

# ON COURSE

THE MIDWEST ASSOCIATION OF GOLF COURSE SUPERINTENDENTS

December 2012



Midwest Association of Golf Course Superintendents  
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The Turf Clinic Turns 60

The Transition Zone

Bullsheet, Breezes and More



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The Midwest celebrates its 60th Annual Midwest Turf Clinic at Medinah Country Club. Dr. Derek Settle leads a panel discussion on recapping the summer that will always be remembered by those in the audience.

**FRONT COVER**

The new Midwest Board of Directors. Dave Groelle, CGCS, Dave Kohley, Chuck Barber, Bob Kohlstedt, Matt Kregel, Matt Harstad, Kris Kvelland, Jim Pedersen, and Nick Marfise. Not pictured: Justin Van Landuit and Ed Braunsky, CGCS, 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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ON COURSE WITH THE PRESIDENT

Dave Groelle, CGCS, Royal Melbourne Country Club



# Transition and Accountability

*I would like to begin by thanking the Past Presidents for their hard work and dedication in making MAGCS what it is today. We would not be where we are without them. It is very humbling for me when I take a look at the names of those who came before me and think that my name will be on that list. So for that I thank you. I have some goals in mind that I would like to share with you for the year ahead.*

My first thought as I take office is that I would like to improve upon our publication. *On Course* is a vital part of our association. It has and will continue to be a leader in our industry. I think we can make it better. It begins with receiving the magazine. It needs to be more prompt. We will hold to tighter standards for delivery, starting with commitments from our authors and ending with the publication ending up in our mailbox. I believe getting the magazine in a timely fashion will greatly enhance its appeal to our members. I also believe we need to have better content. I am not trying to diminish what has been done thus far. I just believe it can get better. The only way that happens is with your help. We need our members to contribute. Write an article. Provide an idea for an article. Our Board will be actively seeking volunteers this year from our superintendents and from our educators. Why is this so important? For me it's value. Value to our superintendent members, and maybe more importantly value to our commercial members. After all, without their support a lot of what we do would not be possible. Therefore, if we create an improved *On Course* that people look forward to and want to read, it could make our commercial members more willing to advertise more. This of course supports our Association and allows us to create more value for our members. So please consider helping out. If you have any thoughts or ideas on this please let me know.

The second area I would like to work on is public perception. Now this is a tough one. I have to go back to the Ryder Cup to explain further. Like many of our members

I volunteered to work the maintenance crew for the event. What an incredible experience. As the event progressed what was overwhelming to all of us was how little the spectators knew about what we do. The Ryder Cup presents a situation different than most events in that course maintenance occurs in between the matches on Friday and Saturday. Therefore, we were out completing tasks in front of an audience! It was wild! What came from this was the fact that people who follow golf still don't know what we do!! Many of us who volunteered commented on the type of questions asked and comments heard by "expert" fans throughout the week. It was quite humorous but at the same time sad, sad that we still haven't reached the status that we deserve in this industry. I would like to work on this. I know this is a very difficult task but I have a few ideas and I think it is with a try. Our story needs to be told, and I think the golfing public will find it very interesting.

I realize those are some very daunting tasks, but you have to start somewhere. As President I will attempt to accomplish something. To do that you need goals, those are my goals. Will we achieve them? We'll see. I am going to work hard and I know the team of Board members that has been assembled will help me out along the way. If you would like to help or if you have any thoughts about anything I welcome them. Hopefully next year will bring average weather that will bring smiles to our faces. Thank you again for the opportunity. **-OC**

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FEATURE

Ryan Dunbar, *Cress Creek Country Club*

# Growth in the Transition Zone



## Turf isn't the only thing to struggle in gray area.

*One thing that originally drew me to pursuing a career in the turf grass industry was its approach to professional development. Our industry is one of the strongest examples of modern apprenticeship.*

Medieval apprenticeships were ostensibly contracts where a teenager was made to trade cheap labor for room, board, and an education—living and working with their master. The turf industries' "apprentices" are assistants, and its "masters" are superintendents. Though we do not live with them in the literal sense, working side-by-side with veterans who hold the very positions we are striving to achieve has few other equivalents. Assistants are not contracted for years to aid their superintendents and must eventually deal with a dilemma many traditional apprentices never had to face: the Transition Zone.

The term Transition Zone, as it refers to turf, is the area of the continental United States where weather conditions permit neither cool-season nor warm-season turf to thrive

year-round. However, I am speaking of a professional Transition Zone: The span of time where an assistant is as prepared as they can be to assume their first superintendence, but have not done so and must continue to function as an assistant. Simply put, when your assistant-sized pants start to chafe your superintendent-sized rear. Growth in the Transition Zone can be precarious.

Progression into the Transition Zone is not a bad thing. To the contrary, it should be the goal for most assistants. Our aim should be our continued education and professional growth. We should learn all we can at our current position and move onto a next level position when we feel our apex has been reached. Unfortunately, the job market does not always adhere to our plans, especially when the next level

*(continued on next page)*

*A few assistants and superintendents of MAGCS from past year's Dom Grotti Championship event.  
(L to R) Thom Irvin and Dave Schlagetter: Matt Leinen and Jerry Dinelli.*



is superintendent. Now you are in the Transition Zone.

So why is the Transition Zone precarious? The root cause of the problem lies with our ego, though I do not use the term with the staunch negative connotation it has often garnered. Ego lets you know you are valuable, skilled, and becoming more so with each passing season. A healthy amount of ego leads to confidence, and confidence is the muscle we flex when it's time to do the heavy lifting of leadership. Superintendents must be strong leaders.

Ego can be a good thing. Yet, unchecked ego will lead you down the wrong path when your Transition Zone moment comes. Sometimes the part of you that knows you're ready can make peace with the fact that preparation and opportunity can take a moment to align. Sometimes it throws a big, fat fit. I'm here to tell you as a fellow assistant, if you fall into the latter category you are not only in the wrong, it turns out you may not be in the Transition Zone at all.

I had a conversation recently with a golf professional who told me the story of an assistant he once had with whom he constantly butted heads. The pro explained the tension between them was caused by the assistant's frustration at being ready for, but unable to attain, his own head pro position. While this was not the first time I had heard a story like this in this industry or outside, this was my first time processing it as an assistant. I was dumbfounded.

I view being an assistant as doing everything I can to make the course and my superintendent shine while learning my trade. Often, a superintendent carries the responsibility of allowing their assistant a certain amount of autonomy and room to grow. Nevertheless, at the end of the day it's your superintendent's course. Their name is on the door, their reputation is on the line, and if a head is going to roll it's going to have their hair color. This in no way means that you, the assistant, should be a simple, silent sheep. If you are truly ready for the next level, you're buzzing with ideas.

Not all of us will have the good fortune of working for people we enjoy. I am grateful to have worked for men I was glad to emulate. Conversely, you don't have to like your boss to respect your boss, and you do not have to respect your boss to carry out their orders. For example, in a planning session after I have voiced my thoughts and arguments, when my superintendent gives an order I follow it. Even if I don't agree. I don't gripe to my co-workers or crew. I do not do it my way just to prove him wrong, or purposefully wrong to prove my point.

Should your super choose to work with and address you as a partner: embrace it! Just never forget they outrank you. Just as they should not forget their course's general manager and board outranks them.

Handled correctly, this intermediary point in your career can be a great opportunity. In a way, you are able to be in two places at once. You are witnessing and operating at a superintendent level, while having a veteran there to catch you should you fall. Many lessons we must learn can be experienced in this way, saving you from having to do so once you have advanced to the next level. Of course, this will not stop you from taking your lumps your first time as captain. To share a thought from a newly minted superintendent, "Nothing short of sitting in the chair, can prepare you for how much it all changes once you're sitting in the chair."

We are not guaranteed a seat at the table. The wait can be long for some of us, but becoming stagnant or growing bitter is not the answer. The last true test of our "apprenticeship" we face as we move through the Transition Zone: Never forget our place no matter how far we've come. We must think like supers, act like supers, work like supers, but function as assistants. If this is beyond your ability, than you are not ready to be a superintendent, and thus, are not truly in the Transition Zone. **-OC**



*Moe Sanchez and Justin VanLanduit*



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## MIDWEST BREEZES

Charles Anfield, CGCS, *Heritage Bluffs Golf Course*



### 2012 CDGA Public Golf Summit

Being a “public golf guy”, I decided to attend the 2012 CDGA Public Golf Summit to see what was up. Public golf has long been a large part of the golf industry, the majority of the courses within the Chicago District Golf Association are public. Our area is well known throughout the country for having many high quality public golf courses.

Representatives of golf facilities both privately and publically owned gathered together at the Midwest Golf House on October 25, 2012 to discuss common issues centered the business of golf. The format was a round table discussion featuring open dialogs moderated by CDGA representatives. Note cards were passed around to solicit topics for conversation. Most of the attendees were Golf Professionals, Club Managers, Owners and a couple of Golf Course Superintendents.

A summary of the topics discussed:

#### Reservations and the issue of “no shows”

- How do courses fill empty tee slots? Most operators were against the concept of discounting.
- How do courses enforce the “short show” issue of people booking times for 4 and showing up with 2? Difficult to enforce without losing customer service and the overall experience.
- On line reservations were discussed. Right now only a minority of times are internet booked. People are still calling on the telephone and speaking to a person to make their reservation. Many people have questions that only a person can answer.

#### Pace of Play

- The general consensus target time was four hours. This can be hard to enforce on more difficult courses and with lesser skilled players. “I paid my money and

I’m taking my time” is hard to argue with when the customer is always right.

- Do GPS and cell phones slow play? The players like the gadgets and many would not or could not play without being connected to the outside world.
- The reputation of a “slow playing course” can hurt player draw.
- Player Assistance programs are helpful if implemented politely. The challenge has been to staff these programs during times of budget cuts.
- High school coaches don’t seem to be helping the issue by enabling players with a sense of entitlement. Pre-shot routines have become too long, Professional golf is also not helping the issue.

#### Discounting and 3<sup>rd</sup> Party Providers

- Are we hurting each other by continuing to lower prices?
- The issue of quality versus quantity. Who is willing to pay for what?
- There are so many fee structures today that hardly anyone is paying “rack rate”.

#### Family Golf and Junior Golf

- This has become very popular at many courses that have evening programs.
- Children are likely to play more if parents play with them.
- Junior tees are very popular so that the children play a scale course. It also is helping pace of play.
- Promotions are being successfully run at schools.
- Junior leagues and tournaments are becoming more popular.

#### Marketing

- Courses are branding themselves for a specific niche player market.

(continued on page 9)

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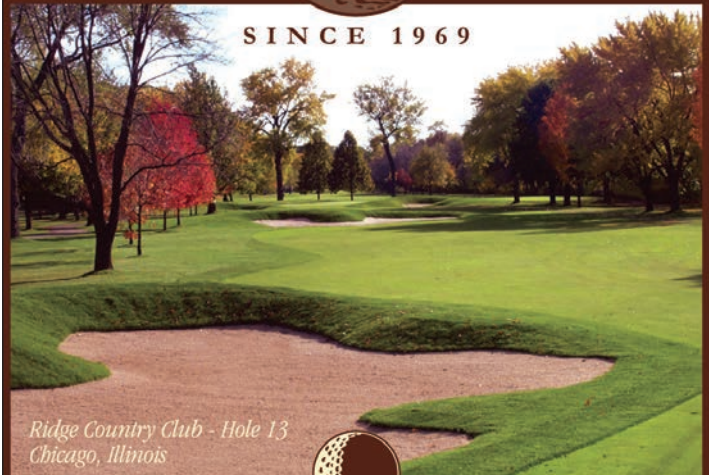
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- Digital marketing is growing via email blasts. The consensus ideal time frame to send email blasts was every 10-14 days with various promotions and newsworthy items. Email blasts can be segmented to target defectors and new acquisitions.
- The goal is to continue to grow the player data base.
- Print marketing is still used based on player demographics.
- Text messaging is an effective tool. Texting offers are being used for spontaneous openings. Surprising to learn this is not age restrictive.
- Who does the marketing at each facility?
- Is social media effective? Twitter, Facebook?
- With the last minute nature of booking, smartphone communication is growing.

### Green Aerification

- Everybody recognized this necessary process needs to be done.
- The best time and best technique will vary with each facility depending on playing schedules, fee structures and expectations. There is no USGA “cookie cutter” recipe.
- It is always better to inform people beforehand, so they won’t be surprised and disappointed.

### Outings

- What do you do when an outing books for 130 and shows up with 60? Set a contract price with minimums,

- give options and reserve the right to fill in openings.
- Not for profit fundraisers have become very common. There are fewer overall outings today than 10 years ago.

### 2012 Golf Season

- Was it good because of the good weather? = YES
- Was it good because Medinah hosted the Ryder Cup? = YES
- Was it good because demand was higher? = Not so much
- Most courses were looking to capitalize on potential favorable winter weather in 2013.

### The Future of Public Golf

- Most attendees felt positive about the future of the business of golf.
- Some people still felt there were too many courses and not enough players.

It was actually quite interesting to sit in and learn about the business of golf from the all the different perspectives of the attendees. I know sometimes we get “tunnel vision” on the turf and are not always exposed to the big picture. The round table discussions are lively and sometimes can be entertaining when conflicting view-points are discussed. After all, this group is competing against each other, but much like our Associations they see a value in sharing information for the betterment of the game. I encourage you to make plans for the 2013 Public Golf Summit. **-OC**





THE BULL SHEET  
John Gurke, CGCS, Associate Editor

# DECEMBER 2012

Welcome to the following new members of the MAGCS family:  
Mr. Ryan Gilmore, Class SM, Joe Louis, "The Champ"  
Golf Course  
Mr. **Brad Allen**, Class SM, Harrison Lake Country Club  
Mr. **Brad Wagner**, Class C, Butler National Golf Club  
Mr. **Brian Kalal**, Class C, Edgewood Valley Country Club  
Mr. **Kellen Miller**, Class E, EZ-GO

Next month has several great opportunities to get smarter (and albeit lighter in the wallet) with the excellent educational offerings provided at the various events on the calendar. On the 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup>, the Illinois Turfgrass Foundation will hold the first-of-its-kind Turfgrass Conference at the Hyatt Lodge on the Hamburger University campus in Oak Brook. Unlike the IPTC and other past incarnations of the winter conference, this will be an education-first theme in a casual atmosphere, with opportunities to network and meet with vendors without the trade show aspect. The roster of presenters is impressive, and covers a wide variety of topics in all areas of turfgrass management. GCSAA credits have been approved for this event. If you've never been on the campus at Hamburger U, the McDonald's museum will take you back to your childhood.

Also in January is the Mid-American Horticultural trade Show at Navy Pier on the 16<sup>th</sup> through the 18<sup>th</sup> ([www.midam.org](http://www.midam.org)); followed by the Michigan Turfgrass Foundation Conference in East Lansing ([www.mtfconference.org](http://www.mtfconference.org)); next up is the MAGCS monthly meeting and Annual Wee One Fundraiser and Auction on the 24<sup>th</sup> at Seven Bridges; and finally the

*(continued on next page)*

## DATES TO REMEMBER

December 3 – Annual South Side Superintendents Holiday Party at Chef Klaus' Bier Stube in Frankfort, IL.

December 11 – CAGCS Holiday Lunch at Pinstripes in Northbrook, IL.

December 13 – 14<sup>th</sup> Annual West Side Superintendents Holiday Party at Seven Bridges Golf Club in Woodridge, IL, **Don Ferreri** and **Dave Gelino** hosts.

January 8-9 – Turf Conference presented by ITF at the Hyatt Lodge on the campus of Hamburger University in Oak Brook, IL.

January 16-18 – Annual Mid-Am (Mid-American Horticultural Trade Show) at Navy Pier in Chicago, IL. Phone 800-300-6103 or go to [www.midam.org](http://www.midam.org).

January 21-24 – The 2013 Michigan Turfgrass Conference at the Kellogg Hotel and Conference Center in East Lansing, MI. Go to [www.mtfconference.org](http://www.mtfconference.org) for details.

January 23-26 – 60<sup>th</sup> PGA Merchandise Show in Orlando, FL.

January 24 – MAGCS monthly meeting and Annual Wee One Fundraiser and Auction at Seven Bridges Golf Club, still in Woodridge, IL, and hosted by Don and Dave.

January 29-31 – 79<sup>th</sup> Annual Iowa Turfgrass & Trade Show at the Downtown Des Moines Marriott. Phone 515-232-8222 or go to [www.iowaturfgrass.org](http://www.iowaturfgrass.org).

February 3-5 – GCSAA National Championship and Golf Classic in San Diego, CA.

February 4-8 – GCSAA Education Conference in San Diego, CA.

February 6-7 – Golf Industry Show in San Diego, CA.

February 6 – MAGCS 2013 Hospitality Reception from 7 til 10 PM at the Hotel Solamar at 435 6<sup>th</sup> Avenue on the Rooftop Lounge.

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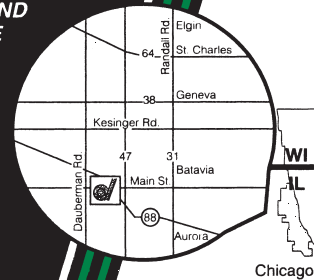
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79<sup>th</sup> Annual Iowa Turfgrass and Trade Show in beautiful Des Moines on the 29<sup>th</sup> through the 31<sup>st</sup> ([www.iowaturfgrass.org](http://www.iowaturfgrass.org)). Hopefully you can take some time to get away to these valuable events. Oh, and if you mistakenly type [www.madam.org](http://www.madam.org) instead of [www.midam.org](http://www.midam.org) as I did, you'll not find anything even remotely pertaining to horticulture. Just sayin'.

.....  
 Congratulations to **Mike Mumper** on his new position as Golf Sales Rep for Arthur Clesen, Inc. Best of luck to you, Mump!  
 .....

We finally figured out why the weather gods decided to rain on the Annual College Championship parade that was to be held at Calumet Country Club on October 22<sup>nd</sup>: It's because **Chuck Barber** was going to wear this get-up.



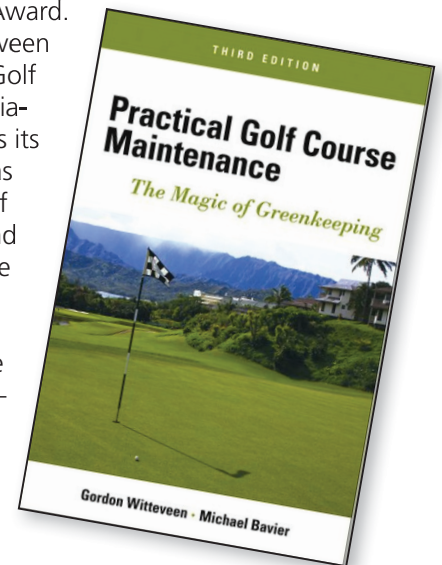
Come to think of it, maybe it was the fashion gods that put the kibosh on the day...

.....  
 Q: Which member of **Brian Bossert's** club hosts a sleazy daytime talk show?

A: Bryn Mawry Povich.  
 .....

Each year the Sunshine Through Golf Foundation's programs help bring joy to people with special needs through golf. To continue to provide these programs and to expand on them, donations are greatly needed. You can donate to this great cause that grows the game which we dedicate our lives to by visiting the website—[www.sunshinethroughgolf.org](http://www.sunshinethroughgolf.org)—and clicking on the "Donate Now" button, or by participating in the Commemorative Brick Program. This is a wonderful way to make a permanent memorial of your support, as the brick you purchase will be forever set in an area surrounding the front entrance to Midwest Golf House. There are two sizes, and you can choose to customize your brick with any message you desire. To participate, go to the website and order online.  
 .....

It's back, and it's better than ever! The highly-acclaimed book from the pens of Gordon Witteveen and **Michael Bavier**, *Practical Golf Course Maintenance*, is hitting the bookstands with its Third Edition. The updated new version offers guidance and tips on the art of maintaining golf courses, and includes the latest information on the tools we use every day in our profession. Mike is the retired longtime superintendent of Inverness Golf Club, and has served as president of both MAGCS and GCSAA, and is a recipient of GCSAA's Distinguished Service Award. The late Gordon Witteveen started the Canadian Golf Superintendents Association in 1965, serving as its first secretary, as well as serving on the Board of Directors of GCSAA and also is a recipient of the DSA. You can pick up a copy at the GCSAA Bookstore on the trade show floor in February—and you might even talk Mike into auto-graphing it for you if you're lucky!



.....  
 Did you know that in this magazine, 60 years ago this very month, the development of the 'Crimson King' Norway Maple in Western Europe was announced? It's true. Beautiful trees, but not so hot on a golf course if healthy turf is your thing. In that same issue of *The Bull Sheet*, this advertisement was causing quite the stir...



Kinda racy for 1952, huh? Then-editor Hugh Hefner moved on to bigger and better things I'm told.  
 .....

(continued on page 14)

The Fall 2012 edition of *Golf Inc.* magazine ran its "The Most Powerful People in Golf" list, with 23 of the 35 people named being from the United States. Steve Mona, past CEO of GCSAA and current CEO of the World Golf Foundation was 19<sup>th</sup> on the list, up from 28<sup>th</sup> in 2011. **Luke Cella**, Executive Director of MAGCS, CAGCS, ITF, Wee One Foundation, and several other organizations I've probably omitted, was not mentioned in the list.

.....  
 This just in from the Organic Arsenical Products Task Force (OAPTF, and yes, there really is such a thing): MSMA applications labeled for use on golf courses (except Florida) for the control of various grassy weeds will be extended for at least 3-4 years until a new National Academy of Sciences review on inorganic arsenic is completed. Therefore, the sale of MSMA for golf course use will not be terminated on December 31<sup>st</sup> as originally called for in a 2009 agreement between OAPTF and EPA.

.....  
 Here are some little known facts that make one feel better about the game of golf—the 2012 John Deere Classic, which is held annually at TPC Deere Run in Sylvan, IL raised a record \$6.79 million for 493 local and regional charities in the Quad Cities area. That's \$1.5 million more than last year! On the national scope, the total charitable impact that golf had in the United States in 2011 was \$3.9 billion (roughly the cost of an Obama family trip to Europe).

.....  
 Did anyone notice the conspicuous absence of **Nick Baker** throughout the entire presidential election? And did you

further notice his miraculous reappearance on the scene immediately after the whole dog and pony show was over? Could it be that maybe, just MAYBE he was unsuccessfully campaigning for vice president?



**Paul Ryan**



**Nick Baker**

.....  
 It looks like it's official—the USGA and the R & A have agreed on a "proposed rules change" banning the anchoring of any golf club against the body. Per the ruling, the following cannot be done anymore: anchoring the end of the grip against the body; securing the club by making a fist and anchoring that fist against the body; and creating a fulcrum or anchor point with the forearm against the body. The rule is set to go into effect on January 1, 2016. That's three whole years to change a crappy putting stroke back to a different crappy putting stroke. I think we'll be okay.

The advertisement features a large red banner at the top with the logo "PAF INC." in white, stylized letters. Below the banner is a photograph of a golf course during autumn, with vibrant yellow and orange trees in the background and a green fairway with a sand trap in the foreground. At the bottom of the ad, white text lists services: "Tree Removal • Trimming • Installation • Stump Grinding • Lightning Protection • Cabling Onsite Tub Grinding/Dyed Mulch Product (Turn Your Own Material into Premium Mulch)" and a phone number: "(708) 913-3916".



Last month it was announced that Jemsek Golf has received an extension on its lease for Pine Meadow Golf Course in Mundelein, which they have operated since the course's opening in 1985. **Frank Jemsek** is a member of the Illinois Golf Hall of Fame, and Jemsek Golf owns and operates St. Andrews Golf and Country Club in West Chicago (**Brian York** and **John Lapp**) and Cog Hill Golf and Country Club in Lemont (**Scott Pavalko**, **Ken Lapp**, **Nick Marfise**, **Frank Latzko**).

Also announced last month was that Rich Harvest Farms in Sugar Grove (**Jeff Vercautren** superintendent) will be the site of the NCAA Division I Men's Golf Regional hosted by Northern Illinois University from May 15-17, 2014. The site of the 2009 Solheim Cup also hosted the NCAA Regional in 2007.

Q: What does **Jim Knulty** get when he has a few cocktails and rambles on too much?

A: Big Foot in mouth disease.

MAGCS members in the news: **Tim Christians** of Makray Memorial Golf Club was spotted in TurfNet's Blog Aggregator letting his blog readers know that all pesticide labels and MSDS's are available for their information on his blog. Also, in the October GCM, **Chase Bonnell** of Rich Harvest Farms penned a great article titled "Knowing how to ask," which details methods for assistants to ask for more responsibilities from their superintendents in order to become more well-rounded superintendent-candidates. Good stuff.



Calling it "an important development for the game of golf," GCSAA president Sandy Queen, CGCS praised the International Golf Federation's recent statement on its commitment to sustainability. The statement, signed by 153 golf organizations (who knew there were that many?) placed sustainability as a core priority with focus on the management of golf facilities, administration of golf events, and the influence of golfers as consumers. You can read the statement in its entirety at [www.wearegolf.org/news](http://www.wearegolf.org/news).

GCSAA announced that eight of its affiliated chapters have made donations recently to the Environmental Institute for Golf (EIFG), and one of those eight was MAGCS. With our contribution of \$1,000, we are proud members of the Golden Tee Club for annual giving, and the Governor's Club for cumulative giving. We rock!

If you are hoping to attend the GCSAA Education Conference in San Diego, but aren't sure if your employer will foot the bill, you can download the 2013 Attendee Justification Kit at [www.gcsaa.org](http://www.gcsaa.org). It contains tools to help you demonstrate the value of attendance to your higher-ups. Didn't work for me, but I'm positive it will for you...

A friendly reminder from GCSAA that you are provided with free life insurance and accidental death and dismemberment coverage as part of your membership. To review your coverage, or to check on your beneficiary information (don't want some pesky ex-wife cashing in on your demise do you?), call GCSAA headquarters at 800-472-7878.

The 60<sup>th</sup> Midwest Turf Clinic was held on November 14<sup>th</sup> at Medinah Country Club, thanks to host superintendent **Curtis Tyrrell, CGCS, MG**. The theme of the day was "2012—The Year That Was", and a really excellent program was presented for the many in attendance. After **David Marquardt** gave the invocation, **Jimmy Frels** did a stirring rendition of the National Anthem, setting the mood for the day. President **Bob Kohlstedt** conducted the Annual Meeting, which was suspended at 9:00 for the morning's education. **Shane Conroy** moderated the morning session, which began with a panel discussion on the year that was led by **Dr. Derek Settle** and manned by **Brad Chamra** of Hinsdale Golf Club, **Tim Christians** of Makray Memorial, **Scott Pavalko** of Cog Hill, and **Bob Vavrek** of the USGA. Kudos to Doc D and the panel on a tight, well-done presentation. Dr. Rick Latin followed with his insights on bacterial wilt, sharing that he "is not a big fan of anecdotal information unless it's my anecdote." The election of officers came next, and the 2013 MAGCS Board of Directors consists of President **Dave Groelle, CGCS**, Vice President **Dave Kohley**, Secretary-Treasurer **Chuck Barber**, and returning Directors **Matt Harstad** and **Matt Kregel** (each with one remaining year), and new Directors **Kris Kvelland** (Ridge Country Club), **Jim Pedersen** (Hughes Creek Golf Club), and **Justin VanLanduit** (Briarwood Country Club). After a Mexican feast for lunch, Chuck Barber presented the Ray Gerber and Fred Opperman Editorial Awards to **Ken Shepherd** and David Marquardt respectively for the articles they wrote for On Course magazine. Following a brief update from chapter delegate **Don Ferreri**, afternoon moderator **Nick Marfise** called **Steve Cook, CGCS, MG** to the podium to deliver his often humorous talk on "When Weeds Become Hard," referring to the tree removal program at Oakland Hills Country Club. Dr. Nick Christians spoke on the effects of the drought of 2012 next, and then keynote speaker Tom Thayer, former Chicago Bears lineman and current radio play-by-play analyst entertained the audience with his stories from the past and his thoughts on the current team (and if he had a southern accent you'd SWEAR he was James Carville). The day came to an end with the ceremonial passing of the gavel from Bob Kohlstedt to Dave Groelle, and the attending members headed home smarter than when they arrived. Many thanks go out to Curtis and the people at Medinah, which is such a fine facility for the clinic, to the presenters and moderators for their contributions, and to our invaluable sponsors, who were **Arthur Clesen, Inc., Aerial Images Photography, BASF, Burris Equipment Company, Great Lakes Turf, LLC, Nels J. Johnson Tree Experts, Reinders, Inc., and Syngenta.**

*(continued on page 16)*



*Eric Mundt, Kris Kvelland, and George O'Hara*



*Dave Kohley, Dave Groelle, Matt Kregel*



*Mike Mumper and November Mustache winner Andy Weadge*



*PM Moderator Nick Marfise, Panel Discussion Moderator Derek Settle, and AM Moderator Shane Conroy*



*Dare I say two old timers, Dave Ward and Carl Hoppman*



*Brian Winkel, Randy Lusher and Chad Hauth*



*Kevin DeRoo, Mike Bavier, Ron Townsend and Michael Miracle*

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The following items are in good working condition, and are being offered up for sale:

- 5- John Deere 220A walking greens mowers— \$1,000 each, or all 5 for \$4,000
- 1- John Deere 260B walking tee mower—\$1,500
- 1- 2002 John Deere 3215B 2wd fairway mower with 2200 hours—\$3,250
- 1- 2004 Jacobsen T628 4wd with Lastec deck, 5200 hours—\$4,000
- 1- Toro Hydroject with 860 hours—\$1,500.

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EDUCATION REVIEW

Charles Anfield, CGCS, *Heritage Bluffs Golf Course*

# 60th Turf Clinic



*The MAGCS Members met at Medinah Country Club for the 60<sup>th</sup> Turf Clinic and Annual Meeting. Curtis Tyrrell, CGCS MG was the host for the day. The education theme for the day was "2012, The Year that Was".*



Curtis Tyrrell

Shane Conroy, Assistant Superintendent from Park Ridge Country Club was the morning moderator. He introduced a panel discussion led by Dr. Derek Settle, Director of Turfgrass Programs with the CDGA, discussing the **2012 Golf Season**. The panel consisted of Robert C. Vavrek Jr., USGA Senior Agronomist of the North Central Region, Brad Chamra, Superintendent of Hinsdale Golf Club, Scott Pavalko, Superintendent of Cog Hill Golf and Country Club and Tim Christians, Superintendent of Makray Memorial Golf Club.

## Act I. Early Spring Warm Up

Dr. Settle led off with some graphs and statistics showing the 2012 annual temperatures. Data indicated that it was one of the warmest on record. The year started out with a warmer than normal winter with very little snow cover. Many courses stayed open for play. The trend continued with an unusual March, featuring nine consecutive days with temperatures in the 80's. Spring also brought unusual disease and pest outbreaks with dollar spot, patch diseases, broadleaf weeds and fairy ring. Dr. Settle estimated our spring season was a month ahead of "normal."

Scott: "It was an early start for everything. We aerified greens earlier than normal; consequently they healed in faster than normal."

*(continued on page 20)*

Tim Christians, Brad Chamra, Bob Vavrek and Scott Pavalko



**Bob:** "There seemed to be no winter kill throughout the Midwest. Golfers were happy to be out playing. The warmer temperatures created an environment for *Poa annua* to thrive and expand growth. The early season demand for playing conditions and subsequently increased labor and mowing inputs became a "budget buster" for some clubs. Weed and insect survival became problems later on requiring extra applications."

**Brad:** "It was my first year at Hinsdale CC and I hustled to try to keep up with the early start. We had to charge the irrigation system three weeks earlier than normal."

**Tim:** "We had a short staff to get the course ready for the early start. It was a lot of work and we had a lot of players out on the course. We were able to get good germination on some of our newly seeded tees."

## Act II. "Booger Bear" Summer

This was Dr. Settle's label for the 2012 summer. He showed more graphs and charts depicting unusual temperatures and exceptional droughty conditions. By the end of August, we had 47 days with temperatures above 90 degrees. Fairy ring and anthracnose became chronic problems. Late June started to reveal bentgrass decline on greens. Etiolation (longer leaves) on turf plants became prevalent. Fans were very popular for helping to cool turf.


**Tim:** "It was tough on our new tees that had undeveloped root structures. We had 2 acres of new tee area and it was difficult to keep up."

**Brad:** "The collars we re-sodded became an issue. We implemented strategies to help the turf like venting, light fertilizing, fungicides and moisture meters to measure for dry spots."

**Bob:** "This summer was all about the hose. Many guys switched to ¾" hoses from 1" because they are just easier and lighter to move around. A lot of grass was lost in the later afternoons/early evening between 6-7 pm. Losing turf to wilt was determined in a matter of hours. We saw heat stress on turf that emulated warm season conditions on cool season turf. Due to higher than normal irrigation use, salt meters were measuring sodium and bicarbonates at unbelievable levels. Problem issues became magnified with irrigation systems running at higher frequencies. Fans and tree removal helped with poor air circulation. Shade issues during morning photosynthesis time became problematic. We are starting to see southern turf related issues creeping north. An example would be goose grass in Minnesota. If this trend continues we will see normal transition zone issues moving north in the coming years."

**Scott:** "I was amazed at how much golf traffic can kill turf in one day when its 100 degrees. We increased the height of cut, started syringing greens and substituted rolling for mowing to help alleviate turf stress."

**Derek:** "We were fortunate we got a cool weather break in mid-August. If we didn't get that drop in temperature there would have been a lot more turf loss. Water management was crucial for keeping *Poa annua* alive. Most poa plants had no roots by the middle of August. We saw some death by ammonia with type I fairy ring causing sterile soil environments."




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### Act III. Fall Recovery

Projects were able to move forward. Weather data showed every month was on average warmer than in the history of recorded weather.

Scott: "Fall was kind of a blur. We were able to get the course back in shape. We moved forward on drainage projects. We definitely maximized our rounds."

Bob: "Most courses had banner years. 2012 was good for golf."

Brad: "We looked back and evaluated maintenance practices of the 2012 season. We need to set more realistic expectations."

Tim: "We are still addressing issues of out tees. We will do some tree removal and some root pruning. We will expand the size of some of our par 3 tees. Grubs became bad in the rough, the skunks and raccoons did a lot of damage."

### Act IV. Q and A

Q: What was your best practice you implemented for the 2012 golf season?

Scott: "We started cutting collars at night. This is an area we have the most stress on our turf. We like the cut we get when we mow dry. We wanted to avoid the stress of mowing in the morning and then the weather getting hot."

Bob: "We have learned we can substitute rolling for mowing. Clubs started target rolling specific areas. When the turf is under stress, stop topdressing, stop using TGR's, and basically stop doing stuff. We need to not be our own worst enemy."

Tim: "Our best investment was a moisture meter. We would test sites then use the hose to water. We tried to minimize using overhead sprinklers."

Brad: "We started mowing collars at night. We would begin at 6:00 pm. Most of our problem issues were with our collars."

Q: Should carts be restricted to paths on "super-hot" days?

Scott: "We just roped off certain areas."

Bob: "I would be concerned with the liability of forcing people to walk. If it is such a concern, just close the course."

Brad: "I met with our golf professional and we considered it. We wound up just syringing fairways in the afternoons."

Tim: "We do have continuous paths but it was just not an option."

Q: Did you use ultraviolet plant protectants?

Brad: "We did use some products. We didn't see any visual difference."

Bob: "Some data we are seeing is the turf that isn't sprayed is 2-3 degrees cooler. The turf is lighter in color."

Scott: "We did use some products, but is hard to say if they worked, I would like to see more scientific evaluation on products."

Thanks to Dr. Settle for putting the panel together and those who shared their experiences with the group.



Dr. Rick Latin

Dr. Rick Latin, Professor of Plant Pathology in Botany and Plant Pathology Department at Purdue University made a presentation on "**Bacterial Wilt. Is it for Real?**"

Bacterial wilt has become a growing issue on turfgrass greens in recent past. There seems to be a lot of concern and confusion because golf courses are having difficulty diagnosing turf problems and some people believe this may be the problem. Specifically, Quail Hollow Golf Club in Charlotte, North Carolina had diagnosed isolated spots of bacterial wilt in their greens in 2009/2010 and the story has "snowballed" from there. Dr. Latin got "dragged" into the issue because of his past research on bacterial wilt on vegetables. "Not much is known about the association of bacteria on turfgrass."

To date the search for a solution has produced:

1. Lots of anecdotal information
2. Few plausible explanations
3. No real solutions

"It's been frustrating, there are no easy answers," Dr. Latin explained.

The history of the disease on bentgrass has been linked to *Acidovorax* which is different than the *Xanthomonas* bacteria found on *Poa annua*. The disease seems to occur on bentgrass which is already under stress. "Only a few labs are prepared to accurately identify bacterial pathogens on turf. No one has been able to isolate the pathogen and inoculate and replicate all systems in the field."

Chlorosis seems to be the most consistent symptom. This symptom progresses into necrosis. Sometimes it has been associated with etiolated tillers which seem to wilt. Sometimes bacterial streaming from the stem can be observed under a microscope.

How did it get into greens? Possible explanations include:

- Airborne bacteria
- Mechanical introduction: shoes, mowers, golfers equipment
- Infested seed
- Was it always there, part of the natural turf ecosystem?

(continued on page 23)

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If so, why now?

- Other problems may have masked disease
- New management techniques may be creating window of opportunity for disease
- The weather has changed over the last two years

Dr. Latin explained, "The turf environment is very complex and has a very diverse microbial population. The disease has almost exclusively been reported on turf maintained at greens height. It seems to be most prevalent at very high profile courses with aggressive maintenance practices and low tolerances for cosmetic damage."

He went on to state: "We have not been successful at replicating field conditions in the lab/check plots."

Are there predisposing factors? Does heat, drought, grooming, mowing, traffic, PGR's, nitrogen stress, fungicide applications, affect disease susceptibility? Research at Quail Hollow has used various products for treatment. No results have been achieved.

"If you think you may have bacterial wilt, the best thing you can do is promote healthy roots. Good agronomy is very important," Dr. Latin said. He went on to make sure we are covering the basics:

1. Aerification in spring
2. Raise height of cut
3. Light topdressing with no dragging
4. No vertical mowing

Final thoughts by Dr. Latin on the subject, "before you do anything, get an accurate diagnosis." For further information Dr. Latin may be contacted at [rlatin@purdue.edu](mailto:rlatin@purdue.edu)



Steve Cook

Steve Cook, CGCS, MG who has been at Oakland Hills Country Club since 1997 presented **"When Weeds Become Hard."** This topic is related to the ongoing tree removal work and restoration of the original design playability intent at Oakland Hills as envisioned by Golf Course Architect Donald Ross.

"People become very emotionally attached to trees," Steve began. Oakland Hills was not designed to be a tree lined parkland golf course. Most of the trees were planted later on by Green Committees. Steve explained throughout his talk that these trees hide the existing natural land forms and features that Donald Ross utilized when he designed the golf course. He tactically used the existing landforms when he built the tees, green complexes and fairway landing areas. So many of the trees are non-native and considered by Steve to be "bad" trees on the property specifically Silver Maples, Honey Locusts, Willows and Colorado Blue Spruces.

Unlike Oakmont Country Club that did all of their tree removal in one massive swipe, Oakland Hills has embarked on a multi-year tree removal plan. "The whole removal process has been very slow to unfold. Tree removal needs to be justified and documented for agronomic and architectural reasons each step of the way," Steve explained. Because of this thorough documentation consisted of: shade studies, tree surveys, replacement costs and tree maintenance principals. Steve wanted to emphasize the "real cost" of trees. Not only does it cost money to plant the tree, but also the annual costs to remove leaves, seeds, branches and regular pruning.

Steve proposed a set of guidelines covering tree maintenance principals to the club. The intent was to provide future tree specification so the course does not revert back to its past ways of random tree planting. Some of those guidelines include:

1. Minimum proximity at mature canopy diameter, to adjacent tees and greens.
2. Trees will not be planted where branches at maturity will not block normal advancement of the ball toward a fairway bunker or green.
3. All future tree plantings will favor native hardwood species on proposed list.
4. Trees will only be planted in January and February.
5. Trees will not be planted where shade of mature tree will inhibit playing surfaces.

Steve has been involved in this process/program for quite a while. He is very passionate about restoring the original playability intent of the Donald Ross design which places a heavy emphasis on the ground game. He said it has required quite a bit of "sales" techniques using appropriate terminology, photography and he continue to keep members focused on restoration principals.

As you can imagine, this has been a challenging process for Steve. He has been a leader at Oakland Hills and in the industry promoting (not always popular) tree removal. I believe many more Clubs in the future will be following this trend. Original architects will continue to be recognized and courses will continue to be restored to their original playing intent of the golf ball rolling on the ground. This is good for agronomics, good for reducing costs, good for playability and most importantly, good for golf.

*(continued on page 25)*



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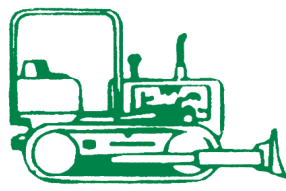
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Dr. Nick Christians

Dr. Nick Christians, University Professor of Horticulture at Iowa State University made the final education presentation of day, **"The Drought Effects of 2012."**

Dr. Christians (father MAGCS Member Tim Christians) started out with weather data from the summer of 2012. Some places of the country were hotter and drier than others but it was overall one of the hottest and driest summers on record.

His turfgrass management practices recommendations during a drought are:

1. Substitute rolling for mowing during periods of stress
2. Use solid rollers on mowers instead of grooved rollers
3. Minimize overhead irrigation
4. Use hoses for specific watering needs
5. Improve drainage
6. Use solid tines for venting

Some of Dr. Christian's observations during the course of the season were:

- High stress seasons are hard on new Superintendents
- Cutbacks in good years caused problems in 2012
- *Poa trivialis* was very problematic
- Perennial ryegrass did not recover well from the drought
- White grubs continued to feed until late fall
- Quackgrass, Windmillgrass and Goosegrass had a strong presence in established turf
- Dollar spot had a late surge, but otherwise low pressure for the year
- Yellow patch was present on fall seedlings
- Phosphite applications for *Pythium* prevention worked very well on older mature turf, but not so well on new seedlings. He recommended keeping *Pythium* labeled products on the shelf for a backup program
- Water shortages cause problems in certain locations. Some were severe.
- *Poa annua* has amazing recuperative ability even after drought and heavy traffic
- Water quality was a concern. Accumulated sodium became concentrated in soil systems during drought.

**For further information, Dr. Christians can be reached at: [nchris@iastate.edu](mailto:nchris@iastate.edu)**

The MAGCS Education Committee put together another great day of education, making it 60 in a row. Thanks to all the speakers who presented, Curtis Tyrrell and staff who hosted and to the MAGCS members who continue to support the association. **-OC**

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