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JANUARY 2012 Volume 65 No. 9



The new Midwest Board shares a laugh while taking a break during the strategic meeting.

FRONT COVER

Your 2012 Midwest Board, (l to r) Matt Kregel, Ed Braunsky, Chuck Barber, Mike Mumper, Matt Harstad, Bob Kohlstedt, Nick Marfise, Dan Sterr, John Gurke, John Nelson, and Dave Kohley. (not pictured Dave Groelle)
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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Important Changes

Who invented the New Year's Resolution? It wasn't a greeting card company that pushed it through like Valentines Day, Father's Day or Mother's Day. I think it was someone that saw the new year as a fresh start, a new beginning, an opportunity to begin with a clean slate. It was probably a very simple utterance since New Year's Day is preceded by a night of tomfoolery. It doesn't take much imagination to the real reason the first resolution was uttered. Resolution is the act or process of resolving, when defined further takes you to the word determine, which, I believe is at the heart of the matter – to fix conclusively or authoritatively.

In middle December the Midwest Board met to look at the Association in a strategic manner. This is a really good practice because it encourages the Board to look at the Association from a different point of view. This differs from our normal meetings throughout the year when we are wrapped up in the minutia of the Association; running the next meeting, squaring up speakers and education, making sure arrangements are set, etc. The setting of the strategic meeting is informal and laid back with no motions or rules to promote the thought process of those present. There is a loose agenda to the meeting that the group is guided through, but the real beauty of it, is the outcome is not set and no one knows where it will go. One of the outcomes of our meeting earlier this month was to fix conclusively the mission statement.

We reviewed the mission and tweaked it a bit to better reflect who we are. It now reads:

"The Midwest Association of Golf Course Superintendents exists to promote professionalism and integrity, to provide networking, education and career enhancement opportunities to all members who facilitate the growth and enjoyment of golf."

The changes come in the addition of "promoting professionalism and integrity" and "to all members" to the statement. These two changes may appear to be small on the surface but a lot of thought and discussion occurred to carefully select the words and their order. The board feels everything we do promotes professionalism. Whether it is producing a high quality desirable magazine, educating our members by vetting our speakers, visiting with lawmakers to alert and inform them, or providing venues for our members to foster relationships, the underlying intent is always to

"The Midwest Association of Golf Course Superintendents exists to promote professionalism and integrity, to provide networking, education and career enhancement opportunities to all members who facilitate the growth and enjoyment of golf."

promote the image and the standing of the profession and the individuals that are golf course superintendents. Furthermore, the board wants to make certain that the integrity of our profession is well cared for and valued as it always has been. Lately, there seems to be some pressure on how we go about doing business, and some of this stems from the economic uncertainty, which eventually will stabilize. The integrity of our profession and our members should never waver under any circumstance – and by adding this to our mission – will keep this belief and practice revered.

With the addition of "all members" the board feels that the mission now reflects what we are: a member driven and member run Association.

As we enter into a new year, know that your board has thought about your Association, and that you have placed it in good hands. For these gentlemen truly care about serving you and the profession not only for the coming months, but also for many years to come. **-OC**

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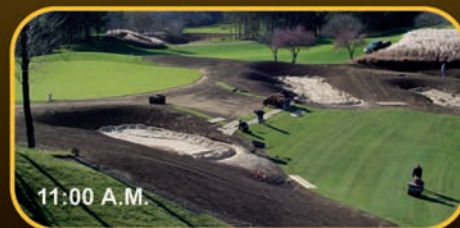


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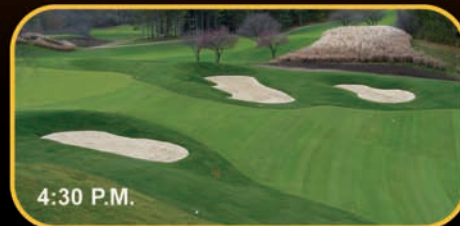
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FEATURE

John Gurke, CGCS, Associate Editor



MAGCS— 85 Years and Counting

The Midwest Association of Golf Course Superintendents enters its 86th year of existence this month. Although we cannot predict what the future holds for our organization, or for the game of golf itself, we can look back on our 85 years as an association and see how it all started, how it has progressed through the decades, and where we stand today. Ten years ago the members of the MAGCS Editorial Committee embarked on a mission to bring our colorful 75-year history to you our members and readers during our diamond anniversary celebration. For eight consecutive months On Course ran these “75th Anniversary Retrospective” articles, each penned by a different author, and each summarizing a particular decade in our past. This was a huge undertaking that would never have been possible without the diligence and dedication of those authors. I wrote the first and easiest article, since the Twenties were more than half over when our association was born and since there was nobody alive to dispute any points on which I may have taken artistic liberties. Erwin McKone, Chuck Anfield, Larry Tomaszewski, Dave Braasch, Jim McNair, Shane Kissack, and Jon Jennings respectively followed with their own takes on each subsequent decade leading up to the turn of the century. It is from these articles that I have gathered most of the information for this article, which hopefully will serve to refresh the memories of our more senior members and possibly enlighten our next generation of members with this time capsule of their association’s history.

The Roaring Twenties—The Birth of the Mid-West Greenkeepers Association

The “Great War,” or World War I had ended at the start of the 20’s, Prohibition was enacted forcing many law-abiding citizens to seek entertainment in illegal “speakeasies,” as well as bringing on a rise in organized crime syndicates in the country’s major cities. In spite of this, America was thriving. During this time, on September 13, 1926, a group of sixty greenkeepers from around the nation convened at the Sylvania Country Club in Toledo, Ohio and formed the National Association of Greenkeepers of America (NAGA). Among those sixty men were Col. John Morley, the founding father and first president of NAGA, and John MacGregor, the greenkeeper from Chicago Golf Club in Wheaton, IL. Col. Morley challenged Mr. MacGregor to convene the greenkeepers in the Midwest with the purpose of organizing the district, and within two weeks notices were sent out to over 500 golf clubs in Illinois, Iowa, Wisconsin, and Indiana. Sixteen

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of those 500 invitees attended the first meeting at the Great Northern Hotel at Jackson and Dearborn Streets in Chicago on November 26th, and the association's first officers were chosen. President John MacGregor, vice-president Alex Binnie of Shoreacres, secretary Ed B. Dearie of Ridgemoor and Oak Park Country Clubs, and treasurer Fred Sherwood—all charter members of NAGA—along with their twelve comrades chose Mid-West Greenkeepers Association (MWGA) to be our birth name, and on Christmas Eve in 1926, the association was officially launched.

During those times, professional sports were becoming quite popular, as the first radio broadcasts of events like heavyweight prize fights and the World Series made household names of men such as Babe Ruth, Jack Dempsey, and Gene Tunney. Golf was among the sports to enjoy huge popularity in the 20's, thanks in large part to characters such as Walter Hagen (winner of four PGA championships including the 1925 tournament held at Olympia Fields, and two Western Opens), Gene Sarazen (winner of the 1922 US Open held at Skokie CC), and Bobby Jones, the amateur phenom from Georgia who, from 1920 to 1929 captured the imagination of a country with victories in three US Opens (and 2nd place finishes in four others), four US Amateurs and two British Opens. Jones also led the US teams to Walker Cup victories throughout the decade, including an 11-1 drubbing of the British team at Chicago Golf Club in 1928.

The 20's brought the introduction of the steel shaft to golf, as the sport attracted people from all walks of life. What was needed were courses, and architects like Donald

Ross, Harry Colt, Charles Blair MacDonald, Charles Hugh Alison, William Boice Langford, Charles Maddox, Albert Warren Tillinghast, and Tom Bendelow filled that need with their many projects throughout the country. Among the courses in the Midwest that opened in the 20's were Bartlett Hills, Barrington Hills, Briarwood, Bryn Mawr, Butterfield, Calumet, Edgewood valley, Knollwood, Medinah, Naperville, Olympia Fields North, St. Charles, Twin Orchard, Sunset Ridge, Shoreacres, Mission Hills, North Shore, Ruth Lake, Silver Lake North, Rolling Green, and Villa Olivia. Elsewhere around the country, courses the likes of Seminole, Winged Foot, Olympic Club, Pebble Beach and Firestone.

At local meetings many of the same things we are troubled with to this day were being discussed, like earthworms, moss on putting greens, brown patch and grubs. The end of the decade brought the stock market crash on Black Tuesday, October 29, 1929, leading to the Great Depression which lasted well into the next decade.

The Thirties—Golf and the Mid-West Greenkeepers Association Weather the Great Depression

Although the Great Depression certainly put a chokehold on the lavish lifestyles and excesses of the Roaring Twenties (it even cost NAGA its nest-egg of \$16,000 when a bank in Cleveland closed its doors), many aspects of American culture seemed unscathed. Hollywood flourished, Superman debuted, and the Chicago Bears won the first NFL championship over the New York Giants. Due in part to the golf boon of

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the past decade, the MWGA was experiencing a flush of new members in the early thirties. The Depression, however, brought new course construction in the thirties to a standstill, and in fact the nation experienced a net loss in the number of courses in play—sound familiar?

Locally, several developments were taking place, such as the addition of newfangled watering systems on courses such as LaGrange, Briargate and Northmoor. Meullermist and Rainbird were the pack leaders in irrigation innovation, with products like ball-drive pop-up heads and horizontal impact drive sprinklers. A few courses did open in the Midwest including Kankakee Elks, Orchard Hills, Pistakee, Pottawatomie, Sportsmans, Timber Trails, Waveland and St. Andrews. Overseeing our association were presidents such as Ralph Johnson, Cyril Tregillus, and Frank Dinelli. It was in the thirties when Augusta National was conceived and built, and the first Masters tournament was held in 1934 (called the Augusta National Invitational) and won by Horton Smith. It was also during this decade that NAGA decided that the name “greenkeeper” alone was not representative of what we were about, and thus changed its name to Greenkeeping Superintendents Association (GSA).

Golf club technology continued to improve, as steel became the choice of shafts for most golfers. No longer did golfers request their brassies, mashies, niblicks or spoons. Gone were the cleeks and baffies. Now clubs were called woods and irons, and they were numbered. It was common for a player to carry several dozen of these clubs around the course, leading to the 1938 USGA 14-club rule which is still in place today. Not only were clubs changing, so were golf balls, when Phil Young, a decent amateur player and owner of a rubber parts company devised a method of creating wound rubber balls with consistently round, properly positioned centers. Titleist was born and golf balls joined steel shafts as items of consistency and precision.

With the threat of war looming, golf maintenance became a lower priority as the calendar turned to 1940.

The Forties: Golf Takes a Back Seat During the War Years

December 7, 1941—“a day that will live in infamy.” The Japanese bombing of Pearl Harbor thrust the United States into World War II, and our nation’s focus united on the war effort in two separate hemispheres. While golf didn’t simply stop during the war, many golf courses were used for war-effort purposes such as military training, agriculture (Augusta National was used to graze cattle and raise turkeys), and even air strips. Local courses were forced to trim expenses and conserve resources, leading several greenkeepers to employ sheep to graze their courses and act as mowers. With the manpower shortages, many courses simply stopped maintaining bunkers, allowing them to grow over, or they tried innovative approaches using machinery to take the place of workers. Women and children became a new component of the golf labor force for the first time. Bob Hope, one of golf’s greatest ambassadors made the rounds on the USO Tour, entertaining troops usually with a golf club in his hand. He would return to the States after the war and help his buddy Bing Crosby promote the “Great Clam-Bake” on the

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Monterrey peninsula that would eventually become the Bing Crosby National Pro-Am (today the AT&T Pebble Beach National Pro-Am).

The popular players of the day were Byron Nelson, Ben Hogan, Sam Snead, Jimmy Demaret and Gene Sarazen. 1948 ushered in the first issue of *The Bullshead*, the official newsletter of the newly-coined Midwest Association of Golf Course Superintendents (MAGCS). Bob Williams was the man responsible for the name, "borrowing" it from the Fort Campbell, KY camp newsletter known as the Bull Sheet. Other notable superintendents of the day were John Darrah, Ray Gerber, Don Strand, and Melvin Warnecke, all of whom availed themselves of such new technologies as 2,4-D, the herbicide that would revolutionize the war on weeds.

When the war ended, America returned to prosperous times, and golf began its next growth spurt, thanks in some degree to an American president whose infectious love of the game led to the construction of a putting green on the White House lawn. President Dwight David Eisenhower, a hero of WWII and mastermind of the Allied invasion of France, would lead the nation into the next decade—a decade full of promise for golf and our association.

The Rock 'N' Roll Fifties: Golf Becomes Everyman's Game

The fifties were a new beginning for Americans who had put their lives on hold through the war years. Wanting to catch up on lost opportunities, folks placed more importance on raising their families, honing their careers, and making better use of their recreational time. The suburbs became the settling-down spot after the exodus of people from America's big cities. With this came a renewed interest in golf, and by the end of the fifties, the country would experience a dramatic surge in new construction. Interest in the sport grew throughout the decade, as the number of players choosing to make golf their game of choice grew to over 3 million, and golf courses numbered over 15,000. Daily-fee courses open to the public attracted even the blue-collar workers to the game, creating a demand for new courses that would spur the next building surge. Our national organization changed its name to its current moniker—Golf Course Superintendents of America, and MAGCS celebrated its 25th anniversary. Locally, MAGCS experienced one of its finest periods, with three MAGCS members serving as GCSAA president through the decade (Ray Gerber of Glen Oak CC in 1950, Norm Johnson of Butterfield CC in 1954, and Bob Williams of Beverly and Bob O' Link in 1958).

Herbicides came of age in the fifties when many of the pre-emergence materials such as Dactal, Balan, and Betasan were developed. Other options included those dreaded arsenicals like lead arsenate, sodium arsenate, and organic arsenicals (and this was long before protective clothing and respirators came on the scene). The insecticides being used included Chlordane, Bandane, and DDT. Fertility was typically accomplished through the use of soluble materials that provided instant improvement in color and health. Penncross bentgrass seed came on the scene, offering an alternative to the predominantly-used South German strains. The end of the war also helped make steel available again, and production of labor-saving machinery was in full swing. Found in shops

throughout the Midwest were Ford and Case tractors, Jacobsen and Toro mowers, and countless other items that allowed for the efficient maintenance of the courses in our area.

The fifties brought televised golf to America's living rooms. Now our heroes of the links were real—men like Arnold Palmer who burst on the scene joining Hogan and Snead. The popularity of Babe Didrickson Zahariis, one of the greatest all-around female athletes ever, laid the groundwork for the establishment of the LPGA in the fifties. The US was dominating international team matches, winning all five Walker Cups and four of five Ryder Cups. The top money winner on the PGA Tour was Ted Kroll who earned a whopping \$72,835! It was the decade of Marilyn Monroe and Elvis, the McCarthy "witch hunts," the end of segregation (Brown v. Board of Education), the start of the Cold War, and the addition of our 49th and 50th states in Alaska and Hawaii. The members of MAGCS were poised and ready to ring in the next decade, with such a promising future ahead.

The Sixties: Milestones and Mayhem

Golf cruised into the sixties on a wave of popularity. Construction took off despite the nation's many problems. We were involved in an unpopular war in Viet Nam, and on our home front, racial tension was heating up. The threat of nuclear decimation loomed during the Cuban Missile Crisis, our finest leaders were being assassinated such as President John F. Kennedy, Dr. Martin Luther King, Malcolm X, and Robert Kennedy. The Beatles invaded America in 1964, and by the end of the decade we were all admiring our Raquel Welch posters while catching an episode of Laugh In on TV. We saw the US land a man on the moon, and a guy nicknamed "Tricky Dick" get elected President.

Chicago was a mecca for golf tournaments throughout the sixties. Medinah, Beverly and Tam O' Shanter hosted four Western Opens, while Olympia Fields hosted the 1961 PGA Championship, which Jerry Barber won. Notable course openings in our area were Cress Creek, Ravinia Green, Village Links of Glen Ellen, and Pheasant Run Resort. Ravisloe CC superintendent Roy Nelson led GCSAA as its president in 1963, when MAGCS membership had reached 245. The Illinois Turfgrass Foundation was established by R. Milton Carleton, Bertram H. Rost, George Vaughan, Dr. Ralph F. Voight, and Ben O. Warren to create a fund to support turfgrass research and development at the University of Illinois, which held its first Turf Field Day in 1960. Technology was improving at a rapid rate through the sixties, with time-saving innovations such as the triplex mower making their debuts. The list of superintendents overseeing the area's courses read like a who's who in the world of golf, with names like Ted Woehle, Peter and Paul Voykin, Art Benson, John Ebel, Ed Stewart and Warren Bidwell headlining it. After a very politically active decade, most Americans were more than ready to see what the seventies would bring.

A Tale of Two Seventies

It was the best of times. It was the worst of times. It was a decade of extremes. The seventies brought many new ideas and innovations into being; however, the decade also meant the demise of many others. The passions of the sixties'

(continued on page 10)



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social revolution evolved into laissez faire attitudes toward civil rights during the seventies. The incident at Kent State University and the decreasing involvement in the Viet Nam War diminished the anti-war protests. The free growth enjoyed during the post-World War II era became burdened by the governmental restrictions of the seventies. It was a time when society began to take a hard look at our planet and implement changes to protect it.

For MAGCS member Jim McNair, who had just begun his career as golf course superintendent in 1970, the memories of purchasing his new Chevy ¾-ton pickup truck for \$3,100 and a new Jacobsen Greens King for about the same price are still vivid. With systemic fungicides still around the corner, the contact products used included Caloclor, lead arsenate and Acti-Dione (cyclohexamide, which has an LD50 of 3)—not much different from 3 decades prior. It would be later in the sixties that the Environmental Protection Agency came into being. Maintenance buildings in the area boasted of Toro 76" Professional mowers, Greens Kings, Cushman Trucksters, Toro Greensmasters and Roseman gang mowers. Green space became a preservation issue and the government even made funding available to municipalities, spiking a mini-building boom in municipal golf development. Around the country things were changing as well, with President Nixon's wage and price freeze, the oil and gas embargo, and the 55-MPH speed limit in effect.

Golf took another step forward with the advent of color television. Now all the lush grass and wild clothes came to us in living color, giving rise to the "Augusta Syndrome" where all courses were now being compared to the pristine conditioning and perfection that the Masters embodies. Technologically, the move to hydraulics eliminated the need for gear boxes, belts, chains, idlers, and countless bearings and bushings. Small engines were becoming lighter and more powerful while the move toward lightweight mowing on large surfaces such as fairways had begun. Architecture and construction were changing to meet the growing need for golf courses that could handle big numbers of rounds—changes like designing larger greens with more pin locations that would spread the wear and tear of all those spiked shoes more evenly. Irrigation systems improved through automation (if you can call it that), cart paths were being built at a record pace to allow for revenue to be realized even after a big rain event, or early and late season.

Locally, MAGCS members were in good hands with suppliers such as Illinois Lawn Equipment, George A. Davis (later Chicago Toro), Nels Johnson, Burdett's, Roseman Tractor, Century Rain Aid, Henry Frenzer, Clesen's, Lemont Paving, and Wally Fuchs' Turf Products. And they needed help after suffering through such turf pests as C-15 decline and the new *Ataenius spretulus* grub that attacked bentgrass roots. The first low-mow bluegrasses were being used (Warren's A-20 and A-34), and DDT was taken off the shelves, giving us back the eagles, herons, and egrets. Labor budgets in the late seventies ranged from \$95,000 to \$157,000 with superintendent salaries anywhere from \$19,000 with housing to \$40,000 without. In 1978, Medinah Country Club offered \$25,000 to \$35,000 for its next superintendent to oversee its three courses. Past MAGCS president Ted Woehrli held the office of GCSAA president in 1977, and superintendents like



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