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THE PERCEPTION OF GOLF



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front cover

The new MAGCS board is voted in on a balmy day in December at the Annual Meeting at Medinah Country Club in conjunction with the Midwest Turf Clinic. Back Row L to R: John Gurke, Chuck Anfield, Chuck Barber, Jeff Hoste, Jake Vollbeer, Front Row L to R: Kris Kvelland, Matt Harstad, Matt Kregel, Jim Pedersen, Justin VanLanduit, Justin Kirtland.



Congratulations to John Gurke, CGCS who was awarded the MAGCS Presidential Award for Meritorious Service at the Annual Meeting for his dedication and work on his column, Bull Sheet, throughout the years.

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DATES

2016 MIDWEST EVENTS

- 1/28/ Midwest January Meeting & Wee One Fundraiser, Seven Bridges Golf Club
- 2/10 Midwest Hospitality Reception, Henry's Pub SD, CA
- 2/23 Midwest Assistant Superintendent Winter Workshop, Midwest Golf House

2016 Board of Directors

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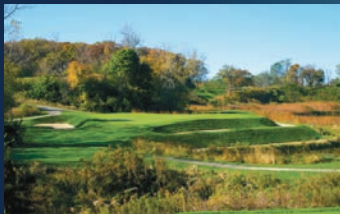
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On Course is published monthly with original member content. For advertising opportunities please call 630-685-2420.

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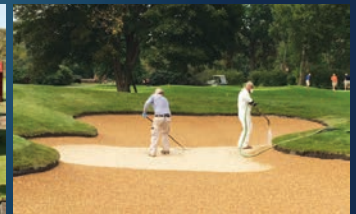
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Luke Cella
MAGCS Executive Director

The Perception of Golf

"You can't always get what you want," is one of the most recognizable song lyrics by non-arguably the greatest rock and roll band of all time.

Like many I took advantage of the weather this December. I was fortunate enough to play golf here a few days before Christmas. It was wet, the greens were bumpy, there were no ball washers out let alone a beverage cart, but I had just as many laughs and enjoyed the afternoon, maybe even more than a day in July – most likely because I knew it would be the last time I was able to play the game for a while. If it was a day in April (it was 50 degrees, rainy and windy), I wouldn't have even thought about venturing out for a round, knowing there would be many more days to come. I enjoyed the day because of my frame of mind. It made me think, why can't we do this with golfers everyday?

It would be nice if our customers could realize this and be satisfied with the products our industry produces. I understand where the golfing community is coming from, as a society we are brought up this way. We are pummeled with this message a thousand times a day. No one is ever happy with what they have, what they look like, the car they drive, the house they live in, so why are we not surprised when they play a golf course and want something more?

The only times there seems to be an inkling of realization that we have what we need is during the holidays – when we see family and friends, share time and laughter, maybe some tears, and realize most stuff in our lives is ancillary. That break is nice, but the reality of our lives and our work is pleasing our customers.

There are tons of resources, ideas, and gurus who claim to be customer service professionals, but ultimately as a service providing industry we need to make sure that our customers' perceived value of the goods we provide is greater (or the very least equal) than the resources they've spent on them. Since most of our operations are so thin, the one thing we can work on is the perception of our customers. Our initiative in the coming year should be to influence their perception.

The USGA continues to alter the perception of golf that brown is the new green – trying to change the way golfers think about conditioning. The USGA made this bold statement and followed it up with the last two U.S. Opens 2014 Pinehurst and 2015 Chambers Bay – that were definitely brown on TV (I wonder what shade of brown they are right now?) In a few short months, our turf will begin to come out of winter dormancy and mowing will take place regularly. About this time, the Masters will be televised in its near green perfection kicking off our golfing season. Somewhere in between these two perceptions of golf is your course. Both the USGA and the Masters manage their perceptions of the products they provide through all their outreach and communications.

How will you manage the perception of your course? Develop a strategy for the coming year. The first step should be to listen to your customers and acknowledge their comments and concerns, no matter how trivial they may seem. It is easy to address problems when you know what they are and often times nip them in the bud before they fully bloom. Solve their problems and follow up with them, thanking them for bringing items to your attention. Take opportunities to educate and truly impact the way people see your facility and don't be afraid to ask for suggestions on how to please them. People like to share their input and more importantly know their concerns are being heard. If you look for opportunities to manage the perception of your customers you will easily adopt them and they will figure out, they get what they need. @

Back to San Diego Golf Industry Show

Luke Cella, MAGCS

The 2016 Golf Industry Show (GIS) is right around the corner. We return to San Diego and it is time to get ready. For most, the GIS invigorates, motivates, and energizes our thoughts as we prepare for the coming season. I took the opportunity to scrutinize all that the GCSAA has prepared for you to experience and highlighted some of the things that caught my eye. San Diego seems to be on the regular rotation for the show and I took a look at some of the other items that may interest you in your free time out West. In any event, I hope your GIS experience gets you ready for the coming year.

Everyone thinks of the GIS as the Trade Show and since this is the perception, here are 20 tips for the trade show floor.

1. Have a plan. If you need to see a specific person on the floor – make an appointment with them. Many companies use the event to plan internal meetings and to meet with other distributors etc. Make sure the people you need to see are available and ready to meet.



Sometimes it is good to divide and conquer the floor from friends.

someone, go sit somewhere and talk – even if their booth doesn't have seats, look on the periphery of the floor for tables and chairs.

4. Stay focused on the work that you need to do and plan time for distractions on the floor. Look for new items, and ideas – jot down booth numbers and come back to them if need be.
5. Don't be in a hurry. It takes longer than you think.
6. Have your contact information ready – business card, or electronic contact card to email or text.
7. Travel light – get pdf's of brochures if available. Keep a notebook or use the note app on your phone.
8. Take pictures with your phone –for ideas and contact information (if taking pictures of products- ask for permission). Take pictures of business cards so you don't lose them or have to carry them.
9. Use the GIS app to find your way.
10. Minimize the time spent with your friends on the floor – don't be afraid to leave your wingman for a time to see items specific for your operation.
11. Always have an out – if and (when) you get cornered by person pitching their product that you are really not interested in, be polite (they are only doing their job), use some tact and say thank you but you're not interested, or you have to meet someone, feign a phone call or text...
12. Do your homework beforehand. If you are going to be comparing products, try and find out the differences beforehand and be ready to discuss them and ask pertinent questions as "why didn't you feel it was important to include that option or how does this compare to brand X"

2. Don't go tired.....walking the floor takes some energy – make sure you get some rest before, you fuel up beforehand and you wear comfortable shoes – not the time to break in your new hush puppies.
3. Sit when you get the chance. If you are meeting with

13. Make a game out of it...If you had the company check-book with an extra \$250,000 in it, what would you take home to make the most impact at your course? Ask your friends to do the same – talk about it over lunch and go see what they saw.
14. Divide and conquer. The floor is open for two days. You don't need to see the whole thing in one day or worry about running out of energy.
15. Visit the floor during non-peak hours to get attention. The last few hours of the show seem to be more quiet and laid back. Sales forces are tired and are less aggressive and are less likely to speak with you unless you directly speak with them.
16. Understand the sales force are people – they would rather be taking in the sights of San Diego too – so don't waste their time if you are truly not interested.



Don't get caught up in the tchotchkes, they're only there to lure you in – unless you are Pro at obtaining them when no one is looking.

17. If you are ready to buy a product or make a purchase use the opportunity to negotiate and get a show discount or pricing you may not necessarily see back home. Some of the smaller companies may be willing to offer deals on products to help them justify the expense of the show. Some of the larger companies may have the key decision makers present that can approve discounts. Ask and find out.
18. Leverage. Know what your friends are in the market for – if both of you are looking at similar items, see if you can leverage pricing, delivery, etc by purchasing items together.
19. Hear past the noise of the show and listen to other attendees. If you find yourself looking at the same thing as another attendee - ask them - they may have some information you have not even pondered.
20. Limit your time with local sales people on the floor, unless you have specific business with them. Easy out: "I'll catch up with you at the Midwest Hospitality Reception."

The Trade Show Floor certainly offers the opportunity to see the latest and greatest products, equipment and services for our industry. In addition, GCSAA has peppered the floor with educational opportunities like: **Answers on the Hour** - 30 to 45 minute presentations by leaders in the industry including Frank Rossi, Cale Bigelow and architect Ty Butler. **Tech Tips on the Half**: short presentations on current technology and how peers are using it to better manage

their operations. **The Dr. Is In**: Each day from 10:30 to 11:30 you can stop by and consult with (Wed) Dr. Doug Karcher, Dr. Aaron Patton or Bud White or (Thurs) Dr. Jim Brosnan, Dr. Elizabeth Guertal and Dr. John Soroohan.

New in 2016 GCSAA is providing a Trade Show Stage that will feature brief presentations and discussions by golf industry leaders. This schedule is still being figured out, so check the website for exact times and presentations.

When the GIS first started out, it was all about sharing information and education. The GCSAA Education Conference is the largest education event in the industry and covers all aspects of golf course management, including agronomics, environmental management, communications, leadership, and business management.

Starting on Monday, February 8 through the end of the Conference the GCSAA has provided a strong line up of seminars ranging in length from two hours to full days. There are four separate tracks offered:

- Assistant Superintendent
- Equipment Management
- Business Management
- Environmental Management

GCSAA does a great job of screening their seminars and providing the most up to date topics and information you can use. Their speakers are engaging and reviewed each year to make sure they can get their point across in an interesting and sound manner. The GIS was founded upon the GCSAA Conference and the education offered at this year's show reflects the principle of sharing and disseminating knowledge in the art of greenkeeping.

One of the overlooked aspects of the education conference are the seminars that contain field trips offered at the show. This year there are several:

Irrigation Deep Dive – The Latest Trends, Solutions and Technologies. Get out of the convention center and inside Hunter Industries. A global leader in irrigation technology, Hunter's U.S. headquarters is located in San Marcos, Calif., just northwest of San Diego. This eight-hour educational field trip will blend in-class and in-the-field learning. Enjoy a day of education on the following topics: irrigation auditing and data analysis, turf reduction, using technology to diagnose and fix issues on your course, sprinkler technology and efficient water distribution, and how to save money, conserve water and still have healthy/appealing turf. While at Hunter, participants will also receive a personally guided tour and see the latest irrigation technology in action.

Golf Irrigation Auditor, Launching a First Green Field Trip Program at your Own Golf Course and Gadgets and Gizmos: How to Best Use Measurement Technology. These field trips are a great way to get out of the classroom and enjoy San Diego, and hopefully some sun while still learning.

GIS Preview continued on next page...

Local Eateries and Restaurants

From *Diner's Drive In's and Dives*:

- **Blue Water Seafood Market and Grill**
3667 India Street, San Diego
- **El Indio Mexican Restaurant and Catering**
3695 India Street, San Diego
- **Hob Nob Hill**
2271 First Avenue, San Deigo

Top Rated Yelp Restaraunts (within 1 mile of Gas Lamp Dist, \$\$, \$\$\$ and highest rated - filters)

- **Werewolf**
627 4th Avenue, San Diego, American Pub, \$\$
- **Meze**
345 6th Avenue, San Diego, Mediterranean, Greek, \$\$
- **Oceanaire Seafood Room**
400 J Street, San Diego, Seafood, \$\$\$
- **The Mission**
1250 J Street, San Diego, American Traditional – Breakfast & Brunch, \$\$

If you're not in the mood for a full flung seminar, on Monday and Tuesday GCSAA once again is offering Conference Sessions. Presented by industry experts, allied association representatives and golf course superintendents, the Golf Industry Show sessions are open to all full-conference registrants.

Topics of these Conference Sessions include:

- Preventative Maintenance Strategies for Turf Equipment
- Transforming Employee Relations
- Tree Risk Assessment
- Taking Your Career to the Next Level
- Waste Management Planning
- Labor Management
- HDPE Pipe for Golf Course Irrigation
- Agronomic Solutions: Drought Planning
- Boosting OSHA Compliance
- Putting Surfaces and Water Management

Tuesday night (Feb 9) will begin the Conference with the Opening Night Reception. Many awards will be handed out including the Old Tom Morris Award to Herb Kohler, Jr. followed by the Opening Night Celebration.

Wednesday night (Feb 10) is held for private events, including the Midwest Hospitality Reception at Henry's Pub on 5th Avenue from 7 to 11 pm. All Midwest members are invited, sponsored by our own Golden Tee Club.

Many of our Midwest members (several are key members of the committee) make the annual Prayer Breakfast, this year on Thursday, Feb 11 at 7:15 a.m. NFL veteran wide receiver Don Beebe will speak to the group. Beebe's ascent from a tiny NAIA college in western Nebraska to becoming the first person to play for six Super Bowl teams is a truly

inspirational journey. Beebe was one of the fastest players in league history and upon retirement, formed a sports franchise business that works with professional and young athletes to build character and maximize their speed and athletic talents. He also serves as the varsity football coach at Aurora Christian High School here in Illinois.



On Thursday night (Feb 11) we will meet our new GCSAA Board of Directors and be entertained by Frank Caliendo, a stand up comedian and impressionist to close the Conference and Show.

If you haven't already taken a look over golffindsutryshow.com website, do so. There are so many offerings at this year's event, it would be difficult to attend and not come back ready for our 2016 season with new information and enthusiasm for your work. @

Sightseeing in San Diego

(not the SD Zoo, Legoland, USS Midway, Seaworld or Coronado)

Museums at Balboa Park

Most open at 10am and close at 5 pm and less than \$10 admission for adults

Museum of Photographic Arts

1649 El Prado

San Diego Automotive Museum

2080 Pan American Plaza 10a

San Diego Air and Space Museum

2001 Pan American Plaza

San Diego Museum of Art

1450 El Prado

Outdoor Activities

San Diego Botanic Gardens

230 Quail Gardens Drive, Encinitas, \$12 per adult, 9a-5p daily

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Dates to Remember

January 12-13 – Turf Conference 2016 at Bolingbrook Golf Club, Jeff Gerdes host.

January 25-27 – 82nd Iowa Turfgrass Conference & Trade Show at the Coralsville Marriott Hotel & Convention Center somewhere in Iowa.

January 28 – MAGCS monthly meeting and 7th Annual Wee One Fundraiser at Seven Bridges Golf Club, Don Ferreri and Dave Gelino hosts.

February 3-5 – Illinois Landscape Show at the Schaumburg Convention Center in Schaumburg, IL.

February 6-11 – Golf Industry Show in San Diego, CA.

February 6-8 – GCSAA Golf Championships in San Diego, CA.

February 10 – MAGCS Hospitality Reception at Henry's Pub at 618 5th Avenue in San Diego, CA.

February 19 – Deadline to register any small unmanned aircraft (drone) you've already been operating.

February 23 – Annual MAGCS Assistant Winter Workshop at Midwest Golf House in Lemont, IL.

February 26-28 – 33rd Chicago Golf Show at the Donald E. Stephens Convention Center in Rosemont, IL.

March 15 – Deadline for applications for the new ASGCS/USGA consulting program—information follows.

January 2016

Happy New Year to all.

Congrats to **Chuck Anfield** on retaining that "CGCS" designation after his name. Chuck was recertified (or would we say recertiFIABLE?) through GCSAA in November of last year. Chuck celebrated his achievement by taking a little ride on his hog with pedals. In his shorts. On December 21st.



Best of luck to Peter Killian, former assistant superintendent at Bryn Mawr Country Club who has accepted the assistant position at Sunset Ridge Country Club.



Congratulations to Kevin Goss (left), superintendent at Sugar Creek Golf Course in Villa Park, IL on being chosen to participate in the Environmental Institute for Golf's (EIFG) Melrose Leadership Academy to be held at the Golf Industry Show next month in San Diego. The Melrose Leadership Academy, named after retired Toro Company CEO Ken Melrose, supports the professional development of GCSAA member superintendents by

providing the opportunity to attend the GIS.

'Twas the season—for Holiday parties around town last month. The Annual South Side Superintendents Party was held in Frankfort at Chef Klaus' Bier Stube on the 7th, with a healthy crowd in attendance to experience the food coma that has become a tradition at the event. Many thanks to Eddie Esgar and Matt Harstad and the South Side hit men for making it another great time. Ten days later, the West Side crew held its 17th Annual West Side Superintendents Party at Seven Bridges Golf Club, where hosts Don Ferreri and Dave Gelino put on a great spread of food and drink for all in attendance. These two parties are a staple for MAGCS members to get out and socialize with their friends and peers, and we look forward to them every year. Pictures on next page.



Congratulations to Kankakee Country Club on its reaching a huge milestone—the celebration of its centennial. It was 1916 when the beautiful Tom Bendelow course was established along the Kankakee River, and now, 100 years later, it remains one the Midwest's hidden gems.

Congratulations to Erin and Justin VanLanduit on the birth of their daughter Rourke Margaret Elizabeth who was born on October 22.



The VanLanduit Family celebrates their first Christmas together.

The American Society of Golf Course Architects (ASGCA) and the USGA are teaming up to make a positive impact on publicly accessible golf facilities and improve the game for players of all skill levels—at no cost to select facilities. Combining the expertise of ASGCA member architects and USGA agronomists, scientists and researchers, the program will provide pro bono consulting services to facilities that need assistance to achieve their goal of making their layouts more enjoyable and reducing their maintenance costs. There is an application form at www.asgca.org/site-evaluation, which interested facilities must submit by one of three deadlines, the first being March 15th. The chosen facilities will receive services including an on-site evaluation, professional analysis and a report outlining recommendations for improvement. These recommendations can cover such areas as course design, agronomy, environmental stewardship, and golf course operations, with the goal of lowering costs while also improving the golfer experience. Sounds like a no-lose proposition for any public facility to take advantage of.

Speaking of the USGA, the first of this month marked the debut of several rules changes implemented by them and the R & A, along with six significant changes to its USGA Handicap System. The rules changes include the Withdrawal of Rule on Ball Moving After Address, Limited Exception to Disqualification Penalty for Submission of Incorrect Score Card, Modification of Penalty for a Single Impermissible Use of Artificial Devices or Equipment, and Prohibition on Anchoring the Club While Making a Stroke. The Handicap System changes include the definition of a tournament score, adjusting hole scores, posting scores when a player is disqualified, anchoring and posting, playing alone and peer review, and committee responsibilities. To learn the specifics of these changes, go to www.usga.org.

With these new rules changes in effect, it occurred to me

that it might be a good idea to occasionally brush up on our knowledge of the Rules of Golf in general, as many of us are asked for interpretation of a rule now and again. With that in mind, now begins what may become a regular feature in this column (until I get bored with it) to test your knowledge of the rules of the game that pays our bills. This month's rules quiz: A player is preparing to drop a ball or place a ball when he removes loose impediments from the area that would affect the lie of the ball. What is the ruling?

- A. No penalty
- B. One-stroke penalty
- C. Two-stroke penalty

Answer at the end. Thank you to **Mike Bavier**, retired superintendent, frequent (and welcome) contributor to these pages, and world traveler for this idea.



While on the subject of Mike Bavier, did you know that the retired longtime superintendent of Inverness Golf Club and past president of both MAGCS and GCSAA is also an accomplished and published author? Mike and his longtime friend Gordon Witteveen, a superintendent of similar acclaim who spent the bulk of his career in Toronto and is no longer with us, co-wrote a book titled *Practical Golf Course Maintenance—The Magic of Greenkeeping* which was published in 1998, and was followed up by the second edition in 2005 and a third edition in 2013. The book has been sold worldwide, and is a great source of information for not only people new to the business, but a valuable resource for the old fogeys as well. If you haven't read it, give it a look.



If you're flying a drone around your course, whether to get some cool overhead video of the property for your web site, or to spy on your crew, or in most guys' cases to check out the action on Ladies Day, you probably know this: YOU MUST REGISTER IT WITH THE FEDERAL AVIATION ADMINISTRATION'S UNMANNED AIRCRAFT SYSTEM (UAS) REGISTRY BEFORE YOU FLY IT. Current owners of drones that have been previously operated have until February 19th to register, while



new owners need to register theirs before operating them. If your drone weighs more than 0.55 lbs. and less than 55 lbs., you need to register it. It costs a whopping \$5, which will be refunded if you do it by January 20th. Go to <https://registermyuas.faa.gov/> to get it done. This PSA regarding UAS is strictly FYI. LOL.

as.faa.gov/ to get it done. This PSA regarding UAS is strictly FYI. LOL.

Q: What does **Brett Gutekunst** drink after a long day of work at his course?

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A: A Robert A. Black 'n' tan.

Bonus Q & A: What does the male of the *Tilia* species have that the female does not?

A: A Linden Johnson.



Tucker Harstad (r) meets his little sister, Grace for the first time.

Congratulations to **Matt** and Lauren **Harstad** on the birth of their second child, Grace Harriet Harstad who was born on November 6.

What happens when a MAGCS member switches

jobs? Besides the obvious—he or she actually switches jobs—they also re-qualify for inclusion in the Midwest Doppelgänger feature, the lucky devils. As one of Chuck Barber's last official presidential acts, we give you this:

Shane Conroy, the GCSAA Field Staff Representative for the Great Lakes region, apparently has one of those faces with more than one evil twin out there. Our Immediate Past President made this discovery, and felt obligated to share with us.

MIDWEST Doppelgänger



Shane Conroy or Guy Smiley? No doubt.

Our profession has made another of those "most" lists. A survey conducted by CNNMoney ranked the golf course superintendent's profession as one of 15 "Most Stressful Jobs That Pay Badly." What are some of the other jobs making this dubious list? How about these: home health coordinator, emergency services dispatcher, mental health counselor, daycare director, loan processor, deputy sheriff, transportation coordinator, and restaurant manager (making the top of the list). We are in good company.



The data from a 2013 survey has been released, showing that golf courses in

the U.S. have reduced water use by 22% over the last eight years. It was also reported that golf courses used just 1.44% of all irrigation water in the U.S. in 2013. Since the previous survey—done in 2005—golf courses have reduced managed


irrigated turf by 14,430 acres, while increasing the use of recycled water by 33%. All good news, and I'm guessing if another survey were taken today, those numbers would be even better, proving that our industry has been and remains at the forefront of environmental conservancy.

Next month, GCSAA members will head to sunny San Diego for the Golf Industry Show that takes place from the 6th to the 11th. On the 6th through the 8th, the Golf Championships will be contested at six high-end area courses, including Torrey Pines. Last year, over 400 members played in the event, raising over \$50,000 for the Environmental Institute for Golf (EIFG). As usual, there are unrealistically high expectations for our MAGCS competitors—don't let us down!

Another organization that will be in San Diego that week is the National Golf Course Owners Association (NGCOA), who will present its 2016 Award of Merit—its longest running honor—to none other than Hootie. No, not Hootie Johnson, but Darius Rucker, founding member of Hootie and the Blowfish for his help in donating more than \$1.8 million to hundreds of charities worldwide while being an ambassador to golf. There ya go.

MAGCS members making news: October's C&RB magazine ran an article by Betsy Gilliland called "Native Land," about the many benefits natural areas on golf courses provide, featuring **Rick Wilson** and the new renovations at Glenview Park District Golf Course. The November GCM issue highlighted **Ben Larsen**, the former assistant superintendent at Sunset Ridge Country Club who is now golf course superintendent at Green Bay Country Club in its Back Nine feature.

On December 9th, **Curtis Tyrrell**, **CGCS MG** and Medinah Country Club hosted the 63rd Midwest Turf Clinic, and it was a REALLY great day. Geoff Corlett of TDI Golf Canada started the day's education with a surprisingly interesting and useful presentation, followed by the Frank Rossi show (which is always sure to please). Frank kept the microphone after lunch, deftly moderating the panel discussion on renovations done recently in our area with panelists **Darin Douglas**, **Scott Pavalko**, **Curtis Tyrrell**, and **Justin VanLanduit** who filled in at the last minute for an ailing **Ben McGargill**. Thanks to everyone who contributed to making it the great event it was, with special thanks to the generous sponsors, who were **Arthur Clesen, Inc.**, **Bayer Environmental Science**, **Burris Equipment Company**, **Chicagoland Turf**, **Harrell's**, **Healthy Grow**, **J.W. Turf, Inc.**, **Nels Johnson Tree Experts**, **Patten Cat**, **Rain Bird**, **Reinders, Inc.**, **Syngenta Professional Products**, and **XGD Systems**. Images on opposite page.

Quiz Answer: A—There is no penalty, as explained in Decision 23-1/6. 



Joel Purpur, CGCS and Brett Ziegler share a laugh at the reception at the end of the day.



Can two make a dynasty? Kevin and son Kyle DeRoos have at least made a start.



135 members and guests of the Midwest attended the Annual Meeting and Turf Clinic at Medinah Country Club.



Dr. Frank Rossi moderated the panel of Justin VanLanduit, Curtis Tyrrell, CGCS MG, Scott Pavalko and Darin Douglas.



John Gurke, CGCS received a standing ovation when he was honored by Chuck Barber for his work on Bull Sheet.



L to R, Matt Leinen, Matt Giermak and Isaac Farley of Bob O'Link chat with each other during a break.



Newly elected President Matt Kregel thanks outgoing President Chuck Barber for his years of service to the Association.



Curtis Tyrrell and Ed Nangle discuss the finer points of striped ties, navy coats, and maybe turf.



Jimmy Frels sang the National Anthem after Dave Marquardt started the day with a short Invocation.



L to R, Olympia Fields Assistants: Jake Paver, Andrew Paxton, & Gerry Navarre were in attendance.



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Turf Clinic Reveiw



Geoff Corlett uses some audience help to explain the relationship among depth of tile, spacing, and water tables.

The 63rd Midwest Turf Clinic and Annual Meeting was once again held at the venerated Medinah Country Club on a balmy 50 degree day. Did I mention it was December 9th? Curtis Tyrrell, CGCS MG and the staff at Medinah hosted. The MAGCS is so grateful to the members of Medinah Country Club to share their gorgeous clubhouse with us. The interior paintings on the wall and ceilings of the meeting room are really spectacular and inspiring! If you haven't been there, you must see it.

The Midwest is proud of its rich heritage founded on the principal of openly sharing information and knowledge in the profession of greenkeeping. The Midwest Turf Clinic and Annual Meeting is the premiere event where this tradition continues. We thank the Education Committee for compiling the speakers and presenters. We thank the speakers and presenters for sharing their knowledge and presenting.

Geoff Corlett, owner of TDI Golf and XGD Drainage Systems crossed the border from Toronto, Canada to make his presentation "Drainage: Soil & Water Relationship." Geoff founded TDI in 1987 as a specialized golf course construction and remodeling company. The quality of work under his direction has allowed the company to achieve accolades from the golf course industry and the business world. Geoff remains involved in all functions of the business, with specific emphasis on field operations. He reviews all sites on a frequent basis in order to monitor quality control of work in progress.

Outside of Geoff's accomplishments with TDI Golf, he has also been a speaker on drainage and construction techniques for golf courses at major turf symposiums throughout the country. He has achieved designation as a Professional Agrologist for his expertise in soil science. Geoff holds a B.Sc in Agriculture from the University of Guelph in Ontario and a Landscape designation from Ryerson Polytechnic Institute in Toronto.

Geoff started his presentation going over the basic soil concepts. Soil texture is comprised of varying amounts of clay, sand and loam in the soil. Soil texture is a dynamic situ-

ation and over time can lead to changes in the soils performance. Clay holds the most water and holds onto it the tightest. Loam holds the most water available to the plant. Sand releases the most water.

Soil structure is a combination of soil particles, air, and water. Aerification has the ability to change soil structure. It can change the soil dynamics in a positive way.

Geoff shared a great visual demonstration using a common kitchen sponge to show the physical process of gravitational water and the properties of capillary water held by adhesional forces that drainage can't remove. He discussed the issues of compaction and its influences on soil drainage. An aerification pan may develop over time from using the same tool at the same depth. A deep tine machine is the tool to use to alleviate this potential problem.

Geoff challenged current drainage techniques calling the classic herringbone drain tile design ugly and not functional. It loses performance when backfilled with gravel and capped with sand. He contends that we don't need to backfill our tiles with gravel as it creates a perched water table and actually prohibits drainage. Fines fill in between the gravel creating an impenetrable aggregate. We would be better off using native soils and allowing the soil to drain naturally. It would also save on costs and ease of operation. The disadvantage of using soil for backfill is that you don't want to compact the soil and ruin its drainage characteristics. It will settle over time. The only reason people need to use sand is because they can compact it and minimize settling.

Socks can minimize micro soils in tile. Some of the new drainage tile is coming with micro slits to minimize fines from getting into the drainage pipes.

Geoff wrapped up his informative presentation that drainage should not affect play or the aesthetics of the golf course. Drain-lines should follow the natural contours of the site. Use soil as fill, cap with sod and save money, time and playability by getting rid of those ugly drain lines.



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Long time friend of the MAGCS, Dr. Frank Rossi, Associate Professor at Cornell University took the podium to present on "Firm Sand, Tight Turf. What Does Science Practice, and Recent History Tell Us About Successful Renovations"

Rossi began his talk discussing the current trend in the "world" of golf and green maintenance is that firmness is now surpassing green speed. Tighter cuts and lower heights are pushing that trend. He looked at four aspects of renovations.

- GOALS: What are the goals of a renovation?
- LOGISTICS: Negotiating and selling the job.
- ENVIRONMENTAL/INFRASTRUCTURE: Surface grass species/Subsurface –soils and drainage
- MANAGEMENT/ECONOMICS: The process of the grow-in.

GOALS

What is the big picture? Is the renovation designed to market the course to attract more players and increase revenue? Is it designed to replace aging infrastructure and retain existing customers? Is the Club concerned about the history of the design and landscape of the course? Does the course need to fix long term problems with contaminated grass species that cause excessive winterkill and subsequent loss of play/revenue?

LOGISTICS

Current trends in surveys show that conditioning of the course "trumps" the challenge of the course. People, are twice as likely to play a course if it's in better condition than if it's "harder." People have shown that they are willing to pay 25% more for a green fee for better conditioning. 81% of the survey revealed that players like to "travel" and play a variety of courses. 20% of the players pay 80% of the green fees. Courses should focus on customer satisfaction for player retention. Some factors to consider is to have an architect "on the same page" as the courses goals. Goals should be set by asking the following questions: Should the course renovate existing features or re-build? Should the work be done by in-house labor to save money or outsource? What is the timing of the project to minimize down time and maximize re-growth? Budgets and timelines need to be realistically set and communicated. What will be the end result of the project? Will it require more hand labor or is the goal to reduce labor and overall costs?

ENVIRONMENTAL/INFRASTRUCTURE

Water use is the industry's biggest issue/challenge. Climate change adaptation and BMP's (Best Management Practices) are common changes courses are adapting to. The water restrictions and turf reduction that is going on in California should be a signal of imminent changes coming for the rest of the country. BMP's with the focus on anything applied

to the property with the end result of the products staying on the property. This should be a major consideration. WOTUS and the actions that this will require is another change in the environmental considerations golf courses will be dealing with. Courses that used to focus drain lines into water features are now changing the path away from the water. Golf courses are now being designed with the sole function as water retention holding areas adjacent to urban areas. Golf courses are also looked at as "urban oasis of green space" and more scrutiny as far as how they are being managed. The GCSAA has been very proactive in lobbying and promoting BMP's for golf courses and promoting our people as educated and trained professionals functioning as environmental stewards.

What construction methods will you use for new greens? The USGA method is tried and true. Physical performance should be the top priority. Modified USGA greens incorporate variable soil depths in high and low areas of soil profile. Consider topdressing materials for the cultivars selected. Will the canopy be so dense coarse particles will not penetrate? It

is still too early to tell if topdressing with only fine sands will affect the drainage/profile characteristics and cause problems.

MANAGEMENT/ECONOMICS

Is the grass species selected appropriate for the maintenance practices being completed on the local site? Consider mowing heights and cultural maintenance practices. Is it better to sod or seed? Dr. Rossi commented, "I am not convinced that simply re-grassing with the latest popular bentgrass varieties is the best solution." What grass will be the best "fit" for your turfgrass management system? Grass species will adapt to your local agronomic programs at your specific location over time. This includes mowing

heights and frequency, fertilizer products and rates, growth regulators, fungicide selection and timing etc. Dr. Rossi refers to this phenomenon as management ecology. Consult recent NTEP trial data for varieties that will perform well in your area. Things to consider are: maintained mowing heights, spring green up, color, shoot density, drought tolerances and disease resistance.

Will you be trying to control *Poa annua* in the new greens? Newly seeded bentgrass greens will convert to 80% poa in 9-15 years unless physical removal is part of the poa exclusion program. A discussion on Poa management should be part of the process.

Dr. Rossi is always an interesting speaker to listen to. He challenges current maintenance trends and practices. His diverse experiences in turfgrass maintenance and research bring a lot to debate and discuss. We definitely are living in an ever



Dr. Rossi keeps the audience involved with his questioning and interactive style.

changing world of turfgrass management and science. Frank is right there. Any questions or comments can be directed via email fsr3@cornell.edu His twitter handle is @fsr3

The last education session of the day featured a panel discussion moderated by Dr. Frank Rossi. The topic was "Renovation Roundtable Panel Discussion" The panel featured (CT) **Curtis Tyrrell**, CGCS, MG Medinah Country Club, (DD) **Darin Douglas**, Mt. Prospect Golf Club, (SP) **Scott Pavalko**, Bob-O-Link Golf Club, (JV) **Justin Van Landuit**, Briarwood Country Club.

The first question was **"How did you sell the renovation project?"**

CT: This was the most time consuming aspect of the entire process. Course #1 was a total remake. We needed to repurpose the land focusing on storm water drainage. This focus eventually led to the final design.

SP: Prior to my arrival, the golf course lost many of the greens due to winterkill. There was a need to renovate entire property. The members realized this. We had great leadership on the Board. They are the ones who drove the project to the rest of the membership. Our goal was to try to restore the golf course close to the original architects design intent.

DD: The concept started on 2004. The process took a long time as we transitioned through new Board Members and new plans. The design concept of David Esler was to create larger greens. We took inspiration from Seth Raynor's work at Shoreacres and C.B. Macdonald at Chicago Golf Club.

JV: Winter kill of turf led to the focus on the renovation project. Being the "new guy" it was difficult to sell the project.

What grasses did you select?

DD: We checked local NTEP trial plots at North Shore C.C. "Pure Distinction" seemed to perform the best.

JV: We planted into native soil in 2011. We went with some of the other local renovations going on at the time and the 50/50 A-1/A-4 combination was proving very successful.

SP: We started with dead greens after a severe winterkill. We also checked North Shore CC NTEP trials and went with "Pure Distinction."

CT: We started our entire process by renovating our short game practice facility and using that as a trial to test our management style. We went with Seed Research 007 and 1119 at varying heights.

What did you use as your subsurface soil mixture?

CT: We went with the USGA 80/20 mix.

SP: We went a custom mix using compost/profile/sand. Our goal was to maximize root zone air and improve the overall soil biology.

DD: 80/20

JV: We stayed with the native soil.

"If you had a chance to do anything different, what would it be?"

JV: I would use a marker for seed application. It was difficult to seed where we applied. I would also modify my irrigation management plan.

CT: I would do a better job of managing erosion around greens from irrigation. I would change the timing of the seed-

ing. Summer would be better to get a quicker germination. Having a good centralized irrigation program schedule is critical for successful irrigation practices.

SP: I would shorten the seeding window so everything grows all at a similar rate. Our seeding was spread out and created many different mowing height scenarios.

DD: I would have taken more time to study engineering plans prior to construction. We had some surprises after the project was underway.

"Was selling decreased maintenance after the construction of the project a factor?"

JV: We won't have to go out and shovel snow off the Poa greens during the winter. We will have decreased maintenance during the season not managing Poa greens.

CT: We will be able to present a uniformity of turf types and consistent maintenance practices across the entire property. The focus was on improving overall drainage modernizing features of club.

SP: We will have a better golf course. There will be less loss of access to course with overall improved playing conditions. We added forward tees to accommodate a wider range of players.

DD: Savings on maintenance was definitely a selling point. The bunkers needed constant pumping out after rain events.

"Was the Club anticipating an increase in revenue after the renovation?"

DD: Increased play was anticipated to be a by-product of project.

JV: Play has increased by 30-40%. We have seen some new members joining.

CT: Our members take a lot of pride in the courses and hope to generate new memberships.

SP: The project was sold to increase property and course values. It was necessary.

"Comment on Staff and Labor budget during and after renovation."

JV: About the same.

CT: We reduced the staff from 25 to 5 during course construction.

SP: Pretty much our normal operating budget. Our staff participated during the project to help facilitate the process as quickly and efficiently as possible. We conducted tree removal in-house.

DD: We kept our full crew. We also did tree removal and installed the straw mat for erosion control. We also kept mowing rough around the property.

A big thanks to the guys for sharing their experiences during their respective construction projects. Thanks to Dr. Rossi for moderating what was a very informative education session. It's the sharing of ideas and experiences that makes our profession unique. The networking opportunities abound at an event like the Turf Clinic. The turn-out was pretty strong this year as this event continues to draw attendees from all over the Midwest. See you next year. @

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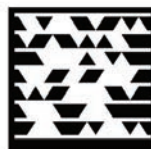
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