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A couple of Field Day veterans — Bill Voegel and Ray Knapp.

vehicles on both sides of County M, waiting to get in. Trucks and trailers trying to get out of the station and onto the highway made the mess worse. Slow registration frayed nerves. Etc. Etc. WE WILL BE BETTER NEXT YEAR. PROMISE.

• People leave too soon in the afternoon. My feeling is that we need an afternoon "hook". What is it? Any ideas or suggestions? How about a couple of drawings for a \$100 bill each time? I'd stay!

### Disappointments

• It is amazing (and sad) to me that there are people in our business and members of the WGCSA who have a need to "sneak" in. I've watched several do it—park and backdoor it to the field and the show and demo area without paying. How can anyone be so cheap—it must be humiliating. One chump—you all know him—slid in again this year without preregistering

or registering at the door. He did the same thing at the Symposium. Next year I am going to name names. This ridiculous little rip-off by the same little chiselers must stop.

• There were too many bargains at the auction. We need to get the bids up higher. I was very satisfied when Wayne Otto bought the Putter creeping bentgrass. We were bidding each other up and up. Fortunately, I am a little more shrewd and he took home the Putter!

### It Was Good To See...

• Two carloads of people from Blackwolf Run. Mike Lee was even doing the driving!

• A dozen people from the Bruce Company, including (as usual) the boss himself.

• A crowd from the SENTRY-WORLD staff. Gary Tanko was still buzzed up from his golf game on Monday!

• Stevens Point C.C. continued their premier support of the Wisconsin Turfgrass Association with a fine turnout.

• Quite a number of golf course superintendents from Illinois, including WGCSA member Danny Quast.

• CALS Dean Roger Wyse and department chairmen Larry Binning (Horticulture), Robin Harris (Soil Science) and Craig Grau (Plant Pathology). These chairs, in particular, have been wonderful advocates for our industry. They really are a special group of good friends.

### Thanks To...

• Gaylord Catering for another excellent year. They always come through.

• Tom Schwab and Tom Harrison for superb and dedicated planning.

• Gary Richards for organizing the parking. He was at the NOER Facility a couple of different times, getting everything ready. He has handled this



A happy man—Field Day co-chairman Tom Schwab.



Field Day registrars Sharon Jaekel and Cathy Pries.

job since the first Field Day at Arlington. By the way, on that day he also handled the beer taps!

- Cathy Pries and Sharon Jackel from the Horticulture Department for their work with the registration. They are the ones who will improve it for next year. Actually, they put in far more work on the days leading up to Field Day than on the event day itself.

- All exhibitors.
- Henry Berg (he did more than we can note here).
- Channel 27 in Madison for covering the event on television.

### Did You Notice?

- The new NOER Facility sign at the entrance, compliments of Gary Richards and Tom Harrison?

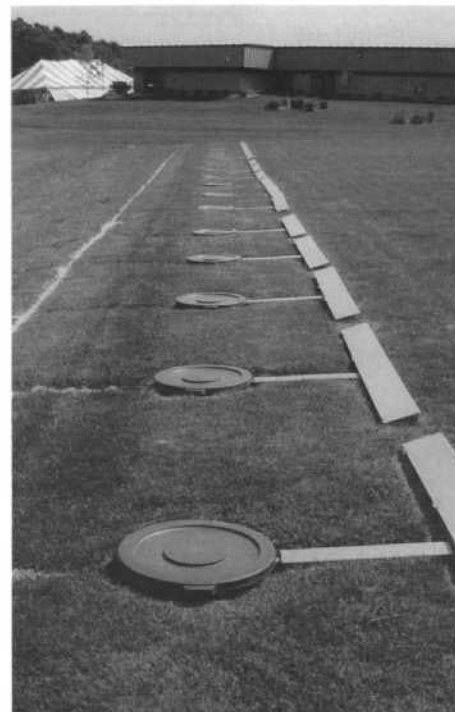
- The new NOER Facility Honor Roll plaque in the front hall of the building?

- The cleanliness of the building, the shop and the surrounds? It is nearly always that way (which is how it should be).

- The materials stockpiled in readiness to construct new experimental greens? (work will be done by The Bruce Co.) 🌱



Weather data collected here was presented in the Field Day booklet.



No—these aren't missile silos. They are part of Professor Kussow's runoff plot area.



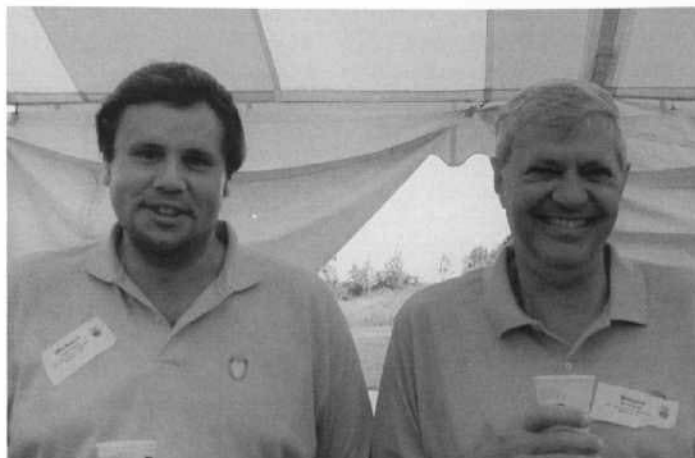
Did you ever wonder how Zoysia grows in Wisconsin? Visit the Noer Facility and find out!



Insect problems? Lots of people consulted with UW-Madison entomologist Phil Pellitteri.



Equipment demo opportunities are an important aspect of Field Day.



Mike Carlson and his major professor, Wayne Kussow.



## Lack of Turf Background is to His Advantage

by Lori Ward Bocher

"I think some of the superintendents look upon me as a rabble rouser," admits Dr. Wayne Kussow, head of the Turf and Grounds Management Program at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. "When I first came into the turf program I told Monroe Miller, 'You know, I feel kind of uneasy because I don't have a turf background.'"

"And Monroe made a statement which has proved to be very profound and very true," Kussow continues. "He said, 'That's to your advantage.' It has led me to question everything I read and hear about turf, ideas that are ingrained."

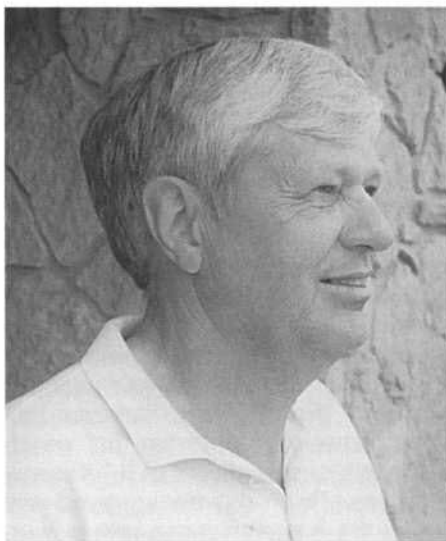
"I guess my main theme is, 'Think about things.' Don't just do them because you've always done them. Spend a little more time thinking about why you do things, and be sure you have a reason," he emphasizes.

Kussow uses core aeration as an example. "A lot of people have a misconception about what core aeration can do for them. The literature says that it doesn't do nearly as much as they probably think it does. Here's an operation that is costly and disrupts the golf course. Then it takes time for the greens to heal. The membership doesn't like it."

"And so my message is, have a reason for doing it," he continues. "Don't just do it because you've always done it. Know that core aeration is the answer to a specific problem."

How did someone with no turf background end up as head of the UW Turf and Grounds Management Program? It all began on an 80-acre dairy farm near Oconto, Wis., where Kussow was the second in a family of five boys. "My mother soon gave up on having the toilet seat lid replaced," he jokes.

Kussow never had any desire to make farming a career. "After my sophomore year in high school, we ran two farms for two years," he explains. "That entailed my getting up at 4 every morning to milk at the home farm and get the barn cleaned before going to



high school. Then I'd get home at 6 at night from football or basketball practice, run to the barn to do chores, come in, clean up, eat dinner, study a couple of hours and go to bed. I knew from that point on that I was not going to be a farmer."

After graduating from Oconto Falls High School in 1957, he followed his brother's lead and enrolled in the College of Agriculture at Madison. "By the end of my sophomore year I had already made up my mind that I was going to major in soil science and that I was going to go to graduate school," he recalls.

"I had taken a number of introductory agriculture courses and soil science was the one I enjoyed the most. And I decided that I wasn't going to learn enough to answer the questions I wanted answered unless I went on to graduate school," he adds.

After earning his BS in 1961, he stayed at Madison and earned his MS in 1963. "I seriously considered going somewhere else for my PhD. But I was able to continue a research project, so I stayed at Madison," he explains.

"The second year into my PhD program my faculty advisor, John Murdock, went off to Brazil," Kussow recalls, adding that the UW was helping universities in Brazil and Nigeria to

develop curricula in agriculture. "I decided if I was ever going to finish my degree, I would have to follow him."

So he and his wife, Carol, moved to the University Rio Grande de Sul in the southern part of Brazil where they lived for two years and where their first son was born.

"I finished up my research in Brazil and then took my final exam for my PhD while in Brazil," Kussow points out. "That was a first in the history of the University of Wisconsin — for someone to take an oral exam for their PhD in a foreign country."

He returned to Madison in 1967 and spent six months teaching introductory soils. Then he was hired by the University of Delaware where he taught soils fertility and started some research. After a year and a half at Delaware, Kussow accepted a position back at the UW in 1969. "And I've been here ever since," he adds.

His first appointment was as the assistant director of International Agriculture Programs (70 percent) and also with the Soil Science Department as an instructor of soil fertility. As assistant director of the International Agriculture Programs, he administered university projects overseas. "So I did a fair amount of traveling in that position," he remembers.

"I enjoyed travel up to a point," he adds. "People look at me kind of strange and say, 'You got tired of going to Indonesia or Nigeria or Colombia?' Yes, I did!"

So he opted for a more "permanent" type of travel. "In 1973, we packed up the family and went back to Brazil on another university project," Kussow recalls. "We did a crazy thing — going to Brazil with the two youngest boys in diapers. That's not a smart move."

They returned to Madison in 1976. "I requested that I be only 30 percent with International Agriculture Programs and 70 percent with soils," Kussow points out. "This allowed me to not only continue my teaching in soils, but to get some research underway." By 1982, he was full time with the Soil Science Department.

Up to this point in Kussow's life story, he had done no work in the turf-grass arena. So how did he become head of the turf program in 1984?

"In 1983, Jim Love was approached by the Milwaukee Metropolitan Sewerage District to test some experimental



Milorganite formulations," he explains. "Dr. Love wasn't interested at that point, so I went ahead and did the work for them and was introduced to turfgrass in the greenhouse.

"Then in 1984, when Dr. Love retired, the department was looking for someone to take over the Turf and Grounds Management Program," Kussow adds. "Since I was the only one in the department who had ever done anything in turf, they asked me. I said yes, providing I could devote all my research to turf."

It could have been difficult to follow in the footsteps of someone as well known as Dr. Love. But Kussow didn't let it bother him. "You can never replace a person because you're different," he says. "So I tried to take the program in some new directions."

One of those new directions was the formation of the Turf and Grounds Management Club which, among other things, helps students attend conferences and take field trips. Kussow gives a lot of credit to Mike Lee for getting the club started. "He put together a brochure describing the Turf and Grounds Management Program, and the WTA paid to have it reproduced,"

he explains. "That brochure has been very influential on the number of students that we've had in the program."

The number of turf students has grown considerably. "When I took over we had been averaging 12 to 15 students for many years," he points out. "Today we have 33 in the program." And one-third to one-half of soils majors each year are in the turf program.

One of the reasons for the popularity of the program is that jobs usually are plentiful. "In the past, graduates generally have had two or three different job opportunities," Kussow reports. "But the fellows who graduated this last May had to scramble a little bit to find a good position. They had to be rather persistent. But I'm happy to say that they're all employed."

About 80 percent of the program's graduates find jobs on a golf course, and many of those are right in Wisconsin. Other graduates go into lawn care, sales or other related fields.

The UW offers only a four-year turf program. "From time to time we talk about a two-year program, but we always talk ourselves out of it," Kussow explains. "With the background you get in the basic sciences with a four-

year degree, you're in a much better position to solve problems. Quite frankly, the two-year program does a much better job on the technical aspects, the 'how to'. But for the 'why' and 'what now', you need a four-year degree."

Officially on paper, Kussow's appointment with the UW is for 50 percent instruction and 50 percent research. He teaches the introductory soil science course (301) each spring and a five-week module on turf fertilization in the fall. He also advises all of the turf students.

But golf course superintendents know that Kussow goes the extra mile by doing a lot of extension work, too. "I'm always a phone call away," he says. He participates in winter conferences. And sometimes he analyzes soil samples for superintendents.

Kussow is even willing to travel to golf courses to do some trouble shooting. "Once in a while a superintendent will call with a problem that has the greens committee chair all upset," he explains. "There's a lot of heat being put on him, and he wants me to come up and render an opinion. Many times it's a problem over which the superin-

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tendent has no control. The club simply needs to hear that from a third party."

In spite of the bimonthly deadlines, Kussow is glad that he has a regular column in *THE GRASS ROOTS*. "It's recognized as one of the top superintendents' magazines in the country. I know that the articles we put in there are reproduced many places. It's a very important outlet for information — much more important than technical journals."

Kussow believes that environmental issues pose the biggest challenge for golf course superintendents. "The superintendent is in a very difficult position," he says. "On the one hand, he has to stay employed and meet the demands of the golfer. That means using products and materials with much greater frequency that he'd probably like to."

"On the other hand, environmental groups pressure him to use less," he continues. "We've had discussions with superintendents. They all agree that if it suddenly would be against the law to apply pesticides to golf courses, superintendents would say 'fine'. That would put them all in the same position. But, as individuals, they can't do it on their own or they're jeopardizing their position."

Environmental laws have changed the job of a superintendent in another way. "They find themselves spending much more time on paperwork," Kussow says. "A common complaint of superintendents from larger courses is that they don't have nearly as much time as they'd like to spend on the course. I think it's only going to get worse in the future."

On a more positive note, Kussow sees "people" as the greatest strength of the turf industry in Wisconsin. "One of the things that makes my job most enjoyable is the people I deal with," he says. "It's a terrific industry."

"In the university, I deal with a horrendous bureaucracy. Things happen very, very slowly," he explains. "It's so refreshing to pick up the phone, call someone and say, 'I'm in a bind. I need this material and I need it now.' Within half an hour I've got what I need."

"It's so enlightening," he continues. "But that's the way industry people are accustomed to operating. They're doers. They don't sit around and have seven committee meetings to make a simple decision. They go ahead and make the decision and move forward."

"And we have fantastic support from all segments of the industry," Kussow says. "Sometimes it's embarrassing."

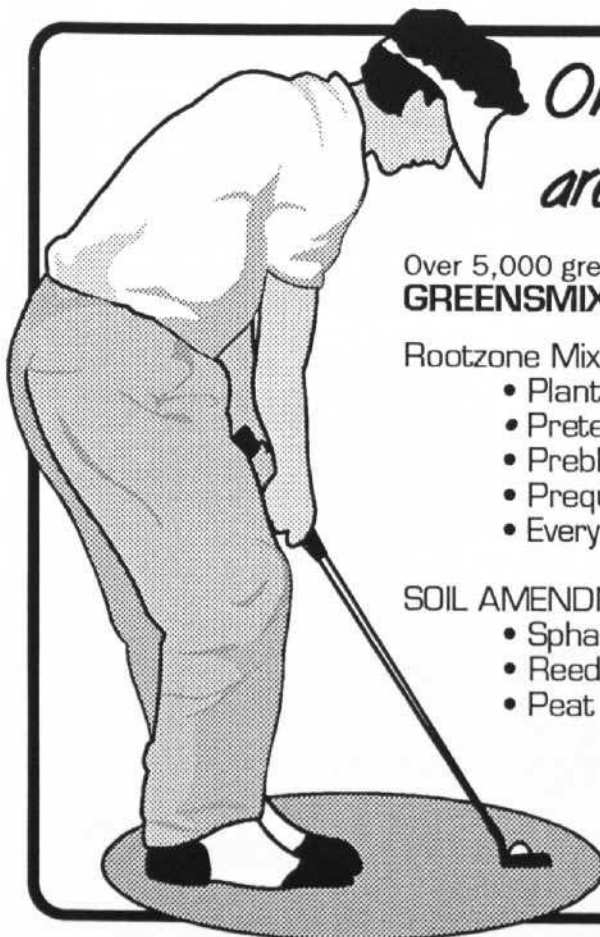
I'll have the money to buy something, and someone will say, 'Save your money. We'll give it to you.' This happens all the time."

Kussow's dedication to his job doesn't leave much time for other interests. "My wife would say I have none," he admits, adding that he does like to ice fish and work in the yard. His wife, Carol, is a substitute physical education teacher in Madison.

The Kussows have three sons who have chosen substantially different career paths from their father. Jeff, 25, is a Captain in the U.S. Army Medical Services Corps and is stationed in North Carolina. Tim, 22, recently graduated from the UW-Green Bay with a double major in art and art education. And David, 21, is enrolled in the nursing program at the UW-Oshkosh.

"When Tim graduated, he made Jeff promise that he would be there in his Army uniform so Tim's professors could see the contrast in the family — the long-haired artist versus the soldier."

And then there's Dad — the farm boy who had a thirst for education, who traveled the world, and who turned a lack of turfgrass experience into an asset for Wisconsin's turfgrass industry. 🍷



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## A NATURAL HIGH

By Pat Norton

Contrary to many flood stricken western Wisconsinites this summer, I've lately been on a long term 'natural high'.

While the Hatfield Dam was breaking up and seemingly the entire area between LaCrosse and Eau Claire was being overwhelmed with rains and flooding, we here at "The Creek" saw only acres and acres of green, green grass. While people in this area were dealing with life threatening situations, we were forced to deal with such heart wrenching decisions as "golf cars or no golf cars" or simply which areas to mow first!

Some friends in the public golf business really did suffer through some lost weekends and are experiencing a tough year because of the weather. It's much preferred, though, over the plight of our Iowa and Missouri neighbors.

We did have to close our golf course due to some temporary flooding—for only one day. We also had a somewhat scary Saturday night during which we thought a couple of boys had drowned in our rain swollen creek. Their ignoramus father finally called the authorities to tell them the youths had come home about ten minutes after he'd raised the alarm. The upshot is that about thirty men were out searching for over two hours for boys who were home safe and sound the whole time! This guy never did identify himself to the Onalaska police or fire department. I wonder why.

Since then, though, things have improved considerably. With all of the rain, it's almost impossible to have poor quality turf—everything is lush and green. Almost all of our outings have been able to go—a few mushy days, but no cancellations due to wet weather. The ample June rains always seemed to interrupt Ladies' Day, Men's Day or a weekend. Too bad for the members, I guess.

Consequently, revenue has been coming in nicely. Big golf outings mean big dollars for golf courses, as I'm sure others can attest. The only

stipulation during the big outings is that the superintendent and maintenance staff must either leave the property entirely or tiptoe around the course with eyes closed. Tiptoeing with the CarryAll to avoid getting beamed by Mr. NoBrain Golfer while also keeping the eyes tightly shut to avoid looking at the damage caused by all of the "fun seeking, sun seeking non-golfers". What a zany way to make a living, eh?

Outings, outings, outings. We seem to take anybody's outing. This summer we've had outings ranging from the LaCrosse County Homebuilders Association (carpenters intent on improving their golf ability) to Fish's Bar (these gentlemen requested only certain brands of beer be served them) to the Alzheimers Outing. Say what?

That's no kidding, folks. On June 14, 1993 we hosted the **Alzheimers Outing** with a noon shotgun start. I don't remember exactly, but it seems that quite a few golfers that day got disoriented, got lost, and didn't know where they were on the course. Moreover, they didn't recognize me and I certainly didn't recognize any of them. Who knows, maybe we were all temporarily afflicted with that dread disease that day!

It's really a natural high, though, when things are going good. The golf course looks good, people are enjoying themselves, employees are all doing good work, and a lot of progress is being made. The days really do fly by.

On those days, everybody feels really vibrant and alive. The sense of self worth is very high, the "can do" attitude is very strong, and everything just keeps clicking. Sort of like this typewriter as I pound out my fifteen words per minute.

In that scenario, Mother Nature is cooperating nicely. The real measure of a person's will is to go through a personal or natural disaster, like so many midwesterners have experienced this summer. I often wonder how I'd react in the face of such peril. I

hope that my resolve would be strong enough, but one never knows until it happens.

Maybe we Americans have had the good life handed to us too easily. Could our generation handle the hardships imposed by a conflict such as World War II? Our 76 year old mechanic, Bernard, really doubts that today's breed of American man could measure up to the task. This old bird feels that people, men in particular, were much tougher and used to adversity in those days. Undoubtedly true. Also true is that old folks in the 30s and 40s saw their lives as being much more difficult than those of Bernard's generation.

People have a way of measuring up and handling a lot of adversity once their lives, families and property are threatened. Witness the efforts of this summer's flood victims.

Compare our profession to others, for example. There are certainly tougher ways out there to make a living. But most of our neighbors seem to have easier lives than we do in our household. Men in our neighborhood all have a lot more free time than I for most of the calendar year. I leave the house much earlier, return home later, work seven days a week with a rare day off, and return to the golf course at night for various reasons. These same neighbors cannot fathom that it takes so much effort "to be a greenkeeper at a golf course".

It all goes with the territory, though. I was cruising the golf course on a recent Friday night with my eight year old son, Ryan, just checking out a few things pertaining to irrigation. I noticed up on the clubhouse deck that the golf pro and his staff were "schmoozing" with the members. The party before the "night golf" outing, don't you know? I had absolutely no desire to be at that party, and moreover chuckled cynically to myself as I entered the pumphouse. "Stay away from that scene," says I.

The highs in our business are natural ones—sunrises, sunsets, working

outside, being healthy and somewhat in shape, and working in a natural setting.

The "highs" in my life very much include my wife and children—being jointly responsible for three young sprouts who look to us for love and guidance. They all require time and individual attention, which always seems to be in short supply.

So I'll be damned if I'll let somebody tell me that it's some sort of duty or fun time for me to golf on Men's Day and stay at the club for dinner and drinks until 1:00 a.m. That's not my job or my responsibility at all.

My responsibility is to be there Friday morning bright and early, directing activities on the golf course until the course looks and plays up to my standards and expectations, not to the standards of the Thursday night Men's club.

When a guy devotes time and attention to the important things in life, then the "natural highs" begin to roll. I am convinced that effort, dedication and hard work are continually being rewarded. I also know that my life would quickly fall apart if I jumped into too much of "the good life". Booze, late evening hours, gambling, short work hours and the opposite sex—all of those factors would soon combine to ruin me.

Fortunately, I'm the one who is now laughing as my young crew members report for work feeling so poorly from the effects of too much alcohol. These youngsters are "finding their way" through their version of "the good life". I did have to laugh recently when 21 year old Todd told me that he was late for work not because of beer, not because of oversleeping—it was

because of "the women"! Sounds like me at that age.

Sooner or later the smarter people in the world realize that there is more to life than getting wasted in celebration of a birthday or having to attend all of the social functions at "the Club". Some people don't ever wise up, though—typically these are the parents who just can't get along with their troublesome teenagers.

My two year old—Tommy—is now talking almost as fluently as Jay Leno, it seems. He's a much better natural high—most of the time—than any of the unnatural substitutes.

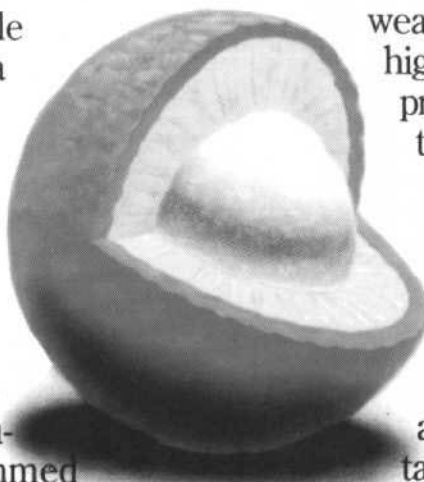
Unless you catch me off guard, suggest golfing (and a few on course drinks) and a short night out with the boys. Don't twist my arm too tightly, boys, I'm coming! I'm coming! 🍷

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## SURVEYING THE NEW PIN HOLDERS

By Monroe S. Miller

It was a pretty impressive sight at this year's WGCSA spring business meeting—four of our colleagues receiving their 25 year pins.

Such sights are becoming more and more rare in America as loyalties to a profession or an employer become a thing of the past for more and more of those in the employed ranks. I don't know what the actual statistics are, but I recall reading that an average worker will change professions four or more times during his or her career. Think about that in terms of earning recognition for being in the same profession for 25 years. Really, it is quite a feat. Given the "norm", the recipients would have to live to something around 125 years of age to finish out their other three careers!

Maybe this is really a lament on my part. Sons and grandsons in America often followed in the footsteps of their fathers and grandfathers. People used to work for the love of the work or for a respectable place in a community where they were comfortable. No more, for many people, I guess.

Does this mean that there will be fewer and fewer 25 year pin holders in the future? Maybe. But I think our profession might be one of the last to fall victim to this new wave in careers. Why? The work, for many of us, is simply too enjoyable and too rewarding. Oh, there will be shifts among clubs and courses. There might even be movement within the wide boundaries of the profession. But hasn't that always been true?

Anyway, I really respect the four gentlemen who stood before us at our meeting in Fond du Lac. In any times, what they have done is quite remarkable.

So, for a new twist to this feature, I only wanted to talk to Jeff Bottensek, Tom Harrison, Larry Karel and Wayne Otto, and ask them some questions only 25 year pin holders could answer. It was fun for me because the conversations were lengthy, sentimental and quite revealing.

Here are the results for you to savor.

### 1. How did you get interested in golf courses and golf turf management in the first place?

For each of the four, their interest was piqued by the actual experience of working on a course during their teen years. Tom Harrison worked for Peter Miller at Nakoma and Pete nurtured Tom's natural interest and aptitude. Jeff worked for Ron Gruenwald and credits him for showing the way down a career path. Larry worked for Deke DeCramer at Tuscumbia in Green Lake and fell in love with the work. Wayne Otto was a farm kid who lived in the Mequon area and decided on golf turf management as an alternative to farming because he didn't want to milk cows for the rest of his life but very much enjoyed the many and varied aspects of agriculture. Wayne also added that he pursued it as a career option because "it looked easy and he wanted to be able to ride around and talk smart!"

### 2. Trace your career path for us.

Larry attended the two year program at Penn State and started working at River View golf course in Appleton. He was there for six or seven years before he moved to Camelot Country Club for another six or seven years. He then took the position at Rock River C.C. in Waupun and after six years he moved to Whispering

Springs where he has been golf course superintendent for seven years. Larry seems to get an itch to move every six years or so!

Jeff also attended Penn State for two years and was hired at the Ridges where he worked for Gruenwald for two years. He moved to Country Club of Beloit and was the assistant to Fritz Reinhardt for two years. Waupaca Country Club called him, he accepted and stayed there as the golf course superintendent for 14 years before moving to his current position at Stevens Point C.C.

Wayne is the third of these four men to attend Penn State's two year program in turfgrass management. Like Larry Karel, he went to college after six months in the Army Reserve. Graduation led him to a course in Nebraska, and shortly after that, in 1967, he moved to his current position as golf course superintendent at Ozaukee Country Club.

Tom Harrison is the only of these three Wisconsin natives to attend the University of Wisconsin in Madison, but his interest was initially in engineering. He moved to four years of service in the U.S. Navy and returned to Madison as the assistant golf course superintendent at Maple Bluff Country Club in 1968. When Bill Eckert resigned his position in the mid-1970s, Tom was promoted

*(Continued on page 41)*

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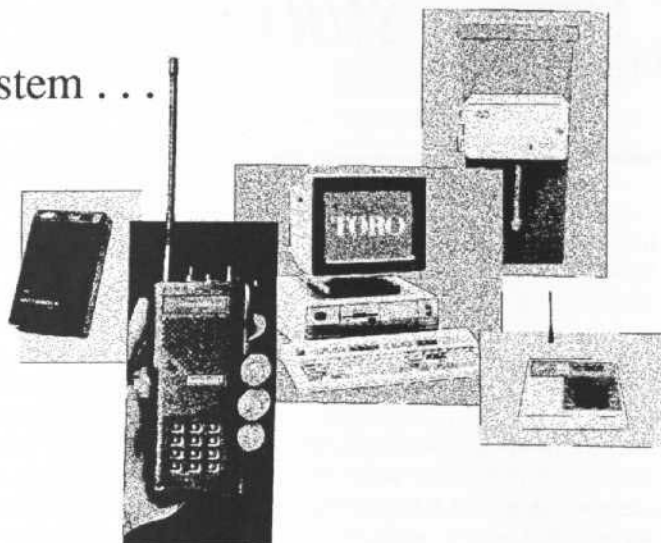
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