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The par 3 number 7 at Mistwood green on a cool morning.
Photo Credit: Dave Drendel

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The Midwest Association of Golf Course Superintendents (MAGCS), founded December 24, 1926, is a professional organization whose goals include preservation and dissemination of scientific and practical knowledge pertaining to golf turf maintenance. We endeavor to increase efficiency and economic performance while improving and enhancing the individual and collective prestige of the members.

The MAGCS member is also an environmental steward. We strive to uphold and enhance our surroundings by promoting flora and fauna in every facet in a manner that is beneficial to the general public now and in the future.

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My Beautiful Garden

"Hey," Tim said, "You get to write the president's column this month, and by the way, the article is due tomorrow. But, Luke is really understanding so you can probably have a few days to get it done, in fact you'll see him at the Cougar game and you two can discuss it."

So, what is it like to be married to a golf course superintendent? First, I like to think that I played an integral role in Tim's career choice. You see, I interviewed for a summer position on the grounds crew at Milburn Country Club. Don (Tim's first superintendent) promised me a position on the summer crew as a favor to my parents, who also both worked at the country club. Before the season started, however, I got a job at the local Macy's. Thereby fulfilling destiny—Tim replaced me on the crew at Milburn Country Club and started to work in what ultimately would become his career. I, likewise, would begin my long and illustrious second career—shopping!!

25 years later I am the wife of a superintendent. I am not sure what I expected with Tim's career choice—

1. Beautiful, well manicured lawn and gardens? No, we don't even own a lawnmower.
2. Golf outings together with secret tips on exactly how to read the greens? No, we usually manage one round of golf a year at the hospital staff outing. Really, Scott (Witte), I am so sorry about what we do to your course each year!
3. Family summer vacations to exciting places in both the United States and abroad? Well, our daughters traveled the world this summer. Their pictures were great and our bank account is a little lighter.

On the other hand, things I know about being the wife of Tim, a golf course superintendent—

1. He is a person who is truly dedicated to his profession. Someone who takes challenges head on, who understands how to work with frequently demanding, and often, fickle members. Someone, who after a torrential rain completely washes away six newly seeded and sodded holes, can still be excited and enthusiastic about a course renovation.

2. He is a father who tolerates living in a house of females, including the cat, Furball. A father who will sit for 8 hours at a gymnastics meet to watch his daughters compete for about 12 minutes.
3. He is a father who will dance with his oldest child and will dream about her wedding (see June On Course president's message).
4. He is a boss who realizes that his crew is as important as his leadership, and understands that all people want to be appreciated for the work they do (see July On Course president's message).
5. He is a husband who supports his wife. He tolerates my crazy work hours, the middle of the night phone calls, the fact that I rarely cook meals. And oh yeah, I mentioned it earlier—I really like to shop and our two daughters share this same passion.

What is it like to be married to a golf course superintendent? All of us who have spouses in the golf course industry know the answer to this. All can match or better the above accounts with your own personal stories. It is a tough, trying, and frequently thankless job. I want to take this opportunity to thank all of the superintendents for your hard work.

A special thank you goes to Tim, my husband of 20 years. He's a great father, role model, leader, and spouse. I really wouldn't water any gardens at our house, I am a pretty bad golfer who is bored after about 7 holes, and winter vacations are usually less crowded. I wouldn't change a thing—that's what it's like being married to a golf course superintendent. **-OC**



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DIRECTOR'S COLUMN

John Ekstrom, Hinsdale Golf Club



My Two Years

This past year as Class C Advisor for the Midwest Association of Golf Course Superintendents has been one of the most exciting of my career. I feel that I have had some great experiences and opportunities. The Class C Committee consists of Scott Verdun — Merit Club, Matt Breeden — Seven Bridges, Scott White — Links at Carillon, Michael Heustis — Chicago GC, Jim Chisholm — Naperville CC, and Virgil Range — Aurora CC. This group works very hard at creating programs and ideas that move the assistant superintendents of the MAGCS along toward becoming golf course superintendents. I thank the group for putting up with me and for making great contributions to our chapter and our industry.

At the end of January, I was invited to the Iowa Turfgrass Show in Des Moines, Iowa — which is similar to our IPTC at Pheasant Run — to make a presentation on professional development for the assistant superintendent. This opportunity allowed me to meet turf professionals from Iowa and to share some of the ideas we embrace at MAGCS. In speaking with these folks, I learned that they are looking to create a committee composed solely of assistant superintendents. Iowa GCSA currently has an assistant on their board but no committee to back him up. Admittedly, everyone in Iowa believes they are about five years behind MAGCS. I appreciated the invitation and their hospitality was impeccable.

This year's Golf Industry Show in Anaheim, California, presented opportunities beyond partying at the MAGCS hospitality suite. Nonetheless, MAGCS and all the contributing vendors did a great job hosting a great hospitality suite. I had the pleasure of meeting several assistants from around the country who are either active in their associations or have a position on their chapter boards. These individuals share my goal of wanting all assistants to have the opportunities necessary for success in our industry. The chapters that were represented at this informal dinner were: Iowa GCSA, Southern California GCSA, Heart of America GCSA, and Central Ohio GCSA.

In April, I had the honor of representing assistant superintendents from around the country on the GCSAA Assistant Superintendents' Committee. This group of six was chaired by GCSAA Board Director Sanford Queen, CGCS, and lead by staff member, David Fearis, CGCS. During these two days of meetings, we discussed ideas for furthering the career development of assistant superintendents. The biggest and main idea is to promote the accomplishments of assistants,

depending on education level, continuing education points, and years of experience. Look for changes to come; the committees that prepare these programs constantly look for ways to better our careers.

Lastly, I would like to thank some people who have given me unfailing support during my tenure as Class C Advisor. First and foremost is my wife, Erica. She has been a source of encouragement throughout this journey. Next is Mr. Scott Witte, CGCS, and Mr. Bob Maibusch, CGCS, MG. Both of them are leaders in our industry. Their vision is what has made the MAGCS what it is today. All of the MAGCS Board of Directors along with Luke Cella, CGCS, have provided no end of support for the Class C committee. I cannot stress enough that without board support, none of the Class C efforts are possible. Thank you to all of the Superintendents who have allowed their assistants to get involved. Please continue to do so. Our industry will thrive and improve because of your enthusiasm. It is has been a great pleasure to serve the members and assistant superintendents of the MAGCS. This has been an experience that has enriched my family and me more than you will ever know.

Thank you,
John

-OC

ed note: The Class C Advisor is appointed by the current MAGCS president and the tenure is two years. John Ekstrom will complete his appointed term at the end of this year, and a term very well served.

SUPER -N- SITE

John Ekstrom, Hinsdale Golf Club



Dave Drendel -N- Mistwood GOLF CLUB

I will begin by saying that it is great to be a member of MAGCS. We are a group, over 800 strong, each individual having great stories to tell. Are we all different and distinct? Yes. What connects us, though, is that we all have a great passion for our industry and the game of golf. Dave Drendel exemplifies both traits. When I went to visit Dave in late June, I knew of him, but did not know anything about him. I left the Mistwood Turf Maintenance Center one-and-a-half hours later knowing another great person with whom I have much in common.

Being a northern Illinois native, Dave grew up spending summers at Valley Green Golf Course in North Aurora. There he worked for his grandparents who owned the course. According to him, Valley Green was a small course where people came with their families to learn how to play golf. In his summers there, Dave spent many a night as a waterman, running sprinklers around. I'm sure he did not think so at the time, but what a great experience!

Two things that Dave and I share is that we both went to high school in the Rockford area, and we also played football for the Redbirds of Illinois State University. He was a scholarship athlete who played defensive end. This being established, we spent just a few minutes discussing three-a-day practices and the business of college football. Those were the glory days. Go Birds!

From Illinois State, Dave went on to intern for one season at the prestigious Butler National Golf Club for Mike Sauls.

Dave learned that only through hard work would he distinguish himself as a great superintendent.

After that, Dave moved home to Rockford where he was an assistant superintendent for Don Altman at Forest Hills CC for a few years.

Dave's last gig as an assistant was working for Ron McCarthy at Edgewood Valley Country Club. While working at Edgewood Valley, Dave polished his resume and knew he was ready to become a golf course superintendent.

Drendel is beginning his fifth season at Mistwood Golf Club. He says he has learned a great deal in his time there. Probably the biggest challenge he faced was getting through the summer of 2005 without water for most of the month of August. Not many Superintendents could go through that and

live to tell about it. Fortunately, he has an outstanding assistant in Ben Kelnhofer. Ben has been with Dave for several seasons and has a very bright future ahead.

Mistwood owner, Mr. Jim McWethy, has been very supportive of Dave and his ideas for the club. Just two years ago, the idea of a new maintenance facility came to fruition. I was very impressed with both its design and its upkeep. There are future plans for a new clubhouse and possibly a renovation of areas of the golf course. Currently, with many acres of fescue, Drendel is focusing on testing different methods of weed removal throughout the course.

Dave has been married for six years to his wife Brooke. They have two boys, David who is almost two years old and Dylan who is only three months old. Needless to say, the Drendel household is very busy.

Going into Mistwood that day, I had no idea that who Dave Drendel was and what led him to where he is today. Today I know that he is a person I could call on if I have any questions. He is a good guy to get to know. I also know that Mistwood will provide the members of MAGCS a great venue for the August meeting. -OC



The Drendels, Dave & Brook and sons David (2) and Dylan (3 mos).



*Above: The par 5 eighth hole at Mistwood challenges you from the tee. Play it safe to the left and experience the full 566 yards, keep it close to the water and you can shorten the hole by 40 yards.
Below: Mistwood's many acres of naturalized areas create scenic egress to adjacent holes.*



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Choosing Grasses for Un-Mowed Roughs

For more than 15 years, several graduate students and I have managed demonstrations and research studies with the overall goal of looking for plants that can work in un-mowed rough areas. Originally, these projects looked at native species such as big bluestem, Indiangrass, switchgrass, and side-oats grama that would reduce labor, increase biodiversity, and enhance the golfing experience by improving course appearance and defining areas. We've also looked at un-mowed exotic turfgrasses such as tall fescue, Timothy, and redtop knowing that these grasses can be easily established and managed. Most recently, based on superintendent requests, we've been looking at grasses, primarily blue grama and buffalograss, with the goal of creating roughs that can be both un-mowed and playable.

This article summarizes our up-to-date findings for these projects and is intended to address common questions and concerns about using grasses in un-mowed roughs. Important plant characteristics include height, appearance, ease of establishment, and maintenance. Also, consider the appropriate growing environments and if the grasses are suitable for creating a playable rough. In this article, the grasses have been divided into three sections – exotic, cool-season turf and utility grasses, tall native grasses, and short native grasses.

Exotic Cool-Season Turf and Utility Grasses

Exotic turf and utility grasses are often planted in un-mowed roughs. In our work, we've examined redtop, orchardgrass (*Dactylis glomerata*), tall fescue (*Festuca arundinacea*), fine fescue (*F. spp.*), and Timothy (*Phleum pratense*). In addition, at some golf courses, mowing is stopped in previously mowed areas and the existing turfgrasses are allowed to grow. Often times, bentgrass (*Agrostis spp.*) and bluegrasses (*Poa spp.*) are present in these settings.

The advantages of using these turf and utility grasses are that the areas are easy to establish and maintain; the seed is inexpensive and readily available; the areas can be attractive, especially early in the growing season when these cool-season

species flower; and the fescues and orchardgrass have moderate shade tolerance. For out-of-play far roughs requiring taller plantings, combinations of orchardgrass, tall fescue, and Timothy are planted. Fine fescues are often used in areas where a shorter planting is desired.

Treat as turfgrasses and plant in late summer - you can usually expect a mature stand by the end of the first growing season and flowering starting in the late spring or early summer of the second growing season. Plantings of these grasses should be mowed at least once a year, usually in late summer or early autumn. The areas will probably perform best over the long haul if clippings are removed after mowing. Control weeds in these areas using turf herbicides.

The disadvantages of these grasses are that they are not suited for producing playable roughs – they generally grow too densely, even when planted at low seeding rates. Also, these areas may become unattractive in mid-to-late summer when the grasses can brown and go dormant. Some may lodge or mat down after flowering.

(continued on page 11)



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