

The Bull Sheet

John Gurke, CGCS, Associate Editor



AUGUST 2013

Dates to Remember

August 13 - 7th Annual Sunshine Through Golf Foundation White Sox Fundraiser at U.S. Cellular Field in Chicago, IL.

August 19 - University of Illinois Turfgrass Field Day in Urbana, IL.

August 20 - Deadline for applications to attend the fifth Syngenta Business Institute on the campus of Wake Forest University in Winston-Salem, N.C.

August 26 - MAGCS monthly meeting at Crystal Lake Country Club, **Steve VanAcker** host.

September 16 - 10th Annual Wee One Foundation Outing at Pine Hills Country Club in Sheboygan, WI

September 16 - Deadline to apply for Green Site status through the Groundwater Foundation.

September 9-15 - PGA Tour's BMW Championship at Conway Farms Golf Club in Lake Forest, IL, **Chad Ball, CGCS** and **Connor Healy** hosts.

October 7 - MAGCS monthly meeting at Chicago Highlands Club in Westchester, IL, **Michael Heustis** and **William Sharp** hosts.

October 15 - Deadline for GCSAA's Excellence in Government Relations Award nominations.

Welcome to the following new MAGCS members, and the best of luck to them!

Mr. **Patrick Karnick**, Wadsworth Golf Construction, Class A
Mr. **John Jensen**, Reinders, Inc., Class E
Mr. **Paul Burger**, Green Source, Inc., Class E



lines, and I think he might be related to Zorro. But I'm straying from my point. This is what I want to do to EVERY SINGLE GNAT ON THE PLANET.

Please forgive this vent. This is a gnat. This is how my guy Hector keeps gnats from going in his mouth. And nose. And eyes. And ears. Hector doesn't mow very straight



"I wanna pull a Dennis Farina -may he rest in peace - and blowtorch 'em."

You know what? I'm still not satisfied—I want complete annihilation of the species. I demand nothing less than this.

Come to think of it, that isn't quite severe enough



I want to do the ol' Al Pacino thing and take a FLAMETHROWER to 'em.



Ok, I'm better now.

Congratulations to Ed Greve of Highland Woods Golf Club, who was named runner-up in TurfNet's 2013 Technician of the Year contest presented by Toro.

This month on the 12th, Billy Casper Golf will host the 3rd Annual World's Largest Golf Outing benefitting the Wounded Warrior Project. One hundred percent of donations and five percent of every entry fee will be donated to WWP. Last year over \$400,000 was raised, and this year's goal is to exceed the half-million mark. The Chicago-area courses participating are Chick Evans (**Daniel Lopez** supt.), George Dunne (**Jeremy Turton** supt.), Highland Woods (**Dan Stahl** supt.), Indian Boundary (Ryan Gilmore supt.), Orchard Valley (**Matt Senatra** supt.), River Oaks (**Jerry Cotton** supt.), Waters Edge (**Jay Lemanski** supt.), and Whisper Creek (**Brian Broman** supt.). Nice work for a great cause, guys!

Congratulations to Laura and **Craig Shepherd** on the birth of their baby boy Holden Alexander Shepherd on July 6th. Holden was a healthy, happy 8 lbs. and 21" long, and has already begun running with daddy.



"Poopy diaper! change me dammit!"

Wanna win a million bucks the hard way? All you need to do is make a hole in one. From the edge of a cliff where you hit down to a green a mere 1,410 feet below. To try, you need to get yourself to South Africa. Next, you have to go to the Legends Golf and Safari Resort (two things that go together like chocolate and peanut butter) and plop down \$1,060 which includes the helicopter ride to the tee, a souvenir cap, glove and DVD of you playing the hole. After that, it's pretty simple—walk to the edge of the cliff, tee up and hit your ball, and wait the 30 seconds it takes for it to land, and hope it goes in (they'll radio up with the results). FYI, nobody has done it, but Padraig Harrington HAS made par on the hole.



John Deere Golf and the First Tee have launched a "Careers in Golf" program, whereby teen-aged participants at three First Tee chapters (locally held this month at Cog Hill Golf & Country Club in Lemont) get the chance to explore several aspects of a career in golf course management and the science of agronomy. The other two locations are TPC Boston (held in June), TPC Sugarloaf near Atlanta in July. Two participants from each chapter get to shadow a superintendent preparing for a PGA Tour event, meaning Chad Ball at Conway Farms will have a couple of extra helpers next month. This program is part of Deere's \$1 million commitment to the First Tee. If you'd like to help out, please contact Luke Cella.

This story makes no sense, since it is blatantly obvious that smart people do not play golf. The headline—"Mensa Members Share Their Top Ten Favorite Golf Courses"—says it all. I thought **Chuck Barber** was the only Mensa member who golfed, but I was wrong. Their favorite? Augusta National. Chicago Golf Club in Wheaton (**Scott Bordner** supt.) was 7th on the list, so our area has that feather in its cap.

Another group of smart folks has come out with its top courses list, too. The American Society of Golf Course Architects posted its Top 100 Golf Courses in the latest issue of Golf Course Architecture magazine, and it included a couple of tracks from our area. Chicago Golf was ranked 42nd, while Shoreacres (**Brian Palmer** supt.) was 74th. **Dave Groelle, CGCS, Tim White, and Brian York** should also be proud, as their courses NAMES were also included in the list; however, I'm going to go out on a limb and guess that the Royal Melbourne, Prestwick, and St. Andrews cited were not the ones in our neck of the woods.

We've found it! Something as old as **Eddie Braunsky, CGCS** that still works on the golf course.



Q: What is **Vince Dodge's** favorite band?

A: The Wilderness at Fortune Bay City Rollers.

Ever wonder why **Eric Reed** doesn't make deliveries on Sundays in the fall? I've heard through the grapevine he's been moonlighting with the Stillers (aka Pittsburgh Steelers) delivering the spheroid to receivers and tight ends.

Continued on page 14



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MIDWEST Doppelgänger



Here's a really cool story from **Scott Witte, CGCS**—"The Cantigny Golf Bee Barometer Project" has gone global. What began as a modest gift of three bee suits and two smokers (me either) to an ambitious school in Ghana, Africa, has become the start of an exciting relationship with student beekeepers intent on self-sustaining practices for their school. The Awutu-



Winton Bee Club, though under-resourced, is passionate about honeybees and their ability to provide a profit center for sustenance. The kids have written very eloquent thank you letters to Cantigny, and the project is a complete and far-reaching success.



Our monthly **Dan Dinelli, CGCS** item features his latest hobby. We all know that Dan has many passions outside of the turf industry,

from snowmobiling to falconry. Now Dan can proudly call himself a Walrus Whisperer as well. Actually, Dan got to chat with Craig Stadler after his victory at the Encompass Championship about the 18-footer the



Walrus made on the final hole to get the win at North Shore Country Club on June 23rd. By the way, great work by Dan, **J.D. Dinelli**, the NSCC staff and all the MAGCS volunteers for putting on one heckuva show for that event—the tournament was fantastic, and the course received nothing but raves from all the players.

These two guys met in 1958 at Bob O'Link Golf Club. **Bruce Williams** was 8 years old and "Speedy" Lipari was a sales rep with Upjohn. They are still enjoying golf together 55 years later at Saticoy Country Club in California where Kurt Desiderio was their host.



Speaking of a group getting together, the ITF and Northwest Illinois Golf Course Superintendents held a meeting at Short Hills Country Club in Moline this past month. A few of our members reunited apparently on the feeder course from the quad cities to the MAGCS. Pictured below: Mike and **Matt**



Senatra, Jeff VerCautren, and Shane Ritchie. Not pictured, but made the leap from Short Hills: **Mike Vercautren, Jeff Scott, Dave Behm, Jeff Plasschaert, and Jake Mendoza,** anyone else work at this gateway club?

Our members are finding ways to get the word out, as evidenced by the various publications with their stories in them. From TurfNet's Blog Aggregator we heard from **Steve Cook, CGCS, MG** at Oakland Hills Country Club in Michigan about his hands-on green committee meetings where members learn to change cups, rake bunkers, mow and roll greens, and other procedures we do on a daily basis in our jobs. **Shane Conroy** at Park Ridge Country Club blogged about irrigation system leaks during wet periods (like we experienced the first six months of this year), while **Tim Christians** chimed in on his favorite new toy, the TDR moisture sensor. In Golf Range magazine, Mistwood Golf Club's (**Ben Kelnhofer** supt.) new Performance Center was featured on the cover, which is just one of the many improvements that have been recently made to the facility. Also, in GCM, **Ed Nangle, Ph.D.**, the new Director of Turfgrass Program at Golf House was featured in the Insider section (pg. 38) of the July, 2013 issue.



The Melrose Leadership Academy offers the opportunity for any Class A member who has been so for at least 5 years and who hasn't attended the GCSAA Education Conference in the past 5 years to attend for free. Up to 20 scholarships will be awarded to qualified individuals provided they fill out the application and submit it by September 15th. They even throw in the hotel and some pocket money, so if you haven't gone to the Show in a while, this may be your ticket. Go to www.eifg.org and click on the Education tab or to www.gcsaa.org to find the Melrose Leadership Academy application tab.

It was recently announced that Richard Konzem, GCSAA's Chief Operating Officer since October, 2011 has resigned his position. Chief Executive Officer Rhett Evans made the announcement, stating, "I appreciate Richard's contributions to the association's operations and its members. We will miss him as a GCSAA team member, and wish him much success in his future endeavors."

There have been some schedule changes for the 2014 Education Conference and trade show set for February in Orlando. The Education Conference will be held Monday through Thursday, Feb. 3-6, while the trade show will take place on Wednesday and Thursday the 5th and 6th. The USGA Session—always a fan favorite—will become the General Session, taking place on Thursday the 6th at 8:00 a.m. The Golf Championship will begin one day earlier than last year, with no activities taking place on Friday.

By the way, the Midwest Hospitality Reception will take place on Wednesday, February 5 at Miller's Ale House on International Drive.


Nominations are open until October 15th for GCSAA's Excellence in Government Relations Award. Forms can be accessed at www.gcsaa.org.

As part of GCSAA's Chapter Outreach Grant Program, MAGCS has received a \$1,500 grant to develop a non-member digital version of On Course magazine. The idea is to communicate the value of our chapter and its members to other related organizations and interested individuals. There were a great many applicants--\$37,000 was requested from a pool of \$15,000—and MAGCS is very fortunate to have been selected.

On June 19th, Randall Oaks Golf Club and superintendent **Mike Sprouse** hosted the 13th Annual John Buck Memorial Golf Outing. The event, which raises money for both the MAGCS and the Kane County Farm Bureau scholarship funds, honors its namesake John Buck, one of the greatest men ever to grace our association.



Randall Oaks Superintendent, Mike Sprouse

The day was beautiful, and the golf course was in tremendous condition, and as usual, just about every hole had some type of side event for golfers to participate in, from bags to ball bazookas. Many thanks to Mike and his crew and the rest of the Randall Oaks staff, to all the lovely volunteers who ran the games, and to J.W. Turf for another great time. 

2013 John Buck Memorial Golf Outing





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Anticipating Acidovorax

Dr. Rick Latin, Turfmetrics

Summer has arrived, and so far, our weather has been a welcome departure from the past 3 years. The cool wet April and mild month of May were just what the doctor ordered in terms of growing grass. That's not to say the weather could not turn hot and dry during the months ahead. Before we get too far into the season of disease, I thought it would be worthwhile to give some thought to the threat of Acidovorax for 2013.

I will not review the history – especially because it was discussed in a GCM article in July 2012 and repeated in a GCI paper this past March. However, I am interested in reviewing some of the facts involved in this dilemma—with hopes that a solution will become obvious in terms of “doing more with less”.

The discussion should focus on two questions. The first question involves the presence of bacteria on our golf courses - and the second question depends on the answer to the first.

Question 1. How did Acidovorax become established on my

putting green?

Discussion 1. There are a limited number of ways that inoculum becomes established. It is either introduced (exotic) or it is local (endemic). A couple of the exotic explanations (bacteria introduced with thunderstorms or on golfers' shoes) are not very plausible, given what we know about the transmission of bacterial pathogens. A third possibility is the introduction of Acidovorax on infested grass seed. Many bacterial pathogens causing crop diseases are introduced with contaminated seed - so this is a really interesting possibility. However, none of the empirical evidence points to contaminated seed as the source in this case. The overwhelming likelihood is that Acidovorax is a natural part of the microbial population that inhabits root zones of our putting greens (and tee boxes, and fairways, etc.). In fact, a paper published in the early 2000's demonstrated that Acidovorax was present in all golf course soil samples tested. It



A symptom of Acidovorax was reported to create etiolated tillers on creeping bentgrass. Photo credit: Derek Settle.

“Since there are tens of thousands of species of microbes in every gram of soil, the likelihood that Acidovorax is among them is high - and the evidence is strong.”

makes total sense. Since there are tens of thousands of species of microbes in every gram of soil, the likelihood that *Acidovorax* is among them is high - and the evidence is strong.

So, let's stipulate that the pathogen is endemic. It is there today, as it was in 2010, and as it was in 1990 (for example) and always. Given that conclusion, the second question involves what has happened between, say 1990, and now that caused the damage associated with *Acidovorax*?

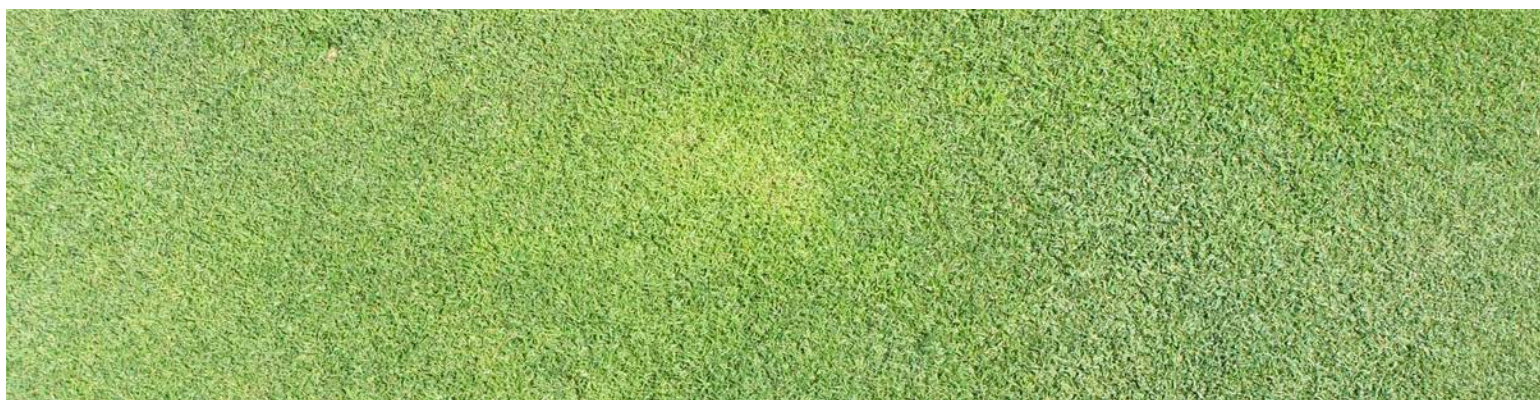
Question 2. If *Acidovorax* was always part of my putting green, then why did I only see over the past 3 years?

Discussion 2. There are three likely explanations. 1) damage did occur, but was masked by other problems, 2) the past three summers were unusually hot and/or dry, and 3) our management practices changed. The likelihood that we simply did not recognize the damage is possible—but given the severity of damage allegedly associated with *Acidovorax*, I think that

Perhaps the recent outbreaks of *Acidovorax* are associated with a “perfect storm” of stressful management practices coinciding with stressful environmental conditions?

What does that mean in terms of the *Acidovorax* threat for 2013? Of course we cannot change the weather, but we might be able to adjust management practices to relieve turf stress, and perhaps avoid a flare up if the weather does turn awful.

The discussion too often turns to what can be applied to prevent or mitigate damage associated with *Acidovorax*. Despite my contention that we should be doing less (raise HOC, perhaps reduce PGR, and generally avoid management related stress) the issue of remedial treatments must be addressed. There are few constants for our consideration. Conventional fungicides are not effective against bacterial pathogens. Antibiotics may reduce pathogen populations, but they are not legal and many trials show no effect. There is no evidence that biorationals (e.g.,



As the bacteria continues to infect, patches of etiolated/chlorotic bentgrass become apparent as pictured above.

explanation is weak compared to the other two. Also, there are no confirmed outbreaks in the US prior to 2009. Heat and/or drought prevailed in the eastern half of the US during the summers of 2010, 2011, and 2012. We know that this is a “stress” pathogen. The heat/drought stress helped create conditions for this opportunistic bacterial pathogen to parasitize plants to such an extent that it caused serious damage to turf.

There is no argument here, but some of us can recall other summers when heat and drought may have been worse (consider 1988 and 1995). Therefore, the argument that weather alone predisposed turf to infection is not as strong as we need to draw valid conclusions. Perhaps our management practices contributed to that stress? How is creeping bentgrass managed today compared to 1990? In the search for firm and fast playing surfaces, putting greens are mowed much closer now than they were 25 years ago. We also use growth regulators to reduce clippings and help increase green speeds. We probably fertilize less, and, during the construction boom of the 1990s and beyond, we adopted new creeping bentgrass cultivars that possess the dense, upright growth habit that requires aggressive grooming to reduce thatch accumulation - keeping playing surfaces firm. Other stress inducers include fungal root pathogens, nematodes, and factors that result in compaction.

Zerotol and Rhapsody) have any effect and biostimulants may actually aggravate the condition. Some evidence from attempts to control bacterial diseases of crops indicate that copper hydroxide will slow the spread of bacterial disease but can also be very phytotoxic to plants.

For courses where the disease was confirmed (by an appropriate lab) in years past, and where remedial treatments are part of the plan for 2013, I think products with “plant health benefits” are worth trying. Whatever you might apply, do not expect a miracle because research results have been inconsistent. Also, better results probably will be achieved if you make every effort to relieve turf stress from an agronomic perspective. Finally, I strongly urge you to create a “check plot” - an area (the larger the better) of untreated turf that can serve as a basis for comparison. The only way to truly learn the benefit you gain from any product is to compare it with untreated turf. @

Dr. Rick Latin is a Professor of Plant Pathology, Purdue University and the Principal of Turfmetrics, a golf course consulting company and a member of the Midwest.

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