

necessary for the "public welfare". So what does this really mean? From my perspective, it means golf course management is still the blend of art and science that it always has been, and modern golf management requires us to behave in a "professional manner", but golf course management by definition cannot be considered a true profession. With this in mind, we are overstepping the boundaries of the purpose of our association by attempting to control who can and cannot be a golf course superintendent. Golf course owners are an independent bunch and generally will hire whomever they feel comfortable with. GCSAA can help in this area by working to educate the people who make the hiring decisions.

It has been estimated that only about half of all golf course superintendents belong to GCSAA. Why is this? If membership in GCSAA is needed to validate our skills as superintendents, then why are so many superintendents not members? It is possible that a great many superintendents validate their job skills on a daily basis

and do not need an association to determine their skill levels. Many are not members because their employers will not pay their dues, and certainly would not pay to send them to the annual conference. This tells me that all employers do not as yet see the benefits of membership.

I have purposely avoided laying out the specific details of PDI. If the basic premise of a program is flawed then the details most certainly are also flawed. In general, a class A superintendent will have to follow a continuing education program similar to that currently in effect for Certified Superintendents. Someone entering the business without formal schooling in turf will have a very difficult time attaining class A status. Those of us who already have class A status will have a hard time maintaining it. The short version for those of us in this section is that you will have to attend the equivalent of a one day GCSAA seminar per year plus the Southwest Turfgrass Assn. Annual Conference. This sounds easy. What if you have scheduling conflicts with these events?



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What if your employer will not reimburse you for any continuing education? What if your employer doesn't send you to the National? Now it gets a little harder. The local chapters will play a crucial role in setting up pre-approved education and keeping track of points earned. This will mean more work for the chapter leaders and more cost for the chapter members.

The PDI seems to be a noble idea. It does not answer the question of why so many superintendents are not members of this association. It really does not address the realities of the job market, and it is certain to create an upper class of elite superintendents at elite clubs, while maintaining a lower class of superintendent who does not have the time or money to comply with PDI. Essentially, the leadership of this organization has gone beyond what the rank and file members demand from their professional association and the split in members that this proposal is causing is only going to make the association weaker in the long run. The current Certification program allows a superintendent to demonstrate his skill level to the industry. It is a voluntary program and should remain that way.

This proposal will be brought before the membership for a vote at the annual conference in Dallas, in

February 2001. The future of the association is at stake. The leadership has proposed that GCSAA make a change for the alleged betterment of the association (remember Golf Asia). It will be up to the members to decide if it is the right way to proceed."



**PDI Perspective**

*This follow-up article was written by Al Jansen, golf course superintendent at Baraboo CC. Al probably has put more thought into the PDI issue than anyone else in GCSAA, including MSRГ Committee members. He wrote this summary for The Grass Roots.*

"The Professional Development Initiative (PDI), once again, has been drafted to improve the image, retainability and net worth of today's superintendent. The GCSAA feels that by providing marketable superintendents to owners and employers, more GCSAA member superintendents will gain and hold better jobs in the industry. The non-participatory members and non-association members will, undoubtedly, under this new plan, have a much tougher time obtaining and maintaining these jobs, according to the MSRГ and the GCSAA.

Once the PDI becomes effective, the MSRГ believes that they will have a better ability to impress upon employers the importance and worth of a GCSAA Class A superintendent. What the MSRГ has failed to understand is that participation in a membership association like the GCSAA has had little impact on the employability of superintendents, in general. Men and women wishing to make superintending a career have developed their own career paths and have discovered their own ways to succeed. Some have used many of the GCSAA services like educational programming or attending the National conference and trade show, but statistically, **most** have not.

The overwhelming majority of superintendents, worldwide, do not attend monthly Chapter meetings, have never requested CEUs or PDUs for their attendance of trade related, non-GCSAA source education, and do not have at least a two-year Turfgrass Management degree. Yet, the GCSAA believes that by requiring this kind of participation, the association's core member will be better equipped to handle the difficult requirements of today's market. And all those (again, the majority) who do not fit the profile the GCSAA developed to impress employers, will be less able to acquire employment, so the GCSAA believes.

What the GCSAA chooses not to believe is the resourcefulness of individuals wanting to become superintendents. The GCSAA also cannot understand why employers have hired nonmembers or members who, on

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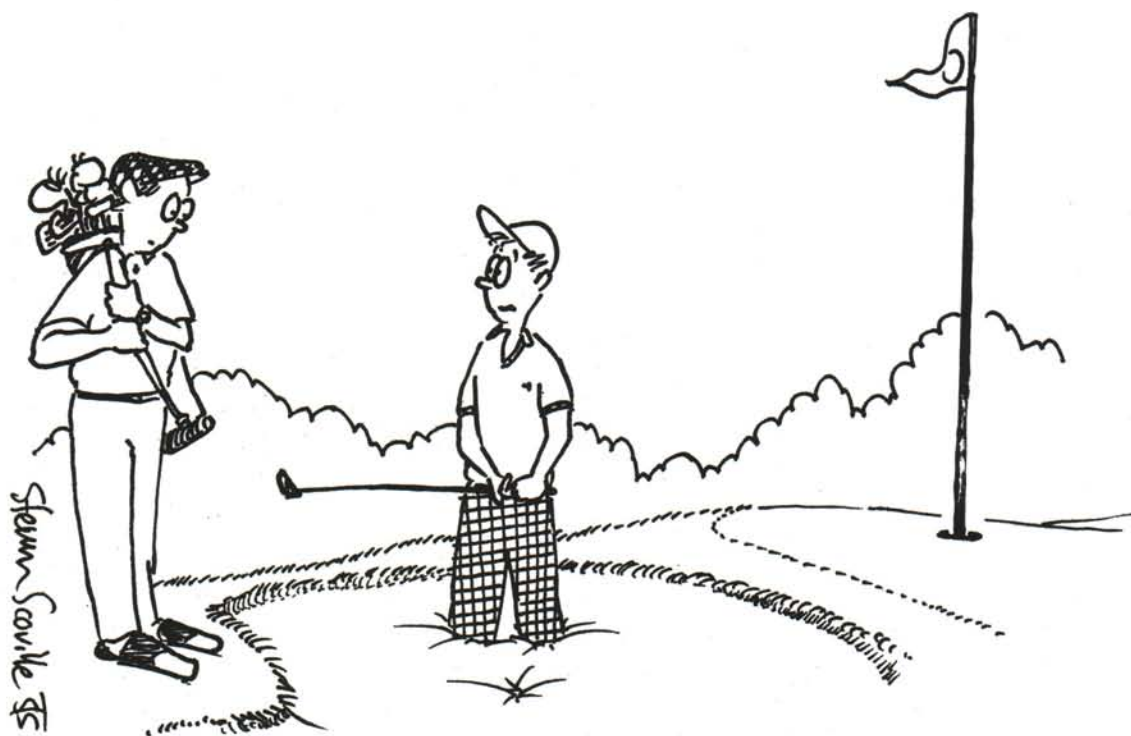
paper, are not as association-active as others. The GCSAA, in principle, feels that the PDI will level the playing field for their superintendents where one who wishes to get ahead in the crowded superintendent market will undertake the required program due to the sheer nature of our competitive job market. In other words, the GCSAA feels that their superintendents have not had a "leg up" in this market and only PDI will give this position to them.

By somehow proving to the golfing public that their Class A members are better equipped to handle the responsibility of overseeing golf course assets, the GCSAA believes more Class A members will obtain the best jobs at the better facilities. What the GCSAA will never realize is that they have had little impact on who gets hired and who stays hired at a given facility. Performance is the sole equalizer. On the job performance can only be improved upon by increasing one's knowledge base and superintendents have been providing this to their respective employers since greenkeeping became a term for what we do.

So what's the point of this? The GCSAA feels that as an association, they have not gotten enough of the credit for providing their service to their members.

Superintendents, on their own, have established this new and increased awareness of the importance the role of superintendent has on golf and the surfaces upon which golf is played. But, by being able to advertise the impact the GCSAA has on their Class A members, the association leadership feels that they, themselves, will gain more recognition in the industry as an important aspect of the golf business. So, in theory, the PDI is an attempt to prove association worth in the lives of the superintendent, more so than the worth of the individual superintendent. It all boils down to what I have been hearing since becoming a member of this association, "The GCSAA, in order to gain the respect of golfers, needs (or wants) to have the same recognition as has the PGA and the USGA. The GCSAA, without that recognition, is just another benefit to the superintendent. The GCSAA, without that recognition, even though they control their own destiny as an association, cannot control the destiny of the golf business or control the impact superintendents will have on golf in the future." But with their PDI, they believe they can.

As much as the GCSAA wants you to believe the PDI will help you, they will never tell you how much they think it will help them." ❧



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# A Pretty Good Season

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

For me, and I suspect for a lot of other Wisconsin golf course superintendents, autumn is like a long deep breath - a sigh of relief - drawn after the great intensity of the fading golf season. I can feel the stress beginning to leave me.

August can bring me some hot, humid days and with them brown patch and even pythium. But there is change in the air. Club championship rounds are underway; the junior players are wrapping up their season before the grade and high schools open their doors. Football players - high school and college - headed out at mid-month for practice, usually two-a-days. Those kids are suddenly grateful for a summer of hard work that got them into pretty good shape! Another wonderful field day at the Noer passes into history. The daily average high temperature is dropping a degree and a half each week, and the days are shorter. In fact, in September we lose 58 minutes of daylight. The light is distinctively different. There is sadness in the morning with the lack of bird-song, but August brings the intensi-

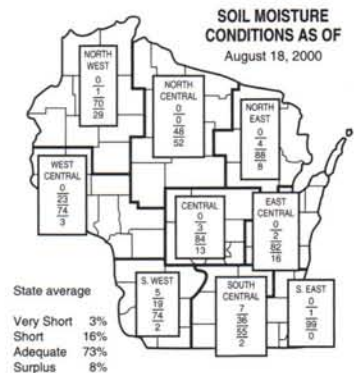
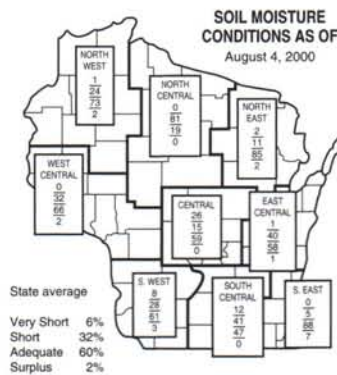
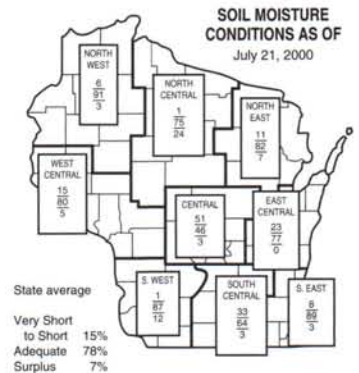
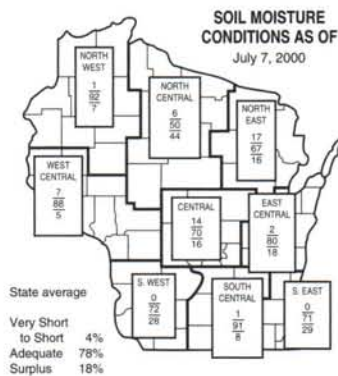
fied sound of crickets, especially at night when they play their familiar cadence of fall.

August smells different, too. It is a spicy smell, a mixture of ripeness and decay - apples and grass clippings and powdery mildew. Soon the dusty smell of dry leaves being mulched and of soil from aerified fairways will fill the air. In August this year we were treated to a Wisconsin Badgers football game at Camp Randall, sure fire evidence that fall is almost here.

I am ready; really, really ready.

The months of July and August were the chance for southern Wisconsin golf courses to dry out from the wet first half of the year. There were pockets of dry conditions, to be sure, but most of us received normal amounts of rain for the period. The normal or even cooler than normal temperatures seemed to keep diseases at bay for the most part, except for some persistent dollar spot on some courses.

A few more stats from Wisconsin Ag Statistics Service are shown here that allow you to track moisture conditions over the past two months.





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Chad Grimm and Mike Bogroff from my staff took our undergrad interns to the Merit Club to attend the Thursday competition of the 2000 US Women's Open. They arrived early and were stopped in their tracks when they saw a famous person. He waved, said "Hi, fellas!" and came over to visit with them. He had his own vehicle, and he had his secret service guard take a picture of him with the guys. Chad had enough composure to tell him he'd heard his wife speak at the GCSAA conference in Orlando.

The famous man was, as you can see, President George Bush!

•

Jeff Porter like antiques. And he likes the PBS show *Antiques Roadshow*. When the show was in Milwaukee, I tuned in to see Jeff getting an on-air appraisal. The show was in Madison on August 27; on the front page of the Sunday Wisconsin State Journal, there he was - Jeff Porter. He clearly has a touch of the showman in him! The pic below is for you to see for yourself.



L-R: Phil Spitz, Chad Grimm, Nick Herbrand, President Bush, Aaron Goninen, Mike Bremmer, Paul Blumke and Mike Bogroff.

•

The bold move by the Wisconsin Turfgrass Association to embrace the Wisconsin Distinguished Graduate Fellowships led to an exciting fund-raiser scheduled for October 10th at Whistling Straits. This event is one you'll want to support, either by participating yourself or by offering the opportunity to someone at your facility. It is a generous offer by Kohler; let's take advantage of it to the maximum.

•

Lori Bocher got me thinking with her last article in *The Grass Roots*. She reflected on ten years of interviews and what they had meant to her.

I got to wondering exactly how many issues of this journal I have edited. It turns out that this is the one hundredth issue. In some ways it seems like I started yesterday; in other ways it seems like it could be the one thousandth issue.

It has been a lot of work, but it seems part of my (and Cheryl's) life. We plan family events around



Jeff Porter at the Antiques Roadshow in Madison.

the various deadlines and there aren't very many nights in a year when I am not doing something related to getting an issue ready.

But it has been rewarding, too. Mostly I treasure time with the great writers we have. They are, as a group, so unique, so interesting, so dedicated. The truly singular thing about *The Grass Roots* is that it is done through the goodwill of contributors; we don't pay.

I am not sure how many more issues I have in me. My family is nearly grown and the arrival of granddaughter Grace Kaster reminded me of so many other things I want to do that require time. So it is almost an issue-to-issue proposition.

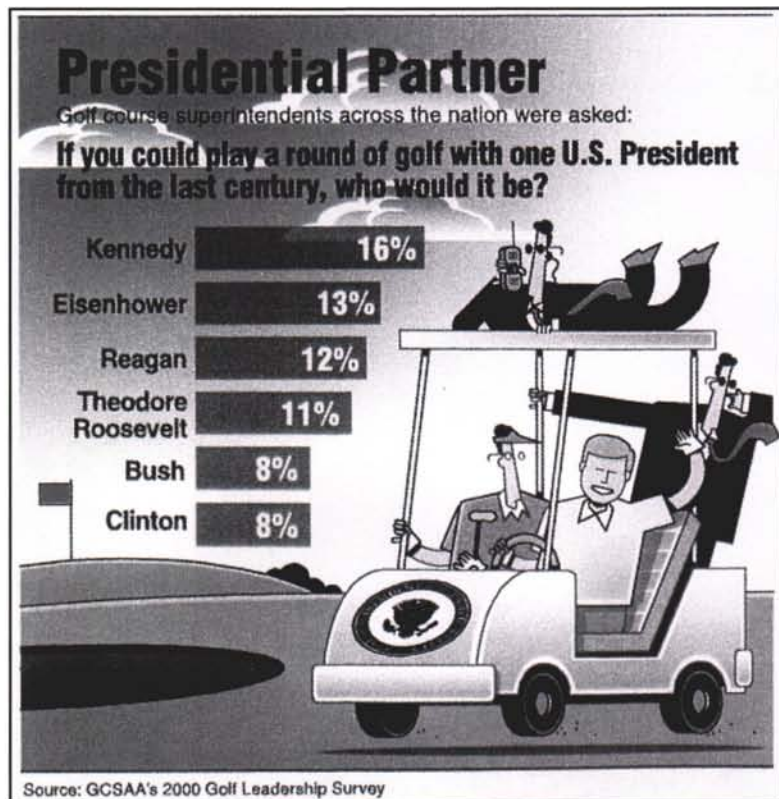
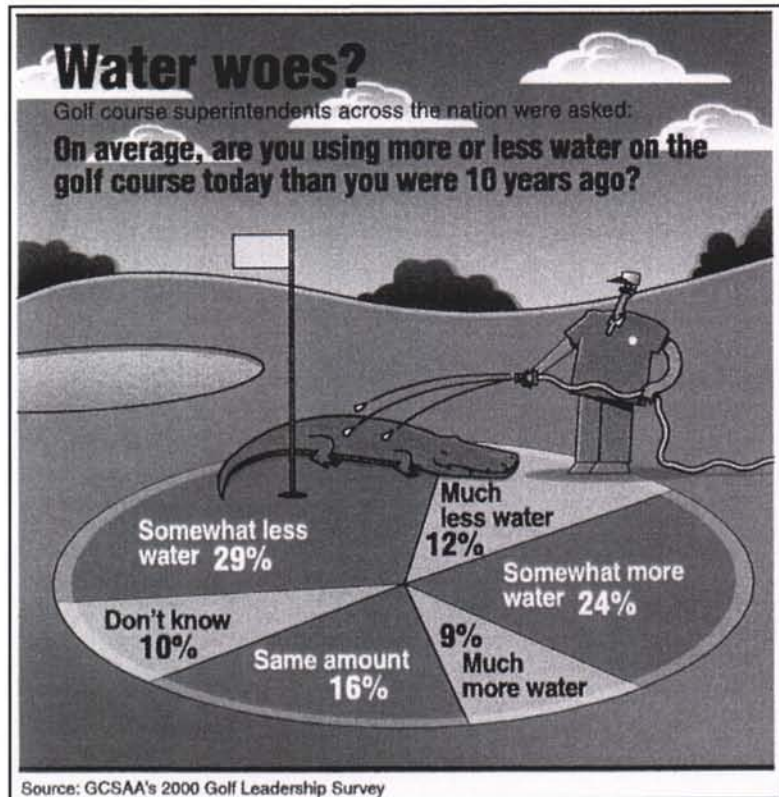
But I do think I will sign up for next year.

Frank and Barb Rossi were in Madison in July to vacation and see family and friends. Coincidentally, Barbara's sister and her family live in our town, so maybe we will get to see them more often. The news in their family is that Danielle and Nicole will soon be joined by a brother or a sister!

Frank brought a lot to Wisconsin in his short few years at the UW - Madison; he is having a similar impact at Cornell. He'll always have a following in our state.

October is my favorite month, and it is right around the corner. Soon I'll put up my orange Halloween lights, tie corn stalk bundles to front porch posts, and purchase the biggest pumpkins I can find to set next to them.

The pace on the course is comfortable, the work days are of normal length, and the weather suits me best. Let us raise our glasses and toast a golf season well done!





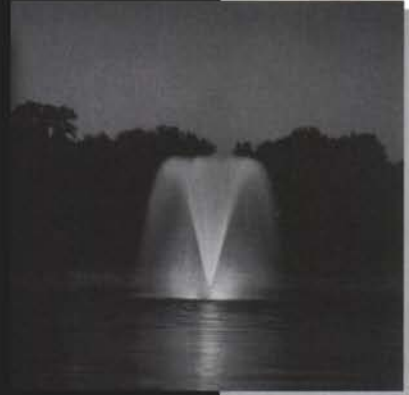
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# JULY MEETING AT OLDE HIGHLANDER GOLF COURSE

By **Mike Berwick**, Golf Course Superintendent, Golf Courses of Lawsonia, Inc.

Dan Shaw hosted the July meeting on Monday, July 10, at the Olde Highlander Golf Course in Oconomowoc. The weather was perfect and the golf course was in great condition. Dan used the event to inaugurate a new green and a couple of new tees.

A delicious brat and chicken breast buffet lunch was served in Kilt's Pub prior to the shotgun start at 12:30.

Sixty-six members and affiliates attended and played in the two man low net event. Partners were picked randomly and not known until after the event.

Following golf a delicious assortment of hors d'oeuvres was served and the golf and event prizes were awarded.

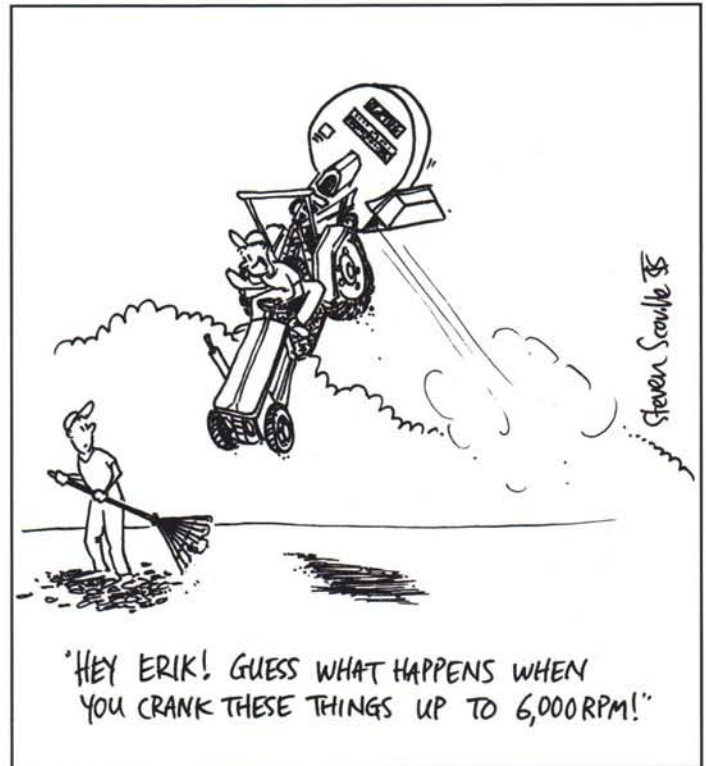
Winners in the 2-man low net event :

- 1st - Jim Shaw and Don Ferger (141)
- 2nd - Mike Lyons and Loyd Cook (141)
- 3rd - Joe Kuta and Brian Schmidt (143)
- 7th - Paul Schaefer and Randy DuPont (148)
- 10th - Andy Zehren and Dan Shaw (152)

Winners of Flag Events:

- |                       |                 |
|-----------------------|-----------------|
| Longest Drive on #3   | Brian Schmidt   |
| Closest to Pin on #5  | Fuzzy Feldman   |
| Closest to pin on #7  | Brian Schmidt   |
| Longest Putt on #9    | Ray Jankowski   |
| Closest to pin on #11 | Gary Huenerberg |
| Closest to pin on #13 | Bruce Worzella  |
| Longest Putt on #18   | Gary Huenerberg |

A special thanks to Dan Shaw, Professional Jim Lombardo, Owner Randy Warobick and the entire staff at the Olde Highhlander Golf Course for inviting our organization and for an enjoyable day. 🌿



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