

Problem Solving and Learning Spanish Highlight February GCSAA Seminars

MGCSA members who attended the February 21-22 GCSAA Seminars at the Embassy Suites Hotel in Bloomington gained valuable knowledge and GCSAA educational points. Speaker J. M. "Joe" Vargas, Jr., Ph.D., professor at Michigan State University in plant pathology, teamed with A.J. "Al" Turgeon, Ph.D., professor of Turfgrass Management in the Dept. of Crop and Soil Sciences at the Pennsylvania State University. Turgeon currently serves as Senior Faculty Coordinator of the Penn State World Campus Turfgrass Program, a web-based series of undergraduate courses through which students from around the world may earn certificates or B.S. degrees in Turfgrass Science.

Thinking Your Way to Better Problem Solving in Turfgrass Management

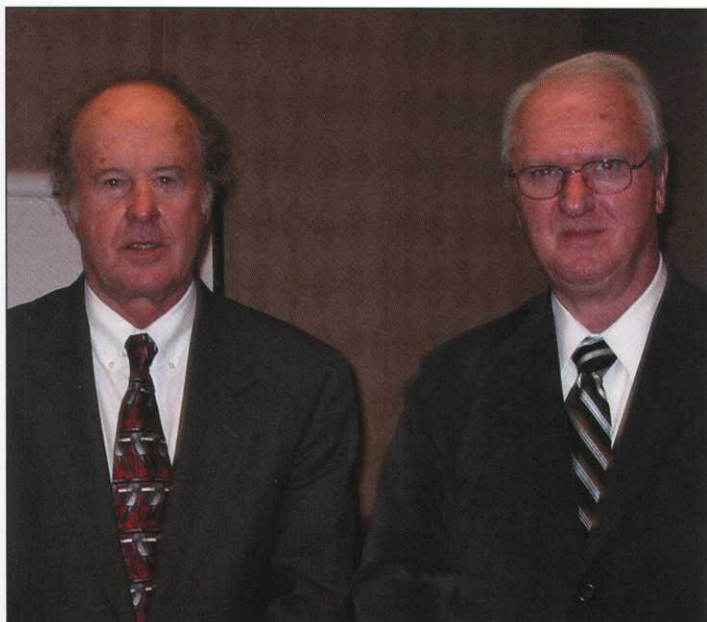
Vargas and Turgeon's focus was "Thinking Your Way to Better Problem Solving in Turfgrass Management and More." Members were given a workbook and were taught how to deal with a variety of scenerios from bluegrass invading bentgrass to dealing with the firing of a long-serving Superintendent whose disgruntled Assistant, mechanic and full-time crew members resigned.

Spanish for Golf Course Maintenance

Although a fairly small turnout, those attending benefitted from Speaker Steve Valdez' expertise. As Hispanics become more prevalent in the turfgrass workplace, it is very important for Superintendents, Assistants, mechanics and crew members to be able to communicate. Even a few words learned from the seminar will be valuable throughout the season.



GCSAA Seminar Speaker Steve Valdez, left, is owner and instructor of his own consulting company, Carpe Diem Consulting Services. Valdez has over 10 years of experience as a case manager and counselor. He spent seven years working at a golf course, where he managed projects and supervised the non-English speaking Hispanics. Pictured with Valdez at the February GCSAA Seminar is Eric Peterson, Superintendent at Dellwood Hills Golf Club in White Bear Lake.



Speaker J. M. "Joe" Vargas, Jr., Ph.D., left, professor at Michigan State University in plant pathology, teamed with A.J. "Al" Turgeon, Ph.D., right, professor of Turfgrass Management in the Dept. of Crop and Soil Sciences at Penn State University. They focused on problem solving.

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“Guidelines” for Safe Handling of Drinking Water at a Golf Course

The following are *guidelines* if you are providing drinking water dispensers at your golf course. If the following guidelines cannot be implemented, providing bottled water as an alternative to dispensers is strongly recommended.

If you are a licensed food and beverage establishment, you must use NSF approved or equivalent equipment. A trained food service staff member should do the handling of water and the filling and cleaning of dispensers.

Dispenser Filling

- Wash hands with soap and water prior to handling water or ice.
- Water and ice must come from an approved water supply system, either a municipal system or a well that is routinely tested and meets safe drinking water standards.
- The dispenser should be stored away from chemical storage or contaminants.
- The dispenser should be filled in an area free of environmental contaminants, such as dust, chemicals and insects.
- The dispenser should not be placed on the floor while filling but rather on a clean and sanitary surface.
- The hose used to fill the dispenser must be food grade (no garden hoses) and stored in a protected manner.
- Hoses should be used exclusively for drinking water dispenser filling and not to fill other equipment or tanks, such as pesticides, herbicides or used to clean other things.
- Plumbing used to draw water must meet the Minnesota plumbing code and have proper backflow devices.
- Ice must be dispensed with an ice scoop to prevent direct hand contact with the ice.
- Water in the container should be drained and refilled daily to prevent the growth of organisms.

- Dispenser containers must not be stored outside overnight.

Water Dispensers

- The water dispenser should be constructed of food grade material and be easily cleanable.
- The spigot should be a gravity flow design to prevent contamination during use.
- Dispensers should be designed and placed in a manner to decrease the risk of tampering.
- The dispenser and nozzle should be washed, rinsed and sanitized daily. Wash with soapy water inside and out, followed by a thorough clean water rinse and sanitize using a bleach solution of one tablespoon per two gallons of water.
- Provide an area for air-drying of the dispenser and nozzle.
- Single use disposable cups should be provided.

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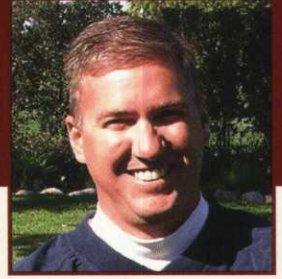
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The Savory Super

By Scottie Hines, CGCS
Windsong Farm Golf Club



Pepperoni Soup

Makes approximately 1 gallon

- 1 stick pepperoni (12 ozs.) thinly sliced into half moons
- 4 onions diced
- 2 cloves garlic finely chopped
- 2 tbsp olive oil
- 4 tbsp butter
- 1 tsp garlic salt
- 1 tsp garlic powder
- 1 tsp red pepper flakes
- 2 tsp dried basil
- 2 tsp oregano
- 2 tsp dried parsley
- 2 tsp celery seed
- 6 cups tomato juice
- 2 cups warm water
- 1 cup tomato sauce
- 4 cups tomato puree
- 1 tbsp dijon mustard
- 1 cup white sugar



In a large saute pan, heat olive oil and butter until melted. Add onions, saute until clear. Add pepperoni, fry until golden brown. Add garlic and cook for 1-2 minutes. Add all other dry ingredients (except sugar) and cook for another 3 minutes. Add the "wet" ingredients, bring to a slow boil. Let this simmer for 10 to 15 minutes. Add the sugar and cook for two minutes at a very low simmer. Strain off any fat on the surface.

To serve: Put soup in oven ready bowl, garnish with mozzarella cheese and your favorite croutons. Heat in 300 degree oven until cheese is melted. Enjoy!

Just a note: If you like it spicy, season to your liking. Addition of sliced Italian sausage is another nice twist.

*Respectfully submitted,
Scottie Hines, CGCS
Windsong Farm Golf Club*



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GCSAA Board Searches For CEO to Replace Outgoing Steve Mona

By David S. Downing II, CGCS
GCSAA President

Recently, the board conducted a series of second-round interviews for the CEO search and the process is continuing in good order. With the Golf Industry Show behind us, we anticipate working through the rest of the process without delay.



Having reached this point, the board feels comfortable working with Steve Mona to set a date certain for his last day. After discussing this among the board and Steve, we agreed upon February 29, as his official last day at GCSAA. He started

full-time at the World Golf Foundation on March 3. We greatly appreciate Steve's dedication in continuing to serve as GCSAA CEO for more than five months after announcing his acceptance of his new position. Steve also has agreed to devote some time to assisting with transition once the new CEO is on board.

In order to maintain our normal governance structure and operations for the time span between Steve's departure and the actual hire and start date of our new CEO, the board has appointed Cam Oury, GCSAA's chief financial officer and managing director of finance, to serve as interim CEO, effective March 1. While Cam will not assume the travel and representation duties that Steve fulfilled, he will have full decision-making authority and reporting responsibility as outlined in the Board/CEO compact.

Can You Compete With Tiger?



PHOTO BY JEFF TURPINEN

If Tiger Woods played golf with you, how many strokes would he be giving up to make a fair match? The answer may surprise you. You may consider yourself a fine player with your 3 handicap. Or perhaps you frequently play to a 15 handicap. You may even think that Tiger Woods could spot you a stroke per hole and you would have a close match. Turns out a stroke a hole would be about right if you were about a 3 handicap. And Tiger would still probably win.

The handicaps of our favorite PGA Tour professionals remain a mystery. Sure, we know they're in the "+" realm (which, oddly enough, means better than scratch) but how far?

Calculations

PGA Tour courses don't have established ratings. Professionals often play from tees used only in PGA Tour events, the rough is grown extra long and thick, and greens are sped and firmed up. Each of those changes has a dramatic effect on the course rating and slope, making it difficult to ascertain the true nature of a pro's handicap index.

Normally, a 0.96 multiplier is applied to a person's average differential in calculating handicaps. This is to help figure in the "potential" of a player. A golfer with an unadjusted handicap index of 5 becomes a 4.8 index after the 0.96 multiplier is applied. It would make little sense, however, to take a +5 handicap to +4.8, so we must instead divide by 0.96. That would make a +5 golfer a +5.2 golfer, again figuring in the "potential."

At the Top in 2007: Tiger Woods
Average Differential: 10.6
Best 10 Average Differential: 13.2
Handicap Index: +13.75

Now, take a deep breath and read that again. +13.75. Tiger's *worst* ten differentials average out to +8.05.

Something like 10% of golfers ever reach single digit handicaps. Tiger's not only done that, but, he's blown through the single digits on the other side of scratch and is in heretofore unexplored territory at +13.75.

Tiger just may have the single best handicap index ever.

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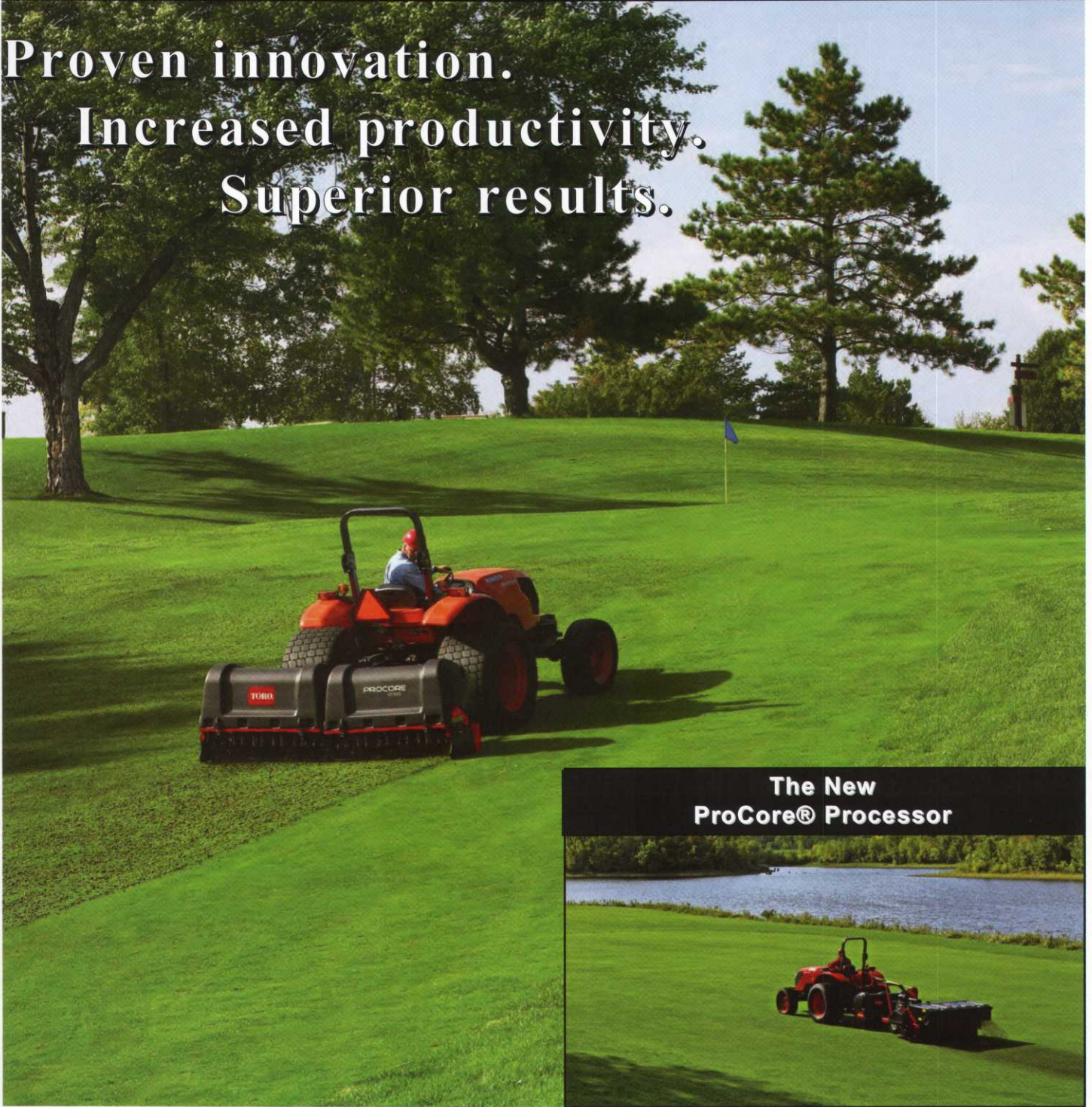
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Organizational Knowledge

By JAKE RYAN

Assistant Superintendent, Northland Country Club

The National Association of Greenkeepers of America (NAGA) was formed over eighty-one years ago. Those sixty greenkeepers, who first met at Sylvania Country Club in Toledo, Ohio, pioneered the way for what is now the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America. A couple of years after the formation they held the industries first trade show. While they may not have foreseen the large impact they would eventually have on our industry. I am sure they knew how important their trade show was.

With last month's Golf Industry Show fresh in everyone's mind, I thought this would be an appropriate time to further develop aspects of organizational knowledge. Developed topics in this arti-

cle include technical expertise, knowing the business and using financial and quantitative data. To better understand these topics I had the opportunity to interview a successful businessperson. The following is a brief profile of the person, with whom I had an opportunity to correspond.

"To achieve goals you must acquire functional and technical knowledge."

Lee Bergstrom-Pfizer, at 20 years old, began a career with the corporation Warner-Lambert, a former diversified American corporation that manufactured products ranging from pharmaceuticals to candy. In the year 2000, Pfizer and Warner-Lambert merged, creating the world's fastest-growing major pharmaceutical company. In the early stages of his career he was a Division Sales Manager supervising about 100 people and before that was a District Sales Manager. He spent the last two years of his employment as part of the Non-Traditional Accounts Department. In this position he had the responsibility of developing accounts with businesses that would not traditionally carry his companies' products. After a thirty-two year career he spends his retirement in the Mille Lacs Lake Area.

I was fortunate to have Mr. Bergstrom

take some time and offer his opinions on the following questions.

How important is it to build an informal network of peers in similar organizations through which you exchange ideas and discuss issues relevant to technical advances in your field and why?

"It is very important. However during my management period this was not recognized."

Expanding on this, he believes, to achieve goals you must acquire functional and technical knowledge. Achieving these goals can be

accomplished by laying out a management plan specifying the moves that will help you. He also mentioned, "By hiring staff with superior technical knowledge you challenge yourself and benefit the organization." Challenge yourself to search out new ideas and information on a regular basis by taking on at least one new project each year. Attend conferences on your professional specialty and subscribe to professional publications.

When presenting technical information, what approaches did you use in the past and what worked the best?

"I employed third party resources when in house personnel were not available." From his experiences he believes you must first identify your audience. Using technical terms and concepts is appropriate, even desirable, when presenting to an audience with relevant technical expertise. The more diverse the group, however, the fewer terms you should use. He further added, "Consider how much detail you need to communicate." Before getting to the "meat" of a document or presentation, free the audience of wading through unessential details, by presenting an "executive summary." When talking with people about technical information, give illustrations and examples to which your audience can relate.

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What steps do you take to assure the company stays on the cutting edge and performs at full potential?

"Keep yourself and your employees 100% informed of all current conditions in the sales plan and industry." He conversed about identifying what will have an impact on your field, suggesting we make a list of emerging technological advances and develop an action plan. Read the latest books in your field and look for research on new ideas and developments. He added to this topic, "Ask for more detailed updates from your people when they are working on highly technical tasks." This should be done to gain a better understanding of the subject matter. Make a determined effort to learn the business from the perspectives of other people. Take advantage of the times when you are working with the experts in other fields.

How did you aim and position yourself to meet constant change?

"I made certain before any decisions

were made at the beginning of the day I was 100% up to date of all current information." He made aware the need to ask someone who seems particularly savvy about the organization to be your mentor. Look for opportunities to lunch and socialize with others outside the normal work environment, or after hours when informal "bull sessions" about the organization take place. Read your organization's history to understand how the business has developed and changed.

What approaches did you take to assure that company weaknesses were identified and corrected? Likewise, assuring strengths were not compromised?

"This can only be handled in one way with openness and honesty. Situations cannot be ignored, all politics must be set aside, and we are all in this together." A suggestion he made was implementing a total quality management program or some broad-based effort to broaden your perspective. Serve on a task force that is dealing with a problem relevant to the organization's future. He believes you must, "Develop benchmarks for the key success factors in your organization." Find out whether your group has received input from stakeholders. List things you can do personally to help the organization

overcome its weakness and list things you can do to make the strengths even greater.

How did you develop a wide-angle perspective of the company?

"I started at an entry level position and followed the management levels when opportunities became available." He mentioned the importance of doing your homework before deciding to join an organization and then ask a lot of questions about the mission, strategies, structure, culture and management style. He advised me, "Get to know several people in the organization that can be good sources of information." When your group tries to solve a problem, ask what other parts of the organization have a stake in the outcome.

Besides quantitative data what are a couple key points for having a realistic budget?

"A realistic budget allows you to meet your objectives without wasting time on revisions." A suggestion he made concerning the budget process was to review your strategic plan, identify goals and objectives, and determine the resources needed to achieve those objectives.

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Carefully assess what resources you have and what additional resources you will need during the period to be covered. Meet with a controller or financial accounting person in your organization to discuss the information you need to understand how to do your job better. Avoid getting bogged down in data by determining the two or three most important implications of the data. He stressed to me, "Back your decisions with quantitative logic whenever possible." Insightful information was shared and developed and it relates to our industry on many levels. Here are a few examples of how I see the information being applied.

The golf course industry has many outlets allowing us to be experts. The GCSAA is one of the many sources we have to increase our technical knowledge. Many of us network with peers, through forums like Turfnet, to get first hand information on industry topics. We utilize publications

containing research, case studies and best management practices that help us provide superior playing conditions. Resources must be used when conveying protocols to golfers, committees and owners. All of these tools give us the technical expertise needed to provide the best playing conditions for golfers. We are better prepared to make smart decisions through the efforts of the Association and making the most of our outlets

As your golf course advances, all current information must be known. In the golf course industry we are amidst many sensitive issues concerning the environment and the well-being of the public. Increased awareness of fertilizer application is seen by recent phosphorus restriction in our state. Researching drift from our sprayers continues in order to limit potential affects on water bodies and nearby private/public lands. The implication of your practices on these entities is vital to the perception of your golf course. Keeping other divisions of the golf course attune to situations like these allows them to know our industry better. Likewise, to gain a wide-perspective of the golf course operations we must understand other

areas. Communicating these issues effectively and understanding the big picture, we improve the golf courses position for the future.

The increasing demands of golfers compel us to make sound financial decisions. Bunkers are being maintained at extremely high standards requiring more man-hours. We provide the desired results even as the wages required for hiring and retaining quality employees continues to increase. Turfgrass is being maintained with high intensity, which often requires greater inputs. Despite increasing fertilizer costs we are still expected to produce the same high quality product and the persons responsible for the golf course finances still expect realistic budgets. For budgeting purposes we must "use financial and quantitative data" in order to justify our increases.

I would like to thank Mr. Bergstrom for his time and hope everyone has taken something from this article. If you have any ideas for future "Management Matters" articles please feel free to email me at jryan@northlandcountryclub.com.

(Editor's Note: The history of the GCSAA was gathered from www.gcsaa.org.)



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