

# WGCSA Fall Election and Business Meeting

By Randy Smith

The election and fall business meeting of the Wisconsin Golf Course Superintendents Association was held on November 4, 1991 at the Sheraton Hotel in Fond du Lac. Reports were given by officers, directors and chairmen. Recognition was given to all those who served and participated in our organization this past year. In particular, outgoing President Rod Johnson was thanked for all his devoted efforts in leading the WGCSA and taking part in meetings, seminars, conferences, hearings, and committees on our behalf.

Two new "B" members were accepted into our association at this meeting. We welcome John Tucker and Doug Davis.

Acknowledgments were given to those superintendents and clubs who hosted a WGCSA meeting this year. In addition, a one-time fee per year for meeting attendance was discussed and will be brought up at our annual March business meeting. The late registration fee will be continued in order to assure accurate and timely registration for our host clubs.

A communication from our GCSAA office encouraged all those going to the conference in New Orleans to be sure to attend the Environmental Session which certainly affects all of us. More locally, it was reported that the Fortis Bill is now being sent to the Assembly which may have some ramifications for golf courses in the future regarding posting. In addition, Ag 29 amendments will be forthcoming. Our Envi-

ronmental and Governmental Committees will keep us apprised of information and changes as they occur.

Election of Officers and Directors were held with the following results:

President: Bruce Worzella, West Bend Country Club  
 Vice-President: Mike Semler, Cherokee Country Club  
 Secretary: Mark Kienert, Bull's Eye Country Club  
 Treasurer: Thomas Schwab, Monroe Country Club  
 Directors: Pat Norton, Cedar Creek Country Club  
 Scott Schaller, Northbrook Country Club  
 Michael Handrich, Racine Country Club

It was announced that there will be a GCSAA Seminar held in November of 1992 sponsored by our association with our fall election and business meeting to follow. This and other efforts are being studied to encourage attendance of our members at this important fall meeting, which again this year had only 35 persons in attendance.

Other discussions held for the good of the association included: proposal to update our membership on pesticide storage and liquid containment facilities, status of gasoline and other fuel storage and variations of the "rules", weather and its effect on irrigation systems at 12 degrees F.

Lunch and fellowship followed adjournment with many of us scampering back to our courses with a "plan of attack" on winterizing our irrigation systems!



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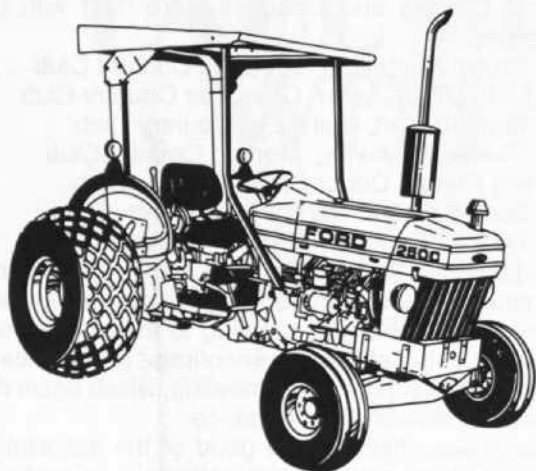
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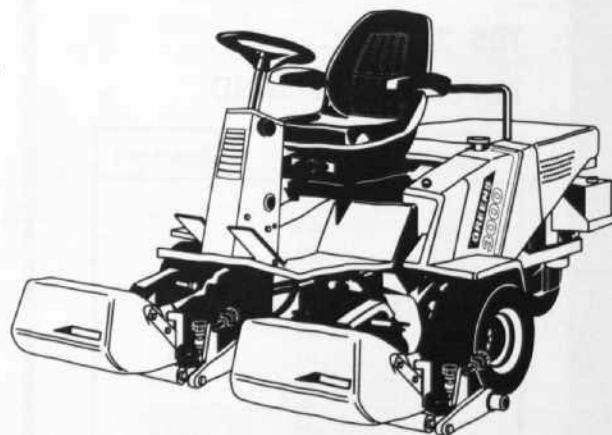
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# Wisconsin Arborist Association to hold State Conference

by Pat Norton

Have you ever felt that your knowledge of trees is somewhat limited? Ever felt the need to expand your "knowledge bank", or maybe just "brush up" on what you think you already know?

Most of us probably have a lot to learn concerning trees and arboriculture. Arboriculture on the golf course is usually very secondary in importance. On many Wisconsin courses I suspect that it's almost non-existent! What a shame, what a disgrace!

A great chance to redeem ourselves presents itself on February 2-4, 1992. Come to LaCrosse for the Wisconsin Arborist Association State Conference!

In addition to a great two-day tradeshow, the WAA has lined up an impressive array of topics and speakers:

## Sunday, February 2 1-4

"Insect Workshop-Ask the Expert" by Dr. Chuck Koval

## Monday, February 3

Conference opening and Welcome to LaCrosse

"Forming a Citizen's Tree Board"

"Working With Volunteers"

"Design Concepts for Urban Foresters"

"ISA Today" (International Society of Arboriculture)

"Understanding AG 29"

Tradeshow-all day

7:05-9:00pm LaCrosse Catbirds basketball game, LaCrosse Center

## Tuesday, February 4

"Tree Hazards"

"Grant Writing"

"Tree Growth Patterns Relating to Transplanting"

"Simple Tools for Diagnosing Tree Problems"

"WDNR Grants and Assistance Available"

Tradeshow-all day

Adjournment by 3:30 pm

The conference will be held in the beautiful LaCrosse Center, on the banks of the mighty Mississippi River. Headquarters hotel will be the Radisson, immediately next door to the Center. The Radisson and the LaCrosse Center are connected by skyway for added convenience.

Registration details are not finalized as of this printing, but this much is known:

Conference Registration members-\$45-55 (includes optional Catbirds ticket) nonmembers add \$15

Hotel Accommodations: \$56 per night, 1-4 people per room.

For further registration information, feel free to contact any of the following WAA members.

Jay Fernholz, Holmen, WI (608) 526-3683

Dick Haas, Wauwatosa, WI (414) 471-8420

Les Werner, Appleton, WI (414) 731-3511

Additionally, membership in the WAA is available for only \$15 annually.

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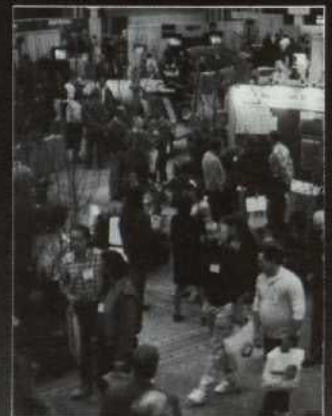
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# The Uneducated Golfer

By Pat Norton

**EDITOR'S NOTE:** With this piece about the uneducated golfer, Pat Norton begins his career as a columnist for *THE GRASS ROOTS*. His feature, *The Public Golf Course Superintendent*, will clearly focus on the problems peculiar to that ever increasing segment of course management.

The NGF has documented the fact that not only are the majority of America's golfers public players, they also represent the area of greatest growth for golf.

And we have seen that in Wisconsin with the addition of Black Wolf Run, Cedar Creek, University Ridge and literally dozens of others.

With the construction of the new challenging golf courses has come employment opportunities for some of the very best among Wisconsin's golf course superintendents.

This editor can think of no one better qualified to look at public golf course issues than Pat. A graduate of the Turf Management program at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, he has a wealth of experience. He has been the GCS at South Hills, Cherokee and Cedar Creek. He served as assistant GCS at Blackhawk C.C. and was a construction superintendent for Lohmann Golf Designs for two years.

Pat, Sue, Ryan, Megan and Tom reside in Onalaska. Pat was elected to the WGCSA board of directors last November.

The explosion of golf in Wisconsin has created an uneducated monster. This daily fee monster is armed with the latest and greatest equipment, and subscribes to all of the pertinent golf magazines. He plays just enough golf so that any swing problems are self-correctable, and feels that his knowledge of the game is perfectly adequate!

But, considering the problems that these golf monsters create, it's no wonder that public course operators alternately curse and bless them! They are the lifeblood of public golf, yet there are times when drawing their blood has definitely crossed my mind.

The monster golfer has typically learned the game as an adult and never had exposure to PGA supervised youth group lessons. As a golfing youth he could have learned about that feature unique to golf, namely golf etiquette. He could have learned the importance of playing golf properly with courtesy to all others on the course and a minimal amount of wasted time.

He could also have learned about courtesy to the **golf course**, respect for the land, and respect for those who labor diligently to make conditions pleasant.

Lifelong golfers learn very early on to respect the golf course as well as the game. If this respect was not observed, a young golfer could easily have been banned from playing for a week or so.

There is so much to the game that these monster golfers never did learn, yet here they are. We, the golf course staff, must deal with them. Is there any way that we can correct their bad golf habits? Must we be the policemen for the public links? Where are the answers?

In the 90's we expect to see a continuation of the golf boom, especially in the public sector. Who will fuel this boom? Of course, it'll be the golf monster. More and more people are taking up the sport (it's next in line when softball becomes too demanding).

Can public course operators do anything at all effective about slow play, sloppy clothing and a complete lack of regard for the course? I regularly see golf cars within ten feet of greens, golfers hitting into each other, and so many near misses that hard hats should be issued upon registration in the golf shop!

I see people topping the ball off into the woods and emerging covered with poison ivy. I see others who could easily hit a golf ball farther with a baseball bat. Then there are the people who really get burned up when the suggestion is made that they hurry up.

Uneducated golfers really do not realize how frustrating it is to co-exist with them on the golf course. I often feel that ball mark damage far outweighs anything a lowly fungus could do to my greens. Why doesn't somebody come up with a compound that instantly heals all putting green bruises?

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Seriously, there has to be some better effort made to educate today's golfers. They need to know how to play quickly, courteously and properly. There are all kinds of educational materials available about the golf swing and how to play the different shots. There's precious little information available concerning golf etiquette.

How about some free information for the public golfer concerning etiquette, speed of play and care of the course?

Each public facility needs to formulate a program for their golfers detailing what's expected of them before they are actually on the course. Then as their round progresses, signage (such as the Keep Pace program discussed at last fall's Symposium) would seem a step in the right direction.

At Cedar Creek, too often it's the poor ranger who is charged with keeping the golf novices moving. There's no way one or two people can keep these neophytes in line. Quick speed of play and care of the course are elusive goals that are never mastered by many public golfers.

Telling some of these golf players to speed up is like telling your seven year-

old to back out the van. They may try like hell, but the fact is that they just don't know how to do it! In both cases strong written and verbal instructions are needed.

Golf facilities in the Sunbelt are probably far ahead of our semi-rural courses in the upper Midwest. Cedar Creek's assistant golf professional, Margaret Olsen, works winters in Palm Desert, California.

Margaret relates that golfers there are given plenty of instruction from the starter on proper play, then plenty of boot if they are tee cause of slow play. I have seen her put this philosophy into action, and it is indeed heartwarming. Usually not enough is done to attack the problem. Heaven forbid should we offend the offending golfer.

I hope that other public courses in Wisconsin have handled this complex problem better than we have here at the Creek. We seem to maximize the problem, but trivialize or shy away from strong solutions.

Speaking of trivia, there were more than a few trivial solutions to this problem presented at the Symposium in Milwaukee in October. I was sorely

tempted to get up and shout "Ropes and paint lines won't cut it. It's a matter of educating those monsters out there." Lay some free education on the public golfers and hope that they respond positively.

If they do respond in a positive manner, we may someday see unblemished greens, golf cars on the paths and away from the greens, courteous players who wait that extra few seconds for maintenance staff to clear the area and, most importantly, golfers who keep pace.

I suppose, though, that I should consider myself fortunate. As with most superintendents in these situations, I do have the option of veering off and heading in the other direction on my CarryAll II.

Pity the poor golf professional and his staff. They are in a no-win situation. Diligent enforcement of the rules really annoys the offenders, while lack of enforcement enrages those who do observe good golf etiquette. Almost always the golf shop staff gets caught in the middle.

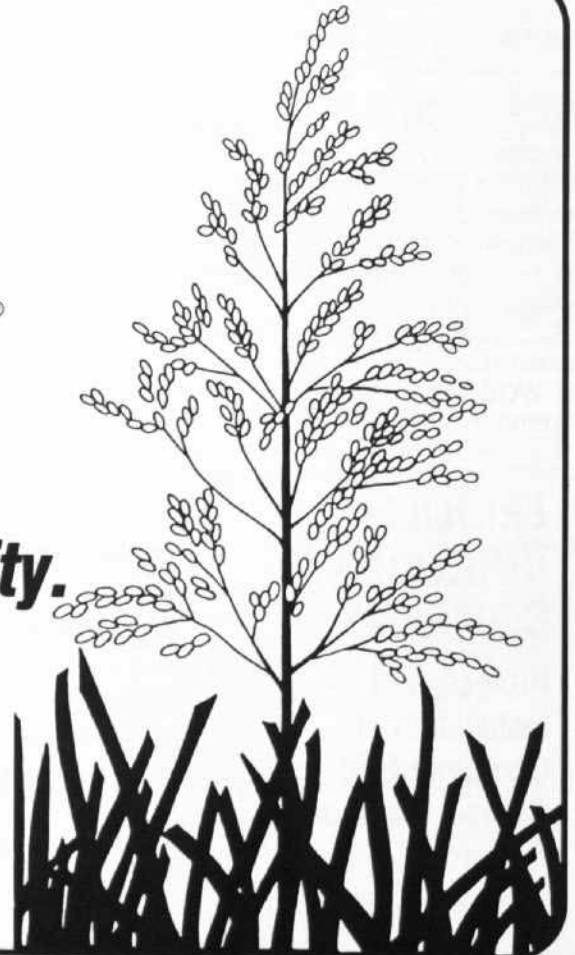
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The most coveted award, in the mind of this editor, is the one for "Best Editorial Content." Content is what matters most in any publication dedicated to a profession. To have that content noted is high honor indeed.

And, of course, content wouldn't be possible without our skillful staff of volunteer journalists who share ideas and

experiences, give advice and even offer up entertainment. A great big "thank you" to them all.

The Grass Roots has bills that have to be paid. Our cadre of advertisers see to it that you get your issue to read.

Finally, deep gratitude to the staff at Kramer Printing. They take articles and ads and ideas, assemble them into a really attractive package and send our journal all over the state for WGCSA members and friends to enjoy.

Here is the letter notifying us of The Grass Roots award.

November 13, 1991

Monroe S. Miller  
c/o Blackhawk CC  
P.O. Box 5129  
Madison, WI 53705

Dear Mr. Miller:

It is my distinct pleasure to inform you The Grass Roots has won "Best Original Editorial Content" in the 1991 GCSAA Chapter Publications Editors Contest.

The announcement will be made in the January 1992 issue of Golf Course Management magazine and during the Opening Session of the 63rd International Golf Course Conference and Show February 13 in New Orleans.

If you requested an evaluation of your publication from the judges, it is enclosed.

Thank you for entering the contest. Please accept my congratulations and sincere best wishes for continued success with your fine publication.

Sincerely,

Clay Loyd  
Director of Publications

kmt



## Another New Feature is coming to THE GRASS ROOTS

By Dean M. Musbach

"Life in the Northwoods" sounds relaxing. Lakes, streams, forest and the wildlife are relaxing, but when is a golf course superintendent supposed to find the time to enjoy the benefits of the north? In the winter, of course. According to most people, we don't work then anyway.

Public misconceptions about our profession are many. I have noticed that many superintendents have similar misconceptions about golf course management in northern Wisconsin.

Four years ago I moved to Minocqua, which is located two hundred miles north of Madison. Because I lived in the Milwaukee area, this was a big change. Despite my distance from most educational meetings and seminars, I continued to attend the important events.

Recently, I was in southern Wisconsin (anywhere south of Highway 10); the

first and most popular question asked was, "Do you hunt and fish a lot?" My answer was, "no." Although no one asked me whether I worked much, I felt they thought I had too much time on my hands.

Believe me, I'm not really insulted. After all, I do live in "God's Country." The general assumption is that since I live in a relaxing environment, my job is easier or less complex than jobs elsewhere.

This is not true. The demands on a northern superintendent are different, but one fact remains the same; golfers want quality playing conditions all season long, and it is the superintendent's job to accomplish this.

In future articles, I hope to show the difference and similarity in golf course management between northern and southern Wisconsin.

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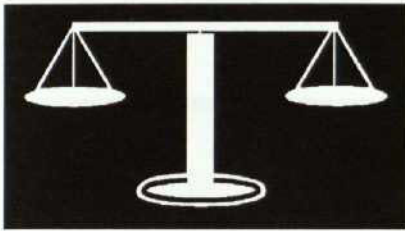
## Winter Turf Conference

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## Superintendent Liability in the Face of Regulatory Compliance

By Charles Passios and Don Brethauer

*EDITOR'S NOTE: Charlie Passios is a GCSAA director and the golf course superintendent at the Hyannisport Club. He was a speaker at the 1991 Wisconsin Golf Turf Symposium. Don Brethauer is GCSAA's government relations manager and spoke at the 1991 Wisconsin Turfgrass Association Winter Turf Conference.*

It probably does not take a turfgrass graduate long to realize that golf course superintendents sometimes find themselves in precarious situations. We spend our time trying to balance the conditions Mother Nature provides against the kind of golf course conditions that are considered acceptable by the players and governing boards. Environmental concerns and restrictions add more and more paperwork, legwork and training requirements to our basket, which already runneth over with responsibilities. We juggle all of these demands, and more.

An unspoken jeopardy that superintendents face every day is the threat of personal liability. This liability can originate from any management act for which a superintendent could be judged negligent—anything from instructing an employee to apply a pesticide in a manner inconsistent with label directions, to not training employees properly the hazards of the workplace.

Recognition of personal liability for superintendents points out the importance of a couple of things: (1) the adherence to and compliance with governmental regulations, and (2) the need for golf course owners, governing boards and management to understand why compliance is important.

The superintendent is responsible for complying fully with the regulations, but may be put in the situation where he/she lacks the tools or resources to do so. For example: In Massachusetts, golf courses are required to post notification of chemical applications. Suppose, however, that a club's management or board of directors instructs the superintendent not to post—in order

not to alarm the membership, or for whatever reason. The superintendent follows the employer's wishes, instead of the law. The superintendent and the club could both be held liable, civilly and/or criminally.

In most lawsuits, more than one party will be named as defendants. Generally, those defendants who have the capacity to pay for judgments and court costs are the ones who bear the financial burden of a legal decision. However, an employee may still be personally responsible for the legal fees associated with a lawsuit—unless insurance and/or an indemnity clause provides legal coverage.

Insurance policies held by the course or club generally include coverage for employees' legal costs. The language for such coverage usually is included in the definition section of the insurance policy. The policy limits coverage and the kinds of acts that are insured. For example, many insurance policies issued to golf courses do not include coverage for incidents arising from chemical applications and few, if any, cover wrongful acts deemed to be willful, intentional or malicious in nature.

Some contracts for golf course superintendents include indemnity clauses. An indemnity clause does not relieve the superintendent of responsibility, but it can cover most of the costs of a lawsuit, including court costs, legal fees and judgments for acts of negligence. However, most indemnity clauses have monetary limits associated with them. These limits usually range from \$100,000 to 250,000. In addition, indemnity clause language does not cover wrongful acts that are deemed to be willful, intentional or malicious.

Indemnity clauses kick in either after the insurance coverage has been exhausted or in cases where the insurance does not cover specific acts for which the superintendent has been found to be negligent in his/her actions.

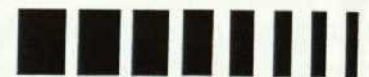
If you want answers to specific legal questions, contact your club's or your personal lawyer. Do not rely on advice

from an individual who is not a lawyer. You should also ask a lawyer to review your contract and the insurance policy of the club or course so you know exactly what kind of coverage you have. It is also important that you fully comply with government regulations because of potential legal consequences.

## Big Jobs Call for Big John

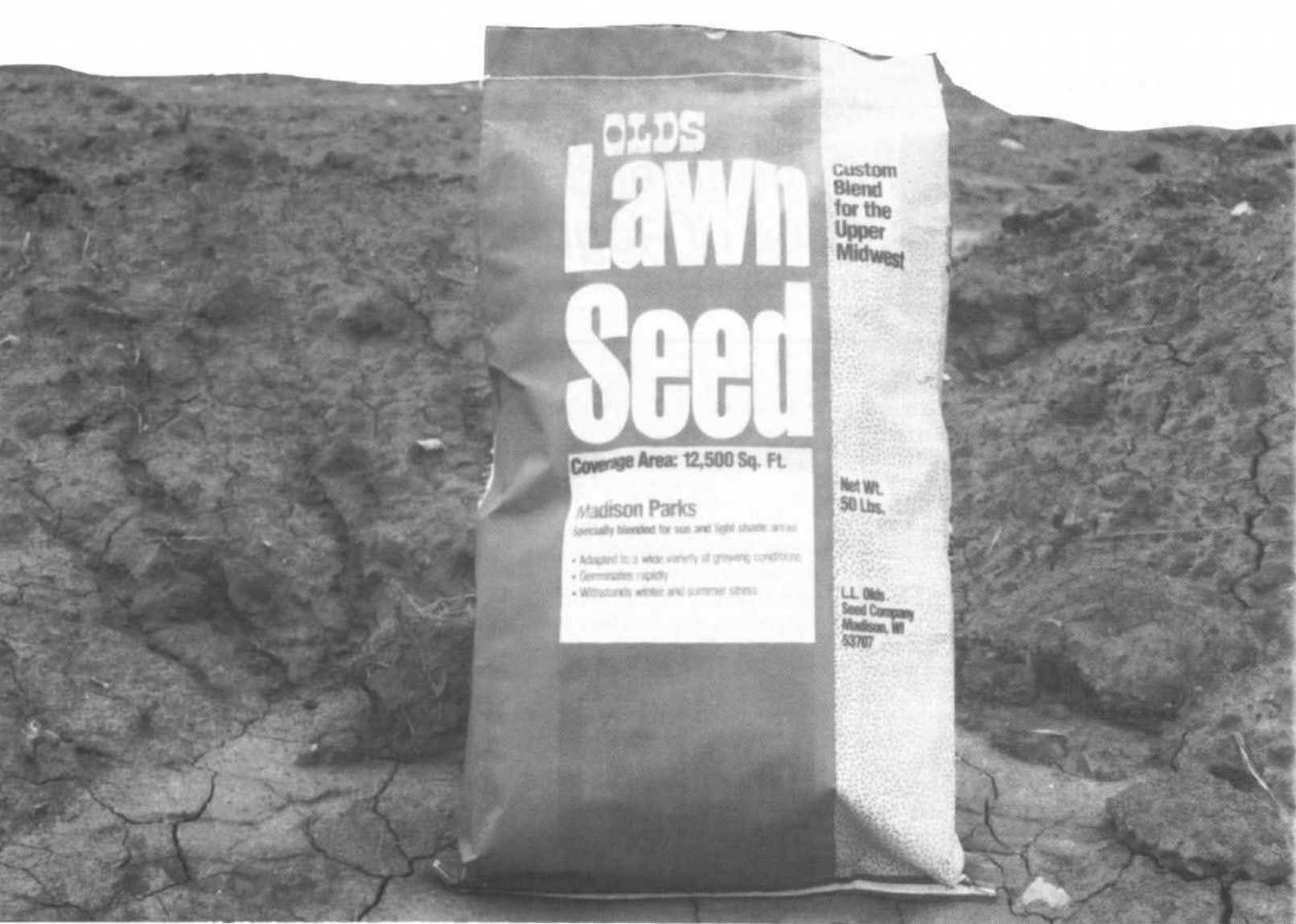


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