



10 Years + 58 Columns + 61 Personalities = Lots of Memories

By Lori Ward Bocher

Up until about 10 years ago, I paid as much attention to turf as the average person. I mowed lawn. I enjoyed parks. I played and watched some sports. Never was a golfer.

But then I had the privilege of meeting Monroe Miller. We were both serving on the WALSAA board (Wisconsin Agriculture and Life Sciences Alumni Association.). His enthusiasm for his job and profession was contagious! So when he asked me if I'd like to write a "Personality Profile" column for *The Grass Roots*, I gratefully agreed.

Now, 58 columns later, I find myself writing my "10th Anniversary" column. Fifty-eight columns! Fifty-eight personalities – 61 if you count all four of The Shaw Boys – and I guess they are four different characters.

In 10 years, I missed only two columns – once after the birth of my daughter and a second time after the birth of my son. A few times each year I'd call Monroe, asking, "Who's next for the Personality Profile?" And he'd always have a name or two or three to keep me busy. Most of the interviews were conducted over the telephone, but a few were done in person.

Although I write this column, it really belongs to Monroe. It was his idea 10 years ago – a way to honor and to get to know many of the people who work in this industry. He seriously considers who he wants to include in each issue. If he opens one "category" of personalities – say, University personnel who touch the industry – he wants to be sure to include everyone who fits in that category.

He's struggled the most with whether or not to include his colleagues, golf course superinten-

dents. He's opened the door a bit, with retired past presidents of the WGCSA and a few other notable exceptions, but he still hasn't pushed that door wide open.

And so, with special thanks to Monroe for putting me in touch with some really great personalities, I'd like to share with you some of my highlights from writing the Personality Profile for 10 years.

Most memorable professor...

Two articles stand out as the most memorable. One was with J.R. Love. As most of you know, J.R. Love was a professor of soil science at the University of Wisconsin-Madison from 1954 to 1986. He also started and headed the department's turf and grounds program beginning in 1960. When Monroe asked me to interview Dr. Love, a touch of fear hit me. You know, the kind of fear you feel when you dream it's time for final exams and you haven't studied all semester?

This fear stemmed from the fact that I had Dr. Love for Soils 301 back in 1981. I was a dairy science major, but my advisor strongly recommend-

ed this course. Other students recommended against it; the course, and the professor, were tough, they said. Thankfully, I followed the advice of my advisor. Yes, the course was tough. I dreaded the exams, especially the lab exams where we had to identify soils.

But the professor wasn't tough. He just had high standards – and a contagious enthusiasm for soils! I never knew I could learn so much or like so much about soils!

Back to the article. Why else is this one so memorable? Because J.R. Love has one of the most sparkling personalities of anyone I've interviewed to date. As I stated in the article, he has an "unending zest for life." Ever the teacher, he told me about his home town of Ruby, ND, being the geographical center of North America. He told me about the grid layout of Chicago streets. He gave me his opinion on many educational topics. There's nothing wishy-washy about this man!

The telephone interview with Dr. Love was the longest I've ever had. And he's the only person who has actually called me back with more

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information. Apparently readers of *The Grass Roots* liked the article, too. Monroe gave the article one of his "best" awards in 1992 – the Best Grass Roots Article. He usually doesn't single out articles. "But the exception comes this year," he wrote. "It is the result of the tremendous feedback from Lori's feature from the July/August issue entitled, 'Even his name shows his Love for life.'"

"Professors Love's following is still formidable and scores of friends and former students were pleased to read about his life in retirement," Monroe continued. "In her story, Lori captured the essence of the man we've known so well for so long."

Thanks for the memories, Dr. Love.

Most memorable and emotional history...

The other "most memorable" article was with Terry Ward. Terry was advertising and sales manager for the Milorganite Division of the Milwaukee Metropolitan Sewerage District. He was quite surprised when asked to do the interview. "My life's dull and boring and I'd like to keep it that way," he said.

But I found him to be one of my more interesting "subjects." As I wrote in the article, "Terry Ward is a slice of American history. He lived through, or was affected by, many of the major events of post World War II America."

A child of the stable and prosperous 1950's, most of his relatives worked in agriculture. But his father, a World War II veteran, came home from the war, got a good job with the Kohler Company, and worked there the rest of his career – typical in the U.S. at that time.

After graduating from high school in 1964, Terry enrolled at the University of Wisconsin-Madison mainly to avoid the military draft, he admitted. But a football injury forced him to drop out of school, so he lost his 2S draft classification, and he was drafted in 1966. And where did he end up? Viet Nam. In the

thick of things.

This is where the emotion comes in. Terry was unable to tell me about his war experiences. His voice cracked as he spoke. "This is what I don't want to talk about," he said. "There have been a couple of things that I endured that shall not be repeated. They're not thought about."

He was badly injured and heavily decorated from the war. When he returned to the U.S., his path was slightly different from his father's return from World War II. Terry went back to college, got a business degree, and then went through a series of jobs. His first job he lost due to a company buy-out. His second job he chose to leave for a new challenge at another company. He lost this third job when the company couldn't compete with Japanese imports and went out of business. Doesn't this sound typical of corporate America in the 1970's and 1980's? After several years with Milorganite, Terry is now working for another company and living in central Wisconsin.

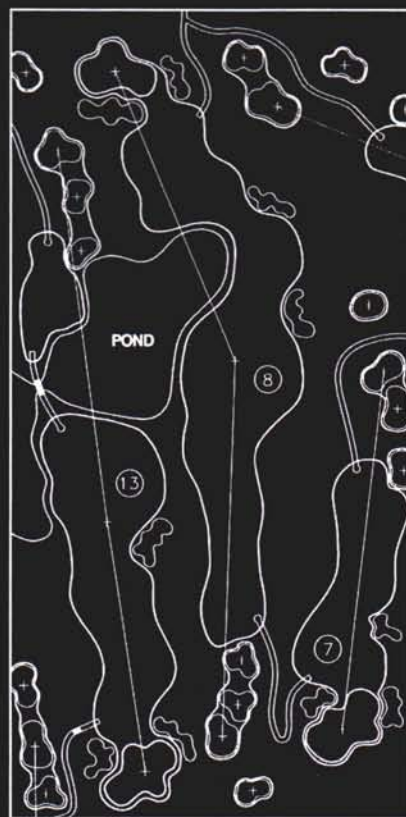
In spite of life's difficulties – or maybe because of them – Terry has remained upbeat about life. "So long as they aren't shooting at us, so long as they aren't too close, that makes for a pretty good day here," he said. "I think that's why I'm always upbeat. I know the worst days are behind me. Every day is a good day. Believe me, I know what a bad day is."

Thanks for the memories, and the reality check, Terry.

Golf course superintendents...

As I mentioned earlier, Monroe has been reluctant to feature too many golf course superintendents. If you do one, you have to do them all, right? But he has made a few exceptions. First he had me interview three WGCSA past presidents who were retired – Woody Voigt, Al Vrana and Bill Sell. Since then, Al and Bill have passed away. When Charles Shiley passed away, Monroe asked me to contact his widow, Mary, for an

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article – my first “memorial” article.

Randy Smith was an “exception” to the don’t-interview-current-superintendents rule. Monroe had me feature him because he was retiring from his superintendent’s role at a fairly young age. Mike Lee was another exception; he was hosting the U.S. Women’s Open at Black Wolf Run. And then there was Mark Kienert. I interviewed him when he was elected WGCSA president in 1995. Monroe usually interviews the new presidents, but I think he was behind and needed some help this time!

And who can forget The Shaw Boys – Dan, Jim, Charlie, and Pat. They were an obvious exception; it’s not often you find four brothers in the same profession.

By phone or in person...

Most of the 58 interviews I’ve conducted have been over the telephone. It just takes too much time and money to drive all over the state. But there have been a few notable exceptions in this category, too.

Back to The Shaw Boys. I couldn’t imagine trying to interview four people on the telephone at once. How would I know who was saying what? And to interview each one separately – then I’d miss out on the interaction between them. So I decided to interview them in person. Pat had the difficult job of getting all four brothers to be at the same place at the same time – in summer, no less.

We met at the shop at Chenequa Country Club, Hartland, where Dan and Jim work. The comradery I felt as the four brothers bantered back and forth, throwing in a quip here and there, was wonderful. And it was heart-warming to see how much they all appreciated being able to work in the same profession.

Bill Sell, a retired superintendent and former WGCSA president, was another exception because he lived in Appleton, only 25 minutes away from my house. If I hadn’t gone there in person, I never would have seen his extensive golf ball collection.

In my first year of writing the column, I did visit most of the people in person. My visit to Egon Herrmann of Kellogg Seeds stands out in my memory. It was a challenge to find the place in an industrial section of Milwaukee. The old building, with wooden floors worn smooth from wear and the smell of seed in the air,

reminded me of childhood trips to the feed mill. And Egon was a real charm. I remember him giving me practical advice on how to grow a better lawn.

Miscellaneous categories...

Which brings me to another category: **Best Accents.** Egon



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Herrmann wins in this category. It was a joy to listen to his heavy German accent. A close second goes to both Lois and Jim Latham with their Texas draws.

Speaking of accents, Geunhwa Jung, the new assistant professor of turfgrass pathology at the UW-Madison, had the most challenging accent. A native of Korea, he admits that he still struggles with his adopted language. But he was kind and patient with me, repeating or spelling words that I didn't understand. I encourage all of you to be kind and patient with Geunhwa when you hear him speak at industry meetings.

Then there's the **Small World** category. I remember my shock when I called Prof. Ed Hasselkus of the horticulture department at the UW-Madison. I had never met the man before. But when I called and introduced myself, he asked, "Is your maiden name Ward?"

"Yes," I answered.

"Is Bill Ward your dad?" he questioned.

"Ahh, yes," I replied, dumbfounded.

"Your father and I figured a out a few years ago that we're very distantly related on the Lean side," he told me.

Although we share the Ward name, Terry Ward and I are not related. But he did remember being on

my family's farm back in the 1970's when he worked for the Murphy Products Division of the Schlitz Brewing Company. This division produced a trademarked product that was drier and had a longer shelf life than wet brewers grains and was sold to cattle farmers.

And I can't forget Woody Voigt, another retired superintendent and WGCSA past president. He was superintendent for the Ozaukee County Park Commission which included two golf courses. My husband, Luke, worked for Woody for two summers at Hawthorne Hills, and he well remembered Woody's ever-present cigar. And my father-in-law, who worked for the Ozaukee County Highway Department, also had fond memories of Woody through their connection as county employees.

In conclusion...

After writing for 10 years about people connected to the turf industry, I've made a few observations.

One, most people are really glad to be working in the industry. Some are downright excited! I sensed that most of my "subjects" are very dedicated to their professions and enjoy the challenges that they face.

Two, most people like to talk about themselves. It's very flattering to have an article written about you, and all but two of my "subjects" were very accommodating. Some were modest and had to be questioned a bit more.

Others spoke freely and volunteered lots of information. But all were genuinely flattered to be featured.

Three, everyone has a story to tell. Granted, some are more eventful than others. But everyone seems to belong where they are, whether by choice or by chance. Everyone's life is important.

So thanks for giving me the opportunity to write the Personality Profile these past 10 years. I hope you've enjoyed getting to know these 61 personalities as much as I have. ♣



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Ten Years of Personality Profiles

Occupations listed are those that were current at the time the articles were written. Letters after the name indicate those who have moved on to other jobs (M), those who are retired (R), and those who are deceased (D).

Golf Course Superintendents

| | |
|---|------------------|
| Woody Voigt(R) | Nov./Dec. 1994 |
| Al Vrana (D) | Jan./Feb. 1995 |
| Bill Sell (D) | March/April 1995 |
| Mark Kienert | Jan./Feb. 1996 |
| Randy Smith (M) | Sept./Oct. 1996 |
| The Shaw Boys: Dan, Jim, Charlie, Pat | Sept./Oct. 1997 |
| Michael Lee | May/June 1998 |
| Charles Shiley (D) via his widow, Mary | March/April 2000 |

Golf Organizations

| | |
|--|------------------|
| Gene Haas, WSGA (R) | Sept./Oct. 1990 |
| Lois Latham, wife and assistant to Jim Latham (R) | March/April 1991 |
| Bill Roberts, GCSAA president | March/April 1992 |
| Jim Latham, Great Lakes USGA Green Section (R) | Jan./Feb. 1994 |

Allied Industry

| | |
|---|------------------|
| Lee Bruce, The Bruce Co. | July/Aug. 1990 |
| Egon Herrmann, Kellogg Seeds (R) | Nov./Dec. 1990 |
| Christine Faulks, Greensmix | July/Aug. 1991 |
| Jerry O'Donnell, OM Scott and Sons Co. (R) | May/June 1992 |
| Curtis Larson, Wis. Turf Equipment Corp. | Sept./Oct. 1992 |
| Ed Devinger, Reinders (M) | Nov./Dec. 1992 |
| John Mortimer, Horst Distributing (R) | Jan./Feb. 1993 |
| Bob Lohmann, golf course architect | March/April 1993 |
| Charlie Wilson, MMSD/Milorganite (R) | July/Aug. 1994 |
| Dan DeVault, Hanley Co. (M) | May/June 1995 |
| John Buck, JW Turf | July/Aug. 1995 |
| Dick Nugent, golf course architect | Sept./Oct. 1995 |
| Terry Ward, MMSD/Milorganite (M) | Nov./Dec. 1995 |
| Tom Emmerich, irrigation designer | March/April 1996 |
| Dick Reinders, Reinders | July/Aug. 1996 |
| Bob Reinders, Reinder | sNov./Dec. 1996 |
| Don Stein, Kellogg Seeds (M) | March/April 1997 |
| Alan Nees, MMSD/Milorganite | May/June 1997 |

| | |
|---|-----------------|
| Wayne Horman, Scotts | Jan./Feb. 1998 |
| Ray Knapp, Spring Valley Turf Products | Sept./Oct. 1998 |
| Vince Johnson, Johnson Turf Equipment | Jan./Feb. 1999 |
| Charlie Kisow, The Bruce Co. | July/Aug. 1999 |
| O.J. Noer (D) via his cousin, Peter Vea | May/June 2000 |

University of Wisconsin-Madison

CALS Deans:

| | |
|----------------|-------------------|
| Leo Walsh (R) | May/June 1991 |
| Roger Wyse (M) | March/April, 1994 |
| Elton Aberle | Nov./Dec. 1998 |

Professors/Specialists:

| | |
|--------------------------------|------------------|
| Gayle Worf, plant pathology(R) | Sept./Oct. 1991 |
| Robert Newman, horticulture(R) | Jan./Feb. 1992 |
| J.R. Love, soils (R) | July/Aug. 1992 |
| Wayne Kussow, soils | Sept./Oct. 1993 |
| Chuck Koval, entomology (R) | Nov./Dec. 1993 |
| Ed Hasselkus, horticulture (R) | Sept./Oct. 1994 |
| Doug Maxwell, plant pathology | May/June 1996 |
| Jeff Gregos, TDDL | Jan./Feb. 1997 |
| John Stier, horticulture | Nov./Dec. 1997 |
| Phil Pellitteri, entomology | March/April 1999 |
| Chris Williamson, entomology | May/June 1999 |
| Laura Jull, horticulture | Sept./Oct. 1999 |
| Mike Casler, agronomy | Nov./Dec. 1999 |
| Geunhwa Jung, plant pathology | Jan./Feb. 2000 |

Grass Roots Contributors

| | |
|--|------------------|
| Lori Ward Bocher, Personality Profile columnist | July/Aug. 1993 |
| Jennifer Samerdyke, cover artist | March/April 1998 |
| Steve Scoville, cartoonist | July/Aug. 1998 |

Miscellaneous

| | |
|--|----------------|
| Russell Weisensel, Wis. Agri-Business Council (R) | Nov./Dec. 1991 |
| M.C. "Milt" Engelke, Texas A&M turfgrass breeder | May/June 1994 |
| Todd Edlebeck, Lambeau Field grounds supervisor | July/Aug. 1997 |
| (now has different position with Packers) | |