

1946 — 1986

## HORST DISTRIBUTING, INC. — OUR 40TH ANNIVERSARY



By Arthur Horst

This year marks the 40th Anniversary of Horst Distributing, Inc. The founder, Arthur J. (Art) Horst is a native of the Chilton, Wisconsin area, attended the area's Public Schools, and in 1927 received a B.S. in Civil Engineering from the University of Wisconsin, Madison. Shortly after graduation he accepted a position with a general contractor in Wheeling, W. Virginia. In 1928, after returning to Wisconsin for Christmas Vacation, he met his future wife Alice, to whom he was married in July of 1929. Art and Alice have one son, Tom, and have been happily married for 56 years.

Art spent the following 17 years in general construction in Milwaukee; near Buffalo, New York; South Point, Ohio; and Baltimore, Maryland. Twelve years were spent as an engineer active in the construction of Wisconsin Memorial Park, West of Milwaukee, and as Superintendent in charge of construction of White Chapel Memorial Park near Buffalo, New York. It was during the time spent on these two projects that Art became interested in landscaping and equipment required for the maintenance of large turf areas. The final two years were spent on emergency wartime construction projects at South Point, Ohio, and Baltimore, Maryland. Because the family could not be with him due to the housing situation, Art and Alice decided to become self-employed, if at all possible, preferably in Wisconsin. Fortunately, an interim position was taken with Forest Products Laboratory, Madison, Wisconsin.

On January 1, 1946, Horst Engineering and Equipment Sales became a reality, located in Chilton, Wisconsin, in the center of a projected operational territory of Calumet, Fond du Lac, Winnebago, Outagamie, Brown and Manitowoc Counties. An old frame building which formerly was a garage and machine shop was rented. A very limited line of credit was established at a local bank, and their assistance throughout the years proved invaluable. Because of limited capital, purchases were minimal. A used wood-bodied Station Wagon and a 2-Wheel Sears Trailer were purchased. Through previous contacts two basic product lines were obtained: Ideal mowers and L.R. Nelson Rainbird Sprinkling Equipment. Golf Course Tee and Green Equipment, a Reel

Grinder, some parts and tools were also added. The original organization consisted of Art as salesman, Alice as Bookkeeper, and in 1947 Dean Connors was added as Mechanic, and he has remained continuously in our employment since then. Office space was rented across the street in a building also occupied by an appliance store.

In these first two years, in addition to trying to establish identity with Commercial Accounts in the area, Landscaping and Survey work were contracted, including preparation of plans for county road improvement. Late in 1948 a fire in the appliance store destroyed the office, records, 2½ months work on road plans and all of the engineering books and equipment. During 1948 a Jacobsen Consumer Dealership was obtained for the Chilton area. At this time, Jacobsen purchased the Worthington Mower Co., and a limited territory was secured for the Fairway Mowers and the Jacobsen Power Greensmower. In 1953 John Mortimer, the present Corporate President, joined the Organization. Additional minor lines were secured, and in 1956 sales exceeded \$100,000 for the first time.

About this time, Jacobsen started a limited pilot distributor consumer products program which prior to this time had been factory direct to dealer. Horst was named as one of a few distributors selected. This program proved successful, and after a few years Jacobsen finalized a 100% Distributor Program. Horst was awarded a distribution territory consisting of 43 counties in Northeast and Central Wisconsin and the U.P. of Michigan.

In 1959 the Company Incorporated, with the Horst family owning all shares of stock issued. A profit sharing-stock purchase agreement was consummated with the employees, and as the number of employees increased, individual insurance policies were obtained to facilitate re-purchasing the stock by the Corporation from the employees at retirement. This plan was later up-dated and remains in effect.

The Company moved to its present location in 1960 after completion of a 60x50 foot office, parts department and service shop. A 40x40 foot warehouse was also constructed. A building rental agreement was consummated between Art Horst and the Corporation. In 1961 a 40x40 addition to the warehouse was added.

As product lines were added to both the Commercial Turf and Dealer Distributor Divisions of the Corporation, it became apparent that additional warehouse space was required. In 1963 a 40x80 foot warehouse was added North of the office. George Ecker, who is presently Vice President and General



Horst Distributing, Inc.

# there's mower behind wisconsin turf...

## AWARDS HIGHLIGHT GROWTH



In 1962, Ralph Christopherson (second from right) and Ray Christopherson received congratulations from Einar Jacobsen, President of Jacobsen Manufacturing Company as Wisconsin Turf was named Jacobsen's Distributor of the Year. Looking on is Roger Thomas, Jacobsen's Turf Division Manager.



In 1967, Wisconsin Turf was honored again as Jacobsen Distributor of the Year. Shown congratulating Ralph Christopherson are, left, Charles Livesey, Marketing Vice President and right, Einar Jacobsen, President; both of Jacobsen Manufacturing Company.



The predecessor to Wisconsin Turf Equipment Corporation was this Saw and Lawn Mower Service Shop. Christy's was originally owned and operated by Ralph in Racine.



1968 made it back to back honors when Wisconsin Turf was again honored as Jacobsen's Distributor of the Year. Left to right Einar Jacobsen, President of Jacobsen Manufacturing Company; Ralph Christopherson, President of Wisconsin Turf; Jerry Jensen Sales Manager, Wisconsin Turf and Charles Livesey, Marketing Manager, Jacobsen Manufacturing Company.

## FAITH IN TURF INDUSTRY GUIDES GROWTH



JACOBSEN DISTRIBUTOR  
ADVISORY PANEL



4000 sq. ft. Addition Highlights Start of 15th Season

Manager of the Consumer Products Division, joined the Corporation as Bookkeeper. In 1966 a 40x40 foot addition with front show room was added to the North warehouse.

As the volume of sales and services increased, the depth of inventories required increased proportionately as did warehouse space. From 1968 through 1972 changes in occupancy and additional construction of warehouses was extensive. Two additional warehouses 40'x140' with full basement and 60'x120' were constructed. The office portion of the original building was converted to additional parts space. The West 40'x50' of the North Warehouse was converted to the present office. Finally, a 70'x21' addition connecting the original shop to the original warehouse increased both the size of the shop and parts areas. All shop grinding equipment is hooded and equipped with exhaust fans and incoming air is automatically regulated in a very modern service shop employing four full time factory trained mechanics.

Upon his retirement in 1974, Art Horst consummated two agreements with the Corporation: the first a land contract with amortization over twelve years (final payment will be made on January 1, 1986), the second covers the purchase of Horst stock over a period of years.

Currently 20 employees are involved in the operation of the Corporation. The officers are John R. Mortimer, President and Commercial Products Sales Manager; George L. Ecker, Vice President and Consumer Products Sales Manager, and Leon E. Geiser, Secretary/Treasurer.

The Commercial Products Division operates in 43

Counties in Northeastern and Central Wisconsin and the U.P. of Michigan and represents Jacobsen Turf Maintenance Equipment, Cushman, National, Royer, Smithco, Sod-Master, together with complete lines of fertilizer, grass seed, fungicides and herbicides. The Consumer Products Division distributes Snapper lawn and garden equipment, Didier, E-Z Rake and allied lines in Northeastern and Central Wisconsin and the U.P. of Michigan, together with Pioneer/Partner Chainsaws in Wisconsin, Minnesota, Upper Michigan and Northern Illinois.

Throughout the Company's 40 years in business, they have been the recipient of numerous sales and service awards in both of its divisions. Being service oriented, one of the awards they are most proud of is the "Professor Jake" award received in 1980. Subject award is bestowed on the top service distributor of the year by the Jacobsen Division of Textron.



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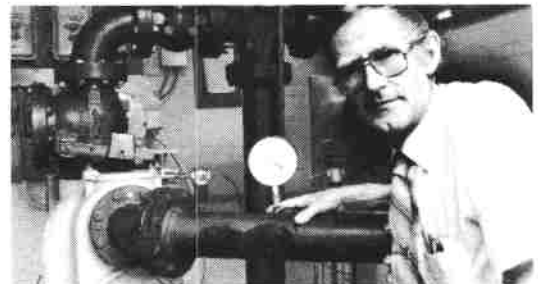


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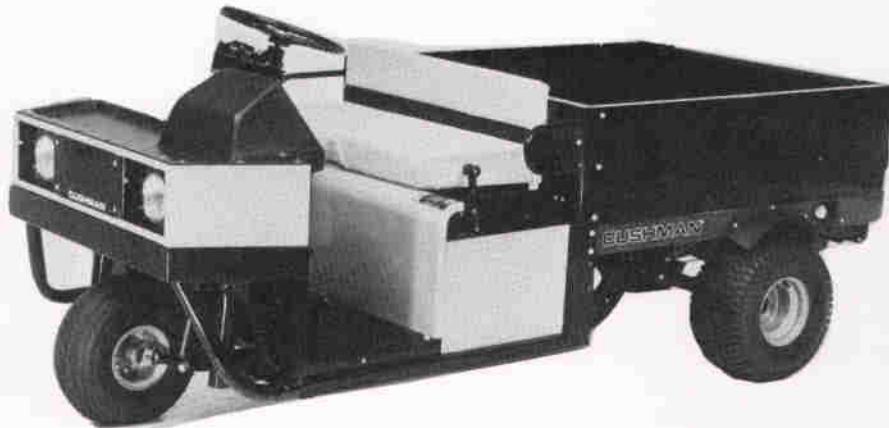


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continued from page 16

**Being explosive and angry.** People who are always yelling, demanding and upset are prime candidates for stress. While it is certainly more advantageous to express your feelings rather than keep them bottled up inside, if you consistently choose anger and behave in an explosive fashion, then you are choosing the accompanying stress that goes with it.

**Perfectionism.** People who believe there is only one way to do something, and who demand perfection from themselves and others, are higher on the stress list than those who can tolerate errors and imperfections. When you set up a standard of perfection for yourself, or any other human being, you will almost be disappointed. No one can grow without failing, sometimes, because learning is plainly impossible without failure. Consequently, perfectionists experience a great deal of stress, since they are unable to handle failure. Those who choose perfection generally choose a safe route. They are inflexible and, of course, not at peace with themselves. Winston Churchill once said: "The maxim that nothing avails but perfection may be spelled P-A-R-A-L-Y-S-I-S." Paralysis, I might add, spells S-T-R-E-S-S.

**Placing too heavy an emphasis on money.** There are some people who have dollar personalities. They talk about things and even people in terms of how much they cost, or what they are worth. They always want to place a dollar figure on everything under discussion. This kind of neurotic pursuit of money, and continual discussion of financial matters, keeps the pressure on the person, and that kind of pressure results in excessive stress on the body. There is much to be said for stopping to smell the roses and appreciating the things which don't have price tags on them.

**Excessive competition.** When you are always looking over your shoulder to see how other people are doing before you can evaluate your own happiness, you are using excessive competition to guide you in your life. How others do things or what is going on in their lives is really not very relevant to your own happiness, unless you

want to evaluate your own state of mind based on how you stack up against them. Healthy competition is fine. However, when you allow your performance compared to others to determine your own inner peace, you are handing the controls of your life over to someone else. And that is a stress builder!

**Feeling unimportant or uninvolved in life.** Just as too much hurrying and impatience can create stress, so, too, can indolence and inactivity. If you are not at peace with yourself about what you are doing in life, and if you feel like someone who has no purpose, then you are adding a great deal of stress in your life. If you have no power in your life, it is because you have taught people to treat you in a powerless way. If you want a voice, then you must speak up and insist upon being heard, or you will always have that innercontempt which will keep you in a lifelong stressful state.

**Rigid and inflexible thinking.** If you find it very difficult to accept another opinion, to change, or admit you are wrong, then you are putting a tremendous burden on yourself by way of stress and inter-

nal tension. Rigid people are always looking for something to be upset about, and they find themselves in arguments and even fights a great deal of the time. This kind of argumentation, rigidity, and one-way attitude puts you into a condition of stress.

**No humor or enthusiasm.** Laughter and a light-hearted approach to life are tremendous stress reducers. Having a sense of humor is an attitude that can be cultivated, and those people who do enjoy life and laugh out loud regularly, are far less prone to suffer from the adverse effects of stress.

All of the above attitudes and personality variables contribute heavily to a condition of stress and regular bouts of anxiety. These are the real causes of stress and they come from the choices that you make to be the kind of person you are. Forget about all of the excuses you have for being stressful, such as a tough job, a bad tempered boss, financial problems, and the like, and begin to examine your attitudes and behaviors toward these conditions.



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*The famous sixteenth hole at Oakland Hills Country Club, Birmingham, Michigan. Home of the 1985 U.S. Open.*

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**The grass machine.**

continued from page 17  
solution. Identification of stressful situations and vigorous measures changing them gives me a powerful sense of control of my own fate — this emotion overwhelms any stress.

It may seem too obvious to mention, but it is essential in composing a list with a plan of attack, to arrange tasks to be done in some order of **priority**. There is no sense in changing ballwasher water and soap when the golf course needs every available man for hand watering. I love the story that former Minnesota Viking defensive end Carl Eller told about Coach Bud Grant. Eller recalled buying his first pair of lavish, custom-made boots. He was proud of those boots, and when he noticed Grant staring at them on the team bus, he began to recite the whole story of how he'd bought them. "I went into how I picked the boot maker, all the different grades of leather you look at, and why I had decided to get multi-colored boots — because I only had one pair like this and I wanted to be able to wear them with a lot of different outfits," Eller remembers. After Eller finished his elaborate explanation, Grant looked at him out of his ice-blue eyes and asked, "Are they any good in the snow?" That is keeping your priorities straight and I am willing to bet Bud Grant feels little stress in his life because he's able to put first things first!

Another suggestion with a well established positive effect is to, in some way, share your frustration or trouble over a situation. I do, and it works. It may be talking a golf course problem through with a key employee. It may be sharing a personnel problem with my wife. Occasionally I take Mark Twain's suggestion: "When angry, count to four; when very angry, swear!" The point is to get whatever is bothering me out of my system; when I do, the stress seems to go with it. Along these same lines comes something I noticed helpful over the years. I work hard to maintain a comfortable and smooth-running work situation on the golf course. I like to keep all of us on the golf course staff geared up and working toward a well-defined objective. This leads to a less stressful work environment for all of us.

Everyone knows what is expected and surprises are not a part of their work life. I am not implying an easy or a soft or a laid back environment, where anything goes and everything is OK. Make no mistake — I have full rein. But there is nothing wrong with an attitude where all understand what is expected.

Age and experience on the job just naturally help perspective and in turn reduce the stress of that job. But also with age comes a better grasp of reality and a decreasing tendency to let job stress get you down. This isn't always true, but it has been for me. Also, with experience comes more clear action plans. It is true that with more experience comes fewer panic situations. I am better able to foresee and head off problems, and this reduces stresses.

Another trick I've learned to reduce stress is to participate in some **physical** opportunity. I don't jog or play racketball or any other vogue activity. I find by working **physically**, on the golf course, maybe with shovel in hand or on a machine, stress leaves me. Sometimes I'll walk to a golf course

destination, rather than driving a vehicle. Frequently I go for early morning walks. Lots of different things work — paramount is the physical nature of the activity. A good sweat doesn't hurt. I've thought that maybe part of the reason physical activities help is that they are very relaxing in nature.

I am asked a hundred times each season if I play golf. My reply is no, much to nearly everyone's surprise. This has less to do with my lack of skill and more to do with a need to get away from the work place and do something — **anything** — **unrelated** to golf courses. Very few other people recreate where they work and I cannot see any reason for me to do that. Pleasurable and enjoyable activity away from my golf course certainly helps in reducing stress.

The frustrating thing about stress is that there is no single, guaranteed method for control. But the few thoughts in the preceding paragraphs have worked for me. The stress management I have learned really works; my hope in sharing is that they might work for you, too.

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continued from page 11

of Tyranaena Golf Course; Dick Lindle, Supt. of Kenosha County Parks; Ray Gronke, Owner of Twin Lakes Golf Course; Joe Lutig, Janesville City Manager and Dick Becker of Big Foot C.C. These were only but a few but they not only gave me their business but good advice and morale support. Among the suppliers Inar Jacobsen, President of Jacobsen Mfg., extended credit far beyond the limits of my financial statement; Rodger Thomas, Institutional Sales Mgr. of Jacobsen, could build a man's confidence higher than the moon and I sure needed that boost every so often in our first trying years; Bill Rolette, Sales Mgr. of Worthington; George Mueller, Vice President of the Devere Co.; Ed Shoemaker with Rainbird. I know very little about the workings of a dollar bill and it was a lucky day back in 1957 when we acquired the services of Ralph Jensen, accounting and business advisor from Burlington, Wis. Cliff Christensen, a vice-president in

Rock County Savings & Trust Bank stopped to see if we needed any financial assistance and the timing was perfect because we were flat broke. The assistance from both these people certainly helped relieve the financial strain. After 28 years we still retain Jensen Accounting Service and Rock County National Bank services.

As far as Wisconsin Turf Equipment Corp. personnel, Jerry Jensen joined me in 1958 and his contributions with very little pay are innumerable. Our general manager and corporate treasurer started in our service department in 1961 and Curt Larson has worked in all phases of the business and he's the guy that could always make things happen. Jerry and Curt are the real pillars of Wisconsin Turf, but they are backed with an excellent team. Briefly I wish to introduce them and the year they joined the company:

My son, Dennis, assistant general manager, part-time 1960,

full-time 1985; another son, Lyle, retail manager and now sales manager 1964; Ralph Derr, service manager, 1967; Chas. Ewers, small engine technician, 1966; Fred Holdorf, manager of internal operation, 1969; Bill Zajicek, parts, 1971; Steve Draper, service, 1973; Jim Knapp, sales, 1973; Curt's son, Brian Larson, field service, 1974; Phal Olson, semi-driver, 1976; Charlene Henderson, office, 1976; Doug Schudda, service, 1977; Myron Seaver, Sales, 1978; Steve Erickson, Sales, 1979; Laurel Angus, office, 1978; Brenda Vermillion, office, 1978; Mike Cook, service, 1978; Debra Messner, office, 1981; Mike Hergert, service, 1981; Curt's son, Barry Larson, sales, 1982; Tom Wiese, parts, 1984; Ron Graf, sales, 1985; Loren Dunnman, delivery, 1985; and Jodie Whittier, 1985.

This is the Wisconsin Turf team made up of a variety of talents ready to serve you.

While talking about people, I have worked with many, many golf



The Christopherson Brothers — Ray, Leslie and Ralph — all WWII veterans.



Field day at Janesville's Blackhawk Park.



Las Vegas, 1984, Jacobsen Distributor of the Year Award.



Washington, D.C., 1985, Jacobsen Distinguished Service Award.

course superintendents over the past 35 years and have observed one traditional characteristic that prevails from the greenkeeper of thirty-five years ago through today's modern golf course superintendent and that is they have all been very very dedicated to their profession. It would be great if that tradition could be passed on to the future superintendents.

In closing it certainly has been a privilege working with the golf course industry the past 30 years and the strides have been tremendous. Thirty years ago the national superintendent meeting would be held in a single hotel with about a dozen suppliers and now it takes a convention center in our largest cities to have adequate room. Wisconsin Turf Equipment Corp. is geared for perpetuation and I hope thirty years from now one of our young employees will say I remember the day when we introduced the lightweight fairway mower and Rubigan to the golf course industry. With the strides that have been made in the past years it's unpredictable what the future holds.

## JOHN JOANIS, CREATOR OF SENTRYWORLD, DIES AT 67



John Joanis, well known in Wisconsin golf circles, passed away on November 18 in a Marshfield hospital. He was 67 years old. Joanis gave a memorable speech to WGCSA members at the August 1984 meeting at

Stevens Point Country Club. His speech centered around his ideas on leadership. He was a dynamic and self-assured leader who once said he spent much of his time at Sentry Insurance looking into the next year, the next decade and even the next century. The daily operations of his companies were delegated to subordinates.

He made no secret of the fact that he felt image was an important part of leadership, and his attitude was reflected in most of what he did at Sentry, including the construction of the SENTRYWORLD golf course.

Joanis was born in Virginia and moved to Wisconsin as a child. He attended the University of Wisconsin—Madison as an undergraduate and also received a degree from the UW law school in 1942. He practiced law in Oshkosh before serving as an Air Force navigator from 1942 to 1945. John joined Sentry, then known as Hard-

ware Mutual Casualty Company, as a staff attorney in 1947. He became president and CEO in 1966, and in 1972 was named chairman of the board. Joanis took a small, financially depressed Hardware Mutual to an international insurance and industrial conglomerate. Sentry has 90 subsidiary companies in wide ranging businesses.

The **GRASSROOTS** is a bimonthly publication of the Wisconsin Golf Course Superintendents Association. Editor and Publisher — Monroe S. Miller, Editorial Staff and Business Affairs — Rodney Johnson — Sheboygan Country Club, and Michael Semler — South Hills Club. Printed in Madison, Wisconsin by Kramer Printing. No part or parts of the **GRASSROOTS** may be reprinted without expressed written permission of the Editor.

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