



*It is all about genes! Every feature of a grass plant, including disease resistance (dollar spot shown), is controlled by DNA or genes. Changing or adding one gene can completely change the behavior of a plant.*

### **What Are the University of Illinois and CDGA Doing to Develop and Evaluate New Turfgrasses?**

At both the University of Illinois and the Midwest Golf House in Lemont, IL, several different turfgrass development activities are underway. Each year, hundreds of new and old turfgrass varieties are planted and evaluated for three to five years. Some of them involve grass entries into the National Turfgrass Evaluation Program (NTEP) and others are varieties, blends and mixtures that researchers want to learn about. The goal is to determine what grows best in Illinois for golf, sports fields, roadways and lawns.

We also collect naturally adapted turfgrasses for possible development in the Midwest. In 2006, the first "Illinois bentgrass" will be available for testing in Illinois. This has been an 11-year project done in

cooperation with the turf-seed industry. Molecular work is also underway at Illinois. Darin Lichtfeld, Tom Voigt and Andy Hamblin used grass DNA to study the behavior of blended bluegrasses and published their ideas on how to prepare better blends. In the Henry Wilkinson program, grass-transformation technology is being developed that will speed up the rate at which GMO plants can be created. Further, Shelby Henning and Wilkinson are evaluating sod blends and mixtures for adaptation to the Midwest and use as sports fields in cooperation with Barenbrug USA. In addition, a cooperation with the Scotts Company was recently completed that involved testing and evaluation of GMO bentgrass for herbicide resistance and disease resistance. Tom Fermanian, Bruce Branham and William Sharp are testing and evaluating herbicide-resistant Scotts' GMO bentgrass in Urbana

under putting-green conditions. At Golf House, the CDGA is evaluating some new varieties and experimental lines of golf turf that are nearer the market or available for purchase currently. Also at Golf House, we are evaluating cool- and warm-season species for use in primary roughs and out-of-play areas on golf courses, in a program spearheaded by Voigt.

While many turf developments are ongoing, the future is even brighter. Within the next five to 10 years, expect an explosion of knowledge about plants and animals as more and more complete genomes are deciphered. This will open up tremendous research opportunities for plant improvement.





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# Monster Garage

## (In Praise of Golf Course Mechanics)

*Golf course mechanics have been said to be a different breed. Some believe that they aren't human or even related to primates at all. Their looks, irritable temper and grouchy personality are traits that are closely related to the cartoon character "Taz" (i.e., the Tasmanian Devil) and not humanlike at all.*

Golf course mechanics aren't monsters, though; they are real, living, breathing beings. But if you look closely at the golf course mechanic, you'll notice that they are a breed apart. Their hands appear to be a swollen, horrific gore, as if they had been beaten with baseball bats. They sweat 10w30 and salt water, which gives off an oily, rainbowish hue in proper sunlight (similar to the wet asphalt on a recently used wash pad). This sort of complexion is a dermatologist's dream and nightmare at the same time! They can also produce unusual sounds from every orifice, yet all smell the same, like cigarettes and cheese. Golf course mechanics are food-driven animals, but you mainly see them wandering the maintenance facility grazing on tobacco, a black sludge they refer to as "coffee" and anything that has fallen on the floor less than five seconds ago (a.k.a. the five-second rule).

Where they came from and how they got here is a complete mystery, but one thing we do know is they are very good at fixing things! From fairway mowers to door locks, they can fix it all. Golf course mechanics, unlike any other type of mechanic, have an uncannily heightened sense of precision. The main thing most of us don't know about golf course mechanics is that they are creative as an ox. Does that make sense?

This leads us to our case study, Aurora Country Club's maintenance facility and head golf course mechanic, Mr. Nick Pavlovich.

Nick was born and raised in Yugoslavia, then moved to the States when he was 18 years old. He has a unique accent, a foreign sense of humor and a wonderful smile. Since he has been in the States he has worn many hats, but from what I understand, being a golf course mechanic is the best job he could ask for. Nick's number-one goal for John Gurke and Aurora C.C. is to save them money. Nick does this by rebuilding used parts with used parts, and engineering and fabricating his own equipment, right there in the "shop." He is a true expert at what he does.

Last winter, ACC bought a walk-behind blower from a large "expanding company" in the area. But this blower didn't come with a trailer.

"Well, how are we going to get this eight-horsepower 'Green Monster' around the course?" wondered John Gurke, CGCS.

"How 'bout we make a twailoo?" said Nick.

"A trailer is a great idea, Nick!" said John. "Go to it!"

One week later, Aurora Country Club had the coolest "Green Monster" trailer known to man. Looking at it, this trailer makes so much sense but there is not one out there on the market like this. Why not? It has a square frame, approximately 36"x36", and golf cart tires that give it excellent balance on steep slopes. It has a low-profile design and requires no ramp for loading and offloading the machine. What else can you ask for?

*(continued on page 24)*



The made-from-scratch blower trailer.



The trim trailer made from an old Dedoes drum aerator.

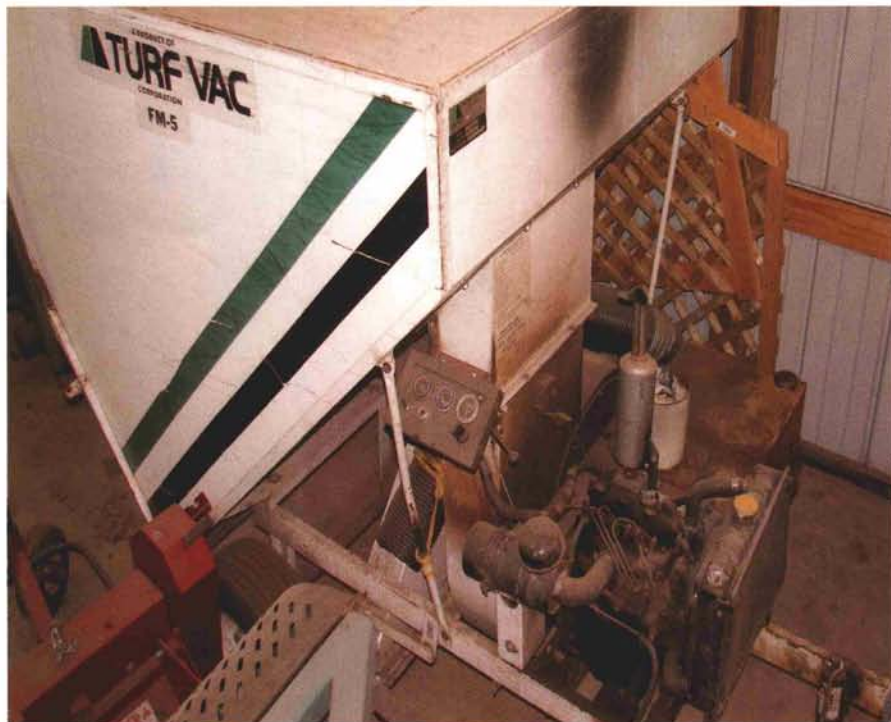


Nick is becoming a legend when it comes to making custom trailers. This past season he challenged himself to make another one. This time it was a trailer designated for the push-mowing crew.

At ACC, two workers are sent out once a week to push-mow around ponds, bunker banks and along the road outside the fence, so these guys move around quite a bit and the trailer they were using was getting old and starting to fall apart. ACC needed a new trailer, again. But what made it happen was when John Gurke was throwing away an old drum-type aerator. Nick had been licking his chops at that aerator for a long time, months maybe even years, just patiently stalking it like prey, knowing exactly what he was going to do with it when it was the right time to pounce. That seems to be the trend with him if there is something being thrown away or gotten rid of. Where he got the idea, I don't know, but the end result of this new trailer was a breathtaking work of art, a true masterpiece of steel and rubber. Nick used every part of that rusty old aerator (except the drum) and rebuilt it into something that made the staff's work more efficient and saved the club a lot of money.

Nick's design concept would knock a lawn-maintenance company off its feet. This trailer was designed to function and look the same as a lawn-care company's low-boy trailer, only miniature. The trailer has just enough space for two 21" push-mowers to sit side by side. Mounted on the side of the trailer is a rack for weed trimmers, and on the front is a steel box that fits five gallon gas cans and other miscellaneous items. Welded on the sides of the box are two pieces of steel tubing to hold leaf rakes. When loaded, this trailer looks like it means business. Even the staff seem impressed with themselves when people see them pulling this miniature lawn service around the course.

Trailers are not the only thing Nick can handle. What about Aurora Country Club's diesel "Turf Vac?" Ahh, the diesel "Turf Vac." The only one of its kind. Picking up millions of leaves in one fell swoop, leaving nothing behind. This machine deserves its



*The diesel-powered Turf Vac.*

own private shed. Each spring and fall, the diesel "Turf Vac" proudly parades around the course grabbing any stick, leaf and hand that may get in its way. There is nothing that can stop this beast and it knows it! It will intimidate any man. Just looking at the diesel "Turf Vac" gives you the chills, knowing that if you turn the key, you'll enter into a strange and exciting new world of overwhelming suction given to you by pure, manly, diesel power.

In the back of the shop sat an old Jacobson Tri-King with a perfect 16-horse Kubota diesel engine. This machine was retired by the golf course but Nick wasn't ready to give up on it. He knew he would need that diesel one day. Then the opportunity came. The 14-horse Koehler engine on the pull-behind "Turf Vac" decided to fail for the last time. Nick knew that this was it! He was going to have an opportunity to go where not many, if any, men had gone before. Then out it came . . .

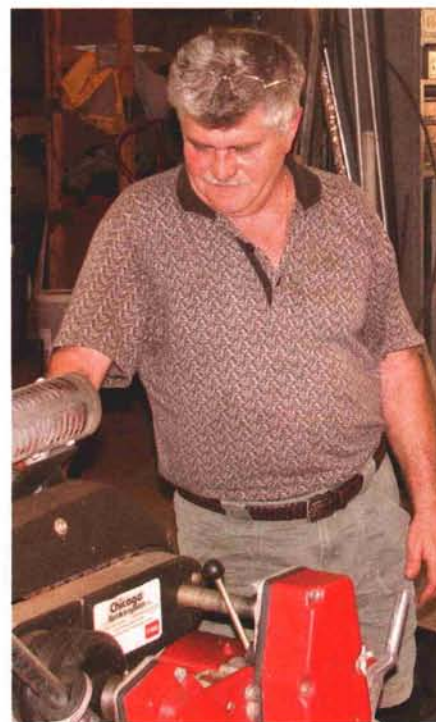
"We are going to have a diesel-powered vacuum!" said Nick.

John Gurke and his trusty assistant were in awe over this crazy yet intriguing proclamation.

"Are you sure we can do that?" said John. "What if it doesn't work?"

"Oh, it will work Mr. Gooky," said Nick.

Trusting Nick's confidence in this new venture, John told Nick to "get to it" and build the most glorious diesel vacuum known to man. And so, Nick effortlessly placed that



*And the man(iac) behind them all—  
Nick Pavlovich.*



16-horse diesel engine on that "Turf Vac" as if that engine were meant to be there.

The engineering of Nick Pavlovich is endless. Every day, he is striving to find something to build to save John and the club money. His efforts deserve to be rewarded (or at least written about). The message for you golf course superintendents is to recognize that your mechanic is an expert at what he or she does and to never take him or her for granted. They mean more to you than your silly little assistants. And to all golf course mechanics who strive every day to better the course—all of you play a very important role in the maintenance of your golf course: thank you! You all are the real experts and superintendents couldn't do it without you.

So here's to you, the golf course mechanic. You angry, fuzzy, little weird creature! Thank you for fixing the golf course's stuff! You deserve a cigarette!



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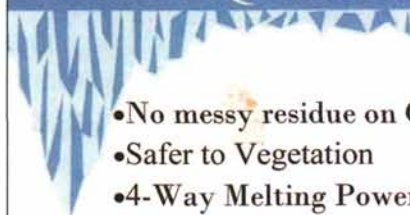
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# the Bull Sheet

John Gurke, CGCS,  
Contributing Editor

## DATES TO REMEMBER

October 3 – MAGCS/ITF Combined Golf Day at Inverness Golf Club in Palatine, IL, **Mike Bavier**, CGCS host.

October 14-16 – EXPO 2005 at the Kentucky Exposition Center in Louisville, KY.

October 3 – December 9 – The Rutgers University Professional Golf Turf Management School's Two-Year Certificate Program Fall Session at Rutgers University in New Brunswick, NJ.

October 18-19 – The Environmental Resource Center's "Hazardous Waste Management: The Complete Course" seminar at the Wyndham O'Hare in Chicago, IL.

October 20 – The Environmental Resource Center's "DOT Hazardous Materials Training" seminar at the Wyndham O'Hare in Chicago, IL. For more info on these two seminars, call 847-297-8464.

October 25-27 – The Toro Customer Factory Service Training Program in Bloomington, MN. Call 888-838-5778, ext. 5545 for details.

November 2 – 53rd Annual Midwest Turf Clinic at Medinah Country Club in Medinah, IL, **Tom Lively**, CGCS host.

November 19 – MAGCS Annual Fall Dinner Dance at the Itasca Country Club, Dawn and **Scott Speiden** hosts.

MAGCS welcomes its newest members and wishes them the best in the future:

**Allan Goldstein**—Aerial Images Photography—Class E

**David R. Hooyer**—Floratine Great Lakes, Inc.—Class E

**Brandon Rux**—Edgewood Valley Country Club—Class C

**Nathan Gingrich**—Country Club of Detroit—Class C

**Brian Tameling**—Prairie Landing Golf Club—Class C

**Paul Frankowski**—Big Head Mulch, LLC—Class E

Congratulations to Sue and **Mark Schmitz** (Meadows Golf Club) on the recent birth of their new daughter, Micayla.

One of the MAGCS's good old friends has closed their doors as of this past August—**Henry Frenzer, Inc.**, which was established in 1948 and has served MAGCS members for 57 years, is no longer in business. Best of luck to the Frenzer family in their future endeavors.

Unfortunately, this issue of *On Course* deals with an overabundance of tragedy. One that has affected our entire country is Hurricane Katrina. At its September 13th meeting, the MAGCS Board of Directors approved a program that will contribute funds to the golf-industry victims of Katrina's wrath. The program works as follows: On the GCSAA Web site (gcsaa.org), the News Releases tab contains a link to the Environmental Institute of Golf. Any MAGCS member who contributes money to the fund that has been established for these victims will have his or her contribution matched by MAGCS on a 50-cents-on-the-dollar basis (not to exceed \$5,000). The devastation caused by this disaster is unsurpassed in our country's history, and it will be years before some semblance of normalcy has been reached in the affected

areas. Please look into your hearts and try to help—any amount counts!

As a result of Katrina, GCSAA has announced that the Golf Industry Show will be held in Houston, Texas (and not in New Orleans) on the same dates as originally planned. Keep a close eye on your incoming mail from GCSAA regarding updates on this.

Houston?

It is September 15th as I write this item, and a lovely downpour (which, by the way, was NOT predicted by the weather experts) is falling outside my porch. It seems that our summer from hell is nearly over, but Mother Nature felt it necessary to give us a last blast of 90°-plus heat coupled with sub-30% humidity levels for the last five days—kind of a last "spit-in-your-face" to usher out this miserable season. Not to downplay the devastation of Katrina, but our area has had to deal with some devastating meteorological events as well, and many of our members (not to mention the area's farmers) have suffered losses, too. I guess my point is this: Let's pray for everyone who has suffered at the hands of Mother Nature's crappy mood this year and hope that She makes it all right again. Not even the little guys were spared—this raccoon simply succumbed to the heat one afternoon at a local golf course. It appears almost as if it's saying, "No more!"



*Baked raccoon.*

On a related note, the drought and heat coverage in our area has reached the national media, as evidenced by the August 26th issue of *Golfweek's SuperNEWS*. On the cover of the issue is **Jim Pedersen** of Hughes Creek Golf Course holding a piece of his irrigation pond

(continued on page 28)





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BUT IT'S NOT AS IF HE BOUGHT A WILL-FIT REEL.**

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next to the headline "Scorched Earth." More mention of local drought and heat damage can be found in *Golfweek's* August 20th issue ("Courses Reach Withering Heights" by Bradley Klein) and its September 9th issue ("Summer Stress and Stupidity," also by Brad Klein).

Our condolences go out to the family of **Julius and Dan Albaugh** on the loss of Julius' father, Howard Hughes Albaugh, on Sunday, September 4. Mr. Albaugh was 87 years old.

As you probably know, our Association recently lost two members in the same week, both of these tragedies beyond belief. One of our most celebrated and renowned members, **Dudley Smith**, passed away on August 28. The next morning, one of our rising stars, **Derek Florian** (Fox Valley Golf Club), was killed in a car accident on his way to work. More coverage of these tragedies can be found in this issue, but my heart, and the thoughts and prayers of the entire Association, go out to the families of our fallen compadres.

An October 15th golf outing at the Fox Valley Golf Club has been arranged for the benefit of the family of Derek Florian. Please go to our Web site ([magcs.org](http://magcs.org)) to download the form allowing you to contribute to his children's education.

The 2005 University of Illinois Turfgrass and Landscape Field Day was held in Urbana, IL on Wednesday, September 14. Moving to a later date when cooler weather is expected was a great idea, but somebody forgot to inform the weather gods about the plan. **Luke Cella**, our executive director, attended the event and was the "photographer on the scene" catching the various U of I faculty, staff and students presenting their research. Among the topics presented were: *Poa annua* controls, PGRs for putting green speed, putting green and fairway bentgrass evaluations, RoundUp Ready bentgrass, precision turfgrass applications, controlling dollar spot, managing temperatures with water,



*Professor Bruce Branham explains the use of mesotrione to control *Poa annua*.*



*Professor Henry Wilkinson demonstrates the effect of soil temperature upon sod survival.*



*Professor Tom Fermanian shows the trial of Roundup Ready creeping bentgrass.*



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organic fertilizers and disease, combining DMSO with fungicides, "does sweetening your turf make it fat for disease?", grasses as biofuels, sudden oak death, impatiens breeding at UIUC, USDA/NC7 woody plant evaluations, effects of planting and mulching depths on white and green ashes, emerald ash borer, and bedding plant selections. Thanks to everyone at the U of I for their hard work and important research.

Not that nutsedge is a huge problem in these parts, but Gowan, Inc. just came out with a new selective herbicide for the control of it called "SedgeHammer." Why is this newsworthy? I just think the name is awesome.

Best of luck to **Rodney Reich** (formerly of Bryn Mawr C.C.) who, as of September 1, has taken a position with Parkway Research, Inc.

Congratulations to the winners of the MAGCS Championship at Idlewild Country Club (**Kurt Sams**, CGCS host). Results and highlights will be published in the November issue due to the late date of the event.

Also, congratulations to the team from Inverness Golf Club and Mike Bavier, CGCS on their victory in the John Deere Team Championship held at Glen Oak Country Club on August 22. The winning score of 57 edged out the team from Village Greens of Woodridge (**Bob Rigney**) and Rochelle C.C. with 58s, and the home team from Glen Oak (**Andy Dauksas**) with 59. And way to go **Bob Lively** (Flossmoor C.C.) for your longest drive on no. 10!



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