

The Grass Roots

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Editor and Publisher
Monroe S. Miller
Blackhawk Country Club
P.O. Box 5129
Madison, WI 53705

Editorial Staff and Business Affairs
Kris Pinkerton
Oshkosh Country Club
11 West Ripple Road
Oshkosh, WI 54901

About the Cover:

As has become tradition, our July/August cover features the favorite golf hole of the host superintendent of the WSGA State Am and the PGA State Open. Also in true tradition, the renderings by Jen Eberhardt are terrific.

The 1996 State Am will be held at Cherokee Country Club in Madison where George Magnin is the superintendent. Designed by Dave Gill, Cherokee was built in 1963. The 14th hole is shown here and is George's favorite.

Kenosha Country Club was founded in 1898 and the golf course was designed by the famous Scottish Architect Donald S. Ross. Scott Bartosh is the course manager and has selected the 18th hole as the one he enjoys most.

Ross was so taken with the KCC site that he stayed on during the course construction to supervise all work. It was time well spent!

*From too much zeal for what is new
And contempt for what is old,
from putting knowledge before
wisdom, Science before art and
cleverness before common sense...*

Good Lord deliver us.
— John Appleyard
UK artist and teacher 1987

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(Left to Right): Mike Semler, Kris Pinkerton, Charlie Shaw, Dave Smith, Scott Schaller, Gary Tanko, Dave Brandenburg, Andy Kronwall, Mark Kienert.

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Welcome!

By Mark Keinert



During our May Wisconsin Golf Course Superintendents board of directors meeting, we approved thirty applications for membership into our association. By my count, since September 1995, we have seen just over 55 new members join the WGCSA. How many of those new membership applications are due to the dual membership requirement enacted by the Golf Course Superintendents Association and subsequent grandfather clause is as good as your guess.

All the membership classifications were represented in some fashion, with the majority of the new members filling the class A, B and D roster spots. A good number of class E members were approved as well. Some of those applications approved were from former members who dropped out for some time and have now returned. To those individuals I say "welcome back."

Not to be ignored was a substantial group of first time members. To those of you, I extend my hand and offer to you a very hearty welcome aboard. Please feel free to introduce yourself to our membership. Call on us with your questions. I would urge you to become active members within our ranks. Volunteer your time by serving on committees, hosting a membership meeting or writing for our chapter publication, "THE GRASS ROOTS." You will find that our chapter journal is our second greatest asset, running a close second behind the collective "brain power" of our membership.

You will find that our organization works jointly with the University of Wisconsin-Madison and its faculty, the Wisconsin Turfgrass Association, (some of our members serve on the board of directors and were founding fathers of the WTA) and the O. J. Noer Research Foundation. If you have moved in from out of

Wisconsin, you'll learn it serves as home to many of the industries and manufactures of turfgrass and grounds maintenance equipment.

In our state, our superintendents are served by some of the finest individuals who represent the sales industry. These are too numerous to mention individually. Please refer to your new membership directory and patronize those class "E" members who support our association. It goes without saying to all WGCSA members: invite those neighbors who you know to one of our meetings and explain the benefits of our organization, if they aren't members. One simple phone call is all it takes. Be the first one to make the move.

Speaking of just one of the benefits offered to you through your membership dues, I would like to thank the 20 progressive golf course super-

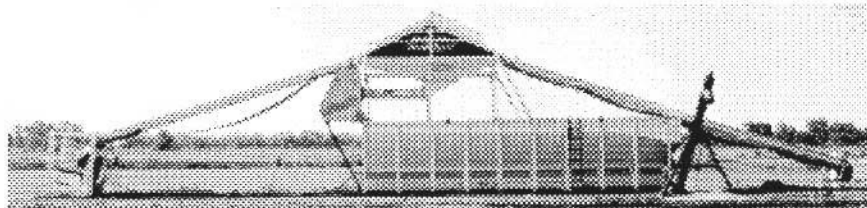
intendents who sent their mechanics to the recently completed electrical troubleshooting seminar sponsored by the WGCSA. This seminar was taught by John Gavinski, a long time instructor of automotive technicians through out our state. The seminar focused on diagnosing troublesome electrical components, both in theory and practice, using test equipment. As automobiles have become home to small central processors, so we have seen the influx of this technology into our grounds maintenance equipment. A very special thank you should go to Tim Johnson, a former mechanic of mine and current mechanic at the Sentryworld Golf Course in Stevens Point. It was Tim who was responsible for all of the arrangements for the day. I would be remiss if I didn't also thank Horst Distributing and Reinders Brothers

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Inc. for their time and donation of new equipment in which some of the troubleshooting scenarios were set up on. Thanks should also go to Briggs and Stratton for the maintenance manuals that were available to those attending the class.

I can tell you that this isn't the only mechanics seminar being planned. I'm aware of at least five additional seminars currently on the drawing board. I'm going to personally see that Tim gets my list of hydraulic repairs, equipment restoration and repainting, establishing the right preventative maintenance programs and keeping the right records to add to his proposed list of seminar topics.

If you have a special need or concern, please feel free to drop a note

in the mail and I will forward it to Tim. All future seminars will be scheduled for just after the time we put our golf courses to bed for the winter and just before the winter repair season. Another seminar is being planned for next March, right before we return to the great outdoors.

I've also had conversation with the department head of the Automotive Industrial side of the Midstate campus. He is willing to work very closely with us to put on a quality program for our employees. Having just introduced a new mechanic into the world of golf course equipment maintenance, I can't tell you how much I personally appreciate those classes. It was a great first step.

Speaking of education, watch your mail for the upcoming "walking construction tour" that will be held at Kohler's new "Whistling Straits Golf Course." This tour will give those of us who haven't had the opportunity to be a part of a golf course in genesis, the chance to see a golf hole from the point of initial staking, to the first turning of soil, all the way to the watering of the many new seedbeds. It should be quite a show, so wear your mud runners', the tour will go on rain or shine. Hopefully, Ed Kirchenwitz, Mike Lee and David Smith will see to the details and that we will have great weather for the event. Ed, how soon can we expect you to host one of our monthly membership meetings? See you there. ♣

The real meaning of diversity





LOOKING FOR SOME WARMTH

By Monroe S. Miller

The Wisconsin State Journal published the winners of their limerick contest in the Sunday, June 2 edition of the paper. A Sun Prairie woman composed one that Wisconsin golf course superintendents will appreciate in a year like this one:

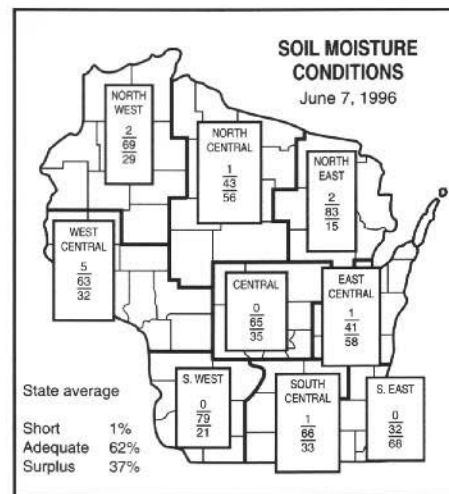
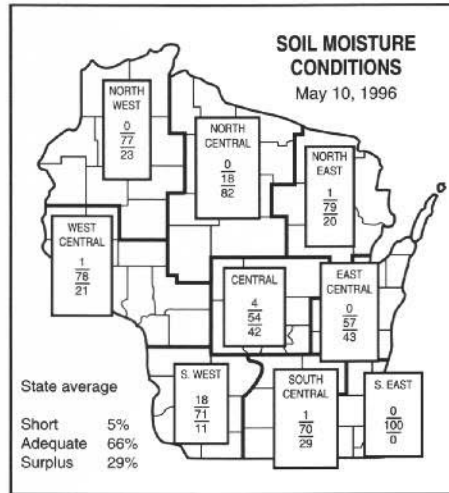
*There once was a season named
Spring
Flowers bloomed, grass was
green,
birds would sing.
Mother Nature cut back
To a three-season track.
It's a late-nineties down-sizing
thing.*

Despite my northern European heritage, I was wishing it would warm up all spring. We had to stay in the shop until nearly 8:00 a.m. on May 30th—heavy frost on the golf course! The few annual beds that had been planted and gardens that were up in our town suffered, no doubt. We were okay at the golf course—our reward for being behind! Everyone in the plant growing business—farmers, greenhouse operators and golf course superintendents—had their patience tried this spring. Around here, in the mid-to late-May period, we experienced 19 consecutive overcast days. Those courses struggling to recover from winter injury continued to struggle in the “spring that wasn’t.”

This spring, the lateness of blossoms on landscape plants was stark. Lilacs were still in full bloom the first week of June. *Poa annua* seeding was retarded by three weeks at my course, and it was greatly reduced in seed production, too. And in the first week or so of June, you could look nearly anywhere and see full, prime blooming tulips!

Such is life in the northern states. By the time the next issue of this journal comes around, I will be looking for relief from the heat and oppressive humidity in a meat locker freezer! Maybe that is why we love Wisconsin so much.

The summary of weather conditions in the past two months comes to you from the good work of the Wisconsin Agricultural Statistics Office.



Sometimes you have to look hard, but in my experience you can almost always find some good in bad circumstances or conditions. Take the harshness of last winter, for example.

The good that came from the nearly intolerable cold is that insect problems should be substantially reduced this summer. Insect pests that attack woody ornamentals especially suf-

fered from low temperatures in the winter past. We saw no tent caterpillars on ornamentals this year, for example. And entomologists tell us that the subzero days of January killed most exposed gypsy moth eggs that were on tree branches and buildings.

Surface and soil borne eggs masses may survive, but the cool weather will retard development, reducing or eliminating some insecticide applications. Such things make the hearts of Wisconsin golf course superintendents flutter with excitement!

Let's hear it for Edgerton's Steve Stricker! He won his first PGA event on Sunday, May 26 with a three stroke victory in the 1996 Kemper Open. Knowledgeable people around here have been saying, "it was only a matter of time."

Dennis Tiziani is his father-in-law, and Steve's wife Nicki is his caddy. It is a real Wisconsin affair. George

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Magnin tells me that when Steve is in Madison he often visits the golf course maintenance shop at Cherokee to see what's going on.

I don't know the kid, but from all I read and hear, "humility" should have been his middle name. How appealing, especially in the midst of a business so filled with arrogance and ego mania.

It pleased me to notice, as I was tromping through Kohl's Department store with Cheryl, to see Steve even has his own line of golf attire—slacks and shirts and ties. And not a single piece was pink!

Steve Stricker likely will become to Wisconsin what two-time U.S. Open champ Andy North has been—someone for us to watch and cheer for, for years to come, on the professional golfers tour.

Our great state University of Wisconsin-Madison excels at a lot of things, and one of them is securing donations for research, academic and scholarship programs. The golf turf and turfgrass industry are among those donors.

Last year the UW-Madison led the nation among public universities in garnering donations. The school raised \$164.3 million from private sources, placing it fifth overall behind four Ivy League schools. The only Big Ten college in the top ten with Wisconsin was the University of Michigan at Ann Arbor, which was three places and \$20 million below Wisconsin.

Private gifts are becoming more and more important as government money sources are drying up.

Two factors stand out in this outstanding accomplishment: the suc-

cess of the UW Foundation and the entrepreneurship of the faculty. The WGCSA is involved with both.

To this success, one can only add—ON WISCONSIN!

By the time this issue reaches you, the 4th of July holiday will be upon us—two down and one to go. Here is my wish for you (and me)—moderate temperatures, adequate and timely rainfall, little insect or disease pressure, happy players and great golf course conditions. ♣

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Golf Course Hydroinjection

Bill McMillan

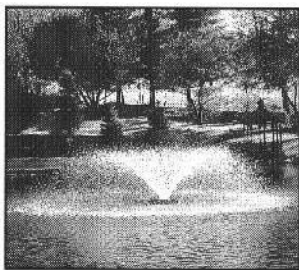
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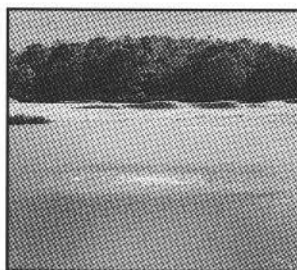
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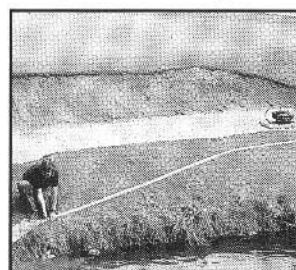
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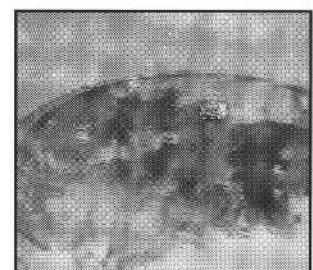
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Mechanics and Business Mix Well for Him

By Lori Ward Bocher

Dick Reinders has always liked to tinker with mechanical devices. It's evident in his career path, his business achievements and even his hobbies.

As a part owner of Reinders, a family-owned corporation, Dick heads up the irrigation division. He also owns and manages Watertronics, a company that split off from Reinders a year ago.

As a high school graduate, Dick had no firm plans of joining the family business which primarily served the needs of farmers at that time. "I had a life-long love of automobiles," he recalls. "In 1955 I really wasn't cut out to get a four-year degree in agribusiness at Wisconsin and go into the family feed manufacturing business. So I took off and got accepted at the General Motors Institute in Flint, Michigan. I took a composite course of engineering and management that got me out in 1958.

"My aspiration was to become an automobile dealer," he continues. "I didn't want to spend the rest of my life designing hubcaps behind a drawing board. I thought it was more glamorous to be a dealer."

After working a year as a service manager and Corvette sales specialist, his plans were interrupted by the military. When his tour of duty was finished in 1960, he immediately married. "I walked out of the military and down the aisle," he recalls.

Dick's brother, Bob, who was already part of the Reinders family business, had just taken on a franchise for Jacobsen golf course equipment and other power lawn equipment. (Reinders switched to a Toro distributorship in 1971.) "He needed somebody with an engineering and mechanical background to help him with the business," Dick remembers. "He kind of lured me away from the automobile business."

Soon after that, they acquired an



Dick Reinders

irrigation franchise for Rainbird and Nelson sprinkling equipment. "We really didn't have much of a customer base, so I set about trying to get the irrigation aspect of the business going," Dick points out. From that point on, Dick specialized in the irrigation division while Bob stayed with the turf equipment division.

He started with residential lawn sprinkler applications, and then had

some small commercial jobs. "There weren't many sprinkler contractors around at the time so we had to create our own market," Dick recalls.

The first golf course irrigation job came in 1966 at Portage Country Club. "It was also my introduction into putting together a pump system for a golf course," Dick remembers. "We managed to get the installation in and learned through trial and error. Sometimes on your first couple of jobs you pay for your education. In this case, we did. But the project got in and it worked." Soon there were more golf course jobs for the Reinders irrigation division which was a supplier of equipment as well as a contractor and designer. (It no longer serves as a contractor.) "And we continued to build our own pump sets for these various applications," Dick adds.

This is where the mechanical side of Dick really shines through. He was bound and determined to develop a better pump station for automatic golf course irrigation.

"As we were installing automatic irrigation systems, I saw the need to create some control schemes that

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were more reliable," he points out. "The pressure tank became involved. When pressure dropped, a switch would turn on the first pump. And if pressure continued to drop, the switch would turn on a second pump.

"But when these pumps would turn on and off, we would see surges going out through the pipeline," he continues. "And some of these surges were severe enough that we'd see cracked pipe or broken sprinklers.

"There were some hydraulic regulating valves on the market that were supposed to control that," Dick explains. "But if the water running through the valves wasn't perfectly clear, the first thing that would plug were the control pilots. And then the valves wouldn't do their job and you'd still have the same problems.

"In my quest for trying to build a better pump system, I came upon a motorized electric valve that was being pioneered," he continues. "But it didn't work very well. If the pressure got too high, it would close. And if the pressure got too low, it would open back up—kind of hunted back and forth. It was like having a cruise control on your car that went up and down 5 miles per hour as you drove along.

"One season I hired some young engineering students from Milwaukee School of Engineering to work as service technicians," Dick explains. "I said to them, 'This valve would really be a godsend to the golf course pump station if we could control it and get it to work smoothly without hunting up and down.'

"So we went to work on it, and pretty soon they had an idea for how to control it by sensing the pressure and putting some time delays into it and using what was now just starting to evolve in the electronics industry—a programmable logic controller," Dick says. "So we started to build a little better pump station.

"As the computer became the central control for golf course irrigation systems, our pump stations were better able to work with that computer," Dick continues. "If the computer was set to turn on 800 gallons a minute at 8 o'clock at night, our pump station controls could now react a little quicker. Instead of turning on one pump and waiting to see if that was enough, it could turn on two or three pumps promptly to respond to the demand.

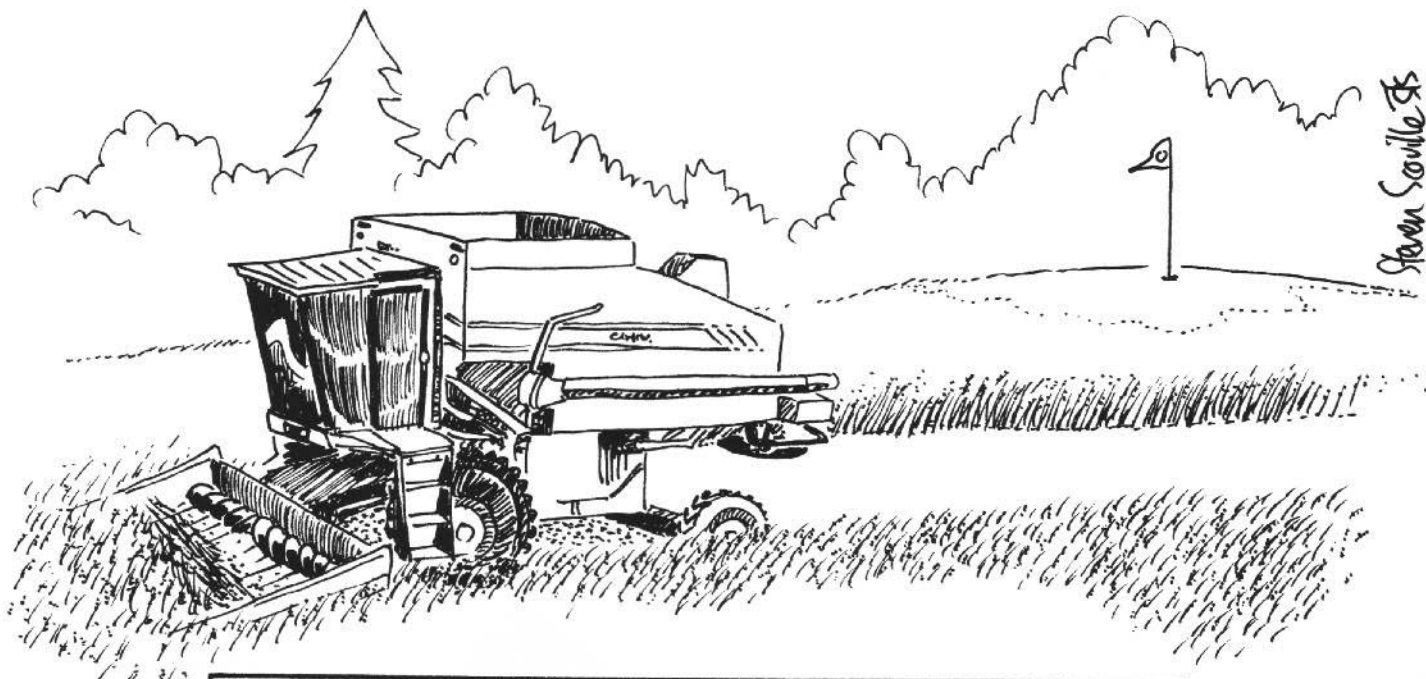
"As we became more sophisticated in what we were doing, we thought

we could probably market pump stations beyond our traditional Wisconsin territory," Dick explains. "So in 1987 we coined the name 'Watertronics' and started a separate division of Reinders.

"Over the years we saw Watertronics grow as part of our irrigation division," Dick points out. "It was becoming so specialized and our market was both national and international. In 1995 Watertronics was separated from Reinders. I wanted Watertronics to have the ability to bring in some key employees as stockholders, which our family corporation didn't allow for.

"Watertronics now has golf course pump stations from Cape Cod through Hawaii, and in Guam, Thailand, Singapore, Indonesia, Viet Nam and Korea," Dick proudly points out. "We also have some stations in South America, the Caribbean and Canada, but none in Europe where there are too many trade tariffs and compliance requirements in Common Market countries for a small U.S. manufacturer to overcome."

In addition to golf course pump stations, Watertronics builds a line of compact pump stations for sports fields, office parks and housing pro-



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