



# “Terms of Endearment”

By Rod Johnson



Good old common sense says, “Don’t throw gas on a fire and don’t throw rocks at a bee hive”. My message this issue may not show an abundance of that common sense.

Rob Schultz, a Madison sportswriter and a regular contributor to the quality of this newsletter, has managed to start some fires to get the bees a buzzin’! The leadership of the Wisconsin PGA has made it perfectly clear that they did not share the grins and the tongue-and-cheek look at comparative worths.

The Wisconsin PGA took offense with parts of the column and I can sympathize with their concerns. The past couple of years has seen the development and strengthening of an excellent working relationship between our groups.

The concerns of the Wisconsin PGA were expressed in a letter from Executive Director, Tony Coleman. Of most importance was the following paragraph:

“The PGA is in wholehearted support of the notion that all of the profes-

sionals in golf, including Golf Course Superintendents, Club Managers, and Golf Professionals should be compensated fairly and equitably.”

As Golf Course Superintendents, our collective worth will not be realized at the expense of, or by taking pot shots at Golf Professionals.

From this group, to your group, I offer my apologies. While I have your attention, and I think we have, our group needs the help of your group in two areas that I refer to as “Terms of Endearment”. They may seem simple and a little oversensitive, but it is clear that our groups are offended by different things.

First is “greenskeeper”. Almost all Golf Professionals have known for many years that our professional title has become Golf Course Superintendent. The explanation of the difference between the two would be redundant and would unnecessarily fill editorial space. Help us spread the word. You are in a position to help us correct those, in the game of golf, who continue to get it wrong.

To rephrase last issue, “Can a golf course live without a [greenskeeper]? Of course. In fact, they are better off with a Golf Course Superintendent.”

The second area that I am enlisting your help is a little easier corrected. That is the term “My Superintendent”. Those Golf Professionals who actually employ or have specified authority over the Golf Course Superintendent, please skip to the next paragraph. Would the other 90% please stop. I don’t know a single person in our group who doesn’t want to throw-up in the sweater aisle when he hears, “my superintendent”. Enough said.

These concerns behind us, I look forward to an even stronger relationship between our groups. We have a lot more in common than many realize. We must concern ourselves with the fact that a knife from within cuts deepest.

To Rob Schultz, let’s get together for golf again this summer. I love your sense of humor!

## Table of Contents

Salaz Hired to Manage NOER Facility	1
President's Message	2
Jottings From The Golf Course Journal	3
WGCSA April Meeting	4
The Editor's Notebook	5
Court Overturns Casey Decision	9
The Sporting Green	11
Wisconsin Soils Report	13
The Sports Page	14
From Across The Country	15
The Other Plants	19
Wisconsin Pathology Report	25
WGCSA May Meeting	26
Personality Profile	27
The Wisconsin Golf Course Quiz	29
Legal Matters	31
The Wisconsin Golf Course Survey	39

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**THE GRASS ROOTS** is a bi-monthly publication of the Wisconsin Golf Course Superintendents Association. Editor and Publisher – Monroe S. Miller. Editorial Staff and Business Affairs – Rodney Johnson, Sheboygan Country Club. Printed in Madison, Wisconsin by Kramer Printing. No part or parts of **THE GRASS ROOTS** may be reprinted without expressed written permission of the editor.



# SUMMER STORMS

By Monroe S. Miller

A late afternoon storm advanced on our golf course like a marching army destined for victory. It was an awesome sight from my vantage point on the tenth tee, the promontory offering the best view of oncoming summertime weather.

It came to us like many others have over the years. After lunch I was aware of a strange quietness on the golf course. Nary a leaf on any of our trees was moving. No birds sang. The waters on our pond and even on Lake Mendota were perfectly calm and still, offering mirror-like reflections of their shorelines.

So quiet was it that I found myself talking softly to people, in hushed tones. Players enjoying the game and conversation several holes away could be heard.

The sun, which had come up over the eastern horizon with a bold and brassy look this morning, fought a losing battle for a share of the sky this afternoon. A blue haze hung heavily over the city and settled on the golf course. "It's like a heat blanket," I thought.

Although I knew a summer storm was coming, I didn't feel threatened. At first, anyway. Part of the sense of ambivalence came from the fact that it looked so far away. All there was to cause any concern were a few quiet flickers of lightning on the western horizon. And I was right next to the clubhouse which offered protected comfort to my mind.

The first sounds of thunder were merely quiet thuds. Even though they were soft, I almost felt them on the ground where I was standing.

Some players stopped to visit as they walked from the eighteenth green back to the golf shop. To them, the pending storm was more of an inconvenience than anything. They weren't filled with either the fear or the relief I was feeling. Or the anticipation of rain that most golf course superintendents live for.

The leaves in the trees started to stir. A few gusts of wind kicked up dust and

swirled it around in clockwise funnels.

The dark sky now showed thunderheads to our west, thick and black and blue and nearly solid. Slashes of lightning were more frequent and brighter. Players were starting to come in from the golf course, on their own, without suggestion from either sirens or rangers.

Then the first drops of rain came. They splattered against the clubhouse windows, so big that they seemed like eggs on the glass. I watched as the drops, seemingly the size of large ball bearings, made craters in the dry sand in the bunkers around the eighteenth green.

Then it happened. The gray curtain of rain I'd watched move toward me from across the golf course arrived. The crest of the storm brought rain in buckets, more of it moving horizontally than vertically. Sheets of water ran down the cart paths to the first and tenth fairways. It made the asphalt glisten like glass. Water accumulated on the greens I could see, all in a matter of minutes.

The wind lashed at the trees and rattled the American flag on its pole at our club entrance. A siren from somewhere in the city wailed. Lightning crashed everywhere. Despite my shelter under the roof overhang, I was soaked. The sky was so black and Lake Mendota was so dark that I couldn't really tell where they met. It was so dark that the lightning flashes lit the course to the intensity of high noon.

The summer storm raged on, bringing the city and the golf course to the heart of humility. My mind raced ahead: will we be closed until tomorrow? Will there be enough time to get the course in order before play begins? Is there any serious damage—downed trees or pumping station power outage?

A summer storm that possesses the power and fury this one did tends to cause a temporary upset in your psychological equilibrium. The fear causes some uneasiness and a vague

discomfort. But nevertheless, there is a sense of relief with the cooler temperatures and a feeling of gratitude for the rain that has fallen, albeit too fast.

I've always been fascinated by summer storms. It doesn't matter much if you watch them come over your golf course or a farm. It makes little difference if you see one from a skyscraper in Milwaukee or from a gun jeep in Vietnam; the emotions are all the same.

This summer storm drew me in more than most because we've not had any in our town for quite awhile. The drought years of 1988 and 1989 left us wanting. And the rains we received last year came, by and large, quietly and gently. The one summer storm we did have come in the dead of night; I missed it.

I was thinking about that as the sky over Middleton to our west took on a lighter, almost yellow hue. A bit of blue even showed. That led my thoughts to a prayer I'd copied a few years ago.

This prayer, which appears below, was written by William A. White. He was prompted to write it by a terrible drought that plagued Kansas in 1935. Mr. White, a Pulitzer Prize winning writer, was editor of the *Emporia (Kansas) Gazette*. It captures so many emotions that I am willing to bet you will appreciate it just as much as I do. It is entitled, "O Lord, Let it Rain!"

*O Lord, in Thy mercy grant us rain, and by that we don't mean a shower. We want to go out and watch the lightning rip across the southwestern sky in hot blue forks as the fat clouds roll in on us. We want to hurry home to close the house, with the first fat drops the size of marbles, on a suddenly rising wind, chasing us and plunking on the car hood. We want to scramble all over the house, just as the first sheets descend, frantically slamming down the windows.*

*O Lord of Hosts, we want to look out of the windows and watch the regiments of close-packed raindrops march diagonally down. We want to hear the*

*gurgle of the gutters under the eaves, and then the sputter of the downspout.*

*God of Israel, Isaac and Jacob, let it come down so hard, let the drops dance so high, that the street and sidewalks seem covered with a six-inch fog of spatterdrops. Then, let it just keep up for a while, and then begin to taper off, and then turn right around and get a lot worse, swishing, pounding, splattering, pouring, drenching, the thunder coming—crackity—BAM—and the lightning flashing so fast and furious you can't tell which flash goes with*

*which peal of thunder. So that all the women will get scared and climb on top of the beds and scream at you not to get too close to that window.*

*And then, O Zealous God, repeat the whole act about three times, and in the middle of the second time, we will climb the attic stairs and put the wash pan under that tiny leak in the roof, which usually you can't even notice in an ordinary rain. And after a couple of hours, kind of taper it down, O Lord, to a good steady rain—not a drizzle, but a businesslike one that keeps up until just*

*about dawn and then spits a few drops occasionally during the morning from the gray sky.*

*Kansas is indeed the Promised Land, O Lord, and if it gets a break, it will flow with milk and honey. But we can't live much longer on promises. So in Thine own way and in Thine own time, make up Thy mind, O Lord, and we will bow before Thy judgement, and praise Thine everlasting name.*

*Amen.*

---

## April Showers Greet Opening WGCSA Golf Meeting

*By Bill Knight*

Dave Smith was our host April 23rd at Abbey Springs Golf Course in Fontana. A threat of rain was in the air and in the weatherman's predictions, but, as we all know, predicting weather is not an exact science. So the event went ahead as planned.

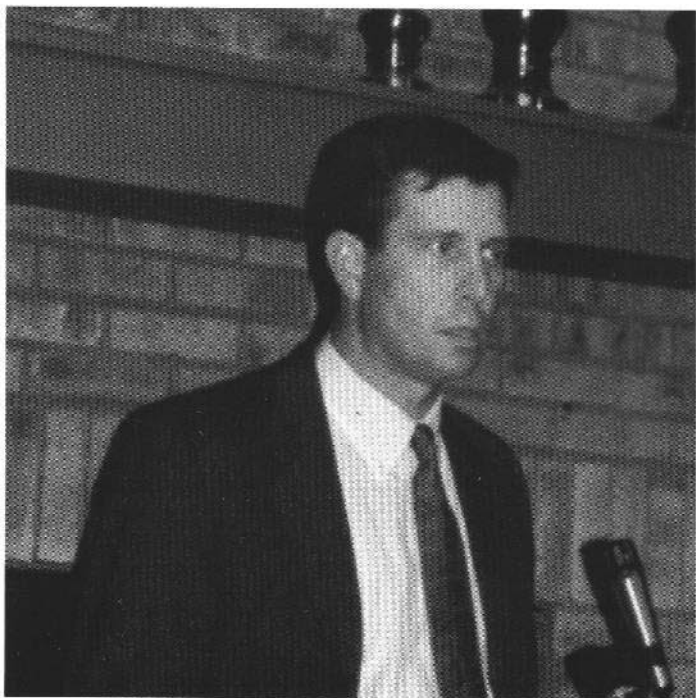
After a lunch of hot dogs and brats, we were led onto the course for the year's first event, a scramble. The course was in particularly fine shape for April. Three holes into our round the sky let loose with a huge downpour. Every one scurried for cover except for twelve brave souls. The rest of us spent the day either trying to get back on the course, only to be rained on again, or

playing cards, or going to the Lake Geneva dog track. Later that afternoon, we all reconvened for a delicious prime rib dinner.

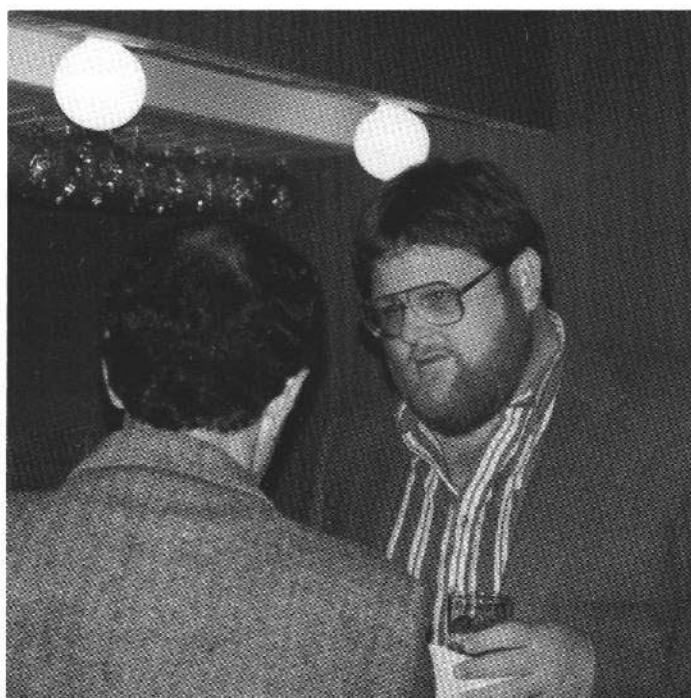
Our speaker for the evening was former Wisconsin Golf Course Superintendents Association President, Bill Roberts. His topic was life as a director for Golf Course Superintendents Association of America. Bill praised his friends from Wisconsin for all the support and encouragement they gave him in his quest of GCSAA directorship. We are all proud of Bill and his accomplishments. His wide ranging lecture covered everything from environmental issues to his extensive

travel schedule.

Our prize winners for the scramble were: first place, Pat Shaw, Jim Shaw, Charlie Shaw and Bill Douglas with a 69 for \$35. Second place, by virtue of tie breaker: Joe Wollner, Chuck Wollner, John Myer and Brian Winkle, 70 for \$25. Third place: Scott Schaller, Gary Sorenson, Dale Parske, and Jim Knulte, 70 for \$15. Bruce Schweiger had the long drive for \$25. Jim Knulte had the straight drive for \$25. Dale Parske had the long putt for \$25. We had 88 turn out for golf, good attendance for April.



GCSAA Director Bill Roberts.



Host Dave Smith seeking advice from Wayne Otto.



# Off To A Fast Start

By Monroe S. Miller

The spring of 1991 will go into my memory as one of the best spring seasons ever. The April showers were plentiful, well timed and yet never heavy. We were not forced into any extra bunker work by the usual downpours we can get this time of the year.

I will also mark this past couple of months as producers of just about the heaviest crop of grasses—all varieties—I can recall. As near as I've been able to understand, most Wisconsin golf courses were in the same circumstances of too much mowing and too few employees.

It was a shame in a lot of ways. Golf course superintendents tend to look at a golf course's potential and are frustrated when that potential isn't reached. This spring, it was the prolific growth that caused some of us to come up a little bit short in the playing condition department. Given a little more help, the season could have been nearly perfect.

However, that excess was far more tolerable than, say, winterkill.

Another thing some course managers will remember is the typical spring weather variability. I think it was best exemplified by the contrasts between the UW-Madison graduation weekend (May 18th) and Memorial Day weekend (May 25th).

Fortunately, graduation ceremonies were held inside. It was a cold 50 degrees F. and rainy outside.

Less than one week later, Tom Harrison and Randy Smith bumped into one another at a loading dock while picking up some fungicide for *Pythium* control. Randy had a case confirmed by the UW Plant Disease Lab; Tom was suspicious of disease at the Bluff, especially on a couple of newly constructed greens. At the same exact moment, Bob Vavrek was in Door County looking at some pink snowmold! I had just completed spraying fairways for a serious, annual *Fusarium* sp. outbreak.

Those weather extremes convince you of the truth in the phrase "Wisconsin winter spring/summer spring! First,

warm days bring the blossoms out early. Then the cool, even cold weather returns to hold them in time for longer than you would ever expect. Redbuds in Madison this year on my golf course seemed to have blossoms on them for over two weeks.

And the hot days at the end of May pushed the last of the buds and blossoms out early. Black locust, for example, had dropped nearly all of their flowers by Memorial Day weekend. On our course, we had to use a leaf blower to clear the blossoms from the 9th green before we could mow it for the holiday events—bushels and bushels, literally, of sweet smelling flowers.

Onward with another Wisconsin summer. This is looking like it could be a long season for our golf players and for us, too.

Golf course superintendents aren't the only people impressed by the Toro Company's new Hydrojet 3000.

The Hydrojet was a big success in this year's "Governor's New Products Awards".

The contest, sponsored by the Wisconsin Society of Professional Engineers, is a competition among Wisconsin's finest new inventions.

Toro of Tomah won the "Best in the State" award for Division I (the state's largest companies) for developing this machine that injects high-pressure water into a compacted soil to loosen it with minimum surface disruption. Obviously, this is particularly useful on a golf course because it allows a minimum of disruption to players.

The WSPE made the presentations at their annual meeting on May 20th in Madison.

Congratulations to the Toro Co. Ed Devinger's excitement about the Hydrojet is shared by many!

I expect to be seeing more and more of Bruce Worzella starting this fall. His

daughter Beth, a West Bend East graduate this spring, has accepted an athletic scholarship to the University of Wisconsin-Madison. She will compete on the UW women's golf team.

Recruited by the team coach, Dennis Tiziani, Beth chose Wisconsin over both Notre Dame and Mankato (Minnesota) State. She joins two of Wisconsin's other best young women players—Dana Tzakis and Erika Brown—on the team.

You'll better understand now when you hear Bruce humming "ON WISCONSIN" and "VARSITY" in his red sport coat, red necktie and red socks!

We had a visitor to the Madison area in the first week of June. Dr. Milt Engelke, a turfgrass plant breeder from Texas A & M University, was educated in Wisconsin, earning a B.S. degree from Platteville, a M.S. and Ph.D. in Agronomy from the CALS, UW-Madison. His daughter graduated from Middleton High School and he flew up from his headquarters in Dallas to attend the ceremonies.

Wayne Kussow, Gayle Worf, Bob Newman, Chuck Koval and several Madison area golf course superintendents hosted Milt for lunch. Afterwards, he was given a tour of the NOER facility.

Engelke is heading a very active turfgrass variety development program at Texas A & M, and he receives very considerable support from the USGA. He is involved with warm season grasses, but is also on the verge of releasing some new bentgrass varieties.

It was an interesting visit from a native son, one we can be quite proud of; he certainly has strong ties to Wisconsin and loves to return for a visit. Incidentally, he was also very impressed by Wisconsin's NOER Research Facility.

A recent report by the Council for Aid to Education showed the University of Wisconsin-Madison received more corporate support and more private donations than any other Big Ten School. All who have given to the NOER facility are included in that sum.

The Council also listed the UW as third in the nation for the 1989-1990 school year with \$44.6 million in corporate support. It further reported the  
(Continued on page 7)



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(Continued from page 7)

Congress appropriated \$2.6 million for the first leg of construction.

The \$8.9 million, which is what the university requested, would serve to complete the funding for the project, along with about \$10 million promised by the private sector.

Hardly a day goes by these days that I don't think about how nice it would be to have a few days off. It's been, literally, months since the last day I didn't go over to the golf course. I've been dreaming about one of those mini-vacations.

Turns out a professor of industrial engineering at the University of Miami thinks that short vacations are better for harder workers like golf course superintendents.

David J. Sumanth believes in short refreshers. "These high-momentum workers, from anecdotal evidence, need short weekend vacations or they lose the momentum if they stay out for long periods of time."

"With a short three- or four-day vacation, you can pretty much bounce back."

These short vacations—long weekends—sound like they are tailor-made for the busy superintendent. I think I'll try to plan one myself!

Congratulations to Dr. Neal Jorgenson. He's been named by Chancellor Donna Shalala as the acting dean of the College of Agricultural and Life Sciences.

Neal has been an associate dean for eight years and has proven abilities as an administrator.

He replaces Dr. Leo Walsh as dean and will remain in that position until a new dean is chosen.

Neal grew up on a dairy farm near Luck, Wisconsin. He received a B.S. degree from River Falls, a M.S. and a Ph.D. from Madison. His academic background is in biochemistry and dairy science.

You will enjoy getting to know Dr. Jorgenson. Maybe we'll be able to get him to the WTA Field Day.

## Court Overturns Casey Decision

On Friday, June 21, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that local units of government may go beyond federal law in regulating pesticide use.

The decision has far-reaching potential implications for golf course superintendents all across America.

The ruling overturned a Wisconsin Supreme Court ruling against the Washburn County town of Casey.

The court ruled unanimously, a vote that stunned F/RoW/T Coalition Executive Director Russell Weisensel.

The Supreme Court's decision said that local regulation of pesticides wasn't pre-empted by the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide and Rodenticide Act of 1972.

Justice Byron White, writing for the court, said that while the 1972 law is a comprehensive effort to control pesticides, it doesn't ban states—and by extension cities and towns—from doing more. FIFRA gives the federal government power over the registration and labeling of pesticides.

"But," White said, "It certainly does not equate those requirements with a general approval to apply pesticides throughout the nation without regard to regional and local factors like climate, population, geography and water supply."

More details of this major court decision will be presented in the next issue of *THE GRASS ROOTS*.

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## The Wisconsin Turfgrass Association 1991 FIELD DAY will be held on Tuesday, August 27th

For a variety of reasons, the event will be sited at the UW-Madison "West Madison Experiment Station", located near the NOER Facility. Details on Registration, Programming and Directions will be forthcoming from Tom Harrison and Tom Schwab.

**PLAN TO ATTEND!**





# TURF'S UP.

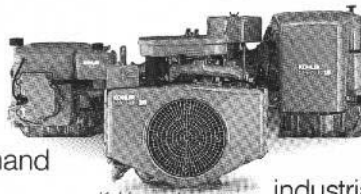
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