

Mike Imgrund Loses Battle with Cancer

By **Danny Quast**, DHD Tree Products, Inc.

Michael Imgrund, age 38, of Oak Creek, WI and formerly of LaCrosse, WI, passed away on Tuesday, October 17, 2006 at Froedtert Memorial Hospital in Milwaukee after a long battle with Hodgkin's lymphoma.

The above notice does not say enough about our fellow superintendent. Mike was a quiet giant, a born leader who loved the profession of golf course superintendent.

I had the privilege to visit Mike in the hospital a week prior to his passing. (I had stopped a month before at Oakwood and asked on behalf of myself, my wife, Beverly, and The Wee One Foundation, if he needed anything. He said, at that time, he was fine. I told him not to hesitate to call if the Wee One Foundation could help in his recovery.) He did call when he thought he needed a stair lift for when he returned home. I visited to present the check for the stair lift and wish him well. His devoted wife, Angie, was there. I could feel the love and commitment they had for each other. It filled the room. Mike talked about going home to recover. He talked about returning to work and how he looked forward to a life. Angie had the stair lift installed. After our 45 minute visit, I told him that I would visit him at his home during his recovery. That was not to be.

While Mike was attending high school, he began his career at the Walsh Golf Course in LaCrosse, Wisconsin, where he worked for eight years before taking a job at Brynwood Country Club in Milwaukee. In 1999, Mike received an associate's degree in Turfgrass Management from Michigan State University. Starting in the summer



of 1998, he went to work at Medinah Country Club in Medinah, IL. I had the honor to work with Mike at Medinah. He was the trusted superintendent on Course III and helped to restore the course back to perfection during the spring and summer after the 1999 PGA Championship and also helped lay plans for a new era for Course #3.

From Brian Zimmerman: "Mike was a true fighter in every sense of the word. He battled cancer for over 10 years. He came to the Milwaukee park system in spring of 2004 and worked as the superintendent at Oakwood Golf Course. During the winter months, Mike took care of the winter sports activities in Whitnall Park. In the

last few years, Mike underwent two bone marrow transplants: the first, he was able to donate his own bone marrow; the second came from his older brother, David. The whole time we worked together, I never heard him complain. He worked as hard at his job as he did fighting the cancer. He had only been out of the hospital a few weeks and had to go by the course to see how it was doing. I heard a story that after he was done talking to the guys and they were walking away, he yelled to the golf pro to tell Brian Danko, the assistant, something that Mike thought needed to get done. Every day, he came to work ready to do his job to the best of his ability. Mike's parents, Doug and Pat, and his wife, Angie, were at his side through his treatments. Mike and Angie were due to celebrate their 3rd wedding anniversary on October 18."

At the visitation, there were over 400 people there to say their final goodbye. On Saturday, the funeral had over 200 present to help put Mike to rest.

The golf industry lost a true friend on October 17, 2006. Rest in peace, Mike Imgrund. ♣

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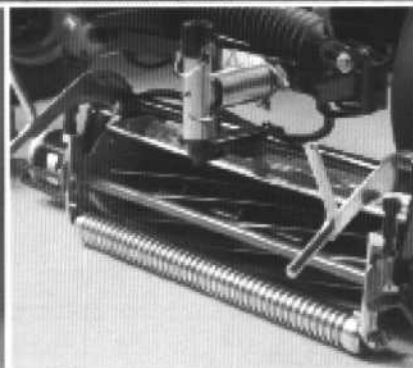
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A Look to the Future

2006 Chapter Delegates Meeting in Kansas City



By **Brian Zimmerman**, Golf Course Superintendent, Milwaukee County Golf Courses

Being a first time delegate I was on the list to tour the GCSAA Headquarters in Lawrence. Although this was not my first trip to headquarters it was an eye opening experience. When we arrived we were greeted by staff and given our assignments for the afternoon. Each delegate that so chooses to attend this section had the opportunity to see his or her dues money at work. We received presentations on the updates to the website, communications, corporate sales and marketing, the GIS show, staff members and my favorite part, the session with Steve Mona. The meeting time with the CEO of the association only further validated why I choose to be a member. Mr. Mona opened with a few comments and then turned back to the delegates. Our group was 10 members of the 100 plus delegate contingent. Steve took the time to answer any topic or any questions we had.

Day two started at 6:30 AM for breakfast with the first sessions beginning at 7:30. The first topic of discussion was GCSAA mission vision and goals. The topic focused on three main themes: they include the development of long term revenue streams, increasing membership and retention, and positioning of the GCSAA member in the marketplace. The next section centered on the establishment of a long-term dues pricing strategy. At the request of the delegates, the board and staff presented a proposal that would tie the establishment of membership dues to an index (Consumer Price Index). Historically, the association has enacted a dues increase in larger increments on average every five to seven years. The result has been a loss of members. There was widespread agreement at the meeting that smaller dues increases would be more easily absorbed at the facility level and less likely

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to result in membership declines. In 2001, the association hit a high of 22,000. Today almost a 10 % decline (to 20,000 confronts GCSAA). The consensus of the group is that the drop has been created by the struggling golf industry and PDI. GCSAA presented a seven-phased membership growth and recruitment campaign enacted late last year. Delegates supported the efforts, realizing it will take time to yield results.

The most heated debate was on GCSAA's philosophy regarding the positioning of the association and its membership classes. Delegates shared a variety of opinions, but ultimately agreed that for membership standards to have value in the marketplace, they must be promoted externally. There was unanimous support that resources be dedicated to marketing the association, with a focus on Class A. It was noted, however, that promoting Class A does not mean that marketing other membership classes should not be part of the program.

The next section centered on the GCSAA chapter liaison. This concept was introduced back at the 2003 delegate meeting. It got started from a need to have more personal communication and outreach to the chapters. The GCSAA wants the position to become a conduit between the members and the association. The pilot program that is funded for 2006 and 2007 has a great deal of support from the delegates.

After a very brief break we covered the TAN program, which stands for Technical Assistance Network. The program is a one-year complimentary membership to the GCSAA. The purpose is to introduce the facility and the representatives to the benefits of belonging to GCSAA. Currently there are 14 memberships in this classification. Each chapter has 5 memberships to use for the national membership. Please contact the GCSAA or myself if you have questions.

The last part of the very long day was meeting the candidates. Each candidate for the board of directors and the slate of officers to be elected had their own room for presentations, and questions and answers. The time was well spent listening to what each had to say and how they felt they could help the association. The secretary/treasurer positions have the greatest impact for the next four years. Essentially they run unopposed for the next two years for vice president and president. Two of the candidates stood out for the director position. John C. Miller and Robert M. Randquist were, in my mind, the strongest for the positions.

Sunday morning we had a few more sessions to discuss; they included GIS show, long term dues proposal and open discussion. The topics that were covered in the open form were brought from the floor. They included: pesticide registrations (methyl bromide and PCNB), chapter effectiveness, logo, and branding.

Each delegate had the opportunity to speak on these topics. The conversation of branding and the logo took most of the allotted time. The overall feel is the need for brand identity (GCSAA) and how it is to be placed into the market.

I would like to leave you with a few key things. Over and over, questions were asked about how the GCSAA comes up with the proposals. They stated that it was from surveys of the membership. Please, if a survey comes across you desk take the time to fill it out. Most times the association awards points to those who take the time. If you have not gotten involved on the local level, volunteer for a committee, board service, or just simply attend the meeting. This is our association; are you a passive member or an active member? ♣

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Experience of a Lifetime

By Tom Schwab, O.J. Noer Turfgrass Research and Education Facility, University of Wisconsin-Madison

Erin Hills Golf Course and superintendent Jeff Rottier hosted the WTA Golf 'Fundraiser for the Fellowship' on October 10th, 2006. The day was a total success for the WTA and an experience of a lifetime for the golfers. The WTA benefited when the event sold out for the fifth year in a row. The fundraiser netted \$7,000 to help support turfgrass research into the future. Golfers benefited by being early witness to one of the most interesting and fun courses to ever open in Wisconsin.

Erin Hills lived up to owner Bob Lang's goal of "wanting to create a unique golf experience you can't find anywhere else." Tour pro Charles Howell said of Erin Hills, "It's Whistling Straits on steroids." Howell made that comment when the course was set up at its full 8,100 yards. Fortunately the WTA golfers played the course at a more realistic length. But what really made the day was the beautiful scenery and challenging golf shots that were spectacular at every turn.

The weather cooperated with conditions at 50 degrees, slightly windy, and overcast. Rain threatened during the day but didn't arrive till everyone was off the course. It could have been a little warmer for those that didn't bring a windbreaker, but no complaints were heard as everyone enjoyed the unbelievable golf experience.

Besides the incredible golf outing, most everyone went home with a nice door prize, some that were worth more than the entry fee. We'd like to thank everyone who donated those prizes. They are listed here. Many gifts were given anonymously, thus some of the donors are not on the list. Two other donations to mention include

Reinders Turf and Irrigation for providing hot hors d'oeuvres and Beechwood Distributing for providing Smithwick's Irish Ale after the round. The golf hole sponsors should likewise be thanked. These individuals or businesses, listed here, gave \$100 to name a hole and additionally support turf research.

The winners of the four person best ball were a foursome from Whistling Straits; David Swift, Grant Davey, Chris Deckard, and Jim Leibham. These guys had the inside edge with their knowledge of fescue fairways and long drives.

Lots of camaraderie was shared among the sold-out crowd from the time they arrived to hit practice

balls to the post-game handing out of door prizes and golf hole winners. This course sure lived up to its claims of being a unique golf experience, and the 144 participants in this year's 'Fundraiser for the Fellowship' would agree. ♣



The smiles tell it all from Mike Lyons, Paul Blumke, Aaron Goninen, Chad Grimm, and Scott Boniface.

Our host Jeff Rottier pictured with Mike Lyons and myself.





Reinders Turf and Irrigation picked up the tab for the post game treats.

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2006 WTA Golf 'Fundraiser for the Fellowship' Door Prize Donors:

Partial list of door prizes

Agrotain	Dozen balls, fancy watch
Aquatrols	Home Depot Gift Certificate
Arthur Clesen	Golf shirt
BASF	Various prizes
Brian Swingle	Windshirt
Bridges Golf Course	Foursome with carts
Bristlecone Pines GC	Two foursomes of golf with carts
Bruce Schweiger	Bicycle
DHD	Golf bag
Evergreen CC	Foursome of golf with cart
Jerry Kershasky	2 chipping wedges
John Hegge	Badger/Penn State Football tickets plus other prizes
Lawsonia	Foursome with cart
Lesco	Golf shirt, sleeve balls, leatherman knife
Midwest Turf Products	Windshirt
New Berlin Hills	Foursome of golf with carts
Oconomowoc Golf Club	Foursome with carts
Old Hickory	Golfwear
Pendleton Turf	Two cases of Guinness, two Home Depot gift certificates
ProSource	Dozen Balls, windshirt
Reinders	Hors de oeuvres
Scott Schaller	Golf prize
Stoughton Country Club	Foursome with carts
Syngenta	Two golf clubs, beer, fishing poles, gift certificate
Tom Schwab	Two golf bags, shirt
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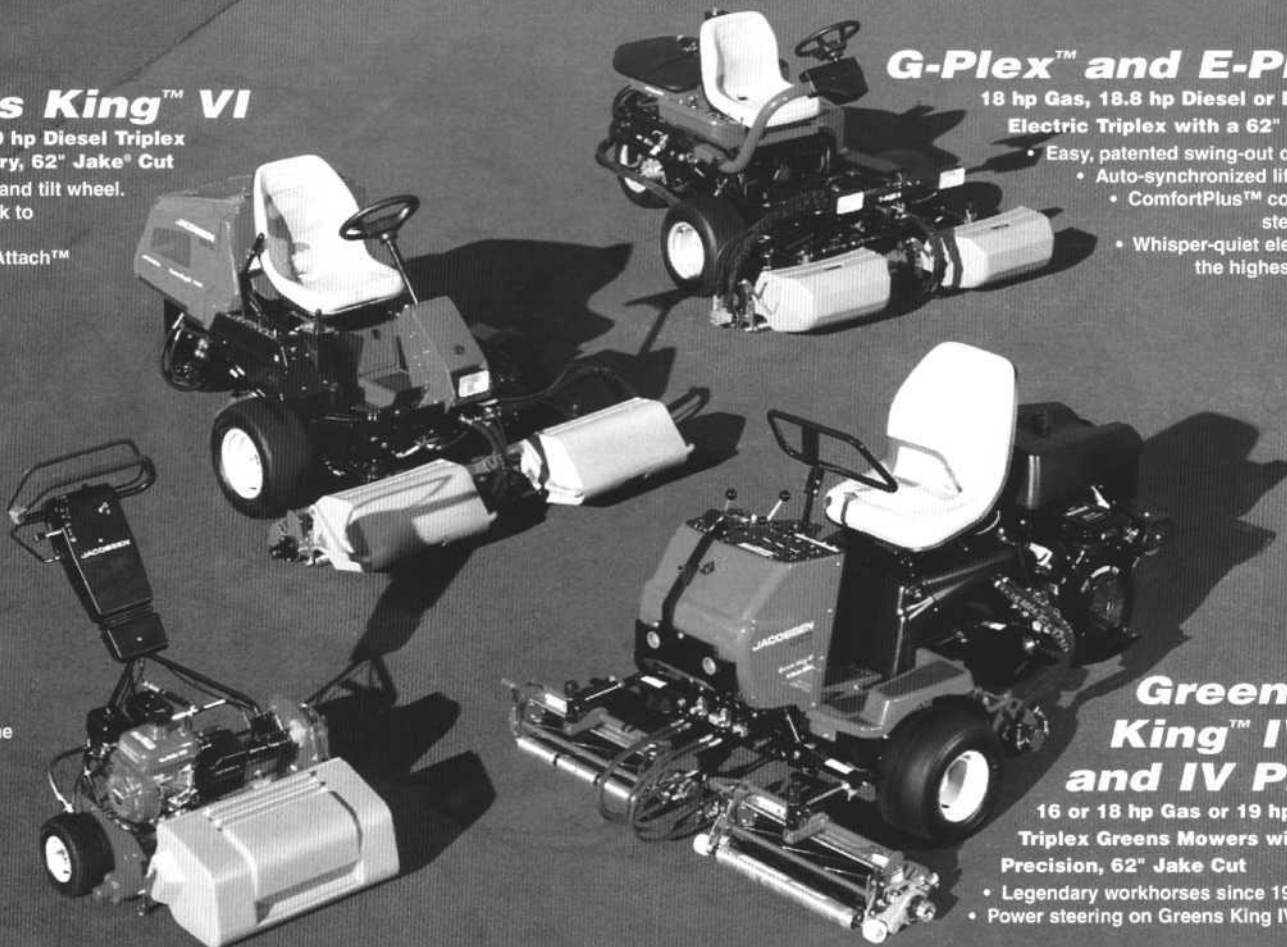
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THE END OF AN ERA

By **Monroe S. Miller**, Golf Course Superintendent, Blackhawk Country Club

It has taken me a long time to find the courage to try to put words on paper that will be a fitting tribute to Jennifer Samerdyke and her formidable contributions to *The Grass Roots* since 1993. The reality is that this issue is her last as our cover artist. To describe my feelings as sad would be to understate it considerably.

Where has all the time gone? Wasn't it just a year or two ago that she started dressing our chapter publication with covers matched by no organization like ours ever has?

Well, actually, it was 14 years ago. Honest. When she did our first cover for the January/February 1993 issue, she was still an undergraduate student at the University of Wisconsin - Madison working on her degree in graphic arts. Her brother Chad, who for a time wrote a column for *The Grass Roots*, was the assistant superintendent at Blackhawk. I was visiting with him about my desire to have a cover for the GR, rather than filling the front page with copy and headlines. I thought about photography but wasn't wild about doing what everyone else was doing. "I need to find an artist to draw or paint covers for us," was my conclusion.

Chad casually mentioned that his sister was "a pretty good artist." She had done some wildlife drawings for her father that Chad felt were of real professional quality. Conversations with Jen resulted and we struck a deal to give it a try.

Our first JLE cover was done in black and white with ink. Dr. Frank Rossi was newly hired and seemed a natural for a cover. I made arrangements to meet Frank early one morning in a lecture room in the basement of the Horticulture building on the Madison campus. I shot up a roll of film, gave the prints to Jennifer and in a few days she dropped off cover artwork at our shop.

I was stunned. She had used a style I wasn't familiar with (and don't know how to describe) but that was spectacular. I knew I had lucked into a good thing.

Although she has employed different art for our covers over the years, we go through a similar process each issue. At first Jen would stop at the shop, we'd visit about the subject and I would give her some raw materials - photos mainly, but notes and examples as well. She did the rest.

After she graduated, her first job was at Kramer Printing, the firm that has printed every issue during my time as editor. Our paths would cross in the Kramer offices or plant and covers were planned then.

Jen has advanced through a number of firms and com-

panies. She would move up quickly - to art director, for example - and then move to another company to advance her career. For a few years we'd meet for lunch at Tony Frank's restaurant six times a year and spend an hour or so discussing the next cover.

As time went on and her success grew, it became difficult to find a time when we could meet and spend that hour or so to talk about each succeeding cover. Our communications evolved to phone visits and an exchange of material for her to use to create the cover. Obviously that has worked well.

In the most recent years Jen has assumed very substantial responsibilities for a large company in Waukegan - Uniek. Uniek is the largest picture frame manufacturer in the world with a plant in Waukegan but also in a number of countries around the world. Their largest customer is Wal-Mart. Jen is gone a lot of the time, frequently out of the country. She is a very busy and very responsible



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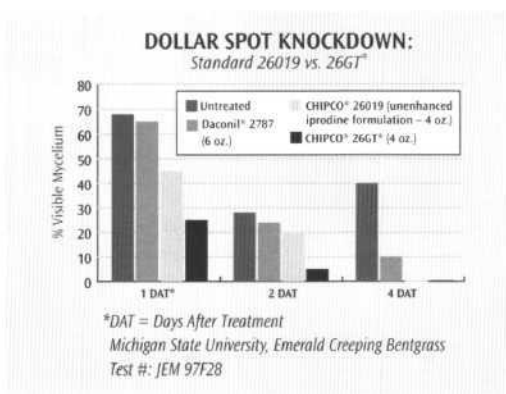
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