

plots throughout the season, along with irrigating the alleys on a regular basis. I feel that these extra projects are important because it better prepares my student workers for golf course work. This is one way I can help show them what is required to make a membership or clientele happy. Following field day, we finally have a little breathing room until September.

September

It is once again time to prepare reports for technical representatives from the chemical companies. This report will cover all of the summer studies that I have done in the past season, and is usually around 30 pages in length. I am also dealing with many of them on a regular basis to line up treatments for snow mold work. At the end of the month, I start my final travel period and crunch time of the year. During late September, until early November, I am on the road every week working on snow mold plots. Many of the plots require ratings before winter as well as in the spring. I also have some teaching requirements in the fall, where I assist in teaching Plant Pathology 300 (Introductory Plant Pathology). In the past year, a turfgrass pathology discussion group has been added which meets weekly.

October

Snow mold, snow mold, and more snow mold! As you know we have developed probably the premier snow mold research program in the country (perhaps the world). From a financial standpoint we receive over half of our research funding from snow mold research, and the individuals supporting this work have come to recognize that we are "tops" in providing data in this area. As noted earlier in the article we have 17 snow mold research plots out this year which will probably remain fairly constant. As I have illustrated, this disease also requires that we take the show on the road because of the differing pathogen populations across the state.

November

After finishing up the snow mold work early in the month, it is time for a week or two of catching up. Toward the end of the month, we start sending out contract renewals. But in general, November is a time for tying up loose ends and to start thinking about the future.

December

We made it! The last month of the year is a time of reflection. This is when we look back on the previous year and determine what changes need to be made. For example, this past year we reviewed the financial support for the lab and felt that we needed to develop a deeper contract base to ensure the lab's existence well into the future. We also saw the need for clerical support, so we hired Audra Anderson at 10% time to assist with the contracts, invoicing, and diagnosis write-ups. Finally, the end of the month rolls around and it is time to start thinking about Expo again.

As you can see being a diagnostician for the TDDL requires more than being able to diagnose samples. I would say that maybe about 30% of my time is spent on diagnosis. A majority of my time is probably spent in research. But, the unspoken majority is for fund raising, either through grant preparation or increasing and processing contracts. Being a diagnostician is a very fulfilling job, but it is a very time consuming job as well. So anytime that you have an open day to spend working with me Oscar, feel free to give me a call. This offer extends to everyone reading this. The lab is here for you, the turfgrass manager, and if you would like to learn more about it, feel free to give me a call. I would be willing to set up time for you to visit the lab and the Noer Facility to see what we are all about. ♣



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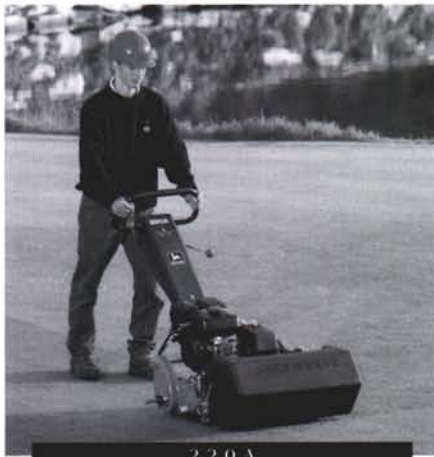
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Value of University Research and Extension



By **Dr. R. Chris Williamson**, Department of Entomology, University of Wisconsin - Madison

Landgrant universities were established for the primary purpose of providing a learning environment in which faculty, staff, and students can discover, examine critically, preserve and transmit knowledge, wisdom and values. This will help ensure the survival of this and future generations and improve the quality of life for all. Consequently, The University of Wisconsin-Madison (Wisconsin's landgrant institution) champions this mission. UW-Madison continues to be Wisconsin's comprehensive teaching and research university with statewide, national, and international recognition. Furthermore programs at the undergraduate, graduate and professional levels in a wide range of fields are offered from agriculture to business economics to medicine. In order to fulfill this mission, UW-Madison engages in extensive scholarly research, continuing education and public service.

So what is the value of UW-Madison's research and extension for the turfgrass industry? Priceless! The

university personnel who make-up the turfgrass working group (Dr. Michael Casler, Jeff Gregos, Dr. Geunhwa Jung, Dr. Wayne Kussow, Dr. John Stier, and Dr. R. Chris Williamson) are committed to developing research and extension programs that will provide useful information to the Wisconsin turfgrass industry. Such information is derived from scholarly research that is based on identified needs of turfgrass managers in Wisconsin as well as regionally, nationally and internationally.

Due to growing environmental concerns and increasing governmental regulations, the need for lower-input, sustainable turf is necessary. Many of the past, present, and future research projects and extension programs originated from invaluable inputs from turfgrass managers. Consequently, the various needs of turfgrass managers are frequently fulfilled.

However, there are often many more needs than there are resources to address respective problems.

Nonetheless, once industry needs are identified, they are prioritized by relevance, utility, applicability, as well as availability of funding resources (i.e., grants or aids), and subsequently respective research and extension programs are then developed after these criteria.

Although one could rely on resources from other surrounding states as well as nationally, specific issues relevant to Wisconsin would unlikely to be addressed by other institutions. Thus, without the invaluable research and extension programs developed by specialists at UW-Madison, many needs of the Wisconsin turfgrass industry may go unfulfilled. Therefore, the already strong working relationship between UW-Madison and the turfgrass industry must continue grow and flourish so that present and future needs and problems can be identified, addressed, and solved. ♣

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In Pursuit of a Golf Course

By Patrick J. Norton, Golf Course Superintendent, Nettle Creek Country Club

Ah, the dream of buying and owning your own golf course! It all sounds so grand, so romantic, and so interesting! There are tons of good reasons for any superintendent or golf professional to consider owning a golf property... not the least of which is the fact that superintendents and golf professionals are the management experts that any golf course needs to thrive.

We're also the ones who are out there daily... forsaking our families and our futures for the sake of the old golf course! We're also the ones who are seemingly underappreciated, underpaid, and way overlooked, aren't we?? After years of working my life away on a golf course... with the idea of acquiring a golf property constantly gnawing at me... it seemed as if the dream of a lifetime was upon me.

A good friend... who just happened to be the golf professional at Morris CC... had been having these dreams/nightmares also! One discussion led to another... and pretty soon we were unofficially... partners!

In fact, wouldn't the team of a superintendent and a golf professional as equal partners... purchasing a golf property... work out just fine? Wouldn't there be just an incredible synergy between both types?

We certainly thought so as we began the process of pursuing a golf course in the late summer of 1999.

We thought that we had this thing figured out from all possible angles! And for many weeks and months of the pursuit process we continued to believe in our vision. It wasn't until almost too late in the game that we were forced to realize that it all boiled down to money... up front money... capital improvement money... working capital money... as my partner said after I dropped out, "Cash is king!"

Let me just say that pursuing and purchasing a golf course... no matter how good the price... no matter how good the property... no matter how good the income potential... boils down mainly to a matter of having the bucks to consummate the marriage.

It boils down to being a businessman. It boils down to being a successful businessman... with a solid track record... of having strong business analytical abilities, an aggressive attitude... which over time result in cash and assets that are further invested in other projects. It is called capitalism! Banks will not seriously discuss commercial real estate projects with 'business rookies' without many factors being in place... primarily capital, but also a serious business history and banking relationship with your proposed lender.

We embarked on our quest in July of 1999. We found out that we both shared the same vision... were both about the same age... with spouses who were really good friends and could definitely work together! We checked into a local course that was reportedly for sale... at a mere \$4,500,000... and realized quickly that professional consulting help was needed.

Our consultant found us an excellent property almost immediately... at a really great price! We were ecstatic and totally enthusiastic! We then embarked on a long series of trips, meetings, teleconferences, offers, counteroffers, etc.... which went smoothly up to the point of realizing... after many months of negotiations... that we could not put this thing together without another investor.

So, after many weeks of trying to put this project together... it finally became crystal clear that the two of us could not do this alone! We had come to the end of the line! We both had decisions to make. After much soul searching... after it became clear that myself and my original partner would not be doing this by ourselves, I decided to drop out and stay here in beautiful central Illinois.

We had the option of staying with the project... which was very appealing. The conditions of the new deal... with new partners... were really attractive!

There were so many pros and cons to consider that I



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ended up waffling for too long... and leaving my partner out on a limb. He was waiting patiently for me to decide to stay or go... and ended up having to make the decision to continue on without us.

I also had the problem of having assets that were too limiting and too fixed... selling rental properties in order to invest those proceeds into the golf course was proving to be a difficult task!

And... after some tough negotiations here at Nettle Creek... my responsibilities, compensation, and future buy-in possibilities were redefined. It was amazingly interesting to us how valuable I had suddenly become to the Nettle Creek operation when I was seriously threatening to leave Illinois and return to Wisconsin!

Imagine that! A Wisconsin Badger... born and bred... turning down a golden opportunity to return to the native state that he and his wife love so much. Extremely ironic, I would say.

I still don't know if I exhibited extreme restraint and wisdom in staying here... or extreme foolishness and lack of intestinal fortitude in passing up the opportunity!

So, the fever has cooled... somewhat. The fever was all-consuming... in my case. I had such a case of the fever that I was willing to do almost anything to acquire my dream.

My partner and I pumped in money, time, legal fees, and lots of uncertainty. We thought for a long while that pursuing this golf course was going to work out for us and our families. We really thought that both of our families would be returning to Wisconsin and operating our new golf course as equal partners. We thought that we were really going to be able to close this deal.

In fact, I have now backed away from the dream... for various well thought out reasons. Fortunately, I've been given the opportunity to expand my horizons and begin to experience all facets of management of a public golf operation here at NCCC...



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Would I ever invest in or attempt to purchase a golf course in the future? A definite maybe, but not a certainty.

For us little guys... buying a golf course is a pretty big bite. We should have been believing in the 30% rule... which is to say that at least 30% of the purchase price... and probably more... is required as equity by any bank willing to consider a loan.

The biggest lesson in the whole pursuit process for me was just that... dealing with the banks and the SBA was far more complicated than we expected! We were 'business rookies'... neophytes who naively believed in many things... when better judgment was trying to speak to us loudly and clearly!

Ah, what the heck! My former partner continued on with the project and is now a partial owner of a very fine golf facility. I decided to work things out here at this family owned course... take on an enhanced position... and bide my time for the future.

We think that we made the correct decision in saying here... as did our friends who are returning to Wisconsin. We do have some regrets... but as Kenny Rogers says... "you gotta know when to hold 'em, and know when to fold 'em." ♣

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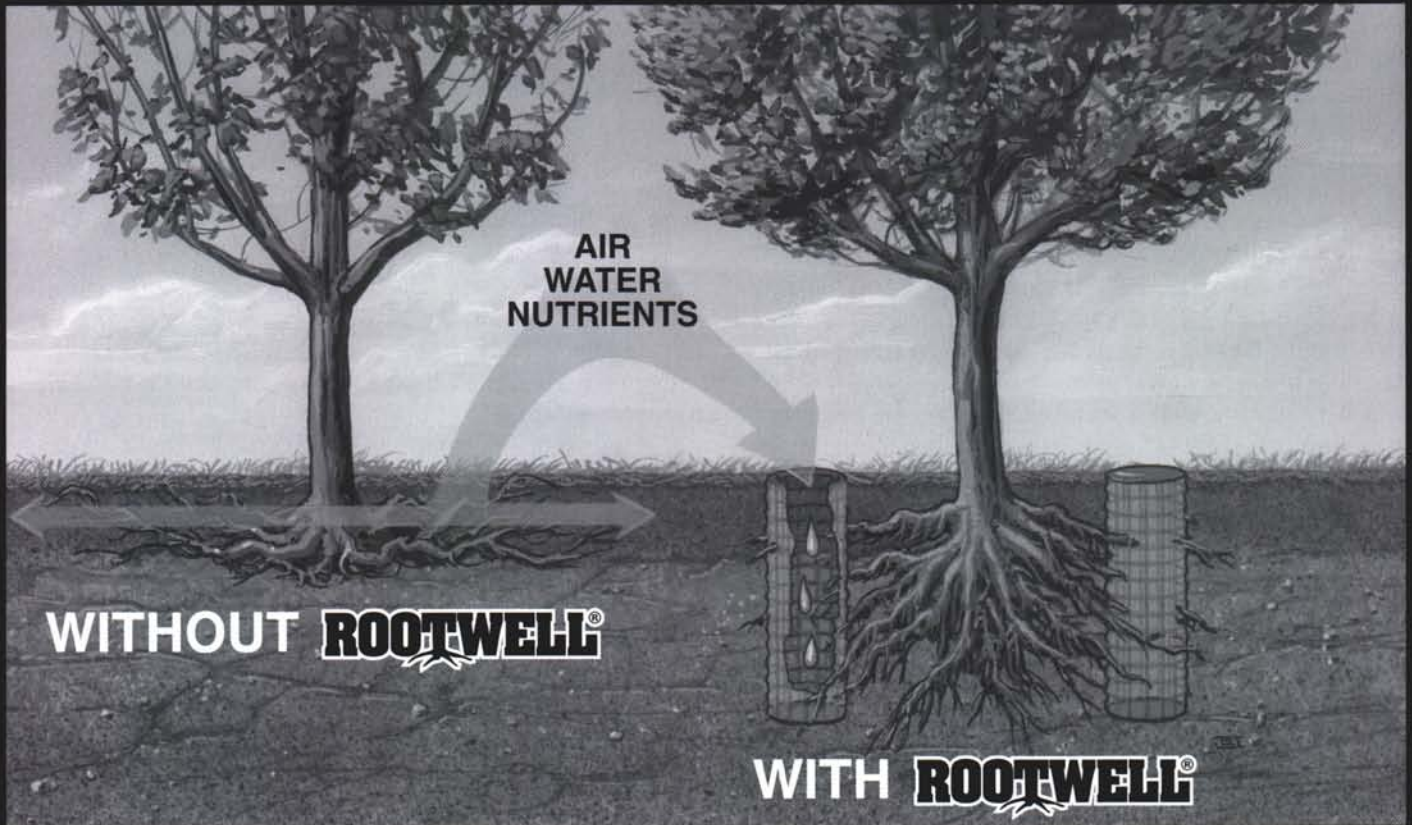
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From Start to Finish, 2000 GCSAA Conference Was Tops!

By **Monroe S. Miller**, Golf Course Superintendent, Blackhawk Country Club



It could have been predicted: we didn't have any snow events to speak of in Wisconsin UNTIL the very day we were to start the drive to New Orleans and the 2000 GCSAA Conference and Show. That day - Sunday, February 13th - presented nearly blizzard conditions. I couldn't complain too much, however. We needed the moisture after an extremely dry fall and a winter nearly bereft of snow.

So, a day later, Steve Millett and I headed south for The Big Easy. We had an appointment at the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Waterways Experiment Station in Vicksburg, Mississippi on the way down. We missed our appointment because of the snow, but thought someone in that facility would be willing to answer questions about zebra mussels. Wrong. They were all in Ontario, Canada attending a zebra mussel convention! Since we were in Vicksburg, we did a driving tour of the famous Civil War battlefield where Wisconsin soldiers played an important role. Many of our Badger boys died there; a memorial to them is in the park, topped with Old Abe, their Civil War eagle mascot.

The weather in New Orleans on Tuesday, the 15th, was warm to the tune of almost 20 degrees F above normal. It felt good. Our room at the Marriott was in order, parking was available for the truck, and we didn't have to worry if our luggage would arrive.

This was the fourth GCSAA conference I have attended in New Orleans. We've stayed at the Hilton, the DoubleTree, the Sheraton and now the Marriott. They are all convenient to the enormous convention center and

close to the French Quarter. Steve was all eyes as we explored that old part of town on Tuesday afternoon.

New Orleans isn't a pretty city. It is dirty, it smells funny, and there are a lot of weirdoes on the loose. Although the food is supposed to be good (if you like seafood), the milk was terrible. But what the downtown area may lack in beauty is made up with its history.

We walked Decatur Street into the French Quarter, nosing around the shops full of beads, hot sauce and chicory coffee. We saw the Washington Artillery Park. The Cafe du Monde was a must stop - strong, black coffee and rich beignets smothered in powdered sugar. Jackson Square, with carriages on the street side, is a show in itself. Mimes are part of the street culture there. St. Ann's side of the Square offers tarot readers and portrait painters and balloon peddlers.

We ate supper at the French

Market. Millett had to eat the crawfish, disgusting little creatures that have to be broken and pinched before you can eat the meager meat. He must have had a



A monument to honor the Wisconsin men who died at Vicksburg during the Civil War. Old Abe is on top.



A plaque tells of the founding of New Orleans. The Café du Morde is in the background.



Jackson Square in New Orleans.

bushel of them. I went for more traditional fare.

We took St. Phillip Street to Bourbon and walked down Bourbon Street. The sights ranged from tap dancers on the streets to Dixieland jazz from the bars. And, of course, on a warm night near Mardi Gras, there is the bead throwing as a reward for... well, you have to see it to believe it.

At a break later in the week, I walked to Dauphine Street, which is parallel to Bourbon and a block north of it. I was thrilled to find the cottage where John James Audubon lived and the one where he painted southern birds as part of his Birds of America epic. It was the last of the Audubon sites I desperately wanted to see.

The other streets of the French Quarter - Royal and Chartres, Burgandy and Rampart, Iberville and Bienville and Conti, Toulouse, St. Peter, Orleans and the rest down to Esplanade Avenue - are all curious and interesting with something for everybody, even hicks from the Midwest.

It was a good omen for us, I guess: we were there at the same time Pat Sajak and Vanna White and the Wheel of Fortune were in town! The week was one of the best GCSAA conferences I have attended. I am a decent judge, based on experience. This was my 28th consecutive conference and show.

What did I like about it? Here goes.

1. I attended a seminar that was

Carriages line the Decatur Street side of Jackson Square.



Bourbon Street held lots of surprises for those who walked there.



John James Audubon lived here (on Dauphine Street) and...



... painted here, also on Dauphine Street..



Randy Swonger & Steve Schmidt visiting in New Orleans, as if they don't see enough of each other at Butte Des Morts CC.



Dr. Frank Rossi, here with Randy Witt, stopped by the Wisconsin Room to renew old friendships.

excellent. Randy Witt was there, too, and I think he would agree. Dr. Frank Rossi would be the one person in the country with the courage to offer a seminar series that looked at *Poa annua* from a view other than eradication. In fact, his survey of the class revealed that 90% or more of us were working hard at its culture. It was a brilliant effort by Rossi. GCSAA now has to offer it as a regional seminar (providing Frank has the time). It will fill a gaping hole in the educational offerings of the association.

2. Convention Center Facilities. The building is big, reasonably arranged and very clean. With only a couple of exceptions (most notably, the research session) there was adequate seating and room in the halls. The auditorium was the first I have seen in such facilities, and it was excellent. Shortcomings were food service stands - most of us resented having to wait so long for mediocre chow. And the people working the stands - well, let's say they weren't exactly service oriented.

Audio-visual equipment that I witnessed all worked. Three cheers!

3. Opening Session. The start of the first conference in the new century was pleasant and informative. The Zion Harmonizers entertained those of us who like to arrive early for a good seat. A New Orleans four trombone band led the big shots in and onto the stage. Only a reason-



Peter Ueberroth stayed to sign autographs until everyone who wanted one was satisfied.

able number of seats were reserved, a distinct improvement over the selfish roped area of some recent years. The auditorium was a terrific venue - comfortable seats, good views of stage and screen, and a good sound system.

I was pleased that the superintendent/pastor remembered Winnie Palmer and Payne Stewart in his invocation. The session was an appropriate place to honor a GCSAA employee who had worked 25 years on the conference and show. And, as is becoming habit, the GCSAA board gave two of the distinguished service awards to former GCSAA presidents. I think they ought to line them all up at once, give them the DSA, and be done with it. From that point forward, search the association for the hun-

dreds of non-politicians worthy of the honor and pick a couple of them each year for the award. The conversation in the crowd indicates I am not far from the mark.

As much as anyone in recent memory, I enjoyed Peter Ueberroth as the keynoter. He is a man of great accomplishment - chairman of the 1984 Olympics, Time magazine Man of the Year that year, the sixth commissioner of baseball and now a co-owner of Pebble Beach. He focused on two messages: change and success. It was an excellent take-home speech. Plus, he was willing to sign autographs for all who wanted one. First class.

4. Golf General Session. This was another really good presentation. It moved along nicely with minimal commentary from the prez

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