

on 02/2014

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front cover

We all know why we aerify our greens, but did you know when most of our members aerify? Michael Paciga surveyed the membership and the results are published in his article.

PHOTO: Luke Cella

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2014 MIDWEST EVENTS

- 2/5 Midwest Hospitality Reception, Orlando FL
- 02/18 Annual Assistant Winter Workshop, Lemont IL
- 03/06 Midwest March Meeting, Lemont, IL
- 04/29 Midwest April Meeting, Silver Lake Country Club

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Midwest Association of Golf Course Superintendents (MAGCS) exists to promote professionalism and integrity, to provide networking, education and career enhancement opportunities to all members who facilitate the growth and enjoyment of golf.

On Course is published monthly with original member content. For advertising opportunities please call 630-243-7900.

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Winter Workouts



Brain Placzkowski
*Assitant Superintendent
Royal Melbourne CC*

While we are all enjoying the polar vortex that won't seem to go away, it's important to remember that this time of year isn't all bad. It brings all kinds of events that help us prepare for the upcoming season.

Equipment is undergoing essential annual service, numerous education seminars are being attended, and most importantly, relaxation mode is in full swing. Whether it's vacationing to somewhere warm, partaking in winter sports, or just spending extra time with our families, we all have unique ways of decompressing after a long season.

When the weather turns cold I particularly look forward to the weekly skate with the Grassholes at Addison Ice Arena. I'd love to call it a hockey game, but it's more like a big practice that turns into a scrimmage depending how many people show up. No matter what you call it, it's a blast. Our group is comprised mostly of golf industry personnel with a few local pick-up players intertwined. The talent levels range from high-level juniors and college players, even one former pro, to those



with virtually no experience at all. The best thing is we don't discriminate, we take everybody, and there's always somebody there willing to teach you something new, which is a good thing, because I was pretty green when I first joined the gang. Here I am four years and many bruises later, (mostly from falling on my rear end and accidentally knocking people on theirs... sorry Chuck) able to make it around in a fashion that somewhat resembles a hockey player. Our hour and a half of four on four battles generally produce some pretty stiff competition and trash talking, but all is well with a postgame frosty beverage.

If you are interested in getting involved, but worry about the expense, I would encourage you to check one of the many local Play it Again Sports stores. You can find decent used equipment at bargain prices. Another approach is to check out one of the many online retailers. Every company has varying levels of equipment to fit any budget. There's no reason you couldn't put together a decent set of pads and skates for \$200-300. Once you've gathered all your gear, it's actually a pretty affordable hobby at \$10 a week, (post game beverages not included).

So, whether you're a long time hockey buff or a newly found enthusiast, it's never too late to give it a try. It's a great opportunity to get some exercise and make some new friends. All it requires is an open mind and a little bit of effort. For anyone interested, we play every Tuesday at 2:00 PM at Addison Ice Arena from November to April. Feel free to send me an email for more information. Come on out, you don't know what you're missing, and remember...DETROIT SUCKS!!! @

When We Aerify: Survey Results

Michael Paciga, Kemper Lakes Golf Club

Golf course superintendents clearly understand the agronomic reasons aeration needs to be performed. These benefits include: Restructure deflocculated soils, reduce compaction, improve surface and subsurface drainage, break down thatch by increasing microbial action, reduce black layer, reduce dry spots, allow top-dressing to be incorporated into thatch and soil without layering and increase overall health of the turf.

Last year, you may have recalled, I sent out a survey to the superintendent members of the Midwest to find out about aeration timing. The following are the results of that survey. It's unfortunate that aeration doesn't get scheduled when the time is ideal. It is often scheduled according to the golfing calendar. Aeration too early in the year makes the recovery process take longer than expected and you may end up favoring the wrong grass species. In the Chicagoland area, it's recommended to core aerify when soil temps are above 55°F, but optimal times are when temps are between 60°F and 65°F. It is recommended that aeration take place when the turf is actively growing, usually around the end of April or early May for cool season grasses such as creeping bentgrass and poa annua. Additionally, the timing of aeration can affect the species that you want to interseed. For example, if you are trying to push more creeping bentgrass into the aeration holes and inter-seed, it would be best to aerify when creeping bentgrass is actively growing (ideally when soil temperatures are in the 60°F and 65°F range). When temperatures are below 55°F, poa annua would have the best opportunity to become the predominant species.

A total of 57 responses were obtained from superintendents of public and private sector golf courses with budgets ranging from approximately \$500,000 to \$1.5 million annually. The following charts summarize the results on the timing of aeration and the overall objectives of the superintendents. Data is also presented comparing the difference in timing of aeration by private and public golf courses.

Aerification Scheduling- Spring

The results of the survey show, according to table 1, that among the surveyed superintendents, both private and public,

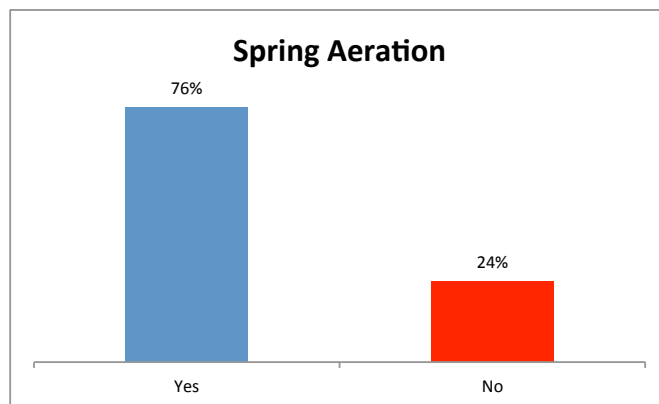


Table 1. Spring Aeration. 76% of all golf courses perform a spring aeration. April is the preferred month for aeration (58% versus 42% for May) because play is less.

about a ¼ of them don't aerify in the spring. Table 2 shows that most superintendents that do aerify in the spring perform the work in April.

It becomes apparent through the results that spring aeration is not as critical as the fall aeration to the superintendents. The overall objectives of the superintendents for the spring aeration are outlined in table 3. These results reinforce that spring aeration is important for thatch control and air/water movement. Due to the inclement weather Chicagoland's spring weather brings, most superintendents try to aerate during April when play can be minimal and recovery can often go unnoticed due to weather changes.

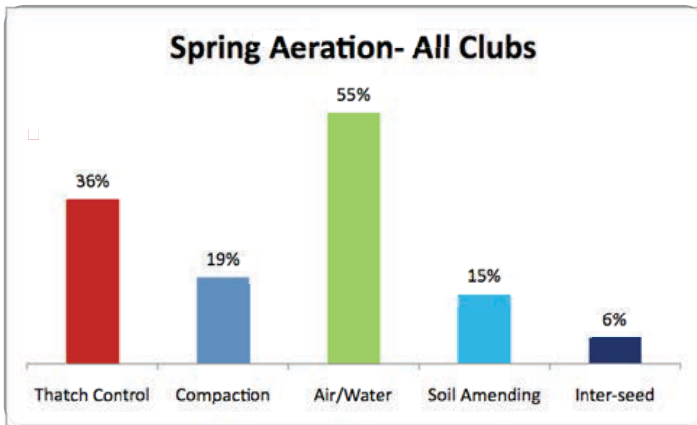


Table 3. Spring Aeration- All Clubs. The primary objectives for spring aeration in clubs that do aerate.

Aerification Scheduling- Fall

The fall aerification process is one of the most important agronomic practice scheduled on golf courses. According to the survey, 97.9% of the golf courses perform fall aeration. The timing of the fall aeration is important. The grass should still be actively growing to speed recovery. If aerification occurs too late in the season, the holes may not be completely healed going into winter. The optimal time to complete the process is September, normally right after Labor Day or within the next couple weeks. As the day lengths begin to shorten, the duration of air temperatures also begins to decline. This marks a special time as photosynthesis begins to decline as the plant begins to prepare for winter. A frost, which can occur at the end of September or early October, is generally the cue for the turfgrass plant to begin

cores to the surface will also bring viable Poa seeds to the surface further encouraging germination” (Reicher, 2003). Greens should not be core aerified in fall; only solid tine aerified as coring will promote Poa annua infestation. If aeration holes are not healed over, this may encourage poa annua infestation, as this species is the first to begin growth next spring. The unrecovered holes from the previous fall provide a perfect opportunity for germination next spring.

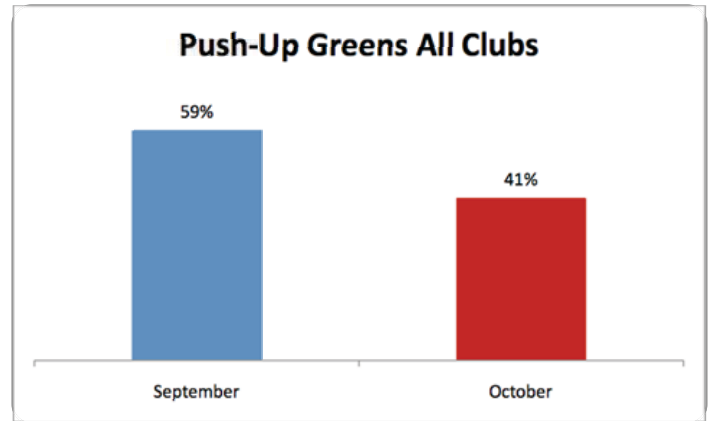


Table 5. Push-up greens all clubs. Members with push up greens typically aerify in September.

When is the Right Time to Aerify in the Fall?

Members at private country clubs often feel that their courses are the only ones that aerify in September. This is not the case. The survey cited earlier was conducted among public and private

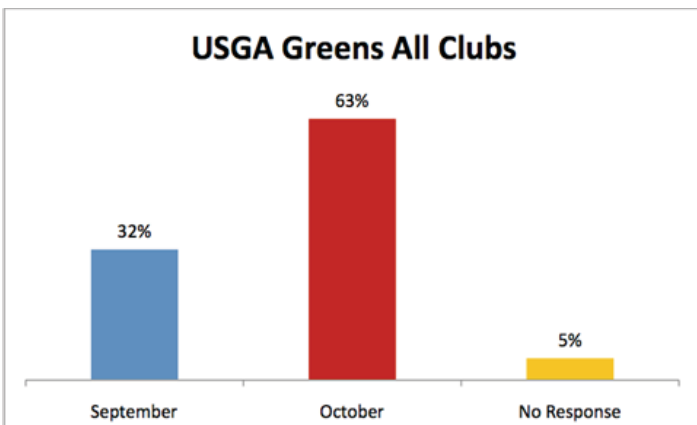


Table 4. USGA Greens All Clubs. When superintendents that have all USGA greens perform their fall aerification.

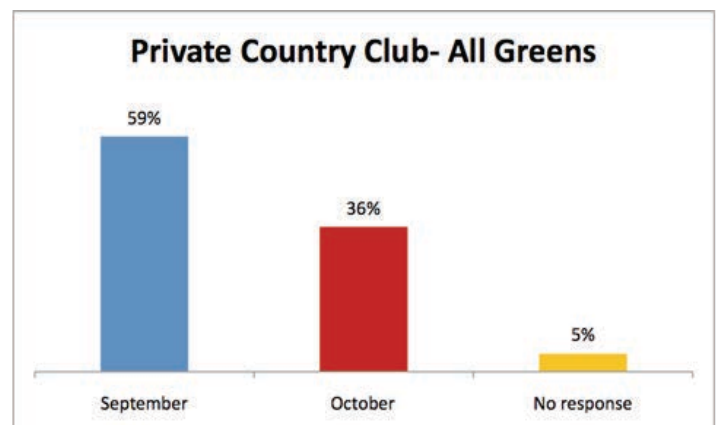


Table 6. Private Country Club- All Greens. Private country club superintendents aerify USGA or push-up greens primarily in September.

storing carbohydrates and signals root growth. At this point, growth of the turfgrass plant has declined significantly, which is a problem for many courses if aeration is scheduled too late into the fall. According to Zac Reicher, PhD from the University of Nebraska, Lincoln, “Poa annua germination peaks in September and October, but will continue to germinate throughout a warm winter and well into spring. Open holes from late aerification will encourage Poa annua germination. Additionally, bringing soil

course superintendents in the Chicagoland area. The following tables classify the practices of private and public golf courses on different green types (i.e. USGA and push-up). Table 4 indicates that most courses with USGA greens will aerify in October.

The opposite is true if the course has push-up greens. Most of these courses will aerify in September which is the optimal time for healing after the summer stresses and allow for the optimal

time to inter-seed and germination. Table 5 indicates that the majority of clubs, private or public, aerify in September.

Whether you aerify your greens in the early spring or late fall or both, whether you have USGA greens or modified push up greens, we can all agree the benefit of this practice is proven.

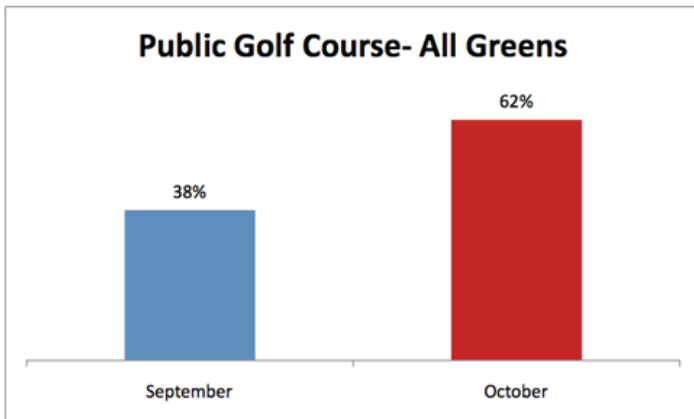


Table 7. Public Golf Course- All Greens. Public golf courses superintendents generally aerate both USGA and push up greens in October.

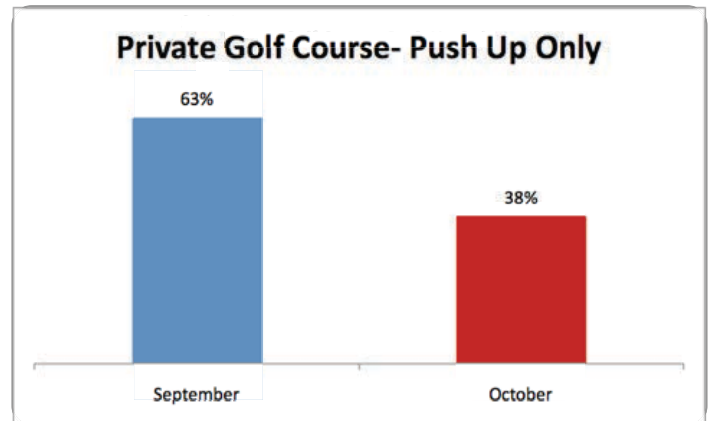


Table 9. Private Golf Course- Push Up Only. September is the optimal time to aerify push-up greens on private courses.

The survey results also indicate a difference between private and public golf courses relative to when they aerify in the fall. As expected (Table 7), public golf courses aerify in October due to revenue pressures. Most private golf courses (Table 6) with push up greens and USGA greens aerify during September for optimal recovery and benefit to the turfgrass plant.

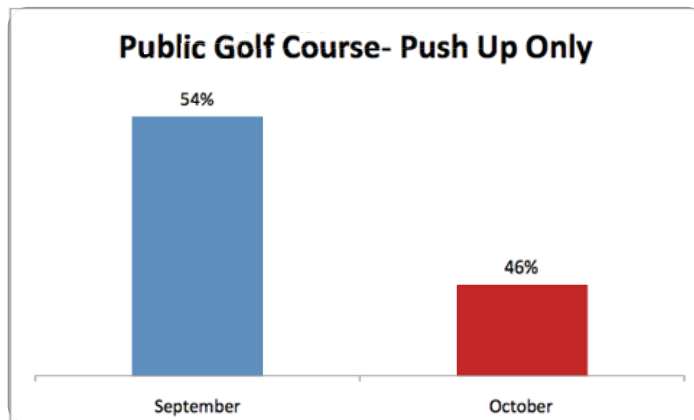


Table 8. Public Golf Course- Push Up Only. Public course superintendents with push up greens primarily aerate in September.

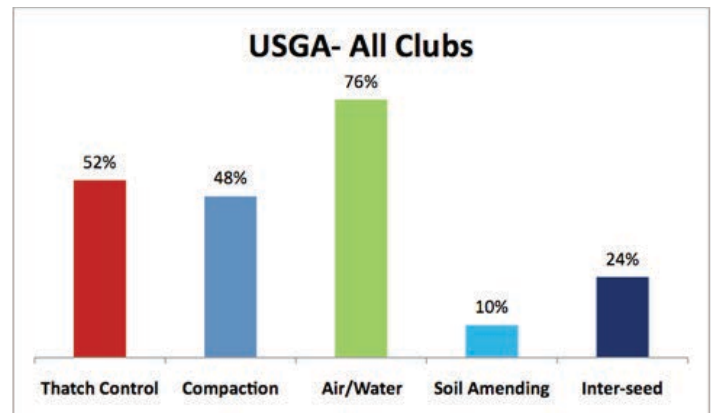


Table 10. USGA Aeration. Primary objectives of aeration from all clubs that have USGA greens.

To further demonstrate the importance of fall aeration especially during September when the turf is actively growing the data shows that the majority of both public and private golf course with push up greens aerate in September (Tables 8 and 9).

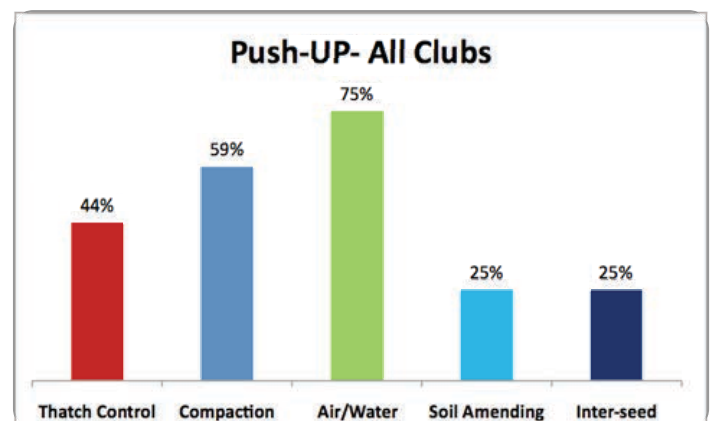


Table 11. Push Up Aeration. Primary objectives of aeration from all clubs that have Push-up greens.

The primary objectives for aeration of golf courses that have USGA vs. push-up greens differ dramatically. As stated earlier, USGA greens management is primarily concerned with thatch control and air/water movement as shown in Table 10. Golf courses that have push-up greens are primarily concerned with compaction. There is an increase in soil amending and inter-seeding by superintendents that have push-up greens (Table 11).



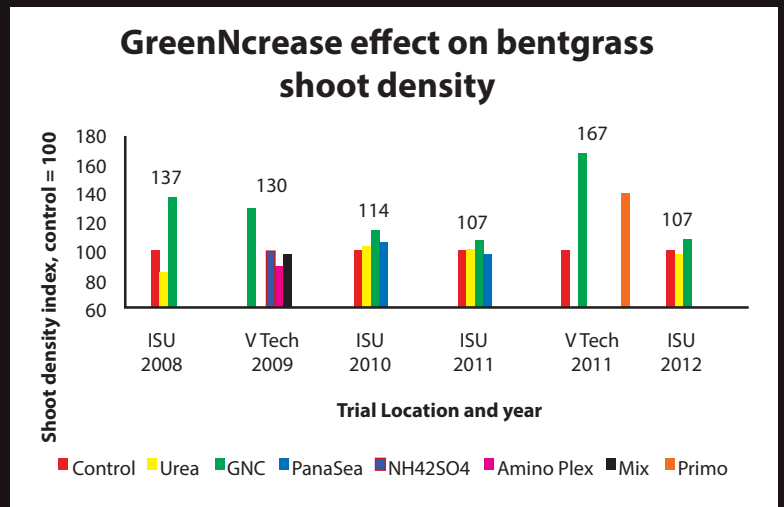
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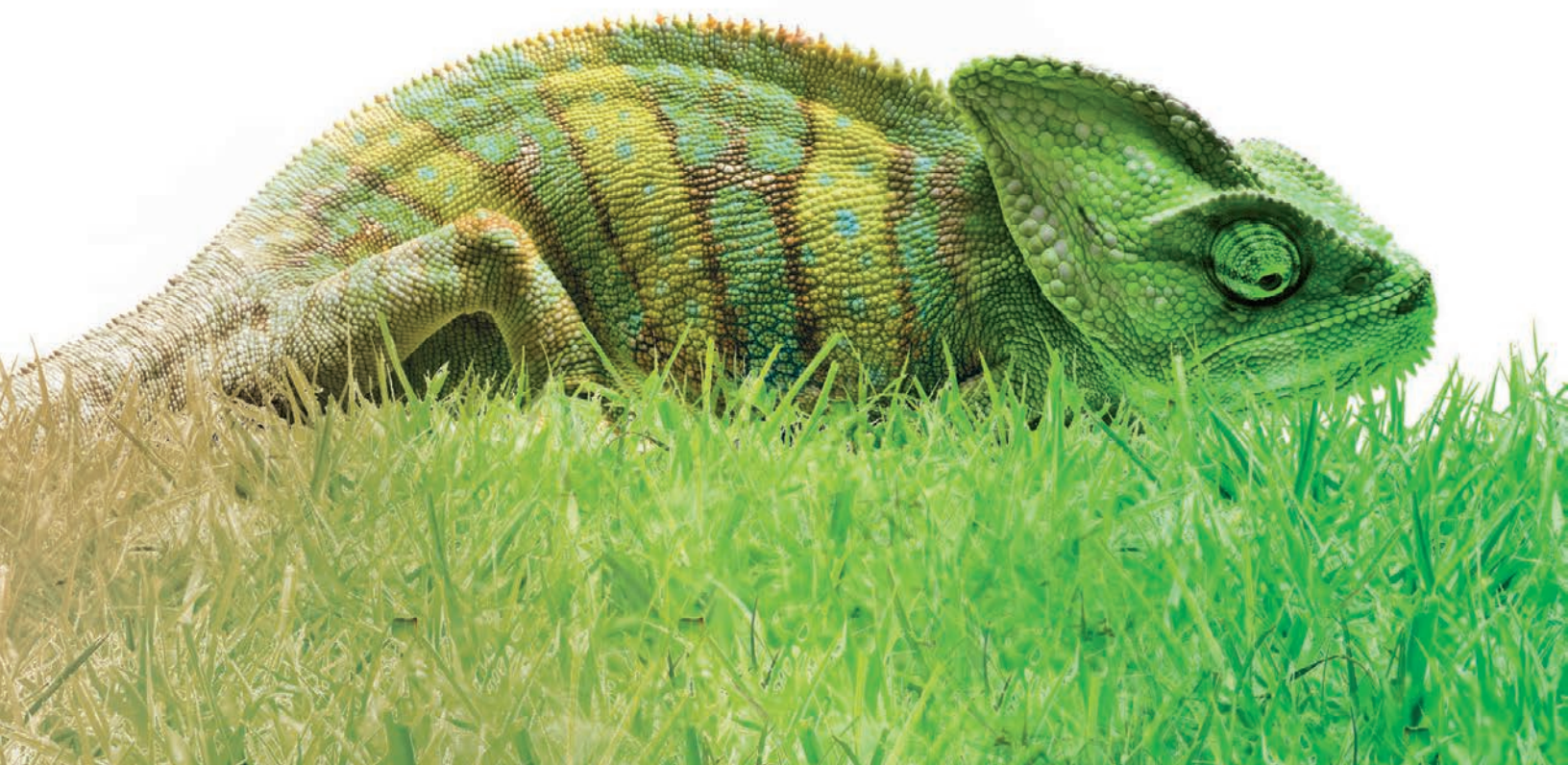
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BullSheet



FEBRUARY 2014

Dates to Remember

February 18 - Annual Assistant Winter Workshop - Midwest Golf House, Lemont, IL.

March 5 – John Deere Landscapes University at the Midwest Conference Center in Northlake, IL. Call 1-800-347-4272 for details.

March 6 – MAGCS meeting at Midwest Golf House in Lemont, IL, Dr. Ed Nangle and Chris Painter hosts.

March 11 – Conserv FS' Tech Day at Pheasant Run Resort in St. Charles, IL, Dan Murray, CGCS host.

March 12 – 30th Annual Chicagoland Forum at Naperville Country Club, Tim Anderson, CGCS, MG and Steven Biehl hosts.

March 30 – Deadline for nominations for GCM's Most Valuable Technician awards program presented in partnership with Foley United.

April 9 – CAGCS meeting at Lake Shore Country Club, Jeff Frentz, CGCS host.

April 29 – MAGCS monthly meeting and Spring Scramble at Silver Lake Country Club, David Kohley host.

May 5 - ITF/MAGCS Combined Event -Country Club of Peoria, Andy Morris Host.

It's nice to be here in the Midwest, where the only weather issues we face are the occasional tornado, the hundred-year flood that happens yearly, or the blizzard that stops us in our tracks. So we have to pick up a few sticks, squeegee off a bit of water, and plow a little snow. In Wales last month, golf courses got to REALLY experience Mother Nature's wrath in the form of huge waves off of the Atlantic Ocean which brought some unusual debris with them. Along with the assorted sea plants and garbage, Welsh greenkeepers had the pleasure of cleaning up all the stinky fish that were just too old or tired to swim back out with the sea when it receded. And there were some really BIG fish—this one weighed over 15 pounds (or is that what its market value was?)



In another of Her mood swings, Mother Nature brought us that polar vortex early last month, which really messed with ITF's Turf Conference 2014 on the 7th and 8th. Because many of the people scheduled to speak at the event and many attendees had difficulties traveling to Oak Brook on the morning of the 7th, the start was delayed until noon, and many last-minute alterations had to be made. Thanks to **Bruce Branham**, Luke Cella, the ITF board members, the presenters and the venue—the Hyatt Lodge—the event went on somewhat as planned and was a great success. Nice job everyone on calling those audibles from the line of scrimmage!



The Lodge at Hamburger University on 1/6/14. It doesn't look like it is -16°F.



Speakers were "skyped" in while moderators advanced their slides and relayed questions from the audience at the Turf Conference.

Our sincere condolences go out to the Dinelli family on the passing of **Frank (Jerome) Jerry Dinelli**—father of **J.D. Dinelli**—on January 19th at the age of 73. Mr. Dinelli retired from Northmoor Country Club in 1974, where he worked with then Data Control Systems (now IBM) on the first computer-controlled irrigation system—a man well ahead of his time. Rest in peace, Mr. Dinelli.

Congratulations to **Roger Stewart, CGCS** at TPC Twin Cities in St. Paul, MN on being named the recipient of GCSAA's 2014 President's Award for Environmental Stewardship. Rog, who once plied his trade in these parts at Riverside GC and Stonebridge CC (have I forgotten any?), has been an industry leader in environmental stewardship throughout his nearly 40-year career, and received his award at the Opening Session of this month's Golf Industry Show in Orlando. Great work, and well-deserved, Roger!

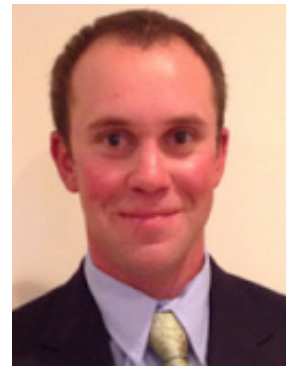


Roger Stewart, CGCS

Q: What is it called when you choose to use a cart at **Todd Schmitz's** course?
 A: A Phillips Park 'n' Ride.

BIG time movement in the superintendent ranks around town. **Scott Goniwiecha**, formerly at The Glen Club is the new superintendent at the Dunes Club in New Buffalo, MI. **Paul Bastron, CGCS**, most recently with Midwest Turf Products has taken over the reins at Kenosha Country Club. **Dan Tully** from Kemper Lakes Golf Club has moved to his new position at Twin Orchard Country Club. Lastly, Drew Barnett, who has been

with the Philadelphia Cricket Club for the last three years is the new superintendent at Knollwood Club, taking over for the retired **Randy Wahler**.



Drew Barnett

I think I've discovered the new Dream Job—golf course superintendent at Santa Clara Golf & Tennis Club in California. The reason? You'll be known for the firmest fairways EVER. Why? Because City officials have approved a special permit to use said fairways for 5,000 extra parking spots on games days at Levis Stadium where the 49ers play. Thank God it never rains in California...

Congratulations to Lauren and **Matt Harstad** (Calumet Country Club) on welcoming their son Tucker Carl Harstad into the world on January 14th. Tucker arrived after putting up a good fight to stay put at 8:19 PM weighing 8 pounds, 10 ounces, and 21.5 inches long.



Welcome to the world Tucker Carl Harstad.

A couple unique education events are on the horizon that are worth looking into. On March 5th, the John Deere Landscapes University will take place at the Midwest Conference Center at 401 W. Lake St. in Northlake, IL—call 1-800-347-4272 for information. Then, on March 11th, Conserv FS' Tech Day will take place at the Pheasant Run Resort in St. Charles, IL (**Dan Murray, CGCS** host). You can register by contacting Kimberley Schumacher at kschumacher@conservfs.com.

GCSAA recommends an item for your New Year's To-Do list: Record your service and education points!

Bull Sheet continued on page 13

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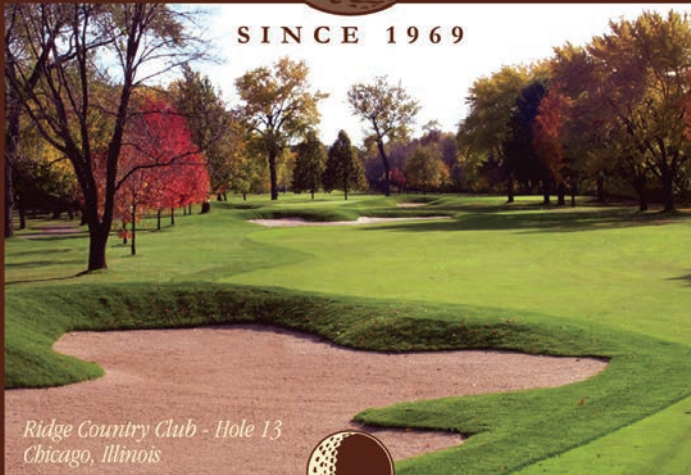


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On a related note, three Midwest members get to keep their CGCS's after their names, having successfully completed the recertification requirements through GCSAA. Congratulations to **Eddie Braunsky**, **Ricky Wilson**, and **me** for remembering to record all those service and education points.

Kerry Anderson is known to us all for many things, but NOT for his skills at coaching or commentating on basketball games. Or so I thought...



Brian Thomson's shop won "owning the largest toolbox on the planet award"

MIDWEST Doppelgänger



Could he and P.J. Carlesimo possibly be one and the same?

In its State of the Industry Report for 2013, Golf Course Industry had several promising trends to point out that are hopefully a sign of things to come...kinda. First, golf course budgets are trending up...sorta. In 2013, 37% of courses reported increased budgets versus 30% in 2012, while 29% remained unchanged and 34% were decreased—the latter two numbers being very similar to 2012 data. There has also been a consistent rise in profitability over the last three years. In 2011 32% of facilities reported turning a profit, while in 2012 it was 38% and 2013 showed 42% of golf courses being in the black. This does lead one to question whether our industry is truly getting healthier, or are other factors at work? Could this higher percentage of profitability and spending possibly be related to this statistic—in 2013 fourteen golf courses opened, while 157.5 (I'm guessing the .5 means an 18-holer closed 9 of its holes) shut their doors. That's a net loss of 143.5 golf courses last year. Ouch.

If your equipment technician is your most valuable employee, why not nominate him for Golf Course Magazine's Most Valuable Technician (MVT) awards program presented in partnership with Foley United? You can find the form at www.gcsaa.org—the deadline to submit is March 30th, and the winner will be announced in the July edition of GCM.

Thanks to the three hosts of last month's CAGCS Shop Tour held on the 14th. **Brian Thomson**, CGCS and Biltmore Country Club were the breakfast stop, followed by **Scott Hillyard** and Hawthorn Woods Country Club and finishing up with lunch at Wynstone Golf Club with host **Ben McGargill**.



Ted Soenksen (l to r), Rich Becker and Jeff VerCautren look over one of Wynstone's topdressers.

WE ARE GOLF—a coalition of the game's leading associations and industry partners focused on communicating the game's economic, charitable, environmental and fitness benefits to members of Congress—has launched a redesigned website with increased functionality, social media interactivity and streamlined navigation. Check them out at www.wearegolf.org.

Did you hear? The EPA has extended the deadline for sale and distribution of Methyl Bromide for golf courses from April 30th to November 30th of this year.

GCSAA has announced a new dues rate for the Associate membership class. For 2014, the rate will drop from \$185 to \$90 in an effort to engage more individuals in the employment "gap" between student and assistant superintendent.

MAGCS members in the media last month included **Chuck Barber** of St. Charles Country Club on TurfNet TV showing off his dedicated course set-up cart and all the goodies it carries; while GCI magazine featured Bob Lohmann's article "Divide and Conquer," suggesting adapting master plans into a dozen or so smaller projects that can be handled individually and with available funding.

On the 22nd of last month, Seven Bridges Golf Club and hosts **Don Ferreri** and **Dave Gelino** welcomed the MAGCS membership to the MAGCS monthly education meeting and 5th Annual Wee One fundraiser. A large turnout came out on a blustery morning for two fine education presentations from

From the Inside OUT

Chuck Barber, St. Charles Country Club

PHOTOS: CHUCK BARBER

"It is the neglect of timely repair that makes rebuilding necessary." – Richard Whately

Richard Whately was a British theologian and thinker who served as the Archbishop of Dublin for the Church of Ireland. I'm not sure what it was he was rebuilding all the time.



Interior decorating is not my thing, actually any kind of decorating is not my thing, thankfully I have a staff with combined talents that took care of it for me this winter.

I imagine having more than one church under your care left a lot of ongoing maintenance to do. That being said, the point I'm trying to make is that I neglected my office. A lot. It fell in to disrepair when I came to St. Charles Country Club in 2011. One day in December of 2013 I decided to change that. Here's how Jason Kahlstorf, our assistant superintendent, and long-time staffer Dan Clark rebuilt what I had neglected.

As you can see in the before pictures there are a lot of exposed wires, there isn't much in the way of storage for our jackets, rain pants, shirts, gloves, hats, and the irrigation computer was in kind of a tight spot. Further, no offense to Pete Leuzinger and Jim Keith but I just wasn't a fan of the chair rail

'lake loons' wall paper. I'm not much of a sportsman which is why I took it off and saved it for Dave Kohley. Finally, the irrigation map was on one side of the room and the computer was on the other. We wanted to have everything all in one spot for clarity's sake. Our goals were set: Update the office, relocate the irrigation computer and find a home for our personal junk.

It turned out to be not as simple as I'd hoped. Nothing in life is ever as easy as I think it should be. The original plan was to remove the carpet, the lake loons, repaint the wall board and the concrete floor. Removing the loons was not going to work so I made the decision to take down the wall board and the old drywall. I'm sure everyone was



Removing wall paper is easiest when you take out the wall board that it is glued to.

THRILLED about that.

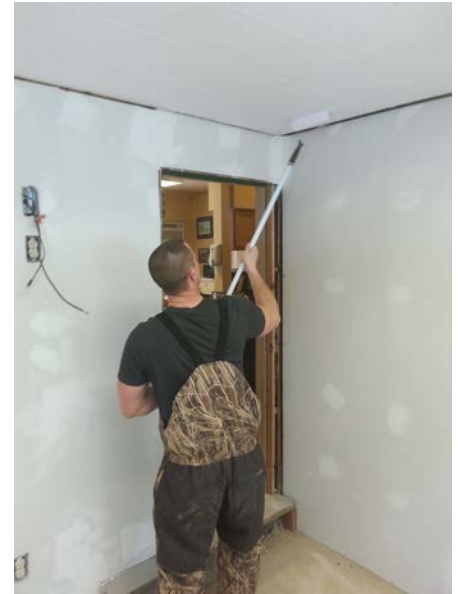
Now that the room was back to the studs Jason went in to the attic to move the irrigation system wires, run new internet cables, phone lines, cable, grounding wire and a bunch of other junk. I can't tell you how many times he had to crawl around in the attic. Further, I wanted to raise all of the electrical outlets off the floor and put them at desk height so he did that with the walls off. Finally, there was some insulation that had water damage so they replaced a few strips of the insulation, otherwise it was intact. Now that the carpet had been removed, the loons were gone, the old drywall had been stripped and the insulation replaced the rebuilding could begin.

The new 1/2" drywall went in next. Thankfully Dan Clark had a lot of experience installing drywall. He and Jason completed it all in a little more than a day. Thanks to one of the many 'dustings' of snow we had in December it took longer than anticipated. No big whoop. After the drywall went up Jason put drywall joint compound on all the seams and fasteners and let it dry overnight. The following morning the compound was sanded smooth. New outlets were installed all around the room to accommodate all the devices we use every day.



The new drywall took a day to hang.

The next step was to repaint the ceiling. I didn't know this but apparently there is special 'ceiling' paint and paint brushes. Go figure. We bought white ceiling paint that went on pink but dried a brilliant white. I got some on the floor but the next step would take care of that.



We made sure we put electrical outlets where we needed them. We painted the ceiling before the walls.

Rental Max in St. Charles was kind enough to provide a floor grinder so we can scrape off the old adhesive and stuck carpet off of the concrete floor. It wasn't easy. It was dusty. I mean really, really dusty. We put water down in small amounts to help with the dust. If you choose to do something like this remember to check your furnace filter frequently if it's nearby. Ours would get clogged quickly.

After the floor grinder went back to Rental Max two coats of primer were added to the dry wall. Jason then etched the concrete floor with a dilution of muriatic acid and water. It's important to have good ventilation during this process. This is a lesson I learned the hard way. After the floor was etched it was time to paint the drywall.



Etching the bare concrete floor ensures that it is clean and good adhesion for paint.

This is Dan's best side. We chose colors that looked good with our break room colors, which is right outside my office. Further, Dan finished painting the new windows that were installed a few years ago.

Dan did the crown moulding himself as well. It was his idea to add decorative inside corner pieces to the room. It makes cutting com-

Continued on page 22



Dan Clark did a great job of bringing the whole project together with colors, moulding and trim work.

plicated angles at the corners unnecessary and speeds up the finishing process.

Dan is a handy guy to have around because he was able to scale back the size of the cabinet housing or irrigation system components. Jason reinstalled the Rain Bird Maxi Interface Module (MIM), grounding, radio transmitter and all



Jason re-installed the irrigation controls into a custom built housing that will neatly hide all the wiring.

the electrical connections. If you have the chance to hire a former Leibold Irrigation service technician like Jason, I recommend it.

With the crown moulding up and the irrigation cabinet installed it was time to stain the floor. Dutch Boy products makes solid color stains. I was looking for a more marble look but the

concrete we had wouldn't accommodate it. I chose the color green. Get it? Green?

With everything done we moved back in again. This was a welcome change because all of the office furniture had been stored in our pump house and break room. It was nice to have a clean path to walk around the shop again. We added a few dry erase boards and calendars so we could better keep track of the golf calendar and our chemical and fertilizer applications. At the time of this writing the irrigation map is

at the framers.

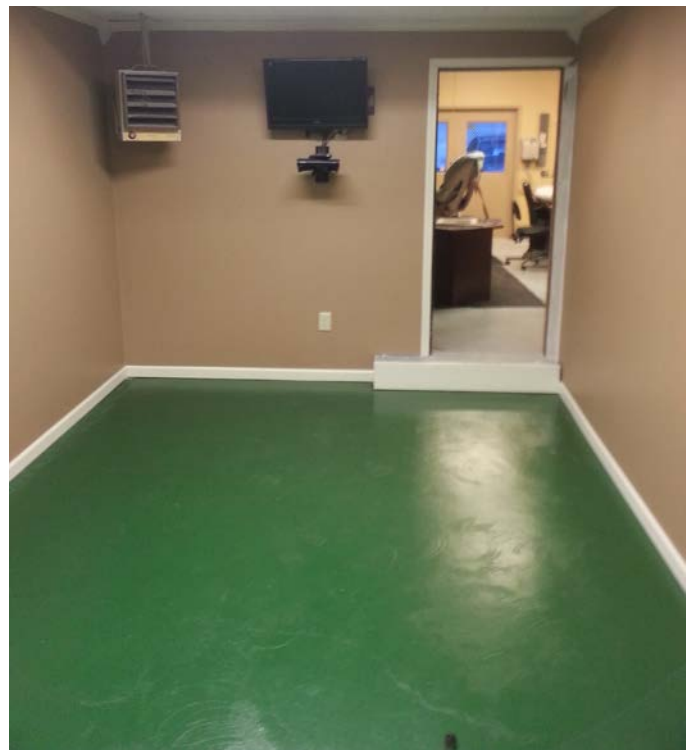
One of our crew members was upgrading his home entertainment and conveniently had a very cheap 55" HD Samsung for sale at a reasonable price. That is the cherry on top right there. I have all of our Grounds and Greens Committee meetings on Powerpoint in our break room and it has been on a 32" TV. It was hard to see some-



Dan added a coat of concrete semi-gloss to the floor to keep it shiny and easy to clean.

times and the VGA cable to connect to the computer was cumbersome. I invested \$35 in a Google Chromecast and can now wirelessly cast my computer screen to the TV. This with the added screen space will greatly improve our monthly meetings.

I would like to thank Jason Kahlstorf, Dan Clark and Fidel Gomez for their work. They put it all together and made it work. Our office is now more functional with compartmentalized irrigation computer systems, wireless printing, improved storage space, and less chair rail lake loons. ☺



The cleanest my office will ever be.....until the next remodel.

Michigan State's Dr. Thom Nikolai and labor attorney Timothy Eavenson, Esq. Mr. Eavenson raised some very valuable points about employment contracts and related issues, while Doc Thom was his usual focused self ("oh look—a squirrel!") in discussing the many variables in maintaining modern putting greens. It was nice to see Bruce Williams make an appearance (he's really let himself slide, hasn't he?) (you had to be there to get the joke). Following education and lunch, the Wee One fundraising auction was on tap, with a whole slew of donated items up for bid via both silent and live auctions. Thanks to the generosity of those who donated goods and services, the auction made just over \$31,000 for the worthy cause. Thank you also to Seven Bridges for a great venue and service, and to all bidders who supported the event. (pictures on page 22) @

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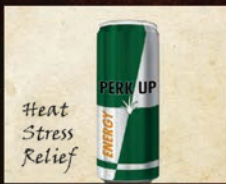
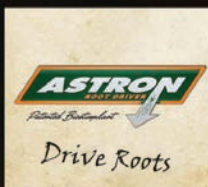
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Putting Green Management

Dr. Thom Nikolai



Dr. Thom Nikolai enjoyed presenting to the group as much as the group enjoyed his presentation.

The January MAGCS Meeting was held at Seven Bridges Golf Club. Don Ferreri and Dave Gelino were the hosts for the day. Dr. Thomas A. Nickolai from Michigan State University made the first presentation of the day titled "Putting Green Management Update."

This presentation was a plethora of information Dr. Nickolai has accumulated over years of his research work at MSU.

Golf Cleat/Sole Study: There have been some recent complaints by golfers and superintendents of excessive damage with some of the new spikeless golf shoe designs. Some golf clubs have even banned certain shoes from their courses. MSU has been doing spikeless shoe wear studies for a while. There are a few companies that send shoes to be tested at the University prior to putting the shoes into production. Some conclusions: Wet conditions are worse for spikeless golf shoe turf wear. Dry conditions seem to be easier on the turf with spikeless golf shoes. Some shoes are less invasive than others.

Top 10 Management Changes in the Last 25 Years that Improved Facilities:

1. Plant breeding and new cultivars
2. Instant communications with smart phones and the internet
3. Increased use of wetting agents
4. Increased technology of green mowers
5. Green speed management techniques
6. Top dressing tools and techniques
7. Aerification tool improvements
8. Lightweight green rolling
9. Increased knowledge and use of PGR's
10. Irrigation technology and tool use

Green Speed: According the recent GCSAA surveys, green speed is the most important factor for golf course customer satisfaction. Customer satisfaction and service is critical to a golf

courses overall success. Dr. Nickolai recommends you always try to exceed customer expectations and don't expect players to lower their expectations. He had a great analogy for this. "If you are serving steaks at your restaurant, you really don't want your customers to leave the restaurant saying the steak was just O.K. You want them saying it was a great steak."

Green Speed Perception Studies: In this study, 50% of the testers said they could tell the difference between a ball roll difference of 6 inches. Which according to Dr. Nickolai, statistically they could not tell the difference. Think coin flip. At a green speed difference of 12", 80% of the people could tell the difference.

Crystal Downs Green Speed Study: After extensive in-house testing and surveys, the Crystal Downs staff determined that a green speed of 9.5 to 10.5 was the optimum green speed for most players. Staff targeted green speeds of 11 feet in the morning to accommodate growth and a subsequent slow-down for afternoon players.

Nitrogen Carrier and Green Speed Studies: There was no discernable difference in green speed data using different nitrogen sources. Color and quality were rated. Analysis was conducted with different soil types. It was also concluded that plots using exclusive organic fertilizers had the most *Poa annua* invasion.

Mowing Height and Water Conservation Study: Research results indicate shorter mowing heights do not require more water. Shorter mowing heights do require more frequent



irrigation. Deep and infrequent irrigation strategies do lead to longer rooting. Currently, most people are using four methods to measure soil moisture.

1. Feel Method- using a cup cutter or probe and looking/feeling for moisture in the soil.
2. Guestimate- This works if the Superintendent is experienced with the site.
3. ET Monitoring – This must be measured daily and irrigation scheduled accordingly.
4. TDR Sensor – measures soil water content. Not all the water is available to plant.
- 5.

Brushing Greens Study: There has been little work done in brushing greens research. The trials were conducted on bent/Poa greens. The proposed benefits include: Increased stolon removal, increased seed head removal and increased green speed. The results actually indicate the brushing picked up more topdressing material which dulled bed knives, with no seed head removal and no increase in green speed. The study revealed that the results did not support the proposed benefits.


Frequency of Clip Study: Results indicate there was no difference in green speeds with any different frequency of clip rates.

Dollar Spot Study: Research reveals that the lowest mowing heights had the least amount of dollar spot and the highest height of cut had the most dollar spot incidence.

Rolling Studies: Rolling studies reveal there has been less dollar spot incidence with frequent rolling programs of at least 3 days per week. Dr. Nikolai believes this is because the bacteria populations increase in the canopy which inhibit the dollar spot pathogen and not as a result of the dew removal as has been previously proposed. There has also been a measurable decrease in moss populations which he believes is probably from the increased wear on the moss from the rolling procedures.

- Reasons why you should roll greens:
- Improved seed bed preparation
- Compacts frost heaving
- Decreased moss populations
- Decreased dry spots
- You can increase your HOC without loss of green speed
- Improves incorporation of topdressing material
- Decreases dollar spot incidence
- MOST IMPORTANT - Improves customer satisfaction

Dr. Nickolai or “Thom” as he asked me to call him was quite the entertaining and informative speaker, definitely not boring. He will have his own talk show including a band, at the GCSAA Conference in Orlando. Be sure to check it out. He will have some interesting guests. He provided a lot of information about a lot of preconceived notions in the field of turfgrass maintenance. Some of the data seemed to be quite obvious. That’s why they do the research and run the numbers, to prove or disprove theories and hypothesis. Numbers never lie. Another good reason to continue to support turfgrass research. @



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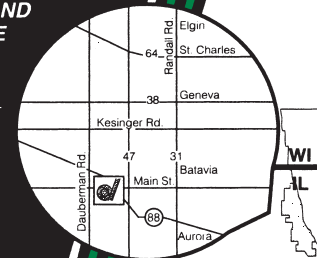
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