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COURSE

CHICAGOLAND HISTORY

LOOKING AT RESEARCH

SWEET SORROW

Taking a Ride on the Bunker Bandwagon



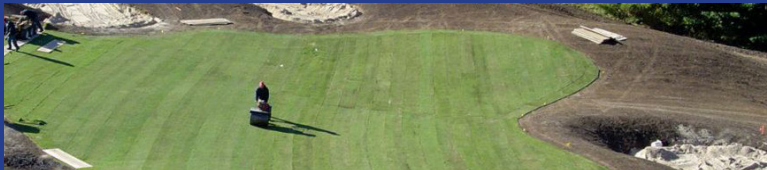
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TABLE OF CONTENTS

front cover

Bunkers are in the limelight. Todd Quitno discusses some of the challenges courses and clubs face when deciding what to do with these hazards.

4

FEATURE

See What You're Looking At
David Marquardt

18

FEATURE

Taking a Ride on the Bunker
Bandwagon
Todd Quitno



The Chicagoland Association of Golf Course Superintendents is 50 years old this year. Find out how and why this Association was formed in a reprinted article from Bruce Sering.

DEPARTMENTS

- 03** President's Column
Matt Kregel
- 11** The Bull Sheet
John Gurke
- 22** MAGCS History
Bruce Sering

DATES

2016-17 UPCOMING MIDWEST EVENTS

- 12/7 Midwest Annual Meeting and Turf Clinic, Medinah CC
- 1/24/17 Midwest January Meeting and Wee One Fundraiser
- 2/8/17 Midwest Hospitality Reception, Orlando, FL
- 2/16/17 Annual Winter Workshop, Lemont IL

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Matt Kregel
President

Sweet Sorrow

I am sure that my last message as MAGCS President will echo the comments of those that served before me. I can't believe that my term is ending. Where did the last year go? How have I moved through all the offices so quickly?

Well it's all true. Life seems to move at a quicker pace each year you get older. It's hard to say why that is but you need to make the time and enjoy the ride. I know it's easy to say but family must come first.

Back in my first message to the Midwest I challenged you to get involved. Did you? Did you attend one or more meeting this year? Did you invite and/or encourage your assistant to attend a meeting or join our association? Did you serve on a committee or write an article for On Course? Did you host a monthly meeting? I thank all those members that have done one or more of these items. To those that haven't, what are you waiting for? (Cue up Van Halen's song "Right Now")

Did you know that serving on the Board of Directors is a very rewarding experience? If you are interested in Board service or want to know more about it, please talk to a current board member. Serving on the board does not require one to ascend through the offices. If you feel more comfortable serving as a director only for a few years, that quite alright.

The MAGCS is one of the largest and strongest chapters in the country thanks in a large part to our dedicated members that have served the Association. I extend my gratitude to them and our current Board for their support. I wish Matt Harstad a very successful year guiding the Midwest. Thank you to Chuck Barber as he completes his time on the Board. Our Executive Director, Luke Cella, continues to make better a great association. I thank Luke for all of the hard work that he does for the group and the help that he has given me over the past year.

I will close out my article by borrowing and slightly modifying a very famous JFK quote: Ask not what the MAGCS can do for you but what can you do for the MAGCS. @

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See What You are Looking At

Mr. David Marquardt, Dirt-n-Turf Consulting, Inc.

One of my favorite stories from many, many years ago is about a research class that wanted to study how far a frog could jump. Every time I tell it I am reminded dissecting frogs in junior high school biology. The story goes like this;

A research class wanted to know how far a frog could jump so they placed it on the ground and encouraged it to jump. 'Jump frog jump' they shouted. The frog jumped 12' and they recorded the data – Frog with 4 legs jumps 12'. Next the class promptly cut off one of the frogs legs and again encouraged the frog to jump. This time the jump was 8' which was properly recorded – Frog with 3 legs jumps 8'. Furthering their study they promptly removed a second leg and again encouraged the frog to jump. This time the frog jumped a measly 4' which was again promptly recorded – Frog with 2 legs jumps 4'. Continuing with their study they removed the 3rd leg and again encouraged the frog to jump. 'Jump frog jump' they yelled! 'Jump frog jump!' Finally the frog flipped off to one side about 1' and again they recorded the data – Frog with 1 leg jumps 1'. To conclude the research

phrase 'see what you're looking at'. Dr. Albrecht realized that sometimes it's more important to look at nature, look at responses, instead of just looking for or at data. In other words, not always does the response mirror the data.

Now let me preface this right up front by saying that everyone who works in turf and horticulture, or with plants and soils, in one way or another, owes much of their career to advancements achieved through research. My thoughts here are in no way intended to slight the excellent work of research institutions, but are instead intended to say that not all research is conclusive and all encompassing. By its very nature and definition, research more times than not leads us to the next set of questions instead of to definitive solutions, and unfortunately we are too often provided with conclusions more than the next set of questions.

All this to introduce my thoughts. For the last six to eight years I've watched with great interest as researchers start taking sides on methods for plant and soil analysis. We have all seen article after article in trade publications and multimedia that suggest one method is better than another. Lately I have even watched one outspoken blogger who suggests that just about every method we've ever used has been wrong. Acronyms are popping up everywhere; BCSR, SLAN, MLSN. (Base Cation Saturation Ratio/Sufficient Levels of Available Nutrients/Minimum Levels of Sustainable Nutrition) And depending on the slant of the author, some are valid and some are not. And even more slanted than the turf battle over method is the battle over desired values.

Now I have been mostly silent about this as I've watched the experts scratch out their place in the sand. Sure, I've had many conversations with clients, but I have not taken pen to paper until now.

An unknown author once wrote that 'we're all



Can you hear as well as a frog?

they removed the final leg and yet again encouraged the frog to jump. 'Jump frog jump! Jump frog jump! Jump frog jump!!' As expected, the frog didn't move and the data was recorded – Frog with no legs can't hear.

Dr. William A. Albrecht, longtime chairman of the Department of Soils at the University of Missouri, once coined the

entitled to our opinions, but mine is the only one that's right! This seems to be the mantra of late as we see article after article and talk after talk aimed at validating results and opinions gathered over a very narrow sampling. Sure, we can say it's more than opinions, after all, there is research to substantiate the views. But in reality, every researcher worth their salt will agree that any argument we care to make can be backed up by statistics and facts.

So what's my angle? Simply this; each method has its place, and the thought that one is better or worse than the other is in my opinion too narrow minded. The problem with some research (certainly not all) is that it sets out to prove a pre-existing notion and therein does not take into account with an open mind, all of the variables that exist. Simply put, we don't all grow grass in the same environments as the research is done. Let me give you an example;

Several years back a researcher known for a strong opinion against the use of potassium, gave a 2 hours meeting on soil nutrition made simple, which included a long rant about the over use of potassium and calcium. At the conclusion of the meeting a superintendent, armed with his water analysis, approached the speaker. The superintendent showed the speaker that his irrigation source was heavily affected by runoff from road salts, and that throughout an average season would apply 30-40# of sodium/1000sf to his soil based, Poa greens. When asked about the speakers earlier comments, the speaker said that in this case the superintendent would need a lot of calcium and potassium to overcome the sodium deposits.



"Blue Club" has sand based greens with new varieties of bentgrass putting greens.

The point is that we need to qualify our statements! Too often researches paint all recommendations and all grow-



Plants respond to their environment each day. How well do you see that environment?

ing environments with the same broad brush. The methods we use to analyze soils and turf needs, as well as the desired values, must be matched to the growing environments we are manipulating.

Let's compare scenarios;

- "Blue Club" receives 7500 rounds of golf, on newer sand based greens, with newer bentgrass varieties, without micro-climates, on the north side of Chicago near the lake, and irrigates with low bicarbonate, low sodium, Lake Michigan water.
- And "White Course" grows Poa annua on soil based profiles with 40,000 rounds of golf. His course is tree lined and full of micro-climates located south of St. Louis. His irrigation water comes off the road and into the pond and is sodium loaded to the point of applying 1# of sodium per 1000sf for every 1" of water applied.

When you add that "Blue Club" has a 1.2 million dollar budget and "White Course" struggles with \$700,000, it's easy to see that their desire values, methods and means, and player expectations will all be different;

- "Blue Club" will have no problem moving irrigation salts while "White Course" will constantly struggle with sodium accumulation, high soluble salts due to the chlorides, and early day wilting/flagging.
- "White Course" will struggle constantly with wear tolerance issues that "Blue Club" will never see.



The soil is only one piece of the growing environment.

All nutrient desired values will be different for these courses as will the products and methods of application. Beyond the desired values, the method of soil analysis will vary. "Blue Club" needs to measure and supply plant nutrients knowing that there are few limiting factors to the uptake and use of the nutrients applied. The roots on "Blue Club" will be deep and very efficient while those on "White Course" will be very short and only moderately efficient.

"White Course" will not only need to apply and manage turf nutrition, but also the sodium-loaded profile that will develop from his irrigation water. Therein, the method of analysis as well as desired values will be different than that of "Blue Club". In other words, "Blue Club" will get by planning most of his/her program around the needs of the turf while

“White Course” will need to manage soil salts and chemistries as well as the needs of the turf.

The point is that research does not and cannot take into account every growing environment. Many courses have a blend of sand and soil profiles, Poa and bentgrass turf, as well as drainage and shade issues. It is up to each operator to evaluate each growing environment and develop a method of analysis as well as their own desired values. Again, consider just some of the variables;

- Green constructions
- Drainage
- Turf type
- Budget
- Water quality (or lack thereof)
- Equipment resources
- Expectations
- Maintenance days
- Round counts
- Micro-climates
- Staff abilities and qualifications
- Weather
- More....

Individually, each of these variables can and will make a difference in turf performance and maintenance. Start coupling them together, and desired values, testing methods, and application rotations become even more individualized. Look, I am not saying the way we do things now is perfect and can't be improved upon. We as turfgrass professionals should always be looking for better ways to analyze and deliver plant and soil nutrition. Let's just be open to the fact that there will never be only one way to manage turf nutrition in living, growing and ever-changing environments and that most every method has a place and purpose.

The take home; research has its place for sure and we are all better for what has come out of many of these programs. We can't hang our hats on 'that's the way we've always done it' and pretend that there possibly aren't better ways to both monitor and apply turf nutrition. My caution is that turf managers must be very careful when altering existing, proven methods and values for theory that has not been properly proven over a wide enough set of variables and over



The methods we use to analyze soils and turf needs, as well as the desired values, must be matched to the growing environments we are manipulating.

a long enough period of time. Again, my cautions;

- Dig a little deeper and find out the scenario and conditions under which the research was done and compare it to your own growing conditions.
- By all means, always look into who funded the research and ask to see the abstract.
- Find out how old the research is and how widely accepted it is. And no different than going to a doctor, get a second or third opinion.
- Above all, bear in mind that one size does not fit all! We are way too quick to be 'either or' instead of 'both and'. Way too quick to say there's only one opinion and one way.
- And to that point maybe we need a new acronym; OIDV or Optimum Individual Desired Values. Values and methods based on each of the micro-climates, soil types, and turf varieties each individual course or club has to manage.
- Nah....we have enough acronyms!

And remember what Dr. Albrecht said, 'see what you're looking at'. @



“White Course” will not only need to apply and manage turf nutrition, but also the sodium-loaded profile that will develop from his irrigation water.

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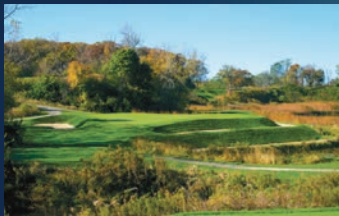
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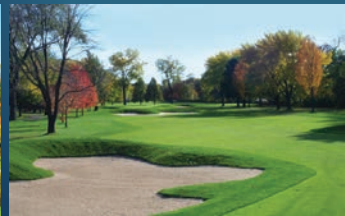


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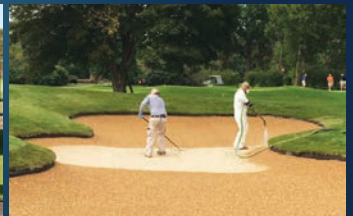
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December 2016

DATES TO REMEMBER

November 30 - December 1 – 51st Annual Wisconsin Turf Symposium. Kohler, WI. (wgcsa.com)

December 5 – Annual Southside Superintendent Holiday Party at The Bier Stube, Frankfort, Illinois. Contact Matthew Harstad & Ed Esgar.

December 7 – 64th Midwest TurfClinic at Medinah Country club, Curtis Tyrrell, CGCS, MG host.

December 9 – Deadline for nominations for the 2016 TurfNet Superintendent of the Year Award presented by Syngenta.

December 12 – Deadline to submit the GCSAA Energy Use and Environmental Practices survey.

December 16 – Annual West Side Superintendents Holiday Party at Seven Bridges Golf Club in Woodridge, IL from 11 to 5, Don Ferreri and Dave Gelino hosts.

January 10 – ITF's Turf Conference, Poplar Creek Golf & Country Club, Dustin Hugen, host (iturf.org).

January 9-13 – Rain Bird Training classes at Sportsmans Country Club in Northbrook, IL, Mark Kosbab host superintendent.

January 24 – MAGCS January Monthly Meeting and Wee One Fundraiser at Seven Bridges Golf Club.

February 4-9 – Golf Industry Show in Orlando, FL.

February 8 – MAGCS Hospitality Reception at Marlow's Tavern on 2101 International Drive, Orlando, FL.

February 8 – Annual University of Illinois Turf Alumni Reception from 5 to 7 PM, location TBD.

February 16 – Assistants Winter Workshop at Midwest Golf House in Lemont, IL.

February 24-26 – Chicago Golf Show at the Donald E. Stephens Convention Center in Rosemont, IL.

Welcome to these shiny new members who have recently joined this party we call MAGCS:

- Loyd Bowman, Spectrum Technologies, Class E
- Taylor Doorlag, Great Lakes Turf, Class E
- Gene Pruban, Wittek Golf, Class E

The CDGA has hired Jesse Benelli to be its Director of Turfgrass Programs, filling the wee little shoes of good ol' Dr. Ed Nangle. Benelli, a Penn Stater with his Master's degree and Ph.D. from the University of Tennessee, will head the only turfgrass program in the nation operated by a state or regional golf association. The Wellsboro, PA native will start in January, 2017. Congratulations and welcome Dr. Benelli.



Congratulations to **Matthew Leinen**, former assistant at Bob O' Link who is the new superintendent at Big Foot Country Club in Fontana, WI.



Welcome back to the area and congrats to **Brian Moore**, who has moved from his position as superintendent at Forest Dunes Golf Club in Roscommon, MI to his new gig as superintendent at Glen View Club in Golf, IL.

A fond farewell to four Illinois PGA members who have served our industry admirably over the years, and are retiring this year. Paul Colton of Ridgemoor Country Club in Chicago,

Gary Groh from Bob O' Link in Highland Park, Bob Koschmann of Lake Shore Country Club in Glencoe and Tim O'Neal from North Shore Country Club in Glenview are hanging up their spikes and calling it a career. Best wishes to these four gentlemen.

The Great Lakes Turf team welcomes two new sales representatives



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KEYNOTE SPEAKERS

Dr. Jim Kerns

North Carolina State University

Dr. Bill Kreuser

University of Nebraska-Lincoln

Dr. Joe Vargas

Michigan State University

Dr. Ed Nangle

Ohio State University

Amy Fouty

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for show registration and updates

in the Chicago market—**Taylor Doorlag**, most recently with Chicago Golf Club and **Dave Behrman**, former longtime superintendent at Riverside CC and Midlothian CC will be serving our area moving forward. Congratulations to both Taylor and Dave!



The Behrman Family

Ryan Tully of Harborside International in Chicago received some great news recently—his dog Endor, a 3-year-old Staffordshire terrier/Labrador mix was selected for the 2017



GCSAA Dog Days of Golf calendar sponsored by Lebanon Turf. Along with getting Endor's mug in the calendar (he is officially Mr. December), he is also in the running for Dog of the Year, which will be voted on during the Golf Industry Show in Orlando in February. The prize for that distinction is \$3,000 to his local chapter, \$500 to Endor for bones, baths and beyond, and a \$2,000 donation to K9's for Wounded Warriors. When you're walking the show floor, stop by

Lebanon Turf's booth #892 and vote early AND often (the Chicago way). Congrats Ryan and Endor!

They did it again. The 2016 John Deere Classic, contested at TPC Deere Run in Silvis, IL and won by Ryan Moore, helped raise a record \$10.5 million for 491 local and regional Quad Cities charities, ranking it among the top three in charitable giving on the PGA Tour. This year's \$10.5 eclipses last year's record of \$8.73 million. Nicely done!

Do Not Forget that December 12th is the deadline to fill out the Energy Use and Environmental Practices survey which is available at www.gcsaa.org. Sponsored by the USGA in conjunction with the Environmental Institute for Golf (EIFG), and the final survey in the second phase of the Golf Course Environmental Profile (GCEP), the survey provides valuable information on trends in golf course management over the past ten years.

Q: What happens when **Mark Kowaliczko** drives his Alfa sports car to his course?

A: He has a Romeo in Joliet.

Scott Witte, CGCS and his bees are everywhere! The October issue of *Golfdom* ran an item about Scott's "Honeybee Hill," where four of his hives are located, while the November issue of *GCM* magazine had an item on the Bayer "Feed a Bee Experience" held at Cantigny. Not to be outscouted, last month's Su-



perintendent magazine ran a feature article titled "Let it Bee" about Scott's efforts in providing a haven for honeybees at Cantigny. Scott buzzes around the property in this bad boy to check on his hives—nice work if you can get it...

When riding a bicycle becomes



*Top Right: Fun
Above: Broken
Bottom: Fixed*

unhealthy—this is the newly-reconstructed shoulder of our own Luke Cella, who required the reconstruction after taking a tumble on his bike. The moral of the story? Doing healthy stuff can be bad for your health.

Some encouraging news came from Bloomberg Businessweek recently. Topgolf is one of the fastest growing recreational entertainment chains in the U.S. The "driving range-meets-sports bar-meets night club atmosphere that's less hushed reverence, more Dave & Buster's with 9-irons" has opened 23 new venues in the last 5 years, with more than half of those since the beginning of last year. Time will tell whether the growth of Topgolf will translate to more golfers on the country's courses, but you would think it's a step in the right direction, wouldn't you?



TopGolf doesn't have a severe weather policy. I asked when this storm was brewing. Just keep playing (eating and drinking too).

OK, why not?

If one synchronized swimmer drowns, do the rest drown too?

Check out the great photo that **Chad Oester** of Bliss Creek GC sent in to *GCM* for its October issue's "Final Shot" feature. The shot was taken by crew member Brian Cole early one morning when the sun was rising and a low-lying layer of fog combined for a beautiful image.

Rules of Golf Quiz: True or False—In both stroke and match play, if the player accidentally touches his ball in play, he incurs a penalty stroke. Answer at the end.



The PGA of America has announced it will contribute \$100,000 over the next three years to the EIFG to support the work of the GCSAA. The gift, which will be used to support research, environmental programs and advocacy efforts for the golf industry, raises the association's support of EIFG to more than \$500,000 since 2007. Now go hug your pro and thank them.

MIDWEST Doppelgänger



Brett Ziegler and Ben Zobrist—they even have the same initials!

Anybody see Brett Ziegler during the Cubs' playoff run? Is it because he was too busy hitting everything thrown at him and winning the World Series MVP award? Hmmmm.

A pretty huge event took place last month—in case you've been under a rock and didn't hear, the Cubs won the World Series. Apologies to Sox fans, but this is a pretty big deal—it's taken 108 years to happen, meaning the only MAGCS member to have seen it happen twice is Paul Voykin. And being such a once-in-a-lifetime occasion, many of our MAGCS friends shared their experiences with us. Like **Greg Martin**, who secured two tickets for three different playoff and World Series games, and made great family memories taking his daughter to one, his son to another, and his wife to the third. Or **Mike and Mary Bavier**, who had been in Arizona for just two days after a two-day drive when they won tickets to game 4 in the Cubs Lottery and flew back to attend the "bucket list" event. Or **Danny Marco**, who was playing Pinehurst when he decided, after one day in North Carolina, to jet off to Cleveland for the opportunity to attend game 7, leaving golfmates Bob Lively and Jeff Brinegar behind to catch the game in a local pub. Or the countless folks who took a beautiful November Friday off to head to the city to join the 5 million others in celebrating with the team in its parade and rally. Wonderful memories all, and we thank you for sharing

them! (Photos opposite page)

And in parting, we say goodbye to 2016 with a fond memory and a few words from our longest member, Mr. **Paul Voykin**. Paul sent me an article from the Saskatoon Express (from

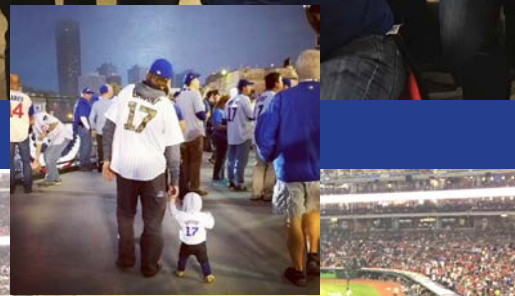
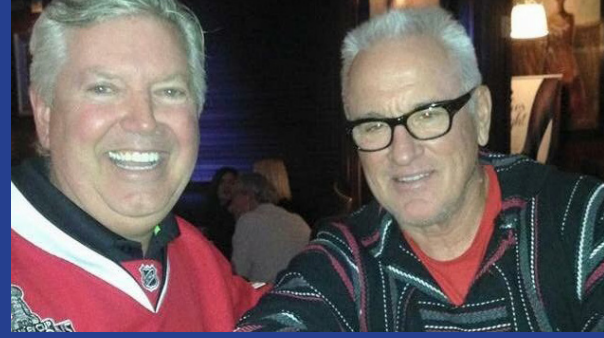


whence he came) about his encounter with none other than Marilyn Monroe. Ms. Monroe was in Jasper to shoot the film "The River of No Return" with Robert Mitchum in 1953. Paul was working at the Jasper Park Lodge, and hitched a ride into town where he sat at the bar for a cup of coffee. "Lucky for me there was one empty seat at the bar, and I grabbed it. Lucky for me again, it was a seat next to a gorgeous blue-eyed blonde (like he noticed her eyes). When I sat down, she instantly said, 'Good morning.' I stuttered 'Good morning.....are you Marilyn Monroe?' Marilyn replied, 'Yes I am,' and I boldly asked for an autograph and she kindly obliged, using my new 59-cent Jasper souvenir pen. She wrote, 'To Paul, with my best wishes, Jasper, 1953, Marilyn Monroe.' I thanked her, finished my coffee and walked out on Cloud Nine. I didn't get that far out the door when I heard 'Paul, Paul.' There was Marilyn, walking fast toward me. When she caught up to me, she smiled and said, 'You forgot your nice pen.' Boy oh boy, what a terrific day I was having! I thanked her and watched her scamper back to the hotel—I tell my friends that was the day Marilyn Monroe chased me!"

Mr. Voykin also shared this, an excerpt from his book "A Perfect Lawn the Easy Way" that was published in 1969, from the chapter titled "October and November:"

"As we step outside to finish our last garden chores, we hear the distant lonely cry of the mourning dove, as if coming from some lost woodland, and there is a sudden spellbound stillness. A shiver comes over us. We feel a great lonesomeness, a sadness. This strange feeling of something lost stays only a fleeting moment, then is gone. What is it? What is it? we ask. Then we feel the chill wind and hear the faint rustle of the tossing leaves, and we know—summer is gone."

Quiz answer: False, per Rule 18-2. In most cases, there IS a one stroke penalty; however, per 18-2, there are seven exceptions (on which you'll just have to trust me or look it up). **C**





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Taking a Ride on the Bunker Bandwagon

Todd Quitno, ASGCA, Lohmann Companies

Can you believe it? Our perennially hapless Chicago Cubs have won the World Series, a repeat victory that took only 108 years! What a monumental occasion for baseball, and of course for Cub fans and the city of Chicago, where admittedly, my leanings tend towards the South Side.

But no worries, that didn't prevent me from securing my spot on the bandwagon! Seriously, I can't recall a more intriguing World Series to watch, filled with streaks and slumps, veterans and youth, history and innovation, and some wild strategy.

It got me thinking how much the game of baseball has changed over the last century, or even the last few decades. The infield "shift" is now a regular phenomenon (Btw, did you know that was conceived by Lou Boudreau in 1946 as a desperate defense to stop prolific hitter, Ted Williams, then reincarnated in the 2000s by Joe Madden and the Devil Rays?) Pitching is now seemingly all by committee, starters rarely go past 5 or 6 innings. And then there's instant replay, which seems like it was used every inning in those last couple of Series games, sometimes even effectively. Add in huge advances in equipment, protective armor, perfectly groomed fields and luxury seating, it's just not the same game your great-great grandfather was watching the last time the Cubbies took the title!

The question is, which version do you prefer, the old style or the new? I'm honestly not sure where I stand on the subject because I can see the virtues of both. I love the good old-fashioned peanuts and cracker jack game, but man it's hard to resist the thrill of being caught on that giant jumbotron with a micro-brew and a veggie burger in hand... well, maybe not that last one (#beef).

This traditional vs. modern indecision is not limited to just baseball for me. In fact, on a near daily basis I ponder the same question in my work as a golf course architect. One of the largest sources of that inner turmoil is the ever-complicated SAND BUNKER.

Statistics indicate that I'm not the only one perplexed by the sandy pits of golf. I've heard some say that bunkers, while constituting only 3% of a golf course's area on average, typically garner 80% of its complaints. Now I can't completely vouch for that statement (it is election season, so truth is relative, right?) but I can say that in the golf architecture world the bunker has rocketed to the top of the priority list. Much like in baseball, innovations over the last centuries, decades and even the last several years have dramatically changed the perception of the sand bunker, both in its construction and its function.



Aggregates seem to be leading the bunker liner craze these days.

Historians tell us that the earliest ancestors of the bunker were nothing more than pits in the dunes, excavated by the wind and those animals trying to avoid the

wind. As golf became more structured and moved inland, so too changed the methods of bunker development from these natural pits to more constructed, hard-edged features. As golf further blossomed in America during the early twentieth-century, "Golden Age" architects like MacKenzie, Tillinghast and Thomas evolved bunkering into a visual artform.

One constant that prevailed throughout this transformation from found to built, however, was the bunker's function as a hazard, meant to be feared, revered and at all costs avoided. Bunkers (even the pretty ones) were expected to be a punishment for poorly executed shots. If they were inconsistent or contaminated or otherwise challenged a golfer's aptitude, so much the better.

It seems, though, as the second half of the century rolled in that this "bunker as hazard" mentality began to slowly wane, likely due to a culmination of things. First off, construction started getting more sophisticated. As we built more and more on poorly drained soils (e.g. the Midwest), bunkers needed to be outfitted with drainage. A crude variety of liners soon followed to protect the drainage from contamination. My boss, Bob Lohmann, remembers pulling a lot of those liners out during the early years of his career (#beenaroundawhile!).

Meanwhile, as construction improved, televised golf came on the scene. With greater exposure to competitive golf came greater competition in golf maintenance and higher consumer expectations, ultimately dubbed the "Augusta effect." Which brings us screaming into the present and what I consider the ultimate undoing of the bunker as hazard... the 2016 Ryder Cup at Hazeltine. I say that with the

greatest of respect to Chris Tritabaugh and his amazing crew of volunteers.



Now a fried lie seems to be a disgrace.

What a spectacular competition, this year's Ryder Cup, loaded with some of the most entertaining, exciting and skillful golf



Construction (top) and final product (bottom) of the LGD Bunker Laboratory where we've pitted various liners and sands against each other. Despite a wet summer, we have yet to do more than hand rake animal footprints!

I've seen. The greens were perfect, 19 birdies in one round from Sergio and Phil? Get real, that was just nuts. But what really caught my eye over those three days were the bunkers. Did you notice that every ball hit into a bunker rolled down that smooth sand face and perfectly into the flat? The conditioning was impeccable, and I can hardly remember a shot from the sand that didn't stop within a few feet of the hole. Hard to call those "hazards" for our golfing elite.

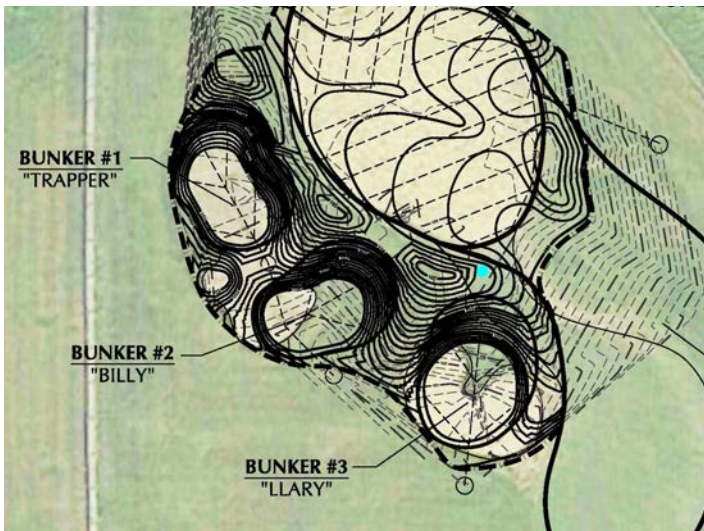
As an architect, I understand that the inherent purpose of the sand bunker is to be a strategic hazard, and frankly as a player I don't mind when bunkers aren't consistent or perfectly maintained. I think that "rub of the green"

game of chance is what makes golf fun and adventuresome, and I appreciate the movement in the industry toward minimalism and quirky, scruffy ruggedness, assuming you have the right site conditions. At the same time, much like instant replay and the jumbotron of baseball, I also get the appeal of these high-tech sand bunkers. Having a perfect lie on firm angular sand gives even the hack a better chance, however slight it might be, of hitting that perfect shot. You know Joe Member marched back to his/her club demanding the same conditioning after watching that Ryder Cup event.



Flashed-sand construction is a valid option again in wetter climates without the worry of erosion and contamination.

And this is why, while I might always be on the fence philosophically, my practical side has been leaning way more heavily of late toward the "give the people what they want" argument, because I believe there is considerable value to be gained by investing in premium conditioning.



The design concept for the LGD Bunker Laboratory in our office backyard.

The bunker revolution is happening all over the Chicagoland area and greater Midwest. We hardly receive a call these days that doesn't ultimately turn its focus to bunker construction. We completed a study recently for one prominent area course with multiple acres of bunkers that has been anchored in a battle against poor conditioning for a while. That battle culminated recently when a management exec playing from a greenside bunker sculled one off the hardpan into the nearby lake, forcing bunkers to the top of the club's priority list. Of course the easiest fix to the problem might have been to simply take the sand out, put new in and get on with things. But management knew that this was fleeting given how quickly the poor soil quality would recontaminate that sand, taking them right back to square one. You might as well throw that investment in the lake with the sculled golf ball!

So we assessed reconstruction options, factoring in the enormous quantity of bunkers, sub-soil conditions and long-term maintenance resources. Knowing the latter would remain static, meaning annual labor budgets would not increase, but that premium conditioning was a high priority, we looked at reducing the overall square footage significantly (without impacting course integrity) and installing aggregate liners (i.e. Better Billy Bunker, Capillary Concrete). Then we analyzed the payback, considering long-term



Why do we spend so much attention on bunkers?


savings on daily maintenance and storm cleanup. Our conclusion was that a \$1.7M investment, versus the alternative of doing nothing at all, would pay itself off around year twelve. This was based on maintenance efficiencies only, not even factoring the revenue benefits of greater customer satisfaction.

Point is, we're seeing real value in these industry innovations, especially in bunkers.

Things change fast these days, and if you're not up with the program you're going to get overrun by the competition. It's interesting to look back just five or six years and realize that aggregate liners were barely on the radar, especially since they now seem to be leading the liner craze. We actually built a "bunker laboratory" in our office backyard here at Lohmann Golf Designs, pitting various liners and sand types against each other so we can observe and better understand their value. So far we have yet to do more than hand rake some animal footprints after a full summer with considerable rain, further confirming our assessment that there's long-term savings to be had, primarily in the lifespan of the sand and reduced clean-up. Not to mention the flashed-sand bunker is back in vogue, which opens some great stylistic design opportunities.

Which brings me back again to the baseball analogy. You no doubt recall that when the Ricketts family purchased the Cubs and Wrigley Field, one of their first orders of business besides hiring Theo Epstein and overhauling the farm system, was to upgrade the stadium. Bleacher expansions, a new clubhouse, a huge jumbotron, you can bet these moves angered some traditionalists and rooftop neighbors. It was a difficult sell, but those innovations are what the consumer masses wanted. Now look at the Cubs, literally on top of the World!



Hard to say what the next 108 years might bring for them and for sand bunkers, but there's a good chance I'll be on the bandwagon! 

Todd Quitno has been a practicing golf course architect for the past 20 years. He is a regular member of the American Society of Golf Course Architects and Senior Project Architect for Lohmann Golf Designs, Inc, based in the greater Chicagoland area. He is also a frustrated Chicago White Sox fan, which led him unapologetically to the Cubs bandwagon this year!



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From Workshop to Association

by Bruce Sering, reprinted from
The Golf Superintendent, Septemeber 1968.



Seven superintendents in the Chicago area held the first, informal meeting on April 21, 1966 to discuss labor problems they were experiencing in the area. From that meeting evolved a new local superintendents' association.

The first, informal meeting was held on April 21, 1966-seven superintendents met to discuss a labor problem. It was a very candid meeting, valuable to each man, principally, because of the frankness of the discussion. Because of the success of the first meeting, it was decided to continue to meet from 3:30 p.m. to 5:30 p.m. once a month.

NO NAME FOR THE WORKSHOP

The host superintendent acted as chairman of the meeting. The topics for discussion were set up at the previous meeting and each superintendent would check his records and be prepared to speak on these subjects. It was a round table debate where each person gave his views. Minutes were recorded and duplicated for every participant; each member had a permanent record to keep and study. To give examples of what we talked about, I will list some of the discussions

I have on file:(1) Wage rates, fringe benefits, and budgets - (this subject took two meetings); (2) Rates and methods of applying chemicals. For example, we found out the rates that were used at our different courses for Dicamba herbicide; not only rates but how much water was used; dates and weather conditions, plus the results; (3) Watering - timing and how much; (4) Caddie and cart policies; (5) Equipment - if one of the participants in the group had a new piece of equipment, he could discuss the pros and cons of its use and any special mechanical problems.

As you can see from the partial list, this information was especially helpful to the younger superintendent, such as myself, in our group. But, as we improved our format, the more experienced superintendent gleaned some usable knowledge from the younger members. Thus, the meetings were mutu-

ally beneficial.

What we had up to this point was an excellent monthly workshop, but we wanted more. There were 11 active members by June, 1967; one man with over 40 years experience and one with only two seasons as superintendent; six men over 35 and five less than 35. It was great up to a point, but we began to worry that our group was becoming too narrow in its scope; too many inbred ideas. We wanted outside speakers to address the group. We wanted more superintendents to attend our meetings. We wanted progress, but we had only 11 people. So, we had to organize, accept new members, receive a state charter, and become a chapter of GCSAA.

CHICAGOLAND GCSA

Why a new association? There is already an excellent association serving our area. We do not consider ourselves iconoclasts. But, we do believe our philosophy differs enough to warrant a new association. We are still active members in the Midwest Association both by our attendance at meetings and our payment of dues. From a purely personal standpoint, I can see no reason why I cannot support both associations as long as my vote at the national convention is just that: one vote.

By early summer 1967, we had come to the point in our history where most of US thought we would stagnate as a workshop. We asked superintendents in our area if they would be interested in developing a new association and join with us in hammering out a set of bylaws. The total number of men interested came to 22. Again, as in our smaller group, the age differential was about the same, even numbers of older and younger men. In relation to types of courses represented at our first meeting, they ranged from the nine-hole public course to a 54-hole private course.

When we assembled for the first time, it became

evident that it would take many meetings and much work to come up with a set of bylaws acceptable to all. To myself, a novice, it seemed incongruous that 22 men, who appeared to have the same goals, would debate these subjects so long and vehemently. What I thought would be several meetings of mutual agreement, turned into fall, winter, and spring debates. Basically, what we did was set up a planning committee of seven members. They would caucus on a section of the bylaws. Then, they presented their views' to the entire group. The membership would modify what was presented and then vote on it. We proceeded from there to each new section and finally completed our bylaws using laymen's terms. We hired a lawyer to convert the bylaws into a legal document.

The best way for us, as a fledgling group, to explain our activities is to quote briefly from our bylaws before they were converted into legal jargon:

"PURPOSE: To advance, promote, and encourage professional knowledge among its membership by the interchanging of scientific and practical knowledge relating to the care


Signatures of the Founder's on a document declaring their registered office in the state of Illinois.

of golf courses thus bringing about more efficient operation on golf courses and increase prestige for each member. To encourage cooperation with other associations whose interests parallel those of this association.

To qualify for active membership, an applicant shall be employed as a functioning superintendent on a golf course. His title and primary duty is that of a golf course superintendent. The applicant must be a member of the GCSAA and must remain a member of the National."

Of course, these are only excerpts from our by-laws, but I think they serve to show our basic philosophy. Simply stated, it is an association solely for golf superintendents, with education our prime concern.

As a footnote to our progress, we have had four monthly meetings held on the third Monday of the month. The meeting begins with dinner at 6:30 p.m. Prior to this time, we have our board of directors meeting to review the plans for that night. Promptly at 7:30 p.m., the guest speaker for that night begins his talk. After the speaker is finished and the question and discussion period is ended, (ordinarily about 9:30 p.m.), we have our business meeting.

We are a new and growing association. We know we can be an asset to each of our members, the Chicagoland area and the GCSAA. 

[Publisher's note:] Fred Opperman, Retired CGCS sent me a letter a month ago with this article in it. He asked that it be shared with the membership, as the Chicagoland Association of Golf Course Superintendents celebrated their 50-year Anniversary on April 21st of this year. It was penned by Bruce Sering, (then Superintendent at Evanston GC) to explain and validate the reasoning behind a superintendent only group. The group still exists under these same principles and is open to any superintendent in the area that would like to become an active member of it. Thanks to Fred for the information and reminder as I always thought the Chicagoland AGCS started in 1968, but have come to find that was the year they formally incorporated. It is good we don't forget. Happy 50th Chicagoland.

It was originally published in 1968 in *The Golf Superintendent*, which for those of you that didn't know was GCSAA's publication prior to *Golf Course Management* but after *The Golf Course Reporter*.

GCSAA's letter to the CAGCS approving their affiliated status.

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 *Great Lakes Turf..... 24
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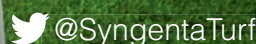
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