



A SUMMER SUMMARY

By Monroe S. Miller

The tenderloin of the 1997 golf season—June, July and August—will be remembered, I predict, as a good one. Green Bay could have used more rainfall; LaCrosse and Madison wished they could have sent them some. While some courses up north were doing occasional hand watering, courses in some southern places were shoveling sand back in bunkers. For our course, that happened a dozen times, way more than normal.

July was just plain wet in our town. Rainfall was twice normal, but it came in torrents and often with high winds. In addition to lots of time in sand bunkers, the steady drone of Homelites and Stihls was all too familiar as downed trees and limbs were cut up and removed. George Magnin spent late July and August removing the wood from over 30 trees tipped over by a tornado that ripped through the course. That was the second time for such a disaster for Cherokee in less than ten years.

But as I visit with colleagues around the state, course conditions seemed pretty good most of the summer. Players told me the same thing, and sales reps were wishing for better fungicide sales, perhaps the surest sign of all of a good season for golf course superintendents.

In all quarters, the temperatures were moderate, the inevitable heat waves were of shorter duration, and only a few 90 degrees were visited upon us.

As I write this, the feeling of fall is in the air at our course. Queen Anne's Lace is everywhere, small acorns are falling from oak trees and golden rod is in full bloom. There is algae in Lake Mendota and fat milkweed pods along the railroad tracks at our southern edge. Crabapples are turning red and so is the sumac.

I suspect there isn't a golf course superintendent in Wisconsin who hasn't noticed the silence at dawn—the birds aren't singing their jubilant songs anymore. And the sunrise is much later now; there isn't much light

at 5:30 a.m. these days. The angle of the sun in the sky has changed, and the shadows all fall differently.

The dragonflies are everywhere, it seems, in this late summer of 1997. The crickets are chirping away on the warm days, and the cicadas' and katydids' monotonous call is a reminder of the late summer time.

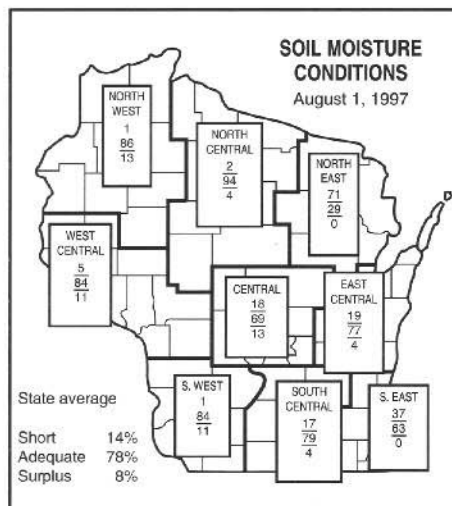
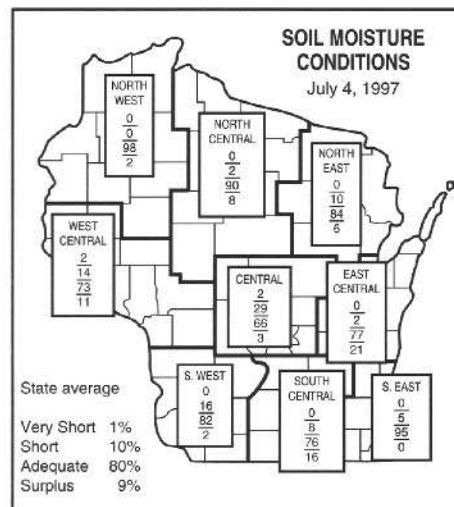
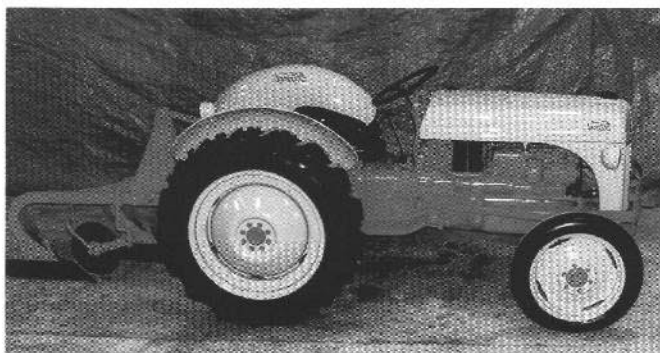
The morning fog and misty dawns come more often, and there is an unmistakable haze in the air. The dusty August scent makes me glad I don't suffer from hayfever and allergies, and I can enjoy smelling the tangy, spicy aroma of plant pollen.

Back in the long days of June and July, I think of summer as being endless. These late days of August bring on the melancholy reminder that it is now almost over; summer is not endless and soon (too soon?) the golf course will be white with snow.

Data from the Wisconsin Agricultural Statistics Service follows as a reminder of how the season's weather was.

Romey Orth would love to have the 1952 8N Ford recently refurbished by The Bruce Company employees in the Wisconsin Golf Course Museum. The black and white photo here doesn't do it justice—in full color it looks brand new. Or better!

Lee Bruce's dad, Leonard Bruce, was a Ford implement dealer in Middleton and bought this tractor and a two-bottom plow for his son to plow gardens and do landscape work. The



kid's goal was money enough to attend a Boy Scout jamboree.

For years and years after that the trusty old Ford was used in the company landscape, nursery and sod operation. Last year Arnie Sieg and his crew in Racine decided to refurbish and restore the tractor to its original condition. Obviously they succeeded.

From such humble beginnings, Lee has built a company that on any given day is conducting business

all across the country. He's an all-American success story.

Speaking of how The Bruce Company has grown, they are building golf courses just about anywhere the game is played. They are very successful, and a key to their success has been close supervision, mostly from the boss himself or from Dave Weber. It reached the point where driving to construction sites was out of the questions due to time constraints. Commercial airlines weren't much better.

So they purchased their own aircraft. It is used, but to look at how well kept it is, you would never believe that. So the photo here will give you a clue. Painted in the company's distinctive white and red colors, the signature **B** on the tail of the plane gives it away every time!

I wonder if Lee has ever been tempted to land it on a new fairway?!

Just about when you think you have heard it all in golf, something more outrageous makes the news. The latest, from the view where I sit, comes from Las Vegas (no surprise).

Shadow Creek, one of the most exclusive golf courses in the world and one that is usually played only by the highest of high rollers at the Mirage Hotel casinos, is going public—for a tidy price.

It is an acclaimed golf course designed by Tom Fazio that is rated among the top 10 courses in America by Golf Digest. Shadow Creek began offering a limited number of tee times last July 15. For a cool grand—\$1,000—a guest will receive a tee time at Shadow Creek and a suite at one of the Mirage hotels, which includes the Mirage, the Golden Nugget and Treasure Island. The rule is that a maximum of two players may participate in each tee time, but it costs another \$500 for the second player. As a charitable gesture, a caddie is included in the price!

If you recall, the owner of Shadow Creek was a speaker at the USGA Green Section Conference a few years ago when the GCSAA conference was in Las Vegas. He gave a thorough narrative about the creation of the course, and he was accompanied by his pal Kenny Rogers. I remember all that because I sat right behind them. Rubberneck, you know!

I've had some feedback from Andy North's *Golf Journal* article that was reprinted in our last issue. It turns out quite a few people missed it in the *Golf Journal* and were grateful to read it in *The Grass Roots*.

Prominently mentioned any number of times by North was Dr. Stephen Snow, the physician who removed the tumor from his face. One day in mid-July a man stopped in our shop to see about the possibility of having our staff aerify a soccer field in the village. He introduced himself as Stephen Snow and told me that he was a member of Blackhawk; that's why he came by.

I thought for a second and then asked him, "Do you know Andy North?"

He smiled widely and replied, "I sure do. Have you read his article in the *Golf Journal*?"

I showed him the last issue of *The Grass Roots*, North's article and Scoville's (he works at the clubhouse) cartoons. Before Dr. Snow left with the news that I wasn't going to aerify the soccer fields ("It was worth a try!" he said) he had given me the once over, checking out where I'd had some skin cancers removed from my nose and ears!

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It is a very small world.

The subject of skin cancers was in the news recently as data on a skin cancer treatment was released. A few of the many thousands of people who get melanoma each year have a natural immune reaction that keeps this cancer from coming back.

Now scientists are bottling that protection and testing hundreds of melanoma patients with an experimental vaccine they hope will keep this killer cancer at bay.

It is too early to predict how well the vaccine called gm2 will work. While initial experiments suggest it is potent, doctors only recently began Phase III test—the biggest hurdle any medicine must pass—with 850 patients. Scientists are cautiously excited about the possibility of an effective vaccine.

New immune system discoveries have led to approaches that were not possible even five years ago. The National Cancer Institute is funding

the Progenics experiment and a trial of a competing melanoma vaccine—Ribi Immunochem's Melacine.

Melanoma strikes about 40,300 every year, and 7,000 die. Sun exposure is the main cause, and the most at risk are people who had even one bad sunburn as a child.

Surgery often cures early melanoma, but up to 30 percent of early—to intermediate-stage patients will suffer a recurrence in a few years—because the surgery missed tiny cells waiting to grow into new, even deadlier tumors.

The idea is for these patients' immune systems to catch and kill the leftover melanoma cells before they become a threat. Research shows that about one in 20 patients can do this naturally.

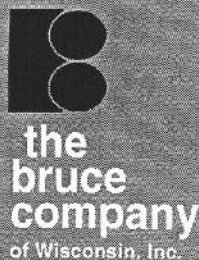
Their immune systems develop antibodies to gm2, a substance on the surface of melanoma cells. The antibodies track down this so-called antigen and then kill its host cells. Researchers purified gm2 to give to patients whose immune systems don't react to the antigen on their own.

An early study of 122 patients, released in the early summer, found those vaccinated with gm2 remained cancer-free for 33 months vs. 17 months for unvaccinated patients.

The study was too small to be statistically significant, but it inspired the NCI to fund the 850 patient trial that could provide the answer by 1999. And any success with melanoma could prompt vaccines against other killer cancers whose cell surfaces also bear a variety of antigens.

The best days of the year are on us. The battle cry "GO, PACK, GO!" has even more meaning this year for our hometown team, the World Champions. And the world will be watching their new grass field with great interest. Soon the familiar strains of "Varsity" and "On, Wisconsin!" will be heard all across the state from Camp Randall. The kids are back in school, there are fewer golf players, and the temperatures are conducive to hard work.

Have fun! 🏌️



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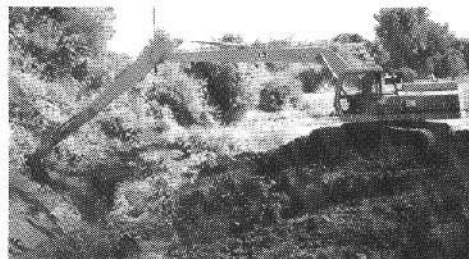
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