



GCSAA AFFILIATE

# Turf Times

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Update  
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The newsletter from the Northern Michigan Turf Managers Association

## *President's Message*

Holiday greetings to everyone! I hope this time of year finds all of you refreshed and ready to enjoy the holiday season with family and friends.

With the close of the golf season the NMTMA board of directors begins its work in earnest. I would like to take this opportunity to thank the members leaving the board for their hard work and dedication, they are: Dave Faucher, Mike Ver Hage and Gabe Ross. Jon Maddern, who's term expired, was appointed for one year to facilitate the transfer of the treasurer's position to new board member Dan Hunt. I would like to welcome Dan, and the rest of the new board members, Kevin Henley, Jim Olli and Mike Allison. Thanks for volunteering your time and talents.

Also, Pete Hohn has agreed to be our new editor of the newsletter and Chairperson of the Public Relations committee, this is a huge job and I want to thank you also Pete.

The board has begun working on educational seminars and the golf meeting schedule for 1998. One of the biggest questions facing the board is how to improve attendance at our meetings. If you have any information you feel will help us, please contact a board member. Also, if you would be willing to host a meeting or have an educational topic you would like to see pursued, we want to hear from you.

Here are some educational opportunities you shouldn't miss:

Michigan Turfgrass Conference Jan 19-22

GCSAA Conference and Trade Show Feb 2-8

GCSAA Seminars, Gaylord, Mar 3 & 4

I wish all of you a joyous holiday season and a great 1998



Brian Holmes

## **NOTE**

Robb Birdsall, Superintendent at Cadillac Country Club, has been designated a Certified Golf Course Superintendent (CGCS) by the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America. Robb has been Superintendent at Cadillac Country Club since 1996.

As a part of the certification process, an on-site inspection of Robb's golf course operation was conducted by two certified golf course superintendents: Mike Morris, CGCS, at Crystal Downs Country Club and Dave Faucher from the Weiskopf course at Shanty Creek Resort.

*Congratulations Robb!*



# Bias versus Reality

Just over a year ago, as my oldest son was finishing his junior year in high school, a biology teacher of his stated to the class the evils of golf courses. Golf courses were to blame for all sorts of cancers, environmental pollution, and groundwater and surface water contamination.

Fortunately, my son spoke up and told the teacher his father was a golf course Superintendent and felt the comments made were not accurate and unfounded. Armed with a water phosphate kit, my son was assigned the task of collecting surface water samples at two locations on the course. Then by following the teacher's instructions, he would gather the results.

Our course has a small stream that meanders through the property and comes in contact with seven of our holes - a great potential source of contamination by either equipment, fertilizer, or chemicals. We felt the best locations to test our water would be at the point where the stream enters the property (exiting from a cherry farmer's orchard) and at a second point just before it emptied into Torch Lake. Samples were collected, instructions followed, and results gained. Interestingly, the results were exactly the same as when the stream was tested two years earlier. The water entering the course contained just over .2 ppm of phosphate. Upon leaving the course the rate of phosphates was only .1 ppm! Imagine, the golf course was actually cleansing the water as it was running through the property.

My son felt quite proud as he took those results back to his classmates and especially to his teacher. As he related to the class the results, he was quite surprised to hear his teacher telling the class he and his dad "must have manipulated the results."

There was "no way" water could run through a chemical waste dump (golf course) and be cleansed.

The next day I went to the school to meet "Mr. Expert." I offered to go with him to collect samples, test and boil water, and get results again. I showed him a test taken two years earlier with nearly the same results. I attempted to explain to him that I am trying my best to be a good steward and take care of God's land. I was amazed at his reply. He refused to repeat the test, as he was convinced his bias were correct.

Incredible as it may sound, this actually happened. What am I to do? Should I give up, and say all teachers are ignorant and closed-minded because of this one? Of course not! We all come in contact with those people whose opinions we can influence and those whose biases we cannot change. Life is too short to waste time on trying to convince those whose bias blinds them from seeing reality. As the old saying goes. "A man convinced against his will is unconvinced still."

It is our privilege and our responsibility to get the truth out in regard to the benefits that golf courses and green belts offer to the environment. Offer to speak at your local school, or write letters to your newspaper. If you need additional information, GCSAA or NMTMA can provide it.

Just last week, I was at our high school for PTA conferences. Again I was able to speak to my son's biology teacher, and again he reminded me that I must have done something wrong to get the results I did. And I reminded him of his bias that prevented him from seeing reality, in the essence the truth.

Jim Tollefson, CGCS

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## Your 1998 Board of Directors

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NMTMA Fundraiser .....	Dan Bissonette and Mike Allison
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## Safety Message

### Driving in Northern Michigan

I am amazed at how often I have near-miss accidents while driving in sparsely populated areas. Usually these incidents involve people crossing the center line (particularly in winter), ignoring stop signs, or just pulling out onto the road without looking. Drivers seem to assume there can't be anyone else around. I am not completely without guilt.

A few years ago I was leaving the accountants office for Wilderness Valley, a log cabin structure on C-38 in southwest Otsego County. I must have been thinking about the amount of wilt sweeping over the golf course instead of my driving. I was preparing to pull out onto C-38 and go right. I looked left - no cars for as far as the eye could see. I began to pull out - and fortunately looked right at the last second - slammed on my brakes! At that second a tractor trailer was passing someone at about 70 m.p.h. in the lane I was about to occupy. I sat there with my mouth hanging open as my car rocked back and forth from the vacuum created from the truck.

The lesson is: keep your mind on your driving and watch out for the other guy, even if its 5:00 am in the western edge of Presque Isle County!

Pete Hohn

## Your PR Responsibility

As you've probably noticed, golf courses are favorite targets of alarmist, doomsayers, and news people who specialize in sensationalism. It is our responsibility to inform the public of the facts whenever possible. At the base level, this means keeping up on your education so you can discuss the facts professionally.

Frequently when someone finds out what I do for a living, they will ask a question regarding environmental issues. Most of the time these questions are about frequency of pesticide use and fertilizer applications. I find that people think we use more fertilizer and pesticides than we do, and don't understand the difference between applying chemicals to turfgrass and row crops. This is a good time to explain about the ability of the thatch layer and fibrous root system to use or allow the breakdown of chemicals before they reach the water table. I mention my IPM strategies and inform them that when chemical applications are made, they are done by a trained professional. Where as millions of home owners put down most of these same chemicals with no training at all!

During the off season, keep up on your education. When the opportunity comes to open someone's eyes, you'll be ready.

Pete Hohn

## Midwest Turf Expo

January 20-22, 1998

Indiana Convention Center  
Indianapolis, IN

- In-depth workshops on pond management, introductory turf management, maintaining trees, turf insect biology and control, landscape irrigation, sports turf, and landscaping for the golf course
- 28 hours of concurrent educational sessions featuring nationally recognized specialists in all areas of turf and landscape management
- Two days of tradeshow featuring equipment and products for the turf and landscape

Contact Bev Bratton  
at (765) 494-8039



**Hey**, you computer junkie's call Kay Patrick

or E-mail her with your E-mail address and we will include your address in the 1998 N.M.T.M.A. ROSTER. You can reach Kay at (517) 327-5474 or E-mail at [mtfturf@msn.com](mailto:mtfturf@msn.com). Look forward to seeing you on the web.

### Important

Remember to let Kay know of any changes to your membership information. These changes will be needed in order to update the membership directory. Kay has been receiving dues payments without updated information. Any questions/concerns call Kay Patrick at 517-327-5474

*The NMTMA appreciates the support from the following businesses...*

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• **GOLF CART SALES & SERVICE** •

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*...and we encourage you to support them.*

**Northern Michigan Turf Managers Association**  
P.O. Box 80086  
Lansing, Michigan 48908



Dr. James H. Beard  
International Sports Turf  
Box 10065  
College Station, TX 77842

**NMTMA Executive Committee**

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Doug Kendziorski - *Vice President*  
Dan Hunt - *Secretary/Treasurer*  
Tom Reed - *Executive Secretary*  
Jon Maddern - *Recording Secretary*

