



**Scott Austin worked with the Hartman Co. to update bunkers at Midland Hills.**



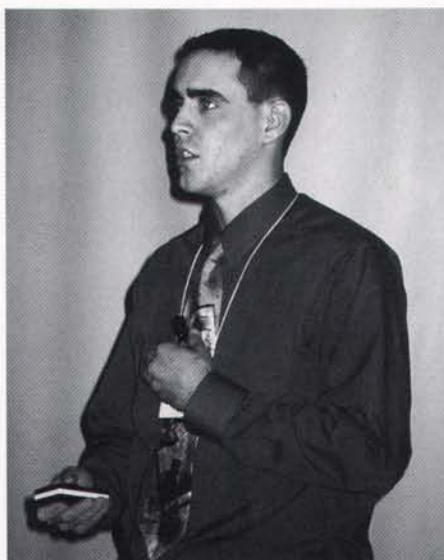
**Tom Meeks gave a very interesting lecture on Rules as they relate to sand bunkers.**

designers qualified him to give the excellent lecture he did.

Superintendents in Wisconsin seem to love the panel discussion format, and the subject of bunker renovation was thoroughly discussed by Mike Morris, Tim Venes and Scott Austin. Mike did a complete in-house restoration of the bunkers at the famous Crystal Downs Golf Club in Frankfort, Michigan. Scott contracted with the Hartman Company to rebuild the bunkers at Midland Hills in St. Paul. Jeff Hartman sent a letter to the WGCSA that talks about the Symposium and adds some advice based on his bunker experiences. And Tim spoke about Bluemound's remodeling using Bruce Hepner as the designer and the contractor. It was a popular format again this year.

Pat Jones, a good friend of many WGCSA members, led off the second day with a look into his golf turf crystal ball as he spoke about what he saw as seven megatrends in golf. Pat's latest venture is the highly successful reintroduction of *Golfdon* magazine. His perceptions added greatly to the Symposium.

Bruce Hepner, who worked on the Bluemound bunker project,



**Aaron Goninen UW-Madison senior in turf-grass management, gave a superb talk on choosing a good bunker sand.**

talked about design and construction, and he accompanied his lecture with some excellent slides. I hadn't met Bruce previously and was glad for the experience. It was a pleasure to talk with a man who does 100 - 150 bunkers a year!

The program continued with a strong, basic lecture from Dr. Jim Crum, a soil scientist from Michigan State. Jim reviewed some of the basic principles that govern the performance of sand in bunkers.

The USGA's Tom Meeks took a look at the Rules and how they impact a bunker maintenance and conditions. Tom has a good voice,



**Jon Tucker talked about bunkers in the land where golf was born.**

great sense of humor and deep knowledge of the Rules. His lecture was excellent and very educational.

My pride was showing when Aaron Goninen spoke to the Symposium audience about the "search for sand." It was work he did on our course as part of his capstone project at the UW - Madison. Aaron graduated in

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**Symposium week is a busy time for Bob Vavrek: a one-half day seminar, a lecture at the end, and two days as chief A/V engineer!**



**Dave Brandenburg expresses thanks to Louis Miller for his contributions to the 2000 Symposium.**

December from Dr. Kussow's program and today is Chad Ball's assistant superintendent at Conway Farms. There was a lot of praise for his presentation.

I haven't yet learned how or who arranged for Jon Tucker to speak, but Milwaukee is a long way from England and his presence was a plus for us. He's a turf agronomist across the pond and a "fellow sufferer in mud holes." His presentation on sand bunkers was so interesting and added a perspective that only someone from golf's birthplace could offer.

Louis Miller, a superintendent from Louisville, has appeared at the Symposium previously and spoke to the subject as both a superintendent and as a golf course builder. Good slides accompanied his folksy, easy style of speaking.

Filling the role he has carved out of many previous Symposiums, Bob Vavrek took time to summarize each speaker's message and, as we have come to expect, did it perfectly.

Compliments and congratulations are due to the Symposium

committee of Rod Johnson, Wayne Otto, Bab Vavrek, Gordy Waddington, Al Nees, Bruce Worzella and Shelley Biro. It has

always been a singular event, but the changes brought to this year's meeting will put it at the top. Thanks from all of us. ♻️



To the Members:

Tom, Mark and I would like to thank your association for allowing us to attend your symposium on the Ins and Outs of Bunkers. It was fantastic! We were very impressed on how well the symposium was presented and on the selection of guest speakers on the very appropriate and well-needed subject of bunkers. You should commend your association officers for a great job. "The Minnesota boys would have been jealous."

Since I wasn't able to stand up in front of a room full of strangers, I felt guilty about not being able to pass along some words of wisdom to you. We have been working on golf Courses for over 28 years. In the past two years we have built or restored nearly 500 bunkers. We have had the privilege of working on the nicest golf courses in Minnesota that are ranked very high in the country. We restored two of Seth Raynor's courses, two Tillinghast courses, a Donald Ross course, and a Robert Trent Jones Sr. course. They are all different with many challenges.

If I were to give any advice to your staff on the subject of rebuilding or restoring your bunkers, it would be to "Never Cut Corners" on any aspect of the project no matter what the expense. "Do it right the first time or don't do it at all". Band-aids only work on scraped knees.

We cannot stress drainage enough. If you want low maintenance and long lasting bunkers make sure the surface water doesn't enter the bunkers. We have seen surface water that was designed to enter the bunker or the attempt to divert the surface water was not sufficient. Surface water from a short mowed, very firm green and slopes that vary from 1% to 4% are the worst. Even after a lite to moderate rain fall on a sand faced bunker, major erosion and contamination will occur. This will shorten the life of a bunker dramatically.

We go out of our way to redesign the surface drainage even if it means moving the bunker or getting into the green.

Grass faced bunkers have less erosion problems. Surface water should still be avoided to slowdown the contamination of the sand. This will also reduce the stress on the subsurface drainage. Good common sense goes a long way.

Again, I can't thank you enough for your hospitality and the opportunity to meet some of your members. If I can help in any way, please give us a call.

Sincerely,



Jeffrey Hartman

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# Winter Disasters

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

It was surprising to have to search for a parking place at the Stockyard Inn in March in the middle of the day. A guy figures the rest of the world moves at his pace and for golf course superintendents in Wisconsin, March is decidedly slower than most other months. This was my first stop at the Stockyards although I had certainly read about their good food, generous portions and reasonable prices. Obviously, that is why the place was busy.

I was the last to arrive. Bogey Calhoun, Steady Eddie Middleton, Tom Morris and Scottie Fennimore were already jabbering away at a table when I walked in.

The restaurant smelled good; there is nothing like the aroma of beef on a hot grill. I was hungry for a good well-done steak, a baked potato smothered with butter and a side dish of cooked carrots. That's an all-American meal that makes a man healthy!

The guys had ordered and were already heavy into conversation about – what else? – golf courses. “Get me up to speed,” I begged. “I don't want to feel left out.”

“Oh, Calhoun was just filling us in on his latest disaster at the course,” Tom said with a grin. “He can't even run a smooth operation in the winter.”

“Hey, be nice, Old Man,” Bogey said to Tom with an even bigger grin on his face.

“Details, please!” I asked.

“Oh, it wasn't that big of a deal,” Bogey said to me. “How were we supposed to know we would have such a warm spell in late February?”

“OK, what happened?” I asked.

“Well, we sneaked a small ice fishing shack out to the pond on the north end of our course, figuring we'd harvest a few of the pan fish we knew were in it. Our big irrigation pumps pull a few fish through the filters but we knew that there were still some good-sized tasty ones in the water. We can't fish for them in the summer, so winter seemed to be the perfect time.”

“Go on,” I encouraged.

“Do I have to draw you a picture? During that warm spell my shanty sunk. And we had all our fishing equipment in it.”

I laughed like crazy. So did the other guys, including Bogey.

“Do you have it out of the pond yet?” I asked between laughing jags.

“Yeah. And it was damned difficult. We couldn't wait too long out of fear some members would catch us, or that the pond would refreeze and we'd have to cut a big hole in the ice to get it out. So we had a small crane come out to the

course. The ground was soft enough that we had to plank the machine to the pond. And we had to hire a diver to cable the shack so the crane could lift it out of the water.”

We all were in stitches over the luck only Calhoun could conjure. “Where is it now?” Tom asked.

“Up north at my father-in-law's cabin, where the ice is thick,” he replied. “I'll never do that again. And we didn't catch many fish, either, not enough for a fish fry in the shop for the crew.”

“Don't we have enough problems during the golf season without practically asking for trouble now?” Tom asked Bogey.

“I said I would not do that again, ever. It almost ruined my winter.”

Our food arrived and we started eating. As Eddie was buttering his roll, he picked up the conversation.

“Well, Bogey,” he started slowly, “we had a disaster this winter, too. I may as well tell you about it, just in case you hear about it from someone else.”

“What happened?” Bogey asked with obvious relief in his tone.

“You guys have all seen our \$100,000 shelter house, haven't you?”

We all nodded in the affirmative. “It's nicer than the house I live in,” Calhoun joked.

Ed continued. “There were a couple of trees we needed to remove and winter is perfect because no one is around. We got the first one on the ground with no trouble. It was cold, everybody was working hard and in no time the wood was cut to length and loaded onto the dump truck. The small limbs and branches were chipped, and the area was raked clean.

“We took a break, filled up the big chain saw with fuel, and went to work on the second tree. It notched easily and I started the cut through the trunk. The saw started to spit out black sawdust, indicating some rotting in the heartwood. All of a sudden the damn tree started to fall, only not where I had intended when I notched it. In the blink of an eye it neatly dropped on the roof of the shelter, crushing it and coming to rest on the concrete block wall. I nearly had a coronary.”

No laughter on this one, until Calhoun started to snicker. “At least nobody got hurt, right?” He grinned.

The rest of us were sympathetic. I asked whom he called first.

“The insurance carrier first. The green committee chair next. Within an hour, the president, the chairman and a couple of board members were on the scene. I

wanted to disappear.”

“I hope you took it like a man!” Calhoun said before he nearly rolled out of his chair. We all started to laugh, too, and so did Eddie.

“Nothing is supposed to happen in the winter,” he said. “I still cannot believe it.”

“Do you have the building reroofed?” Calhoun asked as he caught his breath. Ed wasn’t amused now.

“Since we are confessing our sins,” Scottie started, “I may as well make everybody feel good. My story is more embarrassing than disastrous.

“I took the guys from my crew out to lunch on a Friday, not long after Christmas. We chose the Paradise Café on the west side of town. It’s a pretty nice place with good food and a variable menu. The place appeals to neckties and blue collars alike. We felt right at home.

“We were seated at a round table and the waitress brought the menus, along with water and a big basket of hard rolls. While we were looking at the menu and deciding what to order, Joe reached over and took a roll. Before I could pass him the butter he fired it and hit a guy at another table in the back of the head!

“The victim spun around quickly to see who had done the deed. I nearly had an accident when I saw it was a member of our club.”

“Joe merely said, ‘Sorry, I thought you were somebody else,’ and continued to look the menu over. He didn’t realize it was one of our players.”

“I looked right at Joe and scolded, ‘You’re a jerk,’ and went over to apologize. He was pretty nice about it, nicer than I would have been. All I could think of, besides of subjecting Joe to a slow death, was how could an incident like this happen in the winter?”

Tom was chuckling and asked if we had heard about Taddy Withington and how he had gotten a truckster up in the air with his hoist, only to have it tip off. We hadn’t, and then I wondered why we were laughing at such bad luck.

Tom then ‘fessed up that he had his 4-wheel pickup in front of the clubhouse this past January. It was icy, he started to slide, and the only thing that stopped him from sliding down the first fairway was bumping up against a tree. “It took a wrecker with a winch to pull me back to safety,” he said, “and almost a grand at the body shop to pull out the dent in the box.”

“My pride was hurt more than my truck,” he continued, “and the card players in the 19th hole have had a field day teasing me about it.”

We took a breather to use the bathroom and to get refills all around.

“Come on,” Tom said to me as we returned to sit for a few more minutes. “I know darn well you aren’t immune to these disasters. You can’t be. In fact, you are probably more susceptible than the rest of us.”

I took a sip of the hot coffee that the waitress had just poured, sat back and smiled.

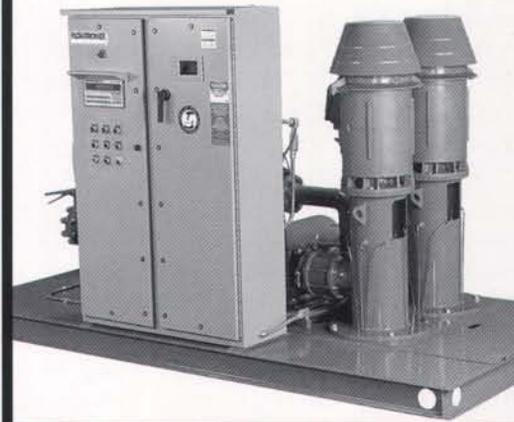
“You’ll never know, Tom, you’ll never know. I’m enjoying a nice quiet event-free winter, like we all should be.”  
Don’t I wish! ♣

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# Better Than Last Time (But Not Much)

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

One of the worst GCSAA conferences I have attended (and I have attended 29 consecutive) was the last time it was held in Dallas. The hotel GCSAA assigned me that year was awful, the streets we had to walk were mean and unsafe, and the entire hotel/conference center arrangement couldn't have been less conducive to business if it had been designed that way on purpose. Left to me, we would never have returned to Dallas.

But such decisions aren't left to me, so we were back in Dallas again this year. Some things have changed; some haven't. This year we stayed in the Marketplace area. It is safer there, for sure, but the shuttle bus hassle was incredible. From there to the Adam Mark hotel and meeting rooms for two days and then to the convention center after that. The buses were supposed to run every ten minutes; fifty minutes was more near reality. Adding to the misery was rain, basically every day we were there. No fun.

We drove to Dallas from Madison. It was 32.5 degrees F. when we left and pouring rain. We managed to stay ahead of the ice and snow, surviving the violent front as it passed through Bloomington, Illinois and driving in heavy rain clear to St. Louis. However, it seemed better than flying despite the weather. Three travel for the same price as one, and flying is hardly convenient these days. When you arrive at your destination you have wheels – no airport taxis or local cabs to deal with.

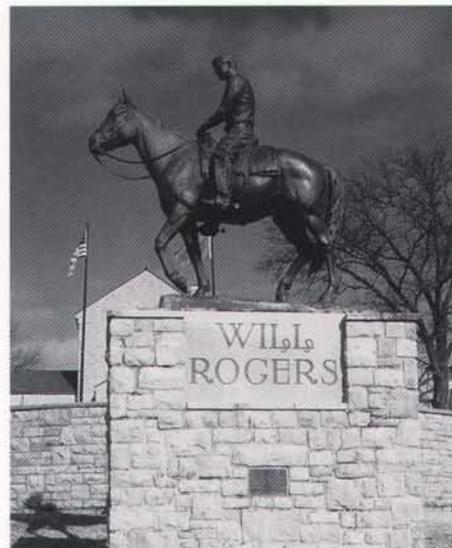
And then there is the excitement of the trip. Our route took us two average days of driving and south of Wisconsin were the Lincoln sites in Springfield, the arch at St. Louis, and the Ozarks. Radio stations along the

way offered heavy doses of country music and Christian broadcasting, evidence of the Bible belt we passed through. Will Rogers is buried in Claremore, Oklahoma and the Murrah Federal Office Building Memorial in Oklahoma City that McVey blew apart was a touching site to see in person. President Bush was at the memorial on February 19 to dedicate the museum – we just missed him. It was a quick stop we won't soon forget. While there we checked out the capitol; an accurate report would say it pales in comparison to Wisconsin's.

There was golf on the way, too. We stopped at the USGA Pro Shop on the edge of Southern Hills CC, site of the 2001 U.S. Open in June. A friendly conversation with the assistant pro there got us through the gate, past the guard house and up to the clubhouse in the middle of the course. It will be a great tournament site, I can tell from personal experience. The A/G series greens looked great.

A trip through areas south of Wisconsin puts winter in perspective. What we considered warm had folks in Tulsa in a panic. It was 15 degrees F. on the morning we went through but warmed to the upper 30s by afternoon. The scary part for them was the temperature falling from 73 degrees F. to 27 degrees F. in 24 hours between the 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> of February.

We pushed through Dallas for what we thought would be a quick trip to the LBJ Library and Museum in Austin. Texas, however, IS a big state and that took more time than



A trip from Wisconsin to Dallas takes you past Will Rogers' museum and grave in Claremore, OK...



Southern Hills CC, site of the 2001 U.S. Open in Tulsa (which is visible from the 1st & 10th tees)...



and the Murrah Federal Office building Memorial site in Oklahoma City.

The road between Dallas and Austin is known as the presidential corridor. It starts with the site of the Kennedy assassination in Dallas...



... goes to the Lyndon B. Johnson Library and Museum in Austin...

estimated. But it was well worth it, as was the stop at George Bush's Library and Museum on the Texas A & M campus. For those in Dallas for the first time, the Kennedy assassination sites are nearly overwhelming. But then, for me it was just as emotional the second time. I recall everything I was doing and where I was when that terrible event took place.

Although the rain made some conference travel activities terrible, I was glad for the rain after the dry weather they suffered through last summer. Remember back to last summer and the record number of 100 + degree days Texas experienced. A 90 degree F. day was considered a break from the heat!

The GCSAA seminar business was brisk although there are still some poor seminars on the docket. When the cost is high I wonder why the weak ones aren't weeded out. It isn't hard to figure which need dismissal. I attended Frank Rossi's seminar series on *Poa annua*, as did a number of other WGCSA members. He presented an incredible amount of information, something you can never overload on when it comes to Wisconsin's primary golf turf.

Conference week flies by, mainly because there is so much to do. There were some comments that went like, "it's simply gotten too big." In some ways I agree, but only because too often there were two places I wanted to be at the same time. You could argue for spreading



... the State Capital where President G.W. Bush presided only a few months ago as governor...

it over more days, but that adds to the cost. I find the audio tapes can help fill in for schedule conflicts.

One of the great thrills for me, after having been to conference so many times, is seeing long time colleagues from outside Wisconsin. We talk about kids, grandkids, golf courses, machinery and everything else. I always have an empty feeling when I leave, knowing I won't see most of these folks for another year.

In a nutshell, here is how the Dallas details graded out from my perspective.

- 1 Facilities: F. This is the world's worst convention center. It couldn't be more user-unfriendly. A/V equipment didn't work too often (where was GCSAA?), there weren't enough chairs at times, you couldn't find your way around the place, it was dirty, the restrooms were filthy, etc. etc. "Why in the name of



... and includes the George H.W. Bush Museum and Library at Texas A&M. Bogroff and Grimm met President Bush at the U.S. Women's Open last summer at the Merit Club.

God's green grass does the association go to what is known to be a lousy facility?" I asked Suzanne Clement. It was a question I heard asked a hundred times the first couple of days. She explained that San Diego wasn't ready with an enlarged convention center so GCSAA was forced to put Dallas on the schedule. OK, I understand that circumstances sometimes are out of control. But the question needs to be asked of GCSAA officials – "why Dallas? EVERYBODY thinks the place stinks; why not somewhere else? Anywhere else."

- 2 City: D. For our conference, I rate it at the bottom. It is unhandy for visitors, the housing is spread too far (and is too expensive), cab fares get out of hand in a hurry, the central city



The Wisconsin Hospitality Room was packed.



The UW-Madison was well represented by undergrads who participated in the Turf Bowl.



It was a pleasure to see and visit with Lois and Jim Latham again. They reside south of Dallas and are ageless.



Dr. Frank Rossi met up with Emily Erickson and Darrin Litchfeldt, both grad students of his during his time on the Wisconsin faculty.



Gary Huenerburg and Ray Shane were socializing at the Wisconsin Room.

is uninteresting. There is more, but why beat a dead horse? I just don't like it as a conference town.

- 3 75th Anniversary Displays: A+. Congratulations to Suzanne Clement and Margo Szabo – what a job. Their work gave all of us a better sense of where our profession has come in 75 years.
- 4 Educational Opportunities: A+. Everything from sand bunkers to Supina bluegrass (thanks to John Stier) and GPS to bent-grasses, it was at conference to learn about. Conflicts frustrated all of us somewhere along the way, but that is a good frustration to have. I was especially glad to see how the progress on new technologies – biological and physical – are being conveyed to end-users (that's us!). Top notch. Seminars, however, need attention.
- 5 Registration: FF. Again, how after 71 conferences can regis-

tration be worse than it ever has been in my experience? I literally did not talk to anybody who did not have trouble of some sort. Does anyone get reprimanded or released for screw-ups of this magnitude? When GCSAA proves it cannot handle something like registration, can you imagine the mess the PDI will be for them to administer (I heard it passed)? I mean, keeping track of little dabs and bits of petty information will bury them. This is going to be fun to watch!

- 6 Opening Session: A. General Norman Schwarzkopf did it for me. Our group muscled front row seats and when the general was finished speaking we wanted to stand ramrod straight and salute him like good soldiers. Fantastic! Also, the presence of Leo Feser's daughter added to the evening. The reception was excellent, also.

- 7 General Session: B+. Too long, although Scott O'Grady gave an interesting account of his experience in Bosnia.

When Tim Finchem was announced as the Old Tom Morris Award winner, I didn't know who he was. I figured, as a result of his position, that he was probably a friend of Steve Mona's and we were due a payback of some sort. However, after hearing him speak I would have to say he likely is a worthy recipient. He's no Arnold Palmer or Bob Hope or Gerald Ford, but his role in golf is significant and he has respect for our profession.

I loved the presence of Old Tom Morris – what a tremendous touch.

- 8 Grand Finale and Closing Reception: A. Video was great. Old Tom Morris returned and helped end the conference on a high note. New event well worth the effort.
- 9 President's Dinner Show: B. Too many head table antics that



How do you spell trouble? Horman, Johnson, Witt and Kienert!



The World Class Rockers provided great entertainment at the dinner show...

bore those out of the loop. Grade was brought up, however, by the great entertainment. Old rockers loved the music, even if it was too loud.

10 Show: B+. Super displays. Aisles were too narrow, which was exacerbated by the outstanding attendance that resulted from poor weather.

11 Other highlights: The ASGCA had a great session, the Research Session was enlightening, and the USGA Green Section Program was up to its normal outstanding level (featuring Dr. Frank Rossi with a tale only he could pull off – great stuff.).

12 Memorable Moments: Seeing Joe O'Brien, hopefully not for the last time but most surely less often than I have in the past. Joe will be remembered by me as one of the best people in golf. His sincere enthusiasm, his obvious intellect, his shrewd problem-solving talents and a thousand other things will be missed by each and every GCSAA member. I wish him the best wherever his career in golf takes him next.

13 Biggest Questions Generated By Conference: Two were inspired by Dr. Rossi:

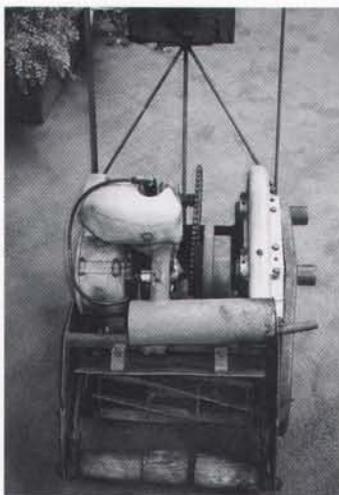
- How is it possible to have grown too many *P. annua* roots?
- Is there a conflict between encouraging golf course superintendents to move more and

more to environmentally friendly management (which includes reasonable heights of cuts and the potentially reduced amounts of fungicides required) and also conducting research on how to manage greens cut below 0.95”?

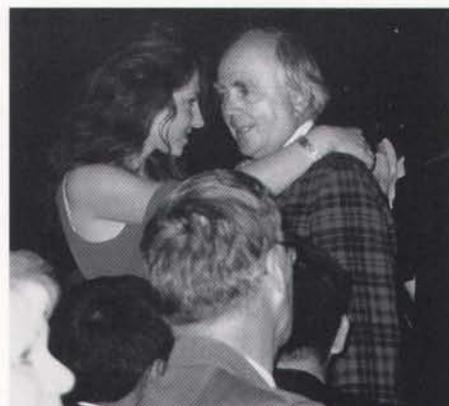
- What happened to conference proceedings? Did I miss something?

In a nutshell, conference this year was the kind of singular educational opportunity I expect. It was held in as poor a site as is possible, inspiring every person I talked with to say, “won’t it feel good to get back to Orlando?”

Yes, it surely will. 🌱



There were acres of new equipment and displays of antiques, part of the 75th Anniversary celebration. Shown here is an old “St. Andrews” mower.



and Robert Trent Jones, Jr. enjoyed dancing to their music!



Bob Erickson rounded up a few former (and current) BCC employees for a photo op!



The WGCSA banner flew proudly as part of the GCSAA 75th celebration.



# Action Packed EXPO

By Tom Schwab, O. J. Noer Turfgrass Research and Education Facility, University of Wisconsin-Madison

The Wisconsin Turfgrass and Greenscape EXPO overflowed with valuable knowledge during this year's conference. There were useful tools and techniques presented over the two day conference from both local and distant experts. In addition to the local experts from the University of Wisconsin who you already know, there were other locals including Neil Radatz from Hawks Landing Golf Course, Raechal Sager from Miller Park, and Michael Koran from the Department of Agriculture. Experts from outside Wisconsin included John Donahoe (University of Illinois), Dr. Paul Rieke (Michigan State University), Dr. Jon Powell (University of Minnesota), Nicole Mason (Mark M. Holeman Inc.), and Connie Rudolph (Saint Paul's Midway Stadium). The useful knowledge from the expansive roster of speakers will allow every attendee to approach this upcoming season with an armload of fresh ideas.

The conference started out with reflection into the UW-Madison Turf Team's past year of work during the 'Wisconsin Research on Parade' session. Drs. Kussow, Jung, Stier, Williamson, and Casler presented some of their year 2000 findings or gave an overview of where they've been and where they're going with their important turf research programs. Next at the podium was Jeff Gregos who demonstrated the new format of this year's Wisconsin Turf Research Report. The report is now on electronic CD-ROM, which might

make it the first turf program in the country to offer their report this way.

Attendees headed off to the trade show after 'Wisconsin Research on Parade.' The trade show had been open all morning, well before 'Research on Parade', but took off full force after the morning session. Participants flooded the vendors with questions. Although the enthusiasm was great, the trade show was smaller this year for some reason. Maybe this was due to industry mergers or maybe the industry has taken a small downturn like the stock market cycle we're in. There were only 48 different booths compared to 56 last year, and the all time record 64 from three years ago.

Overall attendance was down this year also. There were 368 attendees and 121 salespeople in contrast to last year's record 405 and 140. The planning committee knows how to improve attendance and will be starting the plans for the 2002 EXPO this month. Contact someone on the planning committee if you have suggestions for speakers, subjects, or improvements for future shows. The planning committee includes Rich Riggs (chairman and WTA representative), Paul Huggett, Audra Anderson, Jeff Gregos, myself, and all the professors. Most of the comments we heard so far have been positive, but there's always room to tweak the program.

## The Milletts Are Returning to Wisconsin!

Dr. Steve and Debbie Millett are returning to Wisconsin! Debbie assumed the duties of press secretary for Gov. Scott McCallum on March 13 and Steve begins his job in the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection in early May.

Steve will travel to Toronto this summer to present a paper at the International Turfgrass Conference. This is the fourth paper from his PhD thesis from the UW-Madison, leaving only one chapter left to publish!

While in the Columbus, Ohio area this past year, Debbie returned to radio broadcasting. In fact, the world learned of their career changes over the air as her colleagues bid her farewell!

Whatever his role, Dr. Millett's return will be welcome. He made wonderful contributions during his PhD years in Wisconsin and I expect to see more of the same from him.

Welcome home! 🌿