

on 10/2015

THE MIDWEST ASSOCIATION OF GOLF COURSE SUPERINTENDENTS

COURSE

TEES & BUNKERS ANGLES AND OPTIONS

BARN TO BE WILD

TURF CLINIC PREVIEW

Mike Matchen

Wilmette Golf Club



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TABLE OF CONTENTS

front cover

The 18th hole at Wilmette Golf Club with clubhouse in background. Mike Matchen will host this year's October Meeting and we'll get a chance to celebrate his 43 year career as he retires at the end of this year.

FEATURE
4 Tees and Bunkers
 Angles & Options
 Raymond Hearn

FEATURE
18 Barn to be Wild
 Jeff Reiter



The Midwest Turf Clinic is right around the corner and a little down the block - December 9th to be exact. Check out Director Kvelland's column and see who will be speaking this year.

DEPARTMENTS

- 03 Director's Column
Kris Kvelland
- 06 Super-n-Site
Nick Marfise
- 13 The Bull Sheet
John Gurke
- 22 Education Wrap Up
Chuck Anfield

DATES

2015-16 MIDWEST EVENTS

- 10/8 Midwest October Meeting, Wilmette Golf Club
- 12/9 Midwest Turf Clinic, Medinah Country Club
- 1/28/16 Midwest January Meeting & Wee One Fundraiser, Seven Bridges Golf Club
- 2/10/16 Midwest Hospitality Reception, Henry's Pub SD, CA

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Renovations All Around



*Kris Kvelland
Ridge Country Club*

The Midwest Education Committee has been hard at work lining up speakers for this year's Turf Clinic. Please note, we've pushed it back into December this year, to Wednesday, December 9th.

We thought we'd try this timeframe and give everyone a chance to have their irrigation systems winterized and their snow mold prevention applications complete. If you haven't by then, I hope you invest in some warm coveralls or have an Assistant you can really trust to make sure all the water is out!

Our theme for the Turf Clinic this year is Renovation. We've lined up an array of local superintendents who have or are undergoing renovations at their facilities. There has certainly been an uptick in renovations at some of our Chicagoland area courses. Some of the reconstruction has been planned for a while. Other projects may have been pushed forward because of the demise of Methyl bromide and the harsh winter of 2013-14 that some courses experienced. No matter the reason that each came to fruition, all the projects started (and some completed) because of perseverance of superintendents to create the ultimate playing conditions for their clientele. Slated to present are:

- Don Cross, Skokie Country Club
- Darin Douglas, Mt. Prospect Golf Club
- Curtis Tyrrell, CGCS, MG, Medinah Country Club
- Ben McGargill, CGCS, Wynstone Country Club
- Scott Pavalko, Bob O'Link Country Club

In addition, Dr. Frank Rossi will present a talk called, "Firm Sand, Tight Turf; What does science, practice, and recent history tell us about successful renovations." We know from past experience, Dr. Rossi will undoubtedly provide an interesting perspective of how science impacts the decisions we make when it comes to plant, material and product selections.



Dr. Frank Rossi will add his perspective in his engaging style to this year's Turf Clinic.

We look forward to the discussions that will arise from the recent experience our local experts will add to the mix, sharing their choices, successes, and pitfalls they've learned along the way. As you plan to make improvements at your facility (no matter what scope), this is a great opportunity to refine your ideas and concepts before a shovel hits the ground.

One type of project that never ends is drainage. We've also lined up Geoff Corlett, President of TDI Golf and Doug Myslinski, XGD Systems to cover the principles and current techniques of drainage. We all know that water runs downhill, but these two are going discuss the most effective and efficient ways to make this happen while preserving the playability and design of our courses. They've seen projects all over the world and are willing to share with our membership their knowledge and expertise.

We look forward to the Midwest Turf Clinic and have designed it with you in mind. Plan to come with questions and leave with answers. @

Tees and Bunkers

Angles & Options

Raymond Hearn, Raymond Hearn Golf Course Designs, Inc.

In an effort to attract new members at private clubs or increase play at public courses, many club officials or managers lose site of the importance of their number one asset - namely their golf course! Their second greatest asset is the golf course superintendent who maintains this great asset.

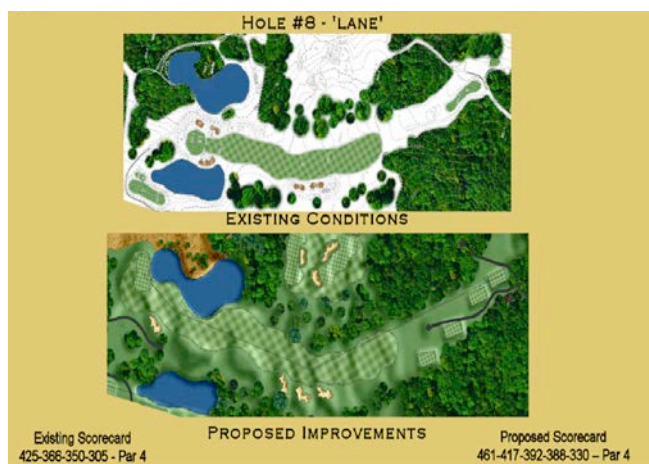
Don't get me wrong, clubhouse remodeling, pool projects, tennis clubs, etc. are all important to private clubs and some public courses. It is a proven fact that a well maintained golf course that is fun and strategic to play will attract more new members at private clubs and more rounds at public courses than any of the other proposed club improvements listed above. Three golf course design principles (strategy, shot value and playability) are paramount to the success of any golf course design or redesign in order to achieve maximum golfer satisfaction. Great golf course architecture brought down to its most basic elements are all about angles and options producing exciting strategy and shot value while maintaining fairness in playability for all golfers.

Many board and committee members I meet with often agree with my assessment but occasionally portray their club's perceived lack of potential with a defeatist attitude. I often hear comments like, "our course is too tight and / or our fairways are too narrow to implement more strategic play options that would offer our golfers more angles and options". The next most significant negative comment we hear is, "this is all fine and dandy but the improvements will cost more than our club can afford and we don't want to assess our membership". Don't despair as there are multiple ways to overcome the negative "road blocks" mentioned above in order to provide members at private clubs or patrons at public courses more strategic play options and at a cost the club can afford. You can implement the new and improved shot value, strategy and playability improvements with moderate cost ramifications if you can slowly phase the improvements each fall over a number of years in your club's

annual capital improvements budget. In slow economic times simply abstain from any construction that particular year.

A golf course architect can help a club achieve these improvements if the course is on limited acreage, has narrow golf holes and has a limited budget. There are four important remodeling strategies that work.

1. There are a significant number of course improvements that can help improve strategy, shot value and overall playability but simply adding new tees, enlarging tees and / or repositioning existing tees is an easy one to implement even on narrow golf holes. To date, I have never seen a course that had too many tees or too many play angles.



Flossmoor CC Hole #8 with improved angles of play and increased shot value made possible by simply creating more tees.

Another good example of shot value as it directly relates to risk / reward strategy is Hole #8 566-550-535-512-413 (formerly Hole #5 at the Mistwood Golf Club in Romeoville, Illinois). This hole is ranked as one of the best par 5s in the USA by Golf Digest Magazine. From any of the six tees, the strategic risk / reward options are numerous (7+ options). A golfer should position their tee shot in terms of how the tee shot's risk relates to specific hazards (lake, bunkers, moguls and the secondary rough) thus yielding a proportional reward for the next shot (preferred distance and / or angle) into the second landing zone or into the green in the case of a long drive.

2. Following the same rationale, assess the new bunker position and grassing limits (fairway, primary rough and secondary rough) with the new, repositioned tees and / or existing tees.



Mistwood Golf Club - Hole #8 with great strategy and shot value while still maintaining a fairness in playability for all golfers.

3. The importance of positioning bunkers perpendicular versus parallel to the angle of play for maximizing strategic play options and adding creating enhanced shot value. Just image the reduced strategy and shot value on this hole if the bunkers were parallel to the fairway. This narrow hole abounds with play options primarily due to the perpendicular bunkers. I see so many courses each year that can benefit from this simple principle.

4. Phase the improvements over a number of years so that the club can afford them. Ideally two to three years is a good completion goal to strive for but I have been involved with plenty of clubs that aspire to improve only one or two holes each fall over a number of years until the master plan is fully completed.

It is important that your existing members and potential new members see that the club is always trying to improve its #1 asset (the golf course) even if the scope of work is small and limited each year. At the same time, limit the construction to the fall

at your club is simple to do and very important. Significant improvements in golf club and golf ball technology over the years has allowed many golfers to hit the ball further thus rendering many tee to bunker relationships as obsolete relative to the original design intent. Improved tee to bunker relationships can be a "home run" in the eyes of members and potential new members and a source for more exciting play angles and options



The left image shows the existing fairway bunker on the 5th hole at Metedeconk National Golf Club. It is parallel to the line of play. The image on the right exemplifies a proposed bunker placement perpendicular to the line of play enticing hitters to drive over the bunker or lay up short.

and sod as much as you can afford (minus the greens) so the grow in and reopening of the hole(s) occurs quickly. The use of temporary greens and tees also allows many clubs to keep all 18 holes open during the entire construction period. In summary, I am not underestimating the importance of green remodeling or other important course renovation or restoration work but successfully recalibrating the tee and bunker relationships

for golfers to enjoy for years to come. @

Raymond Hearn (ray@rhgd.com) is a member of the American Society of Golf Course Architects and President of Raymond Hearn Golf Course Designs, Inc. (www.rhgd.com) located in Holland, MI. All images from RHGCD Archives.

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SUPER-N-site

Mike Matchen

Wilmette Golf Club

Nick Marfise, Wilmette Golf Club

PHOTO CREDITS: LUKE CELLA

“Good Morning” came a deep voice, as I walked into the office for the first time. I had tried to get to the golf course before anyone else on my first day, just to check the place out and settle in. Mike already had a cup of coffee, and his feet up as he read the paper.

“Good morning” I said, “What’s happening?” “OH, just another lovely day” he had replied. At that time, there was twenty inches of snow on the ground, and it was bitterly cold out. Any one of us would have waited to get to work until later knowing that the course would still be there under all that snow, but not Mike. I knew at that moment this was someone who truly loved this place.

As the next couple of weeks went by, I tried repeated-

ly to get to work first. Every time, however, I was greeted by the same deep and cheerful voice, or I would see the headlights of his golf cart in the dark, checking on the course before the rest of the staff would arrive. The crew and everyone who worked there told me I was wasting my time. In a way it felt like a challenge, as if to only let me know that no matter what I did he wasn’t going to let the new guy show him up. I surrendered, and now use Mike’s early morning recognizance to get prepared for the day.



Susan and Mike out for a drive (above) and their children (top left) Nick, Sarah, (bottom left) Jennifer and Jim.



Wilmette Golf Club was founded in 1922, by three men. The property was originally a dairy farm and was converted into a daily fee golf club named “Playmore Golf Club”, which had a pay as you play policy. One of those three men was Joseph Roseman, a gifted inventor who is credited with inventing a hollow roller mower to preserve turf while mowing. Roseman designed the original layout of Wilmette and later designed a few other notable Illinois golf courses including the Glenview Park District Course, Westmoreland Country Club, Illinois Country Club, and Green Acres Country Club, to name only a few. In 1924 the name of the golf course changed to Wilmette Golf



Club as it became a member's only facility. In 1933 Wilmette Golf Club was known for having an "illuminated" nine holes. Those nine holes were played under street lamps and it was the first, if not the only, golf course that could be played under the lights at night. As the years progressed ownership of the facility changed several times. It was once owned by the town of Evanston, then by Northwestern University, it wouldn't be owned by the Wilmette Park District until 1972 when an overwhelming majority vote of 5,704 to 785 approved the 4.4 million dollar referendum to purchase the 106 acre property.

Mike Matchen has lived in this area and is a native to Illinois and the north shore of Chicago all of his life. Originally from Skokie, Mike grew up with four brothers and two sisters, all of whom still live within an hour of where they grew up. Mike's first golf course job was working at Evanston Golf Club. He worked on the grounds crew for Bruce Sering for six years. Bruce became Mike's mentor and would later encourage him to go to school and study turf. Mike owes his career and success to Bruce, who wrote several letters of recommendation for Mike that helped propel his career. After college Mike had worked for Bruce for one year as his assistant and one year for Bill Douglas, who took over after Bruce left for Glenview Club, but then left in 1973 for the Superintendent position at Wilmette Golf Club. Mike jokes that he never applied for this job, but that he saw the club was being purchased by the Wilmette Park District in the local paper. Mike made a few persistent phone calls, and was offered a job that was never posted or advertised.

At the age of twenty four, Mike says that Wilmette was supposed to be his stepping stone job, hoping to land a private club job later down the road. Forty three years later Mike is still here, he has not only made Wilmette his career, but it has become his home, literally. Mike and his wife Sue

had moved into the apartment located above the Clubhouse in 1974. In 1984 Mike, Sue (Mike's wife), and their three children at the time, moved into a house purchased by the park district just off the course. It was a good thing because in 2003 the original clubhouse burned down. The current clubhouse was built in its place and reopened in 2005.

Mike met his wife



The 3rd hole is the #1 handicap hole on the course. Par is protected by a small pot bunker 25 yards short of the large green.

Sue at a Dunkin Donuts, while working at Evanston Golf Club. They've been married forty three years. Mike wants to thank his "support system and love of his life" for forty three great and wonderful years. Mike and Sue are very proud of their four children and three grand children. Their kids; Jim, Jennifer, Sarah, and Nick all grew up on the golf course enjoying rides on Mike's old three wheeled Cushman that still gets used on the golf course today. Mikes son Jim was a 4 time recipient of the GCSAA legacy scholarship award, and daughter Sarah was a MAGCS scholarship recipient. Mike is proud that all of his children have gone on to earn advanced degrees. He credits Sue with that one.

Mike has been a staple in the Wilmette community. With a mind like a steel trap, Mike knows everyone by name,

new driving range nets and poles. Mike's push for this project wasn't easy, but the big sell was on the storm water drainage. The old course would sit idle after minor rain events when fairways would be flooded, and greens would be too wet to walk across. He is proud that since the grand reopening the course can remain open to walkers and that the course has not closed once.

Mike credits his success and career to working with great people. Everyone has been supportive and encouraging, from the Executive Directors, to administration, to the board and committee members. Mike says that he has been very fortunate to have long tenured full time staff. He would like to thank Rick Becker and Ted Soenksen for their dedication and commitment to excellence. He would also like to thank his



and I mean everyone. Mike can remember faces and names with the best of them, knowing a lot of the community just from growing up in the area and attending St. Peter's Grade School and Niles West High School, but also from the golf course, softball games, and through his kids sporting events and activities. Mike can walk through the Wilmette Park District Administration building and tell you everyone's name, and that person's spouse, and children's names as well. Mike has been a man of the people and the community for 43 years. He says that the Wilmette Park District and the Wilmette Golf Club were a perfect fit for him. This career fit his personality and how much he enjoys being around people.

Mike hopes that everyone enjoys the "new" Wilmette Golf Club. One of Mike's career wishes was to undergo a renovation before he retired, that would make the club more successful and sustainable for the future. With a redesign by Greg Martin the course underwent a dramatic transformation. The course now features a brand new modern day design and layout, USGA Greens with A4 Bentgrass, a completely restored subsurface storm water drainage system, new bunkers, new Kentucky Bluegrass tee complexes, and

wife Sue, and their children, for all of the love and support after all these many years. Mike says he wouldn't have changed a thing, and that every morning and day is just as fun as the one that preceded it. @

Image Captions:

Above: A birdie putt on the narrow 18th green is possible with a well placed tee shot on this par 4, 435 yard finishing hole.

Top Opposite Page: The par 4 14th encourages accuracy off the tee, a long iron may be the best option for most to set up the approach shot.

Bottom: The 16th hole is a par three with water along the right side of the green. Trees off the tee make it tough to shape the ball into this back to front sloping green.



Mike Matchen Fun Facts....

Favorite Baseball team is the Chicago White Sox.

At the age of 10 Mike grew up with the 1959 Go Go White Sox, when they were in the World Series .He can still recite the starting lineup: Al Smith, Jim Landis, Jim Rivera, John "Bubba" Phillips, Louis Aparicio (his favorite all time player), Nellie Fox, Sherman Lollar. Ted Kluszewski.

Mike loves to Fish. His favorite trip of the year is to: Mountain Arkansas, on Norfolk Lake.

Remembers when the goal of Superintendents was to cut greens at .250"

His best hole in "three" on a par three he hit his first shot in the water, and after he re-tee'd he put that shot right in the hole. He claims that he never tried to call it a hole in one.

He has worked with three generations of Nadlers...

One of the few people who used to do business with Jim Reed's dad.

Knew Art Clesen's father, who used to drive his Mercedes...

Remembers when George A. Davis (one of the first advertisers of this publication) was the Toro distributor from the city of Chicago. Mike, in fact met George once...

Mike joined Chicagoland Superintendents in 1973, and back then you used to get interviewed by a panel of Superintendents. Mike was interviewed by Bob Williams, John Ebel, and Dick Lamkey. He said he was scared sh*tless.

Mike has worked for four park district Executive Directors; Ray Van DeWalle, Terry Porter, Tom Grisamore, and Steve Wilson.

He has also worked for four park district Superintendents of facilities; Jack Kernan, Terry Porter, Tom Grisamore, and Jeff Bowen.

When Mike got started he was the youngest Superintendent on the North Shore, and he will retire as the oldest Superintendent on the North Shore

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Dates to Remember

October 2015

October 3 – First U.S. FootGolf National Championship at the Sydney R. M Golf Course in Chicago, IL.

October 8 – MAGCS monthly meeting at Wilmette Golf Club, Mike Matchen host.

October 5-December 16 – Rutgers Professional Golf Turf Management School Two-Year Certificate Program at Rutgers University in New Brunswick, NJ.

October 8 – MAGCS monthly meeting at Wilmette Golf Club, the retiring Mike Matchen host.

October 15 – U of I Turf Alumni Golf Outing, Kemper Lakes Golf Club, Mike Paciga, host.

October 22-23 – GIE+EXPO Green Industry & Equipment Expo in Louisville, KY.

November 6-9 – Wives of Turf's TurfFit 5K Virtual Race benefiting the Wee One Foundation.

November 27 – Deadline for nominations for the 2015 TurfNet Superintendent of the Year Award presented by Syngenta.

December 9 – 63rd Annual Midwest Turf Clinic at Medinah Country Club, Curtis Tyrrell, CGCS, MG host.

Congrats to **Bob Vavrek** of the USGA who was named Regional Director for the Green Section's Central Region. Bob will lead the Green Section's programs to help advance the USGA's organizational mission and oversee the department's activities in this 13-state region.

On the 22nd and 23rd of this month, the GIE+EXPO, or Green Industry & Equipment Expo will take place at the Kentucky Exposition Center in Louisville, and it isn't all that far to drive considering what awaits you. Two days of Trade Show (for a whopping \$15 fee), hands-on equipment demos and side by side comparisons in the 19-acre outdoor demo area, optional workshops PLUS the after-hours networking and fun, including concerts for three straight nights and Fourth Street Live in downtown Louisville. To register, or learn more, go to www.gie-expo.com.



Cart jousting—the hottest thing since FootGolf!

While you're in Louisville, be sure to check out SiteOne Landscape Supply, formerly John Deere Landscapes (and for those of us more seasoned vets, formerly Lesco). And **Paul Yerkes**—a VERY seasoned vet—has business cards from all of them.

Congratulations to Julie and **Virgil Range** (Nashville Golf Club, Nashville, IL) on the birth of their baby boy Caiden Michael Range on August 31st. Little Caiden was born at 4:20 AM and hit the scales at 8 pounds, 1 ounce and 21 inches long.



Continued on page 11

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Focus creeping bentgrass has been bred for versatility and can be used for tees, greens and fairways. It's adaptable and recommended for areas wherever creeping bentgrass is currently in use. Focus has excellent *Poa annua* resistance as well as fast recovery from aerification.

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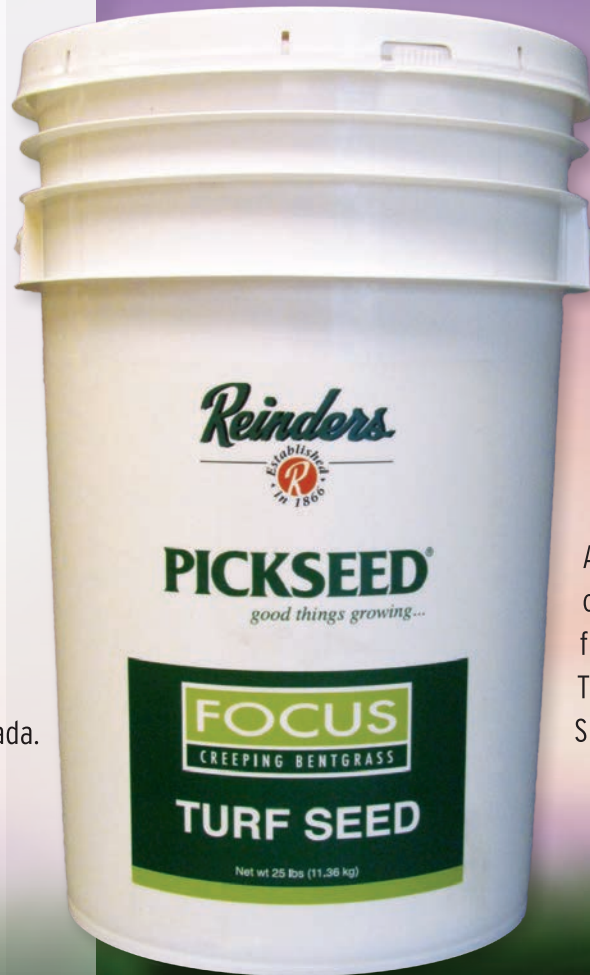
Focus has excellent resistance to dollar spot, pink snow mold and other diseases.

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A couple of our allied associations have brought on some new leadership recently. Jay Karen has taken the reins of the National Golf Course Owners Association (NGCOA) as its CEO, and Carrie Williams has been named the new Executive Director of the Illinois PGA. That Jay Karen guy is going to have his hands full with those troublesome new members Maibusch and Lemanski featured in last month's issue.

Great job by **Chad Ball** and **Connor Healy** and all the volunteers at Conway Farms Golf Club during last month's BMW Championship. Mother Nature chose to get pissy and throw a few inches of rain on the parade—in a very short period of time—and the tournament still went off seemingly without a hitch. With such quality volunteers as **Dr. Ed Nangle** and **Ben McGargill**, who mastered the art of rake- and shovel-leaning, who would have doubted it (below)?



One of them has an advanced degree in this art of leaning.



The staff and volunteers worked like mad to get the bunkers back in shape after heavy rains on Friday night in early Saturday.



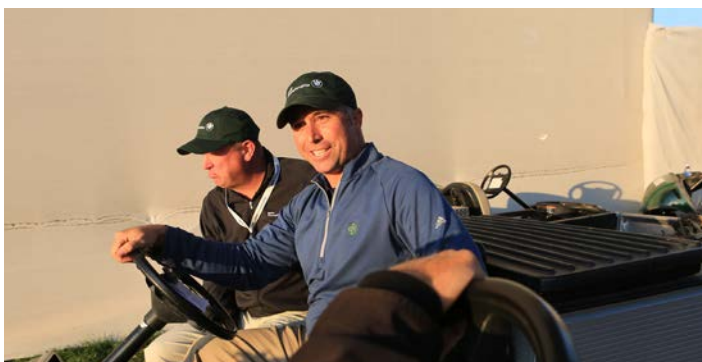
What rain? Sunday afternoon surrounding the 18th green.



Chad Ball (l) and Paul Vermeulen caught early on Thursday morning during course set up.



Only one person volunteered from the great state of Maine, Dr. Randy Kane.



Connor Healy has things under control during managing his staff and volunteers at Conway Farms.



It took Matt Kregel the whole week of mowing fairways to remember he was never really good at mowing straight lines and that's why he never does it at Strawberry Creek.

On Monday, August 3rd, more than 12,350 golfers, including 567 injured service members teed it up in the fifth annual "World's Largest Golf Outing" at 132 courses in 28 states to raise a record \$1,024,287 for the Wounded Warrior Project. Since its inception in 2011, the event has contributed more than \$3 million to WWP. This year, Troon, ClubCorp, and Toll Golf joined forces with event founder Billy Casper Golf to host the fundraiser at golf courses they manage from Hawaii to Florida, including several of our own members' courses.

Have you heard? The U.S. Department of Labor wants to significantly increase the minimum salary threshold required to qualify for the Fair Labor Standard Act's "white collar" exemption. This proposal would require employers to pay overtime to workers making up to about \$50,000 annually, even those classified as managers (like assistants and equipment technicians) and thus, currently exempt from the overtime rules for hourly employees. That would be more than double the current \$23,600 threshold. Stay tuned.

Between Friday, November 6th and Monday, November 9th, the Wives of Turf—an online community of wives of men in the turf industry—will be staging a virtual 5K race called the TurfFit 5K whereby anyone who enters and gets out and walks, runs, or even crawls 3.1 miles will all proceeds from the event to the Wee One Foundation. With Turf Fuel partnering, racers will receive a cool medal and a tee shirt for participating. They have shirts in unisex sizes, so I'm guessing men can play too. For information go to www.wivesofturf.org or find them on Facebook.

Brad Faxon likes to talk about golf on the Golf Channel. **Dan Sterr** likes to take care of a golf course, not on Golf Channel. As seemingly unrelated as they may be, there definitely IS a similarity.

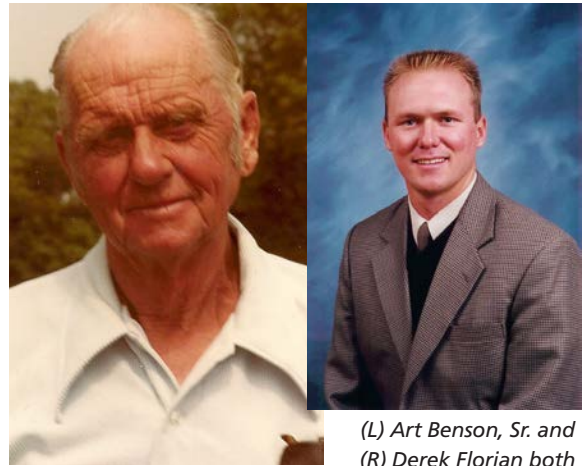
MIDWEST Doppelgänger



Dan Sterr or Brad Faxon. One likes to talk, the other one doesn't.

On Wednesday, September 2nd, **Todd Schmitz** invited MAGCS members to come out to Fox Valley Golf Course to play it one last time and say goodbye before its closing on November 1st. A nice-sized group came out to enjoy a really fun track, have a few adult beverages and just relax on a beautiful day. It's sad to see the old place go away—it has been home to many great superintendents, from **Art Benson Sr.** to **Dan Anderson** to

Derek Florian and now **Todd**. Thanks for the memories!



(L) Art Benson, Sr. and (R) Derek Florian both were superintendents at Fox Valley Golf Club.

How many crew members does it take to host a Western Amateur Championship? Jeff VerCautren says THIS many:



Q: When **Mike Handrich** gets that late-night call about vandals on his course, what does he do?

A: He returns to the Racine of the crime.



Interactive Health, a leading provider of health management solutions, has named GCSAA one of the healthiest companies in America. To achieve this distinction, GCSAA along with the other 157 companies named has succeeded in attaining high employee participation and moving those employees from high-risk to low-risk health status. Ninety percent of GCSAA's employees participate in its health program.

The annual Golf Industry Show will be held in San Diego, CA from February 6-11, 2016. This will be the third time in seven years that the show—themed "Everything Under the Sun"—has been held in sunny southern California.

On an absolutely beautiful September 21st in Sheboygan, Wisconsin, Pine Hills Country Club and superintendent **Rod Johnson** (who celebrated his 61st birthday that same day) hosted the 12th Annual Wee One Foundation Golf Outing. As usual, the course was annoyingly perfect, and the amenities we've all come to expect and enjoy such as the taco bar and brat stop were awaiting the full cast of players. Many thanks to Rod, Pine Hills, and the volunteers who ran the event and made it such a great day for an even greater cause.



Pat Jones, John Anderson and Matt Kregel yukkin' it up for the camera on the selfie stick.

LOTS of our members were seen in print both locally and nationally last month.

Dustin Hugen was quoted in a Daily Herald article about the use of goats at the Bridges of Poplar Creed to remove invasive plants from the natural areas on the course. **Bill Meyer** (pictured right) of Park Ridge Country Club was featured in TurfNet's Blog Aggregator about the chipping green/practice bunker construction project they are completing. **Luke Cella** was seen on TurfNet TV talking about the Wee One Foundation, while the ever-visible **Dan Dinelli** was in Superintendent magazine in an article about "Keeping Their Cool" when the going gets tough. **Dave Arden** and Glencoe Golf Club were featured in an article in club & Resort Business about reducing water use, and **Eddie Braunsky** and Geneva Golf Club could be seen in "Handy Humics," an article also in Superintendent magazine. Nice work everyone!



Congratulations to Jim Sobb, Leon McNair, and H. Chandler Egan on being honored as the 2015 inductees into the Illinois Golf Hall of Fame.

And finally another congratulations to Chad Ball who officially retired at the end of September. A few of his friends got together to wish him well as he readies to move and start the next chapter in Michigan. Best of Luck Chad! @



Brian Baker paired up with Chuck Barber at the event. Through Turf Ventures 1% give back to the Wee One, Brian presented a check for over \$10K to the Foundation at the event from 2014-15 purchases.



Nothing but smiles in this crowd (even Tim Davis!) as Chad Ball joins the ranks of the retired. L to R: Randy Whaler, Tim Davis, Chad and Ed Fischer.



Darrick Robbins and Andy Perry checking in to play while purchasing a few raffle tickets at Pine Hills.

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Barn to be Wild

PHOTO CREDIT: J. REITER

Jeff Reiter, Cantigny Golf

In July, I attended the annual “Purple Martins 101” program at Cantigny Golf in Wheaton, conducted by Ray Feld, a devoted Cantigny Golf Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary volunteer. Feld monitors and maintains the busy purple martin colony that visitors see when they enter the grounds or when they play past on Hillside No. 6.

The golf course entrance drive, in fact, features a Purple Martin Place street sign. There is perhaps no better address in DuPage County to observe dozens of the largest member of the swallow family.

But martins are not the only swallows that enjoy some pampering at Cantigny Golf. Just down the way from Purple Martin Place is a new attraction called Barn Swallow Hollow. It was dedicated in June, in memory of a lady golfer who loved the game and the birds she could see at Cantigny while playing it. The barn swallow was one of her favorites.

It’s easy to understand why. There is much to admire about barn swallows. In the course of helping create the colorful interpretive panel for Barn Swallow Hollow, I learned a few things that made me like barn swallows even more.

Of course I already knew about the bird’s agility and grace in the air. Barn swallows are fast, sleek and distinctive. Their deeply forked tails resemble streamers as they dart about, feeding on the wing. Flying insects are their fuel.

All swallows are skilled flyers but I believe “barnies” win on style points. Golfers... these are the long-winged metallic-blue rockets that skim the fairway turf, sometimes passing within a few feet of your FootJoys. Barn swallows thrive at golf courses, sharing their playground with the paying customers.

Unlike purple martins, the birds are not dependent upon man-made housing. They do, however, favor human-built structures for their signature cup-shaped mud nests, attaching them to walls or beams that offer protection from rain.

At Barn channel but

Swallow Hollow, two bridges over a water provide ideal habitat. They are busy passages the birds don’t mind. Fact is, they have a sweet situation thanks to Scott Witte, Cantigny Golf’s Director of Golf Maintenance. Witte installed tiny platforms under the bridges to facilitate barn swallow nesting. And between the bridges he rigged a steel cable that functions as a perch for young birds and adults. Flight school can be exhausting!

friendly, colony at the with the purple with 50 nest boxes—contribute toward Cantigny’s status as a Certified Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary, so designated by Audubon International.

What I didn’t know about barn swallows until recently is that parents sometimes get a hand from other birds when feeding their babies. The helpers are usually siblings from previous clutches but unrelated juveniles may assist as well. But here’s something else I learned, and it’s far from admirable:



PHOTO CREDIT: J. REITER



Barn swallow nests are an architectural wonder. During construction, a mated pair might make 1,000 trips to gather mud in their bills. The mud balls are reinforced with grass to add strength.

an unmated male barn swallow may kill the nestlings of another pair. His sinister actions often succeed in breaking up the pair, giving him the opportunity to mate with the female.

There's a lot going on under those bridges—the good, the bad and the ugly. Nature happens.

For the barn swallows, it won't be happening around here for much longer. In August the birds begin their journey to wintering grounds in Central and South America. Since they depend exclusively upon airborne insects for food, they must depart our region earlier than most other migrating species. They travel in large groups, called kettles, and cover up to 600 miles a day. Some of the same birds that occupied Barn Swallow Hollow will return to Cantigny in 2016. We look for them in early April, about the same time the first purple martins and tree swallows arrive. @

PHOTO CREDIT: J. REITER



"Barn Swallow Hollow" at Cantigny Golf features this interpretive panel, two nesting bridges and a cable for perching.

This story was Reiter's monthly "Words on Birds" column for August 2015. It appeared originally in the Daily Herald and on the newspaper's website.

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CDGA Turf Field Day

Chuck Anfield, Heritage Bluffs Golf Course

The Chicago District Golf Association hosted its second annual Turfgrass Research Field Day. It was held on Thursday September 10, at the Sunshine Golf Course hosted by Chris Painter. It was nice and sunny in which to take a guided tour of the check plots that the Turf Team led by Dr. Ed Nangle had conducted trials on and prepared for the day's education. Ed thanked all the sponsors of the event for their support of both the research programs and the Sunshine Course management this year. Without that support, this event could not happen.



After a coffee and donut registration and reception, the attendees were guided out for tours of the research plots.

The research talking plots for this year were:

- Dollar Spot Management at Midwest Golf House. E. Nangle
- Summer Patch, An ongoing conundrum. P. Koch
- Bluegrass and Billbugs. D. Richmond
- Problems that we see every day – and how to fix them- or not! E. Nangle
- Dollar Spot and cultural practices- new thoughts. R. Townsend
- Poa annua control and a PoaCure for 2105. B. Sharp/B. Branham
- Management of low maintenance areas. T. Voigt
- Sustainable turf management. R. Townsend
- Zoysia in Chicago. E. Nangle



Dr. Shelby Henning updates the group at the CDGA's Turf Field Day on September 10.

There was some great information on current work being done at the Golf House that was shared to the attendees. There was way too much specific information to be covered here. I always seem to pick up one or two key little tid-bits of information that I use in my course management program for the next year. As the tours are guided around the golf course, it's another opportunity to network with other attendees and compare notes, comments or observations. This really should be one of the must attend events to get the full information package. Put it on your calendar for next year, you won't be disappointed. @

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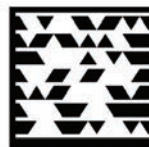
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