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Superintendent: Doug Larson



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MGCSA Upcoming Schedule

January 3, 4, 5
Minnesota Green Expo
Minneapolis Convention Center

Thursday, January 4
MGCSA Annual Meeting
Room ABIJ, Minneapolis Convention Center

Monday, January 22
GCSAA Seminar
"Managing Turfgrass Root Systems in the North"
"Localized Dry Spot on the Golf Course"
Dr. Keith Karnok
(location to be announced)

Monday, January 22
GCSAA Seminar
"Physical Problems of Turfgrass Soils"
Dr. Paul Rieke and Dr. Bob Carrow
Park Place Doubletree Hotel, St. Louis Park
(location to be announced)

Thursday, February 22
Hospitality Night at the Golf Industry Show
Tortilla Jo's in Anaheim, California

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About the Cover

Superintendent Rob Panuska was the 2006 recipient of the MGCSA Distinguished Service Award. See Rob's story on Page 7 by Fred Taylor, CGCS.

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

It's Time to Take Advantage Of Educational Opportunities

By James Bade

Thanksgiving is one of my favorite holidays. For me it marks the end of one season and the start of another. Now that the golf course is put to bed for a few months, the season of budgets, equipment maintenance, tree removal, projects and education start. It is a time to go through periodicals, clean the office, go online and go out to breakfast with the staff. It is a time where your mind isn't totally consumed with high maintenance turf and how it is performing. Hopefully it marks a time to do other leisure activities like hunting, ice fishing, playing hockey, reading a book or watching a movie with the family.

It is that time of year to take advantage of educational opportunities. For me it starts with the Minnesota Green Expo, January 3-5. What a way to ring in the New Year. Paul Diegnau, Tom Proshok and the education committee have done a great job with this year's program. Just by glancing over the schedule in the MTGF Clippings, it is going to be hard deciding which classes to attend. Take note of Thursday's opportunity. A whole block of time has been dedicated to the topic of foliar feeding. There are a lot of practical classes as well as technical ones. The Green Expo gives us the opportunity to stay certified in certain categories and allows us to network and stay in touch with one another. Be sure to see your vendor representatives in their booths. Along with your attendance, the vendors are the engine that makes this conference move. Thanks to Larry Vetter, Bob Fitch and Dr. Horgan for all their time spent putting this event together.

Hopefully by now you have heard of the idea regarding a Research Center Golf Course (RCGC). The Board of Directors has been working very hard on the concept of consulting at a 9-hole golf course. The overlying goal would be to generate revenue for our very own turf pathologist. In 2005 when many of us were struggling with a new disease, wouldn't it have been great to take a sample to someone locally who could grow out the disease. Even this past spring Somerset Country Club had leaf spot so bad it took certain varieties right out. Was it the same old leaf spot or something different? I'm not sure, but it was strange. The possibilities of a turf pathologist teaming up with Dr. Horgan and Dr. Watkins are exciting.

A place called RCGC could also serve as a site to conduct research. It would be an opportunity to take TROE Center data to a larger living scale where carts are driven, divots are taken and foot traffic is real. It could be a place where new products are experimented with, either soft goods or hard iron. It could be a place to showcase our association in regards to regulatory matters. It could show how skilled and educated a golf course superintendent is and needs to be. "The standards we set (as an association) determine how high we go." This concept of managing a golf course could be an opportunity to see how high the MGCSA can go. Two other quotes that may apply to the RCGC are "A readiness to ride the waves of change carries us further," and "Clear information guides everyone in the right direction." With the legislature and environment ever changing, the RCGC may be a place to meet challenges head on. And it could be a place that generates clear information that would support you and our industry.

So I am thankful for a Board of Directors that comes up with new innovative ideas. I am thankful for a supportive staff that helps manage the golf course in my absence. I am thankful for an active association and industry. I am thankful for a loving wife and family. I am grateful that I have a wonderful job, home, physical abilities, countrymen and women who fight for our freedom, friends willing to put up with my shortcomings...and the list can go on. - James

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HOLE NOTES

Official Publication
of the MGCSA

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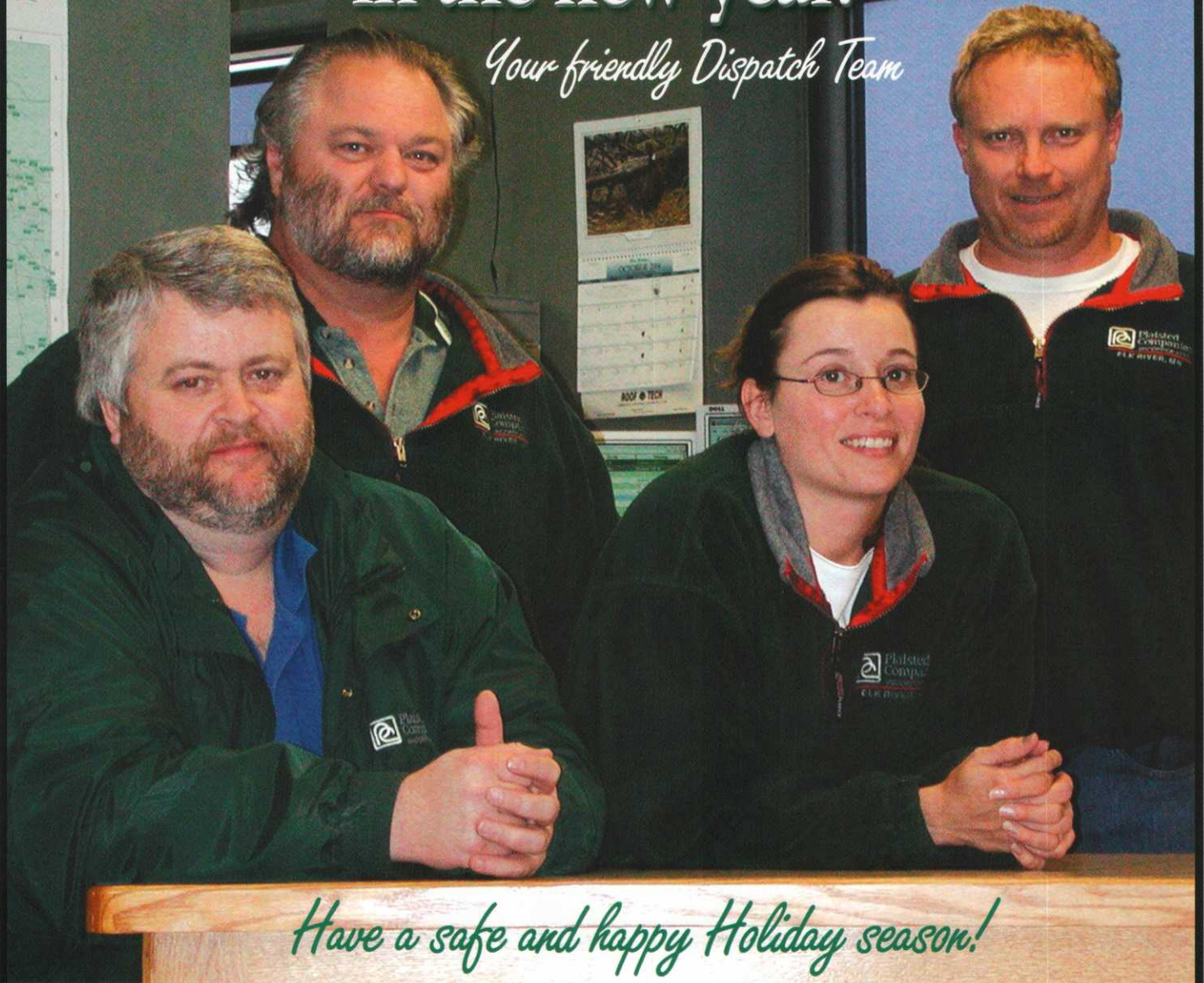
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Chapter Delegates Look to the Future

By KEVIN CLUNIS, CGCS
Tanner's Brook Golf Course

Noting the association and its members have made significant gains on several fronts, the GCSAA Chapter Delegates meeting, October 13-14-15, took a strategic approach in discussing how GCSAA could sustain that momentum in achieving its mission, vision and goals.

"I commend and appreciate the Delegates for the energy they displayed during the meeting," said Ricky Heine, CGCS meeting chairman and GCSAA vice-president. "They were focused and well-prepared in giving the board of directors and staff their perspectives on how we achieve our long-term vision. They took ownership of their association and in their responsibility as delegates. It is obvious they engaged their members in talks before the meeting."

The exchange of ideas and comments focused primarily on three items: a) the development of long-term revenue streams to fund programs and services; b) growing the GCSAA membership and c) and positioning GCSAA and its membership classes in the marketplace (primarily to employers and influential golfers).

The financial conversations centered on the establishment of a long-term dues pricing strategy. At the request of the Delegates, the board and staff presented a proposal that would tie the establishment of membership dues to an index (such as the Consumer Price Index). Historically, the association has enacted a dues increase in larger increments on average every five to seven years. The result has been a loss of members. There was widespread agreement at the meeting that smaller dues increases would be more easily absorbed at the facility level and less likely to result in membership declines. Directors further discussed the issue at their fall meeting, October 20-21 in New Orleans.

Tied to the discussion of revenues was an examination of GCSAA membership



Kevin Clunis, CGCS
MGCSA Chapter Delegate

numbers. From a high of more than 22,000 in 2001, the association's membership has declined approximately 10 percent to just over 20,000 today. There was agreement that the situation has been created in large

The liveliest debate was on GCSAA's philosophy regarding the positioning of the association and its membership classes. Delegates shared a variety of opinions, but ultimately agreed that for membership standards to have value in the marketplace, then they must be promoted externally.

part by a struggling golf economy and the implementation of member standards. Staff presented a seven-phased membership growth and recruitment campaign enacted late last year. Delegates supported the efforts, realizing such an initiative will take time to yield results and must be long-term in nature. They were especially supportive of the GCSAA field staff pilot program and encouraged strong consideration for expanding it in the near future.

The liveliest debate was on GCSAA's

philosophy regarding the positioning of the association and its membership classes. Delegates shared a variety of opinions, but ultimately agreed that for membership standards to have value in the marketplace, then they must be promoted externally. There was unanimous support that greater resources be dedicated to marketing the association, with a focus on Class A as being the preferred membership class. It was noted, however, that promoting Class A does *not* mean that marketing other membership classes should not be part of the program.

Noting that chapters will be integral to the success of revenue generation, membership growth and retention, and marketing efforts, discussion also included an examination of chapter effectiveness. Specifically, the delegates were charged with providing the board and staff direction as to how the association could best invest resources to enhance chapter operations. The top three items were a) membership recruitment and retention, b) chapter executive development and support; c) chapter meeting effectiveness (attendance, timing, satisfaction, value,

etc.). It was the consensus that many of the issues were inter-related and thus could be addressed if programs and services are developed and coordinated appropriately. Once again, support for expanding the field staff pilot program was

communicated, and suggested as a means to implement effectiveness programs.

Delegates also expressed interest in providing support to GCSAA's advocacy efforts. They were briefed on the process the association follows for commenting to the EPA on product re-registration. The process includes an element for member input to GCSAA actions, plus the opportunity for chapters and members to become directly engaged as well.

Rob Panuska Receives the 2006 Distinguished Service Award at MGCSA's Recognition Banquet

By Fred Taylor, CGCS
Mankato Golf Club

Rob Panuska is the recipient of this year's Distinguished Service Award, and there is no one more deserving. I have had the pleasure of knowing Rob for many years, and through his work he truly personifies the objectives of this Association: "Advancing the art and science of golf course maintenance, disseminating practical solutions to problems and promoting the welfare of the Superintendent and the profession."

Rob has been involved with the Board of our Association for over 12 consecutive years. During that time, he has chaired the Human Resources and Public Relations Committee; served as Hole Notes editor; was elected to the position of Treasurer, and then Vice President; was the President in 2004 and 2005; and is currently the Ex-

officio. His time on the Board has seen numerous challenges, and Rob has met those challenges with insight, dignity and honesty. He has been a leader in the industry's quest to partner with the University of Minnesota, serving on various committees and panels charged with everything from hiring a turf professor (Brian Horgan) to helping develop the TROE center. All of this was accomplished, of course, while maintaining the Waseca Lakeside Club in the manner that he and the membership expected and demanded.

Rob started his landscape career when he was about eight years old. A new home next door was being sodded and landscaped. When Rob and one of his buddies saw the new sod, they couldn't resist. So

they cut a hole in the property fence, and "borrowed" enough of the new sod to lay in their play area. Of course when his parents noticed the hole in the fence, and a couple of yards of sod missing from the neighbor's yard, they put a quick end to the newly formed sod company!

In 1977, Rob enrolled at the University of Minnesota-Waseca to pursue a career in agriculture. After graduation he followed his agricultural interests, but later returned to UMW to obtain that landscaping degree he so desired back when he was eight years old! It was at that time that Rob was befriended by Brad Pedersen, the turf and landscape professor that had implemented the Golf Course

(Continued on Page 8)



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Rob Panuska –

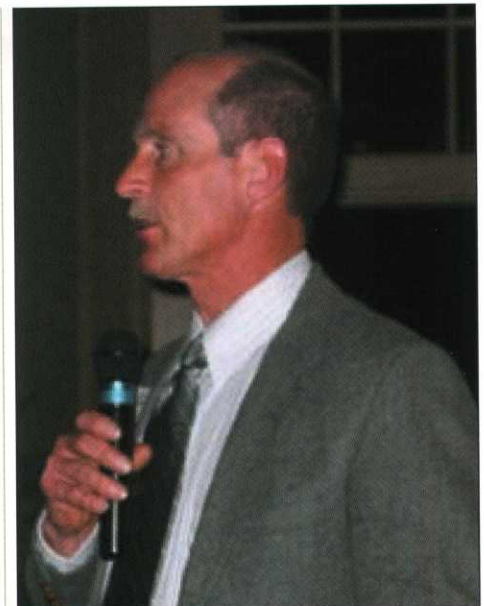
(Continued from Page 7)

Management program at UMW. Brad immediately noticed Rob's determination and desire to succeed, and began to encourage him to think about golf course management as a career path. It was at this time that Rob began working at the Waseca Lakeside Club as a crew member under Superintendent Ray Bloemke and developed the "Grounds Management Plan" for Lakeside, which was so concise and well conceived that it was used for all future grounds maintenance classes at UMW as a template for successful management strategies and practices.

Rob eventually graduated from UMW and was promoted to Assistant Superintendent by Ray. When Ray decided to retire from Lakeside, it was a natural to promote Rob to the position of superintendent. It wasn't long after this that Rob got involved in the MGCSA. Joe Moris asked Rob to run for the board in 1993, and his tenure on the board has been going strong ever since. Rob gives a great deal of credit to his experiences in student

government at UMW as to why he has excelled in leadership roles for the superintendent's association. He was vice president of the student senate there, and got an early exposure to the legislative process while lobbying for the University and, in particular, the Waseca campus. The connection to the University has served Rob again, as he has strived to bring our industry and the University together.

Rob is known for his ability to speak with gusto and fervor as exemplified by his thrilling confrontation with then President Nils Hasselmo of the University of Minnesota at a rally on the Waseca Campus when it was announced publicly that the Campus would be closing. Rob stepped up to the podium in the standing-room-only auditorium, red-faced and with veins popping, and proceeded to let the world know that the decision was a bad one, and that Hasselmo should take a long and hard look at the campus supporters in the room and think again. "NILS!" Rob expounded, "You have single handedly destroyed one of the finest centers of agricultural learning in the country!" Unfortunately, the campus did close; but if you ever want to get the unabridged story



Rob Panuska

Distinguished Service Award Recipient

on that piece of history, ask Rob. Be prepared however, to experience the passionate response!

(Continued on Page 9)

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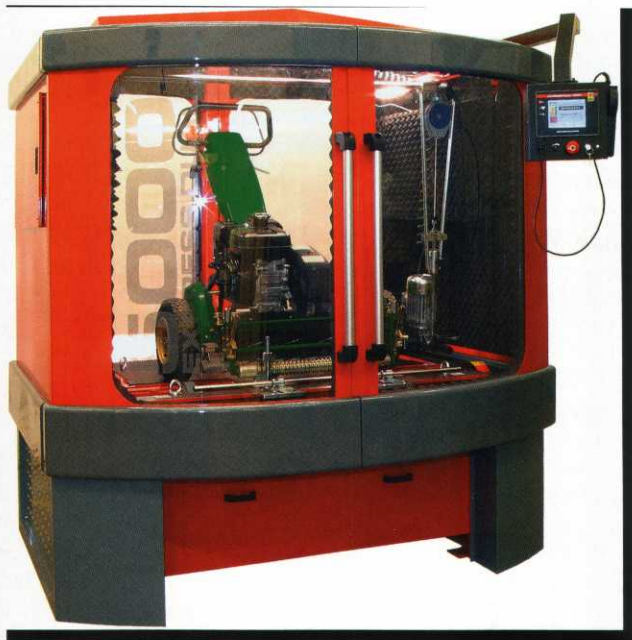
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Rob Panuska—

(Continued from Page 8)

Knowing first-hand of his public speaking skills (Rob was involved in Toastmasters for many years), I immediately called on him when the Minnesota PGA contacted me about speaking at one of their "Cracker-barrel" sessions. They were interested in learning some tid-bits regarding turf culture like, "Why do we need to aerify?" Seeing a real opportunity, Rob and I slightly modified the topic away from agronomy and put the emphasis on cooperation and understanding the pressures and plight of the superintendent. We started out using an example where an irrigation line has broken mid-summer and the superintendent is doing the repair as the properly attired golf professional casually drives up, takes a sip of his pink lemonade and asks, "Have you got a leak?" Rob then began verbally painting a detailed picture of the perspiration-soaked superintendent being knee-deep in mud and water, mosquitoes the size of sparrows swarming in the 98 degree, 90 percent humidity air, desperately attempting to wrestle a three-inch diameter pipe into position. About that time, the wry reply is given: "Yep, it's a leak alright, but it only affects half the golf course - the half that will be dead and brown tomorrow if I don't get this pipe back together by dark! By the way, be careful not to get any of this mud on those new Footjoes the sales rep "set aside" for you. Oh, and have a nice round." Our point became painfully clear to the audience that day.

As a leader and ambassador for the MGCSA and golf course superintendents in general, Rob has been well-versed and articulate in promoting our cause. He has tirelessly led the dialogue with the University, albeit with some frustrations in dealing with such a large bureaucratic juggernaut. He has been a strong proponent of incorporating a turf pathologist into the state golf scene, having worked with the MGA and the MTGF to rally support and financial involvement. Rob has also been involved with the metamorphosis of the MGCSA annual conference, collaborating with the MTGF, MNLA and the University to create one of the largest and most comprehensive green industry shows in the country. There are countless other issues and challenges that surface during the course of doing business as an association, and Rob has faced every one with a logical, focused approach to find solutions and add value to the membership. As Paul Eckholm, CGCS put it, "Rob epitomizes what the Distinguished Service Award is all about: Dedication and service above and beyond expectations for the good of our industry, our Association and our membership."

When asked to provide three words that best describe Rob, his peers, co-workers and employers were in agreement: Passionate, Dedicated and Good Friend. It's not surprising to hear stories of Rob turning that splendid shade of red while pontificating on a subject of a controversial nature, staying at the golf course all through the night to monitor pumps, or providing assistance or consolation to a fellow superintendent in need. It also fits that Rob would volunteer on the Church Council or chaperone a cross-country band trip. Yet, if you were to ask him, his family always comes first, as it should for a man of such integrity and humility. Humble as ever, Rob has never let a title or position get in the way of being genuine and down to earth. He is probably more comfortable in coveralls and overshoes than in a suit and tie, but he carries himself superbly dressed in either. Besides, at the end of the day, it's what is inside the man that counts.

What Kind of a Toad is a Nematode?

By D. H. MacDonald, Department of Plant Pathology, and
D. B. White, Department of Horticultural Science, University of Minnesota, St. Paul

The superintendents of eight golf courses participated in the golf green nematode survey of 2005. They did so for a variety of reasons. Three of them, Marlow Hansen, Paul Diegnau, and Fred Taylor, the superintendents at Forest Hills, Keller, and Mankato, respectively, did so to begin our efforts to try to determine if plant nematodes could be a factor predisposing the bentgrass on some of their greens to infection by the fungus that causes Take-All-Patch. Tim Rasmussen, the superintendent at Lafayette Club, was concerned by a reoccurrence of a "melting-out" problem that had previously occurred on the same two greens in 2002. At that time, again in 2005, and in 2006, a pathogenic fungus could not be isolated from the diseased plants. Scott Hoffman, the superintendent at Madden's, participated in an effort to determine if plant nematodes were possibly responsible for the poor growth of the bentgrass on a portion of one of his greens. The other three superintendents, Donnacha O'Connor at Alexandria, Ryan Guaster at St. Croix National, and Robert Panuska at Waseca Lakeside, participated primarily to learn more about plant nematodes and especially those infesting their "home turf."

Well, what did we learn about plant nematodes from the cooperative effort that resulted in 353 soil samples being collected during September and October, 2005, in preparation for eventual processing over the winter and early spring of 2005-2006? Let's start with St. Croix National which, at 10 years of age, was the youngest of the eight participating courses. Its greens had been seeded in 1995 and put into play in 1996. The greens were built to USGA specifications of sand and peat components that presumably were nematode-free. Those greens are of special interest since they are providing details pertaining to the evolution of greens from being "nematode-sterile" to nematode-infested. Kyle Stirn, the Assistant Superintendent, collected root-zone and below root-zone (to six inches) soil samples from a localized site near the back of each of the 18 greens. The nematode assay results expressed as estimated populations of plant nematodes per 100 cm³ of sand (4/5th cup) were interesting

to say the least. In addition to being interesting, those results revealed that St. Croix National's greens were unusually "clean" with only stunt (*Tylenchorhynchus*) and ring (*Criconeimoides*) plant nematodes being detected. Those results also can be divided into four categories using words such as "expected," "reasonable," "interesting", and "downright perplexing." Many of the greens (seven in all) fit in the "Expected" category since modest populations of two of Minnesota's and presumably Wisconsin's most common nematode inhabitants of greens, the stunt and ring nematodes, were extracted from both the RZ and the BRZ samples. Explanation: plant nematodes can be expected to eventually be found in any soil where plants can grow. Also in the "Expected" category were Greens 4 and 8. Plant nematodes were not detected in the RZ or the BRZ samples from those greens. Explanation: Plant nematodes are sluggish animals that are not very prolific. It takes time for detectable populations to develop in a previously nematode-free environment. In the "Reasonable" category were greens 1, 2, 9 and 16. Plant nematodes were detected in the RZ samples but not in the BRZ samples from those greens. Explanation: The root-zone is the preferred habitat for plant nematodes and the one into which they are most readily introduced. In the "Interesting" category were Greens 14 and 17. Plant nematodes were detected in the BRZ samples but not in the RZ samples from those greens. Explanation: sampling, processing, and counting procedures are part art and part science. That "upside-down" distribution of the plant nematodes as determined from a single sample from a several thousand square foot green is analogous to finding the proverbial "needle in a haystack." In fact, it has been estimated that four million specimens of a plant nematode such as the soybean cyst nematode would have to be present in an acre before it would be possible for that nematode's presence to even be detected. The above tally accounts for 15 of St. Croix National's 18 greens. None of those 15 sampling sites contained a threshold (300/100 cm³) or larger population of even the prolific stunt nematode. Greens 15, 11 and especially 18, the "Perplexing

greens", turned out to be moderately to heavily infested with 380, 468, and 2226 stunt nematodes/100 cm³, respectively. So where did the stunt nematodes come from and why were they especially successful at becoming established and multiplying at those three sampling sites? Explanation: Green 15 may have become infested when a mud slide carried soil from the adjacent woods onto the green. But similar explanations do not exist for the other two greens!

Nematodes can be spread mechanically in many different ways such as in soil on shoes, equipment and presumably on the feet of the abundant deer and turkeys that frequent the course. They may even have blown in as eggs. Several years ago the popular press in Minneapolis-St. Paul described a severe winter storm as "The Blizzard of the Century." The snow that was deposited on the St. Paul Campus of the U of M was decidedly brown with wind-blown soil that speculation then had North Dakota as its origin. We collected a pail of that dirty snow, allowed it to melt, and concentrated the resulting liquid. And as expected, nematodes were found in that liquid. Regardless of how they got there, why were the progenitors of the nematodes from St. Croix National's greens 11, 15 and 18 that ended up in my counting dish more successful in colonizing the sampling sites in those three greens than any of the others? Right now we do not have an explanation. But maybe by building a "nematode database" for several greens at St. Croix National we will develop an explanation. Until then we are stuck with the following simplistic but still useful "explanation:" "Expect plant nematodes where you find them"! I first uttered that statement after having gone on record to Dr. White that a low-lying green at the Virginia, Minnesota, golf course would not contain very many if any plant nematodes. But as it turned out, that green was heavily infested with plant nematodes and Dr. White will not let me forget my premature and erroneous diagnosis.

Lafayette Club, at 106 years, was the oldest course whose superintendent

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