

Thanks, Guys

By MIKE NELSON, *Dakota Ridge Golf Club*

It's the first week of January according to the calendar but out here in Southwest Minnesota it hit 60 degrees last week and that took care of the little snow we had. It's been good in some respects as we accomplished things I thought would have to wait until spring. Now could I please have a nice blanket of snow! It wasn't long ago my days were filled with keeping after contractors making sure specifications were being achieved or maybe the irrigation folks had a life and death situation, or trying to explain to the clubhouse builders that it is important to keep the large trucks off the practice green! Growing in a golf course and being a part of the whole construction aspect is frustrating and at the same time very rewarding. Now things have slowed down. I've had some time to reflect.

My golf course experience goes back about 12 years as I got my start at Midland Hills Country Club in Saint Paul working for Scott Austin. When I first began, the main interest for me was the golf privileges that were included when working on the grounds staff. It didn't take me long to figure out that I enjoyed what I was doing on the golf course, being outdoors, being around a game I truly enjoyed since my father had introduced me to it as a youngster. Scott Austin really helped foster my interest in the profession. He encouraged me to become a member of the MGCSA and answered my many questions along the way. While at Midland I enrolled at Anoka Technical College.

After Anoka Tech I landed my first Assistant Superintendent position at Stillwater Country Club in Stillwater, Minn. There I worked for Kevin Clunis (now with Tanners Brook Golf Course). For three years I was employed there and I took about six years of knowledge with me. From restoration projects to developing naturalized areas in out of play areas to daily handling of staff and scheduling, I was able to experience first hand all the many aspects golf course management has.

My next stop was at Rush Creek Golf Club. Tom Fuller (now with North Star Turf Supply) hired me as Assistant Superintendent. When I first started, there was somewhat of an existing golf course that was going to go through some restoration and then open the doors. That soon changed to get the dozers out we're doing this up! Tom gave me a lot of responsibility and I was able to really grow my existing skills and develop many new ones. I was on staff from the first bulldozer to seeing a very successful LPGA tour event.

My current position at Dakota Ridge Golf Club has allowed me to fulfill some career goals. Having realized that, I also want to thank the above mentioned individuals for not only giving me a job along the way but for also helping me reach goals in the golf management profession. I hope those that are just starting out in the golf management profession are as fortunate as I was to work for such good people.

