

# WINTER TURF CONFERENCE SETS ATTENDANCE RECORD FOR THE WISCONSIN TURFGRASS ASSOCIATION

Over 220 individuals involved in the Wisconsin turfgrass industry put the 5th annual WTA Winter Turf Conference on their calendar and attended the meeting held on January 15. The 1986 meeting marked a new site for the event — the Waukesha County Forum — and a new format. A more informal "roundtable discussion" approach was taken and seemed to receive favorable reviews from the audience. Bob Newman, Gayle Worf, Dan Mahr and Wayne Kussow — all UW staff involved in turfgrass research, extension and education at the University of Wisconsin in Madison — formed the backbone of the presentations and were joined at the speaker rostrum by men involved in all the different phases of the turfgrass industry. WGCSA members that participated in the program itself were Tom Harrison, Monroe Miller, Red Roskopf and Jerry Kershasky. Kershasky gave a particularly outstanding talk on his fairway conversion program.

Another significant change in the 1986 conference was that, for the first time, turf equipment suppliers and manufacturers were invited to display their products on a small scale basis. Results were very favorable on this change and it will become a permanent feature in future conferences.

Egon Herrmann, George Brandt and Rod Johnson all ended their terms on the Board of Directors and their places were taken by WGCSA members Curt Larson and Roger Bell. Also elected was Gary Zwerlein of Milwaukee's Trammel Crow Corp. Officers elected for 1986 by the Board were Tom Harrison, President; Terry Kurth, Vice-President; Jim Huggett, Treasurer; and Monroe Miller, Secretary.



Egon Herrmann, Jerry Kershasky, Fran Tinker and Bob Newman discuss turf seeding and fairway conversion programs.



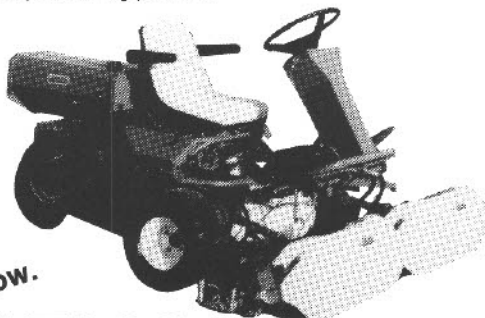
Carl Grassl, Bill Roberts and Rod Johnson were all at the WTA meeting.



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Coffee break!

## A Player's Perspective

# Do We Overgroom Our Golf Courses

By Dr. David Cookson



Green budgets are a large slice of a golf club's expense, and consequently loom large when Boards of Directors in financially pressed clubs, like many these days, are looking for places to pare costs. In this circumstance controversy may often erupt over projects that might appear to one Board member or another to be a non-essential waste of club monies, and lead to the charge that the green budget must be too large if the green superintendent can expend his money so frivolously. This kind of thinking leads next to doubts of a green superintendent's and a green chairman's competence, if not quickly dealt with and carefully explained. Perhaps then, a discussion of "grooming," in the broadest sense, is in order; with emphasis on what is essential and what is merely window dressing or unnecessary.

I would argue that grooming can be broken down into three broad categories; that which is essential to good maintenance, that which is desirable, and that which is mostly unnecessary, although often practiced. The individual club's budget, and membership preferences will determine largely the nature of the grooming that is done, but it is mandatory for good maintenance that the essential work be accomplished. This would include tight mowing and defining of the tee area, along with keeping the tee turf level, and prompt repair of worn spots. Here grooming pays off both in aesthetics and playability. Certainly fairway and rough areas should be well delineated, with careful mowing of fairways so that the ball sits up and is playable, with the rough visibly defined and properly maintained in the area adjacent to the fairway. Trees should be trimmed, with weeds and long grasses at the bases cut back or treated with growth retardant. Bunkers must be neatly raked, and often; free of weeds and debris, edged and outlined in a careful manner. If long grass is to be kept around bunkers it should be in an obviously defined area, and not allowed to be intrusive in an unkempt fashion. Bunker appearance is one of the most visible ways in which general course maintenance can be judged at a glance. Greens of course must be mowed daily, in season, with prompt attention to repair of dead areas and low spots. I would hope all would agree with these things as grooming necessities.

Desirable grooming, but able to be sacrificed to a strict and constrictive budget, would include flower beds, aggressive maintenance of water hazards, and replacement of poorly adapted grasses by more favorable strains. Flowers are a definite beautifying and aesthetically pleasing addition to a golf course, and if placed out of immediate play and thoughtfully nurtured will win praise to the green superintendent. Still, they are not required for the playing of golf; and if excessive, or too obtrusive, may create more ill

will than plaudits. Water hazards can be left alone; but if unsightly weeds or algae dominate the water hazards it is aesthetically advantageous to deal with these problems. In my experience though, sometimes the costs outweigh the benefits, and this is one kind of grooming that one should initiate only after a careful reading of Board and membership desires. Clearing a water hazard is time consuming and slow, and if hand labor is to be employed, is best done at times of slow member play, since one of the worst advertisements for the diligence of one's crew is slow hand work, visible to all, on areas of the course not totally essential to play. Lastly, most would agree it is desirable to replace poa with bluegrass in the rough close to the fairway, or in the collar around greens. But, this too is a highly visible form of hand labor, and also not completely essential. Despite the fact that a good case can be made for doing this, I can personally attest to its implementation sometimes leading to significant criticism of green committee practices by a Board trying to watch and cut costs.

Finally, I think certain practices are "overgrooming" and wasteful. This includes frequent mowing and meticulous maintenance of distant rough areas, and even continued grooming of fairway areas that are generally out of play as fairway. Use of excessive water only to keep greens soft is not only deleterious to green turf, but also overgrooming; as is use of fertilizers only to keep the grass green. Overgrooming is mowing too many banked areas as fairway and not as rough; indeed, the overgroomed course often appears to be one expanse of closely mown grass. Allow the secondary rough to grow to a significant height so that it is not mowed too often, and allow the rough to come up close to the sides and rear of green surfaces. When the golf course begins to look more like a park than a golf course, is when the possibility of overgrooming should be considered.

In summary, I think overgrooming occurs when a particular club spends a lot of effort and money on parts of the course not essential to play, or if non-essential areas are given priority over important problem situations on the playing part of the course. At the same time, we must be diligent in managing our use of water, fertilizer, and herbicides so that they are utilized only where really necessary and so they are not wasted. As you will agree, these are really the primary duties of the green superintendent and the green chairman anyway.

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**An  
Architect's  
Opinion**



## THE MAINTENANCE ZONE

By Bob Lohmann

While attending the GCSAA International Golf Course Conference and Show last week in San Francisco, I had a chance to sneak away and visit the Monterey Peninsula. The AT&T golf tournament was on and I was able to walk the Cypress Point Club and Pebble Beach golf courses. Talk about a spectacular golf course; I have seen photos and television shots of both courses, but neither can do them justice.

The terrain on Cypress Point varies in the most exciting way. The 3rd through 7th holes are wooded hillside holes, and the 8th through 12th are inland in character. The 13th, 14th, and 18th are seaside holes, and the 15th, 16th, and 17th are spectacular cliff-top golf holes.

The common demoninator of all the holes is the intense maintenance style practiced on the greens, tees, fairway landing areas, and sand bunkers adjacent to the target areas. These features were in excellent shape and provided the golfers with ideal playing conditions. The intense maintained areas were not small targets, but were adequate spaces that allowed the golfers some error in their golf shots.

On the majority of the holes, the golfer has an avenue for advancing the ball toward the green without being forced to carry a hazard. Because Cypress Point is a private club with limited membership and is also a championship course, the forced carries on the oceanside holes are not only acceptable, but make the golf course unique and memorable. The remainder of the golf course is traditional and strategic. It is a relatively short playing course of between 6300 and 6500 yards and has greens

that are small, contoured, and well bunkered.

Most impressive to me was the stark contrast between the golf course playing area and the adjacent property, which was attractive and defined the target areas of the golf course.

These sandy dunes and rough grasses adjacent to the highly maintained playing area had far less maintenance attention and in some areas had none at all. This unmanicured style amplified the intense maintenance practices on the playing areas and made the subtle design features more noticeable.

No doubt, in this case, the site was an aid in developing an outstanding golf course. But the design of the architect, Dr. Mackenzie, and the current maintenance style have made the golf course somewhat of a spectacle.

This maintenance style could be adopted by many private clubs whose maintenance budgets are unmanageable. With proper consideration for the club superintendent, its members, and other golfers, the course should be ex-

amined for areas that require less maintenance. Any money saved from using less water, fertilizer, fungicides, or labor could be applied toward the maintenance of the playing areas on the golf course. This shift in maintenance style would not save much money initially because of the costs associated with developing the native habitat. But the minimum amount of maintenance required once the course was established would result in significant cost savings as well as a classic golf environment.

"Natural look" golf courses are often talked about today. They can offer diversity, variety, and distinction if properly designed and maintained. The basic premise is to work with the existing features of the land. The architect and superintendent must capitalize on the natural advantages of the landscape to adopt this style successfully and make it acceptable to the members.

Any club can reduce the maintenance budget by limiting the money available for labor and materials, but this practice doesn't necessarily satisfy the needs of

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the golf course.

An optional method is to eliminate any maintained out-of-play roughs and tee banks and to reduce the intensity of maintenance on fairways between landing areas, flat bunkers adjacent to fairways, and the rough between the regular tees and start of the fairway.

If the country club golfer can be educated to accept this style of maintenance, we can reduce the overall maintenance costs and yet develop an enjoyable and memorable golf course.

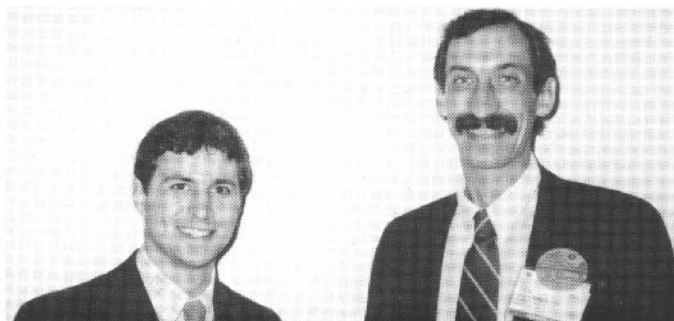
Nature was golf's original challenge and should remain so today. By defining the maintenance zone on the golf course, we can develop the natural look and still benefit from the reduced costs.



## SLAVIK WINS GCSAA SCHOLARSHIP!

Randy Slavik, a senior in the Turf and Grounds Management Program at the University of Wisconsin — Madison, was awarded a GCSAA Scholarship at the Association's Conference and Show in San Francisco. Slavik, one of only eight recipients, accepted the award from GCSAA Director Jerry Faubel at the Opening Session of the conference.

Randy has worked for Jack Soderberg at Merrill Hills Country Club for the past several summers. Jack was also a winner of a GCSAA Scholarship during his undergraduate years at the UW—Madison.



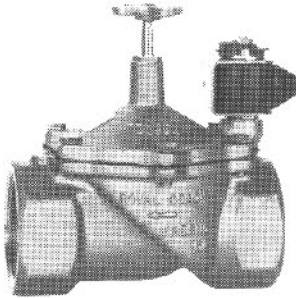
UW—Madison senior Randy Slavik was one of only 8 GCSAA Scholarship winners. Randy's mentor, Jack Soderberg, was also a GCSAA Scholarship winner when he was a UW turf student.



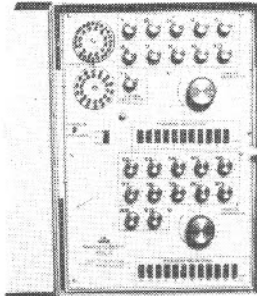
UW's Randy Slavik accepts GCSAA Scholarship from Director Jerry Faubel, Chairman of the Education Committee.

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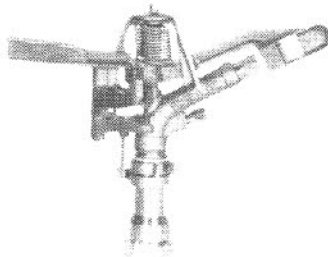
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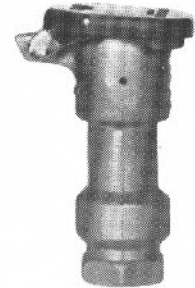
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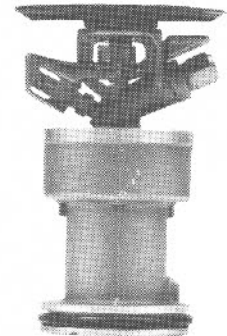
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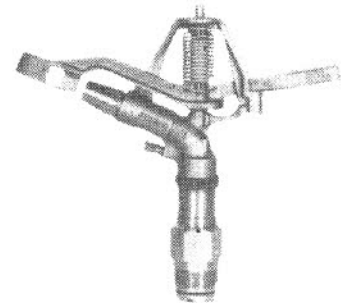
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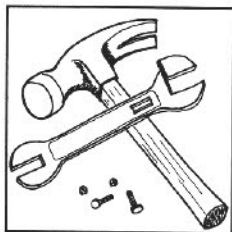
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# WELCOME TO SHOP TALK!

*Editor's Note: This issue of THE GRASS ROOTS marks the beginning of a new feature column — SHOP TALK. A smooth-running golf course depends on smooth-running golf course equipment. This column, which will appear in each issue, hopes to share information from around the state that will help keep our maintenance machinery smooth-running. Pat Norton will be doing the research, following up on tips, and writing the column for us. He will not only be visiting with Golf Course Superintendents, but will be talking to Assistants and Mechanics as well. If you have what you feel might be a good topic or a valuable tip, please give Pat a call.*

*SHOP TALK promises to be a good addition to our magazine, especially in light of the amount of time spent in our maintenance facilities. We are anxious to hear your "review"! MSM*



## FUELS — DIESEL OR GASOLINE? AND WHAT ABOUT LEAD-FREE GASOLINE?

By Pat Norton

Diesel or gasoline power? What are the advantages of each? Do I feel comfortable buying and maintaining diesel powered equipment? And how will unleaded gasoline affect my equipments' performance? These and other related questions are ones that all Wisconsin Superintendents should be asking themselves (and their mechanics)! Let's try to answer them by first discussing diesel vs. gasoline, and then briefly talk about the unleaded gas situation.

Diesel power has long been the standard for ag, construction, and trucking equipment. It's now rapidly gaining popularity for all types of commercial turf equipment—tractors, out front rotaries, light-weight fairway units, etc. Why is diesel becoming so popular? It's because diesel has many real advantages over gasoline as a power source. Let's list them:

—*diesel engines, when properly cared for, require much less regular maintenance than do gasoline engines (no tune-ups, no points, plugs, condenser, etc.);*

—*diesel engines can go many more hours before requiring overhaul or replacement than comparable gasoline units. They also generally have a longer lifespan than an equal HP gas unit;*

—*diesels are much more fuel efficient than gas engines—by about 25-30%. This is one of diesels' most important advantages!*

—*diesels not only save \$ on fuel, they save \$ on lessened oil and filter costs. They also save \$ on less labor required to perform all those routine maintenance procedures;*

—*trade-in value of a diesel unit can be as much as twice that of a comparable gas unit.*

Everything is not entirely in favor of diesel power. They do have their drawbacks:

—*the initial cost of diesel powered equipment is considerably higher than gasoline models of comparable horsepower;*

—*when diesels do require serious maintenance or overhaul, it's involved, expensive, and requires a very experienced mechanic;*

—*diesel internal parts are very precisely machined, requiring very clean fuel. Dirt or water in the fuel can cause serious wear and damage to the engine;*

—*diesels that run out of fuel are very difficult to restart;*

—*diesels are very hard starting in cold weather;*

—*a diesel tank setup requires additional up front expenses for those operations currently using only gasoline.*

Although diesel seems to have some obvious advantages, gasoline power is still the mainstay for most golf course operations, and does enjoy some advantages of its own:

—*engine maintenance on gas units is familiar to most or all golf course mechanics;*

—*gasoline is more versatile than diesel fuel — more types of equipment and accessories use gasoline than anything else;*

—*gasoline units start much easier in cold weather than do diesels;*

—*gasoline engines that run dry are very easy to restart;*

—*gasoline powered units have considerably lower initial cost*

*than comparable diesel units.*

Everyone probably has their own opinions and preferences as to diesel or gasoline—they both have their advantages. Now though, the Superintendent has a choice of either one. The turf manager can now specify his preference, and as a result, definitely can better tailor his equipment fleet to his ever changing needs.

What's the current status on the use of unleaded gasoline? Well, in case you haven't heard, the EPA began a phaseout of leaded gasoline in 1985. The EPA used to allow 1.1 grams of lead per gallon. But, as of July 1, 1985 the allowable level was reduced to .5 grams per gallon. A further reduction, to .1 grams per gallon, was implemented on January 1, 1986.

As one might guess, this EPA ruling created quite an uproar in 1985, and now for many a feeling of "making the best of it." Lead has always provided many well known benefits for gasoline-lubrication for internal engine parts, which reduces friction, which lowers engine temperatures and generally prolongs engine life. Lead also provides gasoline with higher octane levels (octane improves engine performance, etc.).

However, there is an interesting and opposite view—that lead in gasoline is actually harmful to engines. A Toro service bulletin (March 19, 1985) used for this article has this to say—"Analysis of field performance and a multitude of test reports in recent years indicates that leaded fuels may be contributing to a number of engine difficulties. These involve early plug fouling, excessive carboning of the combustion chamber and

related components, and generally poor engine performance.

We have verified the position currently being taken by other small engine manufacturers, that the use of regular grade unleaded gasoline will indeed provide better performance, extend the life of the engine, and reduce or eliminate many of the above noted difficulties that occur when leaded gasoline is used."

So there you have it! There seem to be some positive things about using unleaded gas, but arguments can certainly be made on the positive qualities of leaded gasoline. Since we've all just started using lead free gas, I guess time and experience will help us to judge. I suppose the way to view the situation is that this is just one more change to contend with in the rapidly changing turfgrass industry!

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## NEWS

## CLIPPINGS

### MAPMS Meeting Set For March 16 — 18

The Midwest Aquatic Plant Management Society will hold its sixth Annual Conference at the Abbey On Lake Geneva in Fontana March 16 — 18. Subjects will range from the role of regulatory agencies in managing aquatic plants to progress in lake management. Contact: Richard Bauer, Secretary-Treasurer, MAPMS, 7150 Summerdale Drive, Dayton, OH 45424 for registration information.

### ITF Invites WGCSA To Golf Day

The Midwest Superintendents Association, Central Illinois Superintendents Association and the Northwest Superintendents Association are co-sponsoring a golf day at the Eagle Ridge Inn and Resort in Galena, Illinois on May 19, 1986. The members of the Wisconsin Golf Course Superintendents Association have been invited to attend. Call 815-777-2444 to reserve lodging and golf for this event.

### Lohmann Moves

GRASSROOTS Columnist Bob Lohmann has moved his golf design offices in Crystal Lake, Illinois to a new address. Bob can now be found at 800 McHenry Avenue, Suite H, in Crystal Lake. The zip code is the same 60014, and his phone number is still 815-455-0445.

### USGA Regional Conference

Jim Latham, Great Lakes Region Director of the USGA Green Section, has announced that the USGA will be sponsoring a regional conference on Tuesday, March 11 at the Town and Country Club in St. Paul, Minnesota. For more information contact either Jim Latham at his office or Jim Farrell at 815-459-5590.

### Horst Awards Announced

John Mortimer, President of Horst Distributing, accepted two awards on behalf of his company at the GCSAA Conference in San Francisco. They received the "Jacobsen Distinguished Service Award" for 1985. OMC honored them with their "Cushman Turf Quota Buster Award" for 1985.

Horst, celebrating their 40th year in the turf business in Wisconsin, adds these latest awards to their long list of previous acknowledgements. Congratulations!

### Sauey Joins Columbia ParCar

GRASSROOTS advertiser Columbia ParCar has announced the addition of Todd L. Sauey to the organization as Vice-President of operations. His responsibilities are to cover all manufacturing, material management and accounting functions. Todd goes to Columbia from one of its sister companies in the Nordic International Group.

### Wisconsin Turf Hosts a "Sale-A-Bration"

Wisconsin Turf Equipment Corporation of Janesville will be hosting a "Sale-A-Bration" on March 24 and March 25, 1986. Golf course personnel are invited to attend the March 25 date. The event honors 30 years of business for the company. It will be held at the Americana Resort in Lake Geneva and will feature their entire line of golf and park maintenance equipment. Registration is \$7.00 per person. For more details, contact Curt Larson at 608-752-8766.

### UW-EX Turf Meetings Planned

The University of Wisconsin — Extension Turf Meetings have been scheduled for various sites around the state. The dates are:

March 10 — Madison, Holiday Inn S.E.

March 11 — Milwaukee, Milwaukee County Extension Offices

March 12 — Appleton, Columbus Inn

March 13 — Eau Claire, Holiday Inn

All meetings will have registration beginning at 9:00 A.M. and the program will run until 4:00 P.M. Lunch is included in the registration fee.





## WGCSA To Adopt Prepayment Policy

The WGCSA has decided to adopt a "prepayment" policy for all of its 1986 monthly meetings. This policy decision was approved by the Association's Board of Directors and is based on the real need to a) have better financial accountability at the meetings (who has paid for what, how many for dinner, etc.), b) cause alot less hassle in registering and paying for members and their guests, and c) make the day more organized, hence more enjoyable for both the host club, and especially our participants. The details of the new policy are as follows:

1) Event fee, lunch (if offered by the club), and dinner must always be prepaid. Prepayment will be accepted by check only and must accompany the meeting notice response slip. Responses and checks can be sent to Pat Norton, Cherokee C.C. in the envelopes provided each month.

2) Carts will be prepaid only if carts are required for all participants. If carts are optional (as is usually the case), carts can be paid for in the pro shop on the day of the meeting. There will be a line on the response slip to sign up for a cart if so desired.

3) A registration table will be set

up at each meeting to greet and register participants, inform them of the clubs facilities, answer any questions, and also handle any problems.

4) Event fee will be set at \$5 per golfer. We hope for 100% participation in the golf event.

5) A current handicap card is **required** or else you will play "scratch" in the golf event! If you don't currently have an established handicap, establish one—play some golf! Handicap cards will be checked each time at the registration table.

6) The famous WGCSA RESEARCH AND SCHOLARSHIP RAFFLE will continue at 1986 monthly meetings. The proceeds from this raffle will **most definitely** be contributed to turf research and scholarship, so participate and be ready when Roger Bell hits on you!

The Golf and Arrangements Committee hopes that this new policy will be accepted and understood by all members. We are confident that by using this new format the meeting will be more enjoyable for all our members.

Roger Bell, Chairman  
Mike Semler, Committee Member  
Pat Norton, Committee Member

## Wisconsin Golf Course Superintendents Association Officers and Directors 1985 — 1986

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## WISCONSIN GCSA SEEKS 1987 MONTHLY MEETING SITES

The Wisconsin Golf Course Superintendents Association, through its Golf and Arrangements Committee, is in the process of establishing a tentative monthly meeting schedule for next year, 1987. It is our goal to arrange a geographically balanced schedule with a variety of golf courses for all WGCSA members to enjoy. If you are interested in offering your time and your club or facility for such an event; complete, clip and return the form below to: Roger C. Bell

601 Canterbury Drive  
Appleton, WI 54915

I am interested in hosting a 1987 WGCSA monthly meeting:

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