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### FRONT COVER

Installation of a native planting at Cantigny Golf Course  
Photo Credit: Doug Bauer

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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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## ON COURSE WITH THE PRESIDENT

Tim Anderson, CGCS, Naperville Country Club



# 2007

*As golf course superintendents, all of us stand on the shoulders of those who came before us. The pioneers of our industry worked hard to advance our profession and solidify the role of the golf course superintendent. Today we reap the benefits of their efforts. Likewise, as members of the Midwest Association of Golf Course Superintendents we owe a debt of gratitude to the founders of our association. Their dedication laid the groundwork for what has developed into one of the strongest chapters in the country. We must accept that each of us serves as a temporary custodian of this association. An association nurtured for decades by generations of superintendents. Collectively, we have a responsibility to contribute, and advance our association. It is our duty to preserve the MAGCS and leave it in better condition than we found it for the generations of superintendents yet to come. This perpetual cycle of stewardship is the mechanism that allows us to express our gratitude to the founders of our association.*

For the last 7 years it has been my honor and privilege to serve the membership of the MAGCS. My tenure on the board has been a very rewarding experience, one that I would recommend to anyone. The benefits that I take away from the experience: professional growth, the opportunity to challenge myself to achieve something that I did not think I was capable of, and the new friendships, all far out weigh the commitment of time that was required. I always took my board responsibilities seriously, and strived to work with the best interest of the membership in mind.

Most people do not realize that initially I was not elected to serve on the board. Rather, I was asked to fill a position created by a resignation. I still remember receiving the phone call from then past president Don Ferreri. It was late afternoon and I was still at work. I happened to be in the break room when I answered the phone. Don explained that a resignation had occurred and asked if I would consider filling out the balance of the 1-year term. I had not volunteered, but I had been "tapped on the shoulder" nonetheless. The truth is that very few MAGCS members volunteer for board service. Most are "tapped on the shoulder" and are nudged into service. Next year, as MAGCS past president, my responsibility will include presenting a slate of candidates for the November 2008 election. If you feel a tap on your shoulder I would ask that you resist that initial instinct to say no and take a moment to seriously consider serving on the board. It is truly a worthwhile and rewarding experience.

With that being said, all that remains is for me to say thank you. To the membership of the MAGCS, thank you for allowing me this opportunity. To the MAGCS officers, directors, and committee members, thank you for all your hard work. You embody the best of what our association has to offer. To Luke Cella, you have taken the MAGCS to the next level and beyond. We are fortunate to have an executive director of your caliber. To John Ekstrom and Sharon Riesenbeck, your commitment and dedication is inspirational. To Paul Bastron and Tom Prichard (as they leave the board) thank you for your years of service. To John Gurke and Brad Anderson, your contributions keep "On-Course" fresh and exciting to read. Keep up the great work! To Gary Hearn, Past President, thank you for your leadership and guidance. To my Assistant, James Chisholm, thank you for picking up the slack at work. To my wife Linda and my daughters, Rachel and Hannah, thank you for picking up the slack at home.

It has been said that leadership is the art of mobilizing others to engage in a struggle to achieve a common goal. It is my sincere hope that during the past year we have struggled together to improve our association and re-pay the debt of gratitude that we owe our predecessors.

From my family to yours  
Happy Thanksgiving!  
Tim

-OC



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## DIRECTOR'S COLUMN

Gary Hearn, Salt Creek Golf Club



# MAGCS = Great Association

*Be proud and get involved. My tenure with the Board has come to a complete circle. MAGCS has a new President and Tim Anderson, CGCS has the title of "President Emeritus".*

After sitting as Past President these last 12 months, I liken the experience to a star athlete. You get yourself geared up going through the chairs and striving towards the presidency – the emotions and excitement leading the way...and then BAM! It is all over. The turn of events gives you an empty feeling, perhaps a little depressed, and leaves you still wishing you were more involved with decision making.

I had a great time being on the board. I thank Mr. Al Fierst for taking the initiative and getting me involved with this organization, he started it for me.

As immediate Past President I was responsible for two very important committees: Bylaws / Nominating and Public Relations. As there were no proposed bylaw changes this year, I was able to focus on creating a slate of candidates to lead MAGCS. This task proved difficult as we all seem busier with family and work - actually life in general. It can be difficult to figure out. Time is a precious commodity.

You have all heard it before and I'll tell you again, helping MAGCS is an experience you will not regret. No one says you have to go through all the chairs and serve as director to president, just make a commitment to serve on a committee, attend a monthly meeting or other event. I wish the current slate of candidates the best of luck and feel MAGCS is in very good hands. Thank you gentlemen.

The other responsibility that I have to the MAGCS board is Public Relations. MAGCS members have promoted themselves for years through the conditioning of their courses. We have set the level very high and most surpass standards each day when it comes to golf course condition. We all have used our golf course as a public relations tool to reflect ourselves and our profession. As we move forward the MAGCS board has made a commitment to move beyond individual recognition. The board is on the right track as it seeks direction to promote our profession in the near future.

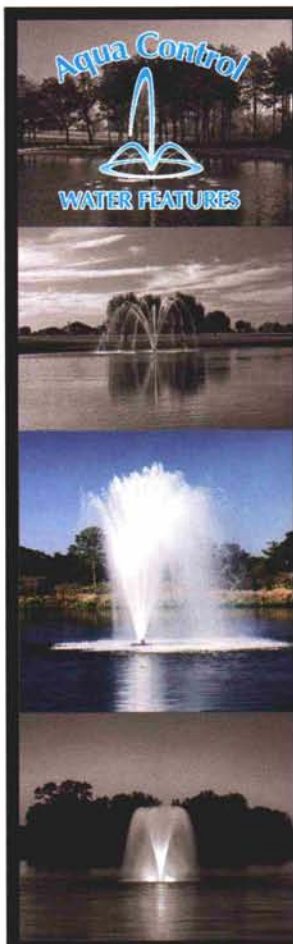
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*We all have used our golf course as a public relations tool to reflect ourselves and our profession.*

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On a personal note, I thank goodness that I wasn't president this year, I'm not too sure how Tim did it through his course renovation. We spent the better part of this year working with an outside agency that installed a state-of-the-art, nine million dollar driving range on our property. I like to say it is a driving range on steroids. The company, Top Golf, of England has leased space (formerly where our bubble sat) to incorporate an entire different kind of game within a driving range. I analogize it to playing darts with golf balls, trust me – it's contagious. I just might want to hold a bloody Midwest meeting here.

Say good night Lexie and Hoss. **-OC**



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## SUPER -N- SITE

Michael Heustis, Chicago Golf Club



# Tom Lively, CGCS -N-



*For Medinah Country Club's very own Tom Lively, Homewood, Illinois, is home. Located just 25 miles south of the Chicago Loop, the Village of Homewood is a quiet suburban setting with many educational, cultural, and recreational facilities. Not only is it a friendly, small "home-town," but it also offers many of the amenities and opportunities of a large city. Tom lives with his two sons, ages 15 and 16. He also roots for the Hoosiers of Indiana University, where his daughter is a sophomore.*

Many of us know Tom as the golf course superintendent at Medinah Country Club, the same club that has hosted many well known golf tournaments, most recently the 2006 PGA Championship. If you read any golf course related publications, chances are you have read about Tom, his crew, and how they prepared for that huge tournament. Keep reading and you will learn not about Tom preparing for a big tournament, but about Tom and his life without the tournament.

Born and raised in the Chicago Heights area, Tom grew up with two brothers and sisters and a love for the game of golf. He spent several years of his teenage life caddying at the local golf course. There he gained a deep appreciation for the game and an understanding of all the hours and dedication a crew puts into preparing a golf course for play on a day-to-day basis.

It was this appreciation for turf management that led Tom to attend Michigan State University. Michigan State is consistently ranked one of the top Turf Management programs in the World. It competes with other schools such as Penn State and Ohio State University that dominate the top-notch turf industry programs. At Michigan State, Tom earned a two-year turf certificate in 1981 and later become an Assistant Golf Course Superintendent.

Since college, Tom's has lived in Homewood. From there he has commuted to and from various positions in the Chicagoland area. He spent seven years as an Assistant Superintendent and 21 years as a Golf Course Superintendent. Thirteen of those 21 years were at Ruth Lake Country Club. Since March 2001 Tom has overseen operations at Medinah Country Club.



**Tom Lively,  
Certified Golf Course Superintendent,  
Medinah Country Club**

When asked about his spare time, hobbies and favorite sports teams, the question had to be repeated due to Tom's not understanding what "spare time" meant. His mornings start at 2:30 a.m. After a forty minute commute to Medinah, his day begins with a desk full of administrative duties, daily meetings with staff and members, and, by the end of the day, maybe a ride around the property. This schedule continues seven days a week, April through October. Tom said balancing work and personal life can be very difficult during this time,

however, he likes the many challenges each new day brings.

Although he likes to play golf, Tom has only played once in the last two years due to tournament preparations. His hobbies include spending time with his family and working around the house. He was raised a Cub fan, but doesn't watch much baseball. He thinks that may change after this season.

Tom says the fondest memories of his life are of the 2006 PGA Championship and getting to work with so many friends in the business. He learned a lot about people. **-OC**

(photos on next page)





*Above and below: Images captured of Medinah's #3 Championship Course during the 2006 PGA Championship.*





## FEATURE ARTICLE

Fred Behnke, CGCS, Mt. Prospect Golf Club

# 2007 – You Are Not Alone



*One of the keys to succeeding in the business of golf course management is the ability to adapt to change. The unpredictability of the weather, new chemistries for the prevention and control of turf diseases, and the development of improved turf cultivars are just a few of the reasons that golf course superintendents need to continually evaluate and adapt their management programs.*

Over the course of the year I had the opportunity to speak informally with several golf course superintendents (GCS) about their experiences this year. While most of us are willing to share in casual conversation, I got the hairy eyeball when I pulled out my note pad, so I promised to keep names out of this article in order to encourage the free exchange of information. I offer up these comments and observations (in italics) with the following caveat; they are not meant to endorse any product or commercial process beyond that of one person's experience. Take them for what they are worth – food for thought.

First of all what happened this year? Weather, like politics, is local, but with very broad brush strokes here is a brief synopsis of 2007 in the Chicagoland region.

The agronomic year began for most of us in February around the time of the Golf Industry Show. While we were enjoying the Southern California sun between seminars and meetings, the Midwest went into the deep freeze following an unseasonable warm spell in January. High winds whipped whatever remaining snow cover off the ridges and windward slopes of greens. Some golf courses suffered turf loss in those areas due to the desiccation caused by frigid, dry winds.

**Comment — GCS (20 years experience)** *"I use greens covers on my greens. It's like an insurance policy, 90% of the time they really don't do much, especially if there is decent snow cover, but this winter was one of those 10 percenters – grass at greens height does not like extreme fluctuations while dormant, and we got that in February. The covers help soften the extremes and we came out in the spring OK. I'll bet that anyone who lost grass this winter lost*

*it on the bare slopes and high points and didn't use covers."*

The golf season began for many of us in mid-to-late March, as usual. The weather was spotty and unremarkable except for a cold snap in early April that had some of us questioning our timing for a growth regulator application to suppress *Poa annua* seed heads. This has been something of a crap shoot over the years, and it's hard to nail down definitive timing of the application.

**Comment — GCS (14 years experience)** *"I've had little success suppressing *Poa* seed*

*heads with Proxy and Primo at heights of cut higher than collar height. I don't make a fairway application anymore."*

Spring and early summer were the calm before the storm, so to speak. Periodic rains and higher dew points began to  
*(continued on next page)*



*Repairing a spot damaged by flood waters with harvest cores on a golf course fairway.*



carve into fungicide budgets earlier than expected, but on the whole most of the Chicagoland area was spared any significant meteorological curve balls.

Late June was when things began to get a little salty. Higher than average temperatures prompted the following post on Tom Skilling's weather blog on July 31:

"Heat has expanded its grip on U.S. weather and is still spreading as August 2007 gets underway Wednesday. Chicago's 91° Tuesday, the hottest here in three weeks and the 11th time highs have reached or exceeded 90° this year at O'Hare, was but one of myriad 90°+ temperatures scattered across 42 of the Lower 48 states. Wednesday marks the fifth day Chicago's temperatures have increased. Peak readings surged from 80° Saturday to 85° Sunday, 89° Monday and 91° Tuesday. Hot as Wednesday's predicted 93° high is, it lags behind the 99° on this date a year ago. With the three-month meteorological summer period now 2/3's over, the season ranks 12th warmest since O'Hare Airport observations began in 1959.  
<http://blogs.trb.com/news/weather/weblog/wgnweather/2007/07/>

with O'Hare Airport averaging 4.25 inches of precipitation during the month. We got four times that amount in Mount Prospect and my conversations with GCS around the six county area indicate a general pattern of three distinct bands for rain totals: South of I-55 had 12-15 inches, between I-55 and I-90 had 7-12 inches, and north of I-90, well past the state line, had 16-21 inches. Obviously, local amounts can vary greatly. O'Hare's official total was 15.85 inches from June through August. We got 16 inches in August, alone, just 10 miles away from O'Hare. The point is that the area was deluged; flash floods were a daily threat; and golf ground to a halt.

**Comment — GCS (20 years experience)** "We were \$40,000 up over last year's numbers and finished the month \$20,000 behind, a swing of \$60,000. August is a bad month to lose here."

The rainfall continued to arrive in buckets, saturating the ground and causing root mass, already depleted from normal summer wear and tear, to recede even more.



*Don't forget the localized dry spot that popped up seemingly a few days after our heavy rains.*



*Can you say dollar spot? Fairway dollar spot trials show off the disease pressure that never seemed to end.*

Still and all, the summer was not unusually trying. Hot and humid in July is where the rubber meets the road in Midwestern golf course management.

**Comment — GCS (21 years experience)** "I tried Dimension as a pre-emergent crabgrass control for the first time this year. It must have been a good year for crabgrass because we missed an area we've been having trouble with and it was wall-to-wall crabgrass. The treated areas were clean."

**Comment — GCS (20 years experience)** "I don't take care of my lawn. I have 150 acres of grass to take care of, and the last thing I want to do when I get home is yard work. Come by the house and see my crabgrass garden."

Then along came August.

August is historically our wettest month of the year,

**Comment — GCS (25 years experience)** "I have roots about 1/2 inch long. We still had to get out and try to mow the playing surfaces between the raindrops, and the mowers are compacting the saturated ground. Grass is lazy, it only works as hard as it has to to get water, and there's been plenty available right at the surface. My fairways are so hard I can barely get a stake in the ground."

On August 23, a front moved through the area bringing near hurricane force winds and, of course, flooding rain. Ground that was saturated for over two weeks provided no foundation for the onslaught. One hundred year old trees were virtually torn out of the ground by the wind. The Village of Mount Prospect estimated that one quarter of its street trees were lost in the storm. The clean-up continued past September 15, and that was just for the trees and branches that fell. Aerial