

Both the Dom Grotti (Superintendent/Assistant) and Class C Championships will be contested at this event, so come out to Lockport and win some hardware.

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And to show just how lazy a Bull Sheet writer can be, I now turn this space over to **Chuck Barber** (Indian lakes Resort) for his description of some recent festivities at Butler National Golf Club:

The following is a short speech I gave about Mike Sauls and the time I spent working at Butler National Golf Club from 1999 to 2006. Butler National chose to recognize Mike as their "Man of the Year" for 2011. This was due in no small part to recovering from floods, tornados and whatever else the weather wrought on the Oak Brook layout in 2010. I believe it had more to do with his achievements throughout his career at Butler and the conditions he brought to the course since his arrival in 1990.

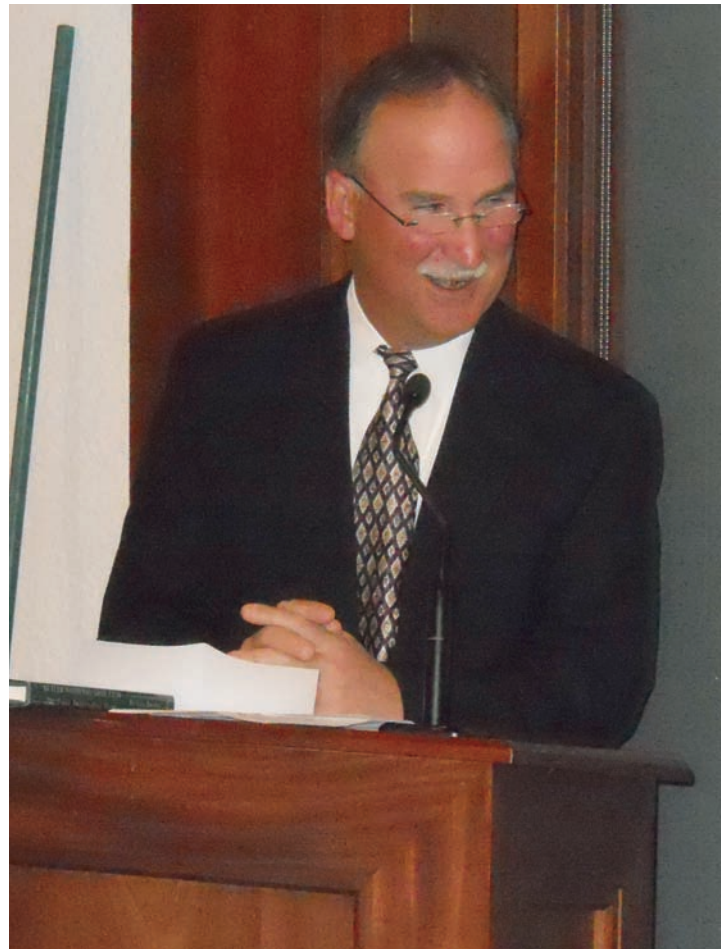
Golf Course Superintendents are sometimes the 'unsung' heroes of golf operations. The membership of Butler National sang loud and clear in praise of Mike, the grounds staff, and the golf course they are able to enjoy as a result of their work. All of Mike's former assistant superintendents attended the lunch, golf, and dinner event at the invitation of the membership. They came from as far as California and Colorado to be there for Mike and it was a very special experience for all of us. I wanted to share this experience with MAGCS as a reminder that employers do notice our efforts, they do take the time to say 'thank you' and they appreciate the value we as superintendents add to each facility.

I came to Butler National Golf Club in January 3rd of 1999 and I stayed through the blizzard that came that day, the floods and projects that ensued over the next 7 years until I left in 2006.

I moved to Chicago in the hopes of finishing my degree at the University of Illinois beginning in the fall of 1999 and Mike was the only golf course employer willing to hire me for a January start. It also helped that I was living with my parents four miles away in Western Springs and Mike felt it a benefit he didn't have to pay for housing me as he did the other interns. He also didn't see fit to pay me more than minimum wage either. His frugality is legendary.

When I joined the staff as the second assistant in 2001 upon graduating I thought I knew it all. I was hot stuff and I was proud to share that with everyone. I came to learn quickly, in the Mike Sauls, not-so-delicate sort of way, that I was wrong. I learned many lessons over the ensuing years that I draw upon daily in my current position as Director of Grounds at Indian Lakes Resort. I would like to take a few moments and share some of these lessons with you:

One of my first Sundays by myself as a manager (Jason Kahlstorf ALWAYS scheduled the most capable, veteran staff on his Sunday. I was left with the rookies and the questionably sober) one of the staff members forgot to rake the bunker behind the fourth green. In a confusing radio conversation I communicated poorly that we were raking



Butler National's Man of the Year, Mike Sauls.

bunkers in fairways while Mike was inquiring about green-side bunkers. I was requested to be present, immediately, behind the 4th green near the halfway house. I was dressed down quickly about my inability to be an effective manager, a good communicator, a turf manager, a Steelers fan, a democrat and a litany of other things. Mike was wielding a putter over his shoulder and many of you in the room were present during this conversation and for that I am glad. I truly felt Mike was going to hurt me.

The Lesson: Safety first

On July 30th of 1999 the mercury tipped out at 103 degrees with accompanying humidity. We observed actively growing disease well into the afternoon and Mike decided to spray fungicide in fairways around 5 pm. Jason Kahlstorf, Jason Tresemer, Tony Bisbee and I spent the next 6 hours spraying fairways. I remember the date for two reasons: 1.) it was my birthday and 2.) I was supposed to go to the Cubs game that day with the Mets front office staff in town for the game with a friend from college. I didn't ask to go to the game if you must know. If you already know the answer it is best to not ask the question. Mike left somewhere around dark and presented the 4 of us with a handsome prize: a 6 pack of Budweiser, 12 oz cans. I'll do the math for you: 1.5 beers per man. Jason Tresemer and I both forwent our halves for Tony and Jason to enjoy.

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The Lesson: Budget awareness is important

During greens aerification before the Salt Creek project was completed one of the staff members torpedoed an expensive Cushman turf truckster into the Salt Creek in front of #10 green. We lifted the operator and the equipment to safety as Mike was breathlessly running to the site. Mike inquired quickly: "IS THE CUSHMAN OK"! The reply was that yes, Hestor was fine and the Cushman would live to fight another day.

The Lesson: It is crucial to have priorities

The best time I had during my years at Butler National Golf Club was during the golf course renovation of 2004/2005. My responsibilities included establishing all the turf on greens, tees, and fairways, and coordinating all the activities with the irrigation contractor with our department. Jason Kahlstorf handled the bulk of the construction responsibilities as well as the staff's involvement in golf course maintenance and the construction work we performed in-house. Mike handled material ordering, logistics and coordinated all the work with Tom Marzolf, David Hunt and Tom Fazio. This involved loads of gravel, sand, topsoil, irrigation components, seed, fertilizer, etc and was really a Herculean task. On one particular day a truck driver delivering topsoil mistakenly dumped his load into a pile of bunker sand. I don't have to tell you how mad Mike was, but I will. His face became as red as I have ever seen, he folded his arms so tight around his chest I felt he might break his ribs and his strides were nearly double their normal speed and length. As he cursed and screamed in English and



Dan Sterr took part in the Saul festivities at Butler to honor Mike.

broken Spanish, the Estonian or Latvian truck driver calmly grabbed a shovel and scooped the contaminated soil and sand out of the pile over the next few hours and then went busily about his life. Some of those curse words are still hanging in space somewhere over Jorie Blvd.

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All former Assistants of Mike Saul's: (Clockwise from left) Ted White, Mike Carlson, Dan Sterr, Hugh Lynch.



The Lesson: You can NEVER over communicate

Mike used to talk about going to Board meetings and facing 'the music' for whatever was happening outside on the golf course that he felt was bothering the membership at that time. This was usually things like: green speed, green speed and green speed. I joked that he should wear his glasses (for those of you who haven't seen them, they are thick enough, I think, to see into the future) for surely no one would yell at someone wearing glasses. Mike's response was: "How about you go & yourself".

The Lesson: A sense of humor is a good thing

It might sound like a bad place to work from hearing these stories. At the time I might have agreed somewhat. Life can only be understood backwards but must be lived forward. Looking back I never learned more, I was never given the opportunity to do more, I was never given that much responsibility, I was never asked to be a leader before, I was never more aware of a larger picture. Many people ask me what it was like to work at Butler National and what it was like to work for Mike Sauls. My answer has been the same since the day I left. I tell people: "Mike Sauls is the best golf course superintendent I know. Working at Butler National is only as difficult as you make it on yourself". I use these lessons and many more in the way I do my job today and they will stay with me for the rest of my career. In my time at Butler National, Mike Sauls taught me a great deal about golf course management, working with memberships, peers, vendors, and the crew but to NEVER lose sight that family comes first. I try and emulate that today now that I have a family of my own. Thank you, Mike, for the chance to learn these things and I am glad the membership of Butler National Golf Club has recognized Mike today for the work he has done for the club for the last 22 years. It is my understanding that Mike and Errie Ball are the only employees to win this award. I don't imagine we'll see Mike mowing rough here at Butler when he's 99 years old! Thank you.



The other side of the ball had Mike's pic on it, not sure why anyone would want to strike that side of the ball.

OK, I'm back now. Don't forget to sign up for the 11th Annual John Buck Memorial Golf Outing which takes place on July 12th at Marengo Ridge Golf & CC (**Luke Roth** host). This event is always a blast with its 4-person scramble format and its post-golf feast, and benefits not only the MAGCS Scholarship Fund, but also the NWIGCSA's and the Kane County Farm Bureau's funds. Call J.W.Turf at 847-683-4653 to sign your team up.

As a public service, we offer the following helpful hint so you may hopefully avoid this...



When you repeatedly haul a heavy piece of equipment around a bouncy, bumpy golf course, and are usually going too fast to try and stay ahead of play, you may want to check the tow hitch periodically for signs of stress or fatigue before a catastrophe occurs. Tow-behind turbine blowers are another susceptible item (not that I would have any personal experience with that—I'm just sayin')



Mike's known as a man of few words, apparently the two imprinted onto the outing balls are a favorite with the membership.

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