



WHY NOT ADOPT?

By Tony Rzadzki

It's taken me over forty years, but I have finally discovered a desire, a passion if you will. I have discovered something that to me, is almost as important as my religious beliefs, my family, and my career. All of you can share in this 'passion', if you decide to, and all that it takes is a little time. I am talking about the joy of 'adoption'. Not adopting another son or daughter, although I'm sure that could be quite enjoyable, but the Audubon International's Cooperative Sanctuary's *Adopt a School Program*.

I have been involved with Audubon International (A.I.) since shortly after the Cooperative Sanctuary Program for Golf Courses began. In 1993, while employed at the Cantigny Golf Club in Wheaton, Illinois, I was able to fully certify Cantigny as a Cooperative Sanctuary. We were the ninth golf course in the United States to achieve this distinction. In 1992 and 1993 I also won The Environmental Steward Regional Merit Awards.

Since I have begun my employment in Wisconsin, at Bristlecone Pines, I have been striving to achieve the same environmental ethics and qualities. I have had a slow start; I had to construct my golf course before I could begin tackling the issues I believe in. But both of my guns are now loaded, and I am ready to get started!

I have had our golf course signed up in the Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary Program (ACSP) since 1995, but construction scrapers and D-8s were in my way. It was hard to develop an 'Environmental Plan' when the plan for the course was still on a blueprint. Finally, when we opened last August, our former farm field became quite a fantastic layout. Many of the design features that A.I. looks for such as; native grasses, wetlands, rock piles, tree snags, natural landscaping, and storm water management were all incorporated into the golf course. It has been fairly easy for me to develop my Environmental Plan this past fall,

although I feel a bit guilty for being so tardy with it.

After catching my breath this past fall I was also able to 'Adopt a School'. You may be wondering by now, "Doesn't this guy have enough to do? And when is he going to stop blowing his horn about environmental awards? And who cares anyway?"

Well, I care. I have experienced and developed sound environmental programs at my previous golf course, as well as Bristlecone Pines. From these experiences I have garnered a conviction from within (that passion) that our environmental message of sustainable conservation must be carried further. I firmly believe that we as superintendents can make a difference in our communities and the Adopt a School Program should be the next step for all of us to take.

"What lit a fire under this guy's behind? Is he some kind of Environmental Nut?" Well I would never chase a skiff in front of a whaling ship, but I am concerned about my children's education, and the education of the next generation. These kids are our future! I personally feel that all of the Certified Sanctuaries in the world could never replace the value gained from one school adopted in this program! I also feel that sound environmental and sustainable conservation principles should become a part of every child's life, as

much a part of learning as math, reading, or spelling!

"Wow, this guy is a nut!" No, I'm not nuts. I have seen an attainable goal, something that I can be a part of, and make an important difference in the community where I live...and you can too! I sincerely urge all of you to consider adopting a school. It is not as difficult or as time consuming as it sounds. As a matter of fact it can be easier than the ACSP that you may currently be involved in at your golf course.

"Well...what is needed from me? Hey, I'm a busy man." You can get involved as much or as little as you want. You are there to share your expertise with the students, administrators, and parents. The idea is to help create an 'outdoor classroom' that the students, teachers, and parent volunteers all participate in developing. If you are interested, Audubon International has created a new brochure that colorfully illustrates the school program.

"You've really got to be nuts! How the heck am I going to get people to do that for me...for nothing? I can't get my crew to work for me...and I pay them!" Audubon International has produced a video showing the ACSP for Schools in action. The kids really get into this. Watch the video and see. Or call me. Audubon International has asked me to be Wisconsin's 'State Steward'.

AMETEK

Manufactured in
Sheboygan, Wisconsin
Specify AMETEK —
A Wisconsin Product!

**TURF
BOXES**

"What does that mean? What's a State Steward?" Well it means that if any of you have a question about the ACSP for Golf Courses, or the School Program, I am here to help. And I sincerely mean that...please call me. Audubon International is located in Selkirk, New York. You may feel awkward talking to a stranger in New York and it is a long distance call. You may have a simple question or problem; feel free to call me. I know that I'm a stranger to many of you and a transplanted Pennyhead, but honestly I have been a Packer fan all of my life and both programs work as well in the Flatlands as they will in God's Country.

To be honest with you, as much as we (and members of the GCSAA, chemical companies, and any other offspring) have been 'blowing our horns' about how great these Audubon Programs are...they seem to have stagnated. And the School Program has barely gotten off the ground.

Here are some facts:

1. Of the 15,390 golf courses in the U.S. (NGF 1995) 1,915 are registered in the ACSP for Golf Courses. Eighty-six of those courses have reached full Sanctuary Status. This is great and I am sure that many more Sanctuaries are soon to grace our country. But, if you do the math, it means that only 12.4% of the golf courses in the country are even in the program.

2. Of the 471 golf courses in Wisconsin (NGF 1995) 59 are registered in the ACSP for Golf Courses. Two of those courses have reached full Sanctuary Status, Ozaukee Country Club and Country Club of Wisconsin. Congratulations to Wayne Otto and Gordon Waddington!

If you do the math, Wisconsin is keeping right in line with the rest of the country with 12.5% of our courses enrolled in the ACSP. So as much as we (and GCSAA et al) tout the Environmental Stewards and the ACS Programs...only 12.5% of the superintendents seem to be working towards the 'environmental standards' that have been presented to them. Please...don't get me wrong and read any political nonsense into this last statement!

I am not saying that if you are not enrolled in the ACSP for Golf Courses that your course is substandard or a less desirable place to

recreate. I know as well as Mr. Ron Dodson (CEO Audubon International) knows, that not every golf course, for one reason or another, will ever get involved in the ACSP. It is not the right program for every one; it's as simple as that.

What I am saying is that if your course is a feasible candidate for the ACSP...do it! You won't regret making the decision. You will be quite amazed at the different management strategies that existed on your course, but you had not thought about. And...most importantly... the tons of paper work that you may have heard about in the past have been greatly reduced. A.I. has compiled a workbook with simple step-by-step outlines in each category. And you can always call me.

Some more facts:

3. Forty-six schools out of 15,390 possible golf course 'candidate fathers' have been adopted. That equals 0.3%.

4. Wisconsin has surpassed the U.S. standard. Two schools out of 471 'candidate fathers' have been adopted. That equals 0.4%. I adopted those two schools.

I do have a genuine desire to see both of the sanctuary programs develop and succeed, especially the School Program. The value that you can add to your community, the new public relations contacts (teachers, parents, local business volunteers), and the realization gained that—golf is good for the community—all of these things will happen because you cared. People in your community may begin to understand that the unknown resource in their town is the beautiful golf course they drive past every day.

"And hey, that greenkeeper really does do a great job!" That's right. I care and we all should care as well. I can be reached at 414-367-9955 extension 21. 🍷

(Answers to crossword puzzle from page 6)

TURFGRASS CRUCIVERBALIST

M	O	S	S		O		A	I	M		V	A	
O		R	H	I	Z	O	C	T	O	N	I	A	P
N	O		O				E	S	P		R	O	Y
T	O		W	O	R	F				F	I	G	H
E	P		Y		U		P	R	O		A		H
I	S			P	O	N	I	A	T	O	W	S	K
T		E	P	A		G	E	T					U
H		M	A	C		I		C	O	U	C	H	M
		D	I	C	K		C		H		U		R
R	A			E	V	I	L			U	L	T	R
		H	E	A	R		D	N	A		T	A	E
E	L	V	I	S		E			S	T	U	P	O
D			M			S	I	L	T		R		A
G	R	A	S	S			N			G	A	S	T
E	R	A			T	A	C	K	L	E		L	O