



The Surrounds

By Wayne G. Horman



This winter has been a tough one for me. Not because of boredom, since I have a 4 month old little boy at home to keep me busy, but the weather this year has been gloomy and it seems every day looks the same. Recently the sun has decided to peek out, but not like it has in previous years.

Also, not many people around to gather information for the "Surrounds". So if you see your neighbor doing something new or different, CALL ME!

My only highlight over the last two months, was an annual sales trip to the western part of Wisconsin. I get there throughout the season, but this time of the year is by far the best! Driving on highway 35, between La Crosse and Prairie du Chien is simply beautiful by itself. But the greatest part is seeing the bald eagles nesting along the open waters of the Mississippi River. It isn't hard to find them, since they line the road along the river. No, I'm not some wacko bird watcher, but you have to be a real stiff to not appreciate their beauty. If you ever get a chance to make the drive, the best locations are near any open water. There are a number of locks and dams along the route, so there are plenty of vantage points. In fact, this year I saw 17 eagles between Victory and Ferryville, WI, and I never stopped driving.

The GCSAA in California was well represented by superintendents and distributors from Wisconsin. Attendance figures aren't in yet, but Wisconsinites may have helped set a record for attendance at this year's show. Most attendees felt this show was similar to others in recent years; it was filled with good information, nice weather, an excellent trade show, and a good time seeing old friends.

The hospitality rooms filled the night life, and word has it they were outstanding. The Ciba Geigy and Scotts Company hospitality rooms were both excellent on a national level, but it is tough beating the Wisconsin/Milorganite party.

One exception may have been the reception for outgoing President Bill Roberts. Bill has represented us well, but it is hard to believe a full year has passed by since he became President.

There is always a discussion or controversy at the show, and this year was no exception. The talk focused on rollers

versus non-rollers for greens mowers, tissue testing, and the always popular turf growth regulators. However, just as it is every year, most superintendents return home with no concrete answers.

I understand the Beach Boys put on quite a show at the reception. Even a few superintendents not known for their appreciation of music, were seen foot tapping and clapping.

A big congratulations goes out to Mark Hjortness (Ives Grove GC in Racine), who finished 10th in the 1st flight division of the Superintendents Golf Tournament. Mark didn't win any prize money, but I understand he made up for it in his skins game with other Wisconsin superintendents.

The best Assistance job in the state is easily the one at Pine Hills in Sheboygan. Rod Johnson took his assistant, Mike Lyons to the SUPER BOWL. I don't know how Rod managed to get tickets, but that's one heck of a way to keep your assistant around for another year. It will be hard to top that one next year Rod!

Back at home, the start of the new year brought some changes in the golf course industry here in Wisconsin. Darrell Acker, owner and superintendent of the Marshfield Country Club is retiring after more than 40 years in the industry. Darrell has spent the last 26 years at MCC, but has previously worked at the old Tuckaway CC, Oconomowoc CC, and Stevens Point CC.

What is even more impressive than his years in the industry, Darrell and his wife/partner Jane have provided 4 children who work in the golf course industry. Chip, who is the PGA Pro and Manager at MCC; Andy, who is the superintendent at MCC; Martin, a superintendent at a 27 hole golf course in Southern Pines, NC; and Anna, who is a golf pro on tour in Florida.

The new Green Bay Country Club, which is just under construction, hired Marc Davison (Blackwolf Run) as their new superintendent. His past experience in new construction at Blackwolf Run will be a big plus in getting that course established.

Villa du Parc in Mequon hired Eric Janson as their new superintendent. Janson was most recently the assistant at Villa du Parc, and previously worked at North Hills in Menomonee Falls and

at Old Baldy Club in Wyoming.

Lohmann Designs has added Dan Murray as their Project Manager. Previously, Dan has worked at Eagle Brook CC and Settlers Hills GC in Illinois, and more recently as the project manager and superintendent for Greenvisions. He will be working at Indianhead GC and Whispering Springs GC on new construction projects here in Wisconsin.

I missed this in the last issue, but Larry Lennert, a former UW grad, and superintendent in Minnesota has been hired by Milorganite as a Technical Representative. It will be a lot easier for Larry to get all the sports information on Wisconsin teams now that he is back.

Wisconsin Turf has filled their sales position in Western Wisconsin and North Western Illinois, with Derek Kastenschmidt. Derek comes from Florida Golf, a golf development that built courses throughout the south.

There are some locals attending various Universities this winter. Alan Fude, superintendent at Rock River CC (Waupun) has been accepted at University of Massachusetts for the spring turf program. The program runs from January through end of March. Chris Roth who works for Rod Johnson at Pine Hills (Sheboygan) is attending Rutgers. Todd Wenzel, son of Tom Wenzel of Ridgeway CC (Appleton) is also attending Rutgers. Andy Gruse, assistant for Scott Schaller at South Hills (Fond du Lac) is attending Penn State. Also attending Penn State is Brett Grams, assistant for Kris Pinkerton at Waupaca CC.

From the WTA side of things, Curt Larson (Wisconsin Turf) was selected President of the WTA for the next two years. Curt brings a great deal of experience to the position, and will help this industry continue forward.

Hopefully, the warm days of early February allowed everyone to get out and clean some ice off their greens. I know that areas of the state were hit hard with rain in December and January. The Fox Valley area, which was hit hard last winter by ice damage, is wrestling with a similar situation again this year.

Well, not much more to talk about. So long for now, and start sending me information on what's happening. 