

# CALS, UWEX Keep UW – Madison Turf Program Moving Ahead

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



Thanks to some favorable decisions from administrators at our land grant college in Madison, the turf-grass program at the institution remains intact and poised to moved ahead. It was scary for a while, though.

The first problem, as explained by Chris Williamson in *The Wisconsin Entomology Report*, was to convince UW – Madison and UWEX staff of the need to return the Koval/Williamson position to permanent position status. Heaven knows we need the help from Williamson now and the looming new pests will present even more formidable trouble in the near future. The turf and ornamental industry simply has to have quick and open access to an Extension entomologist to maintain any semblance of prosperity.

That argument was made by people in the field, by chairs of some of the departments involved with the turf program, by faculty, by end users (golf players) and even by a member of the University of Wisconsin Board of Regents. There is risk in naming names – the fear of leaving someone out is very real. Nevertheless, Dave Hogg and Larry Binning, Elton Aberle and Rick Klemme, and Carl O'Connor especially were key in restoring and funding the Entomology position to permanent status. Dr. O'Connor even visited the GCSAA conference in 2000 as part of his information gathering about the magnitude of our business of golf turf.

The addition of Dr. Geunhwa Jung to the team was a tortuous experience. Where would we have been without Doug Maxwell, Craig Grau, John Andrews and the Dean's office staff working to resolve the plant pathology position? And look how it turned out – Geunhwa is going to do great things for the golf turf businesses in Wisconsin during his career; that wouldn't have been possible without some real hard work and dedication from administrators.

And I am wondering how many of you know of the great opportunity Dr. John Stier had in early summer – he was offered a position on the faculty at Pennsylvania State University that was extremely lucrative. He passed on it to stay at Wisconsin. John, of course, sees the potential at Wisconsin. But he was also aided in his decision-making by Dr. Paul Ludden, Larry Binning (again) and others who know of John's ability and potential and didn't want him to leave. Every time I see John, I am thinking we may never know how close he came to leaving – and didn't!

I am not exactly sure when Wayne Kussow plans on retiring. We can hope "never" but that's foolish. There

aren't many Phds coming out with a soil science background and a turf specialty; I can see a bad moon on the rise. I was thinking the other day as I read Doug Soldat's article in this issue of *The Grass Roots* that somehow a deal should be struck with the "University" that would allow him (assuming he is willing) to finish his PhD and step up to Wayne's job when Wayne does retire. That way, the prof and student could plan course work and research that would match what Wayne thinks would be best for his position. Probably won't happen, but it makes sense and ought to be discussed with someone.

We have a few years of potential stability and tranquility, but that didn't just happen. I guess maybe that is the point I am making in these few paragraphs. We have a pretty good history of involvement and participation and generosity, and it has helped our cause. When you are my age, you can look back and see that.

Let us rededicate ourselves – all of us – to keeping it going. It will be worth whatever effort is required. 🌱



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