

# One Tough Summer

By Monroe S. Miller

I wouldn't necessarily call the summer of '91 a bad summer, but the title above does seem apropos. Miserable fits nicely, too. Fortunately, from the golf player's standpoint, Wisconsin golf courses were in excellent playing condition this summer.

The weather was terrible. In our town we cannot recall the last time we had a slow, gentle and generous rain. We've had gully washers, violent storms, enormous wind damage several times and insufferably hot temperatures. The humidity was almost always high, the disease pressure was equally unrelenting and our crew was weary by mid-August. So was I.

Maybe the worst feature was how steady the worst weather was; we just didn't seem to get a break until late July.

And that break only lasted for a few days into August. The payback came at August's last week—days and days into the 90's with no rain.

From what I could tell from conversations at our summer meetings, the dry weather was in southern Wisconsin, eastern Wisconsin, up through the Fox River valley and on toward Green Bay. I understand southwestern Wisconsin also experienced some extremely dry weather. It seemed western Wisconsin was the area of our state where the rainfall was generally more plentiful during the season. And they had an early summer span that was dry.

The summer probably seemed so long simply because it was. It was summer when it should have been spring. Based on endless clues given by plant life, the acceleration has been anyway two weeks. I based by estimate on turf rooting—it was not what it should have been from mid-July forward. Even the tomatoes in my garden, grown from seed planted directly in the garden soil, matured bright red real early.

By late July, articles were appearing in the city papers that compared 1991 summer conditions with those of 1936, the mother year of the all-time worst, hottest and driest summer.

Another thing you'll be able to say about the summer of 1991 is that each part of the state had these sometimes wild conditions, but at different times. Visits I had with colleagues often seemed like they were coming from locations thousands of miles from where I was working. It was weird.

Isn't it terrible to wish your life away? But that is exactly what I was doing most of the time this summer. You know, wish a deep sigh, saying, "Man, I wish July and August would end." Chad and I were saying that on the Fourth of July and I am willing to bet we weren't the only ones in the state thinking those thoughts.

Hurrah for fall!

Despite a slow start, thanks to bureaucratic meddling, the NOER turfgrass research facility is making a mark.

The formal dedication of the university Ridge golf course included remarks by many notables. Among them was the University's chancellor, Donna Shalala.

She's new to the game of golf but is learning it quickly; she is an excellent tennis player and a good athlete. Chances are good she'll get hooked on our game.

Her comments about the golf course and its value were all positive and upbeat. And then, to my surprise, she observed how appropriate it was that a turfgrass research facility had been built right next to the golf course, a reminder of how important the NOER CENTER will be to the citizens of Wisconsin.

That was on July 1st. At the University of Wisconsin Board of Regents meeting on July 12th the subject of the NOER facility and turfgrass research came up again, surprisingly.

New regent David Hirsch took an active role at his first Regents' meeting. He was particularly outspoken at one time when he scolded regent Ruth Clusen. She had questioned the educational value of the university's new 18-

hole golf course.

Hirsch quickly pointed out that 15 acres of the land were being used for research on turfgrasses.

Someday I hope to have a chance to thank regent Hirsch. Maybe, at the same time, I'll point out to regent Clusen that University Ridge was built with private, donated money.

This year's growing season was one of the best for all of our trees, including those on our golf courses.

UW-Madison forestry professor Ray Guries has said that the mild winter of 1990/1991 and the warm and wet and early spring made for a very leafy year for our trees. They have experienced a lot of growth. Some tree trimmers have expressed the belief that the trees have 25% more leaves than in normal years.

This prosperity can be both good and bad. As we've seen with all the violent weather, tree damage has been heavy. Some believe excessive growth can lead to excessive damage in severe storms. That seems to have been borne out, to some extent.

The good is yet to come, however. It is just around the corner—autumn color. Experts are predicting some spectacular leaf color this fall. The leaves may stay green a little longer and fall a little later. But they will be beautiful.

I am very anxious for that to happen—it will be the frosting on the best time of the year in Wisconsin.

Did you see the last issue of *GOLF COURSE MANAGEMENT* magazine? Obviously, staff writer Mike Falkner was in Wisconsin for several days this summer.

He spent a lot of time in Kohler at Blackwolf Run and in Madison at University Ridge, the NOER CENTER and the UW Madison campus.

Mike also was with Russ Weisensel for a considerable time, visiting about  
(Continued on page 31)

(Continued from page 29)

the Town of Casey suit that was before the U.S. Supreme Court.

We suspected a "Wisconsin" issue of GOLF COURSE MANAGEMENT was in the offing. We were right.

The city papers of July 8th and 9th featured a couple of stories about the damage done to two Madison golf courses as a result of July 7th's raging storm.

Mike Semler made the front page of *The Capital Times*. An article in the sports section of TCT, written by our own Rob Schultz, extensively quoted both Mike and Tom Harrison. Maple Bluff wasn't open until Wednesday after the storm.

The WGCSA July meeting at Lake Wisconsin was a good place for this reporter to try to get a feel for storm damage around the state.

It appears Merrill Hills suffered like Cherokee and Maple Bluff. Most others were like the rest of us in our town—a lot of mess to clean up, but not the severity of damage experienced by these three golf courses.

The storm was the violent chapter in the story of the summer of '91 on Wisconsin golf courses.

Future Olympics are likely to offer even more interest to a lot of us.

The International Olympic Committee has recognized the World Amateur Golf Council. That recognition clears the way for golf to be included in future Olympic Games. The eligibility is first open for the games in the year 2000.

This announcement brought to light, to me at least, the fact that golf had been a game in past Olympiads. It was in the Paris Olympics of 1900 and the St. Louis Olympics of 1904.

The International Olympic Committee will decide whether or not to place golf on the program. If that decision is in the affirmative, the World Amateur Golf Council will decide the format of the competition and the rules of eligibility for the players.

Who will decide, I wonder, the pin placements and the green speed?

The hot summer amplifies concerns about warming trends that are global in nature. That is why I read with more seriousness a dire prediction of Extension climatologist Elwynn Taylor.

Another drought like the one of 1988 could affect our region in a year or two

because of weather patterns in the South Pacific.

The rising ocean temperatures between South America and Australia indicate the onset of El Nino, a periodic weather condition that changes weather patterns west of Latin America and affects atmospheric conditions in the Northern Hemisphere.

El Nino was strong in 1987 and the midwest had a serious drought in 1988; a strong El Nino was recorded in 1982 and we had a moderate drought in 1983. Taylor believes there are strong indications that an El Nino event is developing again.

This South Pacific weather phenomenon occurs on the average every four years and each generally lasts from six to 18 months. A drought immediately follows half of them.

An investigation of records going back to the Dust Bowl of 1934 reveals that there has never been a widespread drought except in a year following an El Nino.

There's one more thing for you to now worry about in the upcoming winter months.

It does not seem possible that the next issue of *THE GRASS ROOTS* will be the last one of this year. Where has the time gone?

I like doing this feature for the next issue—it's time for the annual "Editor's Awards"!

We have all kinds of candidates for many of last year's award categories. Plus, we have many new award categories this year.

For example, there is the new LUMPY AWARD slated for the manufacturer whose fertilizer lumps are the most numerous, the largest and the hardest. We already have had a bushel of nominees for this distinctive new award.

Then there's the new DUPONT AWARD, destined for that company which contaminated the most golf course product with some phytotoxic compound and created the most bad publicity for our industry. No shortage of candidates here, either.

Some are looking forward to seeing who will win the new WHINERS AWARD, given to that person or group or organization that consistently bitches, gripes, complains and belly-aches about everything. Will this year's winner of the WHINER be a Wisconsin golf course superintendent who always has more disease, less rain, more work and less budget than anyone else?

Maybe we will present the WHINER

to a green committee chairman for carping constantly about slow greens that are reading 10 feet on the stimp-meter.

But then again maybe a Wisconsin golf pro will win the WHINER for crying about not being able to make any money in golf.

The list of potentials here is mind boggling, and all of the above are doing quite nicely in the competition for the WHINER.

So keep an eye on your mailbox or the newsstand for the next issue of *THE GRASS ROOTS*. You may want to start praying immediately that you aren't a winner!

Shortly after the supreme court ruled that it was all right for the town of Casey in Washburn County to institute its own set of pesticide rules, the state agriculture board acted quickly to keep Wisconsin from becoming a state with over 10,000 pesticide laws.

At its July meeting, the board voted unanimously to ask the Wisconsin legislature to allow the state, NOT localities, to set pesticide laws.

Without comprehensive and consistent laws, the board said, farmers and other pesticide users will be confused. Statewide efforts to control pests like the gypsy moth could be thwarted by the actions of a few local units of government.

The WGCSA needs to offer its support of this action by the agriculture board through correspondence with the board and with legislators.

After all, our future ability to manage quality golf course turf depends on it.

The GCSAA conference has been held at one time or another in most of the nation's major cities. Lately, it has been visiting some marginal places, in my opinion. One of the most marginal was a couple of years ago when the conference convened in Houston. It was scheduled there again in 1994.

The good news from GCSAA headquarters is that Houston has been dropped as a site and Dallas has been substituted in its place. It will meet here January 31 - February 7, 1994. Dallas has never hosted a GCSAA conference and show before.

Three cheers for the move. I've never felt you should have to put your life on the line to attend a national meeting. Nor should you have to pack a weapon to walk the streets in some of these unsafe large cities GCSAA likes to visit. Houston, along with a couple of the

recent sites, made quite a large number of us uncomfortable, to say the least. I'm glad we are leaving there.

All we have to pray for now is survival at the New Orleans meeting in a couple of months. Make sure your life insurance is paid up; do the same with car insurance if you are driving down. I know a couple of people who had vehicles stolen while visiting in New Orleans.

Sounds like fun.

You're going to love the following pictures Andy Acker sent to me, along with the following note:

*Dear Monroe,  
I thought everyone would get a kick out of these pictures. They were taken at a golf course in south India. The next time someone hears a complaint about a greensmower, show this picture!*

*Sincerely,  
Andy Acker, Marshfield CC*

We are, literally and figuratively, worlds apart from the place in India where these photos were taken. Thanks for sharing them, Andy.



This ground driven greensmower is used to mow greens daily at 0.50".



This fairway renovation project is being done without the benefit of equipment. Amazing!

Wisconsin did it again this year—the latest Green Index study gave Wisconsin another top 10 finish among the 50 states in environmental ranking.

The Green Index is an analysis of 256 indicators by the Institute of Southern Studies in Durham, North Carolina. Interestingly, all top 10 states were in the north, led by Oregon, Maine and Vermont. Southern states brought up the bottom. The institute is a public interest advocacy group.

Their index is issued annually and Wisconsin always does very well in it, showing clearly that we are not doing as badly as some of the shrill radicals would like us to think.

Congratulations to us.

A golf legend was in Wisconsin on Monday, August 12. Lee Trevino was in Lake Geneva at the Geneva National Golf Club.

As the designer of one of the golf courses there, Trevino was part of the official opening. His duties included an 18 hole round of golf on the courses he "designed" (setting the new course record, by the way) and constant chatter with spectators and the press.



**VERTI-DRAIN®**  
The Ultimate Solution For Compacted Soil

## Mechanical Soil Technology

— Contract Aeration Service —  
Serving The Entire Midwest

David Strang  
Phone (800) 743-2419

442 Pine Street  
Galesburg, IL 61401

## LEIBOLD IRRIGATION COMPANY

Professional Installation of Complete Golf Course Irrigation Systems.

*"Satisfaction Guaranteed"*



Excellence in Irrigation®

**John Leibold**  
(815) 747-6817 Bus.  
(319) 582-9351 Home  
620 Sinsinawa  
East Dubuque, IL 61025



GROWERS OF AN EXCEPTIONAL LINE OF HARDY NURSERY STOCK ON OVER 1,200 ACRES

Contact: JERRY DRAEGER or TIM FLOOD

Phone  
(414) 478-2121

FAX  
(414) 478-3615



He made it easy to see why the gallery around him is always so large.

And then, the very next day, golf's greatest legend was at Geneva National to christen the golf course he designed. The Palmer design group has 60 courses under construction worldwide, making it one of the very largest. Palmer was very pleased with the Geneva National golf course, noting, as so many who build golf courses in Wisconsin do, that the designer's job was merely one of fitting the holes into the very beautiful landscape. Palmer's visit to Wisconsin showed everyone that Arnie's army is alive and well in the Badger State.

The September issue of *GOLF DIGEST* is another keeper for golf course superintendents. The issue features an article about the "36 most powerful people" in golf.

John Schilling, executive director of the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America, was included in that list of 36.

The editors of *GOLF DIGEST* ranked these people in the order of their influence. Deane Beman, PGA Tour commissioner, was first. Mark McCormack, keynote speaker at the opening session of last year's GCSAA conference and a noted management consultant, was second. Jack Nicklaus, David Fay and Arnold Palmer, were next in order.

John was listed in the 32nd position. *GOLF DIGEST* said John "is an amiable behind-the-scenes man whose organization has steadily risen in terms of influence and credibility."

Here's the part you'll love: "Golf course superintendents have displaced the club pro as the game's pivotal on-the-course employee and their earnings reflect that shift. Six figure incomes are now common for Schilling's members; much less so for the club pros..."

That is a direct quote from *GOLF DIGEST*, p. 118, September 1991 issue. Look it up.

No editorial comment is necessary. Only thanks.

Between the Wisconsin Turfgrass Association Field Day and the finalization of the NOER research facility, the WTA 1992 Winter Conference has kind of been left out of the spotlight. But Wayne Otto and his committee haven't been ignoring it. Plans are being developed for the program already. The meeting will be held on January 7th and

8th at the Olympia Resort in Oconomowoc.

If you have any questions or suggestions, contact Wayne at Ozaukee Country Club, 414-242-0142.

Speaking of meetings you cannot afford to miss, the Wisconsin Golf Turf Symposium is just around the corner.

It is scheduled for October 29th and 30th at the Pfister Hotel in Milwaukee. This year's offering will be the 26th edition of the only true golf symposium in the country.

And the subject is an excellent one. It is titled "What will traffic bare?" and focuses on the wear and traffic that has resulted from golf's immense popularity.

The Symposium Committee has invited faculty members, golf course superintendents, spokesmen from other golf groups and a controversial sports

writer to Milwaukee to discuss heavy play and its impact on golf courses.

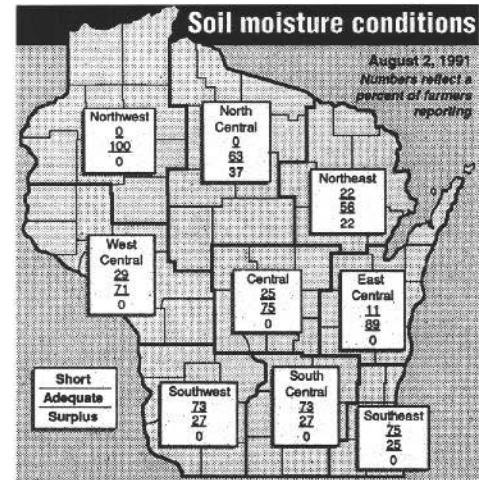
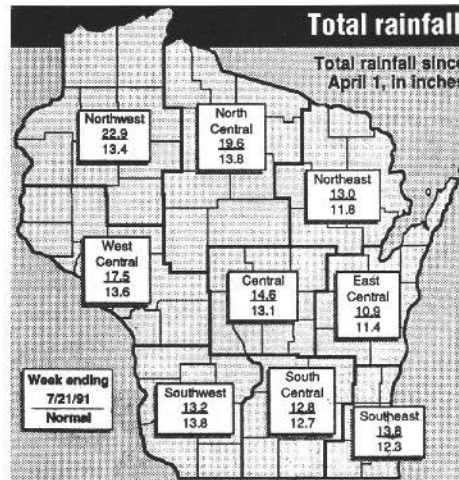
Rob Schultz must have clairvoyance—his article in this issue is a nice lead-in to what that meeting will be about.

The Wisconsin Agricultural Statistics Service rainfall and soil moisture data are summarized in the accompanying graphics. Although not up-to-the-minute, by year's end we will have included all such information for the season.

Statistical information has great value. But it also can be misleading.

A number may reflect "normal" rainfall; it does not tell you, however, that 6" of that rainfall fell in less than four hours and 90% of that 6" ran off the surface.

Nevertheless, over time, such data are generally good indicators of the kind of season it was.



### *Retirement Reception for Dr. Robert Newman*

*Friday, September 20th*

*5:00 - 8:00 p.m.*

*Wisconsin Alumni Lounge*

*(Wisconsin Center)*

The officers of your organization will be receiving an invitation to Bob's retirement reception. Should you wish to attend, please contact one of them or Judy Barth (Department of Horticulture 262-1424) and indicate your interest.

A scholarship fund is being established in Bob's name in recognition of his many years of dedicated service.