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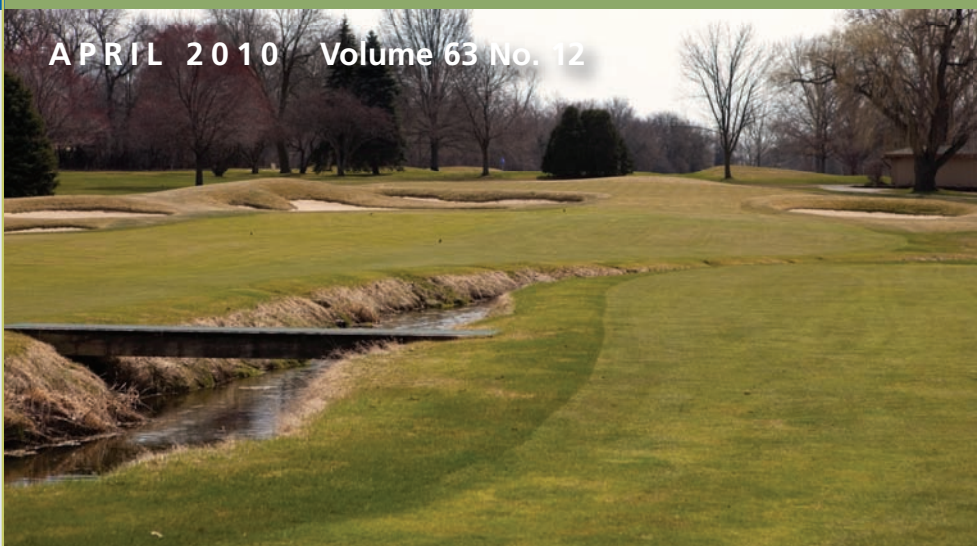
**GRAPHIC ARTIST**

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**FRONT COVER**

Looking back from the green on the straight away first hole at Joliet Country Club, a par 4 of 415 yards.  
Photo credit: Luke Cella

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The Midwest Association of Golf Course Superintendents (MAGCS), founded December 24, 1926, is a professional organization whose goals include preservation and dissemination of scientific and practical knowledge pertaining to golf turf maintenance. We endeavor to increase efficiency and economic performance while improving and enhancing the individual and collective prestige of the members.

The MAGCS member is also an environmental steward. We strive to uphold and enhance our surroundings by promoting flora and fauna in every facet in a manner that is beneficial to the general public now and in the future.

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## DIRECTOR'S COLUMN

Sharon Riesenbeck, Waupaca Sand & Solutions



# ♪ Sentimental Journey ♪

*In case you didn't know it, there is not an official song about San Diego. It came as a surprise to me since it is such a beautiful city. Great weather, great downtown, a lot of history, and from what I heard, a great place to have the GIS show.*

My annual article usually summarizes the specifics of the Hospitality Suite, but I do not know how many beers, wines, or hard drinks were consumed at this year's event, and I'm not even sure if everyone found the place! This much I know: everyone that attended said it was one of the best venues. We can all thank Luke Cella for the location as he selected it and, as usual, did a great job. I am sad that I missed one of my favorite events of the year. You get to see EVERYBODY. You can talk all night if you want to!

I won't bore you with the details, but I got sick during the GIS. To make it interesting, it happened while I was walking to the Conference Center with my new boss, Jed Owen. I am so grateful that Jed and my co-worker, Ellen Davis, were both at my side when it hit as they escorted me back to my hotel room. That is where I stayed for the remainder of the week.

I made some phone calls to good colleagues who gladly covered the event in my absence. A big "THANK YOU!" to the following guys who stepped up to the plate: Scott Witte, Luke Cella, Mike Matchen, Rick Becker, Kevin DeRoo, Colin White, Tony Kalina, Bruce Schweiger, Mike Murphy, Erwin Mckone, John Gurke, Garry Anderson, Tim Snell, Joe Etten, and Joel Purpur's "Nick's" (that is - Marfise and Walters). I knew that the event was in good hands, and if I failed to mention someone, I certainly apologize.

So back to the song that I want to dedicate to San Diego:  
**Sentimental Journey\***

---

♪ "Gonna take a Sentimental Journey,  
Gonna set my heart at ease. Gonna make a  
Sentimental Journey to renew old memories.  
...Never thought my heart could be so  
yearny. I've Gotta take that Sentimental  
Journey" ♪

---

As many of you know, it is time for me to relinquish my position as the MAGCS Commercial Advisor. But I will not disappear. I am going to concentrate my volunteer efforts, which my company-Waupaca Sand-wholeheartedly supports, on philanthropic organizations such as the Wee One Foundation; we want to be there for you.

I have absolutely loved my experience serving the Association. Everyone should try it once! The camaraderie is contagious. Maybe I am naïve, but I am fascinated with you "GOLF GUYS." Keep in mind, I have only worked in "male dominated" industries:

- Farming
- Greek Restaurants
- Railroads
- Golf

Each one of these industries had its own challenges and its own "network." I really thought "railroaders" were the tightest bunch of guys. They encompass very similar ideals to the golf course industry: quality product, quality service, and helping out your "brothers" when they call. This is so true for golf and I am so impressed with all you have to do and all you have to know!

---

♪ "Got my bags, got my reservations...  
Like a child in wild anticipation, I long  
to hear that, 'All Aboard!' ...Never  
thought my heart could be so yearny.  
Gotta take that Sentimental Journey,  
Sentimental Journey home." ♪

---

With a tear in my eye, I just want to extend my heartfelt thanks to all the Board Members that I have worked with over the years. Thank you for letting me be a small part of your journey. -OC

*\*Sentimental Journey, published in 1944, was written by Les Brown and Ben Homer, lyrics by Bud Green.*

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and your course staying **Green**



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## FEATURE I

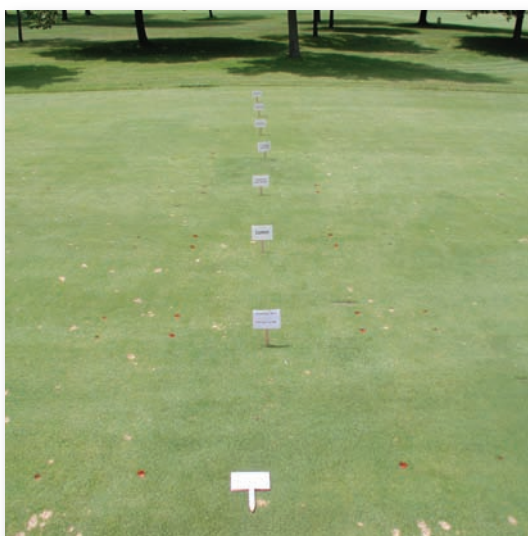
Dan Dinelli, CGCS, North Shore Country Club



# Going Brown, a Poor Message

*Just when the world is appreciating the concept of "green," our industry seems to want to go brown! When it comes to golf, the newly coined phrase, "brown is beautiful," concerns me. The idea is being sold based on the assumption that "brown" turf requires fewer inputs, saves money, is better for the environment, and plays better. A few key issues will drive this topic for some time to come. The industry is trying to break itself from the "Augusta effect," where all plants are growing beautifully, and the look of perfection is seen in all elements within the landscape. "Over grooming is over spending," is the phrase often associated with Augusta-like conditions. Some golfers enjoy the beautified landscape enhanced with flowers and shrubs. Others feel it detracts from the purity of the game. The fact is most budgets can't afford the intensity of care golf-scapes like Augusta's require. In many areas around the country, the drive to "go brown" is about water conservation and restrictions. In other areas the concern is water quality and the application of inputs, such as Nitrogen and Phosphorous. Many scientific studies have concluded that inputs, when used properly, pose extremely low risks on turf. However, governing bodies often overlook these studies and propose broad bans. The expense in over-seeding dormant turf is another driving force behind the idea that brown is good. Lastly, many of the better golfers enjoy the dry, firm and fast surface that thinning turf offers, because it is similar to the courses where the game originated. Regardless of the reasons driving this new trend, I feel it threatens long-term revenues, playability, the health of the facility, and the environment.*

The challenge with "brown is beautiful" or "brown is the new green" is that it can work in certain areas and be devastating in others. Yes, one can argue that over-seeding dormant turf in order to maintain the green look is spending money poorly. The game can be played on dormant turf, and the grass will grow again when conditions are favorable. There are grasses that can survive when pushed into dormancy, like the Bluegrass common in Midwest lawns and prevalent in our inner roughs. During hot, dry summers, un-irrigated rough often turns brown and gets very thin. Unless the stressful growing conditions become extreme, the turf can still be playable. However, these are the areas where we actively fight weeds and have to make turf repairs. The problem is, not all



grasses tolerate dormancy; some, like *Poa annua*, simply die. Bentgrass tolerates some brief level of dormancy, but typically dies under the added stress of putting green conditions. The variability in tolerance to stress and seasonal hardiness within turf species is confusing to the non-professional. Much of what a turf professional learns is directly related to preventing brown, stressed turf during the growing season. It has been documented that healthy, growing turf is the best defense against many pests, diseases, weeds, and wear. Typically, the grasses used in our climate on greens, tees, and fairways are *Poa annua* (considered a weed by many because it lacks winter and summer hardiness and invades the turf with its prolific seed production) and bentgrass.

*(continued on page 7)*

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We try to favor bentgrass because it is a hardier species that tolerates weather extremes better than Poa, but Poa eventually becomes part of the turfgrass stand. These grasses, when starved for both water and nutrients, become stressed and vulnerable to some potentially devastating diseases. We are reminded of this from time to time during stressful growing conditions. Rumors quickly circulate when turf dies in key playing areas at a course. Turf loss can compromise membership retention, playability, rounds played, revenues, and the course's overall reputation.

Sustainability is another buzz word used a lot today. In our climate, with the grasses that we use, turf that continues to grow and function offers sustainable playing conditions. Stressed "brown turf" will not be capable of tolerating wear from play over time. The stand of turf will thin, allowing the surface to turn into barren soil. The potential short-term savings in going brown will be offset when additional resources are required to bring these areas back to healthy, playable turf.

Healthy, actively growing turf, which is defined by the plants' ability to photosynthesize and characterized by green color, offers far more environmental benefit than "brown" turf. The plants ability to cool the surface, filter the water and air, and anchor the soil is greatest when the turf is healthy and active.

The current economy is straining maintenance budgets. As the industry responds and budgets are reduced, golf-scapes will change at many courses. In the big picture, some feel the change will be better for the game because it will lower the cost and make golf affordable for more people. I have seen standards change during my career. We now have sophisticated irrigation systems that almost mimic rain rather than the old, manual quick-coupler systems. Mowing heights on greens, tees, and fairways are less than half of what they were just three decades ago. This has been driven by the quest for fast, firm playing conditions. Managing these ultra-low mowing heights requires a fleet of equipment, an arsenal of inputs, and an army of staff to monitor the turf's life support systems, which mimic an intensive care unit. Bunkers, once considered hazards, now receive a level of attention that rivals what we give to finely managed turf. Some insist that golfer demand drove these changes. Others think it was superintendents demonstrating their skills. Regardless of what instigated the changes, these high standards are challenging our budgets today.

The key is balance. We must balance the turf's health, playability, economics, and environmental concerns to meet reasonable expectations and function. In short, this is what Superintendents are trained to do. The millions of dollars spent in research to better understand and manage turf's ecology and improve its playability are wasted when plant health is ignored. The training, tools, and resources that allow practitioners to grow healthy turf have little value when plant function is allowed to fail. "Going brown" in our climate is misunderstood. I feel it is a poor message that could lead to unattractive consequences for the golf course. -OC



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# Sometimes the Good Guys Win

*The Friday of Memorial Day 2008 started out like any other day. I show up for work, assign daily jobs and send the crew to work. That was exactly how my day was going until I got the first call about a cart in a lake. My first thought was the safety of the crew member who happened to drive in. As I am on my way, I receive a call from my foreman about a cart in the native grass. At this point I realize this is too much of a coincidence, and something is wrong.*

Fast forward an hour or so. We have five different carts that have been pulled out of either a lake or a native area. All had been destroyed by vandalism. Greens had been driven over; flag sticks had been broken and stolen; and numerous signs had been destroyed.

You can imagine the headache this creates; I was not prepared to do sod work and get the tractor and chains out that particular weekend. While the crew is working putting the courses back together, I am busy with the Lake County police, putting together a police report as well as taking pictures of the damage – something that you don't learn in school or on the job.

The most difficult part was the feeling of helplessness. Ivanhoe is a course surrounded by homes; this sort of vandalism could happen any day or night. How can you protect yourself from something like this? It was frustrating to have no other option but to file a police report and wait for the justice system to run its course.

This was not the way I wanted to start my first summer, not to mention Memorial Day, at Ivanhoe. Our focus quickly shifted from setting the course for a large day of golf to removing carts from areas where they didn't belong and putting the course back to normal so nobody would notice. This is one of those stresses that we've all heard about but hope never to experience.

Unfortunately for Ivanhoe, we experienced it again. The next weekend, it all happened again. Carts that were damaged a week ago were taken out again. The same people who had taken the carts the first time saved the keys and used them again.

The same damage was repeated. Six different greens were driven over, numerous flag sticks were broken, flags were stolen, and countless tee markers were missing. Again the feeling of sheer helplessness hit me. I thought I had told the police who was causing the damage in my first report. Now it was happening again. The anger and panic were a little overwhelming.

We ran into a little luck on the second incident, as crazy as that sounds. Outside the home of the suspected vandal,

we found a receipt for a case of Coors Light — the same beer we found in the carts after both incidents. To an amateur sleuth like me, this seemed like a slam dunk.

It was after the second incident that Justin VanLanduit (Briarwood CC) contacted me to inform me that Paul Voyken (Briarwood CC) was a close personal friend of the Lake County Sheriff. After asking Justin for help, he asked Paul to do us a favor and put in a call to his friend, the Sheriff. Soon after speaking with Justin, I was on the phone with the Lake County Sheriff. Unbeknownst to me, he is a huge golfer. His exact words were, "there is nothing I hate more than vandalism on a golf

course, whatever I can do to help, consider it done." A day or two went by. I was contacted by the Sheriff again and told I should be receiving a call from a detective that day. Now I felt like something was getting done, real progress.

No more than 30 minutes after hanging up with the Sheriff, I was on the phone with Gianni Giamberduca, Lake County detective. He came out to Ivanhoe to inspect the damage. We rode around the course. He wanted to see the

(continued on page 11)



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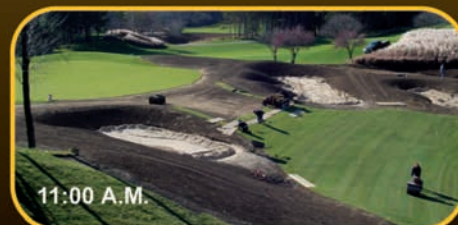


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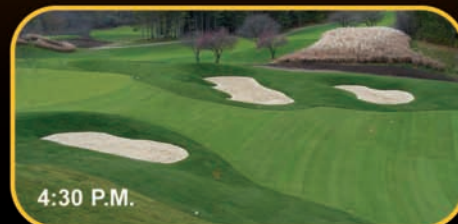
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