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The 9th hole at St. Charles Country Club plays over Norton Creek.
Photo Credit: Jim Keith

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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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I Can't Believe They Are Still Printing Those Things?

I arrived at my office and sitting there smack dab in the middle of my desk is a brand new Yellow Pages. I really don't know what to do with it, my kids don't need booster chairs anymore, I've no need for a doorstop, maybe I'll place it under my monitor to make it more ergonomically comfortable. As I walk downstairs to recycle this thing, it make me wonder if the skill of alphabetizing will be lost with our kids? Did you ever notice the street sign for a park is a seesaw or as well called them, a teeter-totter? When was the last time you saw one of those in a park? I digress, but my kids don't know what that sign means now, let alone when they'll start to drive in ten years. It is hard to imagine the changes that we will see in the future especially when it comes to communication.

There is no doubt technology is driving the way we communicate. I recently attended a Strategic Communications Committee meeting at GCSAA headquarters a few weeks ago. One of the challenges that GCSAA faces (as well as MAGCS) is making certain that the information they have gets to intended audience.

The committee listened to a talk by Dr. Max Utsler, an Associate Professor at KU in the school of Journalism and Mass Communications. (Dr. Utsler often speaks at the GIS and I would recommend catching a talk or two of his.) The way we get our information has changed and it is really apparent with our children. Long after speech was invented, maybe 200,000 years ago, but prior to the printing press, someone may have stood in the town square and shouted announcements. Sometimes he was shot (hence the line: "Don't shoot me – I'm just the messenger"- Why do you think Mercury was so fast, it wasn't to get the message delivered, it was to get the hell out of there before he was killed.). Once people were able to afford their own books and later newspapers, they could read the information at their leisure. The radio was invented and eventually took off, same with the king of communications, the TV. All of these formats and modes of communication have one thing in common – they all control the information sent to you. The providers dictate the time, the content and method of delivery. I know when the traffic will be announced on the radio and often I find myself waiting to hear it so I can flip the station to something I like on my way to and from work. Many of you know exactly when the extended forecast will be played on the nightly news and set your bedtime to it. Some look forward to the daily newspaper (although a quickly winnowing minority) and read it

All of these formats and modes of communication have one thing in common - they all control the information sent to you.

cover to cover. There is nothing wrong with these methods of getting information. This is how most of us grew up, it was the world we knew and to a great extent, still follow.

The difference between those coming into the industry and us is the way **they get** their information. We are used to having it delivered to us. We wait patiently for it, sorting through mass marketing blitzes, recipes for eggplant Parmesan, and methods to getting rid of pet dandruff until the news segment we want to see finally is aired. The up and comers don't do this. If they want to know the weather, they log on to a website and check it out at that moment. If they want to know a sports score, they don't tune into a radio station and wait for the sports segment, they set up an automatic text message alert on their phone that notifies them of changes each inning.

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They don't have newspapers delivered to them, they subscribe to RSS (Really Simple Syndication) feeds that are sent real-time and not printed six hours prior. These kids hunt out the information they desire and often have it at their fingertips. It is how they were brought up, they have no notions of our methods.

Some of us are transitioning into this realm of seeking out information. Why do you think TiVo's or DVR's are so popular with the older crowd that have them? (TiVo or a DVR is a method of digitally recording TV shows and is way easier than setting up a VCR to do it). Those that use this method to record and playback their TV shows have gotten a glimpse of what it is like to get information on your terms, not the terms of the media providers. Ask someone in your generation that has one, they'll tell you it has changed their lives.

Some of us have gotten pretty good at navigating the web. How many of you have a weather website bookmarked? By now, probably most have. But, how many of you don't think to look at your computer when you need a weather forecast? Maybe you still find yourself heading into the shop just before noon to hear what Skilling has to say about tomorrow or the ten minutes he will take to recap the weather you just lived. It is OK, it is the world you know.

Imagine not using the radio to figure out what the most popular song of the day is or even knowing that songs are played on the radio? (So much for the weekly Top 40 Countdown.) That is what is happening today – kids visit a website

to see and hear and download songs that they like so they can hear the song *when they want* to hear it. Has one of your kids ever asked you where you put the newspaper so they could see what movies are playing at the local cinema?

There is no doubt, methods of communicating will continue to change. The question that begs an answer is how will the information we seek change us? One of my favorite places to go is the library. Each shelf contains hundreds of places to go, and one really cool thing is they've arranged content by whether or not it is true. If I have grown up always seeking specific information, how will my mind broaden? How will I develop interests? How will I think of new things to invent, how will I improve the world around me? Maybe my liberal arts background thinks the top ten delivered back by Google is too controlled and narrow.

There is no doubt the associations are in a state of flux with our communications. We want to make sure we are still reaching **all** of our members. MAGCS has taken the lead in going paperless, and I feel it is a good thing. One day, (I may not be around to see it), we may not print On Course and I've got to think that will be OK too. I do know something will take its place because we not only need to share information but we have to challenge our minds as well.

I've got a taste for some eggplant Parmesan and I really don't know why. **-OC**

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James Keith, CGCS -N-



Golf course superintendent Jim Keith will host the Illinois Turf Foundation – MAGCS Spring golf outing in the scenic Fox Valley at St. Charles Country Club on May 12. This past month I had a chance to meet with Jim and learn not only about the history of St. Charles Country Club and his role as the superintendent, but also about himself and his family.

Architect, Tom Bendelow, designed St. Charles Country Club in 1924 along the Fox River. It became known as one of the finest golf courses in the western suburbs along with its well-known signature hole, the 18th, an uncommon rounding ending par 3. In the mid 1980's, St. Charles was offered a rare opportunity to build a new clubhouse, acquire additional land and build seven new golf holes through a land acquisition with Arthur Anderson Consulting (AAC). AAC desired the club's property along the Fox River for development of a professional learning center for the consulting firm's once thriving business. The club agreed and in 1987, the club opened its new facility and seven new golf holes that were designed by David Gill, a member of St. Charles Country Club. After David Gill's passing, the STCCC then worked with Rodger Packard until David Esler was hired in 2002 to design six new holes on undeveloped property that the club owned. These holes are currently used for practice until a complete Master Plan is implemented in the near future. Along with new routing changes over the years, the course has undergone other improvements that include a new irrigation system in 1998 and a complete greenside bunker renovation on Tom Benelow's original design in 2000. Future plans include a possible clubhouse addition in 2009 with a complete golf course renovation to begin shortly thereafter. Jim Keith, CGCS, has been the steward of St. Charles Country Club since taking over in 1994.

Jim was born and raised in central Illinois where he was the youngest of six children. It did not take long before Jim was working in the green industry. By the age of 10, he was already push mowing yards and in the summer of 1984 at

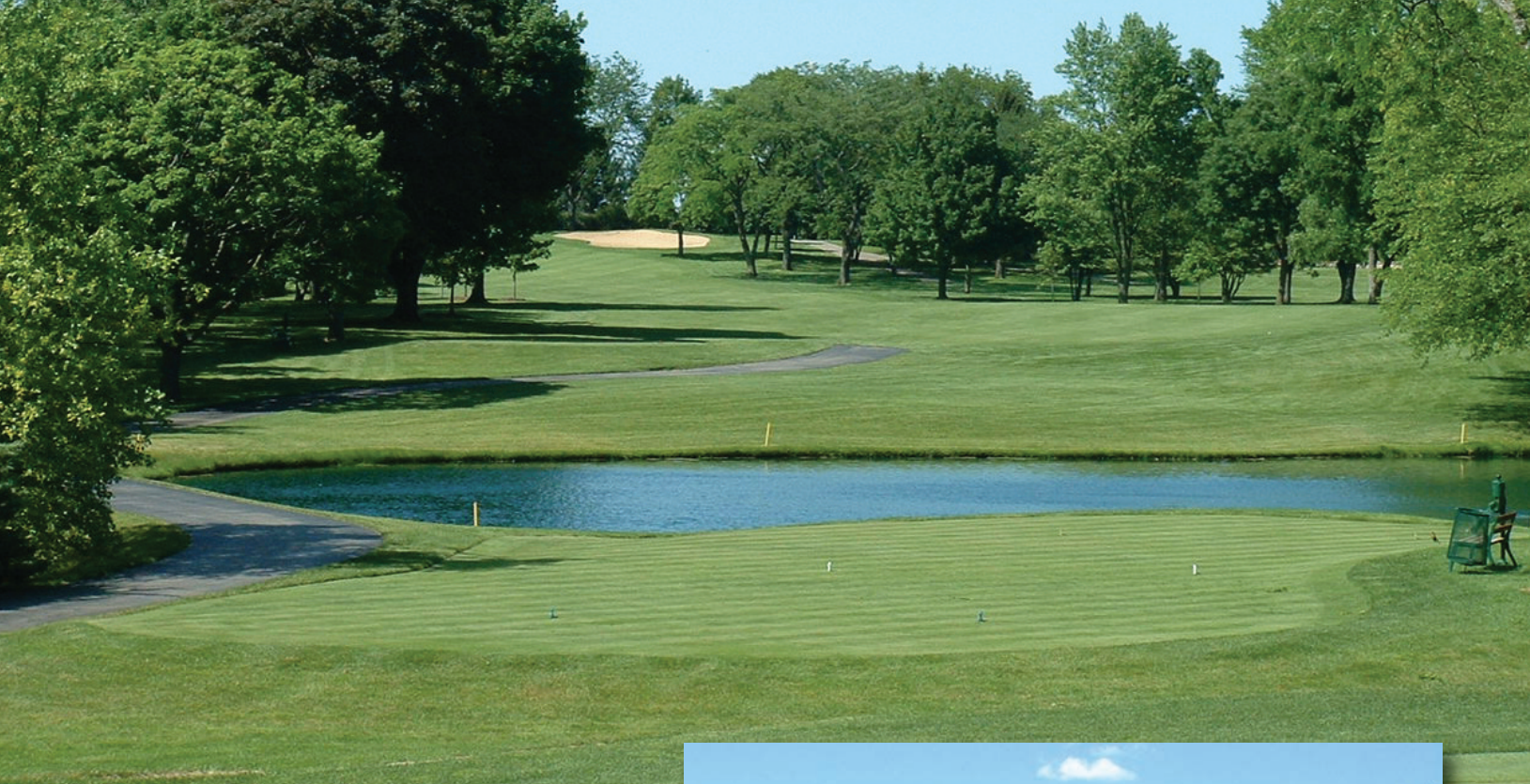
the age of 14, he began working for the Christ family who owned Snag Creek, the local golf course in Washburn, Jim's hometown. Since his first day at "Snag", Jim has never looked back. After graduating from the University of Illinois in 1993, it was then on to St. Charles Country where he started as the assistant superintendent.

With work keeping him extremely busy, Jim still finds time to volunteer in the community, serving on the board of directors for the Elburn and Countryside Community Center as well as coaching teams for Elburn baseball and softball. He is currently serving as a director for the MAGCS. In his free time, Jim enjoys hunting, golfing and spending time with his family. He and his wife Melanie have been together since grade school and now reside in Elburn. Melanie is currently working for Edward Jones Investments. Their son, Dylan, is a freshman at Kaneland and has hung up the glove and bat to concentrate on football and scholastics. Not only is he a straight A student, but he also works part-time for his father and caddies for St. Charles Country Club. Madie, their youngest, is a 5th grader and loves athletics. She is currently gearing up for traveling U12 softball.



Jim Keith

In the short amount of time I spent with Jim it was clear to me that he loved his job. And it was clear the only thing he loved more than his job was his family. As I left I asked him if he had any advice to give a young assistant superintendent such as myself. He told me, "Treat people with respect, maintain a solid work ethic, and be responsible for the actions you take." Words for anyone to live by. -OC



St. Charles Country Club, host to the ITF/MAGCS Spring Golf Day.

Above: The sixth at St. Charles CC is a long par 4 (450 yards) with an uphill green that makes the approach shot on this hole the most difficult on the course.

Middle: The eighth green is protected by an old oak on the left hand side of the green. To have any shot at the green, you must place your tee shot on the right side of this downward sloping fairway.

Below: The seventeenth is a short par 4 and requires a straight drive to a very narrow landing area.



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How Reliable is Your Pump Station?

First of all, are we in the twenty first century yet?

ClaValve and electric butterfly valves (EBV) are the technology of the past. For over fifteen years Variable Frequency Drives (VFD) have been used in pump stations. They have proven to save money both in energy efficiency and in wear and tear on pumps, motors and irrigation systems.

For those of you who are not up to speed yet, no pun intended, A VFD station controls the speed of the pump's motor to match the required flow. The VFD will reduce voltage, controlling amperage to match the required speed. Lower speeds reduce electrical energy. Also the pump will not incur any friction from throttling as it would with ClaValves and EBVs. The irrigation system will also benefit. The VFD – through microprocessor controls – will fill, restart from a faulted state, and control the line pressure without surges.

The life expectancy of a pump station

Pump station manufacturers assert that a station in the Midwest has a life expectancy of thirteen years. What does this mean? You may say, "I have a station that is twenty years old and it is still running." Let's clarify what both of these statements mean.

The manufacturer's view

The manufacturer would, of course, like to sell you a new pump station every thirteen years. It is a matter of reliability. If affordable, replacing the pump station every thirteen years will provide you with flawless operation. Of course this is not always feasible.

The optimist's view

A pump station can always be repaired. At twelve years, pumps are showing signs of wear in bearings and shafting. The integrity of the motor's insulation is breaking down.



Pump controllers and VFDs are obsolete and beginning to fail. The only thing left is piping and skid integrity. Of course water quality, operating environment, and the type of station you have will affect life expectancy. Once again it is a matter of reliability! Remember, things always break when they are needed the most.

With many stations, rebuilding pumps, motors, and updating controls will extend longevity, but the cost of these repairs all at once could be close to the cost of a new station.

(continued on next page)

How to get the most from your pump station

Start at the beginning with a station that is new or in good shape.

Next you need a preventive maintenance program and a quality service company. Pump stations are all about controls. Make sure that your serviceman understands these controls. I like to tell my customers that I need to have an intimate relationship with the station. Of course they look at me oddly and wonder what my intentions are. There is nothing worse than meeting a new customer with an old station that is under duress with no information whatsoever about the station.

In order to achieve quick service and longevity from your station a serviceman requires the following.

- Comprehensive list of what is on the station.
- Register list of all operational parameters

Annual Maintenance

Annual maintenance is important for your pump station, primarily because most of your preventative maintenance occurs during this time. Each year the following should take place:

- Disassemble control valves to inspect working parts
- Clean all sensors and process controls
- Replace pump packing
- Meggar motor insulation

- Grease and change motor oil
- Tighten all electrical connections
- Record voltage, amperage, and pressure at each pump's deadhead (no flow max speed).
- Record voltage, amperage, pressure and flow at each pump's duty point.

With this service completed and the data obtained a serviceman should not have any trouble diagnosing a problem in a timely fashion.

Information saves money and time. A pump that is not performing can be worn or it may have a restriction. With the above data, a serviceman can determine which condition it is. This could be the difference between changing a check valve and pulling a pump. Trending performance data will also inform the serviceman of pump and motor wear.

In conclusion, let's remember that a lot of emphasis is put into maintaining your turf care equipment. Although mowers are important, a course was never lost from one mower breaking. The pump station is the heart of the irrigation system.

Have a great summer and remember Happiness is a Good Pump! **-OC**



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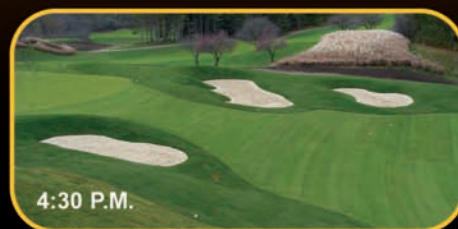
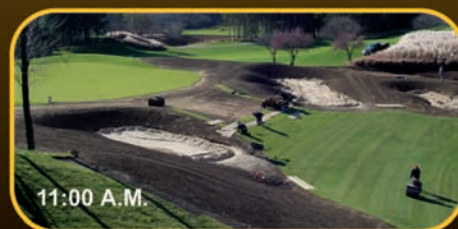
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