

One Superintendent's Perspective

By **STEPHEN DINGER**
Como Golf Course



Como Golf Course, located in St. Paul's Como Park area, opened in 1925 and was re-designed in 1987 by Don Herfort.

I started working for the City of St. Paul the first summer after I graduated from High School. I have been with the Parks Department for 39 years. Most of those years have been spent on city golf courses. I started at Phalen Golf Course in the '70s under Neil Draz. I worked there for three or four years as an entry level worker. I then moved to the Highland Nine Hole Golf Course where I worked with Bob Grew, the Golf Course Superintendent (smart and tough, work was his recreation). I worked as a groundworker mowing, spraying and learning how to manage a course. After he retired in the late 1980s, I became the crew leader (Assistant) and worked with David Ksiazek until I was placed at Como Golf Course as a Golf Course Superintendent in 1989.

How did you enter the turf management industry? When I started for the City I was lucky to be moved to all different types of jobs in the Parks Department. I did everything from refuse collection to working in forestry as a tree trimmer to being a mason's helper and then as a playground groundworker. But when I started at Phalen Golf Course, I knew this was the type of work I wanted to do. I was enthusiastic to go to work and I loved learning about all the aspects of taking care of a golf course. I was able to see the difference we made to the course with our work. I have never lost my enthusiasm or the interest in the work I do.

What has been the highest point in your career? Being moved to Como as a Superintendent was a high point. But having the privilege to work with great people every day is the highest point for me. My staff has always made this an enjoyable experience. The golf courses for the city work very closely together and share staff and equipment. So working with Superintendents Denise Kispert (Highland National) and Jeff Hable (Phalen Golf) gives us a large amount of experiences to draw off of. We have a Central Service Facility that helps us with talented mechanics, trades people and support services, as we may need them. I am very grateful for all the talented people I have had the privilege to work with over the years.

What has been your lowest point? I really can't think of one thing that stands out. When I look back at the problems over the years, I also see the solutions that have come with them, and many have turned into great opportunities.

What are your greatest challenges – political, agronomic or managerial? When I began working for the City of St. Paul, from the shovel to the computer, I was able to learn how work within the system. To an outsider it may look bulky and confusing but we have wonderful people in this system that will bend over

backwards to assist you when you need help.

Agronomically every course has its challenges and Como is no different. It was built partly on an old lake bed and partly on a sand pit with a rocky moraine running through the middle, so I have plenty of different soils and managing them can be interesting. I learned a great lesson from Dr. White when he would bring over some of his classes in late summer and they would not be able to get a soil probe into the fairways more than one or two inches. He wanted them to see what they may have to deal with in the real world setting. I have

learned to accept what is and go from there. Make lemonade.

What is the most difficult disease to manage on your course and how do you? We have lots of Poa in the fairways on the south side of the course that is protected by woods, so we get dollar spot in that area in the late summer. Up until last year we were able to keep it at bay with cultural methods. Last year was a very bad year and we may have to start adding some fungicidal treatments.

Is it hard to find good help in your area of the state? No. I have had very few problems with staff.

Do you have a dog on your crew? We contract out with a service that brings out dogs when the geese population gets too heavy. I think the geese learn to recognize the dog owners truck and hightail it to Como Lake until he leaves and then they come back to dine on the nice turf at Como Golf Course. It does help, but being right in the middle of Como Park we have to deal with two distinct attitudes about geese, depending on which side of Lexington Ave. you're on.

Where will our industry be in 10 years? I think it will be stronger than ever. We have seen the bottom and have nowhere to go but up.

Where would you like to be in 10 years? Retired and spending time with my lovely wife Julie and daughter Emma at Green Lake, Wisconsin in the summer and Vancouver or Portland for the winter. Maybe I can get a part time job changing cups at a near-by course.

What is your perspective of our state association and what would you change? I think we have a wonderful association. All that needs to be done is to continue filling it with enthusiastic people as has been done in the past.

Name your foursome, whom would you play with and why. I am not able to golf much, so whoever it is, it would be for the conversation more than the golf. Bill Murray, Tiger Woods, Buddha and Spencer Nelson (his family lives in my neighborhood and I talk with him sometimes last summer when I walked the dog (still sharp as a tack and great stories).

"I think we have a wonderful association. All that needs to be done is to continue filling it with enthusiastic people as has been done in the past."

- Stephen Dinger



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TECH TALK: TOP 10 PHONE APPS FOR SUPERINTENDENTS

By BOB PORTER
Hiawatha Golf Course

So, you have an iPhone or are thinking about getting an iPhone? In that case, you will want some tech savvy superintendent apps! There are hundreds of thousands of apps to choose from at the App Store, how do you sift through them all to find those diamonds in the rough? I have ten recommendations to start transforming your iPhone into the ultimate multi tool.

Before I dive in, I should note quickly that the iPhone comes with several built in apps that are also great tools. Email (exchange, gmail, mobileme), Notes (make to do lists), Voice Memos (record notes to yourself on the course), Clock (great for a stop watch or timing how long a mower route takes), and iCal (Calendar for all your events during the season) Ok, so maybe you get 15 app recommendations.

Fahrenheit (\$.99) - Weather and Temperature on your Home Screen. This app is quickly becoming my favorite weather app. It is a simple upgrade to the iPhone weather app. Fahrenheit allows the current temp to show in a badge on the app icon. It also gives details about the day and the next 10 days. Initially you get a cloud radar, but is upgradable. (in app upgrade for an additional \$.99 gets you more radar views). I think the best feature is to see the current temp at a glance.

WeatherBug (Free) - Weatherbug is the only truly live local weather app. It provides radar views, current and extended forecasts, maps, video and local area structure mounted cameras. The down side to the free version is that it does have some ads within the app. If these ads bother you, there is a \$.99 Weatherbug Elite advertisement free version.

Facebook (Free) - Facebook is a great way to communicate with the public or your membership. You can post pictures, course conditions, status updates, golf/cart specials, special outings, and course maintenance updates.

Twitter (Free) - Twitter is a quick form of communication in 149 characters or less. It is a really easy way to post course updates, blogposts, and ask questions of fellow turf professionals. The app will also allow you to post videos, pictures and even your location. There are many other apps that tie into Twitter as well. When you make an update to Facebook, for

instance, it can also update your Twitter status.

BlogPress (\$2.99) - BlogPress is a really good go-to app if you host a course maintenance blog. BlogPress allows you to post to sites like, Blogger, WordPress, TypePad, Tumblr, and more. Once you have your blog set up on the web, this app lets you make a new post in just a few minutes.

DropBox (Free) - DropBox is free online (cloud) storage. This app allows you to "keep the course in your pocket." DropBox lets you store virtually any file type. I carry around budgets, employee info, course pictures, maps, spreadsheets, word docs, etc. Not only can you view and edit some files, but you can also share files with coworkers or colleagues across the country. Simply by emailing them a link to the file right from the app.

GoodReader (\$4.99) - GoodReader is a robust PDF reader with advanced reading and annotating capabilities. This app is on the higher priced side, however it has many valuable features. The app allows you to view a wide variety of files. Editing, however, is allowed only for PDF files. You can zoom in on file text with a simple pinch. The app can search text, download email attachments, download web content, WiFi file transfer, and USB file transfer. You can download and upload to Google Docs, DropBox, WebDav, SugarSync and Box.net. This app also allows the user to create a folder system that is completely customizable.

Evernote (Free) - Evernote is considered by many to be one of the Top 10 apps of all time. To quote the Evernote folks "Evernote turns your iPhone, iPod and iPad into an extension of your brain, helping you remember anything and everything in your life." Evernote stores notes, pics, voice recordings, documents, virtually anything you can think of. I use this app to store all my course invoices, web research, articles, contracts, bids, etc.

Turf Management Calculator (\$5.99) - Turf Management Calc was developed at the Univ of Georgia for turf pros and students alike. The app has over 17,000 programmed calculations. Calculate anything from mowing, irrigation, fertilizers, pesticides, topdressing, unit conversion and many other practices. The user inputs the numbers and the app gives the correspon-

ding calculation. I have only been using this app for about two months, but so far I am really liking it.

iPod (included) - iPod. I included this one because I use it all the time. I realize that not all managers and/or facilities allow the use of an iPod, but having both devices in one is one less thing to lose or break. One can simply listen to their favorite music while driving the course in the wee hours of the morning or while mowing. I often find myself using it in my office hooked to a speaker if I am sitting at the computer for an extended period of time.

As I write this, the iPhone OS (operating system) is due for an update in the next month or two. It is unclear if ALL iPhones will be getting the update. The update may only apply to iPhone 4 and not to the iPhone 3G or 3Gs. As a result, some apps may not work on the iPhone 3G/3Gs because the technology inside the older models cannot handle the newer software demands. All of my recommended apps should be fine, but future app purchases may not work on the older 3G/3Gs hardware.

Happy app hunting!

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The Savory Supe

By Scottie Hines, CGCS
Windsong Farm Golf Club



Grilled Banana S'mores

Serves 8. Prep time 15 minutes - Grilling time 15 to 21 minutes
Special equipment 8-by-8-inch baking pan suitable for the grill.

Grocery List: 2 firm but ripe medium bananas, 5 tbsp unsalted butter, 1 large egg, 1 cup graham cracker crumbs, 1tsp brown sugar, 4 cups mini marshmallows, 1/2 cup semi-sweet chocolate chips.

Crust

1 cup graham cracker crumbs, 4 tbsp unsalted butter - melted, 1 egg yolk, 1 tablespoon unsalted butter, melted 1 tsp brown sugar, 2 medium bananas - firm but ripe, 4 cups mini marshmallows, 1/2 cup semi-sweet chocolate chips. Prepare the grill for indirect and direct cooking over medium heat (about 400°F).

In a large bowl combine the crust ingredients and mix well. Firmly and evenly press the mixture into the bottom of an 8-by-8-inch baking pan. Grill the crust over indirect medium heat, with the lid closed as much as possible, until firm, 6 to 8 minutes. Remove the crust from the grill and set aside to cool for about 10 minutes. This will allow the crust to set.

In a small bowl combine the butter and brown sugar. Cut each banana in half lengthwise and leave the skins attached (they will help the bananas hold their shape on the grill). Liberally brush the cut side of the bananas with the butter mixture.

Grill the bananas, cut side down, over direct medium heat, with the lid open, until they start to soften, 2 to 4 minutes, without turning. Let cool briefly and then score the bananas into 1/2-inch slices, cutting through just to the peel.

Fill the baking pan with 2 cups of the marshmallows, making sure they cover the bottom of the crust evenly. Next, scoop out and distribute the slices of grilled banana, followed by the remaining 2 cups of marshmallows.

Grill the pie over indirect medium heat, with the lid closed, keeping the temperature of the grill as close to 400°F as possible, until the marshmallows have puffed up and started to brown, 5 to 7 minutes. At this point carefully sprinkle the chocolate chips over the top and continue cooking until the chips appear glossy and melted, about 2 minutes. Remove the pie from the grill and let cool for about 5 minutes. Spoon into small serving bowls and serve warm.

Enjoy!
Scottie Hines, CGCS



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PEER-TO-PEER: BETTER TURF THROUGH NETWORKING

MGCSA members were asked:

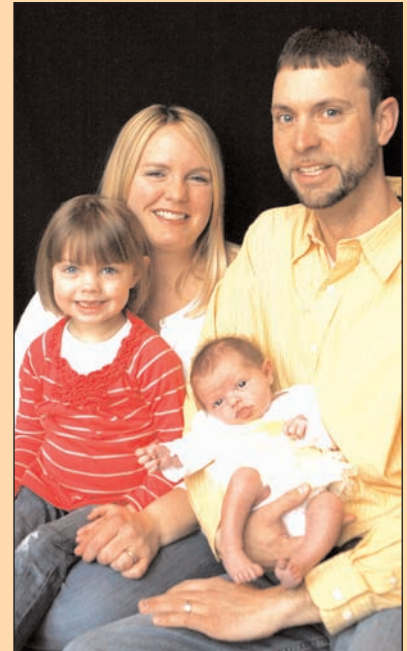
How Do You Treat Your Staff to Special Celebrations?

At **Wayzata Country Club**, we have at least 1 BBQ each month from June to September, usually on Guest Day! We also have donuts the 15th of each month to celebrate that month's bunch of birthdays. Towards the end of the summer season and before everyone leaves for school, we have an employee golf outing at a local public course where all employees, golfers and non-golfers take a swing! - *Jesse Trcka, Wayzata Country Club*

At **Somerset Country Club** we used to go to the Twins game on a Thursday after work; that was when we could get reasonable tickets. Buying hotdogs and brats for the burning of the brush pile is a big hit, a twice-a-year event. Otherwise, we have numerous pizza lunches and a Famous Dave's every once and a while. - *James Bade, Somerset Country Club*

At **North Oaks Golf Club** we meet for a weekly meeting after our Monday buffet lunch to discuss the good, the bad and typically the fantastic job the staff is doing. At that time we give out a Super Star knit polo shirt to those who really excelled during the previous week. Of course there is the occasional breakfast treat, cold drink from the clubhouse as we nail a difficult project and even fresh fruit from the chef. We cap the year with a festive winter Christmas party, either snow tubing or bowling."

- *Jack MacKenzie CGCS, North Oaks Golf Club*



Stella Marie Hemquist was born on March 4, 2011 at 7:02 pm. 7 lbs, 4 oz and 20 inches long at birth. A proud, big sister is Addison and the excited parents are Randi and Arik Hemquist, who is Assistant Superintendent at Brackett's Crossing Country Club in Prior Lake.



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Musing the Minutes

By **BRIAN BROWN**
MGCSA Secretary

The MGCSA Board of Directors met on April 28, 2011 at Keller Golf Club in St. Paul.

President Paul Diegnau, CGCS called the meeting to order. MTGF President Shawn Bernick started the meeting off with a discussion about the state of MTGF. Bernick will be speaking to each of the seven allied associations. Much of the discussion centered on the Northern Green Expo since it is the primary income source for the MTGF. This revenue source has been on the downward trend as most trade shows. The 2011 revenue from the Green Expo was the lowest since 2003. Green Expo attendance was up 15% but 60 less booths were sponsored. The mission of the MTGF is to support education and research, primarily scientists at the UM. In the last five years \$438,000 has been donated for research and endowments. In 2010 \$65k was funded for three research projects at U of M. The MNLA and MTGF are meeting in June to discuss the future of the Green Expo and re-evaluate the current contract specifics. Bernick is seeking ways to enhance the Field Day at the TROE Center and similar venues.

Treasurer Paul Eckholm, CGCS reported that the association income and expenses are close to budget.

Executive Director Scott Turtinen reported that fliers went out for the 71 available Turf Research tee times. The MGCSA Roster is in process of being mailed at this writing.

Conference/Education

The contracts to speakers at the 2012 Mega-Seminar have been mailed out. The 2012 Green Expo speakers are pretty much finalized.

Environmental

Jeff Johnson submitted two case studies to GCSAA Green Links. There will be a "Going Green" series in *Hole Notes*.

Fundraising

The Vendor Appreciation Day was at Olympic Hills Golf Club on May 17. The Green Expo and

Hospitality Night at the 2012 GIS, set in Las Vegas were discussed.

MN Turf / Gov't Affairs

The Department of Agriculture got a bill passed about noxious weeds that does not have legislative oversight on the department.

Old Business

1) Golf Shirt styles and logo were decided. Dant and Turtinen will finalize the shirt selection and mail an order form to the membership.

2) Turtinen to purchase a software package that digitalizes *Hole Notes*. He will also check into setting up a member's access section on the website. This section could have job postings, directories, *Hole Notes*, etc. Turtinen will look into ways of tracking the hyperlink clicks.

3) Turtinen is researching methods to accept credit cards through the website. There are many options available with varying fees and set-up costs.

4) The Board also requested that he looks into services that could combine all of the different digital offerings into one company (website, member only section, hyperlink data collection, online payment, digital *Hole Notes*, etc.).

- Submitted by Brian Brown,
MGCSA Secretary

MGCSA Membership Report

April 28, 2011 - New Members

Jeffrey Hable

Class A
Phalen Golf Course
St Paul, MN 55106
W: 651-772-7554

Sam Reznicek

Class SM
Grand Forks Country Club
Grand Forks, ND 58208
W: 701-775-7969

Clint Forstrom

Class SM
Interlaken Golf Club
Fairmont, MN 56031
W: 507-235-3178

Joe Berggren

Class SM
Montgomery National Golf Club
Montgomery, MN 56069
W: 507-364-7206

Brian Grill

Class C
Edina Country Club
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Reclassifications

Ryan Inglis

Class SM to Class A
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*Respectfully submitted by,
Matt McKinnon
MGCSA Membership Chair*



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