



BIZARRE WEATHER

By Monroe S. Miller

I'm convinced, more than ever, that bizarre weather has become the rule rather than the exception in Wisconsin anymore. From October 23rd right through the end of the year, the weird late autumn and early winter weather fit nicely with the rest of the year. 1991 will be recorded by most Wisconsin golf course superintendents as "strange" simply because of the weather we had.

We experienced virtually no spring. The weather was July-like in May and cases of brown patch and pythium added to the summer feeling. In some areas of our state, it was very dry, too.

The summer was ugly — also dry and hot — until we reached August. That normally difficult month sometimes felt like May.

Then came the autumn season, which only lasted until Halloween. The rain started on October 23rd and continued on a constant basis until the 31st.

That is when the snow started. It snowed and snowed. The temperatures plummeted and panic rose.

Few WGCSA members had snowmold materials applied or irrigation systems purged. With temperatures hovering around the 10 degree F. mark, the tortuous business of winterizing pump stations and distribution systems began.

One day jobs took three. Employees suffered in the cold; superintendents lost sleep.

And if we were worried we had only to think of our friends in Minnesota who were under 30" of the white stuff.

As might be expected (unless you counted on it), conditions did improve and the temperatures rose to normal levels. Leaves thawed and were removed or mulched. Dormant fertilizer was applied, along with fungicides for low temperature fungi. You could hear all kinds of sighs of relief around our town.

Then the rain started again, eliminating any lingering thoughts about construction or sodding projects.

It will be remembered by me as an autumn of unfulfilled promise. We were

poised on our golf course for some project work, and the work was funded. Planning was set. But the weather said, "next spring."

A couple of neat ideas came my way during the scramble to get snowmold protection down on play areas.

One problem, especially with the lower pressure on fairway sprayer booms, was fan nozzle freeze up. George Magnin and the staff at Cherokee C.C. had the same problem.

They also had an answer. They added what amounted to about an ounce of N/M of an inorganic fertilizer to the spray tank. Since that fertilizer was a salt, the freezing point of the solution was lowered. The nozzle freezing problem was solved.

Faced with the need to spray greens and tees for snowmold diseases and the reality that they were under snow, Jeff Parks put his thinking cap on. The result was a solution that was very creative.

Rather than try to apply tons of Milorganite over the snow—a virtual impossibility with a rotary spreader in the snow—to create a dark surface to help melt the snow, Jeff resorted to an easier and quicker method.

His plan was to attach a handheld gun to the sprayer hose, add a high rate of turf marker and spray greens and tees until they were a dark blue.

Coupled with a bit of sunshine, the dark color led to snow melt and the opportunity to do the job that needed doing.

Despite its location, I am really looking forward to the 1992 GCSAA conference.

In addition to the educational opportunities, the enormous equipment show and a large number of seminars, this one will offer more than any other has or ever will.

Those offerings will be more personal. I cannot imagine any WGCSA mem-

ber who won't be bursting with pride when Bill Roberts is elected president of the GCSAA.

It seems like only yesterday when he asked me to help run his first campaign. We were at the South Hills Club in Fond du Lac for a WGCSA meeting. As is usually the case, the board held a meeting. Bill made a formal request for support from the membership. Of course, he received it.

I was personally moved when he asked me to chair the campaign committee.

Although that first effort was unsuccessful (many are), he and Rod Johnson were victorious the following year.

Three cheers for Bill. Three cheers for Tuck Tate, too. He is going to receive the GCSAA Distinguished Service Award. Tuck was the Northern Michigan Turf Managers Association newsletter editor for years and years.

He is also a past president of the Michigan Turfgrass Foundation and for a long time was the secretary/treasurer of the NMTMA and served as its president.

Tuck owned and operated the Frankfort Golf Club for decades, and has been a champion of golf course superintendents for all that time.

He's also an unselfish man. He has shared his prosperity in golf by endowing a scholarship fund at Michigan State University for turf students, to the tune of \$100,000.

The GCSAA DSA was created for people exactly like Tuck Tate.

Finally, I cannot resist the temptation to compliment Rod Johnson for his two years as WGCSA president. He, in a unique way, combined humor and hard work and leadership during that time. They made for a very good president. He left a big pair of shoes for Bruce to fill.

Thanks from all of us, Rodney.