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## Table Of Contents www.magcs.org



Hole #5, Dubsdread new tee complex. Six sets of tees will give every golfer the opportunity to be challenged on the redone track.

### FRONT COVER

Medinah Country Club, host of the 56th Midwest Turf Clinic and MAGCS Annual Meeting. *Photo Credit: Curtis Tyrrell, CGCS* 

## ON COURSE WITH THE PRESIDENT

3 It's Been a Fun Ride Dave Braasch

## FEATURES

- 4 Curtis Tyrrell, CGCS -N- Medinah Country Club Scott Verdun
- 7 LogMeIn Darrick Robbins

## 9 How Do You Say Thank You?

15 Technical Tips Ted Soenksen

## DEPARTMENTS

- 13 Midwest Breezes Charles Anfield
- 16 the Bull Sheet John Gurke
- 28 News from GCSAA
- **31** MAGCS in Motion



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 Dave Braasch, *Glen Erin Golf Club* 



# It's Been a Fun Ride

It was a hot, humid day in 2001 at Hughes Creek Golf Club for the inaugural John Buck Memorial Fundraiser outing. Don Ferreri approached me after the golf portion figuring that he was just going to say thank you for hosting the day's event. That wasn't the case. He stated that the nomination committee chose me as one of the individuals to run for the MAGCS Board of Directors and had asked me if I would be interested. After a short discussion about what the duties entailed, I accepted the invitation to run for office and was elected in November.

It was an honor to be asked and a privilege to serve on the MAGCS Board of Directors for the next seven years. I was excited to be elected until, only a few months into it, I made the move to Janesville, Wisconsin to do a grow in and I began to ask myself, "Do I really want to do all this traveling back and forth for seven years?" After fighting with myself and a few Board members, I stood by the decision that I made and stuck with it. To be quite honest with you, it was the fastest and most rewarding seven years of my life.

How was it rewarding you might ask? For starters you meet a lot of new people and gain new friendships along the way, not only within MAGCS, but with members of allied associations as well. I have learned to delegate and have become a better communicator and public speaker. Those of you that have stage fright while speaking to an audience, the "imagining everyone in their underwear" trick really does work. I have gained an appreciation for what it takes to put a magazine together, organize a monthly meeting, and align education for a year. It goes off without a hitch due to strong communication and planning skills backed by individuals who donate their time and effort. I highly recommend that if you have not volunteered your time to help at any capacity in MAGCS, it is a must, as you will walk away with the same valuable experience as I did.

I would like to thank the Board for all their continued support and service to the MAGCS as we strive to be a leader in the golf course industry. Early on we lost our Class C Advisor, Michael Heustis, as he made the jump from Assistant Superintendent at Chicago Golf Club to Superintendent of Chicago Highlands. After you get past the grow in, we will be hitting you up to serve again, this time as a Director. The void was quickly filled by Scott Verdun of the Merit Club - a seasoned member of the Class C Committee. I would like to thank Scott for his service and John Nelson for allowing him the opportunity to serve on the Board. I would also like to thank Todd Schmitz, "....thank you to the members of the MAGCS for giving me the opportunity to serve you at various capacities over the past seven years."

our Education Committee Chairman, as he will be departing from the Board. I hope that we will see you resurface as a Board member in the future; although, I think you may have to start all over again and not resume where you left off. Sorry. To Sharon Riesenbeck, the bright-eyed and often over-caffeinated individual at a Board meeting, thank you for your hard work as the Commercial Advisory Council Representative by keeping us one with those that support the Association. Thank you John Gurke for the often-entertaining section of On Course "The Bull Sheet" and to Chuck Anfield for informing us of the happenings of superintendents in the "Midwest Breezes." To Luke Cella, the nucleus of the Board as I like to refer to him as, thank you for all of your efforts: On Course, Executive Director, Photographer, Family Picnic Night, and many more ways that I cannot even begin to list. Last but not least, thank you to the members of the MAGCS for giving me the opportunity to serve you at various capacities over the past seven years. It's been a fun and educational experience. I would like to welcome Tony Kalina as our new MAGCS President and wish everyone a safe and happy holiday season. -OC

# Curtis Tyrrell, CGCS -N-Medinah Country Club

Medinah Country Club - former host of the Western Open, three U.S. Opens, two PGA Championships, and the 2012 Ryder Cup - is now home to one of MAGCS newest members, Curtis Tyrrell, CGCS. Recently I had the privilege of sitting down with Curtis to discuss the winding road that brought him to Medinah.

In a turn of events that is familiar to many of us in the industry, Curtis's career began as a job. While working at The Country Club at Woodmore, in Maryland, Curtis decided that the golf course was where he wanted to be. Since he was already armed with a B.A. from Elon University, he decided

to enroll in the two-year program at Penn State. Upon graduation Curtis moved across the country, to southern California, to work as an Assistant to Virgil Robinson at PGA West in Palm Springs.

A superintendent position at Desert Mountain in Scottsdale quickly followed. There he worked for Director of Agronomy, Shawn Emerson. This is also where he learned the fundamentals that he relies on today for operating a multi-course facility. He learned how to use a large crew to its greatest potential and efficiency as well as gaining a wide variety of construction experience. The property expanded from three courses to five while he was there and currently totals six courses.

From Scottsdale it was on to Las Vegas and Anthem Country Club, his first 18-hole course, as well as the first Superintendent position on his own. Halfway through his time

4

at Anthem, the ownership hired Troon Golf to operate the club. It was with Troon, in 2003, that Curtis made his way back to a northern climate at Lake of Isles in Connecticut.

As the Superintendent at Lake of Isles, he was in charge of the simultaneous construction and grow-in of two championship 18-hole Rees Jones designs. Beginning to build in 2003, dropping first seed on July 1, 2003, and continuing to build and seed until July 1, 2004, they opened all 36 holes simultaneously in May of 2005.

That brings us to today, where Curtis sits as the Director of Golf Course Operations at one of the most storied clubs in the country. In his short time at Medinah, he has been working

> hard to create consistency across the board, not just in agronomic practices but also in personnel. Along with his Superintendents: Kris Kvelland, Jim Wallace, and Dave Kloss, he is working to create a team atmosphere rather than three different courses. So far the team is coming together very well and working toward that goal.

On the immediate list of projects is a new short game practice area designed by club architect Rees Jones. This will also serve as a test plot for grasses that may be used on putting greens in the future. The varieties that will be explored on the three short game greens will be Penn A1, A4, and A1/A4 mix. In addition, Seed Research of Oregon's 007, Tyee, and Dominant X-treme are also being evaluated. Currently underway is an addition to the driving range that will allow the set up to shift tees to face slightly south. When hitting

Curtis Tyrrell

balls in the morning, the sunlight will no longer be directly in the hitter's face, as it has been for years.

The near future will bring a slight renovation to the new bunkers on Course 3. Liners will be installed, as well as new sand that will allow for a firmer, more consistent hitting surface. A renovation to the 80+ year old maintenance facility, is in the





early planning stages and is anticipated to begin in the next 12 months. Both of these changes will aid in preparing for the 2012 Ryder Cup, which is right around the corner. The club has also begun to discuss large scale projects for 20-25 years ahead. This will help assure that the younger members will have a state-of-the-art world class facility once they move into a leadership role.

Once all of this has concluded for the day, it is time for Curtis to, "go home and do my real job," out in Huntley, where he and his wife, Bridget, are the proud parents of Kaylie who is 9 and Meredith who is 6 - both of whom are loving life and playing plenty of soccer. They have settled in an area that reminds them of their Connecticut home and have met many wonderful people as a family.

Welcome to MAGCS Curtis. If you ever get any free time, we all look forward to seeing you at some future events. **-OC** 





FEATURE ARTICLE Darrick Robbins, Reinders, Inc.



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## LogMeln-Access Your Computer Remotely from Anywhere - Free. **Remote Control of Any Computer**

How often have you wished that you could access your office computer from home? Wouldn't it be great to turn the irrigation off for the night - while sitting at home in your boxers? How about controlling your office computer from a mobile phone, or some other internet access point? There is a simple and easyto-use piece of software that allows you to do just that - LogMeIn (available for free at www.logmein.com). Let's talk about how it works and how you can make it work for you.

First, let's explore the set-up of the computer you want to control remotely. This computer must have a high speed internet connection. Connect your computer to this internet access point and you are off and running. Open Internet Explorer and navigate to www.logmein.com. In the middle of the page you will find a large green box that says "Download LogMeIn Free." Click on this button and follow the prompts to install LogMeIn onto your computer. You will be asked for some basic information, including a username (your email address) and password, as well as a computer access code. It is very important that you

remember, or write down, these three items as you will need them anytime you want to remotely access your computer. These passwords and codes also protect your computer from being controlled by unauthorized users. Once installed, your computer is ready to be controlled remotely. In the tray at the bottom right of your computer screen you

should see a small gray box with little blue spots in it-LogMeIn is ready and enabled. If this box has a little red and white x inside, LogMeIn is disabled and needs to be enabled. You can do this by right clicking on the gray box and selecting "Enable LogMeIn."

Second, you will need to set up the computer you wish to use to remotely control your office computer. Using any internet connected device (like your home computer) go to www.logmein.com. Log in using the username and password you created when you downloaded the software onto your office computer. The first time you do this you will be asked to allow an ActiveX control—follow the instructions to allow this. Next a page will come up showing the computers that your account has available to be controlled, (usually this is just one

computer unless you have several different computers you have added to the account). Click on the name of the computer that you want to control and after a couple of moments you will be asked for your computer access code. Input this information, and in a moment you will be shown a screen that allows you to choose between three options: remote control, preferences, and help. Click on the "remote control" icon and in a few moments **your** office desktop will be shown on the computer you are working on. From that point on, it is just as if you were sitting in front of your own computer at work.

While you are controlling this computer R you can do almost anything you would normally do when you are sitting in your office. It is particularly useful for operating an irrigation system. Need to put the rain hold on? No problem. You can even run your irrigation system from the golf course if you have a laptop with a wireless card, or an Internet enabled

smart phone with a good size screen (although you can only see a small portion of your office computer's desktop from a smart phone and it is a little laborious to navigate around). If you forgot a file at work you can even email it to yourself at home.

LogMeIn also offers a number of pay versions of their software that provide a number of other features, but for most people, the free version is a very functional tool that allows you to do almost anything most of us need. Please keep in mind that if you use LogMeIn it is essential that you keep your virus software up to date, and employ a firewall to keep unwanted viruses and spyware off your computer. LogMeIn is a simple and powerful program that creates a whole new world of convenience. Give it a try today. -OC

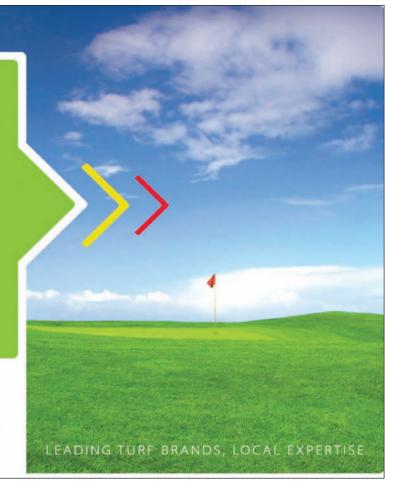


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FEATURE II Fred Behnke, CGCS, Mt. Prospect Golf Club

# How Do You Say Thank You?

Day of the Club Championship: 4:45 AM Woke up, got dressed 5:00 AM Left house to go to work 5:01 AM Discovered flat tire on truck 5:05 AM Brewed coffee and began changing tire (in the dark) 5:35 AM Finished tire change and began drive to work (remember its dark and I'm old and slow)

- 6:10 AM Arrived at course cranky and late to discover:
  - Greensmowers out working
  - Cups being changed
  - Tee service in process
  - Bunkers being raked

Secondary tasks were posted following completion of morning chores and the rangers even had the drinking water out! They were now busy looking for lost balls in the usual spots.

So...I looped the course, moved a few ropes and stakes, and got a second cup of coffee. And it felt good - really good!

It was one of those mornings that are especially rare and gratifying - everything was happening just the way it was drawn up. This was a morning you wish you could bottle up for one of those "other" mornings - you know what I mean -

when your number one guy finds you on number 13 and asks why the shop fire extinguisher isn't working .

Anyway...I got to thinking about the incalculable value of a trustworthy and competent crew. We all seek to provide our customers with the best product possible within the limitations of our budget, and while that budget may range from a couple of hundred thousand up to a million plus dollars, the one thing all golf course superintendents have in common is that the labor line item is, by far, the largest expense.

Let's face it, growing the grass may be among the smallest part of our operation. We need bodies and equipment to keep

Getting the staff out to play a little golf can build morale and camaraderie. Use all those "free" hats and shirts from your suppliers as prizes.

food and beverages are donated, but the lion's share of the food is bought with money we get for recycling aluminum and other 'junk.' We invite family members and pro shop staff to each event and encourage bringing a dessert or appetizer to share. The Thanksgiving party is the kick-off of the holiday season and allows for the seasonal staff to participate before they're laid off for the winter. We try to publicize the party in advance and often get the summer kids home from college to attend. We have games and music, but it's mostly a chance to kick back and enjoy some excellent ethnic food."

(continued on page 10)

the place in shape. Day in and day out we rely on our well-trained and reliable crews to make our plans become reality. Certainly there are bumps in the road, we are, after all, dealing with people and circumstances that can change in a heartbeat, but most of the time if we act fairly, communicate clearly and provide proper tools and training – our employees get the job done.

How do you say thanks for the effort?

I had the opportunity to canvas several superintendents about this subject. Again, I had to promise to keep the

> responses confidential in order to encourage input, but I did identify the type of facility and its general geographic location.

Virtually everybody I asked offered employees what may be described as the traditional perk package: limited facility use with specific benefits depending on the amenities available at the club, but the examples below are over and above "policy."

## Muni – North West Suburbs:

"We have two picnics every season: 'end of summer' and 'Thanksgiving.' The staff works in the morning to prep the course and then we take the afternoon off (with pay) and have a cook-out. Some

## **Daily Fee – North Suburbs**

"We have a couple of cook-outs every season. Sometimes we can get the food and beverages donated from the clubhouse guys, but mostly I just get some burgers and brats and fry them up. It's pretty informal, but the guys enjoy eating and drinking beer on the clock."

days - it is the least I can do for all of their efforts. And I usually give them something from the uniform budget, shirts, hats, etc. I had winter jackets with their names made on them last season for those that stuck it out the longest."

## **Private - North West Suburbs:**

CAN'S

"During the holiday season the club hosts a dinner-dance for the employees. The kitchen staff has to work it, but they take care of themselves later. Coat and tie, live music, ice sculpture,

open bar. It's very nice to see everybody all cleaned up. We also do a more informal steak fry down at the shop in the summer."

## Muni – Western Suburbs

"We all chip in every other week or so during the season and grill after work. We work straight through to finish early. It's voluntary, but everybody usually sticks around to eat, and then some of us go out and play golf. I grab some rental sets from the pro-shop and we play a scramble for nine holes."

To be fair. I have to include a

couple of responses that are more "old school" and along the lines of... "My employees know they are appreciated when they get their checks on payday."

## **Private - North Shore**

"Last year the club chartered a bus and took the staff to a Sox game. All departments were invited, and all expenses were paid. We also get lunch delivered from the kitchen, but that's more of a 'benefit' than a treat."

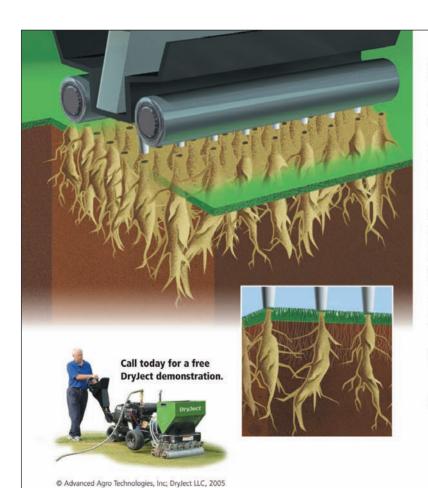
## Muni - Western Suburbs:

"We try to do a couple of food extravaganzas for the crew during the season. We try for July and again in October/November before everyone leaves. It is usually a cookout the first time. Then I will take them to a restaurant of their

Capture your staff doing something above and beyond with your camera.

Post the photo in the break-room and make

a point of saying thanks in front of everyone. choosing in October/ November after we play a little golf. By that time the crew has pretty much dwindled down so it ends



up being between 8 and 10 people. I also pay them for those

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