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the Bull Sheet

John Gurke, CGCS
Contributing Editor

DATES TO REMEMBER

April 4 — "ADA, FMLA and Workers' Compensation in Illinois" seminar in Oak Brook Terrace, IL. Call 715-833-3940 or go online at www.lorman.com for details.

April 22 — MAGCS monthly meeting at Tamarack Golf Club, **Luke Cella** host. Education provided by **Paul Vermeulen** of USGA.

May 6 — ITF Golf Day at Stone Creek Golf Club in Urbana, IL, **John Parkes** host. Northern Illinois-area members are urged to attend.

May 6 — Annual Penn State University Alumni Outing at Riverside Golf Club, **Shane Kissack** host.

May 21 — MAGCS monthly meeting/ITF Golf Day at Whisper Creek Golf Club in Huntley, IL, **Jim Wyffels** host.

Everybody please send your thoughts and prayers in **Albie Staudt's** direction. Albie, the former golf course superintendent at Geneva Golf Club and longtime MAGCS member, began treatment for a tumor in his throat on March 4. Well-wishers can send Albie a note to 732 Carlisle Road, Batavia, IL 60510. Get well soon, Albie—we have nobody trained to "... move we dispense with the reading of the minutes . . ."

The assistant superintendent ranks are changing, as evidenced by the many new assistants recently taking positions in our area: Justin Schroeder, a recent University of Illinois graduate, is now the assistant

at Naperville Country Club; **Derek Florian**, formerly of Prairie Landing Golf Course, is now at Aurora Country Club (no—there is no pipeline from Prairie Landing to Aurora); **Ryan Kepler** is now at Skokie Country Club; **Brian Mores**, formerly of LaGrange Country Club, is the new assistant superintendent at Inverness Golf Club; and **Connor Healy** is the new second assistant at Olympia Fields Country Club. Any others I've missed are strictly the fault of their respective superintendents who didn't call me and tell me.

Congratulations to **Brock Burton**, former assistant superintendent at Skokie Country Club under **Don Cross, CGCS**, who is now the big cheese—the head honcho—the top banana—el major domo—the superintendent of Geneva Hills Golf Club in Terre Haute, Indiana.

Cheers to Linda and **Ted Fist** of Wynstone Golf Club on the birth of their new baby boy. Ryan Edward Fist was born on February 20, and was pronounced by his proud father to be "a keeper," entering the world at 20-1/2" and 8 lb. 2 oz. Congratulations, Fists!



Since you were probably going to ask anyhow, here's what's going on down at the U of I: **Dr. Andy Hamblin** has been busy with several research projects, including Karen Simmons' research into the dynamics of Kentucky bluegrass blends in response to various diseases and a study of the genetic inheritance of brown patch resistance in tall fescue. (Karen is the first recipient of the Carl Hopphan/Illinois Turfgrass Foundation Graduate Fellowship.) Also, **Joyce Jones**, who will begin her M.S. studies in May, is working on a project to evaluate the DNA marker and phenotypic diversity of ornamental switchgrass. Joyce's graduate studies will hopefully involve an ITF/MAGCS/GCSAA-funded project to study the effectiveness of overseeding in creeping bentgrass. **Dr. Bruce Branham** has been focusing his research in several areas: He is currently in the middle of a USGA-sponsored project to determine the best management practices to reduce runoff of pesticides from turf. Bruce also is continuing his research into plant growth regulator use on fine turf and the control of annual bluegrass seedheads. Finally, Bruce will be beginning his third year of trials to determine the effective use of soil sterilants to reduce the annual bluegrass soil seed bank prior to establishment.

Dr. Tom Voigt, along with his cultivar evaluations of Kentucky bluegrasses, tall and fine-leaf fescues, perennial ryegrasses and bentgrasses, is currently working with **Sam Schmitz** on his ongoing study of divot recovery. Sam is writing his thesis now and hopes to finish his M.S. in May. **Dr. Tom Fermanian** is working with graduate students this spring investigating the technology for the direct sensing of turf to determine its nitrogen and moisture content—a project that is partially supported by John Deere and the ITF. Finally, **Dr. Hank Wilkinson** is busy with the Interactive Turf program, which will take off full-swing this year. Hank will also oversee studies into water use by turf species and sod, as well as research

(continued on page 34)

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using molecular biology (DNA) applied in the war against patch diseases. Can any of us sleep until the results of these intriguing experiments are revealed?

Congratulations to these MAGCS members who were named winners of the 2001 Environmental Leaders in Golf Awards cosponsored by GCSAA and *Golf Digest* in partnership with Syngenta Professional Products; Rain Bird Corp., Golf Division; Textron Golf, Turf and Specialty Products; and Pursell Technologies Inc.: **Kerry Satterwhite, CGCS** of The Den at Fox Creek, and **Chuck Anfield** of Heritage Bluffs Golf Club. Great job, Kerry and Chuck.

MORE EQUIPMENT ON THE BLOCK:

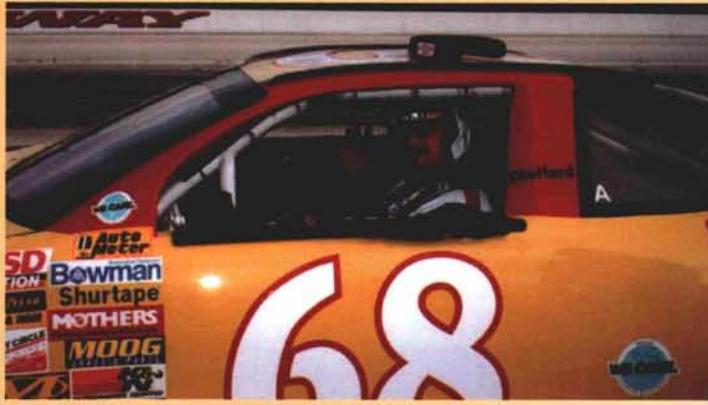
For sale: Two (2) National 84" Triples: A 1999 that runs well is for sale—buy it and receive a 1995 unit (needs some work) free! Both machines have anti-scalp roller kits. Make a CASH offer. Call **Dean Tomaselli** at 847-639-2545.

For sale: Three (3) Jacobsen 26" walking tee mowers in good condition; one (1) Jacobsen LF-100, 10 years old and still running well; one (1) 160-gallon Cushman-mounted sprayer with boom; and one (1) (brand name withheld) old walking topdresser with chain belt. Make an offer! Call **Dave Schlagetter** at 847-251-2414.

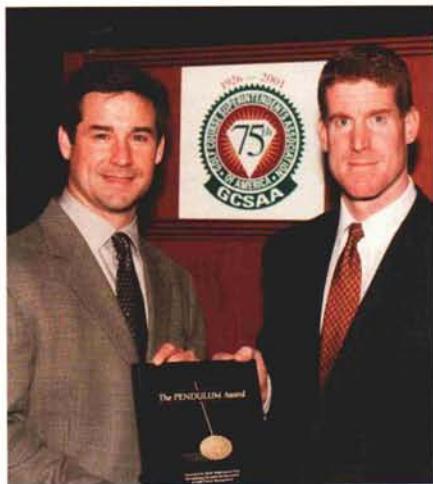
Finally, as we head into another long season of long days and little time to spend with family, always remember that "if the grass around your home is longer than the rough at your course, your marriage may be in trouble."

More Orlando Magic

Better late than never: **Scott Speiden** of Itasca Country Club was another area superintendent who was lucky enough to participate in some extracurricular fun while in Orlando for the GCSAA convention. For Scott's birthday, his wife Dawn gave him the opportunity to fulfill a lifelong dream—to drive a race car. Scott attended the Richard Petty Race School on February 10 and actually raced a car around the Walt Disney World race track—and in near-record time (for an amateur who is a golf course superintendent with a deep voice and goatee, hunts a lot and has a wife named Dawn). Scott completed the 16 laps with an average of 124.89 miles per hour—a good 3 mph faster than the next-fastest golf course superintendent with a deep voice and goatee that hunts a lot and has a wife named Dawn. Is there anything you CAN'T do in Orlando?



Jon Jennings Receives Pendulum Award for Innovative Golf Course Superintendent



Jon Jennings, CGCS (right) accepts the Pendulum Award, which is cosponsored by GCSAA and BASF Corporation.

Jonathan Jennings, CGCS, superintendent at Chicago Golf Club, was selected recently as the winner of the third annual Pendulum Award, presented at the 2002 Golf Course Superintendents Association of America's International Golf Course Conference and Show.

The award, cosponsored by GCSAA and BASF Corporation, recognizes golf course superintendents nationwide who have demonstrated outstanding ingenuity in golf course management.

Jennings was selected based on his work involving sand topdressing for fairways and how it can improve turf. (Editor's note: See our March 2002 issue for an excellent article Jon authored on this very topic!)

BASF presented Jennings with an engraved plaque bearing the image of a forward-swinging pendulum symbolizing his forward-thinking concept. William Strickland, marketing manager for BASF's Turf and Ornamental group, said: "We believe

that sharing new and proven ideas among superintendents is key to the growth of the golf industry. It gives us a real pleasure to recognize Mr. Jennings for the unique and innovative contribution he has made to this professional community."

"I'm extremely pleased to be selected for this recognition," said Jennings. "Like all golf course superintendents, my main interest is creating the best environment for our players and to promote the interests of the community. I hope that my peers can find equal value in the approaches I've taken at Chicago Golf Club." 

On Course With the President (continued from page 3)

on-budget. The shrimp even lasted for close to an hour (the absence of the Czarkies children being a contributing factor to the longevity of the shrimp). These were two wonderful evenings for MAGCS members to enjoy some good food and drink. If you're curious, this year's room's cost over the two nights amounted to just over \$34,000. I know many of you want to know the tab on the beverage service. Totals for Wednesday night

are as follows: 406 cocktails, 65 glasses of wine, 600 bottles domestic beer, 202 bottles import beer, 26 mineral waters and 128 soft drinks. With tax and gratuity, the total was \$7,237.36. This does not include food for the night. As you can see, hosting a hospitality room is not cheap, and if not for the generosity of the sponsors, the room would not be a success. I can only hope that we would have had our suite in a city

where there are not two Omnis so my wife could have found the room easier, although she did make a lot of new friends at the Club Car room. That's enough about the conference. The season is upon us and it's time to get going.

Hope to see you all at Tamarack later this month! 

Drawing Lessons from a Life Well-Lived

In my life, I've known a lot of experts in various fields; however, in the field of life, profession and character, few have exemplified expertise better than John Ebel. I started working for John as a turf student in 1989 because Greg Fuchs told me that he would be a great guy to work for. Shortly after my arrival, I realized that Greg was right. It didn't take long for me to get a feel for the perspective John had on his faith, his family and his profession. The artful way he wove these together, helped define who he was. In my own career as a superintendent, I am still drawing from the valuable mentoring I received while working with him.

John Ebel had the vision and the wisdom to know the importance of maintaining a focus on a higher good for the benefit of the profession and all those involved with it. The fact that John had a passion for his profession to the point where he prayed fervently for it and its members simply demonstrated his genuine concern and love for others.

I contacted John around January 21 of this year and told him that I thought the MAGCS could still learn a lot from him. I wanted to ask him a whole series of questions related to what he thought was the key to his success. However, John lacked the strength to talk to me for more than ten minutes that afternoon. He said he would speak to me again when his strength returned. Sadly, I never had the opportunity to speak with him again. So I will draw from the short talk I had with John, my memory of what I believe is key to his character, and from a long conversation I had with John's wife, Juanita.

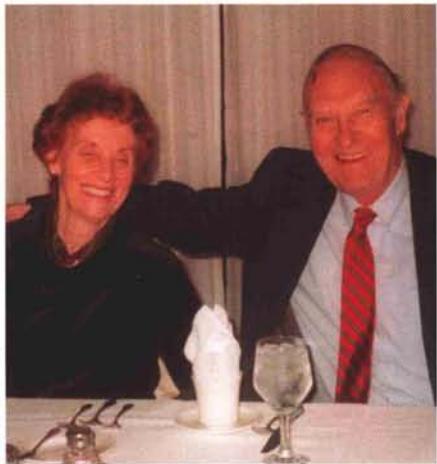
John was a true "jack of all trades" and a tremendous asset to any organization. After spending 22 years at Biltmore C.C., he spent another 22 years at Barrington Hills C.C. John's words to me on this were, "There is definitely something to be said for staying put." We talked about the time, effort and patience it takes to establish longstanding relationships with those around you. John understood the importance of skill and knowledge in his profession, but he didn't stop there. He invested in people along the way, and always treated people with tremendous respect.

There were many times I would talk to him and walk away thinking, "What is it about him that makes him so easy to talk to?" I think it was because of the light that shone within him. You see, John's faith and his use of Christ as a role model for his life had a "trickle-down" effect to the point where you could see it in everything that he did. John was a 24/7 walk-the-walk and talk-the-talk kind of Christian. This was something that John delighted in, and he didn't keep it a secret, either.

Juanita described John as being tenacious in the way he attacked every challenge. This was never more evident than in his efforts to organize the prayer breakfast. The purpose was to seek God's blessing on the GCSAA conference, our affairs, our nation, our members, our directors and our staff, and to share God's love.

John had the vision and the wisdom to know the importance of maintaining a focus on a higher good for the benefit of the profession and all those involved with it. The fact that John had a passion for his profession to the point where he prayed fervently for it and its members simply demonstrated his genuine concern and love for others.

The same principles that made John a successful superintendent also made him a successful husband and father. John's marriage of 52 years to



*Juanita and John Ebel,
December 2001.*

Juanita is a monumental statement of his dedication to his wife and family. Juanita mentioned that John was always so patient at home. I am almost certain that John would say that this kind of patience did not come from his own accord. It came from a kind of inner transformation, and from that light that shone through him. The thing that kept that light burning was the fact that John was a man of prayer. He had a tremendous enthusiasm for the power of God. I remember a story he told me regarding a time in his life when he was an early believer. He admitted to being a little rough around the edges in those days, and he had trouble cleaning up his language. It was something he seemed to have no power over in his life. He explained

that as he grew more familiar with the power of prayer and submitting things to the Lord, he began to change. John looked me right in the eye and said, "As soon as I submitted that to the Lord, my mouth cleaned up overnight!"

John took the motto, "A family that prays together stays together," and he lived it. Juanita told me that she really missed John's nightly prayer. The other thing she missed was John's strong arm beside her. She said that everywhere they went, she could always reach up and pull on his arm for support, but now she has to get by on her own. How wonderful to be remembered as one who was always there for support. Juanita told me John was an expert at that.

In the end, I can only offer my opinion as to what I believe was the key to John's success. I believe it was honesty, integrity and faith that defined John's character. This character flowed from his faith in Christ as his Savior, and his willingness to be molded and transformed by Him. I think it was his successful combination of skill, knowledge, faith and character that made John Ebel a true expert in life!



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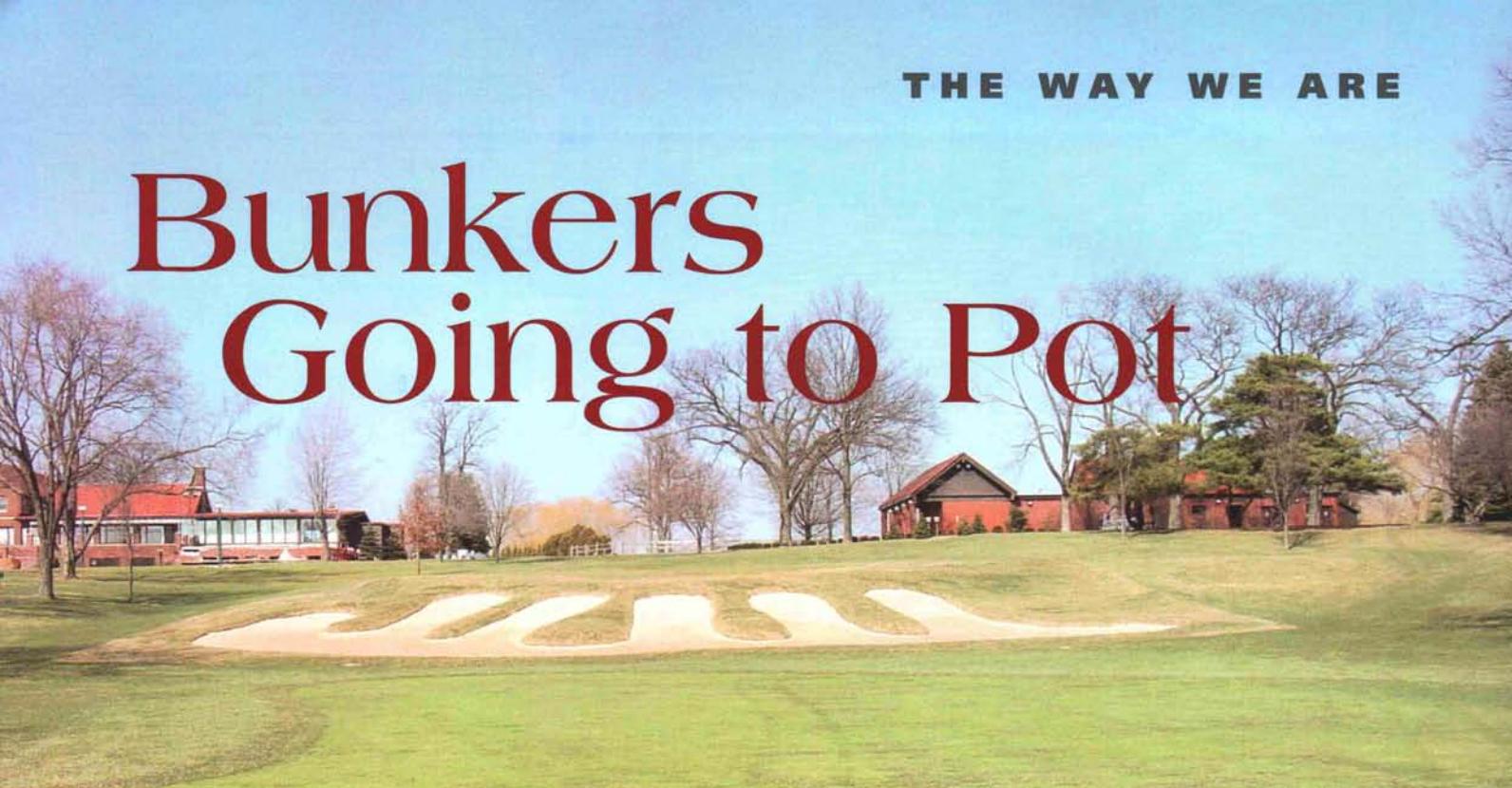
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Bunkers Going to Pot



Green bunker, hole no. 16.

Photos by Ray Schmitz

It's a brave new world for those building new golf courses or renovating existing ones.

Innovations in golf equipment technology and stronger, long-driving players have rendered obsolete or diminished the impact of design features at many of our nation's well-established clubs.

Renovation projects walk the fine line of staying true to the original architect's vision while updating to accommodate advances in the game.

Last fall, venerable Flossmoor Country Club—which celebrated its centennial in 1999—completed a bunker renovation project in thoughtful, deliberate fashion.

Last fall, venerable Flossmoor Country Club—which celebrated its centennial in 1999—completed a bunker renovation project in thoughtful, deliberate fashion. Superintendent Ray Schmitz, CGCS, recounts that the process began three years ago, when the club consulted an architect. An ad hoc committee comprising past club champions, club members, the green committee chair, the golf pro and Ray himself tempered the architect's prescription by touring the course hole by hole and evaluating each bunker.

This process revealed that some bunkers were no longer valid hazards; for example, a bunker 200 yards out from the tee only served to penalize the high-handicap golfer. Meshing the architect's advice with input from the ad hoc committee, a plan emerged to eliminate seven of Flossmoor's 84 existing bunkers while adding four in new locations.

A construction crew embarked on the bunker renovation right after Labor Day 2001 and finished just before Thanksgiving. Another major project occurred simultaneously: the installation of a new irrigation system. Ray's careful planning coordinated both crews and ensured that at least nine holes were always open for membership play.

According to Ray, the new "pot bunkers" are more parallel with the fairway than the old-style bunkers, which were "flat, just a hazard that was perpendicular to the line of flight." Also, Ray reports that shadows really enhance the look of the new bunkers; their appearance actually changes with

the play of light and shadow as the sun moves across the sky.

The process involved removing as much as possible of the sand base in the bunkers and bringing the grass sodded face all the way down to the floor of the bunker. "One neat thing we did here was we changed all the sand in the bunkers," recalls Ray. "They went into the old bunker, dug a giant hole, put all the old sand in that hole and capped it off with clay, then they brought in new sand. That saves time and eliminates one problem for the super on what to do with all the old sand. It also eliminates the traffic of hauling the old sand out."

Flossmoor opted for Waupaca's Northface sand. "It's expensive, but we chose their sand because of virtually no clay content in the sand." Ray adds that from here on out, all bunkers will probably be raked by hand . . . a very labor-intensive proposition.

Another efficiency measure employed during the project involved treatment of the old sod. Instead of cutting the old sod out, the crew rotatilled it and laid the new sod right on top of the pulverized sod and soil.



Fairway bunkers, hole no. 5.

Happily, the overlap between the bunker renovation and irrigation upgrade allowed for installing a sprinkler head at each bunker, the better to water the new sod.

While the new bunkers are deeper than their predecessors, Ray notes, "We tried to avoid going too deep because of potential problems with drainage. Your drainage outlet has to be lower than the floor of the bunker." So far, so good on that count; adds Ray, "With all the rain last fall and even this first week of March, drainage has been perfect so

far, no standing water in the bunkers."

This spring, Ray expects to develop a punch list for the bunker renovation project and refine a few rough edges. Overall, though, he says, "I'm pleased, so far the members are pleased—and they're very enthusiastic about getting a chance to play it." 



Fairway bunker, hole no. 10.

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