



SCOOTERS

By Monroe S. Miller

I've got some friends who are members of the Rotary in town; a few of them have encouraged me to join one of the clubs. I really thought about it until I learned of how strict they are on attendance at their weekly noontime meetings, including those during our extremely busy summer months.

In at least one of the Rotary clubs there are tables for what are called "scooters". These members are those who, at a given meeting, will sign the attendance card, eat dinner and then scoot out before the program begins.

I am beginning to think there are some "scooters" in the WGCSA. There is no reason to hide our disappointment over the last report of donors and donations for the NOER CENTER from the University of Wisconsin Foundation. There sure aren't many golf courses listed. I'm struggling to find out the reason for this.

In the 20 years I've been close to this business, I have heard a fair number of complaints and quite a few criticisms about the turfgrass research efforts at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. "Why don't they have a program like Penn State's or MSU's?" There wasn't much said about the educational program — most grads from the UW's turf management program went out to work on golf courses here in Wisconsin. The faculty worked hard at their extension responsibilities, sponsored some excellent seminars and were available for whatever help people in the field needed. But the resources for substantial research work just didn't exist.

Enter the Wisconsin Turfgrass Association. With the goal of supporting turfgrass research in the state, the organization provided the vehicle needed to focus on development of a facility and program for that research everyone agreed was needed. Sounds great, it has been and it should be.

The plan for the construction of the O.J. NOER CENTER for TURFGRASS RESEARCH was developed and presented (many times) to the turfgrass industry in general and the golf course management business in particular.

The response has been less than overwhelming.

Some who have complained the most and criticized the loudest apparently are "scooters". We haven't heard a word of commitment nor seen a dime of support from far too many golf courses and golf course superintendents. It's very disappointing.

How strange it is that clubs with great means in these times of great golf prosperity cannot find a way to support an effort that will help secure their future. I expressed that very thought to a good friend of mine and to most of the members of the WGCSA. His observation was, "Monroe, don't be upset with the clubs themselves. Most would be forthcoming with a donation and pledge, for the NOER CENTER, *if they were asked*. Your frustration should be directed toward your fellow golf course superinten-

dents. They either aren't even asking or are not presenting a very convincing case." The more I've thought about it, the more I believe he may well be right. Who is the "scooter" in cases like these?

Golf course superintendents are important in the decision making process of golf clubs. This fact gives us a perfect opportunity to ask a golf club or golf course to share what golf has given them. It gives a sense of satisfaction to them to participate, once they are made aware of how important a contribution would be *to them*. It is an easy thing to do, and one that is very obviously critical to the success of the NOER CENTER.

To expect a handful of golf courses in Wisconsin to provide all that is needed to finish the NOER CENTER is a bit like throwing popcorn at a battleship. They just can't do it by themselves. This is a facility that will benefit everybody, and everybody's help is desperately needed to make this dream come true.

Please, don't be a scooter. Give your club or golf course the leadership necessary to move it into supporting the NOER CENTER.

GRASS ROOTS wins GCSAA Newsletter Contest Again!!

The GRASS ROOTS has again been honored by the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America. It has been given the large chapter "Best Overall" award for the fifth consecutive year. Obviously, this award should be a source of great pride for all of the members of the Wisconsin Golf Course Superintendents Association.

To this editor, thanks are due to many. The first thing to always remember is that without our advertisers we would not have a GRASS ROOTS. Simply stated, they pay the bills. That is greatly appreciated.

After the contest, the judges will send the editor an evaluation of his journal if he likes. This editor feels such an analysis is one of the best things about the contest. The analysis this year offered up a number of constructive criticisms to help make future issues a lot better than past ones. They identified problems like gray copy, re-

strained artwork, photos and even the need for a "cover." But on the second page of the evaluation were three words that said most of what needs to be said about the GRASS ROOTS. — "Outstanding writing throughout." That comment was directed to Dr. David Cookson, Rob Schultz, Dr. Gayle Worf, Dr. Wayne Kussow, Tom Harrison, Dennis Thorp, Dr. Lois Stack, Jim Latham and Rod Johnson. These people are our feature writers and are found in nearly every issue. They are creative, insightful and **dependable**. Mike Semler, Mark Kienert and Roger Bell serve as reporters on occasion. Their writing is appreciated, too. We recognize all of those others who write on request or on inspiration. The GRASS ROOTS involves a lot of people and maybe that is why it is so representative of the golf course business in Wisconsin.

Congratulations to everybody!



Reminiscing 1988

By Monroe S. Miller

If ever there was a year worthy of recollection, surely it was 1988. The good news, the bad news and the extremes of such a year need recording. Putting memorable events on paper tends to give them credibility, something our successors may want to see. They probably won't believe what we'll tell them.

And reminisce is what I mean — I promise no 1988 mea culpas and no 1989 forecasts or resolutions. All of those are boring.

But the year past was anything but boring for golf course superintendents. In fact, the way it started out gave some hope to us that it could be a great year. What I'm talking about was the biggest news at last year's Masters. After years of "closet" complaining, some golf professionals went public with their anger, frustration and disgust with fast greens.

Sports page headlines read, *Zoeller Sees Red On Fast Greens*, and *Lyle Leads; Fuzzy Fumes*, and *Crenshaw Criticizes Greens*. Fuzzy Zoeller led the charge. On the second day of the Masters, Zoeller was in third place. Was America's most cheerful golfer happy? "I'm not mad. I'm (bleeped)," said the 1979 Masters champ. "It's a joke out there," he said of the super fast and extra hard greens. "You're just tapping it. You're praying to God to stop the ball within eight or nine feet of the hole and make the next one coming back. Now if that's golf, I'm in the wrong damn league."

Zoeller's anger included a total denunciation of the direction of major tournament golf in America since 1973. Most of my friends in the golf course management business didn't comment on that, but were really cheering him for speaking out on ridiculously fast greens. It was a long time coming, but it arrived with a bang!

"Nobody's having any fun," Fuzzy elaborated. "I hate it when they do like they have done to these greens. Golf is supposed to be fun, and it's no fun as hard and as fast as these greens are."

"A large number of the players feel like I do, but they're afraid to speak out." Without naming names, but in an obvious reference to tournament officials, Zoeller said the problem was that "egos are getting in the way." That's similar to something I wrote three or four years ago in the *GRASS ROOTS*. And I still believe it.

After the third round, the low scorer for the day had more harsh criticism for the fast greens. Said Ben Crenshaw: "I can't say that it was fun. On downhill putts you've just got to breathe on the ball and hope it stops somewhere near the hole."

"That green (the 11th) is dead," Crenshaw said. "There is nothing to hold the ball at all. They're going to have to call in the fire department on that one." Added Zoeller, "I think they should take a picture of the 11th green and have it framed. It's as hard as that — — — wall over there"

Zoeller also said that his hot words were warmly received by the players. Bernard Langer added emphasis to Zoeller's observations about the greens.

If golf players listen to agronomic reasons from the golf course manager and game reasons from the touring golf pros, maybe this ridiculous situation will improve in 1989. That remains to be seen. But the courage of Zoeller, Crenshaw, et. al. to finally speak up will make 1988 memorable for that alone. It was good news.

Around Father's Day of last year, one of my most cherished beliefs was challenged; the assumption that I have lived with my whole life, that no two snowflakes are alike, was disputed by a researcher. Bitter disappointment. An obvious error. Surely an unfounded claim. An insult to the late W. A. Bentley of Jericho, Vermont.

A researcher at the National Center for Atmospheric Research in Boulder, Colorado made the discovery of what may be the first matching set of snow

crystals (Meteorologists like the term "snow crystal" more than "snowflake" because it reflects the fact that they take many forms other than the popular six-pointed image. Snow crystals can be shaped like stars, needles, columns, plates and even plain of lumps.).

Disappointing as this researcher's letter in the May issue of the *Bulletin of the American Meteorological Society* was, it did have a Wisconsin connection. The crystals were captured on a glass slide exposed in a cloud on a research flight over Wausau! The capture was made on November 1, 1986. The glass plate was coated with oil and exposed to the Wausau cloud for 11 seconds at 20,000 feet. The plate was kept cold until the plane returned to the ground and the snow crystals were photographed.

To preserve the theory that no two snowflakes are alike, we should ask researchers to produce evidence to the contrary. They couldn't do it — the snow crystals were not saved. Who could let a picture ruin such a long held belief?

Speaking of old beliefs falling by the wayside, another one took a long tumble when Dr. Joe Vargas, our friend from Michigan State University, had a MSU report quoted in *Midwest Living* magazine.

Dr. Vargas told everyone to forget what we learned over the years about growing healthy bluegrass. He says frequent light watering — 1/10th of an inch every day — produces a better looking and healthier lawn than a deep and thorough watering once or twice a week. He claims his recommendation does not encourage shallow roots.

This same report recommends what our own Dr. Kussow does concerning another matter — late fall N fertilization. At least there is some agreement in this quarter.

Dr. Vargas said he took a beating after his MSU report came out, but he is standing firm.

A tenth of an inch a day?

A Wisconsin connection cropped up in a news release from the National Golf Foundation. It carried some surprising stats — surprising to out-of-staters, anyway.

Golf is in a "boom" time all across the country, but is really enjoying a lot of interest here at home. For instance, Wisconsin **leads the nation** in golf participation, with 15.9 percent of our citizens being golfers. As a reference, Mississippi (a warm weather southern state with a 12-month season) has a participation rate of 3.6 percent of its population playing golf.

Despite being well down the population list, we rank ninth in the total number of golfers with 731,613 players. And we're tied for third in the percentage of females (28%) playing golf.

It's all good news for those of us who manage golf courses here in the Badger State.

There's a new (to me, at least) publication coming across my desk these days. It's called *GOLF WEEK*, and the November 19, 1988 issue had an article on the "Making of a Superintendent." The paper has a section called "Course Management and Golf Business", and the story I'm referring to is the first in a series. This one dealt with what golf course owners expect from a golf course superintendent.

Most of the story was trite, until the author started quoting Peter Trenchard. Some WGCSA members got a chance to meet Peter in Houston at the GCSAA Conference. Others may have gotten to know him in Sturgeon Bay where our November meeting was held. Peter happens to own Cherry Hills of Door County.

Most course owners quoted in the story placed emphasis on a technical education. Trenchard didn't disagree, but he stated that he wants a well-rounded, liberally educated superintendent. He said that good technical knowledge was a must — plant pathology to hydraulics. But then he added: "I want somebody who knows as much about Mozart and Picasso as he does

about cutworms. I like to have dinner with my superintendent and there isn't much you can say about cutworms after the first drink."

Perceptive guy, that Peter Trenchard. I happen to agree with his philosophy.

Rod Johnson helped make 1988 a good year for his own golf course as well as for golf in Wisconsin. Gathering all of his persuasive power, he was able to convince Geoffrey Cornish to travel to Pine Hills a few times and design a master redevelopment plan for the golf course.

I was elated when Rod called with the news that Geoff had agreed. The Wisconsin golf course scene was incomplete, in my view, until then. Many renown golf course architects have left their design mark here — Robert Trent Jones, A. W. Tillinghast, Bobby Jones, Roger Packard, Dick Nugent, Ken Killian, et. al. But until his work at Pine Hills, Dr. Cornish had not done any course design work in our state. We will be richer for it.

I thought of Geoff often during the 1988 presidential campaign — he received a Ph.D. at the same time as did Michael Dukakis, both from the University of Massachusetts at Amherst.

In terms of weather, 1988 was not a good year for golf courses. It wasn't a very good year for our state university in Madison in a lot of ways, either. The athletic department is awash in red ink, the football team was worse than lousy, the CALS took a lot of unfair and unjustified criticisms over the sustainable agriculture issue, and some idiot(s) designed a Memorial Library addition that would block the view of the capitol from Bascom Hill. Added to all of that were shrill and overblown cries about racism that were captured on the night-

ly news, almost every night for a while.

What tends to happen in a rash of bad publicity — some true and some not — is good news about this institution is either lost or overlooked. A loyal alumnus and a state citizen like me has to point out that the UW-Madison is **again** the nation's leading public research university. Figures released by the prestigious National Science Foundation showed that for the fifth consecutive year, the UW ranked third overall among U.S. universities and first among the public universities in money spent for research and development. For fiscal 1987, which ended on September 30, 1987, those research expenditures totaled more than \$254 million, an increase of more than \$23 million from the previous year. The money came from the federal government, the state, private foundations and industry. The sum obviously included those funds donated by the Wisconsin Turfgrass Association.

These monies didn't just happen to fall into the hands of university staff. Most of it is won competitively by the faculty from those sources other than the state of Wisconsin. That whole process reflects on the quality and the hard work of the faculty and represents an important economic enterprise for Wisconsin.

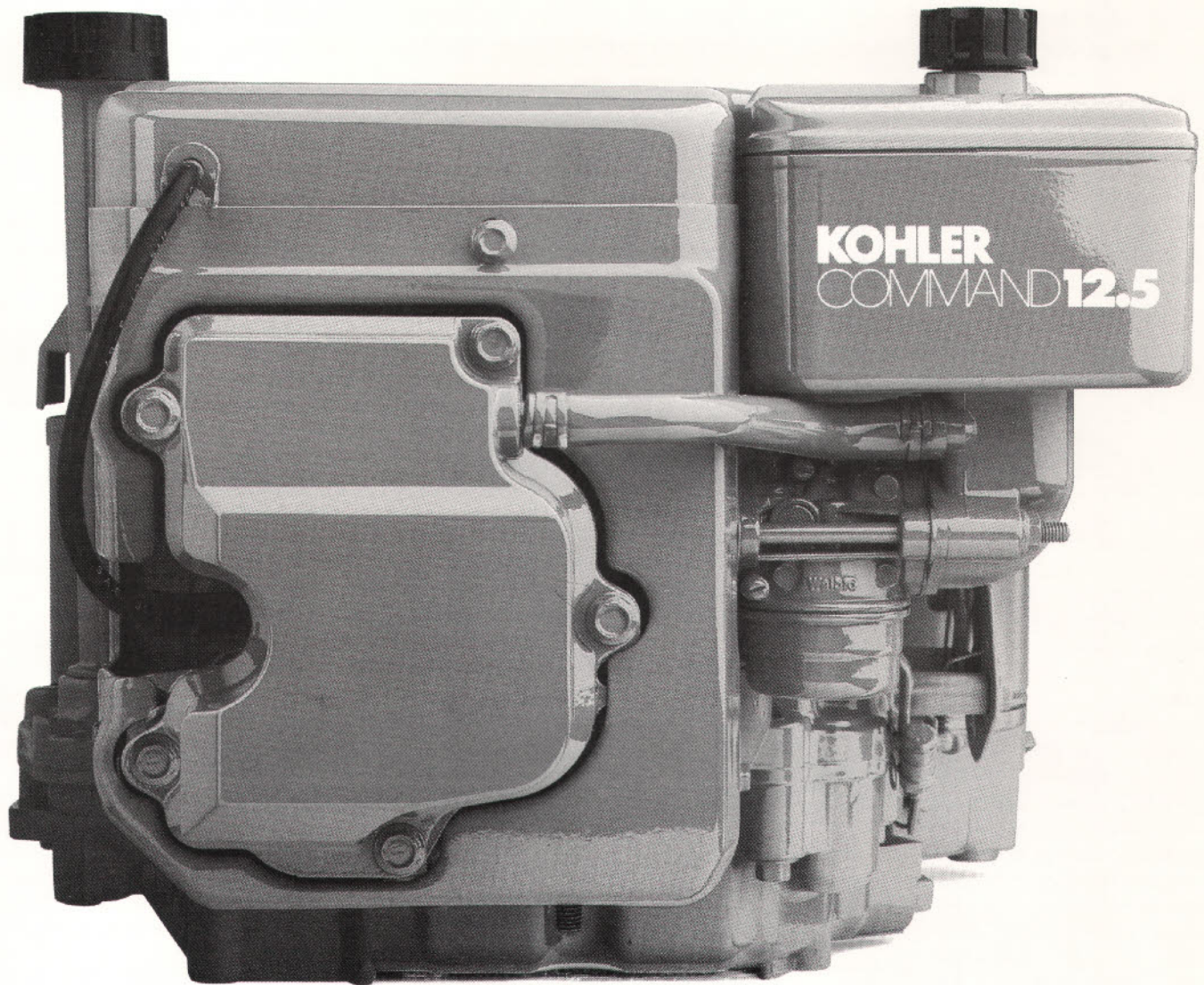
Johns Hopkins University and Massachusetts Institute of Technology, both private institutions which receive big time money from the U.S. Defense Department, finished ahead of Madison. The UW was followed by Cornell, Stanford, the University of Michigan, the University of Minnesota, Texas A & M, UCLA and the University of Illinois. One cannot help but notice that four of the top ten are Big Ten schools here in the midwest.

This good news came at a good time. It gives some powerful bragging rights.

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GREEN SECTION ACTIVITIES: Great Lakes Region

By Monroe S. Miller, Member
USGA Green Section Committee



I'm not sure if this is a report on the activities of the Great Lakes Region Office of the USGA Green Section or if it is more properly and realistically a tribute to our region's agronomist Jim Latham and his office manager (and better half!) Lois Latham.

In reality, it is both. The factual information presented here speaks loudly and clearly of the dedication of the Lathams to golf, to the USGA and to golf course turfgrass problems.

Golf course superintendents had an extremely busy year in 1988, obviously due primarily to the drought conditions. So did Jim Latham. His region covers 9 states, so spring begins early and autumn runs late. He is responsible for the states of Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Michigan, Minnesota, Montana, North Dakota, South Dakota and Wisconsin. He also does some work in Canada. It is a 800 mile by 2,000 territory and getting from place to place in this sprawling area is a major accomplishment in and of itself. Jim's car, delivered new in April, had nearly 40,000 miles on it by the time the TAS visits he had scheduled were over! And on occasion, he is forced to use the airlines. You can begin to get a feel for the amount of travel the man does when you add these figures up.

Just like golf course managers, Jim's work week is not limited to forty hours in five days. As spring passes and we move into early summer, our operations are intense for all seven days a week. So is Latham's. Trying to track him down in the summer is best left to Lois. She at least knows his schedule and where he is headed next.

Also included in the region's assignment and mission is attention to golf courses hosting USGA championships. There were several of those in the Great Lakes Region this year past, and Jim handled those responsibilities as well.

In a look at the Green Section as a whole, 1988 will go into the history books as one with some very significant accomplishments. Several important goals were accomplished in 1988. Among them are:

1. The Turfgrass Information File is on-line. This is a ready-reference source of research publications at the Michigan State University library, available via computer modem connection for 18 hours a day. There are over 13,000 entries available now and the number is growing daily. This committeeman made a pilgrimage to the library at MSU this past August and can tell you firsthand that it is an impressive additional tool for turf managers around the country. I met Peter Cookingham, project manager of the Michigan State Libraries and the really key person in this ambitious project which was started in 1984. The TGIF is a bibliographic computer database designed and developed by Peter. It is the first, and I think only, database for turf.

If you want to do a basic subject search, keywords are available to the user. The computer then finds records in which the term entered appears, either as part of the title or as an assigned subject. You can also locate specifics, like authors, journals or proceedings. Many *GRASS ROOTS* articles are included in the file, by the way.

2. A reissue of the Green Section Specifications for golf green construction were printed near the end of the year. The first one was printed in 1960. Since then, more and more improvements in procedures and knowledge of components have evolved. But as Jim Latham and Bill Bengeyfield have pointed out and made very clear, the principles of the specifications have **not** changed. This is an extremely valuable update for golf course superintendents.

3. The Green Section began work in 1988 on a movie/video which illustrates the recommended methods of putting green construction. Nearly everyone either owns or has easy access to VCRs these days, and use of this high tech method of communication is a sign of the times.

4. Jim Latham wasn't the only Green

Section staff person worked to exhaustion. Other agronomists had similar numbers of subscribers and visits. Staff enlargement continues to be a priority so that they can provide better service to TAS subscribers.

5. The research program, as Bill Bengeyfield told us at the Pine Hills meeting this spring, remains a major effort and is beginning to bear fruit. *Poa annua* development work has reached the field testing stage. A new bermuda variety is in the seed production phase and new buffalograss and Zoysia types are not far from release. Stress physiology research is already helping superintendents to cope with summer problems, and maintenance investigations are continuing to aid fairway turf improvement.

The USGA Green Section in general, and Jim Latham more specifically, have contributed greatly to the betterment of golf through their dedication to helping provide better golf courses. Hats off to all staff members for a great effort in 1988.

HELP WANTED

Can you help? It's hard to have an association without meetings and it's hard to have monthly meetings without meeting sites. Right?

We still have monthly meeting dates that are still open for next year. If you haven't hosted a WGCSA meeting in the past five years you are **PAST DUE!** Please help your association out. We always shoot for the third Monday of each month, but a Tuesday will work just as well. (Maybe some clubs would prefer this). We've also started to book meeting sites for 1990.

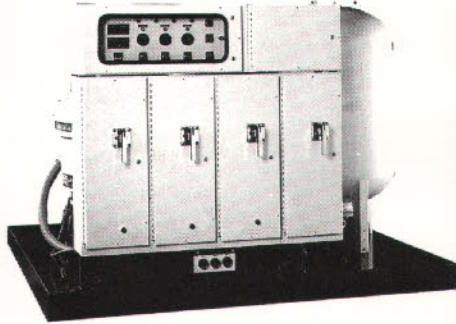
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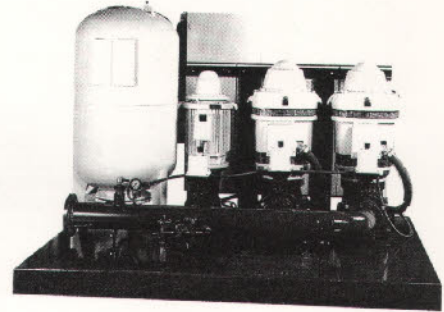
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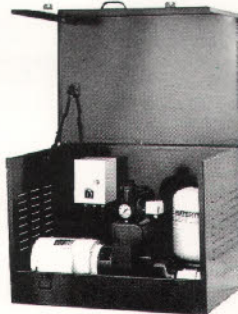
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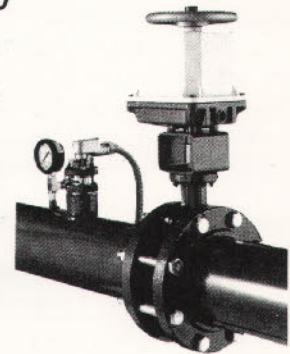
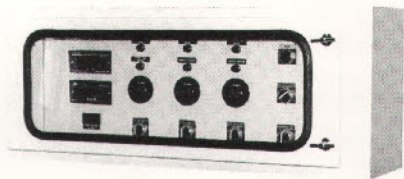
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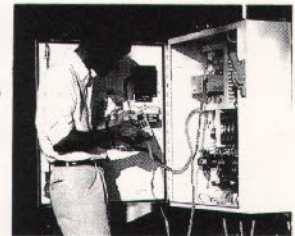
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WTA Winter Turf Conference Moves to the Country Inn

The eighth annual Wisconsin Turfgrass Association Winter Turf Conference will be held on January 10th and January 11th at the Country Inn near Waukesha. The two-day format and the new site are significant changes from previous years.

A lot of planning and hard work by Wayne Otto, Gary Zwerlein, Bill Vogel

and Dave Payne have resulted in expanded educational opportunities for this year. The facilities of the Country Inn are excellent and reasonably priced for those who want to spend the night of the 10th right there on site. The committee has also scheduled former Milwaukee Brewer pitcher and Cy Young Award winner, Pete Vukovich, as

a guest speaker. As usual, the WTA's annual meeting and election will be held during the conference.

All of the necessary information about the 1989 conference is included below. Please set these two days aside to attend our very own Wisconsin conference.

TUESDAY, JANUARY 10, 1989

Morning

- 8:00 Registration
- 8:30 Tabletop Trade Show Opens
- 10:00 Welcome and O.J. Noer Research Center Update
- 10:15 Research Reports: Dr. Wayne Kussow, Dr. Robert Newman, Dr. Gale Worf
- 11:45 LUNCH

Afternoon

- | | SESSION "A" | SESSION "B" |
|------|---|--|
| 1:30 | <i>DEVELOPMENT OF A DISEASE MANAGEMENT PROGRAM</i> — Brady Surrena, Fermenta Plant Protection Company | <i>1988 AND UPCOMING PROBLEMS FOR 1989</i> — Dick Schneider, UW-Extension, Milwaukee County |
| 2:15 | <i>MANAGING GOLF COURSE TURF UNDER WEATHER EXTREMES</i> — Jim Latham, USGA Green Section | <i>PR CRISIS — HOW TO HANDLE MEDIA INTERVENTION</i> — Speaker to be announced |
| 3:00 | <i>BEAUTIFYING WITH NATIVE GRASSES AND WILDFLOWERS</i> — Mark Grundman, Northrup King Co. | <i>PATCH DISEASE ORGANISMS — DO THEY EXIST EVERYWHERE?</i> — Jana Stewart, University of Wisconsin |
| 3:45 | Annual meeting and election | |
| 4:30 | Meet with colleagues and company representatives. | |

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 11, 1989

Morning

- 8:00 Coffee, rolls and Tabletop Trade Show
- | | SESSION "A" | SESSION "B" |
|-------|---|---|
| 9:00 | <i>STATE-OF-THE-ART BLENDING OF ROOTZONE MIXES</i> — Christine Madderom, Greens Mix/Waupaca Materials | <i>THE EFFECTS OF LATE FALL USE OF NITROGEN ON TURF</i> — Dr. Wayne Kussow, University of Wisconsin |
| 9:45 | <i>SUPPRESSION OF POA ANNUA WITH THE USE OF PGRs</i> — Donald (Red) Roskopf, Camelot Golf Course | <i>INSECTS: WHAT TO EXPECT AFTER A HOT, DRY SEASON</i> — Dr. Chuck Koval, University of Wisconsin |
| 10:30 | <i>UNDERSTANDING ENVIRONMENTAL STRESS</i> — Dr. David Wehner, University of Illinois | <i>RENOVATION AFTER THE DROUGHT</i> — John DeMatteo, Loft Seed Co. |
| 11:15 | <i>A POA ANNUA CONTROL PROGRAM</i> — John Turner, NOR-AM Chemical Company | <i>PRE-POST-EMERGENT CRABGRASS CONTROL</i> — Dr. David Wehner, University of Illinois |

Afternoon

- 12:00 LUNCH
- 1:15 Celebrity speaker: former Milwaukee Brewer and Cy Young Award winner, Peter Vukovich
- 2:00-4:00 Tabletop Trade Show

REGISTRATION FORM



TO: Wisconsin Turfgrass Association
 Bishops Woods, Suite 104
 333 Bishops Way, Brookfield, WI 53005

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CONFERENCE RATE SCHEDULE

	Before Jan. 6	After Jan. 6
1. WTA Member Fee	\$45	\$65
Additional Attendees from the same organization	\$35	\$55
2. Non-Member Fee	\$65	\$85
3. Student (Enrolled on a full-time basis)	\$25	\$25

For more information call Wayne Otto at (414) 242-0142.
 Fee includes sessions, lunch, coffee and rolls for both days.
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Rates _____ (Single) _____ (Double)

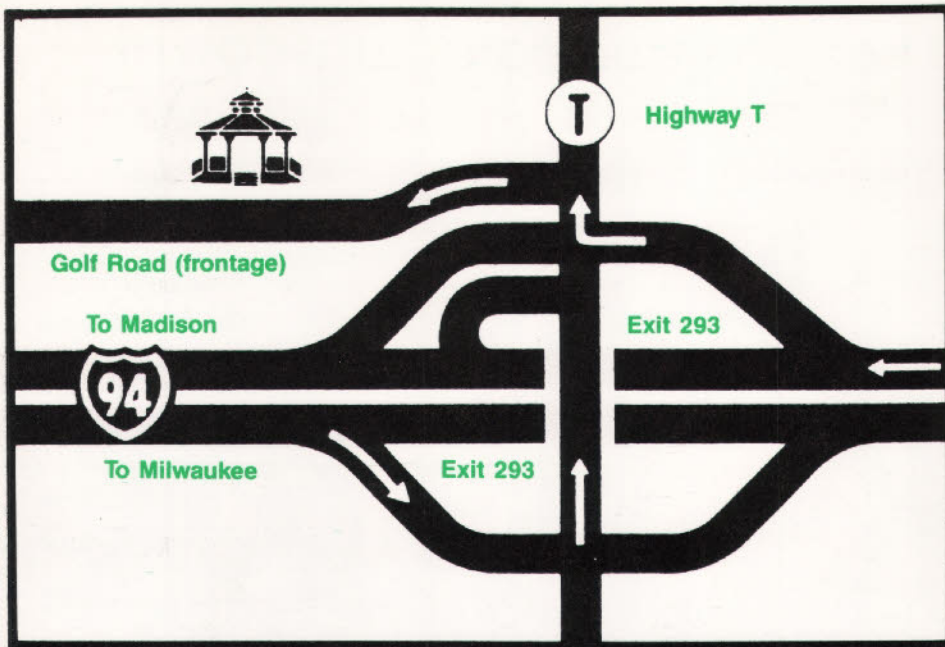
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