



Musing the Minutes

By Rick Traver, Jr., CGCS
Monticello Country Club

Hello members of the MGCSA. Is anyone as excited about opening his or her golf course this spring as I am? I don't know if it's because I didn't go south this winter or our new clubhouse staff or the sunshine, but I can't wait. Going to the March Mini got me just that much more pumped up. I know listening to all the great things Jerry Murphy, CGCS has done for our association and the impact he has had on the lives of so many, left most present with a renewed energy.

Well I am supposed to keep you all informed on the meetings of the minds of the association so I will proceed. Your Board of Directors met on Tuesday, March 2nd at Heritage Links Golf Course. All but two members were present. The highlights to this month's meeting were a new golf tournament proposed by BASF and the new legislation at the capital.

The first was a golf tournament proposal from BASF. This event would be

held in Minnesota for golf course superintendents, and is held in conjunction with several other tournaments around the country. The winner of the tournament would qualify for an event to win an opportunity to play with either Sergio Garcia or Jack Nicklaus. It is a net handicap event and we need to get a full field. The arrangements committee is working on setting up a golf course and how we can tie this into one of our annual events. It is exciting to have our state chosen to host such an event and thanks to Dave Oberle for bringing it to the MGCSA.

Paul Eckholm, CGCS notified us that the phosphorus issue returned in a new bill that included the whole state, not just the metropolitan area. He met with the writers of the bill and with the blessing of the MDA, got our verbiage inserted into the bill. That means our phosphorus certification applies to this bill the way it did to last year's legislation. It appears other states are dealing with this same issue and that we are being used as a model of how to handle this topic. I have thanked you before Paul, but thanks again for making the time to go down to the capital and take on this task.

Paul also reported that the Department of Health is looking at taking on the issue of Nitrogen fertilizer applications and its potential of leaching into water. So we still need to keep an eye on this issue as well.

If you think we have it bad with taxation and legislation, check this out. I was just reading an article from the December issue of Audubon and it appears the farmers and ranchers in New Zealand have a bit to complain about. The government there is planning on imposing a tax on gas

emitted from livestock. It would be the world's first "fart tax." The purpose or justification of this tax is to raise revenue to conduct a study to find better feeds for the animals so they can reduce the amount of methane produced by the livestock. It appears that livestock create over 50% of the greenhouse gasses in New Zealand. My wife visited there about 8 years ago, she said she thought the smell was from the sulfur, live and learn.

In other news the MGCSA Board decided not to have home addresses in the membership roster. Mike Kelly reported he is working on the new environmental CD. Jack MacKenzie, CGCS, introduced, and "asked us to embrace," the concept of a Superintendent Ambassador. This would offer one or two select media people complimentary membership. It would be done in an effort to develop good relationships with the media as well as create some positive PR for our association.

I hope you all have an excellent and early start to the golf season. May Mother Nature protect your turf and the golf gods protect your swing. Have a great start to the year!

The Montana State Dept. of Fish and Wildlife Announces Bear Warning Could Minnesota Be Next?

The Montana State Department of Fish and Wildlife is advising Superintendents and golfers to take extra precautions and be on the alert for bears while in the Gallatin, Helena and Lewis and Clark National Forests golf courses.

Superintendents and their staff are advised to wear noise-producing devices such as little bells on their clothing to alert, but not startle the bears unexpectedly. They also advise you to carry pepper spray in case of an encounter with a bear. It is also a good idea to watch for signs of bear activity.

Superintendents should be able to recognize the difference between black bear and grizzly bear droppings on the golf course. Black bear droppings are smaller and contain berries and possibly squirrel fur. Grizzly bear droppings have bells in them and smell like pepper spray. -- Jack Kolb

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