



Winners and Losers — PLUS The Annual Editor's Awards

By Monroe S. Miller

The end of the year brings the end of Wisconsin's golf season, a time of normalcy for Wisconsin golf course superintendents and the best holidays of the year. It also brings the last issue of *THE GRASS ROOTS* for 1991, and that means it is time for the annual EDITOR'S AWARDS. Appearing with and preceding the EDITOR'S AWARDS are the new WINNERS AND LOSERS from the year past.

It is never easy determining so many winners. The deliberations were careful and thoughtful; they had to be with so many possibilities to choose from. In a sense, even the LOSERS are winners! Let the fun (and seriousness) begin.

WINNERS: Diane Haas, Gene Haas and Marilyn Gaffey for another year of service, guidance and concern for our organization and our profession. Where would we be without them?

LOSERS: All those members who cannot manage to pay their dues on time so the WGCSA board can do timely budgeting. These are the same people who don't send in the directory information sheet in a timely fashion, making Randy Smith's job of producing a directory twice as difficult as it should be. Next year, all leakers should simply be left out of the organization.

WINNERS: All those WGCSA members who are conservationists, naturalists and environmentalists. They are demonstrating that commitment by dealing with fuel storage, hazcom programs, mixing/loading requirements and IPM in timely and responsible fashion.

LOSERS: Golf course superintendents who start spraying fungicides opening week and continue to do so on a weekly basis until Thanksgiving. This is a waste of money and material; it is also unnecessary. Doesn't that make it irresponsible?

WINNERS: All the individuals and organizations who worked so hard and donated so much of the time and money that made the NOER CENTER a reality.

LOSERS: All of the duds and cheap-skates who gave zero to this critical project. They should be embarrassed.

WINNER: Dr. Leo Walsh who did an superb job while dean of the College of Agricultural and Life Sciences at the UW-Madison. He contributed mightily to our industry.

LOSERS: The incompetent bureaucrats in the UW System who threw so many unnecessary roadblocks in our way during the NOER CENTER planning and construction. They demonstrated clearly why so many of us distrust and dislike this type of public employee so much.

WINNER: Dr. Gayle Worf. Who in the Wisconsin turfgrass industry didn't hate to see this wonderful man retire to a deanship in Agriculture Hall? His popularity across all disciplines of the turfgrass industry has been unmatched and probably never will be. There will not be another like him.

LOSERS: Those in the media who cannot seem to merely report stories truthfully without sensationalism. The most evident to us was the reporting of the Merrill Hills C.C. golf course maintenance shop fire in April. This public non-event carried a headline of "Toxic Blaze Prompts Evacuation." It was replete with partial information and void of critical facts.

WINNERS: President Bush, his staff and all the soldiers who handled the Persian Gulf situation with such efficiency and professionalism.

LOSERS: All the pinhead politicians who were so self-righteous in their opposition to Desert Storm, until we won. Then they were scratching like crazy to qualify their opposition. Those bums are big time LOSERS. I kept a very accurate list for reference on election day. On top of my list is BGH foe Feingold. If any politicians like Feingold try to forget their opposition during campaigning, let's all remind them.

WINNERS: The Symposium Committee. They planned another superb

educational program.

LOSERS: Those Wisconsin golf course superintendents who cannot manage to attend the Symposium (or the WTA Field Day or the WTA Winter Conference or UW Extension turfgrass meetings). It must be nice to be so smart that you can pass on educational offerings.

WINNERS: Golf writers and reporters who do such a good job of capturing the essence of the world and sport of golf. They are a special and talented group.

LOSERS: Those who see golf ONLY as a revenue source. Their greed and selfishness is disgusting. More sad yet is the fact that they are missing so much that is rewarding and fun. There really is more to golf's bottom line than profit.

WINNER: Augusta National Golf Club for hosting the revered Masters Tournament. They manage the world's finest golf tournament, making it special for everyone there (players and gallery). I'll always remember 1991 as the year I went to the Masters.

LOSERS: The Wisconsin Department of Revenue for applying the 5% sales tax to a USGA Green Section visit. I wish state (and local and federal) politicians and bureaucrats were as quick at saving tax dollars as they are at creating more. When will "enough be enough?"

WINNERS: All of the WGCSA members who hosted a WGCSA monthly meeting. They keep our organization vital.

LOSERS: The U.S. Supreme Court justices who overturned the Wisconsin Supreme Court decision in the Town of Casey suit. They have created potential chaos for our industry.

WINNER: Dr. Robert Newman. The "Steady Eddie" of our faculty at Wisconsin's land grant college did the work of several people. The committee charged with filling his position found out it would take at least two new hires to fill his shoes. Congratulations, Bob, on a sterling career.

LOSER: The National Wildlife Federation. For their lack of truthfulness and integrity in a story they published in "Ranger Rick", a kids magazine that flies the NWF flag.

Rick is a cartoon raccoon who fights for a healthy and clean environment, something we all want.

But Rick lost all credibility this past May when he pointed out in a story that he and his friends "find deadly dangers in the deep green grass".

The stories are aimed at young people who are at an impressionable age. They are believing nearly everything they hear and read, including misinformation and falsehoods.

The NWF was called on the matter and refused to budge. As a fellow professional pointed out, they have an overbearing, self-righteous attitude.

Another word that fits nicely is "loser".

WINNERS: The United States Golf Association which does a yeoman job of promoting golf and guarding the integrity of the game. The Green Section is especially valuable to golf course superintendents.

LOSERS: State politicians who have worked hard to maintain Wisconsin's position (6th) as an overtaxed state. Studies show we don't get what we pay for either.

WINNERS: The committee charged with the responsibility of hiring a manager for the NOER CENTER. Tom Salaiz will do a good job in that position—he's smart and has an excellent work ethic. Those primarily responsible were Tom Harrison, Wayne Kusow, Marsh Finner and Dale Slough.

LOSERS: Those manufacturers who cannot seem to figure out that packaging is important. We are paying a premium price for some fertilizer that is in bags that are almost impossible to open. You practically need a set of burglar tools to break into a bag.

We use some fungicides in volumes significant enough to merit containers larger than a quart and with an opening larger than a nickel. This list could run pages. Advice: give your consumers and customers some consideration.



AWARDS

Award for Creative Equipment Acquisition: This year's award goes to Sparky Schwab from Monroe Country Club.

Confronted with a desperate need for a new pickup truck and no approval for one, Sparky resorted to super creativity. When the old truck "caught" fire, Sparky pushed it out the door with a "Let 'er burn!"

Sparky's driving a new Ford these days. Very nice truck.

Do you have a match to spare, Sparky? I need a new greensmower!

Award for Best New Product: Easy one here. *Impact* herbicide offers pre- and post-emergence control of grassy weeds plus post-control of some broad-leaves that drive golf course superintendents crazy. The superintendents who used the EUP product this past season gave it rave reviews. I hope it receives EPA registration real soon.

The Pomposity Award: This is an easy choice to make. It goes to Robert Trent Jones, Jr. for his incredibly insensitive remarks about the old barn that was within a few feet of the NOER CENTER.

Jones was told that neither the UW Foundation nor the university had funds to refurbish the old barn, which was nearly ready to fall in. So he said it should just be left standing as is. "Just leave it," he said. "But it should not be knocked down. That would be the worst thing that could happen."

His remarks show total disregard for those in the turfgrass industry who worked so hard and so long to build a turfgrass research facility. He really

doesn't care what that facility looks like or the conditions the barn imposed upon it. His only concern was about "ambiance" from a golf tee and apparently wasn't interested about "ambiance" at the front door of the NOER CENTER.

Unbelievable.

Petty Politics Award: Presented to the state legislature for its inclusion in the 1991-1993 budget bill a provision that removed a modest break in the green fee for UW faculty and staff at the University Ridge golf course. Petty jealousy, too. With all the problems of welfare, crime, high taxes and jobs in this state, it is nothing short of incredible that a politician would have the courage to pull such a stunt. It was just plain mean. But not surprising, considering the mentality of most petty politicians.

The Worf Award: The Worf is given for the worst disease of the year. For 1991, we have co-winners for the Worf Award—pythium AND brown patch.

These two diseases had this award wrapped up in May when they reared their ugly symptoms, one of the earliest in memory. Both diseases were still around my fairways in September.

The Peliterri Award: Presented for the bug problem of the season, this year's Peliterri had several candidates.

Some thought the miserable little deer tick was the best choice. Others voted for mosquitoes; one voted for the lake fly. Ants drove some superintendents in the state crazy and bees in late summer drove golfers off the course. Both did well in the voting. Purists wanted the cutworm named because it is an honest to goodness turf pest.

After careful consideration, the cutworm was named recipient of the 1991 Peliterri, mainly because in some places there were three generations to deal with.

The Newman Award: New in 1991, the Newman Award recognizes the sea-
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son's worst weed problem. The award's namesake spent a good number of years looking for solutions to weed invasions in turfgrass fields, from putting greens to sod fields to home lawns.

Two candidates for the 1991 Newman stand out—crabgrass and knotweed. Both are prolific seed producers and last year must have been a tremendous year for seed production. Many of us have never seen crops of these two weeds like we see this year.

Superintendents who didn't get pre-emergence herbicide down were crying the blues every time they drove across the golf course.

Based on ACCLAIM sales since July 1, the Newman Award goes to a really ugly weed—crabgrass.

Pest of the Year Award: This wide open category has a couple of clear winners. First place goes to the crow, a miserable and ugly bird that can, with the help of only a few others, trash a putting green almost overnight while gulping down cutworms. Too bad shotguns aren't legal within village limits.

Second place goes to an ugly animal—the mole. We captured more this year than in the previous ten taken together. This beast, like the crow, can make a mess overnight.

WGCSA "Survivor of the Year" Award: Co-winners in this category, too. Mike Semler and Mike Kositzke were both visited by shop fires and tremendous storm damage. Yet both men confronted their problems head-on like the pros they are and managed their golf courses back to normal. Applause for them is in order.

Quote of the Year: This award goes to Professor Larry Binning, chairman of the Horticulture Department at the UW-Madison. He was commenting on Dr. Robert Newman's teaching abilities at Bob's retirement party and offered this: "When you ask Bob Newman what time it is, he ends up explaining to you how to build a clock!"

Nice shot!

UW-Madison entomologist and good WGCSA friend Phil Pelitteri says the woolly bear caterpillar is predicting a mild winter. Phil looks at the banded woolly bear and if the brown bands are wider, we can expect a milder winter than normal. That's the case this year.

Interestingly, that tried and true source—*The Farmer's Almanac*—also predicts a more tolerable season for the 1991/1992 winter. The Almanac specifically says to expect a "milder than

normal winter" with the "possibility of heavier than average snows." The prediction also carries the note that there will be a "January thaw interspersed with seasonable cold and a chance of heavy snow."

Phil is hedging a little bit, based on his own instincts. He thinks we are in for a bad winter since it's been so mild. A number of meteorologists agree with him, based on the law of averages and current weather patterns that are below normal in temperatures.

I hope *The Farmer's Almanac* and the woolly bear caterpillar are right!

While on my autumn leafpeepers trip to New England this fall, I witnessed one of the most interesting natural phenomena you'd want to see. Any plantsman would be intrigued to see lilacs in bloom, buds and new leaves on trees and full bloom roses in October in northern places. I thought it was springtime.

I was on Martha's Vineyard, and the hint of spring sort of made up for the lack of any fall color on the island.

What was on display was evidence of Hurricane Bob. The storm's vicious attack on the island had confused plants into thinking it was indeed spring, not fall.

The salt spray from the hurricane winds killed flowers and leaves on most small plants and trees. With the day length and temperatures of September coupled with the lack of living leaves, the plants apparently thought it was spring. New leaves and blossoms came forth.

This interesting situation could not have happened later in the season had the plants already gone into dormancy. But, as we know, buds are maturing in late summer and early fall for the next spring. Hormones from healthy leaves keep them from opening until the spring season.

Once the leaves were gone from the storm, the buds opened. Opening wouldn't have happened had the storm come later because cold weather and shortened days naturally keep them closed even without leaves.

The obvious question is "what will happen next spring?" Best guess seems to be that plants will leaf out, but they may not bloom. Many times I've seen on our golf course a releafing after a crisis (a hard freeze in spring after leaves are out, for example). On Martha's Vineyard, Nantucket and other areas damaged by Hurricane Bob, next spring will seem like a crisis to the plants.

It sure made for some interesting

viewing this fall, however.

You know it must be fall in the northern climes—the moose and elk are out. The males, anyway.

Last year we reported a story about a moose on a Wisconsin golf course and the trouble he was causing. This year there is a story about an amorous elk posing serious hazard on a northern golf course.

The story comes from Canada. Mating elk in the Canadian Rockies are causing concern on the Banff Springs golf course. In early October a golf course employee who was raking sand traps was attacked by an elk. The beast charged the raker, knocked him down and stomped on him.

Starters at the course are telling players to stay at least 100 yards away from any elk and under no circumstance are they to position themselves between a male and female elk.

It is becoming a dangerous profession we are in. Mad moose, irate golfers, violent weather and horny elk.

I don't want to think about what is next. What if the Holsteins suddenly eye up our "greener pastures"?

Several members of the WGCSA were in attendance at Professor Bob Newman's retirement party. Bruce Worzella paid a tribute to the retiring faculty member and presented Bob and his wife Diane with what I think is best described as a "chance for a memory". Between the WGCSA and the WTA, Bob and Diane will be able to experience something really nice when Wisconsin's weather is really terrible.

It was a classy affair. Faculty, industry friends of Bob and university administrators filled a good-sized room in the Wisconsin Center, overlooking beautiful Lake Mendota.

The only thing that aggravated me was that I had to park a mile away and walk to the Center. Bruce Worzella, on the other hand, was foolish enough to drive right to the front door and find a parking spot for his van.

Beginner's luck.

Joanne Roskopf lost her courageous fight against cancer on September 23. She was only 51 years old.

Condolences to Red and their four children. Words cannot express their sorrow or our sympathy.