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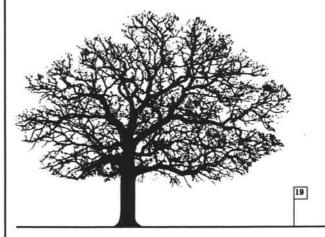
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Trekking in Nepal

by Julie Barbosa, Boulder Ridge C.C.

If anyone ever gave you a chance to spend 5 days in airplanes & airports to go somewhere for 15 days, would you do it? That was about what total travel time ended up being after jumping the dateline a couple times. And there were times during the 'Trek' that I asked myself if it was all worth it. But if you want to see mountains, you have to leave Illinois, and since you're going on vacation, might as well really go!

Nepal is a country with incredible diversity, it reaches from sea level to the highest point on the Earth (Mt. Everest). Nepali do not call it hiking or backpacking when you travel by foot, it has become 'Trekking'. With good reason. Vehicular roads are few when you leave the main cities, mountains are tall, and to get from point a to point b, there always seems to be a mountain in the way. The Himilayan mountain range lies along the northern border of the country. Most people head to one of three destinations (if heading into the mountains), either Annapurna, Mt. Everest Base Camp, or Langtang. We were hoping to avoid the crowds, so we chose Langtang (Lang = Yak, Tang = trail of). The village of Langtang rests at the top of a valley, at the foot of Mounts Langtang I & II. To reach the trail head in the village of Dhunge, we left at 7 am in a Land Rover (about a 1970 vintage). The Rover dropped us off at a landslide, still a two hour walk short of the village, and it took us 6 hours to travel 65 miles. I learned the meaning of distance on this trip as I never have before. I have done long backpacking trips, but always at "normal" midwestern type altitudes — if we climbed 500 foot that was the total altitude height. Not in Nepal. We might gain 2000 foot in altitude, but it was from 12,000 foot to 14,000 foot. I asked myself why I was taking this 'vacation', but if I ever can afford to have the photos developed I'll remember why.

I met up with four friends from Australia, and the five of us trekked for two weeks. The tours take excellent care of you. For the 5 of us we had a 16 person support group. Guide, Sherpa, Cook & Assistants, & Porters. Porters are paid the least (about a US dollar a day), and physically work the hardest. In general, they carried about a 65 lb. load up & down mountains, in thin canvas shoes, flip-flops, or barefoot, and quite often arrived before us who carried maybe a 15 lb. daypack. They carried their own food, generally a bag of rice & maybe some lentils. Pretty sparse for all the work they did.

In Nepal Sherpa is both a last name and a position. The sherpa on our trek was in charge of making sure we had a campsite, set up and such. The guide mostly kept track of all the helpers and us, and did minimal actual labor.

Basically, the trek consisted of waking fairly early, (to a wake-up call, and a cup of hot tea), a hot wash basin, packing our personal gear, and exiting the tent. Sherpa & porters then packed up the rest of the tents and gear after feeding us breakfast. Trek for about 3 to 4 hours, stop for a 2 hour lunch break, trek for another 2 to 3 hours, get to evening campsite. They would serve us tea & cookies, then, after dark, serve us dinner. Basically, we were legs, stomachs & cameras.

Nepal is one of those places where if you drop your camera and it accidentally goes off, you have a beautiful picture. From the terraced farmland, to the oak, rhododendron and fir forests, to the alpine zone, it is all incredible. And it seems whenever you look up and out, you see snowpeaks. We had fog quite often in the afternoon, but usually because were up in the clouds!

One of the first questions people seem to ask is how high did I go? I made it to Yala Peak (Tsergo Ri), a summit of 16,353 ft. That was an afternoon hike. From there we looked down upon Lantang I, and could see a glacier cutting through it coming toward the "valley". We camped in the village of Yala that evening - 15,200 ft. And there I did have the adventure of experiencing altitude sickness. (To give you a frame of reference, Denver, Colorado - the Mile-High city, is at approximately 6,000 ft.). Altitude sickness is a result of too little atmospheric pressure and a lower percentage of oxygen. You feel terrible. Headache, nausea, lethargy, major depression, no appetite. And you are unable to think straight. The best and only real cure for it is to go back down to a lower altitude. There are medicines you can take, but all they do is mask the symptoms. The most dangerous part of it is that you start to become confused and unable to make intelligent decisions. Usually you refuse to admit that it is altitude sickness, until you head back down and suddenly start to feel better. It has nothing to do with being physically fit, and everything to do with acclimation. Generally, if you ascend too rapidly, you get hit with it. I was thinking seriously of getting down quickly, like one step off the side of the mountain. It also has more to do with altitude at which you sleep, so it is okay to hike up higher, as long as you sleep lower. Rule of thumb I heard later, whenever you're over 8,000 ft., if you feel sick, it is altitude sickness.

I've always found it difficult to talk about long trips I've taken without some cue (like looking through photos). You have so many adventures in such a short time, it's sensory overload. Also, I'm afraid of babbling on and on, boring people with the adventure. It never seems as interesting to the telling as when you are experiencing it - hadda-be-there syndrome. Like for instance, about day 10, we were hiking up a switchbacking mountainside, and decided to have a snowball fight! We were probably about 10,000 ft. and chasing each other up the side of the mountain. I'm still appreciative of my hiking boots, otherwise I would have twisted my ankle about 4 times during the fight, probably 10 times over the whole trip. I went on that trip physically and mentally not completely prepared. Up to 3 weeks before, I was not sure I was going to go. And I never did receive an accurate trip description - has to do with it taking 2 weeks to get a letter from Perth, Australia to Chicago. I thought we were only going to get to about 9,000 ft. Oops!

My friend Alison (a horticulturist from Australia) and myself spent hours each day trying to identify plants. They all looked familiar — related to something. The alpine zone, despite being the most stark and shortest, was probably most intriguging. Most plants were under 8" tall. A lot were prickly, some were fuzzy — looking just like down feathers, and most were silver or grey-green hued. There were some really determined cotoneaster, and some beautiful gentians.

(continued page 14)

(Trekking in Nepal continued)

Then, I made it to the top and looked out and all I could see were mountains and glaciers and more mountains and clouds down below. Incredible!

One day we hiked through an oak, rhododendron and fir forest. The oaks and firs were huge and the rhodo's (10-15') were contorted and beautiful. Incredibly guiet. On another day at lower elevation, (still a rhodo forest, but with a bamboo understory), we came across gray langur — a black faced ape — a whole troop of them. About the only other animals I saw were the Royle's pika (mouse hare) - looked like a big quinea pig.

Travel can be for adventure, for vacation, or for extending your horizons. With luck, it can do all of these and more. Traveling to foreign countries makes me appreciate home. with all its familiarity. It's a great break from looking at the same plants, the same people day after day. And finally, looking at mountains (trying to walk over mountains), actually makes me appreciate Illinois' flatlands. Nepal may be a once in a lifetime trip, but it is well worth it.

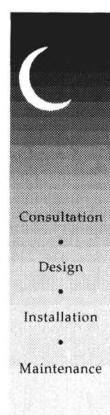


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Upcoming Events - Mark Your Calendar

February 7 - MAGCS meeting at Arrowhead Golf Club

February 12-17 — Indiana-Illinois Turfgrass Short Course

February 20-27 — GCSAA Conference & Show, San Francisco

March 16 — CDGA Green Seminar at Drury Lane, Oak Brook. Topic, Aerification and Spikeless Golf Shoes.

March 28 — GCSAA Spray Technician Training: Calibration & Safety, Oak Brook, IL

March 29 - MAGCS meeting at Oak Brook Hills Resort

April 24 - MAGCS meeting at Mt. Prospect G.C.

May 5 — MAGCS Past Presidents Golf Outing at Geneva G.C.

May - Joint ITF meeting at Eagle Ridge G.C.

June 19 - MAGCS meeting at River Forest G.C.

July 11 - Steeplechase G.C.

August — MAGCS meeting at Mt. Prospect G.C.

September 25 — MAGCS meeting at Prairie Landing G.C.

October 12 - MAGCS meeting at Sportsman G.C.

November — MAGCS Clinic & Annual Meeting at Medinah C.C.

November 27-29 — NCTE at Pheasant Run Resort, St. Charles, IL

Greenkeeper needed for 9 hole Rob Roy Golf Course. Call Tom Pope at 708/298-4445 for application and job description.

Bob Lively at Glendale Lakes is looking for a mechanic. Please call 708/529-6264.

Ray Kearney is leaving Fox Lake C.C. after some twenty years and will be the new Superintendent in his home town of Marengo at the Marengo Ridge C.C. Congratulations, Ray!

The education session at the March 29th meeting will be "Aquascape Maintenance" with Rich Rollins. It should be interesting and informative with all of the water that is on so many golf courses today.

Steve VanAcker of Crystal Lake C.C. is looking for an assistant. Please call 815/459-7240.

Jim Burdett reports yet another grandchild this month. Born on December 21, 1994 was Connor Evan Burdett at 6 pounds. Proud parents Dan & Julie Burdett. This is the 10th great-grandchild for Mrs. Paul Burdett.

Tim Kelly, Village Links of Glen Ellyn, has been informed that he and his club are one of three national winners from across the country in the third annual Environmental Steward Award program. The Village Links of Glen Ellyn has been recognized as the top public course in the country. Tim will receive a personalized plaque and a special seal for the club-house. The sponsors of this award — Ciba Turf & Ornamental Products, Rain Bird, Jacobsen and Lebanon Turf Products, will make a \$500 donation in Tim's name to the GCSAA Foundation. Tim will receive this award at the national conference in San Francisco in February.

For Sale — Used Irrigation Equipment, good condition. 150 - Toro Elect. Valve-in-head Sprinklers (2 speed), 696-06-91; 250 - Rainbird 51 SAM 5/16x3/16; 80 - Rainbird 1½" electric valves; 10 - Rainbird 2" electric valves; 20 - Rainbird Valve-in-head sprinklers, Model 51; 20-Rainbird Valve-in-head sprinklers, Model 47; 26 - Rainbird SC 11 Controllers (11 station); 12 - Hoffman Controller Boxes; 1 - PSI Control Panel 1200 gpm; 1 - Clay Valve 6". Make an offer. Contact Don Cross at 708/835-4296.

Congratulations to Mike Siefken who is the new Superintendent at Woodstock G.C. Mike was the assistant to Dennis Wilson in 1994 and was the assistant at Skokie C.C. during 1992 & 1993.

Dennis Wilson at Sunset Ridge C.C. is now looking for an assistant to replace Mike. Call 708/446-5268.

Timothy J. O'Connor is looking for an assistants position in the area. He is a college grad, with 6 years golf experience. Call 708/397-8525 or write 2504 Jessica Ln., #106, Schaumburg, IL.

Position Open — Spray Technician — Mission Hills Country Club, Northbrook, IL. Knowledge of chemicals a must. Experience preferred, Illinois pesticide license a plus but we are willing to train. We offer top pay and excellent benefits. Contact Lorie Kjergaard, Superintendent, 708/498-3212.

From the Editor: Members and advertisers of the MAGCS, for your information, I work on the "B.S." only in the evening at my home. Consequently I am not around to answer your calls. I have an answering machine to record messages. Please leave a message of why you are calling and not just a phone number for me to get back to you. If you are changing your address, give me the change, just not a number so we end up playing phone tag. Even when I am home, I do not pick up right away for many times it is a fax and I then disconnect it by doing so.

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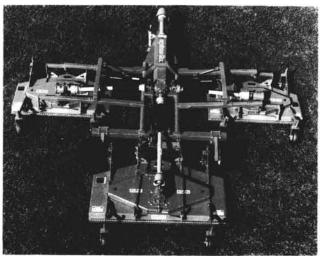
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"Too Much Water is Worse Than Too Little"

by Robert C. Vanrek, Jr.

Agronomist, North Central Region, USGA Green Section

Jim Latham has been cleaning out his desk as the December retirement date draws near. As one might expect, notes, letters, and articles that have been buried for years were discovered in the process. One gem found near the bottom of a drawer was an old article that was the source of the quote used for the title of this short review of the 1994 growing season. The article consisted of excerpts from a January 1938 issue of "The Greenkeepers' Reporter", written by O.J. Noer. The excerpts were sent to all members of the Royal York Golf Club in Toronto after a particularly difficult season during 1937.

The article emphasized careful use of irrigation, fertilizers and the importance of utilizing improved cultivars of turf for greens. It's surprising how little things have changed over a span of 50 to 60 years. During an "easy" season there is plenty of time to experiment with growth regulators, new fertilizers, rollers, biostimulants, and other practices to fine tune the maintenance program. In contrast, when the Milorganite hits the fan during an extended period of hot, humid weather it's time to keep it simple and follow the basic principles of sound turf management. One of the more important, but most often overlooked, maintenance practices to consider is amount and frequency of irrigation.

It was a "sneaky bad" season for a number of superintendents in the Midwest this year, particularly in the Chicagoland and Detroit areas. If one would review the weather records for the summer, there would be little to suggest a period of severe turf stress, yet significant losses of turf on greens occurred during late July and August. The pattern for turf loss was surprisingly similar at many courses. Injury generally occurred on greens in problem sites, those usually affected by shade, poor air movement, tree root competition, and inadequate surface drainage across the putting surface. It was not unusual to find 16 or 17 greens in excellent condition and one or two greens (those found in heavily-wooded sites) to be very thin and weak.

The golfers' unreasonable expectations for ultra-fast green speed, regardless of the weather conditions, were also partially responsible for the injury to greens. The midwest experienced a period of hot, humid weather just before the Fourth of July that caused a flush of turf growth. It became almost impossible to provide a fast, firm playing surface at many courses due to the vigorous growth of turf. The frequent rain and high humidity made the greens soft and, for

lack of a more descriptive term, "puffy", more so on greens that possessed a significant amount of organic matter or thatch near the surface. Golfers at a few courses found they were playing a temporary green by late summer because of the additional stress caused by a shaded site and/or their unwillingness to allow the superintendent to aerify, raise the height of cut, hand water, or initiate other practices to relieve stress on dying greens. A considerable amount of **Poa annua** and bentgrass turf was lost due to excessive rolling, double cutting, and ultra-low mowing heights during the peak stress period of midsummer — not to mention the adverse effects of using plant growth regulators at that time. Unfortunately, these practices were sometimes mandated by the golfers.

It quickly became obvious that more turf was lost by too much automatic irrigation than by too little irrigation. More black layer related problems were seen this summer than in any of my previous seasons with the Green Section. Superintendents who turned off the sprinklers early and switched to hand watering fared better than those who had neither the manpower nor experience to do so. To be fair, an unfavorable growing site was sometimes more to blame than any other factor, and the loss of turf was beyond the superintendent's control.

Fans increase air movement and fungicides can reduce the potential for disease but they cannot compensate for a lack of sunlight. To borrow a favorite saying of Jim Moore, the Director of the Mid-Continent Region: "The three most effective fungicides for use on a number of stressed greens this summer would have been Stihl, McCullough, and Homelite". Unfortunately, many golfers still believe the trees on the course are more important than the quality of playing surface.

Careful management of irrigation is always important but even more so on shaded putting surfaces. Five minute cycles might still provide excess irrigation to low lying portions of shaded greens during humid weather. I was surprised to find plenty of soil moisture in poorly drained areas of shaded greens even after 5 or 6 days without irrigation or rainfall.

"The three most effective fungicides for use on a number of stressed greens this summer would have been Stihl, McCullough, and Homelite."

Hand watering is often necessary in spite of a modern, sophisticated irrigation system. More importantly, hand irrigation only to the portions of the green and collars that need irrigation. Too much hand watering is just as detrimental as too much automatic irrigation. A comment I have heard (and agree with) from more than one superintendent who has been successful in keeping the greens dry is that "few superintendents have a feel for how much moisture stress greens can tolerate without causing permanent injury to the turf." Perhaps a point to ponder before firing up the irrigation on greens during the first dry day next spring? O.J. Noer was right over fifty years ago and he is still right today.

From a Student To a Teacher

by Jim Keith, St. Charles Country Club

As I make the transition from being the assistant superintendent to the head groundskeeper here at St. Charles Country Club, I think daily about the things that were taught to me by my former mentor, Peter Leuzinger. The irony of the whole situation is that I did not realize how much I learned until after Peter left for his new position. I feel this is probably a general consensus among most assistants until they attain their first superintendents position. More times than not, assistants are so "into" their job and at pleasing their boss, they often overlook the "big picture" and at what is trying to be accomplished and for what reason. In doing so, careless and silly mistakes are sometimes the end result. The most important aspect of all this, is to be humble and learn from those experiences.

Probably the most important thing I learned from Peter and which I admire him most for, is what it takes to become a Chicagoland Superintendent and be successful. When I think of the MAGCS and what it stands for, I think of him. Innovation and attitude are synonymous in Peter's vocabulary. A person cannot have one and not the other and be successful. A pioneer in bringing the Audubon program to golf courses worldwide, he has stressed the importance of communication between the green industry and public opinion. He has helped to deter negative opinions of golf courses and proven our industry promotes and utilizes IPM and programs such as the Audubon's to protect our environment. All of his accomplishments have proven to me that being a superintendent is more than just growing grass; we must be responsible to our industry, peers, and most importantly, ourselves.

Thinking I'll be able to fill Peter's shoes at St. Charles would be a mistake on my part. I am, however, going to use the same standards that he used for twenty years to make St. Charles Country Club the class act that it is today. In regards to being the new superintendent, I feel this is a real tribute to Peter. Aside many contributing factors, I think the club felt that it had twenty great years under Peter's reign, so why not give this kid a chance, he learned from one of the best. In closing, I just want to say Thanks to Peter for the time and effort in which he invested in me.

Peter had a copy of a saying which I keep on my desk. I would like to share it with the membership; it reads as the following:



Attitude

"The longer I live, the more I realize the impact of attitude on life. Attitude, to me, is more important than facts. It is more important than the past, than education, than money, than circumstances, than failures, than successes, than what other people think or say or do. It is more important than appearance, giftedness or skill. It will make or break a company ... a church ... a home. The remarkable thing is we have a choice every day regarding the attitude we will embrace for that day. We cannot change our past ... we cannot change the fact that people will act in a certain way. We cannot change the inevitable. The only thing we can do is play on the one string we have, and that is our attitude ... I am convinced that life is 10% what happens to me and 90% how I react to it. And so it is with you ... we are in charge of our Attitudes."

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