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NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 1993

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

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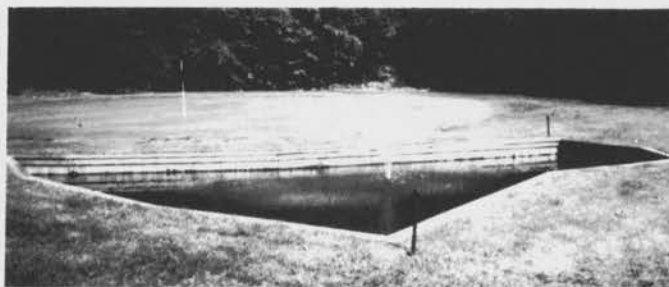
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Klein, Herb (Esther)

3201 Jewell Rd.

Howell, MI 48843

H-(517) 548-4964

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

NOVEMBER

16-18 ... **GCSAA Division III
seminar** Sheraton Lansing Hotel, Lansing, MI
(313) 644-4111

DECEMBER

3 **Christmas Party** Red Run Golf Club

6-9 **Ohio Turfgrass
Conference & Show** Columbus, Ohio
Call (313) 614-292-2601

JANUARY

18-20 ... **64th Annual Michigan
Turfgrass Conference** Holiday Inn - South Convention Ctr.
For information, (517) 321-1660



ANNUAL CHRISTMAS DINNER DANCE

Where: Red Run Golf Club

When: Friday, December 3, 1993

Hosts: Rosemarie & Gary Thommes

Watch for your invitation in the mail
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On par with the president

Every 60 days for the past two years, I've had to force myself to sit down and reluctantly create a presidential message worthy to print. My pulse rate quickened and I would develop a nervous twitch as our publisher's deadlines drew near. Though I accepted this responsibility (but took to it like a child to a spoonful of castor oil), I now feel quite melancholy as I begin to write what will be my final message to you. I don't have a specific topic but, instead, a potpourri of thoughts to share.



Ken DeBusscher
PRESIDENT

It is human nature to believe that the grass is always greener on the other side of the fence. There are times I want to pack up my computer and soil probe and just find some other job. Better yet, some other profession. Headaches with employees, weather, members, irrigation, fungus...I'd rather be selling shoes or insurance or anything. But then I reflect on all the people I know who think I've got the greatest job in the world, working outdoors on a golf course. Obviously, they don't understand the problems we deal with. However, every profession has its highs and lows, and I love my job and profession. Despite the lows, there's no better feeling than being alone watching the sunrise from our favorite spot on our golf course. It's almost a religious experience we all feel whenever we take the time to enjoy it.

The worst part about our profession is lack of job security. How many superintendents actually retire peacefully from our industry? Very few. Many can read the writing on the wall and switch professions as they grow older. Others cling precariously or are forced out of positions by people who are unappreciative of the lifelong commitment and dedication you've given their club.

Certainly, we must produce at all times and never compromise the stretch for perfection. But, those who have shown consistent excellence should be rewarded with longer-term contracts and reasonable retirement packages. This is a serious issue that should be acted upon locally and nationally. Maybe we should collectively consider foregoing annual pay increases in exchange for security and deferred financial packages.

The best part of our profession is the quality of people it attracts. I consider ourselves educated turf farmers—and I say this in a very proud way. Working with the earth, weather and a living landscape certainly keeps us humble. Unlike other professions, haughtiness and arrogance is rare. Unpretentious, salt-of-the-earth people are the norm.

- Our local associations are invaluable because they provide a forum to exchange ideas, offer solutions and share our miseries. Out of this camaraderie develops the lifelong and sincere friendships we all need to deepen the quality of our lives.

- Force yourself to take a summer vacation. Try to get away for a few days during the meat of the season. It will provide you with the kick start you desperately need to finish the season. You, your wife, children and employer will appreciate your mood swing.

- "You will soon wonder how you got along without one," was the response from other local presidents who employ executive secretaries. The hiring of Kate Mason has justly proven that prediction. Kate is a quality individual with lofty standards, whose real worth to the association is immeasurable. The accessibility and stability she lends this chapter has been the piece to the puzzle that's long been missing.

- Because of the efforts and dedication of our Board of Directors, many changes have taken place in the past two years. It has been a privilege working with these pros who have volunteered their own sweat and time to all our benefit. They have admirably tolerated my holy crusades and I applaud their achievements.

I must acknowledge the patience and guidance offered to me by our immediate past president Tom Mason, who will be leaving the Board after 12 consecutive years of service. He left extra large shoes to fill. Thanks, Tom...and don't go to pasture quite yet.

A longtime contributing member, Jay Delcamp, will now fill my void. With his experience and vision, Jay will prove to be one of our best leaders.

- Before I get too sentimental and my eyes begin to swell up, let me close by thanking you for the trust, support and opportunity you've afforded me. I've relished every moment. It is an honor to now be placed on the distinguished list of Past Presidents.

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Ken DeBusscher

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A CHANCE TO DO SOME GOOD

by Tim Doppel

The advent of the so-called "off season" gives us an opportunity to do some work that might have gotten away from us during the hectic days of the summer. Of course, we all know that the mowers need to be sharpened and painted and that the tractors could stand a little work. We all know that our employees need to be trained and that we need to attend the various educational conferences (Are YOU going to the GCSAA this year?).

But if you stop and think for a moment, there is another area that you may want to spend some time on this winter that could pay you real dividends next spring. What I mean is, spend some time with the members of your club at their meetings this winter. Spend some time around the club house during the day when a few of the folks come in for lunch or an afternoon break. Use that time to talk about their concerns about the course and, most importantly, what you apply to the course.

I know that most of you are doing a great job of posting when you make applications and you have been visible on the course all summer. But it is now, in the winter, that you can really score some points with your members and players when they least expect it.

We all talk about public relations as a part of our job description, but do we truly understand what is required for good PR? I'm sure that most of us think in terms of being good at reacting to a situation as good PR. But that is just crisis management, not public relations. PR entails a long-term, consistent program at getting information to your customers (and we all have customers!) about what it is that you do for them. The emphasis here, is on long term.

If all you do is train yourself and your employees on how to answer questions about a particular application, you only have scratched the surface of true public relations. A well thought out program of reaching the people who are impacted by the work you do will take time, effort and, yes, even a piece of that already stretched budget. Maybe you could get some brochures that describe environmentally sound practices done by superintendents. Maybe you can make some flyers that talk about some of your programs. Maybe you just need some reference material on hand in case you get asked to back up some of your claims of safety. But, in any case, have the resources you need to sell your case well.

But don't rely entirely on printed materials to make your case. That would be like me, a lawn care guy, trying to build my business just by mailing a post card. Even if it were a really good post card, it would not generate much response at all because it will get lost with the 200 other flyers and post cards sent out each spring by all us hose-jockeys. I must depend on the abilities of my salespeople in face-to-face conversations to convince my potential customers to trust me with their landscape.

The same applies to you. Without eyeball to eyeball contact, the trust you want to develop simply will not materialize. You even may not have to bring up the topic of pesticide applications in the conversation for you to make a good impression. Just the fact that you are present, making contact and being a professional will begin that long process of building trust and performing good, positive public relations. The results will be seen, not next week, but next summer, as you notice a decrease in the number of inquiries about what you applied and why. ▢

Effective Management/ Employee Relationships Topic of Seminar

GCSAA is offering a Division III seminar on "Developing and Maintaining Effective Management/Employee Relationships." The seminar will be held November 16 -18 from 8:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. daily at the Sheraton Lansing Hotel in Lansing, Michigan. Participants can earn 1.6 CEUs by attending the seminar.

Anyone interested in golf management will find the seminar pertinent. Seminar instructors Mike Jousan, owner of Clear Communication Co., and Tony Walker, executive director of Interactive Trainers, will cover topics such as:

- * Understanding Your Personality Profile and the Motivation and Needs of Your Employees
- * Handling Specific Problem Employees
- * Resolving Employee Conflicts Effectively
- * Training and Developing Personnel
- * Reaping Benefits of an "Open Door" Policy
- * Providing Employee Recognition

The fee for the seminar is \$495. Hotel lodging is available at \$68 to \$78 per night. You can register by mail, phone or fax. GCSAA, 1421 Research Park Dr., P.O. Box 927, Lawrence, KS 66044-0927, (913) 832-444 or (800) 472-7878, FAX (913) 832-4449. For further information, call GCSAA Liaison Tom Mason at 313-644-4111. ▢

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Back to the Fortress

by Jay Delcamp, Chairman

The 1993 Michigan Golf Course Superintendents Championship field was once again challenged by the beautiful Frankenmuth course. The Fortress was in magnificent shape for the 35 participants hoping to tame the strong winds faced in 1992. This year, the winds were calm, but the course has its own way of blowing you over. The scores were much better and all the field finished.

Scott Watkins, superintendent, and his crew received many thanks from all the participants for having the course in perfect shape and also for the refreshments given out at the turn. We also thank the pro shop staff and the staff at Zenders for a great day.

This year's guest speaker was Dr. Jeff Collenkark from the Ciba Geigy Company. Dr. Collenkark spoke to us and answered many questions on the company's new growth regulator, Primo. Many superintendents shared their experiences—the good, the bad and even the ugly!

The good experiences by the golfers were highlighted by these Championship winners:

Carey MitchelsonChampionship flight
David PawlukFirst flight
Pete PaffordLow net ▽

(Right) Dr. Jeff Collenkark of Ciba Geigy answers questions about Primo growth regulator.



(Below) Jay Delcamp (L.) organizer of the 8th Annual Championship, congratulates Scott Watkins, superintendent of The Fortress, for an outstanding job.



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MEMBER FOCUS

by Katie Elsila

Harold Fiebelkorn STONEYCROFT HILLS CLUB



Harold and Blanche Fiebelkorn, members of St. Luke's Lutheran Church, have been married 43 years. They have a daughter, Rose Ann, and a son, Terrance. Terrance and his wife, Rhonda, are the parents of the Fiebelkorn's two grandsons, Kurt and Daniel.

At the GCSAAA convention in Dallas in 1994, the Lely Company will award a new machine to the entrant who owns the oldest Lely product in working order. Look for the front runner to be Harold Fiebelkorn, superintendent of Stoneycroft Hills Club in Bloomfield Hills. Fiebelkorn's faithful Lely fertilizer spreader is more than 28 years old and still is in regular use at Stoneycroft.

In fact, thanks to his mechanical ability, lots of the equipment at Stoneycroft has been there since Fiebelkorn became its superintendent in 1965. "Equipment can last if it's taken care of," he says. "I make sure ours is well-maintained and I don't allow any hot-rodding."

Although "hot-rodders" may

not appreciate this rule, Fiebelkorn has plenty of policies that employees do appreciate. He is a hands-on superintendent and believes in working with employees. "I'm careful to show them exactly how to do something instead of assuming they know," Fiebelkorn says. He says his philosophy brings higher morale and more cooperation. "This summer I got more done with my small crew than some people could have gotten from 20," he says.

This fall, one of Fiebelkorn's summer crew began the turfgrass program at Michigan State University and called Fiebelkorn to tell him, "When my professor presented material to the class, I was familiar with it because of my work at Stoneycroft."

Fiebelkorn was, of course, pleased and thinks that this might be the result of the fact that he lets his employees take on a wide range of jobs at the Club, unlike facilities where each employee is assigned only one task. "They appreciate the opportunity to learn a number of skills," he says.

Coming from a farming background, Fiebelkorn is used to a seven-day work week. But, he also says he is working harder today than he did when he started the job 28 years ago because of the ever-rising expectations of golfers. "They see the golf courses on television and, without taking our budget into account, they think, 'if they can do it, we can, too,'" he observes.

Having a lot of work to do combined with a great desire to design and invent things, inspired Fiebelkorn to build some time-saving machinery for his work at Stoneycroft. He built a spiker that gets the job done in two hours (compared to six hours required by some commercial equipment) and converted his bed knife grinder so it works automatically.

Although Fiebelkorn says his eight-hour-a-day schedule at the nine-hole Club doesn't allow him time to play golf, what really keeps him off the course is his game. "It makes me mad that someone my size can't move the ball," he confesses. "I see people who weigh about 100 pounds hitting it farther than I can."

Hard work, long hours and rising customer expectations—and yet, after 28 years, Superintendent Fiebelkorn says he still enjoys his job. "People often don't realize what nature provides," he says. "When I'm on the grounds at sunrise, when the trees cast their shadows on the water, there is almost nothing nicer in the world." ▢

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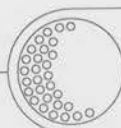
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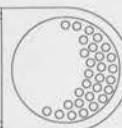
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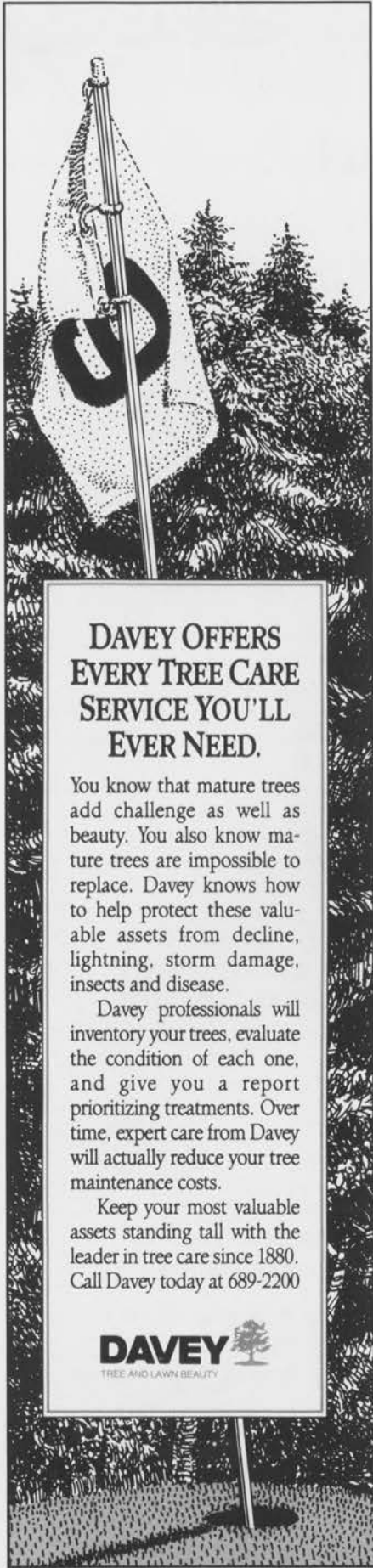
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MEMBERSHIP MEETING UPDATE

RIVERVIEW HIGHLANDS MEMBERSHIP MEETING

by Roy Szyndlar and Paul Kolbe

The August 11 MBCGCSA meeting was held at Riverview Highlands Golf Course with Director of Golf Dick Matthews and Superintendent Scott Ford as host superintendents. Riverview Highlands is a 27-hole complex owned by the City of Riverview.

Dick Matthews also was the guest speaker and talked about a topic of interest to all—golf course irrigation systems. Dick explained that through years of record keeping and communication with the city council, he succeeded in convincing them to begin an irrigation system upgrade. One major change was the adoption of radio controls to run current satellite boxes. The radio controls help with programming and in troubleshooting the system more efficiently. The programming ability reduced the fluctuation of pressure, which caused many breaks and irrigation head failures. He used the resources of association members C.J. Colein and D.G. Irrigation, both irrigation consultants.

Following the talk, the board of directors proposed a dues change in the Associate Membership to include a Corporate Membership category. The voting members unanimously approved the change. (See details below.)

It was a beautiful day to enjoy the hospitality of Riverview Highlands. Scott and his crew had the course in fine shape and conditions were ripe for scoring. We used the Chapmann system, which is a two-man alternative shot contest. There were two flights based on their combined handicaps. The winners were: Dan Prosal and Jim Egler, and Bob Rabideau and Greg Snider.

We enjoyed hot dogs and pop at the turn, which gave everyone a chance to re-energize their games. Afterward, we adjourned to the clubhouse for a fine meal and a chance to exchange stories from the day's event.

Thanks again to the staff and the City of Riverview for an outstanding day.

SPECIAL NOTE: CHANGE IN DUES STRUCTURE

At the August 11 membership meeting, the MBCGCSA Board of Directors proposed, and the membership approved, the following dues structure for Class F Associate Members to include: first member-\$115; second member-\$115; each additional member \$75. This results in a savings of \$40 per member, for companies with three or more members.

The change was made to encourage companies that have dropped members because of the cost to rejoin and, also, to offer a slight break in expenses to those companies who have not yet joined because they have a large number of employees.

The 1994 dues structure for Class F Associate Members is as follows:

1 Member	\$115	3 Members	\$305
2 Members	\$230	4 Members	\$380

SYCAMORE HILLS SITE OF SEPTEMBER 14 MEETING

by Tom Stark, Superintendent
Dunham Hills Golf Course

Sycamore Hills Golf Club was the site of MBCGCSA's September 14 meeting. The scheduled speaker, Donna Nott, from the Michigan Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), was unable to attend due to a medical emergency. Ms. Nott was

to have addressed golf course safety. Instead, we held an open-forum discussion with our 52 participants. Among the topics discussed were: greens covers, rotary mowing, roughs, controlling geese populations and rolling putting greens.

Following the meeting we enjoyed a great buffet meal, after which we teed off with each group getting one orange ball. At each hole a different player used this ball, the object being to keep it in play throughout the round. Only two out of 12 groups were able to avoid the woods and waters!

Thank you to host superintendent Craig Roggeman and his staff for the extra preparations that went into providing us with a well-conditioned course and an enjoyable meeting. ▴

Our best to you!



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1993 MBCGCSA Annual Family Picnic Held August 17

by Paul Dushane, Chairman
1993 Picnic Committee



**Above: Digging
for the silver!**

**Below: That's
Entertainment!**

This reporter has just returned from the scene of a miraculous event. The annual family picnic was held without rainfall!!!! Turf industry professionals marveled at what was basically an ideal day for a picnic. Games were played without delay, conversations and laughter went

unchecked, food was devoured as quickly as it could be served...Did we have an enjoyable and relaxing day???

Aaaabsolutely. Paaasitively. No doubt about it!!!!

Yes, the sun was shining and children and adults alike were playing and competing in a plethora of entertaining games. Coins were sought after in sawdust, marbles were picked up with toes, sack races were run and goofy golf was attempted, all thanks to our games and entertainment directors: Mark and Kim McKinley and Jim McGuire. What a wonderful job these people do, and seem to have so much fun doing it. Rumor has it that these three have been approached by numerous cruise ship lines to keep guests entertained and busy. Wouldn't they all look great in flowery bermuda shorts and big sunglasses?!! Seriously, these folks do a great job and many well deserved thanks go out to them for their hard work and patience. Nice Job!!!!

After the games and competition, everyone's appetite was large and a fine spread of food was set out—all the picnic favorites—barbecued ribs and chicken, corn on the cob, potato salad, baked beans and things that make you go Mmmmmmmmm. And, of course, afterward, Haagen Dazs sundaes served up by our own president—Ken DeBusscher. You all know the president's motto, don't you? One scoop for them, two scoops for me. Can that guy eat ice cream, or what? Many disappointed young children were sent away without ice cream due to his

lopsided scooping trick. "Let them eat cake," the president declared again and again!!!

Shortly after dinner, this reporter saw something that his eyes couldn't believe. Flying saucers!!! Coming from every direction in the sky. This reporter ran for cover and then was surprised to see children running for and grabbing at these UFOs from the sky. Were they crazy? Were they nuts? No, not at all. They knew from past experience that these were just paper plates being thrown from above with exciting prizes attached. When I figured this out, I tried to join in and was abruptly hit in the face with a water balloon. A water balloon? Yes, it seems that our ice cream eating president was seeking some revenge for the many times he had been hunted down and whacked by balloon

wielding children. What a shock to them!! Way to go, prez!! It appears that you got the last laugh. But, there's always next year. Right, kids??!! Aaaabsolutly. Paaasitively. No doubt about it!!!!

Thanks to everyone who helped out: the 1993 Picnic Committee Mark McKinley, Jim McGuire and Doug Johanningsmeier (who did another great job with the beverages), Craig Roggeman, Kurt Muendelein, Scott Johnston, Mary Andreucci, and anyone else I may have forgotten. Thank you very much.

Sincerely,
Paul Dushane, Chairman
and the 1993 Picnic
Committee: Mark McKinley,
Jim McGuire, Doug
Johanningsmeier



**Above: Knollwood's assistant mechanic, Scott
Johnson, makes sure the chicken is done right.**

**Below: Sycamore Hills Golf Club's Craig
Roggeman and son Derek.**

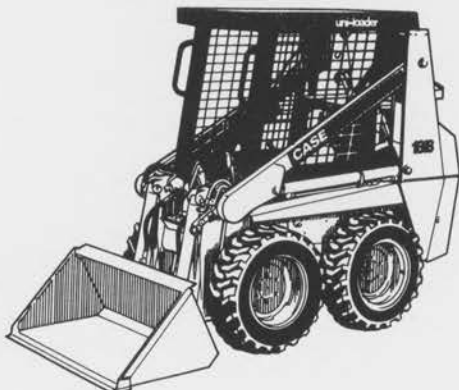
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Around the Course

Member Activities

Completely revised and updated, *Management of Turfgrass Diseases, 2nd Edition*, by Dr. Joe Vargas, Jr., Michigan State University, is now off the press. The book provides the latest information on maintaining healthy turf and identifying turf diseases and covers cultural, genetic, biological and chemical approaches to turf management. It also provides practical solutions to everyday turf management problems.

Dr. Vargas' book is available for \$59.95 from Lewis Publishers, 121 South Main Street, P.O. Box 519, Chelsea, MI, 48118, 800-272-7737. ▴

Amturf Seeds, a division of Ampro Industries, formerly Cowbell Seeds, has been granted a DNR Solid Waste Alternatives Program \$1 million grant to construct a seeding mulch plant. The \$1.5 million, 64,000-square-foot facility is currently under construction in Bradley, Michigan, and will employ approximately 60 people. This plant will use newsprint from landfills in western Michigan to manufacture paper mulch. Paper mulch is a key ingredient in Lawn Patch, a seed, mulch and fertilizer product used to repair bare spots in lawns. Lawn Patch is distributed throughout the United States. ▴



The 1993 Michigan Turfgrass Field Day was held on August 19 at the Hancock Turfgrass Research Center at Michigan State University. Overcast conditions and some raindrops didn't dampen the spirits of turfgrass enthusiasts.

Dr. Bruce Branham welcomed the participants and introduced Michigan Turfgrass Foundation (MTF) President Jim Bogart and Dr. Robert Gast, director of the agricultural experiment station. Brief speeches by both were followed by the field tours. The 16 educational topics were divided between the lawn care and golf industries.

One interesting highlight was the underground green aeration project discussed by Dr. Joe Vargas, in which four-inch pipes with 1/4 inch holes were installed. Air was blown through the pipes by a seven horsepower leaf blower. A plastic tarp on the surface was floating to show that the air was traveling through the soil profiles to the surface. Dr. Vargas said they hope to automate the system in the future.

Growing in new sand-based greens is another problem

facing superintendents. Dr. Paul Rieke stressed the need for continual phosphorous level testing, water management and letting the greens mature to develop good root systems and sod to support the anticipated traffic. Sand-based greens need continual monitoring in every aspect of turf management to be successful.

Two other stops were led by former MBCGCSA scholarship winners. Thomas Nickolai talked about tall fescue compaction, and Darren Lickfeldt spoke about plant growth regulators and overseeding with bentgrass.

The trade show that followed the field tours had numerous representatives showing their products and gave participants the opportunity to mingle with friends and discuss the numerous products that are available to superintendents. An excellent lunch was served and the equipment auction followed. Another great job was done by the MTF Board of Directors and the Michigan State University teaching staff. ▴

kate speaking

"Michigan and Border Cities...Kate Speaking."
"Hi, Kate. It's Pete Miller. Sorry to bother you again."

"No problem, Pete. That's what I'm here for."
"Well, I wondered where your office is located. I have something I think the membership should receive in the next mailing. Could I drop it off to you?"

"I work out of my home, Pete. In Troy."
"Oh. I thought you were in a regular office building."

"Nope. But, just drop it in the mail. That's probably more convenient for you. Better yet. You might want to share that request with Ken...Ken DeBusscher, the president. Yes, in fact, I'd have to run it by him myself, if you were to bring it to me."

"Good idea! I'll call Ken. And what's the best time to call you, Kate?"

"Between 8 a.m. and noon, Monday through Friday. Actually, if necessary, I take calls anytime. But, as a rule, I try to be in the office every morning. I'm really pretty flexible with my time."

"Don't hesitate to call. And if Ken okays the information, mail it to the P.O. box."

"Thanks again, Kate."

"Anytime." ▴

1993 Michigan Turfgrass Field Day: A SUCCESS

by Paul Kolbe

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