

work continues today. Some areas dodged the brunt of the storm, but nobody escaped unscathed.

Comment — GCS (15 years experience) "I've never seen so much fairy ring, and since we couldn't get out with the mowers the rings got extremely hairy."

Comment — GCS (41 years experience) "I put 2007 as one of the top five worst in my career. Tough winter, hot, then all the rain."

We still have a long way to go before we can put our courses to bed for the winter, and many of us are adapting our fall cultural calendar to cope with the after effects of the soggy summer. Most common among the plans are later and more frequent aerification and supplemental fertilizer applications with fewer nutrients per application at more frequent intervals.

Comment — GCS (20 years experience) "I switched to 3/8 inch tines for greens coring a couple of years ago. We use the carbide tipped ones from that specialty catalogue. They don't wear down and pull a clean plug. The cores close up a lot faster and I use less sand to fill them."

No two golf courses are the same and no two golf course superintendents manage their turf the same way. There are many routes to the same destination, but the following comments relate to one requirement we all share, especially in trying times.

Comment — GCS (15 years experience) "My board and greens committee are definitely better educated about golf course management than when I started. I'm sure it has to do with the information I give them via e-mail and newsletter communications. Even though we are out dealing with dead grass they love me more now than when things are perfect. They understand what we are going through and are very supportive."

Comment — GCS (24 years experience) "It's definitely the strangest year I faced in the business. Now is not the time to establish lines of communication. Best to do that before the seeder is out on the bare areas."

The book is not closed on 2007. I asked everybody at some point what they were glad to have done to get through the tough times.



2007 Photo Quiz: Grubs, who has them?
The answer was easy, anywhere you didn't spray in 2007.



How many times can you push up sand on the same bunker in a month stretch?

Comment — GCS (10 years experience) "I started to inject acid in my irrigation water to get the pH under control. I haven't made a granular fertilizer application of N all year. The nutrients that were tied up in the soil are releasing and things are really green. I'm surprised since my roots are almost nonexistent."

Comment — GCS (20 years experience) "I'm taking my aerification cores out to the low areas that drowned and spreading them. Heck the grass is well and truly dead, so if any of the plugs catch they may survive over winter. I did the same in part of my nursery. I call it my 'heritage' blend and it works well for patching existing bent/Poa turf."

Comment — GCS (14 years experience) "I switched from beer to whiskey."

Close the book on 2007.

Good riddance

-OC

Thanks to Dr. Derek Settle, CDGA for contributing the images for this article.

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MIDWEST BREEZES

Brad Anderson, CGCS, Associate Editor



Naperville Country Club, Tim Anderson

These days the members of Naperville Country Club are thoroughly enjoying a new golf course - literally.

Architect Steve Forest has relocated thirteen golf holes, stretching the course from what was formerly a 6,450 yard par 71 to a 6,800 yard par 72; during the scope of this project 90 acres out of 124 were worked as dirt; 150 large trees were transplanted with a 100-inch tree spade; every green is new, with really interesting and challenging false fronts on four holes; there are all new bunkers, some located in the center of the fairways requiring forced carries; all new tees; a new 1,400 head irrigation system and 1,900 GPM pump house, providing near wall to wall coverage.

Indeed there is so little left of the original Naperville Country Club golf course and infrastructure that it could be legitimately placed in the category of new construction.

The greens were seeded to A-1. Alpha was added to the seeding in the collars for enhanced wear tolerance. Where the putting surface and approaches meet Tim has provided his mower operators with 25 x 3 foot rolls of matting for turning the walking green and the walking approach mowers. This method has worked exceptionally well to mitigate wear patterns. Tim is currently using a matting material that his mechanic had

purchased from Grainger for absorbing floor oil. This material is light and does not hold moisture as heavy carpet rolls generally do.

The square tees were built with a 7:2:1 mix and drainage tile. Tim chose T1 turf for its strong recuperative ability. Tim reports that even on the practice tee the T1 is holding up exceptionally well. The T1 has required topdressing every two weeks however or it can get puffy.

The fairways were seeded to Pennlinks II and Pennegale II. Tim chose this mixture based on the NTEP trials at Midwest Golf House.

The quarter to half flashed bunkers are filled with Tour-grade Signature Series Bunker Sand. They are grassed with bluegrass maintained at 4 inches using self-propelled rotary push mowers with grass catchers. The throat of the fairway and approach bunkers are grassed with hand-mown bent to the very edge of the sand. This unique feature makes the bunkers play much larger - we may be seeing more of this design element in golf course architecture in the future.

It's a good thing that our President Tim Anderson didn't have any other big responsibilities to distract him during all of this work. **-OC**



Tim hired Precision Aerial Photo of Indiana for a flat fee to document the progress throughout the project. Tim learned that Naperville sits under flight patterns for Midway and O'Hare and flights above the property were not always possible depending on air traffic.

(continued on next page)



Naperville Country Clubs Renovation Clockwise from Upper Left: #3, #18 and #15. Though Tim Anderson, CGCS didn't have to worry about growing turf in the latter half of 2006 he now looks forward to a normal year starting in the Spring of 08 as his construction projects are wrapped up.

The Benefits of Going Green with Natives



According to the Illinois Natural History Survey, prior to European settlement (and golf!) approximately 22 million acres in Illinois were covered with prairie. Less than one-tenth of one percent of those acres remain today. For those of you who dilute chemicals often, this equals approximately 2,000 acres of remnant prairie remaining in our evolving landscape.

I look at this figure and see an excellent opportunity to combine golf and habitat restoration. I do not advocate widespread, militant restoration, yet I think everyone would like to encourage earth-friendly practices. I believe 100% in the viability of managed natural areas on golf courses. There are many great examples of this being done in and around the greater Chicago metropolitan region by members of MAGCS.

Habitat restoration, specifically prairie restoration, suffers from a lack of understanding. The biggest misconception, and the highest hurdle to clear, is in the definition of what is and isn't natural restoration. In my view, restoration is anything that includes native plants in areas where they previously did not exist. I operate on the simple premise that something is always better than nothing. Incremental adoption and improvement is critical to the widespread acceptance of ecological restoration.

"Restoration is the art and science of creating eco-functional habitat."

What does this mean? Picture the following scenario... you come to a decision point during a golf course remodel. You have to choose between conventional sheet piling at \$60 to \$75 per linear foot or a native shoreline restoration at approximately \$60 to \$70 per linear foot. The answer has both a quantitative and a qualitative component.



Functional/ Quantitative Decision

To start, sheet piling has its place and always will. Once you have identified areas with gentler, below-water slopes that are out of play, you can begin to put together a rough project scope of appropriate treatment areas. Native plants on shorelines are excellent at preventing erosion due to their deep root

systems. With the proper maintenance, native plants become a cost-effective permanent solution. If you'd like to see an example of this type of work, review the photos of Horseman's Island at Cantigny Golf Course (Scott White, CGCS).

Qualitative Decision

What is a golf course "supposed" to look like? Is it the structured feel of a formal English garden or is it the grassy expanse of St. Andrew's? And here comes that hurdle I mentioned above...Why put in grasses native to Illinois when they look like weeds? The sad part is that it's true; what the public identifies as prairie grasses likely are invasive species (weeds). Illinois prairie habitat is rare. Yet most golfers agree that a round of golf is better in an attractive natural setting. Colin Montgomery, one of the world's top players, has said, "A golf course which has been sensitively designed and managed in a way which works with nature rather than against it, is normally more interesting and challenging."

(continued on next page)

Often, the positive aspects of native landscape restoration are intangible, but they can and should be quantified. The following list is abbreviated to allow you more time this morning, afternoon, and evening for important things like long walks, football games, and turf care.

Reducing landscaping costs:

Established natural landscapes have reduced maintenance costs — up to a 90 percent reduction compared to traditional turf grass — according to the Northeastern Illinois Planning Commission. Note that I said "established." It is a common misconception that native plants are care-free! It takes 3-7 years of ongoing stewardship to establish large native plant areas. But once natives are established, long term savings continue to grow like your retirement accounts.

What is stewardship? Stewardship is the care and maintenance of naturalized areas. Tasks can include ecological mowing (cutting higher, 8-12 inches), hand weeding, spot her-

bicide application, and prescribed burning. These tasks should be preformed initially by a specialized service provider. Gradually, within three years of initial implementation, responsibility should transition to on-site grounds crews.

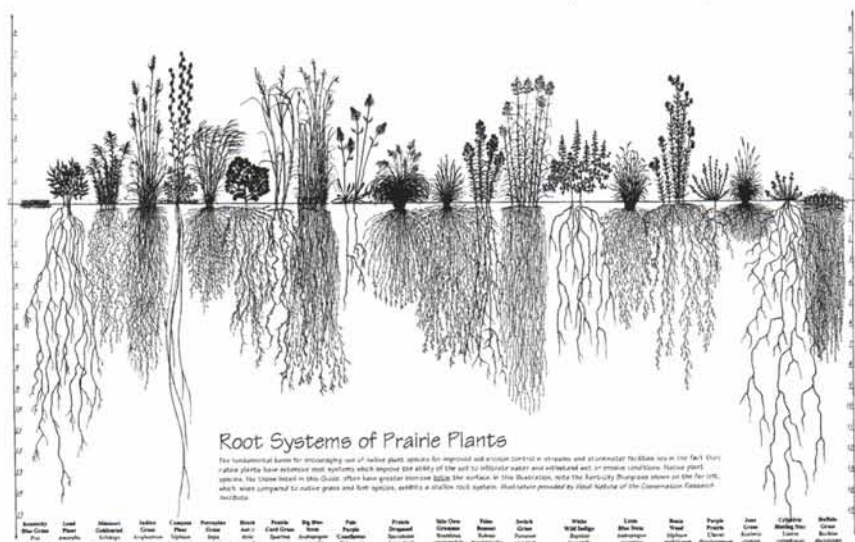
Stewardship is not complicated and I encourage all of my

clients to take an active part in maintaining their native landscape. Often, controlling the five most invasive herbaceous species will cure 90% of the problems facing a new installation.

Reducing air pollution: Less turf mowed means less air pollution. One gas-powered lawn mower, running for an hour, emits as much pollution as driving 650 miles in a 1992 model automo-

bile (U.S. Environmental Protection Agency). I should know, I drive a 1992 Toyota Camry!

Reducing soil erosion: Native landscapes have deeper root systems than common turf grasses. Longer roots better stabilize soils. This makes native plants the perfect solution at the water's edge and anywhere substrate stabilization is a concern.



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Improving water quality: Fertilizers and pesticides are not required on natural landscapes. Thus, fewer pollutants end up in rivers, streams, lakes, ponds, or wetlands. In fact, once these areas are actively established (one growing season) they require absolutely no water!

Providing habitat for wildlife: Natural landscapes provide the food and habitat that animals need to survive. Everybody likes Monarch butterflies. Did you know they only feed on plants belonging to the milkweed family which is native to the Midwest?

Integrated Pest Management (IPM): Natural areas promote invite types of wildlife that feed on insects. Species that are drawn to natural areas, such as dragonflies, frogs, bats, and birds all feast on mosquitoes. No expensive, polluting pesticides are required in a fully restored natural area. Another attractive benefit — Goose Control — geese do not like tall grasses because they could be hiding predators.

Increasing biodiversity: As urban sprawl grows, often, it's the golf course that is the only open space remaining. Integrating the creation and conservation of natural landscapes into your plan is one of the only means of preservation for many valuable species.

Educating people: Few people have actually seen native prairie, wetlands, or woodlands. What many people think are prairie plants along roadsides are actually invasive species (weeds). Information transmitted through posted signs, web page photos, stewardship seminars, and an educated maintenance crew will strengthen community support for conservation and environmental protection. Creating an educational experience on the golf course can get the entire family into the game.

Greening Self-Promotion: "Going green" by incorporating native plants in your landscape plan is an environmental benefit that shows positive leadership and good-neighbor practices to your community.

Golf Ball Sales: Want to sell more golf balls at the Pro Shop? Native landscapes swallow golf balls.

About the author

Doug Bauer has worked as a Sales and Project Manager for Tallgrass Restoration, LLC, for nearly four years.

During his summers in college he worked for the U.S. Dept. of Agriculture, Forest Service in California fighting wildfires. Recently, he came out of the woods and began shaving and showering regularly. He is now pursuing his MBA at the University of Chicago, in hopes that the green industry will continue to grow exponentially! He can be reached at (847) 925-9830 or doug.bauer@tallgrassrestoration.com **-OC**



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What are you Thankful For? The Season's End?

Greetings and hurray for frost on the pumpkin! I am thankful the leaves are down and gone. The skunks, mosquitoes, bees, and those other pests have vanished. The course will soon be closed. Let the teardowns begin! Before this happens there is much to reflect on.

First I am thankful to the staff for making it a great season with minimal accidents or destruction. There's a great feeling of accomplishment at this time of the year if every piece of equipment can be driven into the shop at the end of the day under its own power. It's also notable that there were no physical injuries this year. Following basic safety guidelines really is worth the effort. I hope our crew enjoys the holidays with their families and that they all return next season.

I also want to give thanks to some key people in the service realm. Pete, J.D., Rex, and Jesus at Nadler Inc. should be recognized for showing how important consistent customer service is. Nadler's scheduling of courtesy calls this past summer really was worthwhile. I was able to chat casually with J.D. and Rex when they were out at my shop. I got some service tips that aren't found in the technical manuals. Those tips and more were shared by all who attended the TETA seminar hosted by Nadler back in October. The electrical systems on the Club Car vehicles are much more involved than just maintaining battery water and cables. Again, thank you Dave and Eric Nadler and your customer service staff.

Another huge thank you goes out to JW Turf and Company. Joe Hutsler has been a tremendous help to all of us. I've been able to call Joe cell-to-cell while I'm out on the course. Rarely did he not pick up the phone and make time to help me out on the spot. Often the problems we experience are not in the technical manual. Joe's day-to-day knowledge and experience enables him to be much quicker with the answers. Very often time is critical for us when a machine is down. Joe never hesitates to help out. Thank you Joe! A big thank you to Kelli, Mike, and everyone for your flawless efforts in filling all our parts needs. To be able to call JW Turf at 6:30 a.m., Monday through Friday (in season), and actually talk to someone is phe-

nomenal. To be able to place an order for will-call for the same morning is such a great convenience when a machine is down. Thanks for allowing me to have another successful season. You make me look good!

Next I want to share with you a memorable experience for which I am most grateful. In June of this year, I was told by Mike Matchen (Superintendent/Greens keeper/Golf Operations Manager/ and all-a-round good egg – Wilmette Golf Club) that he had nominated me for the Gold Wrench Award for Technician of the Year. This award is presented annually by *Golf Week Magazine*. Mike also told me that Terry Porter (Director of the Wilmette Park District) and Thomas Grizmore (Director of Leisure Services – Wilmette Park District) supported the nomination. I was, of course, shocked and honored by Mike's announcement. He told me about it only because I might be contacted by the magazine for an interview. After telling my wife and kids, I pretty much forgot about it. Then one morning in July, I was in the club house basement attending to carts. Mike cruised down the service ramp and came to a screeching halt. With a big smile on his face, he extended his right hand and said, "Congratulations, you are one of the finalists!" It took me a moment before I even realized what he meant. He said he had just gotten off the phone with Bradley S. Klein (National Director, *Golf Week's* Course Raters). I was chuckling a bit in disbelief. I didn't know what to say. Mr. Klein had told him that he would be coming to interview me.

The interview was set for August 6th. At that time I had told only my wife and kids about the award. The fellows at the shop found out because they were cleaning and sprucing up the shop area beyond belief during the week before the interview. They did a great job. Thanks to Rick Becker (assistant to Mike) and the whole crew, the shop area was in great shape. I had no

idea how much stuff I had to throw out that early in the season. When they were done, the room was actually brighter, because there was more floor space reflecting the light.

On the morning of the interview, I found out the meeting time had been pushed back to afternoon. It was a typical August day, temperature in the 90s and 94% humidity. I was definitely going to take a shower before the interview. I had planned on going to the clubhouse locker room to spruce up. At 11:15 a.m., I got a call from Mike that Mr. Klein would arrive within ten minutes. I didn't know it was possible, but I started sweating even more. Mike said, "Just put on a fresh t-shirt and you'll be good to go."

After introductions were made, Mr. Klein and I went into my office. Soon I was more relaxed and referring to my visitor as Brad. He got a kick out of my many photographs. We talked about several topics, including tasks that are outside the normal job description. For instance, simply putting air in the wheel of a bag cart for a patron, or tightening a spike in a golf shoe. Coincidentally, a golfer came in the shop as we were touring the area. The golfer asked for some gasoline and a rag so he could get some sticky goop left behind by a decal off the shaft of his driver. I got some carburetor choke spray from a cabinet instead. After the shaft was cleaned, the golfer thanked me and went on his way to the third tee. Mr. Klein got a big kick out of this. I told him that without the customer I wouldn't have a job. We took some pictures of the shop, and of some older equipment that is still used on a regular basis. I talked about my time here at the golf course and realized, again, how good I have it and how happy I am here. Good people to work with and great amenities are very important for enjoyment and success at the job.

Two weeks later I was handed a rough draft of an article based on the interview. After reading it, I was very excited and proud. I couldn't wait to show my family a copy. To have gone that far in the process for Technician of the Year was enjoyable and gratifying. There are many other capable, experienced technicians out there. The recognition I have received from the park district and the support of my family and co-workers is a great achievement in itself.

On September 6th Mike came screeching into the shop and said that *Turf Net Magazine* was on-line with pictures of the six finalists on the front cover. I cracked up that it had gotten this far. I immediately called Mary (my bride) at work so she could check it out. That afternoon, when checking the mail box, I found *Turf Net Magazine* (I had never received it before). I felt like a little kid with a report card full of 'A's as I rushed into the house. I also logged on to see it on the web. What a gas! I was laughing out loud. I was home alone, except for my dog, so I told him his name made it into the article.

The results of the contest came out in October. Congratulations to Jim Stuart of Stone Mountain Golf Club (GA) for receiving the *Gold Wrench Award!* I now have an even better realization of how many talented, qualified people have a great career in golf equipment maintenance and repair. I want to thank everyone who supported me all these years, and hope I continue to deserve it.

I hope all of you had a great season on the course and enjoyed your families and friends. Now it's time to slow down a bit, give thanks for what we have, and give to those who are without. **-OC**

COMPOST

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30 Yard Loads

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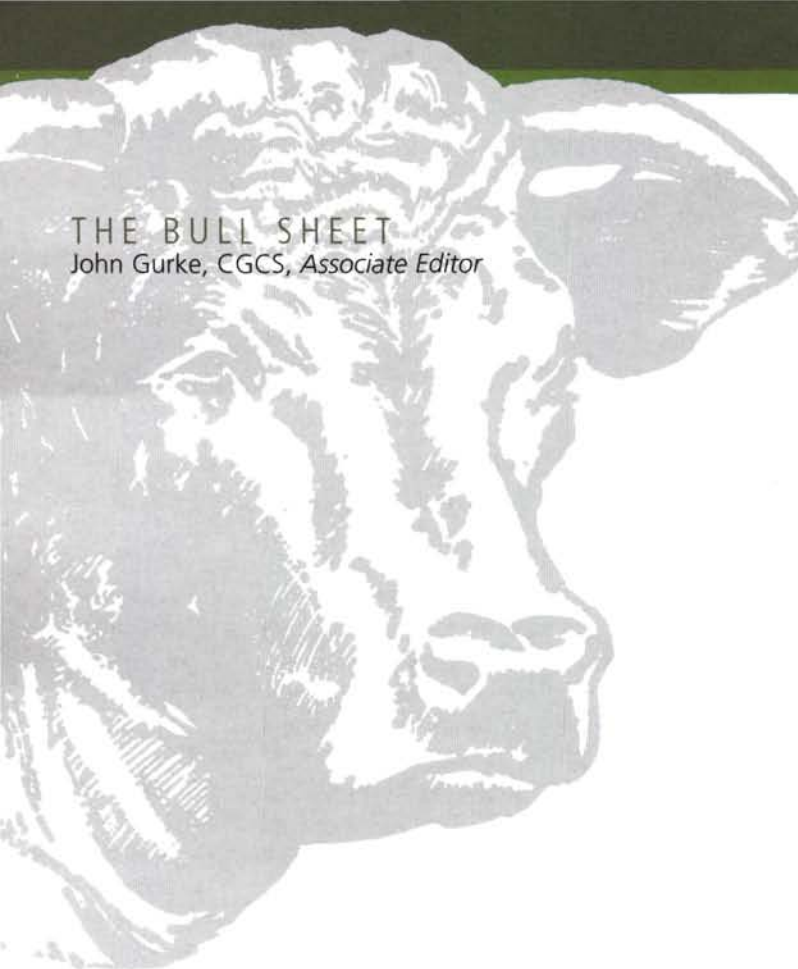
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THE BULL SHEET

John Gurke, CGCS, Associate Editor



November 2007

DATES TO REMEMBER

November 7 – 55th Annual Midwest Turf Clinic at Medinah Country Club, **Tom Lively, CGCS** host.

November 13-14 – Midwest Regional Turf Foundation's Turf and Ornamental Seminar at Purdue University in West Lafayette, IN. Contact MRTF at www.mrtf.org for details.

November 13-15 – Penn State Golf Turf Conference at the Nittany Lion Inn in State College, PA. Go to www.paturf.org for information.

November 17 – MAGCS Annual Fall Dinner Dance at Eaglewood Resort in Itasca, IL, **Kristi and Ben Exline** hosts.

December 5-7 – Illinois Professional Turfgrass Conference (IPTC) at the Pheasant Run Resort in St. Charles, IL. Visit illinoisurfgrassfoundation.org to register.

December 9-11 – 28th International Irrigation Show at the San Diego Convention Center in San Diego, CA.

January 28-February 2 – GCSAA Education Conference, which is somewhat simultaneous with the National Golf Course Owners Association Conference held January 29-February 2 and the World Conference on Club Management (CMAA) on January 31-February 5, all during the Golf Industry Show which is from January 31-February 2. A visit to www.gcsaa.org will help clear things up (relaunched on October 29th by the way).

A brisk autumn welcome to the newest members of the MAGCS family:

Kirk Carls—Spring Lake CC, Class A.

Andrew Cross—Exmoor CC, Class C.

Travis Dykstra—Prairie Landing GC, Class C.

Corey Heasley—Olympia Fields CC, Class C.

John Kirtland—Davey Golf, Class E.

Gerald Morris—Country Club of Peoria, Class A.

Arne Nordenson—Glenview Park District, Class C.

Patrick Ryan—Bethpage State Park, Class C.

Kenny Schwark—Watertronics, Class E.

This month the Annual Midwest Turf Clinic will be held at Medinah Country Club once again—the outstanding venue we have enjoyed for many years thanks to our friends there. The theme for this year's rendition is "Balance." Your Education Committee has put together a compelling list of presenters and the day promises to be fulfilling. Also on the agenda for the busy day will be the annual elections for the MAGCS Board of Directors, as well as the various presentations including the Ray Gerber and Fred Opperman Editorial Awards, the President's Award for Meritorious Service, and the JW Turf scholarship donation. We ask that all MAGCS members in attendance please take the 5 minutes necessary and have their photograph taken by the professional photographer who will be present throughout the day. Also, if you have done this in the past, go ahead and get a new one shot—you probably have improved with age like a fine wine.

Luke promises not to Photo Shop your head onto the body of an animal or anything unless you request it.

Any MAGCS member interested in being a moderator for the upcoming IPTC at Pheasant Run Resort should contact **Scott Verdun** at Merit Club. Scott can be reached at (847) 899-1019 or at scott1019@hotmail.com.

The Class C Advisory Committee is seeking interested individuals who wish to make a difference by volunteering their time and efforts to this important committee. Scott White,

(continued on page 22)