

petroleum diesel was near 8 cents per gallon. Since fuel prices fluctuate daily, the current price could be different. Contact your local fuel supplier for exact pricing.

This does not mean that you can buy only B11. Any company that is a certified blender can create whatever formula you want. However, the more biodiesel that is blended in, the less you will save per gallon.

The post burn emissions of soy-based biodiesel are a fraction of petroleum diesel emissions. This is possible because of several things. Most of you know that when plants photosynthesize, they extract carbon from the air. When the plant is then processed to form biodiesel, that original carbon content from the plant will be released into the atmosphere after being burned in an engine. As a result, a carbon cycle ring forms in which little or no additional carbon enters the atmosphere. In addition to that, sulfur emissions are virtually eliminated, and the human health hazard of particulate matter is reduced by 47% when burn-

ing biodiesel. Biodiesel is also safer to handle than petroleum diesel. It is just as biodegradable as sugar and is ten times less toxic to humans than table salt.

Another great trait of biodiesel is the fact that it has the highest energy balance of any fuel. For every one unit of energy needed to produce biodiesel, 3.24 units of energy are gained. Petroleum diesel will only give back 0.8 units. In comparison to ethanol, biodiesel is 2.5 times higher in energy content per gallon. Those are staggering statistics if you ask me.

The list of benefits goes on and on. There is a ton of information out there along with plenty of reasons why everyone should at least give biodiesel a try. As use of the fuel progresses, it will become more user-friendly and stable. Costs will come down and availability will increase. Biodiesel has a very promising future with us in the United States. So I ask you again, why aren't you using biodiesel?



#### **For more information, visit the following sites:**

- National Biodiesel Board  
[www.biodiesel.org/](http://www.biodiesel.org/)
- University of New Hampshire  
<http://www.unh.edu/p2/biodiesel/index.html>
- Minnesota Department of Agriculture  
<http://www.mda.state.mn.us/biodiesel/default.htm>
- U.S. Department of Energy  
[http://www1.eere.energy.gov/biomass/renewable\\_diesel.html](http://www1.eere.energy.gov/biomass/renewable_diesel.html)

#### **List of my contacts:**

- Brian Davis  
Phoenix Mobile Repair  
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- Tony Nunes  
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# Where Have All the Golfers Gone?

Over the past five years I cannot count the number of discussions I have been in where the topic has been the state of the golf industry, and where have all the golfers gone? These discussions have occurred at seminars, at meetings with other superintendents and golf pros, at weekly meetings with our park director and golf staff, and at a golf summit we host with other public golf courses. I have finally come to the conclusion that there are answers to these questions, however, they are not simple answers, and there is definitely more than one. With that in mind I'd like to go ahead and discuss where the golfers have gone and why.

The first and what I feel is the most important issue that has affected our industry is the changes that our culture and society has been through over the past twenty years. Over the past two decades, life priorities, time management, and daily stresses have taken over our American lifestyle. In an effort to further explain this, I'd like to share one of the responses Dr. James Dobson, of "Focus on the Family," gave when he was asked what he would identify as "marriage killers" in today's society. His response was Over Commitment and Physical Exhaustion. He said, "Do not try to go to college, work full time, have a baby, manage a toddler, fix up a house and start a business at the same time." The reason I use this statement is because this is the exact stage of life that many of our 30-40 year old golfers are in. So, I'm trying to figure out where a round of golf will fit into their agenda. Most likely it won't, golf has taken a back seat to other priorities.

With the advent of the twenty-first century, the battle for a person's time and attention has become paramount. Unfortunately, this battle has grown to encompass golfers of all ages. Years ago I was visiting with a fellow superintendent who said that on any given Saturday or Sunday afternoon 30- to 40-year-old males are almost non-existent on the public golf courses. This is a result of the number of children involved in traveling sports teams. In fact, children's sport teams in general have entire families involved for weekends at a time. And when is this all taking place?—during the prime of golf season. Later in the article I will address the challenge of vying for people's time. I still haven't even touched on how to get Mom involved in golf!

The second issue I want to address is what has happened to all our junior golfers? One simple answer is that the youth of today have so many options for what to do with their time. The age of technology has robbed young people of their free time. Day after day many spend countless hours playing video games, talking on cell phones, sitting in front of computers, or listening to Ipods. If not involved in the aforementioned activities, many youth are encouraged to

participate in a favorite sport or activity that many times requires them to train year round. It becomes apparent that not only are we in a time battle for our middle age golfer, but the battle for junior has become just as tough!

Last, but not least, I want to discuss the number and style of golf courses that have been built over the past twenty years. During the building peak of the '90s, I believe we, as an industry, were not aware of the subtle changes going on in the attitudes and behaviors of our golfing public. As the number of golfers slowly began to dwindle, we heard the constant cry that we needed to open a new course each day of the year. Not long ago, I attended a meeting where Bradley Klein, of Superintendent News, stated "it is more likely now that we need to close a course per day." Not only were we building more courses, we were designing and building the visually stimulating, upscale public golf course. As more courses opened, competition increased, greens fees eventually needed to become more competitive (cheaper), and at the same time the maintenance costs of these visually stimulating courses became more expensive.

Somewhere during the amazing building frenzy of the '90s we also lost sight of one of our most important treasures, the Average Joe golfer. Average Joe is the guy or girl that is an average golfer, at best, and plays golf for the fun of it. According to statistics from USGA agronomist Larry Gilhuly, 95% of all golfers have a handicap of 15 and above, men averaging 16.1 and women 29.2. Average Joe is more concerned about the price of greens fees and tee-time availability than he is about how tough or visually stimulating a course is. In fact, in a 1996 NGF survey, only 12% of golfers surveyed mentioned that course design was important to them. A mere 5% listed difficulty of the course as important. The take-home lesson from this is that while we as an industry were focused on building fantastic, upscale golf courses, all Average Joe wanted was a well kept course, near home, with available tee-times, and all at a fair price.

Now that I've shared what I believe are the main causes for our golfers disappearing, where do we go from here? How does the golf course industry reestablish its niche in an active person's lifestyle? It's not an easy task, but I believe it can be done; here are a couple of ideas to make sure we're on the right track.

Every golfer that steps onto our courses is not only a customer, but also our guest and needs to be treated as such. This was Disney's philosophy in his theme parks from day one. The pro shop staff, ranger staff, and maintenance staff all need to adopt this philosophy to the max.

*(continued on page 14)*



*"Chuck the Chicken" at Prairie Bluff Golf Club. A fundraising game used during a foundation outing where contestants launched rubber chickens with a slingshot.*



Provide a golfing atmosphere that is fun and relaxing. Speed of play is important, but how many times have we heard golfers leave the course complaining about being tired of being timed or being hounded by golf course rangers.

Don't skimp on course conditioning. In the 1996 NGF golfer's survey, course condition was listed third, behind only the cost of green fees and tee-time availability for a course's appeal.

Find out why your regular and permanent tee time golfers come back, or why they don't return, then address those issues.

Finally, we need to continue to be innovative at our own individual golf courses. Every course is different. What works for one course may not work at another. Be creative, our park district recreation staff always has great ideas for us to try at our golf outings. The most recent contest we used at our park foundation outing was called "chuck the chicken." Let your imagination be your guide on that one. The idea is, let's have fun!

When all is said and done I believe we as an industry need to remember one of the main reasons golf was created: to enjoy the game, to be with friends, and to do it all within the framework of nature.



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# Who Is Replacing the Aged Golf Course Technician?

*This could be part of the answer.*

*Since last year I have been involved with an advisory board at the Illinois Central College (ICC) in Peoria. The Turf Equipment Technicians Association (TETA) was asked by ICC, through Luke Cella and the ITF, to participate in a plan to develop the Outdoor Power Equipment Training Program (OPETP). The program would include, but not be limited to, the recruitment, training, and placement of certified outdoor power equipment technicians.*

*The support of  
the manufacturer  
is a major part  
of the success  
of the two-year  
programs.*

TETA is, of course, representing the golf industry. The issue first discussed was the availability of students to enter a program in Peoria. Secondly, would there be placement in the area after graduation? Third, how would successful marketing of the program happen? Fourth, what is the need for trained technicians at dealerships, landscapers, turf operations, golf courses, etc.?

We all know there is a great need for qualified technicians in the golf equipment field. There has always been a shortage of technicians in this unique and viable career. The "golf maintenance barn" is not a shed with lawnmowers and some golf carts crammed in, as many people might think. The "equipment maintenance facility" as I like to call it, has more diverse equipment than any lawnmower shop or dealership by far.

Illinois Central College, less than three hours from Chicago, has four very successful programs that are housed at its campus. First, the Diesel Equipment Technology Program trains a student to earn an Associates in Applied Science Degree. The student is trained to be an entry-level technician who will work on agricultural and construction equipment, trucks, dozers, graders...just about anything with a diesel engine. ICC successfully places all of its students in eight-week internships at local area distributors and dealerships. Second is the Auto Technician Program, third, the Caterpillar Dealer Service Program. The fourth successful program is the General Motors Auto Service Education Program.

All of these have the same philosophy. The support of the manufacturer is a major part of the success of the two-year programs. The successful addition of the Outdoor Power Equipment Technician Program (OPETP) would also require the support of many major manufacturers. An actual shop, staged with the equipment and tools along with OEM sponsored machines for hands on tear-downs, diagnostics, and operations would be a necessity. The golf industry giants will be included in providing the equipment and materials related to golf-specific education.

Today the acceptance and awareness of the certified technician in the outdoor power equipment field is at hand. The Equipment and Engine Training

*(continued on page 16)*



Council (EETC) certification tests would all be a part of the OPETP program at Illinois Central College. This level of achievement should be taken seriously.

Along with the support of the manufacturers, area employers anxiously await the qualified personnel who will enter their facilities for internships and/or full-time employment. The placement of an intern at a golf course is a long awaited and welcome event. Along with the equipment dealers, municipalities, construction contractors, landscape groups, ICC wants to include an invitation to the golf courses in the region to consider sponsoring an intern for an eight-week period. There are many times throughout the year when we could all use a couple extra hands. The intern could help in maintaining equipment or get involved with the winter tear-down segment of the off season. An eager intern coming out of such a program is serious about his or her future. An internship will also help an individual advance in the golf industry and expe-

rience the hidden gem of a career that I have enjoyed for 13 years.

Another concern is the availability of students to enter such a program. How can the industry be presented to the high school student? My local high school district, among others, is phasing out their tech programs, or soon will be. Auto technology still tops the interest list for what hands-on kids want to do after high school. So the marketing of a two-year program with on-campus living experiences and off-campus internships will be another challenge for the college.

I offered, on behalf of ICC, to present this idea to you and ask for your response. If you would like more information about the proposed Outdoor Power Equipment Technician Program please do not hesitate to contact me. The advisory committee will meet before spring. The anticipated start up of this program may be as soon as the fall of 2008.



*There are many times throughout the year when we all could use a couple extra hands.*

While I complete this letter, in the early New Year, the temperature is holding at 48°. We just filled the hopper at the range with balls again. Unbelievable!


Thank you for your continued support. Next time, we'll talk about what's new from Anaheim and the G.I.S show.



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# the Bull Sheet

John Gurke, CGCS, Associate Editor

## DATES TO REMEMBER

February 8 – Annual Assistants Winter Workshop at Midwest Golf House in Lemont, IL.

February 19-24 – GCSAA Education Conference in conjunction with the Golf Industry Show in Anaheim, CA.

February 22 – MAGCS Hospitality Suite in the Hilton Anaheim (GCSAA Headquarters hotel) from 6:00 PM til 10:00 PM. Pacific Ballroom D.

February 22 – University of Illinois Turfgrass Alumni reception in the Monterrey room of the Hilton Anaheim from 5:00 PM to 7:00 PM.

February 23 – GCSAA Annual Meeting and Election at 2:30 PM in the Anaheim Convention Center.

March 13 – MAGCS Chapter-administered GCSAA Education seminar at Midwest Golf House featuring Dr. Derek Settle of CDGA and Dr. Bingru Huang of Rutgers University speaking on management of the new bentgrass cultivars.

April 19 – Chicago Golf Summit – Location TBD. MAGCS, CDGA, ILPGA, IJGA, and CMMA will host all members for this first ever event. Golf industry leaders will speak on the state of the game.

April 30 – MAGCS Spring Scramble meeting at Indian Lakes Resort, **Chuck Ardell** host.

### MAGCS welcomes its newest members:

**Nathan Hoegger**—Class C, Flossmoor Country Club.

**Kurt Reynolds**—Class C, Inverness Golf Club.

**Ryan Tully**—Class A, Harborside International.

**Adam Hanson**—Class C, Bob O'Link Golf Club.

**Eric Lindgren**—Class SM, Blackstone Golf Club.

**Greg Mark**—Class E, E-Z Go Textron.

**Bill McDonald**—Class E, E-Z Go Textron.

**Josh Bebeau**—Class C, Highland Park Country Club.

**Edward Bart**—Class E, The Natural Edge LLC.

**Josh Anderson**—Class C, Prairie Landing Golf Club.

**James Williams**—Class C, Prairie Landing Golf Club.

Best of luck to you all in your new endeavors—now join a committee!

As we all know by now, **Paul Vermeulen** has left his post as USGA Green Section agronomist for our region (after 20 years with the organization) and has joined the PGA Tour. Replacing Paul in the upper half of the Mid-Continent Region is **Ty McClellan**, our new USGA Green Section agronomist. Ty hails from Lawrence, Kansas where he has been with GCSAA working with local chapters throughout the country strengthening their educational programs as one of their new field staff. Prior to his work with GCSAA, Ty worked with Dr. Roch Gaussoin in Lincoln, Nebraska on issues related to organic matter accumulation near the surfaces of putting green profiles, earning a Master of Science degree from the University of Nebraska in the process. Let us all welcome Ty while trying not to keep him too busy...

Former MAGCS member Tom Gray, CGCS (Olympia Fields CC) has

been appointed to the position of golf course superintendent at CordeValle, a Rosewood Resort in San Martin, California. Congratulations, Tom.

Another former MAGCS member and friend—Gene Thompson, Indian Lakes Resort—is living the high life in St. Simons Island, Georgia. Gene has been working as a carpenter for the Sea Island Company for the past 6 months, and was recently promoted to Engineering Supervisor. Gene also continues his music career, performing his solo act several times monthly. To see more about Gene, check out [www.genethompson.net](http://www.genethompson.net).

Turf Professionals Equipment Company and The Toro Company announced the following changes as of December 15: **Mike Murphy**, Vice President, Commercial Sales has assumed the additional responsibility of General Manager of the TPEC Chicago location. Terry Plemons, Vice President, Golf Irrigation retains overall responsibility for the golf irrigation business in the TPEC territory, as well as the day to day operations of all TPEC St. Louis and Kansas City commercial and golf irrigation personnel. Jim McGovern continues as TPEC's Director of Service, while John Elsea continues as Operations Manager. By the way, TPEC has moved locations from Itasca to Franklin Park- 3816 Franklin Street, Franklin Park, IL, 60131.

Fun Fun Fun until somebody gets hurt...

NASCAR's 2006 champion Jimmie Johnson had no problems driving his car to victory last season, but put him on a golf cart and watch out. While playing in a celebrity tournament in Florida in December, Johnson broke his left wrist falling off the roof of the cart (driven by longtime friend Ricky Bobby). It was probably the right-hand turn that threw him.

### MAGCS Member Winter Fun:

Winter is here and it is the time of year that many MAGCS members can reconnect with their hobbies and interests apart from the world of golf. Vacations, winter sports, even a golf junkie for those who just

(continued on page 20)



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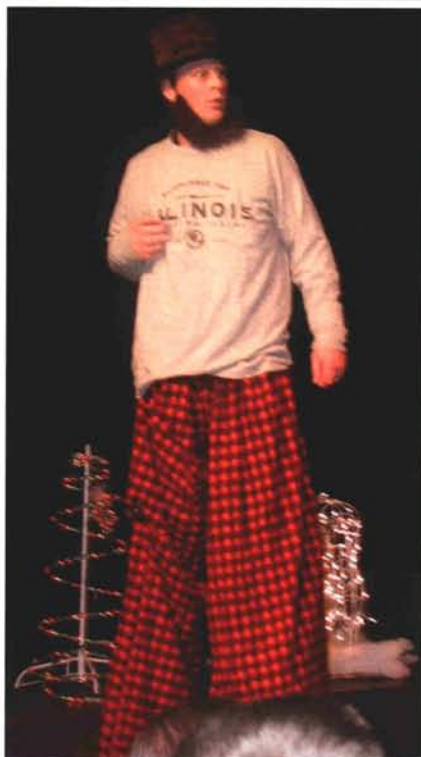


can't put the sticks in the closet for a winter nap are all ways we unwind during the off-season. Granted, the start of this winter was far from winter-like, and many area courses remained open for play; but eventually winter comes to us all. One activity that it seems is growing in popularity among MAGCS members is hunting. Whether it is the exercise, the connection with nature, or the thrill of following a good dog through dense cover while it tracks and finally points or flushes its quarry, more and more of our members are bringing home wild game for dinner—a much more intricate process than walking down the aisle at Jewel and picking up a whole fryer.



L-R: Charlie Brugler, Sean Creed, Scott Speiden, and Chris Plumb.

These 4 gentlemen are truly the veterans when it comes to pheasant hunting, and if you are fortunate enough to be invited along for a hunt at the Des Plaines Conservation Area, you will have the privilege of hunting with some world-class dogs. Left to right are **Charlie Brugler** (BTSI), **Sean Creed** (Oak Brook GC), **Scott Speiden** (Growing Solutions), and **Chris Plumb** (Absolute Service). On the entirely opposite end of the spectrum is Reinder's own **Keith Krause** who pursues his love of improvisational theater during the holidays. Friday nights in December found Keith and his troupe at Donny's Skybox Theater in Chicago (just one floor above Tony and Tina's like 9,000th wedding) performing their "Brian and Patrick's Holiday Show II" to packed seats.



One of the sketches featured an 8-foot tall Krause as Abraham Lincoln going through the usual holiday trials and tribulations that families experience. Details are difficult to explain, but a gift of tickets to a play at Ford's Theater for Abe and the missus from the kids kind of gives you an idea of the show's "flavor."

.....  
 Congratulations to Keith Rincker of Southern Illinois University, and Timothy Hoyt and Thom Irwin of University of Illinois on being 3 of the 31 students to receive 2006 Bayer Undergraduate Scholarships. The scholarships, which were awarded in \$250, \$500, and \$1,000 increments, recognize students pursuing careers in the Green Industry who have demonstrated academic excellence and leadership skills.

.....  
 The big show is right around the corner (whether it be in your high beams or your rear-view mirrors), and this year's rendition is different from any in the past. For starters, the Golf Industry Show features a variety of allied associations' annual events, including the National Golf Course Owners Association's Annual

Conference, the GCSAA Education Conference, and the newest addition, the Club Managers Association of America's World Conference on Club Management. Supporting organizations include the Golf Course Builders Association of America, the American Society of Golf Course Architects, and the National Golf Foundation. As part of its education conference, GCSAA again offers the very popular Golf Course Solutions Center. This year's theme is bunker construction and renovation presented by the Golf Course Builders Association of America, American Society of Golf Course Architects, the Irrigation Association, and GCSAA. Another highlight of the show is the presentation of the 2007 USGA Green Section Award to Dr. Joe Vargas Jr., turfgrass scientist and a professor at Michigan State University for the past 38 years. Dr. Joe receives this prestigious honor on February 23rd at the USGA Green Section Education Session. And don't forget the finest hospitality suite in the business—the MAGCS 2007 version in the Hilton Anaheim (Pacific Ballroom D) is THE event to attend. The format has changed from years past, and is now a 1-night affair with 4 hours of food, drink, and debauchery (if you so choose to debauch). Hopefully, your trip has a mix of great education, great fellowship, and a little fun thrown in to boot. See you there!

.....  
 Keep a close eye on your e-mail for important news and meeting notices from MAGCS. If you are currently not receiving these, please contact Luke Cella at Midwest Golf House. Luke can be reached at 630-243-7900 or at [www.magcs.org](http://www.magcs.org). You can always just send him an email ([luke@cella.us](mailto:luke@cella.us)) and let him know you want email.

