

# A Cool Spring Leads into Wisconsin's Summer

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

May 19, 2002 dawned white in Wisconsin – frost delays for anxious golfers. While Cheryl and I were with our daughter Christie at the CALS Alumni Breakfast for new grads, golf players were waiting for the sun to warm the air temp to above freezing. Record temperatures were broken twice that weekend in our town and all across Wisconsin, too.

Have you even seen the likes of it? I have been paying reasonably close attention to the weather since I was about ten years old when I became aware of how significantly it impacted the prosperity of my parents and our family farm. I cannot, in the 46 years hence, recall such a constant, and consistently cool spring.

There are many downsides to the kind of weather we experienced. The rounds of golf are way down and many of those rounds will never be gotten back. This ripples through our golf economy – lower employment, less fertilizer and other supplies purchased, reduced new equipment purchases, etc. Call it classic Econ 101.

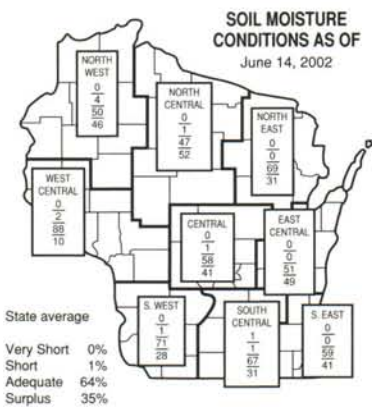
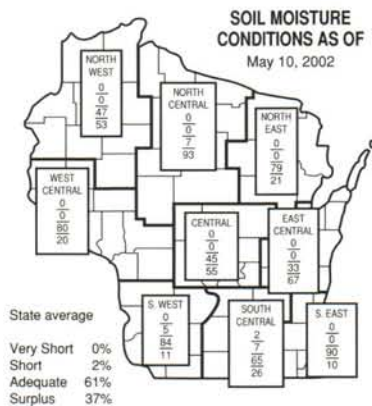
Further, for those of us who aerify in the spring, we had to watch it take several weeks for the coring holes to completely heal. The seeding of annual bluegrass was retarded and extended somewhat, causing bumpy greens for a few more days.

The upside (you always have to look for the positive) was that the flowering crabapples, redbuds and lilac blossoms seemed to last forever, keeping golf courses in full color bloom for three weeks.

Finally, of course it ended with the warm days of early June. With

the normal (or slightly above) amounts of rainfall, it was prime time for cool season grasses. It was hard to keep up and keep courses in top playing conditions, but that is what we get paid to do.

Rainfall stats here are from the Wisconsin Ag Stats Service.



The economic downturn has taken its toll in Wisconsin manufacturing and commerce, so it should not have come as a surprise that John Deere in Horicon will begin laying off 240 workers for five months beginning in late July.

The layoff will be the first time

the company implements a “voluntary manufacturing leave.” During layoffs, employees will receive about 65% of their normal pay, which translates to the rate for employees on medical disability. The option will give workers the opportunity to take the summer or the hunting season off. Deere expects to call employees back in December in time to make machinery for the spring season.

Gosh, I thought he had retired. I was lucky enough to attend a retirement celebration at a downtown restaurant last year. But, as the saying goes, you can't keep a good man down (on the farm).

Dr. Doug Maxwell, professor emeritus of plant (and especially turfgrass) pathology, will serve as interim director of the CALS Center for Integrated Agricultural Systems at the UW – Madison.

The CIAS researches farming and marketing systems that contribute to the environmental, ecological and social well-being of farms, families and communities.

Bright people are capable of many varied responsibilities and Dr. Maxwell has certainly demonstrated that to us.

The Village of Shorewood Hills paid tribute to Dr. Chuck Koval on the weekend of Arbor Day for his two decades as the village forester. He served in the position as a volunteer. Koval Woods is now a part of the village park system, and many family, friends and colleagues were present at the dedication. He treated us to some extemporaneous comments and reminiscences in the rich deep



A part of the ceremony dedicating Koval Woods was a reading of a citation from the Shorewood Hills Board of Trustees.



Pat and Chuck Koval with kids and grandkids at the Koval Woods ceremony.

voice we remember so well.

Chuck looked great, has a great attitude and is recovering at home from some surgery in early May. Congratulations for an honor hard earned and well deserved.

Sad day for me when the Steve Scoville family left Madison in late June for Pittsburgh. Steve's wife Gen accepted a position on the faculty at the University of Pittsburgh.

Steve has drawn golf course cartoons for The Grass Roots for ten years – where has the time gone? He also taught physics at Middleton High School. Believe me, he will be a tough teacher to replace.

But once in a while in life you get lucky, and I got lucky when Steve agreed to continue to draw



Dr. Koval with Entomology colleagues Chris Williamson, Jeff Wyman, Dave Hogg and Phil Pellitteri at the dedication of Koval Woods

for us from a distance. So, despite his absence, we will continue to enjoy the fun of his art and his dry (and sometimes offbeat) sense of humor. I am going to miss his visits to our shop, however.

By now, most of you know about the tragedy at Hawk's View Golf Course in Lake Geneva. Two men drowned during some pond work on the golf course.

Danny Quast has kindly offered to administer an account at the M&I Bank in Juneau – Hawk's View Fund. Donations to support the families of Roberto Montano and Louis Montoya can be sent to

Danny Quast, C/O O.J. Noer Research Foundation, P.O. Box 94, Juneau, WI 53039. Please make your check payable to WGCSA Hawk's View Fund. Thank you.

The urgency of spring is past us and June has fully matured into summer. Tournaments, long days, hot and humid weather, and the peak of the golf year in Wisconsin are here. It doesn't always seem so, but the inclination to autumn has already begun. These days of summer are why so many enjoy the profession, and they will be past us too, soon enough. Make the most of them. ♻️