

ON COURSE

THE MIDWEST ASSOCIATION OF GOLF COURSE SUPERINTENDENTS

June 2011

Prairie Bluff Golf Club

Luke Strojny, CGCS

Midwest Association of Golf Course Superintendents
11855 Archer Ave.
Lemont, IL 60439

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and More

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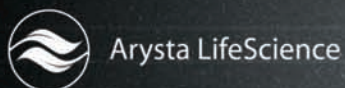
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JUNE 2011 Volume 65 No. 2



Prairie Bluff Golf Course is the site of MAGCS June meeting this year. Luke Strojny, CGCS hosted to honor Ken Shepherd as he retires from the Lockport Park District after 35 years in the golf industry.

FRONT COVER

The 15th at Prairie Bluff Golf Course, a par 5, 573 yard hole that plays straight into the prevailing wind and is uphill all the way.
Photo credit: Luke Cella

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

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

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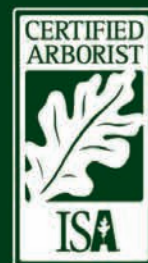


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Good Guys

I recently had a conversation with a former Green Chairman. I have the utmost respect for this individual, not only as a former boss, but also as a friend. He was always level headed and certainly came to understand the nuances not only of the Superintendent's profession, but of the golf industry as a whole. During this conversation he told me about a recent trip to Pebble Beach. He decided to surprise his wife for her 50th birthday, so he, his wife, and another couple played Pebble Beach. The usual was said about how beautiful the course was, and what a great place it was to play, and what a good time they had. But, he also told me about playing at Spyglass Hill. Before his round at Spyglass Hill, he was introduced to the Superintendent there.

He told the Superintendent at Spyglass Hill about his involvement as a Green Chairman and about some of the events he had attended here in the Chicagoland area. At those events he met other Superintendents. The thing he said during this conversation that really made my day was, "you guys are a bunch of good guys." So you have a former Green Chairman who goes out to Pebble Beach and happens to meet the Superintendent at Spyglass Hill. He has also met numerous Superintendents from the Chicago area, and he believes that we are some pretty good guys.

Now, it's important to understand that this individual is also a very good golfer, carrying a plus one handicap. He has also served on the Board of Directors at the club and numerous committees prior to that. The point here is that he understands the Golf business, and the Club business. He has been around it. You don't get to be a plus one handicap without spending some time in and around a Golf facility. After meeting several individuals in our profession, he seems to have a pretty high opinion of the people. Certainly not everyone thinks of us as a bunch of good guys. Not everyone has that high an opinion of the Superintendent. But the individuals who are in the know, the ones who have been around and take the time to listen, the ones who understand the profession, the ones who are important in a successful Golf operation, do.

The point here is that he understands the Golf business, and the Club business. He has been around it.

Every position within a Golf facility, a Club facility, is important. There is not one part of an operation that could function without the other. Each individual job within that facility needs a dedicated and passionate person, and the Superintendent is no different. We have all made it to where we are today through hard work, commitment, sacrifice, and dedication. At times it may seem as if no one notices. We have all been there. In reality, though, the ones who take the time to listen and to understand, do take notice. **-OC**

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FEATURE I

John Ekstrom, Hinsdale Golf Club



A Trip to Washington D.C.

Before I begin, I have to thank the MAGCS and Mr. Bob Maibusch. Bob has allowed me to be involved in MAGCS and GCSAA throughout my tenure as his assistant. I want to publicly thank him for his support of my involvement. The MAGCS deserves many thanks as well. Luke Cella and past Boards promoted the Class C position and fostered its growth. Being the Class C Advisor from 2006-07 helped springboard me to opportunities as a writer on the national scene and to being known in Lawrence. So for that, I cannot thank the MAGCS enough.

It was a privilege and an honor to help represent our industry as a part of the GCSAA contingent that attended National Golf Day in Washington, D.C., on April 13, 2011. I arrived two days earlier, as part of the GCSAA Government Relations Committee. This group was chaired by Pat Finlen, CGCS, and John O'Keefe, CGCS. Chava McKeel, Senior Director of Information and Public Policy, was the staff liaison for our committee. Chava is an amazing resource. If you ever have any issues or questions, DO NOT hesitate to call her. She has connections in Washington and is usually aware of pressing issues at the state level as well.

On the first day, we met at Reed Smith, a law firm that helps GCSAA stay abreast of issues on the Hill. What most interested me was hearing the concerns of the other committee members. Our group included nine Superintendents and one Assistant. The states represented were: Oregon, California, Colorado, New York, New Jersey, Ohio, Maryland, and Illinois. Each member of the group explained some of the issues they face in their respective states. The issues that we have had faced in Illinois over the past ten years are small compared to some of theirs. I was one of the last to speak. I explained that even though Illinois has the third largest city in the U.S., there is quite a bit of agriculture south of I-80 and west of Aurora. I am guessing that helps golf, most of the time.

There are two major issues that most states are facing: either water restrictions or the loss of fungicides in their arsenal. Every year, the pesticide label lists a new state in which it cannot be used. My question is: when will Illinois be added to the knock list?



Bob Ehler, CGCS, MG from Long Island, New York, told the group that there are three aquifers running underneath Long Island. Environmentalists are so tapped in with the legislators and the state EPA that when annual testing is done on the water quality, if any pesticide can be detected at the level of parts per billion, they recommend it be removed from usage in New York. Yes, I said parts per billion; that technology is now available. To me, that is like one drop of water in an Olympic sized swimming pool. Scary stuff.

Later on that day, we heard from Mr. Michael O'Brien from Responsible Industry for a Sound Environment (RISE). Mike is the replacement for Allen James who some of you may recall visited Chicago a few years ago at the turf clinic. Mike told an even scarier story. In the Pacific Northwest a group called the Center for Biological Diversity (CBD) has sued the EPA. They are using the Endangered Species Act to make the EPA look at the impact of 300 different pesticides on 214 endangered species across the country. The scariest thing about this, from what Mike said, is that this group, Center for Biological Diversity, could turn this into a mega lawsuit, which could affect every state and county nationwide. The fallout would be that the EPA and federal government, not having time and funding (mainly funding) to pursue all of these court cases, would settle. In settling with the CBD, I can guarantee that some pesticides would be removed from the market in the U.S. Pretty scary stuff if you ask me.

After the meeting concluded, we walked about eight blocks, going past the White House and the U.S. Treasury

(continued on page 7)

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en route to the hotel. On our walk, just next to the hotel we saw a large, gated home with a guard in front. There were security cameras and a foreign flag out front. Upon entering the hotel, I asked the bellman who lives next door, "Oh that, that's just the Russian ambassador."

Later that evening, we went to the Republican Capital Hill Club for dinner. Many of golf's dignitaries were in attendance. CEOs from all of the major golf organizations were present, along with a contingent of members and staff from each organization. By coincidence, I had the opportunity to sit next to Steve Mona, CEO of the World Golf Foundation and former GCSAA CEO. I had met Steve briefly, once before, but it was nice to speak with him again. The GCSAA group was well represented. Several people told me that the Speaker of the House, John Boehner, was in the building with his security detail having dinner. Unfortunately I did not get to see him. Following a great meal, there were several presentations about what to expect in our Hill visits the next day. David Marin, of The Podesta Group, concluded the evening by giving a sort of pep talk to our group before we left.

After breakfast on April 13th, we all took taxis to the Rayburn Building in the Capital Hill complex. The "We Are Golf" exhibit was there and was already seeing quite a bit of traffic. The PGA had a swing simulator and an indoor virtual golf game in the second floor foyer. Along with that, there were two putting greens. The two greens were the Democrat/Republican challenge. I never did find out who won, but the right was leading before I left. This was an opportunity for legislators, their staff, and anyone walking by to be educated about Golf. My day included four appointments. I had meetings at the offices of Congressman Adam Kinzinger, Congresswoman Judy Biggert, Senator Dick Durbin, and Senator Mark Kirk, all from Illinois, of course. I didn't know what to expect, but Chava McKeel from GCSAA attended my first appointment. We met with the Congressman's legislative aide for economic policy. In our meeting, we explained some of the economic value golf brings to the United States and educated him on some recent legislation that excluded golf.

Here are a few of the highlights:

- Golf is misperceived as solely a rich, white man's game.
- 75% of golf in the U.S. is public
- Golf is a \$75 billion a year industry
- Golf employs over 2 million people in the U.S.
- In Illinois, there are 678 golf courses
- Over \$2 billion dollars are generated for the Illinois economy because of golf
- The IRS considers golf courses to be small businesses, employing people who rely on the game for housing, food, and sustainability.
- In the aftermath of recent natural disasters, Hurricane Katrina/Floods in Iowa, golf was excluded from those disaster relief bills.
- Golf was included with Tattoo/Massage parlors, liquor stores, and gambling establishments, entities not able to get federal disaster relief.

We shared this information with each of the Congressional and Senate staffs we met, and they were amazed.

Following our ten-minute meeting with Congressman Kinzinger's office, Chava and I parted ways so she could make

some phone calls. I made my way to Congresswoman Judy Biggert's office, where I met with her aide for Economic Policy. Sharing some of the same ideas as I had before, this lobbying thing didn't seem too hard. That was put in perspective after my second meeting. I was heading to lunch when I met a lobbyist waiting in line in the cafeteria. He noticed the WE ARE GOLF button on my coat. He asked about our campaign, and then said, "Well at least you aren't some bloodsucker, like me, who represents the banking industry. Everyone likes golf." I can see that his job, especially in these times, is not the easiest.

In the cafeteria, I met a few committee members for lunch. While there I saw some of the PGA contingent and started talking with one gentleman. He asked me how my day was going. I mentioned that I had already met with two legislators and had two more visits to go. Astonished, he asked, "How did you guys set up all of the appointments with the legislators?" I told him that GCSAA works with Reed Smith and that they helped us coordinate all of this. This meant that GCSAA had more individual meetings than any other allied golf organization. That made me feel good.

Also, at lunch in the Rayburn cafeteria, I saw a two-star Air Force General. I had never seen that before. Pretty cool stuff.

The afternoon sessions with Senator Durbin and Senator Kirk's staffs went well. Chava met me to go to Senator Durbin's office as back up. She is very well versed on H.R. 872 – the NPDES permitting bill that would amend the Clean Water Act and FIFRA. It negates the need for the NPDES permits and allows pesticide labels to be overseen by FIFRA and the Clean Water Act. Hence, H.R. 872 is important. That's the message we shared, that and the economic benefits of golf described earlier. The House voted and passed H.R.872 with a bipartisan majority on March 31. Now it will go to the Senate for a vote. Being that Senator Durbin is the #2 man (Whip) in the Senate, behind Senator Harry Reid, I felt having Chava come along was very important. We had a good exchange with Senator Durbin's aide. He was aware of the legislation, but said the Senator hadn't made up his mind on the issue. I hope we helped sway his thinking.

Lastly, Chava left for another meeting and I went to Senator Kirk's office alone. I met with his aide on economic policy and discussed all of the same items that were covered in Senator Durbin's office. These meetings lasted about 10-15 minutes, each.

For me, this was a once in a lifetime event. I flew back to Chicago that evening. After an uneventful flight, which is always good, I lost my iPod on the plane. Aside from being upset about the iPod, I had a wonderful trip. Not only is it always good to spend time with the Board members and staff of GCSAA, but I got to talk with golf's leaders and hear their stories, worries, and hopes. I know it sounds corny but we are all a part of golf. The Family of Golf. If the golf economy is down, it affects all of us. Club managers, pros, the hot dog guy, people selling drivers at Golf Galaxy; all of us. It was great to be part of National Golf Day, especially as an assistant superintendent. An experience I will never forget.

Thank you MAGCS. **-OC**

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FEATURE II

Jason Wolf, *Whisper Creek Golf Club*

Rocky Bunkers?



After spending countless hours manually removing rocks from Whisper Creek's bunkers, our team thought there had to be a better, less time consuming way.

Whisper Creek is located 50 miles from Chicago, in the northwest suburb of Huntley, in the Dell Webb active adult community. The course was designed by Billy Casper and Greg H. Nash. It stretches out over 7,000 yards and includes more than 70 bunkers of varying sizes, all in need of constant maintenance.

In the process of researching what was available, I stumbled on a walk-behind sand cleaner commonly used for beach cleaning. This machine is self propelled. It utilizes a vibrating sift screen to process sand and remove rocks and other unwanted debris. It manually lifts and elevates the sand for cleaning. Clean sand falls through the screen, while contaminants move back into the collection hopper. There are three interchangeable screens: 3/16, 3/8, and 9/16."

By using a hand wheel, the depth of cleaning can be adjusted from 0 to 4 inches by the operator, at any time, even when the machine is in use. The unit is eight feet long and easy to maneuver because of an independent wheel brake on each wheel as well as differential assist. An air-cooled 5.5hp gasoline engine powers this machine.



Whisper Creek's 70 bunkers were constructed with Best Tour Grade sand. Bunker size varies from small pot bunkers to fairway bunkers in excess of 8,000 square feet. Over the past ten years, much of the Best Tour Grade sand has blown away and contaminants have become a problem.

We are currently in the process of renovating the bunkers with Morris sand. This unit works great in both the Best Tour Grade and the Morris sand. The problems we have encountered are effectiveness after a heavy irrigation cycle and ability to perform while on an incline. When the machine encounters wet sand, the sand clumps and then clogs the sifting screen. This reduces the effectiveness of debris removal. Any sifting that occurs on an incline or around the bunker faces will dig and tear at the bunker liner. The machine is most effective in the flattest areas of the bunkers.

Overall, we are very pleased with the purchase. Not only does it remove objectionable stones and

rocks, but it also loosens and conditions the sand. The purchase of this unit gives us a more efficient, effective way to clean and groom our bunkers. Use of the unit has been rotated into our maintenance program once a month. It leaves the bunkers more playable and rock free. **-OC**

SUPER -N- SITE
Josh Cull, *Chicago Golf Club*

Luke Strojny, CGCS -N- Prairie Bluff Golf Club



Doing more with less seems to be the mandate for most superintendents these days. The ever-increasing price of fuel is rapidly driving up operating expenses, and the stagnant economy is driving down the availability of funds for general operations. This is somewhat of a conundrum because golfers' expectations for playing conditions are the only constant. This current state of affairs has forced many superintendents to streamline their operations and look for new ways to become more efficient.

The downturn in the economy may be more difficult for superintendents managing larger budgets generally associated with private facilities; however, superintendents in the public/municipal sector have been maintaining excellent golf courses for decades with significantly smaller budgets. Having met this month's host, I realized this "new" ideology of doing more with less is, in fact, not new at all. Luke Strojny, CGCS is a veteran of the turfgrass industry. He got his start at age sixteen working for John Lapp and Frank Jemsek at St. Andrews Country Club in West Chicago.

"As a kid working as a caddie, I saw the superintendent (John Lapp) riding around the golf course with his dog and thought to myself that seems like a pretty easy job," Luke told me.

That thought led him to five quick years of tutelage under Lapp, until Luke moved on to become a superintendent at a nine-hole course in Wisconsin. That position predicated a twenty-five year tenure at Poplar Creek Country Club in the northwest suburbs where Strojny mastered the art of providing a championship caliber golf course within a constrained budget. Admittedly, he says his biggest challenge was adjusting to a smaller budget. Four years ago Luke departed from Poplar



*The Prairie Bluff Golf Course Team.
(L to R) Kevin Bauer (Head Technician), Luke Strojny,
Kenny Shepherd, Manny Mascote (Assistant Superintendent)
Luis Guzman (Irrigation Technician)*

Creek and assumed the leading role at Prairie Bluff Golf Course in Lockport, Illinois. Maintaining a championship golf course on a municipal budget, Luke continues to excel in the industry, proving that course conditions do not have to diminish with the budget. When asked about professional accomplishments of which he is most proud, Strojny cites a multitude of in-house capital improvement projects he was able to complete... under budget.

Strojny says his biggest challenge, currently, is following an excellent superintendent and continuing to improve the golf course. He credits the staff around him, including his assistant Manny Mascote, and his supervisor at the Lockport Township District for all of his successes.

"It is a cohesive and cooperative environment," says Strojny "that has rejuvenated my passion for this business."

Off the golf course, Luke referees an inline hockey league and enjoys thoroughbred racing. When asked what he would do if he were not a golf course superintendent, Luke said he would like to be an NHL referee or possibly get into the horse racing industry as a track superintendent. He has two children: a son, Kyle (19), and a daughter, Julia (14). **-OC**





THE BULL SHEET
John Gurke, CGCS, Associate Editor

June 2011

Here goes—the last reminder of 2011 about the deadline for submissions for the TurfNet Superintendent’s Best Friend Calendar presented by BASF. July 30th is that deadline, so get those great photos of your dog off to Laura Salinas (lsalinas@turfnet.com) quickly. Oh, and they kinda frown on pics of your dog killing something cute. We here at Bull Sheet do not.

In case you can’t make that July 30th deadline, you have a reprieve: August 1st is the deadline for the “2011 Dogs of Golf” calendar presented by Lebanon Turf. To submit your entry for 2012 Dog of the Year, send your high-resolution images (at least 4 megapixels) to lebturfdogcalendar@gcsaa.org. Check gcsaa.org for more information.

If you fancy yourself a filmmaker, and want to raise awareness to the need for effective, efficient, and responsible water use, you should enter the Rain Bird 2011 Intelligent Use of Water Film Competition. Entries will be accepted until August 1st. A panel of film and water experts will review films submitted via the competition’s website, www.iuowfilm.com, and finalists will win a trip to Los Angeles where they will be guests at a formal screening event hosted by wildlife expert and frequent Letterman foil Jack Hanna. Following the screening, two winners will be announced and awarded cash prizes of \$6,000 for the Jury Award and \$3,000 for the Audience Choice Award. Can’t hurt to try.

(continued on page 14)

DATES TO REMEMBER

- June 21 – MAGCS monthly meeting at Prairie Bluff Golf Club in Lockport, IL, **Luke Strojny, CGCS** host. The Dom Grotti Championship and the Class C Championship will be contested at this event.
.....
- July 5 – Deadline for the call for nominations for the 2012 GCSAA Board of Directors.
.....
- July 12 – 11th Annual John Buck Memorial Golf Outing and Scholarship Fundraiser at Marengo Ridge Golf & Country Club, **Luke Roth** host.
.....
- July 13 – ITF/NWILGCSA Summer Golf Day at Eagle Ridge Resort & Spa in Galena, IL, **Tom Tully, CGCS** host.
.....
- July 18-23 – U.S. Girls Junior Championship at Olympia Fields Country Club, **Sam MacKenzie, CGCS** host.
.....
- July 19 – Midwest Regional Turf Field Day at the Daniel Turf Center in West LaFayette, IN. Go to www.mrtf.org for details.
.....
- July 30 – Deadline for submissions to TurfNet for its “2012 Superintendent’s Best Friend Calendar.”
.....
- August 1 – Deadline for entries in Rain Bird’s 2011 Intelligent Use of Water Film Competition. Details to follow.
.....
- August 6 – MAGCS Family Night Picnic and Kane County Cougars baseball game at Elfstrom Field in Geneva, IL.
.....
- August 21 – MAGCS monthly meeting at Bowes Creek Golf Club in Elgin, IL, **Brad Legnaioli, CGCS** host.
.....
- September 15-18 – 2011 BMW Championship (the 3rd FedEx Cup Playoff event) at Cog Hill Golf & Country Club in Lemont, IL, **Ken Lapp** and **Scott Pavalko** hosts.
.....
- September 22 – ITF’s 3rd Annual iTurfExpo at Midwest Golf House in Lemont, IL, with Doc Settle and the Crew hosting.
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The Second Annual Medinah Patriot Day will take place on July 7th at Medinah Country Club, the site of the 2012 Ryder Cup matches (**Curtis Tyrrell, CGCS** host). The event benefits the Illinois Patriot Education Fund, whose mission is to provide educational scholarships for Illinois military service men and women and their families. A great cause that recently got even better—on May 25th the IPEF announced that it will donate a portion of all donations received through Memorial Day to assist the victims of the tornado that devastated Joplin, Missouri in mid-May. You can contribute to the cause by visiting www.illinoispatrioteducationfund.org.

.....
 MAGCS member sighting in print—**Dustin Huguen** of The Bridges of Poplar Creek Country Club was featured in an article in the March issue of *Club & Resort Business* titled “Standing Up to the Test.” The article stressed the need for soil and water testing to “dial in” inputs while reducing unnecessary applications of nutrients. Dustin related that he performs his soil tests in late July to early August, allowing the season’s maintenance program to have taken full effect, and also that he takes numerous samples from each area tested at a time when there have been no recent fertilizer or pesticide applications and the soil is dry.

.....
 Congratulations to Sara and **Keith Krause** on the birth of their daughter Delilah Sara Krause on May 26th. Delilah was born at 1:17 PM, weighing in at 8 lbs., 14 ozs., and 21” long, and joins sister Lucy and brother Max in filling out the Krause family. Nicely done, Krauses—might I recommend

Samson as a potential name for your next child (and may it be a masculine child)?



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So we have found another uncanny resemblance between a MAGCS member and a celebrity, and once again there is some karma involved. **Brian RACeTte** is a SUPERintendent. Dale Earnhart, Jr. is a RACer who is a SUPERstar. Coincidence? Again we ask you to be the judge...



in our business. He was never afraid to get a little dirt under his fingernails and he loved teaching young lads like myself as well as many others lessons in grass and in life. And although the grass paid the bills and put food in our mouths, he always made sure the family came before the grass. He made it a point every time he saw another guy in the industry to not only ask about the course, but to see how his family was doing. And that's how I think a lot of guys will remember Ken. So if you want to find him after July 1st, you probably have three options: he will organize Team Focus events (a mentoring program for young men who grew up without a father); kayaking with Jim McNair; or RV-ing with mom across Colorado. If you see him at Prairie Bluff, congratulate him and maybe even buy him an Arnold Palmer. And for all you guys who wanted to see another picture of him in short shorts, you got it.



Our April MAGCS meeting was held at Naperville Country Club on the 27th with **Tim Anderson, CGCS, MG** and **Steven Biehl** hosting. On paper, the plan was solid—wait until the end of the month to ensure good weather. The execution of the plan was thwarted by that same issue—weather. April decided it wanted to go out with a bang and not a whimper, and copious rain made the golf portion of the event impossible. Between Tim and his staff, and the excellent education session provided by **Larry Lennert** of Aquatrols, the day was a success regardless of the weather woes. Many thanks to Tim Anderson and Naperville Country Club (and a special shout-out to Oscar in the Men's Grille), and to our generous sponsors—**Arthur Clesen, Inc., Burris Equipment Company, J.W. Turf, Inc., Nels J. Johnson Tree Experts, Syngenta, BASF, Water Well Solutions, PHP, Layne-Western, and Pendleton Turf Supply**—for a great day.

I turn the pen over to **Craig Shepherd** (ProGro Solutions) for the following:

Roy and Trigger Ride Off Into the Sunset

In case you haven't heard the news yet, Ken Shepherd will be officially hanging up the work boots as of July 1st. After 35 years in the greens industry, he will pass the baton and ride off into the sunset...literally (he enjoys riding his road bike A LOT).

He started his greenkeeping career at Cog Hill Country Club working for the legendary Ken Lapp. Shortly thereafter he went on to receive his first head superintendent position at Woodruff Golf Course. After seven years he transferred within the Joliet Park District to Wedgewood Golf Course after Renny "Snake" Jacobson left for Carillon Golf Links. He then got the opportunity to build and grow in Prairie Bluff Golf Club in his hometown of Lockport, Illinois where the June MAGCS golf outing will be held (and dear old dad will be playing). If you have met Ken, you've realized he was one of the hardest working, funniest, most caring individuals

GREAT DES PLAINES ROAD RACE
August 21, 1983
Marathon Foto

The Short shorts—what everybody wanted to see, but the white socks and red shoes make the outfit complete.

(continued on next page)



The family guy—how bout that good lookin' kid on the right?



Dad with his bestest buddy Renny Jacobson.



Dad doing what he was born to do.

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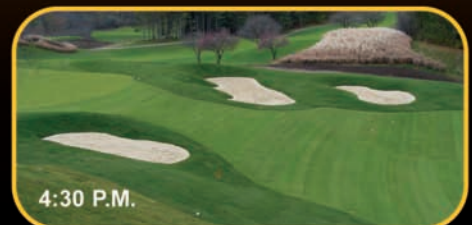
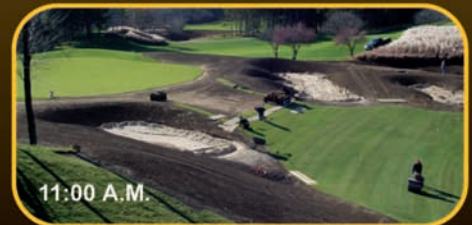
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Both the Dom Grotti (Superintendent/Assistant) and Class C Championships will be contested at this event, so come out to Lockport and win some hardware.

.....
And to show just how lazy a Bull Sheet writer can be, I now turn this space over to **Chuck Barber** (Indian lakes Resort) for his description of some recent festivities at Butler National Golf Club:

The following is a short speech I gave about Mike Sauls and the time I spent working at Butler National Golf Club from 1999 to 2006. Butler National chose to recognize Mike as their "Man of the Year" for 2011. This was due in no small part to recovering from floods, tornados and whatever else the weather wrought on the Oak Brook layout in 2010. I believe it had more to do with his achievements throughout his career at Butler and the conditions he brought to the course since his arrival in 1990.

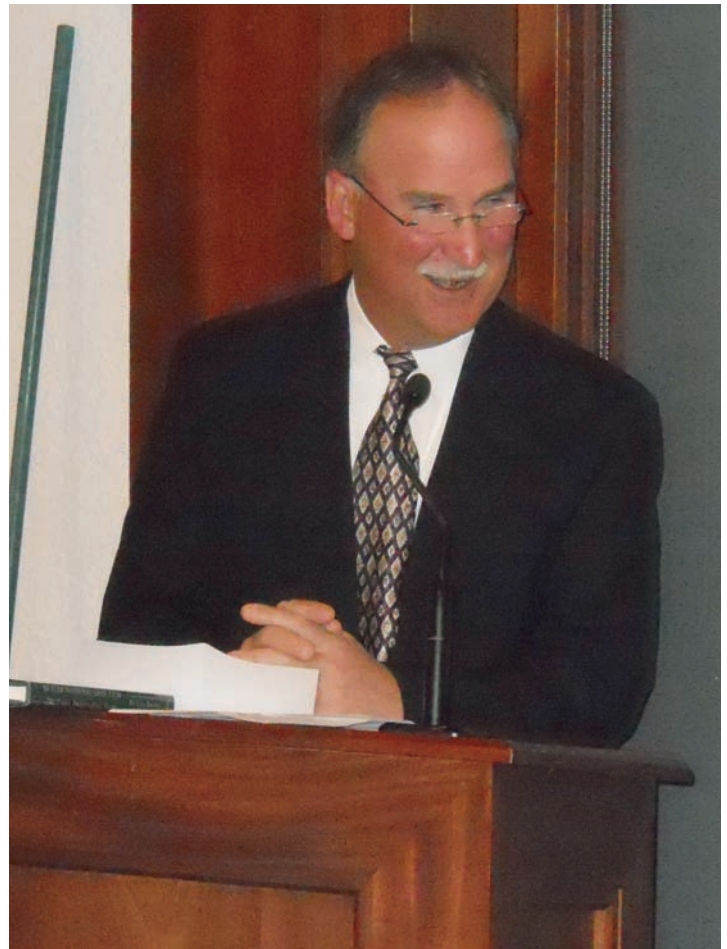
Golf Course Superintendents are sometimes the 'unsung' heroes of golf operations. The membership of Butler National sang loud and clear in praise of Mike, the grounds staff, and the golf course they are able to enjoy as a result of their work. All of Mike's former assistant superintendents attended the lunch, golf, and dinner event at the invitation of the membership. They came from as far as California and Colorado to be there for Mike and it was a very special experience for all of us. I wanted to share this experience with MAGCS as a reminder that employers do notice our efforts, they do take the time to say 'thank you' and they appreciate the value we as superintendents add to each facility.

I came to Butler National Golf Club in January 3rd of 1999 and I stayed through the blizzard that came that day, the floods and projects that ensued over the next 7 years until I left in 2006.

I moved to Chicago in the hopes of finishing my degree at the University of Illinois beginning in the fall of 1999 and Mike was the only golf course employer willing to hire me for a January start. It also helped that I was living with my parents four miles away in Western Springs and Mike felt it a benefit he didn't have to pay for housing me as he did the other interns. He also didn't see fit to pay me more than minimum wage either. His frugality is legendary.

When I joined the staff as the second assistant in 2001 upon graduating I thought I knew it all. I was hot stuff and I was proud to share that with everyone. I came to learn quickly, in the Mike Sauls, not-so-delicate sort of way, that I was wrong. I learned many lessons over the ensuing years that I draw upon daily in my current position as Director of Grounds at Indian Lakes Resort. I would like to take a few moments and share some of these lessons with you:

One of my first Sundays by myself as a manager (Jason Kahlstorf ALWAYS scheduled the most capable, veteran staff on his Sunday. I was left with the rookies and the questionably sober) one of the staff members forgot to rake the bunker behind the fourth green. In a confusing radio conversation I communicated poorly that we were raking



Butler National's Man of the Year, Mike Sauls.

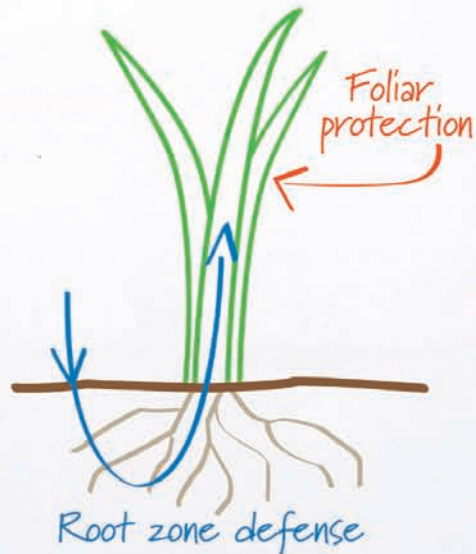
bunkers in fairways while Mike was inquiring about green-side bunkers. I was requested to be present, immediately, behind the 4th green near the halfway house. I was dressed down quickly about my inability to be an effective manager, a good communicator, a turf manager, a Steelers fan, a democrat and a litany of other things. Mike was wielding a putter over his shoulder and many of you in the room were present during this conversation and for that I am glad. I truly felt Mike was going to hurt me.

The Lesson: Safety first

On July 30th of 1999 the mercury tipped out at 103 degrees with accompanying humidity. We observed actively growing disease well into the afternoon and Mike decided to spray fungicide in fairways around 5 pm. Jason Kahlstorf, Jason Tresemer, Tony Bisbee and I spent the next 6 hours spraying fairways. I remember the date for two reasons: 1.) it was my birthday and 2.) I was supposed to go to the Cubs game that day with the Mets front office staff in town for the game with a friend from college. I didn't ask to go to the game if you must know. If you already know the answer it is best to not ask the question. Mike left somewhere around dark and presented the 4 of us with a handsome prize: a 6 pack of Budweiser, 12 oz cans. I'll do the math for you: 1.5 beers per man. Jason Tresemer and I both forwent our halves for Tony and Jason to enjoy.

(continued on page 19)

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The Lesson: Budget awareness is important

During greens aerification before the Salt Creek project was completed one of the staff members torpedoed an expensive Cushman turf truckster into the Salt Creek in front of #10 green. We lifted the operator and the equipment to safety as Mike was breathlessly running to the site. Mike inquired quickly: "IS THE CUSHMAN OK"! The reply was that yes, Hestor was fine and the Cushman would live to fight another day.

The Lesson: It is crucial to have priorities

The best time I had during my years at Butler National Golf Club was during the golf course renovation of 2004/2005. My responsibilities included establishing all the turf on greens, tees, and fairways, and coordinating all the activities with the irrigation contractor with our department. Jason Kahlstorf handled the bulk of the construction responsibilities as well as the staff's involvement in golf course maintenance and the construction work we performed in-house. Mike handled material ordering, logistics and coordinated all the work with Tom Marzolf, David Hunt and Tom Fazio. This involved loads of gravel, sand, topsoil, irrigation components, seed, fertilizer, etc and was really a Herculean task. On one particular day a truck driver delivering topsoil mistakenly dumped his load into a pile of bunker sand. I don't have to tell you how mad Mike was, but I will. His face became as red as I have ever seen, he folded his arms so tight around his chest I felt he might break his ribs and his strides were nearly double their normal speed and length. As he cursed and screamed in English and



Dan Sterr took part in the Saul festivities at Butler to honor Mike.

broken Spanish, the Estonian or Latvian truck driver calmly grabbed a shovel and scooped the contaminated soil and sand out of the pile over the next few hours and then went busily about his life. Some of those curse words are still hanging in space somewhere over Jorie Blvd.

(continued on page 21)

All former Assistants of Mike Saul's: (Clockwise from left) Ted White, Mike Carlson, Dan Sterr, Hugh Lynch.



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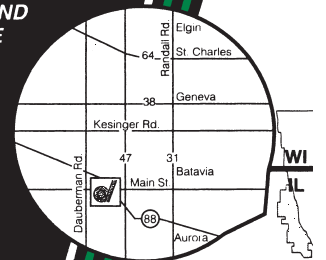
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The Lesson: You can NEVER over communicate

Mike used to talk about going to Board meetings and facing 'the music' for whatever was happening outside on the golf course that he felt was bothering the membership at that time. This was usually things like: green speed, green speed and green speed. I joked that he should wear his glasses (for those of you who haven't seen them, they are thick enough, I think, to see into the future) for surely no one would yell at someone wearing glasses. Mike's response was: "How about you go &\$% yourself".

The Lesson: A sense of humor is a good thing

It might sound like a bad place to work from hearing these stories. At the time I might have agreed somewhat. Life can only be understood backwards but must be lived forward. Looking back I never learned more, I was never given the opportunity to do more, I was never given that much responsibility, I was never asked to be a leader before, I was never more aware of a larger picture. Many people ask me what it was like to work at Butler National and what it was like to work for Mike Sauls. My answer has been the same since the day I left. I tell people: "Mike Sauls is the best golf course superintendent I know. Working at Butler National is only as difficult as you make it on yourself". I use these lessons and many more in the way I do my job today and they will stay with me for the rest of my career. In my time at Butler National, Mike Sauls taught me a great deal about golf course management, working with memberships, peers, vendors, and the crew but to NEVER lose sight that family comes first. I try and emulate that today now that I have a family of my own. Thank you, Mike, for the chance to learn these things and I am glad the membership of Butler National Golf Club has recognized Mike today for the work he has done for the club for the last 22 years. It is my understanding that Mike and Errie Ball are the only employees to win this award. I don't imagine we'll see Mike mowing rough here at Butler when he's 99 years old! Thank you.



The other side of the ball had Mike's pic on it, not sure why anyone would want to strike that side of the ball.

OK, I'm back now. Don't forget to sign up for the 11th Annual John Buck Memorial Golf Outing which takes place on July 12th at Marengo Ridge Golf & CC (Luke Roth host). This event is always a blast with its 4-person scramble format and its post-golf feast, and benefits not only the MAGCS Scholarship Fund, but also the NWIGCSA's and the Kane County Farm Bureau's funds. Call J.W.Turf at 847-683-4653 to sign your team up.

As a public service, we offer the following helpful hint so you may hopefully avoid this...



When you repeatedly haul a heavy piece of equipment around a bouncy, bumpy golf course, and are usually going too fast to try and stay ahead of play, you may want to check the tow hitch periodically for signs of stress or fatigue before a catastrophe occurs. Tow-behind turbine blowers are another susceptible item (not that I would have any personal experience with that—I'm just sayin')



Mike's known as a man of few words, apparently the two imprinted onto the outing balls are a favorite with the membership.

(continued on page 23)

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The ITF /MAGCS Spring Golf Day was held at Briar Ridge Country Club in Schererville, IN on May 24th with **Erwin McKone, CGCS** hosting. This time Mother Nature cooperated with a glorious, albeit blustery day. The format was a two-person best ball with match play Ryder Cup scoring, pitting the evil black team against the virtuous white team. It came down to the last foursome and the White Team prevailed.

Many thanks to Erwin and the staff at Briar Ridge for a great golf course and a great food spread afterward. And of course, thank you to the day's sponsors who made it all possible: **Syngenta** (Driver Sponsor), **Dirt-n-Turf Consulting** (Iron Sponsor), **D&K Products, Arthur Clesen, Inc., BASF, Reinders, Inc., and Dow AgroSciences** (Wedge Sponsors), and **Nadler Golf Car Sales, Inc., and The Andersons** (Putter Sponsors).



Dave Behrman and Dave Schingel.



Drs. Bruce Branham, Tom Voigt and Mr. Scott Witte share a laugh at the ITF/MAGCS Play day.



Brian Racette and Kurt Sams crossed the boarder to enjoy the day.



Joel Purpur and Dave Milosoff readying to play Briar Ridge.



(continued on page 25)

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Smooth swinging ITF Board member Brian Mores (l). Kevin DeRoo trying to start the wave by himself after Barber's tremendous golf shot. (R)



What do you know? Witte wins another raffle.



Shane Conroy and Nick Marfise of Park Ridge Country Club.

John Nelson is such a good superintendent/golfer he can replace his divot before he even completes his swing.





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MAGCS current champion, Dave Kohley attempted to advance the ball as John Neslon explains to him the finer points of replacing your divot during your swing as they search for the ball again.



ITF's Past President Don Cross was able to pick up a Purdue memento at the Pro Shop at Briar Ridge. Dr. Voigt pretended to be amused.



Still hiding something, Erwin addresses the group as the current president of the ITF.

.....

If you have the urge to serve your industry, there is no better way than to serve it at the highest level. GCSAA is accepting nominations for the 2012 Board of Directors until July 5th. The election will be held at the Annual Meeting in Las Vegas next February. If you are interested, contact Luke Cella who will in turn submit your name to the nominating committee for its review.

.....



Erwin McKone shows off his coveted framed copy of On Course and is hiding something.

(continued on next page)

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So it's a shame that our winter sports teams have bowed out of the playoffs, and there will be no championships to celebrate this summer. There is an upside, though—since the Blackhawks made their premature exit from their defense of the Stanley Cup, it gave them the opportunity to get out on the links earlier than last year. This was a BIG upside for **Scott Witte, CGCS** at Cantigny Golf Club when he ran into Bryan Campbell and Jonathan Toews at his course recently. They REALLY look young next to Scott, don't they?



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WE ARE GOLF, a coalition led by five of the game's leading associations—including GCSAA—and supported by a wide range of industry partners, met with key members of Congress in April as part of the fourth annual National Golf Day. The five founding associations are GCSAA, the Club Managers Association of America, National Golf Course Owners Association, The PGA of America, and the World Golf Foundation. Among those in attendance was **John Ekstrom** of Hinsdale Golf Club who, in his role on GCSAA's government relations committee, and acting as *Golf Course Industry* magazine's correspondent on Capitol Hill prepared and sent his Daily Dispatches from Washington D.C. Great job by John on keeping us updated on the proceedings.

Did you catch the article in April's *Golfdom* magazine about the Reinvention of Mark Woodward? You will recall Woodward, the former CEO of GCSAA left his post under some cloudy circumstances. Well, after reading the article (which I had hoped would shed some light on the subject), the whole thing still seems cloudy doesn't it? I guess we file this whole episode along with Big Foot, the Loch Ness Monster, and Area 51—there's a story there and that story is that there is no story. Enough said on this.

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EDUCATION REVIEW

Charles Anfield, CGCS, *Heritage Bluffs Golf Course*

Control Your Water, Control Your Results



The April MAGCS meeting was held at Naperville Country Club with Tim Anderson, CGCS, MG as the host. Larry Lennert Territory Manager for Aquatrols made a presentation, "Control Your Water, Control Your Results".

Statistics reveal that by 2013, 36 out of the 50 States within the United States will experience water shortages and overall increased demand. Water use efficiency will become a more and more prominent issue.

A Great Lakes Water Compact was created in 2008 to bind States bordering the Great Lakes and Canada with water use restrictions. The Compact specifically limits diversions of water outside the Compact area. It requires eight States and Canada to develop water conservation programs. Regulations will be coming our way soon and Best Management Practices (BMP) will be required.

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(continued on page 33)



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One way to quantify DU is to measure it with "catch cans". These can be any size, larger with deeper sides are better to avoid loss from splashing. Larry recommends purchasing Tupperware containers 6"x 8"x 4", or you can purchase commercially made catch cans. They just all need to be of the same size. You will need at least 24 containers. For greens the spacing should be 15 feet. For fairways the spacing should be 25 feet.

- DU is a ratio: $\frac{\text{Beneficially used water}}{\text{Water applied}}$
- This should ideally equal 1.
- A ratio of over 80% is considered excellent.
- A ratio of less than 55% is considered poor.

To improve DU, take steps by answering these questions:

- Are the heads the correct size for the area?
- Is the head spacing correct?
- Are the nozzles worn? Replacing worn nozzles is the cheapest fix.
- Are the pipes the correct size?
- Is the head pressure correct?

Measuring soil moisture is another way to quantify watering efficiency using TDR (Time Domain reflectometry). This is a newer, very reliable technology being used. It is a wireless hand held tool and can be purchased from a variety of suppliers. It provides information on field capacity and specific wilt points for specific soils. Basically what it does is identify areas that need supplemental irrigation. It replaces the low tech method of pulling a core and looking at it to see if it's wet or dry. It can help improve effectiveness of hand watering by measuring soil moisture consistency across a selected turf area.

Water repellency in soils is another problem for turf managers. Hydrophobic soils can be very problematic affecting plant hydration and water distribution. It can severely decrease irrigation efficiency. It is caused by the decomposition of organic matter in the soil. The roots exude organic acids and the acids coat the soil particles. The acid accumulation inhibits the soil to wet uniformly and decrease overall water penetration.

A water drop penetration test (WPDT) can be performed to access soil hydrophobicity. Remove a soil core 4-6" deep from desired soil area. Dry it out for a week. Use an eye dropper and put a drop of water at 1" spacing and measure how long it takes to infiltrate the soil sample. If it takes more than 5 seconds there is some degree of repellency.

Wetting agents and soil surfactants can assist in regaining water penetration and uniform distribution.

The wetting agent attaches to the organic coating on the soil particle and helps reestablish soil polarity undoing the repellency and improving infiltration. A study at Ohio State University in 2002 by Surfactants can reduce run off by 20% or more.

For more information about controlling your water or an irrigation audit, contact Larry Lennert at: llennert@aquatrols.com. -OC




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