

## AN OPPORTUNITY

By Roger C. Bell



*"We are all faced with a series of great opportunities brilliantly disguised as impossible situations."*

— Author Unknown

The above quotation has found its way to the wall by the break room at my shop. I think that it is possibly the best description that I have seen of the summer of 1988.

At least there is some comfort in the fact that golfers KNOW about the drought — the media has seen to that. I dare say that no Wisconsin superintendent needed the newspaper, radio, or television to tell him about the lack of rainfall. We've all suffered —

some to a greater extent, some to a lesser extent. To those without sufficient (or any) water, we extend our sympathy knowing that there, except for the grace of God, go any of us. To those with water, we extend our heartfelt hopes that you can keep your irrigation system patched together during these days of marathon operations.

The cultivation of fine turf remains a red-headed stepchild to the agribusiness community. Gov. Thompson exempted us from the special permits for surface water diversion. We're isolated on our golf courses — there is no state "hot-line" to deal with our stress (as if we had time to talk to a

state-sponsored shrink!)

The time has come for us to regroup and recoup our losses. We need to convince our clubs that the glass is half-full, not half-empty. They need us more than ever to bring their golf courses back to pre-drought conditions. We need to hang together through our Association to promote our profession and to support each other in such times of crises.

The quotation on my wall tells me that I am in the midst of some tremendous opportunities. That's good to know — but, personally, I am looking forward to autumn and a change in the weather.

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# Two Questions

*By Monroe S. Miller*

In one of what has become an untold number of pleas and conversations on behalf of the NOER CENTER, a person I was recently visiting with (a golf player) asked a two-pronged question that may crop up elsewhere. They're the kind of questions that deserve a response, not only in a one-on-one situation like I experienced, but a public one as well.

After kindly listening to me tell him why we needed to raise so much money for turfgrass research, he asked, "If the need for research is as great as you say, and I do believe you, then why doesn't the College of Agriculture provide the necessary resources? After all, that's one of the reasons we pay such high taxes in Wisconsin — our extensive higher education system."

Every question should be so easy for me to answer. The first and maybe most important point to make is that the CALS is dedicated to turfgrass research, education and extension. One of the best undergraduate programs in the country is available to students who want to pursue a career in turfgrass management. Jim Love started it over 25 years ago and Wayne Kussow directs it today. That educational program receives the full support of the College and of the University — that is how the bills get paid. The same is true for Dr. Newman and his teaching and extension and herbicide research. In Plant Pathology, the University has dedicated money and staff support to Dr. Worf, to the Plant Disease Diagnostic Laboratory (so ably managed by Mary Francis Heimann) for work on turfgrass problems. The story is repeated in Entomology — Department Chairman Chuck Koval spends part of his time dealing with turfgrass crops in Wisconsin. Phil Pellitteri, in my view one of the best and most personable entomologists in the country, directs the insect identification lab and has other responsibilities that bring him into contact with the turfgrass industry. The UW Extension meetings, which

set all kinds of attendance records this past spring, are state funded programs through the CALS.

But as an industry there is a sense of the need to do more, not only to help solve the problems of today in a rapidly changing world, but to provide the kind of information that will secure our future. That's what the NOER CENTER project is really about. IPM, ground water, sustainable agriculture and a thousand other things will require research and study and investigation that force the need for the NOER CENTER to center stage.

It's not like we are breaking new ground here. For example, there is a desperate need for a new school of business on the Madison campus. The legislature, probably through the state building commission, made its approval contingent on the school's ability to raise a substantial portion of the nearly \$30 million cost. In the CALS, we have seen program support, generous program support, from the dairy industry, from pork producers, cranberry growers, potato farmers and scores more. The reality is that the turfgrass industry is a johnny-come lately in putting some money on the table for a facility that is needed by us.

It took me far longer to answer that first question than it did for you to read this. No sooner had I stopped talking than he asked me the second question. Maybe you've heard it also. Paraphrasing, the question was, "Won't outside money like you are raising adversely taint the research results forthcoming from the project?" His implication that private dollars would somehow invalidate conclusions of work done at the NOER CENTER was more than I could handle. My fury was tempered by the fact that this question is extremely easy to answer when the focus is the University of Wisconsin.

The answer is a strong, absolute and emphatic NO. Take a look at the pledge card inside the fund raising brochure for the NOER CENTER. The gifts and

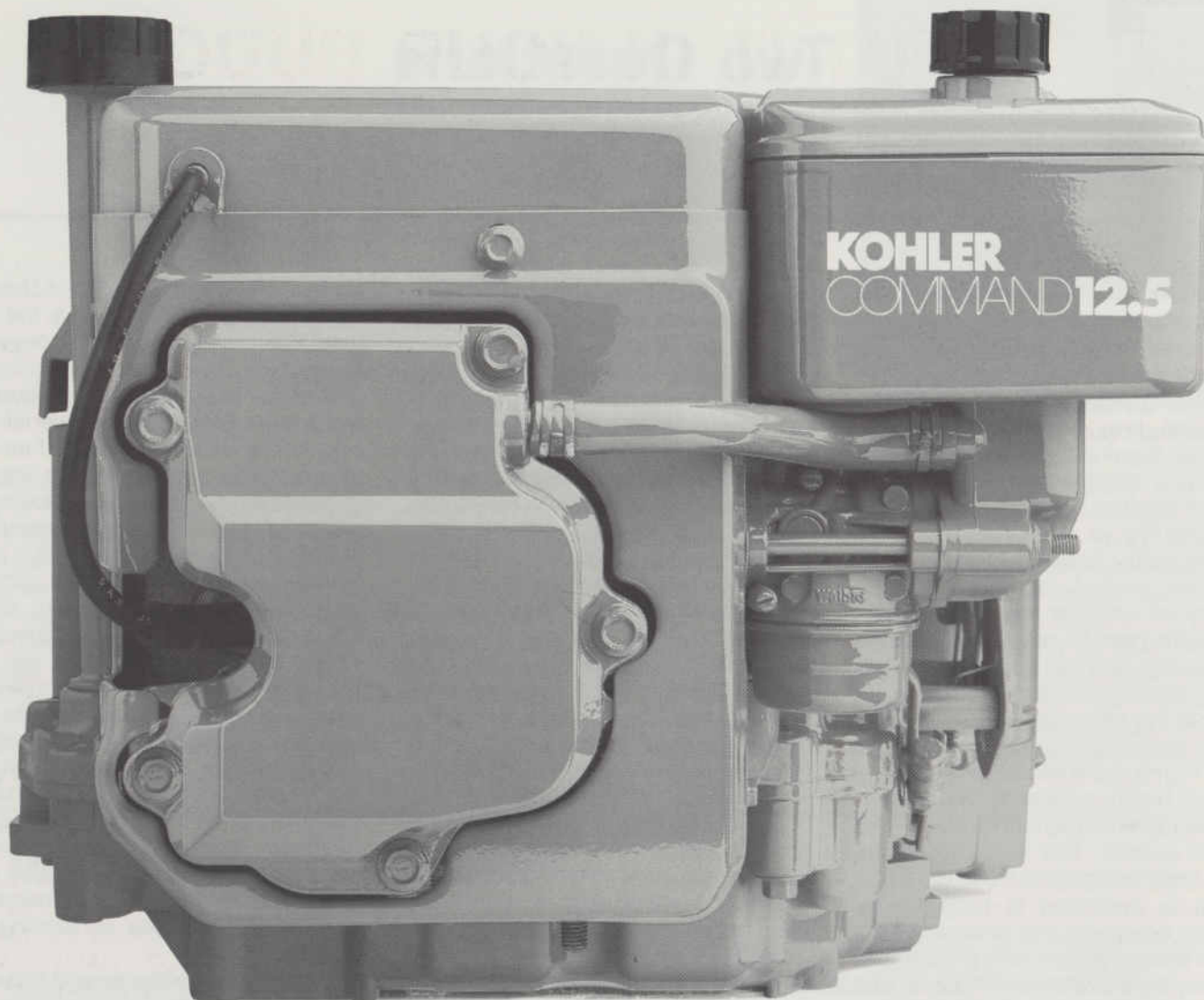
pledges are made through the University of Wisconsin Foundation to the university. No money is pledged or given to a person, a department or college. The UW only accepts money through the Board of Regents and that will be true for the NOER CENTER funds.

The school goes to the nth degree in exercising care when grants of money are accepted. The research which results from such monies is public information and reported accordingly. In fact, if I'm not mistaken, all research records are open for inspection. Faculty dealing with groups like the Wisconsin Turfgrass Association are always reporting such activities to departmental chairmen and deans within the CALS. This is also true when the money source is public. And, of course, the integrity of the UW staff who we deal with directly — Newman, Worf, Kussow and Koval — precludes any chance of contamination of research conclusions because of funding influences.

Actually, the deliberate and thoughtful person would view involvement of an interest group as a plus, a positive factor. Anytime you are able to convey the true needs and problems of your profession to those dedicated to helping find answers and solutions, everyone benefits. Surely this is true for the NOER CENTER.

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# PUT IT IN YOUR BUDGET

By Monroe S. Miller

Few things unnerve a board of directors (or an owner, for that matter) than unbudgeted expenditures or even a request for an unbudgeted item.

I've seen frustration over mid-year requests for computer systems, ice machines and cash registers. They seem a bit more understanding when asked for money to repair a roof or an air conditioning unit or money for an extra application of a pyuthium control product. Emergencies do happen, but even these legitimate surprises seldom please them.

As I've searched around for reasons why so few golf courses and golf clubs have given or pledged money to the NOER CENTER (at last count, that number was less than a dozen of the nearly 400 golf courses in Wisconsin), it dawned on me that maybe this trait of boards that seems to be universal is the reason. We officially started the NOER CENTER fund drive late in 1987, too late for most Golf Course Superintendents to include any money for it in their 1988 budget.

So as the 1989 budget preparation descends upon us, the opportunity to include the NOER CENTER in your financial plan for next year presents itself. This worked for me and a couple of others last year. Quite frankly, if you pledge \$1,000 and it comes from a \$300,000 budget, the club's support amounts to three-tenths of one percent of the golf course budget. As a percent of a club's total budget, that \$1,000, which is extremely important to turfgrass research, becomes so incredibly and infinitesimally small it barely merits serious or lengthy discussion. This is especially true at budget time.

During the budget process, a NOER CENTER gift or pledge is taken in the context of everything else relating to golf turf management for a year. It becomes a little unreasonable for committee members to focus on that number when they may be dealing with labor accounts of \$100,000, fungicide costs that can crowd \$200 per gallon and astronomical irrigation system re-

placement or upgrading expense.

I believe the period of time Golf Course Superintendents in Wisconsin are planning for costs for 1989 is the best time to present a case for research. My argument has been that this is more than just a legitimate expense for us; it is an obligation we all must accept. In my budget not only do we budget for the NOER CENTER, but we also decide on our level of support for the USGA research efforts, the Agri-

business Council, the Wisconsin Turfgrass Association and the Forestry/Rights-of-Way/Turf Coalition. All of these are specific line items in my budget, out front for all to see.

The rationale for the fund drive for the NOER CENTER is powerful but simple. Please keep it in mind as you prepare your plan for the next fiscal year. It is an easy, straightforward proposition. And best of all, it adds up!

## F/ROW/T LEGAL FUND NEEDS HELP

The relief felt from the judgment in favor of our industry in the Town of Casey suit was short-lived. As noted in Russ Weisensel's story elsewhere in this issue of *The Grass Roots*, the state of Wisconsin Public Intervenor's office is appealing the Washburn County Circuit Court's decision. F/ROW/T asked for contributions way back in May to pay for the legal expenses relating to that successful court hearing. It must have fallen on deaf ears and blind eyes. To date, only one-fourth of the expense money has been raised and that has come from only 19 responses. The expense to defend the turfgrass

industry's position in this appeal looms large and that is going to have to be paid for somewhere along the line.

It baffles this editor that our golf courses in Wisconsin seem so unconcerned about problems of this nature. THIS COURT SUCCESS MADE YOUR LIFE A LOT EASIER. YOU WON. WHY NOT HELP PAY THE LEGAL BILL?

The F/ROW/T Board is asking for \$50 from each golf course in Wisconsin. Please fill out the form below and return it today with a check. Thanks in advance.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Firm (Golf Course) \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

1988/1989 Annual Support of F/ROW/T \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Casey Legal Expenses \$ \_\_\_\_\_

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Total \$ \_\_\_\_\_



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## AUTUMN IN WISCONSIN

By Monroe S. Miller

Fall is the best of seasons, for a lot of reasons. It's my favorite season, a hands down winner, an easy choice. This time of warm days and cool nights brings an enormous sense of relief to me and to the golf course I manage, especially after a brutal summer like this one just past. Once we get to Labor Day, I know full well we "made it through" another golf season.

Maybe that realization should bring on melancholy and gloom, instead of joy. You know, time passing too quickly, especially for a man who is over forty now. But who cares — not I! It's this time that I'm usually counting the days remaining until Cheryl and I leave for our vacation. We laugh at the people who don't seem to know any better than to take their vacation in the summertime. They gripe about the heat and the humidity and how hard it is to sleep at night. The waiting lines are long no matter where they go and the traffic on the highways is miserable. We don't have those problems on our autumn trip to New England.

I don't think anyone has ever done justice, in words, to the autumn color in New England. Most of the descriptions I've read tend to drift into clichés. It's not the fault or deficiencies of the many writers who have tried; it's because the spectacle of fall itself in New England is so enormous and so incredibly varied. Autumn there is a season of colors that don't exist anywhere else on earth at any time of the year. It just could be that the words to properly describe these endless scenes aren't in the English language.

But this year we're staying home.

A few months ago, I faced that realization with a bit of bitterness. "No leafpeekers trip?" a friend asked. "Nope," says me. "As usual, business comes first — a new irrigation system and some fairly major construction on the golf course. So I'm going to have to wait until 1989 to recapture what autumn really should be."

I cannot complain too much. Working with an antique irrigation system like ours has made the job of providing

competitive playing conditions on our golf course damned tough over the years. I can hardly wait to see what we'll be able to do now. I feel a sense of responsibility that simply says I have to be here during the entire installation process. Heaven knows that the Midwest Irrigation crew doesn't need me; the construction work most likely does.

So Cher and I plan to make the best of it — an autumn spent only in Wisconsin. It isn't the end of the world, although for months it seemed like it. Fall is a beautiful season here, too.

When he was almost sixty years old, in 1960, the great American writer John Steinbeck set out to rediscover America. Accompanied only by his dog Charley, he travelled the length and breadth of the U.S. He kept a diary and a log and from them he wrote a book, appropriately titled *"Travels With Charley"*. It's our good luck he visited Wisconsin in early October. Did Steinbeck capture your emotions, when he wrote of October in Wisconsin like this?

*"I had never been to Wisconsin, but all my life I had heard about it, had eaten its cheeses. And I must have seen pictures. Everyone must have. Why then was I unprepared for the beauty of this region, for its variety of field and hill, forest, lake? I don't know how it is in other seasons, the summers may reek and rock with heat, the winters may groan with dismal cold, but when I saw it for the first and only time, in early October, the air was rich with butter-colored sunlight, not fuzzy but crisp and clear so that every frost-gay tree was set off, the rising hills were not compounded, but alone and separate. There was a penetration of the light into solid substances so that I seemed to see into things, deep in. I remembered now that I had been told Wisconsin is a lovely state, but the telling had not prepared me. It was a magic day. The land dripped with richness; the fat cows and pigs gleamed against green, and in smaller holdings, corn standing in little tents as corn should, and pumpkins all about."*

How could anyone say it better? Or

be closer to the truth? Imagine how I felt when I read those words—I was on about the 11th parallel, almost within walking distance of the equator, where it rained a hundred inches in a normal year, the humidity was high and debilitating. The VC and NVA were sending incoming rounds every night. It was September and I still had a year to go before I could return to Wisconsin. Steinbeck's words gave me happiness, a little bit of happiness and a reminder of home in the midst of a whole lot of misery.

Twenty years later, Steinbeck has reminded me of our own beautiful Wisconsin autumns. The tree that New England has in abundance is the sugar maple. Those trees are primarily responsible for the spectacular fall color there. Despite the fact that the sugar maple is our state tree, we don't have very many respectable ones. Oh, Tom Harrison has a few at Maple Bluff that have pretty color, but nothing like those in the northeast. But what Wisconsin has that few others can claim the likes of are the oak trees. Some say there are beautiful oak trees in the Ozarks, and there probably are. But I'd put the russets and reds and browns and burgundies and clarets and purples of our oaks against those anywhere and feel confident that ours are the prettiest. And about the time maples are declining, the ash are fading and the hackberry have fallen, the oak colors are coming on strong with their mingled and overlapping colors, and their colors last into November.

I believe the fall blue of our white ash trees, the red flame of our sumac and the soft yellow of the needles of our larch are as fine as those elsewhere. I've often boasted that we have a dozen shagbark hickory trees at Blackhawk Country Club that are "All Americans" in the fall — their deep and clear yellow leaves against the black of the bark and the blue of the sky are breathtaking.

Autumn in Wisconsin tastes good, too. Tomatoes, winter squash, pump-

*(Continued on Page 9)*



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## Jottings

(Continued from Page 7)

kins, grapes and apples are traditional fall garden fare. They add a lot of color to the Farmers' Market around the Capitol Square here in Madison, usually dressed up with bunches of orange bittersweet. This fall we're going to take a trip west to "Coulee Country" and visit Gays Mills. The orchards of that quaint little village produce delicious ripe apples. If you enjoy apples for their beauty as well as their taste, look up a piece written by Henry David Thoreau entitled "Wild Apples". It was actually a lecture he gave that was subsequently printed in the November 1862 issue of "The Atlantic Monthly". It is timeless and reads best in autumn.

Door County is a trip, hopefully, most of us will make this fall. My guess is that the warm water on either side of the Door will preserve the fall color of Cherry Hills through our October meeting. Tom Parent almost promises it.

The irrigation crew works four long days, Monday through Thursday. Once our project is on its way to healing, we're going to pick either a Saturday

when the Badgers aren't playing or a Sunday when the Packers are out of state and get lost on some of the skinny roads in the Kettle Moraine area of Wisconsin. Some of Wisconsin's prettiest vistas are there and they probably are best in fall. Imagine the restful pleasures of travelling leaf-covered roads, maybe to the sound of Johann Pachelbel's "Canon in D" or Vivaldi's "Four Seasons", soaking up the gorgeous landscape.

And speaking of football, in Wisconsin we enjoy, nay love, some of the worst football in the whole country! There aren't many things that rival fall in a college town, and that's mainly because of the football season. It's hard to figure — for twenty years Wisconsin has ranked in the top ten nationally in per game attendance at Camp Randall Stadium. We produce as many NFL draft choices as Michigan or Notre Dame and more than Iowa. Yet our win-loss record stinks. So why do fans still pour into the stadium on game days? It's a "fall" tradition in Madison, the classic college town.

Football means watching Bucky Badger stomping on the Northwestern

Wildcat or kidnapping the Michigan State Spartan or tripping Purdue's Boilermaker. Football at Wisconsin is a sea of red streaming up and down Bascom Hill, alums and students alike, on warm fall game days. Football is the Big Red Pep Rally at the Union, the Homecoming "Yell Like Hell" contest and floats up and down Langdon Street. It's hard to describe — ask Randy Witt or Jim Knapp or Curt Larson. Afternoons at Camp Randall Stadium mean the chance to hear the finest, absolutely the best university marching band in America. After the team leaves the field at the end of the game, the stadium is still full — post-game music and fun! It doesn't happen like that anywhere else in the country.

I inherited many of my Grandfather Miller's books. Among them is a small leatherbound copy of "Evangeline, A Tale of Acadie". It was written by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, and on page 22 is a line that only a poet like Longfellow could write:

*"Then followed that beautiful season, called by the Acadian peasants the Summer of All-Saints!"*

I think I'm going to enjoy "that beautiful season" right here in Wisconsin.

# WGCSA MONTHLY MEETING ROUNDUP

## MONROE COUNTRY CLUB

June 27, 1988

For the second time in four years, Tom Schwab hosted a WGCSA monthly meeting at the beautiful Monroe Country Club. The low level of the pond that provides irrigation water for the golf course reminded the 61 WGCSA members of how serious this drought is for Tom.

The Chapman system of golf was the play method for the day. Winners were:

First place	Dick Evenson and Woody Vligt
Second place	Tom Van Valin and Mike Halverson
Third place	Jack Ross and Jim Knapp
Fourth place	Don Ferger and John Krutilla
Fifth place	Roy Figi and Virgil Elmer

Event prizes went to the following players:

Long drive	Don Ferger
------------	------------

Closest to  
the pin  
Long putt

Brad Wagner  
Tom Van Valin  
Dan Barrett  
Roger Bell  
and Bob Belfield.

## DRETZKA PARK MEETING

July 27, 1988

Dretzka Park golf course is a hidden jewel on Milwaukee's northwest side. A golf course in the Milwaukee County Park system, Dretzka Park has a wide variety of golf holes that have great appeal to the resident players. Golf Course Superintendent Bill Knight deserves much of the credit for the course's popularity. It provided a great setting for the July WGCSA meeting.

Thanks to the PGA Wisconsin Section Executive Director Tony Coleman and past president Dennis Tiziani for joining our group for the day.

Blind draw team winners were Dan Quast, Charlie Shaw, Tom Lewanowski and Chris Pinkerton. Second place

was a tie among three teams with Paul Rhode, Jim Shaw, Greg Youngs, Paul Delfosse, Mike Handrich, Steve Allen, Bob Gosewher, Joe Kuda, Karl Wihausen, Mike Lee and Mark Kienert.

Event winners were:

- Closest to the pin - Wayne Otto and Mark Kienert
- Low gross - Jim Shaw
- Low net - Chris Pinkerton
- Longest drive - Mike Halverson

The Milwaukee County Parks Catering Service offered the finest accommodations. Beer, excellent food (and lots of it) and a beautiful cake topped with the GCSAA logo made the meal a special treat. And finally, all proceeds of this meeting will go to the O.J. NOER CENTER for TURFGRASS RESEARCH.

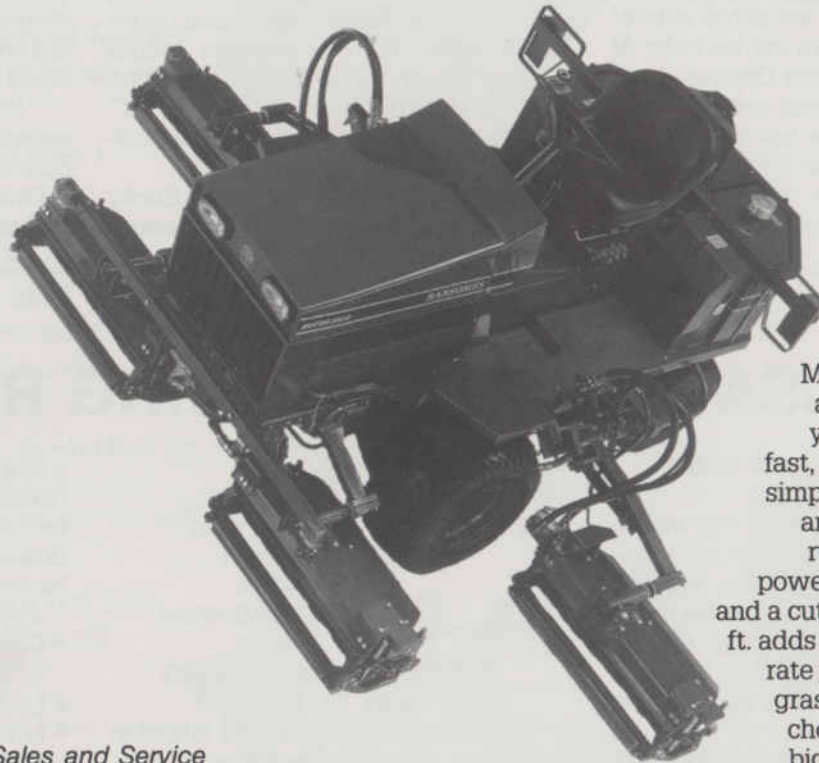
Mary Rondeau deserves thanks for all the time she spent in working at the starters desk before the event and in recording the scores afterwards. And again, appreciation from the WGCSA to Bill Knight for a job well done.





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