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Official Publication  
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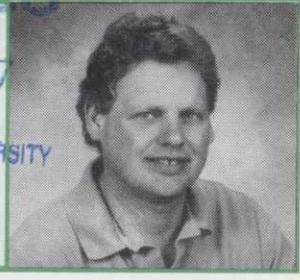
**Editorial and Business Office**  
 Scott Turtinen, Executive Director  
 Minnesota Golf Course  
 Superintendents' Association  
 240 Minnetonka Avenue South/P.O. Box 617  
 Wayzata, Minnesota 55391-1617  
 TEL: 612/473-0557 • FAX: 612/473-0576  
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FROM YOUR PRESIDENT'S DESK MAY 15 1997

## Waxing Philosophical

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For most of us, when we think of a philosopher, we think of the ancient Greeks like Aristotle and Plato. Possibly, we visualize a frumpy, long-haired, bearded curmudgeon seated in a book-laden study, smoking a meerschaum pipe, pondering the true meaning of life. But it may be that we are all philosophers of a sort. Maybe not in the classic sense of the word, but at least in our everyday actions.

There are three areas which lend themselves to philosophical study that are relevant to golf course superintendents. First, the way in which we conduct ourselves, or as Webster's puts it "the system of values by which one lives." It's about figuring out what *really* is important, what takes priority in our lives. From religion to joke telling, your personal philosophy plays a part in nearly every action and deed that you do. We all have a set of fundamental beliefs that have been developing from our youth, but analyzing and defining these beliefs can help us deal with adversity, and prepare us to make decisions.

**Scott Austin, CGCS**, uttered a brief but poignant piece of philosophy a few years ago that has stuck with me like a Waffle House breakfast: "Know the difference between right and wrong," he said, "Then do what's right." How many of us have known in our heart what the "right" thing was, and then, possibly because of a lack of conviction towards our fundamental beliefs or philosophy, did the "wrong" thing? Take some time before the heavy stress season and define your beliefs — then write them down. Consider areas such as religion, family, friends, money and of course, your job. Then, when anxiety hits you and the stress is relentless, you can help yourself do the "right thing" by reaffirming your beliefs and principles.

**As managers**, we also have a stake in the lives of our employees, and developing an organizational or "corporate philosophy" is part of that interest. Many of us have adopted the "team approach" whose mantra "all for one, one for all" is in effect a building block of a corporate philosophy. By definition, any system of motivating concepts or principles is a philosophy, so as we write and define policies and procedures for our staffs, we need to be consistent with what our underlying beliefs are. For example, if my fundamental belief is that an employee's family is as important as his work, but I fail to grant him time off for family matters, then I have 1) confounded the employee, and 2) eroded the philosophy and culture of the organization. Just as a cart follows a horse, so should policies follow the organization's beliefs and values.

Closer to the ground, a turf management philosophy developed by the superintendent and the green committee could help immensely regarding cultural practices and applications. The key to this, of course, is that all parties are in agreement to the fundamental beliefs. If, for example, the superintendent has a philosophy that "lean and mean" is the best approach for a fertility program, but the committee subscribes to a "lush and plush" mentality, an ensuing conflict is inevitable.

Take a few minutes to examine your philosophies in these three areas. If it helps, light up the meerschaum!

— Fred Taylor,  
MGCSA President

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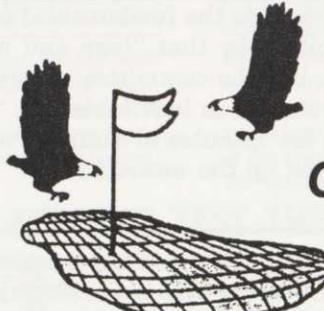
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### 1997 MGCSA Monthly Meeting Schedule

- June 16**  
Cannon GC • Host: Jeff Backstrom
- July 14**  
**Scholarship Scramble**  
Hidden Creek GC • Host: Marty Terveer
- August 18**  
**MGCSA Amateur Championship**  
Rush Creek GC • Host: Tom Fuller
- September 14**  
**Stodola Research Scramble**  
The Preserve at Grand View Lodge • Host: Tom Kientzle
- October 6**  
Les Bolstad University of Minn. GC • Host: Charlie Pooch
- December 10, 11 & 12**  
**MGCSA Annual Meeting**  
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# The Year to Remember At Benson Golf Club

By DAVE SIME

Golf Course Superintendent at Benson Golf Club

**I**t all started back on November 15th with three inches of ice pellets and an all day rain that turned everything to a sheet of ice. I tried spreading Milorganite on a couple of greens and even went out with a roto-tiller to try and break up the ice, but neither seemed to work very well at this point.

By December 17th we had 12 inches of snow and about two inches of ice. I felt that if I was going to do something with the ice, I needed to do it before we got any more snow. We cleared off the greens and brought in a deep tine machine with solid tines to break up the ice layer. Our goal was to only chip away the ice and hopefully keep the turf from suffocating under the clear ice cap. The deep tine worked well to break up the ice layer but we did see some injury to the surface of the greens from the tines because of the different depths of ice. I felt that I could tolerate some mechanical damage better than the risk of leaving the ice cover.

Well, the best of plans seemed to be for nothing when two weeks later we received 1.3 inches of rain. But, while



MAINTENANCE CENTER AND NO. 2 GREEN underwater in foreground.

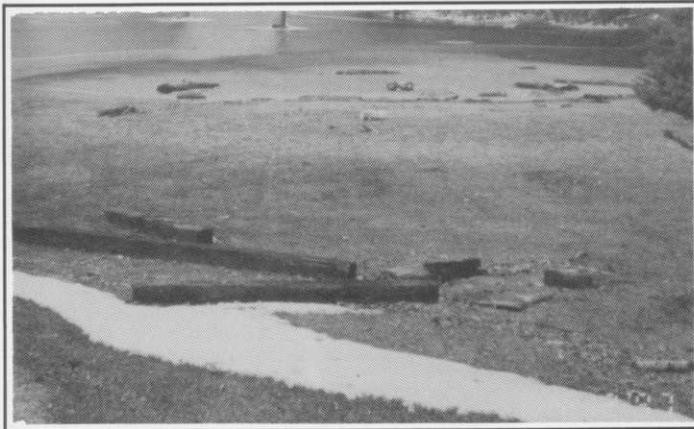
any time soon. As large as this tractor and blower are, I didn't do any damage to the greens, but we did get it stuck several times going from green to green and had to shovel it out. Within two days most of the ice had melted and the greens looked good except for the damage from the aerifier.

## Round 2 Begins

There was no April fool in Benson on the first when the temperature hit 65 degrees with a 35 mph wind out of the south. We lost about 8" of snow in one day and the water in the Chippewa River started to rise. By the next morning we had 4 inches of water in the shop and over half the course flooded. By Friday, my son Matt and I were able to canoe over 5, 14 and 16 greens and could get around the entire course by boat. We went to Montevideo on the 5th and 6th to help with sandbagging efforts and on Saturday the 5th it was 50 degrees and raining. By Sunday it was 15 degrees and a blizzard with 60 mph winds. We traded boats and canoes for ice skates to get around the course on Tuesday. At this point there was little we could do but wait for the water to go down and the ice to melt. By Monday the 14th I called Rob Panuska (*Hole Notes* editor) and updated my article and set the most recent pictures as the water began to recede. As you can see from the pictures of the 5th green, we will have plenty of firewood for winter.

\* \* \* \*

*(Editor's Note: My special thanks to Dave for the pictures and article. He told me that as the water was receding he and his assistant, Rick Lucken, were pumping water from the bunkers to wash the silt off the greens as they could get to them. He also said that the greens that were under water looked the best at this time as far as green-up went.)*



BENSON'S NO. 5 GREEN as the water recedes.

it did refreeze the ice chips from the deep tining, there were air bubbles throughout the layer. Every few weeks I went out and pulled samples from a few greens and brought them in to warm up, and they always greened up and looked good. To get the samples from the frozen turf I used a 2" hole saw and went 2" into the surface, then used a screwdriver to pop the plug out.

On March 17 I went out and blew the snow off all of the greens with a large three-point, rear-mounted blower. I rented it from the local John Deere dealer. The cost of this unit is around \$80,000 so I guess we won't be buying one of these



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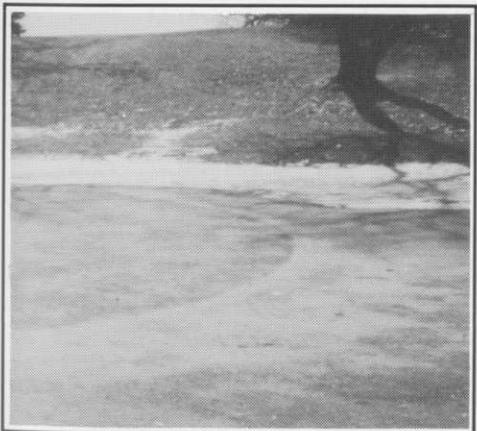
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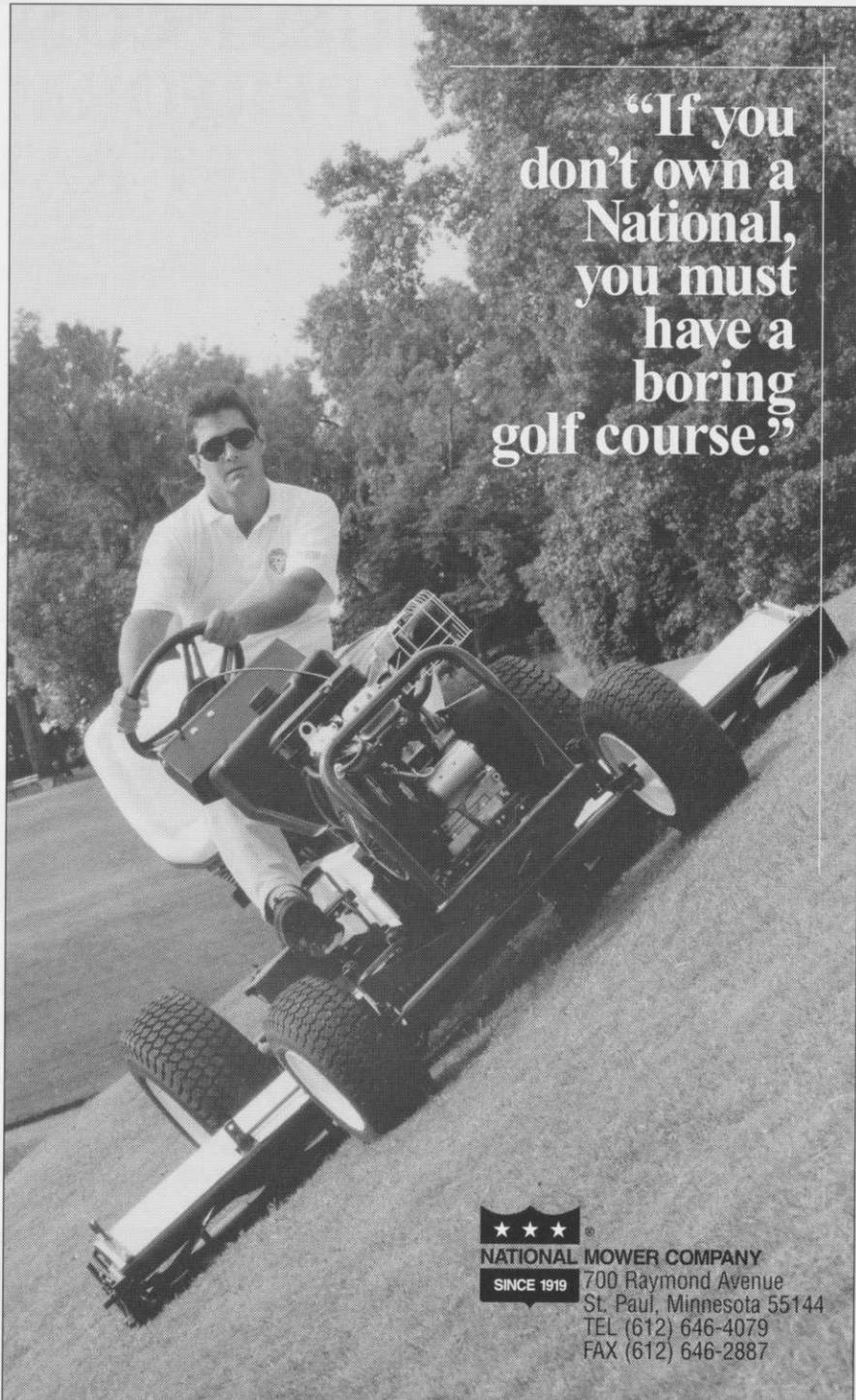
*As the snow melted, the waters rose. Many courses flooded that were next to rivers, especially in the western and northwestern parts of the state.*



*The cleanup after the flood will be time-consuming and expensive for many courses.*



*Snow mold and ice damage were severe for some superintendents despite their efforts to prevent injury.*



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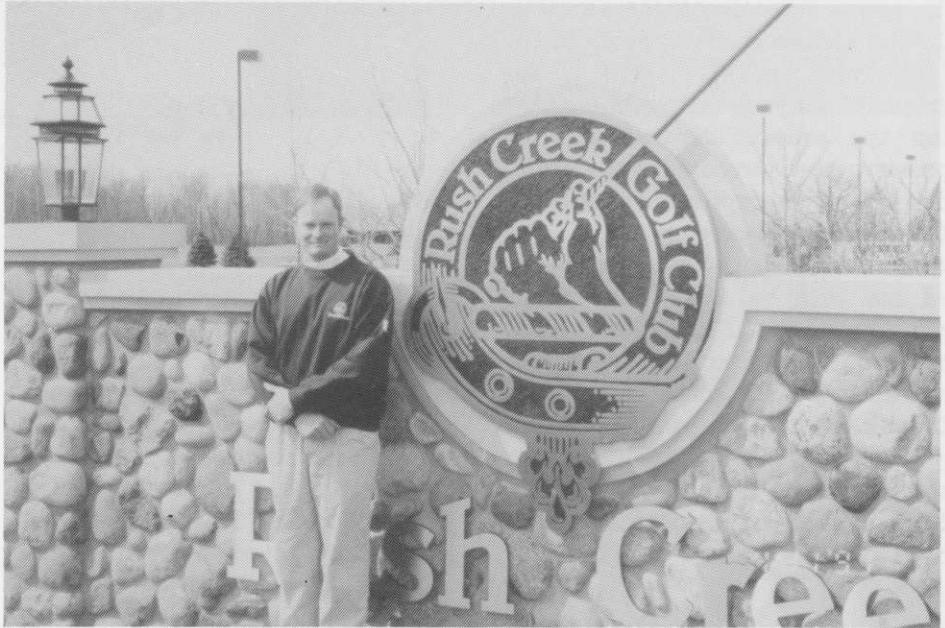
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# Environmental Efforts Taking Place At Rush Creek Golf Club

By Mike Nelson  
*Rush Creek Golf Club*

**R**ush Creek Golf Club is a new golf course that opened in June of 1996. I have been fortunate in that I have been on staff as the Assistant Superintendent since the very early stages of this project. It has allowed me to experience all aspects of construction and grow-in. My turf management career began as a seasonal employee at Midland Hills Country Club in St. Paul. I enjoyed what I was doing and took a strong interest in Golf Course Management. From there I went to the turf management program at Anoka Technical College and after graduation became the assistant at Stillwater Country Club. I was there for three years before moving to Rush Creek.

During the off season at Rush Creek Golf Club we have taken time to better organize our environmental efforts and have become involved in the Audubon Program for Golf Courses. The property Rush Creek sits on has a wide variety of habitats and is home to many different wildlife species. One such species that has been sighted is the rare Trumpeter Swan. The Trumpeter Swan is the largest waterfowl species native to North America. Most Trumpeters weigh 21-30 pounds. The male is called a cob; the female is called a pen. With a wingspan over seven feet, these snow-white birds are truly spectacular. Standing on the ground, an adult trumpeter stands about 4 feet high. Trumpeters have broad, flat bills with fine tooth-like serrations along the edges that strain water when the birds eat aquatic vegetation. Their long necks allow them to up-root plants in four feet of water. Trumpeter Swans were once fairly common throughout most of the Northern United States and Canada, but hunting and millinery trade rapidly reduced the population, and by 1900 it was believed that the species had become extinct. Fortunately there were populations that survived in remote parts of Alaska, Canada and Montana. In 1935, the U.S. government established Red Rock National Wildlife Refuge in Montana to protect the remaining Trumpeter population. Habitat conditions quickly improved when restrictions were put on livestock grazing and hay cutting in the marshes, and more recently prohibiting the use of lead shot and lead fishing sinkers



**RUSH CREEK ASSISTANT SUPERINTENDENT MIKE NELSON** at the entrance of the golf club which will host the MGCSA Amateur Championship on August 18.

because of the danger of lead poisoning. Over the next 30 years, Trumpeters were moved to several western refuges as far east as Hennepin County. Hennepin Parks has been involved in restoration since 1966.

Due to Rush Creek's commitment to the environment and our desire to provide for a rare species, an option for us is to purchase trumpeter swans from a breeder and introduce them to the property in and around the golf course with hopes the birds will imprint at an early age and then return in coming years and someday possibly nest. I began researching the possibilities by telephone conversations with the DNR and people at Hennepin Parks. The immediate response that I received from both agencies was that golf courses are not a good situation for these birds due to all the fertilizer and pesticide runoff. They were also very skeptical as to our motives because they had a very stereotypical view of the golf industry, that is we're providing an artificial situation and our main concern was looking good no matter what the cost to the environment. I assured them our motives were driven by wanting to co-exist with the environment and that Rush Creek and the majority of golf courses today are taking measures to enhance the environment. When I asked how is it they viewed golf courses in this way, they said it was just their opinion and had no facts.

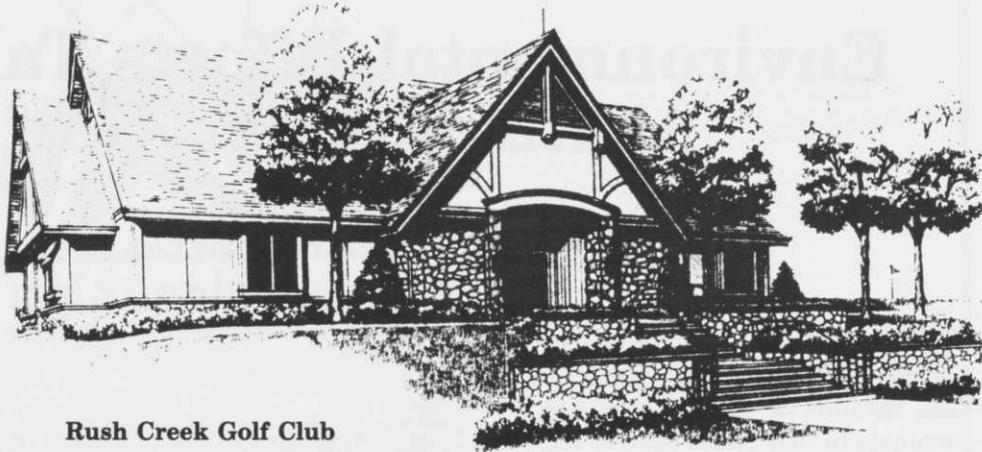
*(Continued on Page 10)*

# Rush Creek—

(Continued from Page 9)

They are on the other side of the fence and I've come to find out they don't even know why! I challenged them to take a closer look at the golf industry because there are a lot of good things going on out there regarding the environment.

I scheduled a meeting with a wildlife specialist at Hennepin Parks to further discuss the Trumpeter Swan. I presented her with aerial photographs of our property while explaining the precautions we take to preserve the surrounding habitats. She was very receptive to what I had to say and approved of our efforts, which was encouraging. She provided me with valuable information regarding the swans along with a list of Trumpeter Swan breeders. We agreed to keep in contact and to let them know how our own restoration project turns out. It was a profitable meeting from various standpoints. Not only did I learn about the swans but I was able to share the efforts the



Rush Creek Golf Club

golf industry is making toward a safe environment.

Heightened public awareness of environmental impacts and the demand for environment quality has affected all of our lives. Golf has been no exception. Questions regarding golf's impact on the environment are increasingly being asked by environmental groups as well as the general public. We often find ourselves surrounded by those in the turfgrass

industry and we hear a lot of the same opinions. To be confronted by someone who is differing in opinion gave me the opportunity to share some facts and do some educating which I found very rewarding.

*(Editor's Note: Thanks go to Mike Nelson for contributing this article. Reminder to all members that Rush Creek is the host course for the MGCSA Amateur Championship on August 18.)*

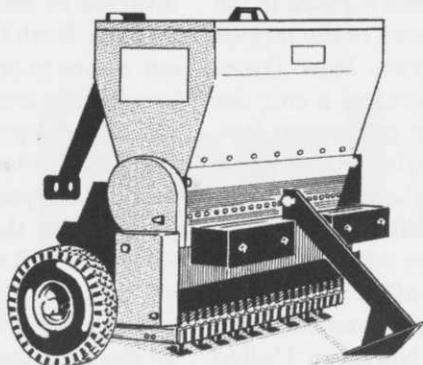
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