



“Did You Hear the One About the Golf Course Superintendent?”

By Rob Schultz

One of the perks of working for *The Capital Times* is an interesting conversation anytime I want to sit down with one of my coworkers in the cafeteria.

To say my newspaper has a liberal slant to it is like saying the Soviet Union's economy is in a little bit of trouble. Liberal thinkers flood my newsroom and they love to get on a platform and try to right all the world's wrongs.

The environment is a perfect example. A few days before Christmas one of our reporters who covers the environment bumped into me as I was banging my head against a cafeteria table in an attempt to drum up an idea for this month's GRASS ROOTS column.

“Killers,” the reporter said.
“Huh?”

“Killers. Golf course superintendents are killers,” the reporter repeated between gulps of his granola bar and fruit drink.

I tried to ignore my coworker by focusing on my Twinkie and Diet Coke. Finally, I congratulated him for talking in such concise sentences and then asked him to explain why he felt such a strong urge to criticize golf course superintendents.

“They've got to be killing something. Pesticides, weed killers, they spray that crud all over their courses, and it gets in the air, gets in the water, spreads into the neighborhoods. Who knows what it's doing,” he said.

“Dandelions,” I said.
“Huh?”

“Dandelions. My yard was full of dandelions this summer,” I repeated.

“So.”

“So, I wanted to spread some industrial-strength weed killer all over my lawn this summer but I got talked out of it,” I said as I opened a bag of Doritos.

“Who talked you out of it?”

“You won't believe this,” I said as I looked my coworker right in the eye, “but a golf course superintendent talked me out of it and taught me how to spot spray with weed killer that isn't harmful to the environment.”

The environmental writer looked into his Tupperware full of wheat germ and seemed to be at a loss for words. This was my chance to really make my point.

(Continued on page 29)



P.O. BOX 14
MERRILL, WI 54452
FRED LATZIG, JR.
(715) 536-3800
FAX (715) 536-2611
TOLL FREE: 800-755-3801

GROWERS OF

Colorado Spruce
Black Hills Spruce
Austrian Pine
White Pine
Douglas Fir
Fraser Fir
Balsam Fir
Scotch Pine
Norway Pine
River Birch
White Spire Birch



B&B PRICES STARTING AT *

3'	\$21.00
4'	\$32.00
5'	\$43.00
6'	\$54.00
7'	\$65.00
8'	\$79.00
9'/10'	\$99.00

Call or Write For Our

Nursery Stock Price List

USUAL SHIPPING POINTS - MERRILL, WI OR ALLEGAN, MI

*Prices quoted are delivered prices for Park Grade Quality.

Delivered within 200 miles of shipping point. Add 25% for orders under \$1000.

“The Evergreen Specialists”

WELL- TEAMED. WELL- NAMED.

It takes years of testing at many locations for any grass seed variety to make the NK Medalist® team. That's why Medalist is the most-trusted name in turf mixtures and blends.

Contact your NK Medalist distributor today.
Or call 1-800-545-6093.



(Continued from page 27)

"There probably are few people who understand chemicals and how they work with or against the environment more than golf course superintendents," I said. "They have to be knowledgeable because they are constantly attacked by both sides. On one side is the golfer who wants his course looking pretty and on the other side is the environmentalist who probably thinks aerifying is dangerous.

"Anyway, most superintendents have degrees in agronomy and they attend seminars all across the country where they are kept up to date by the world's best turf grass researchers. We could only wish doctors would keep as up to date on medical issues the way the golf course superintendents keep up to date on environmental issues.

"In fact, if you need a good source for many of your stories, don't hesitate to call a golf course superintendent. They probably know more about subjects like aquifers than those lunatics at the Department of Natural Resources. And they won't jump up on a soapbox every

time you call them like the lunatic at the DNR."

Finally, the reporter walked away mumbling and left me in peace to play with my junk food as I continued my attempt to drum up an idea for my column. Suddenly, I had it all figured out.

"Nickel," I said to myself.

"Nickel?"

"I wish I had a nickel every time a reporter, environmentalist, golfer, golf course builder, neighbor or friend called a golf course superintendent to get an answer to a question. I'd be a millionaire."

For instance, I started thinking about how I needed a golf course superintendent's advice just a few weeks ago. In a not-so-brief moment of insanity, I had just agreed with my wife that we needed to build an 800 square foot addition to our house. But I was told that in order for the construction equipment to travel to the back of our house, a beautiful blue spruce in our front yard would have to be uprooted and moved.

I never heard of a tree moved in December unless it was cut down with

a hacksaw and placed in somebody's living room with tinsel draped all over it.

The construction guy told me not to sweat, that it would live. He told me I should trust him.

There was no chance that I was going to trust him. Since I needed to find somebody to trust, I called University Ridge superintendent Jeff Parks. His calming voice and intelligent responses helped settle down this neurotic reporter. When I hung up, I had the feeling he had plenty of experience dealing with neurotics who called to ask advice on moving trees or how not to stripe their lawn when they fertilize.

Unfortunately for Parks and all other superintendents, many of those people are also the first to point fingers and accuse them of hurting the environment. It's just another example of how misunderstood golf course superintendents have been over the years.

I swallowed the last few drops of my Diet Coke, stood up from my chair and headed toward my desk. My mission was accomplished. The theme for my column was complete. Now all I had to do was write it.

"Winter," I typed into my word processor.

"Winter?"

"Yeah, winter. Now I know why golf course superintendents love winter. When nothing is green, inquisitive environmentalists, golfers, neighbors and friends disappear.

"For four beautiful months, fingers stop pointing and the phone doesn't ring."

**YOUR MEMBERS
WILL KNOW HOW WELL YOU DID
BY HOW WELL
YOUR GREENS PERFORM**

**topdressing blends
construction blends
straight topdressing sand
bunker sand**

All shipments guaranteed to meet your specifications.



SOIL BLENDERS

715-258-8566

Where soil blending is a science

**PENDELTON
TURF SUPPLY**

Ed Witkowski

- Chemicals
- Full Line of Turf Products
- Competitive Pricing
- New Product Information

Satisfaction Guaranteed

414-421-6474

9305 Oak Creek Ct.
Franklin, WI 53132