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# Transition from the Flatlands to the Snowcapped Mountains

Fred Opperman

It is quite a change from the Chicago area to Bozeman, Montana. The first thing you notice is that you have vistas, mountains with snowcapped peaks and valleys with grasslands swaying in the wind. Bozeman is located in a broad valley surrounded by a crescent of mountains. The next thing you will notice here is the freshness of the air. Then there is the little amount of traffic, the friendliness of the people and the great temperatures and low humidity (in the summer!).

Judy and I have purchased a new home on 1.2 acres located about eight miles south of Bozeman, approximately one-half mile from the Gallatin National Forest. Our home faces the mountains with great views. From the back of the house, you can look over Bozeman and see the Bridger Mountains about 12 miles away. In five minutes by car, we can be in a forested, steep canyon with a rushing stream where you can fish for rainbow trout. In 15 minutes, I can be paddling on a crystal-clear lake surrounded by tall, spruce-covered mountains with their peaks covered by snow. The

first time paddling on the lake, I surprised a moose, and myself, to say the least. The lake at that time was high due to snow melt, and I was able to paddle quietly through the willow and alder bushes at the shallow end, which is where the surprise took place.

You may wonder what it would be like to run a golf course in this part of the country. While it is different to some degree in caring for the turf, from talking to some of the superintendents here, the members are just as demanding. Part of the problem is the shorter season, and they want absolutely perfect conditions the first sunny 50-degree day. Just like Chicagoland!

The length of the season is seven-and-a-half to eight months, with the last spring frost around June 25 and the first fall frost the first of September. The predominant grasses are the same here: *Poa*, blue and bent. Most greens are made up of *Poa annua* and various bents. Tees and fairways are the same. The greens on the private clubs are mowed at 1/8", tees at 3/8" and the fairways at 1/2". The greens are sanded on a regular basis, and Primo is also used. Dean Krob, CGCS, at

Riverside C.C. in Bozeman tries to keep his greens at 9.6 to 10.6 on the stimpmeter.

The biggest problem seems to be drainage. So what else is new? The valley has a heavy clay and silt problem due to the river. The most common disease problem is snow mold; they receive about 80" of snow over the winter. Snow cover is from November through March or later. Most common insect problems are ants, and weed problems are clover and dandelions.

Rainfall averages about 18" per year, with May and June receiving the most rain. Snowfall is not counted in this moisture tally. The courses usually have three full-time staff, and the summer/season employees number 14 to 16.

I will need to landscape our new home and have checked out the tree nurseries here. The selection of plant material is a lot smaller than in Illinois. I was really surprised to find that they are selling box elder trees. I asked why, and the reply was, "They grow here!" The main deciduous trees are crabapples, patmore ash,

(continued on page 38)

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# the Bull Sheet

John Gurke  
Contributing Editor

## DATES TO REMEMBER

September 13 — MAGCS meeting at Bull Valley G.C. This will be the annual championship.

September 20 — John Deere Team Championship at White Deer Run in Vernon Hills, IL.

October 12 — Combined Golf Day at Prairie Landing G.C.

November 3 — Midwest Turf Clinic, Medinah C.C.

November 20 — Fall Dinner Dance at Seven Bridges G.C.

February 17 and 18, 2000 (if we survive) — MAGCS Hospitality Suite at the New Orleans Marriott.

Lori Flood — Lasted three days.

Fred Behnke's "Director's Column" in the July issue erroneously identified Peter Voykin as a pioneer in the wildflower naturalization movement when, in fact, it was his brother Paul Voykin who turned acres of out-of-play areas at Briarwood into colorful and interesting natural areas— "Overgrooming is over-spending." Sorry, Paul...

From the "better late than never" file: Dudley Smith passed this tidbit along. On Sunday, June 27, the three Burdett children treated their parents, Jim and Marilyn, to an old-fashioned picnic. Two birthdays and a 40<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary were cele-

brated. Jim stumbled at the turn during the sack race and bowled over three other contestants. He did manage to win a third-place ribbon in the cherry pie-eating contest, though. Our congratulations to Jim and Marilyn Burdett. The contributing editor wonders—who took first and second?

Related item: Burdett's, Inc. and Master of the Links, Inc. have been sold to Michael J. O'Neill, a Chicago businessman and golf enthusiast. James R. Burdett, former owner, while semi-retired, will be retained as a sales consultant. Master of the Links, innovator of the DIVOT SEED & SOIL tee bucket and THE BULLET tile-cleaning nozzle, has been a distributor to golf course superintendents in the greater Chicago area since 1957. Jim would like all to know that service from the new headquarters in Glen Ellyn will continue uninterrupted, and the 1-888-TURF-888 phone number will remain.

The July MAGCS meeting at Crystal Lake C.C. was unquestionably a success. A full complement of golfers enjoyed a muggy day on a truly beautifully conditioned golf course (with too many trees). Steve Van Acker, our gracious host, should be extremely proud of his and his staff's efforts. A special medal for "Going Beyond the Call of Duty" goes out to Steve for providing much-needed refreshments on the course. The education session arranged by Kevin DeRoo was excellent— Dan Lundquist, CFP, MBA gave an interesting presentation on retirement planning, which is

something we all should be doing. Nice job, Kevin and Dan.

Your "editorial staff" (Fred Behnke, Jim McNair, Cathy Ralston and John Gurke) were able to put their heads together during their round at Crystal Lake, and arrived at a few conclusions: Producing a magazine is much easier than golf; some of the participants in MAGCS events need to learn a little bit more about golf (i.e., etiquette) and keep the conversation and language muted; and bobbing for drinks in the coolers, no matter how hot it is, melts the ice more quickly, thus warming the drinks.

This newest goose-removal strategy was forwarded to me by one of our own: When the wife goes away for the weekend, the two sons, John and Matt (code names), go to the course to chase geese. After throwing John in on one end, the geese swim to the other end just in time to run into the freshly-tossed-in Matt. Though the kids themselves don't scare the geese away, the DCFS van and associated commotion do. Wonder where their sister Grace (again, code name) is during all this?

James Matchen, son of Mike Matchen (Wilmette G.C.), is among 10 high-achieving students—all sons, daughters or grandchildren of GCSAA members—to win a 1999 Legacy Award. The program, which awards a \$1,500 scholarship to each student, originated in 1990 and is sponsored by Novartis in collaboration with The GCSAA Foundation. An independent panel of judges selected the winners on the basis of academic excellence, extracurricular activities and an assigned essay describing their parents' or grandparents' involvement with the golf course management profession. This fall, James will attend Illinois

(continued on page 36)

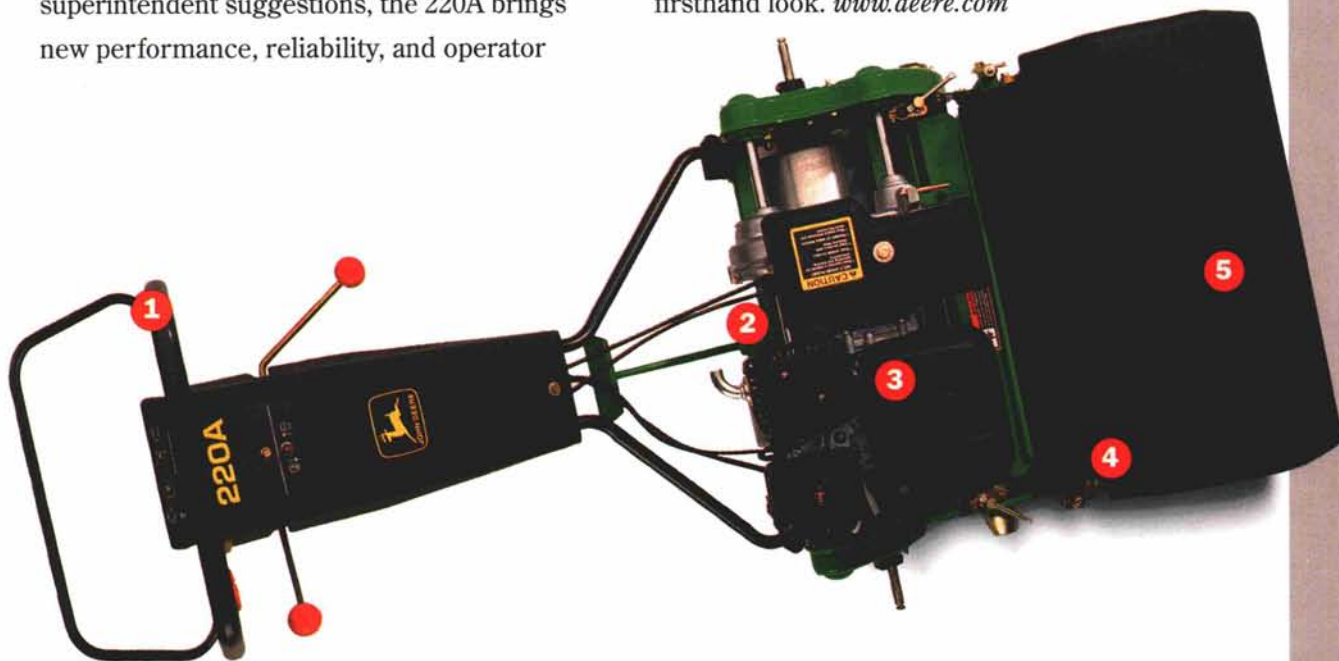


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**the Bull Sheet**

*(continued from page 34)*

State University as a psychology major. Way to go, James!

Our own Dan Dinelli, North Shore C.C., will discuss "What We Have Learned by Comparing Products on Our Golf Course" on September 14 at Southern Illinois University's Turf Field Day. Other seminars will emphasize the many challenges unique to sports turf. For further information, call the SIU Division of Continuing Education at 618-536-7751.

A superintendent position is

immediately available at Alpine Hills in Rockford, IL. Alpine Hills is a new, upscale, nine-hole par 3 course, practice facility and winter sports complex set on 53 acres of hilly terrain in the heart of Rockford. The successful applicant will be a strong golf course foreman or assistant superintendent and will report to owner Rick Kroeger, CGCS. Seeding commenced in August. A-4 greens; Penncross tees; Penneagle fairways; and a blend of Midnight, Unique and Blacksborg bluegrasses in the rough. Green speeds will be maintained at 9'. Competitive salary, truck, benefits. Mail AND fax resume to

Rick's attention at Alpine Hills, 4402 Larson Ave., Rockford, IL 61108; fax 815-398-1903.

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Although September now, as I am writing this it is July 28, and remembrances of the summer of '95 are eerily in mind. I only hope that this month finds all of us with rejuvenated *Poa*, replenished chemical rooms and sweatshirts and long pants in our laundry baskets.

# The Last Gypsy

*This moving epitaph comes from Dudley Smith.*

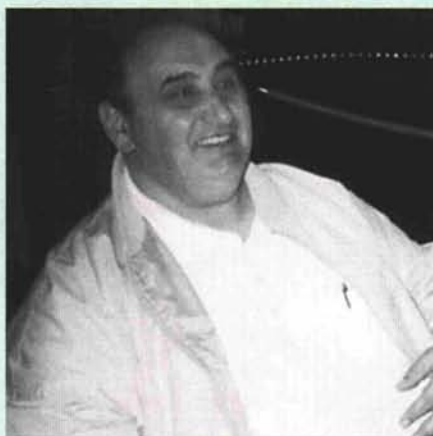
George Haddad, proprietor of Bojo Turf, died July 4 at Hines VA Hospital of complications from diabetes and kidney failure. George was a MAGCS member for 30 years. He is survived by his wife, Emily, and three daughters: Mary, Leah and Amy.

George hailed from apple knocker country—Geneva, NY (in the Finger Lake region). His dad was a country club manager in Rochester.

After attending Alfred College for two years, George received his B.S. degree from the University of Georgia. He then returned from U.S. Army service in Korea to Ohio State and earned his M.S. degree in agronomy. He was a collegiate wrestler, and earned a varsity "O" playing defense on Woody Hayes' football team.

George was employed by Swift & Company promoting Vigoro

fertilizer for 13 years. His first sale came from "Old Bill Lyons" at the Firestone C.C. in Akron. George was frustrated with corporate sales, being a "little spoke in a big



*George in 1988.*

wheel," and started Bojo Turf in Park Forest, IL in 1970.

A peddler or a gypsy, George offered hand soap, mops and brooms, kitty litter, tools, fertilizer spreaders, etc. If he couldn't supply it for you today, he'd return with it tomorrow. We Irish call that person a tinker (a "jack of all trades"). His association with

Harry Paarlberg of South Holland gave him access to fertilizer and chemical products to sell.

Big George was an immense man at 350 pounds and then some. Woody would not have dared grabbing HIS facemask! He traveled in a rickety silver and scarlet van with a sliding door to the driver's seat. His arrival to the golf course was announced by a horn playing the Ohio State fight song.

George knew his products. He was most helpful in diagnosing frit fly, apple scab, black turfgrass ataenius and white grub damage on our courses.

Mention a party and George was ready. He was the genial host at summertime pig roasts, Christmas parties at his plantation in Peotone (thank you, Chef Emily!), fishing charters on Lake Michigan with Craig Marfia, bus trips to college football games and Friday night happy hour sessions at the German tavern in Frankfort.

The Gypsy is dead. His van is empty. The Buckeye blare is silenced. The tinker with the big heart has left us. God bless you, George Haddad.





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### Transition from the Flatlands . . .

(continued from page 32)

alder, Ohio buckeye, white and river birch, and lots of aspen. As for shrubs, the lilacs bloom profusely for three or more weeks due to the cool nights and days. The Japanese tree lilac does very well, as do potentilla and various spireas. The evergreens include spruces, pines, firs and junipers, but no yews.

In ending this update of our new life here in Montana, we received this e-mail from our daughter-in-law. She and our son are foresters at the Grand Canyon National Park.

“Sounds like you’re doing a lot of hiking, so I thought I’d pass this on...Get some pepper spray and some small bells to jingle on your packs if you’ll be hiking in grizzly and black bear country. It’s important to know the difference between black bear scat and griz-



Photo by Fred Opperman

*Relocating to “the last best place” doesn’t preclude traveling elsewhere. Fred captured this shot on a July trip to California. At Sequoia National Park, a black bear is feeding on grubs, which are under the bark of a dead tree. To the right of the bear: a Sequoia tree about 25’ in diameter!*

zly scat when you come across it, so you can take appropriate precautions. Black bear scat is pretty easy to identify: it has berries and leaves in it. Grizzly scat, on the other hand, has bells in it and smells like pepper spray.”

P.S. I’d love to hear from any of you. My e-mail address is: opperman@avicom.net; or phone number is 406-522-9760, Mountain Daylight Time. 

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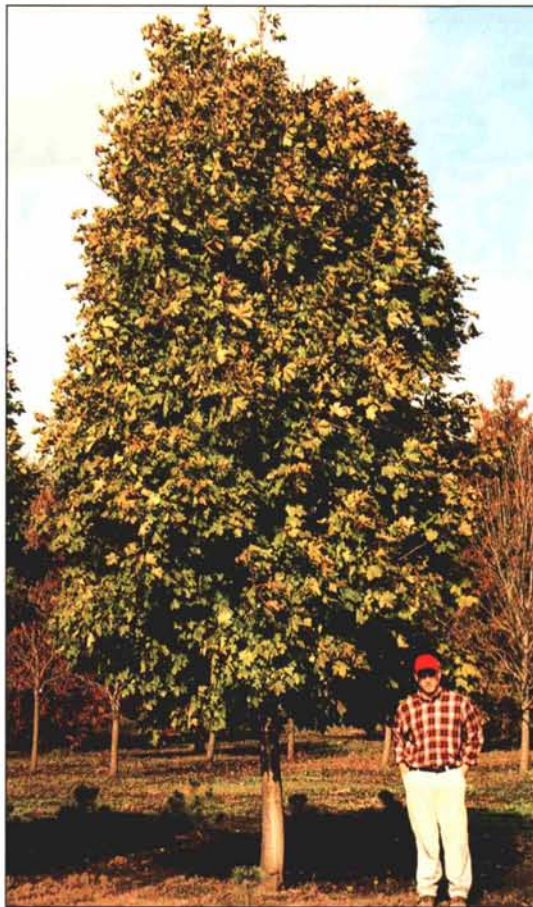
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