

Dispelling Common Myths: ACSP for Golf Courses

A number of “myths” and misconceptions about the Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary Program (ACSP) are circulating among the superintendent ranks. The Great Lakes Regional Field Office for Audubon International, based in Elburn, IL, was created to reach out to golf course properties through the superintendents. Their perspective is enormously important to gaining participation. For the short time that we have been calling on golf courses, we have heard some very good stories about what the program is doing for the golf courses, their members and the superintendents’ careers. We have also listened to rumors about the program, that for lack of a better term, we call “myths.” The following is a short list of these common myths along with the correct information in response to each of them.



Textron’s college all-stars learn about the latest in environmental maintenance.



Wetlands can be a glorious hallmark of a golf course in harmony with the environment.



Some jobs are more fun than others . . . but controlled burns are consistent with environmental sensitivity.

Myth #1: Being in the ACSP is too difficult, and it’s too tough to get certified.

It is not difficult, and you may already be taking actions that can lead to certification. Oftentimes, a member looks at the entire certification process instead of simply taking it one step at a time. Focus on fulfilling the Site Assessment and Environmental Plan. When a member gets through that first step, rather than worrying about all of the steps at once, they will be more likely to become invested in the program. I remember my certification process for two golf courses. Once I got through the organizational part of the certification, the rest was easy. I found enthusiastic people who took control and did what we asked them to do. They lent effort and experience to an undertaking that I thought was insurmountable. Bottom line; it got done and we were certified in a one-year period. It was just a matter of proper documentation along with proper volunteerism and delegation!

Myth #2: Our course won’t be able to join or work towards certification; we don’t have the staff, money or time.

Any existing golf course can join and work towards earning the Certified Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary designation. A course doesn’t have to have lots of acreage or habitat to get certified—it just has to practice good environmental management, and we’re here to help. ACSP-certified golf courses range from small nine-hole facilities and lower-budget public courses to country clubs, high-end resorts and PGA facilities. One of the best examples in our area is Pottawatomie Golf Course in St. Charles. This nine-hole facility was certified in 1997. It is a 32-acre golf course property on the Fox River. In fact, it is an early Robert Trent Jones work, built with WPA dollars. Therefore, this golf course has some history that the public enjoys hearing about. This alone makes the ACSP program more valuable because the property already has the public’s interest. Golfers there witness hundreds of purple martins every summer. Their homes are provided by the golf course in wonderful towers of nest boxes mounted in front of the riverscape. Superintendent Denise Gillett-Parchert has upheld the tradition of certification set by Luke Cella, former superintendent. The golf course accepts the flood waters of the Fox River, it hosts many tournaments throughout the season and it embodies a rich tradition of a lowland course next to a woodland setting. If they can do it, so can the rest of us!

Myth #3: We’re not ready to go the distance—i.e., the certification material must be sent in all at once and be perfect in order to get certified.

The ACSP is not like a test and your certification request is not like a paper handed in to be graded. Instead, we work with you to find ways to meet certification guidelines based on the unique strengths and weaknesses of your site. We’re here to help, not create roadblocks. In my case, I picked the things I liked doing first. The momentum carried me through the areas where I was not as

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confident. I think they call it a "learning curve" these days.

Myth #4: Due to our golf course policy, there is no way we could ever have children tour our golf course/put up nest boxes/naturalize all our shorelines/etc., so we cannot get certified.

Out of all the Standard Management Practices that Audubon International would like to see on every certified golf course, we know that some may not be applicable to a given situation, especially in the Outreach and Education category. That is why the ACSP is a flexible program. If there are any questions about suggested or required projects, please contact us.

Myth #5: There is no way we will ever be able to afford a new irrigation system/\$40,000 recycling equipment or wash pad/have an aerial photograph taken of the course/etc., so we cannot get certified.

These are a few of the many projects that we have heard people tell us they believe they need to complete to get certified. This is simply not true. Once again, if there are any questions about suggested or required projects, please contact Audubon International. We can also send you a list of the Standard Management Practices that we prefer to see on every golf course.

Myth #6: An environmentally-managed golf course is a brown golf course.

We understand that in order to have a playable course, chemicals will be used—we do not require that you stop these practices outright. Rather, we look to help you manage a playable course with as little chemical input as possible. Working on certification in the ACSP can help you reduce the amount of chemicals needed and reduce the adverse envi-



A Brownie troop visiting a golf course for the first time, enjoying and amazed at how beautiful a putting green really is.

ronmental impact from their use and application (i.e., runoff and water quality). Our most recent *Managed Lands Survey* showed that 82% of responding golf program members are using less pesticides, 92% are using pesticides with lower toxicity levels and 69% are using less water, while at the same time, 99% indicate that playing quality had improved (50%) or at least been maintained (49%) since joining the ACSP. Likewise, 53 members of the ACSP and the Audubon Signature Program were ranked among America's 100 Greatest Golf Courses by *Golf Digest* in 2004. Twenty-one were certified.

Myth #7: I already have too much to do.

Joining the ACSP and working on certification through onsite projects can be a rewarding experience. Our most recent *Managed Lands Survey* confirmed this fact with 99% of golf superintendents responding that job satisfaction had improved (49%) or at least been maintained (50%) since joining the ACSP. Once again, I remember that my involvement with the ACSP made me feel like part of my hobby was, all of a sudden, part of my job. I actually feel like I avoided "burnout" and extended my career.



At this course, two volunteers do bird box inventory on a weekly basis.

Myth #8: My golfers are the worst golfers in the world/too particular/too uptight/etc., and will never accept the changes I would have to make to become a certified course.

We have many success stories of superintendents and assistants who have successfully educated their membership and golfers on the ACSP. Once golfers understand why certain steps are being taken (i.e., grass is being kept higher around ponds and streams in order to buffer chemical runoff), they are likely to embrace these changes. That is why Outreach and Education is a part of the certification process. Once again, our *Managed Lands Survey* confirms this with superintendents reporting that golfer satisfaction had either improved (66%) or been maintained (34%) since their course joined the ACSP.

Joellen Zeh, program manager for Audubon International, states, "Not a single golf course has gone through certification without making some changes for the better! As we learn more about the golf course and its environment, we make recommendations that enhance habitat, reduce risk, enhance credibility, increase golfer satisfaction, improve playing quality and improve personal and crew job satisfaction."

I hope these simple "myth-breakers" reduce your fears and encourage you to join Audubon International's Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary Program for Golf Courses. If there are other "myths" that you need us to address, please let us know at 518-767-9051 or via e-mail at acss@audubonintl.org.



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The Unknown Superintendent

"Before you criticize someone, you should walk a mile in their shoes. That way, when you criticize them, you're a mile away and you have their shoes."—Unknown

The following interview was conducted with the little known but much beloved "Unknown Superintendent." Traveling from course to course, the Unknown Superintendent imparts his wisdom on anyone who will listen and gives lessons in golf course management to stewards of clubs all over the world.

Q: Who is the most unlikely person from whom you've received great advice?

A: A retired Chicago policeman. He explained to me that the answer to all golf course problems is mulching mowers. That's why golf courses always look so great. Mulch. That's all you need to keep the grass looking great. Nothing else. I live by that.

Q: Do you have a nickname, and if so, where did it come from?

A: Chip. When I was born, mom was a short iron away from the 7th green. I suppose it could be worse. I could be called "Pitch" or "Wedge" or even worse, "Tight Lies."

Q: What was your biggest golf course-related blunder?

A: This one time, at golf camp . . . wait I can't tell that one. Okay, once I was convinced that golf carts could float and I told all our golfers to go ahead and drive in after any golf balls that go into the water. Oops!

Q: What was your best golf experience?

A: Blowing up that damn gopher at Bushwood Country Club. I know that Carl tried his best, but Spackler just wasn't up to the task. Sure there was some collateral damage, but ultimate victory was mine! I still don't know why they were so upset; the course will be back to normal—eventually (trees DO grow back you know).

Q: What was the most bizarre job you ever had?

A: I used to have a job at a paper bag factory. But I had to leave for reasons my lawyers won't let me discuss. I did, however, receive a lifetime supply of bags. Need one?

Q: Have you ever been talked into singing at a karaoke bar?

A: Why yes. As a matter of fact, I'm a regular locally. Do you like my t-shirt? (Shows me a t-shirt reading: *"The more you drink—the better I sound."*)

Q: What is your funniest childhood memory?

A: The time Bunny Freeman sprayed hairspray into her sink to see if there was any left and then Biff walked in with a cigarette and when he threw the butt into the sink and the hairspray flashed and accidentally lit the cat on fire, it ran around with Biff chasing it and he fell and broke his leg and when the paramedics were carrying him to the ambulance and they heard the story, they laughed so hard that they dropped him and he broke his arm too and . . . wait a minute. That's a sad story. Never mind.

Q: Did you ever own a white suit, and were you into the disco scene?

A: A white suit? Are you serious? I've got SIX of them! The ladies love 'em (especially when you're under a black light).

If you can get a strobe light too, that's too cool! Catch the fever baby!

Q: Did you have a C.B. radio, and if so, what was your call sign?

A: "Handle" good buddy. It's called a "handle." Next time you're looking for a Smokey hiding near the chicken coop, just give a shout out to *Grass Barber*. Catch ya on the flip-flop!

Q: Can you tell us about something you did when you were younger that your mother still doesn't know about?

A: Yes I could, but then I'd have to kill you. I can tell you, however, that it involved Twinkies and a home-made cannon.

Q: What is the most common "misconception" about you?

A: That I have no sense of humor.



the Bull Sheet

John Gurke, CGCS, Contributing Editor

DATES TO REMEMBER

November 10 – 52nd Annual Midwest Turf Clinic at Medinah Country Club, **Tom Lively, CGCS** host.

November 13 – MAGCS Fall Dinner Dance at Aurora Country Club, **Julie and John Gurke, CGCS** hosts.

November 16 – “Pruning for Professionals” seminar sponsored by the Chicago Botanic Garden in Glencoe, IL. Contact **Doris Phelan** at 847-835-6928 for details.

November 16-17 – 2004 Wisconsin Golf Turf Symposium at the American Club in Kohler, WI. Read on for further details.

November 18 – “Pruning for Spanish-Speaking Professionals” seminar—same contact as above.

November 29-December 2 – Illinois Professional Turf Conference (formerly NCTE) at Pheasant Run Resort in St. Charles, IL.

December 3 – “Family and Medical Leave Act in Illinois” seminar at the Four Points by Sheraton Barcelo Hotel in Oak Brook Terrace, IL. Call 888-678-5565 for details and to register.

December 6 – GCSAA Education presents “Managing Turfgrass Root Systems in the North” and

“Understanding Biostimulants” at the Ramada Plaza Hotel & Conference Center in Rockford, IL. More stuff to follow.

January 17-February 4, 2005 – The Rutgers Professional Golf Turf Management School Three-Week Preparatory Short Course in New Brunswick, NJ. Call 732-932-9271, ext. 630 for information and registration.

January 19 – GCSAA and MAGCS present “Annual Bluegrass Management,” one-day seminar at Midwest Golf House in Lemont, IL.

January 20 – GCSAA and MAGCS present “Managing Turfgrass Root Systems in the North” and “Localized Dry Spot and Wetting Agent Use,” half-day seminars at Midwest Golf House in Lemont, IL.

January 24 – MAGCS monthly meeting at Mount Prospect Golf Club, **Fred Behnke, CGCS** host. Don’t switch to autopilot and show up at Arrowhead!

February 10-11 – MAGCS Hospitality Room at the Rosen Centre Hotel in Salons 11 & 12 from 6 to 10 p.m. each night. The address is 9840 International Drive, Orlando, FL. Don’t miss it!

Watch your mail for an announcement regarding the two above-listed GCSAA seminars to be held in Rockford. These half-day events are worth 0.35 education points each. Also, on January 19, Midwest Golf House will be the host of the GCSAA’s “Annual Bluegrass Management” seminar given by Dr. Frank Rossi of Cornell University.

This will be a full-day event worth 0.70 EPs. On the following day, “Managing Turfgrass Root Systems in the North” will be offered again, along with another half-day seminar covering “Localized Dry Spot and the Use of Wetting Agents.” You can also shoot an e-mail off to **Luke Cella** at Golf House (lcella@cdga.org) for the details.

A couple items of note from GCSAA: First, if one of the reasons you enjoy getting away to the Golf Industry Show (formerly GCSAA Conference and Show) is to gain a few days’ freedom from the course and all the people you see every day of your life, 2007 will not be your year. That is when the Club Managers Association of America (CMAA) will join GCSAA and the National Golf Course Owners Association (NGCOA) at the Show in Anaheim, California. This thing just keeps getting bigger and bigger. Second, a reminder to GCSAA members that your membership includes a term-life insurance policy. To make sure you can take advantage of this plan (which in a way would be quite unfortunate), you need to have a designated beneficiary. To review and/or update your beneficiary information, contact **Jana Wiley**, member benefits manager, at 800-472-7878, ext. 4480, or at jwiley@gcsaa.org.

MAGCS wishes all the best to its newest members, and encourages them to take full advantage of the great benefits membership in this Association has to offer:

Jason Wolf, Class C,
Highland Woods G.C.

Robert Quiroz, Class C,
Oak Meadows G.C.

Brad Roose, Class C,
Glen Flora C.C.

Steve Lane, Class E,
Rabine Paving

Justin VanLanduit, Class C,
Ivanhoe Club

Jason Lemanski, Class B,
Water’s Edge G.C.

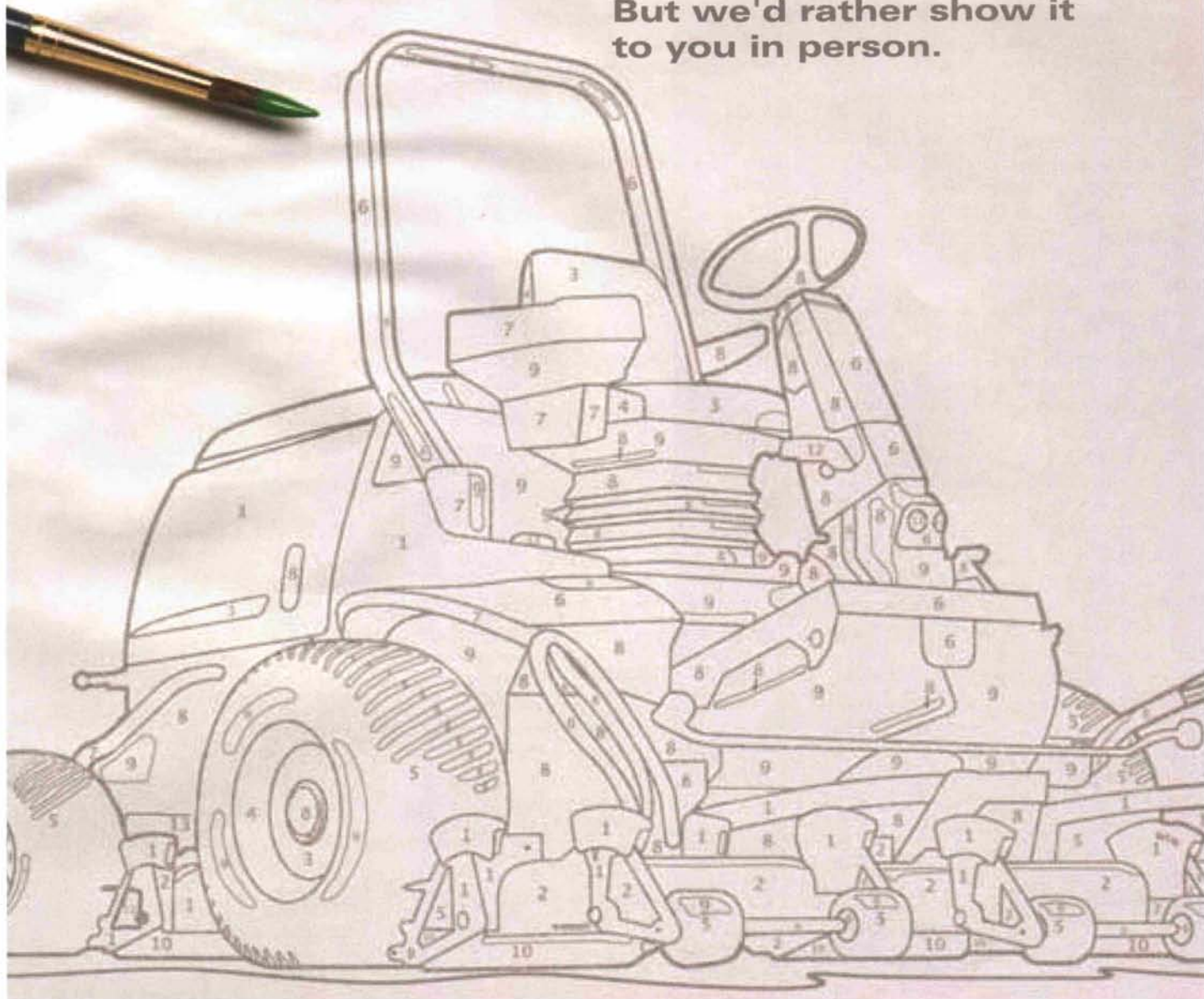
Ryan Deur, Class C,
Doral Eaglewood Resort

Welcome friends!

The 52nd Annual Midwest Turf Clinic will take place at Medinah Country Club on the 10th, and if you haven’t signed up, you may want to reconsider. Education Committee chair **Tim Anderson** and his crew have come up with a great program that will depart from the norm of many years past. The new format will surely streamline the program while still providing the high-quality speakers and topics for the day. One big

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difference will be a hot buffet lunch, replacing the cold sandwich buffet. Also, our photographer **Jim Trzinski** will again be on hand to take member photographs. We strongly encourage you to have your photo taken for our archives ('specially since it's rare that we in this bizness git all gussed up in purty duds 'n' such). Make your plans to come out to Medinah for the new, improved Turf Clinic—it's the real deal.

.....
It was nice to see mention of **Randy Wahler's** victory in the MAGCS Championship in the mid-September issue of *Chicagoland Golf*. If you don't currently peruse that publication, give it a look—it really covers the golf scene in our area like a glove, and odds are you'll see something about your course or the course down the street that will interest you.

.....
Better late than never—congratulations and hats off to our partners at CDGA on celebrating their 90th anniversary this September. We look forward to our alliance for the next 90 and beyond!

.....
The MAGCS Nominating Committee (**Kevin DeRoo**, **Don Ferreri**, **Joel Purpur**, **Ed Braunsky** and **Brian Bossert**) has submitted the following slate of candidates for the annual election to be held on November 10th at the 52nd Annual Midwest Turf Clinic at Medinah Country Club.

PRESIDENT

Phil Zeinert, CGCS,
Elgin Country Club

VICE PRESIDENT

Gary Hearn,
Salt Creek Golf Course

SECRETARY-TREASURER

Tim Anderson, CGCS,
Prestwick Country Club

DIRECTORS

Paul Bastron, CGCS,
Glen Flora Country Club

Tony Kalina, CGCS,
Prairie Landing Golf Club

Jay Druhan,
Palos Hills Municipal Golf Course

Todd Schmitz,
Phillips Park Golf Course

Bob McCallum, CGCS,
Orchard Hills Golf Course

And a pat on the back and a hearty "Way to go!" to Dave Braasch and the team from Glen Erin Golf Club on their victory in the John Deere Team Championship in Wisconsin. The home team advantage obviously worked for Dave and teammates Erik Johnson (golf professional), Brad Bohlman (president) and Tom Sanford (manager who left his father Fred and brother Lamont's burgeoning recycling business to develop golf properties) as they took the trophy and are headed for Arizona this month for the national championship, where they'll battle **Steve VanAcker** and the team from Crystal Lake (among others) for the big prize. Congratulations, guys, and good luck to all in the land of cacti.



The President made a special stop at the Rock County Airport just to watch the team from Glen Erin win the John Deere Team Championship (along with a quick stopover at the Stuckey's on County WW for some pecan logs).

There will be four (4) seats open at this election—three (3) two-year terms and one (1) one-year term. Current directors **Dave Braasch** and **Scott Witte**, CGCS have one year remaining on their terms, and **Scott Speiden** will have completed the second year of his term and will not seek reelection. If you cannot be present at Medinah for the election, call Luke Cella to inquire about proxy voting. In fact, even if you just want to say hello to someone or you're bored, call Luke. Luke loves me.

.....
Good luck and best wishes to **Dave Holler**, formerly of Arthur Clesen, Inc., who is now with Turf Professionals Equipment Company.



Dave Holler.



Alejandro Lima.

Cheers to Alex and **Sylvia Lima** (Prime Turf) on welcoming their son Alejandro Jose into the world on September 16. Little Alejandro was 19 inches long and weighed 6 pounds, 1 ounce—no wonder mom looked so tiny even days before he showed up! Everyone is well, and mother reports that he is a normal baby boy—he eats, sleeps, peeps and poops, and in that order. Congratulations, Sylvia and Alex!

.....
Congratulations to **Mike Mumper**, who on October 2 married Peggy Adducci, thus forming the Mike and Peggy Mumperucci family. At press time, the bride and groom were enjoying the Dunhill Cup in St. Andrews, Scotland before heading to

(continued on page 20)

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The Links at Carillon – Mark Thibault —Summer 2004

"There are a number of reasons I use pHairway®. Aside from the "greening" affect it has on the golf course, it helps me alleviate the "take-all" patch by keeping the turf a bit more acidic and it's more economical than using Heritage."

"We've tried competitor products and they don't work as well as pHairway®. I began using pHairway® once I realized that when you are managing a 63 acre, multi-million dollar property, trying to save \$.50 really isn't worth your job. I decided it wasn't and saved in other areas. Prime Turf service is excellent. They are here within hours of a call and take care of the problem eliminating any headaches."

Andy Kronwall– Lake Geneva Country Club– Summer 2004

"I did research for months, looking for the most efficient way to treat my irrigation water supply from zebra mussel invasion. My criterion were to find a method that would not adversely affect the turf, and to keep the cost at a minimum. I found pHairway® to be the only product that fit the bill."

pHairway® provides 100% control of zebra muscles within the irrigation system. Added benefits to using the product are lowering the water's pH, optimizing pesticide applications, and producing a nice greening up of the turf. It was a win-win situation.

Prime Turf service is top notch. The company's response time to service requests and emergency situations is always less than one day. It would be hard to beat their service. I couldn't be happier, so why would I use another company?"

Flossmoor Country Club—Bob Lively– Summer 2004

"In all my years of being a superintendent, I've never not used pHairway®. However, this past month, I did not use pHairway® for a period of three weeks or so. I personally witnessed a loss of turf color. After two watering cycles with the pHairway® product, I witnessed an immediate greening-up and vitality to the turf."

"If a fellow superintendent told me they were considering using pHairway®, I would tell them to use it because it is a great product and plays an important role in the maintenance of the golf course."

"A great product supported by an impeccable service team. Most of the time, the Prime Turf service team is there even before you ask. Whether it is to fill up the tank, to routine maintenance and check-up of the system, to winterization and start-up. It's nice to have competent guys come out and work on one of the most intricate parts of your system and not have to worry about it at all."



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Italy for their European honeymoon. Best wishes to the Mumpers!

Also congrats to **Dave Blomquist, CGCS**, formerly of Naperville Country Club, who is now the superintendent of Twin Orchard Country Club.

Make your plans now—the annual West Side Holiday Party is coming to town at Dave & Buster's in Addison on December 15 from 12 noon to 3:00 p.m. (or later?). Look for a

mailer soon, or contact Gary Hearn for info.

Your already-full schedule has another “try-not-to-miss” event in Kohler, WI—the 39th annual Wisconsin Golf Turf Symposium sponsored by the Wisconsin Golf Course Superintendents Association and Milorganite Division-MMSD. This year's topic is “Soils—Managing the Pressures;” expect soils experts from around the country sharing their thoughts and

experiences with physical properties, organic matter, aeration, compaction, etc. As always, proceeds from this event will go to the O. J. Noer Research Foundation to fund and promote turfgrass research throughout the country. For registration info, call Mel Organite at 800-287-9645 or e-mail to milorganite@mmsd.com.



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