

## Spring at Last?

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

*Editors Note: Historically The Grass Roots has not promoted specific products in articles or editorial content. We do appreciate our many vendors and the support they give us but do our best to stay non-commercial. However we do find it appropriate to highlight events WGCSA members attend and employee news. In this issue we are featuring Reinders Conference and we welcome submissions from our other valuable vendor members when they have their own events.*

I hope you were able to take advantage of the many educational opportunities this past winter. The WTA, GCCSA, NGLGCSA all provided some great opportunities this winter. Our vendors also provide some excellent clinics and symposiums on a variety of subjects.

Reinders hosts the states best attended conference and this year was no different with the 21st Green Industry Conference. Hosted every other year since 1973 the event has drawn over 1500 golf and facility managers in recent years.



Top Left: Dr Joe Vargas has spoke at all 21 Reinders Conferences.

Bottom Left: Craig Reinders presents Heather Henning of Racine Country Club the show grand prize, a trip to Disney World along with \$1,000 spending money! Congrats Heather!

Top Right: The bustling show floor from the balcony.

Bottom Right: "Riding the Wave" is John Jensen, Mark Robel Joe Kuta, Randy Dupont, Rod Johnson, Tom Speltz and Dean Musbach

# EDITORS NOTEBOOK

No matter what the weather does from here on out we are looking at a late spring especially compared to last year. Topics on the GCSAA website and the Noernet have focused on removing ice or not removing ice and turf managers look for ways to improve the odds of turf survival.

It is hard for golfers to understand that every year is different and we have little control over when opening day is so we need to bear their repeated "are you open yet?" comments.

In Fond du Lac we had a lot of snow this year and have had our share of turf damage over the years mainly from water not being able to move in the winter due to ice and snow blocking the path.

We removed some snow in January but then had a complete thaw and the course was still green at that time but dormant. Then thinking spring was on the way we removed some snow in early March only to have it snow again and again. On March 25th using a snowblower for the deep snow but mainly our dump truck and plow we removed snow from all our greens to promote ice melt.

The entire course was frozen with a layer of ice so we could do no damage anyway. In hindsight it seems to have worked out as the ice was off the greens by Friday and they looked good with no odor.

We are somewhat nervous about fairway damage given the prolonged ice cover and freeze thaw cycles but time will tell. Good luck to all as we hopefully head out of the deep freeze soon.

	OPENINGS	CLOSURES	NET CHANGE
<b>TOTAL 2012</b>	13.5	154.5	-141.0
Daily Fee	8.5	130.5	-122.0
Municipal	1.5	8.5	-7.0
Private	3.5	15.5	-12.0

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According the National Golf Foundation course closures out-paced openings for the 7th straight year with a net loss of 141 18-hole equivalents.

Since 1995 the industry has seen a net loss of 499.5 18-hole equivalent golf courses which sounds like a lot and is if your course was one of them shuttered but it only represents 3.3% of the market.

The late opening every course in Wisconsin is experiencing this spring will reduce cash flow and stretch reserves to the limit as new income is slow to reach the cash registers when snow is on the ground.

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To save on postage costs but to still bring you paper meeting notices we are sending the meeting notices out with *The Grass Roots* to each member. We have some great venues coming up so be sure to attend our events. I can honestly say I have never been to a WGCSA golf event and not learned something both from the course and other attendees.

Be sure to register on time to allow the host club to accommodate us. The rest of the event schedule is on page 47.

The Super Pro is May 29th at Fox Valley Golf Club. Registration

is through the PGA of Wisconsin so talk to your professional today to sign up for that fun event.

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One of the benefits of the long winter it the chance to stay caught up on reading the many periodicals we receive. I urge you to check out Pat Jones's article "You Gotta Believe" in the February issue of *Golf Course Industry*. The column covers the rewards and challenges young men and women should consider before they consider a career in turfgrass management.

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Water use and conservation was a main topic at the Golf Industry Show and the spring WGCSA meeting. It is also a topic on the publics minds as most of the papers in the state picked up on new information out from the DNR on surface and ground water use.

Although golf is not a high user by percentage when you look at the list we are a expendable user in the eyes of the general public.

As turf mangers we do what we can to conserve water because it is the right thing for plant health, playing conditions and the environment. Turfgrass is important to a healthy environment to reduce erosion, offer green space and oxygen production.

Grass might be great in our minds but when compared to crops for food or animals and manufacturing golf takes a back seat. Golf is the 7th largest user of groundwater at 4.2 billion gallons or a mere 2% of total groundwater use in Wisconsin. Municipal water supply leads the list with 90 billion gallons while agriculture irrigation uses 74 billion.

For surface water golf uses 434 million gallons and is 11th on the list at .022% of the total used. Power generation and paper production are the two big users of surface water with 1.6 billion and 121 million respectively.

What is considered a important use of water by our industry is considered cosmetic or non-essential use in the court of public opinion. We will need to be prepared to defend our use of water and show how we limit the use of this valuable resource in the near future.

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Good luck with the rest of spring and your course openings. Hopefully the delayed spring will be rewarded with good weather, gentle and timely rain at night and golf shops full of happy customers.

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