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### About the Cover:

Geneva Golf Club professional Lisa Grimes, tees off on the par 3, 14th hole at The Classic at Madden's Resort during the 2010 MGCSA Harold Stodola Research Scramble on September 20. Grimes was the guest of Alexandria CC Superintendent Donnacha O'Connor. Their team finished in second place. (See story on Page 5)

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### MGCSA EVENTS

November 19  
Pesticide Recertification  
University of Minnesota

December 8  
MGCSA Awards & Recognition Banquet  
Southview CC  
Host: Jeramie Gossman

January 4, 2011  
Super Tuesday  
Minneapolis Convention Center

January 5-7, 2011  
Northern Green Expo  
Minneapolis Convention Center



**TOP GUNS OF THE MGCSA** enjoyed beautiful weather for a day of fun and education at the 2nd Annual Fall Sporting Clay Shoot at the Horse and Hunt Club in Prior Lake on October 4. Forty shooters attended the event. (See the winners on Page 22.)



## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

### *Stepping Up to the Plate for Wee One*

By Paul Diegnau, CGCS

I had the pleasure of playing in the Wee One tournament several weeks ago at North Oaks GC. I know a fun time was had by all. But more importantly, \$22,000 was raised for Tom Fuller and his family and that is very special! Once again, the individuals and companies that make up our industry stepped forward and showed their generosity. Several individuals were intimately involved in bringing this wonderful event to Minnesota. Dale Parske of Reinders served as the Tournament Chairman and poured his heart and soul into making this inaugural event as successful as it was. I know for a fact he's dreamed of bringing a Wee One tournament to Minnesota since its original inception in our sister state across the river. Well done, Dale! He was assisted by committee members John Meyer of Agrotain and Tom Proshok, Superintendent at Brackett's Crossing. Thank you to the North Oaks Golf Club for hosting the event and providing quality service throughout the entire day. Jack MacKenzie, CGCS, and his staff should be commended for the phenomenal conditioning of the golf course. Within the pages of this *Hole Notes* edition (Pages 25-26) you will find a thorough recap of the event written by Mr. Parske. Check it out!

**With the weak economy and ailing maintenance budgets** it has become clear to your MGCSA BOD that attendance numbers are a shadow of what they were ten years ago and probably will remain as such into the near future. With the possible addition of the Wee One to the annual tournament schedule, the prospects for increasing attendance at our regular events are even more unlikely. I have asked the Arrangements Committee to explore possible solutions to this trend and to propose recommendations to the BOD. I would expect a course of action will be agreed upon by the end of the year.

**The MGCSA Harold Stodola Research Tournament** was held in September at The Classic in Brainerd. Having never golfed this highly-touted layout I must say I was blown away! Hats off to the golf course designer and Superintendent of this beauty, Scott Hoffmann, CGCS. Thank you to Scott and his staff for hosting this event. In case you are unaware, Maddens Resort was awarded Golf Digests Green Star Environmental Award. A Green Star is meant to signify environmental achievement in every phase of a golf resort's operation. The 2009 winners included Barton Creek Resort & Spa in Texas, Kiawah Island (S.C.) Resort, Pebble Beach Resorts and Sunriver (Ore.) Resort. Maddens was the lone recipient of the award this year, indicative of the extremely high standards required to bring home a green star. Very impressive!

**I would be remiss if I failed to mention an article I recently stumbled across** (I stack my magazines for winter just like most of you) featuring another environmental leader in our midst. The April 2010 issue of Golf Course Industry features an interview with Roger Stewart, CGCS, of TPC Twin Cities. Pat Jones interviews Roger on his golf course maintenance philosophy as it pertains environmental responsibility. The interview is a great read and really shows you what a class guy Roger is. Make sure and put it on the top of your must read list this winter.

**Speaking of diminishing maintenance budgets**, I was asked by Scott Turtinen to clear up some confusion regarding dual membership between MGCSA and GCSAA. I am sure GCSAA will not be excited to read these words but here goes: Only Class A and SM members are required to carry dual membership. Enough said.

**Don't forget that your last chance to complete pesticide recertification for 2010 is scheduled for November 19** at the University of Minnesota Continuing Education Center on the St. Paul campus. Details are available at [mgcsa.org](http://mgcsa.org)

One final thought, November 2 is the mid-term elections. Please vote. You can make a difference!

*Until next time,  
Paul Diegnau, CGCS*

# HOLE NOTES

Official publication  
of the MGCSA

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HOLE NOTES (ISSN 108-27994) is published monthly except bi-monthly November/December, January / February for \$2 aN issue or \$20 per year by the MGCSA, 217 Minnetonka Av. S., Ste. D, Wayzata, MN 55391. Scott Turtinen, publisher. Periodicals postage paid at Wayzata, MN. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to HOLE NOTES, P. O. BOX 617, WAYZATA, MN 55391.

# Ruhoff, Meyer, Ramler, MacDonald Win 2010 Stodola Research Scramble

The site of the 2010 Harold Stodola Research Scramble was held at The Classic at Maddens Resort. Though the air was chilly, MGCSA members enjoyed a great day to play golf 'up north.'

**Host Superintendent Scott Hoffmann, CGCS** and his assistants had the course in excellent shape. Players found the layout pleasing, fast and fun to play.

**The winning team** of Jeff Meyer, Koronis Hills Golf Club, Billie MacDonald, Yamaha Golf & Utility, Tom Ramler and Jason Ruhoff, Boulder Ridge Golf Club shot a 14-under-par round of 58 to win the 2010 Harold Stodola Research Scramble. The Champs eagled their last hole of the day to capture the win. This team has now won four consecutive Stodola Scrambles.



**4-PEAT CHAMPIONS AT THE 2010 HAROLD STODOLA RESEARCH SCRAMBLE**

*From the left, Billie MacDonald, Jeff Meyer, Tom Ramler and Jason Ruhoff*



**SCOTT HOFFMANN, CGCS**

*The Classic at Madden's Resort*

**A close second** were Donnacha O'Connor and Lisa Grimes from Alexandria Golf Club, Jon Almquist, MTI Distributing, Inc., and Scott Turtinen, MGCSA Business Office. They shot a 13-under par 59.

Shooting a 12-under-par 60 was the team from Prestwick Golf Club, Dave Kazmierczak, Jake Kocak, Dave Thalberg and Dick Rieg.

Kevin Clunis, CGCS, Tanners Brook Golf Club, hit the longest drive of the day. Matt McKinnon, Legacy Courses at Cragun's and Scot Milstroh, Wapicada Golf Club sank the longest putts. The closest-to-the-pin winners were Dick

Williams, Brainerd, Gregg Paulus, The Ponds at Battle Creek, and Charlie Miller, Goodrich Golf Club, who won two of the events.

**The following MGCSA affiliates generously sponsored the 2010 Harold Stodola Research Scramble:** Bayer Environmental Science, Becker

Underwood, CycleWorks Golf Supply, Duininck Golf, Excel Turf & Ornamental, Hartman Companies, Inc., MTI Distributing Inc., Par Aide Products Company, Precision Turf & Chemical, Inc., Superior Turf Services Inc., Syngenta Professional Products, The Tessman Company, and Versatile Vehicles, Inc.

## HAROLD STODOLA RESEARCH SCRAMBLE - RESULTS

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# GOING BROWN

By DAN DINELLI, CGCS  
North Shore Country Club

Just when the world is appreciating the concept of "green," our industry seems to want to go brown! When it comes to golf, the newly coined phrase, "brown is beautiful," concerns me. The idea is being sold based on the assumption that "brown" turf requires fewer inputs, saves money, is better for the environment, and plays better. A few key issues will drive this topic for some time to come.

The industry is trying to break itself from the "Augusta effect," where all plants are growing beautifully, and the look of perfection is seen in all elements within the landscape. "Over grooming is over spending," is the phrase often associated with Augusta-like conditions. Some golfers enjoy the beautified landscape enhanced with flowers and shrubs. Others feel it distracts from the purity of the game.

**The fact is most budgets can't afford the intensity of care** golf-scapes like Augusta's require. In many areas around the country, the drive to "go brown" is about water conservation and restrictions. In other areas the concern is water quality and the application of inputs, such as Nitrogen and Phosphorous. Many scientific studies have concluded that inputs, when used properly, pose extremely low risks on turf. However, governing bodies often overlook these studies and propose broad bans. The expense in over-seeding dormant turf is another driving force behind the idea that brown is good. Lastly, many of the better golfers enjoy the dry, firm and fast surface that thinning turf offers, because it is similar to the courses where the game originated. Regardless of the reasons driving this new trend, I feel it threatens long-term revenues, playability, the health of the facility, and the environment.

**The challenge** with "brown is beautiful" or "brown is the new green" is that it can work in certain areas and be devastating in others. Yes, one can argue that over-seeding dormant turf in order to maintain the green look is spending money poorly. The game can be played on dormant turf, and the grass will grow again when conditions are favorable. There are grasses that can survive when pushed into dormancy, like the Bluegrass common in Midwest

lawns and prevalent in our inner roughs. During hot, dry summers, un-irrigated rough often turns brown and gets very thin. Unless the stressful growing conditions become extreme, the turf can still be playable. However, these are the areas where we actively fight weeds and have to make turf repairs.

**The problem is, not all grasses tolerate dormancy;** some, like *Poa annua*, simply die. Bentgrass tolerates some brief level of dormancy, but typically dies under the added stress of putting green conditions. The variability in tolerance to stress and seasonal hardiness within turf species is confusing to the non-professional. Much of what a turf professional learns is directly related to preventing brown, stressed turf during the growing season. It has been documented that healthy, growing turf is the best defense against many pests, diseases, weeds, and wear.

**Typically, the grasses used in our climate on greens, tees, and fairways are *Poa annua*** (considered a weed by many because it lacks winter and summer hardiness and invades the turf with its prolific seed production) and bentgrass. We try to favor bentgrass because it is a hardier species that tolerates weather extremes better than *Poa*, but *Poa* eventually becomes part of the turfgrass stand. These grasses, when starved for both water and nutrients, become stressed and vulnerable to some potentially devastating diseases. We are reminded of this from time to time during stressful growing conditions. Rumors quickly circulate when turf dies in key playing areas at a course. Turf loss can compromise membership retention, playability, rounds played, revenues, and the course's overall reputation.

**Sustainability is another buzz word used a lot today.** In our climate, with the grasses that we use, turf that continues to grow and function offers sustainable playing conditions. Stressed "brown turf" will not be capable of tolerating wear from play over time. The stand of turf will thin, allowing the surface to turn into barren soil. The potential short-term savings in going brown will be offset when additional resources are required to bring these areas back to healthy, playable turf.

Healthy, actively growing turf, which is

defined by the plants' ability to photosynthesize and characterized by green color, offers far more environmental benefit than "brown" turf. The plants ability to cool the surface, filter the water and air, and anchor the soil is greatest when the turf is healthy and active.

**The current economy is straining maintenance budgets.** As the industry responds and budgets are reduced, golf-scapes will change at many courses. In the big picture, some feel the change will be better for the game because it will lower the cost and make golf affordable for more people. I have seen standards change during my career.

**We now have sophisticated irrigation systems that almost mimic rain** rather than the old, manual quick-coupler systems. Mowing heights on greens, tees, and fairways are less than half of what they were just three decades ago. This has been driven by the quest for fast, firm playing conditions. Managing these ultra-low mowing heights requires a fleet of equipment, an arsenal of inputs, and an army of staff to monitor the turf's life support systems, which mimic an intensive care unit. Bunkers, once considered hazards, now receive a level of attention that rivals what we give to finely managed turf. Some insist that golfer demand drove these changes. Others think it was superintendents demonstrating their skills. Regardless of what instigated the changes, these high standards are challenging our budgets today.

**The key is balance.** We must balance the turf's health, playability, economics, and environmental concerns to meet reasonable expectations and function. In short, this is what Superintendents are trained to do. The millions of dollars spent in research to better understand and manage turf's ecology and improve its playability are wasted when plant health is ignored. The training, tools, and resources that allow practitioners to grow healthy turf have little value when plant function is allowed to fail. "Going brown" in our climate is misunderstood. I feel it is a poor message that could lead to unattractive consequences for the golf course.

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# Voles in the Landscape

By JENNIFER MENKEN  
Bell Museum of Natural History

## IMPORTANCE

Voles, also known as field mice, are small brown rodents very common in yards and fields. Their presence is most often observed in the late winter and early spring right after the snow melts, when their grassy trails are laid bare and areas of dead grass appear. Voles do the most harm to small trees and shrubs when they chew on the bark, often hidden below winter snows.



Meadow Vole

## IDENTIFICATION

Voles are a group of small, brownish rodents about the size and shape of a mouse. They have small ears and a short tail, which give them a "stocky" appearance. They spend a great deal of time eating grasses and roots and making trails. These surface runways are one of the easiest ways to identify voles. Usually seen in early spring just after snowmelt, a series of criss-crossing trails can be viewed on the surface. There may be larger patches of dried grass that function as storage areas for extra food and nesting materials.

Voles will also make small holes about 1 inch across and underground tunnels to get to tubers and bulbs. They will even use mole tunnels. This often cause moles to be blamed for eating roots, instead of the white-grubs they actually eat.

Vole damage may also be noticed on trees and shrubs where they have chewed through the bark very near the ground. The vole's front teeth will leave 1/2 inch side-by-side grooves in the wood.

## BIOLOGY

Minnesota has several species of vole, the most common being the meadow vole

(*Microtus pennsylvanicus*) and the prairie vole (*Microtus ochrogaster*). Like most rodents voles have a short life expectancy but are very productive breeders. One female vole can have 5-10 litters in a year averaging 3 to 5 young. They may nest in shallow grass filled nests on the ground, or dig a small tunnel about 4-5 inches down to nest. Fortunately voles are a prime food source for many predators such as snakes, hawks, owls, foxes, and badgers. Vole populations cycle, and about every 3-5 years there will be a population boom. Mild winters with good snowfall can help to increase vole populations.

## PREVENTION

Voles are extremely common and total prevention is probably impossible but general yard sanitation may help keep vole numbers down. Remove woodpiles and other debris from the ground that may allow hiding places for voles. Keep grass trimmed short and bushes trimmed

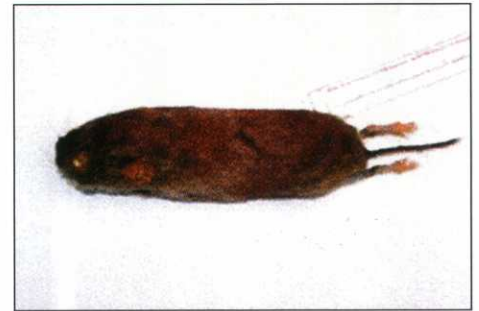


Vole damage on yew

up from the ground. Bird feeders are another attraction for voles and should either be removed or the ground kept very clean to keep vole numbers down.

## MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES

While lawn damage is most visible in the spring it is rarely permanent. Simply rake up the dead grass and reseed the area. As the surrounding grass grows it will cover up the trails. Vole damage to tree bark is best prevented by encircling the tree with a light colored tree guard. The guard should be tall enough to reach above the snow line in the winter and the base should be buried in the soil or have a soil ridge around the base. Make sure that



Redbacked Vole

the guard is loose enough so that it doesn't constrict the tree.

In small areas trapping may be an effective way of reducing vole populations. Standard mouse snap traps set along runways or near tunnels baited with peanut butter will catch some animals. You may want to cover the traps so that pets and children do not accidentally find them.

Large vole populations can most effectively be reduced with toxic baits. There are some pesticides available for home use. Be sure to read the label before you buy any pesticide and again before you use the pesticide. Vole baits should be placed inside bait stations to reduce the risk of non-target species ingesting the bait. Most pesticides recommended for voles are restricted and can only be used by Certified Pesticide Applicators. Contact your local Extension educators for more information about pesticide use.

Remember the voles are always there and for a great portion of the year they go unnoticed. In an average year it may not even be worth the effort to control the population.



Vole damage on yew



# PESTICIDE RECERTIFICATION

CATEGORIES: A (CORE) & E (TURF AND ORNAMENTALS)

November 19, 2010 | 9:00am—3:45pm

University of Minnesota Continuing Education and Conference Center, St. Paul



**GO TO [www.MNLA.biz](http://www.MNLA.biz) FOR MORE INFORMATION**

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Early Registration (on or before November 5)

- MGCSA Members: \$89

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- MGCSA Members: \$109

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2. Online registration available at [www.MNLA.biz](http://www.MNLA.biz).

3. Fax registration to MNLA at: 651-633-4986.

## SCHEDULE

### Session I

9:00am—9:45am

**MDA's Pesticide Applicator Licensing**

Kay Sargent

### Session II

9:45am—10:30am

**Pesticides and Skin**

Dean Herzfeld

10:30am—10:45am

Break

### Session III

(Concurrent Sessions—choose 1)

10:45am—11:45am

Turf: Developing Disease-Resistant Turfgrasses

Eric Watkins

10:45am—11:45am

Woodies: EAB Update

Jeff Hahn

11:45am—12:30pm

Lunch

### Session IV

(Concurrent Sessions—choose 1)

12:30pm—1:30pm

Turf: Current Topics in Landscape Turf Pests

Bob Mugaas

12:30pm—1:30pm

Woodies: Beyond the Emerald Ash Borer:

Replacement Trees for Ash

Kathy Zuzek

### Session V

(Concurrent Sessions—choose 1)

1:35pm—2:35pm

Turf: Sustainable Landscape Turfgrass Management

Bob Mugaas

1:35pm—2:35pm:

Woodies: Tree and Herbaceous Diseases Common in 2010

Michelle Grabowski

2:35pm—2:45pm

Break

### Session VI

2:45pm—3:45pm

Unintended Environmental Consequences of Herbicides to

Landscape Trees & Shrubs

Mark Stennes