

behind the scenes putting together a report detailing the size of our industry and what our industry really needs 10, 20 and 30 years down the road. We compiled the "Wisconsin Greenspace Industry Report" to establish the size and scope of our industry in relation to other state research supported crops. We also put together a proposal for an urban research facility, the "O.J. Noer Center," to study turfgrass. The culmination of this three year effort came on Wednesday, April 2, 1986 when we made our proposal to the U.W. chancellors office through Harry Peterson, the chancellor's assistant. The same morning we also visited with the

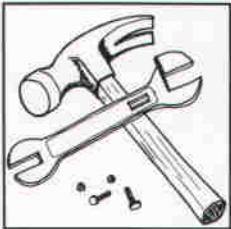
Dean of the College of Agriculture, Leo Walsh. Jim Huggett, Monroe Miller and Tom Harrison made the proposals and were warmly and enthusiastically received. The gracious reception by school officials and the fact that the WTA is determined to put Wisconsin's research efforts on a higher plane will ultimately bring success to this project. My point with all this dialogue is that over the years as interested turf groups such as the WGCSA have supported the WTA people may at times have wondered where is all this heading, or are we really getting the most for our dollar contributed. The answer is positively that the

maximum value is derived from every dollar contributed, but that a great deal of time and some dollars have been put into the long range projects mentioned earlier. Wisconsin will have a great urban research facility someday and we are committed towards this goal with your continued support.

Again on behalf of the WTA Board we thank you for your past support and we look forward to this same cooperative support in years to come. Thank You.

Respectively,
Thomas R. Harrison, President
Wisconsin Turfgrass Association

Shop Talk



REFLECTIONS ON THE WINTER MAINTENANCE SEASON JUST COMPLETED

By Pat Norton

Another (very early) golf season is now upon us. The winter maintenance season is just completed. Everybody's all fired up and ready to go, right? But before the outdoor season gets too hectic, let's reflect back on those endless winter months and ask ourselves a few questions about wintertime in a golf course maintenance shop.

In answering these questions let's take into account the fact that many of these remarks will relate more to the younger superintendent—the guy like myself who is still building up and organizing his operation. More established superintendents can probably identify with these questions and situations by remembering back to their earlier days.

Q) How productive was I over the winter? Was I productive enough?

A) Usually I feel like I'm not productive enough during the winter. Why do I feel this way? I don't really know. Maybe because my day is usually only eight hours (much of that either at the desk or on the phone or both, it seems) instead of ten or twelve hours as

in the summer. I probably feel guilty about working less, although I certainly shouldn't.

Q) How productive were my staff people over the winter? Were they productive enough?

A) Thinking on it objectively and given all the winter responsibilities other than shop work that my staff has—YES, they were pretty darn productive. Especially when I think about all that was accomplished since mid-November.

Q) Did we accomplish everything that we set out to back in November?

A) No, certainly not everything that we had hoped to take care of was finished by April 1. But, almost all of it was. Probably 90-95% of my equipment is set to go. But it always seems like it's the little extras that have to be let go—the traffic signs, the informational signs, the miscellaneous small equipment. It can be really frustrating.

Q) What should I do differently next winter?

A) Quite simply two things come to mind here. One is to

get a good, early jump on the winter maintenance and two is to hire an extra person if you have a real need and budget affords it.

Q) Do I have enough in my budget for winter overhaul and maintenance?

A) If I feel that I don't have enough funds budgeted, the first thing I'll look at is adjusting monthly budget figures to balance things a bit. If the problem is truly insufficient funds, then trace the problem to its source. If you're equipment is older it'll naturally require more dollars to maintain it. Making a green committee understand this is the easy part. Making them support you in your quest for newer, more modern equipment is more difficult.

Q) What, if any, decision making is involved in winter maintenance and repair?

A) The decision-making which follows is pretty simple. Which piece of equipment is it, where and how much will it be used, cost of repair, what could happen if it breaks down are but a few of the things to think about. It's in this decision-making process that a good mechanic will be crucial—one who thinks like the superintendent, one who can give valuable input and suggestions, and one who is just as cost conscious as the superintendent.

Q) What are the priorities on equipment repair?

A) Priorities simply have to be those pieces used most often, those pieces having no backup, those that are to be kept in the fleet. Those pieces slated for retirement or replacement would be those that I'd economize on. Sometimes, though, it's pretty difficult to prioritize on equipment repair—it never fails that the old sand rake that you cut corners on is the same one that continually breaks down on Saturday or Sunday morning.

Q) How do I convince my superiors of my new equipment needs?

A) Convincing one's superiors on new equipment needs can be very difficult. Their viewpoint is usually much less narrow—they have to view the overall club financial picture, not just the golf course. Their knowledge and understanding of this specialized equipment is usually pretty limited also. They are also not the ones experiencing the frustration of dealing with the negative situation of an old, beat up stable of equipment. Educating them and presenting a logical argument of your reasons for new purchases is a good starting point. Also know your club's financial situation and long range plans so that you don't look like a fool.

Q) What are the extenuating cir-

cumstances that may hamper wintertime productivity?

A) In most cases, with most winter golf maintenance operations, there always seems to be too many additional responsibilities (other than shop work) that really hamper winter productivity. The all too common misconception/misunderstanding is that there's not enough to do in a golf maintenance operation in wintertime Wisconsin ("What do you do during the winter? Really??? I didn't realize.....") Therefore, all kinds of extra responsibilities are tacked on to supposedly enhance productivity, which does just the opposite for the wintertime maintenance staff. The end result in April is having way too many "in-completes" on the old maintenance productivity report card!

In summary, let's all realize that there are many other points to reflect back upon. There are but a few. The key I guess is to simply do as a friend of mine once told me. "We should all periodically sit down in the office, close the door, take the phone off the hook, relax and think to ourselves—are we doing a good job and how could I possibly do a better job with this operation?" Think about it and we'll be talking to you next time.



Wisconsin Golf Course Superintendents Association Officers and Directors 1985 — 1986

Mr. William R. Roberts
President
SENTRYWORLD Sports Center
2200 North Point Drive
Stevens Point, WI 54481

Mr. Roger Bell
Vice President
North Shore Golf Club
Box 337
Menasha, WI 54952

Mr. Rod Johnson
Secretary
Sheboygan Country Club
Box 1066
Sheboygan, WI 53081

Mr. Bruce Worzella
Treasurer
West Bend Country Club
5858 Highway Z
West Bend, WI 53095

DIRECTORS

Mr. Carl Grassl
10633 West Burleigh
Wauwatosa, WI 53222

Mr. Danny H. Quast
Milwaukee Country Club
8000 N. Range Line Road
Milwaukee, WI 531209

Mr. Randy Smith
5901 Malabae Lane
Madison, WI 53711

Mr. Monroe S. Miller
Immediate Past President
Blackhawk Country Club
P.O. Box 5129
Madison, WI 53705

Mr. Dale E. Marach
Clintonville Riverside Golf Club
Box 188
Clintonville, WI 54929