

Gary Sorensen has to learn how to relax a little!



One of two "birthday boys" at the Field Day — Ed Devinger and Neil Richter both celebrated the day doing lots of business!



Mike Lyons, Assistant GCS at Pine Hills, gives some John Deere equipment a close look.



The Sand Mizer could be used to store Milorganite, too.



The large field in the center of equipment displays was a perfect place for hands-on demonstrations.



Here's an interesting machine for root pruning trees and installing herbicide barriers.



Specialty equipment was everywhere on the Yahara field.



The aerifiers on the field all got a good workout.

The Ridges Hosts WGCSA Meeting

By Mark Kienert

Wisconsin Golf Course Superintendent, Dave Murgatroyd, welcomed his fellow golf course superintendents to his outstanding (Dave can usually be found out standing in the Mississippi River somewhere) golf course, The Ridges. Dave has hosted our association for six times over the years he has been a member.

A nice dry day in Wisconsin Rapids (what else is new in this part of the state), saw the following individuals take home the prizes in the Chicago Points System format.

| Standing | Name |
|----------|----------------------|
| 1st | Host Dave Murgatroyd |
| 2nd | Jeff Bottensek |
| 3rd | Randy Smith |
| 4th | Roger Lee |
| 5th | Charlie Frazier |
| 6th | Tom Schaller |
| 7th | Robert Stock |
| 8th | Norman Ray |
| 9th | Deke DeCramer |
| 10th | Dennis Robinson |

Event winners saw Ron Grunewald hole out the longest putt. The accuracy award for closest to the pin went to the skillful Andy Archer. The "I like to keep it in play" award for long drive was hammered out by Steve Schmidt. And finally the "Nestea Plunge" award for most balls in the water goes to Bob "Flipper" Stock.

Special thanks for the hard work put in by Jack Harris, Webb Winn and their respective staffs for allowing us the use of their time and golf course.

DATES TO REMEMBER

- September 13.....WGCSA Meeting at Blackwolf Run
- September 25.....WTA Golf Outing at West Bend C.C.
- October 2.....WGCSA Meeting at Willow Run G.C.
- October 20 & 21.....WGCSA Dinner Dance
- October 25 & 26.....Wisconsin Golf Turf Symposium
- December 25.....**Christmas!**
- January 9 & 10, 1990.....WTA Winter Meeting

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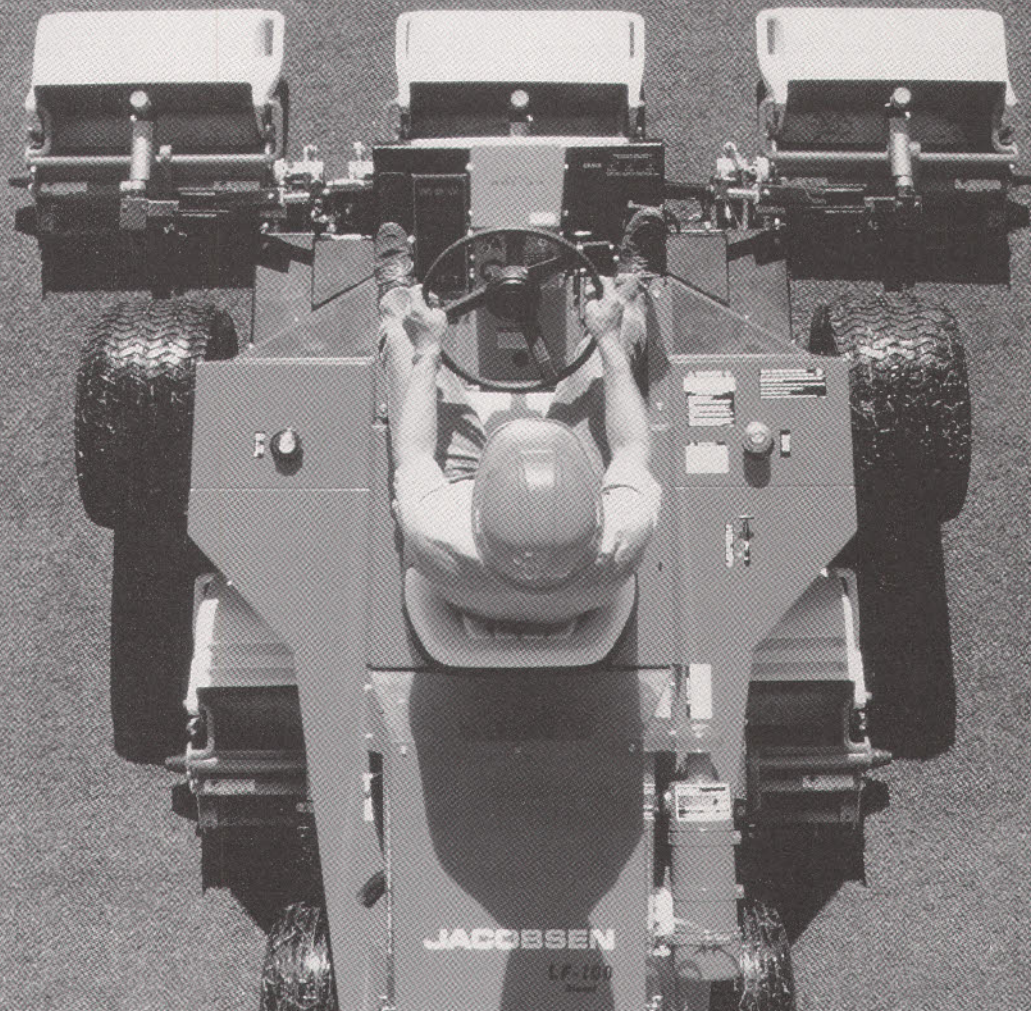
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ADDING TO THE CONFUSION

By Monroe S. Miller

I finally took the step. After months of finding 50 dozen reasons not to, I finally called Dennis Thorp — computer whiz extraordinary — and asked him to come to town for a couple of days to try to teach me how to operate our new computer. The cold and dark days of January seemed conducive to this long dreaded activity.

It is no wonder I'm so reticent when the word "computer" comes up in conversation. I don't like hi-tech things. I prefer antiques, quite frankly. My collections are of "old" radios and "old time" radio programs; I like "old" toy tractors and "used" books. I like visiting cemeteries and museums and even twenty years ago I didn't like "Star Trek". You can guess what "Star Wars" does for me.

I cannot program our VCR at home and barely know how to work the radio in either of our cars (the radios with buttons and dials so small they must have been made for third graders!). I couldn't get daughter Holly's stereo system turned on if my life depended on it. I don't have a clue how to use call waiting nor do I own one of those cards that lets you get cash from a shopping mall outhouse late on a Sunday afternoon. Too complicated. Too hi-tech.

Ask me if I'm computer literate and I'd have to say no, even after two days of Dennis' help. The language is too buzz wordy for me — VCR, VHS, DOS, EZ, and ABC; menus and discs, both floppy and hard. Wordstar. 123 Lotus. These numbers and words and phrases that have such a gosh, gee-willy impact on so many in our society leave me cold.

Maybe out in the cold, too. That's what has me worried. That's why Dennis came up for a couple of days. Although I'm primarily concerned about being able to water my golf course efficiently with our new IBM PS/2 Model 30 computer and its Toro Network 8000 program. I made the concession to myself to learn more about it. This seemed the perfect time and ideal reason to join the computer revolution.

For several years I've been hearing how computers can simplify the job of managing a golf course. What normal and sane golf course superintendent can be against that? So despite procrastination and my reputation as a low-tech curmudgeon, I was sort of anxious to see what Dennis could teach me.

Once I made the decision to invite Dennis to my office, I felt much like most people feel right before they go to the dentist — you know, wishing it was over before it even began.

I've searched my emotions in an attempt to draw some analogy that would best describe how I felt after two days of instruction. Imagine for a moment that it is right before the annual meeting at the Club. You don't have an office — pretend your new shop is under construction. You have a big report to prepare for the Club; it's a major assignment and they're anxious to receive it from you. You have a mountain of materials and one of your Club officers gives you permission to use space in his huge, new, multi-storied office building downtown.

Just as you arrive at the building the maintenance engineer, who has been expecting you, is leaving. He's headed out of town for a few days of vacation. He flips you a ring of keys, tells you to make yourself at home and to lock up when you leave.

The first problem you have is finding the right keys to open the succession of doors you have to go through to get into an office with a desk, some light, paper and writing utensils. Your first stop yields a desk but you cannot find the light switch. The next room also has a desk and you're able to find the light switch. But you cannot locate a thermostat to turn the heat up.

No matter. There wasn't any writing paper there anyway. The search for a warm, well-lit room with pencils and paper, a desk and chair continues, to no avail. Finally, you gather up your resources, find your way to the front door and leave in disgust.

You head for the Country Kitchen, borrow a tablet from the manager and a Bic pen from a waitress, collapse in a booth and write your report. It's done in seemingly no time.

Welcome to the computer revolution. That's about how I felt on my first solo at a computer.

It certainly wasn't Dennis' fault. Fortunately, he is a patient man. His first day was filled with my normal ration of phone calls I couldn't avoid and people stopping with legitimate business. It wasn't the best atmosphere for concentration and learning. Frankly, I was kind of glad for the interruptions. I was smart enough to include Pat in the instruction and he was ordered to stay glued to his chair so he could show me anything I missed.

Like an idiot, I thought in two days I'd know all I needed to know to be an expert. Even with two days of work from a knowledgeable computer person who also happens to know our business, the most I **should** have expected was a brief introduction to the world and science of computers. That introduction has to include things like what components are for what and what gets plugged in where. You have to learn elementary items like how to get the menu (new word), how to ac-

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cess a program and then how to get back out (which gives new meaning to the word "escape").

It was reassuring to learn that there are tutorial programs to lend a hand, especially when you ask yourself what you're going to do when the instructor isn't around. Although there are books, the amount of time needed to find, for example, an answer to a Wordstar program problem in the 760-page manual could run days.

Somehow I thought if I'd invested two days in learning about computers and programs, I'd learn how to compute. What I did learn is that was pure fantasy.

My fear of the technology wasn't relieved, either. If anything, it may have been heightened. I even watched the "expert" erase something he didn't mean to. Fortunately he had made a copy. Imagine the damage I could do.

I did learn a lot about the capacity of these machines. I was amazed with the speed at which they work. I also found truth in the saying "they are only as smart as the operator". Without an operator, they are essentially worthless.

To the disappointment of some, I have to say I was underwhelmed by

what I see as a computer's helpful application to a golf course operation. That opinion may change as I learn more, but first impressions are usually pretty close to the mark.

There remains no doubt in my mind that the most valuable lesson learned is the obvious fact that a working knowledge of computers must be earned. That will take more than just two days. There are no miracles to be had here; there will be no substitute for careful and deliberate learning. I guess it's like almost anything else in our lives.

I intend to keep working away at the learning process. I do want to know how to use these machines, someday, even if I think their application is overrated.

And I'll concede there is a bit of truth in what Dennis said, as he wiped his brow at the end of the second day: "It is tough teaching an old dog new tricks!"

Editor's note: I put the above thoughts down on paper while I was in Anaheim at the GCSAA Conference last January. Not much has changed my thoughts since then, even though we do use that IBM computer to water the golf course. It remains primarily that — a

fancy time clock for our irrigation system. It is a fancy substitute for my manual typewriter, which I still use to do "The Grass Roots". It is no substitute for the reliable records I keep neatly stored in file folders. I don't have time nor do I see the need to transcribe them onto a soft disk. That is merely busy work.

I have found that the written instructions that come with the computer and the program are atrocious. They may as well be written in Greek. I am totally lost when something goes wrong. If Pat isn't around or Tom Emmerich is out of his office or the 800-TORO number is busy, I sit until one of them is available. That isn't a comforting feeling.

I also believe that with all the monkeying around, all the experimenting and all of the learning, these machines break even in time saving for a golf course. Sorry to disappoint you, but that is fact. Sometimes they just add to the confusion.

There is hope, though. I can definitely get along with the NETWORK. Bob Erdahl has one, too, and when he said he thought it was pretty simple to operate I decided I'd best spend more time with it.

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It's Been A Fun 22 Years!

By Rob Schultz

"Hey, mister, how long have you played golf?"

Those words echoed out just as I walked up to attempt a six-foot birdie putt. This youngster, wearing beat-up Nike tennis shoes, a t-shirt and baggy yellow shorts down to his knees, was looking up at me with a quizzical look on his face.

I wondered what made him ask such a question. He had joined my group at the turn and was quiet for most of the round. There were three holes to go and he finally talked. And all he wanted to know about was how long my tour of duty was with a game that I both adore and curse virtually every day.

I decided to ignore the question and concentrate on my birdie putt. But as I stood over it, the numbers flashed in my mind.

Twenty-two years.

My putt flew by the hole and I had a twenty-footer coming back to save par.

I played the rest of my round in a dream state. What have I accomplished? Where have I played? What are the highlights? What are the lowlights?

One at a time.

First, the highlights. The biggest was when I was 14. Living in Oshkosh, I had entered my first city tournament. C flight. It was match play back then, I won my first match, but had to play the city's biggest sandbagger in the second round. We called him The Jerk because he hated kids. He'd bet with us, then take our bikes as collateral after he won. When The Jerk heard he was playing me, he started making bets with his friends concerning just how bad he'd whup me.

On the first tee this forty-year-old buffoon stared me down and said, "I'm gonna smoke your ass kid." After nine holes we were deadlocked. Then, on the tenth hole, I drilled a sixty-foot putt from the fringe for birdie. A gallery had formed by then and they all hollered their approval.

On the eleventh tee The Jerk told me he was taking the tenth hole away from me because I had replaced my ball on

the fringe with a new ball. We had agreed we could change balls on the green, but he said we never agreed to change balls on the fringe.

He started laughing and said to his friends, "Watch this sucker fold."

The Jerk seemed prophetic after he won the eleventh hole to go two-up. I spent the entire eleventh hole wondering what hit me. I had figured it out by the time I got to the twelfth tee. Then I got mad. My whole family had come out to watch me and they all heard me look The Jerk right into the face and say, "Listen crudface, if you say one more word to me I'm going to rip your rocks off with my wedge. Understand?"

Tough talk for a fourteen-year-old. My mother nearly fainted.

I won the rest of the holes and defeated The Jerk 3-2. Among the kids at the course, I was a hero. They got their bikes back.

Later on, before I grew so fast I couldn't even walk without tripping, I would win a few tournaments in high school and play well in some outings. But nothing matched the feeling of beating The Jerk. I could feel myself growing up.

Speaking of growing up, I must

discuss one other highlight. First, I must admit I'm going to sound like a sexist, chauvinistic, woman-ogling pig. OK, I'll live with that.

It was a gorgeous Sunday afternoon and I decided to go out by myself to the course to play 18. I decided to hit a bucket of balls before I teed off, but I never got the chance because just as I got to the driving range I was told to join the group on the first tee.

I walked angrily to the tee box, because I blew \$2 on a practice bucket and the starter never gave me a chance to hit one ball. But then I saw her standing there on the first tee. Blue short shorts. White, tiny halter-top. Long blonde hair. Thin long legs. Dark tan. She could have been Miss America.

And she was standing at the blue tees.

I looked back at the grinning starter and mouthed the words, "Thank you."

After I introduced myself to my new playing partner, I pointed to the ladies' tee and said, "Don't you want to play from those tees?"

She answered by smacking a drive 245 yards, down the middle. She birdied the first hole and finished with a 74.

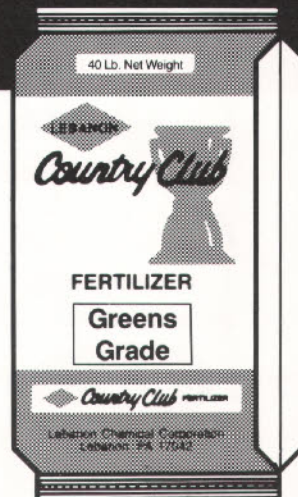
I was mesmerized the entire round and shot about 234. All I could think about was that I was playing with Christie Brinkley, Elle MacPherson and Cheryl Tiegs all rolled into one. And she had a two handicap.

Her name was Gaylin and she played collegiately for some college in

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the south. She was visiting her brother.

"I sure had fun out there with you today," she said with this sweet smile. "It's too bad I have to leave tonight. If I had met you a few days ago we could have had some fun."

Gulp. I tried to say something but my voice went up about ten octaves. All she heard was whiny, screechy gobblegook.

I walked into the clubhouse as she walked away and saw about a hundred noseprints on the window. I was instantly mobbed by all these lecherous male hacks; some of whom had spent the afternoon hiding behind trees just hoping to sneak a peak at her. Nobody let me leave for at least two hours. They all had to hear the story of my round with Miss Fantasy over and over again. To this day I don't know when I was a bigger hero; the day I beat The Jerk or the day I just looked like one.

The lowlight was a simple one. I had just graduated from college, worked for a small daily in Green Bay, and was at my first Green Bay Packer media outing at Oneida Golf and Riding Club.

Writers, TV slobs and former Packers were all invited. Former Packer great Ray Nitschke played directly behind me.

I had just finished warming up on the first tee when I had my first meeting with the grizzly linebacker. He sized me up, pulled a \$100 bill out of his pocket, dropped the cash on the ground and said to his three playing partners: "Hundred bucks the skinny kid duffs his tee shot."

Three more \$100 bills hit the ground. Nitschke sized me up again and then stared at me like I was a quarterback who didn't see him blitzing from my blind side. "OK kid, hit away," he snarled.

Not feeling intimidated in the least, I took a couple of good practice swings, set up over the ball and . . . duffed it about ten yards.

"Thanks kid," Nitschke said as he picked up his profits off the ground.

Highlights. Lowlights. Those are the thoughts that went through my mind after the youngster asked how long I had been playing golf. It took me

awhile, but I finally gave the boy the answer he had asked what seemed to be about one hour before.

"I'm sorry if I asked the wrong question," the boy said apologetically.

No kid, you asked the right one. I may not be Nicklaus or Watson. I've never won a championship of any kind. There are no trophies in my family room. The most money I've ever won gambling at golf is less than \$50.

But my highlights are still special to me. My lowlights are special, too.

So thanks, kid, for giving me the opportunity to sit back and remember them.

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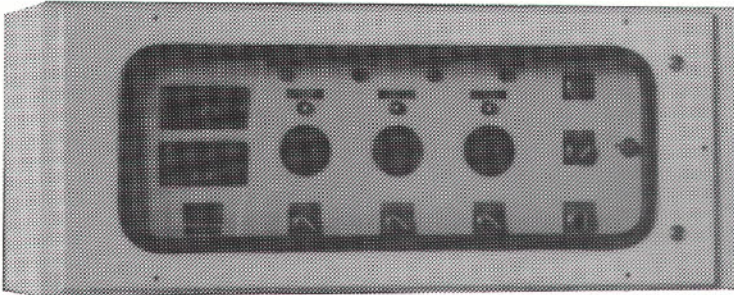
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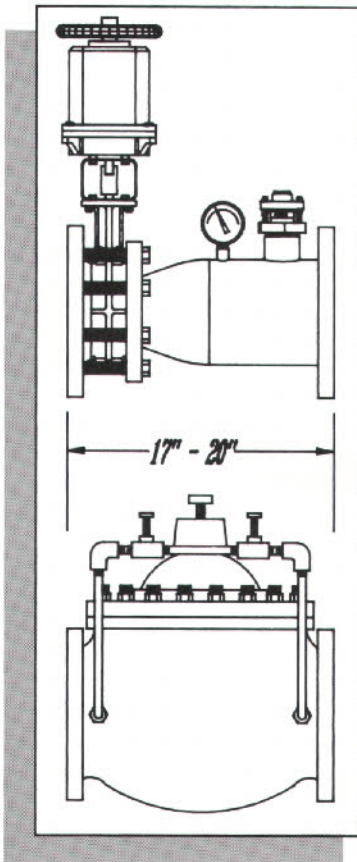
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WHAT'S WISCONSIN'S MOST POPULAR GOLF COURSE TRACTOR?

By Monroe S. Miller

Bob Erdahl started it and everyone enjoyed it. So I guess I'll carry it on. His two-part *The Wisconsin Survey* answered scores of questions, really pertinent one, about our state's golf courses. But I have many more questions.

Some aren't very important ones — they're more of a curiosity than anything. Interesting? Maybe that, too. So during the two months between issues of *The Grass Roots* I'll be asking anyone and everyone in the WGCSA I happen to see or talk to the poll question for an upcoming issue.

The first question of this feature is one it seems I've asked an awful lot of people in our group: What's the most popular golf course tractor in Wisconsin? To get that answer, I asked my colleagues how many of each tractor brand they had. F-10's, F-20's, Parkmasters, etc. weren't counted.

The results didn't surprise me much. Even setting my deep prejudice aside (two Ford cars, two Ford trucks, four Ford tractors), I knew Ford tractors would win in a big way. A real big way. As a matter of fact, they had more than double the next most popular tractor — Massey. Frankly, second place surprised me. I'd have put my money on John Deere. Enough golf courses were considered that I'm convinced there is statistical significance of this trend that would hold up if all golf course tractors in Wisconsin were counted.

Here's my data:

| | |
|-------------------------|----|
| Ford | 50 |
| Massey Ferguson | 20 |
| John Deere | 14 |
| International Harvester | 12 |
| Jacobsen | 4 |
| Oliver | 3 |
| Kubota | 2 |
| Allis Chalmers | 1 |

| | |
|-------------|---|
| Case | 1 |
| Case IH | 1 |
| Toro | 1 |
| Deutz-Allis | 1 |

Ford's overwhelming dominance can be traced to several fundamental reasons. The first is that for decades they've been very affordable. Secondly, in the early years of tractor use on golf courses, most manufacturers were making new crop tractors while Ford's wide front 8N was about all they offered. It was much safer. In subsequent years right through present times, their specialty has been the wide front tractor. And those older Fords were sized about right in terms of horsepower. They really were the ideal golf course tractor.

This unofficial poll seems to indicate they are still in the "driver's seat"!

GYPSY MOTH NIGHTMARE

By Monroe S. Miller

My office and shop are adjacent to a lot of activity. We see a lot of wild things at the State Crime Lab next to us. The Department of Revenue is in the same office building as the Crime Lab. And so are several Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection laboratories.

That includes Julie Nara's entomology lab. She called me about a month ago with panic in her voice. "Would you please go and check the gypsy moth traps on your golf course? If you find anything suspicious, bring it over to me."

I asked her what she was so upset about.

"We're finding a lot of gypsy moths around the state. It's turning into a nightmare."

Pat quickly checked our traps and found nothing even resembling this dreaded insect, thank goodness. But more than 1,000 male gypsy moths

have been caught in the DATCP traps. Most of them have been found in Milwaukee, Dane and Ozaukee counties, but small numbers have been found in the Fox River Valley, too.

The good news, if you can call it that, is that single moths are being found here and there. That's an indication that there isn't a general infestation. These moths can be moved several hundred miles in a strong wind and survive.

As a point of reference, about 600 gypsy moths were caught in our state last year. The WDATCP has 9,000 traps set throughout the state. Most of them are in Kewaunee and Door counties, where the greatest numbers were found last year. This year almost no gypsy moths are being found there.

The gypsy moth, a concern because of the defoliation it can cause, was brought to America from Europe in 1869 for an experiment. It eventually

escaped confinement and has caused serious damage to oak, maple and other trees.

Fortunately, because of the dedication of people like Julie Nara, Wisconsin has been successful in controlling the gypsy moths. The entomologists in the Department of Agriculture have control-trapped infestations in several locations with traps in the past. If the male gets caught in a trap before he finds a female, a population of them can be trapped out in one year.

The potential disaster that exists if this pest should become more widespread points out how important it is for WGCSA members to help with trapping when the call is issued each spring.

It's easy, it's quick, and it's the responsible thing to do. There isn't very much that's pretty about a defoliated tree in the middle of the summer on a golf course.

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|--------------|------------|-------------|------------|
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| Gator | 5.9 | Yorktown II | 5.4 |
| Prelude | 5.8 | Cowboy | 5.4 |
| Repell | 5.8 | Pennfine | 5.3 |
| Tara | 5.8 | Diplomat | 5.3 |
| Premier | 5.7 | Regal | 5.3 |
| Citation II | 5.6 | Barry | 5.2 |
| Manhattan II | 5.6 | Delray | 5.2 |
| Blazer | 5.6 | Omega | 5.1 |
| All Star | 5.6 | Elka | 5.1 |
| Ranger | 5.6 | Manhattan | 5.1 |
| Birdie II | 5.5 | Citation | 5.0 |
| Fiesta | 5.5 | Linn | 3.4 |
| Pennant | 5.5 | | |

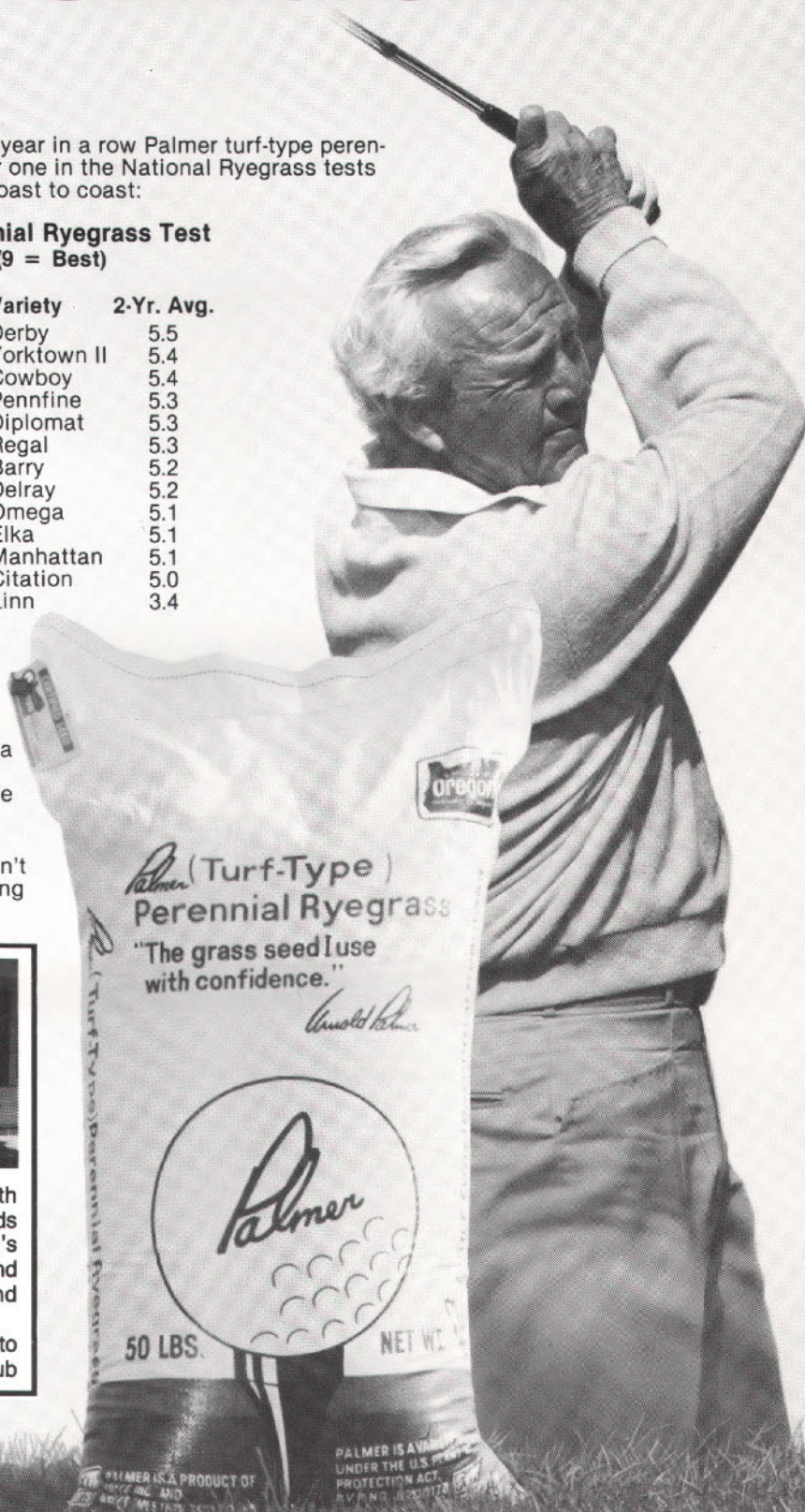
It's no wonder courses like Bay Hill in Florida, Shinnecock in New York, PGA West in California and Sahara in Nevada are only a few of those that are demanding the excellent performance of Palmer.

As a turf professional wouldn't it be nice to know you're using the best? Use Palmer.



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—Wayne Otto
Supt. of Ozaukee Country Club



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