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Speakers have to be booked now even though the conference is still far away. You will recognize the names of many of the excellent presenters we are contacting. They will continue the educational excellence that you've come to expect from EXPO. Some of the speakers that we are contacting (although not all of them are yet confirmed) are Minner, Lohmann, Rossi, Dipola, Landschoot, Doak, Vargas, Riggs, Edelbech, Mellor, Nelson, and Branham. With expertise like these (and more), you won't want to miss EXPO. Call us if you can think of a subject or someone else that you'd like to hear. The site will remain the same at the Marriott Madison West, because they have such nice accommodations for presenting the large trade show and numerous seminar sessions.

The third educational conference is not directly for you in the golf business, but you may know of someone

who will want to participate at this inaugural meeting of the Wisconsin Sport Turf Managers Association. Tell your local school's and park department's athletic field managers about this meeting planned for June 24th. The specific time and place has not been confirmed. The national STMA started in 1981 when a group of athletic field managers believed that sports turf could be improved through the sharing of knowledge and experiences. These managers can maintain better and safer fields by incorporating professional ideas into their maintenance just like the golf industry is better through its professional organization. The turf industry in Wisconsin will be stronger with the addition of more professional turf managers. You can have interested athletic field managers call Rich Riggs (committee chairperson) at 715-341-2633 or call me at 608-845-6895 for more details which we will have after April 22nd. The inaugural meeting will include

education and future education planning, as well as choosing a board of directors and discussing a dues structure. Future educational subjects could include:

- * Technical advances in sports turf
- * Staff motivation
- * Pesticide issues around the schoolyard
- * Field maintenance techniques
- * Field painting and striping
- * Managing multi-use fields

WTA exists to improve education and research in the state. The education from WTA combined with the scope from WGCSA provides us all with a considerable amount of professional development each year. The planning committees for this education put significant energy into these events, and your attendance will make the work worth it. 🌱

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A Report on my Visit to Wisconsin's Last Golf Club

By Monroe S. Miller

Keith Wallace had made the invitation any number of times, but I just hadn't found the time to drive down to visit him and see his course. Or, maybe it would be better to say I simply hadn't *taken* the time. Too bad, too. It was a great visit in more ways than I'll be able to detail in this report.

Keith was the first generation born in America of a Scottish immigrant couple. His parents, Bill and Lorraine Wallace, spent the last 25 years of their lives in Wisconsin; Bill was the greenkeeper at the Bonnyrigg Golf Club in the south/southeast part of Wisconsin. Keith succeeded his father and has been the golf course superintendent at Bonnyrigg for a number of years now.

Bonnyrigg Golf Club is an independent, quiet, out-of-the-way and unpretentious organization. Neither Bill nor Keith was very active in the WGCSA, adding somewhat to the mystique. Never had one of our meetings been held there, maintaining an aura of curiosity about the place. Their predecessors were similar in demeanor, and both of them had retired after a career at Bonnyrigg.

BGC wasn't a member of the WSGA, or any other organization, for that matter. The golf pros over the years were not PGA members, happy instead with their circumstances and position among the players at Bonnyrigg.

Keith Wallace dropped me a line confirming my visit, and sent me directions to the course. "I'm directing you to the clubhouse," he wrote, "because you'd never find the shop."

I almost didn't find the clubhouse. Like most cautious Midwesterners, I left plenty early — you know, in case of a flat tire or a road detour or some other potential delay. There is nothing worse or more rude than showing up late for an appointment. Good thing — I got close in plenty of time but had a devil of a time finding the clubhouse, Keith's directions notwithstanding. Finally, I followed a car that didn't look like a farm vehicle, thinking it might be someone going to play golf. My hunch was right.

The drive into the club was a good quarter mile, narrow and old and very unimpressive. The land on either side was pasture land, fenced with rusty steel fence posts and barbed wire. This was as far from Magnolia Lane as you'll get.

The drive opened into a modest parking lot; it was clean and well striped. I pulled into an open spot in the shade, and started to look for Keith.

The clubhouses at country clubs around the country are fairly easy to spot. There are those, seen mainly in the Midwest in my experience, that are immense, rambling bright white clapboard structures. Usually they have either green shutters or black shutters with shingles to match, big brass doorknobs, massive red brick chimneys, and grass

lawns dappled with the feathery shade of elms or oaks. They are easy to decorate for the holidays and different seasons — big red bows and huge dark green wreaths at Christmas, and tall corn shocks and pumpkins in the autumn. The golf shop mostly is on one end of the building, and the kitchen and delivery areas are on the other.

Then there are the big brick monoliths, Tudor in style, complete with so many rooms that they actually accommodate overnight guests of members and members themselves.

Another standard clubhouse is the style that looks like it belongs in Spain — they have the appearance of a hacienda, all white-washed with a red clay tile roof. They seem out of place in the north.

So do those clubhouses that seem to have been built for a southern plantation, complete with oversized white columns at the entrance.

The clubhouse at Bonnyrigg is, well, a house. It is small and looks like a typical Midwestern bungalow. In other

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words, it is a house, unlike those just described, which might be houses for Rockefellers or Vanderbilts or Kohlers.

Keith drove up in a Cushman and reached out to shake my hand. We exchanged pleasantries — he didn't have the heavy Scottish accent of his parents — and he said, "let's start our tour in the clubhouse."

Up the steps we went and through the door. It opened into a large hallway. There was no receptionist or receptionist's desk. A coatroom was on the right, a small office was to the immediate left.

The dining room was open to the hall; there weren't more than a dozen tables in it. A small bar was to the immediate corner so as not to interrupt the view of the golf course. Two sides of the dining area were glass, offering great sight lines to the finishing hole and the back nine. "There's no menu," Keith said. "You can get a hamburger, a steak, fried chicken, and spaghetti (that's what they call pasta at Bonnyrigg). If you are here early, you might be able to talk the cook into scrambling you a couple of eggs and serving them up with a glass of milk."

Opposite the dining room, on the other side of the hall, were the doorways to the locker rooms, both the men's and the women's. "I don't know why they keep the women's locker room," Keith mused. Rarely do women play golf here, although they certainly can." The men's locker room consisted of pale green half lockers in rows divided by narrow wooden benches. The shower had three shower heads, a clue to how busy Bonnyrigg usually was. There were a couple of card tables, but no television, no locker room attendant and no one available to shine shoes or switch out steel spikes for soft spikes! Pretty much, you are on your own. It was becoming obvious this small private club existed for golf, exclusively and solely for golf.

"I'm anxious for you to meet our golf pro," Keith enthused as we walked through the locker room to the golf shop. "You'll like him. He was trained in Scotland, just like my father was."

"Meet Hamish McFarlane," Keith said. I smiled, exchanged a firm handshake and thought to myself, "this is how it was 50 years ago."

Jim McFarlane was wearing a white shirt and a necktie, like some golf professionals did even when I first started a career in golf. It was refreshing to see a pro dressed that way, rather than in a \$100 shirt, \$200 slacks and God only knows the cost of Italian shoes one might be wearing.

The golf shop mirrored the clubhouse facilities. It was the size of a big closet. There were a few golf shirts with the Bonnyrigg crest embroidered on the front, some windbreakers and umbrellas, a few hats, a good selection of golf balls and a couple sets of handmade clubs. McFarlane had an excellent reputation as a clubmaker. That was the pro shop, probably because that was what the members felt was adequate. A small caddie shack was away from the golf shop, and a couple of golf cars were parked against the back wall of the first tee.

"Bonnyrigg isn't a big place," Keith told me as we headed out for a tour of the course. "It's typical of those courses built between 75 and 100 years ago in Wisconsin. There are about 110 acres here, but the excellent design of the course gives it a feel of covering more acres than that. And it has stood the test of time — very, very few changes have been made."

I was impressed by the condition Keith had the course in. It didn't have that "overgroomed" look to it. The fairways

were cut at a modest height; there was no collar or intermediate rough. The greens were small, somewhat undulated and grassed with what appeared from a distance to be very healthy turf. Close inspection confirmed that.

"I don't know what our greens stimp at," Keith said as we stood on the fourth. "It doesn't matter. The green convenor (green committee chair at most clubs) and his committee, the club captain (president) and I communicate regularly about this issue. Mostly, it is not an issue. They are not trying to keep up with anyone else, so a speed number is meaningless to them."

The sticks were plain, the flags were shaped like penants ("Tradition," Keith said.) and there was one set of blocks on the one set of tees.

Keith's shop was neat as a pin, the equipment inventory fully adequate and current, and the crew was done by noon most days.

"When you get down to it, this is a golf club," Keith offered as we made the final turn back to the clubhouse. There aren't many like us left. We don't have a single golf outing or tournament a year. Not one. There are no weddings or birthday parties or theme parties or any other social event. You can get a bite to eat and something to wash it down with, but not much more than that. And there is no Muzak in the building; it is really quiet!

"Players are loathe, almost forbidden to talk about business deals or the stock market. They play golf and talk about the game. It is a golf club. Period."

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(Continued from page 13)

"There is no swimming pool, no tennis courts, no halfway house, no paddle tennis. What there is, is decent and undistracted golf.

"Hamish doesn't take tee times. If you want to play, you just show up. And mostly, all the guys walk when they play. Or, if you want some solitude and would like to play alone, you can. All you have to do is say so.

"And although I tell everybody Bonnyrigg is a golf club, it is in one way a country club because we truly are in the rolling hills of rural Wisconsin. We are in the country, but close enough to metropolitan areas that we have members from all them. But if you want to play Bonnyrigg, you have to make some effort to get here because it is some distance from everywhere."

I thanked Keith for his hospitality as we shook hands again. I started my truck, backed up and headed out the driveway on my way home.

On the trip back I thought about what made Bonnyrigg different from most other private clubs — and "different" is the correct word. Not better, not worse. Just different.

And the biggest difference was one of conspicuousness. Bonnyrigg has golf and pretty much only golf. Little else matters. Conspicuous consumption doesn't exist, by the choice of the members. They are independent, comfortable with what they are doing and belong to Bonnyrigg just to play golf, kind of the old fashioned way. It is located in a difficult to find place, it chooses members carefully and is debt free. In the world of golf today, it is an unusual organization.

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Dilemmas in Golf Course Management

By Pat Norton
Nettle Creek CC

Life is just chock full of dilemmas, isn't it? A dilemma is defined as...among other definitions...as **a choice or a situation involving choice between equally unsatisfactory alternatives**. Everyday life can sometimes seem like one grand dilemma in the sense that choices and decisions must continually be made concerning...

Home...as in...should a guy press really vigorously for his remodeling and home improvement ideas? Or surrender to the inevitable...in any number of domestic decisions in which the man will *definitely and ultimately* lose the argument? It's best to surrender here, guys, and avoid any dilemma over such things as wallpaper, paint colors, decorating schemes, housework priorities, etc. Sheer logic says that usually these things matter much more to women...while guys like myself don't really care. In fact, being consulted for my opinion in this area drives me crazy!!!

I usually 'get my way' on the exterior of our home when I show up with yet another tree to be planted or some mail order package of bulbs or plants that I've impulsively ordered from Michigan Bulb or Jackson and Perkins...while secretly paying with my VISA card. There are ways to get even in the dilemma filled battle for control of the household...

Family...as in...how ticked off can I afford to let myself get when my seventh grade son...who usually gets 'A honor roll' type grades...reports an 'F' on his mid-term progress report for Language Arts? Do I...after careful consultation with Sue...decide to...punch his lights out...ground him from watching the Playboy Channel...or simply appeal to his honor as a responsible young man who should take greater pride in himself? That, truthfully, was a recent dilemma in our household! Fortunately, that crisis and dilemma has now passed...and rest assured...we still...as Wisconsin liberal types...allow our rapidly maturing son to discover the pleasures of...naw, just kidding, folks!!!

Career...as in...how much time should a golf course superintendent...or any other father...have to devote to a job or career...at the expense of time lost with his family? That, as everybody knows, is a universal, never ending dilemma...

Golf course superintendents...in my opinion...are about in the middle on this one. There are those ultrasuccessful, ultradriven types in other professions who have lots of money...but a terrible family and home life.

On the other hand, it's especially easy to recognize in a smaller, rural town...those people for whom work is a forty hour thing...with limited financial compensation...and a limited future...but who have tons of time to be at everything for their children.

I am right in the middle, I think. During the winter I am able to be at every one of my childrens' functions...and thoroughly enjoy it all. The other three seasons of the year

are a different story, though. I certainly do miss some of their happenings. And I definitely would love to be able to go with my oldest boy on his upcoming Boundary Waters canoe trip with the Boy Scouts, but alas, it is not to be...

Faith...as in...how does a forty year old man reconcile the fact that...as he ages...certain things may not ever come to pass...that former goals were maybe only fantasy...and that certain people have faded into the past...never to be seen again? It's a dilemma in the sense that it's difficult to know when to let go of certain ideas and beliefs...and be able to accept and embrace your life and your family.

In the past couple of years here in Illinois, it's been really something new for me that my interest in attending church and being involved more in the community has really heightened. The feeling that life and people are there to be enjoyed in the present tense is really becoming strong within me also. The result is...I'm not continually hoping for some magical future...that will not happen unless I'm ready for it all.

I'm guessing that all of you Baby Boomer superintendent types out there are experiencing some of these feeling as we progress through our careers and our years.

So right now, faith doesn't really pose a dilemma for me...it's easy to have strong faith when things in life are going pretty good...it's how any of us would react when a family tragedy would strike at us to really test our faith.

That is a question that I ask myself when I ponder what's happened to people throughout difficult times in history or even when reading about any tragic automobile accident in a newspaper. Handling misfortune, especially to my family, would be extremely difficult...and it makes me wonder if I'd have the strength to go through it!

Relatives...as in...How do we all, as adults...maintain long distance relationships with our siblings? It really seems that the relationship between my parents and their

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siblings was/is much closer than any relationship that I currently have with my brother or sisters...which is unfortunate.

Since moving down here three hours south of Madison in 1994...it's been very difficult to get back up to Wisconsin to visit relatives with any frequency at all. And we do miss not being able to do some of the traditional family things that used to be so easy...which is very unfortunate. That is a recurring dilemma for our young family...especially since our roots here are starting to grow stronger.

We all have our personal dilemmas in life...and don't we all have our own golf course management dilemmas to contend with also? Let me illustrate five or six of the recurring dilemmas that I've had to face over the years...see if you can relate!

Dilemma #1...is the fact that many of the superior, intelligent, motivated, hard working people that pass through golf courses on an annual basis inevitably move on to bigger and better things...a huge problem for golf operations like ours that offer too little incentive...very average wages...no benefits...and limited overtime.

As a result, each and every year is a guessing game as to what type of course lineup we'll be able to field. Fortunately, some of these people still enjoy working at the golf course on a part-time basis, which does help us out immeasurably.

Dilemma #2...is the constant battle to provide top quality playing conditions and a great looking golf course on a limited budget. This dilemma is very difficult for me because I have a vested interest in holding costs down and contributing to the overall profitability of our privately

owned public golf course. On the other hand, I've been trained almost my entire adult life as to what a beautiful golf course needs to look and play like...which costs money.

In the end...our group strikes a balance right down the middle...we have a very nice course that requires a middle of the road operating budget. We understand very well that we'd need to jack up fees and memberships significantly in order to try and compete with the truly superior public courses in ChicagoLand. In 1997 we were named to the 'top 35' public golf courses by ChicagoLand Golf in their 'Best Of' polling of their readers...which is probably about as high as we'll ever reach considering all of their various criteria.

Dilemma #3...is the problem of when to speak out as an individual and when to be a team player with the others in the ownership group. All too often I find myself being a team player in situations in which assertiveness could miraculously work in my favor...or seriously backfire! I think that every middle manager...in whatever field...must contend with this thorny problem!

Dilemma #4...is facing up to the fact that golf pros make significantly more money than superintendents...mainly due to the fact that golf professionals deal directly with the members/golfers...and the revenue...and are usually a hybrid between an employee and an entrepreneurial businessman. Superintendents work long and hard hours because of their love of the golf course...but can
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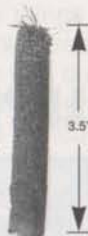
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burn themselves and get easily taken for granted by all sides. There is not usually the opportunity for superintendents to be able to make more money as their workload and stress increases...which is a major shortcoming of what we all do for a living!

Dilemma #5...is deciding after twenty years of being a superintendent...whether or not to continue with it all...or shift gears and try something else. This relates back to what type of operation a guy manages currently...and what type of treatment he receives from his employers...and what his ultimate goals might be in life!

Dilemma #6...is facing the annual sales presentations from the fert and chem reps...and then making the purchasing decisions that will delight some...and disappoint others. My problem is...most of these guys are great people...and I've learned it's best to treat them like the professional colleagues they are! They usually come from similar turfgrass backgrounds...and many times are former superintendents themselves! It is tough to say no unless the supplier rep somehow rubs me the wrong way.

Dilemma #7...is reconciling the fact that I'm no longer very active in any GCSA...in any area. I'm no longer active at monthly meetings...annual conferences...USGA events...or any other golf related associations. And it only bothers me a little bit...a very little bit. The fact of the matter is that activity in turfgrass associations adds up to sig-

nificant dollars...that I'm not willing to request from our group. It all also requires a lot of time...which is scarce in a limited labor golf course situation like Nettle Creek.

There are just tons of other identifiable dilemmas out there for us golf course/turfgrass/father types...and we each deal with them in our own unique way. The important thing is that we all do deal with these dilemmas...we are, after all, trained to be decision-makers.

And, in the end, these problems or dilemmas are really nothing more than disguised opportunities to showcase ourselves. It could also be said that the days filled with dilemmas/problems are sometimes frustrating, yet usually intense and interesting.

And what if we didn't have these dilemmas to face? What if our toughest daily dilemma was to be able to endure the boredom of forty hours in some factory each week? Or to decide what to do if your giant multinational employer decided to cut 5000 white collar jobs...leaving you suddenly unemployed with serious job retraining in your future?

Our dilemmas are not all that serious...and are nothing more than a part of everyday existence as **golf course superintendents** in the lush, green world of golf.

And finally, in the very name of our occupation lies a great dilemma...how did anybody ever settle for the lousy, longwinded, hard to pronounce title of '**golf course superintendent**'?

Somebody out there needs to solve **this** aging dilemma...and come up with a catchier title for this thing we all do! It would be a breath of fresh air!! 🌱

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ACADEMIC WEED-WHACKERS

By Rob Zaleski

Editor's Note: This interesting article came from close to home. Rob Zaleski is a feature writer for The Capital Times here in Madison. He has also worked as a sports reporter and editor at The Capital Times and the Green Bay Daily News before that. This piece appeared in the weekend issue of The Capital Times for March 14-15, 1998. It appears with permission from Rob.

Some Wisconsin homeowners may find this hard to believe, but the quack grass that invades your finely manicured front lawn every summer is not considered the most cunning and despicable weed on this planet.

Not even close.

The absolute worst weed, according to retired UW agronomy professor LeRoy Holm, is a relentless, unmerciful villain known as purple nut sedge, which for centuries has plagued landowners in subtropical regions (including California and the southeastern United States) throughout the world.

Almost as bad is the bracken fern, a rapidly growing weed that's commonly found in England and, if left untended, will destroy acres upon acres of prime farmland in a matter of years.

"There's no way to control it," Holm points out. "Once you get it, your soil is ruined for life."

If anyone should know, it's Holm — the Sherlock Holmes of the weed world — who over the last 35 years has visited some 80 countries tracking down the Earth's nastiest weeds and, along the way, written three books on the subject.

The last of the trilogy, "World Weeds: Natural Histories and Distributions," was published last year and, much to Holm's shock, recently won the prestigious Association of American Book Publishers' 1997 biological sciences award.

Indeed, three weeks after the honor was announced, Holm, 80, is



Look familiar? That's quack grass, one of the most despised weeds in Wisconsin, that UW professor Jerry Doll is holding in the UW Greenhouse. Doll and retired UW professor LeRoy Holm (left) recently won a prestigious award for their book, "World Weeds." Holm's wife, Marian, and his son, Eric (not shown), provided major assistance.



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