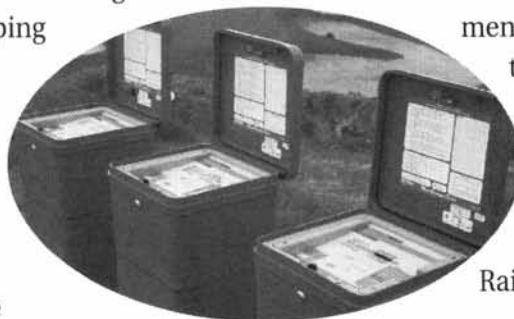




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Hole #10 at RedTail Golf Club.  
(Photo by Jim Trzinski/Compliments of Waupaca Sand & Solutions)

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The Midwest Association of Golf Course Superintendents (MAGCS), founded December 24, 1926, is a professional organization whose goals include preservation and dissemination of scientific and practical knowledge pertaining to golf turf maintenance.

We endeavor to increase efficiency and economic performance while improving and enhancing the individual and collective prestige of the members.

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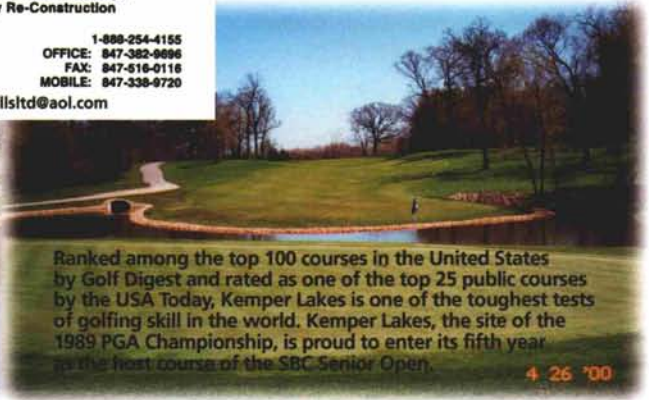
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# Remember to Laugh

*My wife Geri likes to tell me I am quite funny. I ask her, how am I funny? Funny-looking, funny like a clown or am I just peculiar to you? She never answers me. I like to think I have a sense of humor. You would have to, to be in this line of work. It is funny to me that anyone in their right mind could get up at 4:30 a.m. every day and think that is normal. I find it very humorous as well to play a game continually for 20 years, only to say over and over, this is the worst I have ever played golf.*

*The next time  
you encounter an  
agitated individual  
at home or work,  
interject a bit of  
humor to the scenario.  
I guarantee you  
will put the person  
at ease and diffuse  
the problem  
immediately.*

So apparently there are different categories of humor. Some of the e-mails I receive are hilarious, some are not. I usually have a fellow superintendent to thank for those. I find it funny they had time to find them in the first place. My children think I am funny; they thoroughly enjoy my wardrobe and my uncanny ability to be cool and hip at the same time, in the presence of their friends. I will get the last laugh when they find out I invested their college funds in the stock market. Education is overrated anyway. Sports can be quite entertaining. Rick Aguilera, a relief pitcher? Now that's funny. He is making \$4 million a year; that's definitely not funny. Slapstick is yet another wonderful element of comedy. I recently observed a liquored-up duffer fall backwards into a bunker and his playing partners couldn't putt out for five minutes, they were laughing so hard.

A great philosopher once said, "Humor is food for the soul," or something like that. I don't remember who said it, but I believe in it. We need to take things lightly. Put a positive spin on the worst of situations. I use humor in many different ways. Humor will cross any language barrier that exists. Communicating with my seasonal grounds crew can be difficult at times. But inserting timely comedy, usually at the expense of another crew member, can be a very effective device. It also works advantageously to look for the humor in serious situations; this aids in controlling the scene by maintaining a calm and relaxed atmosphere. The next time you encounter an agitated individual at home or work, interject a bit of humor to the scenario. I guarantee you will put the person at ease and diffuse the problem immediately. My daughter Bridget's eighth-grade classmate bravely battled brain cancer this past year. I was amazed by her ability to laugh and create laughter in all those she touched until the very end. She embodied at age 13 what few understand in a full lifetime. I, for one, saw the power of humor reinforced.

*(continued on page 40)*

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# Hell Hath

*On May 18, a powerful storm devastated the North Shore and its golf courses. Affected superintendents shared their stories.*



# No Fury...

*Do you remember last summer? I'm talking July 30, to be exact: Black Friday. A 120-degree heat index and way too many hot spots requiring immediate water. Despite cart restrictions, every 30-handicapper with a buggy was on a direct collision course with a wilting patch of grass and your turf was going up in flames. God, Mother Nature, Whoever or Whatever you feel is putting the earth in motion was winning on that particular day. Damage control was the name of the game. Doesn't it seem to come down to that—trying to make the best of what we are dealt? In fact, in our own minds, we're often out to one-up the Force behind it all. Fast forward from last July . . . a moderate August, a bunch of aerification, some seed, a little fertilizer, a whole bunch of water, maybe some more seed, definitely more water, a mild winter and we win again. The place looks great; you can't even find those nasty cart marks on the fairways. Experience and maybe humility tell us that we are never really one up, can't ever really win the game and that the Force behind it all, always has the final say.*

This spring, that Force has brought a large group of superintendents more wrath than a little aerification can mend. The saga begins during the overnight hours of May 8, when an isolated storm hit the south side of the city and devastated Olympia Fields Country Club. According to Kevin West, 150 trees classified as “in-play” required removal, and when the entire course is accounted for, up to another 150 may either need removal or severe pruning. As of early June, Kevin reports a great number of disfigured trees still standing. Nels Johnson Tree Experts was on hand immediately with three crews and two chipper trucks. Also employing five of their own chainsaws and a chipper truck, the majority of the staff worked two weeks straight on the clean-up.

Olympia Fields was fortunate in that the north course had not reopened yet due to the construction of last fall, but Kevin says the storm prohibited staff

from addressing several details prior to the May 27 opening. “Old, hollow red oaks” were a particularly popular choice of the winds clocked in the 80-90 mph range.

## **A fateful Thursday**

On May 18, heavy rain and severe winds cut a large path through the North Shore, leaving behind damage that will impact the playability of several courses for years. Generally speaking, every meteorologist around had forecast the potentially potent storms. In fact, according to Paul Voykin at Briarwood Country Club in Deerfield, “Dante’s Hell” was forecast two days earlier by one of Paul’s veteran employees. He reported a vulture (yes, a vulture) at Briarwood looking to make quick lunch of a sick raccoon. Paul confirms the sighting: “Red-faced, curved beak and ugly as hell!” This employee recalled from childhood that his grandmother said this was a terrible sign, a disastrous omen and a sure signal that Mother Nature would soon visit with a fury. I don’t know how Paul could have ignored such a sign and not prepared for what was sure to happen. I know a few superintendents who could have used a “heads up.”

*(continued on page 8)*

*Photos of the damage, clockwise from top: A massive tree uprooted at Briarwood C.C.; hail damage at Onwentsia C.C.; tornado-like destruction at Briarwood; more hail damage at Onwentsia; Sportsman’s C.C. looking like a scene from The Wizard of Oz.*



No one I talked to confirmed a tornado touching down, but funnel clouds were spotted in the area. Observers clocked winds at 85 mph and reported hail to be marble-sized in Highland Park and lemon-sized in Lake Forest. The official storm description featured terms like “wind shear” and “microburst.” I know a few superintendents who are not buying those explanations.

“Microburst, my ass,” pretty much sums up the sentiments of Brian Green at Sunset Valley Golf Course in Highland Park. Initially,

pretty bushed after several 12-hour days and probably not working with maximum alertness. Chainsaw work is particularly hazardous under these types of conditions. Lastly, Brian reports that his course is looking for a state declaration of “disaster area.” You wouldn’t figure that should be hard to come by.

Next door at Bob O’Link, things were not any better. Rick Bowden reports 50 trees removed and 150 more requiring corrective pruning. Looking for any silver lining he could find, Rick beams

ers that were awaiting planting. The marble-sized hail did them in.

### The prize goes to . . .

It would be hard to proclaim a hardest-hit winner, but Sportsman’s Country Club in Northbrook may get the prize. Workers tallied 800 man-hours in the three days following the storm, putting a small dent in the clean-up. Some 130 trees require removal and another 250 need corrective pruning. Kevin Czerkies estimates that the park district may spend as much as \$100,000 for contracted tree



Northmoor C.C., red #3 tee.

Sunset Valley tallied 85 trees down (most of the large variety), and a significant section of the golf course was flooded for 48 hours after the storm. Brian reports 24” trees “twisted off” and several 36” willows in the canal that probably won’t be cleaned up until the off-season. An 8” limb pierced a hole in the side of Brian’s shop, and the course was without power for four days. Brian praises his staff and is very thankful that no injuries occurred during the storm and the subsequent cleanup. This was a common theme—talking to several superintendents gave the overall sense that their crews were

that 30 of the 50 downed trees were willows. Clean-up slowed when the canal flooded, leaving 24 acres under water for 36 hours. Bob O’Link was without power in its shop/grounds dorm for 60+ hours. Rick is also quick to point out that Nels Johnson Tree Experts was on hand immediately to expedite clean-up and that a dozen caddies helped out for the weekend following the storm. The course reopened on May 24, delayed one day because the insurance company required a railing be reinstalled on a bridge prior to opening. Almost as an afterthought, Rick mentions that he lost \$6,000 worth of annual flow-

work assisting in the clean-up. The storm also snapped off several of the huge poles holding up the driving range netting; Kevin figures the range to be closed until August. More than 100,000 square feet of netting was destroyed; it will cost \$250,000 to repair the damage at the driving range alone. On the bright side, Kevin inherits the two-man driving range staff until the range reopens.

To make matters worse, the dome used for indoor, off-season practice blew up. Kevin theorizes that a tree fell into the dome and it exploded. Parts of the 30,000-

pound fabric were discovered 800 yards from the site. Ironically, the dome was slated for removal the following day. Now it appears that the \$350,000 structure probably will not be rebuilt.

Kurt Galisdorfer at Exmoor Country Club remains completely convinced that a tornado touched down on his property. The storm left several twisted trees, and Kurt's latest figures have 120 trees already removed, another 80 that still need to come down and 100 more needing corrective pruning. Although his club has eight chainsaws of its own, Kurt estimates the club will spend up to \$100,000 for contracted tree care and that eight semi-trucks full of wood chips had been removed from the property. He figures eight more truckloads would finish the job. To add insult to injury, a large oak crashed through a fairway and pierced an irrigation line.

*(continued on page 11)*

*No one I talked to confirmed a tornado touching down, but funnel clouds were spotted in the area. Observers clocked winds at 85 mph and reported hail to be marble-sized in Highland Park and lemon-sized in Lake Forest.*

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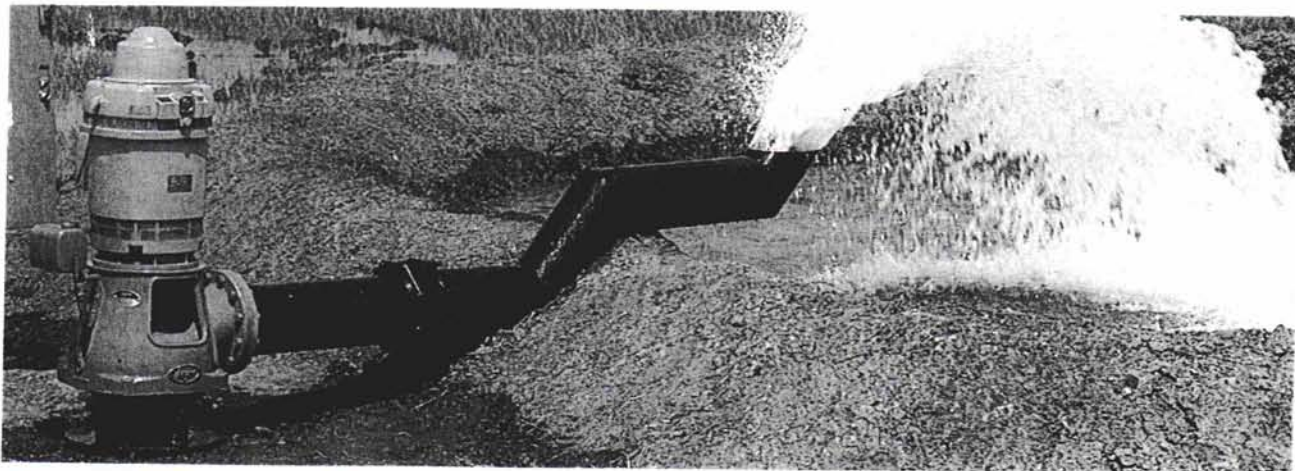
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