



## Late Autumn Notes

By Monroe S. Miller

To some in our society, autumn brings with it a certain sadness. Maybe the blues are brought on because fall signals change—from long, light-filled summer evenings to cold and sometimes brutal winter nights. It serves as a reminder that the toughest season is on the way. Soon when we arise it will be dark and quiet, a stark contrast to the noisy, bright mornings just past.

These people find their spirits dampened by those changes that accompany autumn.

Then there are people like you and me who find their spirits uplifted by the cool and crisp and colorful days of autumn. We like Badger football, Packer Sundays, cool nights, pumpkins, apple cider, fireplace fires and gorgeous leaves.

It's our time of the year. And it comes just in the nick of time when many are on the edge of exhaustion. A normalcy returns, spirits are high, vacations are taken.

Songwriters and poets and writers who see autumn as a time of decline and a time to recognize mortality cannot discourage us. We are, I'm convinced, strong realists if we are nothing else. Our mortality doesn't bother us. It is curious that it may well be our sense of the seasons that has made us ever the realists.

Enjoy the blue skies, red maples and green grass of your autumnal golf course. It is the best time.

It was sad that just about the time the last issue of *THE GRASS ROOTS* was distributed, Professor Emeritus Joe Hickey passed away here in Madison.

The coincidence hit me like a ton of bricks. Professor Hickey was invited to the University of Wisconsin-Madison by Professor Aldo Leopold. Aldo Leopold awarded him a research assistantship. He studied under Leopold for several years, until Leopold died.

Professor Hickey, in fact, took Aldo Leopold's position in the Department of Wildlife Management at the UW-Madison.

Hickey authored *A GUIDE TO BIRD WATCHING*. It was begun in 1942 and is still in print today. Hickey was a distinguished ornithologist, conservation advocate, researcher, teacher and editor.

In the early 1960s, Professor Hickey and his grad students documented the disappearance of peregrine falcons from the eastern U.S. They traced the decline to eggshell thinning, and then linked this thinning to DDE, which is a breakdown product of DDT.

Like so many faculty in the College of Agricultural and Life Sciences at the UW

-Madison, Hickey was dedicated to teaching. Despite untold numbers of prestigious awards, he was most proud of his Chancellor's Award for Distinguished Teaching, given to him in 1976 by the UW. He was a favorite among undergraduate students.

One thought—a quotation, actually—he shared with students was this: "The materials of our bodies are ours only on loan. We have no permanent right to them. They have been used by countless generations of plants and animals before us, and countless generations will have need of them after we are gone."

In the spirit of those words, Dr. Hickey's remains were cremated and buried at the Aldo Leopold Memorial Reserve in Sauk County "where they will fertilized new growths of good oak."

A state senator may seek a law levying fees on citizens who demand information about pesticide use in their neighborhoods.

Commercial pesticide firms (including lawn care companies) are being harassed by self-proclaimed environmentalists who use state rules to demand advance notice of pesticide applications over wide areas.

It's not inconceivable that the same thing could happen to any one of us. The current rules require residents to tell the state they want to know about pesticide applications planned near where they live. Companies are required to supply the information. Those rules were abused when Susan Mudd, state program director for Citizens for a Better

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Environment, sought information on more than 400 lawns in Milwaukee.

Margaret Farrow, a Republican state senator from Elm Grove, has said she may introduce a bill to charge \$1 to \$3 per address requested under the rules.

To me, that seems like fair and reasonable middle ground. We'll provide the information you pay the state to receive.

It was no surprise, really. The National Weather Service summarized the summer of 1993 this way: "It was like cramming all the severe weather of the past six years into a couple of months."

Besides being remembered for flash floods, floating bogs and saturated soils, the "Summer of '93" won the title of wettest Wisconsin summer ever.

In our town we received a total of 21.49 inches of rain in June, July and August, breaking the 1880 record of 21.21 inches.

If that's bad, then the insult to injury is the dreary fact that the summer of 1993 was the cloudiest summer ever in our town, too. Sixty-six percent of summer's daylight hours are normally sunny. This summer that percentage fell to 50. That's gloomy plus.

We noted here earlier that Dr. George Sledge had retired from the CALS Associate Dean for Academic Affairs position.

A replacement for his has been appointed by Dean Roger Wyse. He is Dr. Richard Burrows, a professor in the Department of Agricultural Economics. He has previous experience in administration at the university (Bascom Hall) level.

Speaking of the UW-Madison, the Chronicle of Higher Education reports that the Madison campus is the fifth largest university in the country. It follows the University of Minnesota-Twin Cities, Ohio State, Miami-Dade Community College and the University of Texas-Austin.

Some long held views fell by the wayside when the AP released results of a survey of most popular and most disliked sports in America.

Baseball, long considered America's favorite past-time, isn't anymore. NFL football is.

Baseball, in fact, followed ladies figure skating and ladies gymnastics!~ There's a myth shattered!

Golf didn't fare very well. LPGA women's golf, PGA men's golf and PGA senior men's golf were the third and fourth and fifth most disliked sports in the U.S.

From my family to yours, best wishes for a warm and cozy Thanksgiving, a Merry Christmas and a prosperous 1994. Cheers! 🍷

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