

TABLE OF CONTENTS

THE PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE
Education: Don't Forget About Your Staff! 3

GOLF IN THE FLATLANDS
A Management Memo 5

MISCELLANY
Kussow Honored At Field Day 2000 9

PERSONALITY PROFILE
Former Dentist Takes The Reins At WSGA 11

WISCONSIN ENTOMOLOGY REPORT
DELAYED by WEATHER 15

NOTES FROM THE NOER FACILITY
Another Great Day - Field Day 2000 16

GAZING IN THE GRASS
Golf Courses Can Benefit the Environment 19

FROM ACROSS THE COUNTRY
Blame It On The Committee 29

TALES FROM THE BACK NINE
Old Home Day 33

WISCONSIN PATHOLOGY REPORT
**Development of Typhula Species
 Specific PCR Primer** 37

TDL
**Dollar Spot Control: The Ins and Outs
 and What You Should Know** 40

JOTTINGS FROM THE GOLF COURSE JOURNAL
What Some Others Are Saying About PDI 45

THE EDITOR'S NOTEBOOK
A Pretty Good Season 55

WGCSA
July Meeting at Olde Highlander Golf Course 59

MISCELLANY
**Textron Turf Student Seminar Had a
 Distinctive Wisconsin Flavor** 61

POA TRIVIA
 62

FIELD DAY 2000
 63

ABOUT THE COVER

Dr. Wayne R. Kussow was honored by the entire Wisconsin turfgrass industry on August 8, 2000 when the Wisconsin Turfgrass Association presented the Department of Soil Science at the University of Wisconsin-Madison with the Wayne R. Kussow Wisconsin Distinguished Graduate Fellowship. Every year hence this \$500,000 fellowship will fund a graduate student doing turfgrass research in that department. *The Grass Roots* honors Dr. Kussow with his portrait on our cover, completed by the noted artist J.L. Samerdyke.

"As the colors of autumn stream down the wind, scarlet in sumach and maple, spun gold in the birches, a splendor of smoldering fire in the oaks along the hill, and the last leaves flutter away, and dusk falls briefly about the worker bringing in from the field a late load of its fruit, and Arcturus is lost to sight and Orion swings upward that great sun upon his shoulders, we are stirred once more to ponder the Infinite Goodness that has set apart for us, in all this moving mystery of creation, a time of living and a home.

- Wilbur L. Cross, Governor
 Connecticut 1938

THE GRASS ROOTS

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Education: Don't Forget About Your Staff!



By **Kris Pinkerton**, Golf Course Superintendent, Oshkosh Country Club



All things considered, most superintendents and turf managers around the state are having a fairly decent golf season. But if your not one of them, hang in there, fall is coming soon near you! And with fall right around the corner, so are the educational offerings which continue to be a key ingredient into our own success.

But wait, don't forget the people who make up the core of the team that prepares the golf course for play. There are countless activities, turf symposiums or conferences and monthly meetings available for all of the key people who help make your operation a success. Assistant superintendents, golf course mechanics, irrigation specialists and spray techni-

cians can all gain valuable information when presented with the opportunity to attend educational events. After they attend the meetings, take time to ask about their experiences. Was it worthwhile or would they like to attend again; may be all it takes to keep the lines of communication open and interest level up for some time to come. Problems, concerns and needs may then be discussed more openly and this can lead to the operation running more smoothly. Who doesn't like smooth?

Please join us for our remaining meetings

- September 11 Greenwood Hills CC - Wausau, WI
Scott Sann, Host Superintendent
Guest Speaker - Mr. David Overly,
"Greentrac.com"
- October 2 Horseshoe Bay GC - Egg Harbor, WI
Brian Ferrie, Host Superintendent
Guest Speaker - Mr. Bob Vavrek,
"The Year in Review"
- Nov 14,15 Wisconsin Golf Turf Symposium -
Brookfield, WI

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A Management Memo

By Pat Norton, Golf Course Superintendent, Nettle Creek Country Club

The following is a memo that was issued recently to our management people here at Nettle Creek CC. NCCC is a public golf course that also sells 'memberships'... which are really nothing more than glorified season passes. Our 'members' have no obligation to us... no assessments, no initiation fee, and no assurance of them rejoining us as members each year. We set the precedent of selling memberships and having members back in 1995... and find ourselves here in 2000 questioning whether or not we really want members.

I personally feel that alienating all of these people... through abrupt elimination of memberships... would not be good business. I do agree with the idea of possibly adjusting some of the benefits/features of our membership classes... still giving the member a good value... but creating an environment in which the club can do better financially! Currently, members here:

- make Sat/Sun tee times without guaranteeing foursomes
- take prime tee times well before the general public has any chance
- play for considerably less... a frequent player (40X/season) averages only \$20.62 plus \$11 (cart) = \$32.00



While I sometimes roll my eyes and question the situation... it is definitely worthwhile to keep in mind their value to us as a public golf club. There are some very serious issues to debate when considering the membership question at any public or semi-private golf club.

We have a solid core of very loyal golfing patrons/members... who have been with us for five years... helping greatly to support this golf course. During this time we have modestly increased their membership price each year... which still gives them a great golfing value if they golf frequently.

Offsetting this... we are also seeing a pretty solid increase in rounds from the general public and an increased demand for golf outings, etc. The outing thing has evolved from a situation of limiting ourselves somewhat in the past to our current policy of taking lucrative outings on just about any weekday... and after 10 a.m. on weekends!

Analysis of it all tells us that our members are definitely part of the mix... place the greatest demands on us... expect more service... and receive the best value of anybody that patronizes us. They do pay their dues pre-season... helping us operate in the winter and spring... which is another consideration.

It has all left us still in the position of wondering just who is getting the best part of this deal!

We have many members who definitely get their money's worth... a few who don't... and a few who approach us for a refund when job transfers, moving, etc. become a reality... another part of the membership question.

Check out a few of these prices against your own... make your own analysis... and arrive at your own conclusions!

	By 12/31	By 2/15	In-season
Single male (under age 50)	\$825	\$875	\$925
Cart fees extra... cart fee discounted			
Preferential tee times			
Golf shop discounts			

The fact is that we now have a PGA professional who is very much a public golf type of guy... great with numbers, income, budgets, and players. The truth is... he is very much in tune with everything here except great member service!

The trouble began a few weeks ago when... some of

our managers sort of jumped the gun with their attitudes toward members... which I found somewhat disturbing... and hence, this management memo! Needless to say, a few feathers were ruffled.

To: JP
Michelle Wren
Vickie Shankle
WBN
Rosemary Norton
Robert Patnode

From: PJN
Re: Customer services
Member services
Beverage cart services
Ladies and Gentlemen,

The following **services** are hereby suspended until further notice... I do not want either myself or my golf course staff to be bothered with trying to provide **service** to either fellow employees or, indirectly, to our golfers! I also do not want either them, or myself, to have to get here any earlier than necessary... to work

in any sort of unsanitary, unpleasant conditions... or to work in any sort of rainy, inclement weather. If **service** to golfers/members begins to suffer as a result of this memo . . let them all eat cake!!

1) Garbage pick-up from the restaurant... my staff members dislike the entire process... so let's find somebody else willing to do it ???

2) Bathroom, restaurant, porch, outside stairway, sidewalks, etc... all cleaning in these areas to be suspended so that innocent clubhouse employees can begin to taste the complaints from golfers... and members... for something over which they have no responsibility or control... which is exactly what happened to me last night when I came out to check out Men's Night!!! I do not like getting ambushed by unhappy golfers because we failed to have a bev cart out there...

Also, Rodrigo has complained to me that he really doesn't like starting up there so early... so we'll go to every other day cleaning to make him happier and to save on labor costs!

3) Steam table repair... and other clubhouse repairs... are very time consuming and frustrating for



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me... so why bother??? Other small repair requests will be processed as time permits...

4) Other items/chores on the golf course will be reviewed in an effort to make our employees and management feel less stressed. Besides, our golfers and members probably won't notice if we decide to streamline operations...

- Bunkers... to be raked once/week instead of daily
- Greens... to be mowed every other day instead of daily
- Change cups and tee markers... 3X/week instead of daily
- Fairway and rough mowing... whenever somebody volunteers or is willing to do it!!!

5) Beverage cart services... to be offered on week-ends only... let's not concern ourselves with keeping a bev cart out there for ladies' league, men's league, or couples league... it's probably not worth it to keep a girl out there until 8 p.m.... we'll just make sure that we tell all golfers to take a cooler with them if they want any sort of drink during the week...

These changes will be implemented immediately and be in effect for the remainder of the 2000 season... it will lessen the stress on management, permit us all to keep shorter hours, and dispel the illusion that we are even somewhat concerned about daily, constant, superior customer service.

I am sure that these changes will not have a negative impact on our sales or our operation... golfers will still keep patronizing our newer, sleeker, streamlined Nettle Creek.

Good luck to all as we continue on through the 2000 golf season!!!!

Regards,

Patrick Norton

Golf Course Superintendent & Exec VP

Needless to say... the memo did have the intended effect. We did have a short but rather intense management meeting at which I was asked by our sensitive female food/bev manager... "Could you please not yell so much and get so violent? You make me really nervous when you do that." Others at the meeting were upset at me also... which was fine with me. It meant that they were aroused, angry, and defensive... and really aware that there were problems that we all had to correct!

The interesting thing about this situation is that... with our management team setup... anybody can blow and vent... or more calmly have verbal input... on any area of our operation. If managers notice problems or have ideas for improvement... they are expected and encouraged to bring these ideas out in the open! And isn't it just a major pet peeve when staff members ask

permission before expressing themselves??? I say... let it rip, baby! We are all adults here!!!

In any management team situation... such as a public golf course... it takes everyday teamwork and cooperation to provide good customer service. It takes staff people who are intelligent and willing to express themselves. And... it takes managers who care passionately about their work and create an environment wherein people are encouraged to express themselves and lay themselves out on the line a little bit... it takes tons of effort to keep any golf course looking good and running smoothly.

So, let's work together, people... please help us refrain from letting our dark sides loose... so that we don't rip into people who are somewhat incompetent, make too many mistakes, or just plain don't give a damn!!!

Better yet... let's all wait until the season is finished before we start debating the membership question. We'll then have some private, off-season time to reconsider things and decide just where members fit into our picture! ♻



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*Dale Parske
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You've served our local chapter — Are you ready to serve the national?

You don't need to know a secret code or handshake to be involved on a GCSAA committee. If you're interested in committee service for next year, all you need to do is submit the volunteer interest form by Oct. 1. In addition to the form, GCSAA will also request evaluation information from your chapter president. All this material will be compiled for the incoming chairmen and president to review, and then committee and resource group appointments will be announced in early April.

Responsibilities

A committee member is a representative of the members, a leader of the association, and a worker for GCSAA. Responsibilities include:

- Preparing for and participating in one committee meeting and/or one or more conference calls. Meetings are typically one to two days and are usually held at GCSAA headquarters. GCSAA pays travel expenses.



- Responding to phone, fax and/or E-mail requests for information and feedback throughout the committee year.
- Communicating ideas and relevant issues to the committee chairman and/or staff liaison.

Rewards

When you are selected to serve on a GCSAA committee or resource group, you may justifiably feel good about it. Rewards for your involvement include:

- Networking with other GCSAA leaders from around the country.
- Knowing that you are contributing something significant to enhance the quality and value of membership in GCSAA for yourself and your colleagues in the golf course management profession.
- Honing communication, planning and analysis skills that can enhance your own career.

How to Volunteer

You can volunteer today by submitting the online volunteer interest form in the committee directory section of GCSAA's Web site at www.gcsaa.org. You can also obtain a form by contacting GCSAA's service center at mbrhelp@gcsaa.org or by phone at (800) 472-7878.

For more information contact Lisa Bland
(lbland@gcsaa.org or call (800) 472-7878 at extension 419).

Kussow Honored At Field Day 2000

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



Dr. Wayne R. Kussow was honored by the Wisconsin Turfgrass Association on August 8th at the 2000 Field Day with the announcement that the first of four Wisconsin Distinguished Graduate Fellowships in Turfgrass Science will be named for him. Professor Kussow was visibly touched by the recognition.

The WTA was formed in 1980 by a broad base of turfgrass professionals with the expressed purpose of supporting turfgrass research at the University of Wisconsin - Madison.

That support has taken many different forms over the years. One of the first actions was to purchase a pickup truck to alleviate hassles for faculty with the University fleet. The WTA has awarded hundreds of undergraduate scholarships, graduate student assistantships, and direct grants to the research faculty. It has provided everything from student labor to data loggers. And foremost of the WTA efforts was raising money from 1987 - 1990 to build the wonderful turfgrass research facility that was named for O.J. Noer. The Noer Facility was a gift from the WTA to the University and despite the ten years that have passed since its opening it remains among the best, if not the best, turfgrass research facility in the country.

In the middle 1990s, the WTA established the O.J. Noer Development Fund at the University of Wisconsin Foundation, looking to the future and trying to position the turf industry with an opportunity to help itself when needed and when the time was right. Last year, the time got right. As a result of plan-

ning by the UW Foundation, the Wisconsin Alumni Research Foundation (WARF) and the UW graduate school, the Wisconsin Distinguished Graduate Fellowship Program became available.

The officers and directors of the WTA were excited by the chance to double its money through the Fellowship Program and provide financial support, in the form of grad students, for perpetuity. It clearly is a rare opportunity. The association signed on and has dedicated itself to filling four fellowships, one each for the departments of Soil Science, Horticulture, Plant Pathology and Entomology.

The first of these Wisconsin Distinguished Graduate Fellowships will be in the Soil Science Department. This storied department is where O.J. Noer was educated as an undergrad and as a graduate student. It is the department where the UW - Madison turfgrass program began under the firm hand and strong guidance of Dr. James R. Love. Dr. Leo M. Walsh was CALS dean when the development of the Noer Facility took place; he spent his career in the Soil Science Department. And it is the department of Dr. Wayne R. Kussow, who succeeded Dr. Love and who has done so much for the turfgrass industry in Wisconsin for the past nearly two decades. Wayne has been the glue for the turfgrass program during its time of retirements and new hires and transition.

There are a lot of reasons why Wayne has been so respected in the Wisconsin turfgrass industry. In many ways, he is the quintessential Wisconsin person. He was

born and raised on a dairy farm near Oconto, in northeast Wisconsin; he attended our land grant university in Madison for a B.S. degree in 1961, a M.S. in 1963, and a Ph.D. in 1966. Except for a brief one and a half years at the University of Delaware, he has been on the Wisconsin faculty since graduating.

The year 1983 was a lucky year for us - Wayne did some research for MMSD, his first foray into turf. He studied and surveyed the science and when Dr. Love retired in 1986, Wayne assumed control of the program. It was our collective good luck he chose that career path.

In the years since 1983, Wayne's contributions have been formidable. He is a brilliant scientist and investigator; evidence of that abounds in the field trials at the Noer Facility and in his labs on campus. He is an excellent teacher as students of his will testify, and his writing in the journals we read is the best - clear, concise, to the point. He isn't bound by traditional or accepted practices, always questioning and encouraging us to do the same. Maybe what many of us appreciate most about him is his accessibility - Dr. Kussow is never more than a phone call away.

With these thoughts in mind, the WTA asked, "Why wait until Dr. Kussow retires to honor him? Why not now?" As a result, from August 8, 2000 forward, for all time, the first turfgrass Wisconsin Distinguished Graduate Fellowship will be known as the WAYNE R. KUSSOW Wisconsin Distinguished Graduate Fellowship, telling future generations the high respect we have for this man. ♣

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