



From the Director's Desk

GREAT EXPECTATIONS

By Jim Latham, Director
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Green Section



Upbeat.

That little used word best describes my feeling after the International Conference and Show in our nation's capital. Maybe I caught it from the same person who gave me the flu out there. But this feels good! Our industry is healthy. Someone got the act together again.

Perhaps the most noticeable thing from my side of the table is the genuine spirit of cooperation that was spoken, written and exhibited by the GCSAA and the USGA Green Section. While these great organizations have worked side by side toward better golf turf for a long time, their activities have often lacked the necessary coordination. The Spirit is there now — all the way through the respective Committees and Staffs. The vehicle being ridden tandem is the greatest turfgrass research effort ever — toward the implement of golf turf on a national scale.

In 1985, the USGA Green Section will provide \$338,000.00 toward basic research in golf turf. The ultimate goals of the 10-year program are to reduce golf course maintenance costs by 50% and to reduce water use on golf courses by 50%. They will be achieved by learning how plants grow under golfing conditions as well as developing golf-quality turf from drought resistant (tolerant) species. And how 'bout a hybrid, perennial, creeping, 'annual' bluegrass? Or super bents that will thrive in high temperature and/or saline environments? Don't forget the coming cold tolerant bermudas and Zoysias for courses in the lower North. Studies on the effects of compaction and relief mechanisms on turf rooting will help in the overall picture.

These projects are underway now. For all I know, they'll be studying the possibility of negative heights of cut in the next go-round.

Basic research of this type is not the responsibility of industry. It is the piper to whose tune we in golf

must dance — and pay the cover charge. That's where the Green Section Research Committee comes in, being composed of representatives of the USGA, GCSAA, Industry and Academia. Big projects mean big bucks and **this** committee really works at overseeing the expenditures.

Note also that the fund solicitations are not intended to defer funds from other turf research agencies.

A note to hackers — computer types, not golf types. The preparation of the turf information data base at Michigan State University library is moving along well. Its beyond my comprehension but I'm told it will be just great. We should be right proud that the fundamental or historic section of this setup is The O. J. Noer Memorial Turfgrass Collection.

There's another subject deserving attention now that the February thaw is upon us. It is, **again**, the elation felt by some folks that we have new, safe, methods of getting rid of **Poa annua** — mechanically and/or chemically. The last time something like this hit Wisconsin a lot of **Poa annua** was controlled, but the resulting bare ground wasn't a good replacement.

The new approach to **Poa annua** suppression and plant population replacement through plant growth regulation is a sound one. But it is neither magic nor automatic. Successful completion of such a project will demand the utmost in controlled turfgrass management. It is a multi-year operation and, perhaps, a permanent part of maintenance operations. These comments are not meant to throw cold water on a hot item, but are meant to direct your attention to the realities involved in the success of any **Poa annua** reduction program in Wisconsin.

1. Is **your Poa annua** population a "condition" or is it a symptom of other problems such as:

- a. Poor moisture control via poor irrigation and/or drainage facilities
 - b. Soil compaction from your equipment or golfers
 - c. The wrong grass for the maintenance level it receives (or vice-versa)
 - d. Simple turf loss in the past
 - e. All of the above
2. Are your golfers prepared to
 - a. Accept periods of less than desirable playing conditions
 - b. Budget the total program for the number of years required? This won't be a one-shot deal.
 - c. Understand that a. and b. are for better playing conditions in the **future**.
 3. Are you ready to
 - a. Develop and carry out a multi-year, expensive, time-critical operation
 - b. Defend it eloquently at budget and tournament time
 - c. Talk to yourself when nobody else will?

Initiating a **Poa annua** replacement program is similar to but more painful than the acceptance of a sand topdressing program. Its sorta like forevermore. You can't simply get rid of the **Poa annua**, plant something else and go fishing. You must have the means to keep **Poa annua** down or, like herpes, it will return. Remember, no one intentionally planted the stuff. It was aggressive enough to push what you had out of the way. It will do it again if your future turf management methods permit.

The beautiful thing about these risks is the Opportunity to Do Something about a real or imagined problem. A real opportunity to truly manage golf course turf exists because industry has provided the tools and the expertise to accomplish an end desired by golfers and golf course superintendents for a long time. When you combine PGR's, lightweight mowing equipment and better irrigation and drainage you have the chance. Some of our superintendents have programs underway already. There are several alternative routes to accomplish the goal so the individual requirements of each golf operation should fit into one program or another.

The existing programs are not for every Wisconsin golf course, though. There is a major cost item to be considered. Resort courses may not be interested in golfer displeasure during their short season. Other courses may not have enough environmental stresses to worry about **Poa goa**. And maybe the whiteouts during seedhead season do not bother as many people as we think.

These very **options** mean positive thoughts — all of them Upbeat. Maybe it's the thaw, maybe it's the new interassociation relations or maybe it's my being back with the USGA Green Section. Whatever the cause, 1985 feels good — Upbeat.

P.S. Lets hope the above thoughts don't turn out like the Cover on *Sports Illustrated*.



WHEW!!! IRS Relaxes Rules on Mileage

Most Golf Course Superintendents breathed a sign of relief on February 15 when the Internal Revenue Service relaxed record-keeping rules that are required for cars and trucks used in business. It seems coincidental that the ruling came down immediately after the GCSAA Conference in Washington, D.C. It also seems that correspondence to Sens. Kasten and Proxmire and numerous Representatives did some good.

The amended rules were promised on January 25th after Congress received protests about the regulations that went into effect on January 1, 1985. The announcement of February 15 spelled out details of the changes and expanded the definition of "adequate contemporaneous records." This should be a relief to almost all Golf Course Managers since most of us need to drive a company vehicle. Rather than having to keep a log or diary of **every** trip, we are allowed under the amended rules to

substitute "contemporaneous records that contain the required information and that are kept in an orderly fashion." No logging at all is required for a company or other vehicle used exclusively for business if it is kept at the business site when not in use. The IRS said the company must have a policy, "heeded by employees, against the use of vehicles for personal purposes."

If an employer requires an employee to commute in a company vehicle but allows no other personal use, no logging will be required if value of the commuting — \$3.00 a day — is reported as tax-

able income to the employee.

The amended rules require that records on vehicles be made at the time of use. This record must include the date, mileage driven, purpose of the trip and the name of the user if someone other than the usual driver.

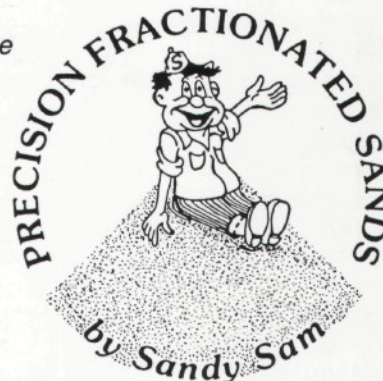
Congress voted last year to require stricter record-keeping in an effort to keep people from disguising personal trips as tax deductible business use. There has been such an outcry and protest about this new law that a majority of House members and 44 of 100 Senators have co-sponsored bills to repeal it!

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MARCH MEETING DATE CHANGED

The date of the March business meeting has been moved from March 18 (as noted in a recent mailing) to Monday, March 25. The reason for the change was a conflict with the Appleton meeting of the UW—Extension Turf Conference. The meeting on March 25 will begin at **10:30 A.M.**

Please mail another reservation to our office when you receive it.