Dear AGC Members,

After a stretch of weather that has been terrific over the past couple months, we are finally experiencing some cooler temperatures typical of falls in Minnesota. Those cooler temperatures are a reminder of what is coming as we move into the winter months in the land of 10,000 lakes.

The Minnesota winters require a lot of preparation to ensure golf courses emerge in the spring healthy and unscathed from old man winter. Our newly constructed Little Darling Par 3 Course is no exception. Here are a few of the actions our Little Darling Greens Superintendent, Jake Fenno, is focused on in preparation for winter:

- **Planting of Native Grass:** During the Little Darling build process, much of the outlying acreage on the course was heavily disturbed by large construction equipment which damaged many of the native grass areas. To restore those areas with the beautiful native grasses that will give Little Darling a very unique appearance, we will be planting native grasses through a method called "frost seeding." Seeds are broadcast on the ground during late fall, allowing the freeze-thaw cycles to naturally work the seed into the soil and promote germination in the spring; this mimics the natural process of many native plants dropping seeds in the fall, with the cold temperatures acting as a stratification period for successful germination.

- **Winterize the Irrigation System**: Removing water from the irrigation system is essential in Minnesota. Otherwise, that water will freeze and

expand, potentially breaking pipes and sprinklers and creating a laundry list of costly and time-consuming repairs. "Blowing out" the irrigation system involves draining the pipes and blowing compressed air through the system to remove any water. Timing the process right is often a challenge. If the system is shut down too early, warm, and dry weather may return and stress the grass. If you wait too long, a sudden cold snap can cause significant problems.

- **Raising mowing heights**: Raising mowing heights late in the season, especially on putting greens, is one of the key things' superintendents do to protect turf in winter. That extra bit of leaf surface helps the grass store energy and provides added protection from cold and ice.

- **Winter pest and snow mold protection:** Even though grass isn't growing during winter, it's still vulnerable to diseases and pests. A primary concern is snow mold, which doesn't necessarily need snow to develop! Weeds can also be an issue as grass grows more slowly and starts to thin out. Disease and pest control along with snow mold applications are being made to prevent damage during winter and spring.

We have accomplished much over the past 2 years in our ongoing effort to deliver one of the premier par 3 courses in the country. I would be remiss if I didn't highlight and thank some of the key people who have been instrumental in helping The Little Darling dream become reality:

- Thanks to the entire AGC Board of Directors who's support and faith in the project have been key to The Little Darling project moving forward. Without their vote of confidence and assistance over the past 2 years, the project could not have occurred.

- Thanks to Tom Lehman who was instrumental in helping us with the design and layout of the course. His course design experience and love of AGC have been a terrific benefit to the project.

- Thanks to Matt Stennes and Stennes Excavation. Without Matt's professional experience and without his family's generosity and commitment to the project, we could not have successfully completed Little Darling nor could we have completed it in such a cost-effective manner.

- Thanks to Aaron Stubbs and QuickAttach who provided us with the use of a number of pieces of specific equipment that were critical to the construction process of Little Darling.

- Thanks to Rob and Ted Thompson of CI Construction who have been intimately involved in the project from the beginning. They have provided key pieces of equipment for the construction process of Little Darling and have provided design and construction guidance for Phase 2 of the project – The Junior Learning Center. I will be sharing additional information regarding the Junior Learning Center in the weeks and months ahead.

- Thanks to Jack Dredla who's broad, and deep, expertise in building and shaping golf courses was pivotal in constructing this amazing venue. Jack and his wife, Linda, spent 3 seasons living in Alexandria to help with Little Darling.

- And finally, thanks to David Kjos and Bruce Leland who have dedicated a significant amount of time and service in helping me with our fund-raising efforts to make construction of Little Darling possible.

We have been very blessed to have had such incredible support from so many people over the past couple years. When you see the above individuals, I hope you will all join me in expressing sincere gratitude for their professional support in bringing Little Darling to fruition. It will leave a legacy at AGC and in the Alexandria community that will pay dividends for generations far into the future.

As we close out the initial construction phase of The Little Darling Par 3 Course, I want to remind everyone that our Founding Member Program Offers will conclude on October 31, 2024. With 10 days remaining in our Founding Member Program, there is still time to be part of The Little Darling legacy. If you would like to receive the terrific Founding Member benefits, please contact myself, David Kjos, or Bruce Leland by months end. You can forever be linked to a project that will strengthen AGC and Alexandria forever.

Thanks for your membership at AGC and thank you for everyone's terrific support of The Little Darling Project!

All the best,
Jerry Rose
Little Darling Project Chair