

Dispatches from the Great Lakes Trade Expo

by Brian DeVries

It may not be on the other side of the globe, but the Great Lakes Trade Exposition at DeVoss Place in Grand Rapids, Mich., brought together an elaborate trade show for turf lovers. Brian DeVries, assistant superintendent at Cascade Hills Country Club, sent us a few notes on his trip to the show.

Monday

I dubbed Monday “education day.” A great take-away item for me was listening to Dr. Bruce Branham’s presentation, “Stealth *Poa annua* Control.” One thing I really liked was the way Dr. Branham talked about golf course superintendents removing *Poa* very rapidly and the unsightly void left in the turf and described it with a great quote: “The operation was a success, but the patient died.” Additionally, he had some great information on the safety of the new products vs. the safety of the currently available products.

Tuesday

Tuesday contained what I believe to be the biggest change since the last time I had attended the event in 2007: the Assistant Superintendent Symposium. I thought this was a great addition to the show, giving assistants the opportunity to hear firsthand some career advice in a two-hour segment designed just for us. The symposium included presentations from Jason Zalensky, golf course superintendent at Lochmoor Club in Grosse Pointe Woods, Mich., and Greg Wojick of Playbooks for Golf. Jason and I actually met at the 2010 Green Start Academy, so it was great to see a familiar face talking about his very quick transition from assistant to superintendent in his presentation, “Thrown into the Fire.”

Wednesday

Wednesday was “show day.” The morning started off with what I believe to be the most fun and exciting event of the GLTE: the Turf Grass Talk Show, hosted by Dr. Thom Nikolai. The set-up for this event was reminiscent of that of *The Tonight Show*, complete with a desk, a sofa for the guests and, yes, even music. USGA Senior Agronomist Bob Vavrek stole the show with his presentation packed with top-notch information and intermittent humor.

With the talk show over, the afternoon afforded me an opportunity to walk through the expansive trade show. Inside, I walked through aisle after aisle and saw seemingly countless vendors from the turfgrass, landscape and irrigation industries. It was a certainly a unique event that presented some vast opportunities to see some products from more than just the golf course industry, and demonstrated just how similar all of our trades really are.



Though DeVries was there to pick up the latest in local info on golf turf, the show gathered turf enthusiasts from many different industries.



#gcitweetup2012

GCI is what's trending at the GIS in Las Vegas this year. We're inviting our Tweeps and other online friends to be a part of our golf/turf social media Tweetup.

The event will be from 5 to 7 p.m., Feb. 28, near the show itself, and will be a great opportunity to get together with others who know the importance of social media in the industry, as well as meet with several GCI staffers and columnists.

The winners of our first-ever Golf Course Industry Super Social Media Awards will also be announced at the Tweetup. The deadline for nominations was Feb. 10. Winners will be recognized in the following categories:

- Outstanding Social Media Leadership
- Best of the Blogs
- Innovative Use of Twitter
- Video & Multimedia Excellence

Want to be a part of the trend? Follow us on Twitter @GCI Magazine or on Facebook. Set aside the time for the gathering of the top social media minds at GIS, and watch for the details to show up in our feed before the show!

UNDERGROUND RESISTANCE

Quantico's Medal of Honor Golf course is dealing with an underground movement. But though they may upset the turf, they're not a huge threat to national security – maybe more to an unaware golfer who might step in a hole.

The course has been dealing with an onslaught of groundhogs for several years, peaking back in 2006. Superintendent Mike Morgan has trapped more than 400 of them since then, he says.

"We've always had them," he says, "but they just got really bad in 2004, 2005. With all the wildlife we have on the golf course, they create a problem with all the walkers."

Morgan contacted the game warden and got some live traps to work with, putting in time researching the habits of the common groundhog. He and his crew discovered they had what they needed to tempt the nuisances all along: bananas.

"They love bananas, they love chrysanthemums," says Morgan.

Once caught, the groundhogs aren't interrogated – they're simply taken across the bridge to the west side of the base.

"Quantico's separated by [Interstate] 95," says Morgan. "It's really the right thing to do. They can eat just as well on the other side of 95 as they can on this side, and you don't see many of them trying to cross the bridge to get back."

Morgan has tried to take as many as he could across the bridge in the past fall, even though he knows that more will show up next season.

"For the most part, we try to flag the worst stuff, and the golfers have pretty much learned where the habitats are," he says. "We've pretty much learned to live with them."



A PRIVATE ROUND

Some guys will do anything to be able to spend a quiet day on the course. At the Shoop Park Golf Course in Wind Point, Wis., a couple golfers were taking advantage of the mild weather and tranquility of nature. The reason it was so quiet, however, was that the course was closed.

Police spotted the two men taking shots along the 7th hole, despite the many "Closed for the season" signs posted throughout the course. Not only did the party have a private round in play, they had caused about 30 divots around the tee box.

The two men were cited with trespassing at the course – and they fixed their divots.