

(Continued from page 39)

work ethic. These types flock to the golf shop to "shoot the breeze" with the guys, but rarely walk the course just for fun and would never consider visiting the maintenance shop. They would be totally out of their element.

It's a great thing that there are so many new golf courses cropping up all around Wisconsin. They will be intelligently designed and built, wisely grown in and managed, and be a

definite asset to this state. It will be a good use of the land, providing that the landowners truly care for their properties and enhance them over the years.

In many regards, golf course superintendents are like the farmers that we know as friends and neighbors. We all love the land and are devoting our lives to managing it. In the process we are also preserving it for future generations. 🌱

Editorial



A Modest Proposal

By Steve Blendell
Brynwood Country Club

Anyone who has been closely involved with the game of golf for a substantial period of years has probably seen many different golf courses, ranging in condition from lush and manicured to thin and weedy and everything in-between.

I grew up playing, and eventually working on, a golf course where the fairways were as hard as an interstate highway and the greens were sometimes not much different.

I have been fortunate enough to play golf in Scotland where maintenance levels are quite modest. I have also had the pleasure to play golf on some of the most impeccably maintained turf in the United States.

The question that has bothered me for some years now is this one: why do I, and I suspect most other golfers (including professionals), shoot the same scores on golf courses that, having similar degrees of difficulty, are maintained in such different ways? Put another way, if higher levels of maintenance don't lead to better scoring, why do we do it?

Unfortunately, I cannot answer my own question. But I would like to speculate just the same.

I think that it is the nature of American business to try to do better than the competition. In some fields, this has been a blessing to the consumer. When we turn to golf course maintenance, I think that the opposite has occurred.

A famous American author said, "progress was fine, but it's gone on way too long." This should be the motto of the GCSAA.

Golf turf maintenance "improvements" have gone on way too long, actually rendering golf courses less playable than they could be. In addition, the incessant search for better (greener) turf has caused us to utilize too much water, fuel, landfill space, pesticides and other precious commodities.

Using my earlier thought, if "better" turf doesn't provide better scoring, are we justified in using our resources in the amounts that we use them? I think we have reached the point in American golf where we are maintaining for aesthetics, at least partially at the expense of playability.

This discussion leads, at long last, to my modest proposal. I propose the GCSAA direct all members to have firm greens, hard fairways, a tolerable population of weeds, sparse tree populations and rough that is whatever the weather will allow.

Further, I submit that bunker maintenance should be done with the idea that bunkers are a hazard, not a scenic

refuge. At many venues, professionals hope to land in the hazard rather than the jungle that surrounds it. One wonders if the grass isn't the hazard and the sand bunker is a sanctuary for some unknown wildlife species.

I feel that we must all band together and maintain golf turf in a manner that the game of golf demands, not in the manner that a botanical garden requires.

Like that old Lite beer commercial said, "...everything you always wanted in a golf course, and less."

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Congratulations and Hosannas...

By Monroe S. Miller

It is right to express thanks to those who have made extraordinary contributions to our business in the last while.

JEFF BOTTENSEK AND JOHN KRUTILLA: Once again, the Wisconsin Turfgrass Association golf outing was a winner last fall, enriching the research coffers in a major way. Jeff, a WTA director, planned the event. John served as host for the event, offering a chance to play Geneva National.

A tip of the hat to these guys for a job very well done.

BILL ROBERTS: You have to admire a person who puts as much time and effort into an organization as Bill has put into the GCSAA. It's been impressive. One can only hope he takes some time this year to rest up!

ROD JOHNSON: Always the innovator, Rodney's idea of providing the signage now required by law is turning into a bonanza for the medical study on the health of golf course superintendents. To see such an unselfish act in an era of greed and self-gratification is more refreshing than words can express. Thanks to our immediate past

president. He continues his good work and leadership.

RISE: This is an acronym for *Responsible Industry for a Sound Environment*. They produced a publication that makes for good reading and explains the many benefits from sensible use of pesticides. Those who attended our spring business meeting received a copy.

Give credit to RISE for assembling such a good piece. We each need to share it with as many outside of our business as possible - green committee members, players, neighbors, extended family, etc. It will help with the endless task of education.

WGCSA O & D: Now THAT was a spring business meeting! Best ever? Could have been. That's high praise from an unabashed observer.

The panel of Professors Harkin and Rossi and P.I. Dawson was excellent, despite the absence of Ms. Terrell. Mike Semler was a perfect moderator, the questions were superb and the discussion among panel members was civil and intelligent, reasonable and very interesting. It was a brilliantly

planned event that nobody should have missed.

The meeting itself was organized and focused on the business we needed to conduct. President Worzella rapped the gavel at 1:00 p.m., promised an hour and a half of business and then adjourned at 2:30 p.m. sharp!

Only Pat Norton got home late for supper!

WGCSA MEMBERS: At least those who attended the spring business meeting.

Many of us were very distressed to see the GCSAA stop its contribution to the USGA Green Section research program last year.

We read volumes from Lawrence about how strong GCSAA is financially, raising questions then why the \$50,000 was stopped.

As an expression of disgust and disagreement, we in Wisconsin will give \$1,000 to the USGA Green Section research program **INSTEAD OF THE GCSAA S & R FUND.**

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April, 1993

Mr. Monroe Miller, Editor
The Grass Roots
P.O. Box 5129
Madison, WI 53705

Dear Monroe:

I am writing in response to some of the questions you raised in the March/April issue of The Grass Roots regarding the changes taking place at Ransomes America Corporation.

We recognize our corporate realignment may have caused a degree of confusion in the marketplace. Without question, change is often a challenging process. However, throughout this process our goal has been to provide our customers with the highest quality products and services in the industry. Please allow me to explain some of the changes that have taken place.

As you well know, Cushman/Ryan and Ransomes operated as separate companies for many years. In 1991, Ransomes plc purchased Cushman/Ryan and merged them together with Ransomes to form Ransomes America Corporation. Again, the goal of this merger was to offer our customers a more comprehensive product line and increased service support.

Throughout this transition, it has been vitally important to us to be driven by our customer's needs. In the process of consolidating the three brands (Cushman, Ryan and Ransomes), we talked to more than 500 golf course superintendents from around the country. These superintendents told us how to best position the Cushman, Ransomes and Ryan branded products under the Ransomes America Corporation umbrella.

Our new corporate logo, shown at the top of this page, was unveiled to superintendents and dealers at the 1993 GCSAA Show in Anaheim. As you can see, it features three converging "roads" which represent the three primary brands of Ransomes America Corporation. Cushman, Ransomes and Ryan are brands, while Ransomes America Corporation is the company.


Along with the new corporate logo, we are now in the process of introducing a new corporate identity and color scheme to represent the full line of Ransomes America Corporation products. By 1994, all Cushman, Ransomes and Ryan products will carry a solid dark green body accented with red and white stripes. You may have seen equipment with the new colors in Anaheim.

Some questions have also arisen regarding the consolidation of our distribution network. The goal of restructuring our dealer network is to give our customers the ability to purchase the full line of Ransomes America Corporation products (Cushman, Ransomes, Ryan) through a single dealer.

Our new positioning, "driven to be the best," is more than words alone. It means we are actively drawing upon the strengths of the Cushman, Ransomes and Ryan brands to provide the highest quality products and to become the easiest company to do business with.

Monroe, thank you for the opportunity to explain the changes at Ransomes America Corporation. If you have any questions, or would like to talk further about Ransomes America Corporation, I hope you will call me personally. Thanks again for your time.

Sincerely,


Doug McCormick
Vice President of Sales and Marketing

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Mr. Monroe Miller
Wisconsin GCSA
Blackhawk Country Club
3606 Blackhawk Drive
Madison, Wisconsin 53705

Dear Monroe:

On behalf of the Turfgrass Information Center, I would like to thank you and the Wisconsin Golf Course Superintendent's Association for the generous donation and needed support.

The Turfgrass Information Center plays a valuable role in the Turfgrass Community worldwide by supplying published information about our environment, turfgrass research as well as making answers available for everyday turf problems.

I hope the Turfgrass Information Center is a service that will be used by everyone in the Wisconsin Turfgrass Industry. There is a staff lead by Project Manager, Peter Cookingham. Peter is ready to help you make the Turfgrass Information File (TGIF) a effective and efficient turfgrass tool.

Again, to each and everyone in Wisconsin, thank you. The Turfgrass Information Center can only exist and improve with support of concern individuals like yourselves. I am looking forward to seeing everyone at the Wisconsin Turfgrass Association Winter Conference on January 12th, and 13th, 1993.

Respectfully,

Danny H. Quast, CGCS

DHQ/nd

Peter Cookingham
Project Manager
TurfGrass Information Center
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THE JOB HUNT

By Jay Packard

The last five months of my life came to an end last week as my search for a position in golf course management ended in success. While the time for celebration and planning has arrived, I feel obligated to pass on some of what I have learned from my job hunt. Keep in mind that the methods and styles I describe are not the only ways to proceed; after all I got a lot more rejections than offers!

After spending the last four summers on golf courses and other time in the classroom, my goal was to find a position as an assistant golf course superintendent. I knew I could find a job at any golf course, but finding that first 'title' turned out to be a very educational search. My job hunt taught me a lot about resumes, cover letters, interviewing, and the golf course industry.

The beginning of my active pursuit of a career came with a class devoted to resumes, interviews, and public communication. The class was mildly successful at the last two; however, the resume building aspect was deplorable. The resume I completed in the class, which was acceptable to the professor, was laughable. The highly decorated "GRASS ROOTS" editor called the whole thing "underwhelming."

So for about the first two months of my searching I spent hours revising that document. One example of how poor that resume was is demonstrated by the section on relevant class work that I included. A resume should emphasize your strengths. Coming out of college, my strengths are not extensive pesticide application, engine work, or time as a crew leader. They are my education, my leadership potential, my work ethic, and my ability to learn. To emphasize my education, I had listed only four classes but after revision I included 15 classes.

Another part of my resume was work experience. In my search for a golf course position, I included my year and a half term as a salad maker for the Memorial Union on the UW-

Madison campus. Now I must admit that I did have a gift for egg salad. However that really doesn't serve any meaningful purpose to a golf course superintendent (unless he likes egg salad). This was wasted space.

A possible reference could have come from the position, but since I had a handfull of student supervisors it would have been weak at best.

What this section should have included was the place of work, the length of employment, and a handfull of my experiences there. Extraordinary duties or skills developed should also be included. From my four summers, I included about 14 different duties or skills developed between the two courses.

The final part of my resume was activities and awards. This part remained the most consistent throughout the revision process. A simple list of all my clubs and the leadership positions I held in those clubs proved valuable. The end of the section included my scholarships, and how many times I made the Dean's Honor List (twice). Later in the job hunt, after I had a couple of interviewers ask my hobbies, I included them on my resume as well.

Writing cover letters is another skill you'll not specifically learn in college. In the beginning of my search I used them to introduce myself, and thank the prospective employer for his time. While both of the points are part of the letter, I gradually began to get much more out of my letter. In less than 20 lines, I was able to call attention to myself as well as highlight my strengths. Using the cover letter to emphasize certain sections of your resume can be very effective.

The low point in my resume/cover letter writing adventure was sending a cover letter with a word missing from a sentence. I did not get any response from that effort.

When I sent out my resumes and letters, I used 9"x12" envelopes. A flat sheet of paper is much easier to look at than one with two folds. The enve-

lope itself had a typed address and I added two Elvis Presley stamps for style. Since I was trying to distinguish myself from other applicants, using the stamp of the King and thick ivory colored paper were the ways I tried to be noticed.

The final and most important part of the job hunt is the interview. Over Thanksgiving my parents took me to a suit shop in Milwaukee to buy the "interview suit." A tailored, navy blue business suit with cordovan shoes, white shirt, and a power tie—all for one month's rent. This suit was the symbolic end of my college days.

From Thanksgiving until the WTA Winter Conference, the job market was non-existent. Past years had always provided me with openings during this period. But not in my year to find a job. At the WTA conference, I hit the beat by letting everyone know I was in the market. Fortunately, I did get one lead for an assistant's position. A phone call yielded an interview and I thought "hey, I'm on my way." The interview went well except that the superintendent was emphasizing a lot of duties that are definitely not my strengths. I still felt I had a chance.

Over the next few weeks, the national referral service brought me a whole host of openings, as I am sure all of you closet subscribers can attest. I would average three cover letter/resume mailings per week. Most of these openings fell in the transition belt, and did not show any interest in me or my ivory colored paper.

The third week in February brought both good and bad news; a rejection from interview number one and another in-state opening. This opening was for a second assistant. Being number two really did not excite me, but at this point I was seriously concerned about finding anything. In early March I was interviewed with the business suit and power tie in full force.

This superintendent was well prepared with a list of 20 questions cover-

(Continued on page 49)

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(Continued from page 47)

ing most aspects of golf course management. These questions exposed most of my weaknesses and the interview quickly fell into more of a lecture. My mouth was going dry between questions, as the interviewer expounded his ideas on golf, landscaping, the position, and me.

I came away from this meeting without much self-confidence or hope for finding a position. Little did I know, this experience was one of the best things that happened to me during my job hunt. While the interview was complete in giving me my weaknesses, it also gave me a lot of insight into the

industry and the positions I was applying for. So while memories of the interview are less than pleasing, the ideas that it generated helped me.

Two weeks later, I was scheduled for another interview. This time the golf course was in the flatlands of Illinois. An assistant's position was open and the superintendent was interested in talking to a Wisconsin graduate. Armed with my previous interview experiences, the business suit and power tie, I went to the interview. This time I was prepared for the questions, and my answers reflected it. The fact that he and I hit it off may have helped a little, too. Following the interview the

job was offered, and two days later I accepted. My job hunt was over.

What I have learned from this is going to help me forever. Had I learned it earlier, maybe it would not have taken as long to find my position. Hopefully this literary work will help someone else find their position. If not, no big deal; they will have to learn it themselves.

Special thanks for all their help over the last six months go to; Roanne Barnes, Steven Schmidt, Wayne Kusow, Monroe S. Miller, Wayne Otto, Mom, Dad and everyone else. 🙏

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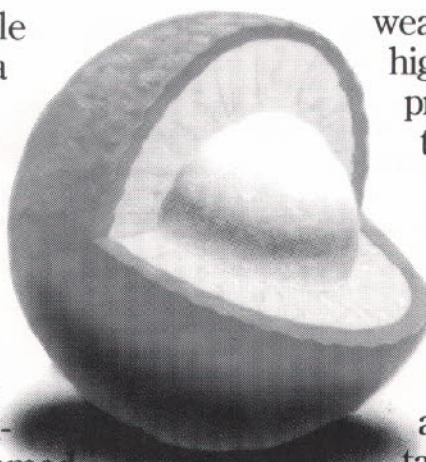
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A REVELATION

By Derek J. VanDamme

Editor's Note: Derek VanDamme is a junior at the University of Wisconsin-Madison where he is majoring in Turf-grass Management. Derek is from Superior and has worked at the Nemadji Golf Club in Superior and the Golden Valley Country Club in suburban Minneapolis. This summer will be the third he has been on the staff at Blackhawk Country Club in Madison. He is president of the Badger Turf and Grounds Club; Dr. Wayne Kussow is his advisor.

Derek also has a two-year degree in Turf Management from Anoka Technical College in Minnesota. He spent one year playing hockey in the U.S. Hockey League on the Dubuque Fighting Saints team. His career goal is to become a golf course superintendent.

While doing the reorganizing that is inherent with the wholesale cleaning of one's room and "office", I stopped to read from two of my favorite publications — *THE GRASS ROOTS* and a book entitled *SUDDENLY* by George F. Will. Will's book is a collection of columns he wrote between 1986 and 1990.

Two articles I read that day struck me as being especially relevant in my life. Chad Eberhardt's article "What Is Success?" and Will's column "I Was Raised But Never Grew Up" caused me to pause and contemplate their meaning to me.

Both pieces have a sports twist to them. Will uses the Pete Rose gambling controversy to delve into the psyche of an athlete and find what sports, in general, give to a man. Eberhardt's article shows how traits necessary for success in sports can be applied to management.

Since being "forced into retirement" from competitive sports at the ripe old age of 20 (due to a lack of talent), there has been a definite void in my life. I had been unable to pinpoint exactly what was missing and how to fill that void until I read these two pieces successively.

Will explained to me what was missing in my life when he wrote the following two paragraphs: "...One reason for participating in sports is to become better — *better at the sport and in the soul* (italics mine). Acquisition of particular skills leads to appreciation of all skills. To learn a sport is to learn what mastery means, even if you fall short of it. Playing a sport...is an apprenticeship in craftsmanship.

"Becoming better at something is called self-improvement, a term with two meanings. It means improving one's self, one's character, one's core identity. It also means unavoidable loneliness, getting better by oneself, in submission to severe self-judgements, in the aloneness of private determination, under the last of the necessity to satisfy one's demanding self. Sport can be an exciting and elevating school."

Although my access to competitive sport had been cut off, the need to compete and the excitement generated from that need still burned within. Eberhardt's article showed me how I could channel these natural yearnings into my work, thus pointing out how to fill the aforementioned void.

I believe golf course superintendents who are ex-athletes are extremely fortunate in comparison to other former athletes in different fields. Superintendents are not only surrounded by and in charge of an "athletic field", but many of their employees are young, enthusiastic people who are often involved in sports. These employees have experienced the feelings articulated by George Will, and are aware of Coach John Wooden's formula of success as explained by Eberhardt.

These advantages can lead to a locker room-like atmosphere in the shop. A camaraderie among not only the crew members, but between the managers and the crew as well develops.

Or, as Eberhardt might say, between the "coaches" and the "players".

So it is no wonder to me why my bosses show up every morning with enthusiasm bursting from every word and gesture. Being a golf course superintendent appears to be a wonderful way to keep that competitive spirit burning — and staying young.

I'll bet many of you can relate to what Pete Rose meant when he said, "I was raised but I never grew up."

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