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AUGUST 2011 Volume 65 No. 4



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FRONT COVER

It is hard to believe that Bowes Creek Country Club is located in Elgin with many of the views the course offers. Highlighted on the cover are the bunkers with Fine Fescue faces that create a striking backdrop on each hole. 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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Let's Talk About the Weather

We are just hitting the dog days of 2011 and already this year has left a few bite marks. A cold wet spring, a cycle of rainy weekends followed by heat and then heat and humidity, roll a few epic storms into the pot and that's 2011 to date. Only a few weeks to go until that magic date in August that most have imbedded into their brains when the days are noticeably shorter, the days are not quite as hot, the air seems to dry out and the stresses of summer turn into aerification schedules and project timetables.

The one good piece of news in all of this, is that people are beginning to play golf again. After such a slow start this spring, many wondered if people would even take their clubs out of winter storage and maybe skip the whole 2011 season altogether. In talking with a few members, it seems rounds are up lately, even outings are making a comeback.

The weather is an easy item to talk about – it is something we all have in common immediately. If you are alive today (and don't live in a plastic bubble or a space station) you most likely experienced the weather to some degree. How we relate to the weather is very personal and depends upon our interaction with it. I have to be honest, some days, my only interaction with the weather is walking from my office to my car. Sometimes, I might even roll down the window of my car and hang an arm out to really get the full effect of what it is doing outside before I create my own artificial environment.

As golf course superintendents, the weather is it. Just about every process that you go through each day is driven by the weather, so when you hit a stretch like this July – the days can meld together into one long sweaty, sticky mess.

One superintendent summed up a few of his long days this summer when he explained, "you know when you go into the garage from the house in the morning....you know there is trouble ahead when you open the big garage door expecting to feel a rush of cool air from outside and there isn't one." Or... "when I'm laying in bed at night catching the 9 o'clock news report and the little scroll on the TV still reads 92 °F, I know it's going to be a short night."

Another superintendent told me he was glad he wasn't 27 again going through this, now past the 50 mark. He explained to me, it is one of those years, no matter what you do, turf is going to die. Too few roots, too much heat, too much humidity, too much rain....you name it, some *Poa* is checking out and taking the rest of the summer off.

The weather is not going to go away, it will only offer you new challenges, that in the end, you will find a way to overcome.

Still another can tell it is going to be a long day when the sun just looks hot at 5:30 in the morning. It has that glow about it....that you know, is only going to intensify as it climbs into the sky.

I've visited a couple of courses in the past weeks, a few, I've been fortunate enough to play. I saw a few trouble spots here and there, always associated with poor drainage and/or restricted air movement. I noticed these spots but didn't really see them. You see, I was playing our great game, and they just became part of it. One group that I played with are not in our business and never even noticed any turf trouble being too wrapped up in their game, the bet or enjoying the afternoon on the links. You've got the trained eye. Because you see a little thin turf, you think everyone else sees it... but I know now, you are the only one on the property that even takes notice of it. – That's your job, that's your profession and no matter how hard you try you can't ignore it. In time you will fix it, and make it better because you care.

The weather makes life interesting. Interesting might be the wrong word after this recent stretch that all of you have been going through. At the very least you all have that in common and it will definitely be something to talk about at the next MAGCS meeting on August 22 at Bowes Creek in Elgin – Brad Legnaioli, CGCS host. **-OC**

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FEATURE

Chuck Barber, *Indian Lakes Resort*

Repurpose

According to The Free Dictionary, the definition of "repurposing" is: "To use or convert for use in another format or product"

In essence it means to take a thing that was meant to do something specific and then to turn it into something else entirely. It could be argued that one of the most immediate, specific challenges golf course superintendents face is maintaining a new equipment rotation. Each golf facility has its own challenges economically. Finding the dollars to purchase new equipment in order to meet member and customer expectations can be difficult.

I was inspired to write about repurposing when I thought about using our 1999 Hyster Fork lift as a second equipment lift for golf cart and utility vehicle maintenance. Although I don't have a picture of it (sadly), our equipment technician here at Indian Lakes, Bryan Stephen, fabricated a sulky for our walk-behind John Deere lawn mower out of an old Yamaha golf cart axle with a banquet chair bolted to the frame. It wasn't pretty, but it worked. I am willing to bet that many of you can think of your own examples of repurposing the tools around you to be more efficient, to save on the cost of buying new equipment, or to realize a benefit from underutilized inventory.

John Gurke, CGCS of Aurora Country Club, turned an out-of-service utility vehicle into a creative flower display for the bathroom in the turf care facility. He turned one thing that had a specific purpose into something else altogether. He "repurposed" the heck out of it.



Mr. Gurke, whose creativity knows no bounds, didn't necessarily repurpose a Buffalo Turbine Blower, here, but he did modify it to address a challenge. John is blessed to have a terrific equipment technician, Nemanja Pavlovich, who is able to make his visions a reality.



At Indian Lakes Resort we were in desperate need of a trailer for our sod cutter. We found it was too heavy for standard utility trailers, and it was more difficult to get on to the trailer than it should have been. I didn't see the need to incur the expense of a new trailer. We already had our turbine blower on a 'skid' mount in a utility vehicle. The trailer was just sitting there. Dale Webb has been at Indian Lakes since before I was born (which I don't let him forget), and he is a pretty good fabricator. He pieced the sod cutter trailer together with parts and metal we already had in inventory. Now, getting our Ryan Jr. sod cutter around the property is WICKED easy.

(continued on next page)



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Terry Buchen, traveling agronomist, put this out in July, 2007, in his "Travels with Terry" column. The superintendent of Admiral's Cove Golf Club in Jupiter, Florida, saw a need to blow clippings and debris early in the morning, but without making too much noise. Apparently, people living on a golf course means you can't make noise in maintaining the course. Who knew? At any rate, equipment technician Jim Matis fabricated a hydraulic motor to power the turbine. The hydraulic drive is very near silent and just as powerful as its gasoline incarnation. I really like this one.

Mike Sauls of Butler National Golf Club is no stranger to repurposing either. Mike saw a need to get sod onto a trailer and into the field quickly, while having as light a footprint as possible. Mike, assistant Corey Kuhl, and equipment technician extraordinaire, Salvador Cerritos, fashioned a flat-bed truckster from an out-of-service Smitcho 300 gallon spray rig. Now the sod can go from the truck to the field quickly and without tracking too badly.

These are just a few examples. If any of you out there in the field have a good repurposing example, by all means, send it on. **-OC**



Ron McCarthy, golf course superintendent of Edgewood Valley Country Club in LaGrange, uses lots of water soluble products in his fertilizer program. He and his assistants, Brian Stout and Tyler Dykstra, fashioned a couple of mix tanks out of old sprayer tanks, hoses, filters, and pumps. I couldn't hope to explain how it all works, but I'm sure Ron could. This system allows the Edgewood Valley crew to load up a tank of fertilizer in about five minutes. Building both tanks this way saved roughly 50% of the cost of one new tank.



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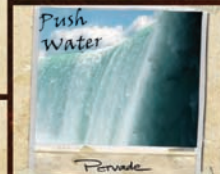
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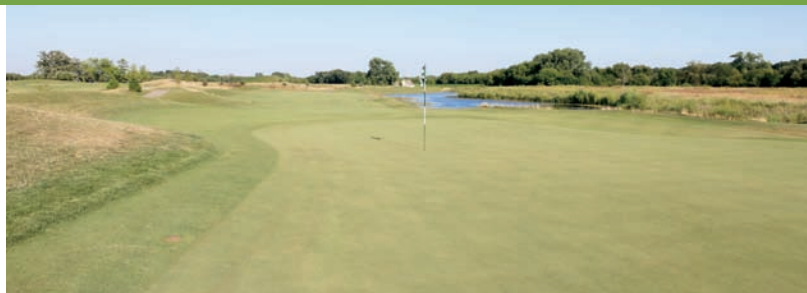
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Shane Conroy, *Park Ridge Country Club*



Brad Legnaioli -N- Bowes Creek Country Club

Most of us know that maintaining an 18-hole golf course is a full-time job in itself. Maintaining two 18-hole golf courses and a 9-hole golf course can take on an entire life of its own. For Brad Legnaioli, CGCS the superintendent of the City of Elgin's three golf courses, Wing Park, The Highlands and this month's host of the MAGCS Golf Championship, Bowes Creek Country Club, it's just another day at the office.

Bowes Creek Country Club, set in an expansive residential development in Elgin, gives you a wow factor as soon as you step onto the first tee. With its rolling fairways, native tall fescue areas, and its signature "eyebrow'd" lipped bunker faces, you see the best the land has to offer. You can't help but take it the scenery while you are out on the course playing your round or visiting the property. Fast forward to the 18th, a fantastic finishing hole, and even if you didn't score the way you wanted to that day, you will still appreciate the view this tee box has to offer. All this is a testament to Brad and his staff and the work they put in to keep Bowes Creek ranked in the top 10 of *Golfweek's* Best "Courses You Can Play in Illinois" list of 2011.

Bowes Creek was designed by another MAGCS member, Rick Jacobson, and opened for play in September 2009. Brad was there to oversee the grow-in of the course and that brought some challenges. Due to the steep slopes found on the property, some areas were prone to washouts during the seeding stage. However, with the help of some favorable weather and Brad's experience they were able to produce a healthy stand of turf. The summer of 2010 was especially rough on some of the young turfgrass plants. Brad and his crew nonetheless came out in good shape. Since then Brad and his staff have made some improvements on the course. He has expanded a few tee boxes, re-constructed a couple of pond banks and added native grasses and plants along other pond banks on the property. He has also added fans on two of the greens due to stagnant air caused by the many numerous trees that surround the greens.

Brad was also in charge of the grow-in at The Highlands of Elgin Golf Course during the grow-in of Bowes Creek. Both grow-ins took place during the 2008-09 seasons. The grow-in at The Highlands took place on the new quarry nine

holes which opened over the July 4th weekend in 2010. The course offers golfers a links style golfing experience. The biggest challenge there, he says, was the fact that the nine holes were built on an old quarry where there was very little usable soil. To compensate for this, 130,000 cubic yards of topsoil were brought in to help make the soil more suitable for turf. The Highlands (stop me if I sound like a broken record) is also in the *Golfweek's* "Top 10 Places to Play in Illinois" list of 2011, coming in fourth. The Highlands is the busiest course of the three, taking in almost 30,000 rounds a year. Brad is happy with the high rankings and credits his foremen and staff as the true reason the courses made the list. He knows the city of Elgin takes pride in having the two courses in their own backyard. Brad explained the grow-ins were a great experience and enjoyed working with the architects and planning commissions during the process. Conducting and completing two grow-ins simultaneously has filled his desire to go through another anytime soon.

The third course Brad oversees is Wing Park Golf Course. Wing Park is the oldest municipal course in Illinois, dating back to 1908. Brad only has two full-time employees on hand at Wing Park, and one part-timer.

The part-time employee comes in and mows greens, while full-timers are responsible for mowing fairways, collars and rough. Occasionally if there is need to bring on more staff to Wing Park, Brad "borrows" one or two from his other courses to fill the void.

When not on the 45 holes he maintains, Brad enjoys spending time with his wife Lisa, his daughter Brooke and his son Nick. He is also involved in both Nick and Brooke's sporting commitments. He coaches his son Nick's football team and his daughter Brooke's basketball team. He didn't however reveal their records. **-OC**



Brad with son Nick and daughter Brooke this past year in Florida.