



MORE ANSWERS

Mr. Monroe S. Miller
Blackhawk Country Club
P.O. Box 5129
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Mr. David E. Smith
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Dear Monroe,

For some time now I have wanted to write and comment on the enjoyable hours spent reading *THE GRASS ROOTS*. My motivation to finally write is in response to your request for answers to your questions. Please don't quit asking questions. I find them thought provoking and a way to examine current issues that relate to our industry. I will try to answer those questions that I feel relate to my situation.

GRASS ROOTS, Nov/Dec 1993, pg. 47:

2. I had an irrigation control system retrofit installed this spring. It was finished and paid for by April 30 (\$14,500.00). On May 16 I received a letter offering me the most recent software update that I could install in my controller for a mere \$150.00. The cost was not much, but the absurdity of the timing was beyond belief.

3. There is not a promise that will not be made in an attempt to sell a piece of equipment or system to a golf course. I am amazed at the number of warranty repairs our mechanic makes just because it is more expedient to repair equipment ourselves and get it back on the course than sending it to the dealer. Installing new Toro LTC controllers and the problems associated with moisture and corrosion were also a headache this season past. Am I wrong in feeling that manufacturers would be pleased if no communication among superintendents resulted in less knowledge about manufacturer responsibilities in replacing and repairing defects?

5. We have for years done most of our projects in-house using contractors for that portion of the project we cannot do ourselves. We are still subject to contractor delay but control the quality of the project by doing the finish work in-house.

6. I do not require salesmen to make appointments. When they drop in to see me unannounced, they take the chance that I will have no time for their visit. I am finding that the handful of salesmen that I care to see are calling to leave a message that they will be stopping on a particular day. I give none of my time to salesmen who are selling items that do not pertain to the golf industry. The longer you are on the job the easier it is to send them on their way.

10. Our biggest complaint was the "cart path only" requirement that seemed to be in force most of the season. It is difficult to hold golfers on the path week after week when the delayed effects of compaction have no meaning to their round of golf that day. The fact that I have the support

of all the staff at Abbey Springs made this period a lot easier for me.

11. My biggest problem was wet areas on the course that had never appeared previously. We have already installed drain tile to 80% of the wet areas this fall.

12. I agree.

13. No pythium, but plenty of brown patch. There were many times Madison had heavy rain this summer that we were spared.

14. Universities are in the business of putting students in the seats regardless of the need for graduates in certain majors. There is a time lag before the poor market for graduates stops the production for graduates. Let's hope that a glut of turf students does not ruin the possibility for higher wages in this industry. Are we eventually going to create enough competition that employment at a lower rate of pay is what we face should we be forced to seek new employment?

I am in this business because I love every minute that I spend tending to this golf course of mine. If a person gets into this business because they like to play golf, they will be surprised at the time it takes to balance the job with your family obligations. If you can then find time to play golf, enjoy it because those days are limited, at least in my case.

16. This issue will come to a head very early this year. Abbey Springs is hosting the April meeting. My boss would love to have green fees paid by everyone. This past season we paid meeting fees of \$45 to \$60 more than once. I will go to bat to waive green fees and hold costs as low as possible to allow everyone to participate without cost being an issue. I hope that future meeting costs will not make me look like I was a soft touch. The outrage of the year was paying close to \$50 at the last meeting this year. My assistant's brother clipped a coupon and played the same course two weeks prior to our meeting for \$35 for two players and a cart. This showed total lack of respect for our profession and I purposely skipped this meeting.

22. I had no requests for information this year and I must say that I am not disappointed.

23. And it continues.

I would like to make some general comments about the O.J. Noer Turfgrass Research and Education Facility and the Field Day. Wisconsin golf course superintendents should be extremely pleased at having access to a world class operation. Everything that has been done there the people involved are first class.

I have received six pieces of literature on EXPO-94. If the coverage is as good to everyone else in the state, I predict a new level of participation. With the quality of the program, it cannot help but be a success.

Keep asking questions. I promise to answer.

GO BADGERS!

Sincerely, David E. Smith