

# New Year, New Decade, New Century, New Millennium

By **Monroe S. Miller**, Golf Course Superintendent, Blackhawk Country Club

Like almost everyone, I suspect, I am weary of the talk about the new millennium. It wasn't a non-event, but the doomsayers were wrong about the problems Y2K was going to bring upon us. The transition was pretty smooth, almost a yawner, as it should have been since \$150 billion was spent on assuring that result. You have to wonder if it was worth it; many countries of the world spent none and they are still functioning well.

I am tired of the stories looking back over the past 1,000 years. They were interesting for a while, but in the end those stories and reflections were simply too much of a good thing.

More interesting (but overdone also) were the stories of the past century. Most of us knew someone - a relative, maybe - who remembered the early years of the 1900s. Despite all the wars, it was a period of huge progress. A perspective for us is that golf is only a little over 100 years old

in America. When it comes to people of the century, *Time* magazine's selection of Man of the Century was hard to argue with - Albert Einstein would have been on top of most serious lists.

Also boring were the predictions for the next 100 years. Talk about an impossibility! I don't even really want to try to guess what is ahead in the next ten years.

The only prediction I'll make is that some golf course superintendent in about 50 years will write his memoirs and title them *When the Grass Was Real*. Fortunately, it won't be me!

The mild and dry weather of autumn, which required recharging irrigation systems that had been winterized all over Wisconsin, continued in November and December. The period was almost balmy with little snow. For heaven's sake, the golf season in our town was officially 270 days, the number of days that scores

under 80 were reported to the Madison newspapers.

Temperature records fell like Big Ten opponents fell before the mighty Badgers Rose Bowl football team. It was 74 degrees in Madison on November 8, breaking a record that had stood for almost a century. It was 75 in LaCrosse on November 9, another record. Overall, November temperatures were 9.1 degrees above the norm. No wonder the birds were still here, ducks were floating on golf course ponds, roses were blooming and yellow dandelion blooms could be found here and there in the rough on our golf courses.

There was a downside to the warm weather beyond having to recharge irrigation systems. The dry weather that came with the warm temperatures created danger from wild fires. That danger necessitated the DNR to issue a burning ban in many counties. The restrictions made it unlawful to even smoke outdoors. That is tinder dry.

The dry warm conditions also impacted one of Wisconsin's finest outdoor activities - deer hunting. It probably resulted in fewer animals being harvested; it most certainly meant some of the meat spoiled in the 50-plus degree weather.

The trend to above normal temps continued into December. The weather was so good that gas prices went up (so the bureaucrats said) due to the significant increase in travelers. After all, who wants to travel treacherous, icy and snowy roads?

Our town broke another record on December 15th when we finally got a half-inch of snow. It was a record for the latest measurable snowfall of a season. The previous record was

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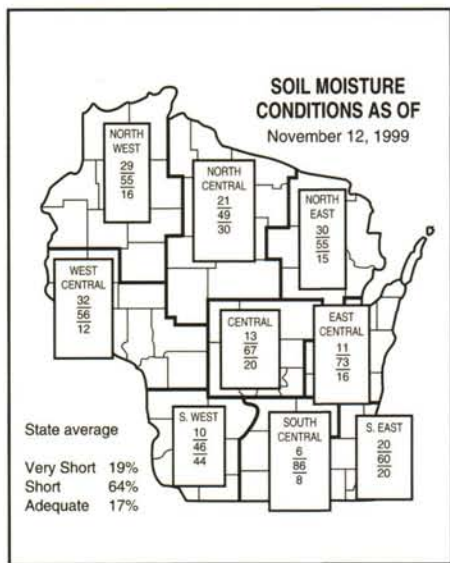
The late snow date seemed to contradict predictions from weather forecasters of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. Their prediction was that the La Nina phenomenon would bring more snow to the Midwest and the Great Lakes region. Our hope now lies in the months of January, February and March.

The Rose Bowlers from Wisconsin were happier this year than last. They made it home with no interference from the weather. That wasn't the case in 1999 because of the snow in Wisconsin. Not that anyone really minded after winning that Rose Bowl, too.

If the average citizen likes the mild winter, so do the insects. Egg populations survive mild winters and explode the following summer. Just what golf course superintendents need - more bugs and the problems they can bring.

One thing we can almost always count on in the Wisconsin winter: there will be snow during our Wisconsin Turf Expo. Leave early and stay late!

The stats from November and December are here, along with summaries of the growing season, (shown on pages 55 and 56). They are from the capable folks at the Wisconsin Ag Stats Service.



The Chenequa Country Club team, which includes WGCSA member Jim Shaw, seems to have a lock on the John Deere tourney, similar to the Monroe CC team in the days when Tom Schwab was playing.

The tournament, which was the 13th annual event, was held on the Prospector Course of Superstition Mountain Golf and Country Club in Arizona. There were 35 teams in the competition.

The photo below shows a group of cheeseheads (excluding the young guy on the far right!) who were obviously enjoying themselves in Arizona in mid-November.

Congratulations!



**Members of the Chenequa Country Club Team (l-r): Jim Shaw, Golf Course Superintendent; Randy Robel, Golf Professional; Keith Everson, Club Manager; Jim Elgenfeld, Club President; John Buck, Distributor Representative.**


After a long battle with cancer, Winnie Palmer passed away on November 20. Arnold Palmer was her

husband. She was diagnosed with it in late 1998, and those who listened to Barbara Bush at the GCSAA opening session in February 1999 will remember the President and Barbara were staying with the Palmers in Orlando. Mrs. Bush made reference to Mrs. Palmer's treatment.

For anyone who read Arnold's 1999 biography, *A Golfer's Life*, the sadness he is feeling becomes quite clear. They were very much in love with each other and he really worshipped her.

I called the Latrobe CC to ask if a sympathy card sent to the club would reach Arnold. I was assured it would. You may want to send one, too.

The equipment end of our business is constantly changing. Simplicity Manufacturing of Port Washington has purchased Ferris



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**MONTHLY RAINFALL: 1999 GROWING SEASON AND NORMAL**

District	April 1/		May 1/		June 1/		July 1/		August 1/		September 1/	
	1999	Normal	1999	Normal	1999	Normal	1999	Normal	1999	Normal	1999	Normal
	Inches											
NW	2.86	2.43	5.38	3.43	4.95	4.06	10.25	3.92	5.88	4.32	4.42	4.01
NC	2.26	2.40	6.36	3.41	3.46	3.92	8.32	3.76	3.22	4.32	2.28	4.17
NE	1.84	2.59	4.63	3.41	4.16	3.72	8.32	3.38	2.57	3.74	1.65	3.95
WC	5.45	2.89	5.19	3.69	3.27	4.10	9.11	4.15	3.38	4.18	1.51	4.07
C	4.50	2.78	3.64	3.59	3.91	3.70	8.16	3.73	2.89	3.90	1.30	4.11
EC	2.87	2.71	4.43	3.02	5.13	3.39	5.77	3.14	1.95	3.64	2.00	3.75
SW	8.19	3.09	4.97	3.41	3.99	3.84	7.93	3.85	3.09	4.08	1.57	3.93
SC	7.31	3.07	4.22	3.16	5.24	3.77	5.12	3.73	2.70	3.90	2.53	3.92
SE	5.82	3.22	4.48	2.94	6.07	3.49	4.88	3.72	2.17	3.80	3.87	3.77
STATE	4.18	2.71	5.02	3.38	4.29	3.82	8.04	3.74	3.38	4.04	2.39	4.00

1/Preliminary estimates, 1999. Source: State Climatologist.

**MONTHLY TEMPERATURES: 1999 GROWING SEASON AND NORMAL**

District	April 1/		May 1/		June 1/		July 1/		August 1/		September 1/	
	1999	Normal	1999	Normal	1999	Normal	1999	Normal	1999	Normal	1999	Normal
	Degrees Fahrenheit											
NW	44.5	41.8	58.5	53.7	63.2	62.8	70.5	68.5	65.3	65.7	56.5	56.4
NC	44.3	40.7	56.2	53.0	63.3	61.7	69.6	66.9	63.3	64.1	55.3	55.3
NE	44.6	41.4	55.9	53.4	63.8	62.3	71.0	67.5	64.4	64.7	56.3	56.0
WC	48.4	45.3	59.6	57.2	66.6	66.4	74.4	71.2	67.8	68.3	59.2	59.2
C	47.7	44.5	59.0	56.2	66.4	65.4	73.5	70.2	66.5	67.3	58.3	58.7
EC	46.0	42.9	57.0	54.3	65.3	63.9	73.7	69.7	66.4	67.7	59.0	59.7
SW	48.9	46.4	59.3	58.0	67.6	67.2	75.2	71.8	67.8	69.1	59.6	60.6
SC	48.9	46.2	60.0	57.7	68.2	67.1	75.8	71.5	67.9	68.8	60.5	60.7
SE	47.4	45.1	58.7	56.1	67.4	65.9	76.4	71.2	68.4	69.3	61.3	61.5
STATE	46.4	43.4	58.1	55.2	65.3	64.3	72.7	69.4	66.0	66.8	57.9	58.1

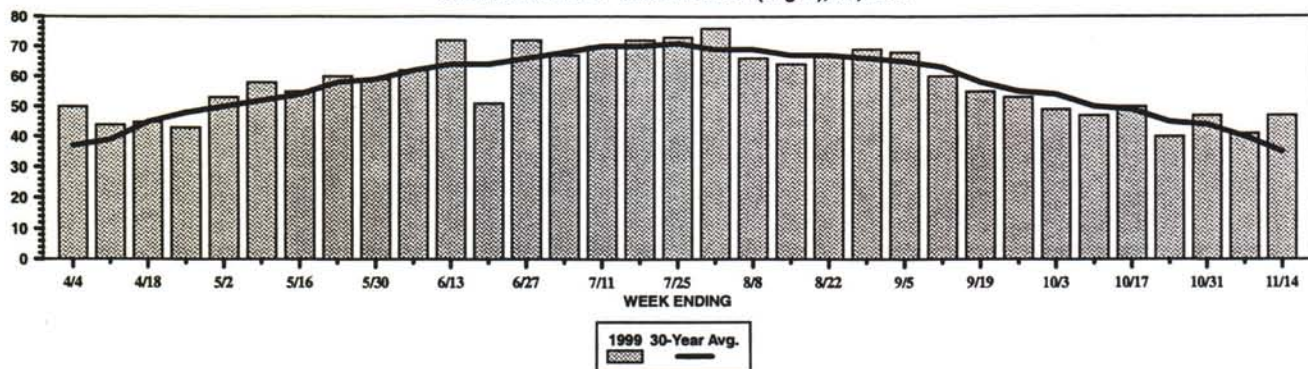
1/Preliminary estimates, 1999. \* Normal is defined as the 30-year average for the years 1961-90. Source: State Climatologist.

**COMPARATIVE TEMPERATURE AND PRECIPITATION DATA**

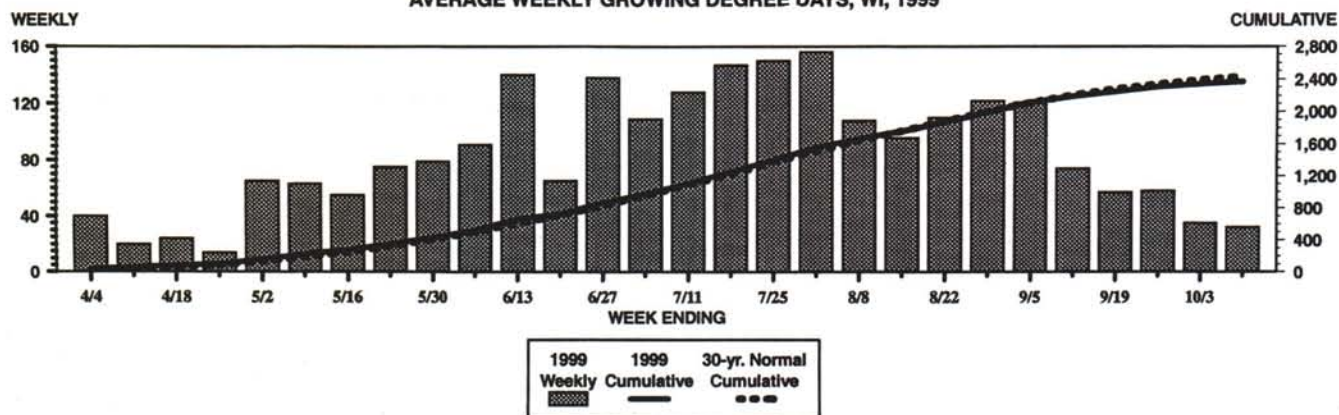
District	Average Temperature						Total Precipitation					
	June - September						April - September					
	Normal	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999 1/	Normal	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999 1/
	Degrees Fahrenheit						Inches					
NW	63.6	65.2	63.2	63.2	65.0	64.0	22.1	23.4	22.6	21.9	17.7	35.2
NC	62.4	64.4	61.8	61.9	63.5	62.9	21.8	22.3	21.1	23.1	16.3	26.0
NE	63.3	65.2	62.5	62.5	64.3	64.1	20.8	20.0	21.9	20.9	16.1	24.3
WC	66.6	69.1	66.2	67.1	67.7	67.2	23.0	22.1	17.6	24.0	23.6	28.9
C	66.0	68.6	65.7	65.7	67.1	66.3	21.7	21.7	19.1	21.2	21.3	25.4
EC	65.9	68.6	65.3	65.1	67.3	66.6	19.5	16.7	18.2	20.8	19.2	23.6
SW	67.7	69.5	66.4	66.7	67.9	67.7	22.3	21.7	19.5	23.3	27.9	30.3
SC	67.7	69.7	66.5	66.5	68.7	68.2	21.6	22.4	21.6	20.4	25.5	29.1
SE	67.7	70.1	66.8	66.5	68.7	68.6	20.7	21.0	21.5	20.6	21.3	28.2
STATE	65.1	66.8	64.4	64.6	66.2	65.6	21.7	21.6	20.5	22.1	20.3	28.3

1/Preliminary estimates, 1999. Source: State Climatologist

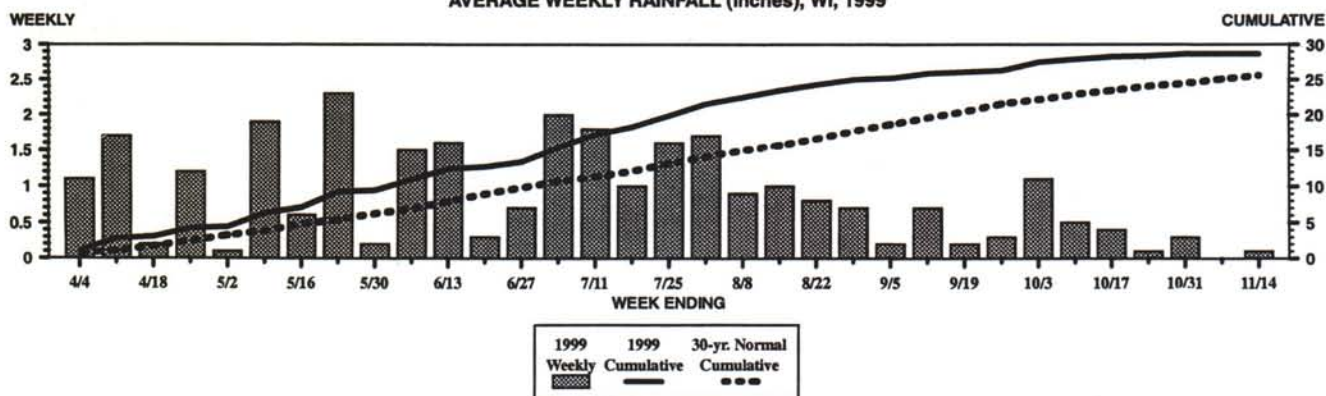
AVERAGE WEEKLY TEMPERATURE (deg. F), WI, 1999



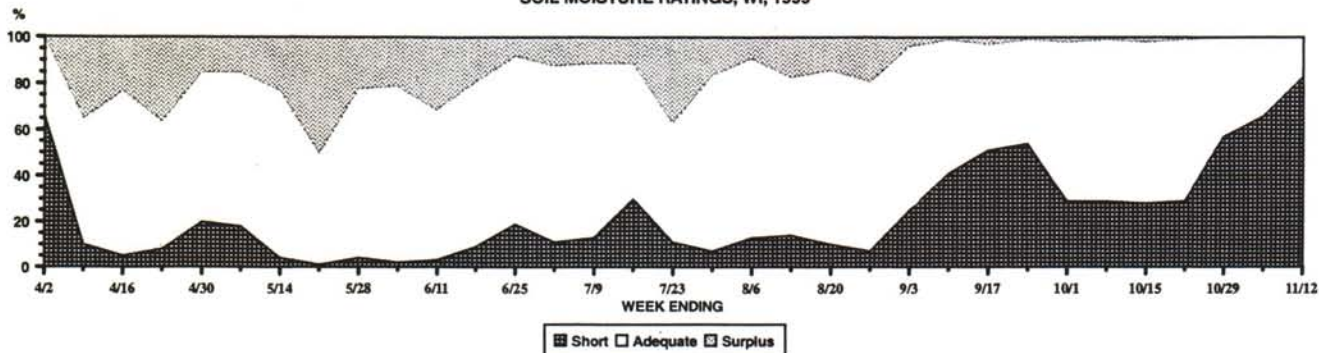
AVERAGE WEEKLY GROWING DEGREE DAYS, WI, 1999



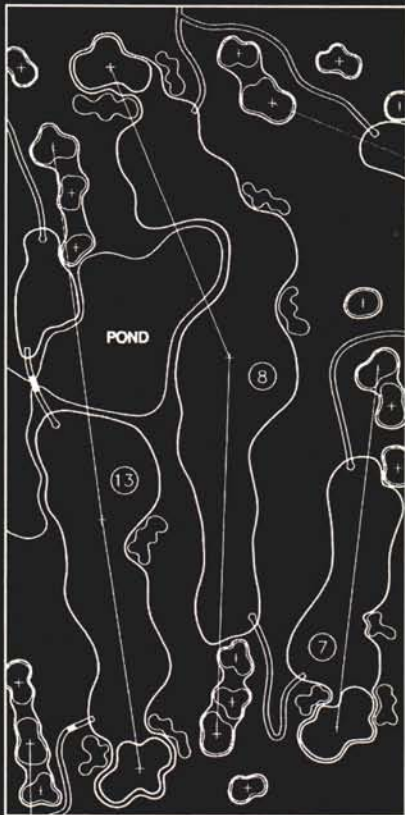
AVERAGE WEEKLY RAINFALL (Inches), WI, 1999



SOIL MOISTURE RATINGS, WI, 1999



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Industries of Munnsville, New York. Simplicity has annual sales of about \$120 million; Ferris generates about \$25 million. Ferris has about 5% of the commercial mower market, and Simplicity wants a greater presence in that market.

From Racine came the news that Case Corp. was acquired by New Holland, forming CNH Global. The new company will have its headquarters in Racine, where Case was started in 1842. It will keep the major brands of Case, Case IH and New Holland. It ranks third in the contractor business worldwide, and trails only John Deere in the farm equipment business.

New Holland bought out Ford tractors and Ford equipment a few years ago. There are only a few farm equipment manufacturers anymore, and that same trend is very clear in the grass machinery business.

Each Christmas, the four University of Wisconsin - Madison faculty who started the turfgrass management program at Wisconsin gather with their alums in the immediate Madison area. The "students" are a little long in the tooth, but Professors Jim Love, Gayle Worf, Chuck Koval and Bob Newman seem frozen in time. They lead active lives, traveling, reading and enjoying the retirement years. Pictures of them that December 1999 day are here for you to see.

The reports on the gypsy moth infestation are both good and bad. In central Wisconsin, numbers



Mike Semler and Jim Love face the camera. Also at the table are Dave Helke, Randy Smith, Chuck Frazier, Jerry O'Donnell and Terry Kurth.



Bob Newman, Gayle Worf and Chuck Koval at Christmas.

were down, indicating the spraying program was effective.

But in northern Wisconsin, the number of moths was higher. This is troubling in any area, but especially in an area where tourism is so important to the local economy.

In 1999, 54,420 acres were

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sprayed to contain the insects. Whereas vast areas in the East have been defoliated, only a small patch of woods in Marinette County have been that affected in Wisconsin.

The success of the spraying program will go a long way on the road to public acceptance. Good work by the WDATCP and the Wisconsin Cooperative Gypsy Moth Program.

With the primary debates going on now in New Hampshire and Iowa, it is easy to tell we will tire of this road show soon, well before the November election. A recent poll says that the one quality in a candidate that is most important to voters in a presidential campaign is honesty. It is a good thing Clinton is done - his conduct as a low-life bottom feeder would eliminate him immediately. And if the poll is true, Al "he's your pal" Gore likely won't pass muster, either. People like the economy but are sick of those two bozos.

A close look at the field of candidates in the running reveals no one that inspires me very much. It is a dreary political landscape out there.

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Fox Lake Golf Club	Fox Valley Golf Club
Foxboro Golf Course	Foxfire Golf Club
Glen Cairn Golf Course	Grand Geneva Resort
Iola Community Golf Course	Dr. David Karwacki
Lake Wisconsin Country Club	Lakeshore Municipal Golf Course
Meadowbrook Country Club	Merrill Hills Country Club
North Hills Country Club	Oneida Golf and Country Club
Racine Country Club	Ridgeway Country Club
Tucklaway Country Club	Valley Green Golf Course
Wander Springs Golf Course	West Bend Country Club
White Lake Country Club	Windwood Country Club

British researchers have reported in *New Scientist* magazine that people who get up early have higher levels of cortisol, the human body's main stress hormone. Those levels remained high all day.

Boy, is that great or what? I have always believed in the bit of philosophy of "early to bed, early to rise makes a man healthy, wealthy and wise," and "the early bird gets the worm." Guess I have been wrong all my life!

So we have stress from golf players, from weather events, from vagaries Mother Nature offers, biological disasters, personnel problems, etc. And now we find it all is worse because we get up early.

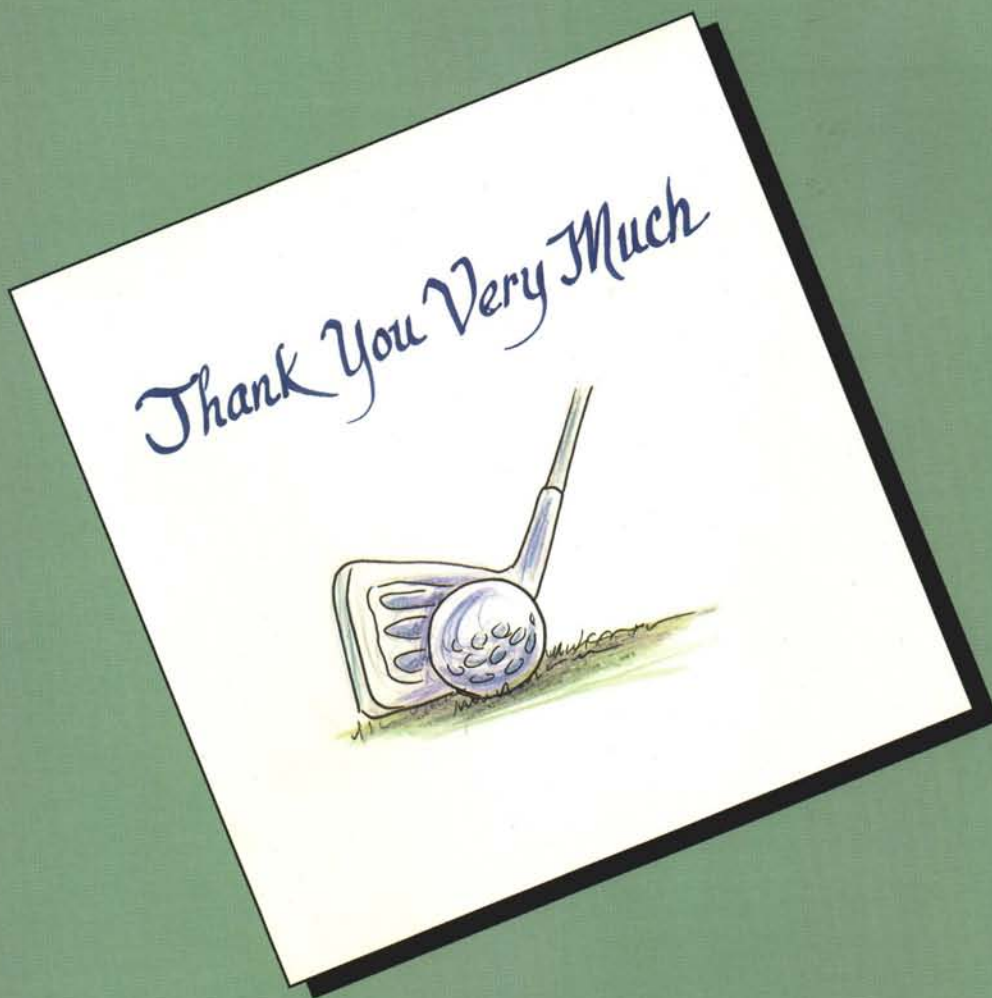
It is enough to make a guy want to go and take a nap.

December 19, 1999 was a momentous day. For the first time

in many decades, a graduate student who focused his education and research on turfgrass pathology was granted a Doctor of Philosophy from the University of Wisconsin - Madison. At that commencement exercise in the Kohl Center on the UW - Madison campus, our friend and colleague and Grass Roots author, Dr. Steven M. Millett, stepped forward to receive that prestigious honor. It was the result of a lot of hard work, determination, substantial intellect, patience and fortitude. Not many are capable of it; Millett was.

Congratulations, Doc! We are all proud of you and your accomplishment.

Finally, enjoy the neat card Gene and Diane Haas sent us regarding the DSA and their evening at North Shore Golf Club. What a great couple! ♡



In appreciation to a swell bunch of guys  
 I'm proud to accept the Distinguished  
 Service Award from the W&CSA.  
 The plaque is hung  
 And the book is on display  
 And they both look great —  
 The trip will be taken at a later date.

Once again, Diane and I extend  
 Our thanks, and wish to express  
 How much we enjoy working with  
 Such a fine group.

*Gene & Diane Haas*

