

# Obligations

By David Brandenburg, Golf Course Manager, Rolling Meadows Golf Course

As employers, employees, parents, children and community members we have a lot of obligations to consider in our lives. Most are enjoyable, some are tolerable and others we do because we have to. Continuing education is an obligation we have to ourselves and our employers to better ourselves.

The more we learn and stay updated to new trends and ideas the better turf managers and employers we are for our staffs. In our industry I would put most of our continuing educational opportunities in the enjoyable category. The topics and speakers are usually relative to what we do every day in our positions.

The 43rd Annual Wisconsin Turf Symposium has come and gone. Attendance was good, but to be honest I was disappointed it was not better. The committee tries hard to pick a date when most of us can get away from our jobs and families for a day and a half of great education. With Milorganite's sponsorship and administrative work the WGCSA is able to offer a unique low cost event, with speakers from throughout the country. I have heard many speakers and first time Symposium attendees from other states say "this is a great opportunity, I wish we had this in our state."

It leads me to wonder why more don't attend our educational opportunities. I can understand that the WGCSA board has done such a good job in running the association that only 19 people (includes 4 Professors, 3 vendors and 2 retired members) came to the business meeting before the Symposium to guide the association's future. But, I do not understand why the

Symposium or other educational events are not full to the brim.

Year in and year out the Symposium offers the best in education but yet many of our members choose to ignore this opportunity to learn. It is late enough our courses have slowed down or even closed, but early enough weather is usually not a factor. Deer hunting is a few days away or already past some years. What could be more important than attending this tremendous opportunity?

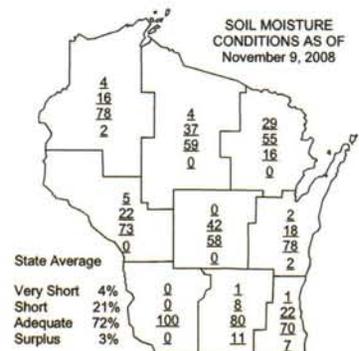
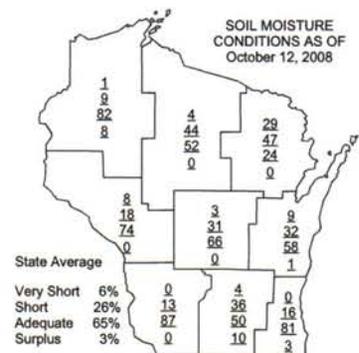
The same can be said for the WTA's Winter EXPO. Honestly, what else can you be doing in early January that is more important than your education? The vendor's donations and registrations along with your membership dollars go into providing a great event but yet so few take part. The WTA has changed over the years at the attendees and non-attendees request in order to attract more participants. These changes have not worked and this year the WTA is pulling out all the stops to provide another great event at a reasonable cost. I hope you have a chance to make it to this year's WTA Winter EXPO held at the Boerner Gardens in Milwaukee on January 13. Watch your mailbox for the registration form.

The WGCSA has been recognized by the GCSAA for the number of educational events the association and related groups offer in Wisconsin. But to be honest I see the day the number of events offered will reduce because many of our members do not participate. It takes funding to bring in professors and speakers from around the country and to pay for meals and meeting room space. If

the events offered do not have the attendance needed to break even, it will be difficult to continue offering them.

If you do not feel obligated to go to these events because it supports the association, the professors and most importantly it improves your career then just go because it is enjoyable.

This fall turned into a great opportunity to complete projects and just maintain turf without weather extremes. The USDA's National Agriculture Statistics Service maps for October and November show soil moisture conditions were mainly adequate with a few areas a little short on moisture. This allowed fall aeration and projects to be completed on time and for the turf to prepare for winter stresses.



Congratulations to Monroe Miller for so many reasons. First he is retiring from Blackhawk Country Club at the end of the year after serving for 35 years as Golf Course Superintendent. It was also recently announced he will be receiving the GCSAA Colonel John Morley Distinguished Service Award at the opening session of the Golf Industry Show (9am Thursday Feb 5, 2009).

The WCSAA recognized Monroe for his dedication to the association as a leader, board member and 24 year editor of *The Grass Roots* by presenting him with a plaque during the symposium. Speaking on Monroe's accomplishments during the presentation were Mark Keinert, Dr. Wayne Kussow and Jake Schneider. The association also presented Monroe's wife Cheryl with a gift for all of her work and sacrifices while Monroe was editor.

Through the organization of the WTA, Dr. Chris Williamson and Mike Lee, many of Monroe's friends gathered for a dinner in his honor after the Symposium. Speakers included Dr. James Love, Dr. John Stier, Dr. Wayne Kussow, Dr. Frank Rossi, and USGA Green Section Director James Snow.

The WGCSA announced the 3 Legacy Scholarship award winners for 2008. The Legacy scholarships are awarded to children and grandchildren of WGCSA members for any major in college.

From the 14 candidates congratulations goes to Angela Berwick, daughter of Mike Berwick, Lawsonia Golf Course, Elizabeth Vertz, daughter of Marty Vertz, Moor Downs Golf Course and Patrick Bastron, son of Paul Bastron Glen Flora Country Club.

Angela Berwick is studying occupational therapy at University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, Elizabeth Vertz is studying journalism at the



President Riley presents a plaque honoring Monroe's contributions to the WGCSA to Monroe and Cheryl Miller.

University of Wisconsin-Madison and Patrick Bastron is studying horticulture at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. Congrats to the students and parents.

The first day of the Symposium allowed for a time of memorial to Jim Latham who passed away July 16, 2008. Jim has had a long history in Wisconsin and the Wisconsin Turf Symposium spending 25 years at Milorganite and then 10 years as the USGA Green Section Agronomist for the Great Lakes Region before retiring in 1994.

Speaking of Jim and the contributions he had in the Wisconsin Turf Industry were, Shelly Biro, (MMSD,) Kathy Belfield, (Jims Daughter,) Danny Quast and Allan Nees.

As we enter the Christmas and Holiday season, be sure to take time to relax with family and friends and

give thanks and appreciation for the many gifts we have been given. Merry Christmas to all! 🌿

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