(Continued from page 29)

have a chance to respond back. Everyone will also see all responses from anyone in the group. It will work to get quick answers back to immediate issues or problems. For example, someone could write, "My topdressing just got rained on. Does anyone have a suggestion for dragging in wet sand?" This list serv could be real informative, fun and as I said it is free. Hopefully I'll have it all figured out and be able to tell you about it at the May meeting to complement Dr. Maxwell's Turf Disease Diagnostic Lab presentation.

On an extremely sorrowful note, I'm sure most of you have heard about the passing away of a dear colleague and friend. Catherine Smejkal lost her short bout to cancer on February 29, 1996. She did so much work for the turf industry for so long.

I remember first meeting her almost twenty years ago when she was a senior research assistant with Dr. Worf in the Dept. of Plant Pathology. I can't honestly say I had much contact with her until I started working at the Noer Facility. There I saw her coordinating and carrying out numerous fertility and disease trials. The days that she was away from the Noer, she was off to another ag research station or experimental site helping Dr. grau and others with potato, alfalfa and other plant studies.

She did so much behind the scenes work for EXPO and Summer Fleld Day. She wasn't concerned with grabbing credit for all the work she did and that work was huge. She was pleasant to work with. You could tell the other workers at the Noer and her own small staff really looked up to her. There will be a big void created by her absence this summer. She will be missed by all of us, but won't be forgotten.

A group of her friends and colleagues are raising funds to build a memorial garden in her name at the Noer Facility. If anyone would like to contribute, you can make a check out to WTA Catherine's Garden and send it to the Noer Facility/3101 Hwy M/Verona, WI/53593. If you'd prefer to send plant material, Catherine left a list of her favorite plants. Call Audra at the Noer to get that list at 608/845-6536. We'll surely miss you, Catherine.



The Noer Facility will expand but to the first row of trees in the background.





The Glacier Slowly Recedes

By Monroe S. Miller

It ended up as one of the longest winters in a long time, the cold season of 1995/1996. Golf courses were slow to open, opened a little late. closed (two inches of snow in Madison on Easter) and opened again. When golf was finally being played here in the southern part of the state, snow hadn't yet melted up north. By and large, however, most Wisconsin golf course superintendents were relieved when winter gave way to spring and course conditions became more evident. Golf courses, generally speaking, overwintered better than a lot of us would have guessed. There were normal scars on most courses, snowmold up north, a little ice damage here and there, and all the rest. But considering the winter was 'way below average, there wasn't a lot of complaining.

The complaining centered around the fact that it was an unending winter. It started very early—late October/early November—and receded at a glacial pace. But it did end, as we knew it would, and hopes are high for a great summer.

Included for your perusal are the weather stats for winter's end.

Congratulations are due Bill Vogel of Spring Valley. The Grounds Management Association of Wisconsin recognized Bill as the GMAW "Person of the Year".

He has a long standing dedication to the golf turf and landscape industry in Wisconsin. Three cheers for Bill!

The National Golf Foundation conducted a study that shows the majority













of American golfers believe that golf course superintendents use pesticides and fertilizers responsibly. In general, the study also shows that golfers' general concerns about the environmental impact of golf have decreased.

More than 80 percent of the golfers surveyed believe that superintendents are environmentally responsible and that we use water and chemicals wisely. Nearly two-thirds of golfers now believe that golf courses are good for the environment. That figure has come up from 55 percent less than two years ago.

The survey results show that our own awareness of problems and their solutions are getting through to our customers.

Chris Kleinsmith, a student in Wayne Kussow's turf and grounds management program at the UW-Madison, won the 1995 AGR EVO USA turf scholarship. He was presented the award by John Turner at the WTA EXPO in Middleton on January 10, 1996.

Chris is a native of Holman and will be an excellent addition to our profession in the years to come. He is a deserving winner.

I always look forward to the WGCSA business meeting in Fond du Lac, especially now that it is scheduled so it doesn't conflict with preparations for opening day. It is good to see colleagues, learn of what has gone on in their lives during the winter months, and to listen to what they think course conditions are in all corners of Wisconsin.

This year had the potential to be particularly interesting. Frank Rossi, having learned from Arthur Miller in Orlando, moderated a panel of individuals of differing attitudes about golf courses and environmental issues. It was spirited and well received.

Also adding to the interest of the day was a visit to Fond du Lac by GCSAA chapter relations committee member Randy Zidik.

Randy is a Pittsburg area golf course superintendent. He was also on the GCSAA board of directors a few years ago. He traveled to Fond du Lac to answer questions about affiliation requirements, and went out of his way to say—several times—that he wasn't going to give us "the company line."

He was an intriguing choice to attend the WGCSA meeting to sell affiliation requirements. The curiosity I noticed was that a few short years ago when he was a GCSAA director I remember him as one of the one man/one vote guys. If my memory is correct, Randy has done a 180 degree turn with his current belief in central power, big bureaucracy and chapter subordination to GCSAA.

It was nice of him to take time to try



to explain the GCSAA motives and their plans. After he was done, the people I was with felt he should have saved his time. He didn't answer the questions put to him.

I tape recorded the session he led, listened to it again, and reached the same conclusion I did from the live presentation. The fundamental question of "how will these changes, most notably dual membership requirements—make Wisconsin a better chapter?" was answered with "it probably won't."

That is hardly a ringing endorsement for voting for the elitist requirements GCSAA wants. A similar answer was offered to the question "how will individual superintendents benefit?"

Interestingly, when I asked him if, for a financial report, we sent the bureaucracy in Lawrence a report that said "we made money" would suffice, Randy replied, "yeah, sure." Sensing this was good news, the follow-up question of "will a one sentence response on chapter activities, such as 'we had a good year', be good enough?", Randy said "yes".

So, should we affiliate (far, far from a certainty) and should we answer as above, I will play the tape for Lawrence employees to remind them what a committee member told us, if anyone objects.

Unfortunately, there are all sorts of low life and scum floating around in our society. One (or several) of them recently broke into Aldo Leopold's famous shack—his inspiration for A Sand County Almanac—and stole a wooden chest of old tools and other historic items.

The shack, in the Leopold Reserve, is in a rural area near Baraboo and the Wisconsin River. People from around the world have visited the shack and gotten inspiration from it. I'm one of those people. The shack is so well known that it is on the National Register of Historic Places in America.

An act of thievery like this is just one more incident that builds mistrust and uncertainty and uneasiness among citizens. The Leopold Foundation will new likely have to install a security system. It wasn't long ago they finally had to padlock the door on the shack. It had been open for all to visit. No more.

(Continued on page 35)

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Of course, there is little chance the crime will be solved. The senselessness of it is numbing.

As of this date, we still have an opening for a speaker this year. My suggestion is to invite Bruce Williams to make the (apparently) long, difficult and torturous trip up from Chicago. Maybe he can stand in front of us and offer something other than the political pulp and adolescent rationale we've heard about affiliation requirements. I would like to hear Bruce defend his impertinent comments about those among us who make \$20,000 a year and his belief they have plenty of money to pay their own GCSAA dues (\$210) and state dues (\$110 in Wisconsin). I would also like to learn how some of our colleagues are our enemies, based on organizations they may or may not belong to. There are scores of other questions we could put

After all, he has twice accepted invitation to come to Wisconsin to meet with us only to bail out at a later date. This year, before Mark Kienert

to him.

could invite him to the spring business meeting, in a pre-emotive strike, he told Mark he couldn't make it because he was going to Canada.

You sort of wonder why he is reluctant to come north. Maybe Rod Johnson has bad breath ... Setting all the nuisances aside, this a good time of the year. As Walter Hagen suggested years ago, "take time to smell the flowers."





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An Open Letter to WGCSA Members:

Af-fil-i-ate, verb. The American Collegiate Dictionary defines this as "to associate (oneself) as a This is the much discussed topic between the GCSAA leadership and its members. By the end of the year, all of us who are concerned about this issue will be sick of hearing about it. My first concerns about affiliation centered around fairness in dual membership requirements. I dwelled on this issue in my mind but something was nagging at me about how this whole reaffiliation member." thing came to pass. After much reflection, talking with other superintendents and reading commentary in various publications, it is quite obvious that the biggest issue in the whole matter is power and control Hal Phillips, aditor of Call Course Neuro in his Fabruary 1006 column defines the issue with a pacifi Hal Phillips, editor of Golf Course News, in his February 1996 column defines the issue quite specifically as just that—power and control. In my mind, this was an issue hatched by some GCSAA insiders and advanced very cleverly. In the world of politics they would be congratulated for having done a mag-Issues such as this, which have far reaching impacts on the way the GCSAA, WGCSA and members of the two organizations interact, need much debate and membership input before they come before the COSAA board and are adopted. But as the Dhilling points out "Debate" way the good and the debate and membership input before they come before nificent job of greasing the path of their cause. the GCSAA board and are adopted. But, as Hal Phillips points out, "Debate" was non-existent from the The pawns in this greased system to slide dual membership past the members were the chapter delates. egates. Due to apathy from most members and a desire to expedite decision making at the national level, the chapter delegates system has been in effect to handle communication with the GCSAA board. membership until the issue was a done deal. Manipulation of chapter delegates for the election purposes and other issues is nothing new. It is pure politics to manipulate the chapter delegates and it has been done to some degree for years. To advance the reaffiliation agreement, the GCSAA board and insiders merely manipulated the chapter delegates into passing reaffiliation. Then they very quickly adopted it to avoid debate and hopefully make it appear to any questioning members that the issue was unanimously accepted and discussion At our March WGCSA meeting we dwelled on the issue of dual membership and what we are getting the patient is bigget then dual membership and what we are getting from the national in return for accepting reaffiliation. The issue of qual memory and what we are year while We are talking should a measive charge in how we do husiness are state charge. We may not ship. We are talking about a massive change in how we do business as a state chapter. We may not See it because we, as current members, are grandfathered and our apathetic nature to GCSAA issues But we must take a few minutes, all of us, to pay closer attention to the long term ramifications of is hock closely at what the COSAA is acting that we go in the efficiency of the two sets that we go in the set of the two sets that we go in the two sets that we g this. Look closely at what the GCSAA is saying that we gain from affiliation. One will see that we gain says "it doesn't affect me so why be concerned?" Look past dual membership. This is a power grab in a very subtle, politically astute way. It is imperative that we all very closely examine this and make sure in each of our minds we understand what is nothing. It is less than smoke and mirrors. It was stated by someone at our March meeting that because this was a done deal and the majority of the chapter delegates passed this, we might as well just accept the fact that it was going to happen going to happen to our state association in the long term. Such an attitude is pure nonsense. Where would we be as a democracy if people did not examine In the fall when we reexamine reaffiliation to make a decision on it for the WGCSA, we must rememand we might as well get on the bandwagon. ber how the issue was orchestrated and how it will affect us long term. We must not be afraid to break issues? We are not a bunch of sheep being led to pasture. ranks if that is best for the WGCSA. Just because the majority have passively acquiesced to this, we must not be afraid to do what is right. We need to have a backbone and stand up for what is right. That is pure and simple "leadership" in my book. Sincerely, Thomas R. Harrison Maple Bluff Country Club

Wisconsin Turfgrass Disease Diagnostic Lab: The Next Step

TDDL

By Dr. Douglas P. Maxwell, Department of Plant Pathology, University of Wisconsin-Madison

WWWWW
TDDL

The dirty little secret among turfgrass professionals is that PLANT DISEASE DOES HAPPEN, no matter how hard we try to prevent it. Consequently, Plant Disease Management that is effective, timely, and as economical as possible is critical. The first step in appropriate turfgrass disease management must be the correct diagnosis of the problem, so the Wisconsin Turfgrass Disease Diagnostic Lab (TDDL) was created last year to provide commercial turfgrass professionals and homeowners with rapid, unbiased evaluations of turfgrass diseases and to then make appropriate management recommendations.

Our staff gets this information out as quickly as possible by phone, FAX, and mail, but is actively pursuing the newer electronic communication methods, such as E-mail and the WWW (World Wide Web), for up-to-the-minute information dissemination. Also, new molecular DNA technologies are to be developed for the more rapid identification of some elusive pathogens.

In the summer of 1995, the TDDL was under the supervision of Dr. Douglas P. Maxwell, a long-time member of the Plant Pathology Department, and Mr. Steve M. Millett, who has an M. Sc. Degree in turfgrass pathology from Clemson University and who is a Ph. D. graduate student with Dr. Maxwell. Mr. Millett was the fellow who provided the diagnoses and recommendations for the 200 plus samples submitted last summer. The 1995 season must rank as one of the most difficult summers in decades for golf course superintendents. The TDDL saw its share of unusual turfgrass problems, and "Poa decline" became an everyday topic of discussion.

In the March/April issue of THE GRASS ROOTS, Mr. Robert Erdahl, a member of the WTA Board of Directors,



outlined the partnership between the WTA and the TDDL for 1996 and the near future. This involves an initial sharing of expenses, with the University of Wisconsin and funds generated by the WTA each providing half the salary of a Research Specialist. Additional operating costs will come from increased fees (\$20 for homeowners and \$60 for commercial samples) and funds generated by the WTA. To achieve this arrangement, the TDDL offered \$1,000 contracts for services for the 1996 summer season. For each contract the staff of the TDDL will process 10 samples and make one site visit, and all contract holders will be invited to attend a plant disease management educational day. The needed funds were raised by the time of Expo-96. What an enthusiastic demonstration of support for the TDDL!

Personnel are the key to the success of any operation, and this was of little concern since Ms. Catherine Smejkal, who had been associated with Dr. Worf's and Dr. Meyer's turfgrass program for many years, was to be the diagnostician. Unfortunately, this was not to be, and her untimely and tragic death due to cancer in March 1996 has left a major void. A position description was approved by the

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Departmental Chair of Plant Pathology in March and applicants will be interviewed until a suitable candidate has been found.

What does the future hold? In short, not what was originally planned in the fall of 1995, but contingency plans are in place. The TDDL will move from Russell Labs on the main campus to the O. J. Noer Turfgrass Research & Education Facility in April. Personnel will include Mr. Gary Gaard, a long-time research and administrative employee of the Department of Plant Pathology, Steve Millett, and Doug Maxwell, as well as an undergraduate, Andi Guerin, who worked in the TDDL in August/September of 1995. The team of Gaard, Millett, and Maxwell will review all data collected during the diagnosis of each sample and jointly come to a diagnosis and plant disease management recommendation. Mr. Millett has by far the most experience with turfgrass diseases, and he will be involved in the final decision on each sample. When a new diagnostician has been hired, he/she will become part of this TDDL team.

The TDDL staff are not isolated. We have electronic mail connections to Dr. Randy Kane, the Turfgrass Disease Management Expert in the Chicago area, Dr. Hank Wilkinson, the Turfgrass Pathologist at the University of Illinois, and Dr. Phil Larsen, the Turfgrass Pathologist at the University of Minnesota, colleagues who have all indicated that they are willing to discuss any particular problem to give us a helping hand, if needed.

On a personal note: Mr. Bob Erdahl hit the nail on the head in his recent article about my expertise-(Doug Maxwell is) "long on plant pathology (32 yrs) and short on experience with turfgrass diseases." What are we (I say we because it is not just me.) doing about this? Getting involved!! This started with a wonderful experience when the WTA invited me to attend the International GCSAA meeting in Orlando in February. After a two-day workshop on Golf Course Design by Geoffrey Cornish and Robert Graves, I'll never look at a golf course in the same way. The workshop was excellent and I enjoyed it immensely. (It was my lucky day that all the disease management seminars were filled, because I'm certain that I would never have selected a seminar on golf course design-not in a hundred years.) Without this introduction, I would not have appreciated the article by Monroe S. Miller on the Tillinghastdesigned Cobble Valley Country Club; now I can hardly wait



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to see this course with its par 4 18th hole which has a dogleg right, as it goes around the old spring house.

Orlando was the beginning for me; now it is spring. With the help of the WTA, we have at least three superintendent mentors: Monroe Miller of Blackhawk Country Club, Jeff Parks of University Ridge, and Joe Kessenich of Pleasant View Golf Club. These superintendents have agreed to spend some time with our staff each month discussing golf course and turfgrass management schemes. Again I feel so lucky to be part of this group! Also, the TDDL staff will visit at least 20 golf courses this summer. As we gain experience, we will be better able to serve the turfgrass industry. Maybe I'll even find time to hit my first golf ball, who knows? But whatever happens, it will be a growing season filled with excitement and wonder. (I wonder...where that ball went, what that white fuzz is, why it's still raining,...)

If you think that you have a disease management situation that needs attention, I hope that you'll give us a call. We are anxious to serve and to learn. \mathbf{W}

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GOLF COURSE OLYMICS

By Monroe S. Miller

We decided to have a little lunch at a relatively new spot on the other side of town—Planet Golf.

I'd already been there several times. It is a unique place, a combination of a restaurant, an antique store full of golf collectibles, a bookshop with a generous stock-old, used and new-of golf books and publications, and a well stocked golf shop. Planet Golf also had an indoor practice area, complete with VCRs and private lessons. Enormous big screen TVs showed golf all day long, and golf crazed kids and players could play golf videos and games as long as their money held out. Original art, prints and posters covered the walls and were available for purchase. There were toys for sale, and at the entrance you were greeted with a restored, brightly painted (red) Harley Davidson golf cart. It turned on a large lazy susan. Elsewhere were several customized golf cars, looking more like small versions of expensive automobiles.

On the surface you would think Planet Golf had little chance for success. Golf is popular, but it isn't like car racing, rock n' roll music or outdoor hobbies like hunting. But I never doubted it would succeed. I know our town too well. There are too many people head over heels in love with golf for it to fail. It had something for everybody, even golf course superintendents.

Since Planet Golf had opened I had enjoyed several meals there, but more importantly had added some great books to my golf library and bought some fabulous golf course toys for my toy collection. For example, for six bucks I purchased *The Bobby Jones Story* by O.B. Keeler and Grantland Rice—a first edition. Less than two weeks after that, a copy of H.W. Wind's *Following Through* showed up for sale—for \$3! Musser's *Turf Management* and Madison's *Principles of Turfgrass Culture* both were on the Planet Golf bookshelves before they found a home on mine.

But the purchase that pleased me most was a mint Tonka Golf Course Tractor. My mouth fell open when I saw it, in its original condition and at a fair price. I snapped it up quick and it looks super with the rest of my collection. In fact, since I'd found one for myself I was able to return Tom Morris' to him. He had given me the Tonka he'd had for years in a moment of unforgettable generosity that touched me each time I thought about it. Now we each had one, thanks to Planet Golf.

I got there a little late. Tom Morris and Bill Flagstick had secured a couple of tables and pulled them together. Bogey Calhoun was trying on a GEAR golf shirt with the Planet Golf logo on the left sleeve, and Steady Eddie Middleton was playing FORE! on a video machine. Scottie Fennimore was drinking a cherry Coke and watching Calhoun act like a kid.

"Tell those guys to get over here so we can order," Tom said, with a little irritation in his voice.

"Yes, sir," I replied, inspiring a grin from Tom when he realized he'd been a little short with me. Ed and Bogey wandered over to join us.

"What are you so grumpy about, Tom?" Bill asked our friend. We're not used to seeing this normally even tempered and kindly guy in a bad mood.

"I am short of help and if I had a little more conscience I would have passed on breaking bread with you guys. We have a lot of work to do before the Western Women's tournament rolls into town and I am getting a little nervous."

A waitress came around and took our orders. It was a confirmation that this was a Wisconsin group through and through—all were red meat orders!

"I can hear the left ventricle of my heart groan," Bogey said as he grabbed his chest. "One of these years I am going to improve my diet and try to recapture my youthful figure."

"You'll never do it, Calhoun," Ed retorted. "You would have to give up beer and there is absolutely zero chance of that ever coming to pass!"

"You're right," he said with a sheepish grin.

"So, Tom, how is it that Maple Leaf CC is understaffed with a big event looming?" Bill wondered. "That isn't your style, and I don't want to hear that your budget is a little tight."

Tom sighed and started to explain. "One of my key guys was fixing a sprinkler head—it had a slow leak and he looked up in time to have a golf ball smack him right below his left eye. We rushed him to the hospital

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