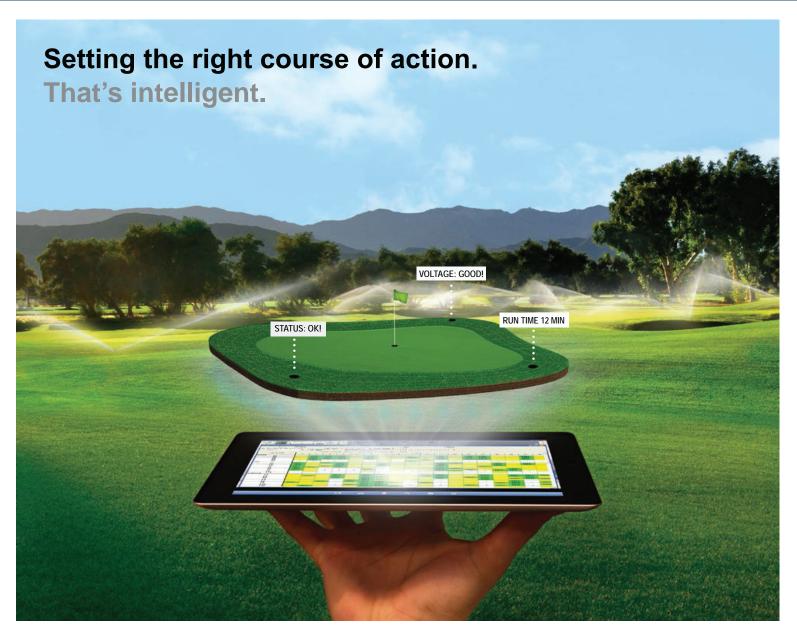


Hole Notes The official publication of the MGCSA

Vol. 50, No. 2 March 2016



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by Dave Kazmierczak CGCS, Superintendent at Prestwick Golf Club

So, how is your staff shaping up this season? The weather has once again given us an extraordinary

opportunity to grow grass earlier than ever imagined in 2016. Golf courses have opened en mass across the southern two-thirds of Minnesota and Wisconsin last week, and by the looks of things the grass will need cutting more sooner than later, maybe even in the month of March if this continues. The next question is, will you have anybody to mow it?

Labor is becoming a difficult proposition in our industry both locally and nationally. The ever increasing minimum wage is pushing budgets to the brink, and the revenue to cover the increases hard to come by. Other industries are matching our salaries or downright blowing them out of the water. It is becoming increasingly difficult to compete with the burger joint down the street that is offering four to five dollars more an hour. If you are relying on college and high school kids, the pickings are becoming slimmer. If you are relying on Hispanic labor the process of attraction and retention is becoming more difficult, and if Trump builds his wall possibly downright impossible!

But the real problem for turf mangers is not entry level positions. Increasingly, it is becoming very hard to find entry level managers: Spray Techs, Foremen and Assistant Superintendents. A quick glance at the MGCSA job board will tell you there are a lot of good jobs available with a very limited supply of good candidates. I would concur, as in the past five years alone I have had a very hard time filling these positions personally.

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The sentiment has also been echoed in many superintendent meetings both formally and casually. So, what has happened?

Ten years ago turf schools were pumping out students like 60hp pump through a four-inch pipe. A typical assistant position would garner at least 20 or so resumes, minimum. Now, a good job receives something akin to a slow drip from a leaky spigot. There simply are not a lot of kids going into this business right now, and who can blame them? A typical student will incur roughly \$40,000-\$60,000 of debt to complete a four-year college degree. Upon graduating, a typical second assistant is staring at an entry level salary between \$20,000-\$30,000 and is staring at a long ascent to the Superintendent's throne- probably ten years and that is if things go well. Unfortunately, the reality is that somewhere in those ten years a lot of potentially good superintendents get married, have children, and burn out from

the pressures of a low paying job with long hours and weekends with family pressures and no real light at the end of the tunnel. Turf programs are becoming non-student entities at four-year institutions. I believe the U of M has virtually no students in the program currently and neither does UW Madison. The fact that courses have been closing at a much higher rate than opening has also greatly contributed to this dilemma.

So what can we as turf mangers, and the GCSAA and the MGCSA do to help this problem? That is a very good question and one that clearly has no simple answer. I feel the associations can start with recognizing there is a problem and start to possibly move some resources to invest in the pipeline that supplies the industry. I'm not sure how that starts, but it just makes sense to me that the organizations that are designed to be advocates and move the profession forward need to promote the profession more

from the beginning, attracting young, smart, energetic talent to the industry.

Another thing that I feel needs to happen is a better promotion of two-year turf schools. We need educated entrylevel managers but the cost of four-year schools is prohibitive. The two-year certificate is perfect for this industry and there are many high quality Superintendents and assistants that have these specialized degrees. We also have a very good and accessible program right here in the Twin Cities in Anoka-**Tech Community College that** has geared its curriculum and class times to the golf season and would be a perfect fit for anybody who likes the job but is unsure on how to get the education they need to succeed. If you haven't looked lately at the program- or at all- check it out. You may have somebody on staff that is the perfect fit.

us as turf managers to promote the virtues of our business and get involved. If you read Tom Schmidt's editorial column on the last pages of this magazine you will find an industry professional trying not only to get his young employees interested in doing a good job at his course, but to look at the big picture and understand work ethic and a job well done. Start with that, and you never know if the green bug will bite that young person and they will take a serious interest in the profession. I have been telling employees that I feel have potential the last two years that opportunities are indeed out there for a career in our field and if you develop a passion for it you can succeed, but it takes hard work, commitment, time and patience.

Hopefully you will not run into staffing issues as you progress through what will possibly be the longest season yet in Minnesota. Good Luck!

But it is also incumbent upon

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MGCSA Assistant Committee Presents:

Spring Assistant Superintendent Seminar Lunch provided by Mike Kelly and Bayer Environmental Science

TPC Twin Cities Turf Management Center, hosted by Assistants Mark Michalski and Jesse Lunde from TPC Twin Cities and Todd Kranz from Windsong Farm GC, Mike Kelly of Bayer Environmental Science

8:00-8:30 am	Registration, coffee/networking
8:30-10:00 am	Elaine Evans UMN Bee Squad talks Pollinators
10:15-11:30am	Sam Bauer UMN presents Member Research
11:30	Lunch provided by Bayer Environmental Science
12:15	Tee Times begin for those playing golf
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Minnesota Turf Winter Disease and Management Field Day

March 29, 2016 830 am to 1 pm Medina Golf and Country Club

Spend a morning learning about the latest research on turf recovery and snow mold management being conducted at the University of Minnesota. We will tour fungicide snow mold trials on greens and fairways, weather permitting.

Agenda

830 am	Coffee and registration
9 – 945 am	Andrew Hollman: De-icing chemicals on putting greens
945 – 1030 am	Sam Bauer: Tips for spring turf recovery
1030 – 11 am	Break
11 am – noon	Angela Orshinsky: 2016 Snow mold trial results & snow mold research at UMN
12 -1245 pm	Tour of fungicide trial results
1 pm	Adjourn









It was sunny, 65 degrees and not a breath of wind on a Saturday morning, 12 days into March, on arguably the

best day Minnesota has had since last October, and I was indoors at an Isaac Walton League Freshwater Summit. It would have been a great day to be cleaning gutters, tapping maple trees, storing the snow blower and pulling the patio furniture from hibernation, but certainly not a day to be surrounded by "more leftleaning than I" environmentalists participating in a series of watershed topics.

As the MGCSA's greatest advocate, I sat and assured myself that our presence was making a difference in the perception of golf courses and golf course management. Often I repeated the slogan shared with me by Scottie Hines CGCS, "If you are not at the table then you will be the main course of the meal." It was good to be at the event as affirmation of golf's presence was observed.

"Golf" had a fine discussion with Doug Thompson, second on command at BWSR, a brief, yet grand, reception from Jill Crafton, local treasurer and National Director of the Isaac Walton League, a courteous nod from Barb Huberty **Executive Director off the Legislative** Water Commission, a "hello" and smile exchanged with Darrell Gerber at the coffee table and a smile from Brad Redlin, Program Manager of the MDA Agricultural Water Quality **Certification Program. "You" were** present in discussion and listening sessions with the intent to stay off the serving platter.

In my mind, the charge of advocacy, placed upon me by the 2012 Board of Directors and continued by more recent BODs, has been exceedingly successful in getting our industry noticed by telling the good story of golf. Kudos to the MGCSA leadership for their progressive attitudes and the membership, for anticipating the need to be actively promoting the industry and the professional golf course superintendent.

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In recent months we have made considerable, although slow, headway in our advocacy efforts. Both at the agency and legislative levels, your wishes are being heard. While it may take time for the wheels of bureaucracy to gain traction, they are beginning to move.

On January fourth, a group of "high rollers" in the golf industry, Jake Schmitz and Roger Stewart CGCS of the MGCSA, Dr, Brian Horgan and Sam Bauer from the UMN, Rollie Carlson from the MWCMAA, Jon Tollette, MnPGA and I garnered a meeting with an equally impressive gang from the DNR; Assistant **Commissioner Barb Naramore, Director of Ecological and Water Resources Luke Skinner, Section Manager of Conservation Assistance** and Regulations Julie Ekman and Water Regulations Unit Director Tom Hovey, provided us a solid audience to air our concerns. We had a meaningful discussion about golf, water, water availability, especially in light of the ground water/surface water interaction, and the industry proposed idea of expectations to water access in exchange for individual club investment in BMPs

and Certification that would include a drought management plan.

Although the DNR was firm on: 1) surface water concerns when the flow or levels are below benchmark will trigger allocation permits to be pulled, 2) water allocation categories will not be changed, 3) all golf courses should pursue alternative irrigation resources and the impending groundwater/ surface water thresholds will have a bearing upon all water users, they did listen attentively to our interest in partnering to create a certification program in exchange for assurances.

Two take home messages; the DNR is willing to consider modifying the allocation permit process and will review what is in their scope of power (an action item) And Julie Ekman put forth an idea to reduce industry water use through staged mandates rather than an immediate cut off to water users. This is great news for our industry.

Eight weeks later, following impromptu introductions with Representative Peter Fischer at two Legislative Water Commission meetings, I had a more formal visit in his office down at the Capital. At that time I shared with him the good story of golf and our concerns about water allocation, industry perception, environmental stewardship, certification opportunities and a few of the amazing water saving opportunities being employed at Prestwick Golf Club, Oneka Ridge, Eagle Valley and Oakdale golf courses.

Attentive and impressed, Representative Fischer suggested that our efforts carried great merit and that he would personally pursue an audience with DNR Commissioner Tom Landwehr to discuss empowering him (Landwehr) with the tools and flexibility necessary to provide environmentally conscious industries that use water, access to this critical resource in exchange for public assurances.

Combined, these two meetings were fantastic for aligning the golf industry with the DNR and one of a dozen members of the Minnesota Legislative Water Commission. Unfortunately, the process takes an amazing amount of time and energy to move forward. In my position I have learned that there are a whole lot of moving parts with many squeaky and misaligned gears. As an industry professional I often cannot comprehend why the process has to take so long as there really are simple solutions.

Over the past few months I have also been reaching out through attendance at watershed management meetings, Environmental Initiative programing, UMN Water and Pollinator Summit planning sessions, agricultural industry pollinator discussions and also a series of emails prompting our DNR to keep moving on our behalf.

The wheels of bureaucracy turn slowly. Agencies and legislatures need prompting. As long as I am your Executive Director, I will spend a handful of glorious weekend days at meetings showing the positive "face" of the golf industry. In hindsight, I could have been stranded at Normandale College with a late winter snowstorm...yuck!

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Fairway Mowing Alternatives, But With Foam?

By Jeff Ische Superintendent at Golden Valley G&CC, Rod Johnson Superintendent at Pine Hills Country Club and Ken Rost owner of Frost Inc, www.frostserv.com

There is always more than one way of doing the many tasks in a golf course maintenance operation. With labor costs on the rise and the unpredictable cost of fuel, many superintendents are looking to improve efficiency in everything they do. The fairway mowing operation is no exception.

When done well, the long diagonal mowing lines on fairways can create a dramatic aesthetic effect, but there can be some drawbacks. Taking the time to get it right may take a while. Some employees can jump on a mower and do it their first time out, but for most, it takes many mowings to perfect it. Then there is the considerable amount of time spent turning the mower around after each short pass across the fairway.

This is not only time on the clock for the operators, but time on the mower's hour meter, which means increased wear and tear, more rapid depreciation and increased fuel consumption.

To speed the fairway mowing

process, many Superintendents are going away from the diagonal striping of fairways, and switching back to a up/down mowing pattern. This cutting method is sometimes referred to as 'Box' or 'Zamboni' style, push cutting the fairways in one direction from tee to green. There are agronomic, aesthetic and playability reasons that some may have for doing this, but time and efficiency gains versus diagonally striping seem to be the biggest reason for switching. Any time a method is changed we can expect unexpected challenges. Here is how a couple of Superintendents took on the challenges and made it work for them.

Jeff Ische is the Superintendent at Golden Valley Golf and Country Club (GVGCC) near Minneapolis, Minnesota. He switched his staff to the Zamboni mowing pattern to reduce turf wear and tear from turns in the rough and hoped to realize the potential savings mentioned earlier. After a season of mowing this way, the quality of his rough improved, but his staff was not consistently finishing the twenty seven acres of fairways in





less time than when they were diagonally striping. On mornings with a heavy dew or rapid growth, they were saving a good 45 minutes per operator, or 3 hours of labor for the four operators combined. However, on mornings with little to no dew or after a dew drag and regulated growth, it was taking the operators as long, if not longer than when they were diagonally striping.

After watching the operators and jumping on the mowers himself, it became apparent what was happening on those mornings with no dew track to follow. Without the contrast of the

dark and light stripes, it was nearly impossible to see where the next pass should be with all the grass being pushed the same way. Even with average growth, those mornings with no dew were difficult. Operators were sometimes overlapping nearly a whole mower pass in an effort to make sure that they didn't miss any grass. Even when attempting to overlap, areas of the fairway were being missed. Unfortunately they weren't always obvious and many were not noticed until the next day, which could have been a weekend or tournament day. Jeff then experimented with having a dedicated "lead mower", with the next mower following right off his leading edge, and so on for the other two operators. This worked most of the time, but it required a highly skilled operator to be the lead mower. It still became inefficient as they were nearing the completion of a fairway and moving to the next fairway. If only one or two mowers were needed on the last passes down the fairway, the last two had a tendency to wait and have the lead mower begin the next hole.

They talked about dragging a weighted rope or chain behind each mower but were concerned about leaving a mark on the fairway or it getting caught up in one of the reels. In conversation with Jeff's assistants, the idea of a foam marker was suggested. They experimented by modifying an inexpensive foam marker used on their fertilizer spreaders. The lead assistant, Matt Olsonoski, found a picture of mowers used at a recent Open Championship that looked like they had foam markers fitted and it help legitimize their idea.

Jeff found out through his spray equipment parts supplier, Frost Inc, that Rod Johnson at Pine Hills Country Club in Sheboygan, Wisconsin had installed foam marker kits on two of his fairway mowers a couple years earlier.

Pine Hills was looking to eliminate fairway mow line stripping with the more

classic look of Box cutting. Light weight mowers mowing a stripped pattern had changed the look of fairways and in some ways were a distraction from the course's topography. Box cutting or Zamboni mow patterns were seen as a potential time savings as well.

Like Golden Valley, the change in mowing pattern was difficult for operators. Days with low amounts of dew on fairways, further complicated by the regular use of growth regulators made for the same overlapping issues experienced by GVGCC. A mower operator observed that if they had foam marks like on the sprayer they could eliminate a lot of overlapping.

Foam marking kits from Frost Inc were installed on two of the three mowers normally used at Pine Hills. The three mowers follow one another so not every mower needed to apply foam but if each mower was equipped, then any machine could lead. The foam markers have resolved any overlapping and has given operators con-





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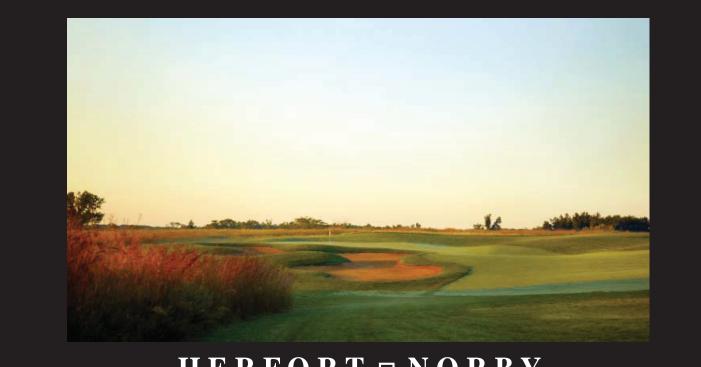
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fidence to do a great mowing job at Pine Hills.

Back at GVGCC, with two of Jeff's four mowers equipped with foam markers, he split his operators into two teams, each utilizing at least one mower with the marker kit. A foamless mower makes the first pass and the operator with a foam marker follows right behind, leaving a line of foam balls for the lead mower to follow on the next trip down the fairway. He set them up so that the foam was dropped on the outside edge of the outer most reels. Conveniently, the foam dropped is rolled down by the overlap of the next mower, leaving nothing but a completely mowed fairway, done with as little overlap as possible.

The efficiency gained by this mowing pattern is now achievable every time Jeff's staff mows fairways. It is easy to see how saving three hours of labor and three hours of fuel consumption every time out quickly offsets the purchase price of the two foam marker kits.

Foam concentrate for sprayers is usually already on hand and the ongoing cost is minimal. Based on the rate of



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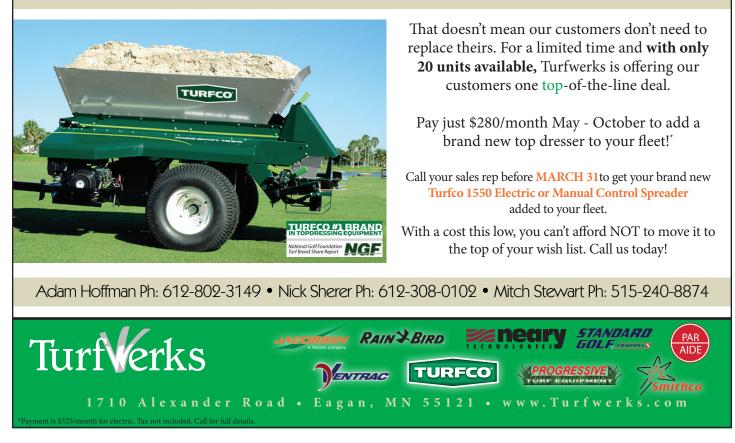
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the foam used at GVGCC, the one gallon tank on the foam marker system is sufficient for two fairway mowings. The experienced operators absolutely endorse the set up, commenting on how much easier it is to mow without dew. The use of the foam marker also aids in training new operators, which is an added benefit.

The cost of the foam markers used by Jeff and Rod through Frost Inc cost around \$500 each and they were installed in an hour or two. There are two foam drops, one for each side, and a switch box for the operator control. The foam drops are mounted as low as possible to minimize error caused by occasional wind.

The days of doing things the same old way are certainly over. This is not new technology, just clever Superintendents discovering a new way of adapting existing equipment for another purpose. To compete with the ever-growing pressure of player expectations and managing maintenance costs, every cost saving idea should be shared. We all benefit through sharing our experiences and we hope you found this tip useful if you are considering alternative fairway mowing methods! The National The GIS in San Diego February 2016



Recruiting Great Employees in the Twenty-First Century

By Dr. Bob Milligan, The LearningEdge

Last Saturday my wife and I shopped for linens to upgrade our towel and wash cloth supply. We had passed the store on Friday but chose not to stop as were had not prepared. On Saturday, we spent at least an hour reviewing what we had in the linen closet and deciding what we needed. Our shopping trip was short and we left with exactly what we wanted. I suspect if we had stopped on Friday evening, our time in the store would have been much longer and very frustrating, and we, likely, would not have gotten what we really needed.

I believe the same is true for recruiting. Preparation is needed and makes the whole process easier and more effective. Whether you have an opening because someone is leaving or you are expanding your staff, two steps are needed prior to initiating recruiting:

1. Develop a job description. This may be revising the job description of the person who left, but you never should just use the previous job description. Others on your staff may have interest and strengths in responsibilities currently in the job description. The needs of your course likely have changed as well. In the job description, focus on responsibilities of the position, not just the tasks.

2. Using the responsibilities in the job description, think about what is needed to succeed in the position. We call these competencies. Identify the 3-5 observable and measurable skills, knowledge, performance behaviors, and personal attributes that will most contribute to success in the position. The following is an example competency set for a maintenance position: reliability, enjoy the outdoors, team player. Recruiting has changed greatly over the last several decades. First, it must be a continuous activity; not something you do only when you have an open position. Many,

maybe most, open positions are no longer filled using a traditional recruitment process of developing recruitment materials and using different media to reach potential candidates.

Increasingly successful recruitment uses the superintends', employees', and courses' network. Many positions are filled with candidates who have already had contact with the course either by actually being onsite, such as playing the course or an internship, or by connecting with the superintendent or other employees at events external to the course.

It is increasingly important that you identify external opportunities to connect with potential candidates. You can fulfill this responsibility by attending events that future employees attend or are a participant. Examples could include school activities, FFA functions, job fairs, etc.

The increasing importance of networking plus the explosion in the use of the internet and social media are greatly increasing the importance of being a great employer - a



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preferred employer! When you want a new piece of equipment, you first check it out on the internet. When you are concerned you are ill, you first check the internet. Similarly, when a potential candidate hears about your course or your position, they research the course and its workforce on the internet and social media. Your greatest recruiting assets is a healthy maintenance staff culture leading to a happy, passionate workforce.

Even with your network, the internet, and social media; there will be times when you need to use the tra-

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ditional recruitment method of creating recruitment material and sending it to multiple venues. The goal of traditional recruiting is to reach and persuade a large number of qualified candidates to apply for the open position. Recruiting includes 1) promoting the positive attributes of the course and the available position and 2) providing information about what will enable a potential candidate to succeed in the position - the competencies.

The positive attributes are often sadly lacking in most recruitment materials I read. Recently, I was





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teaching a seminar for managers. They had a very difficult time moving past their concerns about offering competitive compensation. Compensation is important but not nearly as important as most think. Did you become a superintendent only for the money? Take the time to brainstorm positives.

Your recruitment plan to reach great candidates AND entice them to apply for your position can include informal word of mouth communications, want ads, job announcements, internet job announcements, and formal job services. The following ad for a maintenance position incorporates the competencies defined above for this position:

Golf course maintenance position: Historic, local country club seeks individual for general golf course maintenance. Looking for applicants who are reliable, enjoy working outdoors, and are team players. Duties include mowing, trimming, raking sand traps, and other similar responsibilities. Competitive wages, 50 hours per week, overtime pay. Work with a modern line of wellmaintained equipment. Opportunities for advancement. Fill out application at Successful Valley Country Club, 123 Country Club Drive, Successful Valley

Great recruitment - marketing - materials can be developed using the following seven steps:

1. Lead with a positive statement or job characteristic that attracts attention

2. Give the job title

3. Say something positive about the course

4. Describe the job

5. Explain qualifications necessary for success in the position including the competencies

6. Provide information on wages and benefits, as appropriate

7. Say how to apply for the job. The resulting recruitment materials can go on the internet - (craigslist, internet job postings), in newspapers, and in flyers that can be handed out and posted.

Recruitment is marketing! Today the greatest recruitment tool you have is the job satisfaction of your workforce. You also must "get out there" by making recruitment a continuous process and using and expanding your network.



By Mike Sonnek, Assistant Superintendent at Spring Hill Golf Club

Around the holidays, I was reminded of all the gifts I have received during my lifetime and kind of wishing I had done a better job of giving back. As a father of triplets who works in the golf industry I am more than aware of the demands on



Thumbs up at the local blood drive

our time and how finding time to "give back" can be a challenge. I wanted to share a few things I have been able to squeeze in even with our schedule. Some of these ideas are very simple, and don't take a tremendous time commitment but

> can really pay off for the organizations involved. There is an old saying that every little bit helps, which is so true.

First off, if you have kids at school, sign up to be a chaperone and volunteer at their school. There is always a need for parents or guardians on field trips, overnight events or even week-long trips that just about every student is involved in sometime from kindergarten through high school. This works out great with our slower winter schedules and there is no better investment than time with your kids. You might not even be hanging around with them directly, but they will know you are there and see that you are committed to them as well as showing interest in what they are doing.

Do you have kids and like sports? Try volunteering to be a coach for one of your kids teams. You probably don't even have to have a clue how to do



Packing meals with daughters Pam and Becca at their old elementray school

it, because most sports especially at the early youth level are begging for



KFAN's Cory Cove and a few volunteers who recorded their lupus stories for broadcast during Cory's 24-Hour Show to benefit the Lupus Foundation of Minnesota.

coaches and assistant coaches. It is a great way to bond with your kids, mentor other kids and find new friends in the parents of the kids you coach. Sometimes those people turn into life-long friends. By the way- some of these kids might also be looking for a job when they get older. Maybe on a golf course you just might be managing?



Part of the Sonnek family helping out and getting exercise at the Lupus Hope 5 K Walk/Run.

If you don't have kids or kids in school. that isn't a problem. There are plenty of other simple options available to you. One of the easiest is donating blood, which takes about an hour. This is extremely critical for the medical profession. There is always a demand for blood. especially if you have a rare blood type. All you have to do is walk

in the door or call and set up a time. You will find that once you donate the first time, you will be very popular in the future!

How about packing meals for the hungry? Feed my Starving Children is a great organization to volunteer for, especially as a group. The event takes about an hour as well. How about combining a small donation with exercise? It seems virtually every charitable organization has a 5k run/walk fundraiser for



Sharing a head of beautiful hair for a great cause, wigs for cancer patients.



Rockin' the Fu Manchu 'stache for Movember to raise awareness for men's health.

typically a \$30 donation to their cause. You almost cannot listen to a radio, watch television or walk into a gym without becoming exposed to some form of advertisement for one of these events.

Golf course workers, from management to the starting worker are by nature very handy and used to labor. How about signing up for Habitat for Humanity and helping those in need for housing in your community? There is a Habitat project going on in almost every community in America. Whether as a group or individually, a simple Google search of Habitat for Humanity would put you right on track.

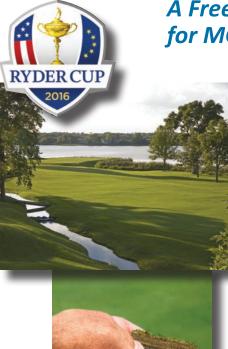
I know that this one isn't for everyone, but I just finished growing out my hair and donating it to Pantene Beautiful Lengths to provide wigs to cancer patients. Again, something unbelievably simple to do- all you have to do is be alive for this one!

I'm sure many of you give much more back than I and that's fantastic. One of the things I am proudest of is how my kids have already embraced community service at a young age. Hopefully they will continue to give back throughout their lifetime. My goal in writing this article is not to pat myself on the back but to encourage those of you who find yourself in the same spot I used to be, asking yourself, what can I do?

I would like to thank Superintendent Tim Johnson, Director of Golf Jeff Kringen and the membership of Spring Hill Golf Club in supporting my efforts to give back.



2016 MGA TURFGRASS FORUM









A Free Informational Discussion & Round Table for MGA Member Clubs and Members

Hazeltine National Golf Club, Thursday, April 28, 2016 8:30 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.

Registration begins at 8:00 a.m. (coffee & rolls will be served)

SPEAKERS & TOPICS

- Preparing for the Ryder Cup Mr. Chris Tritabaugh Hazeltine National Golf Club Superintendent
- University of Minnesota-USGA Partnership

Dr. Brian Horgan University of Minnesota Turf Extension Specialist

• Latest Issues Facing Turfgrass Mr. Robert Vavrek USGA Senior Agronomist, Central Region

THIS MEETING IS FOR

Course Owners, General Managers, Golf Professionals, Golf Course Superintendents, Club Presidents, Green Chairs and any other MGA Members.

- There will be no fee for this forum.
- GCSAA educational points available
- PGA MSR credits available

Register by Friday, April 22

For reservations, contact Joel Comstock, *MGA Regional Affairs Director* 952-345-3968 or joel@mngolf.org *Please provide your name and golf course affiliation.*













The Legacy Courses at Craguns Host Matt McKinnon WINFIELD ESSM

Lakes Area Outreach













Prescription Pathology: An Interview With Renown Turf Guru "Dr." John Steiner, White Bear Yacht Club

Artilcle and Photos By Dr. Angela Orshinsky, UMN Horticultural Pathologist

Talkin' about the "good old days" with John Steiner, CGCS

In the past few years working at the University of Minnesota, I have gotten to know a few superintendents. As a plant pathologist and microbiologist, it is always a treat to chat with fellow mycophile, John Steiner. In this month's column, I interviewed John to get his thoughts on how golf course turf management has changed, disease diagnostics, and his advice for early career superintendents.

Extension Turfgrass Science

Angela: How did you get involved in golf course management? Why did you choose it as a career path?

John: I was attending the University of Minnesota in Minneapolis psychology while working on the grounds crew here at the White Bear Yacht Club. I loved nature and working outside and didn't see that changing. I talked to Dr. White in turfgrass science on the St. Paul campus and the rest is history. I also loved mushrooms and other fungi so I did a lot of additional studying in Mycology and Plant Pathology.

Angela: How has the industry changed since you started in terms of approaches to turfgrass management?

John: Equipment and irrigation systems have changed significantly since I started on the grounds crew here in 1970. Height of cut on greens was higher, Integrated Pest Management did not exist, and water conservation was not even being thought of. Fungicides were very different.

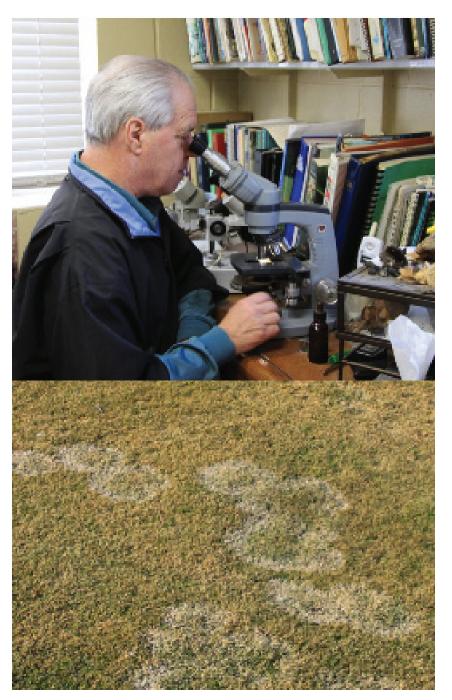
Angela: What do you think fueled these changes in practices? Do you think that expectations for things like green speeds and reduced thresholds for pests and diseases have changed?

John: I do.

Angela: Where do you see turf management going?

John: The biggest thing for this industry is going to be water issues. I also see biofungicides and products to help stimulate the plants natural defenses becoming important in the future.

Angela: There seem to be a lot of new developments in the turf pathology world such as the appearance of Waitea patch, bacterial etiolation and decline, disease resistant grass cultivars, and



Above: John's lab is not high tech, but he makes many diagnoses each year with his modest equipment. Here he is looking at clamp connections from some breakthrough snow mold after a mild year. Photo, J. Steiner

newer fungicides. Do you think there are differences in the types of disease or severity of diseases from when you started in your career as a superintendent compared to now? Do you have any theories on why we're seeing the shift?

John: Yes there are differences. My thoughts on this issue are as follows. These organisms no doubt have always been around but maybe not expressing themselves to the magnitude they are today.

Remembering the old contact fungicides Cadmium Chloride, Phenyl Mercury Acetate, Calo-clor which is another Mercury compound and other heavy metals, one wouldn't doubt that they controlled some of these organisms by accident. Those products also lasted longer. The newer fungicides are more specific in targeting certain pathogens or even just one. This also would tend to increase fungicide resistance issues. Lastly, in many cases we are managing turfgrass species beyond their natural genetic abilities.

Angela: I couldn't agree more! We've changed the circumstances of the disease triangle! Possibly we've changed the growing environment such that it causes more plant stress and opportunity for disease development. The site-specific fungicides make it even more Page 38 important to know what disease you are treating – diagnoses have become that much more important. You do a lot of disease diagnostic work on turfgrass. What steps do you take in diagnosing disease?

John: I like to get a look at the turfgrass stand if possible to see symptoms and signs. I note the weather conditions and environment. Is it wet or shady? etc. I identify the species of grass that's being infected and try to get a little history of how the stand has been managed. At that point I can usually identify diseases by stand symptoms and plant symptoms, also macroscopic signs if they are there (Examples: rust, red thread, powdery mildew). For more complicated samples I get sample plugs of good and diseased turf and put it under the microscope and see if there is enough fungus there for it to identification itself. If there is not enough material to visualize the pathogen under the microscope, I put it in humid chamber for 12 to 24 hours and check again under microscope. You need to look at the roots for patch diseases. Look for runner hyphae. Sometimes you can find fruiting

structures under the sheaths.

Angela: Do you have any case studies in turf disease diagnostics that were especially interesting to you?

John: *My favorite case* study was a pathology case study on the incidence of Hypoxylon canker on Populus tremuloides (Quaking Aspen) on our property here at the club. The incidence was higher than I thought it would be. I liked this study because I love fungi and I got to really measure something and study it.

Angela: In addition to being a superintendent, you're also a supermycologist! What is your favorite fungus and why?

John: Armillaria mellea the honey mushroom. I like it because of its massive fruitings and it cooks up great. (tasty!)

Angela: Do you have any advice for superintendents that are just John: Stay up on current issues and never stop studying and learning.



John's favorite fungus is the honey mushroom, Armillaria mellea. Photo by J. Steiner

Dr. Orshinsky is a plant pathologist and Extension specialist at the University of Minnesota. Her turfgrass pathology research has focused on the molecular and physical interactions between dollar spot and turfgrass hosts, sensitivity of snow mold fungi to various fungicides, and reduction of the environmental impact of turf disease management.

getting started in their career?



Badgerland Outreach Lake Wissota Golf Club Host Kris Woppert



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and b













Equipment Managers Tour Foley United Host Jim LeTourneau



































Home-grown Worldwide Grinder Manufacturer

Foley United, long known for designing and manufacturing sharpening equipment for various industries, has been a family owned business for 90 years. The company has been owned by the Ringer

Family since 1926, when Walter

Ringer Sr.

purchased Foley Manufacturing, a small company that made a machine to sharpen

handsaw blades. He coined the basic philosophy that

the family still adheres to today: "Keeping Everlastingly At It Brings Success."

Foley United takes great pride in its substantial manufacturing of sharpening machinery, and under the guidance and commitment of the Ringer Family, they strive to continue to prove the elder Ringer's



philosophy. The company is owned and operated by the third generation of the Ringer Family and the business has evolved over time to expand into different industries.

One of their more prestigious

achievements was earning the "E" Award from the Federal Government for Foley's effort in World War II, when they manufactured canteen kits for the

troops. This coincided with the introduction of Foley's 338 manual single-blade grinder, which was a brand name all to itself. As Kleenex was to tissue, Foley was to grinders. Today, Foley United is recognized as the most innovative reel grinder manufacturer in the world and this is the main niche that drive's their manufacturing in River Falls, Wisconsin.

The brand of grinders sold to the golf and turf industry are one of the four product groups manufactured at Foley's River Falls facility - a building specifically designed and constructed for this purpose in 1992. Jim Letourneau, self-in-feeding reel grinder for both the spin and relief cycles in the world. The dust and noise abatement was a safety implementation that many shops were keen on and the automation lowered the labor cost of what was

the president and COO of the company, has overseen the operation of Foley United since 1989 and with the growth of golf in the 1990's, Foley turned its attention to the turf industry.

During this time, Foley United recognized that

grinders were the only "shop tool" invested in the re-conditioning of the quality-of-cut of the cutting heads and that is why they've focused on the engineering of their tabletop style equipment since 1993. There were many "firsts" with their introduction of these machines at that time.

Foley's initial tabletop design was the model 650 Accumaster, which was the first totally enclosed,



ACCU-Master 653 closed

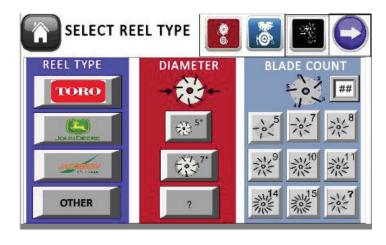
once a very labor intensive job. This automation was ammunition for superintendents to push for upgrading from the older technology, as there was a substantive return on investment in lowering labor cost.

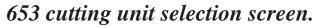
Today's current

design allows superintendents and technicians to not only grind how they want, but also grind how they may need to depending on circumstances. In other words, there's always a choice whether conducting a quick "touch-up" spin grind, or returning the reel to the original equipment manufacturer (OEM) specifications, as the machines have no limitations.

> The new AccuTouch 3 Control Page 43

takes grinding automation to a new level and now provides an animated graphic tutorial. With turnover in shops, this is a priceless tool that will walk a new technician step-bystep through to the highest quality spin grind possible. For more experienced operators, the tutorial is easily turned off for a quicker "setup & spin grind" feature.





With availability of technicians tightening and subsequent labor cost rising, there's merit in owning equipment that can improve productivity with automation, as you tell the machine what you're working on and the machine does the rest.

Foley United was the first company to locate the reel into a grinder by the rear roller and while this feature has several positive design implications, the simplicity of anyone being able to look at a decal for placement is perhaps the



ACCU-Reel selctor by brand.

best. Foley United's new rear roller mounting system is the only design in the world that tells the operator where to place the rear roller based on reel make and diameter. This is part of a pre-positioning system that provides needed clearances for both the spin and relief grind processes.

In addition to easy placement, the "rear roller to reel shaft parallel design" of many cutting units make gauging a "one & done" process for most reels. This is achieved with new visual LED and "bubble-style" graphic systems that allow even the most inexperienced operators the ability to remove taper when spin grinding. It used to be that you could twist the bedknife and take rollers out of parallel to compensate for a cone-shaped reel, but with shorter heights of cut, more rigid reel frame designs, and harder metals, keeping reels true is more



Spin motor left.

important than ever.

The 653 AccuMaster and 633 AccuPro include a counter-balanced spin drive in which the spin drive pivots and floats to connect directly to the reel. This is now the easiest connection in the world and requires no tools.

There's a reason the industry has been trending toward grinders that do more than just spin grind and Foley United's new generation of tabletop reel grinders address the primary reason why. The patented auto-index relief system and automation of the in-feeds make returning reels to spec a "no-labor" proposition. Foley's new relief design makes this option easier than ever before.

While all grinder suppliers can spin grind to a sharp edge, it's Foley's innovation, automation, quality control, and capability that has set the industry standard. The ability to conduct a quick spin grind when wanted or returning to OEM specifications when needed is what it's all about and this is what separates Foley United from all others.

As a Minnesota/Wisconsin based company, they take great pride in being a U.S manufacturer with deep roots in the community. They will continue to "Keep Everlastingly At It," to make grinding easier, faster, safer, and more productive. When it comes to the most important thing you're putting on your turf, which is your reels, you need a "shop tool" that will do what you want. Visit us at www.foleyunited.com to see how we can fit your needs.



The Art Of Hiring

There is a new art of hiring staff today as we embark on the age of the millennials. It is the "new" age-old challenge of cell phones, Tweets, Snap Chat, Instagram and of course there is still Facebook. I feel the best part of my profession is the teaching and training of today's youth. I have been very fortunate in the fact that I have been graced with a big family full of nieces, nephews and cousins.

For the past 16 years, I have had family members on my staff, sometimes two or three in a season with an added bonus that they always have a friend or two that need a job.

> In addition to family, another great avenue to explore is your

> > mgcsa.org

local high schools. Visit your local schools and network with teachers and coaches. These resources can open up opportunities for some dedicated, hardworking and talented youth.

I use to hire with the mindset of hire a few, and work them long hours with intensive labor. Today, my mind-set has embraced the new age of today's youth and I now hire many and work them carefully. Youth of past would work 40 hours a week and today I hope to get them for at least 25 hours a week. Is it hard work ethics that has changed? Or is it that today we live in a society where teenagers play intensive sport schedules? Every sport has a summer club or camp programs along with school programs. One sport is played all year

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round with practices at 8 AM, three to five days a week.

Today, the training we do is the same and essentially the teenager's attitudes are the same. One major shift I have noticed, which is most cars, and why not? They were "OUR" cars. Today, mom and dad will fill their tanks, give them spending money and treat them to Chipotle. Growing up, we used to look forward to our one week vacation every summer.

> In today's society, it is difficult to get the youth to commit to working one weekend a month in the summer.

One of my favorite parts of interviewing the youth of today is my opening question, "have you ever mowed your parent's lawn?" The response is usually..."umm no" but maybe one out of ten says yes. There is a good chance most of

discouraging, is the parents are not the same. As teenagers, we used to have earn our own money to pay for our cars, put gas in our cars and fix our

summer staff.

Tom and two of his favorite crew members, daughter Hannah, son Jeff and hound Putter supplement his

> us were cutting our dad's lawn before age twelve. I have a personal passion when teaching these youngsters the fine

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art of mowing greens tees and fairways. My hope is that by midseason, they take what they learned and apply it on their own lawns- or in my age it was referred to as

my dad's lawn- which was his pride and joy, all without being asked. I make it a personal challenge to have them cross cut dad's pride and joy, weed whip, clean the cement surfaces and then finish up with a good cleaning of the mower. A big part of this challenge is to do this all when mom and dad are at work and don't ask for anything in return. I tell them it will impress their parents. They will prove not only to their parents but to themselves they are mechanically inclined enough to start the mower, do grade "A" work and then clean up after the job is complete. The kids come back to work

with stories of their parents reaction to the manicured lawn and their child's finetuned task of mowing. It's all reenacted with a huge grin of self-pride and confidence.



Squeegee "Crew Joe and Joe", Joe Osell and Joe Schmidt

They hopefully have learned a valuable lesson and my hope is that they continue to mow dad's lawn every week, of course with some extra pushing, prodding and challenges from their boss.

For the past twenty years the age range of the youth I employ is 16-21 years old and they compile at least 70 percent of my work force. With this young of a workforce, I have been fortunate enough to have not had to fire anyone. Yes, I have the tedious task of working around their sports and activity schedules, flexible with multiple family vacations but most prevalent is dealing with the use of cell phones and social media. Even with these challenges I continue to enjoy employing this age group. Many of my young employees go on to get a college degree. They have received degrees in Accounting, **Education, Sales, Turf industry** and even Lawyers.

I believe we can teach and help these youngsters learn the values of work ethic, responsibility, dedication to detail, punctuality, accountability while even having a little fun on the job.

I would not have as much success with out the help of my retired gentleman. I carry a great staff of retired electricians, bankers and 3M employees. These excellent individuals have their own jobs on the course from rough mowing to fairway mowing, tee service and stick cleanup. They work a couple of days a week in the summer and help out more in the spring and fall when the kids are still in school. The best part is they enjoy coming back year after year. They love and are dedicated to the course, love to play golf and love the outdoors.

I cannot express enough gratitude to all my seasonal staff members. Without all of you, I would not be where I am today. I continue to learn daily values and life lessons from my retired gentleman. I vow to mentor and coach this generation of cell phone, social media youth and to support them as they continue their journey in learning the value of a hard days work.

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