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President's Message

How time does fly when you're having fun. I can't believe that it is July already. I hope everyone is having a good summer with no major turfgrass losses occurring. Try to enjoy the summer weather with family and friends and forget about the golf course for a while. The last three or four years, I have learned to take Sundays off and spend the time at home. It has made summertime a lot more bearable. Everyone on the crew also gets either Saturday or Sunday off. When Monday arrives, we are refreshed and ready to go back to work again.

The M.A.G.C.S., C.I.G.C.S., N.W.I.G.C.S. joint meeting held at Pontiac Elks Country Club was well attended considering the heavy rains and threatening weather. Next year's May joint meeting will be hosted by M.A.G.C.S. It is tentatively scheduled for Silver Lake Country Club with Dudley Smith as our host again. The facilities there are very accommodating and within fair driving distance for all concerned. I would like to thank Jeff Michaels, the superintendent at McHenry Country Club for hosting the June M.A.G.C.S. meeting. The course was in excellent condition and the weather was absolutely perfect for golf.

The 1st Annual Pro/Superintendent Golf Outing held at the Golf Club of Illinois was a huge success. We had at least 60 teams (120 players) entered in the Chapman alternate shot event. There were quite a few more than we expected for this first time event. The golf course had recently opened for play in April and was really not ready for golf competition. It will probably take two to three years of hard work and maturity before the course becomes a championship golf course. But the Scottish Links design of the golf course is very interesting and quite unique for the Chicago area. The course is long and very demanding. It contains many hazards, such as sand bunkers, steep berms, moguls, long grass, water, and rolling greens. And because there isn't a tree on the golf course it will always be windy to some degree. The day we played, the weather provided intermittent showers, but it didn't stop anyone from having fun. The outing was a big step forward in improving Pro/Supt. relations. I see no reason why we shouldn't make this an annual event and try to play a different club each year. I want to thank Ken Boyce, Mike Miller and Sherman Finger from the Illinois PGA, and Randy Wahler, President of the Chicagoland Association of Golf Course Superintendents, for making this event a great success.

Our next golf outing will be on July 14 at the Village Greens of Woodridge with Len Berg serving as host. On this day, we will be honoring the senior members of M.A.G.C.S. and we hope many of you can attend for a day of golf and a cookout.

M.A.G.C.S. will again be having a hospitality tent set up for the Western Open at Butler National Golf Club. There will be many changes and improvements on the set-up compared to last year. The tent will be located on a grassy site and closer to Oscar Miles' maintenance building for easy accessibility. We will probably have the tent open just Friday, Saturday, and Sunday for the peak spectator hours of each day. We will use the tent for promotional reasons for M.A.G.C.S. and to extend information to the public pertaining to the role of the golf course superintendent. We want to schedule a few superintendents each day to answer questions and pass out literature. Anyone interested in helping out please contact Mike Nass at Cantigny Links.

Finally, I would like to thank all of the board members of M.A.G.C.S. for the fine job they have done on the committee level in regards to planning and organizing the association events. It is the continued support and activity of the membership and the board that makes the Midwest Association second to none. Keep up the good work.

James E. Evans

Michael Nass Biography

Michael Nass has been a superintendent for ten years. Mike just left Bryn Mawr after seven years and the first of this year he started at a new course — Cantigny Links in Wheaton. This will be a 27 hole layout and will be open in 1988 for play. Mike is a certified superintendent and has served as President of the Illinois Turfgrass Foundation and the Chicagoland AGCS. At the president Mike is the 1st Vice President with the MAGCS having served as the 2nd VP and as a Director. Mike's hobbies and interests include golf, reading, and cross country skiing. He and Jean have two children, Amy age 6, and Kerry age 3.

Change of Life

Mike Nass, Cantigny Links, Wheaton, IL

I realize the phrase "change of life" has many different connotations depending on ones age, sex and/or state of mind. In my case I believe it's mostly a state of mind with the age factor just beginning to creep in there.

Although I've never been the type to actively seek out and create major upheavals, I also don't feel I've ever been the type to shy away from a challenge. That is why, when I was offered the opportunity to be a part of creating a new 27 hole golf course at Cantigny in Wheaton I was happy to accept.

For most of you who have never heard of Cantigny, perhaps a little background would be appropriate. Cantigny (pronounced Can-te-nee), originally called Red Oak Farm, was the summer home of Joseph Medill and later his grandson, Colonel Robert R. McCormick, both in their time, editors and publishers of the Chicago Tribune. The name Cantigny comes from the name of a small French village which was the sight of the first American Offensive in Europe during World War I. As a member of the Army's First Division, Colonel McCormick was a part of this first offensive.

On the Estate, which is about 500 acres in size, stands the Mansion of the late Colonel McCormick which is now open to the public as the Robert R. McCormick Museum, the First Division Museum and about 20 acres of formal gardens.

Aside from the construction of the golf course Cantigny has just completed the construction of a new 15,000 square foot greenhouse. All the annuals to be used in the formal gardens and on the golf course as well as many of the perennials will be started in the new greenhouse complex.

Many of the themes present in the formal gardens will be carried over to the golf course. There will be a formal garden area near the clubhouse and the starting tees as well as extensive planting areas of perennial flowers and prairie grasses.

The course, which is built on about 250 acres, will retain about 80 acres of natural Oak-Hickory woods and will have, when completed, 13 lakes and a couple of creeks. Some of the pond areas are being designed in cooperation with local county officials to aid in flood water retention. Of course the big problem with all those lakes is they tend to attract our friendly Canadian Geese. I am hoping to work out a deal with my new neighbors, Fred Opperman and Don Gerber, to take these geese off my hands at least until I have some viable turf cover. Knowing the helpful nature of these two gentlemen I'm sure they'll be more than happy to oblige.

Of course the flurry of activity here represents a major change in the type of flurry I'm accustomed to seeing in the Spring. Chasing after a Caterpillar 627B scraper is considerably different than chasing a Toro 327 Groundsmaster. Come to think of it though, I did have a Groundsmaster operator once who tried to mow over small trees and reshape mounds with the blades. He wasn't all that efficient with those undertakings however.

The sight of a scraper rolling down the side of a hill is also off the beaten path of what I'm used to seeing, but in some ways it's more pleasant than the sight of winter kill on Poa Annua or just Poa Annua in general.

Of course these changes of scenery are only temporary and by the end of the summer I'll again be faced with the challenge of bringing a golf course into play.

Besides these temporary changes of focus there is also the more long term challenge of a considerably different size and type of operation. Aside from about twice the acreage and fifty percent more holes, there is also an irrigation system consisting of a 2500 gallon per minute pumping station and over thirteen hundred heads. All of which are not overwhelming but which do present me with a new management challenge.

At the same time I have also relocated my family out to the beautiful western suburbs. We have gone from a Democratic, urban environment to a Republic, suburban environment. I mean even the Irish out here are Republican.

All these factors have contributed to my "change of life". This "change" is mainly a state of mind in my case but it has so far been a rewarding one for both myself and my family.

Oh yes, as far as an age related "change of life" I'm afraid I've begun to experience some of that too. No, I haven't had any hot flashes, but last week while trying to stretch a single into a double during a softball game I popped a hamstring and later that week while visiting my dentist I was informed I had a cracked tooth and needed a root canal. Well, I guess into every life a little rain must fall.

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Mark Gorga sips coffee and scans his daily route sheet while he waits for the glow plug light on the dashboard of his diesel truck to go out. By 6 a.m., Gorga's tractor-trailer filled with turf and landscape supplies will be waiting outside a busy Palm Springs California superintendent's office.

Nearly 3,000 miles east, Keith Longshore latches the doors to his store on wheels after supplying a golf course superintendent with a new set of tee markers, poles and some seed. This is Keith's fourth face-to-face visit with customers so far this morning and he will be back in two weeks, the same day and time, so the superintendent can plan his purchases.

There are 36 early risers like Gorga and Longshore across the United States driving green-and-white LESCO, Inc. trucks. Serving the Chicago area with their stores on wheels are Ed Witkowski and Tracy Earles.

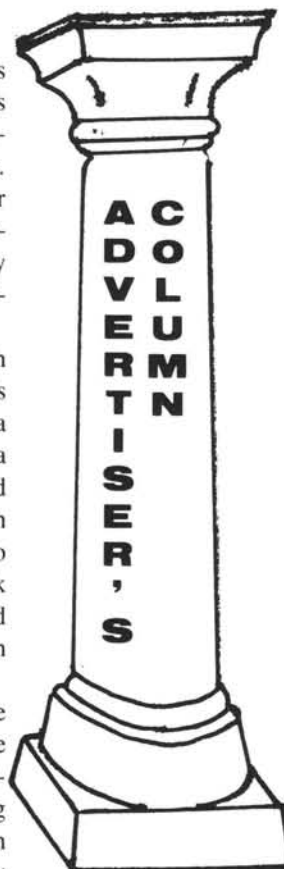
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Something Will Mess Up Your Life

by Edwin Wollenberg, Retired Supt.

Don, my next door neighbor here in Tampa, retired from Knight-Ridder News a few years ago after triple by-pass. But printers ink still flows through his veins, and along with reading the local papers, he subscribes to the Wall Street Journal and Washington Post. The other day while rapping with him, he handed me the Post, saying he was finished with it. THERE, on the first page was a very disturbing article about the terrible *Blatella asachinai*, also known as the Asian cockroach.

That was nothing.

A few paragraphs into the story was the real shocker. According to the Post, the invasion is beginning right here in Tampa.

"They first appeared in this country about 3 years ago near Port of Tampa", the story went on to say. At least they do not have to add "Florida" when they are identifying this city. I suppose once you've hosted a Super Bowl you are world class. Or it could be that the whole nation knows the Buccaneers are the lousiest football team in the league. and the stigma is deeply embedded.

It is assumed that the roaches were stowaways on a ship from Southeast Asia, where the species is common. And last summer when they first came to the attention of entomologists, the insect had infested an area of about 6 square miles. And now they cover 400 to 500 square miles around Tampa, and it's estimated they number up to 100,000 per acre.

Now, our mobile homestead here is on considerably less than an acre of ground, but I figure it still means we must have 30,000-40,000 of the little devils out there in the crabgrass somewhere. And that's a pretty nasty thought when you're the one who has to take out the garbage at night.

I'll tell you what, I've been hearing some odd noises at night out there in my back yard — like a heavy breathing — and maybe the Post story may be offering some real clues to this.

Apparently, according to the story, the Asian roach reproduces faster than the more common German roach. Five fertile German roach females (the story gets graphic here) are capable in producing 45 million descendants in one year.

The story leaves it to your imagination as to how many Asian roaches that could mean huddled outside your back door waiting for you to come out and grill this summer. Fortunately for me, I guess, I don't grill outside at any time, and I don't plan on being here this summer.

I mentioned this roach information to another neighbor, and he told me he had been invited to his son's (who lives on the outskirts of the city) for a cookout last Saturday, and there didn't seem to be any of the "buggers" around. But he also added that his son had two puppies, and there was little of anything left alive out in the back yard.

I read the entire story before I recognized the name of the person they had interviewed. He was Philip Koehler, professor of entomology at the University of Florida. I do remember him now.

Last year he announced to the world that the best way to stop cockroaches from breeding was to turn them into homosexuals. He said at the time that he had come up with a chemical that caused male roaches to become attracted to other males. Personally, I don't think this is a good idea. We already have human males attracted to human males, and all it got us was AIDS. And we certainly don't need these "critters" infesting us with mini AIDS.

Just a thought.

It's been a year now, and he makes no mention in the Post as to how successful his chemical was. I'm sure if it was successful, that by now we would have available to us roach motels in pastel colors, instead of the "blah" black ones.

Of course I don't like to stereotype and it's difficult enough to tell a gay roach from your basic straight type. And that's also going to be a problem with these new Asian cockroaches, which Koehler claims look just like the German roaches we already have.

I don't know of anybody besides Koehler, who is going to get down that close to find out if their household has been invaded by Germans or Asians, although I suppose you could observe them from a distance to see if they march in a straight line and follow orders, which would mean, of course, they were Germans.

Whenever I read something like this, I'm convinced all the more that we should become isolationist. We would not have to be subjected to German roaches, Asian roaches, German measles, Dutch Elm Disease, Japanese Beetles, English sparrows, Asiatic Flu, Columbian drugs, Mediterranean fruit fly and the list could go on and on.

But we do have them and so if you are the fretting kind, you have a legitimate reason to "bitch" along with many others about these foreign invaders.

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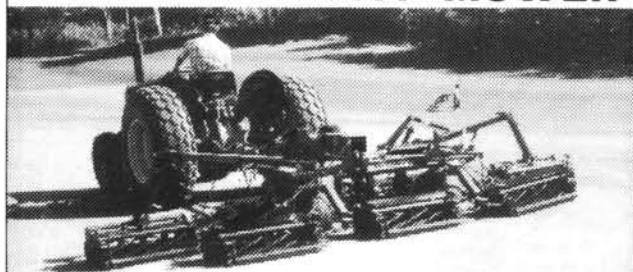
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Sulfur and the Black Layer

We have been getting mixed signals from the agricultural colleges. First we were told by Dr. Goss at Washington State that SULFUR plays a role in the suppression of poa seed-heads when applied at relatively high rates. Then Dr. Joe Vargas, not quite sure that he was getting proper suppression of poa, was actually seeing overall improvement of turf from SULFUR applications — particularly in highly alkaline soils.

These reports were enough to get superintendents on a SULFUR kick. Sales of our flowable SULFUR soared. Suddenly, we have been getting sporadic reports from various parts of the country about a BLACK LAYER. It has been identified and described quite accurately as a sealing off of the soil to the point that air is not getting down to the root system and that an anaerobic condition prevails in which microbial action is producing toxic hydrogen sulfide. The hydrogen sulfide in turn quickly reacts with most of the salts forming black insoluble sulfides. This is especially true of iron. To complicate matters, the black iron sulfide can regenerate more hydrogen sulfide under acidic conditions.

Now the pendulum has swung far to the left in the other direction. The superintendent is being told to lay off of SULFUR in any form — no more sulfates, no more sulfur coated urea, no more elemental SULFUR, as if this will cure BLACK LAYER.

SULFUR is not the cause, but the lack of oxygen is responsible. A layering of soil which prevents precolation and aeration, can be rectified by aerification. This is a quick fix that remedies the situation, as I found out on one Southern California course last summer. Only two or three hundred square feet on three greens were involved. Within a week, aerification remedied the situation. Ironically, this course had not used our flowable SULFUR. But one can find sufficient SULFUR in the soil to accommodate the BLACK LAYER effect under anaerobic conditions.

Recent experiments reporting increased use of phosphates to help the roots to develop and grow out of this stress situation are encouraging. But this, I'm sure, must be accompanied by adequate aerification.

But where does all of this information leave us? How are we to correct high alkaline and saline soils without SULFUR? Impossible — the only adequate products proposed for this correction — are SULFUR products.

The age old remedies of sulfate of ammonia or gypsum — both of which are acidic sulfates — have been used extensively. More recently, carefully metered dilute sulfuric acid through the fertigation system, is receiving extensive testing. Finally — one pound rates of flowable SULFUR - which oxidizes to sulfuric acid eventually — has shown very promising results. Most important of all these remedies work under aerobic conditions, but could backfire under anaerobic conditions.

Isn't it sensible to eliminate the real cause of BLACK LAYER? Excluding SULFUR products is not going to solve the problem, especially if one has an alkaline saline soil. Under this condition — the use of sulfur products is not only essential — but imperative.

Paul Sartoretto, Ph.D.

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