

DIRECTOR'S COLUMN
Luke Cella, *Publisher*



Let's Talk About the Weather

We are just hitting the dog days of 2011 and already this year has left a few bite marks. A cold wet spring, a cycle of rainy weekends followed by heat and then heat and humidity, roll a few epic storms into the pot and that's 2011 to date. Only a few weeks to go until that magic date in August that most have imbedded into their brains when the days are noticeably shorter, the days are not quite as hot, the air seems to dry out and the stresses of summer turn into aerification schedules and project timetables.

The one good piece of news in all of this, is that people are beginning to play golf again. After such a slow start this spring, many wondered if people would even take their clubs out of winter storage and maybe skip the whole 2011 season altogether. In talking with a few members, it seems rounds are up lately, even outings are making a comeback.

The weather is an easy item to talk about – it is something we all have in common immediately. If you are alive today (and don't live in a plastic bubble or a space station) you most likely experienced the weather to some degree. How we relate to the weather is very personal and depends upon our interaction with it. I have to be honest, some days, my only interaction with the weather is walking from my office to my car. Sometimes, I might even roll down the window of my car and hang an arm out to really get the full effect of what it is doing outside before I create my own artificial environment.

As golf course superintendents, the weather is it. Just about every process that you go through each day is driven by the weather, so when you hit a stretch like this July – the days can meld together into one long sweaty, sticky mess.

One superintendent summed up a few of his long days this summer when he explained, "you know when you go into the garage from the house in the morning...you know there is trouble ahead when you open the big garage door expecting to feel a rush of cool air from outside and there isn't one." Or... "when I'm laying in bed at night catching the 9 o'clock news report and the little scroll on the TV still reads 92 °F, I know it's going to be a short night."

Another superintendent told me he was glad he wasn't 27 again going through this, now past the 50 mark. He explained to me, it is one of those years, no matter what you do, turf is going to die. Too few roots, too much heat, too much humidity, too much rain...you name it, some *Poa* is checking out and taking the rest of the summer off.

The weather is not going to go away, it will only offer you new challenges, that in the end, you will find a way to overcome.

Still another can tell it is going to be a long day when the sun just looks hot at 5:30 in the morning. It has that glow about it...that you know, is only going to intensify as it climbs into the sky.

I've visited a couple of courses in the past weeks, a few, I've been fortunate enough to play. I saw a few trouble spots here and there, always associated with poor drainage and/or restricted air movement. I noticed these spots but didn't really see them. You see, I was playing our great game, and they just became part of it. One group that I played with are not in our business and never even noticed any turf trouble being too wrapped up in their game, the bet or enjoying the afternoon on the links. You've got the trained eye. Because you see a little thin turf, you think everyone else sees it... but I know now, you are the only one on the property that even takes notice of it. – That's your job, that's your profession and no matter how hard you try you can't ignore it. In time you will fix it, and make it better because you care.

The weather makes life interesting. Interesting might be the wrong word after this recent stretch that all of you have been going through. At the very least you all have that in common and it will definitely be something to talk about at the next MAGCS meeting on August 22 at Bowes Creek in Elgin – Brad Legnaioli, CGCS host. **-OC**