

# Where Has Summer Gone?

**By David Brandenburg, Editor**

Where is summer gone? By the time you are reading this it will be almost Labor Day and the summer students will all be back in school. They say that as you age the years go by faster and faster. I buy that theory but this summer seemed to fly by twice as fast as last year.

It was a summer I did not seem to get anything done and was always a day behind. First I need to apologize to the writers and readers for not getting this issue out sooner. The last issue was right on time so this one seems even later. I don't have a good reason, the days just slipped by and here I am at 1:00 am on a Sunday night, not going to quit until this issue is done and sent to the printer.

At the club it was our first season without a dedicated mechanic for mainly budgetary reasons. I would call the process a frustrating success. Success because we saved the money while staying on top of equipment maintenance. Frustrating because we had more breakdowns on newer equipment than we did on some of the old relics we keep around. If I hear one more service manager say “I have never heard of that before” I may have a new place to store our torque wrench. James and I learned a lot this year as we reacquainted ourselves with the inner workings of carburetors and hydraulic systems. Next years budget will not allow us to add the dedicated mechanic to our staff so we will continue to hone our skills and processes in the maintenance shop.

Our staff is mainly retired guys looking to stay busy and college or high school students looking to earn some money. The retirees are great and usually arrive at work 20 minutes early ready to go. It drives them nuts to wait until the starting time so we can have staff meetings. We also have a great mix of students who make us laugh every day and despite their lack of experience do good work. Each year they help us accomplish some projects and maintain the course to a high level. But one of the blessings of September and October is they go back to school! We love having them but they do bring a need for constant supervision and help with

small mechanical issues the older employees would handle on their own. Come September it is nice to be able to leave once in awhile to go somewhere or get something done on the course without worrying about the phone ringing.

## Weather -

What can you say about this year? Spring was near non-existent while June was wet followed by humidity and heat in July. August has actually been our best month so far with lower dew points and cooler nights.



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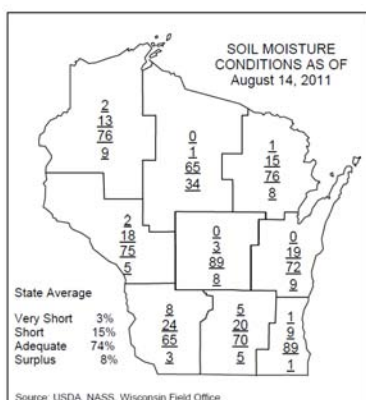
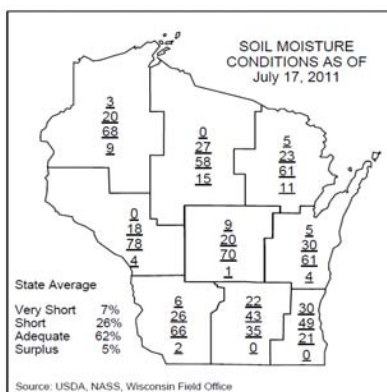
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# EDITORS NOTEBOOK



From the weather maps provided by the National Agricultural Statistics Service you can see only isolated areas were wet or dry. However in between the dates most courses had both wet and dry periods.

Most of the summers turf problems were caused by the extended period of humidity and warm nights along with periods of rain. The rain itself did not present a problem but coupled with the high dew points the turf just could not dry out. Although budgets are strapped turf managers scrambled to obtain and apply pythium preventative products. Every season presents its challenges and this one is no different.

## Goodbye

It is with surprise, appreciation and disappointment we say good bye to Dr. John Stier. Dr. Stier joined the staff at UW Madison April 11, 2007 after working and receiving his PhD at Michigan State. John started with a 70% extension and 30% teaching assignment and recently expanded into the Chair of the Horticulture Department and Chair of the Curriculum Study Committee for the College of Agricultural and Life Sciences.

Dr. Stier has joined the University of Tennessee, Institute of Agriculture as assistant Dean for the College of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources. It is a great opportunity for Dr. Stier and Tennessee but a loss for the Wisconsin Turf Industry. John was a regular speaker at our educational events and writer for *The Grass Roots*. Best of luck to you and your family John!

**LEFT: Dr. John Stier addresses the crowd at the 1998 WTA Summer Field Day held at the OJ Noer Turfgrass Education and Research Facility**  
(Grass Roots File Photo)



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## EDITORS NOTEBOOK

### Passings

It is with sad news we pass along the passing of two well known golf industry icons. Don Herfort, ASGCA Fellow of Lakeville, Minn., died June 26, 2011. He was 86 years of age.

Herfort was a 1951 graduate of the University of Wisconsin, earning a degree in Business Administration. While working for 3M he was asked to design the 3M Tartan Park Golf Course, launching his career as a golf course architect.

During a career which spanned more than 40 years, Herfort designed over 140 courses including Northwoods Golf Course, Rhinelander, Wis.; Indian Hills Country Club and Phalen Golf Course in St. Paul, Minn.; New Richmond Golf Course, Cumberland Golf Course and Royal Scott Golf Course all in WI.

Herfort is survived by his wife Shirley and three children. He was preceded in death by his daughter Karen.

Don "Red" Roskopf passed away August 3, 2011 at the age of 76. He is survived by his wife Mary Ellen, children Shelly (John) Tobiasz, Mark (Kelli), Kim (Mark) Montange and Kurt (Sue) Roskopf.

"Red" was the Past Grand Knight of KC Council 4240, member of the KC 4th Degree Our Lady of Holy Hill Assembly #1677 and was very active in both the Germantown and Menomonee Falls Communities. He held multiple titles in local Lions clubs including President for both Lannon and Sussex, Director of the Wisconsin Lions Foundation and Deputy District Governor of the Wisconsin Lions.

The turf industry first knew Red from his time as a salesman for Wisconsin Turf Equipment and then owner of Camelot Country Club. Red was very active in the industry and served as president of both the Wisconsin Turfgrass Association (WTA) and the Golf Course Owners Association of Wisconsin (GCOW).

Red gave me my start in the industry when he took a chance on a 22 year old "greenhorn" who stopped in looking for a better job in 1988. He not only taught me about the golf industry but the value and joy of association involvement and giving back to the industry through volunteering.

Roskopf had a huge personality and loved to laugh and have a good time. He made sure his customers and employees did the same. For as long as I knew him his license plate said EIEIO in reverence for his love of polkas and all things fun.

He had a lot of experiences that he was willing to share. One of my favorites came up when he was talking about equipment quality. He was trying to sell a school district a Jacobson push mower while working for Wisconsin Turf. This was still the time when the board members and main-



**Don "Red" Roskopf entertaining the crowd at the August 1988 WGCSA Meeting at Camelot Country Club.** (Photo from Grass Roots File)

tenance staff had the salesmen come to a board meeting to show off their product.

With everyone gathered around his truck Red grabbed his push mower by the handle and flung it off the tailgate landing hard on the parking lot below. Well the groups eyes opened wide in amazement as they could not believe what they had just saw. I am sure there were thinking this guy has to be crazy treating this new mower that way. Then with what I am sure was a big smile and trademark Red laugh he said "my mower is made with quality and will last your school a long time". A sale was made and from then on Red knew he had a loyal customer.

With his personality Red was a born salesman, he loved people and interacting with them. Before getting into turf sales he owned Red's Garden Center in Sussex a Simplicity sales store and small engine repair shop. It was said he did okay but never made much money because he just couldn't bring himself to charge full price for things. He was just too nice to people he knew.

Between his community involvement, Lions and the Knights of Columbus Red knew a lot of people. Working at Camelot if we had 200 customers a day 150 knew Red and 50 of them wanted to talk to him before they paid. If he was around and he usually was he would talk to them and if he didn't give them a deal he made them feel like he gave them a deal.

There isn't one lesson I learned from Red, there are three. 1. Like people and enjoy them. 2. Give back to community and industry. 3. Everyone wants a deal, not everyone can have one, someone has to pay the bills.

I need to work on number 1.