

SUPER -N- SITE

Nick Marfise, *Park Ridge Country Club*

Erwin McKone, CGCS and Dave Miloshoff -N- Briar Ridge Country Club



This year's 2011 ITFI MAGCS Spring Golf Day will be hosted by Erwin Mckone, CGCS and Dave Miloshoff at Briar Ridge Country Club. The 27-hole golf course is located in Schererville, Indiana on the old Aaron Hart farm (48 minutes from I-88 and 355, measured just recently). Eighteen holes opened for play in the spring of 1980 and nine holes were added in 1989.

Erwin has been the Director of Grounds at Briar Ridge since 2004. During his tenure at Briar Ridge, he has implemented many changes to the golf course. Erwin notes, he could not have brought Briar Ridge to the point where it is today without his Superintendent, Dave Miloshoff. A common theme at Briar Ridge and the driving force behind the two's success, is their awareness of the impact that the golf course and their operations have on the environment. Both men not only work tirelessly to maintain a pristine course, but also to incorporate sustainable concepts whenever possible.

One of the green practices that they put into action is a visible vegetable and herb garden near the clubhouse.

Club members benefit from the visual aesthetics of the garden while also experiencing the results on their dinner plates. For a unique change of pace, Dave has even planted fruits and vegetables in some of the landscape beds by tee complexes. Tomatoes, eggplant, watermelon, pumpkins, and ornamental peppers have replaced more traditional annual plants. Dave has also converted once annual flowerbeds into native plantings using perennial plants. These expanded natural areas reduce labor and yearly costs, and allow more wildlife to move into the area. Erwin plans to add two beehives to the golf course later this year. The bees, as you all know, will help with pollination.

Dave and Erwin are also very conscious of their water usage at Briar Ridge. They have created different irrigation



Erwin (l) and Dave setting up their empty bee hives in early spring.

programs and have been converting many full circle heads to part circle heads, in order to water more efficiently. Another water-saving trick that Dave and Erwin employ is using compressed air to clean equipment and mowers instead of water. As a result of their efforts, not only is a natural resource conserved, but the course saves money as well. Erwin and Dave also hope to initiate their own watershed program by planting native grasses and other plants to help filter nutrients near drains and runoff areas.

Dave and Erwin have recently built a greenhouse behind their shop. The heat for the house is generated by water filled hoses running through solar panels. The hoses run under the floor and radiate

heat for the greenhouse. The addition of the greenhouse allows the staff to store and preserve many of the previous year's plants and bulbs in for future use.

As gas and oil prices rise, the importance of finding alternative fuel sources continues. At the moment, Briar Ridge Country Club is adding electric carts into their operations. Erwin and Dave have their eyes set on bio diesel as an alternative energy source for their facility in the future.

The pair has also been doing some of their own turfgrass research. One of their studies includes replicating Dr. Derek Settle's experiments using bio-stimulants. They are studying dollar spot resistance through cultural practices. Cultivation methods such as verticutting, aerification, and seeding are

(continued on page 17)



part of the experiments, as well as applications of dyes and surfactants. They are proud of the CO₂ backpack sprayer they created to aid them in conducting their experiments. Made from an old backpack blower, the CO₂ sprayer gives them the ability to apply the necessary rates for their tests without the hassle of mixing large spray tanks.

Erwin and Dave's dedication to the environment and turfgrass research shows the importance of the Illinois Turfgrass Foundation. As the current president of the ITF, Erwin wants to

continue to raise awareness of the ITF in hopes that everyone involved in this business understands the future importance of research to the game of golf. It seems the number of golfers is slowly declining for many different reasons. It is unknown how many people will continue to golf, or from where that next breed of golfer will come. As the economy continues to shift, and the money spent on large trade shows decreases, it will be up to us to continue to promote the importance to turfgrass research and find the funding for it.

(continued on page 19)



Briar Ridge's newly constructed greenhouse uses water heated by solar collectors to keep things on schedule for a spring planting.

Below: The clubhouse is neatly landscaped with many perennial plants and welcomes any guest to its premises.



The installation of the BigPar3 helps to create a new stream of funds for research. Not only does the event raise funds but it allows the golf course superintendent a platform to speak about present turf conditions and the importance of our profession. The great game of golf could not have come as far as it has today without research. It is through research that we have arrived at the knowledge that supports different components of the game, such as grass types, maintenance machines, cup cutters, pesticides, and constantly evolving irrigation and weather systems. As access to environmental resources become more limited in the future, it is important that golf course superintendents stay ahead of legislation by using scientific data to guide day to day operations. The end user needs to support this movement, and the BigPar3 is the conduit for this to happen.

As you continue to give your customer the best quality conditions possible, remember how important it really is to give back. The game itself relies on this. Here's to the ITF, Erwin, Dave and Briar Ridge and another 500 years of moving the little white thing forward. **-OC**

Superintendent Bios Erwin Mckone

- Erwin started at Briar Ridge in 2004, before Briar Ridge Erwin was the Assistant Superintendent at River Forest.
- He likes to play golf and the guitar, river fish, and shoot guns.
- Erwin Coaches his daughter's softball team.
- When he is not at work, Erwin is with his family; his wife Kristin, his daughter Molly and their dogs Ralph and Barney.

Dave Miloshoff

- Dave has been a resident of Indiana and grew up in the adjacent subdivision to Briar Ridge.
- Dave has had a passion for golf since he was a young kid.
- Dave began working at Briar Ridge through college. Dave attended Purdue University Calumet, and later got his Turf Degree from Penn State
- Dave is currently working towards certification; he is an active board member of the Michiana Superintendents chapter.
- Dave and his fiancé Stephanie will be married this September.



Left: Erwin the Apiarist is getting ready for his delivery of the bees in the coming days.

Below: One of the many areas at Briar Ridge designed to welcome bluebirds and other species of the animal kingdom.

