

# *u Brian, Eric and your staffs appy Anniversary!!!*





# *Proposed Dues Increase to Support Member Driven Research*

By Dave Kazmierczak CGCS

## *To The Point*

At the September 2012 monthly meeting, the MGCSA's Board of Directors voted unanimously to submit to MGCSA members the proposal of a dues increase to directly fund research at the University of Minnesota TROE Center. The proposal will be voted upon at the annual meeting in January.

The plan involves an annual giving of \$20,000 from the MGCSA directly to the University of Minnesota turf program, specifically for directed research- meaning research proposals put forth by the membership and approved by the MGCSA board of directors. The research projects generally will be of the one to two-year variety and have direct impact for members of the MGCSA and their golf courses.

The \$20,000 will initially be gifted from the existing MGCSA Research Fund, and re-paid by the dues increases. The recommendation is to increase dues by seven percent year one, 14 percent year two and 21 percent year three, equating to roughly \$10 per year for the next three years. A five dollar fee would also be attached to the first and each ensuing year to "pay back" the initial monies borrowed from our existing Research Fund. After three years the total dues increase per person will be \$35 and will create a self-sustaining, member driven research purse. Future funding will be 24 percent of annual dues to keep up with inflation..

The idea was brought to the board by Roger Stewart, CGCS, Superintendent at TPC Twin Cities, who is also serving as Research Committee

Chair. The Research Committee, Erin McManus, E. Paul Eckholm CGCS, Dr. Brian Horgan, Sam Bauer, Mike Manthey, Brandon Schindele, Adam Murphy, Chris Tritibaugh, Jeff Johnson and Jamie Bezanson met several weeks prior to the BOD meeting, to discuss ideas and finalize the proposal which was sent to the Board.

The concept's origins came from Stewart and Jack MacKenzie, CGCS, and Executive Director of the MGCSA. Stewart said when the new research committee first met they sat down to talk about what was going on at the TROE center, and what the MGCSA was getting out of their existing contributions. The picture became clear very quickly.

"I was concerned because of a lack of action," Stewart said. "The money we gave just kind of kept the lights on. That first meeting I said... here's what I think, and Jack had a plan for the funding, because.....we don't have any way to raise money."

While the team of Dr. Brian Horgan, Dr. Erik Watkins and Sam Bauer have had solid research conducted at the University and many papers

published, a majority of studies have not been specific to golf course work. This concept gives direct funding for work done for golf course purposes. The three turf researchers were first introduced to the idea in an August meeting with Stewart, MacKenzie and Erin McManus, Superintendent Medinah Golf Club.

"I think at first Brian and the rest were very surprised, but then



were instantly enthusiastic and said yes, we can definitely do that," Stewart said.

Stewart went on to say that what this plan really does is help set a constant flow of funding so the researchers know they have financial backing and can set up a game

plan for operations. Research is funded by grants from associations like the MGCSA and private industry. There is stiff competition to secure that funding and conduct research, and much like a bidding process, the landing of funding can be very fickle. This provides stability and would help ensure that the TROE Center continues to be viewed as a valuable asset to the University.

While Stewart admitted that nobody likes an increase in dues,

this increase is a direct benefit to the membership, and really the only way to get out the of TROE Center the potential that it has.

“At some point in time you just have to go forward and see what happens,” Stewart said.

### ***Your Return on Investment***

A dues increase totaling \$35 dollars over the next three years is a significant bump in Association membership fees. The Board appreciates the concerns it will create however also realizes that the MGCSA isn't utilizing a destination they had helped to build with direct funding and in kind support in 2002. After reviewing alternative funding sources the BOD recognized that the only viable solution was to increase the dues to a level that would sustain the goal of member driven research.

The Research Committee has already begun developing a plan of action to be implemented should the Membership accept the proposal. Working with the University of Minnesota a three-phase approach has been reviewed to provide a return on investment to the membership.

***Phase One:*** The Creation of a Research Library. In actuality our Executive Director has already begun the first phase of the project, the gathering of relevant reports, studies

and articles pertaining to topics the RC feels are important to the membership. Once accumulated the material will be readily available on-line at mgcsa.org in the form of article links for ease of sharing. Information such as worm related studies, wetting solution reviews and weather anomaly impacts upon turf. The RC feels that a library of research material will save the membership the time it would take for them to locate, review and replicate information for their club owners, General Managers or player's use.

“By doing the legwork of finding and accumulating research reports for the MGCSA membership, their time is freed up to continue doing what they do best, manage their golf course. When critical information is required the Library will provide links to University Studies and professional articles at the member's finger tips,” MacKenzie said at the first RC meeting.

This library of material, which takes significant time to gather and collate, will be a big benefit to the MGCSA membership.

***Phase Two*** Regional reports generated three times each year by the University of Minnesota Staff. Remember last summer when the weather turned ugly? Your turf may have been struggling and players may have been complaining about conditions and, although you had the answers,



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it took a report from Dr. Horgan to substantiate what you were saying all along...we are growing a cool season turf in a warm season environment.

The RC and University Staff have agreed that proactive reports would give golf courses through the state the material needed to support cultural practices, explain weather anomalies and improve dialogue between all parties involved. Because we have five distinct regions, five reports will be crafted by Brian, Sam and their staffs to anticipate and report on current concerns when courses open in the spring, during the mid summer months and right before winterizing. All of these reports will be available on line with notification of posting through *The Stimpmeter*.

These regional reports, generated by our partners at the University of Minnesota will support your turf management and lend credibility to seasonal changes in your practices, another great return on your investment.

***Phase Three*** Member Driven Research. While it is nice to have the resources a fine University has to offer and an even better destination for research, the value is limited if the

studies are long term and not driven by specific golf course issues. Your additional fees will go directly to fund research as directed by the membership of the MGCSA.

The RC has already begun a short list of topics they feel need to be researched for direct and immediate benefit to the MGCSA. Soon this list will be sent to each of you for further review to create two specific topics to be studied in the initial research projects to begin in 2013 with results published as they are generated and **NOT** several years down the road. As research is completed new research will begin.

Studies such as Divot Mixes; Rates and Recovery, Combining Wetting Solutions and Blending Growth Regulators will be available as they are tabulated and can be applied to Minnesota golf course management. These reports are not intended for University peer review but rather are working documents for the membership's immediate use.

\$20,000 annually will allow staff to be available for conducting the studies both at the TROE Center and in golf course environments across the state, not just in the metropolitan area.

***“At some point in time you just have to go forward and see what happens,”***

**Roger Stewart, CGCS,  
TPC Twin Cities**

## The Future Is Yours To Decide

For many years the Minnesota Golf Course Superintendent's Association was ahead of their time with investing in member driven research. From top dressing studies, analysis of winter covers and the eventual creation of the TROE Center at the University of Minnesota, the MGCSA has proven to be leaders in regional research applicable to Minnesota golf courses.

Since the beginning of the recession however, the research program has taken a back seat to streamlining the business management of the Association. The Board of Directors and Research Committee are recommending getting back into the game by developing a

funding vehicle and format for the establishment of a solid research program for years to come. The MGCSA has access to some of the finest turf scientists in the country, a facility for the application of member driven studies and the forward thinking to implement and sustain a financial system for this critical program indefinitely.

There is a sound plan in place and now it is up to the membership to choose the direction for the research committee to pursue. The dues increase necessary to drive this research initiative will be reviewed and voted upon at the annual meeting in January. If you have any questions do not hesitate to contact a member of the Board or Research Committee.



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**Regional Turfgrass Report  
Twin Cities Region  
Fall 2012 (authored 10.16.12)**

There is no question that this fall has been exceptionally challenging for golf course superintendents in the Twin Cities region. Following the second hottest July on record, the fall drought has left many of us playing catch up on a concluding growing season. Here are the precipitation (or lack of precipitation) statistics provided by the Minnesota Climatology Working Group:

August: -2.92 inch rainfall deficit.

September: -2.78 inch rainfall deficit.

October: -1.27 inch rainfall deficit to date.

The golfing public demanding firm and fast playing conditions were certainly pleased with the firmness of playing surfaces this fall, however our concerns relate to effect this drought will have on our turfgrass quality and irrigation system down the road. For those with less than adequate irrigation availability, greens have been given the highest priority and rightfully so. This means that we need to create a plan of attack for the areas that have been a low priority during the drought. In many cases the dormancy mechanisms of our turf will ensure its survival over extended periods of dryness, but what's the cutoff? This fall has pushed these rough areas to the limits and we need to prepare for the worst. Unfortunately that's the truth.

Dormant seeding in November will be a good option for areas that might not recover next spring, and should be something you consider in addition to your timely irrigation blow out and snow mold applications. Speaking of snow mold applications, how many of you consulted the August issue of Hole Notes for purchasing your fungicides? We encourage you to use this valuable research whenever possible. Also consider leaving a small test area untreated to demonstrate the effectiveness of these costly (but critical) applications to yourself and your club's management.

The lack of rainfall has certainly tested the limits of our irrigation systems. The good news is it provided some perspective on the moisture distribution and the quality of our system components. The bad news, we might be in worse situation than we previously thought. Remember to take photos and document areas with less than adequate irrigation coverage. Making notations on as-builts might be a good idea as well. This information will be useful for implementing irrigation upgrades and adjustments in the future.

As another golfing season comes to an end, it is important to reflect on the struggles of 2012 as a reminder that we can weather the storm. And what a storm it was. The optimist in each of us knows that 2013 will be a stellar year for turf. Still, be sure to prepare for battle as always with the proper planning to ensure a quick spring recovery and successful golfing season in 2013.

Dr. Brian Horgan  
University Of Minnesota  
Turfgrass Extension Specialist



Sam Bauer  
University of Minnesota  
Horticulture Extension Educator



**Editors Note: On the facing page you will find the first stab at a Regional Golf Course Turf Report, Metropolitan Area, generated by Dr. Horgan and Same Bauer, Extension Specialists at the University of Minnesota. The Research plan as perscribed by the Board of Directors and Research Committee encompasses this regional report format to provide you with current information associated with your section of the state three times annually; spring opening, mid summer and in the fall just pior to closure.**

## **Bob Fitch, Executive Director of the MNLA, Moves On The MGCSA Wishes Bob the Best of Luck!!!**

Bob Fitch has resigned as executive director of the Minnesota Nursery & Landscape Association. He has purchased a business that specializes in working with non-profit organizations on issues such as board orientation and training, strategic planning and organizational policies. Fitch will depart MNLA in mid-December.

Fitch joined MNLA in 1996. During his tenure, MNLA continued a remarkable run of growth and enhanced its position as one of the leading green industry organizations in the country. Since 2000, MNLA's total number of members has typically ranked in the top five among state nursery and landscape organizations, its budget has grown significantly, and its grassroots member involvement has thrived at the same time it has added professional association staff.

On behalf of MNLA, Fitch served as president of the Minnesota Grown Promotion Group from 2000-2004; and as president of the Nursery & Landscape Association Executives of North America from 2005-2007. The work of the MNLA team received numerous awards from the Midwest Society of Association Executives for publications, marketing, membership and communications.

One of his signature accomplishments was successfully collaborating with Bob Mugaas and Larry Vetter, former executive directors of the Minnesota Turf & Grounds Foundation, to create and develop the Northern Green Expo from the merger of the MNLA Convention and the MTGF Conference.



His new company, Cain Consulting Group ([www.cain-consulting.com](http://www.cain-consulting.com)), serves associations, foundations and other non-profits across the United States and Canada. It is based in the small northwestern Iowa town of Hawarden, which is just 10 miles from Fitch's birthplace in Hudson, S.D. Moving closer to family was an important consideration in the career change.

"I've been really pleased in the growing relationship between MNLA and MGCSA," Fitch said. "Not only is MGCSA a critically important audience to the Northern Green Expo, but the ability of MNLA and MGCSA to collaborate on legislative and regulatory matters is mutually beneficial to the members of both organizations. I know your great new executive director, Jack MacKenzie, will be able to forge a strong partnership with whomever is the next staff leader at MNLA."



# Within the Leather

by David Kazmierczak CGCS

With the season winding down and a closing date in the near future, I

always take a moment to reflect back upon the year and digest what went right and what went wrong with our operation. I find it a very useful endeavor to try and capitalize on the successes, and remedy the failures. Ultimately, the changes and tweaks over the winter lead to one very important aspect for the future season: the idea of progress.

Progress by definition is the advancing of thoughts and/or actions by an individual or group to further a concept or goal in a positive manor. It is the very essence of why people are in business. The idea is to make progress, or be progressive from the simplest of jobs to the overall operation. To not make progress is to become stagnant, or even worse, regress.

So what about your operation? Take a moment to think about it. Did you make progress this year? Did you and your crew accomplish a large common goal? Did you expand your operation? Did you build a new bunker or add a new irrigation head? Did you add a new product line or expand your customer base?

Are you satisfied with what you accomplished this year, or did you fall into the trap of being adequate? Did you do the same thing as last year with the same result, with the same people, doing the same

things? Are you satisfied with that?

I am willing to bet the answer is no to the last question. It has been my observation that generally, people in the turf industry are not the complacent type. They are innovators either by necessity or design. They are constantly trying to figure out ways to make things better, more efficient, and ultimately lead to progress.

That same idea of progress is currently permeating the management of the MGCSA. It had been suggested by some that the MGCSA had become stagnant: The same thing, at the same time with the same results. Some of the comments I heard included one particularly glaring one, surmising that all a member really got from their paid dues was access to job listings and a magazine. Whether this was true or not is up to debate, but I believe that idea of stagnation was the backbone for the change in the executive director position at the end of last year. In case you have been understandably too busy to notice, let me give you a quick update on what is different with the MGCSA from this point a year ago.

A complete overhaul of the MGCSA website has taken place. It is now functional, reliable and full of information and quick, easy access. It is light years ahead of its' predecessor, and there are many more functional components that will be added in the future.

The Hole Notes publication you are reading is completely digital, giving the MGCSA the capability of producing a high quality information source without breaking the budget to send out a physical copy. The