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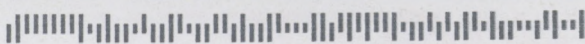
NEGATIVITY

IRRIGATION SYSTEM WOES

COMPASS PLANT

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toc

TABLE OF CONTENTS

4

FEATURE

Your Irrigation System Sucks

Darrick Robbins

16

FEATURE

Super-n-Site

PJ Bugay

SERIALS

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front cover

The Highlands of Elgin will provide a great test of golf for all our flights at this year's Midwest Championship. Brad Legnaioli will host the event at the newest of three courses he manages as pictured from the 10th green looking back toward the clubhouse.



Most of the time you've got to play the cards you're dealt in life. So too, it is with your irrigation system. Darrick Robbins provides a few insights in getting the most out of any irrigation system no matter its age, brand, or features.

DEPARTMENTS

- 03 Director's Column
Luke Cella
- 09 The Bull Sheet
John Gurke
- 20 Nature of the Game
Dave Ward / Kati Bernardy

DATES

2018 UPCOMING MIDWEST EVENTS

- 8/27 Golf Championship, Highlands of Elgin, Brad Legnaioli host
- 10/2 October Meeting at Seven Bridges,
Dave Gelino & Don Ferreri hosts
- 12/5 Midwest Turf Clinic & Annual Meeting,
Medinah Country Club, Steve Cook host

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Luke Cella
MAGCS

Negativitis

I can always tell when the stress of summer begins to wear on the members of the Midwest. Fatigue sets in as many of the club/course championships and other special events have occurred.

Staff members are set on autopilot as they go about their daily chores as superintendents, assistants, and mechanics manage the daily fires sparked by irrigation woes, equipment failure, staffing issues, and turf decline.

If you didn't want to make things better, your "to do" list would be fairly short. As a manager, this is both a blessing and a curse. This is proven when a superintendent or an assistant plays their own course. 99 times out of 100, they don't play well. The reason is simple; they see what needs to be done and can't focus on their game. It is tough to disconnect and unplug your brain and enjoy the fruits of your labor, the fruits that so many other people enjoy daily. Why? You are wired to see the negative, in fact some have been looking this way for so long, it is questionable if there is even a positive terminal under the corrosion and smog formed by years of finding the things that need attention, to be fixed, repaired or improved. As a superintendent or manager, it is beneficial to see your facility this way, but can be detrimental at the same time – especially if you let it creep into your personal life or completely overtake your way of seeing the world. I don't know if there is a cure for negativitis, or if you eventually outgrow it with age, being aware of it is the first step in realizing there might be a problem. I realized it when my family started to call me "Mr. Negativo".

...it is beneficial to see your facility this way, but can be detrimental at the same time...

Even though it has been a while since I've professionally grown grass, I'm fortunate enough to visit and play or visit several area courses and clubs each summer. Some I see through Midwest or Chicagoland meetings, others I play with friends in the industry, and some I play with individuals who are not in the golf industry at all, but are neighbors, friends and family. It's the last group, the non-industry folks, who have helped me see golf courses through a different lens. While playing I might see an area that needs attention, some turf that looks different from its surrounds. If I'm with superintendent friends, the talk might lead down the path of "I wonder what happened there," as we try and solve the riddle, of perhaps a collapsed drain tile, a spray skip or a misaligned part circle head. But if I'm with my non-superintendent colleagues, it might be one time out of a 1,000 they'll even notice that the area is different from the rest. It's how they see things. It's how we see things.

There has been a meme running about you can never really understand a person's point of view unless you have been in their shoes or shared their life experience. I think we can all agree on this; don't judge. Most of us don't when we play another's course because we know no two properties are alike. Earlier this year I got into a long discussion on this topic with a club official when he wanted an easy way to compare one golf course's budget to another. The conversation took a while as I explained the differences to him. He was a numbers guy and thought there was no reason you couldn't just easily figure it out. That was his background, that's what he knew. He didn't know about soil types, irrigation water quality, micro climates, turf cultivars, root pruning, disease susceptibility, and the rest. I think I opened up his eyes a bit and maybe changed his thought process if only for a brief time. Those folks that I play golf with who have no knowledge of turf, are out to play a game, to take a break from their jobs and to enjoy some time outdoors with friends. It's taken me a while, but I see what they see. I've had to work at it. I also notice the other people

Why Your Irrigation System Sucks

Darrick Robbins, Reinders Inc.

PHOTO CREDITS: LUKE CELLA

So, your irrigation system sucks. It's no fun, it doesn't work well. You shudder to turn it on in any circumstance. Sometimes there is nothing that can be done except inject a significant amount of capital into the situation.

But there are often other things that can be done to improve the situation, and help create a more reliable, consistent watering system. This article will cover some of the things that you can control, and some you can't. Not every system can be turned into a perfectly operating thing of beauty, but a little knowledge, and a little planning can ensure that your system operates optimally for your site.

It is often said that the key to happiness in life is recognizing the things that you have control over, and those you do not. You are probably all too aware of the things about your irrigation system that you can't change. In the spirit of that maxim let's talk about the things that you can't control.

Age

The chronological age of your system is what it is, something you don't have any control over. What is perhaps more important is the "effective" age of your system. How well has it been maintained? Was it properly designed and installed? Have ill advised changes to the system been made? Perhaps the electrical circuit has an additional burden that was not accounted for in the design process like a pond aerator, or lightning detection system. Maybe old pipe is rusting, or some other substance has been drawn into the system com-

promising the operation of the sprinklers. Even a low quality water source with high amounts of suspended solids can be abrasive and affect system components. All of these things dramatically increase the effective age of the system.

Design

It is very difficult to overcome poor design. Poor spacing, inadequate hydraulic capacity throughout the system, even inadequate electrical design can defy repair. This underscores the importance of securing a reputable design firm when installing a new system. Once it is in the ground it is pretty much the way it will be until it is replaced.

Manufacturing Defects

No company is free from manufacturing defects. This fact underscores how important it is to choose a company you can trust, one that will do the right thing when these issues arrive. In these situations it is also helpful to have an independent distributor who can be your advocate when these issues arise.

Past Maintenance

Whether it was due to financial considerations, or the negligence of those who maintained the system previously, a lack of maintenance can be very difficult to overcome. Sometimes attempted maintenance can be damaging. Corrosive materials like moth balls are often used in controllers which can cause lasting damage. Winterization without a pressure regulator can cause lasting damage. The list is long. A lack of regular maintenance usually ends up being cured only by a large injection of capital money.

Installation A superior design and system concept can be defeated by a poor install, or the use of poor quality materials. The simple fact remains that irrigation materials are installed underground. By their very nature the access to these materials is difficult. More than half of the cost of an irrigation system is labor to get these materials into the ground. Given these realities the use of use of inferior materials is like build-



Do you get caught in a rut with your system? You think to yourself, the last of the heads are on by the entrance so I know the whole system ran flawlessly last night?

ing a boat with a water-soluble board in the bottom. If you ever get the opportunity to install an irrigation system at your facility insist on the best materials, and the best installer you can get.

Poor Support

You can have the best system in the world, but if it breaks and you don't have anyone to fix it, or parts are not available in a timely manner, what good is it? Work with vendors who service their systems, stock the parts you need, and pick up the phone when you call.

We have established that some things are out of your control. What about the things that can be controlled? How can you as a golf course superintendent improve the efficiency and reliability of your system? The three primary arrows in the quiver of the superintendent when it comes to irrigation are: Understanding, Maintenance, and Improvement. If you don't understand how it works it is very difficult to determine if it is working properly and make it do what you want it to do. Maintenance will ensure the system continues to work as it is intended to, and Improvement will fill in the areas that aren't quite right, or need to be supplemented.

Understanding

It seems obvious that someone on property should have an intimate understanding of how your irrigation system works, but even this can be a challenge. The responsibilities of the modern golf course superintendent seem to grow every year, and assistants tend to have a limited tenure at a given property. Because assistants are often given responsibility for irrigation maintenance this works against anyone having a clear long term understanding of how an individual irrigation system operates. This understanding is essential for efficient use, operation, and maintenance of an irrigation system. There are two elements of understanding the operation of any system: First is understanding how the manufacturer intends the system to work, and second is understanding how your own system was designed to work within the manufacturers structure. It is common to have some knowledge of the second item and almost no knowledge of the first. But if you don't understand how a system operates on a basic level, how can you hope to operate it, maintain it, and most importantly use it most effectively?

The most basic knowledge of any system is just knowing what is "normal". Most golf course personnel have some feel for this, i.e. when I mow this green, these sprinklers are usually on, or when we irrigate this cart path is normally wet. However a way more thorough understanding is required. What are the essential components of the system? What function do each of them play? How does the central signal to the field? Do signals go to the field and come back, or are they only one way? How are stations activated from the central computer, from a handheld radio, or from an application? How do these methods of activation differ from one another? How (and often) are part circle sprinklers adjusted? What other adjustments can be made on each sprinkler? What nozzle configurations are prevalent at this course, and what do those configurations look like? How are adjustments to sprinkler run times made? How can I control the system?



A nozzle for all your needs still won't make up for an irrigation system that is not well understood.

These are just a few of the questions that someone on property should know.

A thorough working knowledge of the software that operates the sprinklers on the golf course is also required. If training is available take advantage of it. If the system does not operate the way that you would like it to operate it is in your best interest to find out how it can. Ask questions as to how you can operate your system more efficiently. Take advantage of those who support the systems and ask them how they believe you can more efficiently water the way you would like to. I have actually seen elements of a system abandoned simply because there was no understanding of how the system operated. If you are on a support plan, use it for any question you have, large or small. If not, then use your sales representative. I am often told the cost of a support plan is too high. These plans can be expensive, but if you use it as not only an insurance policy, but an educational tool it can be very valuable. If you have a question, call someone that is what we are here for.

Simple troubleshooting capability is a valuable skill as well. Understanding how to measure different parameters of a system and knowing their significance can save a great deal of time and money. At \$100 per hour or more it can be cost prohibitive to bring off site help onto the property anytime there is a problem. Basic electrical knowledge goes a long way in maintaining an irrigation system.

Maintenance

In the upper Midwest it is both a blessing and a curse that we normally enjoy abundant rainfall during the growing season. The list of tasks on every golf course is long, and when it rains irrigation tends to fall to the bottom of the list, while drainage floats to the top. This means that maintenance is often deferred or delayed until the system is needed. Sometimes that is too late. Most do not check the health of the irrigation system until it is time to use it again. At this point repair technicians are stretched thin, and the wait of a couple days for parts can put the golf course at risk.

The first step to a well-maintained system is a plan. Sit down in the off season and put together a schedule of maintenance for the course. The plan should include tasks that occur on a regular interval, like cleaning of satellite boxes, but also include an action plan for irregular events like storms.

Some time ago an article was published in Superintendent magazine that did an excellent job enumerating the maintenance tasks that should be accomplished on an irriga-

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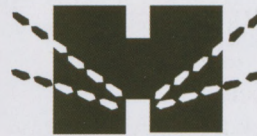


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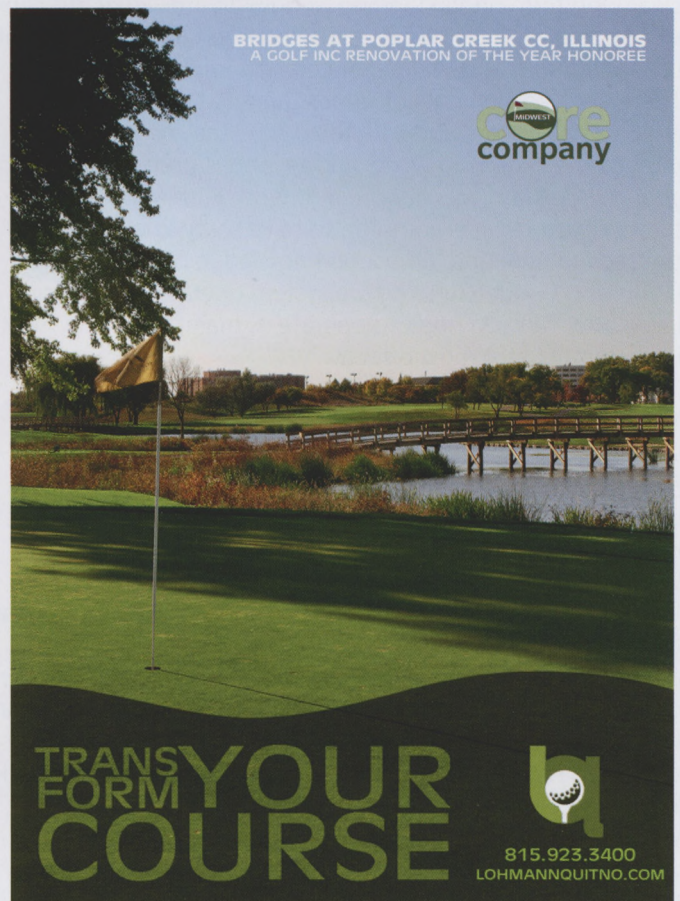
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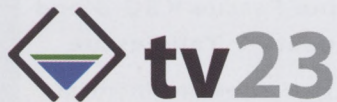
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The BullSheet



DATES TO REMEMBER

August 10 – Last day for nominations for GCSAA's Col. John Morley Distinguished Service Award.

August 14 – Deadline for applications to attend the Syngenta Business Institute 2018 which will be held in Winston-Salem, N.C. from December 3rd through 6th.

August 15 – Michigan State Turfgrass Foundation Field Day at the Hancock Turfgrass Center in East Lansing, MI.

August 27 – MAGCS monthly meeting and Annual Golf Championship at the Highlands of Elgin in Elgin, IL, Brad Legnaioli host superintendent.

August 30 – 12th Annual CDGA Foundation White Sox Fundraiser at Guaranteed Rate Field in Chicago, IL, Roger "The Sodfather" Bossard host groundskeeper.

August 31 – Deadline for nominations for GCSAA's Edwin Budding Award, presented with Jacobsen.

September 12-14 – 32nd Illinois State Senior Amateur Championship at Riverside Golf Club, Corey Kuhl host superintendent.

September 14 – 18th Annual John Buck Golf Outing at Blackstone Golf Club in Marengo, IL, Andrew Perry host superintendent.

September 17 – 15th Annual Wee One Foundation Golf Event at Pine Hills Country Club in Sheboygan, WI, Rod Johnson host superintendent

August 2018

We extend a hearty welcome to these newest MAGCS members:

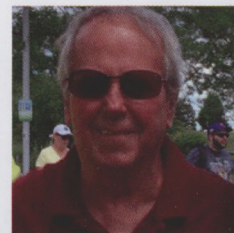
Alan Hoogstraat, Class A, Ravisloe Country Club

Jim Wyffels, Class A, Spirit Hollow Golf Club

Bill Nagle, Class E, Rain Bird

Reid Neumann, Class C, Springbrook Golf Course

Our sincere condolences go out to the family and friends of **Alan Bevers**, golf course superintendent of Arlington Lakes Golf Club who passed away on July 17th.



Al Bevers

The wait is over—the winners of Audubon International's BioBlitz 2018 have been announced! This year's event, which was sponsored by the USGA, recorded over 2,000 unique species of animals, plants, fungi, and insects living on golf courses. Thousands of community volunteers, ranging from school groups to birding clubs to professional naturalists gathered at local golf courses between April 21st and May 13th to discover and document the species inhabiting their valued green spaces on which golf happens to be played. The highlights from this year's BioBlitz included a 100% increase in average number of species counted since 2015; a 95% increase in total participants from 2017; and an 85% increase in golf participation. Winning categories included Most Species, Best Photo Contest, and Most Participants, where **Dave Arden** and Glencoe Golf Club took second place with 160 people in attendance. Congrats Dave!

It's been plaguing me for over 30 years! If anyone—ANYONE—knows a trick to stop me from doing this EVERY SINGLE TIME I fill a chainsaw, weedeater, or other piece of hand-held or back-held power equipment, please step forward!



Oh, and if you DO step forward only to offer THIS as the solution, just walk away. Walk away fast. 🤨



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Folks, I just read this item in a Facebook page called Golf Course Maintenance, which was started 5 years ago by Gary Grigg, and is now over 10,000 followers strong. Call it a Public Service Announcement if you will, but please take its message to heart—NOTHING is more important than your health and family. Nothing. This is from Jason Whiteway:

Hey Guys, I think I've only ever posted in here once and it was my "acceptance into the group" speech. Had a major tragedy at our course here on Prince Edward Island, Canada. Our superintendent, Nathan MacKay, passed away late last night from a brain aneurism he had on Saturday. They operated Sunday but couldn't get the swelling of his brain and pressure down. I worked under him for two seasons and just part time this season. I thought the world of him. He was the nicest guy and would do anything to help anyone. He was early 40's and leaves behind a wife and 3 young kids. I guess what I'm trying to get at is hug your families a little closer tonight because you never know! Spend some extra time with your loved ones, don't stress the small stuff. Thanks for reading this guys. I'm in true disbelief. It just doesn't feel real.. – feeling heartbroken.

Last month, on the weekend of the 12th through the 15th, our area was the hotbed of professional golf. To our northwest, in Silvis, Illinois, the PGA Tour's annual John Deere Classic was contested at its home at TPC Deere Run, where Michael Kim took home the winner's trophy, while more locally, both professional senior tours were on display. At Chicago Golf Club in Wheaton—a Charles Blair MacDonald design that was the first 18-hole course in North America (1895), and one of five founding clubs of the USGA—superintendent **Scott Bordner** and his staff, along with a strong contingent of volunteers set the stage for the first-ever U.S. Senior Women's Open which was won handily by Laura Davies; and simultaneously, superintendent **Kurt Galisdorfer** and Exmoor Country Club—a Donald Ross-designed layout established in 1896—hosted the Constellation Senior Players Championship, in which Vijay Singh defeated Jeff Maggert on the second playoff hole. Congratulations to these clubs and their maintenance staffs on the magnificent conditions they showcased during these huge events.



Holding a USGA Championship trophy with no names on it. The team at Chicago Golf Club: (l to r) Tony Nunes, Brian Chasensky, Scott Bordner and Craig Smith.

While on the subject of renowned golf course architects, this month's Golf Witticism comes from another pretty well-regarded one—Harry Colt: "In no case should a green be contoured so that a ball runs away from the putter like a swine possessed by the devil."

Circling back to the John Deere Classic (I love using cool words and phrases like "Circling back" and "optics"—reminds me of being at a board meeting), the event is special in many ways other than that it is played in our state, the most important being that it ranks #1 on the PGA Tour in per capita giving, having donated \$93 million to Birdies for Charity and other charitable organizations since its inception.

Cantigny Park, where MAGCS member and past president **Scott Witte** is Director of Horticulture and is particularly involved in Project New Leaf, a program which will improve and enhance almost every area of the park (but you already knew that), has re-opened its gardens after a complete renovation. I could tell you all about the changes here (and Scott could enthrall you for hours—DAYS—on the subject, but why not learn for yourself. Check out all the exciting stuff Scott is chest-deep into at www.cantigny.org. Nice work, Scott!

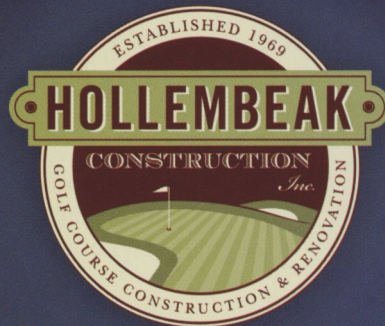


Don't you just hate it when you get out on the course before the plumber even bends over to expose the buttcrack of dawn in hopes of staying ahead of play, only to be thwarted by that slow guy who cut in and teed off before the ranger got to work? Slow play is and always will be the scourge of golf—just ask **Todd Schmitz** at Phillips Park Golf Course.



While you sit watching PGA Tour golf on a lazy Sunday afternoon, have you ever noticed that many of the biggest sponsors are not endemic to golf? According to the National Golf Foundation which studies this stuff for a living, there is good reason. Some of the game's biggest sponsors that are not endemic to the game—companies such as AT&T, Charles Schwab, FedEx, MasterCard and Rolex, for example—find that those of us interested in golf are an appealing demographic and desirable audience for them to engage with. The game's reach of almost 98 million people represents about 1/3 of the total U.S. population. So there's that.

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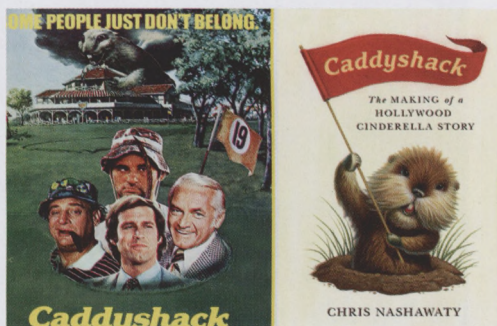


"The Way It's Made Matters." A PEARL VALLEY ORGANIX BRAND

Chalk up another award for MAGCS member and golf course architect **Greg Martin**. For his work on the much-ballyhooed Preserve at Oak Meadows, Greg was one of this year's recipients of the Green Sports Alliance's Environmental Innovator Award, presented to him in Atlanta, Georgia on June 26th. Congratulations to Greg and Martin Design Partnership!

OK, why not? If the police arrest a mute, do they tell him he has the right to remain silent?

As I am sure you do as well, I have many golf-related books on my shelf. Whether it's a technical book written by a famous turf professor, a historical book on classic architecture, or just a big coffee table book with pictures of the world's great courses, we all have them. There is a new addition for our collections that has been 40 years in the making titled **Caddyshack – The Making of a Hollywood Cinderella Story**, a must-read book that details all the craziness that went on behind the scenes during the shooting of the 1980 movie that our industry to this day is still identified with. Just ordered mine on Prime—can't wait!



Q: What classic 1966 film does **Eddie Braunsky** show on movie night at his club?

A: "Genevaderci Baby"

Oh, and these are two of Eddie's crew enjoying said classic 1966 movie—neither of whom had been born when it debuted.

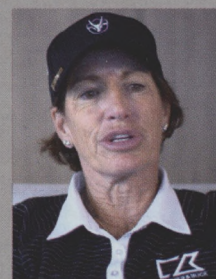


Golf Chicago magazine's July issue ran a great piece on **Brad Legnaioli's** two babies, The Highlands of Elgin and Bowes Creek called "Elgin's Dynamic Duo a Study in Contrasts" by Neal Kotlarek. The article speaks of the vast differences in design and "feel" between the Rick Jacobson-designed Bowes Creek and the Art Schaupeter/Keith Foster Highlands of Elgin, while praising both for "expert conditioning" and great value. Well done Brad!

Also seen in print—on the last page of July's GCM magazine—was a beautiful photo of the sunrise over Rich Harvest Farms' fourth hole (nicknamed the "Devil's Elbow") taken by superintendent Jeff Vercautren. Take a look—great pic Jeff!

And let's go back to that U.S. Senior Women's Open for a sec—Laura Davies did win it comfortably, and the only real challenger she had to fight off was Julie Inkster ... or WAS it?

MIDWEST Doppelgänger



Jerry Dinelli or Julie Inkster? Both are really good golfers...

August's "Clavin-ism:" Did you know—it's a little-known fact—that Eben Byers, an elite amateur golfer at the turn of the 20th century and winner of the 1906 U.S. Amateur died in 1932 at the age of 51 from radiation poisoning? True, and the source of the poisoning was no mystery—since injuring his arm a few years before, Byers had consumed large quantities of "radium water," which was marketed as Radithor and professed to have the ability to heal a number of ailments. He reportedly drank two to three two-ounce bottles of the



stuff daily for two years before he died, and his autopsy revealed necrosis in both jaws, anemia and a brain abscess. He is the main reason we can't go

to the 7-Eleven and pick up a bottle of radium water nowadays.

Great news arrives from the Environmental Institute for Golf (EIFG), the GCSAA's philanthropic organization. The 2018 Rounds 4 Research fundraising program to support turfgrass research and administered by EIFG yielded nearly \$313,000 in the May online auction, making it the most successful in the program's history. Fun fact: the top bid for a round of golf for four was \$3,320 for the right to play Somerset Hills Country Club in Bernardsville, NJ.


The Wee One Pine Hills event is coming up soon—September 17th to be exact—and it's become pretty much a staple in our

that enjoy the facilities you manage and the experience and opportunity you provide them to enjoy the game of golf.

I make it a point at each facility I visit to see the positive. There is a lot to see.

It's a tough balance; part of your responsibility is to see those areas that need help on the course and make them better. To keep the balance, you should make it a point to see the areas that are really good on your course. I don't know if this ability comes with age and experience, but it's something all can work toward. When I used to play my course, I wrote things down that I saw that I knew I'd find and kept it stashed in my bag – this allowed me the freedom to play the course knowing I'd address the issues I had found in due time.

I challenge you to see your facility and the 99.9% of it that does not need any attention. Do whatever it takes to see it this way, walk the course, play it backwards, carry someone's bag and help them play it, or walk on as a single and pair up with a group. Make a list of all that is good out there, of all that you and your staff is doing well. It'll take some effort to see it in this light and I know it'll be worth it. @



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fall golf schedule, providing us with a really wonderful golf venue for a truly great cause. But that isn't the only Wee One game in town—last month on the 22nd, the Wee One Foundation held the Third Wyatt's World Golf Outing at Orchard Valley Golf Course in Aurora, where **Dan Stahl** is superintendent, and the event's cause is to raise funds for Dan's and



Janna, Wyatt, and Dan Stahl.

Janna's son Wyatt, who has a diagnosis of Dysgenesis of Corpus Callosum and is autistic. To learn all about the Stahls and their incredible son, go to www.weeone.org and click on the events tab. As for the outing itself, what a wonderful day on Dan's beautiful course! Great fun, food and refreshments, and a huge raffle afterward. Thanks to everyone responsible for making the day great, and to Dan, Orchard Valley and the Fox Valley Park District for hosting. @

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SUPER-N-site

Brad Legnaioli Highlands of Elgin

P.J. Bugay, The Bridges of Poplar Creek

So you think it can be stressful trying to maintain one 18 hole facility? How about two, or even three of them!?!

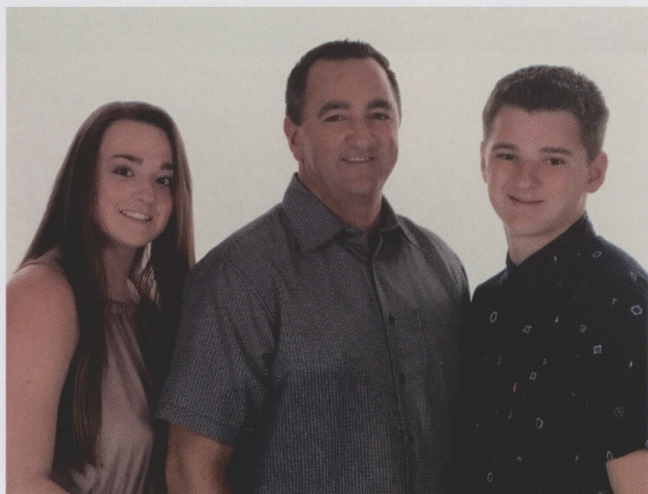
Well Brad Legnaioli is the man behind Wing Park Golf Course, "the oldest and best preserved nine-hole municipal golf course in Illinois", Bowes Creek Country Club "Golf Advisor Top Courses you can play 2016 (#1)" and the Highlands of Elgin another "Golf Advisor Top Courses you can play 2016 (#9)". As an 18-year member of MAGCS and a 24-year member of GCSAA, Brad is more than qualified to handle the pressure of maintaining these 3 spectacular facilities.

We will chat about Bowes Creek and Wing Park a little later but our focus will mainly be on Brad and Highlands of Elgin, the site of the 2018 Midwest Championship. Growing up in Lake in the Hills, Brad thought he would have a career in Account Finance, but that was not the case. He shifted gears and graduated with a Bachelor's Degree in Plant Soil Science from Southern Illinois University. In his early days,

Brad has worked under Brian Comiskey at Pinecrest Golf Club for a few summers, then spent about 8 seasons at Boulder Ridge Country Club. From there he moved to Oak Grove Golf Course for 4 years, and then landed the job at Bowes Creek Country Club for where he has spent the last 14 years of which the last 9, he has been in charge of all three City of Elgin courses.

Running three courses has its challenges but the one thing Brad always makes time for is family. Brad has two daughters in college and a son who is a 3-sport athlete. Though Brad and his son are the only members that play golf from time to time, the whole family would rather do everything else under the sun from spring to winter. Water skiing, jet skiing, and snow skiing are the most popular family activities. The family loves to take a long break every year and get together up at Castle Rock/ Northern Bay Wisconsin and enjoy one another's company doing those activities. When possible, they try and visit other places all over the country but they always make time to visit Northern Bay.

Running three courses, you better have great crews. Alfredo Padilla has been at Highlands of Elgin for 16 years and is Brad's right hand man and knows the ins and outs of the property. The Highlands of Elgin opened in 2010, it was designed by Keith Foster and Art Schaupeter. Part of the course was the city's eastern section of the older Spartan Meadows Golf Course (the west half was sold to Elgin Community College in 2013). Some of the holes were reworked to fit into the new theme while nine new holes reclaimed an old stone quarry and takes advantage of the unique and dramatic landscape offered by the feature. Four holes hug the top of the bluff forty feet above the 12-acre quarry lake providing incredible views and vistas of the course and City of Elgin. The original 9 holes flow through a beautiful terrain mak-



Brooke, Brad and Nick Legnaioli




ing it a wonderful collection of golf holes. Besides the quarry lake, there are other water features throughout the property and provide many challenges and shot options for the player. There are not many trees on the property that come into play, and thankfully the L93 bentgrass fairways are wide and the L93/L93-Alpha greens are sweeping and true.

The course is not all this wonderful facility has to offer; they have one of the best practice facilities in the area sporting a lighted bentgrass range tee with 20 stations, a short game area and a 9,000 square foot putting green. Even on those wonderful rainy Midwest days The Highlands has an indoor simulator to keep you and your buddies swinging your best.

You'll definitely need to swing your best when you come to this par 72, 7,000 yard, 136 Slope and 73.8 rating gem of a course. Brad, a solid golfer in his own right, assures us the course will be set fair for the Midwest Championship. Each year, the Highlands of Elgin ranks well in most online/magazine/golf writer's lists. It provides a true test of golf, is conditioned very well and provides the residents of Elgin a championship course close to downtown. One of the other two courses that Brad oversees, Wing Park is really close to the heart of the city and the residents who live there. It is touted as one of the only remaining 9 hole courses in Illinois that has remained true to its original 1908 heritage with only a few bunkers, a small water feature and postage stamp sized greens in a true parkland setting. The third course that Brad

oversees is Bowes Creek Golf Club, designed by MAGCS member Rick Jacobson. Bowes Creek was featured in On Course in 2011 when Brad hosted the Midwest then. Bowes Creek is in the center of a housing development and features many wetlands, a few prairies and many more trees mixed in the design. It too continues to hold high grades each year on golf lists throughout the area.

While working for Paul Wagner at Boulder Ridge, Paul offered a piece of advice that has stuck with Brad: "Take life as it comes, you never know what is going to happen." I think we all can agree with this mantra. Brad wants to keep doing what he is doing, like all of us he would like to keep pushing out some of his old equipment and bring in some new pieces for his facility. With his two 18 hole courses having about 25,000 rounds a year that wouldn't be a bad idea. Brad offered this for someone starting out in this business: "Go out and find a facility where you can get your hands dirty and learn how to maintain all that the facility has to offer."

That piece of advice goes well with Wagner's. I can attest, to make it in our industry you need to roll up your sleeves and get dirty and work hard. You don't know what each day is going to bring, but it is best to get through the long ones and enjoy the others. 

Brad was in the process of mowing many areas of the natural areas aligning the fairways this July. You won't want to hit your approach shot offline as the native areas around the greens were left and they are deep, thick and gnarly.



tion system. It is a good starting place if you are creating a maintenance plan for your golf course. It can be found at www.golf-water.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/01/GolfWater_Superintendent-Water-Wisely-Quick-Tips-to-Ready-for-the-Irrigation-Season.pdf

An irrigation audit is an important part of annual maintenance. If you don't have the time and resources to do a complete audit, then a smaller scale audit can be conducted on high value areas. If you don't think an audit is necessary, consider the cost of a single sprinkler that is improperly adjusted. One sprinkler improperly can create significant additional expenditures. The cost in terms of labor, increased disease, decreased turf quality can be high, whether the area is overwatered or underwatered.

Improvement

Unless or until you are prepared to replace your system, it is only practical to make incremental improvements to an existing system. Sometimes these incremental improvements can make tremendous differences in system operation. For instance, tees watered by a single sprinkler can be vastly improved by adding an additional sprinkler on the opposite side. Satellite controllers can be replaced one or two at a time, culminating in the installation of a central computer control. Sprinklers can be updated progressively starting with higher value areas and finishing over several years. Occasionally flow can be improved by strategically adding hydraulic capacity. There are options for improvement, and your local irrigation sales professional, or irrigation consultant can help create an improvement plan to meet your needs.

An older superintendent once shared with me his belief that the golf course never stays the same—it is either getting better, or getting worse. I find irrigation systems to be similar. Through continuous improvement and a solid maintenance program an irrigation system can provide years of service. Keeping your irrigation system a little closer to the top of your to-do list than the bottom will result in better satisfaction with it, more trouble free operation, and ultimately a better product in the field. @



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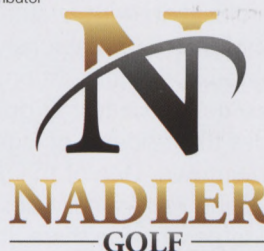
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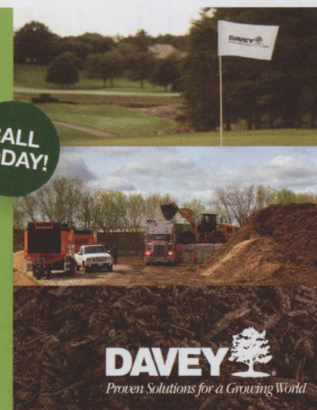
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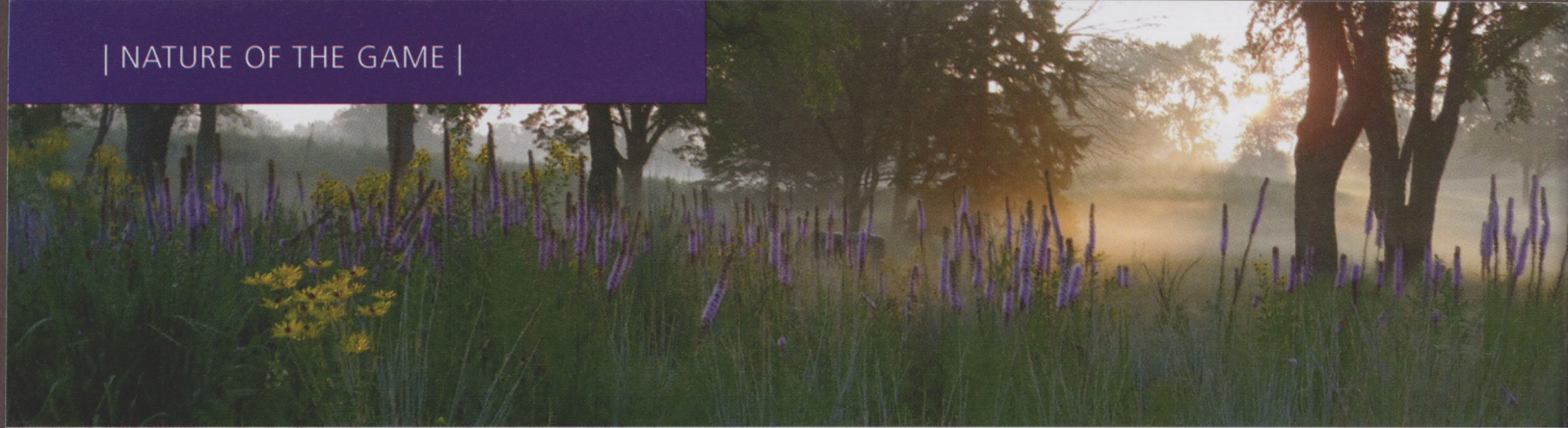
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Silphium laciniatum

Common: Compass Plant

Family: *Asteraceae*

Kati Bernardy and Dave Ward

The compass plant is by far one of the most amazing plants to grow in prairies. It plays a vital role ecologically and is also biologically fascinating. The compass plant is part of the sunflower family and is one of 14 species from the *Silphium* genus found in the eastern United States. Some of the relative species that are found in this area include the cup

their way, but the resin from this plant was used as chewing gum or to clean their teeth.

Compass plants have thick tap roots that can grow up to an amazing 15 feet deep. It is easily grown from seed or from bare root transplants but is hard to move once established. This deep root system of the plant contributes to drought resistance and is part of the reason it can live up to 100 years.



Compass plant is in full bloom right now in the Chicagoland area.



plant, prairie dock, and rosin weed. This native herbaceous perennial has very large, deep cut, basal leaves that can grow up to 24" long and 12" wide. There is a large, hairy central stem that can stand up to 12 feet tall with flowers branching out at the top. These yellow flowers are about 5 inches wide and bloom from June until September. Some of its companion plants include big bluestem, Indian grass, New England asters, and butterfly weed.

The reason its common name is compass plant is due to the direction the leaves grow. They orientate themselves in a north-south direction with the flat part of the leaves growing east to west. Growing in full sun on a hot prairie, compass plant's leaf orientation reduces water loss and increases carbon dioxide. On a hot summer day the leaf will feel cool to the touch and is also scratchy like a cat's tongue. Not only was compass plant used by indigenous people and settlers to find

In the United States, the population of compass plant has diminished do to the loss of natural habitat. This is discouraging because of compass plant's significance in the ecology of regions once covered by prairie. At least eighty insect species use this plant for nectar, pollination or to feed on the leaves and stems. Many birds use it as a perch and gold finches are especially fond of its seeds.

Compass plant is an excellent option to incorporate into natural areas on golf courses. It can be aggressive in a garden setting where it will need to be monitored and occasionally cut back. A famous University of Wisconsin ecologist named Aldo Leopold once said, "What a thousand acres of *Silphiums* looked like when they tickled the bellies of the buffalo is a question never again to be answered, and perhaps not even asked." We will never experience a thousand acres of compass plant but we can and should add a few plants of this important species to the golf course landscape. @



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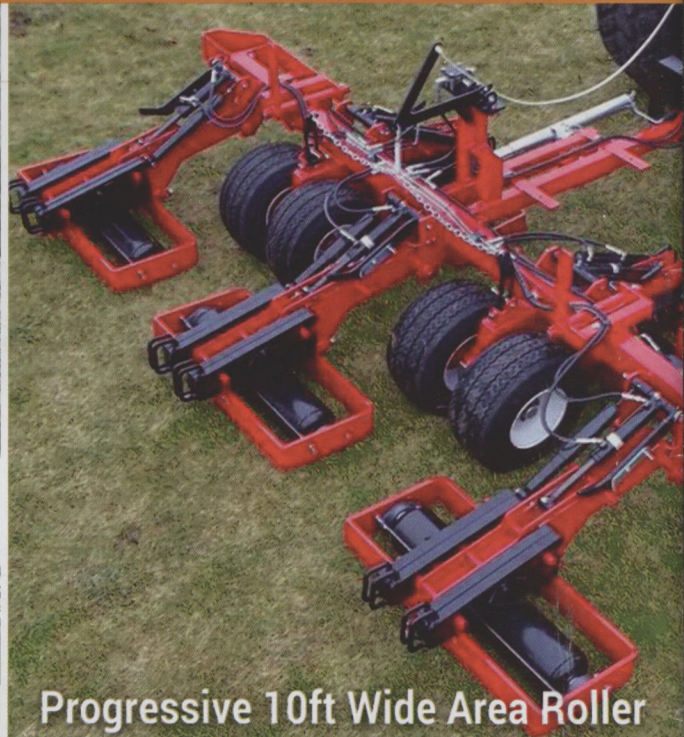
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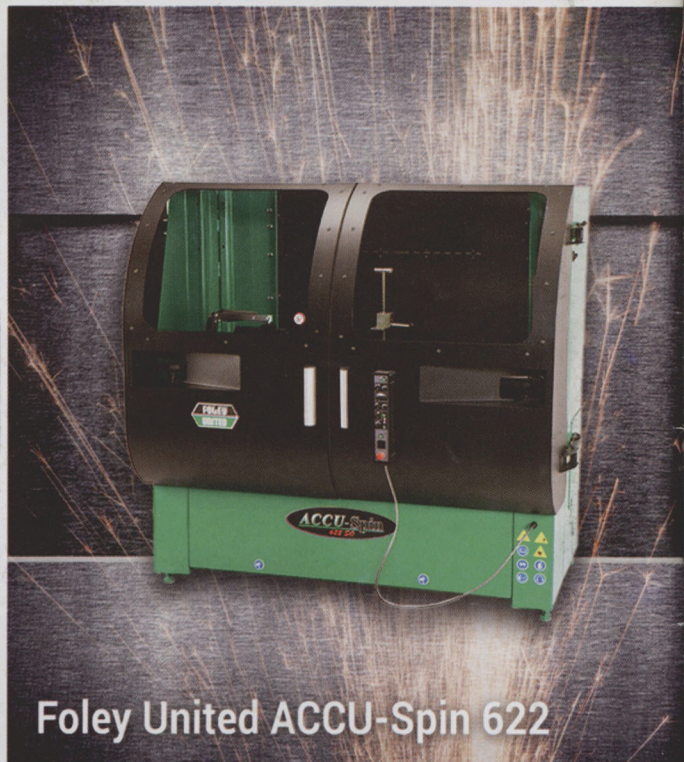
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