

two sessions left for the day as I headed to “In The Moment - The State of Public Golf” a session led by Wisconsin’s Brian Zimmerman of Milwaukee County Parks and Christopher S Gray the Golf Course Superintendent at Marvel Golf Club of Benton, Kentucky. Brian discussed how Milwaukee County is using partnerships with vendors and media to promote public golf courses in joint cooperation beneficial to both parties. Milwaukee County has expanded its advertising and promotions as well as received equipment in cooperative deals.

Christopher spoke on the ways he has reduced expenses and his dependence on natural resources at Marvel Golf Club. Chris is an experienced speaker on the topic of making bio-diesel and using vegetable oil for fueling turf machines. He also covered topics from sky lighting to solar cells to harvesting rain water. The session ended with a round table discussion on different player promotions that have worked for attendees as well as the revenue reductions caused by the deep discounting of golf fees some courses are trying in a effort to compete.

I finished my days worth of education with a “State of The Industry” session led by Jim Koppenhaver of Pellucid Corp and Stuart Lindsay of Edgehill Golf Advisors. Considering the current economic downturn I was not expecting good news about the business of golf and I did not get any. Rounds are down throughout most of the country and revenue is down because of the rounds reductions and discounting of green fees. The only category where sales were up in 2008 was shoes. I would guess all the rain the past two seasons in different areas of the country has more players buying new shoes to keep their feet dry but you never know why industry blips happen.

The “State of The Industry” continued a point I had heard in the two



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**The fanciest item on the trade show floor**

previous sessions. Golf course operators need to attract new players of varied ethnicity to the game of golf and keep them involved by providing great customer service and provide golf courses that do not beat beginners up. This session was excellent and although the statistics and acronyms like RevPAR, GPH and EHE (Revenue per available round, Golf Playable Hour and Eighteen hole equivalent) are not part of our daily conversations as golf course superintendents they are something we need to pay atten-

tion to in order to be part of our clubs overall success.

Following that session I was fully depressed in the state of the industry although more appreciative I still had a job where the checks don't bounce. It was time to unwind and relax, so the WGCSA Hospitality Room at the Café Giovanni was just what I needed. Shelly Biro and the staff at Milorganite did an excellent job finding a spot to host our group. Please see the pictures and listing of vendors who supported the hos-

pitality room that accompany Brett Grams "Wisconsinizing in the Big Easy" article.

I realize that New Orleans had and still has a reputation as a tough or dangerous city. To be fair individuals should not walk alone in any large city in the middle of the night or go off the beaten path. The two times I walked the 15 or so blocks to the French Quarter after dark I felt fairly comfortable as there were plenty of people coming and going. From my experiences and from the conversations I had with show attendees who became all-night patrons of the New Orleans nightlife, the city can be a safe environment with plenty of dining and events to provide fun.

My Friday morning began at 6:00 am with the Prayer Breakfast. A local church music leader led us in song and quickly proved most white people have no rhythm, when we were not able to keep up with his wonderful New Orleans style. Ken Magnum of the Atlanta Athletic Club discussed his life and how Christianity has helped his family grow. The prayer breakfast is early in the morning, hard to find in the conference brochure but always worth the little bit of effort to attend.

After the breakfast, I hustled over to the finish of day two of the Innovative Superintendent speakers before heading to the General Session. Stephen HR Covey gave a keynote entitled "The Speed of Trust". It was a great opportunity to hear a leader in business training and personal growth. Some of his take home points were; trust is financial not just social because without trust we spend too much time and resources checking on and preventing fraud, theft and laziness. Also people generally like to be trusted and relationship built on trust cuts through time wasting "noise and clutter".



**Grass Roots advertiser Peter Meyer in his National Golf Graphics booth.**

**Grass Roots advertiser Milorganite's booth hosted by Jamie Staufenbeil.**



He finished with a story about his son receiving a speeding ticket for going well over the speed limit. As result Stephen lost trust some of the trust he had in his son and his decision making. Covey stated "we cannot talk our way out of a problem we behaved ourselves into".

He went on to explain no matter how much his son said he would not drive that way again, it was not until he showed through his actions he learned his lesson from the speeding ticket and loss of his license the trust from his parents was regained. Trust is slowly earned and quickly lost.

In order to spend some needed time on the trade show floor I skipped the USGA Green Section

session. It is one of my favorite events of the week and I heard from those who attended it was full of valuable information. Fortunately for everyone who was unable to attend the GIS, the topic "It's All About The Economy, Good Ideas to Help You Tighten Your Belt" will be covered in the May issue of The Green Section Record.

I did make it to the certification luncheon, one, to save the cost (and flavor) of the conference center food court but more importantly to hear former Philadelphia Philly's player Mike Schmidt. With spring training starting up it was tough to pass up the opportunity to hear this hall of fame player. Mike discussed his long



**Hospitality Room Hosts Shelly Biro, Milorganite and WGCSA President Dustin Riley Greet Attendees At The Door.**

successful career and sometimes tumultuous relationship with the Philly's fans before taking questions from the crowd.

Friday night finished with the Presidents Reception which has changed a lot over the years. Gone are the days of major entertainers and multi-course dinners. Looking back, my favorite acts were Kenny Rodgers and Trisha Yearwood. However, I understand with rising costs and reduced income it is more important for the association to focus on the associations benefits to the membership rather than entertainment. The reception was smaller than in past years, but it provided one more opportunity to network with new and old acquaintances from around the country.

Saturday provided a few more hours on the trade show floor where I was hoping to get a few more items researched. It was nice the final day crowd was small and I anticipated some one on one attention, but most of the vendors had things on cruise control. Many staff members were already gone and those that were left seemed pretty tired.

I ended my quest for education by attending the session "Coffee Talk With the Experts - The Latest and Greatest in Turf Management". Dr. Nick Christians covered soil test interpretations and the challenges of getting soil test for turf done at ag labs. One item to watch for are recommendations for Phosphorus and Potassium applications are often backwards, recommending applications of P not K when it usually the opposite for turfgrass health.

Architect Ron Carl spoke on disaster recovery and how golf properties damaged by recent hurricanes have been able to re-open in an organized fashion. He also presented information on a huge project he is involved with in China. The course has 4 golf holes that were constructed out in the ocean after tons of granite was hauled in for a base in addition to a breakwater being built to protect the holes from waves. The economy must be okay for some because the developer is selling house lots for 12 million dollars each without the house!

Dr. Harry Nimczyk covered the control of billbugs, bluegrass weevils and ants along with results he has seen on the systemicity of insecticides once thought to be contact or single use products. The always exciting Dr. Frank Rossi finished off this session with a talk on golf's carbon footprint. Frank is one of the few who can make any topic exciting and he did a good job with this one. Dr. Rossi explained it is clear is we are experiencing global change if not true global warming and carbon production is a suspected to be a major cause of it. We can expect more temperature and moisture extremes even though our averages for rainfall and temperatures may hold steady.

As carbon credits and carbon taxes are discussed by leaders in congress, golf courses are fortunate that we have been shown to be carbon neutral in early studies. However golf as all industries has continued room for improvement in our relationship with the environment.

It was announced at the end of the GIS that the USGA would be joining the GCSAA, CMAA, NGCOA, NGF, GCBAA and GCA in 2010 in San Diego. (Yes that is a lot of acronyms) It is only natural the United States Golf Association join the group as they currently have a major presence with the USGA Green Section Session.

It was also announced to the pleasure of the vendors that the trade show will be two weekdays next year and no major education will be planned during the trade show hours to allow buyers plenty of time on the trade show floor. San Diego hopes to be a bigger draw for attendance and with any kind of economic recovery for the golf industry it should be. Many of the power point presentations given at the GIS are available at [GCSAA.org](http://GCSAA.org) if you missed a session or the show. 🌱



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# Billbugs?

By Dr. R. Chris Williamson, Department of Entomology, University of Wisconsin-Madison

Despite the fact that I have been at the University of Wisconsin for over a decade, I really did not put much thought or effort into worrying about billbugs! However, with the persuasion of my colleague Dr. Doug Richmond (Purdue University) and the fact that we experienced a Bluegrass Billbug, *Sphenophorus parvulus* Gyllenhal, outbreak at the O.J. Noer Turfgrass Research and Education Facility in Verona, WI, billbugs are certainly now on my mind.

For those of you who are not familiar with billbugs, likely many of you, there are several species of billbugs in the United States; however the most common species in the Midwest is the bluegrass billbug (BGB). Billbugs are beetles that belong to the family Curculionidae, often referred to as the snout beetles due to their distinguishable snout-like mouthpart that resembles an aardvark. Bluegrass billbug adults range in color from gray to brown to black. BGB has a one-year life cycle; during the spring, overwintered adults leave their hibernation sites to begin laying eggs in the leaf sheaths of turfgrass plants including Kentucky bluegrass and perennial ryegrass. Adults (males and females) can be seen crawling over paved sidewalks and driveways on their way to turf areas. After hatching, BGB larvae immediately begin tunneling (feeding) vertically in the leaf sheaths where they eventually feed and destroy the plant crown. Because BGB larvae grow and develop through several molts, larger larvae move (chew) out of the turf plant and move into the root zone and begin



Bluegrass Billbug Larvae



Bluegrass Billbug Adult



Grass plants damaged by larvae are easily pulled out.

feeding on roots and rhizomes. BGB larvae can be found in the soil at a depth of around 3-4 inches. Larval feeding is completed by mid- to late summer with pupation taking place in the soil. Young adults of the new generation are present during early to mid-fall seeking hibernation (overwintering) sites.

## Monitoring for Billbugs

BGB adults can be monitored in the spring by merely looking for them crawling across paved surfaces as they are seeking areas of turf to lay their eggs. Larvae can be readily sampled by conducting the "tug test" whereby you merely grab a tuft of turf and pull-up on it. If it breaks-off near the crown and you



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see an accumulation of fine, whitish, sawdust-like frass, you likely have BGB. If present, you can dissect the turf plant to locate a BGB larva.

**Insecticide Management of Billbugs**

There are **three** approaches to managing billbugs with insecticides: 1) Adult preventative; 2) Larval preventative; and 3) Larval curative. Each approach has its strengths and weaknesses, however the larval curative approach is not suggested since most billbug (larval) damage will likely have occurred and the insecticide treatment will not reduce the subsequent feeding damage to the turf. Consequently, considerations should be aimed at the adult preventative and larval preventative approach. Essentially, the adult preventative approach targets the overwintering adults as they emerge from hibernation. The goal is to control the adults before they have the opportunity to lay eggs in the turf, thus preventing subsequent larval damage. This approach requires routine monitoring of adults in the early spring. Once observed, an application of a contact insecticide to the turf where the billbugs are

active is an effective management approach. A variety of contact insecticides including: acephate (Orthene), bifenthrin (Talstar), cyfluthrin (Tempo), deltagard (DeltaGard), indoxacarb (Provaunt) and lambda-cyhalothrin (Scimitar) are contact insecticides that will provide excellent control of billbugs when applied at the appropriate timing. The larval preventative approach targets both egg-laying adults (females) as well as young larvae in the leaf sheath of turfgrass plants. Consequently, this approach requires the application of systemic insecticides in early May, prior to adult billbug activity. Insecticides for this approach include: chlorantraniliprole (Acelepryn), clothianidin (Arena), clothianidin and bifenthrin (Aloft), halofenozide (Mach 2), imidacloprid (Merit), imidacloprid and bifenthrin (Allectus) and thiamethoxam (Meridian). Regardless of your insecticide management approach or product you select, **ALWAYS** read and follow the product label directions before using pesticides! 🌱

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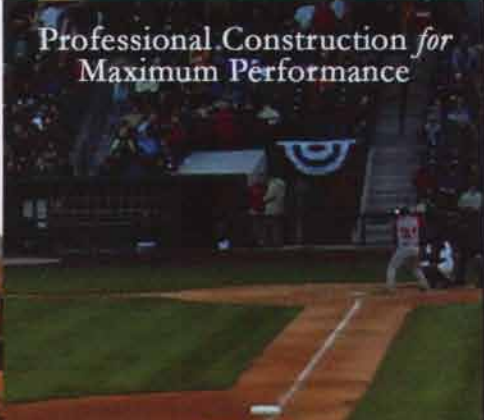


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# The Murgy Open: Ten Years Later.

By **Mark Kienert**, Certified Golf Course Superintendent, Bulls Eye Country Club

It is difficult to imagine that it has been ten years since Wisconsin Golf Course Superintendents lost one of her early leaders. Dave Murgatroyd, age 56 was killed in an automobile accident on April 22nd, 1999 when another driver pulled out in front of his truck. Dave, sadly to say wasn't wearing his seat belt at the time.

Jim Wunrow, former golf course superintendent at The Ridges and chairman of the Murgy Open, a golf outing played in Wisconsin Rapids on the course that Dave helped build along side his father, raises scholarship monies for local high school and Turfgrass students at the University of Wisconsin-Madison asked me to reprise the Memorial tribute I wrote when honoring Dave's Memory.

Most of you reading this are too young to have known Dave and those of you that did are now close to retiring or retired. For those of you that didn't know Dave you missed meeting a man that cut his own path in life choosing to learn via trial and error. Dave probably invented the cloth that most golf course superintendents were cut from. He patented the "lets roll up our sleeves and get it done mentality" long before "Get R Done" was coined. I swear his credo in life was to work hard and party harder. One liners and snippets, usually putting him down in self deprecating humor made him a popular person to be around when you needed a good laugh.

He was the consummate scrounge; he would beam proudly when he unearthed some part in the old bone yard that he could use to keep one of his "challenged" pieces of turf equipment alive for



**Dave and Gloria receiving a short drive award from Mark Grundman!**



**Dave Murgatroyd**

just one more week. If he were alive today, he would just laugh at the thought that these are lean and mean times. I can just hear him say that he "perfected" zero nitrogen, phosphorus and potassium based fertility programs and that the only way he could increase the dollars in his budget would be to stretch his green spray program one more week and just sit back and wait for the \$ (spots) to show up.

Dave mentored many golf course

superintendents like Bottensek, Kershasky, Worzella, Ruesch, Grunewald and Wunrow to name a few. While I never worked for Dave, I learned a lot from him. Dave was the first person I informed that Bull's Eye was closing the doors for renovation and recovery after the infamous drought of 1988. I still recall the invention he brought to my course that would help level my tees after the dead turf had been stripped. It always brought a smile



to my face to see Dave's truck pull into my shop yard. It was certain trouble when he brought Jeff Bottensek with him.

Dave helped his Dad build the Ridges into one of Wisconsin's first destination golf courses back in the early to mid sixties. Golfers from around the Midwest would travel the back roads to play this little gem of a course cut from the wilds "way up North." Today "way up north" is north of Minocqua! Dave would always apologize for his lack of turf education, but I'm here to tell you he possessed a PhD from the school of hard knocks and practical experience. He wouldn't take a backseat to anyone. He was one of the most analytical and inventive persons I've ever known. It would have been a real treat to hear what Dave would have to say about our countries current economic mess.

Dave was happiest when he was on his boat with his family. Dave was a mainstay at all of the couples Dinner Dances. To demonstrate that some things in life were meant to be, Gloria his longtime companion and best friend passed away from her long battle with ALS (Lou Gehrig's disease) on the anniversary date of Dave's passing six years later. I know Dave was waiting at the gates with St. Peter for her arrival. All his daughters are now grown married women and raising

families of their own. Dave would have been so proud and those kids would have been so spoiled.

**"The Murgy Open"**. After Dave's passing, a golf tournament was established to honor his work and dedication to the game and the golf course he so loved. Knowing Dave, he would have been proud, humbled and probably just a little embarrassed by all the attention. He would have been proud to know that over \$19,000 dollars has been awarded to 38 scholarships recipients in his name since the first Murgy Open ten years ago. Scholarships have been awarded to young college bound men and women from both high schools locally and to one turf student annually at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. (Knowing Dave, he would probably tell you that he was paying off some young bright mind to take his finals for him!) An endowment fund has been established in his name to ensure his legacy endures for future generations

The 10th annual Murgy Open is scheduled for Saturday June 6th, 2009 at the Ridges Golf Course. The four person golf scramble will tee it up at 1 PM and is open to men and women of all ages. The Awards Dinner follows at 6 PM and is included your outing fee. If you would like more information, you can contact: Mary Wilkens at 715-424-2615 or Jim Wunrow at 715-421-2987. 🌱



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