

ON COURSE

THE MIDWEST ASSOCIATION OF GOLF COURSE SUPERINTENDENTS

May 2009

Merit Club

John Nelson

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All Merit Club images courtesy of Judd Hansen.

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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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ON COURSE WITH THE PRESIDENT

Tony Kalina, *Prairie Landing Golf Course*



May 2009

As I sit and write this column, I can't believe I'm already almost halfway through my term as MAGCS President. It's going by fast.

Spring is in the air. Golf courses are open for play, and everyone is busy gearing up for the coming season. I am very optimistic about the great game and those employed in this industry. Is 2009 going to be easy? Probably not. At first glance, it appears as though 2009 may be a stern challenge. Change and challenge go hand-in-hand. The game of golf has survived world wars, our Civil War, the Great Depression, the introduction of the "Haskell" rubber core golf ball and steel golf shafts, many recessions, devastation from natural disasters, and our self-imposed societal divisions.

Right now, we are somewhere in the natural ebb and flow of a normal golf industry cycle, and it's severe. However, I believe our industry and game will continue to grow and provide the livelihood, recreation, and vitality that we expect in our lives. The growth curve may look just a little different. We are going to have to 'do more with less' and learn to live within our means or we will suffer farther. It's true. The uncertainty of the economy and the state of our industry has everyone watching every step. I feel that 2009 is going to be about survival, and I know that, when faced with great challenges, our members have the practical and logical abilities to prevail. I believe and know our profession is the fulcrum in the economic success of any golf facility. It's from this solid, basic foundation that every superintendent possesses that we achieve wisdom, wealth, and well-being – and we are not letting go anytime soon. This, too, shall pass. Golf will continue and thrive in new ways.

On the MAGCS Board front, I am very proud of the current board and their devotion to serving the needs of our members. I am benefitting from their service attitude and support – you are, too!

This year, Luke Cella and I have developed a new tool for Board use. It enhances productivity and ease of reporting for board members. We refer to this new tool as the Director's Dashboard. The Dashboard is an on-line, live, information manager which provides 24/7 unlimited access to our internal documents, calendar, meeting checklist, and agenda. The Dashboard is part of the family of services from Google called Google Docs, which are free to most users. The Dashboard is also a one-stop, web-based portal that archives all current and historical

documents pertaining to the board and membership activities. Board members can collaborate in any reporting aspect of their duties, live and on-line. As President, I can then log in for an instant update on the progress of any association item and make necessary changes. The board has used the Dashboard to conduct teleconference meetings with great ease. This feature allows the documents to be viewed live or saved in computer files. The environmental advantage of saving paper and printer ink are an added benefit, too. The only downfall is that the input must be timely. Procrastination in reporting causes a log jam in the process and creates tension. I am sure many of our board members are tired of my constant insistence on punctuality. All in all, the board has done well with their reporting duties.

Another new item at the board level this year is the creation of a special group called the Partnership Task Group. Since first being elected to the MAGCS Board in 2002, I have felt a growing need to enhance the value and recognition of our association's Class E Commercial members. This year, the Partnership Task Group was created as a special committee within the Board. The purpose of the Partnership Task Group is to explore ways in which our Class E members can maximize the return on their sponsorship investments, improve their sense of ownership at sponsored events, add value to our association's "touch" opportunities, and encourage greater Class A member participation. Our relationship with the Class E member is very important to the board. The board realizes that we are an association of golf course superintendents. However, at the same time, we have to reach out and welcome each member, address their individual needs, and deliver.

The work of this committee has been entrusted to Scott Witte, CGCS and MAGCS's Vice-President, as Chair of the group. In my opinion, there isn't a finer person or a more ardent professional to capture and carry the duties and goals of this group than Scott. In time, their crucial work will create a win-win situation for all classes of MAGCS membership. Good things are right around the corner.

The Class C Committee continues to be a vital and trusted part of our association and profession. This group of young men, led by Scott Verdun, continues in the traditions established

(continued on next page)

at their inception. The most recent example of their fine works came this year in New Orleans, with their coordination of the MAGCS's Habitat for Humanity Service Day. We are blessed to have such an active and willing group of assistants waiting in the wings. They are dedicated to our future and our success as an association. It's a great group.

There is a wonderful slate of MAGCS events this year:

- April starts the season, with the traditional four-person, Spring Scramble at Prairie Landing in West Chicago. Eric Mundt, Travis Dykstra, and I are thrilled with the opportunity to have our Midwest peers and friends together at our facility.
- In May, the ITF Spring Golf Day will be conducted at the Merit Club, in Libertyville. The Merit Club holds my personal distinction, resulting from John Nelson's efforts, as the most impeccable course conditioning standards I have ever played. Should be outstanding!
- In June, we'll have to trek to Kenosha, WI to test Matt Kregel's Club at Strawberry Creek. This venue promises a great maiden voyage northward.
- July is the annual MAGCS Family Picnic at the Kane County Cougars Baseball Game. Fun, fireworks, and frolicking with colleagues and family – what could be better? If you haven't been to this event, come see what you've been missing.
- In August, the new, two-day iTurf EXPO research field and commercial exposition will be held at the CDGA's Midwest Golf House in Lemont. This Expo will replace the IPTC Conference normally held in December. It's a new twist and an exciting change. The golf associated with the Expo is a new,

'little-known links' called, Cog Hill Dubsread #4. The course underwent a complete renovation to challenge the PGA Tour's best. Need I say more? It will be fantastic!

- In September, we visit Kemper Lakes Golf Club, hosted by Dan Tully on the 8th. Kemper Lakes will provide a formidable challenge for our Annual MAGCS Championship and thank you to Dan for hosting this event on short notice.
- Lastly, we visit Arrowhead Golf Club in Wheaton for the MAGCS College Championship. This will be Mike Mumper's second stint hosting a MAGCS meeting this year. Thanks, Mike for your willingness to step up and serve.

I am very optimistic about the coming golf season. Sure it will be different, but that is always the effect of change. With each passing year, I become more aware that things move along too quickly for some, too slowly for others. If we all do our part, we'll make this a better place to live, work, and share. There is an old saying that goes, "many hands help ease the lifting." Look around and find your lifting in the 'Midwest.' We can always use a good set of hands.

I pray that God's graces continue to bless you and yours this year. I hope to see you at the monthly MAGCS events. Have a great season.

Sincerely,
Tony Kalina, MAGCS President -OC

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DIRECTOR'S COLUMN

Scott Witte, CGCS, Cantigny Golf Club



MAGCS Partnerships

As chairman of the newly formed Partnership Task Group, I spent some time evaluating the value of MAGCS Partnerships. As I started to delve into the whole concept of partnerships, I thought it would be a good idea to look the word up on Merriam-Webster.com. When I looked up the word "partnership," it said, "see association," which led me to "see also, connection."

Entry Word: partnership

Function: noun

Text: *the state of having shared interests or efforts (as in social or business matters). See ASSOCIATION.*

Entry Word: association

Function: noun

Text: *1 the state of having shared interests or efforts (as in social or business matters). (It is interesting to me that this definition is interchangeable) then M. Webster says: See CONNECTION.*

Entry Word: connection

Function: noun

Text: *3 an acquaintance who has influence especially in the business or political world. Then they said: See ASSOCIATION*

So I started thinking about the link between the three words.

I think what makes the MAGCS such a great association is that we have great partnerships and great opportunities for connection. The level at which we associate, connect, and partner has a direct correlation to the success of the MAGCS and its members.

One of the keys to our success is the fact that our association incorporates the support of our commercial vendors in our business model to help provide services to members. This partnership places value on relationships and networking. No matter what class of member you are within the association, there is tremendous value in the opportunities that MAGCS provides for its members. MAGCS promotes: developing professional relationships, gaining education, sharing information, and increasing networks of industry professionals that provide products and services for golf courses.

When the officers of the association develop the annual budget for the MAGCS, there is no denying that there is a "For Profit" mindset; however, this so-called profit goes directly back to its members in the form of services. Partner investments are put right back into the MAGCS to offset the costs associated with continuing the circle of CONNECTIONS AND PARTNERSHIPS WITHIN THE ASSOCIATION.

So how do you put a price tag on partnership worth and networking potential? Well let's just take a conservative look at the value of the MAGCS membership as a whole. If we consider the approximately 300 golf courses that are members of the MAGCS and assume that their average annual maintenance budgets are 400-500K, we could also assume that after labor expenses, each club would have 160-200K for soft goods or operating expenses. Therefore, 160-200K times 300 members gives us a conservative estimate of 48 to 60 million dollars in purchasing power for soft goods alone. Add to that an average of 25-50K for Capital equipment purchases per member, and we add on another 7.5-15 million. Next we have to consider adding contractor fees for renovations and other improvements. If we average the 300 clubs' costs for contractor fees, new construction, and renovations, we might assume another 10 to 15 million. I am not a genius, or a market analyst, but I wouldn't be surprised if the Chicago area golf courses have an annual spending power of up to 90 million! How's that for a stimulus package?

From a superintendent's perspective, MAGCS partnerships provide easy access to a wide array of products and services. From a commercial vendor's perspective, MAGCS partnerships create opportunities for selling products and services. These partnerships are a two-way street. When companies invest in sponsorships, they are looking for opportunities to interact with potential clients and extract value from their investment. The Golf Course Management readership survey from 2005 found that 82% of superintendents are more likely to purchase from a

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SUPER -N- SITE

Matt Breeden, *Evanston Golf Club*

John Nelson -N-



Superintendent John Nelson and The Merit Club, in Libertyville, will host the Illinois Turfgrass Foundation/MAGCS golf outing in May. I recently sat down with John and got to know a bit about his professional career, the course he oversees daily, and his family life.

Graduating from Joliet Junior College in 1983, John followed the passion that started when he was 15 years old and worked at Cedardell Golf Club in his hometown of Plano, IL. His career began as an intern at Fox Bend Golf Club, in Oswego, IL, which was followed by a one-and-a-half year stint at Butler National under the tutelage of Oscar Miles, CGCS. This is where John got his first taste of professional tournament golf, while helping prepare the course for two Western Open Tournaments. He left Butler to join Al Fierst at Oak Park Country Club, where he spent five years as Al's assistant.

Then came a new challenge for John, warm-season grasses. He moved to Florida for a year and a half and worked at TPC at Eagle Trace where, again, he was involved in tournament prep at the host site of the PGA Tour's Honda Classic.

In the fall of 1989, the Getz family hired Oscar Miles to oversee a new course being built on their family farm in Lake County, IL. After coming back to Illinois from Florida, John went back to work for Oscar Miles. He was hired to work with Dave Schlagetter, Tony Kalina, and Scott Witte for the construction and grow-in at the Merit Club. This group was further enhanced with Enrique Valadez and Lorenzo Ramirez, both of whom had worked with Oscar at Butler National. They came to The Merit



The Nelson Family, (l to r) Jack, Christina, Ben, Mitch and John.

Club shortly after Oscar was hired. To this day, they still work for The Merit Club and John Nelson.

Built by architect Bob Lohmann, The Merit Club opened in 1992. The par 72, 7100 yard course is set on a beautiful piece of property featuring natural oak savannas, numerous ponds, a vast array of prairies, and a naturally sloping layout. The course was the host to the 2000 Women's U.S. Open. John joined The Merit Club in 1990. He took over the reins when Oscar retired in 2006. John has found a great assistant in Scott Verdun. Scott has been working with John for the past four years. He started as an intern

for Oscar. Once Scott finished school, John hired him as his assistant. Since John became superintendent, the course has continued to evolve along with the game of golf. Some of the changes include new bunkers, annual tree transplanting, rebuilding of a rock wall along a pond bank, and adding tees throughout the course where necessary to maintain the integrity of the golf hole's original design.

Supporting John at home is his wife of 18 years, Christina, and three sons: Mitch, 15; Jack, 12; and Ben, 5. John is very involved with his family and spends time with his sons by attending as many football, baseball, and basketball games as

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he can. He has also coached some of the teams the boys have been involved with. John and Christina have opened their home to their niece Maggie for the past eight months while she is attending the College of Lake County.

I have had the privilege of knowing John Nelson before I took the assignment of writing the Super-N-Site for The Merit Club. Needless to say, I have learned so much more about not only the course, but also the man who oversees the course. I learned that John has a great family that he truly makes time for. They, in turn, support his work and the long hours that are sometimes needed to get the job done. He is, and has been, devoted to The Merit Club since the course was opened in 1992. He has a great supporting staff that is equally devoted to the club. I am sure that he was able to accomplish all these things using the knowledge and experience of all the great people he has worked with over the years. **-OC**



Above right: The sixteenth green as seen from the 167 yard tee box.

Right: The twelfth green sporting the newly adopted Merit Club logo.

Below: The best seat in the house. Looking over the course from the highest point, the 13th tee.



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FEATURE ARTICLE I

Fred Behnke, CGCS, Mt. Prospect Golf Club



The Best Defense is a Good Offense

I was toe to toe with the guy and he wouldn't back off.

"Choosing pin locations is MY responsibility as the host of this high school sectional tournament, and I plan to fulfill my obligations to the letter."

"Coach, I don't care what you think are your responsibilities. At this golf course the golf course maintenance staff does the course set-up for each and every event that is played here," I replied.

"Listen," he said, "I just want to make sure the course is presented in its best light."

"Yeah, and who made you Pope of this dump."

OK – OK, I didn't really say that last part, but I was thinking it. The first part of that dialogue did occur, has occurred in the past on several occasions, and probably will occur again. Why? What is it about certain golfers that compels them to horn in? I never see these people when its time to pump bunkers and shovel sand, but when "their" event is around the corner it's...

"So you gonna double cut the greens for us?"

"We need the bunker sand fluffier for Saturday's outing."

"Can we get three circles at ten foot intervals around the cup on seven?"

Shut Up!! – Shut Up!! – Shut Up!! Am I wrong? I have been a couple of time in the past – a long, long time ago when I didn't know any better, but am I wrong? Am I just being a curmudgeonly old greenskeeper?

The short answer in this day and age is – YES! Make golfers happy, maybe they'll come back. If a group is interested enough in a special need for their event to seek you out to make it happen, maybe just maybe, they can be accommodated and you'll make a friend. Which leads me to the real point of this article – The best defense is a good offense.

I'm reminded of a story I was told when I was just starting out BCD (before compact discs). Everybody starts with two pails – one for the white balls – you get a white ball for every time you're a good boy, and one pail for the black balls – you get a black ball when you're a bad boy. As the years go by and the balls start adding up, you'll find that your white ball pail has a

"...you get a white ball for every time you're a good boy..you get a black ball when you're a bad boy."

leak and those puppies gradually disappear, but that black ball pail is as tight as a drum. Every one of those suckers is still there, even the moldy, old ones. That guy whose round was ruined when he sculled a bunker shot out of a footprint thinks you can't maintain bunkers. The day you pulled carts after two inches of rain and ended up canceling the ladies nine-hole league outing will never be forgiven or forgotten. The pin that ended up too close to the slope on number seven is indelibly etched in somebody's brain. God forbid they ever get on the board. After twenty-five years at the same place I've accumulated a pail full of black balls, in fact, I'm on pail number two now. How can I still be here?

Job security is not a passive enterprise. The best defense is a good offense.

The Past-President's Council met recently. We donned our black robes, conducted the ritual sacrifices, and in the flickering candle light made grave and momentous observations on the state of our chapter. One particularly sobering topic of discussion pertained to ways our association can assist members in maintaining their employment during these troubled times. Let's face it. The days of wine and roses are long gone. Golf courses are closing their doors. New construction is at a standstill. People are reeling from the de-valuing of their IRA, 401K, home values, etc.

(continued on next page)

Several questions arose in the course of the discussion:

- 1) Should the MAGCS even concern itself with this issue?
According to our Bylaws, the Purpose of the MAGCS (Article 1.2) makes no specific mention of the association's right or duty to provide "job retention" services. We have always been a semi-loose confederation of independent Lone Rangers. Put in your time, make some connections, work hard, study up, and with a little luck you'll land your first super job. The GCSAA and MAGCS will help you grow the grass and give you a chance to network with other supers to share war stories and what works and what doesn't. You got the job; it's your job to keep the job. But if you answer YES to question #1 we move on to:
- 2) To what degree is it appropriate or proper for the MAGCS to provide job retention support and services to its membership? There is a large group of dynamic, educated, and hungry young men and women out there lurking. They are ready, willing, and able to grab the brass ring, and they are also members of our association. They are the assistant superintendents, and if a grizzled veteran falls back from the herd shouldn't nature take its course? Let the devil take the hindmost. It's what keeps the species strong. Harsh, but they pay dues, too.
- 3) Golf Course Superintendents who have seen fit to advance the profession by participating in and supporting their professional associations have agreed to operate under a Code of Ethics, a gentlemen's agreement, if you will. In essence, this code of ethics (found immediately after the Bylaws of the association in your MAGCS directory and identical to the GCSAA Code of

Ethics) mandates that a member will accept and fully agree to abide by a series of statements that identify proper and professional behavior. It further goes on to provide "Professional Conduct Guidelines." These guidelines boil down to The Boy Scout's pledge (minus the God and Country stuff) – don't lie, steal or cheat, and be man or woman enough to operate in the light. Don't sneak around somebody's back. Back in the day, this behavior was expected. The threat of ostracism by your peers was enough to keep member golf course superintendents playing fair. Like I said before – it's a gentleman's agreement. Sadly those days are long gone.

Organizations exist that seek out the decision makers at your golf course to directly solicit support in replacing or absorbing the current golf course superintendent and maintenance personnel. Some of these organizations are actually members of the GCSAA and MAGCS. There is little interest on the national level in sanctioning these tactics, despite the fact that they fly in the face of the Professional Conduct Guidelines. It turns out that the Code of Ethics and Guidelines for Professional Conduct are really just voluntary.

Now we come to the meat and potatoes of this message (finally).OK. Let's recap:

- Loose confederation of Lone Rangers.
- Plenty of able people just waiting for a chance.
- No rules.
- Sounds like a recipe for disaster unless ...
- Back to the Boy Scouts, except this time, their motto: Be Prepared.

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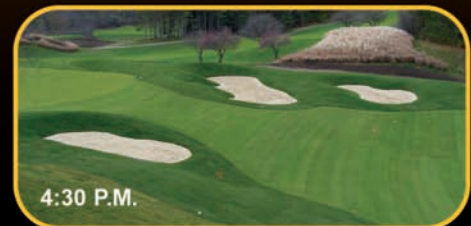
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You have been given notice that somebody's gone behind your back and is in your bosses' ear saying:

- 1) We can do it cheaper,
- 2) We can do it better, or some variation on that theme such as:
 - A) Utilizing a contractual maintenance agreement relieves the golf course of a lot of human relations/employment headaches: Paperwork, payroll taxes, worker compensation, unemployment insurance, etc., etc., etc. Or how about:
 - B) In the unlikely event that something is out of sorts, we have professional agronomists available at a moment's notice to swoop down and help your assigned staffer fix your turfgrass problems and get you good-to-go lickety split. Or:
 - C) Our buying power is enormous; we can get stuff for you for a lot less than you get it now. Or:
 - D) Your equipment fleet is excessive. We can come from off site with aerifiers and punch your greens in one day. Boom - in and out - and then we go away. Why keep the machines sitting around 90% of the time? If something on your course goes down, we can get a replacement piece in there the same day.

Compelling arguments – especially if the boss is unaware that:

- A) Your staff members are not numbers on a time card. They are reliable and competent workers who know the golf course in and out. They produce a product to your (super's) specifications that in turn came from the board or governing body of your golf course. In addition, you and your staff are loyal to your operation. You don't answer to someone else's bottom line.
- B) You, as a competent, active member of your professional association, have a network of peers with an incredible amount of "local knowledge" in fixing or better yet - anticipating problems and heading them off before they get out of hand. The USGA Green Section turf advisory service, the CDGA turfgrass staff and the Illinois Turf Foundation are wonderful and responsive aids to the individual superintendent.
- C) You have complete control of the types and composition of the consumables you acquire for your individual operation. You can tailor your plant protectants and fertilizers to your site's needs and idiosyncrasies. You are not limited by some purchase agreement made by someone in the home office, wherever that is.
- D) The maintenance equipment your course owns (or leases) is supported by a competitive and capable distributor that stands ready to get you whatever you need to keep things moving along smoothly. They rely on your business and will step up when the chips are down.

Pat Jones, a good friend of golf course superintendents everywhere, recently wrote an article suggesting that if you are satisfied with letting your work speak for itself, you are headed for a rude awakening. Get in the bosses' ear before they do. The best defense is a good offense. **-OC**

ELIMINATE GUESSWORK WHEN SPRING FEEDING

Spring fertilization varies greatly on a number of factors. Cultural practices performed, soil amendments made, irrigation and drainage upgrades, fertilizers applied, and what happened last fall plays a significant role with this season's success. However, having a sound fertility program will provide you with your best chance of success for the upcoming season.

Typically, spring applications are applied after the early flush of shoot growth has occurred, but predicting spring weather can be a challenge when it comes to soil and air temperature, and precipitation. That's why choosing a fertilizer that performs in cool climates is so vital.

The nitrogen applied with UMAXX, a top performer in cool weather, is plant available as soon as watering in occurs. In addition, what the plant does not immediately use will be held onto the soil colloid as a reserve for future use.



John Meyer
Regional Manager
AGROTAIN International, LLC

This is a drastic change from other fertilizers.

Coated products are a great example of fertilizers that don't offer immediate plant nutrition and are subject to leaching once the protective coating breaks down.

Still other products rely on a process called mineralization, depending on soil microbes to break down nitrogen. Whereas soil microbes aren't fully active until the soil temperature reaches 55 degrees – which might not happen until late spring depending on the region – UMAXX begins working immediately and is not dependent on soil temperature for nitrogen release.

Although fine-tuning a spring fertilization program varies on many factors, its importance will be felt all summer long and even into the fall. The benefit of using an all-weather, long-lasting performer such as UMAXX provides immediate benefits, as well as a positive long-term impact. UMAXX gives the freedom to apply as a nitrogen component in a blend or part of a soluble fertilizer program. UMAXX offers consistent performance regardless of temperature or application type.

For more information on UMAXX contact me at 952-334-6845 or jmeyer@agrotain.com

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FEATURE II

Harry Lovero, Orchard Valley Golf Course



DJ Gregory – Walk On

One Saturday a couple of months ago on a cold wintery afternoon, I was flipping channels on the old tube and I came across a video report on ESPN about a young man by the name of DJ Gregory. After watching the report, I felt compelled to write this.

DJ was born with cerebral palsy. Doctors told his parent that he would be confined to a wheelchair for the rest of his life and that he would never walk. However, after much perseverance on the part of his parents, and five surgeries (by the time he was in first grade) and much physical therapy, DJ learned to walk. He is now thirty years old and walks with only a cane.

DJ loves the game of golf. He began playing at the age of nine and taught himself to play. He shoots between one hundred and one fifteen one handed while holding his cane in the other hand for balance. His father took him to his first tournament when he was twelve years old in 1990 to get autographs when he was spotted by Mr. Ken Venturi who got him to come up to the CBS broadcast booth where he became very good friends with Ken and Jim Nantz. For a while, DJ was a staple in the booth week after week, stopping by to speak with his friends on television.

DJ is a very bright and intelligent individual. He has a Masters degree in sports management, which he received from Springfield College in Massachusetts.

Now that brings us to 2008. DJ expressed a desire to walk every PGA 2008 tournament. Forty-five tournaments in all. Over 900 plus miles. Something that has never been done by someone with his desire or his physical challenges. There were many doubters but the PGA gave DJ his chance with the deal that he would have to interview one Tour Pro every day and blog it on-line. It was something that he was going to have to prepare himself for physically and mentally. With the support of his



DJ Gregory is not slowed down at all.

parents, friends and family, DJ embarked on his mission to walk forty-five PGA tournaments in the 2008 season. DJ walked and fell a "few times keeping track of every time he took a spill. Can you imagine walking every hole of 45 tournaments normally let alone having a disability such as his?

DJ accomplished his goal and made many, many friends along the way. From spectators wishing him "well to the PGA pros and their caddies "giving handshakes and hugs for his undying will and determination. Many noted that they were exhausted after walking eighteen holes and could not imagine what DJ was going through walking every hole of forty-five tournaments.

He became very close friends with Kenny Perry, who in the video told DJ, "I'm so proud of you I love you like a little brother." Moreover, that was on the final day of the final tournament of 2008, which was a very emotional day indeed

for everyone involved in "the walk of a lifetime."

If you ever get the chance to locate the video on "YouTube", please take the time to watch it. DJ is a very inspiring young man and he absolutely loves the game which we are all so dedicated to. I believe that you too, as I did, will find it difficult to keep your emotions intact while watching. **-OC**

Photo credit: Francisco Medina

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MIDWEST BREEZES

Charles Anfield, CGCS, *Heritage Bluffs Golf Course*



The “Secret Sauce”

The sauce is known throughout the culinary world as the “difference maker” in a masterpiece menu item. It’s a special blending of spices, seasonings, vegetables and other food stuff that is combined and mixed together behind the secret closed doors of the kitchen. There is actually a specialization among chefs who take special training and serve apprenticeships to become sauciers. The meal is not complete without the sauce. These sauces are passed down from generation to generation and become closely guarded secrets. Fast food chains market their hamburgers featuring the “secret sauce”. The secret sauce is the coup de gras of the meal. Everyone wants it, everyone needs it.

Among Golf Course Superintendents there is a great desire to find a secret sauce in putting green maintenance. Everyone is looking for the “edge” to make their greens better. Some of the reasons Superintendents create the secret sauce are: stress relief, clipping reduction/growth regulation, disease control, green speed, color, tighter leaf, poa control, improved rooting and overall health. There are numerous products, by numerous manufacturers out there to ready to provide Superintendents with their “need” to find the secret sauce. Some of these products are new, others old. The concept of these products has been around since the dawn of grass growth. Some experts consider some of these products to be “snake oil”. Many Superintendents take a little of this, a little of that, and viola, the secret sauce.

I called a few Superintendents to share their “secret sauce” formula with me. Some were reluctant to reveal their program but with a little coaxing and bribery I was able to convince them to share.

Ed Braunsky, CGCS (Past MAGCS President from Geneva Golf Club) who is never shy about telling you what he thinks, had this to share. “I like using the Emerald Isle liquid fertilizer combined with Primo, fungicides and Signature on two week intervals, the stuff works”.

Mike Siefken from Sportman’s Country Club, “I’m trying reducing clipping yields and improve my wear tolerance”. He uses Cutless and Primo combined with his fungicide program.

Brian Bossert, CGCS from Bryn Mawr Country Club, “I’m not a biostimulant guy”. He uses Signature at 4 oz/m plus Daconil at two week intervals combined with paclobutrazol. “It’s almost like magic how it perks up the greens”.

Dennis Buck from Dwight Country Club: “I don’t want to give away my full secret but I can tell you I use a granular paclobutrazol in the spring and fall at the full rate. I don’t recommend this to anyone who has a lot of poa”.

Derek Settle of the CDGA recently published an article for the USGA. He conducted a Field Study using six different products that contained cytokinins and other plant extracts to evaluate their impact on creeping bentgrass putting green color and summer quality. These products were compared to Urea and evaluated at the Golf House in Lemont and in College Park, Maryland in 2007 and 2008. “Not all products do what we learned. Based on research, I recommend going back to basics and using urea at .15 oz/m every 14 days for a nice, deep green color”.

There you have it, the secret is out. **-OC**

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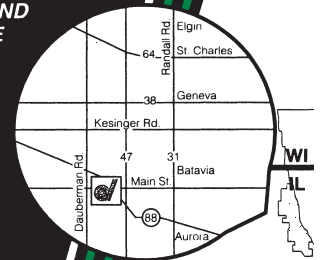
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The Key to Consistency

“Wow, look at that, it turned out exactly the way I wanted.” In some fashion I have heard that said many times. There are usually two questions that come with that statement: “What did I do differently to get that result?” and “How can I make it happen every time?” Well, you may not like McDonalds, but you must admire their ability to make a Big Mac in Florida taste like a Big Mac in Illinois. They do this by process.

There are many ways to pass on a process. The one that we are all familiar with is word of mouth. To me this is a marginal way to pass important information. Two weeks ago I told my 3½ year-old son to get his shoes tied before running around the house. Like most word of mouth processes, the information did not transfer well. The next day I was holding a crying 3½ year-old. Again, I explained the need for a shoe tying process. I hoped that with the added personal experience, this time it would take. As of today he is good on the shoe tying.

In the above story what was the difference? The second warning came with some participation on his part. In the last 10 years I have made process participation a huge part of the teams I manage. I have found that I need to manage less often and that we are more consistent. We achieve this with a process meeting and a process chart.

I stumbled upon the process meeting years ago when I began working in the Reinders Service department. The repairs were done well, but the details surrounding them, like scheduling, order processing, and customer notification happened in different ways. I tried developing the system myself and forcing the participants to execute it, but the results were poor. Judging from the complaints I received, I had talented people doing the work, but we could not seem to get all of the details right for the process. We needed to get the whole team working in the same direction at the same time. This is when we had our first of many process meetings.

In a process meeting you get all the key players together and develop a process with their input. Here you, as a manager, need a little trust. You cannot use this as an opportunity to thrust your opinions down their throats. You need to let them handle the details. You gently advise them and log the steps for later use.

For the logging of the steps, I first ask the team how we do the process now. I have large strips of paper covering the wall they are facing (you will need a good amount of room). I let them tell me how they do it step by step. I log each step on a sticky note and put them in order on the papered wall. After this is done, I ask if this is the ideal way to do it. When we all agree it is not, I say, “OK, let’s fix it.” Start at the beginning and let them fix it. This is where you cannot force them. If you do, you will not have their commitment. It will not be their process. You will have their compliance only, and you will need to manage it every day. Begin by moving or adding steps with sticky notes until you get the ideal process that creates the consistency you desire. Once done, you will use this diagram to make a process map for each team member.

From there I use a computer program called Visio to make a copy of the process map we created on the wall. The program is easy to use. It will only take you a little while to copy the map. I have taken these maps, printed and laminated them, and given them to the team members. We use the maps when there is a breakdown in the process to show where the breakdown occurred, and then we fix it. I have also given these maps to new employees for training. They use it as a visual when they are performing their tasks. You get better performance so much faster than before.

To be consistent you must have a map of the ideal process. There is a time investment to this method, but the value is incredible. The best part of it all is from the manager’s point of view. You will now have the team’s commitment to a process, because they were the ones who developed it. Best of all, you will have a way to show them the breakdowns in the process, and you will do less managing in order to get a consistent result.

-OC

THE BULL SHEET

John Gurke, CGCS, Associate Editor



May 2009



Happy May, and welcome to our newest MAGCS members!

Michael Miracle, Class C, Exmoor CC

Kevin Goss, Class SM, Sugar Creek Golf Course,
(Villa Park, IL)- needs approval.

David Jacobson, Class E, NewStream Golf, Rochester, MI

James Fee, Class E, CP Environmental LLC, Indianapolis, IN

Mark Nega, Class E, Rainbow Treecare Scientific
Advancements, Minnetonka, MN

Due to a unforeseen conflict, the **MAGCS 2009 Golf Championship** has moved to September 8, 2009 at Kemper Lakes Golf Club. **Dan Tully** will host this event. Those of you that looked forward to playing Elgin Country Club will have the opportunity in 2010. Thanks Dan and Phil for your hospitality and welcoming MAGCS to your fine golf courses.

We also welcome the new student intern at Midwest Golf House. Devin Reese, a Peoria native attending Joliet Junior College started his internship under the watchful eyes of **Derek Settle**, **Keith Rincker**, and **Chris Painter** in mid-April. His major course of study is athletic turf, but Devin wants to gain a better understanding of golf and the other turf types grown on the Sunshine Course. He will also play an important part in preparing for this year's inaugural I-Turf Expo to be held on August 25th and 26th. Welcome, Devin!

The March MAGCS meeting was held at Midwest Golf House on the 25th, with our own Dr. Derek Settle and Keith Rincker taking center stage along with Dr. Megan Kennelly of Kansas State University for a day of education. Topics covered included moss development on greens, dollar spot

DATES TO REMEMBER

May 3 – JW Turf's Annual Equipment Auction at their headquarters in Hampshire, IL.

May 9 – North American Birdwatching Open held on International Migratory Bird Day.

May 15 – Deadline for MAGCS Scholarship applications to be submitted.

May 18 – MAGCS/ITF Spring Golf Day at Merit Club in Libertyville, IL, **John Nelson** and **Scott Verdun** hosts.

May 19 – Extended deadline for GCSAA's Energy Use and Environmental Practices survey.

May 19 – CAGCS monthly meeting at Glen View Club in Golf, IL, **Tony Frandria** host.

May 30 – The Sunshine Through Golf Classic 100. Details follow.

June 1 – Deadline for applications for the GCSAA Scholars Competition.

June 15 – MAGCS monthly meeting at The Club at Strawberry Creek in Kenosha, WI, **Matt Kregel** host. The Dom Grotti, Class C, and Senior Championships will be contested at this event.


July 8 – Annual John Buck Memorial Golf Outing at Pinecrest Golf Course in Huntley, IL, **Brian Comiskey** host.

July 25 – MAGCS Family Night Picnic-Kane County Cougar Baseball game at Elfstrom Field in Geneva, IL.


July 27-28 – Illinois Open at Hawthorn Woods Country Club, **David Schingel** host.

control, abiotic and environmental factors influencing turf decline, fairway fungicide programming, and an evaluation of cytokinin plant extract, iron, and nitrogen products' effects on bentgrass greens (does anyone have bentgrass greens?). Thanks to everyone at CDGA and Golf House, to Dr. Kennelly, and to our sponsors—**Nadler Golf Car Sales, Inc. / Authorized Club Car Distributor, Nels J. Johnson Tree Experts, Inc.**, and **Quali-Pro** for a very informative day.

(continued on page 20)



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(L to R) Ty McClellan, Tony Kalina, Dan Tully and Scott Witte attend the March meeting.



Keith Krause and Tim Keating



Rick Wilson shares a laugh during a break.



Roger Ogalla and Kerry Anderson

.....
 Many thanks to everyone who had a hand in making the April MAGCS monthly meeting possible. As I write this, it actually is still 2 weeks away, so I hope I haven't been premature in my assumption that it did in fact take place...

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Anyhow, thanks to hosts **Tony Kalina, Eric Mundt, and Travis Dykstra**, to the staff at Prairie Landing Golf Club, to our education speaker Rusty Stachlewitz of Pro Grow Solutions, to all the great committee members and volunteers who did all the legwork, and to our fabulous sponsors: **Burris Equipment Company, John Deere Golf and JW Turf, Nadler Golf Car Sales**-an Authorized Club Car Distributor, **Nels J. Johnson Tree Experts, Inc.**, and **Quali-Pro**. A full write-up of the event will appear in the June Bull Sheet.

What is the Sunshine Through Golf Classic 100 and why is **Luke Cella** going to have blisters on his hands after it? Here's the deal—the event, to be held on May 30th is a fundraiser for Sunshine Through Golf that is more or less a golf marathon. Luke and the other participants will risk sun stroke, exhaustion, and those pesky blisters in order to drive, chip, hack, chase, and hack again through 100 holes of golf. The pledges per hole that are received will go toward this great foundation. If you haven't made a pledge to Luke, please call or email him and help him help others.

The 19th of this month is the new deadline for you to complete GCSAA's Energy Use and Environmental Practices survey—one of the Environmental Profile Surveys that have been conducted over the last couple of years. Filling out the survey, which can be found at gcsaa.org, nets you .25 Education Points and a chance to win prizes in a drawing. No word on what the prizes are, but my guess is that they'll have a GCSAA logo on them.

So we've seen that MAGCS members are resourceful where municipal trucks are concerned. Last month we featured a city salt truck spreading lime on fairways. This month's creative entry in the "What I Did With My City Truck" contest comes from **Gary Hearn** at Salt Creek Golf Course, and involved the resurrection of a decrepit old rust bucket headed for the crusher. Gary's crew put some elbow grease into fixing and refinishing the thing, but didn't stop there. I think they may have gone to lunch at a local watering hole before coming back to work and adding some personal touches...



Some guys use city salt trucks to spread lime...



...and some use them to trrrrap the foorry little rodents.

Last month was, among other things, Masters month, where the golf bug bites all of us Midwesterners while we watch the action on the hallowed grounds in vivid HD color while looking out our windows at typical dreary weather. The lucky few, however, didn't need HD to witness Augusta National with its crazy undulating terrain and awesome chicken sandwiches in green wax paper wrappers—they got on a plane and went. Among other MAGCS members, the foursome of **Scott Speiden, Larry Flament, Pete Kiraly, and John Nelson** made the trip and came back with this one observation: You have to go!



Larry Flament, Pete Kiraly, John Nelson, and Scott Speiden at Augusta.



The iconic 13th green in Amen Corner

(continued on page 23)

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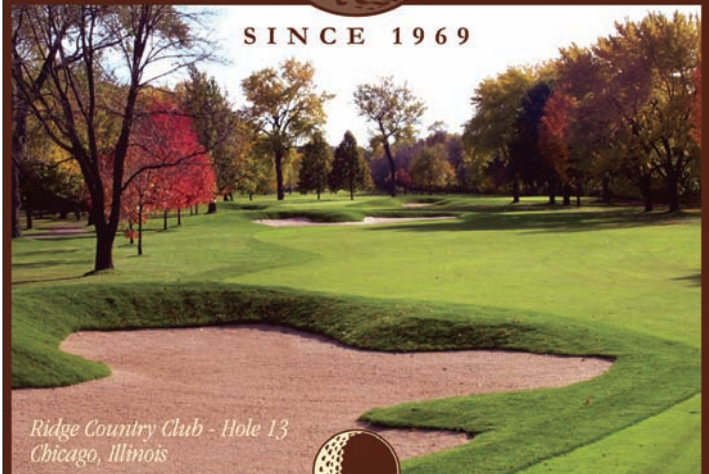


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A couple of our more distinguished members—okay, let's call it what it is and say two of MAGCS' old timers—received great news recently: Long overdue congratulations to **Carl Hophan** on being inducted into the Illinois Golf Hall of Fame later this year. Carl has championed the cause of golf course superintendents for decades, was a past MAGCS president, and is currently Director of Development for the Chicago District Golf Association, and will become only the fourth golf course superintendent—following **Robert Williams, Ray Gerber, and Oscar Miles**—to achieve the honor. The Illinois Golf Hall of Fame is located at the Glen Club in Glenview, and pays tribute to individuals who have made significant contributions to the game both in Illinois and throughout the world. Joining Carl on the list of 2009 inductees are **Frank Jemsek**, Chip Beck, and Steven Lesnik. Again, congratulations to Carl!



Carl Hophan

Also deserving congrats is **Peter Leuzinger, CGCS** who recently became a tenured instructor at Kishwaukee College, where he has been teaching Turf Management related classes since fall of 2006. Among Pete's unique offerings to the students at "Kish" are his Environmental Property Management class, and his stress on mathematics—a seemingly lost science to today's youth—and their practical use in our industry. Well done, Peter!



Peter Leuzinger, CGCS

Boys and their toys—money definitely has its benefits. When former Black Hawk star Jeremy Roenick learned that the golf course he grew up playing on was for sale, he just went ahead and bought it. The Pembroke Country Club on Boston's South Shore is now JR's very own playground, and not having played golf in 25 years, will make a nice place for him to hone his skills for the celebrity tour after he FINALLY retires his sad, broken-down, penalty-shot-missing a#@ from hockey once and for all. Nothing to do with MAGCS, but what the hell.

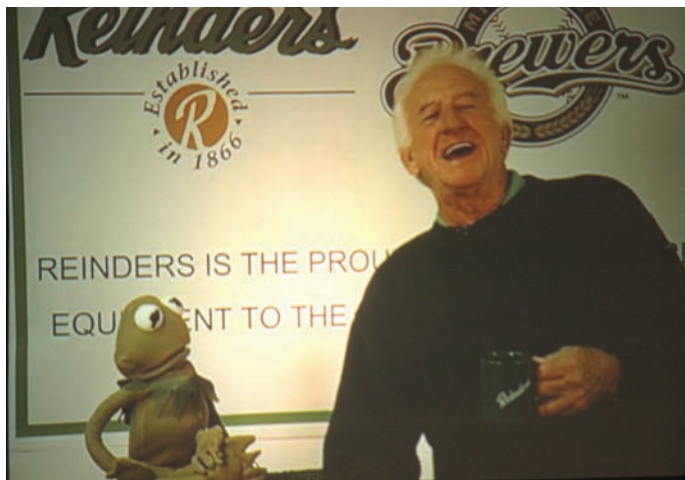
Reinders Wrap-Up—the 19th Reinders Turf & Irrigation Conference took place at the Waukesha Expo center in suburban Milwaukee on March 11th and 12th, with the theme being "Think Green. Be Green. Save Green." Over 1,500 golf industry professionals were in attendance for the 2-day trade show and educational event, while consuming over 3,000 of the now-famous home-made donuts. The biennial event will take place next on March 9-10, 2011.



A great turnout for the 19th Reinders Turf & Irrigation Conference



Trade show floors and beer—a Wisconsin tradition!



Bob Yukker ueks it up with Kermit the Frog at the Reinders show.

(continued on page 25)

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They even let some FIB's come up, evidenced by Illinois' Dr. Bruce Branham's presence at the show.

Another educational event took place last month that you may have attended previously in the fall. The Southern Illinois University Turfgrass Field Day has moved to spring to join the Agriculture Industry Day held on the University Farms in Carbondale, IL on April 17th. For information on future Field Days, contact **Dr. Ken Diesburg** at diesburg@siu.edu.

Congratulations to Wadsworth Golf Construction Company of Plainfield, IL on winning the 2009 Golf Course Builders Association of America's Heritage Award for best reconstruction project for their work at Naperville Country Club (**Tim Anderson, CGCS**). The award was presented at the Golf Industry Show in February.

Ever wonder how you get a four-day complimentary vacation to Myrtle Beach including a free condo and \$500 in free golf equipment? You can qualify simply by being on a plane heading there that takes a detour into the Hudson River in New York City after hitting a flock of birds. We all know the story of "Sully" the heroic pilot that crash-landed his plane in the Hudson, saving the lives of everyone aboard. You may not have heard that several of the passengers were headed to Myrtle for their annual golf junket, which obviously didn't happen. Myrtle Beach Golf Holiday President Bill Golden learned that the survivors included the group headed down there, so he teamed up with Legends Resorts, the PGA Tour Superstore, and members of the Myrtle Beach golf community to invite the guys back whenever they were ready to fly again. They gladly took the offer, but opted to drive to South Carolina instead of winging it.

MAGCS offers its condolences to the families of **Eddie Braunsky, CGCS** (Geneva GC) and **Wes Danielewicz**. Ed's mother Frances passed away on March 30th, and Wes' father Mieczslaw passed away earlier that week.

A new free tool is available to all MAGCS, ITF, and CDGA members that tracks Growing Degree Days for use in determining timing for certain product applications, whether for *Poa annua* seedhead control, early-season fungicides, pre-emergent crabgrass control, or even jock itch. GDD Tracker can be found at gddtracker.net.

Another article originally published in *On Course* has found its way in the magazine of another chapter. **Greg Martin's** "Golf's DNA" was reprinted in the *Green Breeze*, the official publication of the Greater Cincinnati Golf Course Superintendents Association. We rock.

New Rule: Chicagoland Turf employees may NOT play sports. This is in response to **Brian Baker's** blown Achilles tendon while playing basketball and **Keith Krause's** punctured lip and broken tooth suffered in a men's league hockey game last month. We wish you a speedy recovery and rehab, Brian, and a pretty new toof and facial scar for you, Keef.




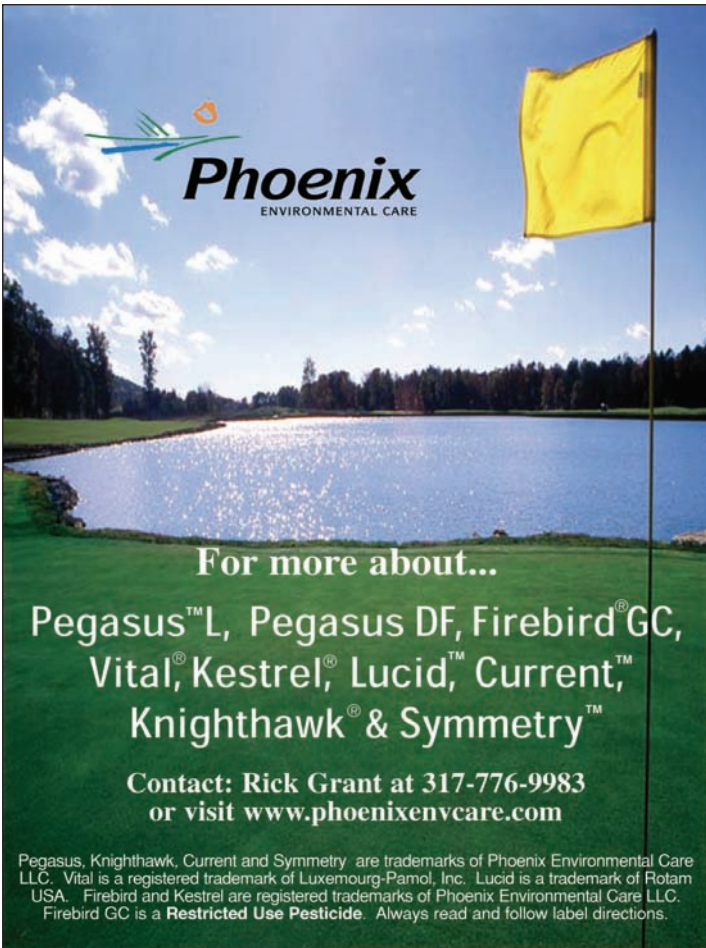
Sports + Middle age = Owies.

If you get those *Golf Course Industry* magazine emails, you may have read the 3-part article by a Dr. Mike Healy about his experiences as a ball hawk at the old York Country Club in Oak Brook (now the Oak Brook Golf Club). Turns out the good doctor is a bit of a self-professed historian on the York Country Club, sharing some interesting facts (or folklore) about its past. Apparently, York was the course of choice for Al Capone back in the day, who would on many occasions park his Packard touring car (complete with Thompson submachine gun mount and bullet-proof armor) next to the larger of the 2 putting greens while sleeping off a long night. Tom also mentioned that there were two known gangland hits at York—one a Berwyn city official who was machine-gunned in a bunker on the first hole, the other a low-level hood found floating in Salt Creek. Aah the good ol' days...



Alphonse Capone

(continued on page 27)

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A couple sad signs of the times—the April 19th Chicago Tribune Sports section ran a full-back page article about the economy and its effect on golf, focusing on the sale of Ravisloe Country Club and its reopening as a public course. It quoted several of Ravisloe’s ex-members and really brought out the human aspect to the story out to the forefront. I suppose it’s a glass-half-empty or half-full proposition—a great and historic golf course has been spared and is available to be played by anyone who wants to in the midst of an economic climate that saw 72 18-hole courses open across the country in 2008 versus 106 that closed their doors.

.....
 On the lighter side, some Whacky Winter Moments for MAGCS Members...



Joel Purpur, Dave Blomquist, Kevin DeRoo and a few friends taking a shortcut to the hunting ground



Andy Weadge doing what he does best on the rink



Jason Lemanski getting pumped for go-kart racing



Nick Baker sporting the NASCAR fan look



Mike Mumper keeping afool of the fowl



Dan Murray grabbing some major air

(continued on next page)



Keith Krause working some major powder



And Dave Groelle after some major wiping out



And then there's this—the sad ending to the "What ever happened to Ernie from 'My Three Sons'?" question.

.....
 Have any goofy photos of yourself being yourself that you're crazy enough to share with your peers? We'd love to capture the lighter side of our membership in these pages, so please feel free to share them with us. Send digital images to booming@aol.com or to luke@magcs.org. -OC

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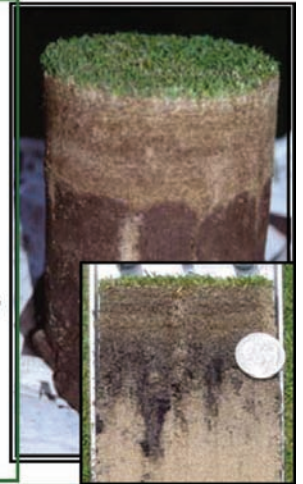


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EDUCATION RECAP

Charles Anfield, CGCS, *Heritage Bluffs Golf Course*

March 2009



(L to R) Ty McClellan, Dr. Megan Kennelly, Keith Rincker and Dr. Derek Settle.

The March MAGCS meeting was held at the Midwest Golf House in Lemont, Illinois. I hate to harp on the same topic, but that place is so nice for educational meetings with its stadium seating, comfortable adjustable chairs and a great stage, top notch. "March Education Madness" featured a lot of "technical stuff". I'll try to summarize the presentations but you really needed to be there to get the full effect. This was the third year of spring presentations of cutting edge turfgrass research that you requested. Some of the research work was done at the Sunshine Golf Course. Derek and the CDGA Staff are looking for ways to improve your turfgrass management through better/faster/cheaper methods of controlling diseases, stress and helping with overall growth.

"Moss Madness" started the day featuring Megan (pronounced Meegan) Kenelly of the Department of Plant Pathology from Kansas State University. Her studies were conducted at courses throughout the Kansa City, Missouri area.

What is moss and why is it so hard to control? Silvery Thread Moss (our main culprit) is a Bryophyte and lacks a vascular system and chlorophyll. Moss reproduces with spores and favors moist conditions. The spores are transported by water and by fragments or little chunks. It can also grow in hot sunny locations and can withstand extreme desiccation and temperatures above 100°. It's found throughout world. Typically moss is found in locations of low mowing heights, scalping, low fertility, shade and poorly drained sites.

Megan tested soaps, oils, copper, baking soda, iron and copper fungicides. She discovered there is little published on moss control. A summary of her results:

- Junction fungicide. Yes it works, but be wary of copper in the soil that can build up and induce iron chlorosis.
- Daconil fungicide. Yes, sometimes, but it is labeled for algae, not moss.
- Quicksilver herbicide. Yes but repeat applications are required and timing is important to help the bentgrass colonize the moss encroached areas.
- Baking soda. Yes. Her label rate is 6 oz/gal water. It can cause some discoloration.

Her research indicates that cultural practices such as higher mowing heights and more frequent use of nitrogen can play a big part in moss management.

Dr. Derek Settle of the CDGA made his presentation on a USGA Biostimulant Study titled "Evaluation of Cytokinin Plant

Extract Biostimulants, Iron, and Nitrogen Products for their Effects on Creeping Bentgrass Summer Quality". Derek's goal of the study was to present an "unbiased assessment of organic products containing cytokinins". Six products were evaluated for growth and color.

A biostimulant is a broad term often referring to one or more of broad range of ingredients, nutrients, organic acids, hormones, vitamins, microbial inoculants, plant extracts and other additives. It is very difficult to quantify the effects of each specific product so the ratings were measured by visual quality 1-9 and by using the NDVL (Normalized Difference Vegetative Index). The NDVL is an electronic device that uses light to measure biomass.

Spoon feeding has been around the 1960's and before. The goal has been to maintain a steady and consistent growth. Derek applied the different products at two week intervals.

More specific information on the results of his study can be found at: <http://usgatero.msu.edu/v08/n01.pdf>

Keith Rincker of the CDGA made his presentation on "Fungicide Programming for Dollar Spot Control on Bentgrass Fairways".

Dollar Spot is the #1 disease in golf course turf. Seasonal changes can vary the amount of dollar spot pressure. Spring dollar spot is usually not as damaging because turf growth is more vigorous. Fall dollar spot can cause more foliar damage and leave lasting scars into the winter.

Keith's study was to compare the effectiveness of different fungicide programs and on a cost per acre. Products were

(continued on next page)

varied as were the rates. Labeled fungicides were compared with off label fungicides. Systemic products were compared with contact products. Preventative programs were compared with curative programs.

The four programs reviewed were:

- Coyote Run
- North Shore Country Club
- CDGA "Bookend"
- Dernoeden 3 Way 21 Day

Dr. Megan Kennelly came back after lunch to make her presentation on Nozzles and Dollar Spot Control.

Some of the nozzle variables are: spray patterns and droplet sizes. Her ideal pressure flow rate is between 30 to 60 PSI. Her 2007 Test Study indicates there is less disease control when using certain nozzles. She found that using certain carrier volumes had similar results of being more or less effective.

Ty McClellan from the USGA made his presentation on "Practical Applications of the USGA Trufirm Testing Device". The USGA was looking for a way to test greens and bunker sand and quantify overall firmness with the objective to predict ball response, measure for consistent roll, eliminate or identify extremes, and determine/track progress of corrective maintenance practices.

The tool works by raising and dropping a hammer device into the desired surface. The design of the tool is simple. Penetration is a direct measure of firmness. It is equipped with an accelerometer. The data is measured by impact and stored directly via computer link using GPS for specific locations. The data is downloaded and stored to a laptop for printing.

The tool will be used at all USGA events, PGA Tour events and TAS visits. There is some fear it may become like the stimpmeter. Club A is thumping .35 and Club B is only thumping at .47! Oh oh.

Ty indicated more research is needed to quantify affects and to provide the most useful information a Club can use. Don't worry; the cost (\$8700) may discourage your Green Chairman from running out and purchasing a unit.

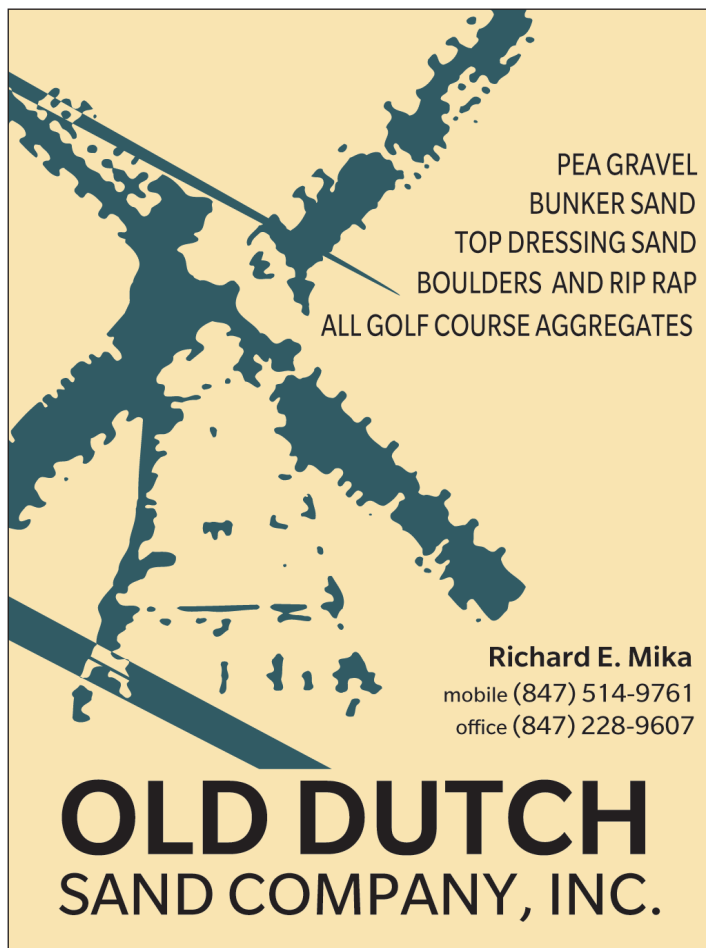
Another great education event was put on at the Golf House. Much of the information was very technical and you really needed to be there to the full impact of the Power Point Presentations complete with graphs, charts and question and answer sessions. This is good stuff! **-OC**

(continued from page 5)

company that supports the GCSAA. I'd like to think that the MAGCS's numbers are comparable to this.

Our industry partners play an important role in ensuring the growth and success of the profession of superintendent. The efforts of the Partnership Task Group are now focusing on new and creative ways for the MAGCS to recognize those industry partners who have provided significant support to the association. Their investments make it possible to provide MAGCS members with the programs, services, and research that advance the profession and the industry. In turn, sponsoring partners have the advantage of year-round exposure through a variety of communication vehicles and events.

Associations perform best when members are connecting on a regular basis. Don't fall into the trap of becoming "dissociated" or "unconnected." Come to monthly meetings on a regular basis; take advantage of educational events; and golf with someone new! Active participation is an essential component of making CONNECTIONS that begin to form PARTNERSHIPS, and strong PARTNERSHIPS make strong ASSOCIATIONS. Please join me in thanking our industry partners and make an effort to support the companies that support our association. **-OC**



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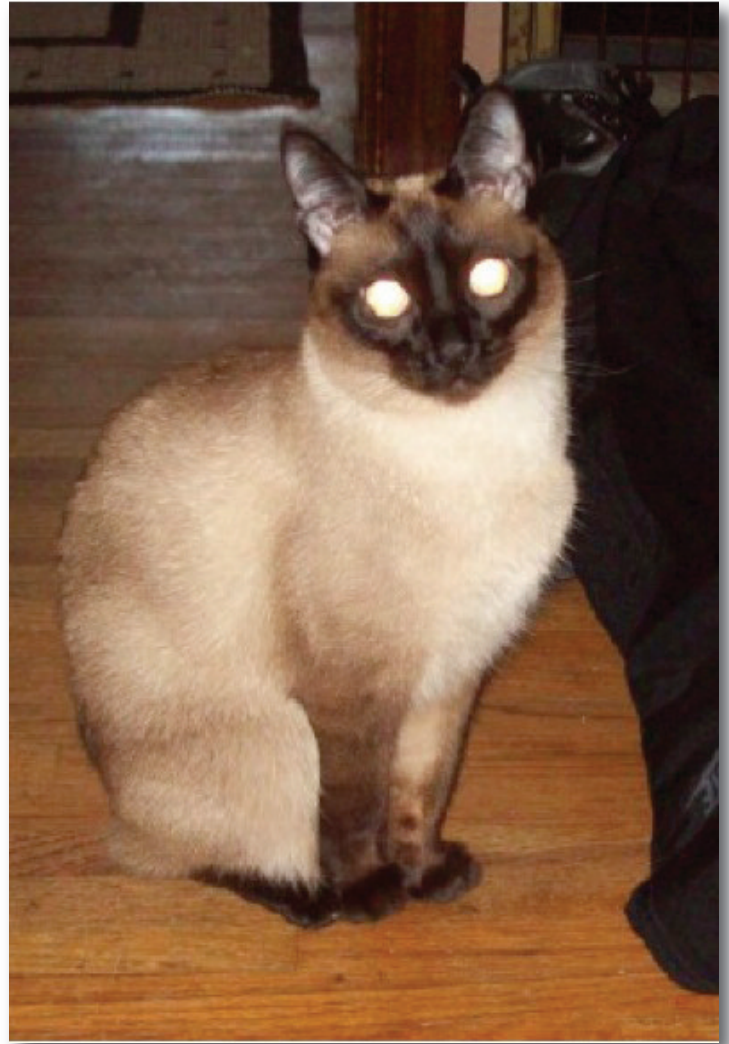
Virgil Range III, Aurora Country Club

"SASSY" our Siamese Dog

I've heard stories about dogs saving lives, but never a cat. Recently, my brother Chad's 2½-year old Siamese cat Sassy did just that. Chad has always called her his little dog. Her personality is unique and similar to a dog's in so many ways. Here is Sassy's story.

My mom was in the hospital for a week and was released on a Saturday afternoon. A few hours after getting home, she got sick. She was vomiting for quite some time. My brother, having a weak stomach for that kind of thing, had to come downstairs. Next, we heard a thud. Chad ran upstairs thinking it may have been our mom. I was right behind him, sensing somehow that it wasn't her that fell. At that time I called 911, and the ambulance came and whisked mom back to the hospital with a brain hemorrhage. A few days later I was driving home from the hospital thinking about things and it hit me. I asked Chad what was the thud that we heard that night? He said it was mom's vase filled with seashells. We put two and two together and realized Sassy knocked the vase off the railing to get our attention. That vase was sitting on the railing for over a year and was the only item on the rail. The next day I told my mom about it and we were amazed. When Sassy knocked the vase off the rail, my mom was trying in vain to call for us, but we could not hear her. When she told us that we realized Sassy might have saved our mom's life. We had just minutes to spare and Sassy got our attention when time was critical.

We are big animal lovers and have a house full of them. Max and Paco are our dogs. Kitty and Sassy, our cats, keep an eye on our 75-gallon tank full of fish. Although I can't vouch for the fish, the dogs and apparently now the cats have unique senses. They know when we are happy, sad, even hurt. We owe a great debt of gratitude to Sassy—she played a big part in saving our mother's life. **-OC**





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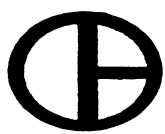
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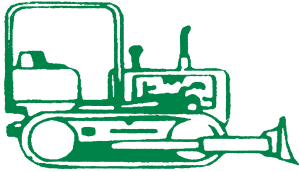
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