



Transition Time

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

I was trying to figure out, in early September, why I was still going to work in the dark. At least until the full moon hung in the clear dark sky in the early hours of the day. Just the night before I was in our clubhouse attending a board meeting and watching the perfectly round and orange sun set behind our 10th green. The sun and the moon remind one of how beautiful our natural world on earth really is. If one didn't go to work early, you would miss the start of it all.

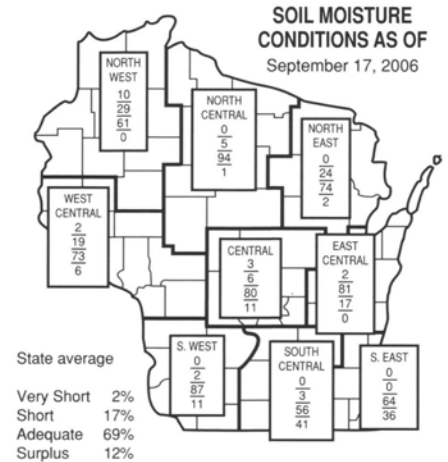
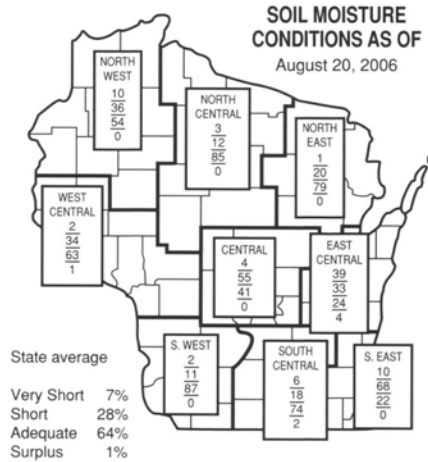
Early arrival at work affords one the chance to enjoy the coolest part of the day, and during another hot summer that's about the best time for relief. At least in our town we had sufficient rainfall overall; the same cannot be said for north-west Wisconsin or the area around Fond du Lac and Sheboygan.

And it was hotter than normal, by several degrees. It is no surprise, really. The U.S. overall has heated up during the first five years and a half of our new century. Last summer saw 2,300 daily record temperatures nationwide in July alone. Specifically, Madison was up three degrees above normal for the first six months of 2006. The period of January through July in Wisconsin was the third warmest since 1895 - five degrees above the average.

It is no wonder we were sweating out *Pythium* in July!

The moisture status for the state over the past couple of months is shown above for your use from the Wisconsin Agricultural Statistics Service.

A local meteorologist was talking about his preparation for a



career as a TV weatherman the other morning: "I spent six years in college studying the science of the weather."

Honestly, he seldom bats over .500 with his forecasts, casting

question on the value of his career preparation.

Maybe it is a matter of not having enough experience - he is under 40, after all. To lay claim to forecasts that are accurate 80 to 85 percent of

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the time, like the Farmers' Almanac can, may require a lot of experience, like 190 years of experience.

The venerable Almanac is predicting a cold winter for 2006/2007, much colder than normal from coast to coast. The prediction comes on the heels of one of the warmest winters on record.

The Farmers' Almanac and its reclusive forecaster, Caleb Weatherbee, also predict it will be colder from the Gulf Coast all the way up the East Coast and especially cold on the Northern Plains of Montana, Wyoming and the Dakotas. They are talking up to 20 degrees below normal.

The prediction also says there will be more snow across the nation's midsection, the Pacific Northwest, the mountains of the Southwest, and eastern New England.

Although a lot of people will groan and complain, I am kind of looking forward to some serious winter weather, high energy costs notwithstanding.

Mr. Weatherbee makes his forecasts two years in advance, using a secret formula based on the position of the planets, sunspots and tidal action of the moon.

As we all recall, last winter was really warm. Wisconsin was one of 41 states that had above normal winter weather. It was the fifth warmest winter on record.

Dare I mention, after poking fun at modern day weather forecasters, that weather forecasting had some of its start in Wisconsin? A well-known Wisconsin scientist - Increase Lapham (1811 - 1875) -

gave weather forecasting its start.

Lapham arrived in Milwaukee in 1836 and immediately started to record the daily weather. When another scientist had suggested that it might be possible to predict the weather, he was ridiculed widely. But Increase Lapham decided to send him the Wisconsin weather data he had accumulated. Lapham was also sending his daily weather observations to the Smithsonian Institution in Washington D.C. by 1847, and staff people there plotted that data on maps for later analysis.

The invention of the telegraph allowed Lapham to gather information about the weather from all across Wisconsin, and so he started to plot it on a map himself. In 1850 he offered the Legislature a petition that set up observations

In this game, it's all about perfect execution.



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across the state although most lawmakers thought weather forecasting was unlikely.

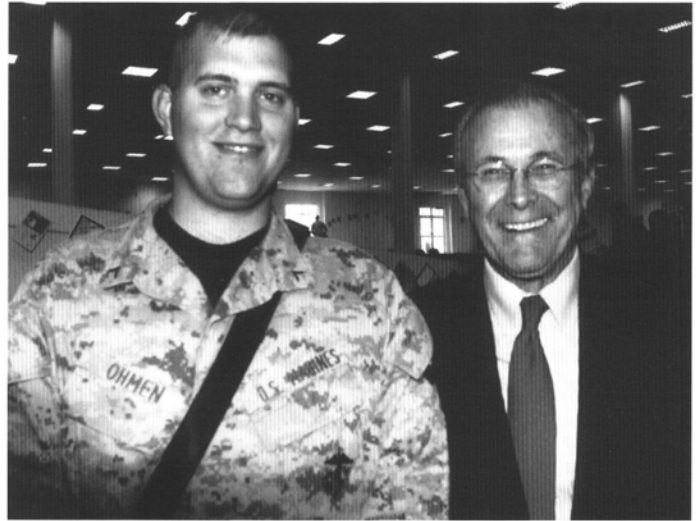
Lapham quickly realized that if enough people telegraphed weather information from enough sites, scientists had a chance to map weather patterns as various fronts moved across the country. He knew only the Federal government could manage a nationwide project like he envisioned.

That conclusion led him to draft legislation that was introduced in the U.S. House of Representatives by Milwaukee Representative Halbert Paine. The resolution was passed and signed into law on February 9, 1870. It established a nationwide system of observatories within the U.S. Army Signal Corps. Military personnel were used to make weather observations and the Corps hired Increase Lapham as the nation's first meteorologist. Their first goal was to predict storms on the Great Lakes.

Of course, you can guess the rest of the story. The small agency in the Army Signal Corps evolved into the National Weather Service we know today.

And it was all because of Wisconsin's Increase Lapham.

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Despite the fact that there is significant opposition to the war in Iraq, the soldiers involved in that conflict are being welcomed home with open arms and high praise. Such wasn't the case for the GI's of my generation who were also involved in an unpopular conflict. So we are thrilled with society's renewed respect for soldiers and veterans.

I am lucky to have a staff member who recently completed a four-year stint in the Marine Corps and is a veteran of duty in Iraq. Lance Corporal Chris Ohmen was stationed with the 2nd Battalion of the 2nd Marine Regiment in the 2nd Marine Division near Fallujah, Iraq. He bumped up against the big boss - Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld — during one of the Secretary's trips to the Middle East to visit with the troops. I'm glad someone was there to snap a picture of Chris and Secretary Rumsfeld — no one would ever believe it otherwise!

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Congratulations to WGCSA's Gene Haas; his formidable contributions to golf were recognized by the Golf Course Owners of Wisconsin at their July meeting in Sheboygan Falls at the Bull at Pinehurst Farms. Gene was presented with their Lifetime Achievement Award. As we know, no one could be more deserving than the author of *Caring for the Green*.

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Cooler days (and cooler nights), football games, pumpkins and gourds and cornstalks, fall festivals and a thousand other seasonal things make autumn in Wisconsin the best time of the year. Soak it all in and give yourself the chance to return some normality to your life. ♻️

163 Yard Par 3 eighth hole at the Refuge Golf Club in Oak Grove, Minnesota.

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6452 City West Parkway, Eden Prairie, MN 55344
 Phone: 952.942.0266 Fax: 952.942.0197
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