



The Tates Are A Perfect Pair

By Rob Schultz

Golf is all about atmosphere, about beautiful courses settled in idyllic landscape. It's about peace and solitude among the birds and deer. It's about silence, broken only by the sound of wind whispering through the pine needles or waves crashing along the shore.

Golf is not perfected by shooting par or making a hole-in-one or owning a handicap in minus figures. Golf is perfected when one understands his or her own miniscule role within the atmosphere, the game. Stand back and make sure you don't get in its way. Play by the time-honored rules. Respect the game and all it envelopes.

On a rainy day late in June along the western shore of Michigan, I had the great fortune to meet two of the few people in this world who have perfected golf. For nearly 40 years Tuck and Becky Tate have lived the game and they have added another dimension to the definition of perfection by giving so much back to it.

The day I met the Tates was such a strange day. It began with the rabid excitement of playing one of the world's greatest courses: Crystal Downs, a wonderful Alister MacKenzie creation located outside Frankfurt. But even though Crystal Downs was everything I expected and more—a true links course that gracefully navigates through one of the most spectacular settings in the country—it took a backseat to the Tates, who graciously invited me to play the course with them and taught me so much in the process.

Nearly 40 years ago, Tuck Tate was in the oil business on the East Coast when he decided to chuck his present life and buy a 9-hole golf course located just a few miles away from Crystal Downs in Frankfurt. Tuck, now 82, was the golf course superintendent and turned his place into a well-manicured, respected layout. Becky, now 76, ran the pro shop with a well-trained eye. They were a perfect combination.

Since Tuck and Becky couldn't operate the course year-round, Tuck also invested some money on a large lot located on a Donald Ross-designed course called Sara Bay Country Club in Sarasota, and wintered there.

At the time, Tuck couldn't have imagined what two wise investments he had made. He bought the golf course at a fraction of what it's worth today because, in the 50s, the sport wasn't nearly as popular as it is today. And he bought his Sarasota lot long before real estate prices on golf courses went through the roof.

But as financially wise as Tuck may have been, that didn't matter as much as finding his and Becky's happiness in ways money can't buy. Their happiness came whenever they were on the course, whether it was Tuck planting trees, rebuilding a trap and shaping a green to give his course a better life, Becky operating the pro shop to make sure golfers got whatever they needed, or both of them quietly spending time sharing dreams in their home

located next to the course on the Lake Michigan shore.

Finally, about seven years ago, Tuck decided to sell his golf course and retire. But he wasn't finished giving something back to the game. He took \$100,000 from the profits of selling the course and created an endowment at Michigan State for prospective golf course superintendents.

Since then, the Tates have been spending time playing golf and bringing that aspect of the game to the level it deserves. This is how I met the Tates—stepping back and breathing golf's atmosphere, making sure they didn't get in the game's way—and they left me with an impression I'll never forget.

On a golf trip to Michigan with a friend, John Berman, we met Tuck and Becky at their home prior to our round at Crystal Downs. I expected to knock on their door, shake hands and then jump in the car to begin our conquest of such a great course.

(Continued on page 13)



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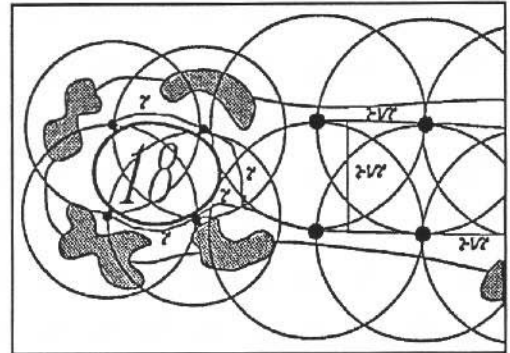
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(Continued from page 11)

Tuck introduced me to the correct, honorable way to play golf with guests. He invited us into this home and spent the next hour discussing golf and what the sport means to us. I felt I was at Augusta, in the Jones cabin, talking to Bobby himself. The difference is that I didn't feel nervous. Quite the contrary. Tuck made me feel comfortable.

Finally, we traveled to Crystal Downs and I joined Becky in her cart for the 18 holes. I have never been treated to a better riding companion. I played horribly. To make matters worse, it rained. To be more accurate, it poured. Such things can make me very frustrated. But through it all, 76-year-old Becky never complained; about the rain, or me. To do so isn't the correct way to play golf. Becky just whispered little pearls of wisdom to me, like when I three-putted the par-4 10th hole.

"Next time, just listen for the ball to fall in the cup," she said. "Don't watch it."

In other words, she was saying, I was moving my head when I putted. Most golfers would tell me in a more direct way. But that's not the game. That's not class. With every quiet word, Becky relaxed me.

Tuck and Becky both still play a mean game of golf.

Despite the conditions, Tuck shot around a 90 and Becky was around 100 on a course with a slope rating of 144. Tuck's round was all the more remarkable considering that he wasn't sheltered from the rain in his cart like Becky and I were. At 82, he played through the rain because he wanted his guests to see the whole course and hopefully enjoy the game like he does.

No chance. As much as I love golf, I'll never come close to enjoying the game like the Tates because I don't understand it like they do. The round ended with a trip back to the Tate's home where they continued to be gracious hosts with their hospitality. They turned a round of golf into an incredible experience. As my friend John and I drove away from their home, our discussion didn't center around Crystal Downs. All we talked about were Tuck and Becky.

Sometime during the day I asked Becky if they ever had any children. Becky said they never had the chance to have kids because they were always too busy.

But that wasn't quite correct. Their child is golf and they are the perfect parents. They teach by example. They teach respect. They are completely unselfish. And their love for it shines through.

What is golf? Yes, it's atmosphere, beautiful courses and time-honored rules. But it's also about folks like Tuck and Becky Tate who make the game truly special.

Editorial



An Open Letter of THANKS

By Pat Norton

Recently I was faced with what seemed to be an unwinnable situation. Our Toro Network 8000 central computer had a completely burned out SNC card, which is the central board that runs the NW 8000 programs, and hence, our irrigation system.

After many weeks of waiting, Toro finally informed us that this board cannot be repaired. The damage to this board was similar to, but more serious than, damage to this same component in 1991. In both instances lightning was the culprit. In neither case did we have appropriate lightning surge protection installed. There is a surge interface box for NW 8000, but this never seems to stop incoming power surges.

Anyway, Toro initially informed us that since the board is not repairable, and since lightning is the problem (which voids any warranty), and since our club insurance policy covers lightning damage...the solution to them seemed so simple. Simply purchase a new or reconditioned SNC board for tens of thousands of dollars, submit the claim to the insurance company, and you're back in business. So said Toro, initially.

"Bullhonky," we said. "Not a very good solution," we said. I didn't relish the thought of an insurance claim for the same problem as in '91. In addition, we felt very strongly that Toro/Reinders Bros. should have recommended additional surge protection last year when we experienced "System Error 3124". There were more than a few times when I wanted to correct "System Error 3124" with a pistol shot right into that smug little computer screen.

After too long I called Bob Emmerich of Watertronics (at the timely suggestion of our assistant, Gary Mracek). Right off the bat Bob began to take corrective action. Within 48 hours of our initial chat, Toro agreed to: 1) replace our SNC board at a very, very reasonable price; 2) ship us additional surge protection, and 3) give us complete instruction and assistance in the future if we ever experience additional problems.

That's what I call service! Bob Emmerich stood to gain very little by helping us in such a fashion, yet he did it. Although his association with Toro has formally ended, his concern for Toro's reputation with its customers was evident in his intervention on behalf of Cedar Creek. Heartfelt thanks to you, Mr. Emmerich!

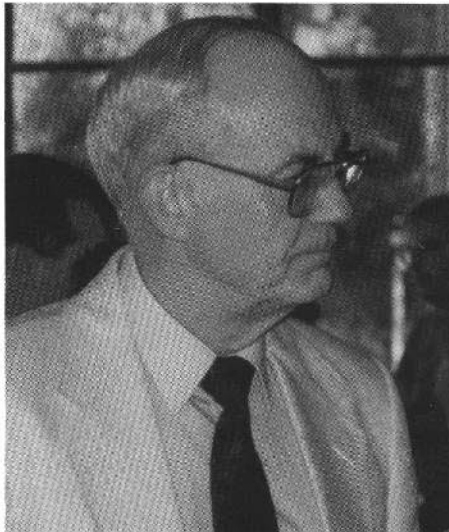
Thanks to Toro also for having the wisdom to help a customer—once the proper people within that company understood the situation, they cooperated with haste. Thanks also to Wisconsin's Toro distributor, Reinders Brothers and MTI, who both offered assistance to us.

It's with this kind of treatment that companies in Wisconsin's green industry win our support and gratitude. Watertronics and Toro just won themselves one very happy customer!

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He Really Did It — Gayle Worf RETIRES!

By Monroe S. Miller



The honored guest at Professor Worf's retirement reception!

Everyone else at Gayle Worf's retirement reception on Wednesday, June 17 may have been celebrating the end of his long and productive career as a plant pathologist and professor and administrator, but I wasn't.

Certainly I was there to honor him. But not to celebrate.

It is pretty difficult to celebrate a day one has been dreading for too long. The very minute Dr. Worf retired, my life and the lives of many other Wisconsin golf course superintendents got more difficult.

Gayle Worf was the epitome of the extension specialist and I cannot begin to count the number of times he got me out of trouble with disease identification, recommendations for treatment and plain good advice. He will sorely be missed.

But honor him we did on that June afternoon in the Alumni Lounge of the Wisconsin Center. Both the Wisconsin Golf Course Superintendents Association and the Wisconsin Turfgrass Association presented Gayle and Mary with travel gifts and good will. The hope on everyone's part was that such a gift will give them good memories that will last forever.

Gayle waited only a couple of days before he sent this letter to be shared with all of you.

Dear WGCSA members,

There really are no words that I know to adequately and properly say "thank you!"

I can say, though, that I have treasured those many occasions I have had to work with members of the turfgrass industry over the years. I've had so many good experiences that I dare not start ticking them off! As I was able to say Wednesday afternoon, though, I've had the opportunity to work with most crops in the state, turf has been my favorite. It's not just because it's a fascinating "crop" with so many challenges and so much value to society, real though these are. It's because I've never met more genuine people who are absolutely open, excited, and supportive of their industry. It's also because you have made so much progress professionally over the past two decades, and you have your goals set on even greater achievements. Your problems have been many, yet your vision has always been beyond them and upon a bright and optimistic future. To remain a part of it through naming the "Worf Conference Room" at the O.J. NOER CENTER is a special highlight. How wonderful!

Mary and I have not decided where we will travel with your gift yet. Rest assured that when we do make the journey, that we will take all our turf friends with us in our hearts!

Please convey our kindest wishes and gratitude to your membership.

Sincerely,
Gayle L. Worf
Plant Pathologist and
Acting Associate Dean



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Questions From The Floor

James M. Latham, Director
Great Lakes Region, USGA Green Section



We've built a number of sand bunkers this year, and the members expect them to immediately offer the same conditions as existing bunkers.

In your experience, how long does it take for new sand in a bunker to reach normal or acceptable condition for play? (Dane County)

It is unlikely that new sand bunkers will play the same as the older models very soon unless they are given extraordinary care. Old sand is usually contaminated with silt and clay from eroding soil on the slopes or from excessively deep raking with motorized equipment. Contaminated sand usually requires frequent, rather deep raking to maintain playability.

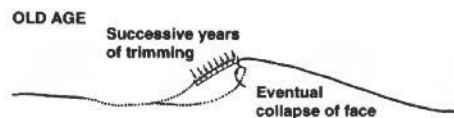
New sand doesn't have these cementing agents, so it must be settled, tamped or packed into place so that the entire profile is firm. That takes time—two or three months or over winter in most cases—if the sand is acceptable. The best in Wisconsin are washed mason's sand with particle sizes ranging from 0.25 to 1.00 mm (will pass through a # 18 sieve and be retained on a # 60 sieve), with a wide range of particle sizes in between. Angular or subangular particles are preferred since round grains are more resistant to compaction.

Note that particle size is similar to that of topdressing/construction sand, but particle shape and size distribution are different.

Speaking of bunkers, what is the depth of sand you recommend in bunkers? (Dane County)

For championship play the USGA recommends 2 to 3 inches on bunker faces and 4 to 6 inches on the floors. This may vary according to the slopes and length of the greenside faces, however. Steep slopes are easily eroded and washouts are the rule rather than exception. When sand is thrown back it must be re-packed to avoid imbedded ball problems, and shallow sand packs more easily.

Steep slopes are often the result of the aging process and may not come close to resembling the original architecture. They were made, not born, by erosion and edging for a period of



years. (Line drawing from Hawtree)

Now that the turf groomers have been in use for several years, what is your current thinking about their value in preparing a putting surface for daily play? Are they making a difference? How often should they be used on a green? Daily? Weekly? (Milwaukee County)

Groomers are used on many courses to slightly increase Stimpmeter readings (3 to 4 inches) without reducing the height of cut. This is similar to double-cutting because it reduces drag on the rolling ball. A few superintendents use groomers daily, but most prefer an every other day routine, running in straight lines only with no perimeter cut, to avoid excessive leaf removal. Operating depth is very important, to avoid peeling the greens, and that will vary depending on height of cut, softness/firmness of the surface, etc., as well as the population of speed freaks playing the course.

My sense is that some Wisconsin golf course superintendents are now rolling their greens on a regular basis. Am I right? How much does rolling increase green speed, and how long does the effect last? What is the best frequency and direction? Won't soil compaction be a problem? (Waukesha County)

Rolling is an old procedure, once used to avoid mowing on weekends (the light rollers were wider than the mowers and had no baskets to empty). Today, rolling is used periodically to temporarily increase green speed and surface firmness desired

for tournament play.

Increased putting speed depends on the weight of the roller, the height of cut and, perhaps, the number of passes over the greens. According to Jerry Kershasky, heavy rollers used at Westmoor increase Stimpmeter readings about 12 inches, with a half-life of one day. Lighter rollers have been built which replace the cutting units of Jacobsen triplexes. Toro triplexes have become light rollers by putting weights in the clipping baskets so that the large front roller applies more downward pressure. These have increased Stimp readings a bit, but I don't know how much.

I see no particular harm in rolling if the top couple of inches of the profile is sand. Round sand. Topdressing mixtures containing soil or high levels of highly decomposed peat are likely to become compacted, so they should not be rolled heavily. Some light rolling to smooth out surfaces roughened by heavy play may be OK, but compaction-related problems must be expected and corrected by spiking, hollow tine aeration, etc.

First we had plant materials for 150 yard markers. Then we went to flat granite markers at 150 yards. They were removed in favor of scores of yardage markers on top of sprinkler heads on either side of the fairway.

Now our players want 150 yard markers back. What would you recommend? (Green County)

Personally, I like the old USGA/ Joe Dey philosophy that depth of vision was as important to the golf play as strength, so no visual aids should be provided. Nevertheless, 150 yard markers sold a lot of bushes and some golfers must have favored automatic irrigation systems just to get the yardage numbers on the sprinklers (now up to three per head). I like Zontek's "Just Hit It" example.

Why not give people what they want? We have whiffle balls or flag-
(Continued on page 17)



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(Continued from page 15)

lets on flagsticks or special color flags to show where the hole is cut, front to back. Might as well start renting or selling lasers, since some high-end public operations sell books showing distance of every tree, bunker, stream, pond, outhouse and beer garden on the course. The days of the purists are over.

Is verticutting greens outmoded and behind the times? Is spiking of putting surfaces passe? (Monroe County)

Verticutting is far from outmoded. Along with brushing, it is the best procedure to minimize spike snags on closely mowed greens and helps keep grain under control. Groomers do not substitute because they do not cut as deep (or better not).

Once a week or twice before every (frequent) topdressing are the norms.

Spiking is also helpful, but isn't used as much now that sand topdressing is a common practice. Spiking does benefit those who interseed just before topdressing. It may also help develop better sod density by cutting stolons to generate new growth at the nodes. Spiking is also helpful in perforating shallow stratifications and when changing topdressing materials, in an effort to blur the sharp interface between materials into a "transition zone."

How are PGR's working in Wisconsin? Under what circumstances do you recommend their use? (La Crosse County)

PGR's are difficult to evaluate since results in the field have been inconsistent from course to course. They have discolored *Poa annua* but haven't eliminated it or reduced seed-

head production. They do, however, slow all growth and help retain putting speed through the day. This is important on courses with a great deal of late afternoon play. Application must be precise and frequency must be judged on performance.

They should be helpful in inter-seeding projects, to help the non-competitive bentgrass and bluegrass seedlings get started before being overgrown by *Poa annua*.

PGR's have also reduced the mowing frequency but any large-scale use deserves some cost accounting. Difficult-to-mow areas should be considered for potential use.

What is the best method you've seen for keeping grass trimmed around trees? We've gone the herbicide route and seen soil slough from the bases of larger trees. We've used mulch, but removed it for safety (concern for eyes) and rulings (free lift?). Gang mowers cause a lot of damage, and riding rotaries aren't a lot better. Two seasons' use of string trimmers show potential girdling damage to trees. We're back to Lawnboys and hand shears (and the resulting time commitment).

There has to be a better answer out there. What is it? (Sheboygan County)

See above, last sentence. There's no universal, "best method." Around greens and tees I'd rather remove those trees which are too close and require manicuring. We see all kinds of operations with none having a distinct advantage over others. Some old timers would use rotaries around trees, but only if the blades were very

dull. They felt that hammered grass blades regrew more slowly than cut blades. (Sorta like string trimmers do today.)

How serious was turf loss last winter, in Wisconsin and surrounding states? (Brown County)

Central Wisconsin was the epicenter of *Poa annua* and ryegrass winterkill, 1991-92. Greens, tees and fairway losses occurred from Green Bay to Madison. Fall plantings of bluegrass, ryegrass and bent were also lost at courses in southern Wisconsin and northern Illinois. The best prevention is to provide better conditions for the desired grasses during the growing season, by drainage improvements, shade reduction, tree root pruning and minimizing traffic-induced soil compaction by feet, golf cars and maintenance equipment.

How serious has the drought been for golf courses in your Region? (Grant County)

Dry weather has not been considered to be damaging—yet, because the prolonged cool weather has cushioned the stress on plants. The availability of water is "under study" in some areas, but negative actions by bureaucrats have not been destructive—yet. The roughs in several courses have cut seedstalks still visible in July, indicating that little growth has occurred, but as long as the irrigation systems function, the primary playing areas are OK. This would be a good time to point out the deficiencies in irrigation systems, especially the scallops along edges of fairways, the wilted donuts around sprinklers and/or the overwatering in mid-fairways caused by trying to get water to the edges.

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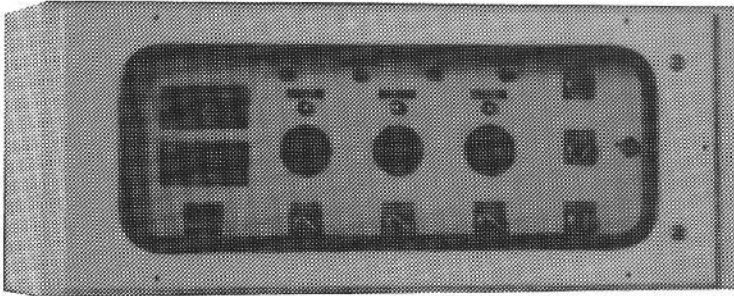
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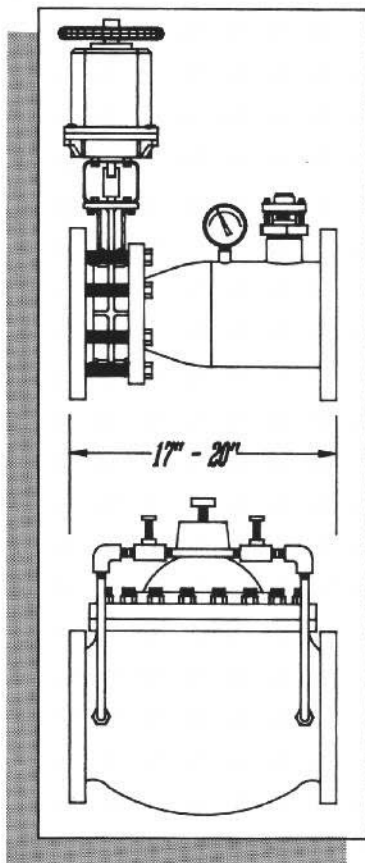
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A PERSONALITY QUIZ

By Monroe S. Miller

How well do you know your peers and friends in the Wisconsin Golf Course Superintendents Association?

Probably not as well as you think you do. Wisconsin's golf course superintendents are a talented group with diverse backgrounds, unusual talents and varied interests.

Take this quiz and discover how well you know your colleagues and friends.

1. This WGCSA member is a politician and a member of his hometown's city council. *Name him.*
2. Name the WGCSA member who has an offspring who is a member of a Big Ten collegiate golf team.
3. Name the WGCSA member who is a third generation Wisconsin golf course superintendent.
4. Name the WGCSA member who, during his childhood, had the distinguished golf course superintendent Ted Woehrle as a baby sitter.
5. Who is the Wisconsin golf course superintendent, still working in Wisconsin, who served as co-editor of *THE GRASS ROOTS* at one time?
6. This Wisconsin golf course superintendent and WGCSA member sleeps with his club's clubhouse manager. Who is he?
7. When did GCSAA president (and WGCSA past president), Bill Roberts shave off his mustache?
8. Professors Worf, Newman, Koval and Kussow all have two common factors in their personal histories. *What are they?*
9. This WGCSA member's father-in-law is a USGA Green Section Agronomist. Who is the member and who is his father-in-law?
10. This relatively new WGCSA member was a working CPA until he saw the light, returned to the UW-Madison and earned another degree, this one in turfgrass management. *Who is he?*

You will find the answers to the WISCONSIN GOLF COURSE QUIZ on page 42.

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Rossi Joins UW Turf Team

(Continued from the front page)

Club for wanting my second weekend off in 3 seasons.

I finished my BS at URI and became the assistant golf course superintendent at The Greenwich Country Club in Greenwich, CT. I lived in a trailer behind the maintenance shop and worked 80 hours a week for two years and really loved it.

However, something was missing. I applied for superintendent jobs in the area and to graduate school at URI. My superintendent was clearly on the rocks at Greenwich and there was potential for staying on, however, I decided to take a huge payout and go back to URI for my MS.

I finished my MS at URI and went to Cornell University to pursue a PhD in turfgrass weed science. During my graduate studies (5 years) I continued to work on local golf courses. In Rhode Island I was the superintendent for a privately owned 9-hole course in Narragansett. In New York I worked weekends on the Robert Trent Jones course at Cornell with Bob Vavrek (USGA Green Section). I believe there is no place in the world more peaceful than a golf course in the morning (before the players are let loose—of course).

I interviewed for the National Director of the Royal Canadian Golf Association Green Section position in the summer of 1990 and just missed being hired. Subsequently, I was hired at Michigan State University in January of 1991 as the Environmental Education Specialist to provide

advanced environmental information to the turfgrass industry. I love working with the industry and really enjoyed the people in Michigan. I will miss them, but I am looking forward to cultivating new friendships and building relationships with the industry and the people of the Wisconsin; even you Monroe!

GR: *I heard lots of favorable comments about the seminar you presented on campus during the interview process. Faculty not only learned from the lecture but were entertained by your 'Westward Ho' slide. Share details about both, please.*

FR: My interview in Wisconsin was rigorous and I spent about 2 weeks preparing. Paul Rieke told me all along I was a strong candidate, but, I wasn't as sure. When I presented my seminar, it was the 1st time I gave it. I never practice what I'm going to say; I just make sure I understand the information I am presenting and be myself.

GR: *The Michigan State turf program is well known and respected in our circles. Why would you leave it?*

FR: Leaving MSU was hard. It is in my mind the #1 turf program in the world. They have graduated over 1200 students in turf! This is a major reason the program is so strong, as well as the distinguished professionals on the staff. I have come to UW for several personal and professional reasons. I want to be involved and to conduct research, and I have a vision for building a great turf program. I was really impressed with the UW

faculty, especially Larry Binning and Gayle Worf as well as the Noer Center.

GR: *Did the NOER facility affect your decision to accept the Wisconsin job? If so, how?*

FR: At the time, I thought that any industry that could spearhead the building of the NOER Center is the kind of group I could work with. My perception of the Wisconsin turf industry is that you have a no-nonsense, straightforward approach to matters of importance—a "do what has to be done" attitude. I am here because I believe we can do some great things TOGETHER.

GR: *What is the official title of your position? What's the percentage breakdown of how you'll be spending your time—research, extension, teaching?*

FR: I was hired as an Assistant Professor of Turfgrass Environmental Management. My time is split 3 ways—75% Extension, 15% Research, 10% teaching. This will demand exceptional time management skills!

GR: *Often we hear that professors dread teaching at the undergraduate level. How do you feel about time in the classroom?*

I have several turf and grounds management students on my staff this summer. They are interested in Horticulture 261. How about a thumbnail sketch of how you will approach the course material, the lectures and the lab? Will your personal experiences in the field influence the material you present?

Do you foresee adding any new classes—introductory, advanced or graduate—to the Horticulture Department offerings?

FR: I am passionate about teaching and ensuring a meaningful learning experience for my students. That's right—meaningful learning—an education that matters to the student. I had very few good teachers during my nine years of college, but, when I did watched closely. I believe training good students is vital, but, is not entirely complete without the practical experience gained from working in the field. Basically, the students arrive as laborers and we must help them discover within themselves the ability to think as managers. As a teacher I am committed to establishing credibility through my command of the material and letting the students know that I sincerely care about their education in my class.

