



# Winter is Coming!

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

After the longest, warmest and for some of us the driest autumn in a long time, winter is coming. It is guaranteed; count on it. Ready or not, here it comes.

And its inevitable arrival is being met with great trepidation this year. It is no wonder, given the massive winterkill many Wisconsin golf courses faced this past spring as a result from ice accumulation last winter.

The weather conditions of last winter reminded golf course superintendents what winter can really mean to a golf course in a northern climate like ours in Wisconsin. If tempted to take winter too lightly and ignore the degree to which it can affect a golf course, one likely will see those effects, and then can be fatal.

And we thought the days of worrying about turf were over. Dream on.

Yet, despite our tendency to worry about a golf course at all times, including winter, the fact is that winter simplifies almost everything for us. The working days are more normal in length, and the working week will now mean freedom on Saturdays and Sundays for several months. Fewer employees and even fewer (or no) players help spell a simpler life, for a while at least.

Regardless of what this coming winter season will bring, we can be thankful that we aren't in the Ice Ages or at the Polar regions of this old earth. Between now and spring are the best of all of our holidays, the educational meetings of Expo and the GCSAA conference. There will be skiing and ice skating, deer hunting and ice fishing, warm fires and warm clothes and time with family. And kept in that perspective, it will be a great time of the year.

Sometimes the blunders committed by our land grant university in Madison are enough to make even the most faithful alum go nuts. Of late there have been stories of overpaid bureaucrats, job guarantees even for major screw-ups, felons and perverts in prison still on the payroll, and more. It seems some staff members have a deal like few others in society have.

Then there was the award as the best party college in the country, and the Princeton Review that recognized pervasive student drinking on the Madison campus.

About the time you think you cannot take it anymore, some startling good news makes the headlines. There is nothing like good news to balance the bad. The UW-Madison was named the nation's top research university in a new college guide that measured higher education contributions to society.

In another ranking, the National Research Council



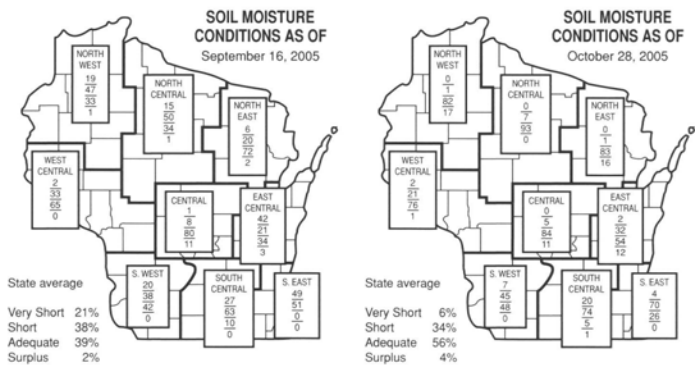
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put 16 of the UW-Madison's doctoral programs in the nation's top 10.

The National Science Foundation reports that the UW-Madison leads state institutions in research spending. Figures show 82 cents of every research dollar in Wisconsin is spent at the UW-Madison. The school also ranks in the top 20 schools nationally in four areas that venture capitalists find attractive - life sciences, engineering, physical sciences and computer science.



Don't laugh - you'll be there sooner than you can imagine - AARP eligible. I have been there for a while now, and I read all of the literature they send to me.

The November 2005 AARP Bulletin carried a brief note that observed golfers save or invest almost 75% more for retirement than those Americans who do not play golf. But the same study revealed that while 75% of golfers know their handicap, a little over half of them know the current value of their portfolios.

Where do you fit into these stats?



I'll add to some of the information that was on the Noernet regarding a U.S. Department of

Transportation identification number requirement for vehicles over 10,000 lbs. gross weight.

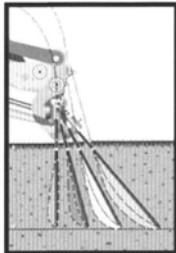
As a result of increased focus on homeland security, enforcement of the requirement to have a US DOT ID number for your golf course truck that has a gross weight of 10,001 lbs or more has heightened recently, as some superintendents have found out.

The US DOT WI number has to be displayed. You are required to have an annual vehicle inspection (keep report in the glove box). The following safety equipment has to be in the cab of the truck:

- Fire extinguisher,
- Spare fuses,
- A first aid kit (required by OSHA),
- Warning devices for stopped vehicles,
- Commercial vehicles hauling hazardous materials need lights or three bidirectional emergency reflective triangles, and
- CMVs hauling non-hazardous materials need at least six fuses or three liquid-burning flares.

Other warning devices may be used in addition to but not in lieu of the required warning devices, provided those warning devices do not decrease the effectiveness of the required devices.

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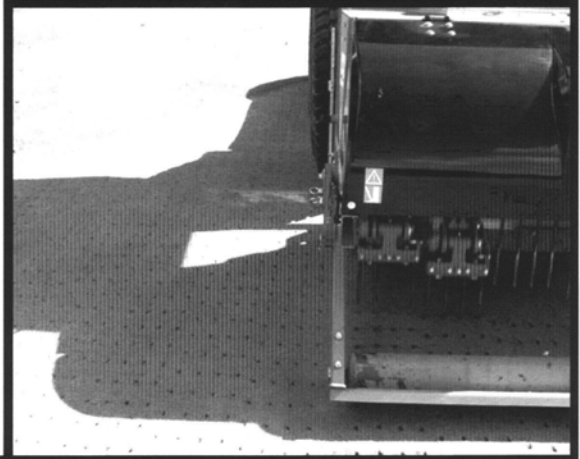
**References available**

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We lost a terrific friend when Dr. Elton Aberle retired at the end of August as the dean of the College of Agricultural and Life Sciences. He joins Neal Jorgenson and Leo Walsh as college deans who made great contributions to Wisconsin's turfgrass program.

When Dean Aberle announced his plans to retire, a committee was selected to search for a new dean. The committee gave the chancellor three names to consider for the position.

He chose a Cornell professor named Molly Jahn. She's not starting until August 1, 2006.

Jahn is 46, a researcher in plant breeding and genetic mapping and has been a Cornell faculty member since 1991. She has been a full professor only since 2003. Baffling to many alums on the outside is the fact that she has never been a department chair, an assistant dean or an associate dean. Apparently she will experience a lot of OJT.

Jahn is married and has four kids. She is the first female to lead the college. We certainly wish her the best.

Three cheers to the WGCSA officers and directors for initiation of the WGCSA Legacy Scholarships. President Marc Davison introduced the first three recipients at the 2005 Symposium in Kohler in November.

David Janzen, son of Roy, was present to accept his scholarship from President Davison. Dave is a student at UW-Stout majoring in information technology management.



**WGCSA Legacy  
Scholarship recipient  
Dave Janzen.**

Gary Tanko's son Brandon is a freshman aviation major at Minnesota State University-Mankato and will make good use of the \$500 scholarship.

Lisa Williams is a senior at Northern Michigan University majoring in biology. She is the daughter of WGCSA member Dan Williams.

Congratulations to these fine young students.

The chairman of the Department of Horticulture is suffering from cancer and Dr. Dennis Stimmart is undergoing treatment now. Someone was needed to help manage the department during Dennis' recovery period and Dr. John Stier was chosen by his colleagues to do that.

Selection as co-chair of a department is quite an expression of respect; John is only in his early 40s. We are both fortunate and proud to have his talents in our businesses and profession.

Congratulations, John.

The Symposium, the opening of the deer-hunting season, and Thanksgiving are behind us now. Christmas is around the corner, the season most of us love most.

But despite the apprehension most of us feel as a result of last winter's disaster, I hope we are all able, for a few days around Christmas, to put the worrying out of our minds and focus on the true meaning of the holiday. It is maybe the best time to enjoy family and friends.

Merry Christmas everybody! 🌿



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