



Within the Leather

by David Kazmierczak, CGCS

I have a confession to make.

center.

I moved to Minnesota in 1998, a Kansas State Turf School graduate. Up until that point I hadn't really heard too much about the U of M's turf school or how strong the program was. Never heard of a ton of cutting-edge research coming from it. Maybe there was, I just missed it. Strength of an individual program is pretty subjective anyway, but let's be fair and say nobody was comparing it to Penn State. As an impartial observer and increasingly more involved individual I have to say I am impressed with the growth I have seen in the last decade.

Starting with the people. The U of M is extremely fortunate to have a leader in Dr. Brian Horgan basically at the helm of this program. Brian is as articulate as he is smart and his enthusiasm and drive would make Donald Trump proud in my opinion. Right there with him is Dr. Eric Watkins, Sam Bauer and Matt Cavanaugh who I feel share in Horgan's commitment and enthusiasm to turf research and outreach. Add to that Dr. Angela Orshansky, Plant Pathologist who I have not met personally but who's publications so far follow right along

While it most certainly isn't earth shattering or life or career altering, it is a wee bit embarrassing as I have been a superintendent in Minnesota for 15 years, have now been on the MGCSA Board of Directors for three years and editor of this magazine for as long. I have never set foot on the TROE center grounds, much less attended field day at the U of M. This is coming from the guy who wrote a column last month criticizing members for not showing up to events.

To be fair, I didn't have a chance to go to the TROE center for field day the past few years as it was presented via computer in a virtual tour. In the years before that, the event day just didn't jive with my schedule or whatever. I will be changing that this year however, and not just because I feel obligated or because we have a board meeting beforehand. I am truly interested in what is going on at the TROE

with the other three in service and dedication to the turf community and our profession.

And we cannot fail to mention the worker bees; Craig Krueger, field manager, Andrew Hollman, Senior Scientist, Pam Rice, USDA, Patrick Flattery, Scientist, and graduate students Maggie Reiter, Garret Heineck, Clemon Dabney, Madeline Leslie, Long Ma and Ian Lane. Who keep the destination operational and perform the studies we support.

The TROE center itself, heavily supported by the MGCSA with cash and in kind funding to the tune of over 2.5 million dollars since 2001, is by most accounts a very fine research center. I will see for myself in a couple of weeks. It takes a first class facility to produce first class results, no matter how good the researchers are.

The research being done, both with and without MGCSA support seems very relevant to our profession and potentially very important to our work on the golf course as time goes on. Having worked on the K-State turf facility and helping with some of the research going on down there 20 years ago, I can tell you not everything is geared towards the golf course but it seems to be a lot of the present research at the U of M is. Good for us!

Lastly, there is the Science of the Green project. This project, which will be presented by Dr. Horgan at the Field Day involves the renovation of the Les Bolstad Golf Course on campus into a renovation lab of sorts, which would serve as a template for renovation both nationally and internationally along with the potential of becoming a living lab for research and testing in the future. The possibilities are seemingly endless with this project. Field Day is back for the first time in three years. It is designed to showcase and highlight the program and enlighten not just golf course professionals, but all turf professionals. A lot of work goes into pulling this off logistically, and the main beneficiaries are the people who show up.

Put all that together, and I see a vibrant turf program worthy of backing and support. I will be interested in hearing the discussions by the participants and seeing what is going on at the TROE center. MGCSA President Roger Stewart in his column last month alluded to just this- that there are big things going on at the facility, and it is indeed worthy of my time- and yours. Hope to see you there.