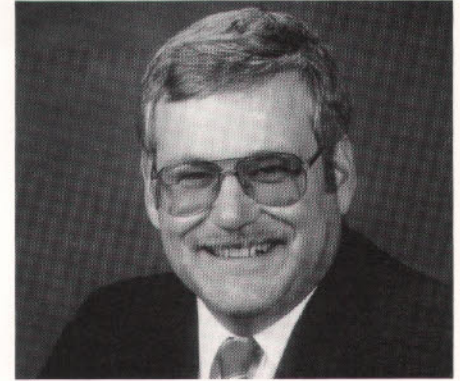


Getting Your Nickel's Worth

By Roger Bell



Almost two years ago I was elected to be your president — an honor, a privilege, and a responsibility I shall not quickly forget. The job of president of WGCSA is an important one although it is largely a ceremonial one. The various chairmen, their committees, and the directors of WGCSA do much of the work to keep the machinery of our organization well-oiled. The president gets to sit up front.

I do get the opportunity, as president, to get philosophical with you here in this space in *The Grass Roots*. (I wonder if everyone who is reading this message gives me a nickel at the next

meeting, will I leave the meeting with enough to buy a cup of coffee?) Writing the "President's Message" has been a good opportunity for me to reflect on my own feelings on being a golf course superintendent and on the importance of the WGCSA. I have come to the conclusion that I am proud of both our association and our profession. There is no other profession that I would choose for myself. I like what I do for a living. In spite of the occasional frustrations on the job, I've never dreaded going to work. As for my feelings about WGCSA: the Association remains on course — still growing, still

stimulating its members with a variety of educational, political, and social programs. Serving as president these past two years has been a challenging and rewarding experience for me.

The future looks bright from where I can see. We have many capable and dedicated members waiting to carry on the work of WGCSA. I am confident that WGCSA will continue as a vital force in the turf industry in Wisconsin.

I thank you for the confidence you have shown in me by selecting me to serve as your president for these past two years. I'll be looking for your nickel's worth at the next meeting!



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Could We? Should We? Dare We? (Take A Vacation During The Season?)

By Monroe S. Miller

I've just returned from a too-short vacation, even though it was two weeks long. It seems I have never been on a vacation that wasn't too short, simply because I've enjoyed them all.

Nothing is worse than listening to or reading about someone else's trip, unless it is watching slides of someone else's vacation. So I'll spare you. Suffice to say the autumn color in the Adirondaks, the Catskills, the White Mountains, the Green Mountains, the Berkshires and the Poconos was as beautiful as I have seen it. So was the Maine coast, Boston, Martha's Vineyard and all points in between.

Honestly, I'm better for having been gone for those two weeks. I managed to reach that almost unremembered state — relaxation. When I unlocked my office the first day home, I was bubbling with excitement and enthusiasm again. And, unbelievably, the golf course was still here and in fine condition.

One of the disadvantages of our business is the difficulty in finding a chance to take a family vacation. For me, for far too many years, I wouldn't consider any time off, including weekends, during the golf season. Then, as soon as the opportunity to leave presented itself, kids were in school. It wasn't fair to them to be taken from school just because their dad's job precluded a "normal" vacation.

So for years, we would tear down South during Christmas vacation. That's fun, believe me. Warm weather feels incredibly good in the dead of winter. But after the sixth or seventh trip, it starts getting a little old.

Complicating the job factor was the fact that early in my career vacations didn't come easy for me. I've observed this combination in a lot of other golf course superintendents. The reluctance to leave the golf course is exacerbated by a disease too many of us have — workaholic. That's a loathsome phrase. We were taught that work — hard work — is a virtue. We are supposed to be industrious; it is ex-

pected from competent and successful people.

But if you work too hard and too long, you're labelled with that affliction — workaholic. It sounds so clinical when it is really such a simple matter.

As time has passed by, however, I've come to realize that society is right in using that clinical word. I've come to recognize that working seven days a week wears you down. It affects your attitude and outlook as well as your body. You do not have (or take) enough time for thinking or planning. That leaves even less time for contemplation. Suddenly your creativity suffers.

Unfortunately, this drive to work constantly during the golf season has been detrimental to relationships — family relationships — for too many of my colleagues. Nothing is more sad.

The academic world, which I read about a lot because of my proximity to the University, came up with an idea years ago that serves to emphasize my point. They call it a sabbatical. Every so often, profs are able to get a semester off. They spend it in any number of ways — travel, time at another institution, work on a book. This simple yet brilliant plan recognizes that time away from work is sometimes essential if you are to do good work.

Think about how much better this world might be if doctors and lawyers, carpenters and plumbers, engineers and social workers, accountants and politicians, journalists and golf course superintendents got time off to dream, to plan, to think. What an opportunity for readjusting attitudes and for finding oneself. Certainly job stress would be reduced.

Sabbaticals for everyone aren't going to happen. I know that. But a well timed vacation can happen. If you will let it. Even during the golf season. Especially, maybe, during the golf season.

We try to surround ourselves with quality people. I've been really successful at that. Time is spent in careful training and logical thinking. Con-

tinuing education is offered. Why not, when circumstances permit, take advantage of this? Allow your assistant and support staff the opportunity to develop even more. I've found most thrive on the responsibility. They know you'll be back — that adds to their confidence and comfort.

Only a fool would propose to vacation for two weeks during the Memorial Day to Labor Day period. Long weekends can suffice then. But there aren't any good reasons **not** to take a family trip before or after this period. That is the sum of my suggestion.

Time is a valuable commodity — you owe some of your time to yourself and your family. You cannot buy it, but you can take it, if you dare.

Can you take a vacation during the "season"? Definitely, if you make your plans carefully and thoughtfully.

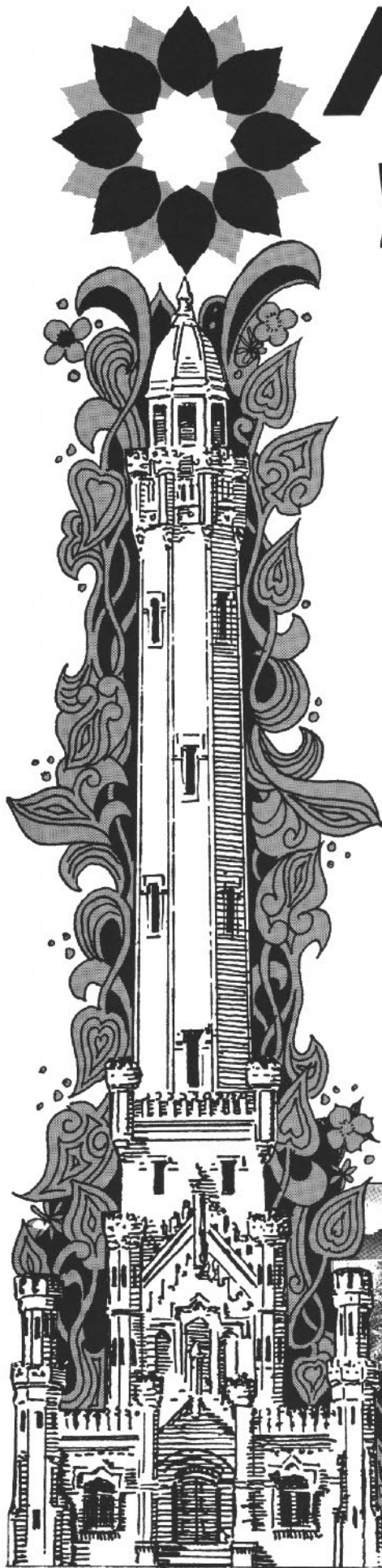
Should you? Absolutely, especially when you are exhausted, physically or mentally, or demoralized or discouraged.

Dare you? My reply is "dare you not?"

Maybe these few lines from a book by Richard Jeffries entitled *Saint Guido* will help you decide:

"... if your people do not gather the flowers now, and watch the swallows, and listen to the blackbird whistling, as you are listening now while I talk, then, Guido, my love, they will never pick any flowers, nor hear any bird's songs. They think they will, they think that when they have toiled, and worked a long time, almost all their lives, then they will come to the flowers and the birds and be joyful in the sunshine. But no, it will not be so, for then they will be old themselves and their ears dull, and their eyes dim, so that the birds will sound a great distance off, and the flowers will not seem bright."

Give yourself and your family some time away, together, before "you are old and your ears dull and your eyes dim."



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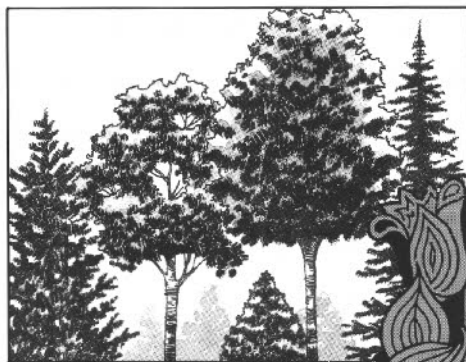
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Escape From Wisconsin?

By Rob Schultz

I have the sniffles, my wife is hacking and wheezing, my car is hacking and wheezing, there is a noise emanating from my basement that could only be the sound of the furnace, and I haven't played golf in weeks.

It must be fall. That means winter is just a few days away.

And I hate winter. I hate winter more than the Cubs, Bears or anything else from Chicago. I hate winter more than property taxes and mortgage payments. I hate winter more than the NFL's instant replay, the in-the-grasp rule and 3½ hour games.

Two writers, whose sanity must be questioned, recently wrote columns in my newspaper describing how anxious they are for winter to arrive. They can't wait to ski, walk and hunt in America's winter not-so-wonderland.

I suppose those are some nice activities, if you like chipping the icicles off your moustache and stopping in a snowbank every so often for one of those farmer blows. It never hits the snow, either. The wind always cranks up at the perfect moment and you're left with a mess on your coat or pants.

Nope, those activities aren't for me. I prefer to mope in the winter. I sit in the house, watch TV endlessly, cry whenever I look out a window and see snow and then plop back on the couch and mope some more.

My outdoor activities consists of running to my car in the garage, driving to work, parking as close as possible to the office door, and then running to that door. I pay my neighbor to shovel the driveway when it snows and I hang up on any friends who call to ask me to go skiing.

Skiers. Yuk. Golfers and skiers don't get along, especially when a skier tells a golfer how smooth the trails were when they made their own path over the 6th green at X, Y, and Z Country Club.

Golf course superintendents should invent some booby trap that destroys those silly little cross country skis worn by an intrepid explorer foraging over a green.

This all leads to a question I've been asking myself since birth: Why do I live in Wisconsin?

Every winter I risk my life on the highways whenever it snows, my stomach gains an extra two inches from my poor imitation of hibernation, and I can't golf.

That's the No. 1 reason I hate winter. Each spring, it takes me six weeks or more to get my swing back. By that time it's June. Great, one month later football season starts, I have to pull out my reporter's notebook and watch two-a-day practices for a month and I have to put my clubs away again. When football season ends, there's snow on the ground.

But then I look at the alternatives. I love the southeast. Great golf courses, pretty scenery, good college football teams. No, or little, snow. But then there are the rednecks with gun racks in their pickups, holy rollers who still think Jim and Tammy Faye were framed, awful summer humidity and weird bugs. And don't forget Hugo. Egad. Terrible combination. Not for me.

Then there's the southwest. Great golf courses, pretty scenery, great college football and basketball teams. But there are snakes everywhere. I'd cringe every time I'd hit a ball in the rough. Forget it.

Finally there's the west. Great golf courses, pretty scenery, great college and pro football and basketball teams. But California? Drugs. AIDS. Earthquakes. Cracks are everywhere. I'd never drive under an overpass again without sweating. I guess I could handle it if I lived near the Monterey Peninsula, but that's too expensive for a poor sportswriter to even think about.

What's left? Not much. Wisconsin looks better all the time, especially when you consider those beautiful April and May days after dreaming about them all winter. And you can't beat this state's summer.

And then there's the possibility that our winters will get milder every year now that the ozone layer is disintegrating over the earth's poles. When I

learned that, I got so excited that I bought a case of Arrid anti-perspirant aerosol cans and emptied them into the air over my backyard.

Wisconsin is the pits in the winter, but it's not as bad as living through an earthquake, hurricane, or tantrum by a redneck who's pointing his .22 at you for looking at his girlfriend. I'll just go out and buy another blanket and slip another \$10 to my neighbor to make sure that driveway of mine stays dry. Then I'll dream about April and May.

★ ★ ★

Environmentalists have their place. They should save seals, whales and rare birds. They should go to Alaska and clean up the mess left by the Exxon Valdez.

But they should stay away from golf courses, farms and anywhere else that's not inhabited by seals, whales, rare birds and the Exxon Valdez.

There's this pond at the new University of Wisconsin golf course. At least it's supposed to be a pond. It looks more like a quagmire. It's full of rusty cans, broken beer bottles and lots of other gross stuff. My cats' litter boxes look more appealing, even when they haven't been emptied for two weeks.

The UW would like to clean up the alleged pond. A great idea, I thought. Dredge it out, build a hole around it. It would turn an eyesore to an eye opener.

Wrong. The environmentalists at the DNR didn't let them. They must like the rusty cans, beer bottles and the other gross stuff. I can't wait for the next environmentalist to knock at my door and ask for a handout. I'll give him my cats' litter boxes. That's right up his alley.

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HOPE ON CHRISTMAS

Twenty Years Ago

By Monroe S. Miller

My Christmas Day in 1969 dawned bright and clear. And hot. I will remember those things as long as I'm alive, along with the memory of what was easily my most sad Christmas.

I was alone that day and over 10,000 miles from home. And I was in a combat zone. I was lonesome for my folks and my sisters and my brother. I was lonesome for Wisconsin. Most of all, I was ill with loneliness for my wife and my new daughter — a daughter born while I was stationed at Long Binh, Vietnam. I hadn't even seen her. The words to describe the misery I was feeling that Christmas season aren't in my vocabulary.

Yet it was Christmas. My whole life I've loved the holiday with all of my being, the guy who starts listening to Christmas albums and does Christmas shopping **before** Thanksgiving. Those feelings are sincere, and despite my misery of that season in 1969, I wanted to make the best of it.

Our Army post had some good fortune that Christmas, good fortune that was going to help me make it through the day. Bob Hope was coming to camp! Like every American GI going back to 1941 who received the news that Hope was coming to see him, I was filled to the brim with excitement and anticipation of seeing him.

All of us stationed at Long Binh waited for Hope's schedule. His first stop was Lai Khe to our north, headquarters of the First Infantry Division. From there his troupe went to Cu Chi, a Vietnamese town near the Cambodian border 20 miles northwest of Saigon and nearly straight west of Long Binh. The 25th Infantry Division was stationed at Cu Chi. Everybody in our Military Police Unit was reading the *Pacific Stars & Stripes* each day to keep up-to-date on Hope's show. From there the gang went back to their base in Bangkok before heading to the DMZ and Camp Eagle to entertain the 101st Airborne Division.

Hope's show always went on, despite some terrible weather at times,

usually very heavy tropical rain and high winds. And the GIs were always there. The weather didn't matter. From Camp Eagle, Hope traveled south to Freedom Hill at Da Nang and gave 20,000 Marines a Christmas they'd never forget.

We were next, and I could hardly wait. Since I was in an MP outfit, we'd been given the assignment of security for the Hope show. Long Binh had an amphitheater that the engineers had built when the post was carved out of the Asian countryside. It had a rudimentary outdoor stage, a flat area resembling a playing field in front of the stage which had benches covering it, and steep, sloping seating on three sides. It looked like a small horseshoe-shaped football stadium.

After the Da Nang show, Hope was back to Thailand for a performance before the Thai royalty and the two other shows for American servicemen stationed in Thailand. Then it was to his final show of the Christmas season of 1969 in Vietnam — Long Binh. We were ready. Finally he was coming to see us.

The GIs were gathered early. There wasn't anything as sophisticated as tickets — the Bob Hope Christmas Show was for any GI of any rank who could steal away to watch. The outdoor amphitheater filled fast. MPs were actually working to keep a rowdy bunch of soldiers under control. Those who couldn't get a seat climbed powerline poles, sat on the roofs of the few permanent buildings around and even congregated in the area to hear what they maybe couldn't see.

As soon as I heard and saw two big Army Chinook choppers moving in fast, I knew the show was going on for sure. The helicopters hold about 40 people each, so you knew we were going to have some real professional entertainment.

What a show! Mr. Hope brought along Neil Armstrong, the world's first man on the moon. Boy, were we proud of that guy. Bob's sex symbol of the

tour was Romy Schneider and his singer was Connie Stevens, one of my favorites of that era. The Goldfingers were with him — a dozen gorgeous dancing girls in very brief outfits! Les Brown and his "Band of Renown" provided the music. Teresa Graves from the Rowan and Martin Laugh-in TV show was there. Suzanne Charney, a popular singer-dancer of the time, and Miss World, Eva Reuber-Starej, added a lot of scenery to the show.

They drove the American boys there that hot afternoon absolutely wild with joy and happiness, me among them. Hope was his usual witty self, propped up with his golf club. It was unforgettable to us.

Hope wrote years later that the Long Binh performance was one he wouldn't soon forget, either. Just before he wrapped the show up with his "Thanks For The Memory", the OIC (Officer In Charge) came to him and asked, "How long will it take you fellows to get your stuff loaded and to move out?" Bob remembers the cool detachment of the question.

"What's your hurry?" he asked.

"Well," the commander replied, "there's a fire fight coming in here. It's only a couple of miles away and moving in fast."

That did it for Hope and his troubadours. They were loaded onto the Chinooks and out of there in 15 minutes. Damn the VC and NVA — they even spoiled the end of our Christmas show.

I felt good on the ride back to our hooch. I was still lonely and still sad, but at least with a feeling that someone from home cared about all of us. "Bless Bob Hope forever," I thought.

Reality returned quickly the next day — back to the work of soldiering. But I got a belated present a couple of days after the show. In the dead of the night I was awakened with a "Get up, Miller, get up."

I cannot repeat my response, but it was not polite. "Get up, you idiot," Sergeant Worozonik said. "You're going home!"

I was wide awake instantly and out of the rack in one bound.

"You've been assigned two prisoners from the Long Binh stockade and have to deliver them for their life prison sentences to Fort Leavenworth, Kansas. From Kansas you can fly home and see your family for a few days."

Escorting prisoners from a combat zone back through Japan and Travis AFB, through several public airports and finally to Leavenworth, all without a weapon, is a long story in itself. The main thing was that I was going home. Right after Christmas. I was going to see my sweetheart and my new baby girl.

Well, needless to say, it was one of those things in your life that you can never forget — loneliness to joy with just the utterance of a few lines. "You are going home."

But there is more. I got home in time to see the Bob Hope Christmas Show on television. In those days, this program was a collection of clips from each of his stops entertaining troops overseas. And yes, there was Long Binh, where I had been only a few days

ago. The show captured all the joy this great man had given to so many of us.

I've thought about Bob Hope hundreds of times since that Christmas 20 years ago, usually trying to figure out why he meant so much to guys like myself in those circumstances.

The most obvious is that he brought laughter to men who needed to laugh, but just couldn't. His sense of humor always brought roars — he picked on the famous, on the conditions of the times, on the attitudes of the day.

His energy was boundless and infective. If you heard, "Hope is coming on Saturday," Hope was there. You could count on him. There were a lot of people at that time in America who couldn't be counted on to support the Americans in Asia.

For GIs of my time, a time of anti-war protests and abandonment, Bob Hope was reassurance that we were right in accepting the call to our country's service. Few others said it like he did. We believed him. He brought new strength and unity to those outfits he entertained at Christmas.

And I guess I felt special kinship with

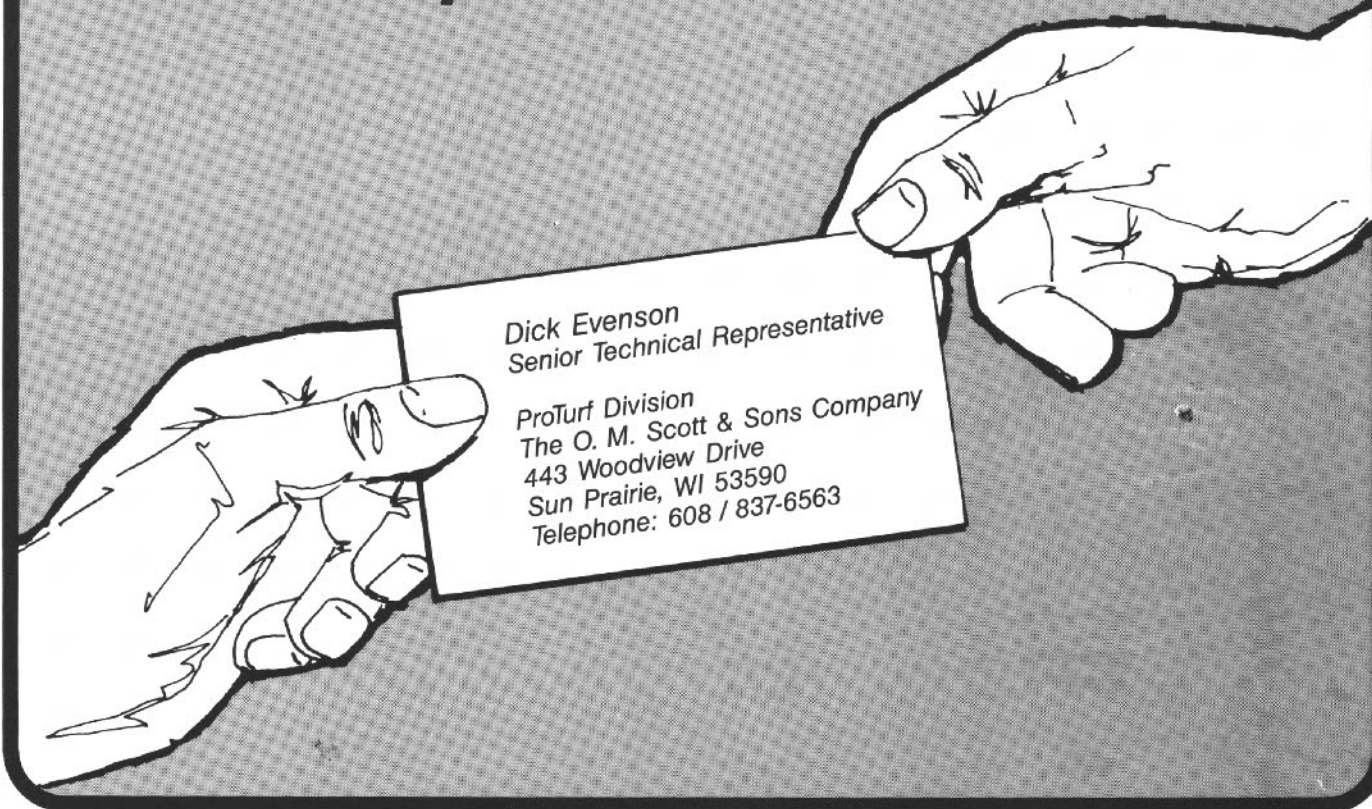
him because of the ever present golf club. He was one of us who loved golf for lots of different reasons. His monologues always had some references to golf. I loved him for that.

I have seen Bob Hope a number of times since that Christmas 20 years ago. He's been to Madison for homecoming at the University. I've watched him play golf with Arnold Palmer at the Bay Hill Classic in Orlando a couple of times. And I was thrilled when the GCSAA presented him with the Old Tom Morris Award and more thrilled yet when he came to accept it in person. Bob Hope is simply a great American.

My story wouldn't be complete if I didn't tell you that the little girl whom I got to see on my surprise trip home is a grown woman now. In fact, Cheryl and I are melancholy this Christmas because Amy isn't home. She's spending her entire year as a University of Wisconsin student in Europe, studying at the University of Provence-Aix in the south of France. I really miss her.

Just like I did that Christmas, 20 years ago.

From one professional to another...



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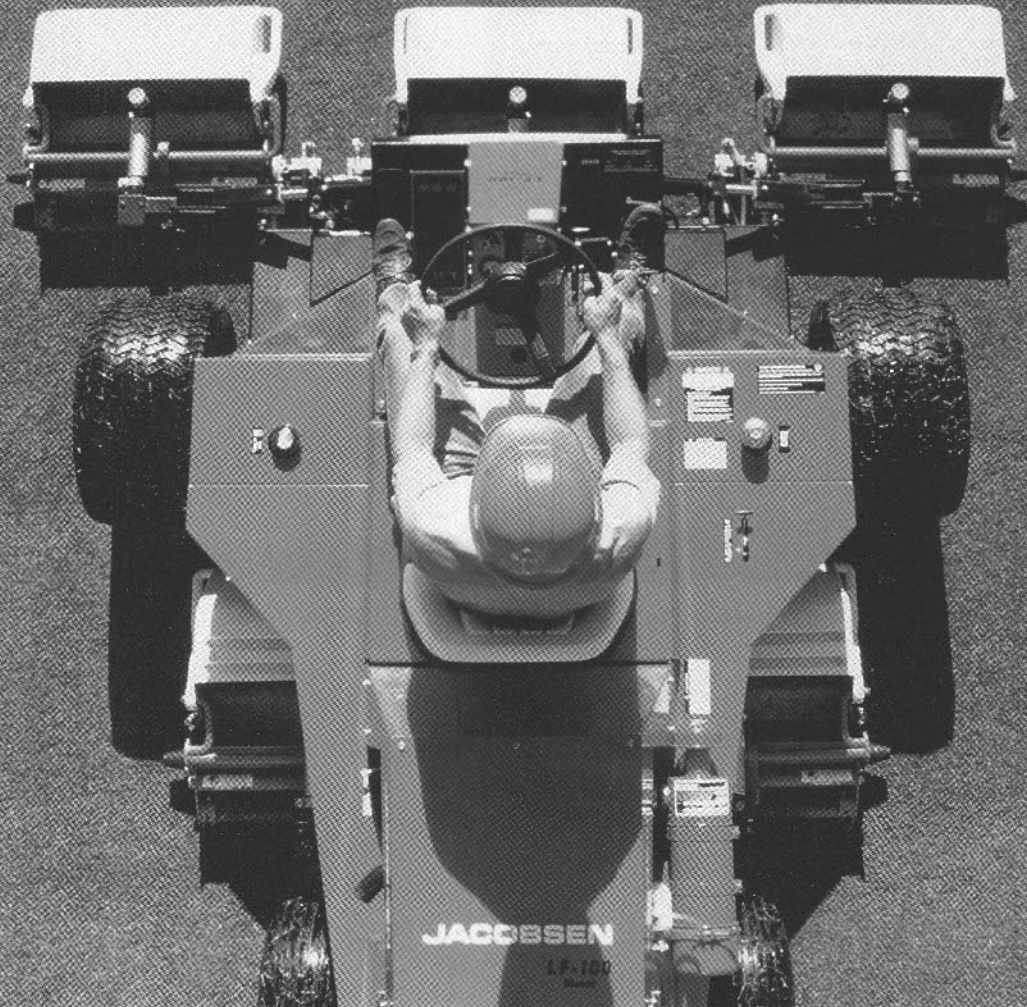
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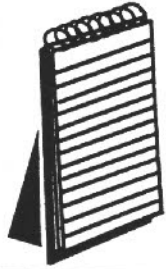


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Deals and Doings Around Wisconsin

By Monroe S. Miller

Wow! What a blockbuster deal — Ransomes buys Cushman! You can't really say, "who would have guessed?", especially if you know Helmut Adam, president of Ransomes Inc. Both Tom Harrison and I were betting this would happen, simply because we've closely watched Helmut and the way he has run Ransomes the last six years or so.

His quiet demeanor masks his aggressive approach to the grass machinery business. We have seen the new and innovative pieces he has developed, the small yet solid companies he has acquired and the quality leadership he's given to the company AND the industry.

First impressions of Mr. Adam? Intelligent. And well educated. He holds a B.A. and M.B.A. from the University of Wisconsin-Madison. He is tuned in to all aspects of the turfgrass business, and those of us managing golf courses are better off because of his contributions.

The \$150 million in cash that Ransomes paid for Cushman's operations includes the Cushman, Ryan and Brower lines of turf care equipment and industrial vehicles. The purchase obviously complements Ransomes' own line of commercial turf care equipment.

Not too long after we read about the Ransomes move, we learned that the TORO Company reached an \$85 million deal to buy Lawn-Boy, another OMC subsidiary. Lawn-Boy is based in Plymouth, Wisconsin. The deal will give TORO about 15% of the national market share in walk-behind power mowers.

It is a major acquisition for Toro — Lawn-Boy had sales in fiscal 1988 of \$153 million. I believe it is good news for Wisconsin. TORO's purchase keeps the jobs here at "home".

Didn't August turn out to be a great month? It was so unpredictable — nor-

mal temperatures which felt so cool! Spring was too hot, then too cold and too dry. Summer came, but the rains did not. Ice accumulation over the winter left many Wisconsin golf courses in terrible shape. There were late frosts — seed wouldn't germinate.

But then August arrived. Timely rainfall is what I'll remember, until the last three days when we received 3.75" at our golf course. It seemed September had come early; I almost felt guilty enjoying such nice weather.

An additional plus — the Packers went 3-1 in the preseason and could have been 4-0. I ordered Super Bowl tickets after their fast start in the regular season. Maybe more interesting than any of these things this season, however, was the October snow. For Milwaukee, snow storm may describe it best — 8" of snow in some places on the 19th of October!

Oh well, that's our weather in Wisconsin. If it isn't anything else, it is variable.

If you are in the mood to write a letter, write Kohl, Kasten and your congressman and express your support for a National Research Council report that recommends a 10-fold increase in the Agriculture Department's paltry competitive research grant program.

And paltry is the appropriate word. That research program is now at the \$50 million level. How pathetic. These kinds of stupid decisions — spending \$50 million a year on agricultural resource — are the reasons the Japanese are killing us on so many competitive fronts. People in Washington had better wake up, and soon. And we had better wake up, too. Here is a decision that would help us.

RENEW AMERICA, a non-profit environmental organization, has rated the best and the worst states for environmental efforts. States were rated in five categories:

1. Drinking water, both conservation

and protection.

2. Food safety, protection from contamination and reduction of pesticide use.

3. Solid-waste recycling, garbage recycling and waste reduction.

4. Forest management, including reforestation and wildlife policies.

5. Impact of growth. This rated measures to protect state resources while accommodating development.

Here are the results of their rating:

BEST STATES	WORST STATES
1. California	50. Louisiana
2. Oregon	49. Tennessee
3. Minnesota	48. Utah
4. Massachusetts	47. South Dakota
5. WISCONSIN	46. Arkansas
6. Iowa	45. Nevada
7. New Jersey	44. Wyoming
8. Florida	43. West Virginia
9. Maryland	42. Kentucky
10. Connecticut	41. Indiana

Our high standing in the "best" column should dampen some of the shrillness from the zealots in our state who seemingly won't be happy until those of us in agriculture put up the 'OUT OF BUSINESS' sign.

Can it be? My hero — Arnold Palmer — turned 60 on September 10. That milestone in his life serves to remind those of my generation of how quickly the years pass. Gosh, it seems as though Arnie should only be in his early 40s.

You have to admit that he is in good shape for 60. There will only ever be one Arnold Palmer in golf.

A Gallup Poll of golf players asked them, "How many rounds of golf have you played in the past year?"

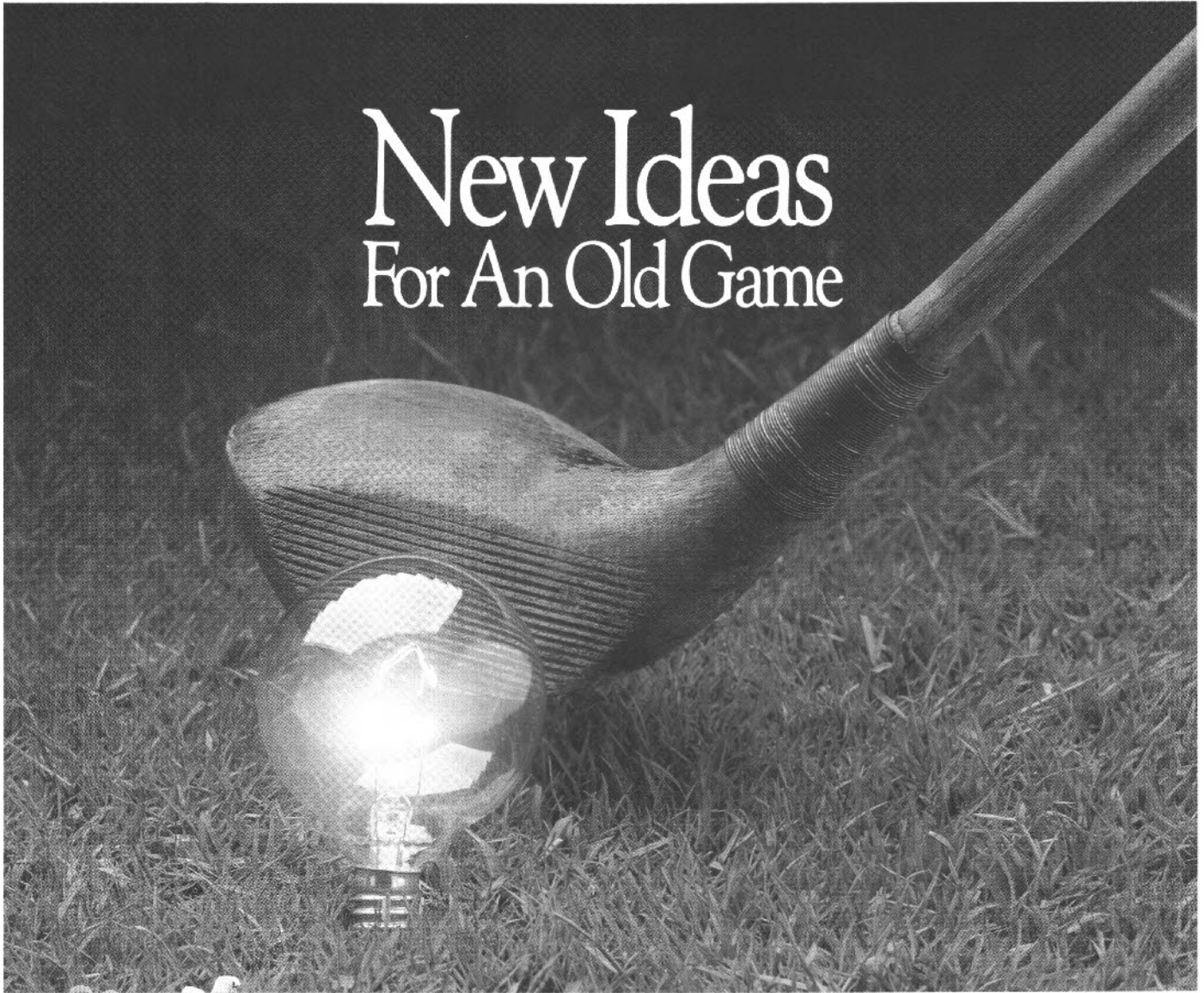
The results:

- 2 or more rounds 87%
- 10 or more rounds 41%
- 20 or more rounds 28%
- 40 or more rounds 17%

Sometimes I think that the players at my Club are all in the "40 or more"

(Continued on page 11)

New Ideas For An Old Game



Golf is a game full of great history and tradition. Golf has also embraced change and innovation to improve the game. No more hickory shafts and feather balls. Today's golfers play with graphite or lightweight steel shafts and aerodynamic golf balls.

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- Columbia ParCar Manufactured 2-cycle Engine designed exclusively for golf car use
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