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Planning for the Future: The Turfgrass Industry and the University of Illinois

Bruce Branham University of Illinois Dept. Natural Resources and Environmental Sciences

ow will the turfgrass industry look in 5, 10, and 20 years from now? What will the job of a superintendent be 20 years from today? One thing we know with certainty is that change is a constant in our ever more technical society. So, we know change will occur, but our guess is that none of us can predict what that change will be.

While we can't predict the future, we can help shape it by the actions we now take. Therefore, at the University of Illinois, we have undertaken a strategic planning process to help chart the future

directions of our program. If our program was physics or mathematics, we would undoubtedly develop our plan strictly based on our internal stakeholders. However, the turfgrass program at the U of I is strongly tied to the Illinois turfgrass industry. We must include the industry in our strategic planning process.

We will work with the Illinois Turfgrass Foundation Board to get their input on how the U of I should partner with the ITF and the turf industry of Illinois. But we would like to see more involvement and input than just the elected board of the ITF. As turf managers, you can make a valuable contribution to this partnership by expressing your ideas. The "eyes" and "ears" of the Illinois turfgrass

industry are the turfgrass managers. By responding to our request for input, you can help shape the future of the Illinois turfgrass industry.

What do you want the University of Illinois turfgrass group to provide you? How can our group strengthen the turfgrass industry in Illinois? We need your ideas, your vision of how the turfgrass industry of Illinois should grow and develop so that it is a model of University/industry partnership. We truly believe that a strong University/industry partnership will add tremendous strength and visibility to our industry.

Change is occurring in the turfgrass industry. The GCSAA is becoming more involved in sup(continued on page 24)

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Planning for the Future: . . . (continued from page 22)

porting University research, the United States Golf Association has developed a strong competitive research program, and state turfgrass foundations have increased their fund-raising activities.

While research is very important to advancing our industry, we must remember that universities provide several other important functions in addition to research. Undergraduate education is a very important mission of each university, and we would argue that training top-quality students is the lifeblood of the turfgrass industry. Many superintendents complain about the numbers of students training to be superintendents. How shortsighted! This is the sign of a vital, growing industry. It also creates competition, which most people agree is good for the industry.

Universities also provide continuing education, an area that may change dramatically in the future as the Internet shapes the way information is transmitted. At the University of Illinois, we currently develop and present an annual turfgrass field day, the NCTE, and Illinois-Indiana turfgrass short course. A web page was recently developed; and publications such as the "Turfgrass Tips," extension bulletins, and other written documents are all part of the U of I outreach program.

We think it is clear that the turfgrass industry will look much different 20 years from now than it does today. Where should the Illinois turfgrass industry fit in the national and international scene? Do we want to be one of the leading industries in the country? Most people would say yes to that question.

Our question to you is how do we get there from here? We want your input; you can reach us by phone, fax, or e-mail with your comments. Thank you for your help on this important project.

Bruce Branham (217) 333-7848 (phone/fax) bbranham@uiuc.edu (e-mail)

Tom Fermainian (217) 244-5147 (phone) (217) 244-3219 (fax) fermo@uiuc.edu (e-mail)

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Henry Wilkinson (217) 333-8707 (phone/fax) hwilkins@uiuc.edu (e-mail) ■

Director's Column

(continued from page 8)

groundwork was laid already; the MAGCS call letters have been reserved for us when we are ready to have our own site. This is certainly not my area of expertise, and I'm pestering pros like Nick Hongisto for help. If any other Internet surfers would care to lend their experience, please give me a call. I hope we'll be online before the season gets into full gear.

In closing, I hope 1998 is a good year for everyone. Enjoy the last little bit of the off-season, and we'll see you at the first golf event on April 27 at Schaumburg Golf Club, the annual opening scramble.

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Get Out, and Stay Out! We Did, and We Will!

John Gurke, CGCS Aurora C.C.

asty decisions are not always the most intelligent ones, as was the case with Team Chicago, a group of local superintendents and assistants who thought it would be fun to participate in the 4th Annual Golf Course Hockey Challenge in Niagara, New York. After pondering the idea for a good minute or two, Team Chicago was formed and committed to make the trip to the Northeast for the two-day tournament founded by some real hockey players (some of whom are actually in the golf course business). The team was comprised of Captain Dave Schlagetter, Dave Blomquist, Joel Purpur, Kevin DeRoo, John Otis, Dave Fisher, Matt Springer, Erwin McKone,

some guy named Dave from New York, Mike Cote (our goalie who, being from Toronto, was expected to be good), and myself. For those of you who are hockey-illiterate, that means we had two lines of generally out-of-shape, fat, old men to be sent to the lions. Preparations were made, the Winnebago was packed, and we were on our way to show those Canucks and Noreasters what real hockey, Chicago-style, was all about.

The tournament consisted of eight teams: Two-time defending champion Kitchener, Toronto (whose third-string goalie was our only goalie), North Toronto, London, and Niagara from Ontario, along with Western New York, Michigan, and, yes, Team Chicago. Four games were scheduled in two

days for each team, followed by the championship playoff, which was fun to watch from the bleachers of the University of Niagara Ice Rink.

We Chicagoans knew we were in trouble from the get-go when, while waiting for Kitchener to arrive during a blizzard, we decided to practice, thus using up any wind and energy we might have had. Just watching Kitchener take the ice was disheartening, as a seemingly endless number of players skated out including two goalies AND two tieclad coaches (which turned out to be the case with all seven other teams). What will go down in the books as our second greatest achievement (the first to be related later) was that we held the game scoreless for the entire first period (never mind that the first period served as Kitchener's warmup).

In the middle of the second period, we suffered a major setback (continued on page 28)

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Get Out, and Stay Out!

(continued from page 26)

when Kevin DeRoo-our herotried to skate between two behemoths on skates, winding up on his backside with a separated shoulder. Doc McKone popped it back, and Kevin was forced to sit out the remainder of the game, which was lost by . . . well . . . a lot. Amazingly, Kevin returned for the three remaining games, playing through pain-a true inspiration to all (you reading this, Alonzo?).

Our strategy of "Pass not to specific players but to general areas" worked well against New York in game two, which was lost only by two goals—really one, but the ref sucked.

To get our minds off hockey, we took in the Buffalo-Vancouver game that night, which was more a rumble scene from West Side Story than a hockey game. Had they not served beer at that game, Friday's two games might have turned out differently. In the morning, we played the Niagara team which,

rumor had it, had a guy who once played for the Philadelphia Flyers. Once apprised, of this, John Otis, team diplomat, extended the olive branch by giving the big lug a kiss on the cheek while mucking it up in front of our crease. I think the guy liked it, as engagement announcements were sent out after the game.

Team Chicago utilized its patented "Slow Down Offense" in textbook fashion, losing by only single digits. In the last game, we played the also victoryless London squad which was beatable, but, alas, it wasn't to be. It seemed everybody named Dave on Team Chicago with the exception of one (you figure it out) took the afternoon off. Coincidentally, those two Daves had ventured over the border for some late-night entertainment after the Sabres game-which may have contributed to their absences, be they mental or physical. The aforementioned greatest achievement for Team Chicago occurred in this game when two of London's voungsters lost their lunch compared to just one for us (no names

necessary). The championship game was won handily by Michigan over Kitchener, which used our chants of "USA! USA!" to motivate their team to victory.

Looking back upon our experience in the tournament, I can only say that we showed up. Hockey aside, we did have an enjoyable time. We saw that waterfall thing they have out there, along with the lesser-known but equallyspectacular Christy Canyon; we sweated a lot; we put some loonies in some bahoogies; and we made a friend or two (although NOT with the refs). Thanks to the Club Car folks and several local suppliers from the Northeast for sponsoring the tournament and to Dave Schlagetter for putting our "team" together. Oh, and an added bonus, thank you again to Club Car for giving out the free hats-funny, only team Chicago's hats had the "Get Out, and Stay Out" logo on them. Who'da thunk Canadians could play hockey?



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DATES TO REMEMBER

March 6 — MAGCS monthly meeting at Nordic Hills Resort Annual Charity Gin tournament to follow the meeting.

March 19 — CDGA Green Seminar at Butterfield C.C.

April 27 — MAGCS monthly meeting at Schaumburg G.C.

May 4 — ITF Combined Meeting at "The General," Eagle Ridge Resort.

June 15 — MAGCS monthly meeting at Fox Valley G.C.



It is sad to report that an old friend and loval member, Adolph Bertucci, superintendent of Lake Shore C.C. for 54 years, passed away on February 4. At the time of Adolph's death, most of his superintendent friends were in Anaheim, California, attending the GCSAA Convention. On the evening of the 5th, President Czerkies gathered together those of us who were in the Midwest hospitality room to share the sad news. Paul Voykin asked to speak to the group and gave a very sincere and heartrendering eulogy for Adolph.

Adolph touched many of our lives in different ways, and it has been suggested that each of us take a little time to write a paragraph on how Adolph touched you. Please take that time now and honor Adolph by jotting down your thoughts and feelings. Fax them (please double space) to 847-428-5009 or 847-836-9344. They will be published in the next available issue.

The Midwest Association of Golf Course Superintendents extends the sincerest condolences to the Bertucci family.

Mary Ann and Tom Vieweg have just returned from a two-week visit in France where they visited their daughter Sarah who is studying at Sorbonne University. After visiting their daughter, they went on to visit the D-Day beaches of Normandy.

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Danville Area Community College is in the process of forming a horticulture/turfgrass alumni association. All DACC horticulture graduates are encouraged to join. A \$25 a year annual fee is required, which will generate scholarship money for second vear students and will aid in horticulture/turfgrass research. As a member of the association, you will receive a membership directory and a biannual newsletter informing you of ongoing and upcoming events in our association, as well as at the college.

Anyone interested in joining the DACC alumni association, please call Brian McCoy at Danville C.C., 217-443-8955, or Charles Schroeder at DACC, 217-443-8793.

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(continued on page 32)