

# Hole Notes

The official publication of the MGCSA



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Vol. 46, No. 5 June 2013

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## Upcoming Events

**August 13**

**The Championship  
Prestwick Golf Club  
Host Dave Kazmierczak, CGCS**

**October 7**

**The Wee One  
Brackett's Crossing Country Club  
Host Tom Proshek**

**October 15**

**Fall Shoot Out  
Minnesota Horse and Hunt Club  
Host Superintendent Bill Gullicks  
Bellwood Oaks Golf Club**

**November 20**

**Assistant's Professional Forum  
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Host Assistant Superintendent  
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**EDITOR**

**DAVE KAZMIERCZAK, CGCS**  
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## The Championship August 13th Prestwick Golf Club



**Medina Magic! Great conditioning and a great shot too!**

*On the cover:  
OUCH!!!  
And you thought you had some  
vandalism recently.  
Read more on page 8.*



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# Presidential Perspective

by Scottie Hines, CGCS Superintendent at Windsong Farm

Welcome to June? Or is it April? Temperatures have been below average, disease pressure has been low and we can't seem to string more than a couple days together without rain. Sounds like a fairly easy year so far, doesn't it? Why does it seem that the stress levels are off the charts this year? Those who had damage from the winter are trying to recover. Others are dealing with flooding and just trying to keep up with the mowing. I guess when you deal with Mother Nature on a daily basis, you never know what you are going to get! I have always said it and I firmly believe it, Mother Nature has a sneaky way of meeting the average! Anyone for a Thanksgiving Day round of golf.....in shorts?

Things have been fairly quiet on the GCSAA front. Obviously there has been a call to action with the NPDES legislation and immigration issues. I am not sure if anyone knows how all those chips will fall. I would like to remind everyone that it is very important to act on these issues when we are called upon locally or nationally. Sure, the immigration issue, for example, might not affect us directly here in Minnesota. We are being called upon to act as an INDUSTRY not as an individual. Having been on Capitol Hill the last two years for National Golf Day as a representative of GCSAA, MGCSA and the We Are Golf Coalition I can assure you our voice is being heard and it is important.

Locally we are in a holding pattern with the Environmental Stewardship Committee for a number of reasons. The main reason being the DNR is in the process of filling positions that will be the people we will have to deal with directly to move the program forward. Tough to do what we need with virtually no guidance from the agency that has the most relevance. On a lesser note, it is summer, golf season, and everyone is dealing with the day-to-day struggles of running a course. This by no means says we are giving up on the program, just slightly delayed.

Hard to believe we are on the down hill slide. June 21 is the longest day of the year. The days will be getting shorter from here to the end. I hope with all the stress involved with this season everyone is taking some time to do the things they like and spend some much needed time with family. Have some relief in the fact that if we keep having this many rain days we will get time with our families. Those days may likely be inside, but time with family is time well spent.

# A TOAST, IN APPRECIATION OF YOUR BUSINESS. HERE'S TO YOU.

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## Cover Story:

Some kid from Hibbing hijacked a truck from the resort and then proceeded to hit a building (not ours thankfully) and then went out onto hole 11.



The plow linkage broke while he was rough-riding and buried itself in the green. Pretty deep-over a foot in places. We had to sod about 40 square yards of the green. Repair was done in less than two days and thankfully we have been maintaining a good greens-grade nursery for these kinds of things. As you guys know, the green will not be “right” for a few years, but it is definitely playable and players barely notice the repair work.

The only good thing about this is that it happened on May 9th-before we opened on the 17th.

Just when you start to think

you have kind of seen it all...

**Vince Dodge**  
Superintendent at The  
Wilderness at Fortune  
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**Count on it.**  
Page 9



# In Bounds

by Jack MacKenzie, CGCS

Inside almost every edition of Hole Notes magazine you will find a Benefits of Membership flier. This isn't just filler, rather it hopefully and subtly encourages you to appreciate everything you have gained through investing less than \$11 each month into the MGCSA, your

Association.

Communication is of paramount importance and facilitated through the Hole Notes magazine, weekly The Stimpmeter newsletters, upon the website [mgcsa.org](http://mgcsa.org) and also job postings sent in the Career Connection. Each of these tools allow you access to a wealth of knowledge published regularly and at your finger tips.

***But did you know there is also a library of relevant articles generated by members upon our website? Look under Resources then Research then Member Library. It is full of great material to share with your Green Committee or Owner when support information is required.***

Ever grow tired of knocking your shin on that unused piece of equipment that is collecting dust in your Turf Management Center? Are those irrigation heads, replacement for the 'old' system you used to have, just taking up space on the shelves? Have you upgraded your rakes, benches and ball washers and need somebody to take the old, yet usable, units off your hands?

***The Classifieds upon the MGCSA website is the place to go to solve all of these challenges. This automated system allows you to place, modify and pull your own ads for equipment, irrigation supplies and even miscellaneous dust collectors that somebody else is probably looking for.***

The MGCSA provides advocacy at the state level through representation upon several state agency committees associated with the DNR, MPCA and Department of Agriculture. Your Association provides support for issues impacting your livelihood directly.

*Representatives of the MGCSA along with other Allied Golf Associations were very instrumental in preventing an increase in water permit fees, saving most clubs from a ten-fold increase in fees for the next two years. Currently, the Environmental Stewardship Committee is working hard to develop a science based and logical water management, conservation and crisis program for potential implementation at all golf destinations in the state.*

Another benefit of membership with the MGCSA is networking opportunities. Here are a few case studies I have been involved with in recent months:

*MGCSA Member emails and needs help with chain saws and operators after straight-line winds nail his course and take down or damage two-dozen massive oak trees. An APB was sent to area clubs for help, which arrived in short order.*

*MGCSA Member emails his request to split a truck load of bluegrass sod to reduce costs for everyone involved. An email list of clubs in close proximity was sent and the Member pursued support on his own.*

*MGCSA Member has a hydraulic blow out upon one of his greens. The operator “drained the tank” and sod is necessary asap. The unfortunate Superintendent was connected with another Superintendent at a club that maintained a giant green sod nursery, information learned at a recent MGCSA meeting.*

*Former MGCSA Member is looking for an Assistant. He re-joins the Association and places ad upon the website.*

Need one more reason to be comfortable investing \$10.84 each month into the MGCSA?

*You get me! While not the best thing since sliced bread and certainly not as inventive as Al Gore, the creator of the internet but I promise I will do my best to help you whenever and wherever possible. Having been in your shoes, I am intimately aware of your challenges and can and often do provide solutions to help you do your job better. If I don't have the direct answer I should be able to help direct you to the remedy, or somebody better suited to help.*

Something to ponder about associations: *In all societies, it is advisable to associate if possible with the highest; not that the highest are always the best, but because, if disgusted there, we can descend at any time; but if we begin with the lowest, to ascend is impossible.*

Charles Caleb Colton

# Perimeter Management

by Chris Tritabaugh, Superintendent at Hazeltine National GC

Playing surface perimeter management has become one of the biggest issues in the golf course management industry. The bottom line when it comes to perimeter management is the control and management of concentrated mechanical stress. This sort of stress comes in many forms, but there is no doubt the prolific use of rollers in the maintenance of putting surfaces, has played a major role in increased perimeter stress. There are many ways in which we deal with this stress. First of all, it is important to recognize the perimeter of putting surfaces as a separate turf system from that of the putting surface proper. Perimeters need their own management program, both culturally and nutritionally.



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These are the areas which make up the putting surface perimeters. This photo was taken about two weeks ago; the yellowish turf was a bit week coming out of winter. Cultural and nutritional practice since, have this turf looking much healthier.



In addition to stress from our maintenance equipment; golfers, caddies and push carts also add to the stress. Out of courtesy, golfers and caddies walk around the edge of the putting surface. In this photo you can see how all of the tracks from the push carts funnel down to a small area on the right side of the seventh green. In the coming weeks, we are going to introduce an initiative aimed at getting golfers, caddies and even push carts to walk right across the putting surface. Stay tuned for more...

***The Championship***  
**Prestwick Golf Club**  
**August 13th, 2013**



Culturally, the perimeters need more work. In this case, you see a small core having been pulled from the collars.

A-4 bentgrass does not perform well at collar heights, for this reason all of the collars have been replaced with Dominant Extreme bentgrass sod. In order to get the best performance from sod, it must be core aerated often during its first couple of years. If this is not done, the sod never establishes as part of the turf system and its quality will decline during stressful periods.

*The Editor of the Hole Notes would like to recognize Chris Tritibaugh for saharing this article with his peers. Rather than collect the \$50 stipend for himself, Chris has requested the mones be donated to the Research Fund.*

**Did you know that a person burns up to 2,000 calories walking an 18 hole round of golf?**



Nutrition is another key aspect of maintaining quality perimeters. Just like the human body, when turf is stressed and working hard, it needs more nutrition than normal. In the case of the perimeters; they are under extra stress, thus they need extra food. Here you can see the perimeters being sprayed with some extra soluble nutrition. Over the course of the golf season, I expect the perimeters will receive double the nutrition of the putting surfaces proper.

***It was a sunny Sunday morning, and Murray was beginning his preshot routine, visualizing his upcoming shot, when a voice came over the clubhouse loudspeaker. “Would the gentleman on the ladies’ tee please back up to the men’s tee.”***

***Murray remained in his routine, seemingly unfazed by the interruption.***

***A little louder: “Would the man on the women’s tee kindly back up to the men’s tee!”***

***Murray raised up out of his stance, lowered his driver, and shouted, “Would the announcer in the clubhouse kindly shut up and let me play my second shot?”***



## Benefits of Membership in the MGCSA

**MGCSA.org:** The MGCSA provides its membership an electronic destination. The site offers a broad range of services including latest news, meeting information, important links, local association contacts and meeting schedules, as well as a market place for used equipment or student internships. Links are provided to the Affiliate Members who advertise on the web site.

**Education:** The MGCSA provides a range of high quality discounted professional education with more than 100 hours of relevant classes at the Northern Green Expo in January each year, supplemented by an extensive program at the Mega Seminar, as well as the annual MGA Spring Turf Forum.

**Research:** The MGCSA coordinates with researchers at the University of Minnesota's TROE Center to make sure you get the information you need. The association also directs Turfgrass Research Benefit Week, the annual sale of donated tee-times, to raise money for golf turfgrass research. And the association also contributes to The Turf Endowment fund to ensure a continuing program at the University of Minnesota.

**Government Relations:** The MGCSA provides access to the State Capitol through a continued relationship with the Minnesota Golf Association and other Green Industry Allies. This service keeps your association aware of issues likely to affect golf as they emerge rather than after the fact. This proactive presence also helps us educate legislators and regulators by providing solid information and research findings as they strive to make sound decisions for the good of the whole community. The MGCSA has representation at the Minnesota Nursery and Landscape's 'Day on the Hill' event.

**Hole Notes Magazine:** The MGCSA provides an award winning professional golf course superintendent association journal. Published ten times each year in a digital format, Hole Notes strives to provide relevant, interesting information that reflects the personality and professionalism of the membership. Links are provided to the Affiliate members who advertise in the magazine.

**Membership Directory:** At the Member's Only section the MGCSA provides an annually updated listing of names and contact details for every member of the association. This electronic directory puts each within fingertip reach of around 700 allied professionals across the region.

**Employment Referral Service:** The MGCSA provides a link between the people with jobs and those who want them. The employment referral service is available on-line at MGCSA.org as well as electronically delivered weekly through 'e-updates'.

**Email Alerts:** The MGCSA uses the internet to provide updates and alerts on urgent matters as they arise so we remain current with issues that may effect you, the industry and the Association.

**Scholarships:** The MGCSA extends its support to the next generation through an annual scholarship program to assist children and grandchildren of superintendents who have achieved academic excellence.

**Wee One Support:** The MGCSA annually hosts a Wee One fund raising golf outing with the proceeds going to support this outstanding program that serves those in the golf course turf management industry.



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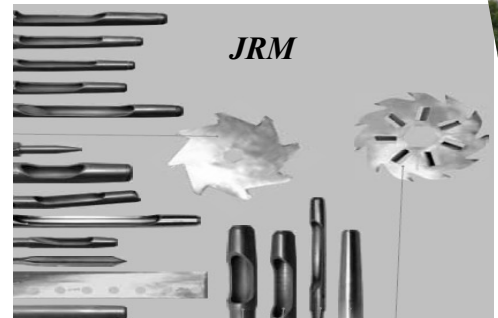


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**Thanks to Erin McManus, his Assistants and the crew at Medina Golf and Country Club for an Exceptional Scramble Event,**



CGCS

**The Ins and  
Outs of Getting  
Certified:  
It's Well Worth  
the Effort**

**A**s just about every turf professional knows, the Certified Golf Course Superintendent (CGCS) designation is the highest level of recognition a golf course superintendent can achieve. In the job market, it is a professional designation that sets you apart from others, especially when pursuing a higher-level position. Once hired, it shows your employer that you are continually striving to enhance your skills and remain on the pulse of the industry as you pursue the continuing education needed to maintain your certification.

Though earning this status has always meant satisfying a series of criteria, in 2001, GCSAA made the requirements for becoming certified considerably more stringent. About 25 percent of GCSAA Class A members currently hold the CGCS status, but, admittedly, the numbers pursuing certification seem to have fallen off. The word on the street is that many superintendents are discouraged by what now appears to be an overbearing and time-consuming amount of work.

Well, having recently gone through the new certification process, I can assure you that it's not all that bad—and actually well worth the effort. I feel that completing the process has made me a better manager and better superintendent, which in effect, has made me more valuable to my club. I learned more effective ways of managing my time and my staff. I discovered things that I could be doing better or that I should be doing but wasn't. And working through the program gave me the tools I've needed to enhance any areas of weakness and also capitalize on my strengths.

What follows is a rundown on what it takes to become a certified golf course superintendent—as well as a roundup of Met member sentiments on what earning CGCS status has meant to them. I hope that after reading this article, you'll be inspired to carve out the time to pursue your certification—and join the ranks of the 79 Met members who are certified golf course superintendents today.

## First Things First: Becoming Eligible

Before you can begin the certification process, you have to be sure you meet the minimum requirements. These include years of experience as a superintendent and level of education. Your educational level will dictate how many years of experience as a superintendent you will need and how many education points you will have to complete before moving forward with the certification process. The chart on page 4 specifies these requirements.

The eligibility requirements don't stop there. You also must:

- Be currently employed as a golf course superintendent.
- Possess a pesticide applicators license or pass the GCSAA's IPM exam if your state or country does not have a pesticide license.
- Complete the online Self-Assessment Tool, which can be found on the GCSAA's website.
- Complete a certification portfolio.

### About the Self-Assessment Tool

Working through the online self-assessment helps you identify how you measure up to the competencies needed to perform successfully as a superintendent—and on the exam. Under each competency, you'll find the education resources—seminars, books, or articles—available to help you strengthen any gaps you might uncover in your knowledge and abilities in all areas. Another bonus: You'll receive .5 CEUs for completing this assessment.

### About the Portfolio

Here's where things get a little more challenging. The certification portfolio is a collection of 33 sections that have to be completed before you can submit your application for the program. These sections are divided into three parts: Work Samples, Skill Statements, and Case Studies. The portfolio was created to evaluate your understanding and application of the management and problem-solving skills needed

to run a successful golf course operation.

I know, right now you're thinking, "You have to be kidding me, right?" Admittedly, the portfolio is one of the biggest stumbling blocks in superintendents' motivation to become certified. I'm not going to say it's not a lot of work, but you can begin building a portfolio at any point in your career, even as an assistant, and if you're a superintendent, you're probably already doing what's required in some of the sections anyway. Take the Work Samples section. Here, you have to provide evidence of tools and documents that you use to manage staff. This might include employee reviews, employee training, job descriptions, or a meeting agenda ... things you have pretty readily available.

One thing that you should be sure to download from the GCSAA's website is the Portfolio Scoring Rubric. This is a great vehicle for helping you make sure that you do not leave any part of an answer out. It is what the judges use to grade your portfolio, so reviewing it can prove to be a great time-saver, particularly since any errors or omissions will require that your portfolio be returned to you for revision. Ugh.

I have judged six portfolios in the past three years, and the most common reason any section is sent back for a redo—believe it or not—is because of grammar, punctuation, or spelling errors. I strongly suggest having someone else proofread your work before sending it in. It will save you a lot of time and aggravation.

Right now, you have two options in putting together your portfolio: You can create an electronic portfolio, or you can submit a paper-based version. Regardless of which method you choose, GCSAA provides helpful templates on its website that are designed to guide you in the creation of your portfolio while ensuring that you include all the necessary information.

If you choose the paper-based portfolio, you have to download the templates onto your computer, type in the answers, and print three copies of everything. Then you have to put them into separate binders and

## GCSAA Point Requirements

Level of Education	Superintendent Experience	Total Points
Bachelor's degree in turf or plant science	3 years	3 (2 edu)*
Other bachelor's degree plus associate's degree in turf/plant science, or equivalent two-year turf certificate (i.e., Michigan State, Penn State)	3 years	3 (2 edu)
Other bachelor's degree	4 years	5 (3 edu)
Associate's degree in turf/plant science, or equivalent two-year turf certificate (i.e., Michigan State, Penn State)	4 years	5 (3 edu)
Turf certificate/short courses (400-hour minimum) (i.e., Rutgers, Penn State World Campus)	5 years	10 (6 edu)
Other associate's degree	6 years	10 (6 edu)
No degree or recognized certificate	7 years	40 (32 edu)

\*Points in parentheses represent the minimum education points required to reach total points.

mail two of the copies to GCSAA, where they would then be sent to two different judges to be graded.

The new-and-improved electronic option allows you to enter your information directly into your e-portfolio by copying and pasting your information from the templates or from something you might have already saved on your computer. Your portfolio will be accessible for five years from the last time you opened it. Another plus with this method is that you will receive your results from the judges more quickly because there is no time wasted waiting for items to be mailed back and forth.

### Completing the Certification Eligibility Worksheet

You'll complete this worksheet, which you can find on the GCSAA website, to establish and document your eligibility requirements. Once you've met the requirements, GCSAA will send you a certification application form to complete and submit with an application fee and your portfolio.

### The Application

When your eligibility is approved and you have your portfolio ready to go, you can submit your application. Once the applica-

tion is received, you will have one year to complete the remainder of the certification process, which includes the written exam, the attesting of your golf facility, and the evaluation of your portfolio. The exam and attesting can be completed in any order within the one-year period.

This means planning ahead is essential. You have to keep in mind that:

- The attesting of your course must be conducted during the growing season.
- A 60-day waiting period is required between exam retakes. So if for some reason you have to retake a section of the exam (you're allowed two retakes), you have to be sure there's ample time remaining in your one-year applicant period for completion. It really pays to wait until you're well prepared to take the exam before submitting your application.
- If any additional information or materials are needed for your portfolio, it must be returned for reevaluation during your applicant period.

I, personally, submitted my application in the early fall, which gave me the off-season to pass the exam and the whole summer to get my attesting done.

### The Exam

The exam is a closed-book, multiple-choice test consisting of three parts with a total of 211 questions. You must pass each section of the exam with at least a 67 percent.

The Self-Assessment Tool mentioned earlier will identify for you the materials or seminars that will help you pass this exam, so it's important that you be honest with your-



To do today:  
 Register for ½ day GCSAA Seminar  
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 Prepare for CGCS accreditation testing  
 Schedule GIS Show

## Maintaining CGCS Status When Retired

What about the people who have been certified but are now on to other things like sales or retirement? You may be eligible to maintain a “CGCS Retired” status, which means you no longer have to renew with CEUs. You simply have to meet the requirements for a retired membership classification in GCSAA, such as Class AA (Life Member), and you have to have maintained your certified status up to the point of retirement.

To be eligible for Class AA (Life Membership), one has to have retired as a golf course superintendent and been an assistant superintendent or golf course superintendent member of the GCSAA for 25 years, of which a minimum of 20 years has been spent as a golf course superintendent.

## For Questions About the Certification Process

If you have any questions or concerns about the program, a great resource is Penny Mitchell, the program’s Senior Manager of Certification. She can be reached at [pmitchell@gcsaa.org](mailto:pmitchell@gcsaa.org) or at 800-472-7878.

Good luck!

*Jim Pavonetti, editor of Tee to Green, is superintendent at Fairview Country Club in Greenwich, CT. Jim has served on the GCSAA’s Certification Committee for the past three years and also serves as a Portfolio judge.*

self when you work through this online assessment.

On the test, there are some things that you’re expected to know from memory, such as the volume of a cube, converting cubic feet to cubic yards, calculating the percent slope, USGA specifications for greens, the GCSAA’s Code of Ethics, general knowledge about turf species from all geographical areas, and how to figure depreciation. You are also expected to have some general knowledge about the Audubon Sanctuary Program for Golf Courses. Formulas for other, more difficult math problems are provided.

As I noted earlier, you have one year to pass the exam, but there is a 60-day waiting period between retakes, so plan ahead!

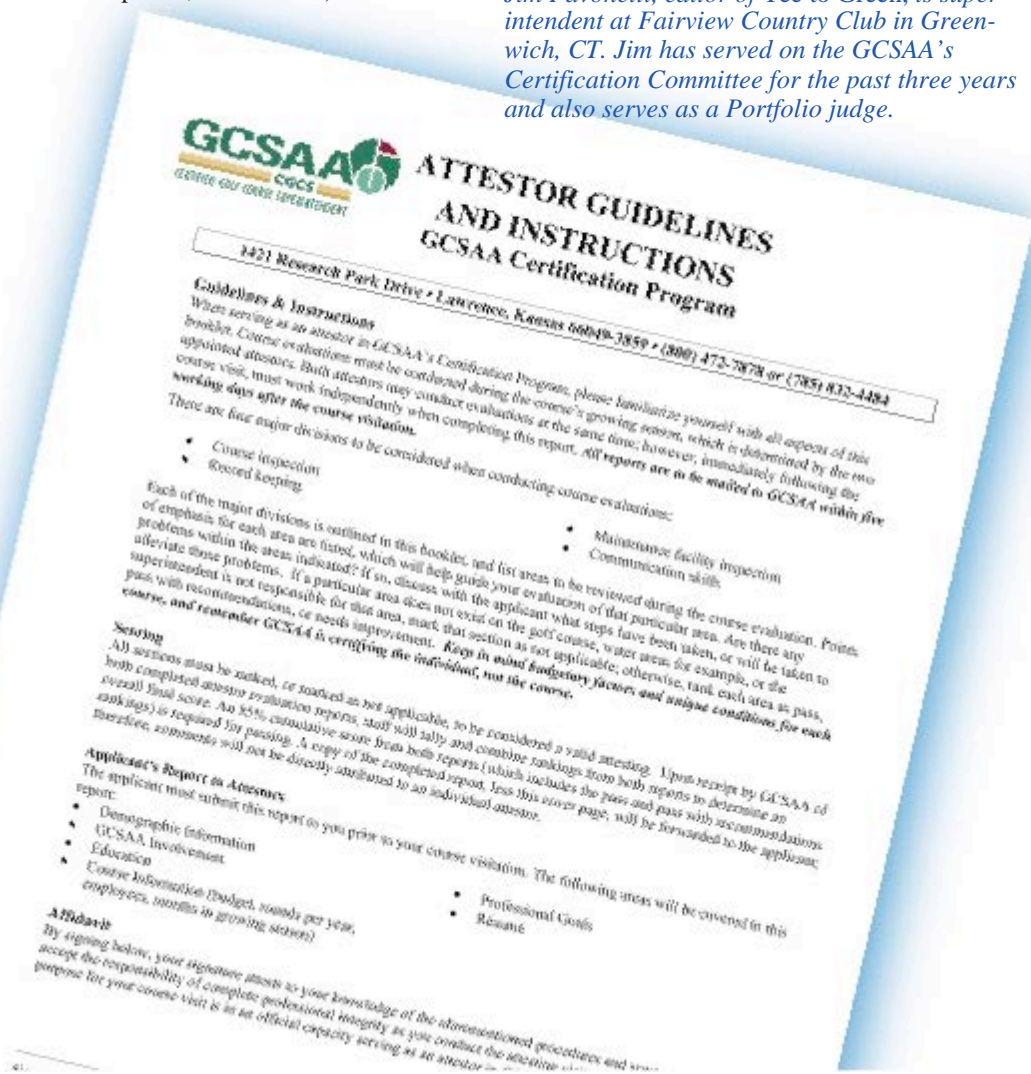
## The Attesting

Fulfilling the attesting requirement may be the easiest part of the program for some and the most nerve-racking for others. This is when your local chapter assigns two certified superintendents to come and evaluate your golf course operation. This evaluation is conducted during your course’s growing season and covers four major areas: course conditions (based on your budget), maintenance facility, recordkeeping methods, and communication skills.

You can prepare for this visit by downloading the grading form that the attestors will use to evaluate your course. There is also the “Attestor Guidelines” booklet available as a PDF, and an “Attestor Training Video,” which also covers everything the attestors will be looking for.

## Maintaining CGCS Status

Once you become certified, you must maintain your CGCS status by obtaining 15 points every five years. (At least five of the points have to be education points; the remainder can be service points.) If 15 points are too much, you can retake the exam and obtain only 5 points. (At least two have to be education points, in this case.)



# Superintendents Talk Certification

**W**e surveyed local certified superintendents to get a sense of how they feel about their certification. Most couldn't say enough about the value they've derived from earning—and maintaining—their CGCS status. Here are their insights:

## *Many enjoyed the “feel good” aspect of adding CGCS to the end of their names. . . .*

“In my 25th year of certification,” notes Preakness Hills’ John O’Keefe, “I am confident that career advancement is just one of the benefits of certification. The CGCS designation is something that makes me feel proud and also gives me a feeling of significant accomplishment. I especially appreciate the distinction my club has enjoyed by having a certified superintendent. At the certification luncheon in San Diego in February, it was a great feeling to look around the room and see that I am among some of the best in our business.”

The Stanwich Club’s Scott Niven notes a similar sense of accomplishment: “I have always felt proud to be able to tell members of my club that I am certified as a relatively small percentage of individuals in our business can say that. The CGCS distinction is also a very prominent and valuable item on my resume and website.”

“For me,” says Country Club of New Canaan’s Mike Reeb, “it has been a professional qualification of intrinsic or core value, a goal that’s provided personal satisfaction throughout my career.”

To Larry Pakkala, superintendent at Silvermine Golf Club and superintendent-at-large for Plant Food Co., certification was a means to an end: “I always have looked for ways to improve my self-image, and certification was a means to do that. I didn’t do it for financial gain. It was a personal goal I set for myself. In our industry, unlike many others, certification isn’t required. It’s up to the individual. Many superintendents take the same number of GCSAA and other courses

as a CGCS without becoming certified. And there’s value to that too. I, personally, am proud that I went through the process of becoming certified—and that I’ve maintained that status for 30 years. I’m looking forward to remaining a CGCS well into retirement.”

For Bedford Golf & Tennis Club’s Bob Nielsen, it’s what certification stands for that’s important: “Certification is presently the highest standard by which an individual can be held in our organization. While I don’t believe certification increases an individual’s ability to become a better superintendent, I do believe it demonstrates a commitment to the profession. This is, and always has been, important to me.”

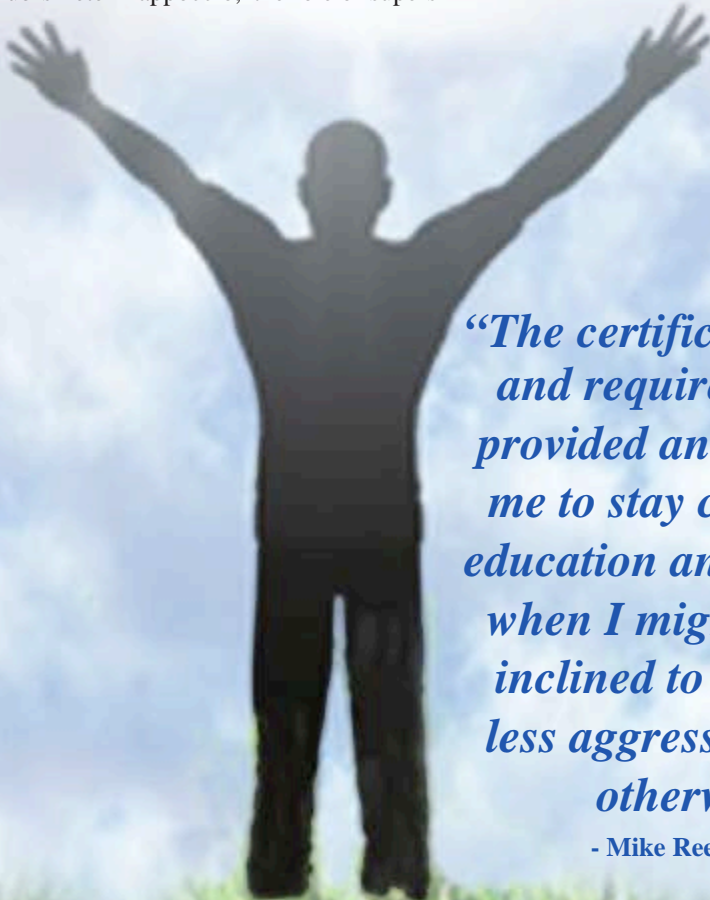
## *Others feel it has given them a leg up in a competitive industry. . . .*

“Back in 1986,” says Silver Spring Country Club’s Peter Rappoccio, “the role of supers

and our status within our clubs was nowhere near what it is today. Many of us looked at certification as a way to distinguish ourselves within the industry and take our jobs to the next level. Though the industry has begun to change and the important role of the superintendent has become clearer to club members and others in the golf industry, I still feel that certification is a distinction that all superintendents should try to attain—and maintain. I have been certified for 27 years, and I already have enough points to be recertified in 2016!”

Emphasizing the importance of CGCS status, Scott Niven adds, “I have always been the kind of person who wants to climb as high in the industry as possible, so as soon as I heard about the certification program back in the early ’80s, I immediately went on a search to find out what I had to do to obtain that classification. Certification holds a certain amount of status in many industries, so whenever you tell a club member, golfer, etc., that you are a certified golf course superintendent, it always indicates to them that you are a professional in your field at the highest level and your work will be representative of what could be considered state-of-the-art in golf course management. I have never questioned my decision to be certified and feel that it has only helped me to achieve a fairly high level of success in this great business.”

Like Scott, Brae Burn Country Club’s Blake Halderman regarded earning CGCS status



*“The certification process and requirements have provided an incentive for me to stay current with education and new trends, when I might have been inclined to settle into a less aggressive approach otherwise.”*

- Mike Reeb, CGCS



***Although certification does not guarantee success, statistics show that it can enhance our career opportunities, job security, and lead to better managed facilities.***

**- Tim O'Neill, CGCS**

as a solid career move. "When I was a young superintendent, my entire goal was to put myself in the best possible position to get the job I truly wanted. I felt if I wanted to be viewed as one of the top 10 percent, then becoming certified was necessary."

Similarly, Meadow Brook Club's John Carlone felt becoming certified would set him apart from others in the industry. "When I earned my certification in 1991, I felt it would make a statement to my peers and potential employers that I desired to be the best I could be in my profession. I remember feeling, 'All good superintendents are certified.' Of course, I've long known that there are plenty of highly capable superintendents who are not certified. Yet I still think that every young superintendent should challenge themselves by pursuing their certification!"

Rockland Country Club's Matt Ceplo feels certification is all the more essential in an economy where job competition is fierce. "I would urge every superintendent to become certified. Completing your certification, in my opinion, demonstrates to current and prospective employers your commitment to the industry and to the profession of golf course management. And because you have to stay current with the latest developments and technology to maintain your certified status, employers know that they are hiring or employing someone who is on their game."

Echoing Matt's sentiments, Country Club of Darien's Tim O'Neill notes: "Although certification does not guarantee success, statistics show that it can enhance our career opportunities, job security, and lead to better managed facilities. Moreover, in this highly competitive industry, certification is a demonstration of a superintendent's passion for the profession, and it allows a superintendent to be recognized for meeting established levels of competency. It goes beyond 'growing grass' by requiring knowledge in business, communication, leadership, and the environment. It was a personal goal of mine when I started my career as a superintendent in 1981, and I believe it has been a sig-

nificant factor in my success as a golf course superintendent."

***Still others enjoy the educational nudge the certification process provides. . . .***

As Glen Arbor Golf Club's Ken Benoit notes: "I became certified in 2004, and my experience has been 100 percent positive. In studying for the certification exam, I rediscovered the joy of learning and take great pleasure in keeping up-to-date on turf-related science and participating in the continuing education process. My involvement in the GCSAA certification program has been nothing short of a wonderful experience."

John Carlone sings the praises of certification's educational requirements: "After 22 years, I still appreciate how being certified ensures that I stay current with every aspect of our changing profession through ongoing education."

"Truth be told," says Mike Reeb, "the certification process and requirements have provided an incentive for me to stay current with education and new trends, when I might have been inclined to settle into a less aggressive approach otherwise. I'm proud to be certified and intend to remain a CGCS for as long as I'm able to renew."

"No doubt," adds Blake Halderman, "the certification process forces you to stay current in the industry, which is a positive for both you and your club."

Peter Rappoccio is one who feels the educational benefits of the certification process far outweigh any potential for financial gain: "I didn't pursue certification with the goal of getting more pay. I viewed it as a means to take my status, through education, to the next level. Those who say becoming certified is not worth the effort because financially it means nothing, have their priorities out of whack. It was, and still should be, a means to continue to improve our knowledge of the business, which, in turn, makes us better supers."

***And some feel there's just no good reason NOT to become certified. . . .***

"A superintendent may or may not feel the need to become certified as it relates to his ability to do his job on a daily basis," says Ken Benoit, "but in my opinion, there is no good answer when asked by a current or potential employer why you are not certified."

Bob Nielsen echoes Ken's sentiments, saying, "One question I always asked myself when deciding whether or not to pursue certification was how I would explain, if it came down to me and another certified superintendent for a position, why I wasn't certified. I have never been able to come up with a good answer."

To Blake Halderman, becoming certified is one of those "why not?" things: "If all those around you are certified and your club finds out you're not, I don't think it will sit too well. You will have to play defense. With the ease of maintaining the certification these days with online courses, I don't see any reason not to get certified and keep it."

While many superintendents were pleased with the recognition and support they received from their clubs for earning and maintaining their CGCS status . . .

***A number of respondents admitted their clubs have little idea what CGCS stands for. . . .***

"I don't believe my employer gives me any more credit for being certified," says Bob Nielsen, "but that is as much my fault as anyone else's. I have not promoted it."

And according to Blake Halderman, "I don't think 99 percent of my club knows what CGCS stands for or what it takes to keep that status. While being a CGCS may not mean much on a daily basis, I still feel the long-term benefits make it worthwhile."

Larry Pakkala, on the other hand, felt more clubs are aware of the benefits of certification than most of us realize: "For many years, I've noticed that some job notices state that being a certified superintendent is a plus. So there are clubs out there that do know about it."

In the end, few certified superintendents would deny the many personal and professional rewards of earning—and maintaining—their CGCS status . . . even if no one knows it but themselves.

# Be afraid of the dark

Paul Koch, Ph.D.

Turfgrass Diagnostic Lab Manager

University of Wisconsin - Madison

*The Editorial Staff and members of the MGCSA would like to recognize Dr. Koch for his supply of relevant material published in the Hole Notes magazine. David Brandenburg, CGCS, and Editor of Wisconsin's Grass Roots Magazine is also recognized for his support and sharing of material previously published in his magazine. Thank you Paul and David for your contributions.*

The summer of 2012 was historically unpleasant for turfgrass managers, harkening comparisons to the infamously brutal summers of 1995 and 1988. Much of the region was mired in a severe drought, and record high temperatures ruined many July 4th festivities (and emptied tee sheets). While the record high temperatures certainly got the attention of the public at large, as turfgrass managers, what should have concerned us most were the nighttime temperatures.

There are a couple reasons for the importance of nighttime temperatures to turfgrass health. As any Turfgrass Diagnostic Lab contract member would know, I always harp on the forecasted nighttime lows when discussing potential diseases to watch out for. The primary reason is that higher nighttime temperatures nearly always equal higher humidity, due to the fact that moisture can hold heat better than air can. As we're well aware, higher humidity usually equals more disease. Sustained nighttime lows above 65°F often signal that dollar spot will become more active, and lows above 70°F for more than three days often signal that it's time to start worrying about Pythium blight and brown patch.

Warm nighttime temperatures go beyond just disease activity, though. As we all know, plants are unique in that they produce their own food. They accomplish this by using the sun's energy to power the conversion of carbon dioxide and water to sugars the plants can use, a process known as photosynthesis. Because the sun powers the photosynthetic production of food, photosynthesis only occurs during the daytime hours. As important as photosynthesis is, though, it only produces the food. To convert that food into energy, a second process called respiration occurs. Respiration is highly conserved amongst life on earth, and occurs in nearly the exact same manner in plants, animals, and other organisms. Respiration occurs 24 hours a day and breaks down the food produced through photosynthesis to energy the plants can use to survive. Since photosynthesis occurs only during the day, and respiration is occurring at all times, there is a period during the night where food is only being consumed and not produced.

What this means is that the plant needs to produce enough food during the daytime hours to sustain itself throughout the night as well. During sunny conditions with temperatures between 65-75°F, the plant produces enough food to sustain the plant through the night and also has extra left over to support plant growth (Figure 1). Different conditions can lower the amount of food available, either through reducing the amount of food produced or by using it up faster. Reduced sunlight due to shade or low mowing heights will lower photosynthetic production, resulting in a lack of food. Temperatures above 85°F begin to decrease the efficiency of photosynthesis through a process called photorespiration, a process that also decreases the amount of food produced. In addition, higher temperatures increase the rate of respiration in the plant cell, which can lead to faster utilization of resources.

This becomes especially problematic during periods with high

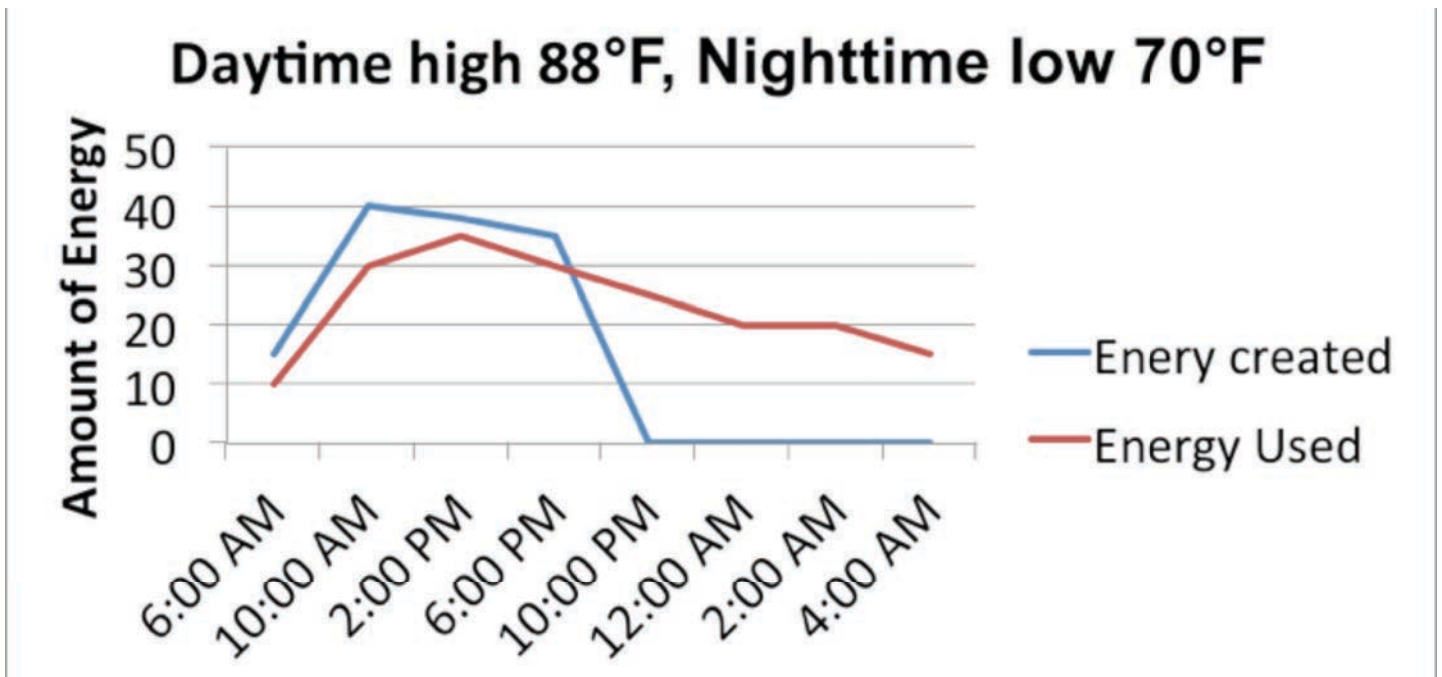
nighttime temperatures. Warm nighttime temperatures increase the rate of respiration, and there is no photosynthesis occurring to compensate with more food. This can lead to energy deficits, which if prolonged, can lead to poor rooting and eventually turfgrass death (Figure 2). This condition, when coupled with a multitude of other stressful summer conditions, has been referred to as summer stress syndrome.

Can anything be done to prevent summer stress syndrome? Well obviously you can't affect the nightly low temperatures, but there are a few things you can do to lessen the impact of a stressful summer similar to 2012. First, raise cutting heights to the absolute highest you can afford to. Even minor increases can help increase rates of photosynthesis, and research from Michigan State has shown that rolling can help maintain putting green speed. Second, syringing the turf in the late morning will cool the turf plants shortly before entering the warmest portion of the day. This can help to lower the canopy temperature, decreasing the rate of respiration. Third, ensure proper drainage by keeping the organic matter in the putting green rootzone below 4%. Excess water in the rootzone can prevent oxygen flow and hold more heat in the soil, which can increase respiration during the night.

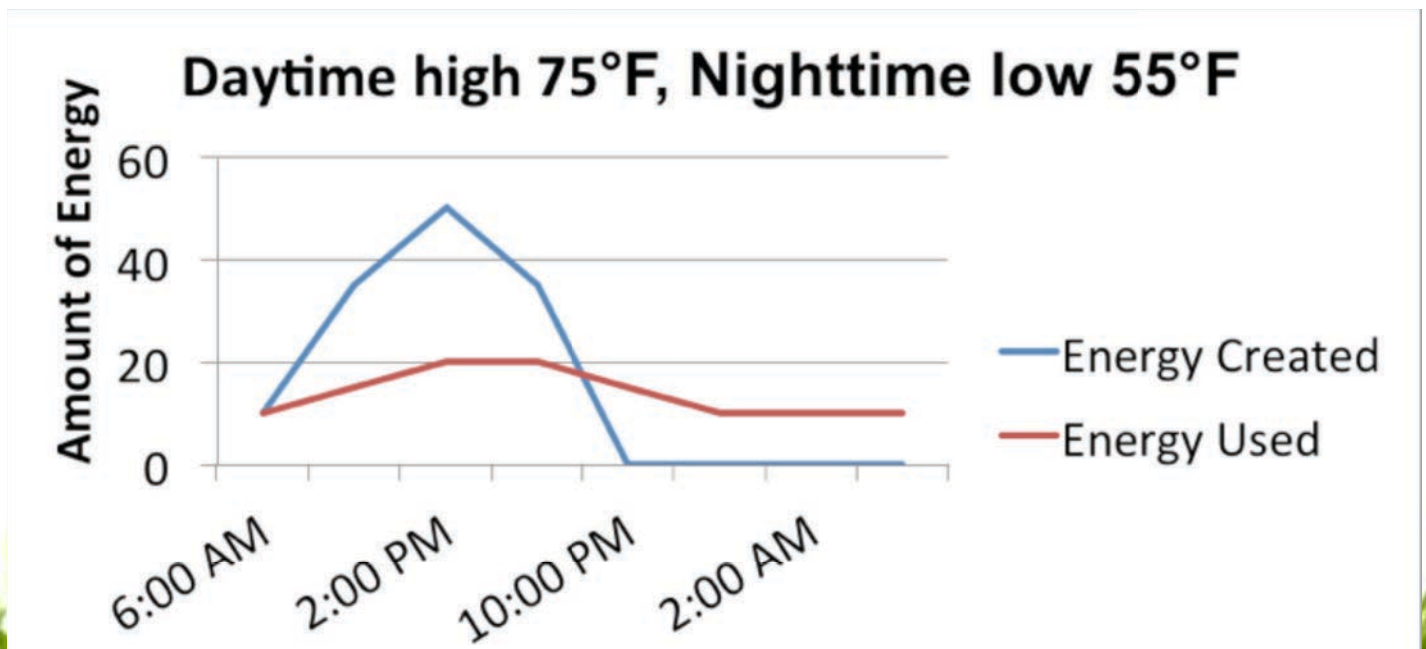
Many superintendents have followed these recommendations and have still struggled to keep turfgrass alive in 2012. To be fair, little can be done when conditions are as extreme as they were last summer. This is especially true for facilities that can't dispatch small armies to hand water struggling areas throughout the day. But with every hot day that passes this summer, it's comforting to know we're one day closer to fall.



*Figure 1. Hypothetical graph showing energy produced from photosynthesis and energy used from respiration at a daytime high of 75°F and a nighttime low of 55°F.*



*Figure 2. Hypothetical graph showing energy produced from photosynthesis and energy used from respiration at a daytime high of 85°F and a nighttime low of 70°F.*



# Emerald Ash Borer: Myths and Truths



Brandon M. Gallagher Watson

Director of Communications, ISA Certified Arborist MN-4086A Rainbow Treecare

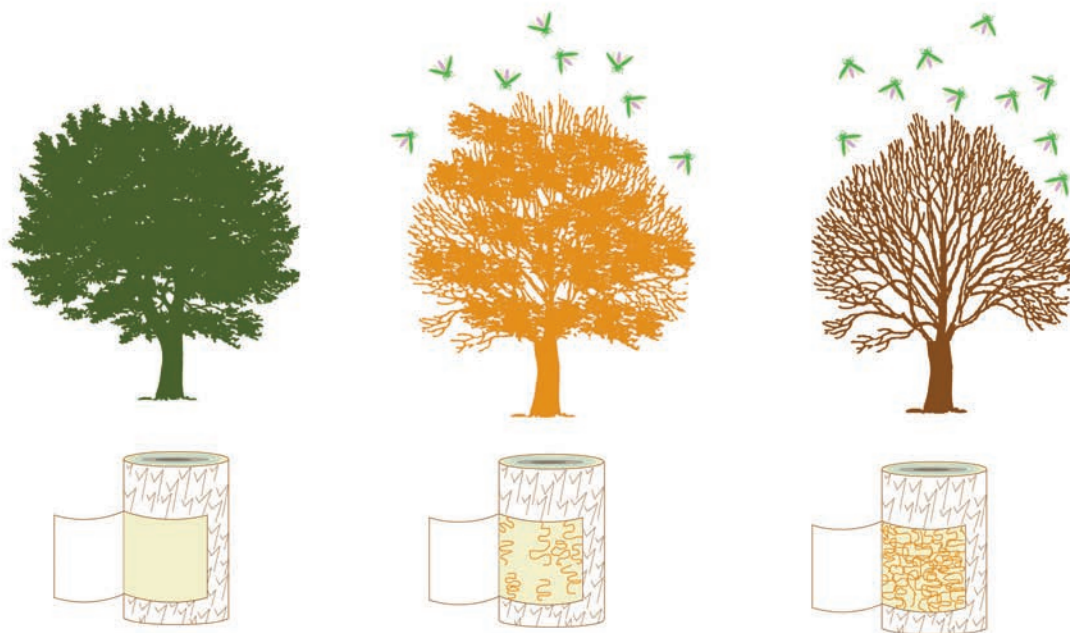
Since its discovery in Michigan in 2002, emerald ash borer has killed an estimated 100 million ash tree across the United States. Here in Minnesota, the impact of emerald ash borer is just beginning to be felt. Hundreds of valuable ash trees have already been cut down in Minneapolis and St. Paul. There are an estimated 937 million ash trees throughout

forests, parks, and neighborhoods in Minnesota. Here in the Twin Cities, one in five trees are ash, so the loss of this species will have a significant impact on the look and feel of our community. Just look around – you are likely to see an ash tree.

Emerald ash borer has set a new bar in terms of media interest



in fact, almost **1 in 5** trees in the Twin Cities, are ash!



and coverage for an urban forestry issue and as it continues it spread into our community this year, that media buzz is not likely to die out any time soon. While the media has been successful with getting a message out to the public about EAB, exactly what message has been reaching them can hurt as much as it can help. For as much quality information that is out there on EAB, there are more myths, confusions, half-truths, and flat out misconceptions that exist around this insect than maybe any other tree pest in history.

To help combat some of this misinformation, the Coalition for Urban Ash Tree Conservation was formed. The Coalition consists of academics, researchers, industry scientists, and strives to get consensus

from industry leaders on best management practices for treatments or removals, and provide a unified voice for the conservation of the ash tree. At a recent meeting, the Coalition discussed myths associated with EAB and its management. While this is by no means a comprehensive list of myths, it may touch on a few that



you may be hearing from the media, government agencies, or even from tree care companies in our area.

EAB Myth #1:

Tree removal slows EAB spread

Fact: ***Tree removal has a minimal impact on slowing the spread of EAB infestations***

This myth may seem counterintuitive at first – shouldn't less ash trees result in less ash borers?

If you are just considering, for instance, one city block where all the

ash trees have been removed then, yes, it will definitely slow to the spread to that block. However, EAB will then just find the next block with ash. The beetles are capable of flying up to 14 miles on their own; if we remove their food source in one spot they will simply fly further to find more. Municipal management strategies that have focused on removing boulevard ash trees simply move the insect to the homeowner's yards or to trees in naturalized areas. Preemptively removing ash trees actually helps quicken the spread of an established EAB population, rather than slow the spread as intended.





EAB Myth #2:

Treatments do not work

Fact: ***Treatments are highly effective against EAB***



In both field trials and in actual practice, treatments have been saving trees with predictably for many years now. There was a short time at the beginning of EAB management where application rates for certain treatments had not been optimized to defend ash trees against this new pest, but today EAB treatments are as effective and predictable as any tree health care management program in the industry. In fact, as a quarantined pest, any product labeled for EAB treatments must provide actual efficacy data to the EPA to be considered for registration. This means that every product available on the market for EAB has to have been shown to

work. In addition to data submitted to the EPA, numerous independent University trials have also shown treatments have a high level of success when used as directed.

A few years ago, removal was about the only recommendation coming from the State agencies on EAB. Today, even the Minnesota Department of Agriculture's message is: "Remember the 3 P's: Prepare, Protect, and Plant," which is a better message to homeowners than "Nothing can be done."

EAB Myth #3:

There is only one effective treatment for EAB

Fact: ***There are four effective treatments and three application methods that are effective***

This myth is no doubt the result of strong marketing efforts by product manufacturers. Since the one size fits all concept of EAB management is rarely the best option for either homeowners or municipalities, it is an important concept to dispel. When it comes down to it, there are literally dozens, if not hundreds of insecticides that would kill EAB if they came into contact together.

While EAB is a challenging insect for managers, it is still an insect, and thus can be killed by insecticides. That said, for the highest degree of control, combined with the realities of application operations, there are three main active ingredients that are recommended by universities and the Coalition. Those three are emmectin benzoate (TREE-age), imidacloprid (Xytect, Merit, others), and dinotefuran (Safari, Transtect). There are also several ways in which these treatments can be applied. Soil applications (imidacloprid, dinotefuran), tree injections (TREE-

age, imidacloprid), and systemic bark spray applications (dinotefuran) are all viable application methods for EAB management. Recently, an organic azadiractin option, TreeAzin, has become available in the US, broadening the management options further.

Choosing the perfect combination of active ingredient and application method will vary by threat level, economics, and management objections, but ensuring the stakeholders are aware of all the options available to them is important



**The healthy trees on the left and right of this stand received a standard treatment to kill Emerald Ash Borer. Phot courtesy of D. Smitely from MSU.**

so they can make the best informed decisions.

EAB Myth #4:

Treatments are too expensive

Fact: *Treatment is often less expensive than 'remove and replace' strategies*

The economics of EAB treatments is always a touchy subject, but one that is probably the most important in terms of getting a conservation program started, how many trees can be treated, and for how many years treatments are to

be utilized. The treatments will have different costs associated with them depending on the number of trees to be treated, application technique, cost of labor, speed and efficiency of application crews. The real value of treatments comes when compared to removal and replacement costs. In many cases, legacy-sized trees (15" in diameter or larger) can be successfully protected for decades for the same cost to the city or homeowner that removal would have been. Additionally, the cost of treatment is spread out annually or biannually during that time so they pay a small amount over 20 years rather than a

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several thousand-dollar tab per tree in one year.

Ash trees typically add about an inch of trunk diameter each year, so that means it will take about 20 years to replace a 20" diameter tree. Put into perspective, this is the same length of time it takes a newborn baby to become a college student. Considering the benefits the trees are providing, the cost of treatments versus removing and replacing, and being able to spread that cost over many years, it is easy to see why the belief that treatments are too expensive deserves to be dispelled.

The value of treatments extends well beyond just the price of treating versus the price of removing and replacing. A mature tree provides

numerous benefits in terms of property values and environmental impacts that a newly established tree cannot. The lesson learned from other cities that have been dealing with this devastating pest longer is the longer we wait for action, the more trees we will lose, and the greater impact on our urban forest.

Emerald ash borer, while garnishing comparisons to other prominent urban forestry epidemics like Dutch elm disease, is truly an unprecedented event. Stories in 2004 predicted the extinction of every North American ash species, as did 1960's articles on American elms. Only time will tell if either prediction was prophetic, or sensationalistic. In the meantime, all we can do is continue to educate the public on the options and save one tree at a time.



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# *Got Duckweed?*

## *Steps to Maintaining Duckweed-Free*

By Mark Koepsell, Healthy Ponds from Bioverse.



photo credit Andy Keyes, Assistant Superintendent at The Meadows at Mystic Lake

Hopefully at this point in the season you have gotten the algae in your pond under control, but here comes another menace -“Duckweed”. It starts out slow. Some small green oval-shaped body called a “frond” start growing around the edges of your pond. These fronds proliferate into colonies which if not treated, can cover the entire surface of the pond.

Common duckweed is a very

small light green free-floating, seed bearing plant. Duckweed has one to three leaves with a single root-hair. Duckweed reproduces by means of asexual reproduction called budding. One single duckweed plant forms a daughter bud per day. Duckweed spreads rapidly, especially in quiet water containing high levels of nitrogen and phosphates. Now what do you do?

# e Ponds



There are basically two ways to control Duckweed. The natural option would be to rake or seine the surface of the pond. The other option is to treat the Duckweed chemically. The following are the chemical control options available:

- Liquid Diquat -brand name SeaPro or Litora - has been effective on duckweed. It is a contact algaecide and herbicide. Contact herbicides act quickly

and kill all plants cells the contact

- Floridone - brand names include SeaPro, Sonar AS, Avast, and Whitecap. These are broad spectrum, systemic herbicides that are absorbed and move within the plant to the site of action. Floridone compounds come in both liquid and granular forms. Systemic herbicides tend to act more slowly than contact herbi-



cides.

- Imazapyr - brand name Habitat - is a systemic herbicide that is effective on post-emergent floating and emergent aquatic vegetation. Imazapyr is effective at low-volume rates and does not contain heavy metals, organochlorides, or phosphates, making it safe for animals and humans.
- Liquid Penoxsulam - brand name Galleon - is a broad spectrum, systemic herbicide that is absorbed and moves within the plant to the site of action. Like Floridone, this herbicide tends to act more slowly than a contact herbicide.
- Flumioxazin - brand name Clipper- is a water dispersible gran-

ule which must be mixed in water first and then either sprayed or injected. This is a broad spectrum, contact herbicide that acts quickly. When using Flumioxazin, it is important that the pH level in the pond is below 8.5 or Flumioxazin will rapidly degrade and lose effectiveness.

Many aquatically registered herbicides have water use restrictions. It is important to always read and follow the label directions and check label for specific water use restrictions. It is also important to determine the correct area and/or volume of the pond to be treated. To determine the amount of gallons of water in the pond, use the following equation:



Length x Width x Average Depth  
x 7.5 = Total Gallons. For area  
treatment; Length x Width = Total  
Surface Area.

As you can see there are many options  
available to control Duckweed. And  
remember, ponds are a lot like people,  
they are all different. Not every  
pond responds to the same treatment  
program. It is important to keep  
as much debris out of the pond as  
possible and to monitor the pond on  
an ongoing basis. Each pond has its  
own issues that need to be addressed  
to determine the most effective  
treatment plan.



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# *Research at the U, Your Support Is Put To Work*

*Contributed by Roger Stewart CGCS, Chair RC Committee*

**One of the most active committees in the MGCSA is the Research Committee. Makes sense** because providing funding for turf research is one of the key pillars that the Board of Directors uses to guide the association forward. This means that the Research Committee not only controls what research to fund, but also has the responsibility for raising a large portion of those funds each year. Our recent dues increase is funding used for member directed research or in other words; research that our membership tells us they need and want more information about. The Research Committee is also

responsible for raising funds through the MGCSA Research Scramble, MGCSA Rounds for Research and the gun raffles we have each year. Dr. Brian Horgan and his staff use those revenues to support the daily operation of the TROE Center at the University of Minnesota, as well as various requests for specific funding such as endowments, projects and proposals for research. In addition, a portion of the money raised at the MGCSA Research Scramble each year is used to fund scholarships granted by MGCSA each year through the MGCSA Legacy Scholarship program.

Currently we have three



**Dr. Brian Horgan, center, receives a \$20,000 check earlier this year from Roger Stewart, CGCS, Chair of the Research Committee. From left to right committee members: Jeff Johnson, Chris Tritabaugh, Paul Eckholm CGCS Erin McManus Co-chair and Mike Manthy.**



**MGCSA sponsored Turf Technician Marion Gagliardi applies a growth regulator at the TROE Center. Thank you for your continued support of research at the University of Minnesota.**

member directed research projects underway. They consist of a one year project on wetting agents, a multi-year project on winter damage protection and preparation as well as a two year project on growth regulators. We currently are wrapping up a five-year commitment to fund a graduate student endowment to support research at the University of Minnesota.

These are exciting times for turfgrass research at the University of Minnesota, and the MGCSA is poised to be at the forefront of opportunity as we look into the future. The Research Committee will be busy developing member driven projects, with your input, using email survey services as well as determining where our dollars will provide the best results and do the

most good. The possibilities really expand if the project at Les Bolstad Golf Course gets the go ahead in the near future. We want to be a part of the future of that project and a driving force for funding turfgrass research here in the state of Minnesota.

This year we have a robust committee made up of the following members: Roger Stewart – Chairman, Erin McManus Co-Chairman, Jeff Johnson, Chris Tritibaugh, E. Paul Eckholm, Jamie Bezanson, Mike Manthey, Brandon Schindele, Adam Murphy, Sam Bauer and Dr. Brian Horgan. I would be remiss if I didn't also mention the tremendous job our Executive Director Jack MacKenzie does providing administrative support to keep us on track.

# Industry Insight

## Doing Business Using Auctions

by Tim Gray, Fahey Sales

### Doing Business Using Auctions

While auctions have changed significantly over the years, many people's perceptions of them has not. Reality television does nothing to dispel these perceptions. The growth of internet auctions and the reduction of small farms has

businesses have had to become more professional. The days of being large garage sales are over. International advertising campaigns, high tech software, Facebook, Twitter and on-line buying are the norm.

An example of this increased



caused a significant shift in the auction business. With this shift many auction services have either gone out of business or sold out to other agencies. The remaining

professionalism is Fahey Sales' recent move into a centralized facility in Glencoe, MN. The new facility utilizes the latest in auction software and electronic commu-



nications. Flat screen televisions in the showroom provide real time information on auctions in the outside portion of the lot. Part of the 32,000 square foot facility is a 12,000 square foot warehouse which offers the ability to conduct auctions in an enclosed facility.

All of this has created an environment where sellers can be more comfortable consigning higher quality equipment. Successful internet selling results require detailed equipment descriptions and information on maintenance practices. This not only benefits the sellers' bottom line but it also provides the buyer with products that they can be confident in purchasing.

The beauty of the modern day auction is that it retains many of the benefits that auctions have always offered e.g. skilled salespeople selling products; focus on a specific market, coupled with the global reach of the internet and first class advertising programs. The days of advertising in the local newspaper and hoping people show up on auction day have gone away along with many of the companies that have relied on that marketing method only. What is left are organizations that are skilled at bringing the most value available at the time for your item. If you haven't tried using an auction service to create profit from your items spend some time researching opportunities. You will be surprised at the possibilities.

# On Board

## Q&A with Members of the Board of Directors

*Regarding the touted multi species rough, planted specifically for the US Open at Merion, does this penalty make sense to you, for golf and/or at your club?*

Scottie Hines, CGCS, President MGCSA  
Superintendent at Windsong Farm Golf Club

*No. It does not make sense for daily play at ANY course. Merion was hosting the US Open, the toughest test in golf. I see a bit of mixed messaging with the USGA and the "While we are young" campaign. Play faster but have 5 inch rough?*



*Three inch rough is too much for even the better player. IMHO.*

Bill Gullicks, Arrangement's Chairman  
Superintendent Bellwood Oaks Golf Club



*I was amazed by the rough at the U.S. Open, but also a little disappointed. The USGA Rules of Golf define a hazard as "a bunker or water hazard". Since when have roughs become a hazard. I know they were trying to make the course more difficult for the professionals, but for what reason. So a short golf course didn't give up some ridiculously low scores. Correct me if I'm wrong but fans like to see scoring. Look at other professional sports, rules have been changed so more offense is created. I would love to see a professional shoot four rounds under a 65.*

*With Bellwood Oaks being a public golf course, roughs much over two inches create issues.*

*Slow play because of lost balls would be the main one. The ability of our average golfer to hit out of it would be another along with the costs associated with maintaining roughs at higher heights. I know that we won't be penalizing our golfers anytime soon with roughs which should be considered a hazard. Oh, that's right they're not.*



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**Have a great story, picture article or something fun to share? Send it to Jack at [jack@mgcsa.org](mailto:jack@mgcsa.org). Who knows, it may just earn you a cool \$50!**



# Within the Leather

by David Kazmierczak, CGCS

Of all of the challenges of being a manager in the golf course industry, and there are many, perhaps

the greatest challenge is the management of people. People come in a variety of shapes, forms, colors and abilities. People also have an infinite variety of personalities, perceptions, habits, learning abilities, work ethics and responsiveness to a manager's way of presenting the job.

I think that is why it is so satisfying each year to look at the finished product at a golf course and realize that it truly takes a team effort from top to bottom to pull off a well maintained course. It takes tactical coordination from the manager through the ranks to the newest of laborers to get the job done. But it's not easy, and it takes a long time for a manager to hone his craft.

I have had the privilege of working for a couple of what I consider very good superintendents in my career, and some not so good superintendents. What set the good ones apart from the not so good was one simple thing: people management. All of them seemed to have technical ability. All of them could co-ordinate mowing schedules, fertilizer and pesticide applications and operate any machine in the shed. But not all of them could communicate, figure out what how to deal with a viewpoint not their own, or give their crew members solid direction while respecting they needed to succeed and

thrive. It is that ability that sets leaders apart from followers.

While I truly enjoyed working for the good ones, I learned more from the not so good ones. It was that exposure that helped make me the superintendent I am today. While I have to admit that I dreaded going to work some days for those guys, I used the poor decisions made by those superintendents as a guiding light to not make the same decisions when I was in charge. I always asked myself the question when I thought a situation was handled incorrectly: What would I have done or said if the problem or concern was on my shoulders? How would I have reacted in that very situation and what would the possible outcomes have been? Would I have made the situation better or worse?

Increasingly, I started asking those affected by the seemingly poor decisions made by the superintendent how they felt, what the situation was in their minds, and then run my ideas past them to see what their reactions were. Luckily most of the time my ideas were well received, and my prodding did not get back to the original guy who might have thought I was trying to somehow be subversive or underhanded. I just wanted to see if my instincts were right, and maybe try to smooth out a bad situation. That is a tricky process for a second or third in command, but sometimes it is warranted.

That's not to say I consciously advocate searching for a poor manager to work for just to learn what not to do. You can do the same thing working for a good superintendent as well. The opportunities to



second-guess a decision or devise your own scheme may not be as prevalent, but even a good manager can make a mistake or two, or not see the best way of accomplishing a task or goal, or how to deal with a person generally or specifically. Same can be said for a superintendent with a general manager or club owner. If a decision is made that is not to your liking, ask yourself what you would have done differently if you were in that position. Who knows? Maybe someday you will be.

Generally speaking, I base my management philosophy on the adage of treating people how I would want to be treated. Be honest, fair and try to communicate in a pleasant, professional tone. I try to inject humor into mundane or uncomfortable situations. I want my employees to feel like they are all part of our team, and that I, and all of our management, do care about them as an employee and as a person. It sounds basic but it works.

I am also a firm believer in giving the people an opportunity to succeed on their own, or develop their own way of accomplishing a task. Empowering an employee is a very rewarding thing for both the employee and the operation. The one exception to that is when wisdom and experience trump ambition. A blending of the two is optimal. By giving direction backed with experience they will acquire the knowledge they need to succeed, but too much direction stifles ambition and retards the individuals desire to progress and feel self worth. A good manger walks that fine line, and the line is often blurry and resides in different locals for each employee. That is what makes people management both complicated and rewarding.

Now that is not to say that there are not superintendents that have different styles and personalities that also get the job done. We have all heard of superintendents that are “my way or the highway” guys, or “fire and brimstone” guys. A few are even the opposite- the “I don’t care what you do” guys. I think there are far fewer of these. Some guys run a tight ship, some guys run a very loose ship. It seems to me a balance works well, but there are operations that stand the test of time with dysfunctional managers.

However in this era of ultimate scrutiny of golf course management, practices, budgets, etc. it seems to me a superintendent had better have his crew on his side. Especially when seemingly everybody else is not. A manager cannot be all things to all people, but with solid communication, a positive outlook and a relaxed spirit the operation will have a pretty good opportunity to succeed.

We have all heard of or know of the manager that “seems like a really great guy or gal- but I would never want to work for him or her.” What a shame that is. If you are that guy or gal, or even have a suspicion that you might be, take a good hard look at how you do things and carry yourself. If you are successful presently, think about how much more successful you could be if your employees genuinely enjoyed working for you and with you, instead of just putting up with you. You might be astonished at how much more enjoyable your job will become, and how much more successful the overall operation will be.