



Double Duty

By **Pat Norton**, Golf Course Superintendent, Nettle Creek Golf Course

The constant, stable way of life centered around the seasons is one of the great attractions of being a golf course superintendent. Dad always looked at his golf course career as a series of segments...depending on which golf course was currently considered as his home. The similarities shared by each golf course far outweighed the differences...but it was the differences between golf courses that made everything so interesting.

Since moving down here to Illinois way back in 1994, this stable life has been very good to Dad and to his family. Dad has always had a good job, has always worked hard and been very devoted to Nettle Creek. He always realized that his position at NCCC was, and still is, the financial life blood of the family. He was always able to roll with the punches of being a part of a family owned public golf facility. He was able to take advantage of a few really good investments that will someday provide for a nice retirement nest egg for Mr. and Mrs....as a sort of long term thing to complement the short term thing known as the biweekly paycheck.

About fourteen months ago, Dad had to shift gears a little bit. Nettle Creek...the basis of Dad's working and golf course world...was turned over to a golf management company. The owners of that golf course...like so many others...were hurting financially to the point of running out of possible solutions. They tried, in vain, to outright sell the golf course, but to no avail.

So, as of January 1, 2008, Dad began working for the golf management company. And, after fourteen months of adapting to company rules, procedures, and operating philosophies...Dad realized that working in the corporate golf world was...in many ways...better than working in the family owned public golf world. He really liked working for the company...which was full of people who understood public golf. Dad did go through a quick period of readjustment in which he had to adjust to their higher standards of operation.

Dad was thrown another curveball at the beginning of this year. The company asked him if he would be interested in doing double duty. It meant that he would be responsible as superintendent at Nettle Creek in Morris and also at Ravisloe C.C. in Homewood...about 50 minutes east and in a south suburban Chicago location. Dad thought a bit...reflected on the economic times in which we all find ourselves...and instantly agreed that it would be a very good idea to keep his job and make himself more valuable and productive to his new company...

Dad started his new duties in late February...and so far says that things are quite interesting, challenging, and even fun! He also says to check back with him in late July...to see if his opinions have changed...

Dad and family have lived south of the border for about fifteen years now, but still strongly consider themselves Wisconsinites. At the same time, Dad is beginning to realize that he may finish out his career over the next fifteen years down here in the Land of Lincoln. With his new duties, he feels the pull of ChicagoLand all the more. He is an expressway traveler...and a faithful listener of WGN and WBBM. He still cannot decide between the Cubs and the White Sox...while still yearning to hear more about the Brewers as summer approaches. His truck radio stills tunes itself in to WTMJ to listen to pre-season games once in awhile.

So, even though the job and position have remained basically the same over all of these years...changes to the family are constantly happening. He and his faithful bride of 26 years are on the verge of experiencing the empty nest...with their youngest graduating this May from high school.

Children ultimately mature into young adults...eventually leave home...and start again the cycle of completing college and entering into the world. It seems like such a few short years ago that Mom and Dad were the wide eyed students enjoying life at UW-Madison...

Now Dad is the middle aged guy typing these paragraphs while wearing his reading glasses...and thinking that it's just about bedtime. He needs to get his sleep as he prepares for the fifty minute drive over to his new golf course tomorrow...early on a cold March morning. 🌱

Sod Grown on Irrigated Sand

Growers and Installers of Fine Turf
Low Mow Bluegrass, Kentucky Bluegrass, Bentgrass & Fine Fescue

Central Wisconsin Sod
Coloma, WI • Robert Heath, owner
Phone: 715-228-4106 • Email: heath@uniontel.net