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OFF COURSE

Rusty Stachlewitz, Associate Editor



• It is always interesting to learn what makes people in our industry tick. What excites them and find out what they do in their spare time. I'm not sure if this is a Clark Kent/ Superman story or a Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde situation. By day a mild mannered sod farm operator/sales person, by night an audio/video producer.



When the whistle blows at Huber Ranch Sod Nursery in Schneider, IN it is a good bet that you can find John Huber as his alter ego in his home recording studio on the farm property. This is not a small room with a tape recorder and a few microphones. This is the real deal, a full blown audio recording facility. Isolation booths for drums, vocals or horns as well as a large enough space for a full band to set up and jam are showcased in his main studio. A computer driven sound board that rivals anything I have ever seen is the showcase of his production room. Check out the studio at www.thepotstudio.com. I'll admit I don't understand a quarter of what goes on with all the equipment but the output is fantastic. John has completed several projects for me and all are of the best quality possible.

A stop upstairs will bring you to his 'green screen'. Yep, like the one that the weather man uses. This allows for action to be filmed and placed over any background. Using this technology John has created a virtual band for himself. He has video taped people playing instruments in front of the screen and compiled them on video to assemble a virtual band that can be projected behind him when he plays his guitar at area night clubs. Who wants to split the pay with the rest of a band when you can pay them to play once and tape it? Oh yeah, John plays the guitar and sings. He is currently playing in "The Average Church Band" and their CD can be found on the Internet at www.cdbaby.com/averagechurchband.

John is also unique in that he has lived out his life-long fantasy of playing with some of rock and rolls greatest musicians. In the summer of 2006 he won a trip through Sweetwater Sound to Rock & Roll Fantasy Camp in New York City. John played and met with the likes of Joe Satriani, Dee Snider, Dr. John, Jon Anderson, George Thorogood and many others. To truly understand how this affected him you have to talk to him about the experience, he will be more than happy to tell you about it.

• Haven't had enough grass in your life? Pick up this new book from Ted Steinberg, *American Green-The Obsessive Quest for the Perfect Lawn*, brought to you by Norton Publishing.

The Professor of History from Case Western Reserve University takes us from the advent of the American lawn to present day. It is hard at times to tell if the author loves or hates turf-grass. It is certain that he advocates a common sense approach to maintenance of grass and the book is a quick and entertaining read.



• I think this internet thing is going to catch on. When you get a chance, check out these sites. They probably won't make your life better but you never know.

www.changethis.com

This site offers "Manifestos" from noteworthy authors and those who hope to be. Don't worry it isn't Unabomber stuff. Every month the site releases another list of titles that are completely free! They are also short which is great for those with short attention spans. Topics are usually business oriented but some of the content is very valuable.

www.bored.com

Yeah, it has pop-ups but it also collects a lot of the coolest stuff on the web in one place. By cool, I mean, dumb and trite but interesting in a car crash sort of way.

-OC

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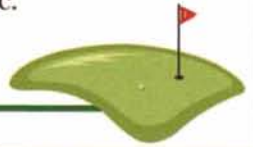


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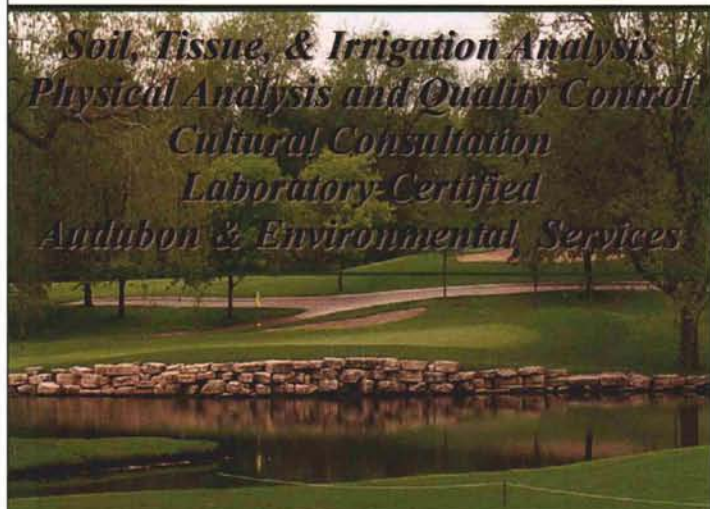
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The Changes Just Keep Coming

Welcome to the new look of On Course. Thank you to our editorial committee and Mark Karczewski our graphic designer for all of their input into the redesign of On Course. Though somewhat based upon style, the redesign will integrate overall improvements to the publication to come. The committee will continue to provide the readership with timely MAGCS information, technical articles, outreach and education, and news from allied associations. On Course will continue to be a value to our members for the source of local and national information as well as the best way to reach potential customers. On Course continues to be the most read publication delivered each month to you, and it is the goal of the committee to make sure this continues to occur.

One new section to the magazine is "Off Course", the moniker originated by Rusty Stachlewitz and the new associate editor of this addition. This column evolved from many discussions in committee to provide information to the readership that is informative but not necessarily golf course related. From trends in technology, a favorite recipe, to shopping for a mink coat, you might find it here in "Off Course". (By the way, if you would like to contribute to this section, contact Rusty or myself. It doesn't have to be in the form of an article, just information you would like to share.)

A MAGCS Board First

The MAGCS June Board of Director meeting was held via conference call. This is the first time the Board has used this technology to conduct a regular meeting of the board of directors. While it was agreed, this format will never completely replace a face to face gathering for your directors, it is a viable alternative to meet especially during the busy time of the year. The meeting lasted approximately two hours, and each participant was able to phone in from their location of choice. The board will look to utilize this technology in the future for committee meetings when appropriate.

MAGCS Website

One of the things that was approved at the June meeting of the Board of Directors was the new MAGCS website. Though still in its preliminary design phase at print, the new website will offer the MAGCS members more benefits than ever. The site will have two sides to it, a public side and a member's only or private side. The public side will extol the profession of superintending, the history of MAGCS and the benefits of membership. Furthermore, the public side will also offer a look into the magazine On Course (for potential advertisers) and an employment section

dedicated to those who would like to post open positions and/or post resumes for our members to view.

The most noticeable changes coming to our website is for members. It will begin with the log in process. Each member will set a unique username and password for access to this side of the site. Once in the secured area, you will find:

- The MAGCS directory online, indexed and searchable
- The ability to change your membership information
- An event calendar with direct links to individual events and registration
- A "remember me" check box for those pesky little registration details we ask each time (name, company, address, phone, etc...[in fact, I'm not really sure why we ask you all that if we know who you are anyway])
- Online registration with receipt of payment generation and email confirmation
- An online forum (this one will be much easier to use)
- Photo galleries (not all the membership images that are taken are published in *On Course*, now we will have a place to use them)
- Online market place to sell MAGCS apparel
- Useful links to useful sites
- A portal to Michigan State's Turf Grass Information File (TGIF). *On Course* will be online here, indexed and archived each month, not to mention just about every other print resource you may need.

Many of the improvements that will occur on the site are on the "back end" or inside the site that most won't see or notice. However, one upgrade is the new email program that will allow us to send HTML email (email with images imbedded in it) and/or email with attachments. The new system will keep track of bad email addresses and notify me when emails need to

(continued on next page)

be changed. The new site will be W3C (www compliant) which means it will render itself well in all browsers (Firefox, Safari, Netscape, etc.) as well as searchable.

As we work through the design process, the committee has a few goals in mind:

- A professional design that embodies MAGCS
- Clear and concise navigation for all users
- A site that is kept current with pertinent information
- A site that is beneficial to our members

The website will be the conduit to reach members as we move to paperless (except *On Course* and the directory) in 2008. MAGCS is able to take this step because of the members' ability to adapt and adopt technology and once again lead other associations in our industry. **-OC**

Though still in its preliminary design phase at print, the new website will offer the MAGCS members more benefits than ever.



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