



November 2007

As we are engulfed by cold and winter is upon us I have decided to look into what others think of grass. Not scientists or researchers, but poets and politicians. I know I could use more culture, and I am going to assume all of you could as well. In fact, I would estimate from my non-scientific research that 98% of those in the golf maintenance industry could use a little refinement.

(This is an excerpt from "Imitation of Immortality" by William Wordsworth.)

*Though nothing can bring back the hour
Of splendour in the grass, of glory in the flower;
We will grieve not, rather find
Strength in what remains behind;
In the primal sympathy
Which having been must ever be;
In the soothing thoughts that spring
Out of human suffering;
In the faith that looks through death,
In years that bring the philosophic mind.*

I'm no English major but I think he is telling you not to cry when your greens die next spring. Interesting advice. I wonder what your greens committee would think if you told them, "We will grieve not, rather find strength in what remains behind," when you explain that temporary greens will be set up and sod will be ordered!

*Grass – Carl Sandburg
Pile the bodies high at Austerlitz and Waterloo.
Shovel them under and let me work—
I am the grass; I cover all.
And pile them high at Gettysburg
And pile them high at Ypres and Verdun.
Shovel them under and let me work.
Two years, ten years, and passengers ask the conductor:
What place is this?
Where are we now?
I am the grass.
Let me work.*

The message makes a lot of sense. As a professor in college once told me, "The grass was here before you got here, and it will be here after you leave." Let the grass do its thing. Do not overthink it. If Carl Sandburg can figure it out maybe we should too.

Walt Whitman wrote an entire book entitled *Leaves of Grass*. I won't bore you with the details, but he was a fan.

Water restrictions are getting to be an issue, and water rights will become an issue as we move forward. I am hearing more about golf courses being blamed for aquifer depletion and, worse yet, contamination. We will see more restrictions as we move forward. How come we don't have more politicians waxing poetic about grass? Read the statements below.

"Next in importance to the divine profusion of water, light and air, those three great physical facts which render existence possible, may be reckoned the universal beneficence of grass. It is at once the type of our life and the emblem of our mortality. Lying in the sunshine among the buttercups and dandelions of May, scarcely higher in intelligence than the minute tenants of that mimic wilderness, our earliest recollections are of grass; and when the fitful fever is ended, and the foolish wrangle of the market and forum is closed, grass heals over the scar which our descent into the bosom of the earth has made, and the carpet of the infant becomes the blanket of the dead."

"Grass is the forgiveness of Nature — her constant benediction. Fields trampled with battle, saturated with blood, torn with the ruts of cannon, grown green again with grass and carnage is forgotten. Streets abandoned by traffic become grass-grown like rural lanes, and are obliterated. Forests decay, harvests perish, flowers vanish, but grass is immortal. Beleguared by the sullen hosts of winter, it withdraws into the impregnable fortress of its subterranean vitality, and emerges upon the first solicitation of spring. Sown by the winds, by wandering birds, propagated by the subtle horticulture of the elements which are its ministers and servants, it softens the rude outline of the world. Its tenacious fibers hold the earth in its place, and prevent its soluble components from washing into the wasting sea."

"Unobtrusive and patient, it has immortal vigor and aggression. Banished from the thoroughfare and the field,

(continued on next page)

it abides its time to return, and when vigilance is relaxed, or the dynasty has perished, it silently resumes the throne from which it has been expelled, but which it never abdicates. It bears no blazonry of bloom to charm the senses with fragrance or splendor, but its homely hue is more enchanting than the lily or the rose. It yields no fruit in earth or air, and yet should its harvest fail for a single year, famine would depopulate the world."

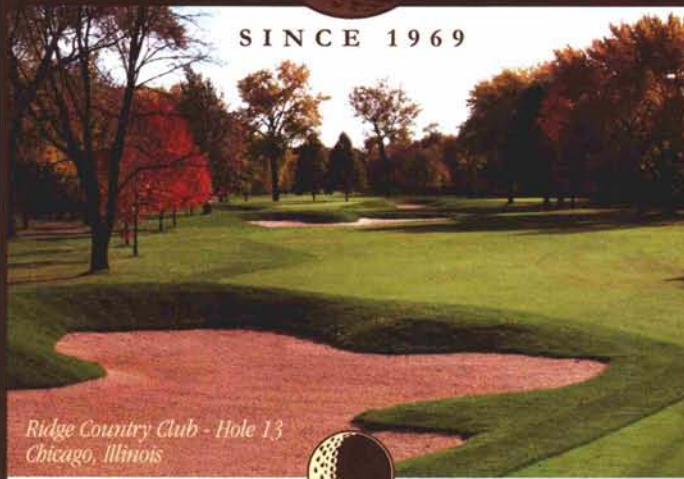
John J. Ingalls
 Senator from Kansas
 1873-1891

I couldn't have said it better myself. No really, I couldn't have. You've read this column, you know. Seriously, Mr. Ingalls was a fantastic writer who is considered one of the finest residents of Kansas ever. His likeness stands in the U.S. Capitol's National Statuary Hall Collection.

I do not even want to get into the musical connections to our beloved grass but how many times have you rode around the golf course singing to yourself, "Grazing in the grass is a gas, baby can you dig it?" by The Friends of Distinction? Just me? Well you don't know what you are missing. **-OC**

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