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About the Cover

Pictured on the cover of this issue is the first hole at the beautiful Town & Country Club in St. Paul. Town & Country Club is Minnesota's oldest golf course.



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UPCOMING EVENTS

May 16

BASF Tournament

Stillwater Country Club, Stillwater
Host Superintendent: Marlin Murphy

June 13

MGCSA Scholarship Scramble
Dellwood Hills Golf Club, Dellwood
Host Superintendent: Eric Peterson

August 1

Harold Stodola Research Scramble
Brackett's Crossing Country Club, Lakeville
Host Superintendent: Tom Prosek

September 26

MGCSA Championship
Midland Hills Country Club, St. Paul
Host Superintendent: Scott Austin, CGCS

October 11

Fall Mixer

Monticello Country Club, Monticello
Host Superintendent: Rick Traver, CGCS



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

'Turf Doctor' Concept Is Being Reviewed

By Robert Panuska

After a slight delay due to that mid-March snow storm for those of us in the more southern part of the state, our courses opened with a flurry of activity. The snow melted quickly, the rains came and the grass started growing. At this writing the weather people are saying that this April was the second warmest on record and it could be the warmest by the time you read this. We NEED this kind of record!! By early indications our patrons were out and taking full advantage of the nice warm conditions. Of course this will really help move along those damaged areas we are trying to "grow in." Good luck to everyone who is struggling with turf loss this spring and I know several courses are. Don't be afraid to ask for help and advice. That is what this association is here for, to support each other.

* * * *

I would like to bring you up to speed on an exciting possibility we are working on with the Minnesota Golf Association. As I briefly mentioned at the March Mini-Seminar we have been discussing the "concept" of a "turf doctor" with the MGA. Much of the efforts over the last couple of months have gone into "fact finding" and looking at different models around the country. Tom Ryan, MGA executive director, Dr. Brian Horgan, University of Minnesota turfgrass extension specialist, and I visited the Midwest Golf House in Chicago in March. The Chicago District Golf Association has the longest running program in the country. Dr. Randy Kane is the "turf doctor" and serves the member clubs by making "house calls" when needed. They also have engaged in several research projects and actually have a 3-hole golf facility at the Golf House to demonstrate and conduct research. Their program is very strong and successful and a valuable asset to their clubs. Could a program like this work in Minnesota? How would the program run? What about the USGA turfgrass advisory service? Doesn't the University of Minnesota serve that role? What would it cost and who will pay for it? How will it benefit the superintendent, the club or the game of golf? As we work through these questions and more, we hope to have answers soon and see where this may lead. We will keep you posted.

* * * *

Be sure to review the meeting and event list and attend as many as possible. Thank you to the superintendents and their clubs for hosting our events this season. If you have an interest in hosting a future event, please contact Matt McKinnon at the Legacy Courses at Cragun's, your arrangements chair this year. He is closing in on having 2006 filled and starting work on 2007.

Until next month,
Rob

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Gordon, Simeon, Greeninger and Keyes Win Assistants' Spring Mixer at North Links GC

Luke Gordon, Thompson Oaks GC; Mark Simeon, GreenImage; Butch Greeninger, MTI Distributing Co., and Andy Keyes, The Meadows at Mystic Lake, combined to win the MGCSA's opening mixer with a score of 128 at North Links Golf Course on April 25.

Special thanks go out to host Superintendent Eric Peters and his staff for hosting a terrific event. The MGCSA also appreciates the generosity of the staff and members of North Links GC for offering their course to our members.

This was the first try to have a concentrated effort to have Assistants attend this



Guest Speaker Janna Beckerman

event. We had 45 golfers and 34 of them were assistants. By these numbers alone it was a very successful day.

Larry Gorman, GreenImage; Mike Manthey, Golden Valley CC; Dennis Perrault, Pheasant Acres GC, and Joel Koski, Rush Creek, also shot a 128, but lost on the third extra hole of a scorecard playoff.

Janna Beckerman, University of Minnesota, gave a talk about Turfgrass Diseases. Janna was very energetic and provided useful information to attendees.

Five field prizes were awarded: the longest drive was hit by Dennis Perrault and four closest-to-the-pin winners were Andy Keyes, Larry Gorman, Fred Taylor, Mankato GC, and Ken Felix, Inverwood GC.

Special thanks to our affiliate members who sponsored tees, greens, long drives and par threes. The sponsoring



FIRST PLACE

Pictured left to right are Luke Gordon, Andy Keyes, Butch Greeninger and Mark Simeon.

companies were Agrotain International, BASF Corporation, Bayer Environmental Science, Dow Agro Sciences, E. C. Grow, Inc., GreenImage, Hartman Companies, HydroLogic, Leitner Company, LESCO, Inc., MTI Distributing Co., Plaisted Companies, Pro Source One, Professional Lake Management, Reinders, Inc., Syngenta Turf & Ornamental, Turf Supply, TurfWerks, LLC and Twin City Hydro Seeding.

Sponsorship opportunities are still available for Affiliate members. Contact the MGCSA office at 952/473-0557 or by e-mailing scott@mgcsa.org if you would like to participate.

Our next meeting is May 16 at Stillwater CC for the BASF fund raiser. This event raised over \$6,000 last year for turf research. The MGCSA Scholarship Scramble will take place June 13 at Dellwood Hills Golf Club.



North Links Golf Course host Superintendent Eric Peters, left, with MGCSA President Robert Panuska. Eric is the MGCSA's Membership Chair.

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It's What We Do Best

By NATE USELDING

Assistant Superintendent, Dellwood Hills Golf Club

I love this time of year. Finally the gloom of winter is over, temperatures are rising and people are out and about. It's the time of year when we get to see what cards Mother Nature dealt us from the previous winter. Some of us peeked early on and were dreading spring green-up while others were happy it's finally here. If anyone was going to save us it was Mother Nature herself. The early spring time temperatures haven't been this warm since the early 1900s and what a big help it has been.

I was excited to see how our course fared from the winter. We heard the horror stories from many different courses and in the back of my mind I feared the worst for ours. We peeked early on and took samples of our greens. There was death present from the poa plants while the bent was flourishing well. The amount of death was uncertain until the thaw. We knew our course wasn't going

to be perfect this spring, so when the snow melted I was chopping at the bit to get out and do something. Then I remembered seeds don't germinate well in frozen soil. The first thing we did was to document our outcome from winter by taking over 200 pictures. We wanted to share with others our misfortunes and learn about these different areas of our course. This will prove to be a great visual aide in the future by how different areas respond to different treatments.

The sight of death was terrifying, what were we going to do? Nothing looks good when it is brown or white. How were we going to overcome this and turn these fairways back into a plush green carpet? First, you have to set the mood and be happy. Embrace this tragedy because it could be worse. This is our time to shine because it is what we've been hired to do. It's what we studied in school and what we learned from so many years on

the job. It's how to grow grass. Granted it may not be our ideal situation, but who doesn't like a challenge? Many superintendents took this opportunity and discussed their problems with their peers. No one was in this alone and it was great to see people reaching out for help and others receiving it.

My boss continually informed me of how other courses were doing and what they might do for corrective measures. This opened my mind up to many different ideas for our course. We sat down and mapped out our problem areas and our ideas to correct them. Some of our ideas came from past experiences at other courses and others from what we are capable of doing with the equipment we have. This brainstorm session was nothing more than getting us all on the same page and thinking in the right direction. We now have an action plan in place,

(Continued on Page 9)

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Superintendent: Eric Peters



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June 20, 2005 ~ 9 a.m. - 12 p.m.
1400 West 96th Street ~ Bloomington, Minn.

Hennepin County will be holding a Waste Pesticide Collection on June 20, 2005. The hours for collection are 9 a.m. - 12 p.m. The collection site will be located at South Hennepin Recycling and Problem Waste Drop-Off Center located at +1400 West 96th Street in Bloomington.

This collection is similar to the Waste Pesticide Collections that the Minnesota Department of Agriculture has held in the past. The only change is that participants must have a county business address or be a resident of Anoka, Carver, Hennepin, Ramsey or Scott counties.

The collection is open to farmers, commercial applicators, non-commercial applicators, and structural pest control applicators. Pesticide retailers

and distributors are not qualified participants. Each participant is allowed to bring in a maximum of 300 pounds of waste pesticide.

Participants need to pre-register the Waste Pesticides that they will be bringing to the collection. Waste Pesticide Registration forms are available by calling (612) 348-3777, or on our web site at www.hennepin.us (*keyword search: Waste pesticide collection.*) Complete the forms and return them to the address located on the top of the form. The program will also not accept non-pesticide products such as surfacants, crop oils, adjuvants, tank cleaners, dye markers and empty pesticide containers. Waste pesticides are the only products participants will be allowed to drop off.

It's What We Do Best—

(Continued from Page 7)

our membership is behind us and we feel good about what we are going to accomplish.

As assistants, many times we are left to carry out the orders to our team and never get the opportunity to experiment with different strategies. If you have problem areas, this is a great opportunity to ask for a small area of your own to practice on. If it is a tee or the beginning of a fairway somewhere, you get the chance to try out different ideas or closely manage the practices in place. It never hurts to try something new and by having ownership of an area and learning from your mistakes, it allows you to see first hand what will work. When you do have success, it gives you confidence with future endeavors.

Spring of 2005 definitely proved to be a challenge for all. We all worked a couple extra hours each day, but that is what it took to get the job done. Looking back, April was a great month for growing grass and it allowed us to successfully do our job. It is only the beginning of our long season and doesn't it feel good to have conquered what Mother Nature dealt us?

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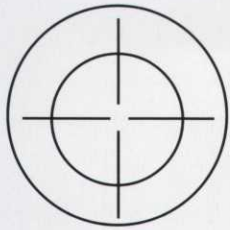
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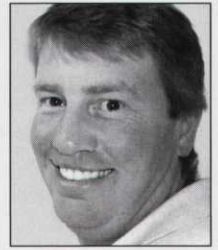
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Golf Courses Miss the Mark When it Comes to Bluebirds



By PAUL DIEGNAU, CGCS
Keller Golf Course

With spring approaching, I thought it would be nice to depart from topics related to invasive species. As the new chair of the MGCSA Environmental Committee, I would like to discuss one of my favorite subjects, bluebird trails. In the next few paragraphs, I will try to make a case for MORE golf courses becoming bluebird sanctuaries

First and foremost, golf course properties are IDEAL for attracting bluebirds. This is an undeniable fact. The short-mowed turfgrass found on golf courses



provides incredible forage space for these "gems of blue". Bluebirds prefer insects of all types, and as we know, golf courses harbor great quantities and varieties of insects. From perches above the turf, they spy their prey and pounce. When rearing young they feed constantly. On a small scale, bluebirds are a bio-control tool to help keep insect populations in check.

Starting a bluebird trail does not have to be expensive or time consuming. If you or someone on staff have basic wood-working skills, nest boxes can be built very economically. They can also be purchased pre-made at many stores and there are many outlets for nest boxes on the web. If you choose to build your own, always fasten with screws in conjunction with a quality exterior adhesive. This will save you on repair time in future years. I would also recommend purchasing a quality reference book on bluebird trails

or at the very least, use the Internet to research the subject. There are many types of bluebird nest boxes and variations on entrance hole sizes and shapes. The North American Bluebird Society (NABS) and the Bluebird Recovery Program of Minnesota are valuable resources that are more than willing to help answer your questions.

When starting your first bluebird trail, I would recommend starting small and increasing the size of your trail as time and resources permit. Here at Keller GC, we started with 32 boxes nine years ago and eventually expanded to 72 boxes. Our trail is primarily located in rough areas around the perimeter of the golf course. The boxes on our trail are paired, meaning two boxes are mounted within 25 feet of each other at each site. Pairing boxes is done in areas with high populations of tree swallows. This procedure eliminates competition between the two species, as each species will occupy a box and live in

harmony. Therefore, our 72-box trail actually has only 36 nest sites. Nest box sites should be a minimum of 100 yards from each other. Never mount boxes on trees, wooden fence posts or fencing. Anything that can be climbed is a dinner invitation to raccoons, feral cats, opossums, and snakes. Ideally, boxes should be mounted a minimum of five feet off the ground on smooth, metal posts at least one inch in diameter. Entrance holes should face east to northeast whenever possible. Such an orientation reduces nestling exposure to precipitation and hot, afternoon sun. It is also advisable to keep nest boxes away from woodlands with underbrush. Such locations will often attract house wrens.

Now that you have installed a trail, you will need to monitor it. This component of bluebird trail maintenance is non-negotiable. Boxes must be checked at least once per week starting sometime in mid-

April and continue through the summer months until all nesting activity has ceased. The number one reason for monitoring a bluebird trail is the European house sparrow. European house sparrows



Eastern Bluebird, Male

are an invasive European species brought to North America in 1850 and now thought to be the most abundant wild bird species in North America - imagine that! They compete directly with bluebirds for nesting cavities and boxes. Once a male house sparrow has claimed a nest box and a territory as his own, he will defend it to the bitter end. These birds can be extremely vicious, destroying eggs and attacking and killing nestlings and adult bluebirds. House sparrow nests MUST BE REMOVED from the trail on a regular basis and, under no circumstances, should young house sparrows successfully fledge from a nest box. Monitoring is also necessary for record keeping, removing old nests prior to second and third nestings

(Continued on Page 11)