



Ted Soenksen,  
President TETA

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WITH**   
Ted Soenksen, Wilmette Golf Club

## The Turf Equipment Technicians go to Atlanta

*TETA was represented by six board members at the 2006 Golf Industry Show (GIS) in Atlanta. In attendance were Tim Johnson (Arrowhead G.C.), Glen Peters (Sunset Ridge C.C.), Don Briggs (White Deer Run G.C.), Matt Pasantino (Stonebridge C.C.), Gus Santos (Country Club of Detroit), and I. We had set goals to meet for TETA, and another set of goals for our own course needs. Whether to scope out future equipment or to get ideas on replacing items that are outdated, there was little time because there was so much to see. The GIS is by far the best opportunity to see everything pertaining to golf equipment. All of the manufacturers are well represented by sales, service, and engineering personnel. They are always eager to meet and talk with the service technicians who actually have to maintain their product. Our input is appreciated by those who can take our ideas and comments back to the drawing board to better improve or even redesign their product.*

Another of our goals was to search out and find new contacts for future educational seminars for our members. We also want to broaden TETA's recognition in the golf and turf industry: for striving to better ourselves by seeking out education to help us find the timeliest materials and training available in the industry.

Yet another one of the missions we achieved was to talk with a representative from John Deere's educational training department to address the idea of having a Spanish-language presentation, which has been requested by some of our members. I wanted to present this idea to Gary Carpenter, manager of training at John Deere, who welcomed a meeting with us on trade show floor. We discussed the idea of conducting a factory seminar presented entirely in Spanish by one of our own members, who had successfully attended and completed the factory school. The instructor at the factory, John Schumacher (who is fluent in Spanish and also was at the GIS show), joined us. Both he and Carpenter were intrigued by the idea, and it was decided the idea is well worth pursuing. A survey will be composed and sent out in the future to all members on this topic.

The highlight of the trip was the TETA session on Saturday, the 11th. The topic this year, "The Real Story on Reel Maintenance," was well attended. This was our sixth opportunity as an allied association of the GCSAA to contribute to the educational offerings of national show. The presentation covered everything from the basics of day-to-day adjustments and maintenance, to troubleshooting cutting unit problems. Of course, quality of

cut issues and failure analysis also were of great interest. Audience input augmented the open discussion, thanks to their varied geographical climates and locations. Representatives from Colorado and as far as the tropics were in the room and actively participating. We had positive comments and requests for future contacts from those in attendance. Of the 36 people seated, only eight were actual equipment technicians. I hope that every year, more golf courses will be able to realize the benefits of sending their technicians to the national or at least the regional show.

I welcome any response or inquiries about TETA's involvement with the GIS.



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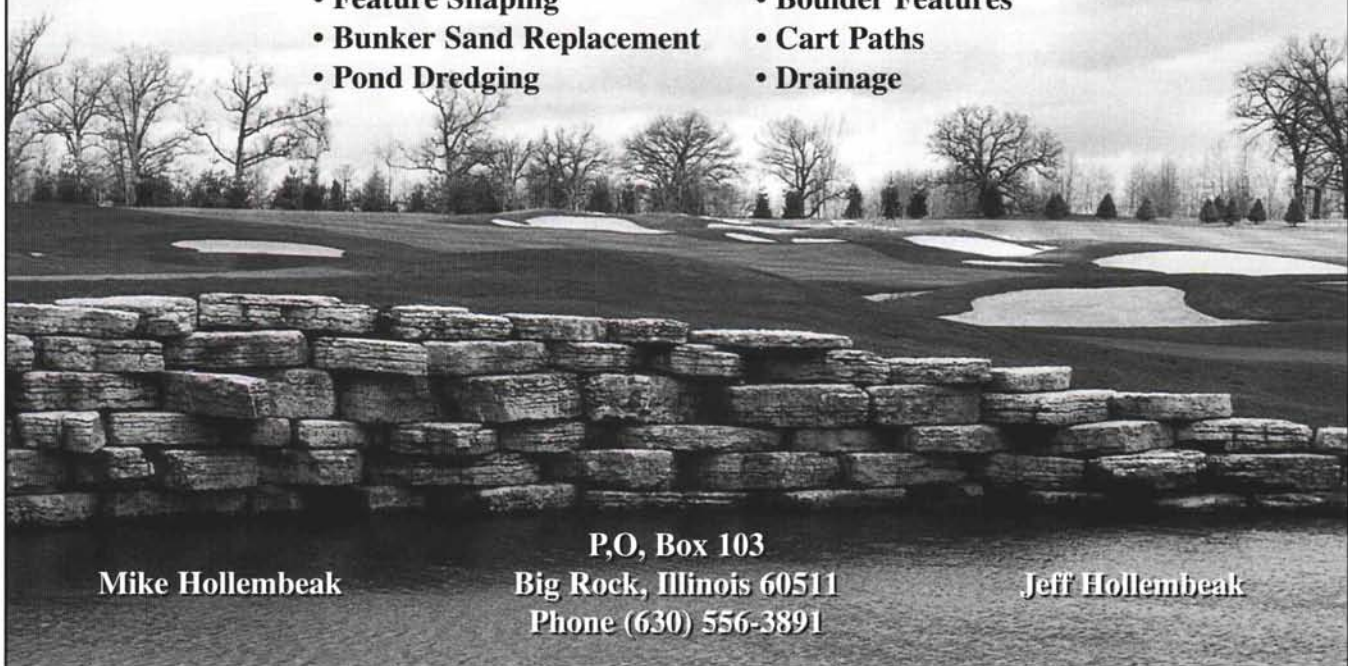


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# Are You in Control of Your Turf Equipment?

*Are you in control of your turf equipment or is your equipment in control of you? How do you run your shop? Are you bringing your equipment in by choice for daily checks? Are machines lined up at your door when you come into work because of breakdowns? If you are chasing your equipment, it's probably because your maintenance is not up to par during the mowing season and waiting for winter to arrive. It doesn't have to be that way. I am a firm believer in preventive maintenance (PM). Having a good PM schedule will greatly reduce down time of equipment, which keeps the operator out mowing, the superintendent happy, gives you a little breathing room, and most of all, keeps your course looking great! There are excellent maintenance schedules for every machine and every engine. The manufacturers have invested time and money to develop these schedules. They should be followed in order to get the maximum life span and best results from your equipment. By following the manufacturers' recommended preventative maintenance service intervals, you'll achieve several things. You can be sure your engines and hydraulic systems will perform better and run longer. Engine oils begin to change in viscosity as contaminants are suspended in the oil. Friction is created and with friction comes heat, therefore causing engine overheating, causing the thinner additives of the engine oil to vaporize and be burned off in the engine. The lack of these additives reduces the oil's lubricating properties. Critical engine parts lacking proper lubrication result in premature engine wear and eventually catastrophic engine failure. This is not to say that engine wear will occur if you go over the recommended interval once or twice. It is the constant, consistent malpractice of preventive maintenance that causes excessive engine wear. Regular service intervals will keep oil at its optimum lubricating performance, allowing your engine to perform at its best for maximum longevity.*



*Inspecting hydraulic hoses for signs of wear is a key component of PM on a golf course.*

**Reels, bedknives, and rotary blades** should be maintained on regular service intervals as well. Frequent sharpening and adjustment will enhance turf

Hydraulic systems can be somewhat deceiving, due to their nature. Pull the dipstick on an engine after fifty hours and the oil is black. Pull the dipstick on a hydraulic system and it looks like you just changed it. There are no by-products of combustion to contaminate the oil. However hydraulic oil gets a workout in other ways: constant heating and cooling of the hydraulic system, constant pressure changes, stresses of taxing a system to a point beyond relief, contamination by the introduction of fuel into the system, etc. Hydraulic oil that is used beyond the recommended service interval loses its ability to protect hydraulic components. Oil operating temperatures rise, oil viscosity changes, and less protection between moving parts occurs. The lack of protection between moving parts leads to more contamination, resulting in possible pump and motor failures. Excessive heat in the hydraulic system can cause aluminum valve blocks to expand or warp excessively, causing plugs to loosen, O-rings to tear, oil to leak, turf to die, etc. Bottom line—servicing your hydraulic systems at recommended intervals will save you from problems that do not need to exist. This saves time and money.

*(continued on page 34)*



conditions, with minimal effort from the machine. Roller and reel bearings should be checked for play, and greased on a regular schedule. The bearings should be replaced as conditions warrant. Ensuring that the adjustment screws, bolts, etc., are not seized greatly reduces the amount of effort, as well as the time, needed to make routine adjustments during the growing season. Replacing reels should be anticipated and scheduled before they reach the maximum wear limits. This will avoid the possibility of having to tear down cutting units mid-season. Bedknives should be replaced when they no longer meet OEM standards and can no longer be sharpened. Using alternate cutting units for topdressing greens is an efficient way of preserving the normal cutting units. This allows you to have a good set of units on hand at all times. It also gives you, the tech, the time to recondition your normal greens mowing units if needed.

**Inspecting hydraulic hoses and replacing them before they burst is priceless.** I know that all of us have had a hydraulic hose spring a leak at one time or another. It is the nature of the machine; the constant movement and flexing of these hoses causes them to burst when you least expect. Actively replacing hoses, espe-

cially when there is evidence of wear (abrasion, fraying, etc.), may help to eliminate these problems. One of the challenges we face, however, is that most hydraulic hoses today are covered with some type of wrap, making it next to impossible to see any external wear. The other challenge is the routing of these hydraulic hoses and lines—they are sometimes routed in such a way that you can not see any damage. To help combat the problem of hydraulic leaks on your turf, it is recommended that you replace hoses on a service interval every two years. This, of course, depends on the machine's hours of usage, and is recommended for those hoses that have movement and flex. Replacing hoses at regular intervals will help to reduce, if not eliminate, the chances of hydraulic leak.

**Electrical systems need preventative maintenance** as well. Operation of safety interlock switches and warning lights needs your constant attention. Switches that are found faulty should be replaced immediately. Warning lights that do not light when the key is on (engine not running) indicate that there is a problem. This should be investigated further and repaired. Batteries and their cables that supply the unit with power should be inspected for corro-

sion and proper connections. Bad or dirty connections can cause intermittent problems and can cause you much frustration. The use of universal replacement battery terminals that you cut off the old terminal and place on the new terminal, using a clamp-type system, is good for a quick repair to get a machine up and running. However this repair should only be temporary and should be replaced with a complete new cable when time permits.

**Keep good, detailed, organized records** of all work done and parts used to complete the job for each machine. This will help track costs of maintaining each unit as well as evaluate the condition of your equipment. Creating a work order is a good way of checking off the service required for the unit when you bring it in for service. In this way, you can't forget to perform the correct service at that particular interval. There are many other PM checks that can and should be made. These are just a few key items of what a PM service interval should include. The benefits of keeping a good PM schedule, and sticking to it, are self-explanatory. Keep in mind that all PM schedules are provided to technicians by the equipment or engine manufacturer. It is not something that we need to

*Using alternate cutting units for topdressing greens is an efficient way of preserving the normal cutting units.*

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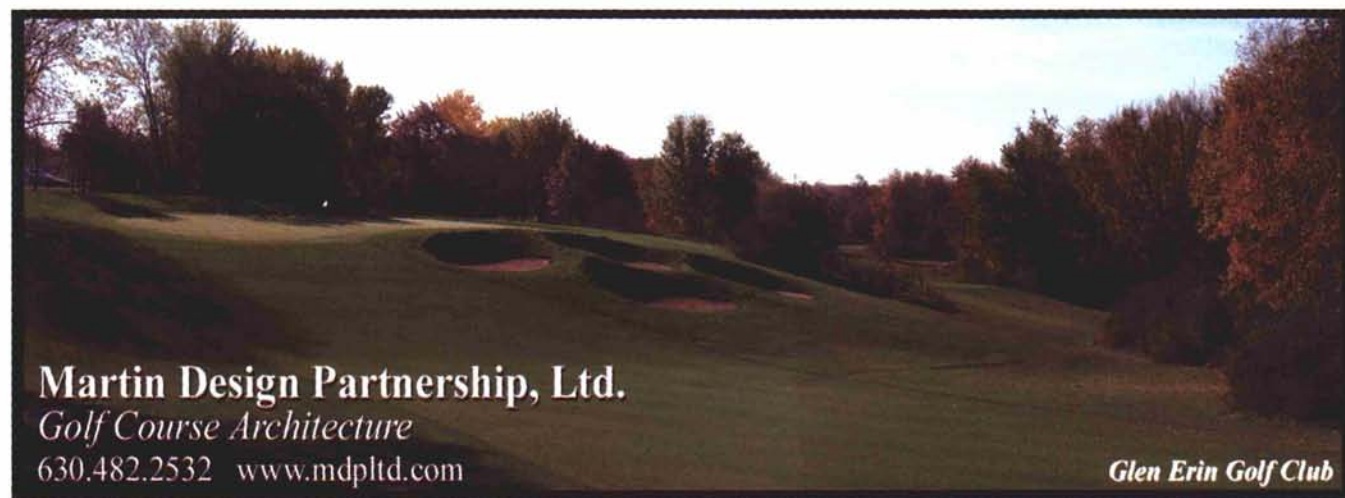


invent; all we need to do with these schedules is follow them. PM schedules are not carved in stone and can be performed sooner or enhanced according to your conditions. When you enforce a good PM schedule, you are inspecting your equipment more frequently and catching failures before they occur. I am not saying that you will not have an occasional breakdown, just that you drastically reduce the chances. Personally, 95 percent of the equipment that rolls onto my lift is by my choice. That makes my job easier and less stressful. Keeping a preventive maintenance schedule at regular intervals requires work, determination, time, and consistency in order to reap its benefits. An important point is that you can order parts in advance before they fail, so the machine will not be out of service while waiting for parts. This also will allow you to make other arrangements if a part is not in stock or backordered.

Practicing good PM at regular intervals does not mean that you need to change fluids and filters again in the off-season, especially if the service interval is not due yet. Stick with the schedule and continue when the season starts again. I am sure most of you have a good schedule, but if you don't, try this out. You will be amazed how easy it is to maintain your equipment. An essential part of a great PM schedule is the cooperation of the superintendent in helping to coordinate mowing schedules so that the technician has adequate time to perform the scheduled maintenance. Well-trained operators who will inform the technician when and if a problem occurs are a big plus. Good communication between operators and technicians goes a long way. Well-maintained equipment will provide a better work environment in which technicians, superintendents and operators will benefit. It also will make the end product (the turf) look better and healthier, thus increasing the bottom line.



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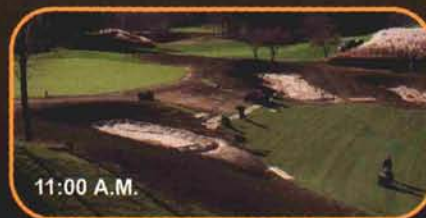
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# MIDWEST EDUCATION RECAP


Brad Anderson, CGCS Midlane Country Club

[Editor's Note: This is a new section in On Course that will be published to summarize educational events offered by the MAGCS. Sorry you can't get Education Credits (ECs) for reading the article.]

## March

The March meeting was at the Midwest Golf House. Our instructor, Joseph M. DiPaola, Ph.D., Golf Marketing Manager of Syngenta Professional Products, spoke on the subject of Career Enhancement and Personal Development for Golf Course Superintendents. I have summarized the session in ten key points.

1. Be aware of the market conditions and trends that influence your future in golf management.
2. In developing your career goals, begin with a broad view of all your career options.
3. Consider what actions are required to arrive at your career goals. Benjamin Franklin said it best: "Luck is when opportunity meets preparation."
4. While shoring up your professional weaknesses and shortcomings, do not neglect to invest the appropriate time on honing your natural strengths. Your strengths may carry you the furthest towards your goals.
5. You should always be networking. During one of the breakout sessions, everyone in our group agreed that we would not be where we are today if not for the fortuitous meeting of key people who helped us in our careers along the way.

6. Work on developing the dedication and the quality of character that your career role models have exemplified. Becoming a better person will make you a more successful professional.
7. Your resume should be uncluttered, limited to one page, with one inch margins all around; it should connect your achievements with the needs of the employer, in concise bullet points that highlight the actual value and contribution of your career achievements.
8. Learn all the etiquette of applying and interviewing for a position. You never have a second chance to make a first impression.
9. Utilize the career counseling services and resources of the GCSAA.
10. Be involved with your association on the national and local level. 

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## MIDWEST PERSONALITIES

[Editor's Note: As we resurrect this column, it is fitting to welcome our newest member, Derek Settle, CDGA's new addition to the turf team. All members are encouraged to be profiled in the future. Visit [www.magcs.org](http://www.magcs.org) for the form to fill out.]



Name: **Derek Settle**

Company: **Chicago District Golf Association**

Job Title: **Manager of IPM Program**

MAGCS member since: **3-1-06**

Date of Birth: **6-11-67**

Place of Birth: **Wichita, KS**

Current Residence: **Apartment in Willowbrook, IL**

College/Degree(s): **Kansas State University/BS, MS, and PhD...too many.**

Spouse/Children: **Separated/1 good boy - Nathaniel**

My favorite childhood memory is: **Sitting on my Shetland pony as he grazed in a fescue pasture during a hot Kansas summer – no shirt, no shoes... time stood still.**

My personal hero: **Pope John Paul II**

My professional mentors: **My major professors Drs. Jack Fry and Ned Tisserat**

Favorite Actor: **Nick Nolte**

Favorite Musical Performer: **Dave Matthews Band**

Favorite Restaurant: **Chipotle**

Favorite "Pig Out" Food: **Foot-Long Chili Cheese Coney**

Favorite TV Show: **Seinfeld**

Favorite Color: **Both Blue and Green**

Favorite Professional Sports Team: **KC Chiefs**

Favorite Pro Athlete: **Muhammad Ali...I remember his banter with Howard Cosell in the days when boxing was broadcast on TV**

Favorite Pro Golfer: **Tiger Woods...for lack of a better answer**

My Handicap Index: **I would need a really big one**

My favorite place to play golf is: **A hacker at the Manhattan Country Club (not NY)**

My best/most memorable round ever: **I need to learn to play before I can answer this one**

The most interesting/exotic place I've ever traveled is: **Montreal, Canada**

The book I've been recommending lately: **Management of Turfgrass Diseases by Vargas**

The last great movie I saw was: **"Capote" in a theater in Kansas**

In my spare time, I enjoy: **Building homes with Habitat for Humanity / music**

Three words that best describe me: **Friendly, Helpful, Kind – a biased answer of course**

What I enjoy most about my job: **The positive atmosphere and my coworkers**

What I dislike about my job: **Not enough vacation time?**

I'm a Midwest member because: **I want to meet the superintendents I'm here to assist, and I need to understand the current issues that exist in turfgrass management in Illinois**



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