



# LOOKING FORWARD TO 1989

By Roger C. Bell



Autumn has arrived both in the weather and by the calendar. Many of us are busy re-seeding our courses after the hot, dry summer. Perhaps autumn is the time to begin re-seeding our association, too. Organizations like ours are like grass; we must plant new seeds so that next year can continue the success and growth of this season. We do have secure roots in our present officers, directors, and members who volunteer their time and money. We sincerely thank them for all their work that made our association and our monthly meetings so successful this year. We need their continued efforts. But our membership is still growing

and we need to involve all our members — new ones, too — in our organization. I would encourage all members to contact any officer or director to volunteer their services. I would also encourage those members willing to serve as host superintendents for 1989 meetings to contact Golf and Arrangements Chairman, Mark Kienert.

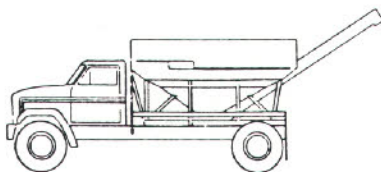
With the end of the golfing season in sight, we can also focus our attention on the O.J. NOER CENTER for TURFGRASS RESEARCH project. We are half-way through the fund-raising period and we are not yet half-way to our dollar goal. This Research Center is for the benefit of all of us. We need

to support it now so that it will be there when we need it. Thanks to those individuals who have given already and thanks to those clubs and businesses who have generously donated. The rest of us need to get going now so together we can reach our goal. Remember — O.J. NOER CENTER is for your benefit.

The WGCSA is a strong, healthy, growing professional group that works for the good of its members. Non-member superintendents are encouraged to join and benefit with us.

The WGCSA is going into the winter in fine shape and we plan to overwinter well and flourish again in 1989!

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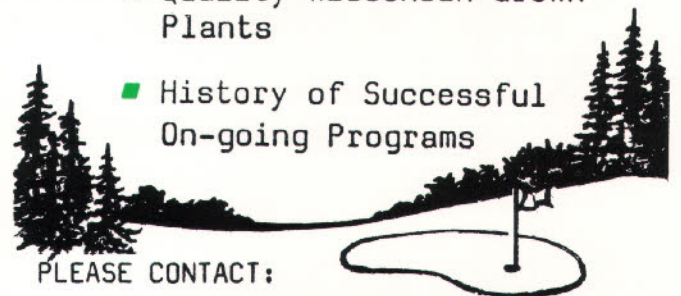
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## GAG US WITH A STEREOTYPE

By Monroe S. Miller

Those of us who live in Wisconsin and love this state sometimes tire of its image among out-of-staters. You know, the frozen north with snow on the ground for over 200 days of the year. We are *only*, to them, "America's Dairyland" and no matter where your glance takes you, a barn is in view. We hear a lot of griping about being on the receiving end of some very generous dairy subsidies from the U.S. Department of Agriculture. I think they sort of make up for the Defense Department contracts we don't get!

Gag us on a Holstein.

Milwaukee, instead of inspiring thoughts of the arts and of clean streets and of corruption-free municipal government, conjures up images of beer. "The beer that made Milwaukee famous", "Milwaukee's finest", etc. ad nauseum.

Gag us on a no-deposit no-return bottle.

And if we tire of having out-of-staters stereotype us as the land of cow manure and beer flatulates, then how about many of the professions we read about each day? The lawyers are the butt of a flood of jokes. Ask your neighbors and friends (assuming they aren't attorneys!) about their perceptions of lawyers and you'll likely get phrases such as "money grubbers" and "ambulance chasers". They are thought to be incredibly selfish as they pursue frivolous suit after petty and marginal suit through our already crowded criminal justice system, for the sole reason of padding their own wallets.

I'm sure the vast majority of the honest and competent attorneys in the State Bar could gag on a summons.

They have company, too. Doctors, politicians, stock brokers, businessmen and journalists are also in that group of professionals who have become more narrowly stereotyped of late, most often in very unflattering light.

And for those members of the golf course management fraternity who haven't checked lately, let me assure

you that all of us are still viewed in stereotypical terms, despite the efforts of a lot of individuals and some organizations. I kept a loose list of references to our profession (and ourselves) and it includes the usual greenskeepers, groundsmen, groundman, grass cutter, et. al., etc. I gag on these stupid stereotypes. I did not spend six years at this state's land grant university to become any of the above. Did Jim Beard earn a Ph.D. in "greenskeeping"? Most people cannot even spell the damn word right—there is no "s" between the "n" and the "k". Is Wayne Kussow a professor of grass cutting? To see educated and capable men and women viewed in these lowly terms is sad to me.

I will admit that occasionally the use of these words is innocent and inadvertent. The thing that saddens and frustrates me so much is the thought that these are terms in common use among the golfing public and reflect what they are used to hearing. I can only hope most think more of us than the words they use imply.

It isn't that I've lost (or never had) a sense of humor. Frankly, few are more ready to laugh at themselves than I am. I am simply deeply troubled that after so much effort, experience, education and contribution to the game of golf that we could still be suffering from that kind of "good ol' John Turnipseed" stereotype.

Gag us with a push mower.

Only a few months ago I was in a social situation with a friend of mine who is a faculty member at the University of Wisconsin. Despite nearly twenty years of knowing one another, when he introduced me to a couple he was with, he didn't know what to tell his friend my job was! He knows where I work and what I do, but he didn't know what to call my position. He was embarrassed. The point of this incident is that not only do we suffer stereotyping, but we don't even have a focused position in the eyes of some.

Living in Madison offers the opportunity to see a lot of state professional organizations in action. Many call the capital city of Wisconsin their "home". The State Bar of Wisconsin, for example, is quartered here and I've read of how they are developing a program they hope will overcome much of their public stereotype. From what I've read, this program will recommend changes from the law school level and up. Reports have it that their program includes a lot of self criticism.

Our own Golf Course Superintendents Association of America is working very hard to improve our image, and it obviously needs improvement. Bob Still is the staff person who was given that formidable task and he has shown how capable he is with this assignment. Rob Schultz spoke with Bob and wrote a column in "The Sports Page" about Still's work with focus groups of golfers. Anyone who attended the opening session at the GCSAA Conference in Houston had an opportunity to see and hear a video developed by Still that gave viewers a look at our profession. It is a good piece of work — my hat is off to this capable young man.

But despite my sincere support for such PR programs because of an obvious need, I am troubled by them. It is one thing to change "perception". But what do you do if, realistically, you have to change "fact"? I am not so foolish that I don't recognize that there may be a little bit of truth to the stereotype I believe we suffer. The image is what the public sees and hears about us; the presumption is that the reality is different. Presumption is the key word, for me. If people like Bob Still labor heavily and we spend generously in support, the public may actually eventually believe what we want them to believe. The trouble comes if the image is what too many of us are not. Then there is little incentive to change the reality, in my mind at least.

*(Continued on page 5)*



# You just can't keep a good company down!

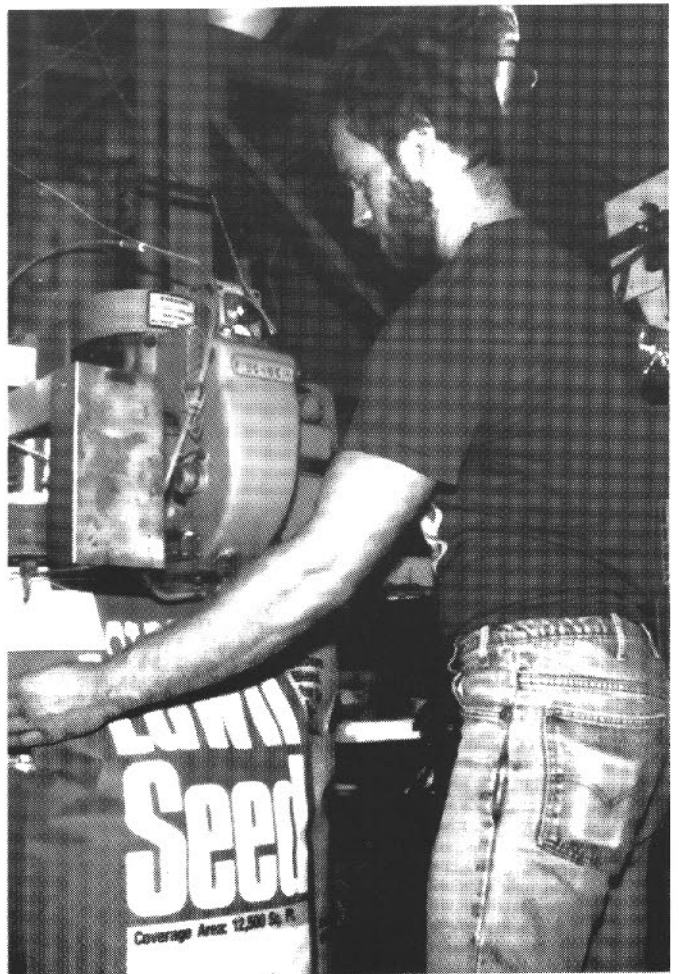


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It seems you could illustrate my point by using another example — the difference between “character” and “reputation”. One’s reputation is what others have come to think about him; his character is what he really is. If this person devotes considerable effort to improve his reputation, for selfish reasons, then his character will undoubtedly suffer.

An image must be a true reflection of reality, or it is a fraud. The only permanent and meaningful way to change our stereotypic image is to change more of the substance behind it. Bob Still, the GCSAA and all of their programs cannot do this; each and every Golf Course Superintendent has to assume the task. Everyone in the profession must make the commitment; one idiot can spoil the good work of a hundred.

We need to re-examine our goals, our values and our standards. Every time I go to a meeting — Houston was the most recent and gross example — and see colleagues dressed like they just came in from the shop, I realize

how far we have to go. Dirty tennis shoes, blue jeans and rumpled shirts should be verboten at any of our meetings — GCSAA, WGCSA, WTA or whatever. If you look like a hick, well, maybe the stereotype fits.

What kind of an image can you expect golf players to have when they see a shop yard that looks more like a junk yard? Frequently, a trip *into* the shop reveals a mess worse than outside. Disorganized chaos does little to improve images.

Work habits, proper grammar, neat attire and a hundred other things may well deserve more attention than PR programs do. This is hard work and might be unpleasant to follow. But it ultimately is the only really honest way to merge reality with image. A barrage of publicity complete with key phrases like “dedication”, “professionalism”, “service” and similar will ring hollow until we remedy the practices, procedure and conduct that lead to stereotypes like those we detest.

I’m extremely sensitive to what others think about us as a professional

group. And I don’t want them to have a wrong conception. I hate the stereotype we suffer too frequently. But also, I am smart enough to realize that dressing up an image for the golfing public without some improvement in the way a few of our colleagues act will make them imposters and the true professionals will be prostitutes. Without change on the part of those that really need it, each of Bob Still’s successive campaigns will have to be more intense and more expensive and more hysterical. It will never end.

Obviously, I am not suggesting that we start having sushi and a glass of Chardonnay for lunch, or that we start driving Volvos; a phony image is of absolutely no value. Let’s continue to applaud the work of groups like the WGCSA and the GCSAA to improve our image and try to make their job, on our behalf, much easier by being the kind of professional people we want the public to think we are and that we should be.

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(Continued from page 1)

Dr. Cline also spoke on the three most important issues relating to our job. The first is that we keep our perspective of how we fit into the global picture and that we practice conservation on our own little area for the benefit of the whole scheme. Secondly we need to recognize that our purpose is to do more than grow grass. We should educate others about the beneficial aspects golf courses make in the environment. And finally, we need to be proactive and press forward as leaders in water conservation and ecology so we can show that we are doing our own part.

We also heard from Dr. Michael Agnew, Professor and Turf Extension Specialist from Iowa State University. He brought us up to date on legislative activity and concerns from our neighbors in Iowa. These included underground storage tanks, groundwater protection, pesticide licensing and disposal measures.

During the Tuesday session we also heard Scott Hausman of the Wisconsin DNR who, in addition to describing water priority use lists, explained how the DNR regulates surface water pumping permits. Regulation of lakes and streams is through two means. One is through diversion permits, which allow the user to withdraw a specified amount of water for a specified time period. Second, regulation is through setting minimum water levels, below which no water removal for agricultural purposes may occur. This was the case at Bullseye C.C. where the flow rate of the Wisconsin River went below the minimum level and the DNR shut off their water diversion rights.

Scott also left us with fair warning that the DNR will be getting tougher on permits, reporting of water levels and usage, and making sure irrigation pumping equipment and wells are maintained up to state standards.

Along the lines of water management came the issue of effluent water for use on golf course irrigation. Bud Quandt, Superintendent at Pasadena Yacht and Country Club in Florida, provided some insight into his trials with effluent water use. His number one concern (and recommendation) for anyone interested is to make sure the effluent source is of good quality and low in salt. Since all sources of effluent are different, it is imperative that constant monitoring take place to insure quality.

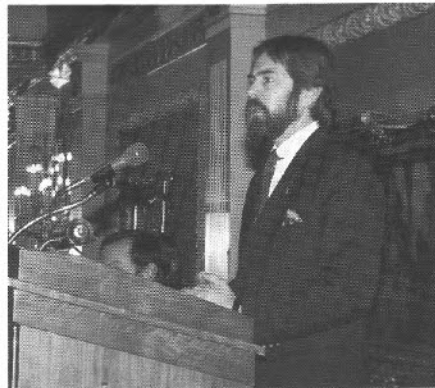
Dr. A. Martin Petrovic, Professor of Turfgrass Science from Cornell Univer-



**WGCSA President Roger Bell welcomed everyone to the 1988 Wisconsin Golf Turf Symposium.**



**Keynote speaker, Dr. Van Cline of The Toro Company.**



**Noon luncheon speaker Jeff Percival.**



**Scott Hausmann, DNR Water Regulation Chief.**

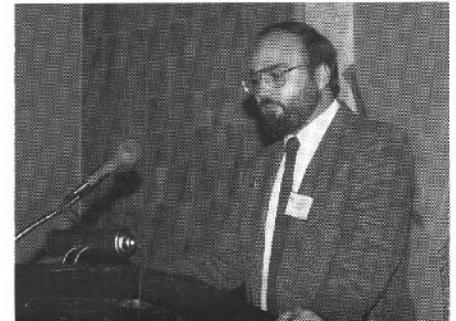
sity, discussed the fate of nitrogen applied to turf.

In addition to explaining the nitrogen cycle, Dr. Petrovic examined research results showing where the nitrogen applied to turf ends up and what the percentages are. His conclusions were that 10% to 75% is taken up by the plant, 35% to 40% is stored in the soil, 1 to 36% is lost to the atmosphere and 0% to 50% is lost through leaching to groundwater.

This is significant because of the concern of nitrate pollution in the groundwater and its effect on the health of those who drink that water. Nitrates are known to be carcinogenic, mutagenic and may cause the Blue Baby Syndrome affecting newborn infants.

For those reasons it is critical that we more fully understand the fate of nitrogen applied to the soil.

The subject of groundwater pollution was addressed by Nick Christians, Professor of Turfgrass Science at Iowa State University. He spoke on the use of pesticides and water management. His focus was on the factors affecting groundwater pollution and how to deal with them.



**Professor Marty Petrovic's appearance at the Symposium was the second time he's come to Wisconsin to speak at the Symposium.**

The primary factors affecting contamination are: the type of pesticide being used; the type of soil at the application site; the climate, geology and depth to groundwater at that site and the management practices instituted at the site.

When trying to determine the level of contamination possible at a specific area, it is important to consider all of these factors and make the necessary changes in the management practices and the pesticides used to avoid groundwater contamination.





Jim Latham did his usual superb job of summarizing the message of the 1988 Wisconsin Golf Turf Symposium.



Dr. Nick Christlans, Iowa State University.



Bud Quandt traveled a long way (St. Petersburg, Florida) to address the 23rd Symposium.



Ted Horton's second appearance before the Symposium was as professional and informative as his first one a few years ago.



"Dusty" Kienert



Dr. Michael Agnew, Iowa State University.

Keeping with a tradition of the Symposium, our USGA Green Section Director, James Latham, provided the Symposium roundup on the final day. His comment was that this was the best Symposium he has attended. Jim was right. The drought of 1988 has made us all aware of the need to keep up with information and the times we are in, and that we must always be informed professionals.

His perceptions on the major theme of the Symposium that turf is a low priority product in water use and that golf turf may, in times of short water supply, be deemed frivolous in the public eye, certainly was true in the eyes of the Symposium speakers.

If the Symposium did nothing else, it made all those in attendance realize the importance of water in our management of golf turf and the need to preserve the right to use that commodity for economic and ecological reasons.

The Symposium Committee — Belfield, Bell, Latham, Miller, Otto, Quast, Spindler, and Welch — did their usual outstanding job of planning for this year's meeting. Extra special thanks go to Jim Spindler for handling the endless details that go into a successful meeting. The quality of this year's edition has made their task next year even more difficult — this will be a tough act to follow.

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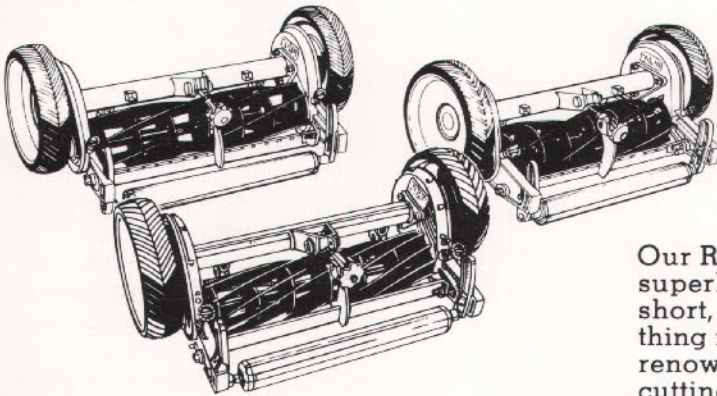


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## THE DROUGHT

By Monroe S. Miller

The flames in the fireplace are gently flickering and there is the slightest hint of hickory wood smoke in the air. I'm home alone and it is a very peaceful time right now. The thought pervasive in my mind at moments like this one in late fall, whether I'm inside or outside on the golf course, is that the drought of 1988 seems so long ago.

I am baffled by the emotion. The summer was easily the most brutal I've struggled through, even worse than 1976. And the autumn months didn't bring a whole lot of relief, especially September. Colleagues, when questioned about this, have expressed similar feelings. They cannot explain them either.

Maybe what we are noticing is the human tendency to quickly put bad experiences behind us. And this summer was at least a tough time, even if it wasn't "bad". Tough and frustrating. Disillusioning. The unauthorized meandering of the jet stream that brought us seemingly endless days and weeks of debilitating heat and lack of rainfall drove most people into an earlier and deeper stupor than most summers do; for us, the price for somnolence was immediate disaster.

The season of 1988 is one we'll not soon forget, even if it seems long removed. I subscribe to the philosophy that says regardless of how bad something is, there is always some good. The good I've taken from this extraordinary six months past is a new reference point. Now most of us will be able to say, hopefully for many years to come, "Yes, this was a tough summer, but it doesn't come close to the one we had back in '88." The best of my short military career was a reference. No matter how bad things get — difficult summers, irrigation leaks at 2:00 a.m., rampant disease, personnel problems, or whatever — they pale in comparison to 15 months in a combat zone where the risk of losing your life is very real, all 24 hours a day.

I learned a lot of other things from the drought of 1988. One of the most

enduring was a reminder of the importance of pacing myself. It became quite clear by mid-June that the year was going to be very long and intense. It was equally apparent that a real effort would be required to keep a healthy pace. Reasonable middle ground between angry reactions with fist shaking and withdrawal into a shell had to be found. That's easier said than done and yet for me it was something important. It would have been impossible to keep a breakneck pace from opening until Thanksgiving with the heat and drought wearing us down. A pace like that is unhealthy and potentially destructive. It can take a mental and psychological toll, also.

Pacing involved simplifying nearly everything, both on the job and at home. It meant accepting the weather that bore down so unmercifully day after day. It meant separating the golf course challenges and dealing with each one as it appeared, one at a time.

If a sense of humor was ever important, this summer past was the time. I was really lucky this year because my assistant, Pat Zurawski, is blessed with a marvelous sense of humor. There were days when the sun would beat down on the golf course with a dead, blistering, relentless malice. Sweat was swelling from every pore in everyone's body. There wouldn't be a breath of air anywhere. I'd ask Pat how things looked across the tracks and he'd reply with something like, "Nice and toasty warm, the grass is browning nicely." I'd have to laugh.

A good laugh can do wonders in dispelling gloom and despair. It can put things back into perspective, and heaven knows that was very important this summer. No part of life can afford to be without humor for long, including life on a golf course during a drought. Laughter this year was a powerful tonic for me and the people on my staff.

In a hot, droughty summer like '88 when wells give out and streams and rivers go dry and golf courses barely make it to survive another day, golf

course superintendents need to reinforce confidence in their abilities, training and experience. This was not a time for faint heartedness. Trust in our own abilities, our own strength and reasoning needs support from science. We got it this summer from those with that charge, and it helped. The faculty from the UW deserve our applause.

Another ingredient is frequently discovered by many in a drought year. When on the verge of being overtaken, despite help from science and despite personal ability, church becomes more important to some. From what I've read, this has been fairly common in drought years among those whose fate is heavily dependent on the weather. People with no past inclination to go to church suddenly attend prayer meetings and visit sanctuaries. They sit before the pulpit, heads bowed in humble respect. Prayer may seem a quaint option to some. But this past summer, even White House spokesman Marlin Fitzwater, when asked about the administration's response to the drought, replied, "Pray for rain." In most cases that makes the most sense. And a sign in front of a Wisconsin farm along Highway 18 this summer read: "Read II Chronicles 7:14." Look the passage up sometime this winter and think about it.

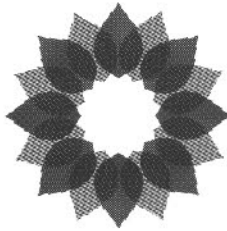
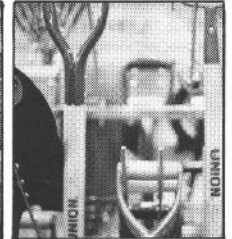
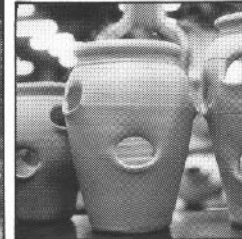
There were a lot of interesting side-lights to the drought I won't soon forget. Have you ever seen a time when the weather forecasters were more accurate? Forecasts sounded like a broken record — "Hot and dry all week." I'll never appreciate the joy with which they present this bad news to us. Apparently, to most people this is *good* news. On those few occasions when we did receive a little rain, the rain refreshed the news reports and weathercasts as much as it did golf courses and farm fields.

And speaking of forecasts, 1988 led to a major disappointment of sorts. I've always put a lot of faith into the long range weather outlook in the Old Farm-

(Continued on page 11)



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