



## TRUCKS

By Monroe S. Miller

Men in our profession seem to often be envied by those in other endeavors. Neighbors have said to me how fortunate I am to be able to work so closely with golf and all of the excitement the game generates. Others wish they worked outdoors with nature and beauty, as I do. And haven't you also been viewed with "friendly jealousy" because of the wide variety of your work? The list of things other people like about our jobs is quite long, but one that I hear about a lot is that we all seem to have a truck! How true that is — we all have a legitimate need, in fact require, a truck. No wonder we are envied. I think most American men harbor a deep, albeit sometimes subconscious, desire to drive a truck for legitimate business purposes. It gets a little difficult for a dentist or an attorney or a clubhouse manager to justify having a truck. For us, it is part of our way of life.

Trucks have been a part of my life for as long as I can remember. Some people call the vehicles I'm speaking about "pickups." They are that, I guess, but I personally do not like the name and always call them trucks. My dad always had trucks, but the first one I can remember a great deal about, the first wheel I sat behind, was my grandfather's. He had a Model A Ford that was perfect for his 140 acre dairy farm in Grant County. The Model A Ford truck was much like the 8N Ford tractor — low technology at its best. There was beauty in their simplicity and functionality. Options were unheard of. Black in color and built to last, these trucks served this country in more ways than you could count. They could be repaired, literally with pliers and baling wire. They were inexpensive to maintain and seemed to last forever, hauling milk and livestock to market and performing endless errands on farms. No doubt the same was true for golf course work and the Model A. I was truly saddened when my grandfather traded his Model A for

a 1951 Ford.

The truck I like best of all that I have driven over the years is the one that I was first able (legally) to drive — a 1954 Ford. It had all the features that a good truck should have — a V-8 power, heavy gauge body metal, running boards, oversized tires, a spare tire bolted to the side of the box where you could get at it, and a standard transmission. It was built like a tank and lasted longer than similar vehicles today could be expected.

You couldn't possibly run a farm — yesterday or today — without a truck. Nor can you run a golf course without one. A number of years ago (more than I'd like to admit!) when he was my Assistant, Jeff Parks and I were going to a WGCSA monthly meeting after work. It was hosted by a golf course we'd never visited before and we had some difficulty in finding it. We finally stumbled upon the course itself and proceeded to search out the clubhouse. I was beginning to wonder if we'd ever find it when Jeff suddenly said, "That must be it, over there." I looked and couldn't see a building and asked him why he thought it was there. "Parking lot full of pickups!," he replied. He was right. There were anyway twenty-five trucks in the lot. Since then, I've taken particular note whenever and wherever we meet. From the Pfister Hotel to the SENTRY-WORLD golf course, when we gather, so do the trucks. Even Bob Hope has noticed this. In his new book, "Confessions of A Hooker — My Lifelong Love Affair with Golf — Bob jokingly tells about his acceptance of the GCSAA's **Old Tom Morris Award** a couple of years ago. "Arnie, who had been the recipient the year previous, was the presenter. I got to the hotel in Las Vegas for the ceremony and I knew Arnie was already there, because I saw his tractor in the parking lot!" I wonder if Bob saw all of the trucks in the parking lot at Caesar's Hotel that week?

I get a real charge from all of the pickups I see as I drive around town, day by day. I used the word "pickup" because no self-respecting truck would wear all of the baubles these urbane vehicles have — it is almost embarrassing. Wouldn't you love to see one of these "Yuppiemobiles" with a load of topdressing or compost or fertilizer? Trucks were meant for work, not looks. They should be a dark color, preferably green, brown, black or navy blue. Red is permissible here in Wisconsin because that is the UW's color. Glitter and metallic paint don't make it, nor do whitewall tires. Chrome on trucks should be verboten. Wheel covers and side mirrors are permissible because they serve good purposes, if they are kept simple. But this is not true for cab carpeting or fabric seats. Remember, trucks are not pleasure machines, they have serious purpose.

And what an insult it is to hear Rod Johnson talk about his "truck." Call it a toy or call it a wimpmobile, but don't ever refer to one of those Japanese wonders as a truck. Load more than three bags of Milorganite in the box of one of those silly little rice burners and you can't steer it down the road. I'm convinced the reason Rod always has someone with him is to help pedal!

I've got to admit, however, that I am sometimes caught between ritual or tradition and high technology. I may miss the running boards on trucks, but I love automatic transmissions. It used to require a heavy load for a truck to ride smoothly, but who cannot appreciate the smooth ride of today's truck, even if the box is empty. Tinted windshields are most definitely an improvement over straight glass. Nostalgia is nice, but so is the improved gas mileage of today's truck, even at the expense of more plastic and fiberglass than 30 years ago.

I think my love of trucks is probably pretty similar to that of most of the guys on Wisconsin golf courses. Here in Madison we all drive under-stated, full-sized, heavy duty trucks. Everyone understands what they are all really about.

Has anybody seen what Bob Musbach is driving these days?!