



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

'Turf Doctor' Concept Is Being Reviewed

By Robert Panuska

After a slight delay due to that mid-March snow storm for those of us in the more southern part of the state, our courses opened with a flurry of activity. The snow melted quickly, the rains came and the grass started growing. At this writing the weather people are saying that this April was the second warmest on record and it could be the warmest by the time you read this. We NEED this kind of record!! By early indications our patrons were out and taking full advantage of the nice warm conditions. Of course this will really help move along those damaged areas we are trying to "grow in." Good luck to everyone who is struggling with turf loss this spring and I know several courses are. Don't be afraid to ask for help and advice. That is what this association is here for, to support each other.

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I would like to bring you up to speed on an exciting possibility we are working on with the Minnesota Golf Association. As I briefly mentioned at the March Mini-Seminar we have been discussing the "concept" of a "turf doctor" with the MGA. Much of the efforts over the last couple of months have gone into "fact finding" and looking at different models around the country. Tom Ryan, MGA executive director, Dr. Brian Horgan, University of Minnesota turfgrass extension specialist, and I visited the Midwest Golf House in Chicago in March. The Chicago District Golf Association has the longest running program in the country. Dr. Randy Kane is the "turf doctor" and serves the member clubs by making "house calls" when needed. They also have engaged in several research projects and actually have a 3-hole golf facility at the Golf House to demonstrate and conduct research. Their program is very strong and successful and a valuable asset to their clubs. Could a program like this work in Minnesota? How would the program run? What about the USGA turfgrass advisory service? Doesn't the University of Minnesota serve that role? What would it cost and who will pay for it? How will it benefit the superintendent, the club or the game of golf? As we work through these questions and more, we hope to have answers soon and see where this may lead. We will keep you posted.

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Be sure to review the meeting and event list and attend as many as possible. Thank you to the superintendents and their clubs for hosting our events this season. If you have an interest in hosting a future event, please contact Matt McKinnon at the Legacy Courses at Cragun's, your arrangements chair this year. He is closing in on having 2006 filled and starting work on 2007.

Until next month,
Rob

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