

the years we've seen the evolution of golf courses being designed for all levels of play," Dave explains. "Whether it's a moderately budgeted daily fee course or an upscale private course, multiple tees have become very common so that different levels of players can play the same holes and have the difficulty relate to their ability to play the game."

This trend has affected the remodeling end of their business, too. "When remodeling a course, what we see most is bunker renovation or the addition or enlarging of tees," Dave says. "Some of the older courses that had very small tees are needing to make them bigger to be able to support the amount of play that they're getting."

**Keeping cost in mind...**

"When designing a course, there's also a very conscious concern on everybody's part as to how much it's going to cost to maintain the golf course after it's built," Dave points out. "Designers don't want to do things that are going to drive maintenance costs through the roof or things that are going to require a much larger staff because, again, it's very, very difficult to find the staff to do the work that needs to be done."

"So I think there's a very conscious effort between owners, designers, superintendents and contractors to try to create a course that is going to provide an equal level of opportunity to every golfer, and something that's reasonable and affordable to maintain," he sums up.

According to Dave, the golf course construction business is still very competitive even though there's a large number of courses being built. "With landscape and golf work, even when there's a large amount of work that is out there, it still seems to be very competitively priced," he says. "It's never a problem to find a builder, even with

the large number of courses being built."

**A look back...**

Although he's been an employee of the Bruce Company since 1978, Dave has been working in the golf course division just since 1995, and he's been its director for only one year. Prior to 1995, he worked in the landscape end of the business. And what got him into the landscape industry? Let us digress for a moment...

Dave was born in Portland, Ore., but his native Wisconsin parents moved back to the Badger State when he was 5 years old. "For all intent and purposes, I'm Middleton raised," he points out. "I went to Middleton High School and graduated in 1969. Then I went to UW-LaCrosse because I wanted to be a phy ed major and a phy ed teacher."

"But then I had to go into the service because of the Vietnam War," he continues. "I volunteered for the National Guard because I had a very low number in the draft lottery. When I came back from basic training, rather than going back to LaCrosse I went to UW-Madison. At that time, to be a phy ed major, the school required a foreign language. And I just absolutely despised the thought of taking a foreign language."

"In the College of Agriculture was this thing called 'landscape architecture' that looked really neat," Dave recalls. "And no foreign language was required. So that's how I ended up there. I had absolutely no interest in the field before that."

**Luckily, he liked it...**

Once he was in the major, he grew to like it. "It was a ball. It was a great major," he says, adding that he grad-





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uated in 1975. "Then my wife and I packed up our few belongings when I got a job with a landscape contractor in Tucson, Ariz. I started out on the landscape crew to learn how they did things and to learn about the different plants."

Working in a desert climate was new for Dave. "Everything was completely foreign," he recalls. "The design concepts were the same, but the type of plants we used were different. I had many a run-in with a cactus! And it was not uncommon for people down there to work at night and not during the day."

Dave and his wife weren't in Arizona for long. "We were there for one year. Quite frankly, we missed the seasons of the Midwest," he admits. So they came back to the Madison area where Dave found a job with FW Dodge, a company that puts out a daily construction report, "Dodge Reports," that went to contractors and suppliers in the construction industry.

"My responsibilities were to interview architects and engineers and owners as to what building projects were being done and the specifics about those projects," Dave points out. He worked at this job for two years.

"In 1978 a college classmate of mine let me know that there was going to be an opening at the Bruce Company for a drafting person," he points out. "It was an entry-level position, but it was a chance for me to get back into the landscape business. My wife was pregnant with our first child. I left a salaried job with a company car and benefits to start work at the Bruce Company for minimum wage and no benefits. It was scary at the time, but it turned out to be one of the best decisions of my life."

After working in drafting, he moved to a position in landscape design and sales. He held that position until about 1995. "At that time, Lee (Bruce) needed some additional staffing in the golf course end of the company," Dave explains. "I had expressed some interest in that and had helped him with a couple of minor projects. He asked me if I would like to start transitioning in that direction, and I did."

"At that time I was handling primarily larger commercial design/build type work," he continues. "I kept doing some of that and started to help with golf course projects, too. In 1998 I moved into the golf course division on a full-time basis. And a year ago I became director."

**Husband, father, coach...**

Dave and his wife, Debbie, have been married for nearly 29 years. "She worked as a cardiac technician at St. Mary's Hospital from 1988 to 1999. She also attended college," he says. "She graduated from the UW-Whitewater in December (2000) with a degree in social work. She interned at a detox center in Madison last summer, and she continued working there after

graduation. She's also enrolled in graduate school."

Debbie and Dave have two sons. Bryan, 22, is a junior at UW-Eau Claire majoring in business finance. "He worked on the maintenance crew for Mike Semlar at Bishop's Bay for five summers, so he knows how to get up early in the morning," Dave adds. Son Jeffrey, 20, is a freshman at Madison Area Technical College. "He's thinking about attending Purdue University to major in their golf course architect program, so this golf course thing might run even deeper in our family."

The Webers live in Waunakee where Dave has been active in youth sports. "I've been a youth hockey coach for about 20 years," he points out. "Currently I'm in my third year as the head hockey coach for Waunakee High School. I was the assistant coach there for three years before that."

"Between hockey and work, it keeps me pretty busy," he adds. "As I tell my wife, trying to support three 'kids' in college is a full-time job."

In closing, Dave just wanted to say: "I'm very humbled to be asked to do this article. It's a real honor for me." ❧



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# WGCSA MEETS AT HORSESHOE BAY GOLF CLUB IN OCTOBER



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

On Monday, October 2, 109 members, affiliates and guests ventured north to Egg Harbor, Wisconsin where Superintendent Brian Ferrie hosted the final meeting of the year at Horseshoe Bay Golf Club. It was the first WGCSA monthly meeting held at the new course that opened for play this year. The course was beautiful and in great condition, a tribute to the work of Brian and his staff.

The golf event began with an early shotgun start at 11 o'clock. The 4-man scramble format was welcomed as the course and the greens proved to be very challenging for most of the players.

Following golf, cocktails and a delicious buffet style dinner were served in the Member's Clubhouse.

After dinner, Mr. Bob Vavrek presented his annual "Year In Review", a compilation of observations from his travels as the USGA Green Section agronomist for the North Central Region. Bob stated that he had received numerous calls regarding the latest disease, bentgrass

dead spot. He also talked about the large volumes of rain that hit southern Wisconsin time after time. He stated that as usual, weather conditions varied throughout the region, but by the end of summer, everyone appeared to be in good shape. As he has done in the past, he interjected some interesting slides showing some instances where common sense was ignored. It seems he also found time to do a little fishing.

Thanks again to Bob for providing this always-interesting year end wrap-up.

The golf awards were as follows:

#### **4-Man Handicapped Scramble event:**

- |           |  |
|-----------|--|
| 1st place | Doug Devries, Scott Bushmann, Davis Herr, Lee Reinke       |
| 2nd place | Bruce Worzella, JJ Ziegler, Gordy Waddington, Mark Kienert |
| 3rd place | Randy Mallmann, Mark Grundman, Seth Brogren, Hank Koss     |
| 4th place | Charlie Ocepek, Brian Schmidt, Wayne Otto, Rod Johnson     |
| 5th place | Scott Sann, Scott Thompson, Dean Musbach, JD Huseboe       |



Bob Vavrek, speaker at Horseshoe Bay meeting in October 2000.



Geunhwa Jung's 1st ever attempt at the game of golf at Horseshoe Bay meeting!



Host Brian Ferrie, golf course superintendent at Horseshoe Bay.

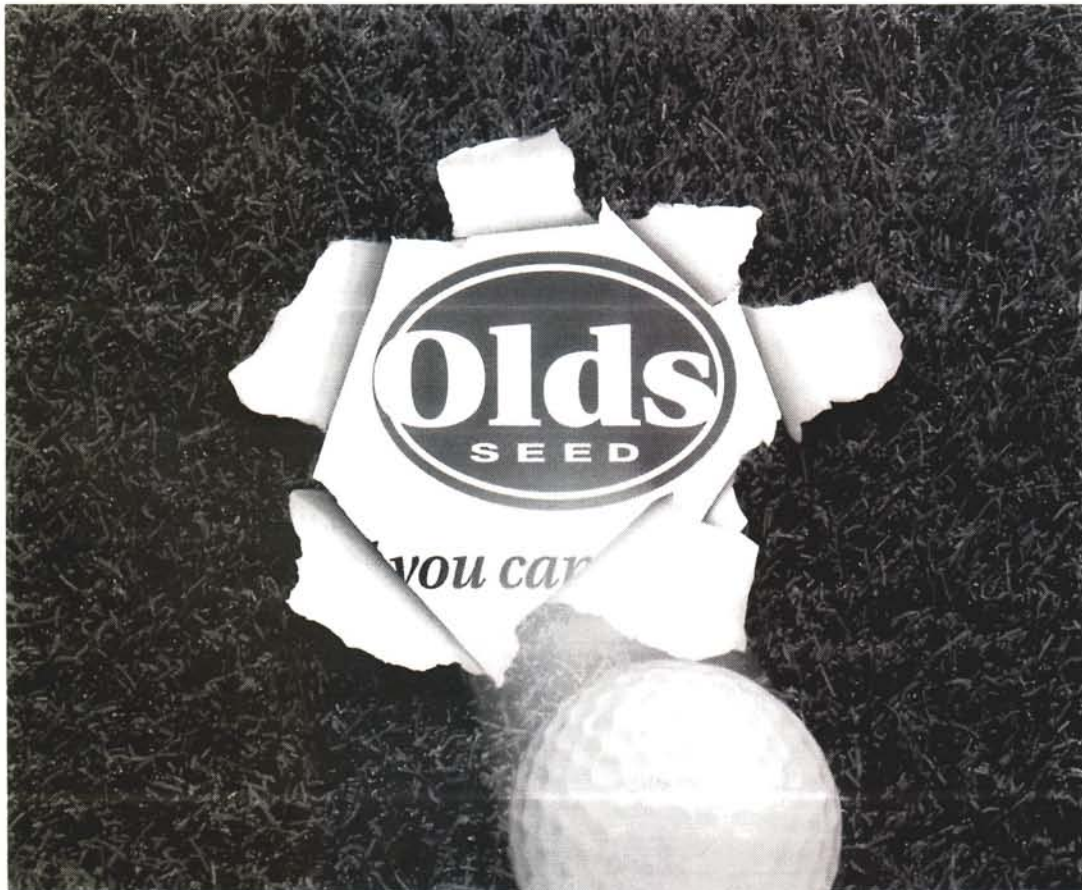


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- #1 Longest Drive in Fairway Mike Day
- #3 Closest to Pin in One Scott Bushmann
- #4 **Sponsored by Lesco**
  - Shortest Drive used for scramble Mike Kransel
  - Closest to Pin in Three Tom Schwab's group
- #5 Longest Putt Jeff Barlow
- #7 **Sponsored by Reinders**
  - Longest Drive in Fairway Matt Meachium
  - Longest Putt JD Huseboe
- #8 **Sponsored by Waupaca Sand Solutions**
  - Closest to Pin in Three Jim Van Mater
  - Longest Putt Seth Peterson
  - #10 Longest Drive in Fairway Jim Kron
- #11 **Sponsored by Horst Distributing, Inc.**
  - Closest to Flag in Fairway Scott Moulton
  - Closest to Pin in Two Bob Padula
- #12 Longest Putt Jack Hirt
- #14 **Sponsored by Jacklin Seed Company**
  - Most Accurate Drive LBJ
  - Closest to Pin in Two Matt Davis

- #15 Closest to Pin in One Mike Day
- #17 **Sponsored by Club Car** (Use of Carryall Turf II for the 2001 season)
  - Closest to Pin in One Norm Ray
- #18 **Sponsored by Jim's Golf Cars**
  - Closest to Green in Two Dave Herr
  - Longest Putt David Brandenburg

Thank you to the above mentioned Hole Sponsors and to the Beverage Cart Sponsor, Kerry Anderson of Aventis Corporation, for adding to the enjoyment of the day.

Special thanks to Brian Ferrie, Professional Tim Bauman, Club Manager Vernon Doenges and the entire staff at the Horseshoe Bay Golf Club for their hospitality.

Also thanks to all the host clubs from this past year, and all the members and affiliates for taking the time to attend these events.

Thank you to all those that donated to the TDL this year on the registration check off.

We raised \$850.00 for this worthy cause.

Please remember that we have openings for hosting next year's meetings. If you would like to volunteer your club it would be greatly appreciated. Have a Good Winter! ❄️



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# The Winter Games

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

Noon time in a golf course shop during the height of the golf season can be a madhouse - noisy, raucous and seemingly disorganized. Usually there are too many employees for the size of the lunchroom and there are too few microwave ovens. The refrigerator is too small. The chairs and benches are crammed, dishes are everywhere until lunch is over and the mess cleaned up. People are coming and going, laughing, telling jokes, arguing about sports and sharing tall tales about drinking and dating. It is over in the blink of an eye as everyone tears off

to their afternoon assignment with the thought of quitting time motivating them. When you are my age, it is a scene right out of the movies.

In the winter, the scene couldn't be more different. The permanent staff, usually older, more mature and a lot wiser than the summer crowd, make for a more reserved and quiet lunch time.

Sometimes the atmosphere is downright serious, almost somber. For example, if you happen to visit Tom Morris' shop at the Maple Leaf CC at noon in the cold months of a Wisconsin winter, you

will hardly be noticed. All of them are readers, and in the winter they each grab the book they are reading from the bookshelf in the lunchroom and bury themselves in it after they have eaten. I have gone to Tom's shop and not one of the them, including T.M., even looked up to see who was visiting.

In Bogey Calhoun's shop, on the other hand, it is so loud you cannot carry on a conversation. Those guys are all card players. Visit their place at noon and you'll shortly find yourself in a game of sheephead or euchre or hearts.



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