

An Adventure in Life—

(Continued from Page 20)

One could get upset and watch the blood pressure rise, or laugh at the situation. Years ago, anger would have been my emotion. As I've grown older, humor has taken over. You have to laugh if you want to survive, especially here and in the golf course business in general.

The Chinese culture is one that has very little familiarity with the game of golf and with motorized equipment. Transportation is on foot, bicycle or public transportation. Out of a staff of 106 people, only 12 staff members have or own vehicles. Hong Kong has a tremendous public transportation system, and an abundance of taxis. Both methods of transportation are very inexpensive. A half-hour first class train trip to Hong Kong costs about \$3 US. Taxi fare to Hong Kong is about \$18 US. A large obstacle to vehicle traffic is the lack of parking where ever you choose to drive to. Even with owning a vehicle, most often you will travel by public transportation or taxi.

With a lack of familiarity with golf and motorized equipment, training is very important in the golf industry here and throughout the Asian market. Again, patience is a key. With this lack of training and knowledge, I have instituted a training program. Every Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday I have a training seminar for one of the course's staff members for an hour in the afternoon. The Game of Golf, cup changing, tee set-up, bunker maintenance, greens mowing, tee mowing and fertilization are just



"I thought you said back up!"

some of the session topics we have covered. This has proven to be invaluable for upgrading the level of productivity and consistency within the staffs work performance. I have found the staff members to be very receptive and appreciative of this training. There is no formal program of education in the turf industry in Hong Kong or within Asia. All my current assistants are enrolled in the Penn State online turf program. This is the one avenue they have for eventually acquiring a turf degree.

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The photos below illustrate the difference in particle size and uniformity between the Andersons small and mid-size fairway fertilizer and a competitor's product. Notice no nutrient segregation with Andersons mid-size due to uniform particle sizing versus significant nutrient segregation with competitor.

Andersons 25-3-9 + 2% Fe (150 SGN)



1 lb. of N per 1,000 = 175 lbs/acre = 3.7 particles per sq in.

The matrix shown below demonstrates a dramatic increase in particle coverage (PPSI) by using smaller particle products versus increasing the rate (lbs.) of a larger particle product.

POUNDS/ACRE	Particles Per Square Inch Matrix 20-3-20 Fertilizer with 65% Nutralene					
	SGN 125	SGN 150	SGN 175	SGN 215	SGN 240	SGN 300
100	3.9	2.3	1.4	0.8	0.6	0.3
125	4.9	2.8	1.8	1.0	0.7	0.4
150	5.9	3.4	2.1	1.2	0.8	0.4
175	6.9	4.0	2.5	1.4	1.0	0.5
200	7.9	4.5	2.9	1.5	1.1	0.6
225	8.9	5.1	3.2	1.7	1.2	0.6
250	9.8	5.7	3.6	1.9	1.4	0.7
300	11.8	6.8	4.3	2.3	1.7	0.9

Avg. SG (g/ml) = 1.8

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Local Competitor 15-5-10 (215 SGN)

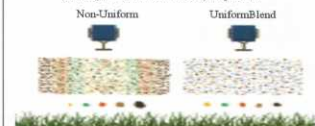


1 lb. of N per 1,000 = 290 lbs/acre = 2.0 particles per sq in.

The illustration below shows the effect of using a non-uniform fertilizer product. Note the severe skewing and banding of different nutrients.

Uniform Particle Distribution
Spreadability : Particle Flight

Varying particle sizes and density cause irregular ballistic behavior resulting in inconsistent delivery of product



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You Have Two Choices Today: Be in a Good Mood or a Bad Mood

John is the kind of guy you love to hate. He is always in a good mood and always has something positive to say. When someone would ask him how he was doing, he would reply, "If I were any better, I would be twins!" He was a natural motivator. If an employee was having a bad day, John was there telling the employee how to look on the positive side of the situation. Seeing this style really made me curious, so one day I went up and asked him, "I don't get it! You can't be a positive person all of the time. How do you do it?"

He replied, "Each morning I wake up and say to myself, you have two choices today. You can choose to be in a good mood or you can choose to be in a bad mood. I choose to be in a good mood." Each time something bad happens, I can choose to be a victim or I can choose to learn from it. I chose to learn from it.

Every time someone comes to me complaining, I can choose to accept their complaining or I can point out the positive side of life. I choose the positive side of life. "Yeah, right, it's not that easy," I protested. "Yes, it is," he said. "Life is all about choices. When you cut away all the junk, every situation is a choice. You

choose how you react to situations. You choose how people affect your mood. You choose to be in a good mood or bad mood. The bottom line: It's your choice how you live your life."

I reflected on what he said. Soon hereafter, I left the tower industry to start my own business. We lost touch, but I often thought about him when I made a choice about life instead of reacting to it. Several years later, I heard that he was involved in a serious accident, falling some 60 feet from a communications tower.

After 18 hours of surgery and weeks of intensive care, he was released from the hospital with rods placed in his back. I saw him about six months after the accident. When I asked him how he was, he replied, "If I were any better, I'd be twins...Wanna see my scars?"

I declined to see his wounds, but I did ask him what had gone through his mind as the accident took place. "The first thing that went through my mind was the well-being of my soon-to-be born daughter," he replied. "Then, as I lay on the ground, I remembered that I had two choices: I could choose to live or I could choose to die. I chose to live."

"Weren't you scared? Did you lose con-

sciousness?" I asked. He continued, "The paramedics were great. They kept telling me I was going to be fine. But when they wheeled me into the ER and I saw the expressions on the faces of the doctors and nurses, I got really scared. In their eyes, I read 'he's a dead man'. I knew I needed to take action."

"What did you do?" I asked.

"Well, there was a big burly nurse shouting questions at me," said John. "She asked if I was allergic to anything. 'Yes, I replied.' The doctors and nurses stopped working as they waited for my reply. I took a deep breath and yelled, 'gravity!' Over their laughter, I told them, 'I am choosing to live. Operate on me as if I am alive, not dead.'"

He lived, thanks to the skill of his doctors, but also because of his amazing attitude. I learned from him that every day we have the choice to live fully.

Attitude, after all, is everything. Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own." Matthew 6:34. After all today is the tomorrow you worried about yesterday.

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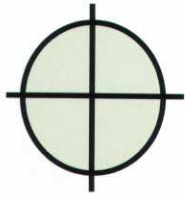
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MINNESOTA IN THE CROSSHAIRS

2007 Green Expo

By Paul Diegnau, CGCS
Keller Golf Course

It won't be long before we greenkeepers descend upon the Minneapolis Convention Center to attend the 2007 Green Expo. As the MGCSA education chair, I feel we have put together a very solid program that offers a good cross-section of topics that should appeal to most. As with any MGCSA offering or event, we need to hear from you, the membership. The only way we can improve and better serve the needs of our members is through feedback, both positive and negative. We need your help! So, on January 3, 4 and 5, check out the educational offerings, the trade show and the camaraderie. Then, sound off!

One of the issues that concerns me regarding the Green Expo format is the amount of education time available relative to dedicated trade show time. Currently, the Green Expo runs for 25.5 hours over the course of three days from Wednesday to Friday. The trade show is open for 19.5 of those 25.5 hours. Of those 19.5 trade show hours, 11.25 are dedicated hours. This means that educational seminars cannot be scheduled during those hours. I am of the opinion that 19.5 hours will afford anyone, if interested, the opportunity to traverse the trade show floor and visit with the vendors of their choosing. I would favor freeing up 2-4 hours from the dedicated block of time for educational purposes. Adding additional seminars to the golf program would allow for more variety; more extended, in-depth seminars and could possibly bolster attendance from our segment of the industry. After all, isn't the point of this winter gathering centered around education? In order to lobby for these changes more effectively at the MNLA/MTGF Joint Programming Board, I will need vocal support from MGCSA members and vendors. The current JPB feels that the current time allotments for education and trade show are appropriate and all parties are satisfied. I have talked to both MGCSA members and vendors that feel differently. If there is enough support for this proposition, I will pursue it further. If, on the other hand, the status quo is acceptable to

our membership and vendors, I will drop the issue. It is up to YOU!

Now for a primer on the upcoming Green Expo that takes place on January 3-5, 2007:

Wednesday

In addition to the always impressive keynote speaker that morning, Bob Vavrek, USGA agronomist, will (hopefully?) share with us some of the problems and solutions our colleagues have dealt with at various golf courses he has visited over the years.

Lukas Dant, M.S., Iowa State, will discuss sprayer performance issues and how to improve plant-protectant performance as revealed by his field research at golf courses across the Midwest.

Gary Grigg, CGCS, Grigg Brothers, will talk about program-based budgeting, a technique that associates costs with specific golf course conditioning, making random budget cuts much more difficult for golf course management.

Paul Magro, former GC Superintendent and Instructor, Turfgrass Technical Coordinator and Field Research Facility Coordinator, Penn State, will present talks on the art of syringing and the role of fertigation in golf course maintenance.

Dr. Roch Gausson, University of Nebraska will present the results of his research on the role of organic matter in golf greens as they mature.

Thursday

Dr. Gaussoin/Gary Grigg will present their GCSAA half-day program on foliar nutrition. This seminar has received high ratings from attendees in the past.

Caitlin Rood, Environmental Engineer at Tetra Tech EM Inc., will discuss pollution prevention strategies specific to golf courses, alternatives to solvent-based parts washers that work, and how to choose cleaning supplies and shop chemicals that minimize environmental impact.

Paul Magro will talk about chemical and pesticide safety.

Carl Osterhaus, The Toro Company,

will discuss diesel engine performance and troubleshooting procedures and will present a seminar on effective shop layout

Dr. Lane Tredway, North Carolina State University, is an up and coming star in the field of plant pathology. He studied under Dr. Bruce Clark at Rutgers University. Dr. Tredway will be speaking on phosphate products for disease control and stress management.

Dr. David Shetlar, a.k.a. The Bug Doc, Ohio State University, will speak on multiple target principles to maximize golf course insect control.

Dr. Eric Watkins, University of Minnesota, will present an update on the 2006 NTEP trials conducted at the TROE Center.

Dr. Brian Horgan, University of Minnesota, will present the results of his phosphorous runoff study at the TROE Center as it pertains to clipping management and fertilizer inputs.

John Mascaro will present the live version of his photo quiz that has appeared in Golf Course Management Magazine since 2002. Stop by and put your turfgrass knowledge and investigative abilities to the test.

Friday - Pesticide Recertification

Dr. Lane Tredway will discuss an integrated management program for the prevention and control of foliar and basal rot anthracnose. He will also present his most recent research on the biology and management of root-infecting fungi.

Dr. David Shetlar will conduct two seminars, one on the modes of action and use strategies for the new insecticides on the market and the second on dealing with nuisance insect pests on the golf course.

As you can see, there should be something of interest for everyone. Please plan on attending. You won't be disappointed. Hope to see you there!

Representing Dacotah Ridge Golf Club

Nelson, Daak, Kodet and Kieffer Win Fall Mixer at Oakdale Golf Club

The Dacotah Ridge foursome of Dan Nelson, Nick Daak, Jesse Kodet and Riley Kieffer shot 123 in a net two best ball format in the Fall Mixer at Oakdale Golf Club in Buffalo Lake.

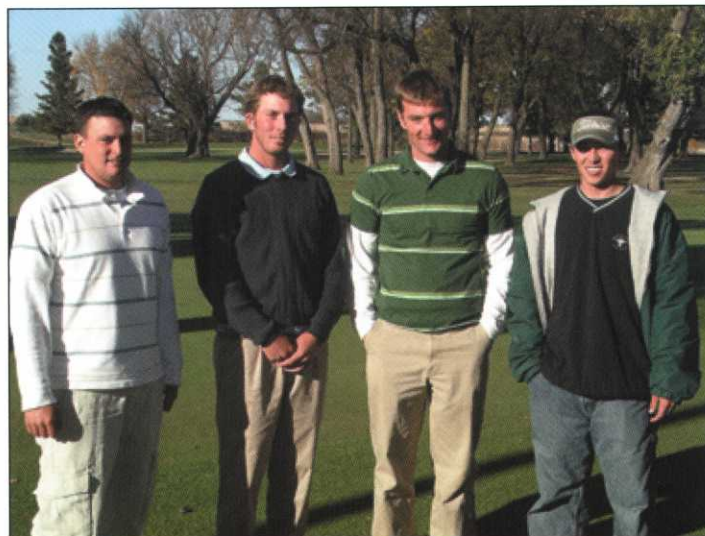
Oakdale Golf Club host Superintendent Mike Knodel's team of Larry Meier, Kyle Schaufler and Andrew Schaufler finished in second place at 126. Mike had his course in terrific shape and the 52 attendees had lots of fun playing it.

Closest-to-the-pin winners were Manley Vinkemeier, Glencoe CC; Randy Zieman, Riverwood National; Jesse Kodet and Scott Bertram, Riverwood National.

Tom Proshok, Brackett's Crossing Country Club, won the long drive contest on No. 14.

Scott Hines, CGCS, Windsong Farm Golf Club, sank the longest putt on No. 9.

Thanks go out to Mike Knodel and all others who helped make the Fall Mixer very successful and also to our MGCSA affiliates who help make it all possible.



Fall Mixer winners from Dacotah Ridge, from left, Nick Daak, Dan Nelson, Riley Kieffer and Jesse Kodet.



Mike Knodel
Host Superintendent



Guest Speaker Jim Walsh
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Representing Mystic Lake at the Fall Mixer were, from left, Zach Wignall, Erik Pille, Superintendent Pete Nolan and Andy Keyes. They "had a great time on a wonderful golf course," said Pete.

163 Yard Par 3 eighth hole at the Refuge Golf Club in Oak Grove, Minnesota.

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Musing the Minutes

By MATT MCKINNON
MGCSA Secretary

The MGCSA Board of Directors met on September 11 at Somerset C.C.

Paul Eckholm, CGCS, reported that we are not satisfied with the accounting firm that we are using. We have been using this accounting firm for the last 10 years. Executive Director Scott Turtinen and Eckholm found Larsen Allen a new accounting firm that works with non-profit organizations. A motion was made by Paul Eckholm, CGCS to switch accounting firms to Larsen Allen. 2nd Rick Traver, CGCS. Paul also reported that we opened up a new account at Think Credit union. Currently we have a six-month CD with a 5% return. This CD will mature on December 12 at which time we will roll it.

President James Bade reported the University of Minnesota Field Day had a good turnout but very few MGCSA mem-

bers. Bade also stated that Kevin Clunis, CGCS reported that dues are a big issue in the GCSAA. GCSAA is looking at having smaller increases instead of one big increase every five years.

Tom Proshek reported the Awards & Recognition Banquet will be at Rush Creek Golf Club on December 5.

Paul Diegnau, CGCS reported that there is an excellent list of speakers scheduled for the Minnesota Green Expo. Diegnau also reported that he has sent in the requests for the Chapter-hosted GCSAA winter seminars.

Jeff Hartman reported there was a good turnout for the Vendor Meeting in July. Topics discussed were the Minnesota Green Expo along with the cost for Hospitality Night at the National Conference. The total cost for the night

could range from \$8,000 to \$10,000. Vendors thought there still should be a charge to all MGCSA members attending hospitality night. Tom Proshek made a motion for a charge of \$15 for pre-registered members and \$20 for walk-ins. Eckholm, CGCS 2nd

The MGCSA received a letter from Bruce Williams, CGCS from Los Angeles Country Club. Williams sent a letter to all Chapters looking for contributions for the Leadership Endowment Fund. Diegnau made the motion to contribute \$500 to the Leadership Endowment Fund. 2nd Rick Traver, CGCS. The board voted to send \$500 to this fund.

Eckholm reported that there have been questions raised about job postings for Superintendents. Diegnau made the motion to charge \$150 to post a Superintendent position along with posting the job announcement without a description and for members to contact the club/course for information. In order to post any position you must be a MGCSA member. 2nd Traver.

Eckholm made an amendment to the motion to also charge \$150 for mailing labels from the MGCSA and only members can purchase them. Diegnau 2nd.

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BASF Honors Golf Course Superintendents at BASF 'People vs. The Pros' Golf Tournament at Pinehurst Resort

South Carolina Superintendent Steve Jones Wins BASF Superintendent's Cup

BASF Professional Turf & Ornamentals recognized superintendents nationwide at the BASF People vs. the Pros golf tournament held August 18 - 22 at Pinehurst Resort, Pinehurst, N.C.

Twenty-two BASF-sponsored superintendents were a part of a field of 200 competitors vying to play against PGA professionals Retief Goosen or Gary McCord for the opportunity to win \$50,000 for the charity of the winner's choice. The top two scoring superintendents not playing against the pros competed against one another in the third annual BASF Superintendent's Cup.

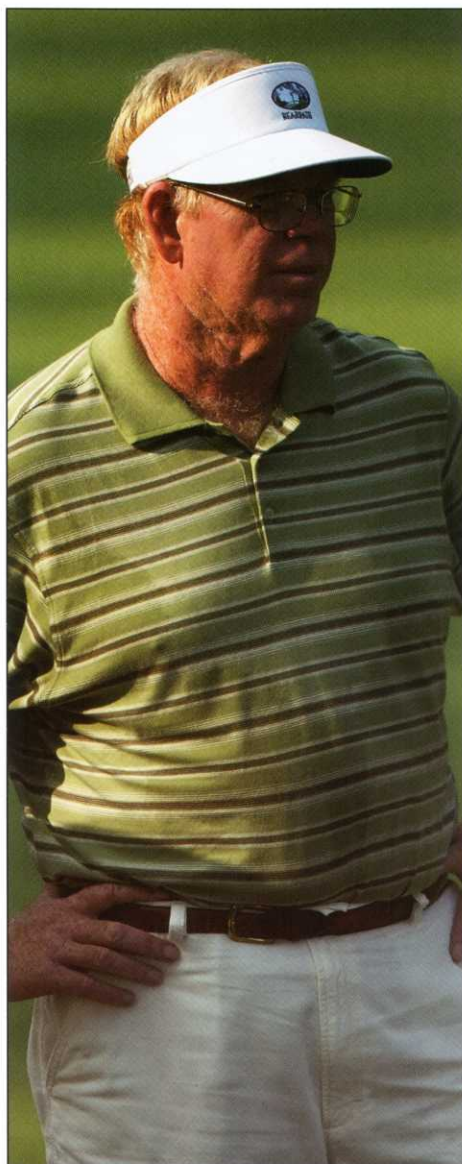
"BASF Professional Turf & Ornamentals is honored to use our title sponsorship to highlight the professionalism of the golf course superintendent," said Dr. Toni Bucci, business manager for BASF Professional Turf & Ornamentals. "The exceptional work of golf course superintendents is key to the enjoyment of the game and the success of the courses they manage. They deserve our recognition for their contribution to the game of golf."

As the tournament's title sponsor, BASF hosted more than 1,000 superintendents who participated in 18 regional qualifier tournaments held throughout the spring and summer in conjunction with Golf Course Superintendent Association (GCSA) chapters from across the country. Each regional qualifying superintendent won an all-expense-paid trip to compete in the Pinehurst final, and BASF donated \$2,000 to the hosting chapter's education fund.

A tournament within a tournament

At the People vs. the Pros golf tournament, BASF-sponsored superintendents had the opportunity to compete in the BASF Superintendent's Cup, which featured the top two superintendent finishers from the three-day, 54-hole tournament play held on Pinehurst's No. 5 and No. 8 courses.

Ron Dobosz, superintendent at Ludlow Country Club in Ludlow, Mass., and Steve Jones, superintendent at Greenville Country Club in Greenville, S.C., teed off at Pinehurst No. 8 on August 22, to com-



John Malloy, Superintendent at Bearpath Golf & Country Club, represented the MGCSA at tournament.

pete for the third annual BASF Superintendent's Cup. Jones won the May 21 regional qualifier tournament hosted by the Carolinas GCSA at Ballantyne Resort in Charlotte, N.C., and Dobosz was the winner of the July 10 New England GCSA qualifier held at Juniper Hills Golf Course in Northboro, Mass.

Dobosz was this year's leading superintendent, with a total net score of 217 in the 18-49 age division, placing 3rd overall with his 0 handicap. Jones scored a net 218

with the benefit of his 9 handicap in the 50-and-over age division, placing 4th overall.

After competitive play by both superintendents, Jones ended the handicapped match play with a victory on the 17th hole, winning 2 and 1. Jones won the Cup, along with a \$10,000 check from BASF Professional Turf & Ornamentals and an additional \$10,000 worth of BASF products for use on his golf course. Runner-up Dobosz earned \$5,000 for his second-place finish.

Fifty-four-year-old Jones is a member of the Upstate Turfgrass Association and has served as superintendent at Greenville C.C. for 19 years. He is a recreational golfer, playing two to three times a month with the pros and seniors on his course.

"I had a couple of bad holes the second day of the tournament, but after that I played consistently," said Jones. "Ron and I wanted to be relaxed and have some fun in the final match - we both just played our game."

Jones currently uses Insignia® fungicide on his golf course greens to control pythium and brown patch and plans to purchase additional product with his prize winnings.

BASF People vs. the Pros

Returning for its fourth year - and for the second time at Pinehurst - the 2006 People vs. the Pros at Pinehurst featured amateurs in two age divisions competing in the 54-hole finals tournament Aug. 19 - 21. The low-net winner in each age division battled professional golfer Retief Goosen (18-49 age division) or Gary McCord (50-and-over age division) with the benefit of his handicap and a \$50,000 prize awarded to the charity of choice for the winner of each match.

The Grand Prize Match of the People vs. the Pros and highlights from the BASF Superintendent's Cup was scheduled to air on ESPN2 in mid-October.

The 2006 BASF People vs. the Pros superintendent participants included John Malloy, member of the Minnesota GCSA and Superintendent at Bearpath Golf & Country Club, who participated in the 50 and over division.

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Windsong Farm Team Captures Stodola Research Scramble

Hines, Alderman, Thompson and Carothers Shoot 16-under at Medina

Fresh off hosting the MGCSA Championship in August, the Windsong Farm Golf Club team took their act on the road and won the Harold Stodola Research Scramble at Medina Golf & Country Club in Medina on September 18.

The four-person team of Scottie Hines, CGCS; Jamie Alderman, director of golf, and Windsong members Billy Thompson and Dave Carothers fired a 16-under par 56 to win by two strokes.

The day's weather showed signs of what is coming soon. A blustery day turned into a pleasant golf outing at Medina G&CC. Host Superintendent Andrew Larsen and his staff had the course in excellent shape. Players found the undulating greens very tricky with their slippery slopes.

Affiliate members from Hydrologic and Ridgeview Country Club finished in second place at 58. The four-person squad included Ted Schirck, Todd Folie and Tim Cole from Hydrologic and Wes Salo from Ridgeview CC.

Winning a scorecard playoff for third place was the team of Marlin Murphy, Kevin Milbrandt, Todd Samarzia and Justin Funk from Stillwater Country Club. The fourth place team was made up of Barry Provo, Deer Run Golf Club; Brian Brown, Chisago Lakes Golf Estates; Kevin Norby and Dave Newinski from Herfort Norby Golf Course Architects.

Jerry Webb, Riverwood National, sank the longest putt competition on hole 18. Billy Thompson, Windsong Farm, hit the longest drive on #10. The four closest-to-pins were won by Mike Anderson, MTI Distributing; Jamie Alderman, Windsong Farm; and Tom Kasner, Albany Golf Club, who hit two good shots to win twice.

The MGCSA extends thanks to host Superintendent Drew Larsen, his staff and all other representatives from Medina Golf & Country Club who helped out with our successful event. Proceeds from this event go towards the MGCSA Research Fund.

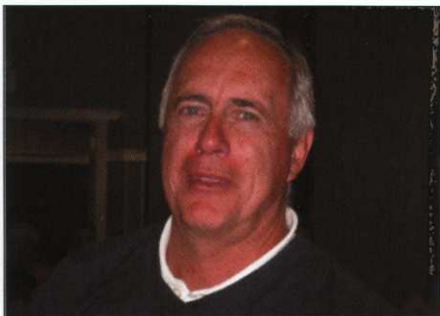
The MGCSA Awards & Recognition Banquet will take place on Tuesday, December 5 at Rush Creek Golf Club in Maple Grove. Dale Hiebert is host Superintendent.

Thank you to all affiliate members for your continued support of the MGCSA.

(See Stodola photos on Page 29)



Winners from Windsong Farm Golf Club are, from left, Director of Golf Jamie Alderman, Billy Thompson, Scottie Hines, CGCS, and Dave Carothers. They shot 56.



Mike Anderson, MTI Distributing Co., won closest-to-pin honors on No. 4.



Runners-up, from left, Wes Salo, Ridgeview Country Club, along with Todd Folie, Ted Schirck and Tim Cole from Hydrologic. They finished two back at 14-under score of 58.



Medina Golf & CC's Drew Larsen was Host Superintendent at the Harold Stodola Research Scramble on September 18.



Third place honors went to the Stillwater team of, from left, Kevin Milbrandt, Todd Samarzia, Marlin Murphy and Justin Funk. The Stillwater foursome carded a 13-under 59.



Enjoying the day at Medina Golf & CC are, from left, Jerry Webb, CGCS, Riverwood National/Vintage GC; Seth Swanson, Deer Run GC; Rick Traver, CGCS, Monticello CC, and Ron Manske, Versatile Vehicles.

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In Bounds: ...the rest of the story

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

There once was a lad so determined to work on a golf course he begged the superintendent for a job every day after school for two weeks in the spring of 1976. Barely 16 years old and a member's kid, he really didn't have a chance. The club he wanted to work at didn't hire the children of the club's patrons. However, he persisted to beat a path to the door of Bill Pietz for many afternoons that warm April.

Bill, then superintendent at the White Bear Yacht Club, must have seen something in that kid or perhaps he was being kind until the youth quit, for one afternoon he gave him a very small butter knife and told him to remove weeds from tee boxes, every tee box, beginning on the fourth hole. Dissatisfied with the tool he was given, the young man requested he be allowed to use his own knife and produced from his pocket a colorful and very sharp six inch flip blade his father had brought back from the Korean War. "Of course", Bill said, "just be sure to get every weed."

Following many days of cleaning tee boxes the fresh employee advanced to removing rocks from bunkers, hand clipping around tree bases and weeding along the curb at the clubhouse. The youngster's persistence was paying off for after several weeks of manual labor he was given a motorized piece of equipment, a seventy pound rotary mower, to push mow the bunker banks. Even though he was a member's kid, Bill had taken a chance and hired a pretty good worker, one Jack MacKenzie.

Two years later he pulled me from high school and introduced me to the profession of turf management by taking me to a fertilizer seminar. Hooked into agronomics, I have never looked back. Thanks, Bill, I owe you for seeing something in me and taking a chance.

Many years have passed since I became interested in the industry and Bill, God Bless him, keeps tabs on me from heaven. The hours seem longer, competition for open positions is fierce, and the market is saturated with many qualified individuals hoping to make their mark as superintendents. It is a long hard road to travel

in today's market of declining interest in golf. For these and a few other reasons I discouraged my son from following in my footsteps when he inquired about becoming a golf course superintendent himself. It is a tough life, rewarding, but tough.

Yet the last few years have been great fun working with him. Our bond as a team has strengthened and I will miss him next year as he pursues other employment interests. We will continue to share something in common however; his high school buddy and two-year employee at North Oaks Golf Club, Eric Proulx, will remain on my crew.

I first met Eric seven years ago. He and my boy Tyler were in knowledge

...and now you know the rest of the story...

bowl and math league together so twice a week I drove them to school prior to classes. Armed with his French horn, Eric was prompt, courteous and happy every day when I picked him up. His parents did a darn good job in his upbringing. I shouldn't have been surprised when Tyler asked if his good friend could work on the crew.

Eric applied himself to his summer job with the same enthusiasm he had during school. Eager to learn, polite, hard working and a good listener, he showed signs of being a real go getter in life. It appeared to me that his drive would do him well in any vocational pursuit. He chose computer applications and was signed up to begin a college level program last August.

That was until he attended an open house at the campus and, among other things, met his peer group. Eric informed me the next day, "I really don't see myself enjoying my choice of study. In fact, the people I met seemed sort of scary." This was from a youth who now had a pink Mohawk and sported two piercings (that I know of); in his lip and eye brow. Ah, the mysteries of youth!

It wasn't long after his education revelation that Eric came to me and announced in a determined manner his intent to get a degree in turf management and become a golf course superintendent. He told me of his love for the outdoor opportunities, watching this grow and friendships with the diverse staff. Basically he said that he really had fun doing his job on the golf course.

After many discussions regarding everything I had told my son about the industry -- long hours, strong competition, declining interest, limited economic rewards and often difficult challenges with Mother Nature -- he still wanted to fulfill his quest. Who was I to stand in his spirited way. His eyes declared a very strong interest and it was up to me, the father of his best friend, to guide his next course of action.

Beyond a solid background working on a golf course Eric appreciated he would need an impressive resume from an accredited school system. He looked at many two year programs including Rutgers and Penn State as well as local choices. And he visited with the turf department at the University of Minnesota. Eric, after much thought, decided upon taking care of his basics at a community college and then transferring to the University of Minnesota/St. Paul. Good for him, as I have always appreciated my B.S. from the U of M. His process and actions indicated a will to become a very good superintendent.

Eric's mother on the other hand had some reservations regarding the need to attain such a great (and expensive) education. Thus I was invited to their house for a little industry promotion exercise over a bowl of booya. Having never met Eric's mom in person I didn't know the kind of individual to expect. She was just like her son; thoughtful, respectful, curious and hospitable. When it all was said and done she agreed that a four-year education was very important for Eric to succeed in the golf industry. And then our discussion went onto other topics.

We talked about high school histories, growing up, local golf courses, people whom we both may know and other social conversation. Then she asked me one final question, "You seem pretty young, but maybe... did you ever know my father, he used to work at the White Bear Yacht Club, his name was Bill Pietz?"

I guess it is pay back time Bill. You are in my thoughts as I work with Eric, your grandson, to become everything you encouraged me to become. Thanks again.