

# A Dramatic Concept, A Bold Opportunity

By James Bade and Jack MacKenzie, CGCS

## The Concept

Wouldn't it be nice to be able to call a local turf pathologist for a quick visit should an unidentifiable disease rear its ugly head upon your course? Or maybe send samples of dead grass to a local lab to diagnose a disease? How about going to a local destination with your Green Committee, staff or owners to see research being conducted upon a fully operational golf course? Perhaps you would like to see a lecture hosting "your" turf pathologist presenting information generated at "your" Association's research center.

This idea really isn't too far-fetched considering the needs of our state Association. Today there isn't any local pathological service available. Time sensitive samples must be sent away for examination. Plus it would be nice to know if the cultures were actually grown out for positive identification. Many of the highly regarded consulting services are just too cost prohibitive to acquire at a moment's notice.

## The Answer

Locate and negotiate the management of an existing local golf course with the goal of creating a living science station dedicated to further research, education and outreach which would include a turf pathologist and destination to conduct the research. A possibility? You bet!

Over the last decade our Association has made leaps and bounds in turf science and self promotion through its relationship with the University of Minnesota with cash and in kind contributions used to develop the TROE Center Research Facility. Our Chapter of the GCSAA has truly done its part to create a long-range plan to make the University a destination for the implementation of applied turf studies. Kudos on a job well done!

Changes in the direction of the priorities at the University of Minnesota, and across the country, have generated uncertainties in applied disciplines like turf-grass science. This isn't to say that the TROE Center will cease to exist but rather new options must be created to further turf research in our state.

The MGCSA Board has been seeking

other avenues of research and promotion for our industry. During the past three years we have investigated alternatives including affiliations with other regional superintendent associations and the potential of a self-supporting center for research not unlike the Chicago Golf House, which was visited by Rob Panuska, Dr. Brian Horgan and Tom Ryan of the MGA the spring of 2005.

*"You don't make progress by standing on the sidelines, whimpering and complaining. You make progress by implementing ideas." - Shirley Chrisolm*

Several weeks ago an opportunity came to our attention. The City of Forest Lake was interested in a management change at its city-owned golf course; their intent to improve conditions and eliminate financial support from the city as well as suppress the unhappy golfers whom frequented the course. Your Board of Directors visited the course, discussed options with the City of Forest Lake and reviewed the long-term potential of using the facility as a tool to generate money, create a "living research center" and hire a Turf Pathologist. At the time the only catch was a symbiotic partnership with two local businessmen, their name being on the city contract and our interests as a concept until further review of the idea could occur.

Throughout the process we have had contact with both Dr. Horgan and Dr. Watkins from the University of Minnesota to discuss potential conflicts and benefits. They embraced the idea wholeheartedly. The TROE Center would continue to conduct small plot-controlled experiments. Results from the TROE Center and other large scale experiments would use the Research Center Golf Club for further development. Other opportunities abound through the creation of a curriculum of study on real life applications ranging from NTEP trials to chemistry research and stress tolerant studies. Environmental impact as well as water management investigations could also be conducted.

In an effort to solicit input from various groups of the Association affiliates, the BOD invited representatives from the equipment sector to the first of several planned meetings. Through discussion it

was confirmed that the idea of creating a destination Research Center Golf Club complete with a Turf Pathologist had strong backing. However, due to the nature of the "partnership" with a private entity, the attendees at the meeting felt a misperception could ensue as to where the profit of the course was going. Support for that particular destination would be very limited due to the potential of misperception of sponsorship.

The meeting concluded with the following suggestions:

1) Make sure management is solely the

MGCSA

2) Continue discussions with other affiliate sectors, allied associations and "green" industry to generate a strong consensus and financial backing for the creation of a foundation dedicated to further research, education and outreach which would include a turf pathologist and destination to conduct the research.

3) Keep on track with the development of this progressive concept.

To that end the MGCSA broke off negotiations with TruRing, the Forest Lake businessmen who were working with us. While everyone was disappointed by the outcome, we welcome them as members into the MGCSA.

## Where to from here?

At the current time your Board is continuing a series of meetings with the other affiliate sectors including irrigation, soft-goods, services and design. In particular, key upon the tech reps of the chemical companies to get a solid handle on their needs for a research center and potential commitment in paid research. We need to have parameters for their research to be applied with confidence.

Your BOD is also preparing to contact the Minnesota Allied Golf Associations such as the CMAA, MPGA, MWGA and MPGMA for their input. The MGA will also be pursued for ideas as they are the backbone of the allied associations. By selling the program as a benefit for associations, the plant pathologist and RCGC should be very comprehensible and gain support.

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## *In Bounds: Forgiveness*

By JOHN "JACK" MACKENZIE, CGCS  
North Oaks Golf Club

Christmas! What a festive time of year with smells and sounds which evoke fond memories of yesteryear. Glimpses of the past brought ahead in time through the cutting of a fresh tree to décor the living room, a light blanket of snow upon the ground and a flutter of the heart once the mistletoe is hung. Such is the Holiday time of year.

Fifteen years ago I received a different kind of gift, one that left me breathless, mystified and trembling with emotions unspent. Fifteen years ago my wife announced a separation from me after seven years of marriage. But please, no woes for me my friends, for my personal tragedy afforded me the opportunity to mature and learn and grow.

The new year of 1992 brought bitterness and anger, sadness and rage. Interesting how a broken heart can peel away layers of kindness and display hatred; pure and unadulterated, to the bone, frosty enough to chill an individual through a long and hot summer. Hatred, my new found companion rode my shoulder and helped me vent my frustrations with a vengeance I was unaware I had inside of me.

**Clearly now, I look back upon those times and lament the energy I used in reconciling the phantom issues that lead to my divorce.** I can remember how the quagmire of misery clung to my sole like the stench of rotten eggs, to be shared with everyone whom I had contact with. I bitched and moaned, pissed and ranted about the injustice, the humiliation, the defeat to anyone who would listen. Those individuals grew fewer as time went by.

**My salvation came Christmas of 1994.** A gift was placed under the tree from one of my few remaining friends. Adorned in gold and silver paper with a green velvet bow, I knew it was a book just by feeling its identifiable shape. Great, I thought, probably another guide to unraveling the secrecy of my golf game. But no, I opened a treasure that would soon change my life.

*A Return To Love*, by Marianne Williamson, revealed knowledge I had

long locked away and a key to opening my heart to a healthy perspective of how my life could be. Her commentary and

*"Acknowledging and apologizing for acts, both intentional and unintended, can free wasted energy spent on anxiety and worry."*

thought provoking wisdom stirred my mind and caused me to reflect upon me; who I was, how I acted and the manner in which I lived. Her conversation with me, as I found it to be quite personal, solicited a new direction in my life.

The premise of the book is based upon giving yourself to love. And the greatest gift I took from the account was practicing the art of forgiveness. Perhaps you may be skeptical about the power of forgiveness. I know that for two years in the early 90s I sure was.

Williamson's work inspired me to develop the courage to meet with my former wife and ask her forgiveness for my part in our marital dissolution and forgive her for her actions. Not unlike being "saved" at the Jesus People Church in 1976, my heart soared with emotions I had hidden in the center of my chest. I was free again. The lead chains that weighed me down and were drowning me in the languid depths of self-pity melted and I rose once again to life. Beautiful and wondrous life.

**It is amazing what the act of asking forgiveness can do for a person.**

Acknowledging and apologizing for acts, both intentional and unintended, can free wasted energy spent on anxiety and worry. And accepting forgiveness can liberate those requesting it. In fact, I believe it compounds the emotional release.

To bring my heart relief, I have since tried to practice forgiveness whenever it was necessary. Even the act of asking forgiveness from those whom I cannot physically talk with brings me solace. And finally forgiving myself for sometimes

doing idiotic things, thinking dumb thoughts or saying something stupid allows me to move forward with comfort.

Peace, reassurance and harmony. The great equalizer is forgiveness.

Christmas is a happy occasion for me. Introspections upon my life's journey cause me to smile and be very thankful for my capacity to forgive. Since 1995 the revelations of forgiveness have provided my former wife and me the ability to raise our children as thoughtful parents. We communicate on a sincere level and share the good parent/bad parent skills sometimes necessary in disciplining our children. We attend school functions together and celebrate holidays as a family. We have the capacity to hug and laugh and share.

**This Holiday Season I wish each and every one of you a quiet moment** to reflect upon

your life. Within yourself, celebrate your accomplishments and take pride in your good deeds. Review your "not so polished moments" and consider righting any wrong. And perhaps as you take a personal inventory, there may be an opportunity for you also to share the greatest gift of all, forgiveness.

## *Letter to the Membership-*

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Furthermore, we plan to keep in close contact with the MTGF and University of Minnesota. There are big changes happening at both of these entities. MTGF is working hard at "branding" themselves and promoting the turf and grounds industry through the wide spread presentation of an in-depth Economic Impact Statement. And the University of Minnesota has just signed on a new Dean of Agriculture. It is imperative that these two organizations be in the scope of this project.

Finally, the BOD is committed to keep the membership informed about its intent to continue moving forward with a very progressive idea.

Who knows, someday you may have a pathologist just one phone call away. Maybe you will come up with a new idea and may want to try it out on the RCGC. Or perhaps you will be bringing your Green Committee or course owner out to the RCGC to demo a variety of sands and review bunker liner options. The possibilities are endless. Together we can achieve them.