Upcoming Events

August 27
MGCSA Championship
New Richmond GC
Host: Tom Johnson

October 8
Wee One Event
North Oaks GC
Host: Brian Boll

October 15th
Fall Shoot Out
Horse and Hunt Club
Host: Bill Gullicks
Meet Eric Counselman, Superintendent at Somerby Golf Club, “Motion W”, John Meyer’s second Super-In-Site review.
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Wow! Can you believe it is just past July 4, Independence Day? I hope everyone had a great holiday with family and loved ones. Seems like it should be closer to Labor Day, doesn’t it?

Based on the last 10 days, summer is definitely here! If we don’t see any more of that weather this year, that would be fine with me. At least that last stretch was a bit drier than the similar run we had last summer. I find when we get into periods of weather like that it is as important to manage the health, physical and mental, of your key staffers as it is turf health. Long days in that heat dragging a hose is not much fun. Better than shoveling up washed out bunkers, but still not fun at all. Making sure people are getting enough water, rest and food is a real juggling act at times. I still manage to run myself into the ground during these times even though I know I have a great staff around me. I don’t know if I will ever learn!

From the GCSAA side of things there is some good news to report on the NPDES legislation. Currently, H.R. 872 has been included in the House Farm Bill Draft Proposal. This would eliminate the need for the NPDES General Permit, etc. to spray on, in and around waters of the US. However, the other side of the aisle let this same legislation drop from the Farm Bill Proposal. I strongly feel more legislation, more fines, more paper-work, more…anything is not the answer. Responsible use of any product and further education are. As golf course superintendents I believe we are the best educated and most responsible users of any end product.

The GCSAA will be coming out with more “Action Alerts”. I strongly encourage everyone to do their part and be heard. Contact your elected officials locally and federally. Be a voice, be an advocate of our professionalism. Our law and policy makers want us to be involved. Please take the time and respond to these “Action Alerts” from GCSAA. If you really feel passionate about some of these issues, be pro-active and contact these people on your own. We are a big industry of small businesses and we are significant contributors to our local economies. We matter and we count for more than just great golf conditions!

One final note: As I see it, we are about 5 weeks from safety. Why? I look to August 15th as the day that if I haven’t killed it, I can’t. At that point we are losing 3-4 minutes of daylight per day. Yes, it can get hot, but it will not stay hot for long. The sun angle is lower which takes a little stress off things. Disease pressures are lower. We have aerified or are near aerification time. The mornings start getting “crisper”. The mist starts to come off the ponds again in the mornings. August 15th, my Independence Day!

2012 seems to be the year of managing extremes. Despite the heat, humidity and all that goes with it find some time for family and loved ones. We are almost there….
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In Bounds
by Jack MacKenzie CGCS

A short while back my wife Kim and I went on a weekend ‘road trip’ to Grand Marais on a mission to check out their annual wooden boat show. Cool stuff…many of the boats were hand crafted at the North House School and by local boat masters…and talk about handsome! The display, both on and off the water was very impressive, but not as personally enlightening as our ‘road trip’ entertainment.

To make the miles melt, my spouse and I have learned that audio books can be a very welcomed distraction. We have embraced the funny, the tragic and the dramatic productions written by many fine authors as Kim and I adventure about. On this trip we listened to something enriching, enlightening, inspirational, emotional and very, very educational…

Men Are From Mars and Women Are From Venus by Dr. James Gray.

Although each of us had read the self-help book back in the early nineties while struggling with relationship building after challenging divorces, we obviously had forgotten some of the lessons as we intently listened to, paused the cd and discussed the Dr.’s perceptions. Also, as our relationship had matured with time so had our ability to communicate through constructive or destructive habits. Over time we discovered that we forgot how different the sexes really are.

Our audible journey presented material we already knew…but had either forgotten or through living patterns stopped practicing. Lets face it, often times relationships get into ruts and if not appreciated those ruts can become communication crevices; difficult to overcome and sometimes insurmountable. Men Are… brought Kim and me back to reflecting upon our inherent differences, both good and challenging, and gave us tools to improve our marriage…not that either of us have been or were ever dissatisfied with the other.

The chapters took us through many scenarios, some quite funny and some gravely serious, but each with a lesson. Beyond physical aspects, we are as different from each other as Dollar Spot (continued on page 32.)
Some would say that with the arid fall, winter and spring we are experiencing that proper drainage is not very important at all. In fact, probably some golf pros, general managers and greens committees may be speaking that kind of language as I write this. However, forward thinking, progressive golf facilities are possibly looking for ways to budget some unexpected money that may be becoming unleashed for some capital expenditures to further improve their course and put it in the best possible condition to perhaps be more attractive to prospective members or the golfing public in general.

When speaking of the importance of “proper drainage” to golf courses I like to think in terms of “infrastructure upgrades”. Most of North America’s urban areas are in dire need of these upgrades to roads, bridges, sewers, water mains and the like. A large amount of this infrastructure can be 50 to 100 years old and significant advancements obviously have been made in product development and installation techniques.

I believe the same can be said for most golf facilities. Many golf courses do not hesitate to spend one to two million on irrigation system renovations and most of these upgrades are on only twenty to thirty year old irrigation systems. While I understand
this type of infrastructure spending for
the golf course I can’t help but ponder
how often it is utilized, for instance
unless a course has truly adopted the
deep and infrequent watering mantra
that I totally support (but few clubs
really practice), I purport that the only
times the irrigation heads are really
used are after an aerification event and
it may be a little dry and windy on their
playing surfaces. Let’s face it, most mid
to high-end golf courses really only
hand water (see popular twitter hash tag
#whosgotmyhose) their putting surfaces
these days which gets me to my point,
if golf facilities will routinely spend
this type of capital on an irrigation
system, why won’t they spend it on
equally important infrastructure (in my
eyes anyways) like subsurface drainage
upgrades?

Drainage infrastructure upgrades
are generally a quarter to half the cost
of an irrigation system replacement
and will generally last almost twice as
long as irrigation pipe, which is under
constant head pressure unlike a gravity
flow drainage system. But what is the
value or importance of drainage? Well,
the last two hot and wet summers have
really solidified that non-argument.
Simply put, when wet soil gets hot
turfgrass roots will bake. When they
bake, turfgrass roots shrink upward
and when they do so the turf plant is
susceptible to a host of diseases and
insect infestation issues. In essence,
my take away point in this article is that well thought-out golf subsurface drainage infrastructure is the best way to get your turfgrass plant healthy enough to withstand the environmental onslaughts that Mother Nature frequently throws at you. Now before you think I am against irrigation system upgrades, I will say they are also a major player in aiding in turf health as well. Irrigation and drainage are the most important tools in a golf superintendent’s arsenal to impact on positive soil moisture content, which again promotes the healthiest turfgrass plants. I believe it was Donald Ross who coined the popular phrase “the three most important components to a successful golf course are Drainage, Drainage and Drainage”.

Obviously, that phrase is likely well over eighty years old and one could easily argue that we are not driving around in cars from that era, so I will counter that with while that is certainly true, shouldn’t careful, thorough drainage still be in the top three? Precipitation event frequency really hasn’t changed. We still need to manage the excess moisture. Currently, many water challenged facilities are looking in to recycling as much course runoff as possible back to their facilities. Moving forward, this type of rainwater management will begin to be adopted by