

(Continued from page 39)

"How long has it been since you've used any spikers, Sandy?" Bogey asked.

"I can't remember when the last time was," Sandy answered. "Maybe ten years ago. When I first got into this business, spiking was 'in'. Everybody was spiking everything but roughs and cart paths. What you don't see here is our Ryan Renovaire—it's parked around the corner. I've still got the spiking blades for that, too."

"I guess, after a few years, nobody saw any great benefit from spiking and it sort of died out as a cultural practice."

"Why did you keep all of these spiking units?" I asked Sandy.

"Why not?" came the curt answer. "I take very good care of our equipment, but the distributors will give me practically nothing in trade, so I keep them. Who knows—maybe spiking will return to vogue."

"Look here," Sandy went on. "These are attachments I don't use much anymore, either—verticuts. At one time you were made to feel inferior if you didn't verticut your greens every week or so. MBCC has a pair of Ryan Renothins, a Ryan Mataway and two—yes, two—sets of verticuts for triplex greensmowers. We use them only occasionally nowadays because the turf groomer is 'in'. Same deal—verticuts aren't worth much so I just hang onto them."

"You guys have seen our Toro dump truck, haven't you?" I asked.

"Yea," they replied. "You should get Arnie Palmer to autograph it with a paint brush sometime when he's in town on business with Ray-O-Vac," Bogey chuckled.

"Thinking about that truck and seeing these old pieces of equipment reminds me of the progress and advances our business has made," I said to Bogey and Sandy.

Sandy mulled my comment for a minute or two and then said, "there's a difference between old spikers and that old Toro truck of yours. Maybe you have missed it."

"The old Toro is an antique that was useful for decades. In fact, it could still perform a useful function on the golf course, say, filling bunkers with sand. Maybe it wouldn't be the best, but we still have to haul things on a golf course and it can do that. Progress has given us better machines to do that."

"But spikers and verticuts, to me anyway, demonstrate what a 'bandwagon business' we are in. Equipment, cultural practices, chemicals, fertilizers and every other thing we work with, are

very subject to popularity peaks that have little to do with improved turf management, only the hope for it. Most have little support from good science and research." Sandy sounded like an editorial writer. "Much of it is the folklore of golf course management."

He was right. Any honest golf course superintendent would have to admit our gullibility to buy into practices and machinery offering unsubstantiated results. Many times salesmen even bristle when asked for evidence to support their pitch.

The bandwagon effect goes way beyond the equipment scene, too. I remember all the *Poa annua* control programs involving tri-cal arsenate, sodium arsenate and lead arsenate. During their times, something was "wrong" with the course superintendent who wasn't dedicated to these programs.

Never mind that they didn't work. Today we have a whole new generation of *Poa* control products—herbicides and plant hormones—that offer questionable results, if you read what investigators say about them. But those in the business of offering them to us promise miracles. Haven't we heard that before? Get on the bandwagon of progress.

Bogey reminded Sandy and me about the low fertility bandwagon of a few years ago.

"There were guys who actually had the courage to claim they were using less than a pound of N/M each year on their greens. Anyone using four or five pounds a season was given the respect usually accorded an idiot. Of course, now they are back to using sensible amounts of nutrition. Not much is read about these irrational fertilizer programs anymore, obviously because they didn't work and are out of vogue."

Sandy surveyed the ocean of equipment under his control. He was obviously proud of it.

"I think you cannot, however, confuse this bandwagon propensity with real progress. I mean, there's a reason we aren't using those old Worthington Airfield Blitzers over there to mow roughs anymore. There is simply better equipment available."

Bogey and I both agreed. It was Bogey who made another good point. "You could review my operation over the past ten years and definitely find signs of the bandwagon syndrome. What I'd have to show you is how many were imposed by players. I am sure the same is true for other superintendents—programs have been foisted on them by well meaning owners, presi-

dents and green committee chairmen.

"They probably were well meaning, too. The drive for improved golf turf at a lower price somehow, sometimes, ends up with either or both goals far from accomplished. More frustrating is the clamor to climb aboard the bandwagon 'because the Club across town is doing it' or because a colleague of a board member from a Club miles away bought a piece of machinery and 'we should have one, too.' In other quarters, that is known as 'keeping up with the Jones'."

Sandy continued talking. "For me, the latest example is the Hydrojet that sits in a corner of our cold storage shed only to find infrequent use. It's bandwagon machinery bought by Shady Dells' green committee three years ago. It has definite use in some areas, but it has not revolutionized putting green aerification, and that's what they had in mind when they made me buy it."

We continued visiting, chuckling about everything from ryegrass overseeding programs—almost all regretted today—to ridiculously high potassium fertility programs. It covered the horizon from weekly sand topdressing to clipping harvest, PGRs to solid tine aerifying and from gypsum use to surfactants. Oh let's not forget green blankets, either.

"Clever engineers and sharp salesmen have made a lot of money from the golf course bandwagon," Sandy observed.

"For me," Bogey offered, "I'll take Milorganite, reel mowers and good ol' Pennncross."

Just as Bogey and I reached our trucks, a flatbed owned by one of our distributors pulled into Sandy's shop yard.

"What the heck are they delivering?" Bogey wanted to know.

Sandy looked a little sheepish, kicked some dust up from the yard and quietly answered, "our new greens roller."

"Toot toot. Make way for the bandwagon," Bogey teased.

Sandy smiled at me and said, "back your truck up to the hillside over there and run the aerifier off. I'll put it away later."

On the way home, all I thought about was when I was going to be cornered into buying a roller for our greens.

The more I thought about it, the more I realized if I could hold off only a little while, the chances were good I wouldn't ever have to buy one.

That's the nature of a bandwagon business. 🍷



NOT AGAIN!

—Winter Injury in the Great Lakes Region

By Robert Vavrek, Agronomist
Great Lakes Region, USGA Green Section

The 1992 season was almost too good to be true. Ample rainfall at well spaced intervals and minimal heat stress was the rule at most golf courses in the nine-state Great Lakes Region. It couldn't last, and it didn't. A "one-two punch" of severe freeze/thaw cycles and thick ice cover took its toll on *Poa annua* on greens and fairways at courses in Rockford, Janesville, Madison, the Fox River Valley, and the list goes on and on. As if the loss of turf from "crown hydration" wasn't enough, pink snow mold activity this spring added insult to injury.

The following is a summary of the more interesting observations I have made this spring regarding the winter related loss of turf. First, geotextile covers did not prevent loss of turf. By design most covers allow free movement of air and water across the fabric, so there is no reason to expect covers to protect turf during a severe freeze/thaw cycle. The thick excelsior blanket covers used on a few greens at Nakoma Golf Club provided a fair degree of protection from winter injury but at least four inches of snow were removed from the putting surface before the

greens were covered. Consequently a fair comparison of the amount of injury between greens cannot be made; in other words, was it the excelsior mat or the removal of snow that made the difference? The initial results are promising, but don't jump on the excelsior blanket bandwagon just yet. They are quite expensive, last about three to five years, and have unique handling and storage requirements.

Superintendents have come up with several ways to renovate and oversee the more severely injured areas. Good seed-to-soil contact is needed to ensure successful bentgrass germination and development. The use of shallow quadratine aeration or hand tillage with a "Garden Weasel" before overseeding has produced some good results at several courses. Grow-in time has been accelerated by pregerminating seed in the shop or by the use of the relatively new "primed" bentgrass seed. One device used at a number of courses was the "Gardenvator", a mini hand spiker. This garden cultivator caused very little disruption to a putting surface and is often used before and after the seed is applied. This tool

looks like a series of small "Ninja" stars (for those of us who remember the Kung Fu TV series) set on an 8-inch paint roller. Pushing the seed just a bit into the soil surface makes a big difference. I am sure there are similar devices used by others.

Some recovery occurred during the warm 10 day period of early May. Since then, cold nights with frost have just about shut down bentgrass growth and development. One of my most difficult challenges this spring has been making explanations to golfers regarding the limited growth of bentgrass during cool weather. In general, though, golfers have been very understanding, probably due to the widespread injury across Wisconsin and neighboring states. According to Jim Latham, Director of the Great Lakes Region, it seems that the area between Hayward, Green Bay, and Madison, referred to as the "Devil's Triangle", experienced some of the most severe injury in the state. The "Devil's Triangle—that must be where *Poa annua* enters and is sometimes never seen again.

Well, here's to summer and some warmer, sunnier weather! ☀

Answers to The Wisconsin Golf Course Quiz

1. Twenty-five years. This is the GMO's silver anniversary.
2. No. After three years at North Shore C.C.—1968, 1969 and 1970—the GMO moved to Tripoli C.C. After two years at Tripoli—1971 and 1972—the GMO moved to Tuckaway C.C. It has been there since then.
3. Jim Gallagher, Jr. The total of his earnings is \$228,565.40
4. Andy North ranks 68th on the career money list with earnings of \$31,439.21
5. Dave Stockton won in 1968 at North Shore C.C. with a score of 275. He went home with a \$40,000 purse.
6. Bill Kratzer finished with a 266 total (67,66,67,66) in 1980.
7. \$1,000,000.
8. All of them.
9. Dave Eichelberger has earned money in 18 GMOs, an amazing and impressive record.
10. The GMO is one of two community based tour stops. All of the others have a principal sponsor—Honda, Contel, etc.



THE LUCK OF THE DRAW

By Pat Norton

What part does luck, just plain old dumb luck, play in this business of golf course management?

There's no doubt that there is an element of luck involved in our work, just as there's some luck involved in everything in life. How else can one explain those days when everything clicks perfectly, when events happen to perfection, or when people do exactly what you'd expect them to do, and then some more? Sometimes it just has to be plain old good luck.

But, can a person survive, and ultimately thrive, in any field simply by relying on continual good luck? Absolutely not!

Good luck or good fortune cannot be relied upon with any degree of certainty, as any serious gambler can testify. Luck must be combined with intelligence, a strong work ethic, and a genuine concern for other people. When these and other factors are combined, then long-term success in many areas of life are more certain. This homespun, half-baked theory of mine is certainly not original. It's better known as "making your own breaks".

However, there are those times in life, and in this business, when there can be no other explanation for a turn of events other than to chalk it up to good luck.

Simple good luck for those of us who manage golf courses here in western Wisconsin. Simple bad luck for those in Wisconsin who were hit hard with ice formation this past winter, and have the turfgrass damage to show for it this spring.

For some reason Mother Nature (I refer to nature as a female because females control almost everything in a man's life) decided to smile down upon God's Country here in the west and spare us the ice storms of the winter of '92-'93. I have heard the horror stories secondhand from colleagues, but have

not seen any damage directly. We here at 'the Creek' were extremely fortunate to escape the winter without serious ice formation in our low areas, thank God! One of these years, though, it will be our turn. We have more low ground here than the Low Countries of Europe, it seems.

Members here have returned from golf outings at other locales, reporting back that other golf courses don't look so good. These people have a somewhat smug attitude about the whole thing. It is as if it is the damaged clubs' faulty management that caused the damage.

Most golfers really don't understand that Mother Nature is a very powerful force that can easily disrupt the best laid plans of any mere mortal. How else can it be explained when a superintendent observes golfers heading away from the clubhouse as a heavy duty thunderstorm bears down on the course? It's times like those when I really do wonder about the intelligence level of the average golf player.

When confronted with their ignorant comments and more ignorant attitudes, I am forced to refresh their memories concerning our ice damage from the winter of '91-'92. We had extensive damage to our roughs because of ice sheeting that lasted about three months. We were heavy duty overseeding in April 1992—WITHOUT any perennial ryegrass in our blend, I might add. If I never see perennial ryegrass on this golf course again, it'll be much too soon!

Since we have a new golf course with Penncross covering our feature areas, winter damage is not such a worry for myself and those others who have the good fortune to be managing bentgrass. I seriously doubt that I ever want to return to managing an older, established course and face the trials of managing annual bluegrass. Bent-

grass management by comparison is really a piece of cake!

Actually, a bigger worry is that our virgin bentgrass tees, greens and fairways are beginning to lose their virginity. Small spots of *Poa annua* are beginning to show up in worrisome numbers this spring, especially on the tees with their devoted voids.

Apart from our temporary woes in golfdom, consider the good fortune that we've all experienced over the years. Healthy children, supportive families, work that is usually quite enjoyable, and pretty good financial compensation are often taken for granted as we all continue to strive for that ever perfect, ever elusive golf course of our dreams.

Ice damage and turfgrass loss seem pretty minor and insignificant when compared to some of life's potential hardships. Imagine being caught in a situation in which parents could not protect their children from disease, starvation or even death. Think of the strength of spirit it would take to survive and thrive after enduring such hardships.

Think about 'the luck of the draw'. We have all turned up '21' by being fortunate enough to live in the USA and enjoy all of the benefits that this great country has to offer. Each of us has the opportunity to change our luck and improve our lot in life.

Really though, it is not a matter of luck. It's hard work, determination, clean living, and the grace of God that will ultimately permit us to reach our goals in life.

It's just that maybe God could have been a bit more merciful this past winter and kept those ice storms out of Wisconsin entirely, right guys? Keep on praying daily like we all do here in western Wisconsin—God will surely take notice and be sure to help you keep your courses green and ice damage free! 🙏

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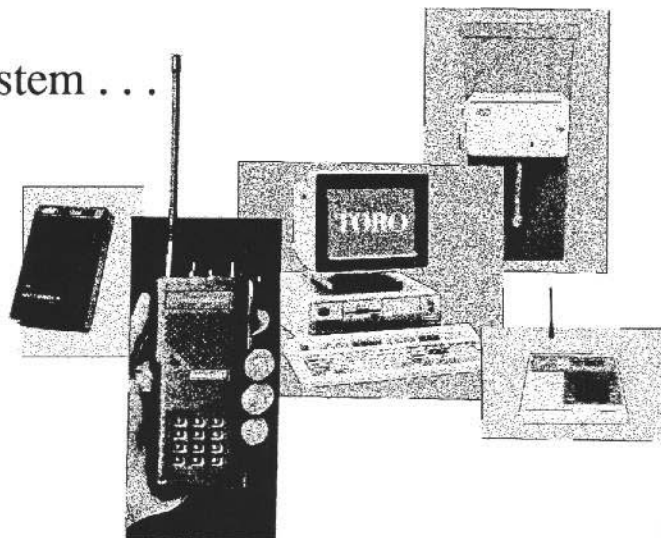
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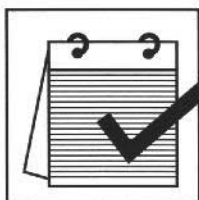
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The Real "Real Superintendent"

By Rod Johnson

On three occasions our most talented and most respected editor has written very enjoyable pieces on his description of "Real Superintendents." I know for a fact that a large part of the enjoyment that Monroe derives from his duties is the response generated by his editorial writings.

His views at times are somewhat left of Rush Limbaugh and his descriptive writings of a real superintendent would have an outsider thinking that "Joe Average" is a cross between a Lutheran Minister and "Delbert Nerd class of 72."

While I have been accused of being a little off center I didn't think I was a lot different than most. The results of last November's presidential election and of the GCSAA elections in January have left me questioning a lot more than my habits and traits.

I have always considered myself a real superintendent despite the fact that I switched to decaf four years ago and I've liked Lite beer with its great taste and less filling nature from its introduction in the early seventies. I'm trying to cut back on Wisconsin cheeses and snack on low fat pretzels. My beef intake is moderated with chicken becoming a favorite. I start the day early in tennis shoes and blue jeans but try to change dress by 10 a.m. and consider it a compliment to be confused with the golf pro. I've never gone deer hunting and enjoy "doing lunch." The only time that I open a *TIME* magazine is when an anti-pesticide article is brought to my attention.

While a staunch Republican, I wouldn't blast the other side of the aisle as leftist. Dick the Barber is a good friend. Both he and I agree that no haircut at no airport is worth 200 beans. I don't fly Old Glory outside my shop; never even thought about it. Country music is #1 in my shop, Billy Ray excluded of course. I don't wear a pony tail nor an earring. I always stand and remove my hat when the national an-

them is played despite a developing bald spot and numerous bad hair days.

Thinking I'm closer to center than led to believe, I offered to conduct this issue's survey perhaps shedding some light on this real superintendent. While there are many more questions to be answered as to the habits and preferences of superintendents, the answers in six important categories can now be revealed. Forty-four superintendents shared their interesting answers to the following.

1) What are your 2 favorite T.V. shows? Not surprisingly *Home Improvement* with its male macho grunts was a clear first choice (17 votes) followed by the provocative *Sienfeld* (15 votes). Showing the same imagination as last month's responses to the favorite bluegrass variety question, the Weather Channel (12 votes) and the Six o'clock News (11 votes) were next. One superintendent, coincidentally from the "Snow Queen" region, has admitted to having an intense fixation towards Marly Sanyer, the well-endowed early morning star of the Weather Channel.

Other shows receiving mention were *Married With Children*, *Murphy Brown*, *Cheers*, and *60 Minutes*. Two votes—self included—were cast for the Saturday afternoon westerns on the Family Channel. They're best watched from the comfort of the Rec Room couch with your eyes closed.

2) Is your favorite soda (pop for those of you outside the metro-Milwaukee area) Diet or Regular? I was surprised by this one with so many superintendents watching their waist lines. The results were 28 regular and 16 diet. There was clearly no interest shown in the new clear colas.

3) This question was probably more near and dear to our group anyway. What is your favorite beer? Wisconsin superintendents like beer and they prefer Miller products. Miller Lite finished first with 14 votes followed by regular Miller and Genuine Draft with 8

votes each. The people in St. Louis will be disappointed to learn that only six superintendents questioned prefer "rice beer." One of Wisconsin's finest even said that he would rather go without than drink Bud. Now that's going a little too far!

4) Question four had to do with "doing lunch". Ten superintendents regularly go home for lunch, six brown bag it, two do lunch at the clubhouse, and 18 have lunch at a restaurant other than the clubhouse. The food and atmosphere is usually better at Micky D's.

5) As a group, superintendents have never been known to throw away their hard-earned bucks. Did you notice that when the GCSAA Conference was in Las Vegas they turned down the lights and sent the extra help home around 9:00 P.M.

When asked of their lottery ticket purchasing habits 3/4 questioned admitted to only occasional purchases and then only when the pot exceeded \$30 million. All of those who do purchase admitted they thought they had a real chance to win and would of course keep working after they won.

6) While very personal, this question needed asking. The answer shows the deep moral convictions of our group. What type of underwear do you wear, briefs or boxers? The numbers speak for themselves. Ninety-one percent (40) wear briefs. Only three wear boxers. One individual, who by the way happens to be the same smart — — — who's favorite ryegrass is dead, claims not to wear underwear. Oh, those wild and crazy "flatlanders".

By the way, Wayne Otto still wears briefs which we knew anyway from pictures previously published.

So there you have it, a scientific revelation of the habits and preferences of the Badgerland's best. A group of my professional peers that I am proud to call "REAL SUPERINTENDENTS". 🍷



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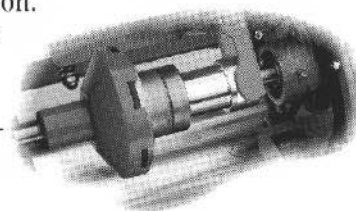
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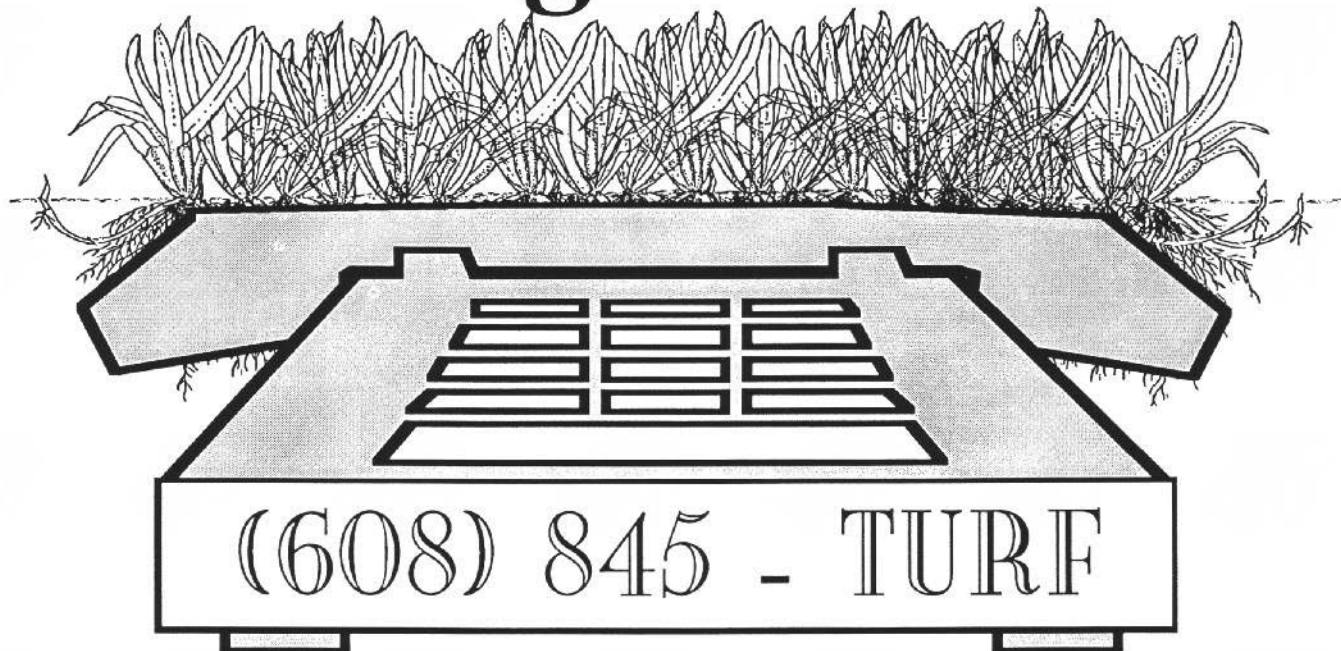
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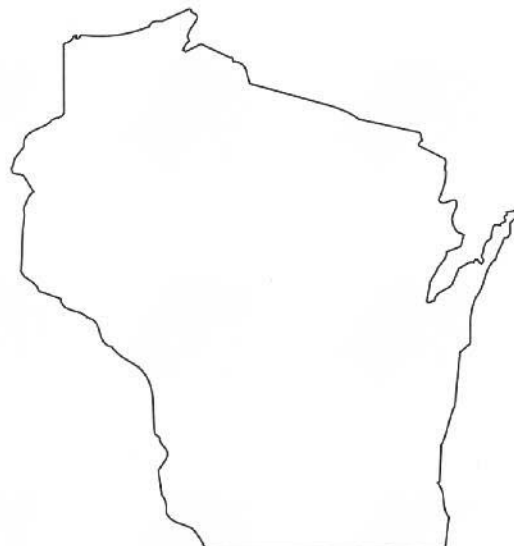
A successful integrated pest management program depends on your access to environmental information that could aid in predicting pest pressure. As our industry eliminates pesticide applications based on a calendar, access to degree day accumulations and pest outbreaks in your region is vital. Additionally, recommendations based on current environmental conditions could aid in scheduling specific cultural practices such as, core cultivation and turf establishment. Access to this type of information is now available to you by calling the UW-Turfgrass Hotline at (608) 845-TURF (8873).

Each Friday afternoon from April through October a two minute message is recorded that includes current turfgrass recommendations, such as; cultural practices, Integrated Pest Management strategies for current pest outbreaks, growing degree day accumulation and soil temperatures to more accurately predict pest problems prior to infestation, and hot topics, such as pesticide use concerns, up-coming educational programs, and what's new at the O.J. Noer Turfgrass Facility.

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Mr. Monroe Miller
Editor, *Grass Roots*
3606 Blackhawk Drive
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May 13, 1993

Dear Monroe:

As your fondness for Milwaukee is well documented, I thought you might appreciate some good news coming from our fair city. The EPA has published a set of rules designated 40 CFR Part 503 as part of the Reauthorization of the Clean Water Act. This rule regulates the disposal of sludge generated from Publically Owned Treatment Works, or POTW's, such as the Milwaukee Metropolitan Sewerage District. These rules have a profound effect on products such as Milorganite.

In the 1970's, the United States Environmental Protection Agency was charged with the responsibility of regulating the disposal of sewage sludge. The common perception at that time, and perhaps rightfully so, was that this toxic, nasty stuff (for lack of a more descriptive term) was being dumped into oceans, rivers, and potable drinking waters. Disposal was largely unregulated, unmanaged, and clearly responsible for a number of serious pollution problems across the country. At the time, EPA had no idea that sludge had any beneficial use, especially as a popular fertilizer for over 50 years.

Fifteen years of scientific research ensued to determine just how nasty this stuff really was and how disposal methods would impact the environment. Every possible scenario was studied from plant toxicity, wildlife, and human health perspectives using a Most Exposed Individual (MEI) risk assessment. The extensive data was gathered and reviewed by a group of qualified scientists from across the country, including the United States Department of Agriculture.

The final regulation is over 600 pages long including the Preamble, and according to the document, required unprecedented effort by the EPA to complete. The bottom line here is that finally, after extensive scientific research, there is a clear cut and definitive line which determines that **Milorganite is safe.**

That definitive line and one of the key components in the 503 Regulations was the establishment of what has been termed "Exceptional Quality" sludge. (The politically correct term now for sludge is Biosolids.) "EQ" Biosolids must meet three key criteria.

1. They must demonstrate that they meet processes to remove pathogens. Milorganite is heat-dried to temperatures

exceeding 850° Fahrenheit for over 40 minutes. This process ensures that not even *Cryptosporidium* will survive in Milorganite, let alone disease-causing bacteria or viruses.

2. The products must be in such a form, or used in such a way that they do not attract vectors (such as flies or rodents) which may carry other diseases. Since the manufacturing process of Milorganite yields a final product of less than 5% moisture, this criteria is met.

3. Finally, "EQ" Biosolids must not exceed concentration levels of 10 heavy metals. The regulated metals include cadmium, chromium, arsenic, lead, molybdenum, copper, zinc, selenium, nickel, and mercury. These levels were developed to protect both human health as well as ensure that plant toxicity from high concentrations would be avoided even if the products were grossly over-applied or otherwise misused.

It is important to understand that Milorganite and other products derived from Biosolids are the only fertilizer materials which currently must meet heavy metal concentration levels, demonstrate a reduction in pathogens, and ensure that it will not attract and promote outside pathogen vectors. Most fertilizer products clearly could also meet these standards. Interestingly, however, many would not.

As you know, Milorganite has taken its licks over the years and has been criticized based on hearsay and conjecture, not fact. Now, fifteen years of science defines criteria, which no other product has to satisfy, **that maintains that Milorganite does not carry pathogens; that maintains Milorganite does not promote the spread of pathogens; and that maintains that the metal concentration in Milorganite does not pose a reasonable threat to plant, animal or human life.**

Too often our industry is criticized by those who ignore good science and base conclusions on emotion rather than scientific fact. Likewise, emotion rather than scientific fact was and continues to be employed from many sources against Milorganite. With the promulgation of 40 CFR Part 503 by the EPA, the opportunity to embrace science rather than emotion is available. I hope this serves as encouragement to practice what we preach.

Alan K. Nees

Alan K. Nees
Director of Marketing

AKN/bls



The Anti-Superintendent Takes A Road Trip

By Rob Schultz

Some here's and there's on a late May day while I'm waiting for winter to end:

THERE—Maybe it was my homeboy mentality that gave me the idea that Wisconsin was the crown jewel of the Midwest when it came to beauty and ambience.

But then I spent six days in the northern half of lower Michigan this May and my mind was changed forever. Wisconsin has nice, pleasant views. Michigan has views that take your breath away.

Just stand at the first tee of the new Tom Fazio course at the Treetops resort in Gaylord. You're so high above the gorgeous tree line that you think you can see all the way to Canada. It reminded me of the Appalachians.

Or stand at the 17th tee at Crystal Downs Country Club in Franfort where you're almost as high above the tree line as at Treetops, but you have the added benefit of beautiful Crystal Lake on the horizon.

Or stand at the first tee at Little Traverse Bay Golf Club located between Harbor Springs and Petoskey. Look to the right and you see on the horizon the gazillion dollar cottages owned by the Grosse Pointe elite who spend their summers there. Look to the left and you see the cozy village of Petoskey tucked in a tight, little bay. Look straight ahead and you can see all of Little Traverse Bay all the way to Lake Michigan. You're standing so high above it all that you think if you squint, you can see all the way to Wisconsin.

As for the golf courses, there is nothing in Wisconsin that matches the best the upper half of lower Michigan has to offer. I'm not being critical of Wisconsin's courses. In fact, I came back from my trip with even more praise for our best public-fee layouts because they remain some of the best bargains in the country. It's just that the Treetops courses, Boyne's courses, Little Traverse Bay, the Legend at Shanty Creek, High Pointe and, of course, Crystal Downs, have no weaknesses. I looked. Hard. And I couldn't find any.

Every course worked its way through tall, pretty hills and tight, tree-lined fairways were the norm. It wasn't surprising to find some severe dropoffs; the most dramatic, of course, were at Treetops and Little Traverse Bay.

I was in Michigan with *Golf World* senior writer Gary Van Sickle, who was writing a travel story on the state. He was

extremely impressed with Crystal Downs and also gave his highest marks to the Fazio course at Treetops.

"Instant top 50 in the country," he said of the Fazio course.

The most unique course we played was also at Treetops. It was its par-3 course, designed by resident pro and current guru to some of the top PGA Tour players, Rick Smith. It's called Threetops and it included the resort's most dramatic holes, including the 212-yard third hole called Devil's Drop. It was aptly named since it had a 145-foot vertical drop from tee to green. Another hole had a 75-foot vertical drop. Fun stuff.

Most of the nine Michigan courses I played survived the winter in exceptional shape. The reason, of course, was the relative youth of each place. The exception was old-timer Crystal Downs, which had more *Poa Annua* to deal with than the others. Its members even replaced one of its greens. We played with gracious member Randy Dye and he was constantly apologizing. He didn't need to. Crystal Downs' problems were like a tiny zit on a beauty queen.

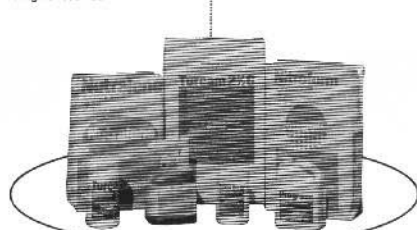
HERE—My apologies to Tuck and Tony. First, I never thought I could travel to Michigan without calling Tuck Tate and his wife, Becky. But my trip had to go on without them because they were en route to Frankfort from their winter home in Sarasota.

I'm also still kicking myself for missing out on a second trip to Michigan in May with a contingent of state PGA professionals. Led by director Tony Coleman, the state group was playing groups from other Midwest states in a Ryder Cup format and I was supposed to cover the event for them and my paper. But family matters intervened and I had to stay home.

HERE AND THERE—Golfers are certainly grumbling about the horrid course conditions found around the state from the harsh spring and winter. But most golfers who I've had contact with understand that superintendents aren't to blame. Those who don't understand have been corrected with a sharp blow to the forehead with an 8 iron by those who do understand.

If there's a silver lining to the nightmarish spring, it's that golfers are taking a better look at places like the O.J. Noer

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turfgrass center and how it can help us learn how to stop similar tragedies from occurring in the future.

HERE—My wife, Pat, can't believe I'm writing a column for a publication read mostly by golf course superintendents.

"You're the anti-superintendent," she said with a giggle.

She was referring to my constant battle with lawn fertilization. Every year I find a different way to mess it up. Stripes are normal fare on my lawn.

This year, however, was the topper. The directions for the high-powered weed-and-feed said the spreader dial should be at five and three-quarters.

Suffice to say I didn't read the directions.

I ran out of fertilizer shortly after finishing my front lawn. Hmmm, I said to myself. The bag said it should cover more than an acre. My front lawn is about the size of a medium-sized green.

Maybe I should read the directions, I said to myself.

The bag had the number five and three-quarters written on it.

I looked at my spreader and it was on 10.

Whoops.

The anti-superintendent.

My wife walked outside and remarked, "It smells like a chemical spill out here."

Uh, oh.

My first inclination was to call Monroe Miller. I figured he'd have an answer; that he'd tell me somebody on his crew does something like that all the time and I should have nothing to worry about.

I called Miller. He didn't have an answer. He told me nobody on his crew in 48 years—or however long he has been at Blackhawk—had ever done anything that stupid. He also told me I had lots to worry about.

To make a long story short, my lawn survived. It took four days of constant watering to save it, but it's lush and green. Boy is it lush and green. Fish stories don't grow like my grass is growing. Pinocchio's nose can't hold a candle to my lawn. A neighbor's kid walked into my lawn the other day and a search party was sent out to find him.

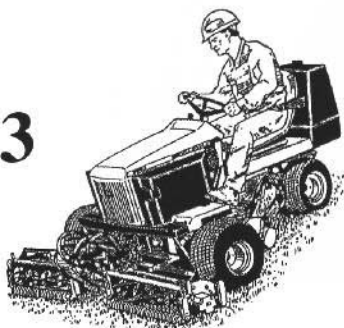
I mowed it yesterday at noon. Today the grass was above my ankles. It sure looks good during the day, but I wish I could get rid of the glow it gives off at night. 🌟

Answers to the puzzles on page 18.

A K Z E N I B S U R A V E S A E S I
L E P A V E Q U M E L B A U L O S
K Z V A X P P Z Q L H R I Y E D E C
R I E K E S W C E Z N J A A O D M A
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	V		O	R	G	A	N	I	C			M
27	R	O	L	L	E	R		L	O	Y	D	
32	E	R	I	E		S	A	Y	L	O	R	
35	N	G	U		T	E	D		D	R	I	P
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43	J	N		A	P	I	E	C	E		R	A
47	A	I	R	Y		C	U	T	S			I
50	I	S	A	A	C			O	C	E	A	N
55	L	M		S	A	T	U	R	A	T	E	S

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