

From the Director's Desk
**OUR SUPERIN-
TENDENTS NEED
NEWER AND
BETTER
EQUIPMENT**

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If Wisconsin golfers are to be pacified by Tour-caliber courses, they should provide the superintendent with the tools he needs to get the job done. I'm not talking about a super irrigation system, new mowing devices or a hump-proof hole cutter, I'm talking about knowledge and the part superintendents play in its generation. Question: Why have only two Wisconsin clubs (to my knowledge) participated in the Baltusrol Plan this year?

The grapevine tells us that some clarification of the GCSAA-USGA Green Section research program is necessary. The joint effort by these organizations is to generate funds for dispersal through the USGA Foundation. A large portion of these funds goes to Basic Research on golf course turfgrasses and their management. Unfortunately, many Great Lakers heard only that the prime involvement was toward minimizing water use in the West and Southwest. We have no shortages here, they say. Well, there's not a thing wrong with **using** less water here, is there? Pumping isn't free. But there's more to it than water.

Much of the basic research is in understanding **Plant Stress**. We can't cope until we understand. If plant stress were not a problem, why is **Poa annua** tops on the hate list? If stress were not a bluegrass or bentgrass problem how did **Poa annua** become dominant in the first place?

Golf Course management puts ever-increasing stress on all the turfgrass species and cultivars we have today. If some physiological characteristics can be defined in stress tolerant plants, perhaps they could be transferred to or developed in **golf** turf types. Stress here means not only heat/cold or wet/dry, but may include low cut,

trampling, shade etc. etc. All are stress mechanisms.

There are other valuable research programs underway. Dr. Don White and his group in Minnesota are deeply involved in **Poa annua** breeding work. Funded by both the USGA and the O.J. Noer Foundation, he has isolated several "P.a. types" and is searching for more superior plants. Both conventional (pollen transfer) and tissue culture breeding programs are involved. It is doubtful that the folks in El Paso are ecstatic about this, but Wisconsin folks should be.

Across the Lake, Dr. Paul Rieke at Michigan State University is getting to the bottom of aerifier holes. He is trying to get a handle on the soil compaction that our golf courses experience. This will enable us to better cope with this **stress** problem, but from the soils' standpoint rather than the plants'.

The above are only two of the many Green Section projects now underway throughout the U.S. to reduce the cost of golf while maintaining high quality playing conditions. They can be accomplished only by a **national level** organization which can coordinate the expertise of highly skilled scientists who have access to a lot of expensive instruments and equipment. Turfgrass research has had a piecemeal approach to major problems for much too long.

Now, what happens to all that good information when it finally reaches the status for publication? What has happened to the wealth of useful data we have generated since the 1920's? Nothing — unless it gets into the hands and minds of those who can use it. This is where the computerized database information system under development at Michigan State comes in. At present, I don't know how or when it will operate or just who can or will use it. It is evident, however, that we travelling minstrels of the turf business can find in it a ready reference library

for information we can't remember or put in bookshelves or filing cabinets. Unused or unavailable information is really worse than no information at all. It is a waste.

Little did we know that the books and periodicals collected from the O.J. Noer Memorial Turfgrass Collection would be the historical basis for such a broad, up-to-date information network! We may find that some "new" problem was solved 20 years ago, but only the student or researcher knew about it. All research papers do not reach the pages of the prominent journals or periodicals.

There are other aspects of the USGA Foundation which go beyond research and extension efforts. Just as a golf course superintendent needs an adequate maintenance building, the USGA must have proper housing for their facilities — testing equipment required by the Implements and Ball group — Computers for The Handicap group — space for The Golf Library — all the things necessary to administer as well as serve Our world of golf. These things cost money, too.

The prime sources of revenue for the USGA are the golfers, contacted through their club or association on an **annual** basis. Contacts for research funds can and should be instigated by golf course superintendents. It is their best indirect fringe benefit. If the club so desires it can restrict the use of funds to a specific use.

The Baltusrol Plan, that is, a contribution of \$2 per member per year fell short of needs and some projects had to be scaled down. To maintain the current commitments, the 1985 goal is \$3 per member. This will prevent scaling down the level of research in future years. (The tab for 1985 is \$338,000!) We have a good thing going for the future of everyone in golf — reduced maintenance costs without loss of playing quality; greater ability to cope with environmental stress; new and better golf turfgrasses; and, yes, reduced need for water.

Don't you owe it to yourself, your professional society and to **golf** to support this program? Just be as enthusiastic about this as you would be if it were a piece of equipment you really, really, need. It **really** is.