

MIDWEST BREEZES

Scott Vincent, Skokie Country Club



Geneva Golf Club, Ed Braunsky, CGCS

Geneva Golf Club was founded in 1900 and built by James Foulis Jr., the first golf professional at Chicago Golf Club and winner of the second U.S. Open. Remarkably, in the 107-year history of Geneva Golf Club only three superintendents have cared for the course: Frank Mastroleo, charter member of the GCSAA, Albie Staudt, long time stalwart and past president of the MAGCS, and current Superintendent and also Past President of MAGCS, Ed Braunsky, CGCS.

There is a rich tradition and history at Geneva Golf Club, and with that in mind the club hired Dave Esler in 2006 to

remodel the tees and bunkers to a more vintage style. The tees were built with a 7-2-1 Waupaca growing medium, and seeded to Penncross. The greenside faces of the bunkers were grassed with four-year old fescue sod. The sod was cut as deep as the sod cutter could go down, and stapled on to the perimeter of the bunkers, generally one to two rows wide. Ed reports that the fescue sod established very well, and he has mown the fescue just once in the spring and once again in the fall with a hedge trimmer. **-OC**



One of the major changes at Geneva GC, increasing tee space and squaring off the corners.



Fine fescue now lines each bunker face on the golf course. Mr. Braunsky, CGCS and Geneva GC will host a MAGCS Scholarship Fundraiser in July of 2008, plan to come and see the changes in person.

FEATURE ARTICLE

Paul Vermeulen, PGA Tour



Special Events Require Special Considerations

The key components for making a special event special are proper scheduling, rigorous course preparations, and appropriate budgeting.

While a number of golfers would never admit it, somewhere deep down inside they want their course to be in peak tournament condition every time they have the opportunity to tee it up. After all, it seems perfectly logical that, if the superintendent can get the course in peak condition for the club championship in mid-June, he or she ought to be able to sustain the effort all year long. Suffice it to say, more than one green committee chairman has had to learn the hard way that the seduction of this logic is often the shortest path to an unhappy future.

From a scheduling perspective, all turfgrasses must be in optimum health in order for the superintendent to produce peak tournament conditions. For cool-season species, such as Kentucky bluegrass, *Poa annua*, and creeping bentgrass, optimum health coincides with specific periods when daytime temperatures are in the upper 60s to mid-80s and nighttime temperatures are in the mid-40s to upper 50s. When temperatures are either too cold or too hot, the growth of cool-season turfgrasses is unavoidably subdued and so is the potential for sustaining fast putting green speeds.

It is important to recognize the relationship between temperature and the rate of turfgrass growth, since producing optimal playing conditions requires a variety of maintenance practices that cause some degree of turfgrass abrasion. These practices include frequent mowing at low cutting heights to

produce ideal ball roll, vertical mowing to eliminate grain, and topdressing to create a smooth surface. To tolerate abrasive maintenance practices and avoid irreparable thinning, the turf has to be growing vigorously so that damaged foliage is replaced. This being the case, the first key component for hosting a special event is to select a date when the odds are favorable for good weather and turf growth. In the Chicago area, the optimum time for scheduling special events tends to be late spring/early summer and late summer/early fall.

Having determined a proper date for a special event, preparing the course by implementing a rigorous maintenance plan requires a coordinated effort by all parties. Depending on the circumstances, these parties can include but may not be limited to club staff, the board of directors, corporate leadership, the golf committee, and the green committee.





Regardless of who is involved, the first step is to establish appropriate guidelines for course preparation.

While some people are convinced that the only guideline for tournament play is to turn off the irrigation system so that the greens become firm and fast; those who must actually shoulder the responsibility soon realize that naive slogans are no substitute for in-depth analysis and detailed planning. While it is true that firm greens with a high Stimpmeter reading can be ideal for some tournaments, exactly how firm and how fast are critical details.

For the very best players competing in the U. S. Open, greens that are firm enough to discourage lob shots at the base of the flagstick and fast enough to add enormous break to a long putt are highly appropriate. Can the same be said for the Club Championship at a typical Midwestern golf course? Probably not, since even the firmness and speed of the greens on the PGA Tour varies considerably tournament to tournament and is dependent on how the greens were constructed, turf species, prevailing weather conditions, availability of principle resources, and design of the course.

When developing guidelines for tournament preparation, each part of the course should be evaluated. Starting with the greens, most superintendents provide consistent Stimpmeter readings in the range of 9'6" to 10'0". Generally, this range allows the superintendent to sustain healthy turf conditions and utilize six or more hole locations per green for daily play. For special events, such as the Club Championship, increasing the Stimpmeter reading by as much as a foot is, in all probability, a realistic goal. It should also be noted that the Stimpmeter reading should be consistent from green to green and from the first day to the last day of competition.

Weather and soil type permitting, greens should be firm, but not overly hard. To achieve this goal over the span of several days usually requires intensive hand watering ahead of the first group and immediately after the last group of the day. This necessity can be costly, as the most experienced staff members are needed to recognize areas that will dry out and therefore require added attention. To prevent severe wilting and subsequent turf loss, watering with the

irrigation system and/or hand watering between groups should be done without hesitation.

To help maintain the greens at a prudent moisture level, several types of electronic probes can be useful given uniform, sand-based construction. Also, the use of wetting agents via spray or hose-end application will promote a more even water infiltration and reduce dew formation.

In regard to fertilizing, mowing, topdressing, brushing, vertical mowing, and the use of growth regulators, each superintendent must develop a schedule that produces the desired ball roll without too much physical damage. Sounds easy or does it? Not really, because the results of each practice have to produce a simultaneous and synergistic effect during tournament week, not the week before or the week after. By comparing notes with superintendents across the country who host events for one or more of the three Tours, one will quickly discover that there is no 'one size fits all' program that guarantees success.

In addition to scheduling practices that have a direct impact on putting conditions during the week of a special event, thought must also be given to disruptive practices that are essential to the long-term health of the turf. The best example of a disruptive practice is aeration when it is performed with large, hollow or solid tines. Ideally, the date for completing aeration should be set well in advance of a tournament so as to ensure that the turf will be fully recovered.

To help make certain that nothing is overlooked, it is always good to write down a list of final course preparations that will require attention in the days and weeks leading up to a special event. Details, such as preserving the best hole locations two weeks before the event, leveling greenside sprinkler heads to avoid unnecessary rulings, replacing high and low hole plugs, and training an employee to paint the rim of the hole, can make a significant difference in the overall perception of an event and how well it proceeds.

Once a sound strategy has been developed for preparing the greens, doing the same for the tees, approaches, fairways and rough should be fairly straightforward. As in the case of

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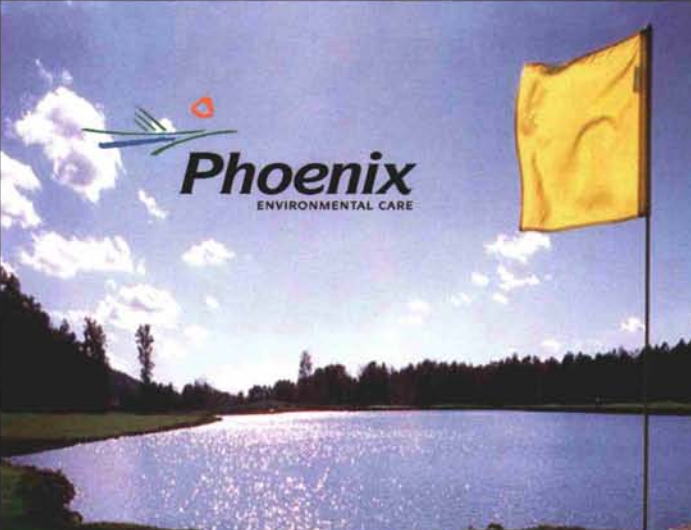




the greens, the underlying theme of consistency is important in producing equitable playing conditions. This theme should also carry over to the bunkers, where too much time is spent creating hazard-free playing conditions. Bunkers are simply hazards where a golfer should anticipate a challenging situation; one that is similar for anyone who hits a shot off line. If designed and built in a consistent manner, then a quick once over with a machine or leaf rake should allow the competition to move forward without delay.

Whether at the professional or amateur level, every special event requires proper golf course marking. Similarly, any plan for a special event absent course marking should be considered incomplete. Fortunately, there is a regional golf association in every part of the country that can provide assistance, albeit they require plenty of advance notice when an on-site visit is necessary.

Given the many special considerations that are required to host a major tournament on a club's calendar, it should hardly be surprising that appropriate funds are needed in the annual budget to get everything accomplished. Albeit, if it is hardly surprising, why is it so rare to find a line item in the annual budget for tournament preparations? The answer is probably related to the fact that most golfers believe that little is required to get a course tournament ready. That said, maybe putting together a detailed tournament plan and adding the cost to the annual budget is a good way to drive home the message that a special event requires special considerations. **-OC**



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Prepping a New Bed Bar/Shoe

Prepping a new bed knife shoe (or bed bar) before installing a new bed knife is important. Never take a new bed knife (especially a micro or tourney knife) out of the package and rush to mount it to the bed bar before you consider the following:

- In most cases the bed bar has been factory machined perfectly, *and then spray painted*. There is over spray in the machined threaded mounting holes. Before mounting the bed knife to the new shoe:
- Take the time to run a tap through each hole.



Tap tool in bar

- Do the same to the outer mounting holes. Also take the time to keep the tap clean with brake clean after each hole and use cutting tool lubricant. This will keep a fresh cutting action hole after hole.
- After this is done, coat the 'new' bed knife screws with loc-tite, antisieze, or other lubricant such as WD40.
- Lastly hand tighten each screw in sequence (middle-out) then repeat with a 'torque wrench' to manufacturer specification.



Torque wrench

It's Not Just Gear Lube Anymore

Not too many years ago I could purchase one bottle or pail of 90 weight gear lube and use it in most all gear cases, and trans-axes. Though most are still using 'ole #90' in every thing, you might want to try taking a new look at this practice. With the advancement of multi-viscosity technology, older equipment can even longer in hotter temperatures using a lube like 85w-140. You may even find in some cases (no pun intended) gasket and seal leaks are less frequent. I have found this to be true in the Toro GM455D and GM223D units that I manage.

In fact, more manufactures are requiring the use of a heavier 85w-140 lube in their specifications. If you are going to upgrade or swap out you lube make sure you drain the old after the machine comes in from action.

For an example, the Toro 455D has a transaxle which holds about 128 ounces of lube. If I tried to drain this unit cold, I could be there for days watching a slow drip. Furthermore:

It not only flows a whole lot faster when heated, you will also get better results by removing sediment in the flow of old lube out of the transmission. Particles will remain suspended in the lube and end up in the drain pan.

When refilling the case, keep in mind how thick the lube is when trying to pour it into the gear box.

Remove any vents on top of the gearbox or transaxle to aid in air escaping. This practice will shorten the time it takes for the lube to settle out.

When you think your done filling, walk away and come back 15 minutes later to make sure no more lube is needed. Some things just can't be rushed or taken for granted. **-OC**



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THE BULL SHEET

John Gurke, CGCS, Associate Editor



January 2008

DATES TO REMEMBER

January 1 – The day Illinois knocked the crap out of USC. I'm taking a HUGE chance here.

January 7-9 – Michigan Turfgrass Foundation's Great Lakes Trade Exposition at DeVos Place in Grand Rapids. Go to www.glte.org for details.

January 14 – Advance registration to the Golf Industry Show closes.

January 14-16 – 2008 Indiana Green Expo in Indianapolis. Go to www.mrtf.org for details.

January 16 – MAGCS monthly meeting at Green Garden Country Club in Frankfort, Illinois, **Renny Jacobson** host.

January 16-18 – Mid-America Horticultural Trade Show in the Lakeside Center at McCormick Place in Chicago. Go to www.midam.org for details.

January 21-23 – Iowa Turfgrass Conference and Trade Show at the Iowa State Center in Ames. Go to www.iowagcsa.org for you-guessed-it, details.

January 25-29 – 2008 GCSAA National Championship and Golf Classic in Orlando, Florida.

January 28 – February 2 – GCSAA Education Conference and Golf Industry Show at the Orange County Convention Center in Orlando, Florida.

January 31 – MAGCS Hospitality Suite at the Golf Industry Show. The grand event will be at the Renaissance Orlando Resort at Sea World from 7 to 10 pm.

February 19-20 – Gateway Green Industry Conference (formerly Southern Illinois Grounds Maintenance School and Trade Show) at the Gateway Convention Center in Collinsville, Illinois.

February 21 – MAGCS Annual Winter Workshop presented by the Class C Advisory Committee at Midwest Golf House in Lemont.

First a wish for a happy, healthy, and prosperous 2008 to all MAGCS members! A special welcoming wish to the newest members joining the fold in this young new year:

- Kyle C. Jacobson, Class SM, Twin Orchard Country Club
- Charles D. Hill, Class E, John Deere One Source
- Nicholas S. Hillyard, Class C, Lake Shore Country Club
- Ken Schwark, Class E, Watertronics

Welcome returning member **Bill Johnson**, formerly of Olds Seed Solutions now with Cleary Chemical Corporation as their new Technical Sales Representative for our state and a few others. Congratulations BJ.

We also welcome our newest member of the Board of Directors, **Mike Siefken** of Sportsmans Country Club. Mike joins the board as a willing appointee replacing outgoing director **Tom Prichard** for one year.



Mike Siefken

(continued on page 18)



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A reminder to please take a moment to review your MAGCS membership renewal information, make any changes you see fit, and send it in to Luke at Golf House. Our renewal drive is winding down, so git 'er done quick.

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Though belated news, it is never too late to congratulate one of our own on a change in jobs. **John Turner**—as of October 1, 2007—is Senior Golf Sales Specialist for Bayer Environmental Sciences covering the Illinois/Wisconsin territory. Many of you who have known John over the years also know he held this position from 1980 to 2002, after which he managed the formulator and key lawn care accounts with the Midwest from 2002 to 2007. John is ecstatic to be back amongst us and looks forward to seeing many of his old customers and friends in the coming months and years. Welcome back, JT!

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Another reminder to assistants, superintendents and commercial members alike to keep February 21st open for the Annual Winter Workshop presented by your Class C Advisory Committee at Midwest Golf House. **Bruce Williams, CGCS** of the Los Angeles Country Club (also a past MAGCS and GCSAA president, and former golf course superintendent at Bob O' Link Golf Club) and David Downing, current GCSAA president will be the day's education presenters, and the event promises to offer something of interest to all who attend. GCSAA Education Points have been applied for. Contact **Michael Heustis**, Class C Advisory Committee chairman at 630-668-3588 for information.



Bruce Williams

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And just one more reminder for the new year's biggest event—the MAGCS Hospitality Suite during the Golf Industry Show in Orlando, Florida. The locale will be the Renaissance Orlando Resort at Sea World on 6677 Sea Harbor Drive—NOT the GCSAA Headquarter hotel as in past years. Hours are from 7 to 10 pm, and it will not disappoint. If you wish to volunteer your time to serve at the check-in table, call Commercial Advisory Committee chairperson **Sharon Riesenbeck** for details or visit the website for specifics.

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If you just can't seem to get enough education to satisfy your raging thirst for knowledge during the winter, you are

in luck. The Gateway Green Industry Conference might be just the tonic. Formerly known as the Southern Illinois Grounds Maintenance School and Trade Show, the Gateway is an "IPTC-like" event with multiple education seminars and talks along with a trade show featuring the latest and greatest stuff our industry has to offer. The dates are the 19th and 20th of February, and the site is the Gateway Convention Center in downstate Collinsville, IL. If you are interested in learning more, call 618-650-7050, or register at www.extension.uiuc.edu/madisonstclair.

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MAGCS sends its best wishes for a successful showing to the competitors who are representing us in the 2008 GCSAA National Championship and Golf Classic in Orlando later this month. The annual event begins on Friday the 25th with registration and practice rounds, followed on Saturday with another practice round and the Welcoming Reception (6 to 8 pm). Round One of the Championship and the Four-Ball are slated for Sunday, followed on Monday by round two of the National Championship and round one of the Golf Classic. Tuesday the 29th brings the final rounds of both events, with the 19th Hole wrap-up concluding the festivities. Again, good luck to the teams from MAGCS!

..... **Other Golf Industry Show notables:**

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Oscar Miles, CGCS is one of three long-time GCSAA members who will be honored at the show by receiving the 2008 Distinguished Service Award. It would take several issues of this magazine to document all of Oscar's contributions to his profession and to our chapter's ascension to the lofty position it now occupies in the golf industry. Oscar has always been at the forefront of forward thinking, becoming renowned for his decades of soil temperature research and his "radical" lightweight fairway mowing concept (which is now an industry norm). The men and women who have served under Oscar that are now superintendents could easily fill a room—a true indicator of the man's dedication and contribution to our industry. Sharing the honor with Oscar are Donald Hearn, CGCS and Jim Loke, CGCS. Congratulations Oscar!



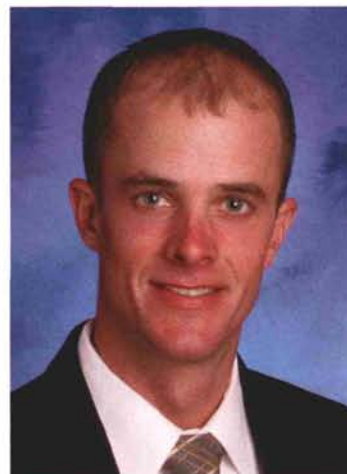
Oscar Miles

Toro and Syngenta are sponsoring the newly-created Assistant Superintendents Session to be held on Thursday the 31st from 2 to 5 pm in a TBD location. MAGCS will be represented well by **John Ekstrom** and Michael Heustis who will cover differing topics in the session much akin to the "Innovative Superintendents" sessions which have been so popular over the years. Please mark your show calendars and attend this session to show your support for our ground-breaking Class C representatives.

A visit to the gcsaa.org web site (and a few clicks here and there) will get you to a very cool link—the real-time online floor plan. You can plan your route around the floor, clicking on specific vendors' floor locations and adding them to your personal agenda (my expo). As of December 1, 847 vendors had signed on, accounting for 285,950 square feet of floor space, and attendance was projected to be at approximately 25,000.

Not to toot the horn of our Class C Advisory Committee too much, but these guys leave me no choice—you may have read in an earlier issue of the committee's efforts in regard to Habitat for Humanity, whereby they have agreed to provide materials and labor to landscape a HFH home on 119 North Sumner in Aurora, Illinois. The landscape design and plant list have been donated by **Martin Design Partnership** of Batavia, Illinois, and the sod came courtesy of **Dunteman Turf Farms** of Kaneville, Illinois. On a rainy, icy, and just plain nasty December 1st, a group of MAGCS volunteers descended upon the Aurora address and got really muddy

sodding the lawn just before the ice and subsequent snow hit. If you missed out on the fun, there will still be some work to complete come springtime—give Michael Heustis or Matt Breeden a jingle to find out the particulars.



Mike Heustis

This month on the 16th, the MAGCS meeting will be held at Green Garden Country Club in Frankfort with Renny Jacobson hosting. The education for the day will be something we all should be interested in—CPR/AED Training provided by the Frankfort Fire Department. Completion of this program will update your 2-year certification for both CPR and AED, which are eligible for GCSAA education points.

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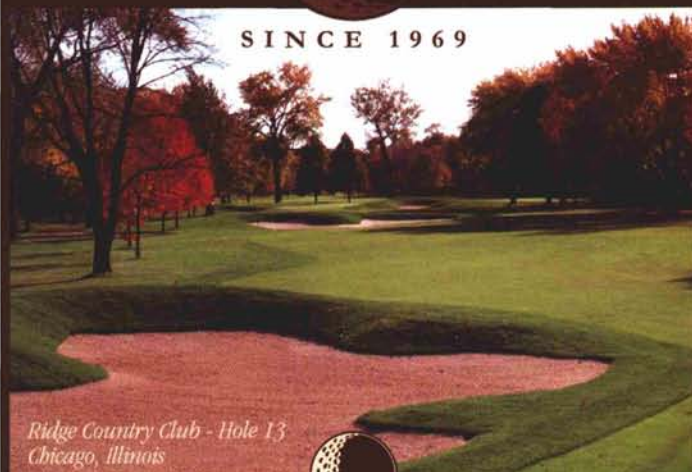
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Congratulations to Kyle Jacobson, former assistant superintendent at Butler National Golf Club on being named the new golf course superintendent at Twin Orchard Country Club. Kyle is an Iowa State University graduate who was the first assistant at Whistling Straits Golf Course during the PGA Championship, after which he moved to Nebraska to build the Jack Nicklaus Dismal River Club before joining **Mike Sauls** at Butler. Best of luck to you, Kyle.

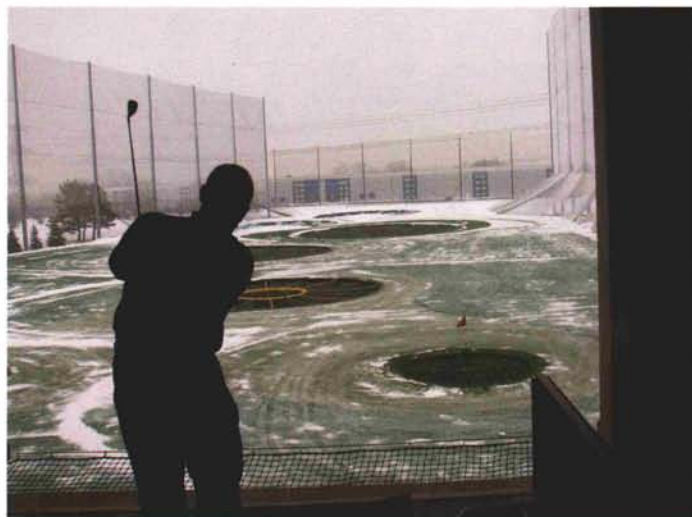
This news comes from Bruce Williams: **Robert M. Williams**, a former president of MAGCS and GCSAA, winner of GCSAA's Distinguished Service Award, inductee into the Illinois PGA's Hall of Fame, and the man responsible for naming both the *Bull Sheet* and *On Course* magazine (just to list a few of his accomplishments) has taken up residence with his caregiver. At 93 years young, Bruce says Bob is looking great and in fine spirits, but has slowed down enough to require more attention than assisted living could provide him. Bob's new address is 40899 Nevelier Drive, Antioch, IL 60002. Drop Bob a line, or stop on in if you're in the neighborhood—he'd love to hear from his MANY old friends.

Here's a new one: The *Toronto Sun* ran a story in November about Keith Rasmus, the 42-year-old superintendent of the venerable Scarboro Golf and Country Club and his recent dismissal from the club. It seems Rasmus had informed management (with 3 months notice) that he'd be taking 9 months off from his job to spend time with his new baby son—a paternity leave of absence. The club responded the day before his leave was to begin by informing Rasmus that his contract would not be renewed when it expires next fall. While the club insists that its decision had nothing to do with Rasmus' request for paternity leave, he disagrees, citing that just a few months before being given his walking papers, he had been given 90% of his eligible bonus, and has had nothing but favourable (spelled like they do in Toronto) reviews ever since becoming superintendent in 1993. He now has launched a civil lawsuit against the club seeking \$825,000 in damages, while he has also cut his leave short and is back on the job in what he describes as an "uncomfortable" situation. No kidding?!?

Remember SuperNEWS? That was the magazine that then became *TurfNet* the Magazine last year. Well, you have seen the last of it in all of its print forms—after its December, 2007 issue, *TurfNet* will discontinue publication of the magazine and focus solely on online products in 2008 and the future.

The annual holiday party circuit was in full throttle last month with the 2 mainstays providing MAGCS members with the opportunity to get away from work for a while and visit with friends. The Annual Southside Superintendents Party was held on December 3rd at Chef Klaus Bier Stube in Frankfort, featuring the old-world atmosphere and cuisine for which it is famous. Many thanks to Eddie Esgar and Keith Peterson for making all the arrangements once again. The following week saw the West Side Superintendents Holiday Party take its act to a new venue. The Salt Creek Golf Course and Top Golf hosted the party, which included

lunch and refreshments followed by games in the new \$9 million facility. If you get bitten by the golf bug this winter, check out Top Golf—it is truly unique, and a great way to spend an afternoon. Thanks to Gary Hearn and Don Ferreri for putting it all together, and to Growing Solutions for providing the beanbag games.



West Side Superintendent Partygoers tee it up at Salt Creek Golf Course's Top Golf facility.



Can you hear the laughs now? Ed Braunsky and Jim Burdett share a few.



Who needs Dave and Buster's? We bring our own games to the party. Gary, can you get them to raise the ceiling?