

The Grass Roots

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About Our Cover:

One of the most familiar places on the University of Wisconsin campus in Madison is Agriculture Hall. Jennifer Eberhardt captured the essence of the building as seen from Henry Mall, which connects University Avenue with Ag Hall. Generations of students have attended classes in its auditorium, had discussions on its steps and enjoyed the ornamental plantings at its entry on Linden Drive.

"May is an eruption. With so little time, every living thing crowds creation into a few vibrant weeks and then sits back for June to take the census."

— Mel Ellis
Wisconsin Author

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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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My Thoughts on Afterthoughts

By Mark Kienert



"It'll never happen again!" Those were the words spoken to me by a former club president as he tried to explain, somewhat apologetically, for not having invited me to the club's invitational awards dinner. His embarrassment came as he overheard one the club's assistant golf pros ask me why he didn't see me at the reception last night. You automatically know my reply if you have been in this business for any length of time; you've probably been in a similar situation like this yourself. "I wasn't invited," was my simple reply. I recall a story of a former employer who was invited to a "black tie" affair on the same day of the event! Needless to say, he didn't go.

My ego is not as brittle as it once was, and I have started to catalog events that have occurred to me in my mind searching for simple omissions. I began to question why the green department was always the last to be informed. I'm sure it has something to do with the "trickle down" theory. Most clubs operate within committees and by the time the committee meets to finalize last minute details, they truly are last minute details. This forces most of us in the green department to scramble like mad, once again pulling the rabbit from the hat. Even as late as mid-summer last year, I walked into the pro shop and asked the question, "How come we have so many players on the course? We have a 9:00 o'clock shotgun, haven't we?"

The look on his face told me all I needed to know. "Oh my, I forgot to call you, didn't I?" The shotgun had been canceled due to a lack of interest and moved to a tee time format instead. Now I'm here to tell you that the golf pro here at Bull's Eye is one of my best friends. In all the activity of running his business, he forgot to tell me or anyone on my staff that the shotgun had been canceled. We were

prepared; the crew had reported early for work to get the job done. I do, however, have this fear that I will somehow overlook an important starting time and find our crew caught and cornered on the course without it being setup and ready for play.

If you have had this experience, you have been the victim of, as I like to call it, an "afterthought." As a tribute to our status as sometimes forgotten heroes of golf, I named my column in our clubs newsletter "Green Afterthoughts." It seems for some reason club department heads are the last to be included in the communication loop. Naming my column "Green Afterthoughts" was a bit of sarcasm on my part as I find most club newsletters to be woefully late in delivering timely communications to our memberships.

With that in mind, I began to search out new ways to communicate directly to our golfing membership. I placed important information up on

the bulletin board leading to both the men and women's locker room, thinking that would ease the problem. Like the late sixties song, "Signs, signs, everywhere a sign," these signs didn't produce the results I was after either. I recall the incredulous look I received from a board member whom stated that she never saw the aerification notice.

"It was hanging right next to where you post your handicap scores," I replied. "Oh! I never read those," she said. If you're like me, you have taken the steps of posting notices on locker room doors, clubhouse entrance doors and signs on the first and tenth tees. I have often thought it might take leasing the Goodyear blimp just to get my message across to the membership.

I know that public opinions are changing and have finally caught up with the times. In the January issue of "Golf Digest," a whopping 48 percent of golfers questioned in that survey

(Continued on page 5)



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(Continued from page 3)

stated that the golf course superintendent was the single most important person in the game of golf. Forty-eight percent is decent, but we should not be satisfied with this number. In speaking with colleagues, we concluded almost universally that the percentage would not have been that high five years ago.

It is my belief that with this kind of recognition there is an underlining measure of responsibility that goes with our new found credibility. I hope you stand ready and accept the challenge when opportunity presents itself. Image is an important measure of this success. Education, hard work and a simple modicum of professionalism will carry many of us a long way. Imagine how I felt when I was told that the winner of the American Society of Golf Course Architects golf hole design contest donned a baseball cap as he received his award from Jack Nicklaus. Oh my! He should know that we are no longer weedpickers in bib overalls. Our attire has changed from T-shirts to golf shirts. Once thought of as "old Jake" down by the "barn," we are now known as golf course managers

in the maintenance center. I enjoyed a measure of success when the board of directors refers to our future maintenance building as the "Green Section Service Center."

Now, as golf course managers preparing for the twenty-first century, our jobs have become even more conspicuous in the way in which we conduct our everyday business lives.

We have raised the bar to a new level simply by our hard work and loyalties to the game and clubs that employ us. For myself, I know things have changed since I'm expected to be a part of a "let's talk golf" seminar that is to be held in May at our club. I still wasn't asked, but this time I knew that was expected to be there. This time I wasn't an afterthought. ♣



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TURFGRASS CRUCIVERBALIST

By Steve Millett
Department of Plant Pathology
University of Wisconsin-Madison

A cruciverbalist is a maker of crossword puzzles. A turfgrass cruciverbalist is a maker of crossword puzzles for turfgrass professionals. For those of you who manage to handle the *New York Times* or the *USA Today* crossword puzzles, I apologize for my amateur effort. Let me or the editor know if you like this puzzle or if you have any requests for other puzzles such as word search, kriss kross, quote falls or cryptograms. I would like to hear from you at mmm@plantpath.wisc.edu. The answers will be at the back of the issue. I hope all is well. 🌱

(Answers on page 53)

ACROSS

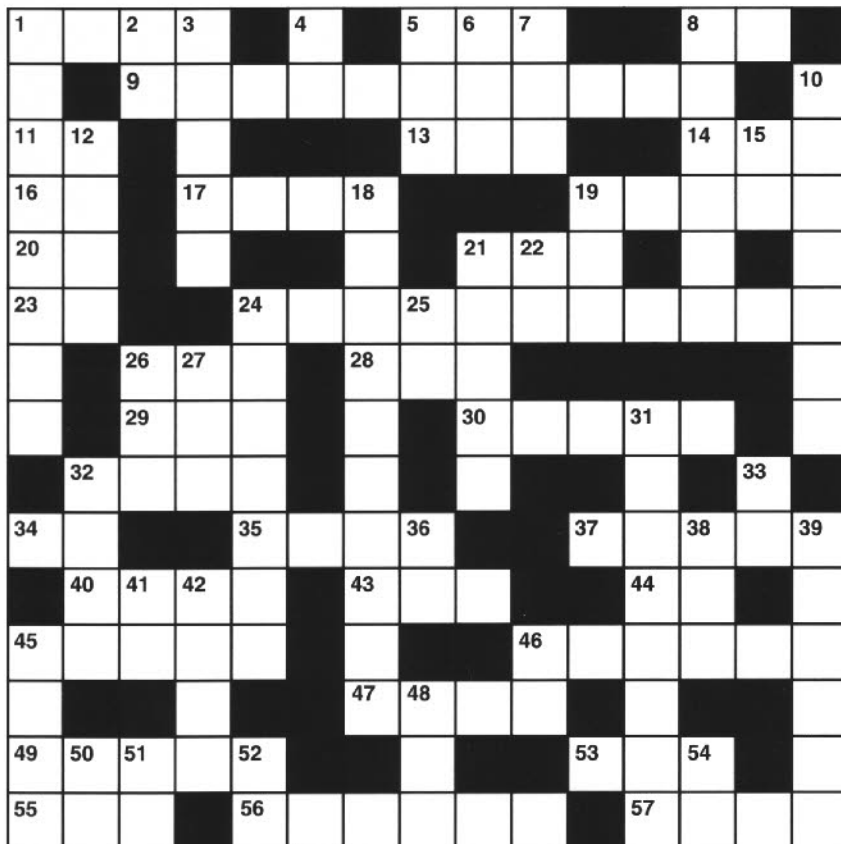
- 1 Grows in shady and moist areas
- 5 To direct one's efforts
- 8 Vet's Administration
- 9 Causes brown patch
- 11 "Just say _____"
- 13 Extrasensory perception
- 14 Late singer Orbison
- 16 Turnover
- 17 Dr. Necrotic Ring Spot
- 19 Heated discussion
- 20 Extended play
- 21 An expert
- 23 Verb form of be
- 24 Center of the Northern half of the Western hemisphere
- 28 To obtain
- 29 Macintosh
- 30 Legend Dr. Houston...
- 32 President Nixon
- 34 Research assistant
- 35 Bad, ill, unfavorable
- 37 Extreme, radical
- 40 Ears do this
- 43 Blue prints of life
- 44 Teaching assistant
- 45 My dog's name and the King of Rock & Roll
- 46 Lethargy; drunken
- 47 Clay, sand and _____
- 49 The _____ Roots

- 53 Indigestion
- 55 Age, day, time, epoch
- 56 Reggie likes to do this
- 57 Honey, darling, sweetheart

DOWN

- 1 UW PPath grad and 2nd USGA Green Prez
- 2 Senior
- 3 Full of color
- 4 The Wizard of _____
- 5 Tennis serve term
- 6 Internal Transcribed Spacer
- 7 Floor cleaning device
- 8 'King of Turf Pathology' from MSU
- 10 Blights that kill overnight
- 12 Said at accident
- 15 Ohio
- 18 Chemicals that kill fungi
- 19 Nirvana spin-off the "_____ Fighters"
- 21 Rhizoctonia solani causes brown _____

- 22 Route
- 24 Football's World Champions
- 25 id est
- 26 Sex Pistol's song
- 27 Political Action Committee
- 31 Controls: biological, chemical & _____
- 32 UW PPath grad who worked with Monteith for USGA
- 33 Railroad
- 36 Lane
- 38 An audible blow
- 39 Expose to circulating air
- 41 Electron volt
- 42 Plural of #5 across
- 45 A cutting quality
- 46 Street
- 48 Stuff in a pen
- 50 Railroad
- 51 Alcoholics Anonymous
- 52 Saint
- 54 Besides home runs, Babe Ruth had lots of these





It Was A Strange but Nearly Normal Winter

By Monroe S. Miller

Freeze/thaw repeated five times. Lots of snow falls yet never much on the ground. Not very cold, at least for any extended periods. Snow at inopportune times—Reinders conference, USGA regional conference—but within a few inches of the average. Statistics will say it was a “typical” winter.

That was winter where I live in Wisconsin; most likely it was different where you live, especially if you live up north, say Oshkosh and beyond. We were getting ready to open in Madison and Randy Witt hadn't seen any of his course yet in Green Bay. In northern northern Wisconsin, by mid-March Hurley had recorded almost 260 inches of snow! Jeff Gregos' snow mold field days should be very revealing this spring.

Anyway, when spring does finally arrive and golf courses open from south to north, most of us are ready for it. Fresh air, green grass, players, new machinery—they all make for bad cases of spring fever for most golf course superintendents. Summaries from Wisconsin Ag Statistics Service are here for your records and comparisons.



Twenty-five year members in 1997, L to R: John Krutilla, Chuck Frazier, Don Ferger & Monroe Miller. Jim Belfield wasn't able to attend.

Our course wasn't opened by Easter this year. The sacred Sunday was early in 1997. It falls from March 22 to April 25, so some years Easter brunch at the Club has members and guests looking over a very green golf course. Not this Easter.

“Why?” you might ask? (I did). Here's the reason: Easter is celebrated on the first Sunday after the first full moon after the vernal equinox. Therefore, this date involves a lunar concept to it.


The exception to this rule is if the first post-equinox full moon falls on a Sunday. Celebrating Easter on that day would coincide with Passover, which always begins at the full moon. Easter, in this case, occurs one week later.

Best bumper sticker seen since the last issue of *The Grass Roots*: How can you tell when Slick Willie Clinton is lying? His lips are moving!

I hadn't given it a thought until Charlie Shaw called me sometime in mid-winter to make certain I would be attending the WGCSA spring business meeting. Along with four others, I was going to receive a plaque recognizing 25 years as a WGCSA member. Of the group—Ferger, Belfield, Krutilla, Frazier and Miller—four had spent their entire 25 years at the same club! Only in Wisconsin—Belfield at Tripoli, Ferger at CC of Beloit, Frazier at Nakoma GC and Miller at Blackhawk CC. And it isn't like John Krutilla has moved all over God's half acre, either.

Community, stability, persistence—those are marks of the boys from Wisconsin. And as I think back, the 25 year classes of the past have pretty much been the same.

Last summer was a tough year for Wisconsin in the battle with gypsy moths. The Wisconsin Department of Agriculture sprayed 970 acres around Kellner, which sits on the Wood and
(Continued on page 9)



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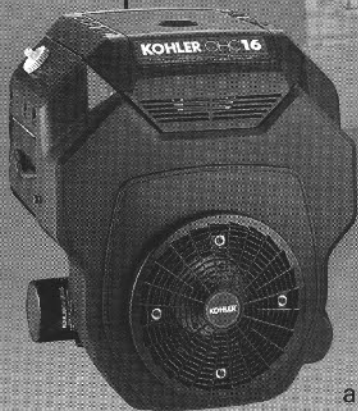
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(Continued from page 7)

Portage county line east of Wisconsin Rapids, but it was an ineffective treatment. WDATCP officials aren't sure why, but it could have been the rainy weather.

At any rate, the acreage set for 1997 treatment for moth control has increased by 900% to 10,240 acres along the Wood/Portage county line, almost one-fourth of the total acres scheduled to be sprayed in Wisconsin this year. All told, 40,000 acres at 24 sites in 13 counties will be sprayed to kill the caterpillars which eat leaves of more than 300 tree and shrub species. Defoliation can kill these valued landscape features.

The gypsy moth problem took a new turn in late March when the U.S. Department of Agriculture ordered Wisconsin to inspect all products sold by orchards, nurseries, Christmas tree farms, lumber companies and "anything that is stored outside" before it is sold. The inspectors will look for eggs of the moth in four counties in northeast Wisconsin—Brown, Door, Manitowoc and Kewaunee. Fourteen other counties in the northeast are labeled "transition" counties. All 18 may be quarantined by WDATCP.

Extensive trapping by WDATCP (we have participated for years) hasn't turned up huge numbers of adults, but state inspectors discovered lots of egg masses in these counties along the Lake Michigan border.

Quarantines aren't cheap. We now have only 1 1/2 state employees dedicated to the gypsy moth program; in contrast, Michigan has 50 - 60 full-timers who do nothing but search the state for egg masses.



Bob Brame has visited Wisconsin twice this spring to speak for the USGA green section — at the WGCSA spring business meeting and at the USGA regional conference in Kohler.

This problem is clearly a bad moon on the rise.

The last issue of GCSAA's *Newsline* reported on the results of a member survey. I completed the questionnaire myself and was dumbfounded by one of the questions. To paraphrase, some genius in GCSAA asked "if we should start a PAC."

It was a breathtaking question, considering the stench coming out of Washington, D.C. since the election of Clinton and Al (he's your pal) Gore. Their political fundraising schemes—

from putting the touch on Asians at a Buddhist temple, the sale of the Lincoln bedroom and freebie rides on Air Force One, free coffee with Willie at the White House, to God only knows what else, has disgusted nearly everyone in the country (except politicians). GCSAA doesn't need to be in on that nonsense.

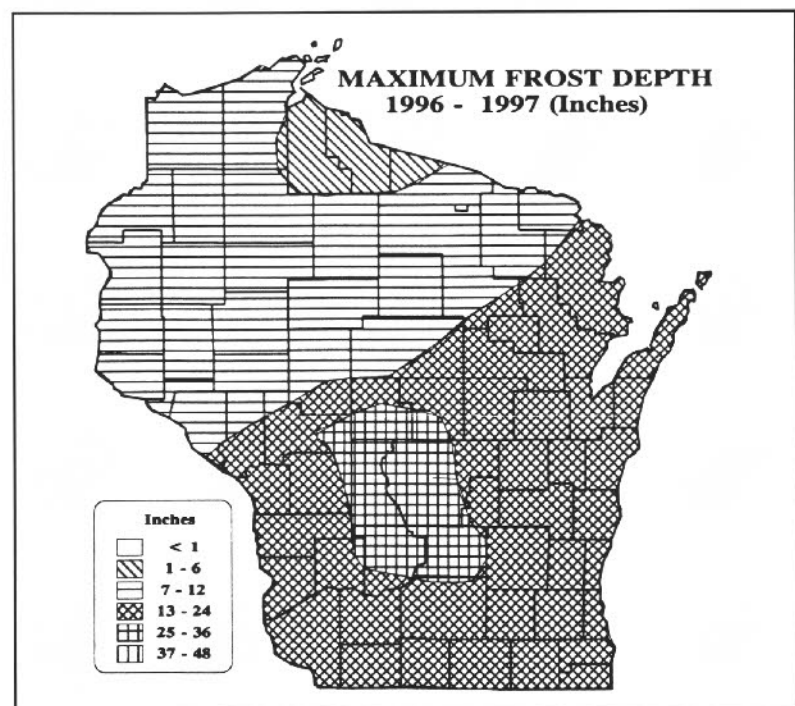
Since the question was posed, one wonders if somebody in Lawrence actually thought we should engage in such wasteful silliness. Would GCSAA members have had a vote in how such money would have

(Continued on page 10)

Wisconsin Average Precipitation October 1, 1996 - March 31, 1997 1/

District	Total	Normal	Departure from normal	Percent of normal
Northwest	13.40	9.40	4.00	143
North Central	12.79	9.70	3.08	132
Northeast	12.99	10.43	2.56	125
West Central	13.59	9.19	4.40	148
Central	10.60	10.11	0.50	105
East Central	10.47	10.69	-0.22	98
Southwest	11.88	10.03	1.85	118
South Central	11.18	10.86	0.32	103
Southeast	11.14	11.67	-0.54	95
State	12.30	10.01	2.29	123

1/Preliminary. Source: Matthew Menne, State Climatologist.



(Continued from page 9)

been spent? Would we have held an election to decide on who was to receive our endorsement and money?

Fortunately, members responded with a 63% negative response. That should answer the question for a long, long time. Like forever.

I received a nice letter from Dr. John Stier a few weeks ago. He and his wife Valerie have purchased a home in the Stoughton area; you cannot miss the coincidence since O.J. Noer grew up on a Stoughton farm.

John will pick up the responsibilities of the turfgrass extension position in the Department of Horticulture in late April. Most likely he will spend the summer familiarizing himself with the turfgrass industries in Wisconsin and all the problems that will require his attention. He also has a course in turfgrass science to teach this fall and that preparation will require some of his time.

Then there are grant proposals to write, research to get organized and a hundred other things that go along with any new job. Whenever we can, we can be counted on to lend a hand to this new faculty member. We will get him to some WGCSA meetings and start his career as a *Grass Roots* author. And maybe Tom Harrison can give him some lessons on living among the Norwegians. Stoughton has more than a few!



One of the most accomplished speakers at the UW-Madison, Phil Pellitteri addressed golf turf insect problems.

Thanks to Reinders and to the USGA for two excellent late winter conferences. Only those among us who have served on committees that



The busy crowd at Reinders 13th turf conference grew to 1,300!

Snow and Frost Depths, Winter 1996-97

Month	Snow Depths						Frost Depths					
	1995-96		1996-97 1/		Normal 2/		1995-96		1996-97 1/		Normal 2/	
	Date	Inches	Date	Inches	Inches		Date	Inches	Date	Inches	Inches	
Early December	12/1	6.9	11/29	3.3	2.6		12/1	3.7	11/29	3.2	1.7	
Mid-December	12/15	6.5	12/13	3.4	4.4		12/15	6.8	12/13	2.5	4.4	
Late December	12/29	6.3	12/27	8.6	5.9		12/29	9.2	12/27	5.0	7.4	
Mid-January	1/12	8.6	1/10	8.7	8.0		1/12	12.0	1/10	6.7	11.1	
Late January	1/26	18.0	1/24	7.9	9.9		1/26	14.8	1/24	10.5	14.5	
Mid-February	2/9	14.0	2/7	12.2	10.1		2/9	18.8	2/7	11.9	17.0	
Late February	2/23	8.8	2/21	8.2	8.6		2/23	19.9	2/21	10.4	17.7	
Mid-March	3/8	7.7	3/7	5.6	7.2		3/8	18.5	3/7	8.1	16.3	
Late March	3/23	2.0	3/21	6.9	3.8		3/23	13.9	3/21	5.5	10.6	
Averages		8.8		7.2	6.7			13.2		7.1	11.2	

1/Survey dates vary between 1995-96 and 1996-97. 2/ 1961-96 and 1962-97 averages.

Mean Temperature and Departure from Normal, Fahrenheit, Winter 1996-97

Location	October		November		December		January		February		March		Six months	
	Avg.	Dep.	Avg.	Dep.	Avg.	Dep.	Avg.	Dep.	Avg.	Dep.	Avg.	Dep.	Avg.	Dep.
Madison	48.5	-0.4	28.7	-6.7	22.6	0.9	15.7	-0.3	24.1	3.5	34.1	1.8	30.2	0.8
Milwaukee	52.3	2.0	33.1	-4.6	27.1	2.7	20.4	1.5	28.2	5.2	35.9	2.6	33.2	1.6
Green Bay	46.7	-1.3	28.5	-5.9	21.7	1.5	15.1	0.8	21.1	2.8	26.9	-1.1	28.3	0.6
La Crosse	51.7	1.5	29.2	-6.4	19.9	-0.4	14.7	0.3	24.8	4.9	33.9	1.1	30.2	1.2
Duluth	43.6	-0.1	23.9	-4.5	11.2	-1.6	7.0	0.0	14.8	2.5	23.1	-1.3	20.6	-0.8

Source: Matthew Menne, State Climatologist.

Total Precipitation and Departure from Normal, Water Equivalent Inches, Winter 1996-97

Location	October		November		December		January		February		March		Six months	
	Total	Dep.	Total	Dep.	Total	Dep.	Total	Dep.	Total	Dep.	Total	Dep.	Total	Dep.
Madison	3.14	0.97	1.01	-1.08	1.27	-0.57	1.36	0.29	2.50	1.42	1.54	-0.63	10.82	0.40
Milwaukee	3.00	0.59	0.63	-1.88	1.53	-0.80	1.26	-0.34	2.47	1.02	0.66	-2.01	9.55	-3.42
Green Bay	2.93	0.70	0.80	-1.36	1.89	0.36	1.81	0.66	1.40	0.37	1.92	-0.13	10.75	0.90
La Crosse	2.98	0.78	4.45	2.72	1.42	0.15	1.80	0.87	1.16	0.26	3.09	1.13	14.90	5.91
Duluth	3.08	0.59	3.95	1.80	0.86	-0.38	0.94	-0.28	0.37	-0.43	1.39	-0.52	10.59	0.78

Source: Matthew Menne, State Climatologist.

Total Snowfall and Departure from Normal, Inches, Winter 1996-97

Location	October		November		December		January		February		March		Six months	
	Total	Dep.	Total	Dep.	Total	Dep.	Total	Dep.	Total	Dep.	Total	Dep.	Total	Dep.
Madison	0.0	-0.2	5.9	2.1	6.7	-4.3	13.1	2.7	15.0	7.2	2.7	-5.6	43.4	1.9
Milwaukee	0.0	-0.2	1.8	-1.4	9.2	-1.1	23.6	10.5	10.7	0.7	0.5	-8.1	45.8	0.4
Green Bay	T	-0.2	3.7	-1.2	19.4	8.6	17.2	6.3	15.5	7.1	20.7	11.8	76.5	32.4
La Crosse	0.0	-0.1	12.2	7.8	11.3	2.2	11.1	1.0	10.9	2.9	20.4	11.4	65.9	25.2
Duluth	0.3	-1.2	15.9	3.2	42.2	26.8	35.5	18.4	8.5	-2.8	23.6	10.2	126.0	54.0

T=Trace. Source: Matthew Menne, State Climatologist.