

Badger State Turf Clippings

By John Jensen and the Reinders Team

Are you ever amazed at the journey and friendship you can have by just a simple introduction? "Hi, I'm John Jensen." I have said this a million times during my 22 years of sales calls. I was personally never comfortable in walking up to people and starting a conversation until I was paid to do it. It became much easier and as time has passed I have found that just simply introducing myself can be the beginning of some great things.

My introductions have led to some fantastic times with memories that I will have for a lifetime. My introduction with Carl Grassel who served in the past as the Superintendent at Bluemound Country Club was followed years later by a week-long hunting trip to Montana where Carl, his son-in-law, my dad and I enjoyed an unbelievable antelope hunt out in the middle of nowhere. I remember sitting at the ranch house for dinner that first evening and thinking, "wow, hunting in Montana with my dad and Carl Grassel, unreal."

My first introduction to Jeff Millies of Edgewood Golf Course was followed years later by sitting in the North Woods of Wisconsin hunting Whitetail deer with me and my dad. This was one of many deer, antelope, pheasant hunts and practical jokes that Jeff and I have enjoyed together.

My first with Dustin Riley at Oconomowoc Country Club was followed a few years later by a trip to Tampa with some other good friends to watch the Packers play the Tampa Bay Buccaneers. I remember sitting on the beach the day before the game thinking, "wow! I'm sitting on a beach nursing a huge hangover and enjoying it all with Dustin and friends."

My first meetings with Jerry Kienast who was the mechanic at Silver Spring Country Club years ago, Scott Neary who was at Beaver Dam Country Club at the time and Mark Robel who was working at Bluemound Country Club all lead to friendships that later turned into friends that ended up working with me at Reinders. Who would have known when we first met?

My first introductions with Randy Du Pont at North Hills Country Club and Jim Shaw at Chenequa Country Club were followed years later by sitting on the back deck of the cabin at Farmlinks during a warm winter evening in Sylacauga, Alabama enjoying a nice drink and good conversation. What a great memory.

And then there was the time I met Mike Handrich, Superintendent at Racine Country Club. We hit it off almost from the start and over the years have bow hunted, fished and pheasant hunted together. Mike and I have enjoyed some great conversations over an early morning breakfast that were geared more around conversation on family, hunting, fishing than around business. I feel especially lucky that I have been able to enjoy a nice dinner with him and his wife and have had the chance to watch as his daughters have grown.

So it was surreal for me last Saturday as I stood in front of Mike and his wife Karen and their youngest daughter Jessica, sobbing and searching for my voice so I could say how sorry I was so for the loss of their 25 year old daughter Holly. She was taken from this world way too soon after a hard fought battle with cancer. All I could do was hug them both. I know they understood what I was trying to say but couldn't find my trusted voice that would tell them

how sorry I was. I cannot even imagine the loss they are feeling but hope they know that there are many of us that hold them in our hearts and prayers.

As tough as that was, it has shown me that a simple introduction may lead to a lifetime of memories and close friendships that are there during good times and difficult times. So the next time you get the chance to meet someone new, it may just lead to more than a casual hello.

Industry News:

Ryan Knick has been hired as the new superintendent at The Orchards at Egg Harbor in the Door County area. Prior to Ryan's move to The Orchards he worked at Lake Windsor Golf Course near Madison.

Rob Steichen is the new superintendent at Twin Oaks Country Club in Denmark, Wisconsin. He was previously the assistant superintendent at Mayville Country Club.

Congratulation goes out to Bob Stephens, CGCS who recently earned his Golf Course Superintendent Certification from the GCSAA. Bob is the Golf Course Superintendent of Indian Head Golf Course in Mosinee. Way to go Bob on this great accomplishment!

Love those Hooters:

While touring Merrill Hills Country Club with Golf Course Superintendent Randy Van Fleet, he drove me past a tree that has been frequented every few years by a pair of Great Horned Owls. They had two owlets hiding in the large nest within the mighty tree and one of the parents put on a flying display as we crept near. I found it amazing how quietly this bird takes off and fly's as it leaves the nest. With up to a four foot wingspan this owl species is a graceful giant. Sometimes the Great Horned Owl will lay its eggs in the old nest of a hawk, but they also build their own nest in a tree, pot-hole, cliff or river bluff, and sometimes even on the ground.

The Great Horned Owl lays 2-3 eggs. Incubation is around thirty days, with both parents taking turns.

The owls feed on rabbits, squirrels, rats, wild birds including crows, ducks and other owls. Sometimes they will take on an animal as large as a skunk. Randy and his crew have witnessed the parents bringing pheasants, squirrels, a small turkey and something they were not able to indentify but the guess was a cat or muskrat.



Great Horned Owls Make a Home in a Willow Tree at Merrill Hills Country Club. Photo courtesy of Randy Van Fleet

As always, please be sure to email me with any news that you wish to have included in upcoming articles. With this being one of the few articles I have written without a birth announcement, everyone best get busy so I have something to write about in 9 months give or take a few weeks. Thanks! 🌿