

(Continued from page 39)

fields built in the Minneapolis inner city. One was built and the other was under construction on what used to be very distressed railroad land. The amount of land was limited so the fields had to be built to be played on continually and take a lot of abuse. They decided to build the fields with a Netlon sand based rootzone, install irrigation, and use *supina*. They also wanted to create as much green-space as possible so even the parking lot was sodded to *supina* and on Netlon mix to resist compaction. The funding for these fields came from a group called Urban Ventures. Urban Ventures is a non profit organization supported by corporate and individual sponsors. One of the large sponsors is Honeywell Corporation. Their headquarters is located adjacent to these fields and part of their parking lot was sacrificed to make enough room to build a regulation size soccer field. Another sponsor is the Minnesota Sport Turf Managers Association. Their members are donating time and equipment to guarantee the continued success of the fields. Urban Ventures is involved in many other projects to help inner city children. Their investment was based on their belief that

inner cities can be improved if young children are given more good activities to that will give them pride in their community. Not just anyone can use the facilities either. The children have to earn the right by getting good grades in school.

The last stop was one that I insisted we make. I wanted to visit the turf research facilities at the University of Minnesota in Saint Paul. Unfortunately we stopped in unannounced during a school day; consequently, there was nobody to show us around the facility. Their facility included agronomy, perennial flower and shrub and tree research on the same land. An agronomy student was able to inform us a little about some of the putting green and species research and we also saw some of the space-planted breeding work. I will need another visit to get the complete tour though.

One of the things John and I discussed during the drive was how many athletic field construction and maintenance phone calls we received this summer. John has had a lot of athletic field exposure but mine is more limited. This trip was very informative to see the many athletic fields in different phases of completion and

styles of construction. All the other stops were also valuable learning experiences. My hope is that the WGCSA will have more construction tours for monthly meetings in the coming years. Something is always learned at the usual monthly meetings and even more so when a half-day is dedicated to a special tour like Gary Tanko hosted on shop safety at Sentry World last year. But nothing beats the Construction Tour. ♣

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# Four Great -ber Months!

By Monroe S. Miller

The last four months of 1997—the -ber months (you know: SeptemBER, OctoBER, NovemBER, and DecemBER) have been wonderful ones for most of us in Wisconsin, even those not entrusted with the welfare of a golf course.

September was warmer, warmer than August even, and dry; it was exceptional for golf players and those among us involved in course projects that required moving soil and/or seeding. October and November were sort of reversed, somewhat like August and September were. It was fortunate there were good outside working days in November, especially later in the month. The foliage crop on trees in 1997 was not only larger than normal, but it was late in falling. On our course, oaks dominate the landscape and they are last to fall every year. We worked on this routine task into December.

As we live our lives in the great state of Wisconsin, successful seasons by the Badgers and the Packers made most of us happy. The whuppin' the Packers gave the Dallas team in Great Bay was one of the five best games I've attended, even though my feet are still cold. "The 'boys went down in Tittletown!" was a phrase oft repeated by the legions who love the green and gold. The following week saw them pound the Vikings into the Metrodome "turf", also an exciting win. The Badgers made it to a bowl game, again, an accomplishment that is getting to be a good habit.

These months have great holidays—Labor Day and the end of the busiest days of golf, Halloween, Thanksgiving and Christmas. And, finally, we can enjoy some holidays with our families instead of at work.

The autumn of 1997 will be remembered by me as the time of our best Symposium ever. That was pleasure in the extreme, experiencing learning in a totally absorbing and interesting way.

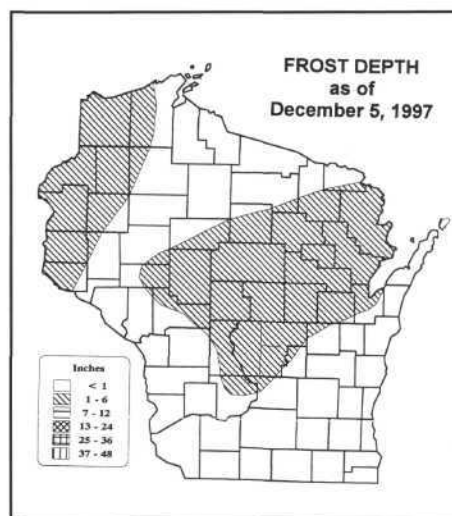
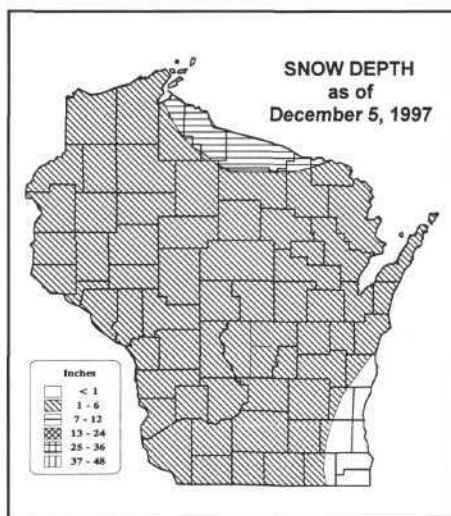
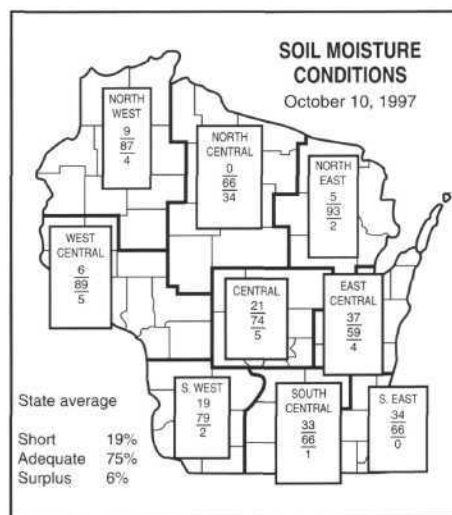
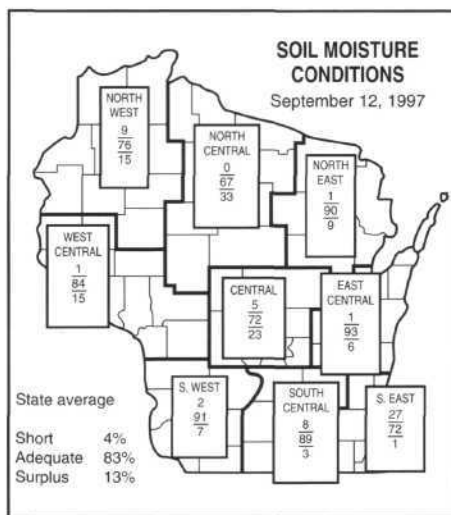
On a personal note, I enjoyed this season because it was my 25th, with the same employer even. The players at our Club helped me celebrate it in a really wonderful and classy way. I won't soon forget that Sunday.

And now we are at the threshold of another year in golf course management in Wisconsin. Will it be a good year, fulfilling and rewarding? Or will El Nino bring havoc to our weather and our season, bringing drought or disease epidemics? Time will tell.

Anyway, as we close the records on 1997, here are the final weather

statistics from the Wisconsin Agricultural Statistics Service for your perusal. I hope it was a good one and that next year will be your (and my) best ever. Happy New Year!

Did you catch the October issue of *Golf Digest*? The Ryder Cup was played at the Valderrama course in Spain, a course designed by Robert Trent Jones. He has done a couple of courses in Wisconsin—one on the Apostle Islands and, of course, The Springs near the Wisconsin River and close to Spring Green. Did you



ever wonder why he chose to do this course? Nick Seitz wrote this: "(Jones) liked the sonorous ring of Frank Lloyd Wright's full name and even Wright's egocentric outlook, once calling himself *The Frank Lloyd Wright of golf architecture...*"

Lawyers sometimes get a bad rap in our country and judging from the ones I know, it is often undeserved. But every once in awhile one lives up (down?) to the stereotype. Take for example the guy (an attorney) from Wausau who was able to patent a putting stroke!

Patent No. 5,616,089 was issued to protect this attorney's dominant *hand putting method*. The technique involves using the putter with one hand and using your other hand to brace your arm. He claims it took five strokes off his handicap.

He admits it will be all but impossible to collect royalties, but instead he hopes to develop a golf instructional video and sell it to recoup his expenses from the patent process.

Appropriately enough, the patent was issued on April Fool's Day this year. More aggravating to me that the silliness of this person's patent application is the time wasted by public employees—overpaid bureaucrats, no doubt—in reviewing such foolishness. It is a classic example of the sort of stupidity that leads to so much cynicism about our government and those who work for it.

The Turfgrass Information Center is now on the World Wide Web. You can visit their homepage at <http://www.lib.mus.edu/tgif>.

When most golf course superintendents talk about seed production, they are usually thinking about seed farms in Washington state or Oregon. If the superintendent of the UW Agricultural Research Station at Ashland and the owner of Deer Creek Seed, Inc. have anything to say about it, that perception may change.

Bill Leakey, owner of Deer Creek Seed, and Mike Mlynarek, superintendent of the Ashland ARS, think northern Wisconsin has the potential to produce significant quantities of quality seed. "This is grass country," Leakey said while explaining what an excellent alternative seed production would be for farmers in the northern part of our state. It would fit in nicely as a crop rotation component, too.

The Ashland station started out with seven different grasses to see which could be grown there. All seven made a crop, but perennial ryegrass was selected for more testing because it had the greatest potential for success. From these test plots demonstration fields were designed, and they were followed by limited production fields. In 1996, 198 acres of turf seed were sown; this year the acreage grew to 235. In 1999, it is anticipated 451 acres will be grown, and Leakey's goal is to have 2000 acres planted in the year 2000.

Yields of cleaned seed this season were about 700 pounds per acre. Both men believe that with good management yields of 1,200 to 1,500 pounds of seed per acre are attainable.

Anytime Wisconsin agriculture has another crop choice, the benefit is great. When that crop choice is one Wisconsin golf course superintendents could possibly use, we benefit directly. It is going to be an interesting process to watch unfold.



Stress detection glasses use aircraft and satellite technology to evaluate the health of plants. When drought, disease or some other pest cause stress to plants, it can be more easily detected through these glasses.

Most golf course superintendents have what I've called for years "a calibrated eyeball." We are able to look at a grass area and intuitively or instinctively know that something is wrong and know what that something is. Our eyes may soon get some help.

Stress detection glasses are now available that will help us pinpoint plant stress in the sea of green that is a fairway or a tee or a golf green. These glasses can help detect stress caused by drought or pests or disease. The purple lenses in plant stress detection glasses were developed by NASA so that aircraft pilots could evaluate ground vegetation. This is another spin-off from the space program research.

The lenses serve as "passive chlorophyll detectors" which filter out certain light wavelengths. They allow a viewer to see through the green and spot problems lost in that sea of green.

The glasses can be used not only for grass but any green crop. They sell for what seems to me to be a reasonable \$80.

Since I am on the subject of high technology, the U.S. Census Bureau recently reported that Wisconsin ranks No. 1 in the country for high-tech jobs per capita. Stated another way, per capita more people in Wisconsin are working in high technology jobs than any other state. Yes, including California and its Silicon Valley and Massachusetts with its Route 228 outside of Boston. You could argue that we are both the Dairy State and the Technology State!

It is a good sign, too, because that is the way our national economy is  
(Continued on page 44)

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(Continued from page 43)

moving. Wisconsin has 9,980 technology employees per 100,000 citizens; second ranked Massachusetts has 5,710 high tech jobs per 100,000 citizens and California has less than half what we have.

Once again, thanks to the University of Wisconsin. It acts as a magnet for high technology companies and offers intellectual resources for those companies. Basic research drives new technology and that is what the UW does as well as any other institution in the world. For taxpayers, this is visible evidence of how our tax dollars for education are paying off. It is also evidence that The Wisconsin Idea really works!

I saw similar lists to these a number of years ago, and if my memory serves me correctly, I also printed them in *The Grass Roots*. Below are updates of the top discipline problems in public schools in the 1940s and in the 1990s.

#### **1940s Problems      1990s Problems**

Talking	Assault
Chewing gum	Drug abuse
Making noise	Alcohol abuse
Running in the halls	Gang warfare
Getting out of turn in line	Robbery
Wearing improper clothes	Rape
Not putting paper in wastebaskets	Suicide
	Arson
	Pregnancy
	Venereal disease

Things have changed a lot—for the worse.

The Pesticide Application Training Schedule for 1998 is out, and the Ornamental and Turf (3) category sessions are as follows:

Milwaukee	March 5	Feb. 20
Chippewa Falls	March 10	Feb. 24
Green Bay	March 11	Feb. 25
Arlington	March 25	March 11
Milwaukee	March 26	March 12

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Here is another example of the uphill battle people like golf course superintendents seem to be engaged in all too often. It is a news item forwarded to me by Mike Lee of Blackwolf Run.

*A freshman at Eagle Rock Junior High won first prize at the Greater Idaho Falls Science Fair, April 26. He was attempting to show how conditioned we have become to alarmists practicing junk science and spreading fear of everything in our environment. In his project he urged people to sign a petition demanding strict control or total elimination of the chemical "dihydrogen monoxide." And for plenty of good reasons, since it can*

- 1. cause excessive sweating and vomiting*
- 2. it is a major component in acid rain*
- 3. it can cause severe burns in its gaseous state*
- 4. accidental inhalation can kill you*
- 5. it contributes to erosion*
- 6. it decreases effectiveness of automobile brakes*
- 7. it has been found in tumors of terminal cancer patients*

*He asked 50 people if they supported a ban of the chemical. Forty-three said yes, six were undecided, and only one knew that the chemical was water. The title of his prize winning project was "How Gullible Are We?" The conclusion is obvious.*

El Nino—the abnormal heating of the southern Pacific Ocean off the coast of South America—has affected winter weather in Wisconsin in years past and National Weather Service meteorologists say it will again this winter.

El Nino winters have more precipitation and more of it comes in the form of drizzle, slushy freezing rain and thawing days. The six strongest El Nino winters on record, when averaged together, gave weather in our town 3.9 degrees warmer, had 8.4 inches less snow and received 0.67 inches more precipitation.

When it is distilled down, I'll still believe it when I see it. My preference is always for a winter with lots of snow that falls in early December and leaves for good in mid-March.

EXPO is around the corner. I've seen the program and it looks very, very good. I hope to see all of you there. 🙌



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# BEST EVER?

By Monroe S. Miller

Although not scientific, my sense is that most people who attended the 32nd annual Wisconsin Golf Turf Symposium thought it was the best one ever. My personal history with the Symposium goes back to the second one in 1967; I missed two while in the Army and another due to a personal conflict. I would judge the 1997 Symposium to be in the top three. It was terrific! An attendance record of 232 was set.

What makes for a memorable event? Lots of things are important—venue, weather (can you get there without driving hassles?), time of year, topic. And lectures.

The strength of the Symposium this year was in the roster of speakers. The Symposium committee selected a topic that piques the interest of all golf course superintendents, and then they chose top notch individuals to talk about this great topic.

This year's roster of speakers had the intellect of faculty like Dr. Wayne Kussow and Dr. Norm Hummel (former faculty member). Included was a designer (one of the wittiest and one of the best!) — Brian Silva, and a golf course builder (Lee Bruce and Dave Weber). The program presented the USGA agronomists — our own Bob Vavrek and Jim Moore, who is the USGA Green Section's construction educator. And to make the program complete, two end users — golf course superintendents — spoke to us. The entire meeting flowed from start to finish in a way seldom seen in educational seminars.

Dr. Kussow got the meeting off to a good start with a discussion about USGA Green Section specification greens. He asked some tough questions, brought out strengths and shortcomings and generally set the stage (as a good keynoter does) for the rest of the speakers.

Norm Hummel has left the ivy covered walls at Cornell University and entered the world of American business. His lab offers analysis services for soils and construction materials for golf courses, and he is gaining a reputation as a credible consultant on soil related issues on golf courses.



Dr. Norm Hummel made a point with Marc Davison.



Keynote speaker Dr. Wayne Kussow.



Lee Bruce thinks about his answer to a question from the audience.



Three of the most veteran and finest golf course superintendents in America — Wayne Otto, Paul Voykin and Dan Quest.



The head table, left to right are: Rod Johnson, Al Nees, Bruce Worzella, Bob Vavrek, Mark Kienert, Wayne Otto, Gordon Waddington and Terry Ward.

Hummel built his lecture around the four general methods of putting green construction commonly seen these days: 1) USGA Green Section method, 2) simplified USGA method, 3) California method, and 4) push up or native soil method.

It took longer than a lot of us had hoped, but we finally got Brian Silva back on our Wisconsin program. He's a little more gray than he was when he was last here, but his sense of humor is sharper! "I'm confused,"

*(Continued on page 46)*

(Continued from page 45)

Brian declared. "Some are good, a few are thin are there are isolated dry spots!" Silva visited about greens he has built using different methods and concluded there were surprising similar results. This man and his success must make Geoff Cornish smile.

It made sense to follow the lecture of a good golf course architect with some thoughts from a good golf course builder, or, better yet, two good builders. Dave Weber's message, clearly, was that construction of golf greens requires great flexibility for success. Bruce Company founder, Lee Bruce, has seen a lot of different circumstances in the many years he's been in the business. The earthmoving has not changed much, but everything else involved in new course construction has been "all over the map". He does predict that in the future there will be courses built for the less affluent.

The last time Jim Moore participated in the Symposium he gave the keynote address; it was super. His



A look at the large noon luncheon crowd.



Jim Latham and Mike Handrich enjoy good conversation at the luncheon.



Mark Jackson accepts thanks from Session Chairman Mike Lee.

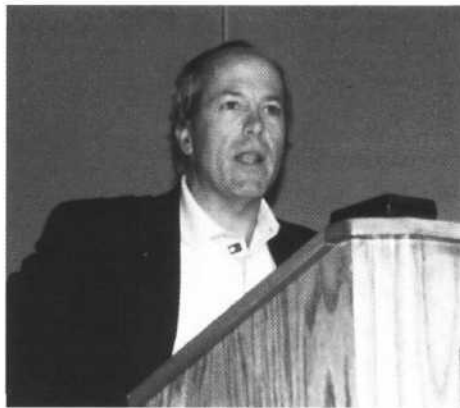


Jeff Carlson answers a question about Widows Walk Golf Course.

return this year was in his role as an USGA Green Section construction guru. His comments focused on factors important in green construction, factors like location, level of maintenance expected, superintendent skills, and construction methods.

Golf course superintendents like hearing other golf course superintendents speak, and two really good golf course superintendents AND speakers traveled to Milwaukee this fall to share their experiences. Mark Jackson is the course manager at Detroit Golf Club and talked about rebuilding greens at that venerable old golf course. Jeff Carlson comes from a new course that already has generated considerable headlines and interest. Designed by Dr. Mike Hurdzan, the Widows Walk Golf Course was an experiment in construction and is, still, an experiment in progress. Grass varieties, grass mixtures and different root zone mixes are but a few of the variables that went into this Massachusetts golf course. It will be talked about and studied for years.

The Symposium committee figured if you have Jim Moore at hand then it makes sense to get him to the podium twice. Jim shared his "Checklist for Construction Materials and Quality Construction" with us. It was information and advice that was good to hear. Demand has led Jim to get it



Brian Silva will be remembered as one of the most interesting speakers ever.

out on the Internet. I would be willing to bet money Moore will be back in Milwaukee next year for the Symposium as a speaker.

Bob Vavrek continued a long standing tradition by wrapping up the Symposium as the last speaker. It was a good job by an accomplished speaker.

Already, before we left for home, the topic for next year was chosen — GROW IN. It should be another good meeting. 🌱



Dave Weber of The Bruce Company.



Jim Moore appeared on the Symposium twice.



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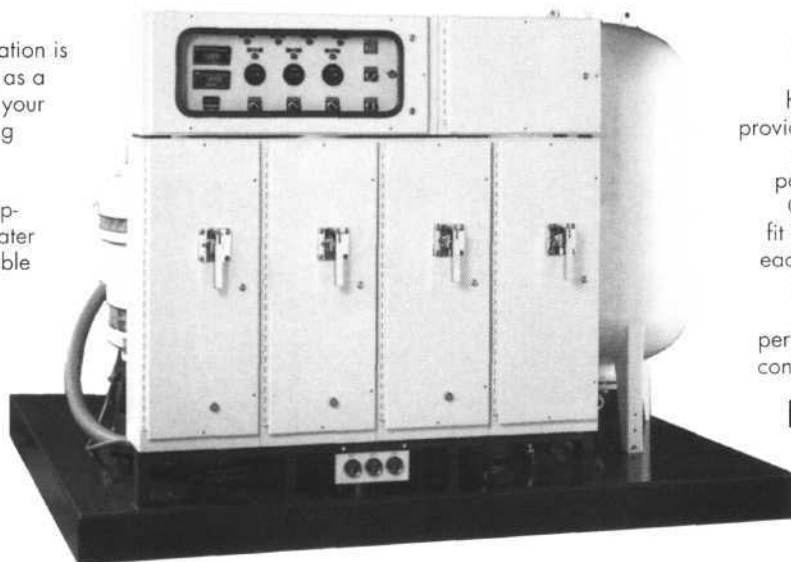
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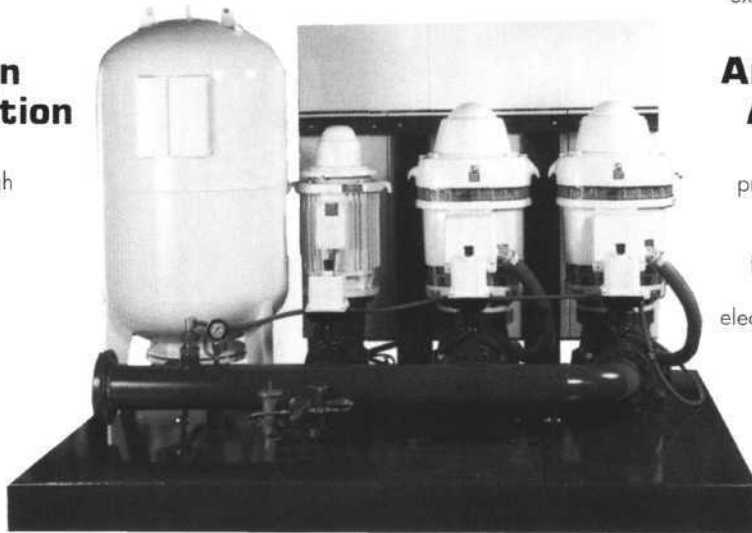
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# THE GRASS ROOTS Article Index - 1997

Compiled by Larry Lennert

## Awards

*Millett Wins Watson Fellowship; Accepts Award At GCSAA Conference*, by Monroe S. Miller, March/April, p. 17.

*Golf Digest Rankings Announced; Blackwolf Run Is Wisconsin's Best Course*, by Monroe S. Miller, May/June, p. 51.

## Breezes Through The Pines

*Why Not Adopt?*, by Tony Rzadzki, May/June, p. 52.

## The Campus Connection

*Where Do Turfies Come From?*, by Jon Thronson, January/February, p. 30.

*An Investigation Of The Salt Tolerance Of Turfgrasses*, by Bradley A. Smith, July/August, p. 36.

*Bentgrass Response To Non-Traditional Soil Additives*, by Timothy Wegner, July/August, p. 58.

## Cultural Practices

*Prescription Disease Management*, by Steve Millett, January/February, p. 51.

*Dollar Spot Resistance Management With Reduced-Rate Fungicide Mixtures*, by Jeff Gregos, March/April, p. 30.

*Lambeau Lawn Becomes Larger Than Life; Tales From "Title Town"*, by Norman Ray, March/April, p. 36.

*To Remove Ice Or Not To Remove Ice—That Is The Question*, by Robert Vavrek, March/April, p. 39.

*Thinking About Biological Control*, by Gary Gaard, May/June, p. 32.

*Widespread Winter Woes*, by Robert Vavrek, July/August, p. 42.

*Typhula Zones*, by Steve Millett, September/October, p. 28.

*Dollar Spot Control: Old Stand-Bys Breathe New Life When Tank Mixed In Reduced-Rate Mixtures*, by Jeffrey S. Gregos, November/December, p. 48.

## Editorial

*Good Writers And Faithful Advertisers Lead "The Grass Roots" To Another GCSAA Chapter Publications Award*, by Monroe S. Miller, May/June, p. 55.

*Restless In Madison*, by Jeffery S. Gregos, November/December, p. 19.

## The Editor's Notebook

*Best Wishes For Another Year In Wisconsin*, by Monroe S. Miller, January/February, p. 13.

*The Anxiety Season*, by Monroe S. Miller, March/April, p. 6.

*It Was A Strange But Nearly Normal Winter*, by Monroe S. Miller, May/June, p. 7.

*A Cold, Dry And Windy Spring In Wisconsin*, by Monroe S. Miller, July/August, p. 6.

*A Summer Summary*, by Monroe S. Miller, September/October, p. 16.

*Finish Up, Wind Down*, by Monroe S. Miller, November/December, p. 35.

## Education

*An Observer's View Of The NCTE*, by Pat Norton, January/February, p. 24.

*Reducing Our Fears: Pesticides Are Medicines, Too*, by The Turf Resource Center, January/February, p. 27.

*1996 SYMPOSIUM: Risk Worth The Reward*, by Rod Johnson, January/February, p. 28.

*EXPO Is PACKED!*, by Tom Schwab, March/April, p. 18.

*GCSAA 1997 Conference—A Roll Of The Dice*, by Monroe S. Miller, March/April, p. 25.

*Sentryworld To Host 2nd Annual Golf Course Tour*, May/June, p. 15.

*1997 Spring Education/Business Meeting Held*, by Brent R. Amann, May/June, p. 28.

*Turf Students Spend Week In Racine At Jacobsen School; WGCSA Members Serve As Faculty*, by Monroe S. Miller, July/August, p. 54.

*Summer Field Day Wants YOU!*, by Audra Anderson, July/August, p. 63.

*Expo '98—Information Packed*, by Audra Anderson, November/December, p. 39.

## Equipment

*Nothing Ventured, Nothing Gained (WTA Summer Field Day)*, by Tom Schwab, November/December, p. 26.

## From Across The Country

*Reducing Our Fears: Pesticides Are Medicines, Too*, by The Turf Resource Center, January/February, p. 27.

*Lambeau Lawn Becomes Larger Than Life; Tales From "Title Town"*, by Norman Ray, March/April, p. 36.

*Another Look At Wisconsin's Golf Heritage*, by Gene Haas, May/June, p. 46.

*Sun Stroked*, by Andy North, July/August, p. 43.

*Why I Love Wisconsin*, by Frank Lloyd Wright, September/October, p. 50.

*Oconomowoc GC Looks To Restore Donald Ross Character*, by Rick Pledl, November/December, p. 44.

## From The Directors Desk

*To Remove Ice Or Not To Remove Ice?—That Is The Question*, by Robert Vavrek, March/April, p. 39.

*Widespread Winter Woes*, by Robert Vavrek, July/August, p. 42.

(Continued on page 50)

(Continued from page 49)

### **Gazing In The Grass**

*Moving Ahead*, by Dr. John C. Stier, July/August, p. 10.

*Plant Growth Regulators Can Improve Turf Performance In The Shade*, by Dr. John C. Stier, September/October, p. 12.

*Better Grasses By Breeding: Section I*, by Dr. John C. Stier, November/December, p. 14.

### **GCSAA**

*GCSAA 1997 Conference—A Roll Of The Dice*, by Monroe S. Miller, March/April, p. 25.

*Good Writers And Faithful Advertisers Lead "The Grass Roots" To Another GCSAA Chapter Publications Award*, by Monroe S. Miller, May/June, p. 55.

*Chapter Delegates Digest*, by Mark Kienert, November/December, p. 43.

### **Golf In The Flatlands**

*An Observer's View Of The NCTE*, by Pat Norton, January/February, p. 24.

*Fresh Season, Realistic Attitude*, by Pat Norton, March/April, p. 14.

*These Are Definitely 'The Good Old Days'!!*, by Pat Norton, May/June, p. 24.

*A Day To Remember*, by Pat Norton, July/August, p. 50.

*Back To The Basics*, by Pat Norton, September/October, p. 42.

*The Heat Is On*, by Pat Norton, November/December, p. 31.

### **Jottings From The Golf Course Journal**

*Wisconsin Winters*, by Monroe S. Miller, January/February, p. 20.

*A Visit To Walden Pond*, by Monroe S. Miller, March/April, p. 32.

*Our Kind Of Guy (Dr. Wayne Kussow)*, by Monroe S. Miller, May/June, p. 35.

*JOHN MUIR—A Wisconsin Great*, by Monroe S. Miller, July/August, p. 32.

*Image*, by Monroe S. Miller, September/October, p. 40.

*The Wisconsin Idea*, by Monroe S. Miller, November/December, p. 10.

### **Notes From The Noer Facility**

*Statistics And The Science Of Turfgrass Research*, by Tom Schwab, January/February, p. 16.

*EXPO Is PACKED!*, by Tom Schwab, March/April, p. 18.

*Noer Turf Group Anticipates Important Season*, by Tom Schwab, May/June, p. 12.

*Joy Of Cooking*, by Tom Schwab, July/August, p. 17.

*Try One Of These In Your Spare Time*, by Tom Schwab, September/October, p. 55.

*Nothing Ventured, Nothing Gained (WTA Summer Field Day)*, by Tom Schwab, November/December, p. 26.

### **The Other Plants**

*Flower Gardens Attract Butterflies, And Butterflies Attract Birds*, by Lois Berg Stack, January/February, p. 39.

### **Personality Profile**

*He Comes To First Job With Lots Of Experience (Jeff Gregos)*, by Lori Ward Bocher, January/February, p. 6.

*From Rookie Employee To Owner, All At One Place (Don Stein)*, by Lori Ward Bocher, March/April, p. 10.

*Golf Leads To Successful Turf Career (Alan Nees)*, by Lori Ward Bocher, May/June, p. 19.

*In The Shadow, And Spotlight, Of Lambeau Field (Todd Edlebeck)*, by Lori Ward Bocher, July/August, p. 12.

*The Shaw Boys: Golf's Fraternal Foursome*, by Lori Ward Bocher, September/October, p. 8.

*Finding Answers To The Unknown (Dr. John Stier)*, by Lori Ward Bocher, November/December, p. 6.

### **Ponderings From The Front Nine**

*Immobility*, by Dr. Frank S. Rossi, January/February, p. 10.

### **The President's Message**

*It's The Season For Reading*, by Mark Kienert, January/February, p. 3.

*Living On Newfoundland Time*, by Mark Kienert, March/April, p. 3.

*My Thoughts On Afterthoughts*, by Mark Kienert, May/June, p. 3.

*Beyond The Millennium*, by Mark Kienert, July/August, p. 3.

*A Potpourri—"A Potpourri Of Random Thoughts From A Random Man"*, by Mark Kienert, September/October, p. 3.

*"Where Have All The Old Timers Gone?"*, by Mark Kienert, November/December, p. 3.

### **Research**

*Immobility*, by Dr. Frank S. Rossi, January/February, p. 10.

*An Observer's View Of The NCTE*, by Pat Norton, January/February, p. 24.

*In Retrospect—And Looking To The Future*, by Dr. Wayne R. Kussow, January/February, p. 44.

*A Scanning Electron Microscope Peek At Poa annua And A Fungus*, by Gary Gaard, January/February, p. 47.

*Dollar Spot Resistance Management With Reduced-Rate Fungicide Mixtures*, by Jeff Gregos, March/April, p. 30.

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