



# IMPACT

By Rod Johnson



Often the game of golf is viewed by non-participants as a trivial pursuit; a game for the wealthy having the same impact on our society as a rained-out ice cream social. Fortunately for our profession, this is far from the truth.

In fact, golf has a tremendous impact on our nation's economy. The amount of money associated with golf is staggering. A million dollar professional tournament is small potatoes when compared to the total economic impact of the game. Imagine the dollars spent annually by the players of the game on equipment, clothing, green and cart fees, membership fees, travel, and golf-related real estate purchases.

Of major impact is the business of golf. Not just golf course management but total club management. Think of the dollars spent on course maintenance, facilities management, new construction, and the labor force employed.

Collectively, our profession is having tremendous impact on the game. There can be little argument that golf courses are in better playing condition than ever. Of more impact is that golf

courses are more responsibly maintained than ever. More golf courses are being maintained by responsible, educated, competent golf course superintendents.

The United States Golf Association chose the eve of this year's U.S. Open to announce that it will spend \$5.4 million on research over the next three years, more than double its previous funding. The USGA has directed 3 million of those dollars towards evaluating the impact of golf courses on the environment.

In announcing the USGA decision to study how fertilizers and pesticides affect the environment, C. Grant Spaeth, the USGA's president, said, "Right now the game is threatened by the lack

of knowledge about the environmental impact of pesticides and fertilizers used to maintain golf courses. I can think of nothing more urgent to golf than to answer this environmental question, and to propose responsible solutions."

I cannot think of anything more urgent to the game of golf — period! The information generated by this research promises more impact towards golf than square grooves ever came close to creating.

Do golfers understand the potential impact of this research? I think not. The lines to donate funds to turf research will never be as long as those to purchase Karsten Copper. Will this research be enough or will other interests and future technology demand more? Quite probably the latter.

The real impact to our profession is that golf's "Big Daddy", the USGA, recognizes the importance of this research and is moving for answers. Other threats to the game will surface (super golf balls, nonconforming grips, etc.), but this research takes on the utmost importance and promises long-term impact.



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# A Christmas Letter

By Monroe S. Miller

Everyone gets one or two at Christmastime -- letters from distant relatives, former friends and faint acquaintances.

They are all about the same. Written under the guise of a holiday greeting, these obnoxious letters are sentence after sentence and paragraph after paragraph of pure, unadulterated boasting.

Often, I really believe they are not all intended as such. I'd love to read or hear, however, from a psychologist why some people have a need to offer up these annual missives. Is it some form of compensation? Do they suffer from an insecurity of some sort? Are they desperate for attention?

Then, of course, there are those Christmas letters sent by people who are hardcore, unabashed blowhards, braggarts. The letters they send, with seriousness, are hilarious. In our extended family, we often send back and forth these "Christmas letters". They are that entertaining!

For fun, I've decided to compose one here, for colleagues and peers and friends. Remember, it's only for fun and written tongue-in-cheek.

Christmas 1990

Dear Friends,

Well, the first year of the new decade is now nearly history. For me and mine, it will be remembered as a fairly typical year in our lives. I'll share a few highlights with you.

The board of governors here at Enchanted Valley Country Club just completed my annual review. Again this year, they tried to get me to sign a lifetime contract with them. I declined, again -- a guy hates to limit himself.

So they came back with yet another huge raise and a megabonus. Honestly, I don't know what we're going to do with all the money. I guess we'll probably continue our heavy financial support of over twenty charities.

The members of EVCC were thrilled with the golf course conditions this year. They take a lot of pride in having the fastest, truest and firmest greens in

all of America. We had them reading 11.00 feet on the stimpmeter everyday, all year. And with no nitrogen applications!

The players at the Club have come to expect perfect 3/8" fairways from opening day until Thanksgiving, and once again we delivered the goods, so to speak. They were also pleased we finished the fiscal year under budget again.

As usual, I had a lot of inquiries from around the world about how I'm able to provide such a superb product. "Just a green thumb," I told the greenkeeper from Scotland's St. Andrews.

A few modest honors came my way this past year. I was named chairman of the Governor's State Blue Ribbon Task Force on the environment. It's a time consuming appointment, but we must all do our part. In the spring elections I was returned to the city school board and promptly elected president by the balance of the board members. Civic pride, you know.

Our church approached me about leading a group of pastors to the Holy Land for an intense 10-day educational experience. I agreed, since I've done it previously. "We must serve God," I always say.

Finally, I had to fly to Washington, D.C., to accept the VFW "Man of the Year" Award from President Bush. It was interesting enough, but I did it for the kids in the neighborhood -- role model and all that.

About the time I start feeling sorry for myself because of all my professional responsibilities and extracurricular activities, I look and see what my wife is doing.

She is a national finalist in the Mrs. America contest. Beautiful girl. Of course, you heard that earlier in the year she was promoted to executive vice president of the firm she works for, the first woman to hold the position.

Honestly, I don't know where she gets the time for her hobbies. She entered the State Orchid Contest and walked away with a couple of first places. And when the dust cleared from

the Wisconsin Women's Triathlon, there she was, crossing the finish line ahead of everyone else, still smiling and with energy to spare.

What can I say about our oldest daughter; we're very proud of her. She finished her PhD last spring, Phi Beta Kappa, at the age of twenty-three. She interviewed with Dartmouth College, Princeton University, Michigan and Wisconsin for a tenured faculty position. They all wanted her, but she chose Wisconsin. "Might as well go with the best, Dad," she said. Love that kid!

We were thrilled when our middle girl was named University of Wisconsin Homecoming Queen this fall. She's a beauty, that's for sure. Turns out that was just a warm-up. About a week ago we learned she'll be Queen of the Tournament of Roses Parade and will lead our football team onto the field for the Rose Bowl in Pasadena, California. She's also president of her sorority and worked nearly full time at a stock brokerage firm while maintaining a 3.95 G.P.A. She's quite a young lady. On top of all this, she repeated as champion of the Wisconsin Women's Amateur golf tournament.

And then there's the youngest one. She continually amazes us. She was moved up two complete grades at the end of the school year. This past summer she led all qualifiers in her age group for the Pan American games, a tune-up for the 1992 Olympics. We expect to see her up against some tough foreign competitors, but have confidence she'll do well. Maybe there's some gold in her future! The girl also holds first chair in the flute section of the Wisconsin Youth Symphony Orchestra, is president of the student council and was elected class president. She's on her way!

We're anxiously awaiting your annual Christmas letter, hoping your year was as exciting and prosperous as ours.

See you in Las Vegas in February for the national meetings. Until then, have a happy holiday season.

Sincerely,  
Joe Blow and Family

What does all of this have to do with managing a golf course? Nothing! Absolutely nothing! But it has something to do with Christmas, and during this time of the year, Christmas is what matters the most to nearly everyone.

Merry Christmas, all!

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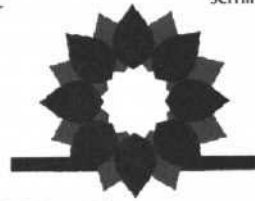
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## MidAm '91



## A class act at Oakland Hills

By Rob Schultz

Ted Woehrle stood on fabled Oakland Hills Country Club's 10th green, pointed back toward the tee and told a grand, old story.

It was a cool, crisp autumn day in Birmingham, Michigan, the air was clear and, as Woehrle spoke, the characters in the Oakland Hills golf course superintendent's story almost seemed to come to life.

In the backdrop of the 10th tee that Woehrle pointed to was the magnificent clubhouse. It almost has as much history as Oakland Hills' grand south course, which Ben Hogan labeled "The Monster" during the 1951 U.S. Open.

But Hogan wasn't the main character in Woehrle's story. Instead, it was the great Walter Hagen, who served as the pro at Oakland Hills about 60 years ago and once said, "I don't want to be a millionaire, I just want to live like one."

Hagen did just about anything to live like a millionaire and that included gambling on the golf course, even at midnight. Woehrle said Hagen would sit at the Oakland Hills bar and bet anybody that he could par the brutal par-4 10th hole in total darkness. Even though he was one of the greatest golfers in the world at the time, such a feat still seemed so improbable that it wasn't difficult to find some takers.

Woehrle said that Hagen stood on the 10th tee and said he'd hit his drive just a few yards short of the fairway bunker. The small gallery then ran up to that spot and, sure enough, they found his ball.

Hagen then said he'd hit his second shot on the green about 10 feet short of the pin. Once again the gallery ran to the green and found his ball precisely where he said it would be.

Hagen, meanwhile, putted out for par and collected his money. "And nobody ever knew," said Woehrle, "that Hagen had a clubhouse boy place those balls on the fairway and green long before he made the bet. All Hagen had to do was make sure he didn't hit the ball anywhere close to where he said it was going."

A great story. And there were more. Each hole on this wonderful, old track seemed to have a story. As I trudged along with Woehrle and listened to him spin tale after tale, it was hard to stifle the shiver that kept going up and down my spine.

Oakland Hills has an ambience carved out by the world's greatest golfers in the world's greatest tournaments over a period of nearly 100 years. Hagen, Hogan, Bobby Jones, Gene Littler, Sam Snead, Gary Player and architects Donald Ross and Robert Trent Jones, Sr. are just some of the great faces that are part of Oakland Hills' pictorial Hall of Fame in the clubhouse's main upstairs hallway.

But none deserve a spot on that wall more than Woehrle, who is as much a part of Oakland Hills' story as the stories he tells so well.

Oakland Hills and Woehrle are a perfect match; a superb golf course that needs a great deal of care and a savvy superintendent who has all the answers for all the course's needs.

Woehrle, only the third superintendent in the course's illustrious 73-year history, has preserved and protected Oakland Hills as if it was one of his own children or grandchildren of which he is so proud.

And, like Hagen, Hogan or Player, Woehrle does his job with grace and class. Spend a few hours with Woehrle and it's easy to understand why he is one of the world's most respected golf course superintendents.

First, Woehrle pays attention to detail. As we stood on the first tee he pointed out the new tees that have been built, in part, for next year's Senior U.S. Open. New tees were also built for the women members, who, in the past, were forced to tee off from the front of the men's tees. It was a major undertaking that came out magnificently.

But in the same breath Woehrle also pointed out the new flagpole that was installed the day before our round. He took just as much pride that that project was pulled off just as well.

Second, Woehrle is at the top of his

class as far as understanding and successfully completing even bigger jobs than building new tees.

After we completed our round, Woehrle took us into the men's club room and pulled out about 50 before-and-after photos of his latest project. It was a dandy. His crew painstakingly restored Oakland Hills' 100-plus sand traps — most of them designed and added to the Donald Ross course by Robert Trent Jones in 1950 — back to their original shape.

Some had been finished just a few days prior to my arrival at the course. But nobody would have known it. I stared at the ground looking for marks where the sod was placed. For that matter, I stared at the entire course wondering if there was a flaw someplace. I couldn't find one.

Third, Woehrle has heart; a special gift that completes a very special package. He understands the history of his course, how its subtleties and nuances make it so great and he has made sure nothing occurs that could change it. It's not just a job. He has let the course envelop him. Subtly. Like the course itself.

Woehrle spent a beautiful Saturday afternoon with an out-of-state newspaper guy, a complete stranger. Yet he treated me like a long lost friend because he knew I loved the course. Quietly, he pointed out some of the wonders of his course. The other wonders he let me find out for myself.

And then Woehrle watched the course envelop me for the duration of the round. He smiled when I birdied the No. 1 handicap hole, the infamous par-4 No. 5 where T.C. Chen two-chipped and lost the '85 U.S. Open to Andy North. And he smiled when I dropped a 10-foot downhill slider to save par at the equally infamous dog-leg par-4 No. 16, the course's only real water hole.

Hopefully the afternoon made him feel good, worth the time away from home to spend time with this stranger. As I waved good-bye to Woehrle later that night, I wondered how many others of Woehrle's stature would do the same for such a stranger.

Woehrle talked of Hogan and Hagen and Player and Littler with respect. They are all great stories at Oakland Hills.

But Woehrle is their equal; a true, great story himself.

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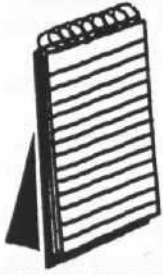
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# The Editor's Awards

By Monroe S. Miller

The year that is fast closing on us, like every year for God only knows how long, will experience an untold number of reviews by the time December 31st arrives.

I'm driven each year to do the same — capture the highs and lows, the good and bad, the memorable and forgettable and everything in between — for our business of managing golf courses in Wisconsin.

In an attempt to do that differently this year, I'm introducing the EDITOR'S AWARDS for 1990. Take a quick glance at the winners and see if you agree with the jury's selection!

**The MEA CULPA Award.** This award could be given for any number of incidents, decisions or remarks I've made in the past twelve months. One, in particular, deserves recognition.

On the afternoon of August 26th, while mowing fairways with a Ransomes Motor 180 for a Monday golf tournament, one of my employees was smacked in the back of the head with a golf ball.

Fortunately, he was wearing a hard hat!

I was pretty happy. Andy Phelps is the captain of Middleton High School's football team (so he's hardheaded anyway) and we wouldn't have wanted to interfere with that team's quest for yet another state championship.

Excuse me while I pull my foot out of my mouth.

**The OUTLAW Award.** Near the end of May, the two men from Arkansas who sold buckets and boatloads of the voracious grass carp to many WGCSA members pleaded guilty to doing so illegally. Supposedly, the fish caused more than a half-million dollars in damage.

I thought maybe the guys should have been given some sort of public service award instead of jail time. Those fish maintained some of the cleanest lakes and ponds in the history of Wisconsin's golf courses!

**The DISAPPOINTMENT OF THE YEAR Award.** After a lot of publicity

and advance press, the heralded invasion of the 17 year cicadas didn't happen. I didn't see or hear even one of them.

Let's see; the next chance to see a cicada of this variety will come in the year 2007. Hopefully, I'll be around to greet them.

**The RED SMITH Award.** Named in honor of a Wisconsin born and world famous writer, this award is given to the author of an article in a national journal that in a special way advances the profession we work in.

This year's selection was easy: Frank Hannigan's piece in the Vol. 32, No. 8 August 1990 issue of *Golf*. It was entitled "A Super Job".

Every one of us should write a thank you note to Frank Hannigan — the article was a super job by him.

**The WORZELLA Award.** Named in honor of the WGCSA's best golf player, this award goes to a Wisconsin golfer who accomplished something special or unusual during the year.

The 1990 Worzella plaque goes to our own Andy North, winner of two U.S. Open championships.

North tied a PGA Tour record during the second round of the Anheuser Busch Classic in Williamsburg, Virginia. He completed the round with only 18 putts, tying the tour record. Three others have done that — pretty amazing when you think about it.

**The CUTTING EDGE Award.** This prestigious presentation goes to the WGCSA member who, during the season past, has pushed golf course maintenance practices to new levels, levels not imagined possible ten or even two years ago.

The award this year goes to Ozaukee Country Club's venerable golf course superintendent Wayne Otto.

The new ground he's plowing this year is the cutting height of his putting greens. The cutting height, at one point in August, was 0.110! That height has to give new meaning to the phrase "fast grass"!

**The BIRDIE Award.** Recognizing

environmental efforts by those associated with golf is important. The 1990 "Birdie" winner(s) was an easy selection; it goes to the members of the Portage Country Club.

This past spring the club members erected 28 bluebird houses on their course. The houses, set back in the rough a bit, also serve as 150 yard markers!

By mid-June eight pairs of bluebirds had nested, 17 young had hatched and 16 eggs were being incubated by female bluebirds.

**The RIP OF THE YEAR Award.** Only the quick witted in our group will ever be eligible for this Editor's Award. The 1990 winner, Ed Devinger, is well qualified.

It happened at our Koshkonong Mounds meeting. Skip Wilms was our speaker.

Skip was discussing his new job in Illinois. He commented that he was "working 30% LESS than he ever had at Racine Country Club."

A gruff and gravelly voice from the back of the room said, loud enough for all to hear, "NOT POSSIBLE!" It was Ed.

Even Skip laughed.

**The RUBE GOLDBERG Award.** This prestigious honor, named after the noted American cartoonist/sculptor who was famous for creating intricate diagrams for contraptions designed to effect relatively simple results, goes to a British computer guru.

This guy had so much spare time that he invented a sod-laying machine. Stuart Mills' "machine" is a track implement that unrolls one roll of sod at a time. But it offers "hairline precision" for abutting sections.

It looks as though it would take longer to load the roll of sod into the machine than it would to manually lay it.

Rube would have loved this guy. And Rod Johnson has ordered a pair of the machines.

**The BULLWINKLE Award.** We are giving the 1990 Bullwinkle to that crazy moose that got loose while searching for a mate during the height of this fall's rutting season. His search carried him to the Golden Sands Golf Course in Cecil, just east of Shawano.

His appearance on the golf course scared the bejesus out of the players, and reports said the 1000 pound beast left some pretty big tracks across the 12th green.

**The WOLF Award.** Few things catch Professor Worf's fancy quicker than reports of a disease outbreak. In honor of this outstanding turf pathologist, the WOLF award acknowledges the worst disease outbreak during the past season.

The 1990 WOLF goes to the Rhizoctonia brown patch that seemingly infected at least half of Wisconsin's golf courses in the third and fourth week of August. I had a severe outbreak on fairways, but some colleagues had greens and tees infected, too.

Many of us hadn't seen brown patch in years; its appearance reminded us of how frightening and devastating it can be.

**The PELLITTERI Award.** Similar to the WOLF, the PELLITTERI is named

after Phil P., a man who truly loves bugs. This award recognizes the worst turf insect problem of the past season.

No, the PELLITTERI is not going to the cutworm, the black turfgrass ateniens grub, ants or any other classic turfgrass insect.

It goes to the mosquito!

The above-normal rainfall created near optimum conditions for them, especially about the time of the GMO. They were driving the tour players and the spectators crazy.

Golf course superintendents in Wisconsin were buying insect repellent by the five-gallon pailful this year; OFF! will be a significant item in next year's budget for many of us.

**The GREEN INDUSTRY Award.** This category is competition for all the

excellent non-golf turf writing that is appearing these days. We'd be remiss if we didn't recognize the great article our own Lori Bocher wrote in the September 1990 issue of *Turf* (central edition).

It was entitled "The Packers' Turf — They love their field".

I am extremely pleased that this talented writer's craft appears in each issue of *THE GRASS ROOTS*. Her feature adds a lot to our journal. And as it is turning out, she is adding significantly to quite a few others, too.

So there you have them — the 1990 Editor's Awards. The competition for the 1991s begins immediately on January 1st. Choose your category and go for it!

# THE GENTLE GIANTS

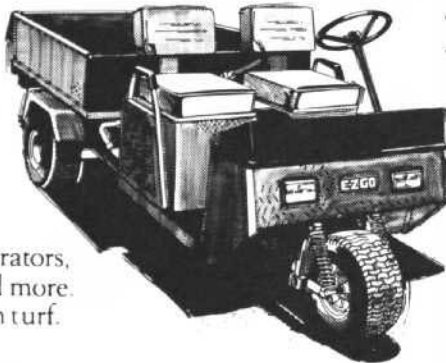
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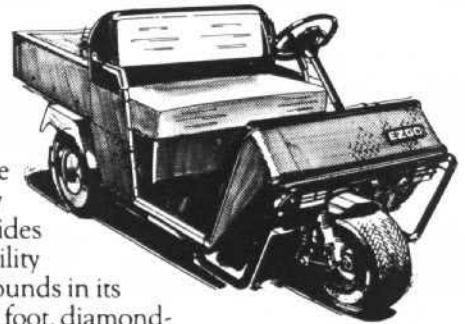
## The GXT-800

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(Continued from front page)

4. Mark Kienert, representing Bulls Eye C.C., brought their donation of \$1,502.50;

5. WTA president and Camelot C.C. owner Red Roskopf sponsored a tourney at his course that generated \$1,065 for the project;

6. Jim Spindler, representing the O.J. NOER Research Foundation, presented that group's check for the NOER CENTER in the sum of \$1,000.

So it was a memorable day for the largest turnout ever at this event. The comradery, the pride and the sense of accomplishment were in the hearts of every person there.



Scotts was well represented by (L-R) Jerry O'Donnell, Dick Even-son and Wayne Horman.

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