

2011 - Appreciate What We Have

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

It is hard to conceive that 2011 is coming to a end. There is so many things I want to get done yet plus all the planning I want to do for 2012. I guess there is no stopping it and I may as well accept the inevitable, I will enter 2012 the way I entered 2011, a bit behind.

How will you remember 2011? A good year or a bad year? I have two philosophical comments on that. Every year we are alive and able to live with our families is a good year and every year will bring challenges.

Those challenges can be big or small but they are there for everyone. It can be hard for us to realize when things are not as we would like in our lives that we have it good. For most of us our challenges are minor compared to others with serious illnesses, abandoned by family or without work.

A few short years ago when the golf industry was peaking we seemed immune from unemployment problems. Now the list of golf course superintendents and assistant superintendents looking for work is growing. Just this month a 18 hole course near me fired the hardworking superintendent because the board needed to save money and they thought they could get by with a part time person running a part time staff.

You and I may think that is crazy but the club is grasping at straws to survive and that survival is more important than turf conditions. I am pretty sure in the long run the club will find it costs more to operate without a professional staff but they could get lucky and find a unique person.

I am not saying it would have helped but this case is a good lesson for golf course superintendents to be involved in all facets of the golf operation. Have a knowledge of industry trends in marketing, human resources, communication and general management. When possible be involved and an expert on the golf industry for your clubs committees and boards.

For some golf course superintendents it is take on more responsibility or someone else will take over your position and do it for you.

It is expected there will continue to be a retraction in the size of the golf industry for a few more years. Unfortunately there is too many courses for the number of rounds being played and something has to give. Golf is still a popular sport but golfers are harder to attract early in the morning or during less than ideal weather, leading to less overall revenue.

The industries challenges will continue through the winter and into the 2012 golf season but take time again this winter to evaluate your operation and continue to provide your golfers the best product you can.



Monroe Miller receives the USGA's Ike Grainger Award from Bob Vavrek.

Congratulations to Monroe Miller, Executive Director of the WTA, and retired long time superintendent at Blackhawk Country Club for receiving the Ike Grainger Award from the USGA. The award was presented to Monroe by USGA Agronomist Bob Vavrek at the Symposium.

The USGA started the award in 1995 in appreciation of those who volunteer for 25 years of service with the association. Monroe has been a member for the USGA Green Section Committee since 1986 and also won the Green Section Award in 2004.

Ike Grainger was a past USGA president and considered an expert in the rules of golf. He spent over 50 years as a volunteer for the USGA and took up the game of golf in 1907. He passed away in 1999 at 104 years of age.

Former WGCSA President, WTA Treasurer and Board Member Roger Bell had and is recovering from open heart surgery where 5 by-passes were performed. Roger was the long time superintendent at North Shore Country Club in Menasha and later Peninsula State Park Golf Course before retiring on Surprise Lake in Townsend, WI.

EDITORS NOTEBOOK

Congratulations to Lori Stanek, Assistant Superintendent at Petrifying Springs Golf Course for winning a Toro Tri-Flex Hybrid Greensmower in a random drawing. The mower will be added to the fleet at the Kenosha County owned course as employees cannot personally accept gifts or winnings they receive on the job.

Either way Lori will get to use the machine to make her course better and who needs a greensmower at home anyway.

If you have a turf student on your staff be sure to remind them to consider writing articles for *The Grass Roots*. Articles on research, projects at the course or internships are eligible for the "Monroe Miller Literary Scholarship" worth \$1,000 and awarded by the association each year.

This years GCSAA Educational Conference and Golf Industry Show will be a great opportunity to attend 'the show' at a lower cost than normal. Las Vegas tends to be a less expensive venue for conference attendees providing you stay out of the casinos. GCSAA Travel offers good savings on hotels and normal prices on flights but there are many packages you can find with a little shopping to find low cost packages to the city. The show runs February 27 to March 2 to allow attendees to miss work but be home on the weekends for family activities.

The conference offers a unique opportunity to participate in free education as well as many for fee seminars put on by industry leaders and educators from around the country.

Celebrity speakers this year will be Peter Jacobsen who will receive the Old Tom Morris award and David Feherty who will speak at the General Session.

I have never been disappointed by the Golf Industry Show and find it to be a worthwhile investment in my education even the years I pay my own way.

Be sure to check out the November /December online issue of *Wisconsin Golfer* to read the story titled "I'd Rather be Playing My Hickories" by Dennis McCann. Recently the Society of Hickory Golfers held the annual Kummel Cup at the Langford and Moreau designed Lawsonia Golf Course.

Mike Lyons is the golf course superintendent at the course which is listed as #55 on Golf Weeks list of classic courses and was considered a natural venue for the event.

The society has about 300 members who don their plus fours and use hickory shafted clubs to test their golf skills with the tools from yesteryear.



**Lori Stanek Assistant Superintendent at Petrifying Springs tries out the mower she won.
L to R: Mark Robel - Reinders, Pete Whitacre - Toro, Lori Stanek, Helmut Ullrich -Toro and John Jensen - Reinders**

The story can be found at www.wisconsingolfer.com and more information on the society can be found at www.hickorygolfers.com.

Kummel is a sweet, colorless liqueur flavored with caraway seed, cumin and fennel and a traditional drink at many European golf clubs.

I hope you enjoyed this years issues of *The Grass Roots*. It was my third year as editor and first doing the actual layout which does make the editing job easier. I only forgot three ads this year and with some groveling obtained forgiveness from our very valuable advertisers.

Through the associations Industry Partners Plan the advertisers bring you each issue without any cost from your membership dollars. So be sure to patronize and thank the advertisers in your magazine. In these days of tightening budgets the appreciate your business and feedback.

Thanks also goes to Chapter Manager Brett Grams who handles the business managers job of finding the advertisers and collecting the money. That is a job I do not miss and it allows me to concentrate on the content of each issue.

Most importantly a thank you goes to the writers who make *The Grass Roots* one of the best chapter publications available. Their in-depth articles provide for second to none education and information.

*Merry Christmas and
Happy New Year!*