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Luke Cella
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Office: 630-243-7900, Fax: 630-257-0362
E-mail: luke@magcs.org

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E-mail: pdbastron@sbcglobal.net

Harry Lovero, Orchard Valley G.C.
Home: 630-894-0453, Office: 630-907-8998
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E-mail: tschmitz@aurora-il.org

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E-mail: Djsterr@aol.com

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CLASS 'C' REPRESENTATIVE

John Ekstrom, Hinsdale Golf Club
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E-mail: snapp79@aol.com

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Dr. Randy T. Kane
University of Illinois & CDGA
630-257-2005

EDITORIAL CHAIRMAN

Scott Witte
E-mail: switte@tribune.com

ASSOCIATE EDITOR

John Gurke
E-mail: Boomding@aol.com

Brad Anderson
E-mail: brackim@earthlink.net

GRAPHIC ARTIST

Mark Karczewski

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FRONT COVER

The "Lawn Chair" reminds the Midwest Member to take a break this time of year.
Photo Credit: Luke Cella.

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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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ON COURSE WITH THE PRESIDENT

Tim Anderson, CGCS Naperville Country Club

MAGCS Master Plan Revisited

A strategic plan is vital to the long term health of any association. This president's message is the first in a two part series dedicated to the topic of strategic planning.

In December of 2004 the MAGCS board of directors met with Hanes Combest of the GCSAA to work towards developing a strategic plan for the association. The November issue of *On Course* contained a summary of the plan and reported on progress that has been made toward achieving these goals. Long range planning is not a static exercise. It changes and evolves as time passes. Ongoing discussion leads to new ideas and visions. With this in mind, the board met in December of 2006 to revisit the strategic plan. This time the meeting was moderated by our Executive Director, Luke Cella. The objectives were:

- Review the 2004 mission statement
- Review and expand upon 2004 visions
- Review and expand upon goals set in 2004
- Evaluate outstanding goals. Prioritize them and link them to action plans with specific timelines for implementation.

When reviewing the goals set in 2004, it was encouraging to see how many have already been realized.

A review of the mission statement found it still to be an accurate description of the association's purpose. As such no modifications were recommended. For the most part, the visions set forth in 2004 remained the same. The exception being that in 2004 our vision included offering educational and networking opportunities to other turf related organizations (such as sports turf, lawn care, parks and recreation). After discussion it was decided that with the availability of education through the ITF, ITPC and Mid-Am Trade show that this vision would no longer be included as part of the MAGCS strategic plan.

When reviewing the goals set in 2004, it was encouraging to see how many have already been realized. However, two goals were re-evaluated. The first was establishment of an endowment fund for MAGCS scholarships. This has been reviewed by the scholarship committee for two consecutive years. The committee has concluded that current funds are better spent trying to increase the value and term of the existing scholarships, as opposed to putting monies into an endowment fund. A scholarship endowment fund is an admirable goal, but short of a large charitable donation from an outside source it would represent a large undertaking for the association.

The second goal that was revisited had to do with efforts to increase membership size. In 2004 membership was at 685. Over the last two years the valiant work of the membership committee has paid off and the membership currently stands at 812. Currently there is excellent facility penetration in the Chicagoland area. Fewer than 50 courses are not members of the MAGCS. These courses have been contacted and made aware of the benefits that MAGCS has to offer. With this in mind the 2004 goal was modified to place

(continued on page 4)

an emphasis on "taking care" of the current membership by expanding resources dedicated towards enhancing member benefits.

The last topics of discussion were how to achieve goals that have not been realized and setting new goals. The conversation focused on nine primary areas: governance, technology, education, *On Course*, finance, public relations, scholarship, and member benefits.

Governance

The MAGCS board will continue to evolve into a more strategic board. Responsibility for much of the operational activities of the association has been turned over to the executive director. This allows the board to focus more energy on long-range planning. Strategic planning has been incorporated into each board meeting. A year long agenda has been established with specific topics scheduled for discussion at each meeting. A calendar has been compiled that outlines the business activities of the association by month. This will be updated annually to ensure a smooth transition from board to board. Committees already operate based on formal SOPs. The next step is to develop job descriptions for board positions so that officers and directors can better understand and fulfill their responsibilities. Other goals related to governance include succession planning and the development of a program to increase member involvement at all levels of the association.

With completion of the build-out at the Midwest Golf House, the MAGCS business office has transitioned into a larger office and is now located on the second floor. Staff and facility resources have also been increased. This provides the association with the infrastructure needed to strengthen its governance and fulfill some of the goals discussed later in this article. Make sure to ask Luke for the grand tour next time you are in the area.

Technology and the Digital World

We will integrate the use of technology into the management of the association. Technology will be used to streamline procedures and increase pro-

ductivity. It will also be used to increase benefits available to the membership. Use of the website as a means of communicating with the membership will increase. The underlying goal will be to keep the format simple and unobtrusive. The website was first launched in the late 1990s. By 2000 members could elect to receive meeting notifications via e-mail as opposed to U.S. mail. Starting in 2004 new members received all their meeting notifications and association correspondence via e-mail. This transition to paperless communication is set to be completed by 2008, at which time all members will receive meeting notices and correspondences via e-mail. This final transition will start in 2007 as MAGCS employment referral announcements will be available only through the web site. When a new position is posted members will receive an e-mail with a link directing them to the web site. This will save time and money spent on mailings. It will also give members quicker access to employment opportunities.

The web will be used as a means to survey the membership. Gone is the day of long paper surveys. The web gives us the ability to instantly survey members on relevant topics and quickly tabulate responses. This technology has already been implemented. Prior to the GCSAA annual election the MAGCS surveyed all candidates on a variety of key topics using an electronic "Zoomerang" survey. The survey was put together with input from our chapter delegate. The results of the survey were used as a tool to evaluate the candidates and were made available on-line to the membership.

The current message board was discussed and will be evaluated in the near future. We recognize that the

use of the message board has diminished greatly in recent years, but since the cost to maintain it is minimal, there is no great urgency to remove it. The idea of establishing a blog as opposed to a message board is under investigation. Look for an increase in on-line activity. Make sure that you have internet access, and verify that your current e-mail address is on file with Luke.

As membership has grown so has the geographical area that is serviced by the MAGCS. In response, this year the board will conduct two meetings by teleconference. This makes participation more convenient, and minimizes the amount of time that is spent away from the golf course during critical summer months. We hope this will encourage a greater number of members to volunteer for board service. In the future this idea could be expanded to include committee meetings.

Summary

Next month's message will be the second installment on strategic planning. It will cover: education, *On Course*, finance, public relations, scholarship, employment, and member benefits. In closing, I would like to thank all the Gold Tee members for sponsoring the hospitality suite. A special thanks to Sharon Riesenbeck and the Class E Advisory Committee for all their efforts in organizing this great event. The association is truly fortunate to work with an outstanding group of local vendors. Your involvement and financial support is greatly appreciated.

Tim



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DIRECTOR'S COLUMN

Paul Bastron, CGCS Glen Flora Country Club

Forget The New Year's Resolution

As I was leafing through the January issue of our new and improved GCM magazine I read the Presidents message, "Out with the Old, in with the New". In his message, Sean Hoolehan has listed his New Year's resolutions for 2007. Of the ten or eleven resolutions, the one that caught my eye was his resolution to join the Wee One Foundation. He follows by stating that we should all join. I couldn't agree more and I greatly appreciate the awareness this will raise by including this in his column.



As the awareness of the foundation increases so do the number of people with good intentions of becoming a member. The unfortunate dilemma that the Wee One is experiencing is that awareness alone is not enough. Nearly everyone I have encountered that is aware of the Wee One Foundation has expressed positive feedback with intentions of contributing, or becoming a member. Unfortunately instead of mailing in a check it becomes one of those "things to do" that is set-aside for tomorrow.

To date the Wee One Foundation has gifted over \$100,000 to families in need. This is a great cause. So, if after reading this column, you agree with the Wee One cause, please make out a check for \$50 and mail it to: The Wee One Foundation, PO Box 33, Juneau, WI. 53039. Or visit www.weeone.org for a printable form.

No need for a New Year's resolution.



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Midwest Breezes



The Club at Strawberry Creek

Rick Jacobson has designed a traditional links style golf course just over the border in Kenosha where MAGCS member, Matt Kregel is golf course superintendent. There are many incredible features to highlight about this great new golf course, but for this issue I will focus on the success that Matt is having with fescue grasses.

The faces of the bunkers are grassed with 100% Aurora Gold Hard Fescue. Matt reports that the Aurora stays at a height of 6 – 9 inches with no mowing, no fertilization, and minimal water. And Aurora Gold is reported to be tolerant of Round-up. While Matt has yet to experiment with Round-up on Aurora Gold Hard Fescue, he has been assured that an application of Round-up provides the dual benefit of non-selective control of all invasive vegetation, plus it acts like a growth regulator to keep the Aurora growing at a dwarf height.

The fescue mix that was used immediately off the green surrounds and rough is as follows:

- Aurora Gold Hard Fescue @ 25%
- Little Big Horn Hard Fescue @ 25%
- Big Horn Blue Hard Fescue @ 25%
- Camilla Creeping Red Fescue @ 12.5%
- Tiffany Chewings Fescue @ 12.5%

Matt states, "All areas in-play were seeded with this mixture to allow one to find their golf ball. It is meant to be more of a shorter grass on the thinner side, allowing openings, not necessarily full coverage. It penalizes you for hitting into it but it allows you to find the ball and advance the ball out of it. No fertilization or water is applied to these grasses. The grassing lines of these areas follow the coverage of sprinklers. During grow-in all the sprinklers were full circle, allowing the fescues to germinate and root, but once the fescue was established the heads were turned to part circle to only water the short grass. The Toro 855 head makes this a relatively easy task."

The generously wide bentgrass fairway and golf holes at Strawberry Creek are framed and separated by prairies and mounds. The deep out-of-play areas were seeded with the following prairie mix:

- Little Blue Stem @ 27%
- Blue Gramma @ 18%
- Side Oats Gramma @ 27%
- Virginia Wild Rye @ 18%

- Big Blue Stem @ 2.5%
- Indian Grass @ 2.5%
- Red Top @ 5%

These grasses will be entering their third year this season, and Matt is looking forward to their full impact on the landscape as they begin to emerge.

Brad Anderson, CGCS



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The greenside bunker on the 4th hole, a 147 yard par 3, is surrounded by by a special fescue mix.

This 468 yard finishing hole of the front 9 plays directly west into the wind, and will test the best of players. A solid drive down the right side challenges the fairway bunkers and yields the best approach to the green. The approach must carry the creek to reach the putting surface.





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Why Aren't You Using Biodiesel?

Some of the greatest things that any single individual can do for our environment are cutting waste, recycling, and not polluting. What if you could do just that while boosting our economy, helping field-crop farmers, and saving yourself money? This is what some alternative fuels do. There are several fuels out there, but none has as many amazing characteristics as biodiesel.



100 % Biodiesel created from used cooking oil.

According to the U.S. Department of Energy, biodiesel is our nation's fastest growing alternative fuel. In fact, some states already require biodiesel to be blended in with diesel fuel. Illinois requires that all governmental bodies, state, county, and local, as well as universities, school districts, and mass transit organizations use a 2% blend of biodiesel. Minnesota mandates that not only governmental bodies, but all statewide sales of diesel fuel must be blended with 2% biodiesel. Legislation such as this has caused the production of biodiesel to triple in the last two years, reaching over 200 million gallons in 2006.

Everyone knows that petroleum diesel is a non-renewable, highly polluting, and expensive fossil fuel. Within our infrastructure, diesel is widely used. What we need is a fuel that can take the place of diesel with minimal change to our existing way of life. With the right precautions, biodiesel is that fuel.

Biodiesel is renewable, extremely practical, and environmentally friendly. It can be made from soybean oil, rapeseed oil, animal fats, various cooking oils, and oil from other plant structures. This is made possible by a process called transesterification. Glycerin is separated from the vegetable oil leaving behind methyl esters that are then refined to meet the ASTM D 6751 fuel grade specification, thus making it legal for sale in the United States. Making biodiesel yourself is also an option, but the likelihood of creating an unstable fuel is high, and caution is certainly advised.

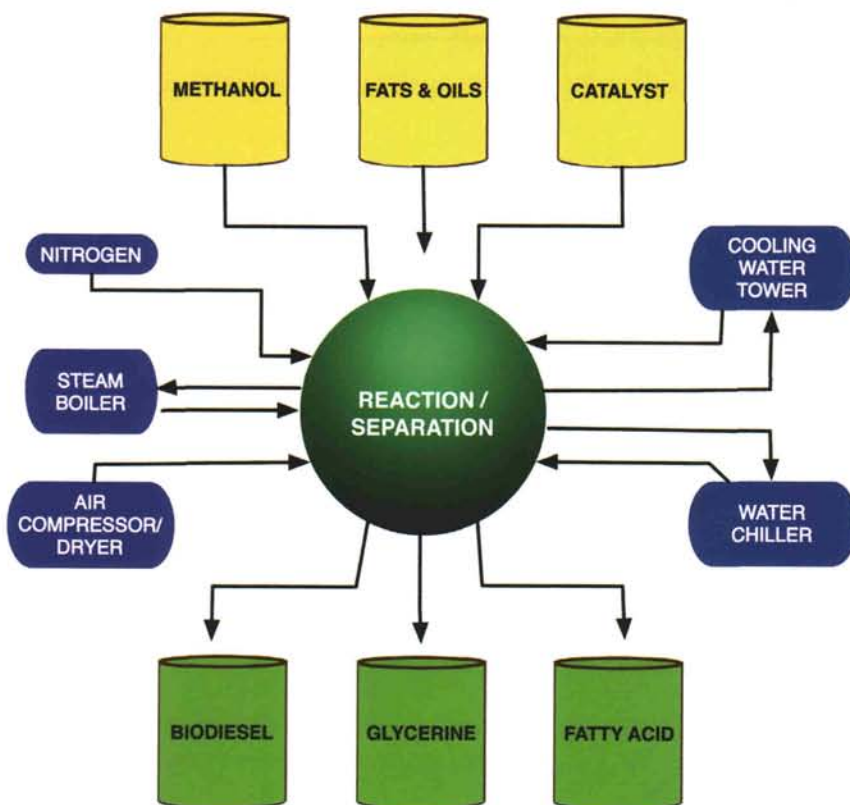
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Biodiesel is not the same as petroleum diesel. In my opinion it is far better, but there are differences between the two that must be considered. A fuel that is 100% biodiesel (B100) is about 8.5% less powerful than petroleum diesel and cannot tolerate cold weather as well. Biodiesel also has a solvent effect that may dislodge petroleum-based particles from within the fuel system. This could eventually clog parts like injectors or filters. It means you would see a loss in power or fuel economy, gelling in the winter, and constantly dirty filters, right? Yes, but remember that those are the facts on paper and in test labs. If the right steps are taken in practical use, those problems can be virtually eliminated.

Right now the quickest and easiest way around those issues is to use a blend of biodiesel and petroleum-based diesel. How much to blend will depend on your use requirements. In addition storage capacities, machine age and condition, and climate are all things to consider. To mitigate those problems, a maximum blend of 20% biodiesel is an industry recommended standard.

I had a chance to talk with some industry professionals about biodiesel. I noticed a common theme among them. With the right biodiesel blend, there is no reason not to use it.

Brian Davis, owner of Phoenix Mobile Repair, is Master Certified in auto, medium, and heavy-duty diesel repairs by the National Institute of Automotive Service Excellence. Over the past year-and-a-half, Brian has repaired vehicles that have had petroleum-based diesel particles come



A flow chart depicting the process called transesterification to create biodiesel. The process starts with soybean oil, rapeseed oil, animal fats, various cooking oils, or oil from other plant structures.

loose and eventually clog fuel systems. This occurred after biodiesel had been in use. But after unclogging the fuel system, Brian was amazed at its overall condition after biodiesel use. According to Brian, fuel system parts like injectors, lines, and tanks were now much cleaner than when using petroleum diesel.

Tony Nunes Head Mechanic at Chicago Golf Club has been using 11% biodiesel (B11) in off-road fuel since the fall of 2005. He says that they have not encountered a single problem associated with biodiesel. They store their B11 in an outside, above-ground tank just the same as in years past when they were storing petroleum diesel. They use B11, without any hesitation, in a wide range of equipment from a 1976 John Deere tractor to a late model Caterpillar skid loader. Tony says he changes filters on the storage tank four times a year and changes the equipment filters only once a year. He is very happy with their fuel choice and intends to use it well into the future.

I also contacted Keith Copersmet from Palatine Oil Company to discuss his experiences with biodiesel. Surprisingly to me, he was unaware of anyone having prolonged difficulty. His clients that purchase biodiesel are all very satisfied with the product and plan to continue using it. He does recommend that first time biodiesel users install a new fuel filter and have a supply of fuel filters on hand, because of the potential for clogging.

Keith also gave a breakdown of biodiesel pricing in the state of Illinois. A gallon of biodiesel made from 100% soy is more expensive per gallon than petroleum diesel. However, there are incentives provided by the state and federal government to encourage people to buy it. Whether in on- or off-road use, any biodiesel blend over 11% is sales tax exempt and comes with additional rebates. To achieve a happy medium and to pay less for an alternative diesel fuel, it works out that B11 is the most cost-friendly blend. As of late 2006, the general savings for B11 vs. 100%

With the right biodiesel blend, there is no reason not to use it.