



# Looking Ahead, Looking Back

*October is the perfect time to evaluate our efforts and programs of the past season to prepare programs and budgets for the next golfing season. We all know how vital drainage and irrigation are to successful grass-growing, and this past summer thoroughly tested everyone's irrigation infrastructure. Now is an opportune time to make long-range plans with decision-makers at your facility concerning quality and ample water sources, as well as updated pumping stations and irrigation systems. I was very fortunate this season that several years ago, the entire irrigation infrastructure at my club was updated. The long-range planning committee at Elgin Country Club realizes the importance of this and has plans for updates 17 years from now. And I wouldn't stop with just the irrigation system—take into consideration the other extreme of too wet and update all surface and subsurface drainage. After all, you are protecting the number-one asset at your facility.*

*Fall is the time to draw upon lessons learned to better address long-range issues like irrigation, drainage and grass selection.*

Another consideration for long-range planning this fall is the introduction of grasses that are best suited for a particular golf course. This issue is most paramount for golf courses utilizing effluent water in the far southern regions of the United States. This past winter, I played several rounds of golf with members from Elgin Country Club at a golf course in southern Florida. The entire facility is watered with effluent from the surrounding community. As a test run, the club replanted its practice facility with salt-tolerant paspalum to see how the members responded to the playing surface. The test run also allowed the superintendent time to experience growing in and managing the grass. The members loved the new paspalum surface. The entire golf course had a successful renovation this past summer with a surface the members like and a turf that is easier to maintain given the use of effluent water.

On Mondays, when Elgin Country Club is closed, I converse with retired long-time superintendent Bill Leith. During one of our Monday meetings, Bill left me his collection of *Bull Sheets* dating back to the early 1960s. I haven't had a lot of time to read all of the issues, but in browsing through them one person seemed to frequent many editions: Dudley Smith. So many of the things we enjoy with the MAGCS and GCSAA and our golfing community come directly from the efforts of Dudley. Thanks, Dudley.

My 10-year-old son, Jonah, is at a stage in his life where he questions everything. The questions concern nearly every possible subject matter and almost become annoying due to frequency and persistence. There was another person in my life who questioned every single aspect of growing turf and performing the tasks of being a superintendent. His questions at Kishwaukee Country Club were relentless, each and every day. He would approach me at the end of each day with a slight grin to set the stage for another question-and-answer session. This memory always brings a smile. Thanks, Derek. 