

ON COURSE WITH THE PRESIDENT
Bob Kohlstedt, *Fox Bend Golf Course*



Here We Go

Ready or not, we start another season of mayhem. I hope everyone found some time during the shortened "off-season" to recharge and spend some quality time with family. My wife and I used the GIS to escape the kids for a few days and spend some time as a couple, which is rare for us. As our children approach the high school years their activities seem to double. These activities take time, and we have to become good managers of our priorities. The winter months allow us more freedom with time, but as the season starts, the pressure builds. Sometimes hard decisions need to be made, and family functions get shortened or skipped. I believe this is the evil side of our profession. It is easy to get sucked in. We pour our hearts and souls into our little slice of the earth, and it consumes us. I challenge myself every season to try not to forget to set aside time for family and friends. Equally important is to make time to take care of yourself and your well-being. Play more golf, go to more games (Go White Sox!), or take a long weekend. Don't regret not having a life off the course.

The business of turf management has definitely changed over the years. I must be getting to be a grumpy old man, but it seems to me that greens keeping was more fun when I was younger. Not that I don't enjoy my chosen profession, but it's frustrating being asked to do the same, or more, with less money and manpower. Thanks to the wonderful state of this economy, there's no relief within reach. Still I am amazed what my staff can get done in a shortened day, with old equipment, and at the same wages as last season. For that I am very grateful.

We all know about learning from past experience and applying the lessons to current challenges. Extremes are not what any of us want to deal with, but after two decades of turf management it's inevitable that we will experience similar conditions again someday. Be proactive. Don't add any unnecessary stress to the turf during the "100 day war," because a shaggy green is easier to restore than a brown one. Concessions need to be made in dealing with smaller budgets. The demand for tournament conditions during extremes is unrealistic. As professional turf managers we need to be able to communicate this to the golfers so there is some understanding.

I often make the mistake during difficult growing conditions to think I'm the only one that's struggling. When soil temps wander above 95 degrees on 75% *poa* greens, the last thing you want to hear is a golfer telling

you that your neighboring course isn't having any trouble. That's what they want you to believe. You know it's not true. That's the time to reach out and talk with peers. Misery loves company. I have had some of the best conversations at MAGCS monthly meetings. This is one reason to attend the meetings and share experiences (and a cold one) with others who are willing to help.

The Midwest is here to help the membership spend a little time away from the pressures of the job. Blackstone Golf club will be hosting the next MAGCS event on June 19th. You should plan on bringing your assistant and competing for the Dom Grotti Championship. Assistants deserve a chance to recharge as well. Too busy? How about bringing the family out to the Kane County Cougars game on July 14th? This is a great opportunity to spend some of the above-mentioned quality time with friends and family. What about a long weekend with buddies north of the border wrapping up at Big Foot Country Club on September 24th? Then it's time to call an alum and compete for your alma mater at Calumet Country Club on October 22nd. The strength of this chapter comes from its membership. After attending other local and national events, it's easy to see that the Midwest Association of Golf Course Superintendents is one of the best.

So, here we go! I hope we all have the perfect season and that we all take care of ourselves, because nobody else will. **-OC**