



# HAVE TIMES CHANGED?

By Bruce Worzella



We find ourselves in a much more relaxed (normal) state, this time of the season (despite the lack of grounds staff, the guessing game when to schedule irrigation winterizing, and chasing those darn leaves around). I thought I would reminisce a little by going through my past issues of *The Grass Roots* to see what other presidents reflected on this time of the year.

Rod Johnson wrote about the importance of research and how we convey this back to the end user, the golfer (1990).

Roger Bell encouraged everyone to get involved. As a member of WGCSA, we are only as strong as the effort we put forth (1988).

Bill Roberts expressed his gratitude to the membership for all the hard work that went into the Symposium, recruiting new members, and the excellent

award winning publication (1986).

Monroe Miller, standing next to Arnold Palmer (photo) informed us that when you say "Arnie" you say Golf. I hope you have the negative and had it blown up, you lucky person (1984).

Bob Boltz told us that we have to be business orientated, and good personnel can only make our future brighter (1983).

Jim Belfield indicated that "our association is growing and a central office at Wisconsin State Golf Association will make us function more efficiently" (1981, thank you Jim and WSGA).

Woody Voight talked about how important it is to attend the WGCSA fall annual meeting and the GCSAA convention in St Louis (1979; it still has not registered. Hopefully this year it will).

Wayne Otto in March of 1978, my oldest issue, hopes everyone is plan-

ning to complete the pesticide certification process given by the state so we are in compliance.

The past fifteen years we have been lead by great individuals who have said, "give back to the profession, get involved, hard work pays off, seek and you shall achieve, and fulfill your obligations so that you can be called a professional. It is amazing how our previous leaders had insights on how to make our association and profession continually progress and function proficiently. I commend all of you mentioned and the many others who have made this a successful association. I hope, as my first term as your president comes to an end, that your expectations as a member of Wisconsin Golf Course Superintendents Association have been fulfilled.

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(L to R) Mike Semler, Bruce Worzella, Rod Johnson, Bill Knight, Pat Norton, Tom Schwab, Mark Kienert, Scott Schaller and Mike Handrich.

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## TIMEPOSTS FOR WISCONSIN GOLF COURSE SUPERINTENDENTS: You're getting older if...

By Monroe S. Miller

- You remember when fast greens were cut at 3/16"; most others were mowed at 1/4". And the golfers were happy!

- You remember the time when very few golf courses had a Cushman truckster.

- You visited GCSAA headquarters when it was located in Des Plaines, Illinois.

- You helped unload your golf course's Milorganite order from a railroad car.

- You remember when Ryerson's was Wisconsin's Toro distributor for golf course equipment.

- You had worked on golf courses for a number of years before the invention of the triplex greensmower.

- You remember when a bentgrass fairway was pretty uncommon and Kentucky bluegrass fairways were what most golf courses offered.

- You remember when pondweeds were controlled with a tractor drawn dragline.

- You remember when Nelson Rain Trains were a very common site on Wisconsin golf courses.

- You remember when every golf course (or almost every one) used stone boats to move equipment from place to place on the course.

- You remember when Gene Haas didn't manage the Wisconsin State Golf Association.

- You remember when Lee Record made the USGA Green Section visits in Wisconsin.

- You remember when the official publication of the Wisconsin Golf Course Superintendents Association was SUPER TALK.

- You remember when Wayne Kusow was a graduate student in the Department of Soil Science at the UW-Madison.

- You remember when there was only one University of Wisconsin and it was located in Madison.

- You remember when thiram, dyrene and calo-clor were the main

turfgrass fungicides used by Wisconsin golf course superintendents.

- You remember when Dupont introduced a new turfgrass fungicide and named it Tersan 1991. And it wasn't contaminated with atrazine.

- You remember when the golf course superintendent who had an F-10 was the envy of his colleagues.

- You remember when Arnold Palmer was the very best golfer in the world. He still is the most popular.

- You remember when all sand bunkers in America were raked by hand, and every kid ever sent out with an aluminum rake at 6:00 a.m. facing 60 bunkers loathed the job. That kid now owns two Sand Pros and cannot fathom a hand-raked bunker is better than one groomed by a machine.

- You remember when golf courses didn't have ANY water coolers on the golf course.

- You remember when Penncross creeping bentgrass was introduced.

- You remember when Merion Kentucky bluegrass was the rage of the turfgrass industry.

- You remember when the WGCSA newsletter was called *THE GREEN SHEET*.

- You were there when the first automatic irrigation system in Wisconsin was installed. If you recall when the first fairway irrigation system was installed, you are ancient!

- You still think the Rainbird 808 is the best irrigation sprinkler ever made.

- You know who Scotty Stewart was and why his nickname was "Cast Iron".

- You clearly recall when all fairways that were ever aerified were done so with a Ryan Renovaire.

- You've met Fred Grau and can visit at length about his contributions to our industry.

- You remember when a GCSAA conference and show was held north of the Mason-Dixon line.

- You remember when all Ford tractors were red and gray in color.

- You remember when Oliver trac-

tors were being manufactured and considered a premier golf course tractor.

- You remember when orange tractors were made in West Allis, Wisconsin.

- You remember when Jerome Increase Case's company made orange tractors in Racine, Wisconsin. Some of them found their way to golf course work, too.

- You've met O. J. Noer.

- You are able to recall when grass fires on golf course fairways and roughs were common and real concerns.

- One of your former employees has reached a station in life that permits him to receive appointment to Green Committee Chair at a major golf club.

- You remember when GCSAA's official publication was *THE GOLF SUPERINTENDENT*. You are extremely far along in years if you can remember when it was called *THE NATIONAL GREENKEEPER*.

- You can remember when Reinders sold Jacobsen grass machinery.

- You can remember when golf course insect problems were insignificant because of an annual application of chlorodane.

- You remember how beautiful Wisconsin golf courses were when they were accented with the stately American Elm.

- You remember when most putting green fertility programs in Wisconsin included a weekly application of Milorganite applied with a Cyclone rotary spreader set wide open with 6' passes. That was how 12-plus #NMYr ended up on so many greens. There was no need for a "fine grade" or "greens grade" material, either. Not with a 3/16" height of cut!

- You remember when Bill Sell was president of the WGCSA.

- You remember when Joe Deschler was a golf course superintendent.

- You weighed 20 pounds less than you do now and had a full head of hair!

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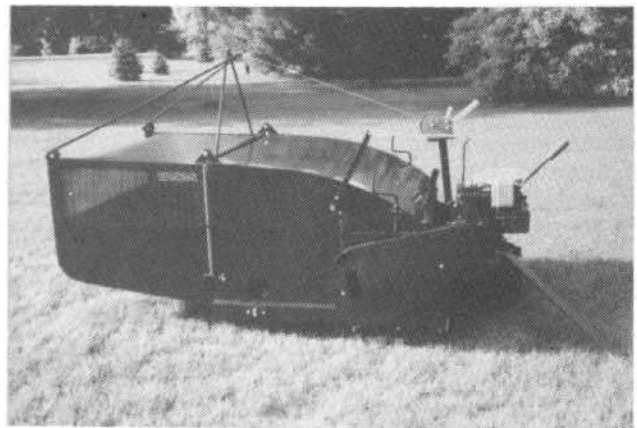
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# The Annual Editor's Awards, Including the Best and the Worst for 1992

By Monroe S. Miller

The end of another year is upon us. And what a year it was. I'll remember 1992 as a great year, for the most part, for golf courses and an average year at best for golf itself. The weather that was kind to golf courses during a lot of the season was uncomfortable for golf players.

But we deserve that. Too many years in recent times have been huge aberrations—excessive heat and drought during the summers and vicious cold during the winters. It was nice to have a “normal” year.

Normal years are uninteresting to some, not the kind that make for creative annual awards.

That may be. But I'll take the good weather and comfortable temperatures anytime. And we will still honor those highlights of the uninteresting season past.

Here goes.

**BEST NEW AUTHOR AWARD:** This prestigious award goes to two men—they tied in the voting. Pat Norton, with his column “The Public Golf Course Superintendent” and Dean Musbach, with “Life In The Northwoods” have added greatly to the quality and the diversity of *THE GRASS ROOTS*. Along with last year's winner of this award—Chad Eberhardt—Pat and Dean have expanded the dimensions of the WGCSA's award winning journal. Thanks to them, our official publication remains current, interesting and popular among the membership.

**COUP OF THE YEAR AWARD:** Easy—the University of Wisconsin's hiring of Dr. Frank S. Rossi from Michigan State University. We will profit from this success for decades to come.

**JOKE OF THE YEAR AWARD:**  
Q: How many grass machinery engineers does it take to grease a fairway mower? A: One, if you run him through reeal slow!

**SLOW PLAY AWARD:** Goes to the impatient player in Levittown, Pennsyl-

vania who was in a foursome following a particularly slow group of inexperienced players.

His group thought they were invited to play through when they reached a par-3 hole. But when they reached the green, one of the slow players grabbed the impatient player and threatened him.

Threats don't mean much when you're packing a rod. Our slow play award winner was ready—he pulled out a .38 caliber pistol! He had a license to carry it and no shots were fired, despite the fact he put the weapon to the slow player's head.

**SALES PITCH OF THE YEAR AWARD:** “Right after you apply the plant growth regulator to your fairways to retard their growth, be sure to fertilize.” I know, I know. There is science behind the recommendation. Nevertheless, it has to be a dream come true for a sales representative who handles a line of PGRs and a line of fertilizer to have a customer express interest in this kind of program. Sort of reminds me of the pitch for the turf groomer—“you aren't supposed to see what a groomer does. Trust me—it will really improve your greens.”

**“WHAT ARE WE TO BELIEVE” AWARD:** Presented to the USGA. The Green Section Staff does a superb job—during agronomist visits, in the *RECORD*, in articles written for chapter publications and from the speaker podium—of convincing golf players and wayward golf course superintendents of the absurdities of ultrafast greens and the deleterious effects such conditions have on turfgrass plants.

Why, then, did the USGA turn the putting greens at the U.S. Open at Pebble Beach into what looked like 18 research plots for Roundup?

The answer, obviously, was to make them ultrafast.

The contradiction is huge! The world's best players were somewhere between disgusted and outraged.

They claim the greens were NOT a true measure of golf skill, but rather a test of player luck.

USGA tournament officials appear unaware of what USGA Green Section Agronomists are telling golf course superintendents from one end of the country to the other.

Imagine—what would happen if the grass at the 1993 Master Tournament in Augusta looked like the grass on the greens at the 1992 U.S. Open at Pebble Beach?

That's a scary thought, until you realize it will NEVER happen. There's a lesson there.

**SHOCKER OF THE YEAR AWARD:** GCSAA's withdrawal of financial support from the USGA's golf turf research program. Few of us were expecting it.

**FLATTERY AWARD:** Goes to the *Milwaukee Journal* for the excellent article they included on the front page of the sports section of the August 27, 1992 edition. The story featured Pat Shaw and dealt with our profession as much as it did with Pat. We should all have felt as good as Pat must have.

**WISCONSIN SPORTS HEROINE OF THE YEAR AWARD:** Easy choice—Sherri Steinhauer. Wisconsin born and Nakoma GC member Steinhauer won her first LPGA tournament in Winnipeg, Manitoba on August 16th.

Many are betting she will be winning some more major tourneys in the near future.

**ROCK BOTTOM WEATHER REPORT AWARD:** It came on the first day of summer when forecasters were calling for frost. It was ugly seeing frost on rough grasses suffering from drought at that time.

The rains during the week of September 14th came in a close second and the Washara county tornado was third.

**INSECT PROBLEM OF THE YEAR:** This is a tough call because it wasn't  
*(Continued on page 7)*

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(Continued from page 5)

that bad of a season for bugs. I heard most of my colleagues, at one time or another, complain about earthworm casts. Despite the good these creatures do, they can make a mess of golf course features. So what the heck, let's give them the prize for 1992.

**DISEASE PROBLEM OF THE YEAR:** Again, not a year of real disease pressure, except for one exception. Dollar spot. Some courses had infection from this disease like never before, and it drove them crazy. So we'll call this the "year of dollar spot". Beats the "year of pythium", though.

**PHONEY BALONEY AWARD:** Goes to those golf course superintendents who claim FULL credit for the excellent golf course conditions around Wisconsin this summer past.

Face it—we received a lot of help from the "Big Guy" in 1992. He evened the years out with this one.

But we had it coming, quite frankly.

**BEST GOLF COURSE QUOTE FOR 1992:** By Brendan Gill in the August 1992 issue of *ARCHITECTURAL DIGEST*: "Golf courses are among the most pleasing objects that man has fashioned out of nature—in the arts jargon of our day, they are sculptural earthworks that happen also to function well in ecological terms, shielding from the gross asphalt intrusions of suburbia several million acres of grass, trees, ponds, streams and wetlands.

**BEST FREE PR:** Marsh Finner, director of the UW-Madison Agricultural Research Stations gets credit for this.

The Wisconsin Department of Transportation includes the location of every

UW research station on all official state maps that they distribute (for free, by the way, by the tens of thousands). Marsh made sure the new version of Wisconsin's state map included the NOER facility!

**BEST ELECTION NEWS:** The best news from the September primary election was State Senator Lou Fortis was given the boot by voters in Milwaukee's 4th Senate District. They apparently saw Fortis in the same light we've seen him for some time, now.

There is justice in the world after all!

**BEST OTTOISM:** The sage of our Association comes forth with many gems of wisdom and truth adages during the course of the season. Some you have to think about for a few days before you figure out what he means.

But he told the truth when he said "it was such a good year that you couldn't kill grass if you tried!"

**BEST GRASS ROOTS ARTICLE:** The honor of "best story" has never been given before and may never be awarded again. The judge is never impartial and there are too many good stories to single out one as "best". As I always say, all stories in our journal are winners.

Rob Schultz, Wayne Kussow, Gayle Worf and Lori Bocher are our best and most consistent writers. They cover the scene, the personalities and the sentiments of our profession. To note one story over all others is, in a sense, demeaning to those not chosen.

The exception comes this year. It is the result of the tremendous feedback from Lori's feature from the July/August issue entitled "Even his name shows his Love for life".

Professor Love's following is still formidable and scores of friends and former students were pleased to read about his life in retirement. In her story, Lori captured the essence of the man we've known so well for so long.

It was such a fine and memorable year that the staff has decided not to despoil it with any WORST awards. Seems fair enough. The 1992 season may well become the yardstick that measures golf seasons in the near future. It will be tough to match.

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## Symposium Review

(Continued from front page)

The publication of the revised specifications will be met with wide acceptance in the industry.

Many had anxiously awaited John Huber's appearance at the Symposium to talk about washed bentgrass sod. The interest in the use of washed sod for putting greens is very high, and John answered many of the questions held by Wisconsin golf course superintendents. Its advantages—earlier opening, no layering, elimination of wash-outs, the lack of weekends, lower transportation and labor costs—seemed in line with its cost. It will be fun to see who among us will be the first to use washed sod.

Don Sweda is a colleague from the Beechmont Country Club in Cleveland. He discussed his success at regrassing putting greens from seed, and led the audience through the process with an excellent set of slides.

As he's done since his appointment to the USGA Great Lakes Region Green Section Agronomist position, Jim Latham offered a summary of the proceedings. The Symposium wouldn't be the same without this USGA tradition.

The 1992 Wisconsin Golf Turf Symposium offered a unique opportunity to those who attended—the chance to hear Ron Whitten speak. Ron is the co-author of the book *THE GOLF COURSE* with Geoffrey Cornish, a publication that has met with absolutely tremendous success over the past decade and is found in the home or office of many serious golfers and many golf course superintendents.

Whitten is a true student of the playing fields of golf. He speaks from memory about architects, golf courses, specific features and just about anything else connected with the history of golf



Lee Bruce discussed green and tee construction.



Ron Whitten, Terry Ward and Bob Belfield at the noon luncheon.

courses and golf course architects. His appearance as our luncheon speaker ranks up there with Frank Hannigan's trip to Milwaukee and Andy North's appearance at the podium in the mid-1980s.

### Symposium Awards, Records, Firsts and Kudos

#### AWARDS

**Best News Award**—the revised USGA specifications for putting green construction. Dr. Hummel's lecture on those changes and the reasons for them was welcomed by anyone facing new construction.

**Best Advice Award**—from Brian Silva: "When seeding new greens, double the recommended seeding rate. Do not be afraid of using 5# of bentgrass seed/M on new greens. And do not be stingy with the fertilizer. New golf greens will need about 2# N/M/month for three years to grow a thatch cushion."

**Best Slides Award**—Ron Whitten. It was pure pleasure to listen to the Architecture Editor of *Golf Digest* talk about great golf courses, golf holes and green surrounds. His slides complemented his words perfectly.

**Keynote Award**—although time can dull our memories, I'm pressed to remember a keynote address any better than Jim Moore's. Down-to-earth, practical, blunt, challenging and even controversial, his remarks set the stage for a great program.

**Sentimental Award**—goes to Charlie Wilson for stopping by to see how his 27 year old "youngster" was doing. WGCSA members my age know what a giant in our business Charlie was during his career. Younger members should do some reading and find out. Without Charlie and his forward thinking there likely wouldn't be a Symposium to attend.

#### FIRSTS

1. First time we heard the SAME speaker twice on the program. And who better than Brian Silva to break a 26 year old precedent? As many said, "I could listen to Brian Silva talk for days." Thanks to Brian and credit to the Symposium committee for breaking new ground.

2. First time the Symposium was held at the Hyatt Regency. Look elsewhere for a scorecard on the hotel's grade as a Symposium site.

3. First time we had three USGA employees on the program and two former employees in attendance (Charlie Wilson and Brian Silva). The number goes up by one if you count Norm Hummel's sabbatical!

4. First time the audio-visual equipment worked!

#### RECORDS

1. Highest registration—attributed to an outstanding topic AND a terrific lineup of speakers.

2. Highest second day attendance—credits same as above.

#### KUDOS

To session chairmen Dave Smith, Jerry Kershasky and Jim Belfield. They kept the program on time, prodded the audience for questions, and handled introductions like the pros they are. Good job.

To the Symposium committee. Faced with the impossible task of pleasing a large audience AND choosing a topic better than the year before, they came through again with flying colors. Thanks to Bob Belfield, Rod Johnson, Jim Latham, Al Nees, Wayne Otto, Bob Vavrek, Terry Ward and Bruce Worzella for yet another winner.

To Terry Ward from all the program speakers. He told us he was the caretaker for our two days in Milwaukee, and he was. Special thanks to this witty, gregarious and capable fellow! MMSD is lucky to have him.

To MMSD for all their staff does (and has done for 26 previous years) to make this event happen, in the name of education and on behalf of the NOER FOUNDATION. Collectively, they are the best!

To the speakers, who come from near and far to share their expertise and experience to make for better golf turf. A lot of time and effort goes into preparation for an appearance at the Symposium podium; those efforts and the time are appreciated.

### SCORING THE HYATT

It seems only appropriate that the venture of the Symposium into a different venue receives a grade. Below is one man's opinion of the Hyatt Regency job as host of the 1992 Wisconsin Golf Turf Symposium. 1 = poor; 5 = excellent.

**PARKING:** Accessible, easy-to-find. Cost is too high, but competitive with other ramps in the downtown area. Convenient to hotel. Advertised as "unsafe" (see pic); give credit for honesty despite the sad comment on conditions downtown. *Score = 3.*

**ROOMS:** Clean, big, comfortable. Very expensive, even at our group rate. Obscenely expensive for procrastinators who registered late and paid an extra fifty bucks a night. I'd have camped out! As near as I can tell, however, the rooms are priced with similar facilities downtown. *Score = 4.*

**HOTEL RESTAURANTS:** Even though we are in Milwaukee to learn, we still have to eat. I found the food service prompt, the food good and the prices high (what's new?). *Score = 4.*

**AMBIANCE:** The Hyatt is a distinctively modern hotel, but is very beautiful. It lacks the character of an old hotel like the Pfister—I always liked going down to the lobby in the morning and reading a paper in one of their plush chairs. But the Hyatt has a personality all its own, and I very much enjoyed it (especially the elevators!). *Score = 4.5.*

**LECTURE HALL:** Very good. Chairs were comfortable, acoustics were superb, audio-visual equipment actually worked (what a singular treat!), lights worked. The temperature was perfect and there were no outside windows and attending shades to deal with. The only negatives were short supply of refreshments (and golf course superintendents DO like their refreshments!) and the lack of pencils and notepads.



The latter may be the only things from the Pfister that I missed. *Score = 4.5.*

**NOON LUNCHEON:** Great meal, just what you should expect when you have invited a guest like Ron Whitten. I'll never forget that skinny sandwich from last year! The room was comfortable, the tables roomy and the audio-visual equipment worked, again. Just great! *Score = 5.*

**LOCATION:** The Hyatt offers neither advantage nor disadvantage when compared with the Pfister in the category. *Score = 3.*

**COST:** This is a major factor for Terry Ward and Al Nees. I haven't heard from them in this regard, but I suspect that I will. "Corp fin" has a lot to say in this department! *No score.*

**OVERALL SCORE:** The Hyatt is enough to make me forget the Pfister, and I am a big-time traditionalist. I hope we are at the Hyatt next year and every year after that. *Score = 4.*

At least the parking ramp staff is honest!

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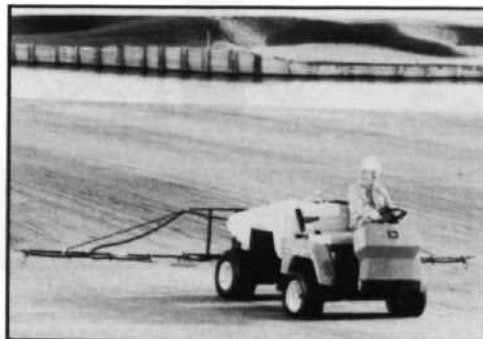
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