



Who'll Stop the Rain ?!

By Dr. Frank S. Rossi
Department of Horticulture
University of Wisconsin-Madison

My arrival to Wisconsin came on the tail-end of one the coolest summers on record. Last summer we recorded only one day above 90° F! The fall of 1992 brought a few record rainfalls and a nice Thanksgiving snow cover. Many of my friends and colleagues indicated to me how odd a weather year it had been; little did anyone know what was ahead for late winter, spring and now a majority of the summer. Rain, rain, rain, and more rain, not just drizzle, but, more like monsoons. First 0.5" of rain in 1 hour (considered a storm whose likelihood of returning is once every 50 years—a 50 year storm), then 2 days later 0.75" in 1 hour (100 year storm), then one week later 1.25" in 1 hour (250 year storm), then another week almost 5" of rain in a 2 hour storm! A great year to determine weaknesses in your drainage system.

While many of you have been shoveling sand back into bunker faces, pumping water out of low spots, not mowing areas for weeks because of saturated conditions, we have been trying to establish plots at the Noer Facility. Our silty loam soil at the Noer Facility became saturated early in April and only recently (late July) has dried sufficiently for us to work. Several attempts were made during the season to work the land, remove debris, lay out plots only to have torrential rain disrupt the process. For instance, Dr. Julie Meyer and her crew, Scott Mackintosh, and myself were out on a Saturday seeding some plots. Julie, Scott, and the crew had the land prepared and began seeding while I finished hand-raking other plots. By 2:00 p.m. I was ready to seed my plots and went looking for the seed and became frustrated at my inability to easily locate it. To make a long story short, I found the seed a day later and it wasn't at the Noer Facility. Anyhow, just as Julie's crew was finishing up, a nice gentle rain fell on the new seedbed. However, later that night we received almost 3.5" of rain and all the seeded plots washed out. For once my absentmindedness pays off! It's been that kind of year.

On behalf of the entire UW-Turf-grass Group, I am thrilled to report that most of our plots are seeded and establishing well as I pen this article. It has been the kind of season that has brought us all closer as a team, united in helplessness as we watched the rain fall and waited for the soil to dry.

Scott Mackintosh

Scott arrived for work on June 14 and has provided the leadership at the Facility which had been lacking since Tom Salaiz's departure. Scott has come on-board and quietly observed and interacted with all of us, determining priorities and developing new operating procedures that fit his management style. Scott possesses the practical experience necessary to manage the station and the technical expertise to aid in conducting research.

Scott faced many challenges upon his arrival, the least of which was managing the facility. He came without his wife who was in her last month of pregnancy with the twins, and even harder was having to live with the Rossi's (Barbara, Danielle, and me) for a month while he found a place to live. At least I know he ate good. He stayed in close contact with Diane as she was told to stay off her feet, then finally he knew he had to get back. He left on Thursday July 8 and the twins (Morgan and Evan) were born on Tuesday July 13 to a happy and healthy set of par-


ents! Exactly one week before the expected delivery date.

I know you will all join me in wishing the Mackintoshs a warm congratulations. Scott will be back with us before Field Day with Diane and the twins due to arrive in late September.

Thank You's

One behavior that I believe we do not do enough in our day to day lives is show appreciation and thank someone for a job well done. Well it has been the kind of year where people throughout the Midwest have rallied to help their neighbors and people like Mike Carlson and Henry Berg definitely follow in that tradition. While I was on a short visit back East, the flooding was all over the national news. My family and friends commented to me how much they admired the people working together filling sandbags or just consoling a neighbor who has lost everything. I was immediately reminded of the work above and beyond the call of duty that Henry and Mike have provided.

Thank yous also go to Dr. Kussow and Ron (his summer employee) for always being ready to lend a hand when needed (while they weren't trying to catch floating barrels). I'm sure I have left someone out and I will apologize in advance. Take a look around you and your crew and give 'em some thanks for a job well done. 🙏

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July 16, 1993

Dear Monroe,

The July-August issue of *THE GRASS ROOTS* was a real humdinger, mostly because of the technical articles by Drugan and Packard. O.J. would have loved both! I must take issue with your implications (in "A Bandwagon Business") that spiking and vertical mowing operations were fads and now out of style. Not so. Verticutting is still the best tool to prevent spike snags, since groomers are seldom set deep enough to cut off the unrooted ends of stolons. Once over every week (except the week after topdressing) is usually enough. The appropriate setting leaves grooves visible when viewed in the direction of travel, but not at 90 degrees. Some superintendents prefer twice over at the time of topdressing. Groomers just don't do this very well, if at all, unless you risk peeling the putting surface.

Spiking? I think these are helpful in interseeding greens during the playing months - just before topdressing. Granted, there is less surface crusting, since sand topdressing became the "in thing", unless you consider the low-mow crust of algae seen so frequently. I really don't know about stolon cutting with these things to help generate new growth at nodes, but it used to be a good thought. I have second thoughts when I write things like this, so maybe you've got the right string but on the wrong yo-yo. Maybe some of the newer, quicker, hi-techier gimmicks have replaced some of the old standbys through hype in type, tell, or tales. And incidentally, very light, wide rollers once substituted for mowing on Sunday morning.

Another quest that has bugged me since EPA came in is why lead arsenate was essentially abandoned by our industry long before production plants were closed down. Not the risk in handling, but because the newer chemicals work faster and were easier to apply. We just forgot about *Poa annua* because we could keep it alive longer with the new stuff. But, maybe it wasn't as good as we remember it to be. Now you know what I do on July 5 "holidays".

Sincerely,

Jim Latham
James M. Latham

JML:DGC

Editor's Note: No argument from this golf course superintendent about anything in Jim's letter. In fact, walk into my shop right now and you will see spiking units hanging on one of our new Greens Kings. Spiking still works on occasion.

Although I cannot speak for Sandy Grant or Bogey Calhoun, I think their point was focused on (1) the folklore of golf course management, and (2) rapid change disguised as "progress". Progress sells product. They seemed, in my visit with them that day, frustrated by the cost of it all. Maybe, beneath the surface, they were wishing less was spent on advertising and sales budgets and more on good solid documentation.

Think of the graduate degrees there are to be earned in that area of "folklore"—what works and what doesn't. A new professor could build a program on that area alone.

As an editor, it is rewarding to read the first line of Jim's letter. Students and editors are lucky to have faculty like Wayne Kussow—the two students who did the research summarized in those two articles did so under Wayne's tutorship. Students in his program receive excellent classroom instruction, good golf course experience around Wisconsin and the chance to do some original science in the laboratory and greenhouse. He is to be complimented by us and thanked by his students. ♣

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OLD READS

(With Some Advice Relevant Today)

By Monroe S. Miller

As Francis Bacon observed many years ago, "old books are among the best to read." I think he had something there, especially when applied to three prized possessions in my professional library.

I've tromped through used book stores from one end of the country to the other, and the time investment has yielded lots of volumes in my library, at work as well as at home, that have been long out of print and never reprinted. Two of the volumes I am going to tell you about are in that category.

The third was a gift from Bob Erdahl when he left Blackhawk Country Club to strike out on his own. Bob discovered it on a trip through Paul's Book Shop, a State Street landmark to tens of thousands of UW-Madison students.

The first book I am going to review for you may be the "classic" text in our business of golf turf management. It is, of course, *"Turf For Golf Courses"*. It was written by Charles V. Piper and Russell A. Oakley. Both men were agronomists for the United States Department of Agriculture, and their book was published in March of 1917. As with many golf turf texts subsequent to this, it was published with support and assistance from the United States Golf Association.

The first line in the first chapter of this antique book shows how basics are true for all times. Witness: "Good grass turf is conditional by two great factors—climate and soil." Most of us by now have accepted we can't change the first, but here we are in 1993 with revised Green Section putting green specifications, still trying to modify the latter.

Any book reveals a lot about the period in which it was written. In the first quarter century words like bluegrass, bentgrass and crabgrass were hyphenated. Our common word "turf-grass" was offered as two distinct words.

Recommendations also reflect the early stages of our sciences. Piper and Oakley preferred "clayey loam to sandy loam" soils, while today most would prefer the reverse. The ideal

putting green of that day was a loam texture, far from what we want in 1990s greens. The authors also recommended generous use of "barnyard manure" and thought courses in the north and west should sport "flocks of sheep to keep the grass short."

The subject of fertilizers was treated by the two USDA researchers. In 1917 they were still making references to Liebig's experiments with plants! They openly state that "the functions of fertilizers are not clearly known..." They supposed that some of them (fertilizers) "act as correctives or disinfectants ameliorating toxic conditions..." Interestingly, the scientists would not recommend "mixed" inorganic fertilizers.

In our times of renewed interest in composting, the extensive treatment of composts in chapter four is very interesting reading. And instructional.

Some subjects are timeless, as this book points out. Emphasis is placed on drainage, a lesson many are still trying to learn.

Seventy-five years ago creeping bentgrass was recognized as "unquestionably the finest commercial grass for putting greens in the North."

And they had this to say about annual bluegrass: "Annual Bluegrass is not always looked on with favor, but when abundant it makes excellent putting greens."

I can imagine that the greenkeepers of that day found this book invaluable. It has a chapter on how to distinguish various kinds of turf—an easy-to-use key to plant ID. Piper and Oakley covered the subject of turfgrass establishment—"making the turf" as they preferred to call it—and subsequent care.

Weeds were a bigger problem on putting greens then than they are today. In fact, the writers only worried about weeds on greens, making no reference to them anywhere else. Herbicides didn't exist, and they cautiously recommended ((NH₃)₂SO₄) to kill plants like white clover.

Here's some interesting reading: "As is well known, all these weedy summer grasses are at once killed by a heavy frost. Attempts have been

made to devise a satisfactory machine to kill them by freezing, but thus far the expense of the necessary portable refrigerating machine has been prohibitory."

Have we come a ways?!

Their discussion of turf machinery covered six pages and includes narratives about seeders, spiked rollers, sprinklers, rollers and mowers. That was it.

This entire book is worth whatever it did (or would today) cost simply because of chapters 24 and 25. Both are great—read chapter 24 and learn about experimental work on golf courses. The research of that time was not done at the big midwestern research universities like it is today. It was done individually, often on personal property, seldom by any faculty member and most often by golfers themselves. The story about the Olcott grass turf garden in Connecticut was fascinating. So were details of the Taylor method of putting green construction.

I most enjoyed reading the personal experiences and lessons learned by three ardent golfers in America at that time—Hugh Wilson of Merion (near Philadelphia), Walter Harben of Columbia Golf Club (near Washington, D.C.) and C.B. MacDonald of National Golf Links (on Long Island). Great stories and observations.

Photographs, detailed drawings and accurate sketches included in the book are excellent and really pull the narrative together.

This timeless (rolling greens isn't new, as you'd read in this book) and historical (what's a turve?) book is a treasure of mine. I take it from its place on the shelf from time to time and each time I do I greatly enjoy the trip backward in our history it takes me.

In 1922, O.M. Scott & Sons Company from Marysville, Ohio offered a book entitled *The Seeding and Care of Golf Courses*.

It is a slender volume that is smaller in dimensions than most books. But it is packed with the best advice of the day for golf course management. You'd love reading it.

The second paragraph of the first page refers the reader who needs more extensive information to Piper & Oakley's *Turf For Golf Courses*!

Material offered in this Scotts book is less formal than in the previously

reviewed book. It is written in a snappy style for popular reading.

Unlike the previous book, this one doesn't reference anyone in our position or anyone else charged with the responsibility of managing the golf course. The closest it comes is a comment here and there about green committee chairmen. This volume does advise that every golf club needs a "turf nut" in its membership, going on to say: "He belongs to the company of cheerful martyrs in an unappreciated but vital cause. The turf nut's helpful hobby is the velvety carpet of his much beloved greens."

The Scotts Company of 1922 did not recommend soil testing—"it is of little value" and suggested avoiding commercial seed mixtures!

Like Piper and Oakley, the writers of this book recognized the importance of drainage, advice that is solid today.

In the discussion of rolling greens, by 1922 some limitations had already crept into the recommendations. For example: "Rolling was formerly practiced with great enthusiasm and unrestraint, but it is now generally recognized that it can be overdone."

Back in the 1920s, as this book notes, "sanding" of greens was highly recommended and practiced because it served to "smooth the surface and lighten a heavy soil." Could have written that yesterday!

Earthworms were recognized as being very beneficial, but when the casts became serious on greens, the recommendation was to poison them with the "favored executioner"—corrosive sublimate of mercury.

This book gave advice on ridding the golf course of ants (Paris green), moles (traps) and brown patch (Bordeaux mix at half rate). The subject of weed control was introduced with "weeds are the Philistines of the golf course" and later a confession that "a weedless golf course" was nearly impossible was offered. Also true today.

In 1922 Scotts was a seed company and this book offered good advice on seed. At that time the bentgrasses offered were South German Mixed Bent (which grew wild in a small district of Germany) and Rhode Island Bent (a wild plant from New England that was less inclined toward creeping than the South Germans).

This delightful old read and the brief trip back in time it offers is illustrated with quaint sketches of the period—golf attire, cars, caddies and sticks with something other than flags on them. Bob Erdahl knew me well when he gave it to me, knowing the hours of pleasure over a lifetime it would provide.

The final book I want to tell you about represents a quantum leap in the science we now take so much for granted. It was the text in common use when I was an undergraduate (a long, long time ago!). I am referring to Professor Burt Musser's *Turf Management*.

Like Dr. Beard's book of today and Piper and Oakley's book of three quarters of a century ago, Musser's book was 1) the standard reference of its time, and 2) a publication of the United States Golf Association. It was first published in 1950 and revised in 1962. I have the 1962 volume. It runs 275 pages exclusive of some extensive tables in the appendix and an index.

Most reading this book would not find it as foreign as the Scotts book and the Piper and Oakley book. Since the phenoxy herbicides were developed in the mid-1940s and fungicides about then, the pest control sections are more extensive and useful. Interestingly, most of the fungicides recommended in 1962 have been or soon will be removed from the marketplace—Acti-Dione, PMA, Hg_2Cl_2 / $HgCl_2$, Cadminate, et. al.

Irrigation is treated with some depth, although at that time systems were all manually operated. Space is used to discuss root zone mixes for greens, but no strong recommenda-

tions are given. The chapter dealing with turf maintenance is especially interesting to read. Discussions of poling, brushing, whipping, clipping and verticutting are offered. The thought crossed my mind that we maybe should rethink some of these procedures. Read Jim Latham's letter elsewhere in this issue of *THE GRASS ROOTS* for more thoughts on this particular subject.

I was shocked to read this on page 158: "Good quality creeping and velvet bent turf can be clipped to minimum heights of 1/8" without injury." There must have been some fast greens back then. I recall the lowest height in the mid-1960s around here on putting greens was 3/16".

Weed control, at this time, included chemicals. But Professor Musser emphasized cultural approaches, too. In particular, the picture of a "power mat" to be used for raising crabgrass stems so then could be cut before seeds formed was interesting. If you want to see how far we've come since the 1962 printing, compare your equipment inventory with the one given in this book. Unbelievable!

O.J. NOER was on the First Edition editorial board and you will know that from the many pictures he contributed, many likely from around here. Also on that board was Dr. Fred Grau, director of the Green Section in 1950. The revised edition editorial board included Al Radko, future Green Section director, and Bill Bengueyfield, Radko's successor to the Green Section directorship. Imagine—even Bill is now retired.

Turf Management is out of print now, but worth keeping an eye open for in the used bookstores.

These three volumes should have a home in the Wisconsin Golf House library. I hope I live long enough to see such a facility. I'd like to donate these and other volumes important in our golf turf history.

That is where they belong. 🏌️

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SOME MORE QUESTIONS I'D LIKE ANSWERS TO

By Monroe S. Miller

Although I've pretty much been a hermit since the last issue of *THE GRASS ROOTS* hit the newsstand, a number of people have either called or written with answers to some of the questions I asked in that issue. I hope more replies come my way. It has been fun listening to the responses and, so far, everybody understands the intent. I found it interesting, for example, to learn that some golf course superintendents **do** like thornless honey locust trees! And Dave Strang was especially reassuring in his letter to me that deep tine aerification is here to stay. He also was very complimentary in his comments about all of you he has done business with here in Wisconsin.

So, as more food for thought, here are some more questions for you to deliberate.

1. When are turf equipment manufacturers going to put the engineering into triplex greensmowers that they've invested in the fiveplex fairway mowers? (The fiveplexes I've operated and purchased are marvels and shame the greensmowers)

2. When is some sharp engineer going to design a grass catcher for a greensmowers—triplex and/or walker—that doesn't dribble grass clippings on the putting surface?

3. Would you be in favor of requiring a driver test for all golfers who want to use a golf car to play golf? How about adding a written test to that?

4. With all of the rain we have received in Wisconsin this season, have you taken any grief from players when you have been forced to limit, restrict or forbid the use of golf cars?

5. OK. Now that we have had a monsoon season for comparison, would you prefer it as a lesser evil to a drought year, or vice versa?

6. How's your fungicide budget holding up for 1993?

7. Now that the mercurous/mercuric chloride salts and phenyl mercuric acetate will no longer be manufactured (you were aware of that news, right?), what are you going to apply for snow mold protection in place of them?

8. How is your operating budget looking under the press of weather and reduced rounds of golf?

9. Have you had enough rain yet?

10. When was the first time this year that you operated your irrigation system at night? (For us, it was the night of July 22nd)

11. Are there any golf courses in Wisconsin who have yet to resolve the underground fuel storage problem?

12. Are there still quite a number of Wisconsin golf courses that are harvesting fairway clippings, or has the practice declined?

13. How did your USGA Green Section visit go this summer? (You did schedule one, didn't you?)

14. Will the tough weather this summer and last spring impact on your 1994 budget?

15. What effect has the miserable weather had on the turf distributors who serve our industry?

16. Is there such a thing as a "walker ring"?

17. Could it be that the WSGA State Amateur is amateur golf competition at its finest?

18. Do you think that there may be one player who uses a golf car to play who might concede that there actually exists, if even only rarely, conditions

that dictate a "no cart" decision on the golf course?

19. Have you demonstrated one of the new mid-size rotary mowers on your golf course yet? (Talk about smooth operation!)

20. Have you seen Dr. Rossi's new "do"?

21. Speaking of the USGA Green Section, during what season—spring, summer or autumn—do you prefer your agronomist's visit?

22. Did the severe winterkill of 1992/1993 alter your management plans for going into the winter of 1993/1994?

23. What is the normal term of service for the green committee chair at your golf facility?

24. Are women players represented on your green committee?

25. Do you own any equipment in partnership with another golf facility? If so, does it work well? What pieces are particularly given to co-ownership?

26. Michigan has had a waste pesticide collection program for some time. Minnesota has a similar program now. Once again I ask, why is it impossible for Wisconsin to do the same?

27. Wouldn't a well engineered quick height of cut adjustment be nice on a walking greensmower?

28. Is this by coincidence or by design—Dr. Frank Rossi (native of New York) now lives on Knickerbocker Street in Madison?

29. What do you think—should there be a fine for a golf player who tromps through a mature, full-bloom flower bed to retrieve a golf ball? How about a suspension? ♣

Results To 1993 John Deere Championship Finalized

By Tom Schwab

The fourth annual Wisconsin John Deere Team Championship results are now complete. This tournament combines a golf course's superintendent, professional, manager, and president in a scramble format. The familiar team from Monroe Country Club will again be heading west to the national tournament in Palm Springs. Monroe Country Club actually placed second, but John Deere later named them the low Wisconsin qualifier.

The sole Illinois entrant from Pinnacle Country Club in Coal Valley, Illinois, grabbed first place with an awesome scramble score of 58. Monroe turned in 62 for second. There was a three-way tie for third with 63's tallied by Big Foot Country Club, Lake Wisconsin Country Club, and Americana-Brute. There was also a three-way tie for fourth place with 64's turned in by Rock River Hills, Muskego

Lakes Country Club, and Pine Hills Country Club.

Low Pro prize money also flowed south with Pinnacle's professional Dave Pfister corraling a 70 for the first place purse of \$375. There was a four-way tie for second place between Mark Krause- Muskego Lakes, Jerry Groark-North Hills Country Club, Raymond Kizer-Lake Wisconsin, and Mike Muranyi-Monroe with each posting 75 and collecting \$183 for their efforts. Ike Bailey from Big Foot held on to third with a 77 for \$70.

Superintendent Jim Crothers had his Americana -Brute, Lake Geneva Resort Course in wonderful playing condition. The greens were an absolute joy to play on. Every other facet of the course was in perfect shape also. Hats off to Jim and his obviously dedicated staff. If you've never played the Brute, I suggest you try to fit it in

sometime. The hilly terrain, scenic views, and great design layout, along with the conditioning make it one of the most enjoyable courses in the state.

There were quite a few questions raised this year about teams from other states entering in the Wisconsin tournament. I was told there was no set rule and thus anyone from Wisconsin could likewise enter the Michigan, Illinois, or whatever tournaments. The Wisconsin John Deere tournament sponsor, John Buck, from J.W. Turf in Hampshire, Illinois, promises that the rules will be spelled out more definitely next year. He hopes the team championship will grow to be a major event on the Wisconsin golf scene. It truly is a great format for getting golf course superintendents, professionals, managers, and presidents out for a fun and competitive round of golf together. 🏌️

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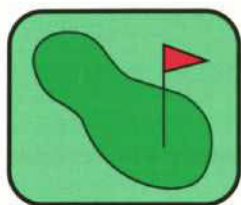
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AVOIDING THE SUMMER SLUMP

By Chad Eberhardt

Remember this your lifetime through —
Tomorrow there will be more to do...
And failure waits for all who stay
With some success made yesterday...
Tomorrow, you must try once more
And even harder than before.

— John Wooden

Congratulations! You've survived **THE GAME**. You should feel very satisfied.

Team spirit is higher than ever. Each and every player worked harmoniously with his teammates for the common good of all throughout the tournament. Competitors, tournament officials, club members, media, and visitors in the galleries all sang praises of the condition of the golf course.

Zero complaints! In our sport, the fewer complaints you hear, the better the job done.

Unfortunately, before you have time to enjoy your feeling of satisfaction, reality comes along and bursts your bubble.

The women can't figure out why you only aerify on their golf days and not "Men's Day". The men don't understand why the practice tees are temporarily closed. And, the senior members are still ticked that they can't hit a wood off such a short height of cut on fairways.

It sure doesn't take long for all your recent success to vanish!

At this point it is vitally important for you to realize that it is time for you, and your team, to move forward.

Congratulate your players one last time for their performance in **THE GAME**. They must be reminded who

they are really performing for from now on—Club members!

After all, the golfers paying your bills don't care how fast you had the greens rolling or how beautiful your mowing patterns were during the week of the tournament. Their main concern is strictly personal: "What have you done for me lately?"

If you still consider yourself a successful coach in our sport of golf course management, remember that coaching is teaching. You sure can't teach for any length of time unless you can motivate your players to want to always do their best.

It's been a long season, and there are precious few surprises left in a coach's and player's bag of tricks. Mental staleness is often a problem as a team goes through the motions of finishing off the season.

Even strong veteran teams need to be motivated near the end of the season to keep their competitive sharpness. Weak teams? Forget it!

If you're a good motivator, you won't have lost control of your team at this stage. You'll still be able to reach your players most of the time—if, that is, you haven't been foolish enough to let your crew think that their success as a team is based upon how they performed in **THE GAME**.

For your motivational slant this late in the season, you should point out the areas in which the team has improved since the season began and describe other areas in which the team must continue to improve if it's to be the kind of team everyone wants it to be next year.

You should strive towards building a winning tradition.

By the way, nice game ... Coach! 🌿

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