Sunny California

By Monroe S. Miller

Most of us from Wisconsin, when we think of California, we think 'sunny California.' It is an impression that is about to disappear for me and some others. Like the last time GCSAA convened in Anaheim, it rained. When we meet in San Francisco, it rains. And this year in Anaheim, it RAINED. Buckets. Cats and dogs.

The weather was of disaster proportions. There were mudslides. closed highways, trees down in roads and on houses, flooded neighborhood, eroded beaches that in some cases actually disappeared, and monsoon rains. The wind blew at gale forces. Traffic, normally in gridlock, turned highways into parking lots. And golf courses, many which thousands of us wanted to see or play, were closed and often under water. Local golf course superintendents, from San Francisco to San Diego, had to leave the conference for home to try to salvage their courses. It was, mildly put, a mess.

But many of us weren't surprised. What you hear from the west coast of the country all year long is bad news — a record setting drought last summer, earthquakes, forest fires and polluted air. Crime is in the news always. A visit to California reminded me why I like Wisconsin so much.

Weird as it seems, bad weather can have a positive impact on some attendees at conference. This year the show floor was jammed and educational sessions were well attended.

When the weather wasn't filling the newspapers and TV news programs, Monica Lewinsky (of Slick Willie's Zippergate — or is it Fornigate? fame) was; she decided to visit her upper crust home in Brentwood while we were there! I wasn't sure if we would know of any attack on Iraq or hear of early Olympic returns; both lack the news appeal of bad weather and corruption.

This is the fourth conference I have attended in Anaheim. The first was the best, the third was the worst, and this was in-between. If the weather was tough, the surrounding area seemed safer, though it is no Shangri-La. There was little gang graffiti whereas last time (1994) it was everywhere. There were no stark warnings about walking in certain areas, unlike last trip. And Anaheim has embarked on a substantial improvement project in the Disneyland/Convention Center surrounds. It is needed and visitors will appreciate it when it is completed.

Overall, the conference was put together pretty well. There were fewer irritations, some clear improvements and a great cast of celebrities to hear and meet. I was glad to be there.

It didn't rain constantly, contrary to impressions created by news reports, and in-between storms some guys traveled north to check out some of the many great golf courses up there. Although the ATT Pro-Am was canceled at Pebble Beach, the courses were open for a relaxed "look-see", unfettered by any players. There was a group of Wisconsin GCSA members who played Riviera CC, Bel Air *(Continued on page 22)*



A USMC Honor guard stood at attention while the Alley Cats sang the national anthem.



Dan Quayle willingly signed books and gave autographs.



Peter Jacobsen was the star of the opening session.

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CC and LACC. The tournament courses pleased most players although the tourney was shortened by 18 holes.

For anyone attending a conference at the Anaheim Convention Center, a trip (five minutes maximum) to the Crystal Cathedral is a must. It is an architectural wonder one can see every Sunday on Robert Schuler's TV ministry. And about 15 minutes from the ACC is the Nixon Library and Museum. There is no argument that there was a dark side to the man, but I have visited a lot of presidential sites and this one is among the best. His childhood home, built by his father, is part of the museum and is at its original spot. The President and Mrs. Nixon are buried in the backvard, and the museum is extremely well done. It was an interesting side visit

Anaheim is one of the now handful of places the GCSAA convention uses. Like the others coming up --Orlando, New Orleans and Atlanta it has its good and bad. The best aspect of Anaheim is that the headquarters hotel is a real advantage; it is across the street from the convention center. In weather like we had this year, I was really grateful to be able to stay at the Hilton, even though I cringed at the obscene cost. Do GCSAA officers and directors pay for their room, or do we? Somebody is insulated from reality when agreeing to such outlandish room rates. Sharing a room, when the cost is that high, is essential.

I was also glad that three of the big sessions — opening, environmental and banquet — were right in the building. The proximity to the ACC was a plus, but it is far from my favorite convention building. The downstairs location for some of the exhibitors and the GCSAA booths was unhandy, far worse to me than the split floor at San Francisco that so many griped about.

This was the 26th consecutive GCSAA conference I have attended, and like all the others, parts of it were good and some were average and some were poor. Following are my highlights and lowlights.

Opening Session: "Fantastic!" "Awesome!" "Best ever!" These and other comments like them were what I heard right after the opening session. Me? I loved it! Here's why;



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• The U.S. Marine Corps Honor Guard presented the Colors while the Alley Cats sang the national anthem accapella. It was beautiful and inspiring.

 Peter Jacobsen was the greatest! He entertained us, got on other golf pros and club managers, ridiculed the GCSAA official carpet plaid wardrobe, and flattered golf course superintendents for a job well done. He was right on every time! People were in tears with laughter. He supported soft spikes, donated \$25,000 to the capital campaign and ripped on stimpmeters. His comments on course condition were right on - three heights of cut, the absurdity of mowing fairways with walkers and other such conditioning crazes. He hopes for new golfers, lower costs to play and a retreat from golf 'in the air.'

"Integrity and honesty are the most important part of golf," Jacobsen said. "Respect of the rules, respect of competition and respect for the golf course must never be lost." Plus, Peter stayed and signed his book and gave autographs.

· Dave Mastroleo accepted the



An antique mower not unlike the one in my antique collection.

GCSAA distinguished service award with a speech that was like most would only dream of giving. The DSA was his "Oscar" — he is at L.A.'s Hillcrest CC — and he proceeded to thank those influential in his career without putting anybody to sleep. He was super!

The opening session this year was more fun than it has been in my memory. Anyone offended by Peter Jacobsen — I cannot imagine anybody is that thin skinned — needs to get a life. Jacobsen's video *I Love to Play!* was the best, too.

À couple of questions do come to my mind. Why cannot the student scholarship recipients be introduced in person rather than by video? And did we have to have the "rap" music video promoting *Par for the Course?* It was too loud and too fast to follow. Even though Peter Jacobsen thought it was cool, I thought it was obnoxious.

Oh, we all appreciated there was plenty of chow at the reception afterwards!

Governmental and Environmental Session: High marks here again. Former vice president Dan Quayle was an excellent choice as a keynote (Continued on page 24)



Current ASGCA president Alice Dye and incoming president Bob Lohmann.



Tom Schwab and Jim Spindler visited and relaxed in the Wisconsin Hospitality Room.



Old Tom Morris award recipient, Ken Venturi, answered questions at a press conference.



Dave Brandenburg, Marc Davison and Rod Johnson swap stories at the Wisconsin Hospitality Room.

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speaker for this session, given the pathetic conduct by Clinton these days. Quayle contrasts sharply to the current occupant of the White House. He also loves golf, has played most of his life, and plays well. His first lessons were 'replace divots, repair ballmarks and rake traps!' Quayle told some golf stories, related experiences with golf greats like Sarazan and Snead and Hogan, and spoke of his friendship with Peter Jacobsen.

More serious matters were touched on by Dan Quayle — the moral and spiritual crisis in America, the yearning we have for some positive and creative leadership, the failure of public schools, and our excessive taxes. He concluded "that despite our problems, there is hope. America is great because America is free."

Oh, we all appreciated there was plenty of chow at the reception afterwards!

GCSAA Gala '98: Given the authority, I would rename this event Snoozefest '98. The invitation I received said it started at 6:00 p.m. Imagine the Midwesterner who typically arrives ten minutes early. He goes to the table at 6:45 p.m., and waits until 7:20 p.m. before anything happens. The meal was served at somewhere between 8:15 and 8:30. It was so dark on the aisle of tables next to the entertainment stage that one person at our table put his plate up next to the table candle in the middle of the table to see what he was eating. The meal was good, even if eaten in the dark. But between the end of the meal and the start of the entertainment, some guys were literally falling asleep; others were talking and lots were not paying attention. It was BORING, except for the Old Tom Morris Award presentation to Ken Venturi. I sat there in the dark, which encouraged lots of vawning when combined with head table activities, so long that my butt was sore.

Why can't this affair be shortened? Do we need to meet directors again for the upteenth time? Do we have to watch still MORE videos? Or is this the price we pay for "sponsorship?"

I don't care for hillbilly music and thought that was what the entertainment was going to be. It was a pleasant surprise that Trisha Yearwood can actually sing. I enjoyed the show, although the bozos with the TV cameras spoiled the view. The speakers were right in front of our table; I was a little hard of hearing before the show, and now I'm almost deaf.

The head table crowd should sit with the commoners some day and listen. People think it is too long. Period. And it has gotten expensive. I have never missed a banquet, but one of these years I am going to figure that there is a better way to spend SIX hours.

Concurrent Sessions: 'The Inside Scoop on Bentgrass', deftly chaired by Dr. Frank S. Rossi (who wasn't so deft as chair of the Innovative Superintendent Session Part II on Saturday!) was absolutely outstanding. The substantial room was jammed, guys were lined up against



The largest ball on the show floor!



Oscar Peterson and Gary Coulson visited about red iron in Toro's booth.

the walls and in the back of the room, and the crowd even spilled out into the hallway. It received rave reviews from everyone.

Obviously, I didn't attend the bermudagrass meeting. I counted on a colleague to report on the 'Managing Turf to Protect the Environment' and he gave it good marks, although it was poorly attended because we were all at the bentgrass meeting.

The 'Environmental Success Stories' session was rescued from being only average at best by Wisconsin's own Fred Fabian from Teal Wing up in Hayward. His lecture was great!



Frank Rossi chaired the popular bentgrass session.



The Wollner brothers - Joe, Chuck and Dan.



John Netwall, Sue and Fred Fabian; John and Fred were honored for their ACS efforts.



Wisconsin Hospitality host Kris Pinkerton.

Innovative Superintendent Sessions: Ours may be the only professional conference in the country that has an educational program that starts at 6:00 a.m. On Friday and Saturday mornings, for 3 1/2 hours before the trade show opened, a program of golf course superintendents only as speakers talked about topics ranging from the Internet to green speed. The best among them, and I heard nearly all, was a double lecture by veteran superintendent Tom Mason from Birmingham CC in Troy, Michigan. Too many of the talks aimed too low. were poorly presented or had marginal topics.

Trade Show: "It's too big," is a comment heard frequently. With 700 exhibitors and over five acres of products, it is a daunting task to see it all. The best plan seemed to be to walk the show quickly, make notes of places you want to spend time at, and then go back later. The array is staggering, the scene is colorful and exciting, and it might be the best place in the world for golf course superintendents to chew the fat. It is always a great time when you are kicking tires.

USGA Green Section Conference: This was excellent, as it is most often. We should be flattered that the Green Section continues a part of our conference. The turf tips were great, the lawyers opened a few eyes, and author/broadcaster Jerry Schemmel added to the program. The only question was: why wasn't Stan Zontek on the program? I love that guy!

ASGCA Conference: The architects usually have a cool meeting, and it



Richard M. Nixon's childhood home, located only a few steps from his museum and library, was close to the Anaheim Convention Center.



The writing desk in John Muir's library is where many of his books were written.

was true again this year. They are a little off beat — last year they hosted a design contest for golf course superintendents, and this year they literally held a round table discussion after their lecture. Alice Dye, current president, will be succeeded by UW-Madison grad (and Grass Roots



Dr. Alister MacKenzie's "cabin" is located on another famous course he designed, Pasatiempo. Ken Venturi still holds the record low score, 63.



John Muir's home in Martinez, California. He is buried, with other family members, near here.

advertiser) Bob Lohmann. I am really proud of him.

1998 Conference Awards:

• Winner: Ken Venturi, a great choice for the Old Tom Morris Award, He's a regular guy, a golf guy. I went to the press conference, talked to him, asked a formal question, got the books he wrote that I have autographed, and left inspired by him.

• Losers: Probably half of the speakers are either poorly prepared, have marginal material or are lousy speakers. Why can't we preview them?

(Continued on page 27)



For architecture buffs, the Crystal Cathedral was minutes from the Convention Center.

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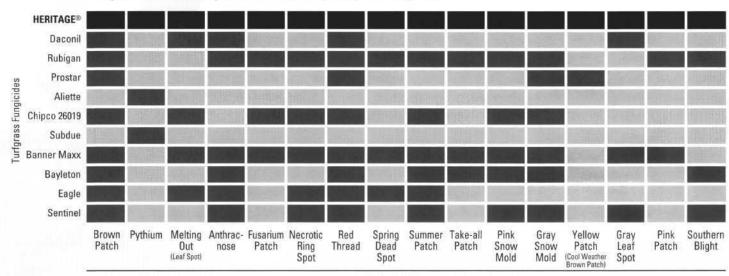
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Changing the Course of Disease Control

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• Upper: The thrill of visiting with authors at the book signings. It was and continues to be a great idea — credit GCSAA's Dave Bishop.

• Downer: The sponsor program, which forces us to listen to endless ads and introductions before and during events, to the point where we tune them out. I have, from the beginning, thought the program of selling everything to a sponsor stinks. The smell was worse this year. Plus, I would like to know where the money goes. My registration doesn't go down, it goes up. Cost for events doesn't go down, it goes up. Seminars are not less expensive with sponsors, they cost more. We need to investigate where the money goes.

• Say It Ain't So: Like most all others, I was appalled by the daily room rates for GCSAA hotels. Imagine how some of us felt when we heard a rumor that GCSAA gets a cut from each room it fills. If that is confirmed, I'll lead the revolt. Please, somebody, say the rumor isn't so.

• Best Speech: Joe O'Brien. He told me earlier in the day he had prepared some remarks. Big time under-



Chad Ball and Paul Bastron landed in LA, rented a couple of Harleys, and found some sunshine. Paul captured this photo of Chad.

statement — his speech was even complimented by the former vice president. It was excellent listening to a deserving winner and a thoughtful guy.

• Most fun: Cruising the member merchandise store. Compliments to whoever made such bargains available — it was even more fun for nonshoppers like me.

• Do: Stay from the first event to the very end. It is a rich experience that teaches and inspires.

• Don't: Use GCSAA Travel. We even had a difficult time dealing with them for a rental car. The few bucks you save don't cover the cost of the hassle. You have to call (and call

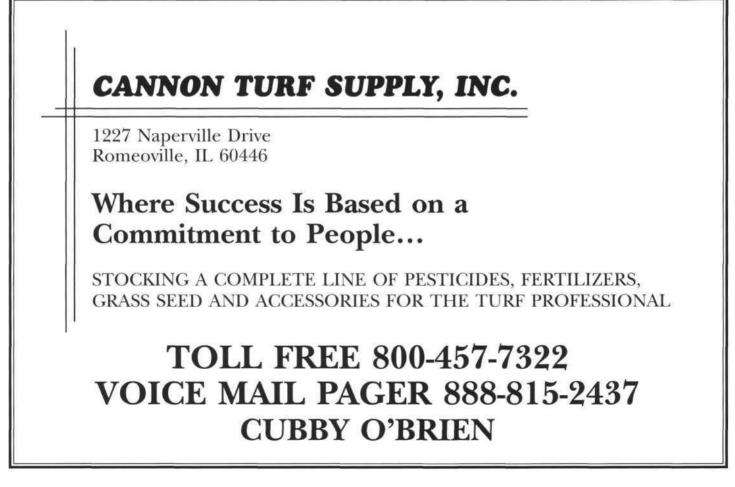


It's back to Orlando next year.

and call and call) for a written confirmation on anything. Forget it and go it alone or choose a local travel agent you can quickly get your hands on when problems arise.

• Best Freebie: Again, after 26 years, the Jake hat is the best giveaway. My collection includes one for every year I have attended. A close second is the golf art work by David Pursell; this year's sketch of Ken Venturi was superb.

If you missed Disneyland this year, you will have another chance in 1999 when the conference and show moves to Orlando, again. God willing, I'll see you there.





Climactic Chaos and Your Turf

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

Our climate is in chaos and everyone is speculating on what El Nino will do next. Growers of all commodities want to know how El Nino will affect their livelihood. Climatologists and weather freaks didn't need Jimmy the groundhog from Sun Prairie to pop his head out and see his shadow to tell us that January was much warmer than usual and that spring is just around the corner. The average temperature in January was 23.7 degrees, well above the normal average of 16 degrees. While there were only two days in January when the temperature was below zero, the precipitation was more than double the normal average, with 18.9 inches of wet snow. El Nino has brought Wisconsin a warmer, wetter winter and one of the darkest Januarys ever! How will El Nino affect your turf? Has El Nino provided ideal environmental conditions for snow mold damage? Will El Nino bring us a hot summer filled with toasted turf? What about global warming? Is it a myth or a real phenomenon? And why should you care? These are some tough questions growers will ponder as they try to forecast potential problems of this growing season and the seasons to come in the next century.

El Nino has had a huge impact on many aspects of our lives. The warm winter has spurred a housing boom, with residential construction in Madison off to a red-hot start for 1998. Gravediggers in the southeastern third of Wisconsin saw frost depths of only 1 to 6 inches in late January, which is far less than the normal 8 to 12 inches (Wisconsin Crop Weather).

Potent storms reeked havoc all over the globe. El Nino is battering California with rain and wind, leaving residents and rescuers struggling to save lives and homes. Snow weary residents of Kentucky trudged through snow drifts left by a three day snow storm and nearly 500 National Guard troops were activated to help those snow bound Kentuckians. The mayor of Nagano, Japan, asked residents to pray for snow before the start of the Olympic Games as bare spots on ski slopes worried many of the organizers. Unfortunately, the praying hopefuls learned to, "be careful what you wish for" as heavy snows delayed skiing competitions for several days.

The natural fauna and flora have also been affected. El Nino has given bugs and plants an early wake-up call, as tulips, skunk cabbage and ladybugs in the Madison area have come out of hibernation early. What about snow mold? Well, the lack of frost penetration and temperatures close to the optimum temperature for fungal growth MAY HAVE provided optimal conditions for some serious snow mold damage in the state of Wisconsin. Total snow cover days in Madison are about three weeks behind the average of the last two years. I don't know yet if this year's snow mold damage will be greater than average, but by the time you read this article, the snow may have melted and we will all know the answer to that question.

The effects of El Nino are expected to continue through midsummer. What will it bring? Will it bring back memories of the summer of 1995? Warmer temperatures are being predicted for Wisconsin and probably the only thing we can do is expect hot temperatures and not sweat it. Arguments over what El Nino might bring will continue as the growing season progresses.

Another topic that scientists and non-scientists alike will continue to debate is global warming. Is it a myth? According to the State Climatology Office, the state's mean annual temperature has varied widely over the past 103 years, but overall, it's one to two degrees warmer than the 150 year average. *The Wall Street Journal's* December 4, 1997, article says that temperature variations are caused mainly by sunspot activity. Furthermore, the *WSJ* says that there is no persuasive evidence that people have altered



global temperatures and that some computer models incorrectly predicted temperature increases from the period 1980 to 1996. Climate models have been both used and abused as they have become increasingly sophisticated. However, they do not offer the certainties that policy makers or growers would like.

An extremely important question when thinking about snow mold damage and current breeding efforts is this: Is the amount of snow cover changing? Snow is a transient part of the earth's surface and since the monitoring of global seasonal snow is practical only with satellite remote sensing (see the National Operational Hydrologic Remote Sensing Center @ www.nohrsc.nws.gov/index.htm), there are no reliable records prior to 1971. Records since 1971 reveal considerable variability. The extent of snow cover lessened since 1987 (Robinson et al., 1993, Proc. Fifteenth Annual Climate Diagnostic Workshop, NOAA, 219-224), with the largest snow anomalies occurring in the spring. Recent direct measurements reveal an increase over the past century in the North American Great Plains (Brown et al., 1994. Annals of Glaciology, 21:45-50) but a decline in the Canadian Prairies.

How sensitive is snow cover to climate change? Karl et al. (Journal of Climatology, 1993. 6: 1327-1344) predicted that a one degree increase in the annual temperature of the Northern Hemisphere would result in a 20% reduction in North American snow cover. If Wisconsin were to experience this 20% reduction in snow cover, the amount of snow mold damage would be greatly diminished while other turf diseases gained greater importance.

Global warming and the response of fungal pathogens have led some researchers to closely reevaluate some of their research objectives. Wheat breeders in Japan have already changed their objectives because of their belief that the climate of Japan has changed. This is particularly important for breeding since research efforts often don't come to fruition for years. It would be very disappointing if it took 15 years to develop a snow mold resistant variety only to find out that contemporary growers didn't need it after all!

What do we still need to know? There are many uncertainties in understanding what is currently happening to critical components of our climate, mainly because existing monitoring systems are inadequate. Critical questions remain about how each component of the turfgrass ecosystem will react to climate change. Effects of climate change on other natural systems need to be better understood and quantified, particularly when they affect humans. Economic systems of agriculture, forestry, tourism, transport and engineered structures are just a few to consider.

Today we live in a world where the only thing that is constant is change. It is imperative that we remain aware of what is happening around us, otherwise the river of change will make growing grass very difficult.

Catherine's Couscous

The other day I was looking through my recipes trying to plan next week's meals when I found this recipe that Catherine Smejkal gave to me in 1994. There I was, a 31 year old man with tears in his eyes hovering over a recipe card. I had enjoyed Catherine's couscous several times, but I haven't made it since she left us on February 29, 1996. I miss Catherine.

Catherine brought so many good things to everyone around her. She had a passion for cooking as well as science. Our department enjoyed the benefits of her culinary skills often because Catherine organized birthday parties and special celebrations at Russell Labs. She always tried to make people smile if not with her humor then with her food. I told her once that I loved anchovies but hardly ate them because nobody else shared my desire. The next party at RL she prepared a fancy relish dish with all sorts of stuff including anchovies. She told me she brought them for me. Sometimes it's the little things that matter most. I loved Catherine.

Well, after rediscovering this recipe I went out and bought the ingredients to make Catherine's couscous. It is still as robust, vivid and yummy as it was when I first made it. Eating it made me smile. I hope that you too will enjoy and remember Catherine when you experience this delicious treat. Catherine was a great person and a great cook who brought happiness to many people. Enjoy.

Catherine's Couscous

couscous - 3 cups water/2 cups couscous

- 2/3 cup fresh lemon juice
- 3 Tablespoons red wine vinegar
- 2 Tablespoons dijon mustard
- 4 garlic cloves, minced
- 3/4 cup olive oil
- 1 cup each of love and laughter
- 1 bunch of green onion, chopped
- 1 15 oz. can of garbanzo beans (drained)
- 1 cucumber, peeled, halved, gutted of seeds, chopped
- 3.8 oz. can sliced black olives
- 1 fresh bunch of parsley finely chopped
- 1/4 cup fresh mint (optional)
- 1/2 lb. Feta cheese crumbled

Couscous: Bring water to boil in saucepan, mix in couscous, cover & remove from heat. Let stand 10 minutes, transfer to large bowl & fluff with fork.

Dressing: Mix lemon juice, vinegar, mustard & garlic in bowl – whisk in oil. Add green onion, drained garbanzo beans, cucumber, olives, parsley, mint & dressing to couscous, toss well. Add feta, toss gently. Refrigerate and serve cold.



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