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ABOUT THE COVER

Landscape artist J.L. Samerdyke presents to us the favorite golf holes of each of the host superintendents of the Wisconsin State Open and the Wisconsin State Amateur.

Ric Lange, golf course superintendent at Meadowbrook Country Club in Racine especially enjoys the 10th hole on his course. It is a 484-yard par five that will give players in the Wisconsin State Open their best eagle opportunity. He loves the look of the bunkers and mounds and the green surrounds. The view shown here is from this spring.

Nakoma Golf Club is the site of the WSGA State Am in July. Superintendent Clark Rowles favors the 527-yard par five sixteenth at his course. Trees, bunkers and water guard a two tiered green. The view here is from deep summer.

"Whoever could make two blades of grass grow where only one grew before would deserve better of mankind, and do more essential service to his country, than the whole race of politicians put together."

Johnathan Swift
1667-1745

THE GRASS ROOTS

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Goals

By **David Brandenburg**, Golf Course Superintendent, Rolling Meadows Golf Course



Last issue I discussed how spring is a good time to initiate action to achieve new goals. I had mentioned two of my goals for 2003 were office organization and better crew communication. Those are the easy or small goals in my life. The big or hard goals are (1) learn to say no and, (2) leave work at the end of the day.

Learning to say no is a problem for me because I like to help people at home and at work. I am getting a little better but have a ways to go. I end up at meetings or events I do not need to attend. I also volunteer for things that others could do. I took the Steven Covey *7 Habits of Effective People* last year. Habit 3 is putting first things first. In other words, do what is important for you and eliminate what is not, both at home and work.

A good example of when I should have said no is the creek on our 17th hole. The pro and one of our customers who happens to run a landscape company wanted to add boulders and mini-dams to the grass bottom creek to make it look nice at no cost or labor to the golf course. (If something sounds too good to be true, it must be.) Well I knew this would

be an expensive and labor-intensive project because the rocks need to be placed, one by one, so they look like they have been there forever. I explained that to the contractor and they said they had done it before and not to worry.


Well they dumped some ugly white boulders into the creek and ran them over with a skid-steer to smash them into the creek-bottom. It was the worst looking thing I ever saw. After a weekend of regret, I decided to cancel the project when it was three-fourths done and James (the assistant) and I took the 30-ton of rock out by hand. Besides a learning lesson, I enjoyed the look on the contractor's face when I told them to go home. To add humor James also had a customer whom asked "do you guys take these rocks out of the creek every fall?" I have the picture of the project in my office with the words "just say no!" on it as motivation for the future.

It is helping because this spring I did say no to joining a third committee at the kids' school and I told the local extension office our staff could only roto-till part of the community garden. I also have fought off the customer volunteer projects on the golf course because they always turn out to be more work for our staff.

My other goal of leaving work at the end of the workday, not sunset, will be tough for me. I want to go home, but I love to work. I won't say I am a workaholic but others probably would. At most mid-level golf courses like ours, there is always something that needs doing, and I am happy to be doing it. Like many superintendents, I want the best course possible and try to exceed what our budget allows us to do by

doing extra myself. It is an ugly cycle that is hard to break. It also goes along with just say no. Many of us just need to say, "no we cannot do that because our budget does not allow that kind of labor."

Every time I plan on going home when the crew leaves, something comes up or that office work calls me, and before I know it, it's 6 pm. I am at the stage where Kayla and Andy are 10 and 8, respectively, and they are growing up. I need to get the heck out of here to do things with them and Noelle.

I think the deaths of Roberto and Luis at Hawks View GC stresses how short our lives may be. Many people can take care of our golf course when we are gone. But only we can take care of our families and friends. In the middle of this busy season take a moment to ponder this: life is short; spend it with those who are important to us. 

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April Meeting - Autumn Ridge

By **Dustin Riley**, Golf Course Superintendent, Oconomowoc Golf Club

The Host Golf Course - Autumn Ridge

Autumn Ridge is an 18-Hole, Par 70 semi-private golf course located in Valders, WI. The golf course architect, Ernie Schrock of Indiana, stretched his design up and over the very hilly and tree laden terrain. The seven-year old course opened in 1995. In February of 2000, Tom O'Conner and WSGA Golf Professional, Chuck Dammier, partnered in purchasing the golf course. Since the change over, golf rounds have increased by 5,000 in 2001 and are projected to continue to increase. Even though Autumn Ridge is fairly new, significant changes have occurred since the ownership changeover. The most obvious change involves the extensive tree removal program. Over the past couple of years 1,200 - 1,400 trees have been removed from green, tee, fairway edges and also in rough areas.

The Host Golf Course Superintendent - Chad Harrington

Chad Harrington became the golf course superintendent at Autumn Ridge in the spring of 1995 during the construction and grow-in phases. Chad, a native of the Wautoma area, began his golf course maintenance career at Waushara Country Club. As with many young individuals, Chad worked at the golf course during his high school and college years. Upon completing his English degree at Ripon College, he was offered the assistant superintendent's position at Waushara Country Club. Chad's next career move would be to head the golf course construction, grow-in and maintenance department at Autumn Ridge. With the help from his assistant, Julian Mejia, Chad manages a golf course maintenance staff totaling nine during peak summer months.



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The Event

Seventy-six superintendents, assistants and industry affiliates attended the first 2002 WGCSA monthly meeting on April 29th. The event was preceded by an informational presentation by Wayne Horman of the Scotts Company. His presentation provided some insight into the direction of Round-Up resistant turf. Although many of the studies are still currently in progress, the potential use of these grasses on golf courses is beginning to be defined.

All players were reminded that April in Wisconsin can be somewhat unpredictable and inconsistent. Weather conditions provided an array of different playing conditions. Who would have guessed that the 40-50 degree day would be a precursor to all of May? The steady spring breeze accented the cool temperatures.

Despite the cooler weather, all of the teams appeared to enjoy the opportunity to see their fellow peers while playing a little golf. The scramble format yielded the typical golf outing characteristics such as the occasional "golfer language," some hoot'n and holler'n and the repeated clanging of golf balls ricocheting among the trees. Although there may have

been over a thousand trees removed over the past couple of years, there were several instances when numerous stray golf balls collectively resembled the sound of a two-year old banging on a xylophone.

As the event came to a close, it was brought to everyone's attention that there was a problem. The siren from an approaching ambulance caused great concern. During the golfing portion of the meeting, one of our peers suffered a heart attack. Dewey Laak was taken to Holy Family Hospital in Manitowoc. It was discovered the following morning that there was a 99% blockage to the lower right side of his heart. Medical procedures relieved some of the blockage and Dewey was released following four days in ICU. He has been home and getting better everyday. Doug Laak, Dewey's son, was kind enough to keep everyone informed of his father's condition. His e-mail, sent through the Noernet on May 17th, relayed a sincere thank you to all those individuals that concern for his father's health. I would like to use this article to quote a part of Doug's email. "Remember guys, family first, grass second - listen to your body, make time for a physical - the people you love could be gone in a flash."

Four places were awarded for their scores.

First Place (60) - Mike Skenandore, Wanaki Golf Course

Dan Shaw, Lac Labelle Country Club
Mark Hortness, Ives Grove Golf Links
Ed Witkowski, Pendleton Turf

Fourth Place (62) - John Feiner, Public Golf Association


Skip Willms, Green Concepts
Chad Ball, Conway Farms GC
Wayne Otto, Ozaukee CC

Seventh Place (63) - Dale Marach, Reinders

Bruce Schweiger, Reinders
David Swift, Whistling Straits
Grant Davies, Whistling Straits

Tenth Place (65) - Scott Bushman, Fox Valley Golf Club

David Herr, Deer Run Golf Course
Lee Reinke, Deer Run Golf Course
Roy Zehren, Natural Athletic Turf



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Hole event awards were:

Hole #1 - Longest Putt
 Marc Davison, Green Bay Country Club

Hole #7 - Closest to Pin
 Pat Staehler, Spring Valley

Hole #9 - Longest Drive
 Jace Schmelzer, 27 Pines

Hole #12 - Closest in Two
 Skip Willms, Green Concepts

Hole #14 - Longest Putt
 Sam Andre

Hole #17 - Closest to Pin
 Bruce Schweiger, Reinders

The Celebrity - Wayne Otto, Ozaukee Country Club

In recent issues of Golfdom Magazine, there has been an advertisement starring one of our very own Wisconsin superintendents. Wayne Otto can be seen relaxing in a lawn chair, displaying some awfully white legs reading an issue of Golfdom Magazine. Wayne has since become an even larger celebrity among his peers. In great humor, Wayne was kind enough to "go along" with a celebrity issue autographing. Thanks, Wayne, for all of your influence throughout the years. You'll be missed upon your retirement.

Future Meetings

The summer is here and the golf courses are in full swing. Hope that everyone can get away for a day and participate in the future meetings.

July 15th - Wisconsin River Golf Club

August 13th - WTA Field Day -

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"ONE OF THOSE BIG MOSQUITOES HAS JUST BEEN SIGHTED ON THE 14th TEE. LARRY, GET ME MY SHOTGUN."



He Keeps Putting on the Miles

By Lori Ward Bocher

Somehow, I see Joe Deschler as the man in Robert Frost's poem, "Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening." Okay, so Joe doesn't ride a horse. But he does see a lot of snow and woods in his sales territory of northern Wisconsin and Michigan's UP. It's the last verse, though, that reminds me of Joe the most:

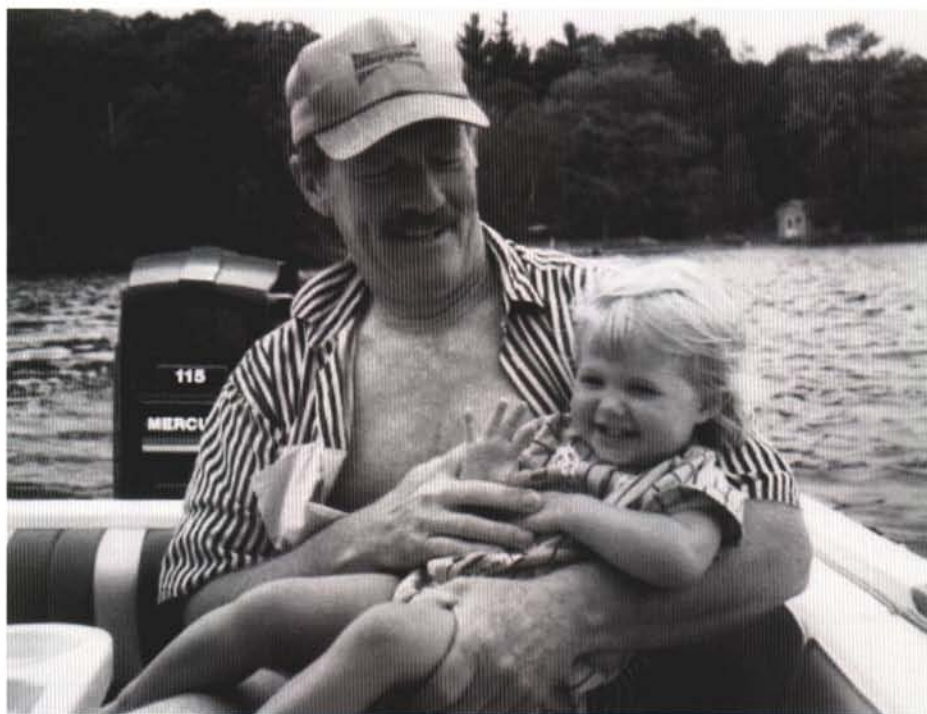
"The woods are lovely, dark and deep.

*But I have promises to keep,
And miles to go before I sleep,
And miles to go before I sleep."*

Joe puts on 45,000 miles a year as a territory sales manager for Horst Distributing, Inc. "It takes a lot of hours to drive that many miles," he says. "Any salesman who puts on more miles than that is spending too much time driving and not enough time selling. It would be better if I'd be putting on 35,000 miles a year as a salesman."

But his territory is too large and spread out to allow him that luxury. Joe's territory is defined by Hwy. 13 on the west; the shores of Lake Superior on the north; Antigo and Merrill to the south; and more than half way across the Upper Peninsula of Michigan to the east. There are more lakes than golf courses in his territory.

"I travel all the way to the end of Hwy. 41," he says of his drive up the Keweenaw Peninsula to the northernmost point in Michigan, Copper Harbor. "Marquette, Michigan (population 20,000) is the largest city in my territory. Up here, I must get a good chunk of the business to make it pay. When I covered more densely populated areas, if one customer wasn't in, I



Joe Deschler enjoys boating with granddaughter Mariah.

could go on and meet with others. Up here, I might go two and a half hours between accounts.

"But it's worth it," he adds. "Great people up here. I guess I just wish I could call on everybody because I also really miss the customers in my previous territories. And I enjoy seeing them at meetings."

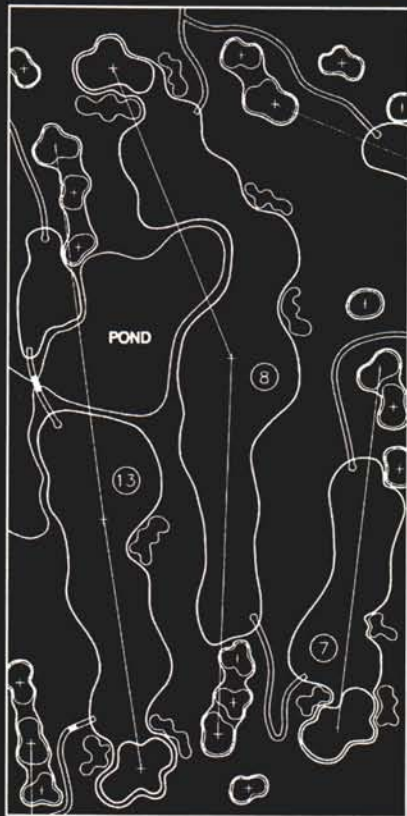
In addition to having a huge territory, Joe lives on Pearl Lake near Redgranite – close to 100 miles south of his nearest customer. "I'm gone most all the time during the week. Pretty much stay in motels every night. I guess we're just used to that," he points out. "Unpack Saturday, pack on Sunday. Occasionally I come home on a Monday night which is a real treat."

Joe wasn't working his present territory when he built his lake home. "I did look for a place in the far north for about three years and didn't find anything that made me jump at it," he says. "I found some fabulous places, but they were way out of my price range. I wasn't going to pay a half million dollars for a house." So he continues to commute from Redgranite until he finds that perfect spot.

Wears many hats...

As a territory sales manager, Joe is responsible for everything in his territory – sales, demos, meeting with the board of directors, following up after the sale, and more. "And we deliver a lot of equipment as we do our sales," Joe adds. Unlike the horse-riding gentleman in Frost's poem, Joe drives a

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“super big” pick-up truck – dual-wheels, crew cab, 4-door, diesel – that doubles as his office when he’s on the road. And he pulls a big trailer full of the machinery he’s delivering or demonstrating.

Merger mania is obvious as Joe lists the line of turf equipment that Horst carries. “We sell Textron products, which are all orange now. But they used to be the green of Cushman, Ryan and Ransomes lines,” he points out. “We also sell Smithco, National, and Turfco products, along with many other lines too numerous to name. And we carry a complete line of fertilizers, chemicals, and soft goods.”

About 75 percent of Joe’s customers are golf course superintendents. The rest are municipalities, school systems, colleges, resorts, industrial plants, cemeteries, etc. As a former golf course superintendent, Joe especially likes calling on golf courses.

“It’s been very valuable to me to have had a golf course background,” Joe points out. “It has helped me greatly. People feel comfortable talking about any aspect of the business with me,

like, ‘Well, Joe, you remember back when you used to aerify,’ or whatever. I can relate. There isn’t a turf machine that’s made that I haven’t either operated or seen. I’m a far cry from a turf expert, but I know an awful lot about this business. And I plan to be in it for a long time yet.”

What does Joe like most about working in turf sales? “The people,” he answers. “Ninety-nine point nine percent of the customers are the greatest people in the world. I just love dealing with them. I like meeting the new people. And I enjoy what few old timers are left. Most of the people know me. It’s really great.”

What does Joe like least about turf sales? “I despise appointments,” he answers. “Invariably, the customers I’m with prior to a scheduled appointment will want more of my time for one reason or another and I then must cut them short. If someone needs me, I want to stay. Many times I need to come back to them after my appointment to finish up.”

Joe has been involved with many golf course groups. “I was a



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member of the GCSA for years," he points out. "And I've been a member of the WGCSA for years – when I was a superintendent and now through my company. I'm currently on the board of directors and an active member of the Northern Great Lakes GCSA. It's a great little association for northern Wisconsin and the UP."

Lifetime miles...

Joe hasn't always been in turf sales. He has traveled many "proverbial miles" in his lifetime, going from golf course superintendent to turf sales manager to business owner and back to turf sales manager.

Joe was born in Racine and raised in Mequon. His first golf course job was at Ozaukee Country Club. "I thoroughly enjoyed working on the golf course and I thought it would be a great

career," he recalls. So, after graduating from Shorewood High School, he traveled to Penn State for their two-year turf program.

"But I didn't graduate from the program," he points out. "I came home to get married and was planning to go back. But then I landed the job at Tripoli Country Club in Brown Deer. Being that young, I was probably insecure and thought I'd better stay there instead of going back to school. I was the superintendent there for close to nine years."

Joe had the distinction of being the youngest golf course superintendent in the state at that time. And although he enjoyed working on the course, he didn't enjoy working for 500 members. "I like to keep everybody happy, and that's impossible," he says. So he went to Horst Distributing in 1967 as a territory sales manager, and he cov-

ered the southeast part of the state along with much of central and northern Wisconsin and the western UP for 13-1/2 years.

Tries his own business...

Then he traveled down what turned out to be a dead end road. He worked as a marketing manager for an energy company in Wausau while starting up his own business, Energy Efficient Structures, Inc. "We manufactured and sold a foam block building system where you put the blocks in place for the structure you're building, and then pour concrete into the foam blocks," he explains.

"Our blocks had wood nailers built right into them so, when you were all done putting up the structure, you could apply the siding on the outside and the drywall on the inside," Joe explains. "It was a neat system. My entire home is built out



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