

ON COURSE

THE MIDWEST ASSOCIATION OF GOLF COURSE SUPERINTENDENTS

September 2012

Big Foot Country Club

Jim Knulty

Midwest Association of Golf Course Superintendents
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From the back of the green looking up the 14th fairway at Big Foot Country Club. It is a 368-yard dog leg par 4 that places a premium on your drive location to set up your approach.

FRONT COVER

The 5th hole at Big Foot Country Club aka "The Grand Canyon" is only 366 yards from the tips and rough funnels on both sides to fairway. However, (there's always a however on holes like this) the green awaits to challenge you. 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.

All editorial and advertisement inquiries should be directed to Luke Cella, Publisher, *On Course*. 11855 Archer Avenue, Lemont, IL, 60439. (630) 243-7900 or visit www.magcs.org for rates and requirements. Statements of fact and opinion are the responsibility of the authors alone and do not imply an opinion on the part of the officers or members.

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DIRECTOR'S COLUMN

Chuck Barber, *St. Charles Country Club*



The Message

As I write this I am watching lightning flash and thunder roar. The good news is we needed a little bit of rain to aid in recovery and to water in topdressing sand. The bad news is that we didn't finish topdressing and with four greens that haven't been topdressed still to go the question is: will we be able to finish? More than any other year, 2012 forced me to examine, re-examine and re-re-examine each decision I made as a superintendent. That didn't include just scrutinizing the management of the golf course agronomically, chemically and culturally; that also included managing our staff, our equipment fleet, and myself much more carefully.

Record heat, humidity, drought, severe thunderstorms, mechanical failures, turf stress and the need to be on-site more than a typical year leads me to ask if I was trying to do too much. All of us feel, in one way or another, pressure to maximize the golf course and minimize inputs: Firm, fast greens and clean playing surfaces free of debris, divots and excessive traffic stress were my focus this year. We all know what our challenges are from golf course to golf course. The choices we make in managing each property is what makes each golf course different and excellent in their own way.

I entered the month of July of 2012 feeling very good about the prospects for the rest of the summer. I left July with damaged turf, slower, softer greens and the prospect of having to recover from a July second only to 1921 in high temperatures. When it became apparent that the long-term forecast for July was going to be 'challenging', I made a decision to change up as much as possible to save stress on our turf. Further, we switched the staff's schedule to keep them out of the heat as much as possible. We worked from 5 a.m. until noon straight through. We began alternating mowing and rolling greens, we abandoned sand topdressing

for a few weeks and we did what every salesman likes to say: We doubled the rate and shortened the interval. In short, we made a great many changes in our normal routine so we didn't do too much.

The price we pay for this is a changing golf course something our membership had to adjust to on fairly short notice. I communicated via email, clubhouse posting, newsletters and through committee and board reports to send an important message. That message was that we were going to adjust our plan based on the cards that we were dealt and the resulting playing conditions would change, albeit temporarily. I knew first hand that doing too much in the challenging environment we were experiencing could have disastrous results. I erred on the side of healthy turf and while we experienced slight to moderate turf mortality (I don't lose turf, I kill it. I can see it, I didn't lose it. It's right there, it's just frikkin' dead. Thank you Brian Sullivan for that nugget.) in some areas, we are healthy over 99% of the golf course. The mantra I repeat to our membership, their guests, the staff and club management is that you can do more with healthy turf than with stressed turf.

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My guess is we'll hear some horror stories through the grapevine about grass dying on area golf courses. I'll dispel any mystery: Grass is dead today here. Some of it was my fault and decisions that I made were either incorrect or wildly incorrect. I don't intend to make those mistakes again. I will learn from them and I CERTAINLY don't want to make the front page of Dr. Derek Settle's "Weekly Scouting Report" for physiological decline two weeks in a row again. More of it was grass that never stood a chance for a variety of reasons we all can relate to: poor drainage, air movement, and sunlight. We communicate the need for these components of a turfgrass system and we live with the choices we make alongside our employers. The message is simple: The more of each, the healthier the turf.

I think we'll all enjoy the rest of this year and begin to recover, enjoy a bunch of aerification and resume many of the cultural practices we might have skipped during 100 degree weather. Heck, we might even play golf again? I was somewhat successful in getting that message out and educating our membership about the consequences of severe weather coupled with poor growing environments.

I'll dispel any mystery: Grass is dead today here. Some of it was my fault and decisions that I made were either incorrect or wildly incorrect. I don't intend to make those mistakes again.

The trick is to have a willing audience eager to learn and to understand the challenges. Many of us aren't lucky enough to enjoy a surplus of understanding employers, customers, and members. Sometimes the stress only escalates even after the heat subsides. One of the reasons I love writing for *On Course* is to learn more and understand what is happening at each course in the area so I might pick up a trick or two and improve things for my current employer. I encourage each of you to contribute as much as you can to the magazine because you might learn something about yourself and help others reading your content at the same time. **-OC**

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FEATURE I
Kyle Haines, *Onwentsia Club*

Preparing For Projects in the Future A Homegrown Bentgrass Sod Nursery

In what turned into one of the hottest summers on record, it seemed many of us were left counting the days until August to catch any sort of relief. For the third consecutive year we were dealt intense heat with unfavorable growing conditions throughout all of Chicagoland. With August came overdue rain showers, cooler soil temperatures, and highs and lows that brought things back to reality. While most of us are now enjoying the shorter days and preparing for the last stretch of events, this year (more than others) will be a refreshing feeling getting our hands dirty and transitioning into project-mode.

Whether it's drainage, seeding and sodding, renovations, or just getting after cultural practices, we all have something we're looking forward to working on this fall. Here at Onwentsia Club, we've begun expanding our fairway nursery. Being an older club with little work done to our fairways, we try to keep as much sodding in house as possible because of the many varieties of older bent grasses found throughout the golf course. Once established, we then use our own polystand surplus for our other ongoing projects such as fairway expansions and new green complexes.

About this time last year, we began harvesting cores from the least contaminated areas of fairways for creating the first phase of our fairway nursery. Cores were pulled using the Toro 648s with $\frac{3}{4}$ " hollow tines set at 2.5" spacing and at about a 2" depth. With the site prepped and irrigation already installed, the cores were then spread to approximately a 1" layer over a 7000 sq ft area. Next, the site was dimpled in with the Sand Pro for leveling and to create pockets for a light seeding. Lastly, the cores were covered and kept moist for a quick establishment giving us usable sod by this recent summer.

(continued on page 7)





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products, playing with rates, cultural practices, and giving great insight into issues we've faced such as localized dry spots and disease pressures.

Even if it's not a nursery expansion you're working on this fall, good luck with any of your off-season projects. **-OC**



Cores are pulled and harvested from existing stands of bentgrass/Poa fairways and greens.



The cores are then spread out by hand on the prepped site to a depth of 1" or so.



Using a sand rake tire tracks, the cores are then "dimpled" and prepared for a light seeding.



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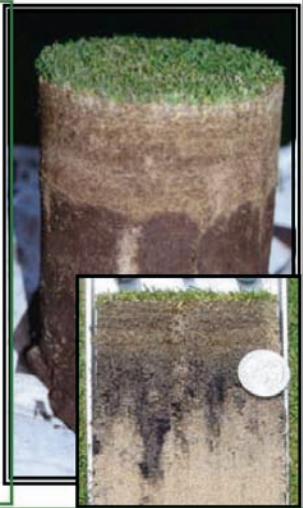


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FEATURE II

Doug Myslinski, *Jacobson Golf Course Design*

MAGCS Members Are Everywhere



Brad Helms and his son after a victorious day on the diamond.

As volunteers on the MAGCS editorial team, we all hope to contribute informative, educational, and/or humorous editorials to our fellow members. As I struggled to come up with a topic that all of you would find useful, the idea occurred to me as I sat in a Village of Palatine Planning Commission meeting. Odd you say? Indeed! But as I took my assigned seat on the volunteer/appointed commission forum, I noticed a name plate from a councilman that occupied that seat during their regular meetings. The name on that plate was Brad Helms, who happens to be a Certified Golf Course Superintendent at our local Palatine Hills Golf Course and a volunteer/ elected councilman for the Village of Palatine. I began to wonder that if the two of us in the business of golf are volunteering our time and knowledge, how many others in our industry are doing the same. And most importantly, why should we? With the likes of superintendents, architects and consultants, there is vast experience with environmental issues, permitting, budget management and people management to list a few.

Brad summed it up so well by saying, "As a superintendent I strive to provide the best golf experience for our customers while also enhancing and protecting our environment to the best of my ability. As a volunteer councilman, I try to promote a good experience for our residents while also considering the environmental impacts each decision carries." Despite the differences in these two jobs, Brad is able to find the balance pleasing people and maintaining good environmental practices, all while tending to his family.

Very few people in this world today are as environmentally versed as active golf course superintendents. The only other professions that interact daily with our natural habitats are the environmental governing agencies such as the Army Corp of Engineers, DNR and Wildlife Conservation and the EPA.

Brian Green, CGCS, MAGCS and Superintendent of Sunset Valley in Highland Park, often volunteers with the "Friends of the Chicago River" where he has the opportunity to educate all those who care about the environment and about the role of a superintendent. In his words, "I discovered through volunteering that I was able to strengthen our relationship with the governing bodies by showing them that there is a common bond in both of our efforts in preservation." Brian is doing us all a favor by volunteering his time and

knowledge to help eliminate the misconception that golf is an environmental imploder.

By volunteering to share our expertise with the environment or assist in balancing a local village budget, or even coaching a youth baseball team, we also reap the many ancillary benefits that come from being a volunteer. These benefits may include making new friends, learning a new skill or advancing a career, all while enhancing our mental and physical health.

One of the best reasons to volunteer is to help strengthen your community where you live. Unpaid volunteers are the glue that keeps a community together and are often involved in developing plans to improve it for everyone. Becoming involved offers you the opportunity to connect to your community and make it a better place. Most people don't realize that volunteering is a two way street. It can also benefit you and your family just as much as the cause. Volunteering increases your self-esteem, confidence and sense of accomplishment. It gives a sense of pride, especially when many receive the fruits of your labor. Life's views become more positive and future goals are set higher when you are involved in the big picture. Furthermore, it can strengthen a family bond if volunteering includes family members. Start your kids out early with you and chances are, when they become adults, they will positively impact their community too. **-OC**

SUPER -N- SITE

Brian Placzkowski, *Royal Melbourne Country Club*

Jim Knulty -N-

Is it November yet?! Not quite, but September will be upon us shortly, which hopefully means we are on the downhill side of another tough summer. It also means it's time for the MAGCS Championship at Big Foot Country Club. I recently had the great pleasure of meeting with this year's host superintendent Mr. Jim Knulty. Jim is one of our association's longest tenured superintendents, having been at the helm at Big Foot Country Club for over 30 years, 33 to be exact.

Big Foot Country Club is located just over the Cheddar Curtain in Fontana, Wisconsin. This hidden gem is situated on roughly 200 acres of beautiful rolling terrain near the western shore of Lake Geneva. Built in 1924 and opened 1926 this Tom Bendelow inspired design has survived the years to maintain most of its original routing. This 6,669 yard par 73 track with its tight tree lined fairways and tricky greens, provides quite a test for all levels. Over the past few seasons Jim has been hard at work alongside fellow MAGCS member Dave Esler on a project to standardize the bunker style at Big Foot. Over the years minor tweaks have led to a collection of different styles with the membership settling on a rugged naturalized look. Currently they have completed two holes with plans to do a few holes a year over the next



handful of years. Another interesting project Jim is involved in is the utilization of ArborCom Technologies to help him address shade problems that have developed with time. For those of you that don't know, ArborCom is a consulting firm that uses computer modeling to map tree placement and their level of light penetration. This can be a useful tool to help realize the gains that can be made by removing certain trees. This can be very helpful when handling memberships sensitive to tree removal.

For those of you who don't know or haven't had the opportunity to meet Mr. Knulty, I'd like to take a few minutes and give you a glimpse at how he got to where he is today. Jim was introduced to the game at the age of about 10 by his father who was an avid golfer and as a caddie at another



The Knulty Clan. Jim is pictured in the pink shirt with his arm around his wife Sandy surrounded by their children and grandchildren this past summer.

local favorite, Midlothian Country Club. After initially deciding school wasn't for him, very similar to my own path Jim decided to join the Army where he would serve three years. Again strangely similar to my own path, after his service Jim began to pursue a formal career in golf at the local community college and eventually Southern Illinois University. During his younger years Jim had gained a feel for the game working minor maintenance jobs at places like Twin Ponds and Crystal Lake Country Club, finally reaching the level of superintendent at Woodstock Country Club. After only a short time at Woodstock, a member there who also happened to be the greens chairman at Big Foot Country Club mentioned to Jim that the superintendent position was available at the club. Jim applied for the job and took the reins in late 1979 and the rest is history. Jim informed me that he had very little formal experience when he started and really learned the job just by doing it and by surrounding himself with a good bunch of friends in the business. I asked Jim if he had any words of wisdom about his philosophy he could share with some of us young superintendents and I'd like to share a few of them with you.

"There is no cultural practice more important than aerification."

"Don't succumb to members need for green speed, because they remember dead greens a lot longer than slow ones."

"If you find yourself in a stretch of tough weather wondering whether you should be doing more, DON'T. Keep it simple."

I'm sure we have all heard a version of these statements over the years, but they are all very true.

Just like we all attempt to, at least during the summer anyway, Jim also enjoys his time away from the golf course. When he manages to get away, Jim enjoys spending time with his wife Sandy of 37 years, as well as his three daughters and four grandchildren. They especially enjoy traveling in

the winter making frequent trips to Mexico and Florida. As we all know, in this business you can't beat the winters. Oh! I almost forgot! I am very proud to report that even though his path has taken him north of the border he has not been infected by the deadly blight...Jim is most definitely a diehard Bears fan.

So, if you find yourself at the MAGCS Championship this September, be sure to stop and say hello to Jim, I guarantee you won't regret it. **-OC**

(more course photos on page 13)





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THE BULL SHEET
John Gurke, CGCS, Associate Editor

SEPTEMBER 2012

Welcome to the growing MAGCS family to these new members:
Michael VanDeVelde, Class E, Breezy Hill Nursery
Stan Baker, Class DT, Oregon State University
Justin Pawlicki, Class C, White Eagle Golf Club

As the summer from hell, of hell, IN hell comes to a merciful end, we would be remiss if we didn't send a shout out to the many wonderful Class E commercial members of MAGCS who were there when we needed them on countless occasions. The unsung heroes of our industry deserve a big round of thanks from those of us who rely on them day in and day out, and often take for granted the superb service and assistance they provide. CHEERS to you all! And thanks to **Brian Bossert, CGCS** for the reminder...

Ladies and gentlemen, Elvis has left the building. By Elvis, I mean **Tim Anderson, CGCS, MG** of Naperville Country Club, and the building to which I refer is the grounds maintenance facility. The MG after Tim's name can officially be turned around to read GM, as in General Manager, as the club recently announced that Tim has been promoted to that role from the interim Club Manager position he previously held. Accompanying this announcement, NCC also promoted **Steven Biehl** to the position of golf course superintendent from his previous assistant's role at the club. Congratulations and best wishes to both gentlemen! Oh, and elephants beware!

(continued on next page)

DATES TO REMEMBER

- September 17 – Annual Wee One Outing and Fundraiser at Pine Hills Country Club in Sheboygan, WI, **Rod Johnson** host.
- September 20 – CDGA's 41st Annual Husband & Wife Championship at Crystal Tree Golf & Country Club in Orland Park, IL, **Les Rutan** host.
- September 24 – MAGCS Golf Championship at Big Foot Country Club in Fontana, WI, **Jim Knulty** host.
- September 25-30 – The Ryder Cup Matches at Medinah Country Club in Medinah, IL, **Curtis Tyrrell, CGCS, Ross Laubscher, Jake Mendoza, and Jim Wallace** hosts.
- October 2 – Northwest Illinois Golf Course Superintendents Association (NWIGCSA) monthly meeting at Dubuque Country Club, presumably in Dubuque, IA.
- October 3-December 14 – Fall Session of the Professional Golf Turf Management School Two-Year Certificate Program at Rutgers University in New Brunswick, NJ.
- October 15 – Deadline for nominations for GCSAA's 2013 Excellence in Government Relations Award.
- October 19 – Deadline for nominations for the 2012 GCSAA/Golf Digest Environmental Leaders in Golf Awards.
- October 19 – Golf course equipment auction at Graystone Golflinks. Information to follow.
- October 22 – MAGCS Annual College Championship at Calumet Country Club, **Matt Harstad** host.
- October 24-26 – PLANET 2012 Green Industry Conference in Louisville, KY.
- October 25-26 – GIE + EXPO in Louisville, KY. For info, go to www.gie-expo.com.
- October 29-30 – Symposium on Affordable Golf at Southern Pines, NC. Information on this event is available at www.symposiumonaffordablegolf.com.

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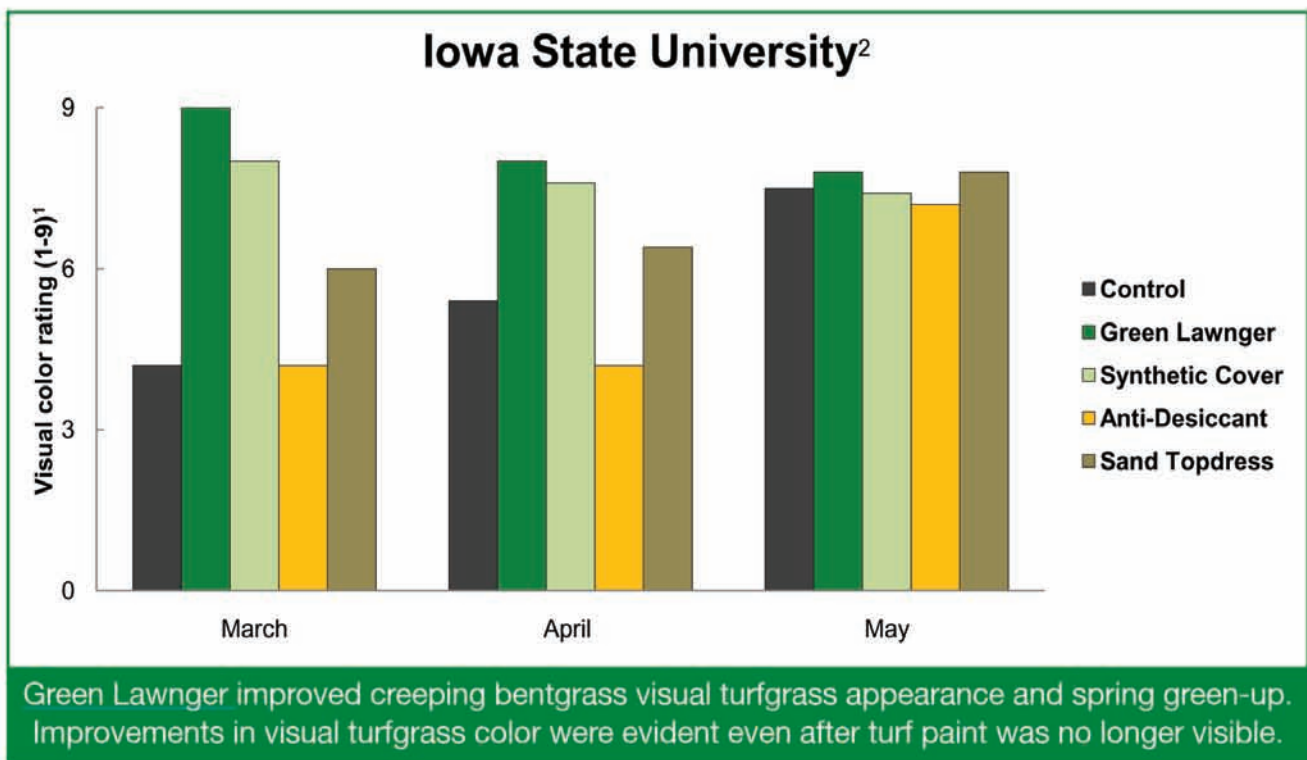
TURF WINTER INJURY MANAGEMENT SOLUTION

Winter Injury

Harsh winter conditions like snow and ice often damage turf. Dry weather and freezing temperatures can cause a delay in the spring transition to green turf. Many golf course superintendents and sports turf managers have used synthetic covers, anti-desiccant sprays, and heavy sand topdressing to offset winter injury and speed spring green-up.

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²Adapted from Minner D.D. and F.J. Valverde. 2005. The effect of winter protection products on putting greens. Presented data were collected at the Iowa State University Research Station.

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Steven Biehl and Tim Anderson, CGCS, MG

Also big congrats to **Renny Jacobson** on his exciting new endeavor. Renny has started CS Turf—Common Sense Turf Management, Inc., which specializes in Deep Tine Aeration of greens, tees, and fairways. For more information, you can contact Renny at 815-791-7404 or at renny@csturf.net. Good luck Renny!

A bit of sad news, and a sign of the times—after 18 years of operation, Graystone Golflinks, 7600 W. 191st St. in Tinley Park is closing permanently. All golf course equipment will be auctioned at the site on October 19th at 9:00 am. Information is available by contacting owner Karen Gray at 708-908-0011.

Ever look at your fairways this time of year and wonder what is REALLY going on under the surface?



Married worms

Single worm

Q: What is the bank of Lake Kadija at the Ryder Cup's host club called?

A: MeDinah Shore.

Thank you to **Brian Green, CGCS** of Sunset Valley Golf Course on alerting the MAGCS membership to a potential health hazard on our golf courses. It turns out that Blue Green Algae (no relation to Brian), which can bloom in water bodies during the summer months, are toxic to dogs that drink it. Check out the video on what precautions to take with your dog(s) at http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CGG50pfBEh&feature=player_detailpage.

(continued on page 19)

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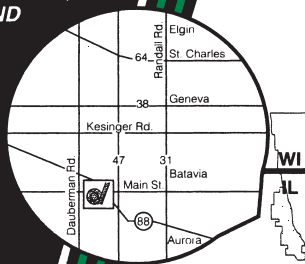
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Brian Green, CGCS

were to be flat vs. 2011, 2012 would end +5.7% (the equivalent to a year-over-year bump of more than 26MM rounds).

Audubon International has announced that after a nationwide search, its Board of Directors has named Ryan Aylesworth as the new executive director of the organization. Audubon International was founded by its current president Ron Dodson (who originally re-established the Audubon Society of New York State in 1987 after it ceased holding meetings in 1930, and which subsequently became Audubon International in 1996), and is the force behind the Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary Program for Golf Courses. Among its Board members are Dr. Frank Rossi of Cornell University and **Dan Dinelli, CGCS** of North Shore Country Club.

Condolences to **Kerry Anderson** and his family on the passing of Kerry's mother Marian on August 18th at the age of 84.


Not that this news should affect anything from the customer standpoint, but Eagle One Golf Products was recently purchased by Canadian company Golf Supply House, which plans to continue to operate the Eagle One Golf office and production facility in Anaheim, CA, as well as its Eastern Distribution Center in Charleston, S.C.

I love a happy ending, especially when it involves a dog. Let me explain—while Joe Stoudt, the superintendent at Lander (Wyoming) Golf & Country Club was playing his course one afternoon in June, he was informed that a fire had engulfed the community center where his office was located and where he had left his dog Gizmo. He rushed back to the site, finding the building in flames, and feared the worst. Miraculously, Gizmo appeared unscathed in a window that

(continued on page 21)

Congratulations to **Larry Flament** and the staff of Stonewall Orchard Golf Club on their successful hosting of last month's 90th Illinois Section PGA Championship from the 27th through the 29th. All players were in unison in their praise of the excellent course conditions, and that can be a tough group from which to get praise. Nicely done guys!

Encouraging news from the National Golf Foundation came out last month: NGF tracked a modest recovery in several areas of the industry this year, most notably in rounds played and in golfer confidence. With regard to national rounds played: June was up 3.2% vs. June 2011; YTD rounds are up 12.2% over last year; The YTD rounds increases are nearly double at public facilities (+13.5%) vs. private courses (+7.6%); And if rounds played for the remainder of the year




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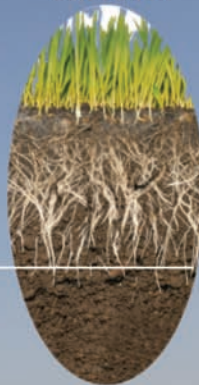
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had blown out of the office, apparently saved by hiding under a table that shielded him from the falling, smoldering debris. He even got to ride on the 1927 fire truck in the town's 4th of July parade. That's what I call a feel-good story.

Infamous Chicago mobster Al Capone purportedly had a hideout somewhere outside of the city to the south. Old Oak Country Club is somewhere outside of the city to the south. Chad Walk is the superintendent of Old Oak. Could there be a connection? You decide...



Q: What does Phil Zeinert, CGCS refresh himself with after a long, hot summer day on his course?

A: An Elgin and Tonic.

When hazards go too far...



Oops!



Double oops!



Picture of the month swiped from Facebook. Jeff VerCautren caught a rainbow at the end of his driving range after one of the passing showers this summer.

(continued on page 23)

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GCSAA Class A and SM members have the opportunity to attend the 2013 GCSAA Education Conference and Golf Industry Show in San Diego thanks to the Environmental Institute for Golf (EIFG) and a grant established by Ken Melrose, retired CEO and Chairman of the Board of the Toro Company. Up to 20 individuals will be selected to participate in the Melrose Leadership Academy, which includes numerous activities at the conference and show from February 4th through the 8th. The grant will cover a full package registration, seminars and sessions, four nights lodging, airfare, a \$200 stipend for incidental expenses, and regular communications including tools and resources. You can apply online at www.gcsaa.org, and you can get more information by calling Mischia Wright, GCSAA Senior Manager of Development at 800-472-7878, ext. 4445.

If you feel you or someone you know are excellent in government relations, maybe you should nominate yourself or them for the GCSAA Excellence in Government Relations Award. Go to www.gcsaa.org and find the nomination form, and do it by October 15! It's an excellent opportunity to demonstrate your excellentness.

Also open for nominations are the 2012 GCSAA/Golf Digest Environmental Leaders in Golf Awards (ELGAs), which are presented in partnership with Syngenta and Rain Bird, and recognize golf course superintendents for their commitment to environmental stewardship. Same deal as above—go to www.gcsaa.org for the form. Deadline is October 19th.

It was another month that found several MAGCS members' work featured in industry publications. Among them were **Bob Lohmann's** feature in Golf Course Industry magazine on two programs that are growing the game of golf—First Links and Links Across America. The same magazine ran an article titled "High and Dry" that highlighted **Brad Anderson's** efforts at Bittersweet GC at reducing water usage through changing out full circle sprinkler drives to part circles on the outer edges of fairways in order to stop irrigating the rough. And *TurfNet's* Turf Blog Aggregate featured **Tim Christians** (Makray Memorial GC) and the rebuilding of the club's unique water features. Good stuff guys.

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MAGCS IN MOTION
Luke Cella, *Publisher*

MAGCS to Participate in Rounds 4 Research

After surveying the membership, the Midwest is going to participate in the Environmental Institute for Golf's Rounds 4 Research program. Enough Midwest members responded positively to the request for round donation in a quick online survey. It is a very simple program to be a part of and through the generosity of our area courses and clubs, the turf industry benefits.

How does it work?

- Rounds of golf are donated to the Environmental Institute for Golf (EIFG), specifying the Midwest as the affiliated GCSAA chapter.
- They are auctioned off online through – Bidding for Good (biddingforgood.com) an online auction company that specializes in the non-profit sector.
- A minimum of 80% of the funds generated from your donation is sent to the Midwest to fund local Illinois specific turf research, education, scholarships and advocacy. The EIFG will keep a portion of the money raised, less than 20%, to cover costs associated with administering the program.
- The Bidding for Good website has over 650,000 registered bidders and their most sought after items are, what else, golf rounds.

The EIFG has set up an online donation form for participating clubs to use. It can be found at www.rounds4research.com or by calling 800-472-7878. There is a ton of information on the program online including letters to request rounds from you employer, FAQs and a current donor list. Donations are flexible and up to you and your club – restrictions are ok, as long as they are clearly stated.

This program has been very successful in the Carolina's. Over the past three years, they have raised close to \$350,000 for turf research.



The Midwest is happy to support this program and is excited about raising money for local good. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Luke Cella, 630-243-7900 or luke@magcs.org anytime. **-OC**

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