

A TRIP TO THE PENN STATE TURF CONFERENCE

by Mike Bavier

Penn State ranked number one in football! Not this year. Number one in turf — that's a different story. Penn State surely is ranked high in their turfgrass education and turf programs and just might be number one.

A car full of turf men from the Chicago area left one snowy January morning for Penn State. We arrived that night at our alma mater (for three of us, anyway, and hopefully for the fourth in the not too distant future). We spent the first half hour getting acquainted with the new look — not the girls, but the increase in the size of the campus. We were indeed awed. The school that was home for a couple of years or so for each of us had now grown to an enrollment of some 48,000 students just on the home campus.

We made the normal pub spots and, to our delight, they had changed little. Unfortunately, we quickly realized we had aged some. We drank a few Rolling Rocks (beers, to the Westerners) with our comrades from the East and discussed turf (part of the time, anyway).

For us Chicagoans, the conference would start the next morning. I was the first speaker and wondered if those loyal pub patrons would be able to arrive for the early morning session. A little to my surprise, an attendance of some magnitude was achieved before the opening remarks. "Good Grooming is Good Spending" is a little hard to discuss at an early hour of the morning, but the hospitality of the Easterners never ceases to amaze me, and they did accept my comments graciously. Next on the program was our own Mr. Western Open, Ed Fischer. Ed did a fine job of talking about Butler National and showing slides to the audience from the course's conception right up to date, including the two Western Opens in 1974 and 1975. The tremendous amount of effort put forth in preparing the course was quite evident. Many a fellow greenkeeper questioned Ed on the different operations and course preparations. Eddie fielded questions the rest of the conference on this unique and super golf course.

The speakers for the remainder of the conference were professors and PhD's — a little heavy at times but necessary for those conference goers interested in the Pennsylvania Pesticide Examination to be given the final day.

The conference banquet was quite impressive to say the least. The turf grants and scholarships were numerous and of substantial value, a goal that might be possible in Illinois but would take many a man's best foot forward.

Our mission nearly completed, we were ready to head West. Before leaving, our young traveling companion from Silver Lake G.C., David Behrman, submitted his turf application with an added sense of pride, hoping to return later this fall. Dudley Smith was his own quiet self, remembering so well his many hours spent in the ivy halls of P.S.U. and the countless memories of yesteryear.

We heartily agreed as we left Penn State on a snowy wintery morning (the same as we had left home a few short days ago!) that a return trip would be just as enlightening and enjoyable as this one was. Hopefully, we can make it again in the not too distant future.

January, 1976

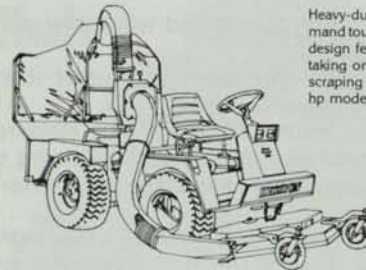


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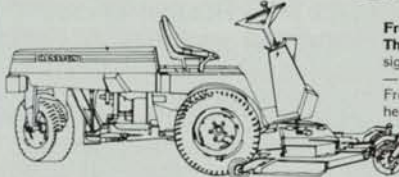
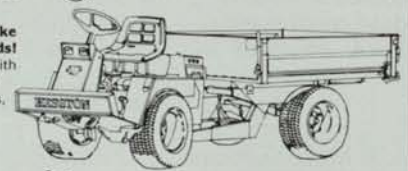
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