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Donating Time for Juniors is Rewarding and Enjoyable

By THOMAS SCHMIDT

Superintendent, Hillcrest Golf Club of St. Paul

In the winter of 2000, Hillcrest Golf Club of St. Paul was not only hiring me as its superintendent, but its membership was also transforming from an older, more traditional membership to a family-oriented club. As you can imagine, the "traditional" ways of the older membership now needed to be changed or renewed to include a family-based foundation.

With this change, programs were added that featured activities to include families, women, and juniors. Getting more juniors involved in the game of golf became a goal that Hillcrest eagerly set out to accomplish. The idea was to start a junior clinic where juniors could learn the proper mechanics on chipping, putting, bunker play, and their long game. Hillcrest, under the direction of PGA member Brent Heit, began holding two one-week camps each summer. These camps have grown to include 60-80 juniors ranging in age from five to 12.



After my first year helping with the junior program, I set a plan in motion to develop a junior course that would have the appropriate yardages for juniors to play on. From there, then-Assistant Pro David Branstad and myself measured the appropriate yardages that I already planned out, placed the in-ground tee markers in the fairways, and designed a score card to be used when playing the course. The short course measures 4,400

yards, while the par 3s are set up from the forward tee markers already on the course.

The course became beneficial not only to the junior camp, but would also play an important role in everyday play for the junior membership. Before the short course was created, juniors playing with their parents would get discouraged because they would hit the ball seven times before they would reach their parents' drive.

With the short course, they now had a chance of getting pars and bogeys, enabling to stay close to their parents. The end result is a family who can enjoy golf together.

The camp has continued to be a success. The current program divides juniors into age groups where they move from station to station learning about topics such as course etiquette, replacing divots,

(Continued on Page 24)

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Musing the Minutes

By RICK TRAVER, CGCS
Monticello Country Club

I know it often seems like all we talk about is the weather, but yesterday another storm blew through and my daughter of eight years asked me if this was like being in a hurricane. While I was telling her it was like a hurricane except that hurricanes last for days, the realization of what an actual hurricane is like started to set in. All over our news programs the aftermath of a half-hour storm. We lost a few homes in the metro and while this is devastating to the people it happened to, the mess that the people affected by Katrina and now Rita must just be unbelievable. How blessed we are to live in the great state of Minnesota! Yeah, we have a tornado once and again or some snow and an occasional flood, but it is all much more manageable than so many of these natural disasters that seem to be on an ever increasing level in other parts of the country.

Well, you didn't read this to get my editorial on weather, so here is the latest from your MGCSA Board of Directors. We met on September 15 at the University of Minnesota. Thanks to Dr. Horgan, Dr. Watkins and Larry Vetter for the accommodations, I always enjoy visiting one of my old campuses.

Scott Turtinen reported from the business office that the MGCSA website is generating between 140 & 200 hits a day. We asked that he see if he could get some more specific numbers about time spent on the site and the pages that were hit to give a more accurate picture of who might be hitting on our web site. Scott also researched the cost of having *Hole Notes* be a 100% color publication and the increase in costs would be more than offset by the color advertising so we elected to go to a full color publication.

Turtinen mentioned that the MGCSA office has received several phosphorus coupons that were published in *Hole*

Notes. If you are not aware, the only obligation you have to renew your phosphorus training is to read the article in the September issue of *Hole Notes* and send in the Phosphorus Fertilizer re-training coupon. This will satisfy our requirement with the state.

Paul Eckholm, CGCS, reporting on the state legislature, stated that the U of M is trying to get the governor to call a special session to address a new stadium. Our hope is that if this does come to pass that the governor will have the foresight to

limit the session to one topic and not allow our legislators to tack on any extra issues and fees like the last special session.

Dr. Brian Horgan reported on the University of Minnesota. It appears we may have a building for Turf Research. If

you are familiar with the U of M St. Paul Campus. We will be getting the old Head and Green houses. This facility is no longer being used for the Ag students and the Capital Oversight Committee seems to be on board since we will be remodeling an existing building. Great News! Dr. Horgan gave us a tour and it looks like it will be a super fit to the program. We will need to generate some funds for the remodel, so if you know of an alumnus that loves golf, have we got a project for him or her.

Rob Panuska presented a letter that will be sent to the members regarding the hiring of a pathology person at the U of M. We have had a difficult time getting the U of M to replace Jon Powell after he left and it appears that an Extension/Pathologist is a possibility in the future. We need to create a groundswell among our members to send letters to the appropriate people at the U pushing for this position to have a turf focus. Keep an eye out for the e-mail, which will have addresses, contacts, etc...

Have a great month!!! - Rick

Par for the Course –

(Continued from Page 15)

the effects of predator guards and pesticides on golf courses; since there is little opportunity for comparison (most golf courses have pesticides and predator guards).

Before nest-box monitors hit the links with a cart full of nest boxes in tow, they should familiarize themselves with the golf course superintendent, who is interested foremost in providing the best experience possible for golfers. Golf course superintendents need to know the benefits of having nest boxes on the course, such as an increase in the number of insect-eating birds. Other practical aspects of golf course trails also need to be considered, such as placement of boxes and devising a monitoring schedule that minimizes interference with golfers. Although our preliminary results suggest that golf courses do provide suitable habitat for cavity-nesting birds, there are still many consequences that we are unable to examine. For instance, we do not know whether fledglings from golf courses have higher survivorship than those in other habitats or whether disturbance from golfers has any effect on nesting success.

As urbanization continues to expand into once-natural areas, wildlife will by necessity have to make use of managed areas such as golf course. For some species, golf courses may be the best available habitat to nest. The Birdhouse Network will continue to explore how habitats affect nesting success. We ask that nest-box monitors continue to enter data about pesticide use into The Birdhouse Network's database. (Editor's Note: Tina Phillips is project leader of the Birdhouse Network. Caren B. Cooper is a research associate in the Lab's Bird Population Studies program.)

Donating Time–

(Continued from Page 22)

and repairing ball marks. They are also taught the finer points of golf including putting, chipping, bunker play, long irons and woods. The final day is fun-filled, including a four-hole mini-tournament, pizza party and prizes.

Over the last eight years, I have donated my time toward the junior clinics. It has been rewarding and enjoyable. Hopefully, the sport will continue to grow with all the juniors playing and learning from the PGA pros and superintendents.

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13th Hole at The Minikahda Club. Photo is courtesy of Jeff Johnson, Golf Course Superintendent.

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GreenImage John Deere Team Championship Tourney


The Territory Golf Club in St. Cloud recently hosted the GreenImage John Deere Team Championship. The event was a two-man net best ball event in which the top two finishing teams win an expense paid trip to Palm Springs, California to compete at La Quinta Spa and Resort in the John Deere World Team Championship on December 7-10.

First place honors went to the Marc Schwarting and Dave Busse from The Bridges Golf Club in Madison, WI. Second place came down to a sudden death playoff between Cannon Golf Club's Jeff Backstrom and Scott Anderson against Bearpath Golf and Country Club's John Malloy and John Hankinson. In the end the team from Bearpath prevailed and will advance to California with the first place team from The Bridges. These four individuals will now play as a foursome representing GreenImage in the John Deere World Team Championship held December 7-10th at La Quinta.




Winners of the GreenImage John Deere Team Championship, from left to right are, Dave Busse and Marc Schwarting from The Bridges in Madison, WI along with Joel Danielson and Larry Gorman of GreenImage.

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Assistant's Angle: *Got Golf?*

By NATE USELDING
Dellwood Hills Golf Club



Off the tree, bounce off the cart path, over the bunker, land on the fringe and roll-up to the hole...nothing but the bottom of the cup. What's your next shot? That was me when I was a kid, a high handicap, high risk shot maker enjoying the course with my friends. Now, with an appreciation of the game, I am a bogey golfer and would love to be a good golfer but I don't play or practice enough to be one. I want to though. Playing golf is one of my hobbies I just don't set aside enough time to play on a regular basis.

The game of golf is the most important part of our profession and for many of us it is why we became interested in this field. Now that it is our job, sometimes we solely look at it this way and lose sight of how the game is played. We only look at it from the maintenance perspective and not the golfers. I play with a persimmon wood off the tee and with one of the first sets of oversized irons. These clubs date back to many years ago and I question if I am enjoying the game of today's standards to the way golf should be played. With all the new technology, golf courses are being played differently then they were fifteen years ago. The game is now more enjoyable to all abilities of players because of technology and I want to have the same experience. Why, because I need to understand the game of golf the way our members are playing it. It would allow me to play the same game they are and feel first hand what may be concerning them.

As a golf course manager we see our course and perform management practices to it everyday, but how often do we play the game of golf? I think it is very important for us to play golf. Not only at our own course, but also at others because it opens your eyes up to a whole different perspective. We are creatures of habit and follow certain "maintenance paths" all day

long on the course. By playing golf you have to go where your ball goes and if you are like me, your ball doesn't always go where you want it. The great thing about the game is your ball never lies in the same spot twice, giving you a different look with each swing. It forces us to see the course differently than you normally would as a worker. Walking instead of riding makes a huge difference because you are moving at a much slower pace and get to see more "action."

"Enjoy your course rather than having to work all day at it. Don't think of it as if you are going to work when you play, relax and have a good time. Get out there and play a round of golf and see your course from a whole new perspective."

For instance, when I play golf at our course, I will play from a different set of tees for each round. Sure, I normally don't play from the forward tees or the tips, but I like to experience and feel the whole course from all angles. It is like a fresh set of eyes when I am out there playing because I am not looking at the golf course as a worker anymore, I am seeing it as a golfer. Playing off different tee boxes puts you in real situations and in areas you normally would not play from. Maybe you spot crabgrass growing on the tee and now you know tomorrow to send a guy out to take care of it. Noticing issues before members notice them keeps you another step ahead in the game. I would rather experience and notice the flaws of the course before any member came to me about their concerns.

How do you feel the course plays? The feel factor is how you would categorize the course by the way it plays. Is it soft and wet, fast and dry, or perfect? I take in all areas, greens, tees, fairways, and rough

into consideration when I rate the course. Let's start with the greens. Everyone cherishes their greens because golfers are more likely to remember the greens rather than the 12th tee box when their round is complete. How do they roll, how is their speed, and where is the pin located? Bad pin locations can really turn a round sour in the eyes of a golfer. The more you putt on your greens at different pin locations, the better you'll set the course up on a daily basis by having good pin locations. Green speeds are becoming an issue at many golf courses forcing us to maintain a consistent speed all year long. Different weather patterns have the ability to fluctuate the speeds from day to day, making it important we putt on our greens on a regular basis.

Learn the rules of golf and play by them. Last winter, I picked-up a copy of the rules and read them. I was amazed by how much I didn't know of the game and how I understood the rules differently. After talking to many average golfers, I realized I wasn't alone in how I perceived the rules. General knowledge of the game is important and it starts with the rules. We have the first hand in keeping the game honest and fair as we prepare the course for play each day.

Enjoy your course rather than having to work all day at it. Don't think of it as if you are going to work when you play, relax and have a good time. Invite your staff out to play and maybe have a mini outing with the clubhouse personnel. Your staff will have a better appreciation for the course if they play it along with you. Best of all, golf is free! We hold a benefit most employees would love to have, we just don't take advantage of it. Get out there and play a round of golf and see your course from a whole new perspective.

Mark Your Calendars!

MGCSA Announces Appreciation and Recognition Banquet to be Held December 7 At The Wilds Golf Club

The Minnesota Golf Course Superintendents' Association announces an Appreciation and Recognition Banquet to be held December 7 at The Wilds Golf Club in Prior Lake. The event will be similar to the 75th Anniversary Gala in 2002 at Golden Valley CC.

The evening will bring recognition to MGCSA members including this year's Distinguished Service Award recipient Steve Garske, Par Aide Products Co., and Scholarship Award winner Aaron Johnsen, University of Minnesota.



Steve Garske was chosen as the 2005 Distinguished Service Award recipient for his outstanding contributions helping the advancement of the golf course superintendents' profession. Besides the Par Aide products his company supplies to the golfing world, Steve also sponsors a Legacy Scholarship in his

father's name. This scholarship has been awarded to MGCSA members' children since 1996.

Aaron Johnsen was awarded his scholarship in June but will also be recognized at this banquet.

A 45-year service award will be presented to G. M. Jerry Murphy, CGCS.

35-year service awards will be presented to George Jennrich, John Sniker and David Zimmer.

30-year service awards will be presented to Randy Allen; Joe Check; Tom Fischer, CGCS; John Granholt; Scott Hoffmann, CGCS, and John Wiley.

25-year service awards will be presented to the following members for 25 years of service to the MGCSA: Walt Braunig, Jr.; Richard E. Carr; Tim Commers; William S. Cox; Allan Fitz; Cary Femrite; John Ganske; James Gardner, CGCS; Michael Hoffman; Kurt Johnson; Tom McCann; Robert McKinney, CGCS; Marlin Murphy; Duane Slaughter, and Greg Spencer.

Other awards to be presented at the banquet include the Watson Award and the President's Award. The Watson Award is given to a member for journalistic efforts by writing an article for *Hole Notes*. Rob Panuska will present the President's Award to an individual who has dedicated his life serving the landscape and turf industries in Minnesota.

Invitations will be mailed the first week of November. Cost will be less than \$50 per person. Please mark your calendars for December 7. All members are encouraged to attend this social event with peers in the turf industry.

Topic of the Month:

Bunker Sand

(Editor's Note: This month's topic is about bunkers. Member Superintendents were asked the following questions via email: How old is the sand in your bunkers? What are your maintenance practices? Are your bunkers perceived as too soft, too firm or just right? What is the predominant sand inside your bunkers?)

At Oneida Golf and Country Club, we went through a bunker renovation project in the fall of 2003. We installed new drainage and new sand in all 53 bunkers. We did not use any bunker liners. We rake the bottoms daily and the pull edges three times a week. The first year they were too soft, this year they are much better and it has been two months since we heard any complaints of the dreaded "fried egg." We are using Northface Bunker sand from Waupaca Sand and Gravel, which meets the industry guidelines for size and shape. We mechanically edge the bunkers two times a year, once in May and once in August.

- Mark Storby, Superintendent
Oneida Golf and Country Club
Green Bay, Wis.

North Oaks went through a bunker rebuilding program 13 years ago. Using specifications available at the time we constructed sand hazards that are too deep according to today's standards. The brown masonry sand is too soft and inconsistent according to the members. They are spot-raked daily and total-raked about twice each week. A light edging is performed every week as well.

- Jack MacKenzie, CGCS
North Oaks Golf Club
North Oaks, Minn.

Forest Hills did a complete bunker renovation project in the fall of 2000. The steep greens side faces were softened, they were made shallower and contoured with some fingers added and new drainage in all of them. Plaisted's "regular" bunker sand was used 4-6 inches deep. An idea that worked for me: I split my driving range bunker into three sections and put three different types of sand in them, let the members try them and decide (knowing the price also). We experience much less washout problems. We rake them mechanically 2-3 times a week, hand rake other days. Members still thought

they were soft...until this year with the new irrigation system. I have dual heads around the greens and make sure all bunkers get coverage so I can keep them moist and have heard no complaints. (Or maybe they didn't bitch about them because my greens sucked so bad!)

- Marlow Hanson
Forest Hills Golf Course
Forest Lake, Minn.

The bunkers at the Benson Golf Club were redone approximately eight years ago. The sand is a straight mason sand and is too soft and buried balls happen often. The bunkers are too deep and will hopefully be fixed this year or next. We groom them 2-3 times a week.

- Sally Berens, Superintendent
Benson Golf Club
Benson, Minn.

Dacotah Ridge Golf Club was opened in 2000. Construction methods were the use of draitile and the 4-6 inches of light brown mason sand was directly placed on the subgrade which varies from clay to gravelly type soil. When subjected to heavy rains the bunkers are prone to washing down from the faces as the bunkering is sculpted. Contamination from the subgrade has been a problem as drainage is being slowed as the fines over time have mixed in. Another big issue we face is the wind. Just keeping the sand in the bunkers is a challenge. On a windy day, which is often out here, the sand can be wiped out right down to the subgrade. On these days we run irrigation to try to wet things down, and I have installed irrigation with the sole purpose of wetting the sand to keep it in place. Overall playability is still very good. We touch up pretty much daily and do a complete raking twice a week.

- Michael Nelson, CGCS
Dacotah Ridge Golf Club
Morton, Minn.

At Tartan Park, our bunkers vary in age from 20-40 years old. Masonry sand was used in all of them. They are groomed about twice a week. Our bunkers are perceived to be too soft and inconsistent. Some hand edging is done but most edging is accomplished chemically.

- Randy Allen
Tartan Park Golf Course
St. Paul, Minn.

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In Bounds: A Call to Action

By JOHN "JACK" MACKENZIE, CGCS
North Oaks Golf Club

It wasn't too long ago that I was a "Big Booster Boy" for the University of Minnesota and the long-range plan of creating a Turfgrass, Outreach, Research and Education Center. The U had recently hired a young gun named Brian Horgan, who inspired the development of a facility that was sure to place the University of Minnesota in a place of high esteem regarding its turf science program. Indeed industry was behind this new development and along with the MGCSA and MTGF contributed in excess of \$750,000 toward the cause.

The dream included the development of 16 acres dedicated to the study of grass, the building of a center to house equipment, offices and classrooms and continued funding to maintain a first-class program. What a wonderful concept con-

sidering that the state of Minnesota generates over a billion dollars in turf-related business. The University provided the land; industry inspired the development of the land and a steady stream of funding was being created by the MGCSA and MTGF.

Sadly I learned through an anonymous phone call last fall that the whole program was in jeopardy due to a "shift in position" of the University Long Range Planning Committee. No longer was the TROE Center head of the list; in fact, it had dropped off the radar along with the promised creation of a Turf Pathologist position. I immediately called the Dean of Agriculture Food and Environmental Science, Charles Muscoplat, to get the "total" picture.

The image he painted was one of a sad Picasso. Dark, shadowed and depressed,

certainly not what I had hoped for. I asked whom I needed to contact in order to make my voice of concern and frustration heard. He told me it was him. When I inquired about going straight to the top, President Bruninks, I was told that my doing so would upset him, Dean Muscoplat. In fact, Dr. Muscoplat told me that a barrage of e-mails and snail mails indicating industry frustration would only serve to irritate him personally and would NOT be in the best interest of the TROE Center or long-range plan.

I felt utterly defeated. Who were we, as an industry, supposed to talk to with our concerns? After contributing \$750,000 to the University in recent years, I expected a little respect for our dollars. And then I remembered how kicked around the turf community had been in the past few decades. All of the promises made and broken, the rosy dreams shared and shattered and the dishonesty, whether real or perceived. Same old, same old I guess.

Well, six months later and again times have changed. Suddenly there is renewed interest in the Turf Management Program at the University of Minnesota. A huge surprise to me is the grand potential of

(Continued on Page 31)

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