

## Why You Need Protection For Your Irrigation Control System

By Joe Becker

**Editor's Note:** A couple of years ago a lightning strike outside our shop burned a circuit on the SNC board of the IBM computer that operates our Network 8000 irrigation control system. Fortunately, Reinders had a backup board and Tom Emmerich installed it in our machine and sent the damaged board to Toro for repairs or replacement. It was repairable, thank goodness. A new board would have cost in the neighborhood of \$14,000. Since that time, if we see lightning as near as Dubuque or Galena or the Rapids, we unplug the computer and worry about the watering consequences when the storm passes. It is a miserable way to have to do business, so I have been looking for some new technology that would eliminate the need for worry about damage from the skies.

That led to our newest GRASS ROOTS advertiser, Joe Becker. He is the owner of D & B Sales Associates in Geneva, Illinois. He has developed a system that better protects field and central control units, among other things, from electrical damage. He agreed to write an article for us on the subject. Winter is a good time to do some reading on it; there is ample time for consideration before the next golf season begins.

Becker is a member of the Lightning Protection Institute, and his company specializes in power protection equipment.

Devastating lightning strikes and power surges are all too common occurrences on today's golf courses. The sensitive nature of the critical computer based irrigation systems requires special coordinated protection to prevent catastrophic damage to expensive control equipment.

Complete and total protection requires that every possible path for lightning or power surges be considered. However, damage to irrigation systems is not always related to a specific storm or lightning strike. It is a well known fact that many failures of sensitive equipment are a result of component stress due to constant bombardment by common power line voltage transients. So if you have suffered triac failures, constant fuse replacement, power supply board damage, modem and computer failure due to lightning or power line transients, there is a solution to these expensive problems.

It is called coordinated power protection. It involves applying the proper surge protection devices in all the right places.

It begins with proper grounding of all elements of the irrigation control system. Good grounding is the backbone of any power protection system because all protection devices require a solid earth ground to enable it to suppress lightning and power related transients. Merely driving an eight foot copper rod next to the controller will not necessarily provide a good ground. The type of soil and available moisture will have a direct bearing on ground potential. All grounds should be tested with a proper resistance meter and tightened annually.

Coordinated protection for most irrigation systems can be summed up in just four critical areas:

1. Main panel protection for your maintenance building and pump house to prevent lightning strikes and power surges from entering the facility.
2. Satellite equipment protection for the AC loop power feed to remote satellite controllers which are vulnerable to ground induced lightning surges.
3. Signal Data Line protection for controllers to prevent transient damage to control circuits.
4. Central computer and peripheral hardware protection to prevent costly catastrophic damage to sensitive computer systems.

Complete and total protection of irrigation control systems requires that every possible source for lightning transients be provided with correct protection devices. Any wire or cable to or from any part of the system is vulnerable. While many of the new control systems have some level of protection built in, it has been proven that damage still occurs because the protection was inadequate or nonexistent on certain critical elements of the overall system.

For example, none of the 45 golf courses recently surveyed provided protection on the main power panel in the maintenance building or pump house. These can be the primary paths for lightning damage from utility power lines. A lightning strike on or near a power line, miles from your golf course, can still do considerable damage to your expensive equipment.

Since golf course superintendents are not required to be experts in lightning protection, how does one go about providing this necessary protection? Consulting engineers and electrical contractors are possible sources, but most do not have the special expertise required to recommend devices for each specific application. The source in the Wisconsin area is Reinders, the Toro irrigation distributor who has been trained and equipped to provide a complete protection package. They will make a site survey of the facility and recommend the exact equipment to provide complete protection for your irrigation control system. 🏌️

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## *He Retired from the Course, But NOT from the Game*

By Lori Ward Bocher

Retired golf course superintendent Elwood "Woody" Voight may have left the golf course professionally. But he hasn't left it as a player. At his retirement community in Arkansas, he can play on seven different courses, the farthest one being only 14 miles away.

"I play an average of three times a week," he reports. "My wife, Betty, will play at least twice. And we belong to two couples groups that play maybe once a month. Then we go out to dinner and have a few cocktails. It's nice."

In Arkansas, golf is a year-round sport. "The winters are great down here. We get cold and we do get snow occasionally. But we play golf all winter. Normally in the wintertime it gets into the 50's in the daytime when you've got about zero," he adds with a laugh.

Before retiring and moving to Arkansas in 1991, Woody Voight was superintendent for the Ozaukee County Park Commission, which included two golf courses (Hawthorne Hills and Mee-Kwon) and seven parks. He also was president of the Wisconsin Golf Course Superintendents Association in 1979 and 1980.

Woody considers himself one of the "old timers" who learned about turf by working with it, not by going to school. "I think most of the superintendents are college graduates now," he says. "Maybe a few of the old timers are left. But not many of them are still working."

Born in Illinois, Woody entered the world of golf as a high school student by working at a small 9-hole course. "That was during World War II when we had very little equipment and no chemicals to work with," he recalls.

"After graduating from high school I went into the service, worked at a few other jobs, and then got back into the golf course business in 1955. And I've been in it ever since," Woody says.

His cousin owned a golf course in Ft. Wayne, Ind., and Woody joined him as a business partner in 1955. He had no professional training or schooling. "Just a lot of hard work," Woody says.



Elwood "Woody" Voight

He made the move to Ozaukee County in 1969. "I was very fortunate when I was in Wisconsin," Woody points out. "The Park Commission was really well into the golf end of it. We got along great for the 23 years I was there."

During his early years on the golf course and during his 23 years with the Ozaukee County Park Commission, Woody witnessed a lot of changes in golf course management. "It was almost like going from the Model T to our present cars," Woody relates. "When I first started in the business there were very few chemicals. Then we used chemicals that you can't use anymore.

"And the equipment has come so far," he continues. "It's a lot better." But the better equipment, including riding mowers, didn't allow them to reduce the labor force.

"That's because the demands became greater, too," Woody points out. "Everybody demanded better turf. When I first started in the business we mowed greens maybe three times a week and fairways a couple of times a week. When I quit we were mowing greens every day and fairways five

times a week. We just had to have finer facilities."

He believes the push for finer facilities began around 1960 when there was an explosion in the number of golfers. Consequently, lots of new golf courses were built. "Competition forces you to do a better job," Woody adds.

"I was in the public sector," Woody points out. "But I'm sure it wasn't different in the private sector. The better one golf course got, the better the next one had to get. It just kept going that way."

Having worked on a public course for 23 years, Woody was aware of the differences between public and private courses. "We have no control over who is playing on our golf course," he says. "And I think we get a lot of players who are new golfers. They don't respect the course as much as the people at a private course."

There also are more rounds of golf played on a public course. "When we opened the gates at 6 on weekdays and 5 on weekends, there were people sitting there waiting. They don't have that at the private sector courses," Woody believes.

Through the years, Woody also saw changes in the WGCSA. "It became more professional," he says. "And it grew. When I first started they were having a little difficulty getting people interested in holding offices, things like that. I think that's over with.

"The education of superintendents has helped so much," he continues. "If you don't have that college education now, you can forget it."

Contact with fellow superintendents is what Woody misses most now that he's retired. "Al and I talk about it a lot," he says of his neighbor, Al Vrana, another past president of WGCSA. "What we really miss most is the golf course superintendents. Al and I both went to all the meetings. We really enjoyed getting together with everyone."

Maybe that's why they both continue to read *The Grass Roots*. "I really look forward to it," Woody says. "When

Al and I get it, we sit down and talk about it for a while. Monroe is doing a heck of a good job on *The Grass Roots*.

"We especially enjoy reading articles written by people we know," he continues. "But we don't recognize as many names. Don't see Bill Sell's name anymore. I played golf down here with a guy who was in the service with Bill. He had a few stories about him."

Woody has some words of wisdom to pass on to those readers of *The Grass Roots* who are still working as superintendents. "You'd just better enjoy what you're doing because you couldn't be with a finer bunch of people. I'd say 99 percent of the golfers are really nice people."

In spite of those positive feelings toward the job, Woody felt it was time to retire in 1991 when he was 63 years old. "It got to a point where the job was starting to bother me a little," he recalls. "Rather than letting it get me down, I just said, 'This is it.' And we wanted to retire while we still had time to do some traveling and things like that."

The Voights had purchased a house lot in an Arkansas retirement community long before his retirement. "We always knew that we'd be coming here," he says. "Al Vrana, who lives right next door to me, was here about four years earlier."

Now that he's retired, Woody spends his time playing golf rather than working on the course. But retirement hasn't stopped him from noticing the differences between Wisconsin and Arkansas courses. "The grass grows all year here," he points out. "However, this is a transition zone. They have a lot of bermuda and that turns brown in the wintertime. So we get used to playing on brown grass."

Even though he can golf year-round in Arkansas, he much prefers the playing conditions on Wisconsin courses. "Of course, it's much easier to grow grass in Wisconsin," Woody points out. "In June this year (in Arkansas) it was

90 degrees all month. We don't get the cool weather.

"And we're in the Ozarks. It's mountainous," he continues. "Although the mountains are small, the ground is pretty rocky. That makes it tougher to grow grass. And you've got to watch it when you hit a ball."

Not all of the differences between courses in the two states can be blamed on climate or geology. "They lack a little bit on the management end of it," Woody believes. "But I stay out of it. I did sit down with some golf course officials once to talk about the condition of the golf courses. But they didn't seem to be nearly as knowledgeable as they are in Wisconsin."

In addition to playing golf, the Voights also have enjoyed traveling. "We've taken a lot of short three-day trips down here," he points out. "Last February we went to Florida for a month, just traveling around very leisurely. We don't have to be home on a certain day.

"And in October we drove to the New England States," he continues. "Then we worked our way down the east coast where we met some friends at Hilton Head, South Carolina. Played a little golf with them."

While at home in Arkansas, they're volunteer workers at The Helping Hand. "That's a place where they resell clothes and furniture, and all the money goes to the poor people," Woody explains. "They generate about half a million dollars a year. It's interesting and we meet a lot of nice people."

The Voights aren't the only retirees from Wisconsin who found their way to Arkansas. "There's a Wisconsin Club down here with about 800 members," he points out. "It's just for people from Wisconsin. We have four meetings a year, like a Christmas party, golf outing or picnic. Everybody gets their Packer caps out when the Packers win."

What does Woody miss most about Wisconsin? "The summers," he answers. "Wisconsin has great summers."

He and Betty get back to Wisconsin a couple of times a year to see their three children and six grandchildren. Son Ron is Register of Deeds for Ozaukee County and lives in Port Washington. Daughters Lori and Lynne both live in Cedar Grove with their families.

And, when they return to Wisconsin each July, they get together with old friends and neighbors from Fredonia, their former home. "We have a group of eight couples who spend a long weekend at Fox Hills in Mishicot playing golf," Woody explains. "We've been going up there for about 15 years."

It's clear to see that golf is still a very important part of Woody Voight's life.

Author's Note: My husband, Luke, worked for Woody for two summers at Hawthorne Hills. "I remember he always had a cigar in his mouth," Luke points out. ♣

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## A FRESH BREEZE FROM KANSAS

By Monroe S. Miller

In September I was in Lawrence, Kansas to participate in a GCSAA resource committee meeting. It was an eye-opening, refreshing and learning experience.

It would be charitable to say that in recent years some GCSAA members have been less than satisfied with the organization and any number of the association's activities. Count me among them. "It was an ill-wind from Kansas," a friend of mine said.

There would be no useful purpose in rehashing the things that led to the suspicion and dissatisfaction. Most members know, at least in a general way, what those things are. And even among those members who pay little attention to such affairs, there was a sense that something was wrong and that GCSAA needed an infusion of trust and faith or some kind of renewal and maybe a new sense of direction. Possibly a clarification of purpose. Something.

I can report to you, from first hand experience and exposure, that the association appears to be getting that "something" it needed.

There are lots of things that caught my attention in Lawrence. Foremost and most important was the clear

message that those in charge now — employees and elected officers and directors — are committed to serving our profession and our members. It is an attitude most of us feel in our own workplaces and expect at headquarters. Let's face it — service is the tenderloin of the GCSAA. When you lose sight of that simple concept, you are on a slippery downhill slope.

How do I know that things are different? Well, at every turn on my visit that point was made. By Joe Baidy. By Bruce Williams and Dave Fearis. And by Joe O'Brien. The open exchange and comfortable conversation were refreshing.

I was a little cynical when Steve Mona and Joe O'Brien were hired to run the headquarters office, reserving judgment until I saw some results from them. After all, talk is cheap and nothing is easier than telling somebody what they want to hear. Performance is something entirely different. But now I have seen some results and I like what I see.

For the two intense days I was at the headquarters building I watched O'Brien in action, at work. The guy won me over. And he wasn't even

trying to — I was just one of many people on that committee. All Joe did that weekend was his job, the things he was hired to do. His title — chief operating officer — fits like a glove.

When the board hired him, they got a man with excellent experience in the PGA organization and a couple of different stops in the hospitality industry. He is a University of Illinois graduate, very bright and decisive. During the meeting, his role was facilitator, and he really made the time we spent productive time. Bruce Williams was smart enough to let him do this.

But as important as any of those things is the fact that O'Brien is a genuine, down-to-earth person, sincere and friendly. He is a nice guy with an easy smile. But he is not an elbow kisser, obviously preferring to let people judge him by what he does and who he is. I really like that.

It is probably right and fair to give credit, which I haven't before this, to Randy Nichols. Lots of members "in the know" have told me he was key in opening the doors of the association and getting more member input and involvement. I credit him for hiring O'Brien and Mona.

We will all have a chance to get to know Steve Mona soon as he is speaking at the Symposium. If he measures up to O'Brien, we all should raise our glasses to toast new times in Lawrence.

What a breath of fresh air that would be! ♣

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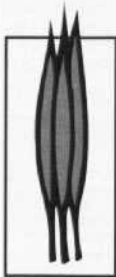


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# Now *THAT* Was A Field Day!

By Monroe S. Miller

The smell of diesel smoke. The sound of mowers. A "normal" August day. Over six hundred turfgrass managers. Good food. A research tour. An auction.

These were a few of the ingredients that combined for what was a great event—the 1994 Wisconsin Turfgrass Field Day. The judgment was nearly unanimous that this was about as good as a field day could be. Company reps reported that Wisconsin has reached a level where the best of the others are at and gone beyond many.

Attendance almost doubled from last year to this and speculation is that there will be another big jump in 1995. Simply stated, on August 16, 1994, the Field Day was the place to be if you work in the turfgrass industry in the Badger State.

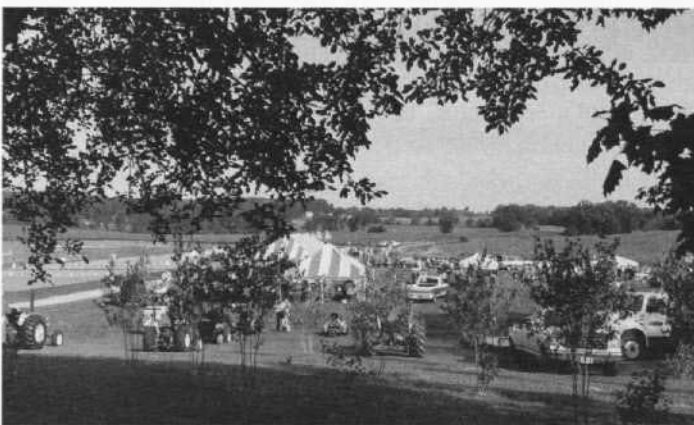
Faculty, graduate students and Noer Facility staff were on duty at the eleven stations of the research tour, which started after lunch. The groups were small and rotated at pre-determined intervals, giving everyone a chance to get a

close look at the studies underway. It was very educational and equally interesting. Many used the opportunity to get specific answers to problems they were having at work. And it wasn't all grass research. Landscape managers will be able to make good use of the dahlia cultivar trial and the perennial trial.

The morning hours were occupied by product and equip-



A young man destined for great career in turfgrass pathology—PhD candidate Steve Millett. He explains his snow mold research and his "Box o' Turf".



A beautiful setting on a beautiful day for a Field Day.



Professor Kussov explains the basics of his nutrient and pesticide runoff and leaching research.



Dr. Frank Rossi was everywhere on Field Day, the ultimate venue for a professor with so many U.W. Extension responsibilities.

ment demonstrations at the north end of the farm, just beyond the display area. It was better organized than in the past, and it ran on time from start to finish.

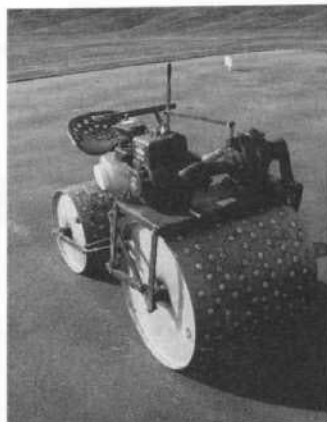
Everything ran smoothly—parking and registration included, just as promised after last year. The meal was superb and generous. The handouts—books, really—were excellent educational aids.

The news that the research facility will be expanded by twenty acres to the north as soon as the corn crop is harvested this fall was exciting. We can only dream what things will look like next year.

The only downside to this grand event was that it marked Scott Mackintosh's last day as Manager of the Noer Facility. His good work in the past year is appreciated.

Once the final reporting of the income of the Field Day is available, we will know just how valuable the auction was. It was bigger than last year, and the generosity of donors was impressive. Organizers were wise in keeping it as part of the 1994 Field Day.

It is appropriate that thanks are extended to the Field Day Committee - Tom Harrison, Tom Schwab, Frank Rossi, Wayne Kussow, Julie Meyer and Scott Mackintosh. And no Field Day would be complete without exhibitors. We thank those in attendance for 1994 and recognize them: Wisconsin Turf Equipment, Wisconsin Department of Agriculture,



**Dr. Wayne Kussow's traffic simulator, made possible by a donation from Bob Erdahl.**



**Rod Johnson, when he saw Dr. Kussow's "spikulator", asked "where are the soft spikes?"**

Vigoro, Tyler Enterprises, Turf Supply Co., Town and Country Ford Tractor, Tillman Landscape Nursery, Temporary Rain, Spring Valley Turf Products, Scotts Proturf, SCN Sales Inc., Ryco Industries, Roberts Irrigation, Reinders Irrigation, Reinders Turf, Pro-Lawn Inc., Pendleton Turf Supply, Milorganite - MMSD, Miles Inc., Mechanical Soil Technology, McKay Nursery, Lesco Inc., Lebanon Turf Products, L.L. Olds Seed, Knox Fertilizer, KEI, Johnson and Associates, Jerry's Small Engine Supply Co., J.W. Turf, Horst Distributing Inc., Hanley Implement, Growmark Inc., Greenmix, EZGo-Textron, CIBA Turf and Ornamentals, Chipco Specialty Products, Central Wisconsin Evergreens, The Andersons, American Sod Company, and Agr-Evo.

Joe Morris, president of the Minnesota Golf Course Superintendents Association, travelled to Madison with a group of his colleagues to attend our Field Day. It is good to read what golf course superintendents from somewhere else thought about this event. Following is Joe's "President's Message" from the September issue of Hole Notes, official publication of the MGCSA:

*On August 15 & 16 Kevin Clunis, Tom Johnson, Dale Parske, Bob Frank, Dr. Ward Stienstra and I attended the Wisconsin Turfgrass Field Day at the O.J. NOER Turfgrass Research and Education Facility in Madison. There was more electricity in the air than during a lightning storm. I was very impressed, as were the other members of our group. When I saw Dr. Stienstra on his hands and knees, I knew he either wanted to go home or was really into it. Of course, I asked him, and if you want the answer, ask him or anyone else who attended.*

*Dr. Frank Rossi and Dr. Julie Meyer were very happy to see us and gave us a very personal walk-through. That's not easy when there were in excess of 700 people in attendance. I spotted a distinguished looking gentleman that looked a lot like Jim Latham. Sure enough it was.*

*In the past I have had mixed thoughts on needing a research facility in the metropolitan area. However, after realizing how far south geographically Madison really is, and talking to a lot of researchers, I have come to believe, without any doubt, we are in great need of a facility such as the O.J. NOER.*

*I didn't think Madison falls somewhere between Austin and the Iowa border geographically.*

*After hearing the background of the WTA, I am positive the great turf people in Minnesota will be able to merge into a very strong Minnesota Turf and Grounds Foundation.*



**Darin Lickfeldt, a new PhD grad student in turfgrass management, held court for the first time. He is also a new Grass Roots columnist.**



**Ed Devinger had reasons to be happy—lots of customer traffic through his Toro tent.**



It was a great event to everyone, no doubt. Here are a few personal highlights of this attendee:

- If I planned to seed quality Kentucky bluegrass fairways, I would consider the variety Indigo, based on what I saw at Field Day. It is very fine textured.
- Providence creeping bentgrass looked especially good. But then, so did Penncross.
- Crenshaw and Providence suffered a pretty good infection of yellow tufts this spring past.
- Grad students and NOER Facility employees did a good job at their station assignments.
- The ice cream cones with the Milorganite topping, provided by MMSD for a donation for research, were really good!
- WGCSA members like me had a chance to see how our money was being spent.
- Dr. Kussow's research on nutrient and pesticide runoff may be the most valuable for the public to learn about. This work is confirming the value of turf to society.
- Best and briefest advice of the day came from Jim Latham on the subject of using Zoysia in Wisconsin: "Forget it."

And my advice for everyone is this:

**DON'T MISS FIELD DAY 1995!** 🏆



NTEP bentgrass trials, in case you wondered about varietal differences.



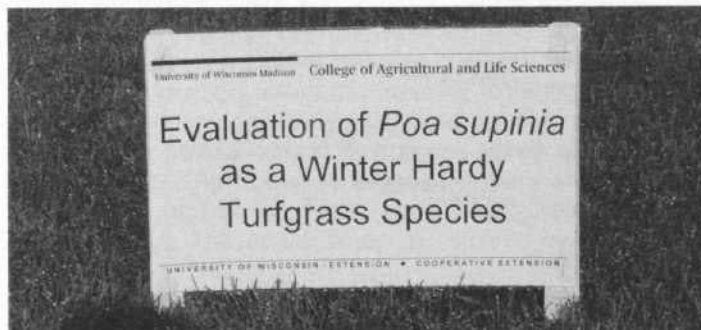
Dr. Chuck Koval's insect traps.



The "Freedom Lawn"—a weed patch to most.



Tom Schwab (r.) ran the second annual Field day auction, which generated several thousand dollars for turfgrass research.



Wonder what *Poa supina* looks like? Visit Field Day and find out!



NTEP fine-leaf fescue plots were an especially interesting stop for Field Day-goers.



The Noer research facility includes an EnviroCaster.



There was some BIG equipment at Field Day '94.



WTA President Curt Larson. He's also the man who makes Wisconsin Turf Equipment Corp. work.



## *What Do You Think?*

Monroe S. Miller  
Blackhawk Country Club  
P.O. Box 5129  
Madison, Wisconsin 53705

Monroe:

Just a quick note before we leave for our annual vacation.  
(I know superintendents don't have that luxury).

More and more of the printing we do is on recycled paper,  
using soybean based ink. As a responsible caretaker of our  
environment I wonder why you are still publishing on a non-  
recycled paper using I assume a petroleum based ink. We  
have found that our printing costs are not greater and find that  
the quality of work looks better. I would even say that the pub-  
lication is not acceptable at paper recycling centers.

What with articles published on The Audubon Society and  
the many references to nature and the preservation thereof, I  
believe you are remiss in not pursuing the aforementioned  
method of publishing.

Keep up the excellent work. Your organization certainly is  
one of the foremost in the country.

Peter F. Miller

### **EDITOR'S REPLY:**

Pete's got something here, of course. For some time now we have been using soy ink.

Since I've been editor (Jan/Feb 1984) we have printed on "Frostbrite" 70# paper and been pleased with the results. The paper has a nice feel to it, handles photos nicely, and has a first class appearance.

But, as Peter suggests, it may be time to switch to recycled paper. I've decided to get your input first. Pages 25 through 32 are printed on recycled paper. How do you like it? Are you bothered at all by the way it takes photos (you can see through it more easily than Frostbrite)?

It doesn't change cost significantly, so the decision is based on quality and conscience.

Tell me that you think.