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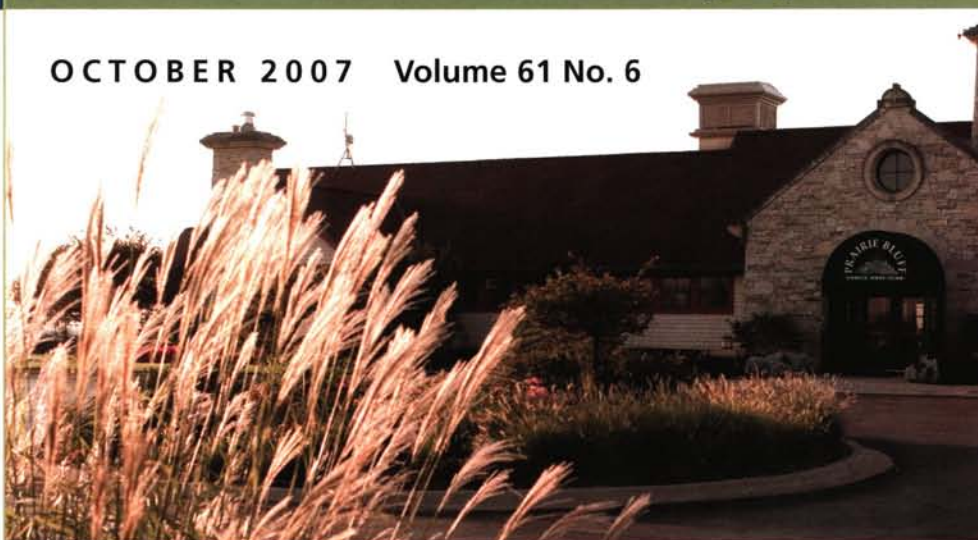
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WHAT COLLEGE WILL GET ENGRAVED ON THE DUDLEY SMITH TROPHY?

FRONT COVER

The seventh at Prairie Bluff Golf club on a crisp clear morning in early Fall. The most difficult hole on the golf course, this par 4 plays 448 yards from the tips and is usually into the ever-present wind.

Photo Credit: Luke Cella

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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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Updates and Changes

This month there is no shortage of topics to discuss so we might as well jump right in.

GCSAA CEO Steve Mona

By this time everyone is aware that on September 26th it was announced that GCSAA CEO Steve Mona had accepted the newly created Chief Executive Officer position of the World Golf Foundation. Mona has committed to assisting the GCSAA for up to 6 months as the GCSAA Board of Directors select a new CEO and complete the transition process. The GCSAA Board of Directors are already in the process of selecting Mona's replacement. During the Chapter Delegates meeting, delegates will be briefed on the selection process. This information will be part of the Chapter Delegates report presented at the annual meeting on November 7th at the Midwest Turf Clinic.

Under Steve's tenure the GCSAA has accomplished many goals including: overall growth of the association, development of the Golf Industry Show, establishment of the Professional Development Initiative, improved offerings in continuing education, and the evolution of the GCSAA Foundation into the Environmental Institute for Golf. While news of Mona's departure may be bittersweet, the GCSAA can take pride in the decision that was made 14 years ago to select a highly skilled individual as the leader of our association.

The MAGCS wishes Steve and his family all the best as he assumes his role as CEO of the World Golf Foundation, and we extend our support to the GCSAA Board of Directors as they embark on the difficult task of selecting a new CEO.

MAGCS Website

The updated MAGCS website was launched in September. All members are asked to visit the new website and set up your personalized screen name and password.

The website is a work in progress. Many of the pull down menu items have already been populated and are ready for use. Some menu items are still under development and are not fully functional yet. If you come across any "bugs" please bring them to our attention so that we can make the necessary corrections.

Launching the updated website was a critical step as we move closer to our deadline for going paperless. You may recall that our long range plan called for a conversion to paperless in 2008. The updated website puts us in a position to achieve this

goal. Our webmaster shows that several members have already logged on and switched their password. Don't get left behind! If you have not yet logged on and switched your password please do so as soon as possible. If you need assistance please contact the MAGCS business office at 630-243-7900 and Luke will walk you through the process. Some MAGCS services have already gone paperless such as the employment referral service. The balance of our transfer to paperless will take place over the next couple of months.

Class C Advisory Committee – Habitat for Humanity Project

I can not say enough about the outstanding work that the Class C Advisory Committee has accomplished. I would personally like to thank committee chairman John Ekstrom, (Assistant Superintendent at Hinsdale Golf Club) and the rest of his committee for all their hard work. John's term as Chairman of the Class C Advisory Committee comes to an end this fall. The chairman of this committee is appointed by the President to a 2-year term. Michael Heustis (Assistant Superintendent at Chicago Golf Club) has been appointed as the new chairman of the Class C Advisory Committee. Michael has served on the committee for the past two years.

This fall the Class C Advisory Committee continues to lead by example as they partner with Habitat for Humanity to landscape a Habitat Home. The mission of Habitat for Humanity is to provide opportunities for home ownership to limited income families. Habitat for Humanity works in partnership with people in need to build modest and affordable housing. The houses are sold to those in need at no profit and with no interest.

Greg Martin of Martin Design Partnership has volunteered his services to design the landscape and develop the required plant list. We will solicit donation from MAGCS members to cover the materials need for the project. The home is located in Aurora at 119 N. Sumner Street and is scheduled for completion in November.

This project is a great opportunity for all members to "give back" and participate in a win – win situation. Watch for sign up information to be sent out shortly.

(continued on page 27)



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Iron Sharpens Iron

I have always liked the phrase "Iron Sharpens Iron." It seems like something Tim—the tool man—Taylor would say on the sit-com "Home Improvement." He would of course follow that with a low, grumbling Ruh...Ruh...Ruh. Actually, this is a proverb that reads: As iron sharpens iron, so one man sharpens another. I think we as superintendents have a thing or two to learn from this old proverb. You just have to ask yourself two questions. Have you SHARPENED any iron lately, and are you STAYING Sharp?

Sharpening iron refers to our ability to mentor and teach others. Staying sharp usually requires interaction with our peers and learning from those around us. Throughout my 22 years in golf course management, I have had the privilege of interacting and learning from many people. As time goes by, I find myself appreciating them more each day. As a superintendent, and a leader of many, it is clear to me that there are infinite opportunities to teach or be taught.

There is definitely an art to teaching and mentoring. So I thought it would be a good idea to offer a few tips to superintendents on how to stay in the sharpening mode.

- Engage in discussion whenever possible so others can learn from you. (Don't underestimate your impact on younger, less experienced superintendents or assistants.)
- Consider it part of your duty to prepare your assistants to go out on their own. (Are you doing everything you can to move your assistants to the next level?)
- Go to bat for your assistants during budget time. Budget for them to attend a monthly meeting or two. Send them to a local seminar. Start small, and get your superiors to buy-in on the fact that it is wise to be proactive in the professional development of your assistants.
- Be willing to make a small sacrifice of time. Take the time to coach and mentor whenever the opportunity arises.
- If you are unable to attend a monthly meeting, make it a point to send your assistant instead.
- It might seem like a stretch to some of you, but consider sending your assistant to the GIS.
- Be open and forthright with your ideas. Others can benefit equally whether your ideas fail or succeed.
- Consider proposing a club-sponsored tuition reimbursement program. Perhaps one of your veteran employees has an interest in earning his or her associate's degree, or bachelor's degree. What better way to encourage continuing education than with the almighty dollar!

- Send your assistant to the MAGCS "Shop Talk Series" and "The Assistant Workshop."
- Give those around you every chance at greater success.
- Don't limit your mentoring to "professional" matters; be open to coaching others through "personal" matters as well.

The other part of this equation requires a person to do everything he or she can to stay sharp? The MAGCS provides many opportunities for continuing education and skill sharpening. By the end of the 2007 season, the MAGCS will have offered two MAGCS sponsored GCSAA seminars, four monthly meetings with education, and of course the annual Midwest Turf Clinic in November. All these events help superintendents stay on top of their game. Many of the benefits are obvious, but I have listed a few things to consider in regard to the value of our educational opportunities.

- Elevate your membership status, maintain your class A status, or work toward certification
- Learn something new and broaden your horizons
- Discover a new passion, i.e., Audubon, wildlife restoration, prairie management, wetland restoration, etc.
- Network with peers, share ideas
- Enhance what you already know
- Maintain a competitive edge
- Discover ways to save your club money
- Increase your value as a superintendent
- Stay up to date on what is new and cutting edge

I believe that ours is an environment rich with opportunities for both learning and teaching. It will continue to be the goal of the MAGCS to foster this environment and maximize its impact on our members. The most important component then becomes your participation. So dive in people. Take advantage of the many opportunities before you, and remember the proverb: As iron sharpens iron, so one man sharpens another! **-OC**

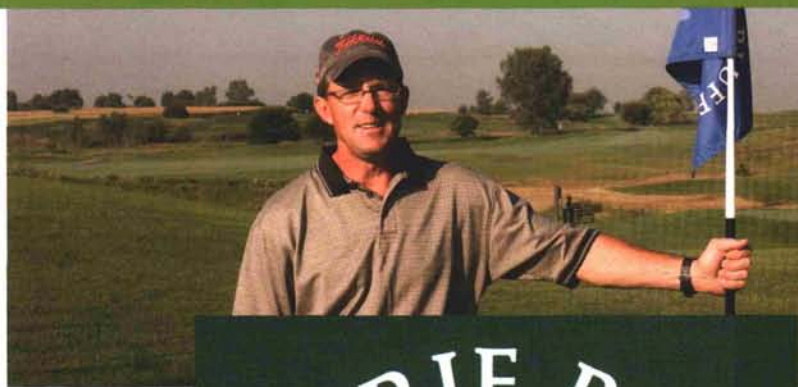
SUPER -N- SITE

Scott White, *Mauh-Nah-Tee-See Country Club*

Kenny Shepherd -N-

In the Southwest suburbs you can find one of the finest gentlemen around, Prairie Bluff Golf Course Superintendent Ken Shepherd. I was fortunate to work down the road from Mr. Shepherd for the last five years while at The Links at Carillon. After trading irrigation parts, equipment, and secrets, I consider Kenny a good friend and would like to tell you a little more about this Midwest legend.

The legend began in the summer of 1973, as young Kenny Shepherd started his turf management career straight out of high school, working at Cog Hill for Ken Lapp. After completing a year at Lewis University majoring in Business, Kenny decided to switch to Joliet Junior College for an Associate's Degree in horticulture. In 1976, Kenny accepted his first Assistant Superintendent position at Woodruff Golf Course working for the Joliet Park District. Two years later he was promoted to Superintendent at Woodruff where he spent the next 11 years. In 1989, Kenny moved within the park district to Wedgewood Golf Course, Joliet's tournament course. In 1997, when the Lockport Park District built Prairie Bluff Golf Course, long-time Lockport resident and seasoned Superintendent Ken Shepherd was the perfect fit for the job. With 19 years of experience working in public golf, Kenny made an easy transition to Lockport. He oversaw the construction and grow-in of Prairie Bluff's beautiful facility designed by two-time U.S. Open champion Andy North and Roger Packard. Prairie Bluff Golf Course is truly one of the best public golf courses in Chicago, with great conditioning and outstanding staff inside and out. Long-time Assistant Golf Course Superintendent Manny Mascote oversees the daily maintenance routine and helps insure that Prairie Bluff stays at the top among public facilities in the area.



Having built a successful career on and off the golf course, "Old Shep" turned a young 52 in August. Kenny takes pride in family, friends, and faith. He and his wife Nancy, a nurse at St. Joseph Hospital in Joliet, are celebrating 30 years together! They took a long overdue trip to Hawaii in the spring. Nancy and Kenny have two sons, Craig and Kyle. Some of you may know that their oldest, Craig, who is 25, recently graduated



The Shepherd's, Nancy, Kyle, Ken and Craig.

from the University of Illinois. He works for Liebold Irrigation and services the Chicago area. Kyle, 22, just accepted a position with the Lockport Fire Department. Yearly ski trips to Colorado and Wisconsin keep the family bond strong and help recharge the batteries for the next season. Kenny is active in the MAGCS and attends several monthly meetings each year. You can find him hanging around fellow superintendent and friend Renny Jacobson, counting down the days til the snow flies,

or planning the yearly pilgrimage to Bristol to cheer on Jeff Gordon.

Interviewing Kenny and hearing the old stories, looking at pictures and talking about the good old days, I found an individual devoted to enjoying life. The golf course is in great shape and it's fun to play. Kenny Shepherd's success on the golf course is easy to see, but his real achievement is balancing work, marriage, and family over the past 30 years. Congratulations Ken and Nancy. **-OC**



This picture (above) of the 15th green at Prairie Bluff Golf Club details the smooth and rolling lines of the green side bunkers and surrounds. The image below tries to capture the expanse of the property that sits on 230 acres.



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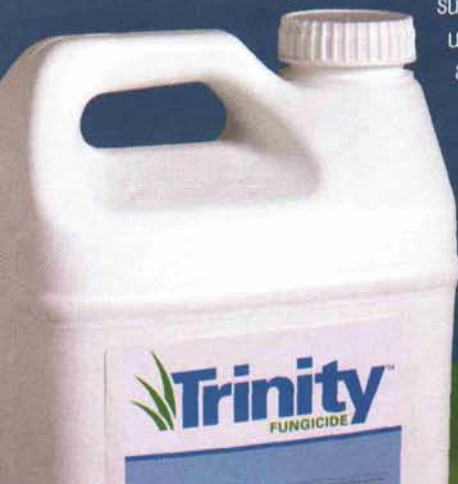


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Making The Right Renovation Decisions?

The dictionary defines renovation as "a restoration to an earlier condition or to impart new vigor to; to revive." This is precisely what is sweeping the nation, as more golf courses undergo a complete or partial renovation in an attempt to meet the expectations of today's golfers. These expectations may include but are not limited to faster green speeds, lower mowing heights, and better playability.

The planning process can get very exciting. It is easy to become enamored of grandiose proposals, but be especially wary of that. The infrastructure of the entire facility must be carefully considered before deciding how quickly to implement a renovation program. Too often the money needed for a new maintenance facility, equipment replacement, or irrigation and drainage systems is used to finance the renovation. This can have disastrous long-term effects on the financial health of the course.

In the case of multi-year programs, it is usually advisable to begin the implementation phase slowly to aid in golfer acceptance. "Don't bite off more than you can chew," is sound advice. Similarly, choose the easiest and least controversial projects for the initial phase in order to get the clientele excited about the program and to garner their support. Success breeds success, and a failure in the initial phase can compromise future projects.

In cases where the plan is not controversial and the need for the work is well understood, often the best course of action is to implement the plan more quickly. Biting the bullet and performing the work in one or two phases causes more disruption in the short term, but far less in the long term. It is best to perform all putting green and/or regrassing work in the same season so that all of the turf is at the same stage. Building or regrassing greens piecemeal complicates the maintenance program because different sets of greens are at different stages in development and require different maintenance programs. This also causes greater inconsistencies in playability. Furthermore, putting green construction work tends to be more controversial in nature. Few courses ever complete a putting green reconstruction project on a piecemeal basis. Generally, it is far more economical to do all putting green construction work at the same time. Once the green light is given, many decisions must

be made. Regardless of the scope of work, these decisions must be made with careful thought and precise planning.

In today's golfing market, many renovations take place every year. To aid in the decision making process, a survey was taken of 17 area Golf Course Superintendents who have recently completed a renovation. They were asked about many of the decisions made during their renovation. As one would expect, there were numerous good decisions, some not so good, and some valuable numbers on what grass varieties were used. The following is what they reported:

When asked to **describe three of the most interesting or beneficial things one has seen or experienced in a renovation**, the three most popular responses were as follows:

- 1) The overwhelming positive responses from the golfers has been one of the most interesting and beneficial things. The golfers enjoyed the new look of the golf course. More respect was given to those who maintain the course after the members were able to see the hard work and perseverance necessary to complete a project of such magnitude.
- 2) The use of covers on seeded greens helped control seed movement from heavy rain. In cases of cold weather, the cover acted as a greenhouse and absorbed heat from the sun allowing the grass seed to germinate better.
- 3) The ability to make improvements to drainage, irrigation, and other traditionally problem areas was a great benefit. Since the course was under construction anyway, it was the perfect time to make other corrections as well.

(continued on next page)



Covers can only do so much against a heavy rain on this green. This picture shows the uncontrollable aspects of a renovation that weather created – washing away and exposing irrigation pipes and gravel layers.

As we all know, hindsight is 20/20. Referred to as mistakes by some, this article will refer to decisions gone bad as things you would do differently the second time around.

When asked to **list three of the most significant changes you would make the second time around**, the three most popular responses were:

- 1) As in the previous response, those who missed the opportunity to make any corrections in drainage and irrigation reported this as the biggest mistake. Many times this was

ascribed to “tunnel vision.”

- 2) Having too many individuals involved in the overall decision making. Many times work was complicated and planning became inconsistent due to input from more than just the key decision makers.
- 3) Poor Planning – contingency budgets were either non-existent or not adequately planned. Seeding dates and opening dates were also juggled due to the golfing calendar, thus providing less than optimal dates for a successful renovation.



Extensive planning goes into a hydronics system such as the one show in the picture



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