



Are We Having Fun Yet?

By Paul Diegnau, CGCS

I have been in this business for 27 years and this golf season has been a series of "firsts" for me. Granted, my memory isn't what it used to be and past extremes seem to fade and blur with time, but 2011 has been unique. Some of my firsts:

- I had never experienced a putting green exiting winter with 90% kill.
- I don't remember seeing so much rain in such a short period of time and having to close a golf course because it was impassable due to rivers, rapids and lakes.
- I could go on and on about the extended periods of heat and humidity but why? How do our colleagues to the south deal with these conditions on a regular basis? Dew points in the 70s and 80s are just plain physically draining on the human body and mind.
- I have never before seen such an explosion of turfgrass disease as I witnessed on July 18 of this summer. Within 24 hours I watched a Brown Patch epidemic spread from fence line to fence line on my golf course. I swear you could literally watch it spread before your eyes, but my sprayer never stopped moving so I can't confirm that.
- Crabgrass is living the good life. We have large, thick patches of this light green ugliness everywhere, even in areas where it has never been an issue before.
- We have been dealing with Japanese beetle for probably seven years now but this 2011 Japanese beetle population is on steroids! I have never seen so much surface disruption from egg-laying activities on our putting surfaces. We are constantly pelted by flying beetles as we move around the golf course. I had one beetle fly into the corner of my eye and proceed to bite me! Trees of many species have been hit hard by the voracious appetite of these beetles. I have even seen them feeding on spruce, pine, oak, hawthorn and serviceberry! Why can't ash and silver maple be their favorite food source? This year is most definitely a year to treat your golf course or face the possible destruction caused by hungry raccoons and skunks. Trust me...you don't want to deal with that damage.

2011 will definitely be a year to remember. We are all in the same boat. Keep your life preserver on and the stormy seas will eventually subside. Fall is just around the corner! If you find yourself in need of additional information for communicating with your members, players and the media, the GCSAA distributed a news release on July 25 regarding the issues and concerns associated with the weather extremes we have experienced so far this year. The article can be found on the GCSAA website.

In case you feel that these weird weather patterns are the result of man-made global warming, I would offer up the latest satellite data just released by NASA. It seems that satellite data from 2000 - 2011 indicates that the Earth's atmosphere is allowing far more heat to escape into space than climate computer models have been predicting. It also shows that increases in atmospheric CO2 trap far less heat than levels claimed by proponents of global warming. Bottom line: climate computer models and reality don't agree.

The U of MN Field Day is coming up September 15 and will have concurrent tracks for both Turf and Grounds as in past years. This year a joint session will be held to explore the issues surrounding the herbicide Imprelis. Officials from the Minnesota Department of Agriculture, weed scientists, pesticide chemists, woody plant specialists and turfgrass scientists will present and discuss how we got here, the extent of the damage and what actions are being taken. Please make plans to attend and learn about the latest research being conducted at YOUR Turfgrass Research, Outreach and Education Center (TROE) on the University of Minnesota St. Paul campus.

The 2nd Annual Wee One Tournament is fast approaching. The event will take place on October 3 at North Oaks Golf Club and all proceeds will be donated to the Wee One Foundation. The Wee One Foundation was founded to assist golf course management professionals (or their dependents) who incur overwhelming expenses due to medical hardship without comprehensive insurance or adequate financial resources. The format for 2011 has changed to a 4-man scramble in the hope of attracting even more participants and there will be a taco bar on the golf course, similar to the original venue program at Pine Hills Country Club in Wisconsin. This is a great cause and a great tournament. Dale Parske, tournament chair, and his committee, are working hard to make sure this year's event is bigger and better than last year.

The MGCSA Fall Mixer will once again be held on October 17 at the Minnesota Horse and Hunt Club in Prior Lake. If you need to practice up for fall bird hunting, this is a perfect opportunity to sharpen your skills and have a great time doing so. Sporting clays are a blast (*pun intended*)! The winner of the 2011 gun raffle will be drawn at this event. Good luck and I hope to see you at this event and the others mentioned above.

This is the 16th year that Steve Garske and Par Aide have offered two Garske Legacy Scholarship awards to sons and daughters of MGCSA members. Thank you Steve! The MGCSA also offered two legacy scholarships this year. Please see the story on Page 7 for more details.

Keep your head up - snowflakes are on the horizon!

- Until next time,
Paul Diegnau, CGCS

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