

The Masters was held in some unusually warm weather this year, and several WGCSA members were there to enjoy it, along with Dr. John Stier. The WSGA cannot be thanked enough for making this singular golf experience available to us. The opportunity to see the old guard – Palmer, Nicklaus and Player – and the new guard of Woods and Duval adds to the trip.

Every year produces some fallout from the Masters that can end in our court. It comes as criticism for the excesses believed necessary to produce such overwhelming beauty, and from some players who think they can have such conditions on their course everyday. Although both are irritating to me, they are a small price to pay for the enjoyment the Masters brings to so many of us.

Belated congratulations to James Krutilla for receiving an Environmental Stewardship Award from GCSAA at last February's conference and show. His ESA Chapter Award was in the public facilities category, and is an award he has won previously.

Anyone who knew John Buck liked him and enjoyed his company. That is why his passing left us feeling so sad. I must confess that I did not appreciate the seriousness of his illness, which amplified the surprise I felt.

Heartfelt sympathy is extended to Holly and his family.

I want to thank the WGCSA officers and directors for the outstanding budget they prepared for 2001. The support of scholarship and research extended on our behalf to the faculty and students at Wisconsin demonstrates the commitment golf course superintendents have to science and education. I am impressed, and have

heard similar sentiments from many others. We have a lot of work to do to fill the three remaining Wisconsin Distinguished Graduate Fellowships we have committed to through the Wisconsin Turfgrass Association.

In all the greenness that is spring on a Wisconsin golf course, we lay out our plans for June and July and

August. There will be an urgency in the shop everyday in those months with everything seemingly happening at once. Although they seem far away now, the golden days of September and October will be here before we turn around. The fabled "100 days of summer" are about to begin! 🌱

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# Signing Off

By **Stephen Pearson**, Turfgrass Research Specialist, Department of Horticulture

Many of you reading this article may not know me, but I hope that's about to change. Those of you who do recognize my name are probably aware that I work at the O.J. Noer Facility as Professor John Stier's research specialist. Well, my time in the turf industry is drawing to a close. My last day at the Noer will be on April 26th. I would like to take this opportunity to reflect back on my brief career in turf management and in doing so hopefully give you a candid look at the UW-Madison Turfgrass Program.

After I graduated high school in 1995 I took a position at Riverside GC in Janesville, our local public golf course. Like most people just joining a crew I spent the



Steve Pearson

first few weeks either weed-wacking or emptying the garbage. After about a month of changing the trimmer string on the weed-whipper that wouldn't start, I was questioning my desire to remain at the course. As it turns out, I stayed and enjoyed the rest of my first summer in the turfgrass industry.

After my first year of college at UW-Madison I came home for the summer. I returned to Riverside to work another season. It was this summer that I had my first encounter with a turfgrass disease. I was mowing tees and par-3 fairways on a triplex machine when I noticed several small white spots on the 4th tee. It so happened that the superintendent was nearby, so I asked him what was going on. He got down on the ground with me and showed me a leaf blade with a bleached out lesion that had an hourglass shape and reddish borders. I had just discovered dollar spot (FYI he sprayed the next day). From that point on, I was fascinated with turfgrass diseases.

I returned to school in the fall still undecided in my



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major. The Dean of the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences (CAL S) referred me to Dr. Kussow because of my interest in turfgrass. I spoke with Dr. Kussow about my situation, which I think was quite rare. I had planned on applying to medical school at the end of my studies, but was really interested in turfgrass as well. After Dr. Kussow and I discussed the situation, we decided I might be best suited in the Department of Plant Pathology. That's when I met Dr. Maxwell.

I can't say enough good things about Dr. Maxwell. He helped guide me through my courses and set me up with the job that got me started at the O.J. Noer facility. I started to work for Jeff Gregos in the Turfgrass Diagnostic Lab (TDDL at the time) in March of 1998. The summer before I started at the O.J. Noer Facility I did an internship under Dr. Maxwell at Janesville Country Club. My experiences at the JCC were extremely valuable. Mr. Dan Mosblack was very willing to take the time to explain and show me interesting things. I truly enjoyed my time there under Dan and I appreciate his efforts.

As I stated earlier, I started to work for Jeff Gregos in March of 1998. I wasn't really sure what to think about Jeff at first; but, now that I know him about as well as anyone, he truly is a big part of our program at UW-Madison. I learned more in my first season of working for Jeff at the Noer Facility than I learned in my previous three seasons on a golf course. Despite the 60+ hour weeks Jeff likes to work, I loved the time I spent at the Noer. After I graduated I worked for the new turf pathologist Dr. Geunhwa Jung in his new lab on campus. I worked as an LTE for Dr. Jung while I waited to see if I got accepted into medical school. Things didn't get any clearer when I was put on the waiting list at 3 schools. As a result, I ended up taking the position as Dr. Stier's research specialist.

About two months later I was spraying a research plot at Trout Lake GC when my girlfriend called my cell phone and told me I got into medical school. At first I was ecstatic, but then I thought about my commitment to John. It all worked out in the end because the school granted me a year deferment. I am very excited to start medical school in late August.

After four years with the UW Turf Program I have learned a lot about what they work for. One thing I have noticed in my short career in the turfgrass industry is that almost everyone loves what they are doing. Well, I can speak from experience when I say that those at the University are no different. Each person working on turfgrass here in Madison cares about the industry and those individuals who make it up. Everything we are doing here has the ultimate purpose of helping you "out in the real world" do your jobs better.

The UW Turfgrass Program has come a long way from even the time I became a part of it. I believe that the progress forward is due to the hard work and dedication of the people who make it up. For example, the Noer

Facility has added acres worth of plot space in the last few years and there are plans to expand across the drainage ditch to develop another nine acres. We've not only added land in the past few years but people as well.

The people who make up this group are the heart of the turf program. We should all be proud of the people we have on board here at UW-Madison. Obviously Dr. Kussow has a place in history with the turfgrass industry in Wisconsin. He has been an amazing staple that has held the program together and guided it through all its changes for more than two decades. I think we have several other people, including Dr. Stier and Dr. Casler, who are destined to create their own history here at UW. Both Dr. Jung and Dr. Williamson have been fantastic recent additions. Having specialists like them makes our program one of the best in the country. Other people that the program could not do without are stationed at the O.J. Noer Facility. Tom Schwab, Audra Anderson, and Jeff Gregos are integral parts of making things work smoothly. Everyone in our program takes a lot of pride in the Noer Facility. The hard work and dedication of these individuals show in how the Noer Facility always looks. The golf outing, Summer Field Day, EXPO, and many other events are the hard work of Audra, Tom, and Jeff. Unfortunately, I can't mention everyone who has helped make this program what it is today. I hope you take as much pride in our program as I do. Please continue to support them in their quest to make the turfgrass world a better place.

In closing, I would like to say thank you to everyone who I have worked with in the past few years. I have enjoyed my time in the turfgrass industry and you never know...I may be back someday. ♻



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# Research: A Student's Perspective...

By **Robert Lisi**, Civil and Environmental Engineering Department, University of Wisconsin - Madison

The following article will guide you through a season of research from my perspective as a student at the University of Wisconsin - Madison. Debating my 2000 summer employment, I chose to learn from the research community stationed at the O.J. Noer Turfgrass Research and Education Facility. Similar to the six summers I worked at Turtleback G & CC in northwest Wisconsin, sod was still placed green side up, irrigation trenches were occasionally excavated by hand, and the early morning brigade of mowers daily cut straight lines through the dew. I did expect to be challenged with the insight of the research team, but I also hoped to contribute to their work even if it was simply through a strong work ethic. Although the rectangular plots appear in contrast to the sweeping curves of the neighboring golf courses, they provide relevant information that increases the efficiency of our turfgrass industry. The 500+ visitors to the annual WTA Summer Field Day received first hand exposure to that information.

A unique feature of the research station is the incredibly diverse environment that is contained in less than 10 acres. That small area balances multiple turfgrass species and cultivars, diseases, chemical applications, management schemes, and several years of collaborative experience from the research team. For example, a Kentucky bluegrass study containing roughly 130 cultivars, each seeded by hand, was established last fall. It would be difficult for anyone to have consistent exposure to this diversity outside of the research setting.

In January, the summer research was released at the WTA EXPO for the benefit of the turfgrass industry, conveniently provided as management budgets are compiled during the "off season." I enjoyed knowing that the research I helped conduct would contribute to the efficiency of our industry. A month later, I attended the 2001 GCSAA national convention in Dallas, Texas. Part of the activities for students was a tour of the Texas A&M turfgrass research station followed by a visit to the ballpark at Arlington, home of the Texas Rangers. Dr. Milt Engelke, Texas A&M turfgrass researcher and a UW-Madison alumnus, guided the students through the main attractions of the station and introduced several other researchers including Dr. James Read and Dr. Dennis Genovesi. Their work is similar in function to the work conducted at the O.J. Noer Facility but focuses primarily on warm season grasses. Instead of 130 Kentucky bluegrass cultivars, they displayed greenhouses packed with

plugs of zoysiagrass cultivars.

The Texas Rangers 'new' ballpark at Arlington, constructed in 1996, was recently sodded with washed TifSport Bermuda grass and still displayed the distinct edge of each sod piece. Head superintendent Tom Burns presented the challenges he faces; the most immediate concern was establishing the sod for the first game with less than optimum growing conditions. This was refreshing news knowing that another ballpark besides Miller Park was pressed for time to create the perfect opening day field! I topped off the memories of that trip by running a home run lap and catching a view from the home team dugout.

In March, I attended the Reinder's Convention in Waukesha where several researchers and industry representatives presented a wide range of material. Dr. John Stier addressed concerns regarding the pro-



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posed regulations outlined in NR151 by the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources. His comments convinced me to attend that evening's public review of NR151 held at the Fitchburg Center in Fitchburg, WI. Dr. Stier presented the concern that the proposed non-agricultural regulations were not developed with consideration of the research conducted by institutions such as Michigan State University and the University of Wisconsin - Madison, both well respected turfgrass research institutions. This is a perfect example of the necessity of political and public relations for the correct representation of our industry.

Throughout the winter months, I aided Jeff Gregos at the Turfgrass Diagnostics Lab with several *in vitro* studies on the suppressive effects of fungicides for snow mold resistance. This winter season provided ideal conditions for snow mold damage throughout the state proving that we need continued research to efficiently manage this disease.

Before my summer experience at the O.J. Noer Facility, I held an uninformed, skeptical opinion of the relevance of the work conducted at the Facility. Now I'm convinced that research is the lifeblood of the turfgrass industry. There are several benefits of working as a turfgrass research assistant: 1) intense interaction with professors and professionals that will help to develop lifetime contacts, 2) a wealth of applicable information, and 3) the formation of a respectful, well-rounded understanding of the industry.

I want to credit the hard working professors, graduate students, and full-time staff at the O.J. Noer Facility for their professional attitude and direction that has made my experience very enjoyable. I look forward to the 2001 season with eager anticipation of a research project of my own and the opportunity to positively influence your occupation. The past year of exposure to research will definitely complement my career choice, and therefore I encourage any student to look for these opportunities. ♣

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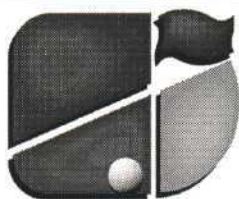


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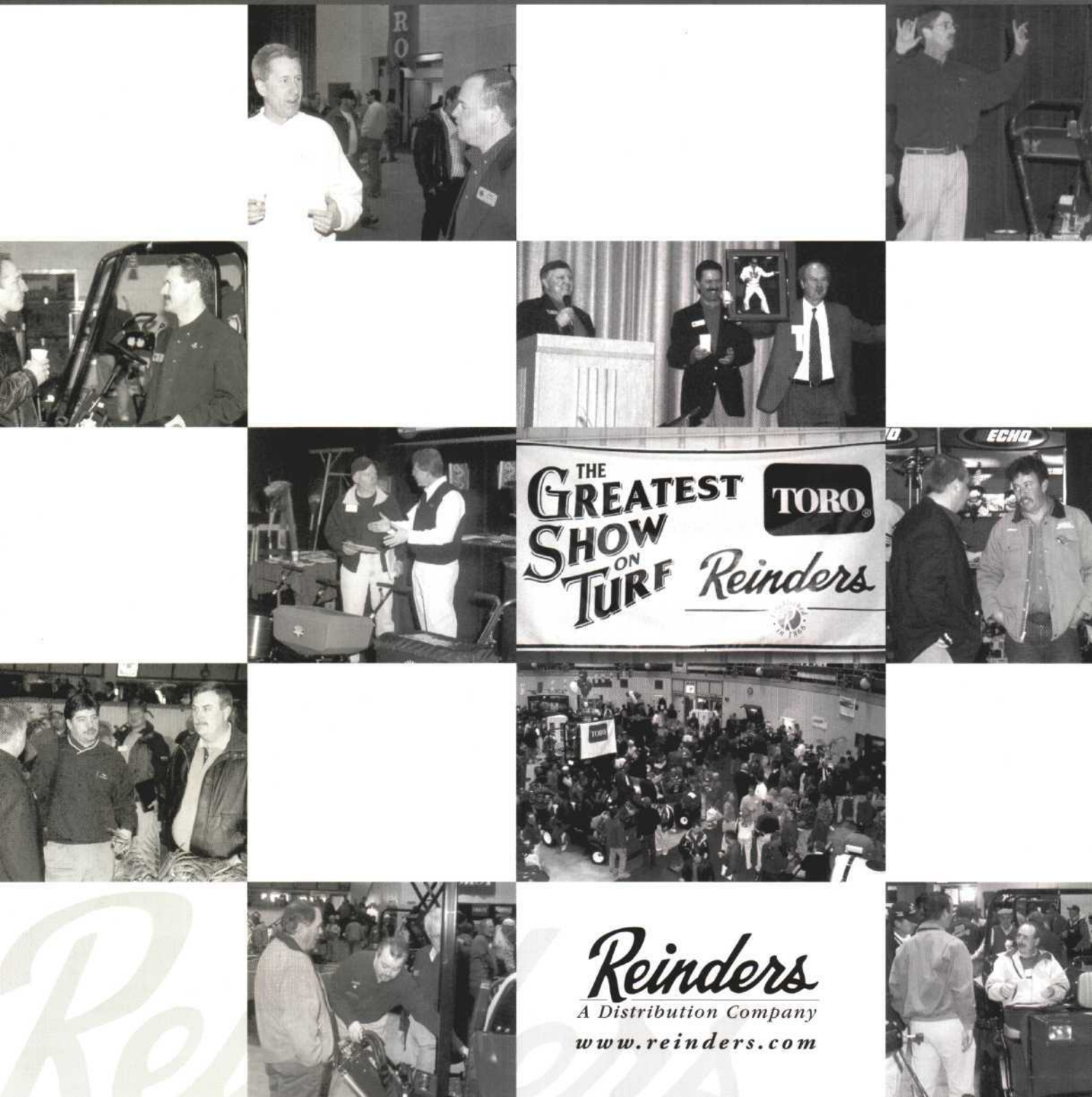
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# Mr. Mayor!

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

Cheryl and I got stranded in west central Wisconsin last winter on our way to the Twin Cities to see our kids and our granddaughter, Grace Kaster. We had to get a motel room and spend a Thursday night waiting out the snowstorm. She wasn't real happy that I had decided to take the scenic route instead of I-94, but the room was clean and we found a good restaurant (The Fork and Spoon) for supper.

Like any normal American does these days, the first thing I did when we returned to the motel room from eating was grab the remote and turn the TV on. There before my eyes on Channel 4, the area's public access channel, was Jack Hauge, golf course superintendent at Splendid Valley CC. He was presiding over a meeting of the Bergen city council meeting; the nameplate in front of him said MAYOR.

It was a good thing Cheryl had a book with her. I was determined to watch Jack manage the business of Bergen, a town of 2,000 with a strong Norwegian influence yet today despite its founding nearly 150 years ago. Jack traced all of his ancestors back to Norway and had visited the home fjord a number of times.

The meeting was pretty routine, I'd say. It seemed everyone on the council – there were only six of them, plus the mayor – was congenial. Clearly, in a small town there are far fewer divisive issues when compared to, say, Milwaukee or Madison or Green Bay.

This night they were talking about paving a section of Elm Street (the 600 and 700 blocks) and approved a motion to replace the recycling containers with new and larger ones. Both were budgeted items and approval seemed a formality. There was a brief dis-

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cussion about new lighting for the ball diamond in Hauge Park. Jack's brief comments put the issue to rest: "The community park was named after my grandfather. He donated the land for it to the city and it is a special place for me. But if it needs lights now, it needed them when we were in the budgeting process. I am firmly against unbudgeted discretionary spending." End of that deliberation.

There was one issue that did generate some discussion among the council members. One member offered a motion to install a stop light at the intersection of Main Street and Lincoln Avenue. The city attorney pointed out the process with the Wisconsin DOT that they would have to comply with. The city engineer gave estimated costs. After weighing both sides of the issue, it was dismissed as unnecessary at this time.

And that was it. Jack had run a well organized meeting with efficiency and brevity, not unlike he ran the golf course at Splendid Valley.

The next morning we went back to the Fork and Spoon Café for some breakfast. We sat at the counter, ordered black coffee to drink while looking over the menu, and started to visit a little bit with the local folks

who had gathered. Little restaurants like this one always have a regular crowd for each of the main meals of the day. My preference has always been for the early birds, and it didn't take long to engage them in conversation about their mayor.

"Did you see him on TV last night?" asked one older fellow in bib overalls and LaCrosse boots.

"I sure did," came my reply as I volunteered, "and I have known Jack for many years. I am in the same business as he is."

"Oh," was the collective response from several within hearing distance.

We ordered bacon, eggs, wheat toast and hash brown with orange juice and milk to drink. The waitress went down the counter and filled the coffee cups.

"How's he doing as Mayor?" I finally asked. Norwegians are known to be a little reticent. "Well," came the reply slowly, "we got ourselves a good one. He takes the job way more seriously than any mayor most of us can remember. And he works dang hard at it, too."

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