

## EDUCATION RECAP

Charles Anfield, CGCS, *Heritage Bluffs Public Golf Club*



# “The ITF and You”

*The Illinois Turfgrass Foundation (ITF) was established in 1959. It was set up as a nonprofit organization dedicated to supporting turfgrass research and education in Illinois. The ITF sponsors the IPTC, golf outings, field day and other fund raising activities. Funds derived support outreach and education, and research – both applied and basic.*

This year's IPTC (Illinois Professional Turfgrass Conference) was held in a new location at the Renaissance Schaumburg Conference Center. This brand new, modern facility was built in 2006. The location is accessed off of route 53 which makes it easier to get to, for a lot of people. The ITF responded to its members "needs" from surveys and feedback that a new facility and location were necessary. It was a nice change. There was plenty of room for parking, the amenities were comfortable, roomy and swank. Luke Cella was there at the check in area to meet and greet the attendees and presenters. It was a great setting to network, check out some new products and maybe learn a little bit about turf care. It felt relaxing and soothing to attend the education sessions in the meeting rooms titled; Nirvana A, B and C, Euphoria and Utopia.

This show is always one of my favorites. The timing is good as the growing season is over and I have a little more time to be away from my operation. If I have to choose to go to ONE of the many Turfgrass Conferences out there, THIS IS IT. I know for some, due to budget constraints this was their "national show". The IPTC education is always strong, catering to; Golf, Lawn Care, Sports Turf and Equipment Technicians. There is something there for just about anyone in the Turf Care Professions. This is the show where I meet all of the people who sell the products I purchase. It's where I get to ask questions on any of the products I might be purchasing in the coming year and maybe find out information about new products or unfamiliar suppliers I was not aware of. I get to kick the tires and equipment I've looked at in the catalogs or viewed on line. I get to meet all of the educators, ask questions in person



*Jerry Dinelli (I) visits the trade show floor at the 2008 IPTC.*

about specific turf related questions. I get to expand and tighten my network, meeting with other Golf Course Superintendents, Distributors, Academics, and meet some future Superintendents.

There was so much to see and do but I'll offer a few highlights on some of the education.

Terry Buchen, CGCS, MG was in person to present his "Travels with Terry" slide show on equipment modification ideas. He is a contributing writer for Golf Course Industry magazine. He has scanned the globe, toured shops and taken photographs. He presented some creative ideas from Equipment Technicians

who have modified and improved existing turf equipment or fabricated stuff to improve equipment functions. This was one of those shows, "you had to be there" to see in person. For more information, go to [golfcourseindustry.com](http://golfcourseindustry.com) and click archives, Travels with Terry.

Dr. Tom Voigt from the U of I made a presentation on Playable Rough Research Results. He made a comment that stuck in my mind. He said after surveying many undisturbed naturalized sites like graveyards and railroad right of ways, the ever durable and highly functional Kentucky bluegrass was a major component along with some of the natives. Hmmm, good old KBG.

Dr. Trey Rogers from Michigan State University made a presentation on research he conducted on 18 different ball repair tools. His research revealed that if ball marks are repaired correctly, the tool doesn't matter. That being said, some tools are better than others. The restricted entry tools did the least damage in untrained hands. Restrict the entry=restrict the damage.

Jean Payne from the Illinois Fertilizer and Chemical Association made a presentation on the future of fertilizers.

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Some of her key points:

- Water quality will become a larger issue.
- Public perception is positive with horticulture, not so good with agriculture.
- There are few stories about the benefits of fertilizer and chemicals, mostly negative.
- Politicians are not informed. We need to educate them to deal with negative perceptions.
- Agriculture is the largest industry in Illinois.
- Water quality drives legislation, municipalities are under pressure to reduce run off pollution.

She made a humorous comment about organic fertilizers and food that got the crowd roaring. Rusty Stachlewitz of the Illinois Lawn Institute then had the "pleasure" of following Jean and making his presentation on Organic Fertilizers. He made a good case for the benefits of organic sources of fertilizer for turfgrass. Some of those are:

- Organic fertilizers feed the soil and build up healthy microorganism populations.
- Organic fertilizers are made from renewable sources of animal or vegetable matter.
- Because of the slow release characteristics there is less chance of burning, leaching or run off.
- Studies have shown disease suppression.
- The public is more comfortable with organic fertilizers.

Ty McClellan, USGA Agronomist gave us an update on some USGA activities. Some of his key points included:

- This year's weather was much below normal. It was the 27th coldest out of 113 years.
- We never reached temperatures that create summer bent grass decline=healthy bent.
- It was also the 112th wettest out of 113 on record. Perfect for cool season turf.
- Methyl Bromide is being re-labeled in 2010. Turf may not be on label in 2011. If you're planning on gassing and regrassing, do it now, or soon.
- Golf Digest has changed their wording on conditioning for their Panelists in the rating system. They are promoting firm, fast rolling conditions. This is a change in being green is better philosophy.
- Green covers do not protect turf from crown hydration in low lying areas. Drainage needs to be improved.
- Cost saving measures for 2009: include
- With loss of sponsorships, there will be a decrease in money available for turfgrass research.
- Reduce flower beds and ornamentals on course.
- Reduce bunker maintenance, reduce rough maintenance.
- Decrease clipping removal from fairways. 1/3 lb. N is lost each year.
- Promote more use of PGR's. Benefits include: better turf, deeper roots, and decreased irrigation requirements.

- To reduce overtime expenses, promote a 7 hour work day.
- Be a skeptic on sugars or "snake oils". Do the homework on research.

Derek Settle took the stage and he reiterated the "easy" summer. There were a few challenges along the way.

- The slow green up in the spring did not promote winter injury recovery.
- He only had 9 days above 90 degrees in Lemont. There normally are at least 20.
- The warm (not hot) humid nights promoted more dollar spot during the summer.



*The folks from Illinois Dept. of Agriculture discuss Emerald Ash Borer at the IPTC.*



*A few of MAGCS members (l to r) Al Fierst, Dave Ward, Dan Marco, Tim Anderson, CGCS and Dan Charlton, make up a great roundtable discussion.*

- We had the very unusual heavy rain effect caused by several hurricanes named Gustov and Ike.
- Anthracnose in fairways is a good method to get rid of poa annua.

The ITF borrowed a successful formula from the CAGCS, the ever popular Round Table. It was interesting to note of the five guys in discussion, 3 were past CAGCS Presidents, one current CAGCS Board member, and one Past MAGCS President current CAGCS Member. The "Big Hitters" were: Al Fierst of Oak Park CC, Dave Ward of Coyote Run GC, Dan Marco, CGCS of Ruth Lake CC, Tim Anderson, CGCS of Naperville CC and Dan Charlton of Evanston GC. All had been through renovations or major construction recently. The topics for Q and A related to everything from establishment, tree removal, green expansion, irrigation installation, construction techniques, Member PR and education, seed blankets, poa annua control and the weather

effect. The overall cumulative experience of those guys is probably a hundred years or more. That's the strength of the round table. Anyone doing any renovations in the future should dial one of these guys up. Erwin McKone, the 2008 IPTC Program and Planning Committee Chair, attempted to present slides of the different course construction projects during the session. He said he was out of sorts due to something about being "DeRooed" the previous night. The comment drew laughter but we were unsure what that meant. He did a nice job of moderating the round table.

The action down in Exploration Hall was highlighted by a nice, well lit, roomy show floor with many returning vendors and some new ones. Without these people the show does not happen. The concessions and facilities were top notch. Another idea that worked well on the trade show floor was the Solution Center. This was an area in which presentations were made. These included: Bunker face irrigation, Ash tree replacement and Options for choosing the correct seed. These seemed to be very popular with the attendees.

The IPTC put together another successful show, great job to all those involved. It was fun, educational, and informative. See you next year. **-OC**