



# WESTERN VIEWS

July-August, 2000

Official Publication of the West Michigan Golf Course Superintendents Association

## President's Message

It's on the coat tails of September and I would like to think we are on the downhill slide towards fall. It has been a good year for most of us in the turf business, and hopefully you fared well. Many are aerifying and fertilizing and getting ready for some fall weed control along with fall projects that will ready the course for next year. There are a few important dates left on the

calendar for this season that you should try not to miss.

The annual Golf Day was held at Egypt Valley to help support turf research at Michigan State. We annually raise a significant amount of money and this year, with the number of groups signed up, it should be a banner year. Something you may want to take note of this year, if your golf course dropped

their membership with the G.A.M., is that a significant amount of money from the membership that went to support that organization also went to help support research at M.S.U. The M.T.F. will be looking for alternative ways to raise funds to help subsidize this loss.

We are sponsoring a seminar this fall in conjunction with the G.C.S.A.A. in Grand Rapids at the Crown Plaza. The date is October 17 and the topic is Bentgrass Management and Rootzone Maintenance. The class is being taught by Milt Engelke, PhD. There are 0.7 CEUs available for this class.

The last event to be held this fall will be the annual meeting at Muskegon Country Club. The host superintendent is Kevin Welp. The annual elections will be held at this meeting, and it will be held on October 9. A mailer should be sent out shortly, if you haven't received it yet.

That's it for now. Have a great fall and happy hunting!

Sincerely,

Al Bathum, President

## Update on WMGCSA/Valley Turf Whitecaps Game with Big Brothers/Big Sisters

The WMGCSA and Valley Turf sponsored a game day at Old Kent Park for the Big Brothers/Big Sisters organization of West Michigan on August 5. There was a great turnout of kids and their sponsors to watch the game. Unfortunately, the weather didn't cooperate, and the game was canceled. But

the kids had a great time anyway.

Everybody ate some hot dogs and hamburgers, and we enjoyed getting to know new people. The organizers and participants of Big Brothers/Big Sisters were thrilled with the offer and the new association we have.

Very special thanks to Ron Brink and Brian Vanderbaan of Valley Turf for their generous donation of game tickets and food and beverage.

### 2000 Monthly Meetings and Locations

Sept. 18 Egypt Valley Country Club  
Golf Day

October 9 Muskegon Country Club  
Annual Meeting and  
Elections

**SERIALS**

*Editor's Note: Please write me if you have any corrections or if you are interested in doing an article for us at:*

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Western Views  
8121 Cowan Lake Drive  
Rockford, Michigan 49341

## GCSAA Seminar Coming in October

WMGCSA is sponsoring a GCSAA seminar again this year on October 17 at the Grand Rapids Crowne Plaza. The title is Bentgrass Management and Rootzone Maintenance, and is taught by Milt Engelke, PhD. This will be a great opportunity to pick up some education points and freshen up on this very timely

turf topic. Please plan on attending the seminar. There is an advertisement in this newsletter, and we will send you a flyer in a couple weeks. If you have any questions, you can call GCSAA at headquarters, or John Fulling at Kalamazoo CC at (616) 345-5013. Hope to see you there!

# Keep On Sweepin' - Clean Sweep System Is Ready For You

by Gregory T. Lyman  
Turfgrass Environmental Education Specialist  
Michigan State University

Clean Sweep—a safe, easy...and cheap way to dispose of unwanted pesticides. Have you got that jug of "stuff" in the back corner of the pesticide storage vault that was left there some years ago or some goodies that mistakenly froze and you don't want to gamble that it will perform its job when the pressure is on? Well, if you ask those questions in a crowded room, rarely do you get anyone to jump out of their seat to declare that they have a whopper of a pesticide mess at their shop. Yet having a few oddball pesticide products hanging around a golf course, or any grounds maintenance operation, is not uncommon. There seems to be a variety of ways in which pesticide products can accumulate. Changes

in the scope of the business operation, label changes and new products emerging on the market are a few ways that pesticide products can become unwanted, fall out of favor and get pushed to the back of the storage room. Another common situation is where a superintendent takes a new job, and during the first few weeks discovers a gaggle of materials that just don't fit with their maintenance scheme. Regardless of how the products ac-

cumulate, we have a system to dispose of these products... at no cost.

**Clean Sweep Program—**First, let's tip our hat to the Michigan Groundwater Stewardship Program at the Michigan Department of Agriculture (MDA). The MDA has been aggressively building a mechanism to move old, unusable or unwanted pesticides off your storage shelves and into the hands of disposal professionals. They continue to establish and maintain permanent Clean Sweep disposal sites. The current sites and contacts are listed below.

In general, green industry operations don't have large quantities of unusable or unwanted pesticide products hanging around in storage sheds. More commonly, small amounts of a few products accumulate over time. If you do have a drum or a pallet of stuff, you can make arrangements with your local site for the best approach.

**The System—**Let's cover the ground rules. Again, there is no cost for those operations that are considered end users of the products. These include ground maintenance, golf courses, athletic fields, municipalities, and homeowners. Those who are in the business of selling pesticide application services will be charged a nominal cost; around one dollar per pound, which is a fraction of the cost if you tried to arrange this yourself. This includes unknown pesticide products—those packages that have no label. If you have containers that are old and oozing, put them in clear plastic bags until dropoff day. To take advantage of this system, simply contact the site that is closest

## D.A. Blodgett services for Children and Families

August 25, 2000

Attn: Al Bathum  
WMGCSA  
Cascade Hills Country Club  
3725 Cascade Road SE  
Grand Rapids, MI 49546

Dear Al:

The Big Brothers Big Sisters Program of D.A. Blodgett Services for Children and Families wish to thank you and your organization for supporting us through a Whitecaps outing on August 5, 2000.

One hundred and fifty tickets were distributed to our volunteers and their children for this event. Free food and non-alcoholic drinks were consumed prior to the game. Unfortunately, the game was rained out but it didn't hamper the good times had by all.

Thank you and your organization, John Fulling and Ron Brink from Valley Turf for this opportunity. Hopefully, we can try again next year.

Also in an attempt to network, we have an annual golf outing called Golf for Kids Sake sponsored by Mill Steel in Grand Rapids. Let's discuss the possibilities of your organization being involved in this event somehow someday.

D.A. Blodgett Services is a 501C non-profit organization and our federal ID number is 38-1358163.

Sincerely,

Robert W. Tiesma  
Social Worker  
Big Brothers/Big Sisters

# PDI—But Not This PDI

by Tom Mason,  
Assistant Delegate

I am amazed at the number of people who simply assumed that I am an advocate of GCSAA's current Professional Development Initiative. While I am for higher standards and making the profession better, this proposal for changing member classification and for what is expected of a class A member is simply wrong.

**What is PDI?** To me, PDI is three different things. First, there is to be a standard for becoming and maintaining Class A status. Secondly, there has to be some by-law change to accommodate those who comply and those who don't comply. Thirdly, an enhancement of our education programs to accommodate what is expected.

**The Education**—The effort to improve our education program is really an effort for the staff to understand exactly what a golf course superintendent does now and needs to be able to do in the

future to remain an asset to his/her employer. The HR Web seems to be a very effective tool in quantifying the skills needed by a golf course superintendent. Thus, all money spent for instruction, career planning, reference materials, guidance counseling should be on target. To me, this is not a PDI issue. It is an ongoing education improvement and should not even be an issue for consideration.

**The Standards**—To me, members of GCSAA who are Class A should be working as professional golf course superintendents. They should be actively trying to enhance the image of our profession. They should be working to contribute to the future of our profession. They should be working to enhance their value to their employer. They should not be penalized because of the amount of education they have or don't have. They should not be told by GCSAA that they need to take a seminar or a class. The survival and efficacy of their

job should be up to them.

**The Committee**—I have known many or most of the MSRSG for many years. There is no reason for anyone to accuse this group of anything other than trying to advance the profession for all of GCSAA's members. They are truly dedicated and very capable of keeping their personal motivations out of the way of the finished product. I believe that the product is, as Stephen Covey puts it, "They climbed the ladder of success only to find that the ladder was leaning against the wrong wall."

**What's Wrong #1**—One of the fundamental cornerstones of Stephen Covey's "Seven Habits for Highly Effective People" is what he describes as an "Abundance Mentality." Simply put, "Abundance Mentality" means that one believes that there is enough credit, reward, success out there for everyone. If one works hard and smart, and works to make everyone else better, then they will be successful. PDI is an example of the antithesis of "Abundance Mentality." One that believes that there is only so much credit, reward, success out there and one should try to get as much of it as possible. Or, one believes that in order to be successful, then it has to come at someone else's expense.

I believe that golf course superintendents are in the service business. Superintendents need other people to be successful, so they have to be team players. Superintendents need other superintendents to be successful, so our

profession is elevated. So the very nature of our business is to be rooting for others to be successful.

**What's Wrong #2**—I have been going to Chapter meetings, Conventions and GCSAA Committee meetings for many years. A prevalent topic for discussion among other people is the lack of success associated with GCSAA's Certification Program. There is a general consensus that there are many certified superintendents who are not even very good, let alone are our best and brightest. There is a general consensus that employers are not recognizing certification and thus not rewarding certified superintendents. I agree, but since I am not certified one would think that I'm biased, so I don't respond unless asked. GCSAA continues to pretend that this is not a problem and therefore is not addressed in PDI.

**What's Wrong #3**—GCSAA has done a very good job in many areas of supporting the career of the golf course superintendent. They have done a fair job of marketing to the outside world as to the plight of the golf course superintendent. Unfortunately, they have done a dismal job of marketing to their own membership. GCSAA has not taken its message to the membership. They are seemingly waiting for their message to dawn upon the members. Good luck!

Members are too busy to read magazines and newslet-

## Keep On Sweepin', *continued*

to your operation, let them know what you have, follow their packing and transport directions, make arrangements to drop them off at the site, and then drive away with a smile, knowing that you have helped your company, the environment and the industry.

I realize that this is a busy part of the season, making it difficult to find time to complete these types of tasks. Yet

this is an incredible tool that can make a difference in the health of your operation. Don't let it pass...

**Clean Sweep Pesticide Disposal Site:** Darwin Baas, County of Ottawa Health Department, Environmental Health Division, 12251 James Street, Suite 200, Holland, MI 49424-9675. Phone: (work) 616-393-5638. Fax: 616-393-5643. Email: dbaaseco.ottawa.mi.us.

*Continued on page 6*

**TWO  
Great  
Seminars!**

# GCSAA Education

**Register  
Today!**

## **Bentgrass Management and Rootzone Maintenance**

**TUESDAY, OCTOBER 17, 2000**

**8:00 AM - 5:00 PM**

**Grand Rapids Crowne Plaza  
Grand Rapids, MI**

The course focuses on environmental conditions and cultural practices which optimize the longevity of stand and turf performance of primarily bentgrass greens.

### **TOPICS INCLUDE:**

- Cultural practices from establishment to renovation
- Seeding, interseeding, thatch control, and disease incidence and control
- Maintenance of an active and effective rootzone to support bentgrass growth and development throughout the year
- Watering practices, fertilization, aerification and top dressing techniques

### **INSTRUCTOR:**

**Milt Engelke, Ph.D.** is a professor of turfgrass breeding, genetics and management at Texas A&M University Research and Extension Center. He has a great deal of consulting experience in bentgrass management and has traveled extensively in the Pacific Rim area. His experience has led to the development and release of six bentgrass cultivars and four zoysiagrasses.

**Continuing Education Units: 0.7**

**Member Fee: \$110**

**Non-member Fee: \$165**

**Code: 01RS138-01**

Brought to you by the **Western Michigan GCSA**

## **Managing On-the-Job Behavior**

**TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 7, 2000**

**8:00 AM - 5:00 PM**

**DoubleTree Hotel  
Novi, MI**

Learn the true challenge of management—getting things done through the people you manage.

### **TOPICS INCLUDE:**

- Responsibilities and accountabilities of people in management positions
- What makes managers effective
- Truths and pitfalls of management
- Distinguishing between good and poor management practices
- Adapting new concepts and systems to ensure that quality, quantity, efficiency and costs are indeed managed
- Raising your own performance level as managers and the levels of your employees—the people you rely and depend on for your success

### **INSTRUCTOR:**

**Gerald Sweda**, a former golf course superintendent and corporate training manager for O.M. Scott & Sons, has taught GCSAA training and management seminars for more than 10 years.

**Continuing Education Units: 0.7**

**Member Fee: \$120**

**Non-member Fee: \$180**

**Code: 01RS194-03**

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### **THREE EASY WAYS TO REGISTER:**

**Phone: (800) 472-7878 • Fax: (785) 832-3643 • Website: [www.gcsaa.org](http://www.gcsaa.org)**

# Equipment Purchase Options

by Mark Snyder, CGCS  
Berkeley Hills Country Club

There are several options to consider when purchasing golf course equipment: purchasing the equipment with available funds, purchasing with a capital lease (lease-purchase) program or leasing the equipment with an operating (true) lease. I will briefly explain in simple terms the advantages and disadvantages of each option below so you can decide which option best suits your needs.

First you must decide which pieces of equipment need to be replaced. Reviewing maintenance repair records and knowing the age of your equipment will help you in this decision. Long-term use equipment should be purchased and includes tractors, backhoes, topdressers and other equipment that works properly for many years with little repair expense. The items that could be considered for a true lease are everyday transportation as well as mowing equipment for greens, tees, fairways and roughs.

Once you decide on the equipment that needs to be replaced or purchased it is time to look closely at your available funds. A capital budget is normally set up each year and the equipment is

bought from the vendor for the price of the respective piece. This option for equipment replacement is usually good for operations with a large amount of available funds as long as the operation managers understand that equipment has to be replaced on a regular basis.

If available funds are not obtainable, a second option is spreading out the purchase over a period of time agreed upon at purchase. It can be set up as a capital lease or a loan whereby you make monthly payments toward the purchase of the equipment. A capital lease is normally set up with a \$1 buy-out option at the end of the lease term to purchase the leased equipment. The monthly payment is not reflected in the operations budget of the golf course maintenance department.

A third option is an operating or true lease situation. With an operating lease, the equipment is leased for a set number of years with a monthly payment. There are various scenarios as to the future of the equipment after the lease term has expired: (1) return the equipment to the vendor and obtain new equipment with a new monthly lease payment, (2) purchase the equipment at fair market value after the terms of the

lease are met, (3) extend the lease plan for another 12 months, or (4) return the equipment. The monthly payment on this type of lease is reflected in the operations budget and is considered an expense.

Some of the advantages of an operating lease are: (1) it conserves working capital for golf course improvement projects, (2) a portion of the payment is tax deductible, (3) you obtain new equipment on a regular basis, which improves morale of the employees and reduces repair expenses and equipment down time, (4) no property taxes or insurance are involved, and (5) flexibility, meaning that equipment can be added or subtracted to the lease plan as the need arises.

Some of the advantages of purchasing equipment with a capital lease versus a true lease are: (1) the equipment is shown as an asset on the balance sheet, (2) you are able to purchase the equipment at the end of the lease term for a nominal amount, and (3) it has no effect on net operating income (NOI). NOI is revenues minus expenses; therefore, capital funding does not effect the

*Continued on page 6*

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## Equipment Purchase Options, *continued*

expense side unlike the true operating lease situation. A golf course that needs to show a profit might lean toward a capital funding situation, while a golf course that does not have to show a profit might lean toward a capital funding situation, while a golf course that does not have to show a profit might lean toward the operating or true lease situation.

If your golf course has available funds, set up an equipment replacement program and purchase the needed equipment each year according to the program. The lease-purchase program is good for golf courses without the available funds that prefer to purchase the equipment. The true lease program is for golf courses that would like to have good equipment but do not have the capital funds each year to purchase a large amount of equipment.

## PDI—But Not This PDI, *continued*

ters in a timely manner. So many or most opinions are made through the negative or sensational aspects of communication.

As the voting delegate for the Greater Detroit chapter for many years, I have tried to remain silent about my perceptions of this PDI. Hopefully, most members will make up their own mind about either supporting PDI or not supporting PDI. In the fall of 2000 you will be asked to give guidance to your voting delegate, as to your vote (I will remain as Assistant Delegate). Your vote will be cast exactly as you wish.

GCSAA is made up of members who come from a very diverse variety of golf course situations. Every year that goes by creates more different situations. We can never legislate our way to our mission. We have to explain our mission. Members have to buy into our mission. We have to create incentives for working toward our mission. We need members to appreciate that there is a mission.



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