

A PLEDGE

By Roger Bell



President's messages should be like commencement addresses—eloquent, inspirational and, above all, brief. I can assure the readership of this column at least one of the three—brevity.

I chose to become a golf course superintendent over thirteen years ago and there is nothing else that I would rather be. I am proud of my chosen profession. It is a special honor, then, for me to be chosen by you—my peers—to represent you as President of the W.G.C.S.A.

I have a very hard act to follow. Each of my predecessors has overseen sig-

nificant advances in our organization. Jim Belfield implemented the office services which now serve to maintain communications with our membership. Monroe Miller brought us awards with his updated and expanded *Grass Roots*. Bill Roberts has extended our field of vision by involving W.G.C.S.A. in many national committees and regional organizations. We need to maintain these advances while exploring new possibilities for our organization (and our profession) to grow. (We're currently looking into the implementation of a public relations campaign to

promote the job that we do to the people of Wisconsin. More about that at a later date.)

Any organization is only as strong as its members and that means we need your input. Please contact the Directors or Officers to volunteer your services for their committees or projects. There is room in the W.G.C.S.A. for EVERYONE to make a contribution.

Thank you for the honor of serving as your President. I pledge to do my best to be worthy.

Editorial



UNITE!

By Monroe S. Miller

Three-quarters of a century ago, William James made the classic observation that the main task of mankind "is to find some moral equivalent for war." Nations unite in wars and his point, I think, was that man needs to find some positive, creative goal that will motivate our loyalty, generosity and affection in the same way conflict does. In our little world of turfgrass management, I believe we've found a small example of what Mr. James wished for mankind - the project to build the O.J. NOER CENTER for TURFGRASS RESEARCH.

It is a well known and fairly common human emotion to unite **against** something. Disasters come to mind immediately. A town unites against a disastrous flood. A state unites against a wicked snowstorm. A plane crash

unites victims' families against that tragedy. There is deep satisfaction in these kinds of unifications. There is a common foe to fight. Generosity and self-sacrifice spring forth; people display their better selves.

It seems really difficult for people to work **for** something in the same way and with the same intensity they will work against something. But I'm of the opinion that the NOER CENTER is needed so badly by our industry that we will come together to get that job done. To counteract this natural human emotion, couldn't we quite easily declare "ignorance" our enemy and unite to fight this dastardly foe? The best weapon in a battle for more research in the turfgrass sciences will be the NOER CENTER.

Let us all get together on this project.

The goal is noble; the need is great. There are significant rewards to be had by everyone who gives in whatever way he can. The opportunity is golden, but it won't be there forever. Please, act today and dream of the high levels of harmony and unity in our working world the NOER CENTER will bring.

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WINTERLUDE

By Monroe S. Miller

I don't remember where I first read this word - Winterlude - but it has remained with me for years. I like it not only for its pleasant and relaxed sound, but also because it probably better describes than any other word could this season we are now in. I think all Golf Course Superintendents not only like but really need the break winter gives us. We can, briefly at least, return to some normality.

How many times in your career, even if it's a career in its juvenile stages, have you been asked, "What do you do all winter?" Years past I actually tried to explain to those inquisitive folks the work that needed to be done in the cold months of winter to keep a golf course running in the warmer months of spring, summer and autumn. Seldom did I get more than barely started before they were off in another direction. Most really don't care. So nowadays I tell people, "We play euchre during most of the weeks, spend a lot of time in Florida, and draw unemployment when we've tired of card games."

If you were to ask Cheryl Miller about my job in July, she likely will say to you, "It's a mistake he's never overcome." But ask her the same question in winter and she'll probably tell you I've got the best job in the world. We have little choice on our golf courses during the season but to put forth any and all time required to get the job done. Usually that means long days for all seven days in a week. But when winter comes, it is oh so nice to work normal hours and lead a normal life. It's during the winterlude that you realize this business of managing a golf course is a way of life, one to which you become accustomed. It is also during winterlude that you remind yourself that it is a good way of life, too.

Wayne Otto put it in perspective several years ago when he told me, "They ought to give us all our salary in June, July, and August—that's when you really earn it." Wayne is right. I always heard from Peter Miller, in my youthful years on a golf course, that

there were 100 absolutely miserable days on a golf course, days when you cannot convince yourself that the job is enjoyable. Challenging? Maybe. Enjoyable? No way. But Pete always pointed out that the salvation was the couple of months in the winter when you could do the things everyone else does and maybe a few more besides.

For those of us who are still young(!) and have children in school, our profession gives us room to go to school for conferences, plays, concerts and any of the many other activities our children are involved with, **even** if those events are during working hours. I've gone to some and been one of only a handful of fathers there. Being able to do this somehow assuages the guilt we feel from not being with our kids as much as we should during the other seasons.

The winter holidays, those that **aren't** forgotten, give wonderful opportunity for celebration. In our house, planning for Christmas reaches nearly absurd proportions. All in our family love it, and my profession gives us time to celebrate like we want. Same for Thanksgiving.

And quite frankly, we have all learned to really enjoy winter vacations. Those anxious trips to the southland fill us with great anticipation. The warm weather of Georgia and Florida is incredibly welcome in January, just like a cool day in July is welcome at that time. We go nearly every year and never tire of it. Not everyone has a profession that allows this kind of freedom in the winter. It makes up for not ever having the luxury of leaving our golf courses during the summer vacation months.

Winter, in our home, lets us do almost everything on a schedule again. Among the things Cheryl and I like most about our winter schedule is evening coffee. Now that I'm a "Mr. Mom" and have serious responsibilities in preparing our dinner, habits have evolved that I seldom allow to change in the winter. Cher gets home

from her job at 6:20. Just before the dinner hour I build a fire in the fireplace. After we have eaten, cleaned the table and sent the kids to their rooms to study, she and I love to sit in front of the fire with a big steaming cup of freshly brewed coffee. One of my favorite poems was written by an 18th century author, William Cowper. In his immortal poem "The Winter Evening", he wrote what we feel:

*Now stir the fire,
and close the shutters fast,
Let fall the curtains,
wheel the sofa round,
And, while the bubbling and loud-
hissing urn
Throws up a steamy column,
and the cups,
That cheer but not inebriate,
wait on each,
So let us welcome peaceful ev'ning in.*

I drink coffee whenever I feel like it, which is frequently during every day. But it tastes so much better in winter, by a fire with my sweetheart. Winterlude makes it so.

Should I be given a quarter for every time I've visited my favorite spot in the last 15 years at Blackhawk Country Club, I could take a long and extravagant trip around the world. But seldom do I go there in the winter months—no need to. This seasonal interlude offers endless other opportunities for solitude. I believe, as I believe practically nothing else about our profession, that one of a Golf Course Superintendent's greatest needs is for occasional solitude. We need time for contemplation about our work and our goals. We should take time to listen, undistracted, to that inner voice that so seldom gets the chance to be heard, especially during the months from March through November. In the wintertime those times are easier to find.

Our lives for so many days of the year are dictated by the demands of the golf courses we manage. That's okay, understandable, acceptable. But it also is wearisome. By the end of



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November I'm tired of those structured demands, of the unforgivingness of impulse. I like Christopher Morley's words from "John Mistletoe". They could have been written for us:

If there is any appalling and spiritually murderous sensation on earth, it is the knowledge that on a certain date or at a given time and place you have got to be somewhere doing some set, prescribed, definite thing. This winter we shall keep our horizon perfectly, crystallinely open, ready every day for the scouring gales of impulse.

We spend our whole working time trying to change and improve our golf courses. But no more can be done for them for awhile. This is a good time to take pleasure in the changes we have wrought and to think of what remains undone. The beauty of this time is that all future changes and improvements are still possible as we plan without burden of reality.

The golf course is lovely and peaceful now, seemingly in need of this time as much as we are. Although the year turns slowly on its axis, the geese will soon fly north, the crocuses will bloom and patches of green will be peeking through the snow. Use these days in the best way—Enjoy!

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Butte des Morts Country Club Hosts Seminar On Wheels

By Scott Johnson

Steve Schmidt, Golf Course Superintendent at Butte des Morts Country Club in Appleton, served as host to a stop on the 16th Annual "Agriculture Seminar on Wheels", October 12. "Seminar on Wheels", sponsored by Wisconsin Farm Progress Days Inc., provides the opportunity for junior and high school counselors to learn about careers and opportunities in agriculturally related businesses. While at Butte des Morts, the group of 25 counselors learned from Steve the duties of a golf course superintendent, career paths, and opportunities for young people in the industry. Steve also gave the group a brief tour of the facilities and literature about the industry for the counselors to take back to their career files for students. Following Steve's presentation, the group had lunch at the Club before continuing their tour. The visit to Butte des Morts was part of the first day of a three day program which toured businesses in east central Wisconsin. Other stops included places such as Lied's Nursery, Chief Implement, Pillsbury-Green Giant, 21st Century Genetics, Hillshire Farms, Knigges's Guernsey Farm, Flanigan Brothers Kraut, Navarino Wildlife Area, Wayne Feeds, and Fox Valley Technical Institute.

"Agribusiness Seminar on Wheels" rotates to a different area of the state each year with all expenses for participants covered by Wisconsin Farm Progress Days Inc. Planning and coordination is done as a joint project of Farm Progress Days, the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences at UW-



Madison, the Colleges of Agriculture at UW-Platteville and UW-River Falls, UW-Extension, and the Agribusiness division of the Wisconsin Vocational Adult and Technical Education System. This was the first time a stop at a golf course was included in the tour; however, because of the interest generated efforts will be made to include similar stops in future tours. The goal of "Seminar on Wheels" is to allow school counselors to gain a greater appreciation of careers relating to agribusiness and natural resources through on-site visits to employers. Participants are encouraged to take the knowledge they gain back to their colleagues and students. Counselors can also gain continuing education credits that may be applied towards the renewal of their teaching certification.

The sponsors of "Seminar on Wheels" wish to thank Steve Schmidt for his fine presentation, the Country Club staff at Butte des Morts for opening on a normally closed day for lunch, and Monroe Miller of Blackhawk Country Club in Madison for his help in identifying a convenient location for the 1987 "Seminar on Wheels". We look forward to working with this association next year as "Seminar on Wheels" moves to Southeast Wisconsin.

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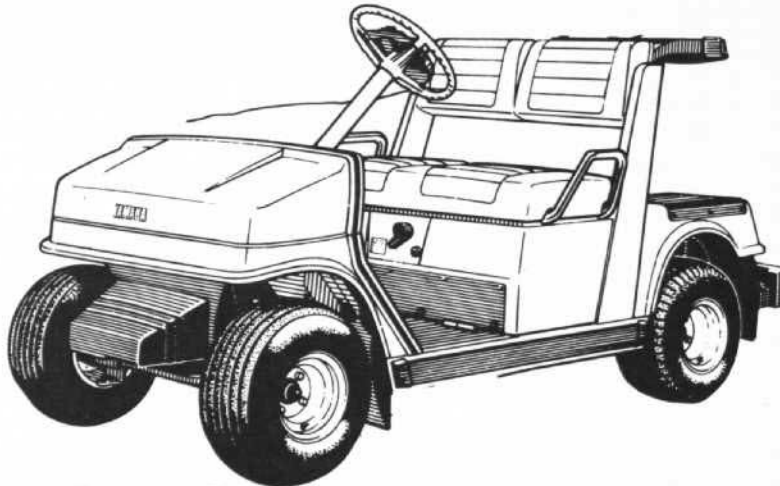
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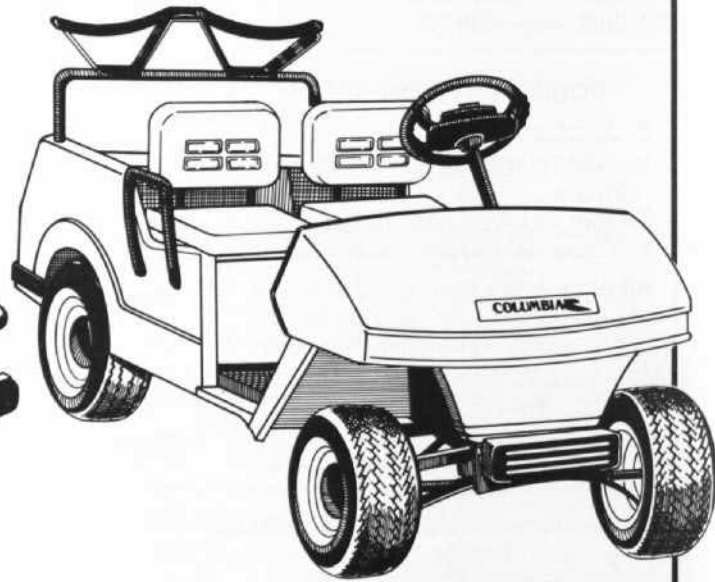
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Brown Patch Control is an Interesting Dilemma

By Dr. Gayle Worf
Department of Plant Pathology
University of Wisconsin-Madison

When a serious disease threatens, we want to know what to do about it. Brown patch disease represents one of those problems. Lots of fungicides are registered for the control of this disease, including the decarboximide—Chipco 26019 and Vorlan; the benzimidazoles—Cheary's 3336, Fungo 50, ProTurf Systemic Fungicide and Tersan 1991; sterol inhibitors—Banner, Bayleton, Fluid Fungicide II, Fungicide 7 and Rubigan; and old standbys such as Daconil 2787 and Dyrene. Even such products as Fore, captan, thiram, and especially PCNB (Terraclor, Turfcide and ProTurf FF II) have brown patch on their label. So with all of these compounds, what's the problem? Mainly, it's recurring reports of failures or disappointments by superintendents with so many of them over a period of time.

Maybe that shouldn't be surprising. The disease is caused by a very common fungus, *Rhizoctonia solani* (perfect stage is *Thanatephorus cucumeris*), which is widespread throughout the world in both cultivated and noncultivated soils. It is readily isolated from diseased plants and soils, with isolates differing in both pathogenicity and morphology. Several intraspecific groups are known, and there are international experts who spend much of their time learning the relationships and specific characteristics among them. It is believed that cultivated crops exert a strong influence upon the prevalence of a given intraspecific strain. Thus, those found in turf are especially adapted to working and living on that crop, and their population theoretically increases during the growing season because of the presence of grass and favorable temperature. All of us know that it is especially a problem during periods of higher temperature like we had this past season. Although it was drier than ideal for the disease, I suspect our irrigation provides all the moisture needed, just as it also did for *Pythium*. So we received several reports of brown patch along with ques-

tions concerning product failure. The fungus survives from season to season by means of sclerotia, and can live saprophytically as well as parasitically, so it's no wonder that it can be a problem for us.

I'm not acquainted with any study that has examined variability of isolates to fungicides, but I suspect that such variability exists, and therein may rest part of our problem. That is, what works against one strain on one course may not work someplace else. I think there's another reason, too: it's a very difficult disease about which to gather any reliable fungicide evaluations. In the years of our evaluation of fungicides, we have yet to encounter a single instance where we have had enough brown patch to compare chemicals! And we are not alone. In annual fungicide/nematode tests shared by colleagues over a long period of time, there are very few legitimate published reports. This leaves the chemical manufacturers with rather scanty data. It's not their fault, just the state of the art. And of course if they have any hint at all there's activity they want to get it on the label.

I've been tempted to begin a collection of *Rhizoctonia* isolates from Wisconsin golf courses and do some inoculating for screening purposes. I'm reluctant to do it on a cooperator's course, because I don't want to introduce a difficult-to-control strain. We inoculated at Camelot with a local strain last summer to demonstrate the diagnostic kits, and got just a little infection. I'm told by colleagues that's the normal field reaction, though the next year symptoms often show up better. We could do it in the greenhouse, but that has some limitations, too. Perhaps that's the kind of thing we should do—with some isolation—at the new O.J. Noer Center for Turfgrass Research.

Discerning superintendents can play an important role, I believe, in sharing their experiences and results with each other. It may be a project that the Golf

Course Superintendents would want to take up. I'd be willing to participate if there's a strong feeling that such an organized effort is needed.

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A BRIEF HISTORY OF COMPUTERS

By Dennis Thorp

Editor's Note: We are introducing a new feature for the Grass Roots and reintroducing a former member of our profession. Dennis Thorp is a 1971 graduate of UW-Madison and was one of the first students to start and finish under J.R. Love in the Turf Management Program. He left the profession in 1975 and is now returning to it. During his absence, he gained extensive experience with microcomputers. He purchased an Apple computer in 1979 and has worked both in sales and consulting. He is currently employed by Blackhawk Country Club.

There is a growing interest in microcomputers among Golf Course Superintendents. One has only to look to the literature of our own industry to see the number of articles about computers or references to their use. But there seems to be an absence of hard information on "how to use" and "what to do with" a computer once a superintendent has decided to jump into this field. As if there was not enough to do as agronomists, purchasing agents, personnel managers, public relations experts, etc., now we are expected to master another technology. The purpose of this column is to give some sound advice on what to buy as far as hardware and software and how to use it once you have it. We will attempt to answer any questions as they come up or at least point you in the right direction to find a solution. For those who have computers gathering dust in a corner, we offer a ray of hope.

The first outline of what eventually became the modern computer was created by an Englishman in the 19th century. But he was limited by the technology of his time and his dream was not realized until some 70 years after his death. The first operational electronic digital computers were developed during World War II. The British developed a series of computers to crack German codes and materially contributed to victory in the

war. Americans plunged into action two years after the British when a project was initiated to develop a machine to help "compute" firing tables for the military. Mathematicians were employed to manually calculate firing data, and since over 500 factors had to be accounted for in each calculation, it could take up to three months to solve each problem. Hundreds of people were employed by the government to produce their tables and rush the information to the battlefield. A project was funded to produce a machine to solve these mathematical problems, but it was not completed until 1946. ENIAC was born—Electronic Numerical Inter Active Calculator or something like that. Too late for World War II, but a new industry was created.

About this time, the first "bug" was discovered. The early computers were room-sized devices with thousands of vacuum tubes and very critical cooling requirements. As Grace Hooper, a recently retired Navy Admiral, tells the story, she was working on one of the first machines and it began to behave erratically. The technicians were confused and checked the machine for days. Finally, a large moth was discovered deep inside the machine, shorting out some circuits. Furthermore, when a computer or piece of software behaves in an unexpected or erratic manner, it has been said to have a "bug" in it and the process of finding and fixing it has been called "debugging".

We will move forward to the 1960's. Transistors have been invented and computers are becoming smaller and more accessible. They still do not have display screens or keyboards. Instructions are entered by means of a paper tape with holes punched into it and output was delivered in a similar manner. But some students at MIT began to experiment with one. They were members of the model railroad club at the university and their passion was figuring out how things worked. Before the

computer arrived they would spend hundreds of hours rewiring the switches on their railroad layout. Beneath the racks were miles and miles of wire leading to the various switches. As they experimented with the computer, they found amazing similarities between the switches and wiring of the railroad setup and the computer. If anyone takes a close look at the main board of a microcomputer and forgets all the jargon, it is only a series of wires running from point to point. Some early boards actually had wires soldered in to correct designing flaws. Taken in its simplest form, that is all a computer is: a series of switches that are either on or off. It works on the binary codes (Base 2) that some of us learned as the "new math" of the 1960's—1's and 0's. "1" is on and "0" is off. What they discovered is that by changing the wiring, they could change the function. This was a very radical thought for this time, when computers required special environments and only a very select few people would have access to them.

Now we will jump to the mid-1970s. A garage near San Francisco is the site for Steven Jobs and Michael Wozniak to invent and begin to ship Apple computers. They tied the floppy disk drive to the microcomputer and used a television set for a display screen, but they did something even more dynamic. They conceived the theory of "open architecture": the hardware had slots for aftermarket plug-in devices that users could install to make the computer do different things. Radio Shack, Commodore and other early microcomputer manufacturers restricted the market to devices that they designed and sold. Since all ingenuity did not reside within those companies, end users found that the Apple was more flexible. This translated into more sales. When IBM entered the market, they followed the "open" route. This was a departure from their previous corporate policy of requiring that

everything installed into or on one of their computers only come from IBM. "Open architecture" greatly increased the speed with which microcomputers became accepted by the general public.

There was still one element missing. No matter how sophisticated the hardware is, without instructions (program, software) the computer is only good at being a boat anchor or door stop.

Let's go to MIT where the first widely-used, general purpose software was written: VISICALC. Before this time, a user had to be a programmer or buy a program that would only do one specific task. The relative simplicity of Visicalc opened the door to wide use and acceptance. This piece of software did more than anything else to

put microcomputers on the desks of businessmen. It was no longer a toy or curiosity, but a way to use information at the lowest possible levels. Visicalc led to Lotus 1-2-3 which led to Symphony which led to ?. Once the hardware was widely accepted, everyone jumped on the bandwagon and the microcomputer revolution was here.

All this history is nice to know, but isn't much help to the superintendent who has a computer gathering dust or is contemplating a purchase. Read the articles in the November 1987 issue of *Golf Course Management* for more general information. What we hope to accomplish here is to give specific recommendations on hardware and software. Future articles will deal with the "nuts and bolts" of electronic

spreadsheets, word processing, data base management and telecommunications. We will review various pieces of software and tell you how to get up and running with some of the most popular ones. Those of you with specific questions are encouraged to write letters to the editor and I will do my best to answer them. Some of you may even be able to give me a clue as to what topics would be most interesting to our readers. We will try not to get too tied up with the jargon of the industry, other than to tell you enough about RAM and ROM, bits and bytes so that you can be considered "computer literate".

The tentative topic for the next issue is: "Hardware—what to buy and how much to spend."

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