

It's All About Me

What is West Nile Encephalitis?

Infectious Disease Epidemiology, Prevention & Control

What is West Nile Encephalitis?

West Nile Encephalitis is a viral disease transmitted to people and horses through the bite of an infected mosquito.

West Nile virus (WNV) is maintained in a transmission cycle involving one or more species of mosquitoes and birds. Current research is focusing on which mosquitoes and birds are most important in this cycle.

WNV is usually found in Africa and southern Europe. The virus was first reported in North America during a 1999 outbreak of encephalitis in New York City.

How Serious is West Nile Virus?

Most people infected with WNV will have either no symptoms or a very mild illness. A small percentage of people, especially elderly patients, may develop encephalitis (inflammation of the brain). Approximately 10% of these encephalitis cases are fatal.

Most of the severe human cases of WN encephalitis begin

with sudden onset of fever, headache, stiff neck, and vomiting. The illness progresses quickly to include confusion and other mental status changes, altered reflexes, convulsions, and coma. There is no treatment for WN encephalitis other than supportive care.

Approximately 33% of symptomatic horses are put down or die from WNV infections.

What is the Risk of a West Nile Encephalitis Outbreak in Minnesota?

Since 1999, WNV has moved rapidly to 47 states, the District of Columbia, 75 Canadian Provinces, 24 Mexican States, Dominican Republic, EL Salvador, Jamaica, and the Cayman Islands. WNV was detected in Minnesota (July 23rd, 2002).

9,858 human WN cases were reported in the United States in 2003.

With our abundant mosquito and bird populations, we expect that WNV will become established in Minnesota. Similar to other mosquito-transmitted diseases already established in this area (LaCrosse encephalitis, Western equine encephalitis and Eastern equine encephalitis), WNV will likely cause sporadic illness in humans (especially elderly people) and horses.

What Can People Do to Prevent West Nile Encephalitis?

Personal protection measures such as use of mosquito repellents, avoiding outdoor exposures at dusk and dawn (peak feeding time for many mosquitoes) and wearing long-sleeved shirts and long pants can reduce the risk of WN encephalitis.

Removal of water-holding containers (mosquito breeding sites) from residential areas will reduce numbers of several mosquito species.

There is a vaccine available for horses to prevent WN encephalitis. Please contact your veterinarian for vaccine recommendations. A human WNV vaccine is still in development.

How Can I Help Look for West Nile Virus?

The first indication of WNV in an area is usually an outbreak of the disease in wild bird populations. Over 255 species of birds have been found to be infected, but dead American crows and Blue jays are especially apparent in outbreak areas. If you find dead birds during the summer months (especially July-September), please report them to the Minnesota Department of Health. This year we are offering web-based reporting which is available on the MDH webpage at www.health.state.mn.us. Scroll down the menu to access the submission form. These submissions will be reviewed daily by MDH staff and a small sample of birds will be collected for testing. If you are unable to report online, dead birds can be reported over the phone at 612-676-5055.

(Editor's Note: The Infectious Disease Epidemiology, Prevention & Control website is www.health.state.mn.us. The DEP&C phone is 612-676-5414 and the address is 717 Delaware St. SE Minneapolis, MN 55440.)

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Scholarship Scramblers at White Bear Yacht Club



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Cary Femrite, Sun Turf, and Steve Garske, Par Aide Products Co., take a moment to relax at the MGCSA Scholarship Scramble at White Bear Yacht Club.



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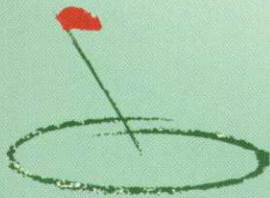
Pictured from left to right are Minnesota Valley Country Club Superintendent Michael Brower, Brady Scott, Nate Studer and Troy Lang. The group shot 66 at the Scholarship Scramble.

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NETWORKING

By **BRUCE R. WILLIAMS, CGCS**
The Los Angeles Country Club

As we develop our careers it is increasingly important to manage a set of contacts that become a part of your network. Remember that for job seekers it is often not just what you know but whom you know as well. Taking that a step further it can also be not only whom you know but whom they know as well.

Let's make a list of all the people that can help you in your career. It is not necessary to use names but for this exercise we will use positions to indicate areas to develop contacts:

- + Fellow Superintendents
- + Former employers
- + General Managers
- + Golf Professionals
- + Golf Association staff
- + Local distributors
- + Manufacturer's representatives
- + Educators
- + Researchers
- + USGA agronomists
- + Media
- + Golfers
- + Neighbors
- + Relatives
- + Former classmates
- + Alumni from your school
- + Seminar instructors
- + Golf Course Architects
- + Consultants
- + Headhunters
- + Agronomists for Management Companies
- + GCSAA staff

Now that you have a list of potential network opportunities, it is time to develop a strategy to build and cultivate relationships with as many people as you can.

I will try to provide a few tips that I have learned, over the years, to help you cast a wider net in developing relationships.

Business Cards

Be certain to have professional business cards with you at all times. Keep your information current. The greatest value is not in handing out your business cards but in exchanging them to develop new contacts. The exchange of business cards alone will not ensure the memory of your encounter. Follow up with an e-mail or a note to set you apart from the crowd.

Working the Room

Set a goal of making a certain number of contacts at any meeting or function you

attend. If there are 100 people at a meeting it is reasonable to assume that you might walk away with 5-10 new contacts depending on the type of function. Target people that are leaders or influential in the industry. Most people are not interested in talking to you for half hour but surely will give you 3-5 minutes of their time.

The Elevator Speech

A long time ago I had a mentor that taught me about the "elevator speech." He indicated that if you got on an elevator and were going up five floors, what would you say in that short time frame to sell yourself to someone? We should all have a speech, prepared in advance, that would allow us to make a connection with anyone. When someone says hello and asks what you do for a living...you should have a quick reply that would be interesting and memorable. Although I call this an elevator speech it is more applicable at social functions, out on the golf course, in the locker room, etc. When introduced to members or guests, at my golf course, I like to reply "Hi, my name is Bruce Williams the golf course superintendent here and I hope I make your game more enjoyable with the conditions that see today." This usually leads to further conversation. The goal is to make a lasting impression.

Six Degrees of Separation

In *The Tipping Point*, Malcolm Gladwell talks about the origin of this phenomenon. He describes how a large group of people ultimately became connected to one another by just a few, surprisingly connected individuals who provided a common link. Gladwell talks about how there are pivotal people in any network of connected individuals who know a lot of other people. Connect with those who are connected.

When I meet people I try to find out what we have in common together. It is amazing that I rarely find someone that I have nothing in common with. Usually we are familiar with a certain golf course, a city, an individual, a hobby or something else. Without probing you can ask a

Points to Consider

- + Don't wait until you've lost your job to start networking.
- + If you are clueless in the field of networking, then get a mentor.
- + Be prepared and consider every day an opportunity to meet and connect with new people.
- + Don't get caught without it...business cards that is.
- + Don't use a silly sounding e-mail name like "MachoMan" or "TimeForHemp" as it will gain attention but not in a positive manner.
- + Don't be arrogant and listen as much as you talk.
- + Don't monopolize someone's time. Five minutes is a good limit at an initial introduction and there is a difference between following up and becoming a pen pal.
- + Dress to impress and look as good or better than everyone else in the room or at the meeting. Without saying a word you are sending a message by your attire when meeting someone.
- + Don't be shy. It may not be easy for some but, with practice, you will learn how to be assertive and make yourself known.
- + Always be truthful and never embellish your qualifications. Overstating yourself will end up giving you a tag of being dishonest.
- + Serious relationships develop over time. They endure because you work at it. Most people have little use for a person that uses you for what they want and then drops you like a hot potato.
- + Remember to repay the favor of those that have helped you. Take time to help the newcomers and youth of the industry. Extend your hand to them and be sincere.

few questions to find common ground and expand into those areas of mutual interest.

In closing, it is easy to see why networking is so complex. There is a lot to be considered. Nobody grows up with a networking gene in his or her DNA. It is a learned skill. By following some of the tips I have provided you too can get "connected". While I have never thought of making new contacts as merely a lead for a job search, I can tell you that it has been the most enjoyable part of my career. I am one of those individuals that truly feel that the most important thing to me, over the last 35 years, is not what I have accomplished but the people that I have met along the way!

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In Bounds

By Jack MacKenzie, CGCS
North Oaks Golf Club

I consider myself one of the luckiest men alive. Today I celebrate with my wonderful wife one year of marriage.

Not only is Kim witty, charming, intelligent, funny and attractive, but also she has the patience to put up with an often times retentive superintendent husband. And the latter means a lot especially when her spouse's work demands many hours and a product close to perfection. I truly appreciate her attributes and regularly let her know how much she means to me in thought, word and deed. However, the lesson to love and show appreciation was learned the hard way.

As is so often the case, my first marriage, which ended in 1993, was dedicated to even longer work hours and an almost maniacal attitude toward my job. It was my understanding that to make it to the top of the profession I needed to work at least 10 hours a day and make sacrifices along the way. Sadly this included putting my family on the back burner. My wife at the time became quite bored raising two children without me, and chose a different path for her life than marriage. Throughout my first marriage in my mind I had foolishly thought my wife KNEW what to expect and would acclimate to my schedule.

In hindsight I should have seen the dissolution coming. But my selfish quest to be the best at my job blinded me to the fact that to be part of a family I needed to be present. The divorce was an eye-opener. And perhaps it started one of the best journeys of my life, one back to fatherhood.

It began with taking Thursdays off to be with my young children, and attending ALL of their functions, including school, chaperoning at every opportunity. I saw the Muppets twice, went to several museums and zoos, toured the local nature centers and led a troop of kids around the city of Wyoming to visit the local businesses. Events included ice skating, gingerbread house construction, snow shoeing and the logging of many, many miles cramped inside a yellow bus built for munchkins. To be factual, the elementary school in Wyoming is a long, long way from the Twin Cities, especially inside a bus packed full of excited juveniles. And there were also the T-ball, baseball and basketball games, plays and band concerts and who could forget Parent/Teacher nights.

However, besides participating in the extracurricular activities, I watched my children grow up, make new friends and have fun in school. At first they would hang by me with their little clusters of pals, and then in the later years my heart would bruise as "Dad" was no longer a novelty, but rather a nuisance to be avoided. All part of growing up they say, and I wouldn't have traded my injured ego for a minute without them.

I learned a lot in the course of my divorce. Tolerance, acceptance and most importantly, the value I was as a mentor to my children rather than just a provider of a roof, the next meal or clothing.

My divorce also matured me into a much better partner. Love and marriage is a team

event, and the first time around I didn't understand the complexities of combining two different personalities to achieve one common goal. At the time my views were rather focused upon my making the money and my wife spending it while raising the kids of course. The emotional volatility of a separation and the finality of a divorce forced me to review my goals as a husband.

All along I knew that I wanted to have a deep relationship. At first I went the "rebound, live in girlfriend" route. Complete with two creatures, oh I mean children, who didn't have quite the same values as my kids did. Quite an education, right up until the day they accepted my invitation to move out of my house.

After a two-year hiatus from long-term relationships, yet full of dating many different women, I chanced upon my wife. I guess I give credit for my marriage to Bill Gates for inventing the personal computer and Al Gore for creating the Internet. You see, Kim and I hooked up through the personal ads!

Following an extended multi-year courtship we were married last summer on June 21st. Since then I have experienced a life beyond anything I ever imagined. You could say that the love I share with Kim was created in heaven. Even with a few bumps in the road, I wouldn't want to travel the highway of life without her. Kim is my best friend and understands the complexities of my waking on the dark side of dawn and beating the sunset to bed.

Kim consoles me when I'm crabby and makes the sun shine on my rainy days. She is the kindest, most sensitive woman I have ever known and I am curious what I have ever done to deserve her. But I am sure of several things; I will never, ever take her for granted. I will never place my job ahead of our relationship. And I will let Kim know every day of our lives together that I love her with all my heart.



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MOBILE: 612/282-0466
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YEAR JOINED: 1983

ANDERSON, PAT

CLASS: D
DELLWOOD HILLS GOLF CLUB
29 EAST HIGHWAY 96
DELLWOOD, MN 55110
BUSINESS: 651/426-4406
MOBILE: 651/470-8121
FAX: 651/426-0484
YEAR JOINED: 1984

ANDERSON, TIMOTHY

CLASS: C-GCSAA
LAFAYETTE CLUB
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MINNETONKA BEACH, MN 55361
BUSINESS: 952/471-0170
FAX: 952/471-7608
YEAR JOINED: 2001

BAERT, DANIEL

CLASS: C
CITY OF PIERZ
603 PARK AVE SE
PIERZ, MN 56364
BUSINESS: 320/468-2768
MOBILE: 320/630-5084
FAX: 320/468-2759
baertking@hotmail.com
YEAR JOINED: 2004

BEZANSON, JAMES

CLASS: C-GCSAA
PRESTWICK GOLF CLUB
9555 WEDGEWOOD DR
WOODBURY, MN 55125
BUSINESS: 651/459-0288
jamie_honda@yahoo.com
YEAR JOINED: 2004

DAHLBERG, DAVID

CLASS: A-GCSAA
MYSTIC LAKE GOLF CLUB
2330 SIOUX TRAIL NW
PRIOR LAKE, MN 55372
MOBILE: 651/336-1912
lonepinegolf@hotmail.com
YEAR JOINED: 1989

DAVIDSON, DONALD

CLASS: RETIRED-GCSAA
13209 285TH AVE N
ZIMMERMAN, MN 55398
BUSINESS: 763/856-3603
YEAR JOINED: 1998

DuCHARME, WILL

CLASS: A-GCSAA
RUM RIVER HILLS GOLF CLUB
16659 ST FRANCIS BLVD
RAMSEY, MN 55303
BUSINESS: 763/753-8847
MOBILE: 612/501-6524
FAX: 763/753-6106
theducharmes@charter.net
YEAR JOINED: 1996

FLATTEN, CASEY

CLASS: B-GCSAA
SHAMROCK GOLF CLUB
19625 KARKIN RD
HAMEL, MN 55340
BUSINESS: 763/478-9977
MOBILE: 612/799-5898
cflatten@hotmail.com
YEAR JOINED: 2004

GUSTAFSON, JAY

CLASS: A
WENDIGO GOLF CLUB
20108 GOLF CREST DR
GRAND RAPIDS, MN 55744
BUSINESS: 218/327-2211
jaygus@uslink.net
YEAR JOINED: 1989

JENSEN, PETER C.

CLASS: A
BOIS de SIOUX GOLF CLUB
Box 53
WAHPETON, ND 58074
BUSINESS: 218/643-2327
YEAR JOINED: 1990

JOHNSEN, AARON

CLASS: STUDENT-GCSAA
SOMERSET COUNTRY CLUB
1416 DODD RD
ST PAUL, MN 55075
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FAX: 651/455-2282
john6333@umn.edu
YEAR JOINED: 2004

REMITZ, KYLE

CLASS: D
FOREST HILLS GOLF COURSE
7530 210TH ST N
FOREST LAKE, MN 55025
BUSINESS: 651/464-3097
MOBILE: 651/269-3632
odremitz@yahoo.com
YEAR JOINED: 2004

RISBERG, CRIS

CLASS: C
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HUTCHINSON, MN 55350
BUSINESS: 320-234-7533

RYAN, ADRIC

CLASS: STUDENT-GCSAA
TOWN AAND COUNTRY CLUB
300 N MISSISSIPPI BLVD
ST PAUL, MN 55104
BUSINESS:
MOBILE: 651/263-2393
adricryan@hotmail.com
YEAR JOINED: 2004

SCHMID, MATTHEW

CLASS: C-GCSAA
WAYZATA COUNTRY CLUB
200 W WAYZATA BLVD
WAYZATA, MN 55391
BUSINESS: 952/473-6955
MOBILE: 612/366-4128
FAX: 952/404-2532
flytyier@hotmail.com
YEAR JOINED: 1999

SCHWEGMAN, KATIE

CLASS: ASSOCIATE
STONEBROOKE GOLF COURSE
2693 CTY RD 79
SHAKOPEE, MN 55379
BUSINESS: 952/496-3171
FAX: 952/496-0324
katie_schwegman@yahoo.com
YEAR JOINED: 1997

SHANDA, DALE

CLASS: B-GCSAA
PINE HILL GOLF COURSE
1689 CTY RD 61
CARLTON, MN 55718
BUSINESS: 218/384-3727
YEAR JOINED: 2004

STIRN, KYLE

CLASS: STUDENT-GCSAA
NORTH OAKS GOLF CLUB
54 EAST OAK RD
NORTH OAKS, MN 55127
BUSINESS: 651/484-1024
MOBILE: 507/398-8716
uks201@umn.edu
YEAR JOINED: 2004

SUNDEEN, ADAM

CLASS C - GCSAA
WOODHILL COUNTRY CLUB
200 WOODHILL RD
WAYZATA, MN 55391
BUSINESS: 952-473-5811
sunnyadam14@hotmail.com
YEAR JOINED 2004

TSCHIDA, TROY

CLASS C - GCSAA
ROLLING GREEN COUNTRY CLUB
400 EVERGREEN RD
HAMEL, MN 55340
BUSINESS: 763-478-2179
troyschida@hotmail.com
YEAR JOINED: 2004

WATERS, BARRY

CLASS: A-GCSAA
CLIFTON HOLLOW GOLF CLUB
W 12166 820TH AVE
RIVER FALLS, WI 54022
BUSINESS: 715/425-9781
FAX: 715/426-1461
barry@cliftonhollow.com
YEAR JOINED: 1996

WOLLA, CHRISTOPHER E.

CLASS: C-GCSAA
BRIGHTWOOD HILLS GOLF COURSE
1975 SILVER LAKE RD
NEW BRIGHTON, MN 55112
BUSINESS: 651/638-2152
MOBILE: 651/775-3407
FAX: 651/638-2153
cwolla@ci.new-brighton.mn.us
YEAR JOINED: 2000

YONAK, JOSH

CLASS: C-GCSAA
NEW HOPE VILLAGE GOLF
8130 BASS LAKE RD
NEW HOPE, MN 55428
BUSINESS: 763/531-5178
MOBILE: 612/242-7652
FAX: 715/381-8410
YEAR JOINED: 1996

2004 AFFILIATE MEMBER ADDITIONS

DUFAULT, RANDY
DAKOTA PEAT & EQUIPMENT
PO BOX 14088
GRAND FORKS, ND 58208
BUSINESS: 701/746-4300
MOBILE:
FAX: 218/773-3151
sales@dakotapeat.com
YEAR JOINED: 2004

FREIER, WALLY
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PO BOX 206
CHANHASSEN, MN 55317
BUSINESS: 651/738-0379
MOBILE: 651/303-6468
wallyfreier@visi.com
YEAR JOINED: 2004

HENDRICKSON, DENNIS
GREENIMAGE, LLC
12040 POINT DOUGLAS DR S
HASTINGS, MN 55033
BUSINESS: 651/437-7747
MOBILE: 612/889-9639
FAX: 651/437-3483
dghendrickson@yahoo.com
YEAR JOINED: 1972

MEYER, JOHN GCSAA
AGROTAIN INTERNATIONAL
18155 ITALY AVE
LAKEVILLE, MN 55044
BUSINESS: 952/892-6694
MOBILE: 952/334-6845
FAX: 952/892-6694
jmeyer@agrotain.com
YEAR JOINED: 2004

O'BRIEN, DAN
TIZIANI GOLF CAR
951 E 79TH ST
BLOOMINGTON, MN 55420
BUSINESS: 952/853-9836
YEAR JOINED: 2004

KIEL, TRAVIS
CLASS: C
MILACA GOLF CLUB
PO BOX 175
MILACA, MN 56353
BUSINESS: 320/983-2110
MOBILE: 320/420-1931
kiel_travis@hotmail.com
YEAR JOINED: 2004

KLATTE, CHRIS
CLASS: A - GCSAA
ELM CREEK GOLF COURSE
19000 HWY 55
PLYMOUTH, MN 55446
BUSINESS: 763/478-8592
chrisklatte9@aol.com
YEAR JOINED: 1996

KRAMER, JUSTIN
CLASS: C-GCSAA
MOORHEAD COUNTRY CLUB
2101 N RIVER DR
MOORHEAD, MN 56560
BUSINESS: 218/233-3831
FAX: 218/233-8095
YEAR JOINED: 2002

KUFALK, THOMAS
CLASS: C-GCSAA
FOREST RIDGES GOLF COURSE
21540 COUNTY RD M
CABLE, WI 54821
BUSINESS: 715/794-2561 X385
FAX: 715/794-2553
proclaimliberty@hotmail.com
YEAR JOINED: 1999

KUTZ, MICHAEL
CLASS: B-GCSAA
COKATO TOWN & COUNTRY CLUB
PO BOX 506
COKATO, MN 55321
BUSINESS: 320/286-2007
MOBILE: 320/224-6225
kutzmr@yahoo.com
YEAR JOINED: 1997

McCORMICK, BERNARD J.
CLASS: D
EDINBURGH USA
8600 EDINBROOK CROSSING
BROOKLYN PARK, MN 55433
BUSINESS: 763/315-8582
FAX: 763/315-8585
YEAR JOINED: 1988

NEGEN, TERRY
CLASS: B-GCSAA
THE CROSSINGS GOLF CLUB
WEST HIGHWAY 212 PO BOX 231
MONTEVIDEO, MN 56265
BUSINESS: 320/269-6828
MOBILE: 320/226-2887
FAX: 320/269-6828
tnegen@hotmail.com
YEAR JOINED: 1995

NELSON, GARY
CLASS: A-GCSAA
ABERDEEN PARKS & REC. DEPT.
612 SE 10TH AVE
ABERDEEN, SD 57401
BUSINESS: 605/626-7015
FAX: 605/626-7989
YEAR JOINED: 2004

NELSON, STEVE
CLASS: A - GCSAA
MISSISSIPPI DUNES GOLF LINKS
10351 GREY CLOUD TRAIL
COTTAGE GROVE, MN 55016
BUSINESS: 651-768-8588
FAX: 651-768-7361
YEAR JOINED: 2001

OLSON, ANDY
CLASS: C-GCSAA
SOMERBY GOLF CLUB
320 20TH ST NE
BYRON, MN 55920
BUSINESS: 507/421-9264
MOBILE: 507/421-9264
FAX: 507/775-2152
aguy110@hotmail.com
YEAR JOINED: 2004

PETERSON, GEORGE
CLASS: C
PEBBLE CREEK GOLF CLUB
PO BOX 250
BECKER, MN 55308
BUSINESS: 763/261-4656
georgep50@hotmail.com
YEAR JOINED: 1989

PETERSON, GREGG
CLASS: A
ZUMBRO VALLEY GOLF CLUB
PO BOX 76
KASSON, MN 55944
BUSINESS: 507/635-2821
YEAR JOINED: 1993

RASMUSSEN, TIM
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