

Springtime in January

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

The thermometers in Wisconsin are as confused as we are. After enjoying a snow-covered landscape through Christmas, January has been as consistently spring like as, well, spring itself. The frost is out of the ground, at least for the most part in our town, the bigger lakes and streams are open and free of ice, and some daily fee golf courses have let golf cars onto their courses. I guess we are ahead of last year, though; we made it through EXPO week without any rainfall, and most of the golf courses seem to be in pretty good condition. Knock on wood.

We are far from home free. Ours is a world of unabating change and finally, in the twilight of my career, I realize and accept that.

Winter is a time of rest, a season of hope. The days are lengthening and the sun is returning to a higher

place in the sky. It is also the time of our GCSAA conference. Remember - it is in Atlanta, not New Orleans and not Houston!

Hopefully, those headed south will arrive safely.

Pat Sisk tells me that GCSAA really is going to enforce their PDI rules for those picked for the first three-year cycle. What this means, in a nutshell, is that you need to acquire a combination of education and service points to remain a Class A member, and you have until July 1st of this year to do that.

There should be time for you to do that. You need three points, and 1.2 of them must be "education" points. Everything from attending a local chapter meeting with approved education (like our spring busi-

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ness meeting), to participating in one of the GCSAA web cast opportunities to attending the 2006 Conference and Show in Atlanta will get you points. Credit is also given for serving your community in some capacity - school boards, park committee and the like. Presentations to outside groups also qualify. A full list of ways to do this is at "My Member Central" tab on the GCSAA website, or call 1-888-838-4419 for help.

The website is at www.gcsaa.org. Member Central is also where you record these education and service points, and it is also where you can see your transcript and monitor where you are at.

Education points for pre-approved non-GCSAA educational events require an approval code that is given at some point during the program. Mike Lyons did that at EXPO, for example. To record attendance, submit the code using the online affidavit form. Or, you may also use a paper affidavit if you want to.

Education points for educational events that haven't been pre-approved are submitted at "Member Application for GCSAA Education Points" under Member Central also, at the external education section to request a review of an education program. These applications must be submitted within 30 days

of the event. If it passes muster, you get your points.

By completing an evaluation form given at the end of a GCSAA seminar or web cast, the points are automatically awarded to you.


One and a half education points are automatically given when you register as a full-pack attendee for the GCSAA conference and show. Service points can be recorded using the online service point affidavit in Member Central or by submitting a paper affidavit. Sometimes additional documentation will be required. See the complete list of service points at Member Central if you are wondering.

Not only do you need the three points for Class A status, you need a pesticide license. If the state doesn't require you to have a pesticide license, you will need to pass the GCSAA IPM exam. Again, head to Member Central and access the affidavit. If you need to schedule the GCSAA IPM exam, you can do that on line as well.

So, what happens if you haven't gotten the three points? Well, this in all voluntary stuff (PDI) and if you don't fulfill the requirements, you will still be a member. You just won't be a Class A member but rather a Superintendent member. You have all the privileges of a Class A except that you cannot hold office in GCSAA.

So, it is up to you. However, keep that July 1st deadline in mind.

Experts are blaming a weak El Nino system in the Pacific Ocean and greenhouse gases (carbon dioxide



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and five other heat-trapping gases) for making 2005 the warmest year since records were first kept in the late 1800s.

It was the worst year for extreme weather with the hottest temperatures, the most Arctic melting, the worst Atlantic hurricane season and the warmest Caribbean waters. The year 2005 was also the driest year in decades in many places (the Amazon, for example).

I'll testify to both. Last year wasn't very pretty for a lot of reasons — winterkill, summer heat and high fuel prices among them.

The warming trend has been going on for 30 years. Before 2005 is officially entered into the record book, 1998 was the hottest year, followed by 2002, 2003 and 2004, in succession. I see a trend there, and given the January weather we've seen so far, it could well continue for 2006.

There is also concern expressed by oceanographers that the Pacific Ocean is the warmest it has been in 1400 years (how would they know that?), temperatures that are way out of sync with normal cycles. Greenhouse gases are partly to blame for this, too, according to the same scientists.


The Census Bureau released the 2005 Statistical Abstract, a 1,023 page book of numbers quantifying just about every aspect of American life. Among the statistics that didn't surprise me was the finding that Americans are spending less time outside and are participating less in almost every recreational sport, including, unfortunately, golf. Tennis, bowling, and snow skiing were also down in 2004. Most of us have noticed the slowdown in golf up close and hope it will change for the better soon, the sooner the better.

The 2005 gypsy moth 'Slow the Spread' aerial spray program was successful to the extent that for the second year in a row there was a decrease in moth catches. The leading edge of the gypsy moths spread in Wisconsin also receded by 10 miles.

The proposed spray blocks for 2006 will be announced by WDATP soon, at a series of statewide

public hearings sometime in March. More details can be found by calling 1-800-642-6684 or go to <http://www.datcp.state.wi.us> and click the insects button and then the gypsy moth link.

That's it for now. Happy trails until we meet again. ♡



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