



A Look at a Really Rotten Year

By Rob Schultz

Fortunately, 1988 is over. It wasn't a great year. The economy was too topsy-turvy, there were horrible natural disasters, including the drought that turned many of the area's golf courses into the Mohave Desert. And the state sports scene belonged in a landfill somewhere.

Looking back, there just isn't much good to say about 1988. It all can be wrapped in the combined records of the Wisconsin Badgers and Green Bay Packers. Yuk.

Anyway, in an effort to capsule the past year, I thought of people in the news who I met for the first time and certain moments that had an impact on me. Here they are:

Lindy Infante: The Packer coach couldn't have envisioned a worse nightmare when he decided to take the job last winter. He's a smart man with an intelligent game plan. Little did he know he was inheriting a team where the majority of the players didn't have an IQ above 75.

Throughout the horrible season Infante kept his sense of humor intact. Incredibly likeable, it's no wonder Infante is immensely popular with the public and his players.

But if Infante has a flaw — and some might consider this a gift — he doesn't have a great relationship with the press. His idea of what our function should be is all wet. A good reporter, in his view, is a cheerleader. Whoops.

Throughout the season, Infante was condescending to the better reporters. Worse yet, he was virtually unquotable all of the time. That's not a good idea when your team is the worst in the league. This is one area where he should have taken notes from the very-quotable Forrest Gregg.

The press came down hard on the Packers this season, as it should have. Infante didn't enjoy much of a honeymoon. But he might have been let off easier if he got along with reporters from the start.

Pete Dye: He was nothing like I imagined him to be. Dye was present for

the introduction of his Blackwolf Run creation to the media last spring. It was like sitting in a living room listening to your grandfather tell stories.

You never get bored listening to the grand old golf architect. He told story after story and each one was incredibly funny. His best story is what the Playboy Club people did to his Briar Patch creation. He designed it with Jack Nicklaus and thought it would be a great course. But that was before the Playboy Club added the horse stables and airport. Using some spicy adjectives to make the story humorous, he said he'd rather forget he ever designed it.

Chuck Cecil: I hope this guy makes it with the Packers. He has all the intelligence and ability in the world, although he is a bit slow afoot. Cecil is so unassuming, it's hard not to like this guy. He always can be seen wearing his Idaho potato hat and a half-smile. He's the quintessential Cool Hand Luke.

But what really separates Cecil from the others is his competitiveness on the field. Never hit a receiver with your shoulders, he says. Always use your helmet. Cecil has knocked himself out so many times, he has lost count. Nobody hurts more after a loss, nobody enjoys winning more than Cecil. He's a keeper who the Packers need more of to turn the corner.

SOME MOMENTS THAT TOUCHED ME

The Greg Norman-Jamie Hutton relationship: This is what makes one think that professional sports is more than just a way for spoiled athletes to get rich.

As bad as 1988 was, the Norman-Hutton relationship made the year bright. It started with the Monona youth following Norman around during his victory at the Heritage at Hilton Head. The trip was sponsored by Thursday's Child, a group that grants the wishes of sick children.

But the relationship really blossomed when Hutton, who is suffering from

leukemia, went through a dangerous bone marrow transplant this summer. Norman has continuously kept in touch with his young friend.

Hutton isn't completely out of the woods yet. But his faith is strong, partly because of the efforts of Norman. A relationship between two classier individuals couldn't be created.

The release of Frankie Neal: Neal had the great ability, but his head, and mouth, always got in the way. Infante had no option but to cut him.

What made Neal's release significant was what he said before leaving. He tore apart the relationship between the Packers and the city of Green Bay. He said it's impossible for a black player to live there. He called it a living hell.

Neal touched upon something that everyone knew about, but have chosen to ignore. Green Bay is the dregs of the earth for a professional athlete and may be a huge reason why the Packers may never return to a spot in the winner's circle regularly. Neal's suggestion that the Packers move the organization to Milwaukee has merit.

Playing Blackwolf Run: This state may have finally hit the big time in golf. Andy North has said that Wisconsin has many good golf courses, but none are in the "great" category.

Blackwolf Run is the first that could reach greatness. Dye pulled out all the stops and created a wonderful thinking-man's course. It's beautiful, brutal and charming all rolled into one. Even though it's a tad expensive for tightwad Wisconsinites, it should be a can't-miss course each year for anyone around here who considers himself a golfer.

SOME THINGS I'D LIKE TO SEE HAPPEN IN 1989

See the UW golf course completed: Is this too much to ask? Probably. The UW athletic department is facing so many problems, they just might ice this project for the time being. That would be a disaster. Still, I'd be surprised if it's seeded this fall.

Let the city of Madison's golf course superintendents play their courses free of charge. The height of stupidity is Madison forcing hard workers like Ted Payne to pay to play his own course.

Wake up city of Madison officials, see the light.



Lessons Relearned

By Dennis Thorp

The longer I work with computers, the more convinced I become that the problems that confound and cause users the most problems are the simple and ordinary beginning steps rather than the obscure and esoteric advanced ones. This has been re-emphasized to me several times in the last few weeks and perhaps reading about my misadventures will help some of you avoid similar pitfalls.

In the first instance, I moved my computer from one building to another and after setting the machine up again, I noticed a gradual deterioration in the quality of the display on the monitor. It gradually got fuzzier and fuzzier. My first thought was that my glasses needed to be changed. Old age! Mine, not the computer's. When the picture started to roll like a television set with a bad vertical hold, I knew the fault was in the machine and not in my head. My first step was to get a screwdriver and attempt to adjust the vertical hold for the screen. No luck.

The next step was to switch monitors. I have the luxury that very few of you will have, in that computer hardware is my hobby and I build these machines from the motherboard up, so consequently at any time I've got the

components for more than one complete system sitting around the house. The monitor I was using was an inexpensive Korean model and I hoped the more expensive Japanese model would cure the problem.

No luck there, either, so I "jumped" to the conclusion that the video card had failed, and as luck would have it, I didn't have a spare one of those laying around. But, I still had that screwdriver handy so I opened the case to see if perhaps some connection had come loose because of the move.

The "experts" will all tell you that the covers should never be removed from the machine with it plugged in and running, but I've never had any trouble by doing it my way and saved a lot of time. Having said that, I'm sure that the next time I try it, with somebody watching, I'll melt a chip or something. I did see a technician drop a screw onto a motherboard when he was changing a card with the machine turned on, and he shorted out something, effectively destroying the motherboard.

This isn't for the faint-of-heart or shaky-of-hand. Anyway, I started pushing and wiggling things, while watching the monitor, to see if the move had loosened something. Let me note here

that being moved isn't something new for my machine. This year alone it has been moved over a dozen times and traveled over 3,000 miles, some of that in the back of an Army truck. Most machines are set up in one place and never moved again. Not mine! When I pushed in the video card, the rolling on the screen stopped and the distortion disappeared, even though all mounting screws were tight and nothing appeared to be loose.

Then I remembered a lesson I "learned" several years ago on my first computer, an Apple II+. Oxidation will set in after a period of time, and break electrical connections. I felt really stupid the time I rushed to the computer store with my machine under my arm and the technician fixed it in 30 seconds flat by unplugging one connection and plugging it in again. That got rid of the oxidation.

A longer term fix is to use a pencil eraser on the contacts and to rub off any oxide coating. Even though the contacts on expansion cards are gold plated to reduce oxidation to the absolute minimum, a little preventative maintenance never hurts. Maybe once every two years under most conditions. Keep the eraser crumbs out of the machine, too.

Just to be on the safe side, I took all of my cards out of my machine and cleaned the contacts. I also used a vacuum cleaner to remove some dust from the inside of the machine. Compressed air works just as well. The cooling fan on the machine is constantly moving room air through these machines, so if the environment where your machine is kept is particularly dusty, this might be a point of extra care.

One time I answered a service call on a printer that was malfunctioning and fixed it with some WD-40 to lubricate the roller gears and a vacuuming of the print mechanism.

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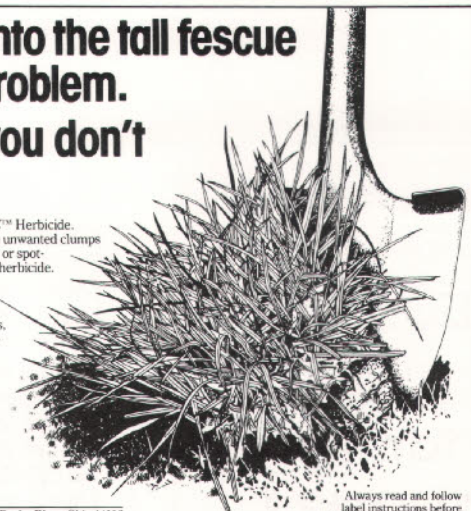
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sional interior decorator and she periodically likes to move the furniture and/or put up new wallpaper. I'm the only guy I know that ever had purple walls.

I am also of the philosophy that "creative minds are rarely tidy." Anyway, one day I came home from work and the room where the computer is kept had been totally rearranged. Not only that, but all the papers that I had "neatly" stacked on the desk had disappeared. I knew where to find things, even if nobody else could. Naturally, she wasn't home when I got there, and it is probably lucky that I don't own a cat or dog because the SPCA would definitely be looking for me.

But the moving wasn't the worst part. She didn't know where the wires plugged in, so she just stuffed them behind the cabinets, out of sight, out of mind. It was several days before I sat down to work at the computer again and imagine my surprise when nothing worked when I turned on the switches. *#@*!!

If someone touches your computer, strange things can happen, even with the best of intentions. One time I answered an urgent call because a spreadsheet I had designed had mysteriously stopped working and the backup copy wouldn't work either. The first commandment of computer use is "THOU SHALT HAVE A BACKUP" but when that fails, go to the second one: "IF YOU DON'T KNOW WHAT IS WRONG, CALL SOMEONE WHO DOES."

When I got there with an extra copy that I "knew" worked, I also got an error message. It dawned on me that the problem might not be in the software, but could be hardware-related. When I opened the case, I discovered that one row of memory chips had been removed. Whoever did it knew what he was doing, because some switches had to be reset inside the machine to tell the machine that amount of mem-

ory installed corresponded with the switch settings, or an error message would flash on the screen whenever the machine was started up.

It was a simple fix, because I had my machine in the car and I just removed some memory chips from my machine and installed them in the other one. After I reset the switches, the software worked fine. I asked some questions and found out that a former employee had often been working on the machine, late at night, to learn the software. Nothing could ever be proven, of course, and the price of memory chips had dropped drastically since the machine was purchased, so the fix was inexpensive, but this is an example of where caution needs to be used when letting people have access to your machine.

The following tips on keeping your computer healthy are courtesy of PerfectData Computer Care Products and LABB Systems/Software.

Can you afford to lose your important business records? Most people can't. Yet, important information is lost all the time. This can be caused by something as simple as a dirty computer. So, for the safety of your computer, review the following computer health tips:

Location Tips. . . . Even before you purchase your computer, decide where it will function at its best. Locate the equipment away from excessive foot traffic and avoid moving it.

Keyboard Tips. . . . Never place beverages on top of your computer or next to your keyboard. Avoid eating near the computer equipment. Crumbs, soups, oils, etc. can fall into your equipment and cause serious problems.

Disk Drive Tips. . . . It takes only 30 seconds to clean the read/write heads in your disk drive. Consider for a moment that your computer's cooling fan is constantly cycling air through the system. All the dust, lint and smoke in your office air is eventually processed through your computer. Once depos-

its begin to build up on your read/write heads, the danger of lost data grows. A wet/dry disk drive cleaner can correct this problem if it is used once a week.

Screen Tips. . . . Use a spray and wipe method or a moist towelette with antistatic spray to clean your glare filter and CRT screen. Static charges produced by your monitor attract dust particles. The accumulation of dust and fingerprints can cause headaches and discomfort as your eyes strain to read the monitor.

Printer Tips. . . . The printhead and the platen (roller) on your printer accumulate ink residue and paper lint. They must be cleaned to avoid ink and paper dust build-up. Paper dust on the platen will cause many sheetfeeders to misfeed.

An effective cleaning system uses special materials that will not leave film residues and crack rubber components. Only use cleaning products that are specifically designed for computer care.

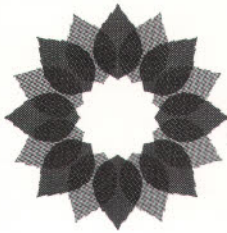
A final note on care: There has been a great deal of concern in the computer community since the incidence of a so-called "virus" attacking systems across the country. The only way one could get into your system was if you were hooked into the phone lines and your system was set up for remote access. The changes of a golf course being set up like this are one in a zillion.

A note for those of you going to the GCSAA conference in Anaheim. There will be a computer special interest group meeting on Sunday, February 12, at 1:00 p.m. facilitated by Duane Patton, intended for superintendents who currently have computers and want to expand their usefulness and for superintendents considering purchasing a system. Persons familiar with Turfbyte, TGIF and various bulletin boards will be in attendance. Come to this unique meeting and share your expertise.

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REINDERS TURF CONFERENCE APPROACHES

The ninth edition of the Reinders Turf Conference is set to go on the 8th and 9th of March of this year. It will be held at the Waukesha County Expo again this year. Ed Devinger expects between 1,300 and 1,500 people to attend.

Although the program details are still being finalized, it will include Dr. Gayle Worf, Dr. Wayne Kussow and Dr. Bob Newman from the UW-Madison faculty. The Wisconsin DATCP's Ed Bergman will try to sort out the latest regulatory decisions as they affect turf managers in Wisconsin. Also included are Dr. Jay Pepin from Pickseed West, Dr. John Street from Ohio State University, Fermenta's Dr. French and of course Dr. Joe Vargas from Michigan State University.

The meeting is a combined educational conference, an equipment show and a service clinic. If you have any questions, contact Ed Devinger at 414-786-3301.

AN OPTIMISTIC FORECAST

Several areas of the country where the soils were parched by the drought that started last April should get an extra dose of rain and snow this winter, according to Donald L. Gilmore, the National Weather Service's chief of long-range forecasts. Thankfully, this includes Wisconsin. He's also predicting more than normal cold for us this winter. Most WGCSA members can handle the cold if there is a **lot** of snow to go with it, snow needed to replenish moisture for landscape plants and un-irrigated areas on our state's golf courses.

ELECTION RESULTS

The annual meeting of the Wisconsin Golf Course Superintendents Association was held on November 7, 1988 in Fond du Lac. Officers and directors for the upcoming year were chosen as follows:

Roger Bell — President
Rod Johnson — Vice President
Carl Grassl — Secretary
Bruce Worzella — Treasurer
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