

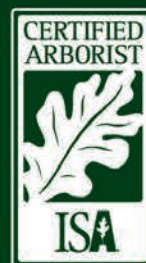


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Condolences to the family of **Bruce Woehrli** on the passing of Bruce's mother last month.

And our sympathies to **Chris Pekarek** of the Village Links of Glen Ellyn and his family on the recent passing of his father Lawrence L. Pekarek. Our thoughts are with you all.

Best wishes to **Mike Mumper** for a full recovery from back surgery which he underwent last month.

Mike has been seeking advice on the best rehab strategies from many of his closest friends who have gone through similar difficulties. Most recently, Mike

sought the sage advice of Gayle Sayers—a notorious fast healer—while he was rehabbing his back at Wrigley Field.



Have you hopped on the bug bandwagon? The one where you get these little Rolaid-sized pellets that have all kinds of microbes (so we are told) in them that you just throw in your pond and they eat all the sludge on the bottom? Ever try heaving 300 or so of them out to the middle of your pond? Holy Tommy John! There is an alternative to that pain and suffering, and it can be found at your local Walmart—works like a champ, and with practice (and a little luck) it does a pretty good job of ridding your water feature of geese, too.



The EIFG has announced two appointments to fill Board of Trustees vacancies for 2014. Bill H. Maynard, director of golf course management at the Country Club of St. Albans in St. Louis, MO and Darrell Crall, Chief Operating Officer for the PGA of America were named to the board at the organization's June meeting.

There have been some fun events in the last month at some great venues that hopefully you were able to enjoy. First, on June 30th, **Brian Racette** and Sand Creek Country Club hosted the Michiana Superintendents Golf Outing on a picture perfect day. What an aptly-named golf course! I believe every hole included some interaction with Sand Creek (or any of its many tributaries), and if you came to Chesterton, Indiana without an ample supply of golf balls, you were like me digging them out of the water just to be able to continue playing. That aside, Brian and his crew had the course in marvelous shape,


and it was a thoroughly enjoyable day. Several attendees opted to wait out the impending bow echo that the radar showed bearing down on them by enjoying a cold beverage at a local Mexican restaurant (outside on the patio, of course), where a new cocktail was discovered---the Indianarita. Many thanks to Brian and everyone at Sand Creek for their hospitality.



On July 10 the 2nd MAGCS 9-holer was held at the beautiful Woodstock Country Club, with Bob Kronn, Sr. serving as our host. What a golf course! Conditions were perfect, as anyone knowing Bob would expect; but what was unexpected to this first-time visitor to the property was how scenic and undulating the golf course was. Oh, and the width of the fairways! There was obviously a shortage of bentgrass seed when they were built—I've seen wider expanses in a "People of Walmart" photo collection than on Woodstock CC. The format was a 4-man team hi-lo, with each foursome recording its best and worst score combined on each hole. Not surprisingly, the team of Bob Kronn Sr., Bob Kronn Jr., Ed Fischer and Tim Davis won with an 81 (their average age). The post-golf feast was wonderful, too, with some down-home comfort food including some really fine ribs to send everyone home happy and full. Thanks to Bob and the staff at Woodstock, to the participants, and to the day's generous sponsors for a fantastic time.

And lastly, on July 21st the 14th Annual John Buck Golf Outing was held at the Highlands of Elgin with Brad Legnaioli, CGCS hosting. The event benefitted the John Buck Scholarship Fund, which is distributed to the Kane County Farm Bureau Foundation, the MAGCS Scholarship Fund, and the Northwest Illinois GCSA Scholarship Fund, and it included the usual fun and games throughout the course. The scramble format made



for a competitive day, with the team of (above) **Don Ferreri, Scott Witte, Luke Cella and Dave Kohley** besting the field on the immaculately conditioned golf course. A voluminous Mexican-themed buffet followed golf that was enjoyed by all in attendance. Thanks so much to everyone who helped run the event, and to Brad and the people at Highlands of Elgin for another great rendition of "the Buck." 



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2014 Actual			Proforma Projection	
%	\$	Revenue / Expense	\$	%
Revenue				
53.21%	\$26,350	Adult admissions	\$26,000	50.49%
6.86%	\$3,395	Teen admissions	\$4,000	7.77%
14.09%	\$6,975	Child admissions	\$7,000	13.59%
7.43%	\$3,680	Member purchased ball drop raffle tickets	\$6,000	11.65%
1.84%	\$910	Guest (cash) purchased ball drop raffle tickets	\$1,000	1.94%
8.77%	\$4,342	Member purchased beverage tickets	\$5,000	9.71%
1.53%	\$759	Guest (cash) purchased beverage tickets	\$1,000	1.94%
5.62%	\$2,785	Member (chit) purchases at the portable bar	\$500	0.97%
0.65%	\$321	Guest (cash) purchases at the portable bar	\$1,000	1.94%
100.0%	\$49,517	TOTAL Revenue	\$51,500	100.0%
Cost Of Goods Sold (COGS)				
12.80%	\$6,340	Food COGS	\$7,500	14.56%
3.94%	\$1,950	Beverage COGS	\$2,000	3.88%
16.74%	\$8,290	TOTAL COGS	\$9,500	18.45%
		Gross Profit		
83.26%	\$41,227	TOTAL Gross Profit	\$42,000	81.55%
Expenses				
		Payroll		
12.97%	\$6,420	Hourly staff (inclusive of OT pay)	\$7,000	13.59%
1.96%	\$970	Temporary labor	\$1,000	1.94%
14.92%	\$7,390	TOTAL Payroll	\$8,000	15.53%
		Other Expenses		
22.21%	\$11,000	Fireworks and permits	\$11,000	21.36%
7.25%	\$3,590	Tent Rental 40x100	\$3,600	6.99%
6.51%	\$3,225	Buffet Rentals	\$3,000	5.83%
14.08%	\$6,970	Other rentals (inflatables, snow cone, DJ, portable toilets, face painter, entertainment)	\$7,000	13.59%
3.99%	\$1,975	Paper supplies, plastic supplies, cups, stereo	\$2,000	3.88%
0.74%	\$365	Disposable table cloths	\$350	0.68%
2.91%	\$1,440	Event insurance	\$1,500	2.91%
4.24%	\$2,100	Ball drop payout	\$3,300	6.41%
0.80%	\$395	Helicopter rental	\$400	0.78%
0.85%	\$420	Ice	\$400	0.78%
0.27%	\$135	Event bracelets	\$200	0.39%
0.62%	\$305	Light tower rental	\$400	0.78%
1.26%	\$625	Dumpster rental	\$425	0.83%
0.00%	\$0	Refrigeration truck (vendor donation)	\$0	0.00%
0.64%	\$315	Mosquito control	\$300	0.58%
0.98%	\$485	Miscellaneous (sunscreen, bug repellent)	\$300	0.58%
67.34%	\$33,345	TOTAL Other Expenses	\$34,175	66.36%
99.01%	\$49,025	TOTAL Expenses (COGS + Labor + Other expenses)	\$51,675	100.3%
0.99%	\$492	INCOME / (LOSS)	(\$175)	-0.34%

Each event is one part of the portfolio of events at NCC. Detailed P&Ls help us to determine how they fit into overall budget and become planning tools for future occurrences.

policy that allowed us to cancel the event as needed if the on-course lightening detection system was activated. Incorporating an additional expense into an event that we had been battling

with for years may seem counter intuitive, but as the event had grown so had the costs. By 2013, the Fireworks Extravaganza was projected to cost \$48K. With this type of exposure, the additional cost of the insurance policy was a prudent decision. The policy premium was based on projected event revenue. Revenues were estimated at \$48k, so the premium for the policy was set at 3% or \$1,440.

“You can’t Manage What You Don’t Measure”

I am a strong believer in the saying “You can’t manage what you don’t measure”. As

a result, we routinely use event P&Ls to track the performance of individual events. This helps us to understand how the event works, and how we can manipulate the event to improve future performance

in the form of enhanced member experience, better financial performance, improved efficiency, and expense reduction.

As you can, see the cost of pyrotechnics represents the single largest expense associated with the event, accounting for 21.8% of available revenue. Stated a different way, if we have 1,000 participants, \$11.00 of each admission ticket would be required just to cover the cost of the show. Firework displays are like anything else, they range in quality and price. Displays should be spec’d out based on reputation and safety record of the company, duration of the show, shell count, and shell size. Our production crew has always recommended a show time of approximately 22 minutes. Their opinion is that if the show drags on too long the spectators lose interest. The NCC show is 22 minutes in length with a total of 1,600 shells ranging in size from 2 inch to 8 inch. That is about 1 shell every second. Larger diameter shells are available ranging in size from 10 to 16 inches, but shell sizes ties directly into setback distances and safety requirements. Reducing the length and quality of the show in an attempt to control expenses was always an option, but this would have diminished the member experience and impacted our ability to reach the “critical mass” of 1,000 participants. So we elected to focus on other techniques to influence the event.

Finally! - Success at last!

So how did the Fireworks Extravaganza pan out in 2014? The weather cooperated. We had a perfect day. The Show Stopper insurance policy was activated but went unused. 950 participants came out to enjoy the event. This was about 100 less than the year prior. We attribute this to a combination of people that were turned-off last year by the bad weather, and the corresponding adjustments that we made for 2014. Prices were increased slightly to account for the cost of the insurance policy



and beverages are no longer included in the event. Members purchase beverage tickets for \$2.00 each that can be redeemed for beer, house wine, soda, Gatorade, or bottled water. We also switched to wristbands for entry in to the festival area. Members were encouraged to pick up their wristbands in advance. Those that opted to pick up their wristbands the day of the event were directed to the "Will-Call" booth. The use of wrist bands allowed participants to move into the event without having to wait in lines, improving the member experience. It also required



80 Employees work to support the event, 700 hours are logged by hourly employees and all full-time staff are on hand.

less staffing at the registration booth which reduced labor costs. Also new for 2014, all member purchases were billed to member accounts. This increased efficiency and reduced billing issues. Cash boxes were available, but were only used to accommodate guests that wanted to purchase their own beverage or raffle tickets. Members and guests still had the option of purchasing raffle tickets to enter a 50/50 split the pot helicopter ball drop. Each raffle participant was assigned a golf ball with a number on it. We hire a helicopter to gather up all the golf balls and drop them over a target green in the driving range. The ball closest to the cup wins 50% of the pot (less the rental fee for the helicopter). This years' winner took home \$2,100, not bad for a



A private helicopter is rented to conduct the ball drop.

\$10 investment, and the Club gained \$2,100 in event revenue.

The other adjustment for 2014 was the sale of beverage tickets. In the past, beverages were included in the price of admission. As we studied the event P&L, it became apparent that to maintain an affordable price of admission and achieve our goal of breakeven or better, we would need to segregate out beverages and start to charge for drinks. In 2014 we sold 2,225 beverage tickets at \$2.00 each for a total of \$4,500 in additional revenue. In 2012 (the year prior to the rainout) we had 850 participants and beverages were included. That year we went through 24 kegs of beer. In 2014 we had 950 participants, beverages were not included, and we only went through 7 kegs of beer. The other item of interest was that in 2014, when we sold beverage tickets, we saw a significant increase in the number of drinks sold at the portable cocktail bar, specifically the sale of vodka/lemonades. Apparently, when the beer is included, members will drink beer and they are prone to consume and/or waste more product. When asked to purchase beverage tickets, they are more discerning and are willing to actually spend more to get their drink of choice.

So, after 5 years of evaluating and manipulating different aspects of our Fireworks Extravaganza, we finally solved the problem and pulled off a breakeven event. This may sound like a lot of effort for a single event (which it was), but a -\$22K (loss) in 2013 vs. a breakeven event in 2014 represents an improvement of \$22,000 to the bottom line. Keep in mind that over the last 5 years, all of the Club's social event have been evaluated using this same technique. The same is true for weddings, banquets, and golf outings.

The Fireworks Extravaganza is just one piece of a very large puzzle. In 2013, our F&B department operated at a profit of \$155K. That was inclusive of the \$22K loss on Fireworks. As a whole, we had managed our event portfolio well. Additional analysis allowed us to come up with a plan to mitigate a specific loss within the portfolio, thereby increasing our overall performance. In this case, it was not so much about increasing profits as it was alleviating a loss. Adjustment to the Fireworks Extravaganza has put the F&B department on track to operate at a profit of \$175K this year. This would represent a departmental profit margin of +10.5% compared to a margin of -7.0% in 2009. Stated another way, in 2009 every \$1.00 spent in the F&B department actually cost the Club \$1.07. This change represents an improvement of 17.5%.

Detailed analysis of each individual event in the Member Event Portfolio is just one step in structuring a successful F&B department. Remember – "you can't manage what you don't measure", records and event P&L's are critical to the process. For the most part, clubs view F&B to be an amenity used to enhance the experience and support the overall atmosphere at the Club, which attracts and retains members. Evaluating how to accomplish this goal in an efficient and cost effective manner is important. Close and constant management of our portfolios (member dining, member events, weddings, banquets, and golf outings) have been a critical step in this process, a step that has allowed the F&B department to operate in the black for 5 consecutive years. @

Agronomy in Flight

Bryan Stromme, Billy Casper Golf

On a flight last week, I sat in the back row near two flight attendants discussing how they couldn't understand why most people were in such bad moods on their flights.

So why would a customer dislike flying?

Think back to the last time you flew somewhere, the entire experience was one hassle after another. It all started with sitting in traffic to the airport, followed by the parking lot bus to a crowded tram which, of course, took you to the last terminal. Next, you stood in line to pay for your overweight bag. Then it was off to the line at security where you hoped a stranger didn't determine you needed "additional searching." Then you waited in another line to go through the gate, waited in the extremely cold or hot jet-way and finally waited in line on the plane to get to your tiny middle seat. You thought you were in the clear, but then you landed and had to wait for your bags, rental car shuttle and rental car.

And they were curious why someone would not enjoy flying?

In full disclosure, flight attendants don't get paid unless the door is shut and the flight is in progress. When there is a flight delay or cancellation, the staff sits there like most of us...stuck and not working.

This story made me think about the customer experience at the golf course. We, as superintendents, know all the necessary agronomic steps to create a great product, just like a flight attendant knows everything involved to get us safely from one place to another.

So the question we need to ask ourselves: are we also looking at our agronomic practices (flight process) from the guest's point of view?

Are we taking the extra step to ensure all the topdressing is brushed in, machinery moves out of the way for each group, hand watering is completed in a courteous manner, employees are acknowledging the guests...you get the point. All of our necessary cultural practices have the same effect on our guests when interrupting their round of golf as do the various processes at the airport.



Customer surveys take a few moments to fill out and can help retain players by allowing them to voice their concerns about the product we produce.

The golf industry is experiencing people having less time and opportunities to play each season. Golf course operators are not only competing against other courses, we are competing against all the demands for people's time including; family, work, vacations, reduced disposable income and everything else you can imagine. So when a person does get the opportunity to dedicate 4-6 hours to play our facility, we need to ensure each and every guest gets a great experience, no matter when he or she plays.

With the reduction of resources we are all experiencing; we know there is a necessity to complete cultural practices with guests on the course. But, as you create your plans for the upcoming year, ensure you view each maintenance practice from the guest's eye. Put yourself in their shoes – would you tolerate the interruptions or level of service if you were a paying guest?

The next time you catch yourself saying, "It's Tuesday morning, what do they expect?" think about your last flight and create a plan to treat your guests to a fun and enjoyable golf experience.

Bryan Stromme spends enough time in the air as the Regional Director of Agronomy for the Midwest & West for Billy Casper Golf. @



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MIDWEST Pic of the Month

Submitted by Jim Pederson, Sunrise at Hughes Creek. Got a pic? Email to luke@magcs.org



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Dinelli Educates Players at Encompass



Kirk Triplett (above purple shirt) was edged out by Tom Lehman this year at North Shore Country Club.

You didn't think that Dan Dinelli, CGCS would let an opportunity slip away to educate any group that traverses across North Shore Country Club, let alone, the old-timer professionals, did you?

Dan set up a poster that was put together by Dr. Bruce Branham, Bill Sharp, and others at the Encompass Championship right on the practice putting green. The poster highlighted some of the work completed at North Shore CC by Dr. Branham, primarily the work centered on *Poa annua* control using the rather new product Methiozolin (PoaCure).

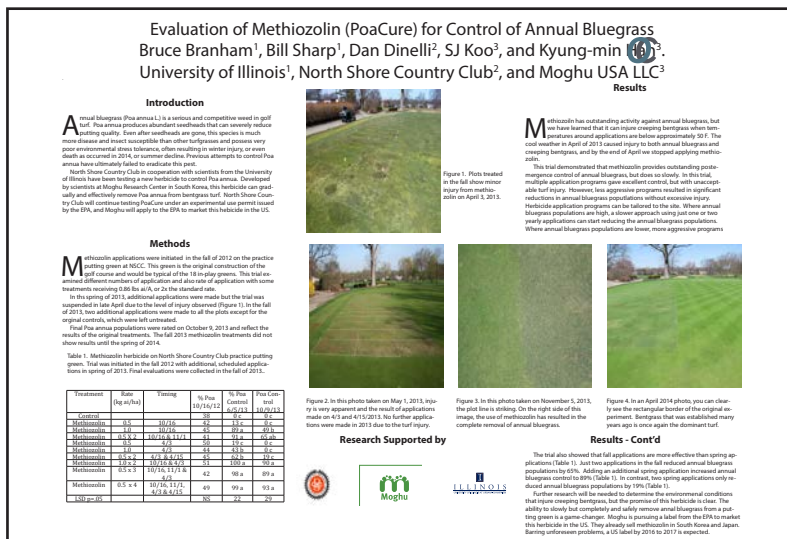
The results Dan shared come directly from the poster: "Methiozolin has outstanding activity against annual bluegrass, but we have learned that it can injure creeping bentgrass when temperatures round applications are below approximately 50 F. The cool weather in April of 2013 caused injury to both annual bluegrass and creeping bentgrass, and by the end of April we stopped applying methiozolin.

This trial demonstrated that methiozolin provides outstanding post emergence control of annual bluegrass, but does so slowly. In this trial, multiple applications programs gave excellent control, but with unacceptable turf injury. However, less aggressive programs resulted in significant reductions in annual bluegrass populations without excessive injury. Herbicide application programs can be tailored to the site. Where annual bluegrass populations are high,

a slower approach using just one or two yearly applications can start reducing the annual bluegrass populations. Where annual bluegrass populations are lower, more aggressive programs can be utilized.

The poster goes on to explain that the developing company Moghu is pursuing a label for turf use in the US from the EPA. The product is already sold in South Korea and Japan and a US label for sale is expected by 2017.

Dinelli had a captive audience as the professionals warmed up for the Encompass Championship each morning. As Dan explained to me, "who would know more about playing on *Poa annua* greens than the seniors... and with the way things are looking with PoaCure, they might be the last to experience it where it isn't wanted."



Beyond the scope of the specific research shared at the event, Dan has been a great advocate for our profession showing that science drives the decision making process of the golf course superintendent.