

Nothing To Do On Rainy Days? Ha!

When I was in the lawn mower and small engine repair business, I used to find some comfort in a rainy day forecast. It meant that customers weren't going to be coming in the store, landscapers didn't work, and outdoor equipment, for the most part, was not going to be used. It was an opportunity to straighten up paper work, restock parts shelves, tidy up the shop, and shine up the showroom.

When it rains on the golf course (what? it never rains on a golf course?), I'm often asked what we do. Nothing can be done outside and the course is closed. Many think that we just lock up and leave. Maybe going to breakfast and then back to bed sounds good. This is a goody.... "Do you just wash and wax golf carts all day?" In fact, most of us know that a good washout can mean a good day of catch up in the shop.

The employees start arriving around 5:30 a.m. It's been raining since before I arrived at 4:15. The rain gauge shows .750" and climbing. There's a good chance I'll have company for at least the first part of the morning. It's October and a rain out hasn't happened all summer. Many things have been put off or tucked away somewhere. A huge list is waiting just for this "rainy day." Before I get my hopes up and approach the list, I have to wait and see what Mike (Matchen) has in mind. Generally it starts with a good clean up around the club house. So I lose two or three guys to that. I usually get two guys who are used to working with me on time-consuming maintenance tasks that get in the way but are still very important. Most of the PM is up to date. So when the unexpected rain day comes up, what is priority and practical for my suddenly extra hands to take on? Well I'll start with a rack-full of rough mower rotary blades that have accumulated all summer. I know that a good portion of them will soon need to be sharpened and used for leaf season. Years ago I found one employee ideally suited to this task and trained him on the proper sharpening and balancing procedures. He enjoys the solitude of making sparks for hours. Another good task to teach someone is rewinding spare, trimmer-line spools. There are always 30-40 spools to refill. Tasks that may seem too simple and unimportant can be really beneficial for workers. It gives them a sense of accomplishment and wipes those menial items off my list. The pile of flat, golf cart tires that has

accumulated since spring is another job to train someone on. Plugging tires or busting them off rims to replace them is good fun for a couple of the guys, again these are menial jobs I don't have time for. I have someone sharpen hand tools, shovels, spades, sod knives, etc. The guys appreciate these tasks because they know a sharp tool makes their work easier.

It's always nice to think that maybe another six people can scrub-a-dub and wax some equipment. This is another rare occurrence for us. It just does not make the priority list as it should. We pull cutting units off fairway mowers to attack the accumulated grease and junk that sticks to lift-pivot points and drive motors. We degrease and wax painted surfaces as time allows. By this time the rain has stopped, the sun is showing, and guess who is stuck finishing up the detailing? It is all part of the game of golf. The golfers and many others associated with the course do not have a clue as to what happens down at "da barn" on a rain day.

I know all of you have similar lists of things to do on rainy days. The point is to utilize our laborers and operators on these occasions. It not only helps the equipment technician, it also tells the staff that they are valued beyond their usual daily assignments.

If the rain persists into the next day, then consider cleaning the parts room, or vacuuming your office.

Well, time to fire up the leaf equipment once again and wind down some other equipment and routines. Soon it will be time to order winter stock reels and bed knives.



the Bull Sheet

John Gurke, CGCS, Associate Editor

DATES TO REMEMBER

October 1 – Deadline for submissions for the James Watson Fellowship Awards funded by Toro.

October 2 – December 12 – The Rutgers University (the same one that beat Illinois 33-0) Professional Golf Turf Management School Two-Year Certificate Fall Session in New Brunswick, NJ.

October 3 – Member registration opens for the 2007 Golf Industry Show from February 19th through the 24th in Anaheim, CA. Visit golfindustryshow.com to register, as well as to reserve housing.

October 5 – Assistants Shop Talk at Inverness Golf Club, **Brian Mores** host.

October 10 – 26th Southern Illinois Turfgrass Field Day at the SIUC Horticulture Research Center in Carbondale, IL.

October 15 – Deadline to nominate the ITF's 2006 Distinguished Service Award winner. Visit www.illinoisturfgrassfoundation.org for the form.

October 15 – Deadline for nominations for GCSAA's Excellence in Government Relations Awards. **HURRY!**

October 16 – 17 – TGT Live! event presented by Questex Media Group (publisher of *Golfdom* and *Turfgrass Trends*) at FarmLinks at Pursell Farms in Sylacauga, Alabama.

October 17 – Annual University of Illinois Turfgrass Alumni Golf Outing at Broken Arrow Golf Club in Lockport, IL (**Alan Perkinson** and **Adam Crissey** hosts).

October 21 – Deadline for the GCSAA/Golf Digest magazine Environmental Leaders in Golf Awards in partnership with Rainbird and Syngenta.

November 1 – 54th Annual Midwest Turf Clinic at Medinah Country Club, Tom Lively, CGCS host.

November 28 – 30 – Illinois Professional Turf Conference at Pheasant Run Resort in St. Charles, IL.

Welcome to the newest member of MAGCS—**Ron Freund**, President of National Golf Course Builders.

If you are in the mood to just hop in your car and travel to Carbondale, do it on the tenth—the 26th Annual Turfgrass Field Day will greet you at the SIUC Horticulture Research Center when you arrive. To register, call (618) 536-7751 or go online at www.dce.siu.edu.

Another big event in October is the first-ever TGT Live! event at FarmLinks at Pursell Farms in Sylacauga,

Alabama. This 2-day event on the 16th and 17th is being presented by *Golfdom* magazine and *Turfgrass Trends* publisher Questex, and will feature an impressive array of turfgrass industry speakers from across the country, including **Dan Dinelli**, CGCS of North Shore Country Club. It may not be too late to join the fun (which includes golf at the really cool course there), so call Jen at (800) 669-1668 or go online at www.golfdom.com/registertgtlive and check it out. Although the cost is a steal at \$300 for the whole shebang,

I'm guessing that airfare at this juncture might set you back a bit. But it can't hurt to try, right?



Dan Dinelli

November 1st is just around the corner, and the 54th Annual Midwest Turf Clinic looks to be a great one! Medinah Country Club and Tom Lively, CGCS is our host, and **Tony Kalina** and the Education Committee has a super agenda planned. Without going into too much detail and spoiling the surprises that await you, I will say that this clinic will feature a comprehensive look at golf's latest craze—the quest for more distance—from all angles. Plan now to attend—it promises to be memorable.

Congratulations to Beth and **Steve Schendel** (Ruffled Feathers GC) on the August 27th birth of their fourth child. Henry Stephen—aka Hank—Schendel joined the family Sunday night, pushing Steve out of the family foursome. Great news!

Congratulations are also due to **Darrick Robbins** and Jim Burge, the latest additions to the Turf Professionals Equipment Company's golf irrigation team. Darrick, former assistant superintendent at Ridge-moor CC, is the golf irrigation sales representative while Jim will tackle service and technical support duties across the Chicago area as well as in Rockford. Best of luck to you both!

(continued on page 24)

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The Class C Advisory Committee and MAGCS are losing one of their favorite sons and most active members. **Aaron Willing**, former first assistant superintendent at Chicago Golf Club has accepted the position of golf course superintendent at the venerated Indian Hills Country Club in Mission Hills, Kansas, just outside of Kansas City, MO. A private 18-hole club, Indian Hills is a 1926 A. W. Tillinghast design that has gone through a recent renovation featuring new A1/A4 greens, Meyer zoysia fairways, rebuilt bunkers, a 6-year old irrigation system and a 10-year old maintenance facility. It is a parkland style course that plays to 6,800 yards at par of 70. Aaron says he will truly miss the great camaraderie and all the wonderful people he has been associated with here, and wishes us all the best. One back atchya, Aaron—best wishes for great success in your new adventure!



Aaron Willing

How's this for a class act? A golfer in Wisconsin—Ben Ziemann, 20—aced a 113-yard hole in a golf outing in Eau Claire and won a Four Winds boat worth \$17,500. Or so it seemed... As it turns out, the outing's organizers' insurance would not cover the cost of the prize based on the length of the hole not being at least 150 yards. This meant that the money taken in for the charity (Fore a Cure) would have to pay for the prize, robbing \$17,500 from the intended recipients. Or so it seemed... Until Ben stepped forward and decided not to accept the prize

based on the circumstances. He had planned on selling the boat to pay for college with some of the proceeds while donating some of the money back to the charity. Makes you hope your kid would do the same, doesn't it?

A fond farewell and "thanks for the memories" to another of our fallen colleagues—PCNB. It looks as if our future snow mold prevention will not include PCNB based upon EPA's recent Re-registration Eligibility Decision (RED) to cancel its use on turf, green beans, potatoes, dry beans, and peas. My poor dry beans—what will become of them?

Congratulations to **Brian Racette** who has accepted a new position as golf course superintendent of Lincolnshire Country Club in Crete. Brian moves across the street from his former post at Lincoln Oaks Golf Course, which is now in the able hands of **Erik Swenson**. Good luck to both of you!

While cruising around Medinah Country Club with Luke Cella on the Sunday evening before the tournament began, several things were made very clear to me that I'd like to share. First, the magnitude of what goes into hosting a major championship is simply mind-boggling. The logistics, the scheduling, the complete transformation of a peaceful, serene golf course into a city bustling with activity is something to behold. Throughout our travels around the course, I was constantly amazed by all the pomp and circumstance, as well as by all the behind-the-scenes stuff that goes into it. The miles of electric cable and crowd-control rope. The acres of parking, vending, and hospitality space covering once-pristine golf course turf. The amount of machinery and people involved, and the coordination it takes to pull it all off. Astounding! Even the media center (for which I was fortunate enough to have obtained credentials to enter and enjoy) was a source of amazement, featuring its own restaurant, cavernous interview room, and registration center that resembled a major airline check-in counter. After all that, I marveled at the condition

of the golf course. With all that was going on outside the ropes, the conditions inside—where the real action was to take place—were impeccable. In my humble opinion, with conditions as perfect as those provided by Tom Lively, the staff at Medinah, and the many volunteers; and the cooperation (from a player's standpoint) from Mother Nature, it was a forgone conclusion that the greatest players in the world would play well on the venerated track. Then came another revelation—I figured out why Tiger Woods is so dang good. By pure luck, Luke and I stopped at the fourth green in time to watch Tiger hit up during an informal practice round. He's so huge that even his caddy doesn't carry his bag for practice—he just walks alongside Tiger and takes countless notes while tossing his boss as many practice balls as he requires. What I determined, as I watched his regimen on the fourth green, is that the reason he wins more than his competitors lies not only in his God-given talent, but in his preparation and focus. We watched Tiger hit every conceivable shot to every conceivable hole location on the fourth green. He hit bump-and-runs, he hit lobs, he putted, he hit 3-wood runners, he practiced from the right rough, the left rough, and the approach. While he did this, 2 PGA tour players hit up to the green, putted, and played through. Neither won the tournament. In fact, neither won the 2 tournaments leading up to the PGA (one being another major), nor the 2 following it, because Tiger Woods won all 5 in a row that he entered. Remarkable. So I figure if I just play golf every day, all day long, I too will be invincible. That's my plan, anyhow.



(continued on page 26)

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The Wanamaker Trophy sits on the practice green at Medinah.

More PGA stuff:

- It sure was nice to see the televised piece featuring **Tony Bisbee** and his hex-plugger system of repairing divots on Saturday's broadcast—we like exposure like that.
- It wasn't all that nice to see that graphic that described Medinah Country Club in a nutshell—its date of establishment, its architect, the various renovations and the architects responsible for them, the general manager and the head professional—with no mention of the superintendent nor any of his staff. Yes, there were the occasional mentions made by the commentators, but was this equitable? Harry Lovero (Orchard Valley GC) had this to say in regard to this subject: "As I watched the trophy presentation at the 88th PGA Championship on the 18th green at the beautiful Medinah Country Club and as Tiger Woods complemented the excellent playing conditions, I noticed that one very important person was missing from the delegations in attendance on the green. All of the dignitaries of the PGA were introduced, as we all know if it were not for them, there would not be this game called Golf. Not once during the trophy presentation did anyone mention Tom Lively, CGCS. Once again, it seems as if it were not for the PGA, we would not have these wonderful playing conditions that all are accustomed to and expect.

Yes, the one person who should have been in attendance on the 18th green on championship Sunday was the Golf Course Superintendent.

- Is it too much to ask to have the golf course superintendent present for a little more acknowledgement than just saying his/her name? It's nice that Bobby Clampet mentioned Tom's name numerous times, but how about a face to go with the name? Not everyone watches the Golf Channel or catches an interview with the course superintendent at some obscure time.
- Is the GCSAA really doing all that they can to continue and expand our role or perhaps plight, as Golf Course Superintendents? I personally do not think so. What is the point in having a superintendent as President of the GCSAA when he doesn't/can't do anything for us as members other than be a figurehead? It seems the CEO actually runs the association, not the superintendents? Every time we take one step forward we end up taking three steps back. The GCSAA seems to be concentrating on more corporate duties instead of what is best for us as members. After all it is the Golf

Course Superintendents Association of America! Maybe it is time for us to take back our association.

- The GCSAA wants to raise our dues again. I only hope the dues increase will go towards getting us the recognition that we deserve. I am worried that our employers will no longer want to pay our dues in the national association and membership numbers will really begin to drop. Will we ever get the justice that is due to us as true professionals in the world of golf? Only we as members can answer these questions. Get involved in your associations! I know it is easier said than done.
- **Tom Lively CGCS** and his assistants should have been on the 18th green that afternoon so that Tiger Woods could have congratulated them in front of the world to see! It would be nice for the world to see the people that are responsible for the beautiful surrounds that they enjoy when they play this game called Golf!"
- Another grievous omission pointed out by **Mike Bavier, CGCS** (Inverness CC) was that while GCSAA sent its usual entourage of representatives to attend the event (as is their norm for all majors), nobody from MAGCS was

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contacted in regard to their presence in our midst. Oh well...

- These things aside, it was a hugely successful PGA, and with all the golf world's eyes on Medinah, Tom and his crew did us all proud. Congratulations to everyone at Medinah Country Club for a job well done!

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If you are a graduate or former student from the University of Illinois' Turf program, come join your classmates in the Annual Turfgrass Alumni Golf Outing on the 17th at Broken Arrow Golf Club in Lockport. A new format will be unveiled, and it is bound to be another great time. Call Bruce Branham for details at (217) 333-7848.

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Belated congratulations to JW Turf's Kelli Zopfi and her husband Jeff on the June 20th birth of baby daughter Payton Pricilla Zopfi (coincidentally born on the very same day as the John Buck Memorial Golf Outing). Payton was a bouncing 6 lbs. 12 ozs. And 20 inches long when she arrived.



Payton Pricilla Zopfi

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The August issue of *Golf Course News* included articles featuring 3 MAGCS members. **John Ekstrom** (Hinsdale GC) was featured in a news analysis titled "Assistant Superintendents Create More Opportunities for Themselves," highlighting his work on the Class C Advisory Committee, while **Ed Braunsky, CGCS** (Geneva Golf Club) and **Jeff Pozen** (Downers Grove Golf Club) were both immortalized in an article about nine hole

courses titled "Still a Challenge." Congratulations on your newfound fame, guys!

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(continued on page 28)

Director's Column...(continued from page 5)

Now that my board tenure has come to an end, I will continue to support the MAGCS by signing up for a committee or two. The sign-up sheets will be out at the Midwest Turf Clinic and Annual Meeting on November 1, at Medinah Country Club. Let's fill up all those sheets.



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The August MAGCS meeting was held at McHenry Country Club with **Bill Humphres** hosting. What a setting! The clubhouse sits not 20 yards from the river, with boat docks and piers giving the place a vacation resort atmosphere. The education presentation was given by Pete Leuzinger, who discussed "Managing Your Property for Wildlife." After that, it was time to hit the course for a great day and a great, unique format—the progressive logo ball competition. The course was in excellent condition with greens fast and true, fairways firm and tight, and rough gnarly. As it turned out, the team to win most of the prizes was the only team to have arrived by boat, proving the age-old adage that if you arrive to a golf outing in a boat, you will win the most prizes. Or something. The 64 turned in by **John Nelson**, **Pete Kiraly**, **Scott Speiden**, and **Charlie Brugler** was a full 7 shots better than the 71's posted by team #17 (**Lynn Wesson**, **Hans Hopphan**, **Steve Junk**, and **Erne Kaplan**) and team #5 (**Brad Legnaioli**, **Pat McDonagh**, **Steve**

VanAcker, and **Paul Schaefer**). Individual honors went to **John Nelson** (61), **Scott Speiden** (64), **Steve VanAcker** (68), **Bill Humphres** (70), and **Bob Kronn** (70). Also, new member **Ron Freund** won the strightest drive, **Pete Kiraly** the longest drive, and **Brad Legnaioli** closest to the pin. Finally, **Pete Leuzinger** won the best prize of them all—the Grey Goose gift set in

the raffle. A big thank you to **Bill** and everyone at **McHenry Country Club** for hosting this great event, and to our kind sponsors without whom the day could not have taken place—**Arthur Clesen, Inc.**, **Nadler Golf Car Sales**, **Palatine Oil Company**, **BTSI**, **Nels J. Johnson Tree Experts**, **JW Turf**, and **Chicagoland Turf**. 



Host Bill Humphres accepting his framed issue of On Course.

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