

# A PATCH OF GREEN

WINTER 1993-1994



**New MBCGCSA President  
Jay Delcamp Elected at  
Annual Meeting**

Story on page 11



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The Official Publication of the Michigan and Border Cities Golf Course Superintendents Association

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# CALENDAR OF EVENTS

## MARCH

14..... **Membership Meeting**  
Bowling Tournament- Salt River Golf Club,  
Host: Jerry McVety

22..... **Pesticide Certification**  
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26..... **MBCGCSA/GAM Seminar**  
Detroit Golf Club  
Host: Clem Wolfrom

## APRIL

7..... **GCSAA Spray Technician Seminar**  
Indianwood Golf and Country Club  
Host: Mark Jackson

11..... **Tiger Opener**  
Vs. Baltimore Orioles

### To be Announced

Joint Meeting with Canadian Association

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# On par with the president

*Where have all the flowers gone? It was only yesterday that our landscape technicians were tilling the soil and applying the herbicides to the beds in preparation to add the many-colored flowers that beautified our little portion of this great land. It's the season when there is an opportunity to spend a little more time in the office, looking back at your achievements, good memories and obstacles of the past season. It is a time to let your mind wander back even further to reminisce of yesteryear.*



Jay Delcamp  
PRESIDENT



give ourselves, members and staff an environmentally friendly turf of superior quality to play and walk on while smelling and enjoying the beautiful flowers.

But where have all the flowers gone? Sometimes it seems more difficult to accomplish golf course goals than it was 23 years ago. An abundance of time is spent on total quality management, which includes motivating and encouraging your employees, along with maintaining the course at an exceptional level. In addition, mechanical equipment is complicated to repair, and updated, complex regulations require understanding and correct implementation. However, to our advantage, the fast moving world of computers and fax machines has given us the opportunity to plan and communicate on a timely basis. There is no longer an excuse to delay productivity. Nevertheless, maintaining our part of the earth to the best of our ability gives us pleasure and satisfaction when we obtain our course goals, no matter what the difficulty.

Even though the flowers have disappeared and the last traces of winter are nowhere in sight, we can look forward to next season when the flowers again will grace our rounds with more abundance and beauty than ever before. Like the flowers, our organization has grown tremendously under the leadership, support and dedication of Ken DeBusscher. It always has been easier to stand on the sidelines and watch the parade go by; however, today it is imperative that you join us in the march so you will not be left behind. The occasion for everyone to participate is at hand. Ask questions, voice your concerns and tell us your ideas. Become involved with your association and plant your individual flower, because our organization will only thrive and inspire greatness through your efforts.



"Michigan and Border Cities...Kate speaking."

"Hi, Kate. Pete Miller, here."

"Hello, Pete. How are you? How're things with you?"

"Oh...had a great season! Family's doing fine and I'm ready for a break!"

"Me, too. Have been especially busy this past year. Enjoyed it a great

deal...Setting up the office, attending meetings, helping to make things

happen...Learned a lot about Michigan and Border Cities and hopefully this next year will run more smoothly.

That's what I'm here for- to help M&BC run efficiently and effectively. Well, enough about me." Sigh. "What can I do for you, Pete?"

"Actually, I just called to thank you for your help this past year. You answered lots of questions for me."

"Glad I could help, and I'd like to encourage all members to feel free to contact me with their questions and concerns. Sometimes, of course, I might refer them to someone else for an answer, but I'll try to be of assistance and will gladly address those matters in the "Kate Speaking" articles."

"Well, gotta go and see if my crew's done grinding those mowers."

"Put up your feet and relax while you can."

"Oh, believe me, I will." Chuckle. "Thanks again, Kate."

"Any time, Pete."



# MBCGCSA'S ..... **BIG EVENT A BIG SUCCESS**

Four hundred and twenty-six players participating in the 28th Annual Big Event for Turf Research made the October 4th date just that—a big and profitable event. We are proud to report that this year's fundraiser earned more than \$25,000, which will be donated to the Michigan Turfgrass Foundation and Michigan State University for student awards in the Turfgrass Program.

A well-deserved thank you to the five participating courses and those whomake it possible to play on them. They are the reason that this event is so successful.

This year's courses and their superintendents were: Oakland Hills Country Club (Martin Fuchs), Franklin Hills (Tom Gray), Katke-Cousins Golf Club (Jay Delcamp), Grosse Ile Country Club (Andrew Socie) and Bay Pointe Golf Club (Rick Murphy). Each of the courses were in excellent shape, and the cool weather did nothing to dampen the spirit of those who participated. Bay Pointe also served as the host for dinner and the other festivities. The outstanding meal and service provided a great setting for the raffle and prizes that were given away. Each year, the planners of Golf Day try to make everyone a winner, and this year was no exception. A "Rules of Golf" video was given to all the players, and the large number of prizes donated by businesses and golf clubs made our large contribution possible.

As with any large fundraising attempt, a committee of volunteers helped to make it all possible. Those who served this year did a remarkable job. A special thank you to Mike Bay, who also serves on the Board of Directors for our organization. Mike spent many hours organizing the prizes. His efforts are greatly appreciated, as are those of all who helped.

We invite all the participants of the Big Event to join us for the Big Event in 1994. The courses have not yet been determined, but we promise to continue to make this event one you and your friends will want to attend.

by Carey Mitchelson, Chairman

(Right) Fundraising Chairman Carey Mitchelson announces it's time for the raffle and prize presentation. (Top) Dr. Joe Vargas with Bay Pointe's General Manager Terry Ciotti.



(Above) Mike Bay presents a plaque to Jay Delcamp, superintendent at Katke Cousins Golf Course, for his hard work as one of five host superintendents.



(Right) A distinguished group of members and guests enjoys the activities. A lucky raffle winner accepts prize from Gary Thommes (Above left), who did another outstanding job in the prize presentation. (Above, right) Larry Obey won the raffle for the television. More than \$1,800 was raised.



COMMITTEE MEMBERS: Carey Mitchelson-Chairman: Mike Bay, Jay Delcamp, Gary Thomas, Doug Johanningsmeier, Doug Melton, Steve Kolongowski, Mike Hahn, Roy Szyndlar, Paul Kobe, Tim Dorner, John Cooney, Keith Richards, Rick Murphy, Don Fields

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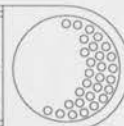
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# MEMBER FOCUS

by Katie Elsila

**Brett Marshall** Executive Director of Golf Association of Michigan

*Brett Marshall, executive director of the Golf Association of Michigan, was Executive Director of the Kansas Golf Association for 8-1/2 years. Marshall took time from his busy schedule to answer the questions golf club superintendents frequently ask.*



**Q: What do you look for in a host facility?**

**A:** We look for a course that is in good condition, one that players will enjoy. Every golf course offers a different level of difficulty, but if it is in good condition players will look forward to coming back and participating the next time around. So it's very important to us to have a golf course that's maintained properly.

**Q: How do golf courses become host facilities?**

**A:** We do have golf courses that contact us and express interest in hosting some events. Obviously, we'd love to have more do so—that would make our jobs a little bit easier. In many cases, we initiate the solicitation of golf courses to host events for us. We go through a very comprehensive process in communicating with club officials. I'm not so sure that we've done as good a job as we possibly can in contacting the superintendents, and I certainly want to make sure that we include the superintendent in the solicitation process because, when we have contacted them, they've been very supportive. Superintendents have pride in their own course, and hosting a tournament gives them a chance to show their skills to a lot of the golfing community in the state.

**Q: What's your position on the speed of the greens?**

**A:** I'm not hung up on stimpmeters. I'm more interested in seeing what the surfaces have to offer—the degree of difficulty, the slopes of the greens and what kind of weather conditions exist at the time we are going to be there. I believe in never placing the greens in jeopardy of being lost. It isn't worth it—no matter which event we're running, even the most important. If you double cut and roll greens when it's 95 to 100 degrees in mid-July, you stand a very good chance of losing them. I'm not willing to risk that, even if it would make for a better playing surface for the golfers.

**Q: What about the height of the fairway?**

**A:** For championship events it's not unusual to expect a fairway height somewhere between 7/16 to 1/2 inch. With anything higher than that, you tend not to get the best playing surface for that caliber of player. For outings, where it's really a fun day for a gathering of people in the golfing community, we'd ask the club superintendent to

set it up fairly easy, about the middle of the tees. No special marking of the course is necessary. For championships, our staff comes in and does all the course marking. We also do the tee and hole locations. We ask the superintendent and golf professionals for their input because they know the golf course better than we do on a day-to-day basis. We like to make the final decisions on those things, however, because our name is on the tournament. If we do a good job, the players are going to be happy. If we don't do a good job, we assume responsibility. It's a way to protect host superintendents against criticism that might come their way.

**Q: How difficult do you like to see the course?**

**A:** The degree of difficulty depends on the tournament and the level of skills of the players. For the Michigan Amateur Championship, for example, we make the course very difficult. On the other hand, for our senior tournaments, the degree of difficulty and the length of the golf course is less. Our goal is to identify good champions, but we also want the players to have a good time and go home with a favorable feeling about the golf course.

**Q: Why is that important?**

**A:** We are in a service-oriented business. The golfers are, in essence, our customers and we want them to be happy. If we can identify champions by setting up courses that are difficult, but fair, most of the players will accept that. Even though they may not play well, they will still go home with a favorable feeling about the way the golf course played,

and that is my ultimate goal. I don't want players saying, 'That was set up unfairly and I'm never coming back.' Even if the tournament is moved to a different golf course, we may lose those golfers and never get them back. I don't like to see that happen.

**Q: Why is cup placement a hot topic?**

**A:** Over the years, I think a lot of players have seen hole locations that are too close to the edge of the green or too close to the slopes on the greens or are on mounds. That doesn't really give the player a fair chance. If players feel that it is unfair, they're going to have a negative reaction to the entire competition, to the entire experience at the golf course. That's one reason why we're very involved in the placement of the hole locations at our events. They may be difficult, but they are going to be fair, and they are going to be in a relatively level area around the hole where a player can have a good chance.

**Q: You were executive director of the Kansas Golf Association for 8-1/2 years. How does golf in Michigan compare to Kansas?**

**A:** Golf club superintendents in Michigan have a shorter season to deal with. In many cases, that makes it harder to get their golf courses up to the type of conditions they would like to have during the playing season. The shorter season also gives them less time to do much of the ongoing maintenance procedures. However, Michigan winters benefit the golf courses in many ways because they get a complete rest from play. Many of the courses are totally shut down, even if there is nice weather in wintertime. In Kansas, if there's no snow on the ground players are going to be playing. So the golf courses take a bit more abuse. Also, the Kansas area is a transition zone for weather, so superintendents are dealing with even greater fluctuations of weather conditions and climate than in Michigan.

**Q: What are your observations about the role of the golf club superintendent?**

**A:** In Kansas, we shared our offices with the GCSAA's national headquarters for three years. That really gave me a great insight into the role of the golf club superintendent at the golf facility. I think their role has been understated for many years. They play a vital role. People want to play at quality facilities and if you don't have a quality golf course, typically, the club is not going to flourish. I see a lot of high-quality people in that end of the business, so it has been rewarding to see the importance of their role upgraded significantly over the last five to 10 years. The GCSAA is a very good organization. Its members are interested in educating themselves and we have good relationships with them. We do our greens seminar in March in conjunction with all four of the state GCSAA organizations. I feel good about what we are doing with the superintendents and for them and the fact that our clubs are raising money and making significant donations to the Michigan Turfgrass program of MSU. I think this signals our dedication to the superintendents' industry in Michigan. I'd like golf club superintendents to know that we are committed to them.



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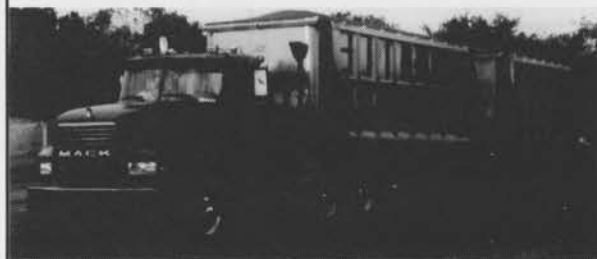
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# MEMBERSHIP MEETING UPDATE

## 1993 Annual Meeting Held at Maple Lane

The MBCGCSA's Annual Meeting was held on October 19 at Maple Lane, where the hospitality, as usual, was excellent. The west course was well prepared, and the weather accommodating for the playing of the Clarence Wolfrom Memorial Tournament. The field started by 11 a.m., and when it was over, Dale Bauer was winner with a net 60. Jim Hyde finished second low net. Jim Thesier was third.

After a delicious meal, President Ken DeBusscher called the meeting to order. The treasurer's report indicated that the activities of the past year had left the association financially sound. No changes in dues would be necessary for the coming year.

Committee members gave announcements, and packets of committee reports were distributed to all attendees. Members were told that a "Technical Training for Sprayers" seminar will be held in April 1994. Also, 1994 Scholarship Chairman Dave Picot reminded members about the \$1,500 GCSAA scholarship available to the children and grandchildren of members. The student need not be a turfgrass major.

Announcements aside, it was time for elections. And the results were:

**Jay Delcamp, president**  
**Carey Mitchelson, vice president**  
**Gary Thommes, secretary/treasurer**

### Board of Directors

**Paul Kobe and Roy Szyndlar will serve three-year terms. Jon Shreve will serve the remaining two-year term in the position vacated by Carey Mitchelson's election to vice president.**

Throughout the meeting, special recognition was given to several members for their service to the association: George Prieskorn, for taking charge of the election process again this year, Doug Johanningsmeier and Tom Stark, for their three years of service on the education committee, Kate Mason, for her excellent service in her first year as executive secretary, Mike Bay for his term on the Board, Ken DeBusscher, for serving as president, the generous people at Maple Lane, for hosting our Annual Meeting again this year.



Carey Mitchelson (l.) congratulates Dale Bauer, winner of the Clarence Wolfrom Classic.



Outgoing president Ken DeBusscher (second from left) with (l. to r.) Gary Thommes, secretary/treasurer; 1994 MBCGCSA president Jay Delcamp and vice president Carey Mitchelson.

MBCGCSA Leadership (l. to r.) Past President Tom Mason, Outgoing President Ken DeBusscher and Incoming President Jay Delcamp.



MBCGCSA Executive Board: (l. to r.) Paul Kobe, Mike Bay, Paul DuShane, Jon Shreve, Roy Szyndlar, Ken DeBusscher, Dave Picot, Fritz McMullen, Tom Mason, Jay Delcamp, Gary Thommes and Carey Mitchelson

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## Safety Training *Is a Must!*

by Tim Doppel

Whenever you hire a new employee, you give that person training in lots of different areas. Whether it is simple things such as where to punch in and change clothes or really challenging things such as where to eat lunch, those first few days will always be stressful for you. You always wonder, did you tell him everything he needs to know or is this rookie going to do something really stupid that will embarrass you in front of the members?

When you make your list of all the things to train your new employee about, be sure that some safety training is included. Although this may sound like a no-brainer for a lot of us, it is truly amazing how many people do not include this in their training regimes. And when you remember that it is required by law to provide this training for all employees, well, it becomes quite remarkable that so many let this slip.

Michigan law is very clear on what has to be provided. All employees must receive training about the hazardous materials that they may come in contact with in the course of their employment. And a written training program must be kept on file at each place of employment.

All employees should be knowledgeable about how to read a label of a pesticide. Now, I know that not all your employees will be making applications. But what if there is a spill or an overexposure accident. Where would someone find the correct information to give to emergency personnel? On the label, of course. So in the event that neither you, your assistant or your applicator are present when an accident occurs, all employees need to be able to read a label properly.

Be sure that everyone knows at least where to find the product name, active ingredients, emergency phone numbers and EPA Registration numbers on each label. With this level of knowledge, each employee may be able to give emergency personnel the information needed to control a bad situation.

But labels are not the only documents your people need to know. Material Safety Data Sheets also are needed. Although most of the information you would need is on the label, MSDSs provide a level of information that cannot be squeezed onto a label. Your people need to know where to find the MSDSs, how to find the one they want and how to read one. And they should be able to do that under pressure. I drill my employees (usually twice a year) with a surprise inspection from Sgt. Hoss M. Down from the Fire Department. The sergeant creates a situation that different employees must respond to in a certain amount of time. Sometimes they get it right, sometimes they don't. But it is always a good learning experience.

Be sure your program includes respirator use and storage training; spill control and basic first aid also are helpful. Although this may seem like a lot, and it is, you do not want to find yourself in a situation where you have to explain to an inspector, or an attorney, why you did not provide the kind of training necessary to maintain a safe operation.

If you have an employee manual (and I suggest that you do), then some of this information can be included in it. Certainly the requirement to receive and understand the training should be in your employee manual. As always, have an attorney review any documents you provide in a manual.

The training you provide your employees does not have to be fancy or a slick presentation. It just needs to be something that will give everyone on your crew, and we're stressing everyone here, the basic information needed to respond in an appropriate manner to a crisis. Hopefully, your crew will never have to use its training. But if they do, and do it well, it will be a positive reflection on you for having the foresight to provide the training in the first place. And that is the hallmark of a true professional.

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