

# Late Winter – A Great Time for Thinking

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

Someone asked me in January how I liked Wisconsin's winter so far this year. "Super!" I replied, "although January won't be able to match the wonderfully snowy (most snow ever for a December in our town – 35") and cold December (third coldest record in Madison, 10.5 degrees F. below normal).

I was right. January was the fourth least snowy January ever with only 1.6" of new snow. Temps averaged slightly more than five degrees above normal, which translated into a 10 degree differential between December and January. It even rained 0.75" at the end of the month.

Although the details are in yet, February at least started out good and cold (-4 on the second day of the month) and the Sun Prairie rodent saw his shadow, a clue of more winter to those believing in that fairy tale.

It does seem clear now, however, that we won't likely have the early early start we did last year. Thank goodness for that!

After enjoying an honest-to-goodness real Wisconsin winter, one wonders what summer might bring. A reliable source for an answer for many of us is *The Old Farmer's Almanac*. The almanac predicts the first hot spell for the summer in the upper Midwest will come in late May. June, July and August are forecast to be hotter than normal with a lot of rain.

It their forecast proves to be the case, it may be a good season for fungicide sales.

The U.S. Weather Service is taking another look at the current

wind chill system and may change it. The system we use was developed back in 1941 by the U.S. Army in Antarctica; it is known as the Siple and Passel formula. Basically, the Army researchers filled plastic containers with water and recorded how fast they froze under varying temperatures and wind spells. Not real complicated.

The current research takes into account factors like humidity, shade and sunlight. The Army tables measured wind speed at a height of 30 feet; we know winds at ground level are less than at that height. There are other factors that seem to cause the wind chill factor to be overrated – each person's unique physiology, how

## There's No Mistaking an Original.



The outstanding performance of a reliable, economical, multi-site fungicide.

The only broad-spectrum systemic strobilurin fungicide.

The two top selling fungicides in golf, **HERITAGE®** and **DACONIL®**

[www.zenecaprofprod.com](http://www.zenecaprofprod.com)

Contact: [Jim.Shone@agna.zeneca.com](mailto:Jim.Shone@agna.zeneca.com)



**syngenta**

Important: Always read and follow label instructions before purchasing or using these products.  
©2001 Syngenta. Syngenta Professional Products, Greensboro, NC 27419. Banner®, Barcader®, Daconil®, Heritage®, MAOX®, Primo®, and Subdue® are trademarks of Syngenta. Dact® is a trademark of Dact Computer Corp. Echo® is a trademark of Echo, Inc. Makita® is a trademark of Makita USA, Inc. Toy-Bit® is a trademark of Toy-Bit, Inc.

ZPP TRF-020



we are dressed, the influence of temperature itself, and more.

Just to give you a clue as to how significant the changes may be, the chart below compares wind chills when the air temperature is 10 degrees above zero. The proposed wind chill index on the right was compiled as a result of new research:

Wind Speed (mph)	Current Wind Chill	Proposed Wind Chill
5	6	10
10	-9	0
15	-18	-8
20	-24	-14
25	-29	-19
30	-33	-23
35	-35	-26
40	-37	-29

From the desk of my brother, slightly amended, and received on a cold day this past Wisconsin winter:

#### *Why I Love Wisconsin*

When it's  
Winter time in Wisconsin,  
And the gentle breezes blow  
About seventy miles  
an hour  
And it's fifty-two below.  
You can tell you're in Wisconsin  
'casue  
the snow's up to your butt,  
And you take a breath of winter  
air  
And  
Your nose holes both freeze shut.  
The weather here is wonderful,  
So I  
Guess I'll hang around,  
I could NEVER leave Wisconsin.  
My feet are frozen to  
The ground!

The grinch must be living in Racine. On the last full day of production before the Christmas holiday shutdown, Tectron announced it will be closing the Racine Jacobson plant at the end of 2001. The move will

eliminate 275 jobs in the grass machinery manufacturing sector in Wisconsin.

It will also end almost 80 years of Jacobsen presence in Racine. The Danish family who founded the company had a prosperous business in one of the most Danish cities in America.

There were attempts to keep Jake where it belongs. Incentives, including \$950,000 in low interest loans by state, county and city leaders didn't help. I don't know details but I've heard over the years that UAW policies didn't help (when will they ever learn?). And the plant was dated.

So it goes in America. Whether it was vice president Dan Wilde or somebody else who timed the announcement, that person ought to be ashamed of how it was handled. It was close to mean.

Christmas is a time for, among other things, family and friends. A high point for alums in our town is when we gather for a holiday lunch with Jim Love, Chuck Koval, Bob Newman and Gayle Worf. They were powerful influences for us aging former students and it is always a treat to be with them again. They are interesting, interested and curious about everything, like they have been for their entire lives.

The photo here gives evidence that they are a vigorous group. They asked about many of you.



Plant hormones and plant growth regulators are slowly beginning to find their place in golf turf management. Dr. Folke Skoog conducted pioneering work with auxin, and while he was on the Botany Department faculty at the UW – Madison he discovered a major new class of plant hormones – the cytokinins. This PGR stimulates the division of plant cells and regulates plant growth and development. Outside of our business, Dr. Skoog's 32 years on the UW – Madison faculty had a profound impact on agricultural and horticultural practices around the world. He passed away in Madison on February 15, 2001. He was 92.

Professor Skoog was active in many botany and biology societies, and he was the recipient of untold numbers of honors. Foremost among them was the National Medal of Science given to him in 1991 in a White House ceremony. His discoveries are considered one of the major advances in the plant sciences in the last 50 years.

Barb and Frank Rossi welcomed their son, Tucker Angelo, into the world on November 30, 2000. He was born early and only weighed 3lb. 5 oz. Mother and son spent 20 days in the hospital, leaving Frank in charge of their daughters, Danielle (14) and Nicole (5) and the farm. Barb had to return to the hos-



pital when she got very ill after that, but now is on the mend. Tucker has doubled his weight since his birth and the proud father is back at work. He had a substantial role at conference – three seminars and a major presentation at the USGA Green Section Session.



"Tex" Otto in training for the trip to Dallas.

Wayne Otto takes our business seriously. And since the GCSAA Conference is part of our profession, Rod Johnson caught Wayne practicing up for the February trip to Dallas. "Get along, little doggie!"

Wisconsin's lucky – we have a state flower, tree, soil and a dozen other things that identify us and set us apart from the other states.

Do you know what America's national tree is? I mean, we have a national flower, the rose. Surely we have a national tree.

Nope. But the National Arbor Day Foundation thinks we should have. Starting back on January 1st, the Foundation gave Americans the chance to vote for one. Visit [www.arborday.org](http://www.arborday.org) before April 26th and vote for one of the 21 nominees. Or write your name, address and choice of a tree on a 3" x 5" card by April 1st and mail it to:

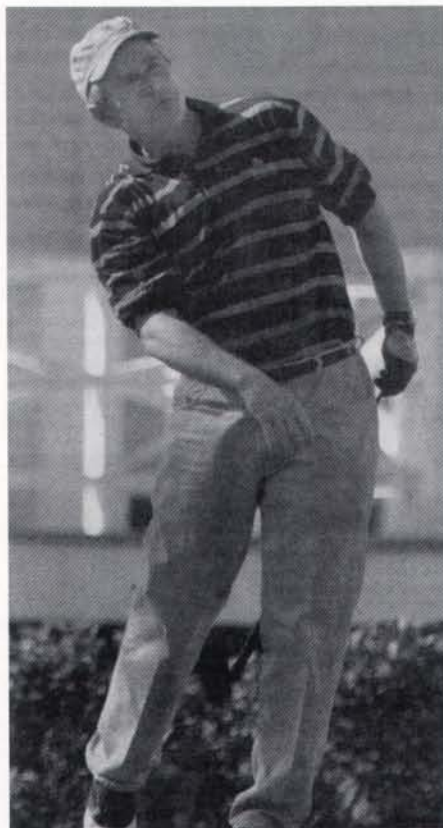
National Arbor Day Foundation  
Dept. P  
Nebraska City, Nebraska 68410

The results will be announced on April 27th, which is Arbor Day. It is expected that Congress will then designate the winner as our national tree.

As a point of information, every state has a state tree. Wisconsin's is the sugar maple. Eleven states have a type of pine, seven have an oak species, and five have followed our lead with a maple.

Cast your vote for your favorite by April 26!

One of the first things George W. Bush did after winning the presidential election was hit the links in Florida for a round of golf. He follows his father and grandfather in that way. In fact, his grandfather was a president of the USGA and won the U.S. Senior Amateur one year. What we will have to wait to see is if George W. can play an 18-hole round as quickly as his father could.



George W. Bush cannot help but be in a good position as our new president. He loves golf and he

dwarfs the small and petty administration that preceded him.

Entomologists from the UW – Madison expect a worse-than-usual gypsy moth infestation this spring. Despite our cold weather in December, we needed several consecutive days of –20 degrees F. to kill the eggs. And beyond that, the beautiful deep snow of December pretty well insulated the eggs from cold temperatures anyway. The number of moths will continue to increase until we have a really cold winter without deep snow.

Conversations I have had with WGCSA colleagues in eastern and northern Wisconsin scare me. "You have to see and hear trees covered with caterpillars in the spring to fully appreciate the seriousness of the threat." The USDA has a program that provides money to fight the moths, and in our state, Brookfield and Appleton have applied for a grant to spray for them.

The problem is troubling for golf courses. Trees are one of our greatest assets.

Congratulations to Tommy Thompson as he heads to D.C. to straighten out the USDHHS. If anyone can, he's the one.

Thompson held the governor's office longer than anyone else has or ever probably will. I like the job he did for Wisconsin. He has virtues that I respect: a humble, rural Wisconsin background, a tremendous work ethic, loyalty to friends, and a sincere and deep love for the state. He was proud to be governor and appreciated the chance to serve the people.

Golf courses don't run themselves. They are a lot like an old fashioned wheelbarrow – it doesn't go anywhere unless you push it.

And as the days lengthen and warm, Wisconsin superintendents know the pushing is about to begin.

May it be our best season ever. ♣