



**Speaker Bob Vavrek, USGA Green Section Agronomist.**

mats including best ball and scrambles. The WGCSA tournament required that everyone actually play their own golf ball - *and keep score*. This day's event would have two flights. Flight A (hcp 0-16) and Flight B (hcp 17-32) would include golf course superintendents with an established handicap. The Peoria system would score the group golf course superintendents without an established handicap along with guest and affiliates. Thankfully, Fox Valley Golf Club's golf professional, Don Erdmann, was gracious enough to assist the scoring using the Peoria system. Here are the results of the tournament:

**Flight A - Handicap 0-16**

Net 68 - Gordy Waddington, Country Club of Wisconsin

71 - Dave Herr, Deer Run GC

Low Gross 73 - Scott Bushman

**Flight B - Handicap 17-32**

Net 72 - Richard Chapman, Crystal Springs GC

74 - Dustin Riley, Oconomowoc GC

**Peoria Flight**

72 - Joe Kuta, Hartford CC

72.5 - Bob Young, High Cliff Golf Course

**Golf Hole Flag Events**

Hole 5 - Closest to Pin: Dustin Riley, Oconomowoc Golf Club

Hole 7 - Longest Putt: Steve Schmidt, Butte de Morts CC

Hole 8 - Closest to Pin: Randy Dupont, North Hills CC

Hole 9 - Longest Putt: Dale Marach, Reinders

Hole 10 - Longest Drive: Scott Schaller, North Shore GC

Hole 12 - Closest to Pin: Scott Schaller, North Shore GC

Hole 14 - Closest to Pin: Terry Ward, Brillion Iron Works, Inc.

Hole 16 - Longest Putt: Bruce Schweiger, Reinders

Hole 18 - Longest Putt: Robert Gosewehr, Mee-Kwon Park GC



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# Christmas at the Big Piney Golf Course

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



It started innocently enough. Dutch Vanderzanden loved the nearly perfect Black Hills spruce that was growing in the clubhouse lawn at the Big Piney Golf Course in northeast Wisconsin. When seen from inside the big house, it was neatly framed by the large windows in the dining room. Late one fall, after Thanksgiving, he decided it would be a nice touch to decorate that favorite spruce tree for Christmas.

Not long after he carefully put big lights on the tree, it snowed. Like most superintendents, Dutch loved to see snow on the ground during the winter months. This first snow of the year was light and

fluffy and generous - a ten-inch blanket covered the golf course. And when his Christmas tree lights were turned on, the scene was like one you would see on a Christmas card. Snow rested on the boughs of the spruce and softened the bright tree lights. Members and diners loved Dutch's decoration.

After the winter season, Dutch purchased a lot of sets of lights for half price, thinking ahead to the next Christmas. If people were so pleased with bright lights on one tree, he could imagine how much they would enjoy seeing the entire clubhouse grounds lit for the holiday season.

Although the historic course

was named Big Piney, the center piece of the circular drive at the club entrance was a huge - 80 feet tall - Norway spruce. It reminded him of the big evergreens in the Indian Hills park in Madison, a park he drove by each time he visited his son Bill at the state University of Wisconsin in Madison. When he picked up Bill at the end of the first semester, the park trees were lit with what appeared to be giant Christmas lights. He drove down to the park for a closer look and discovered the tree was decorated with heavy electrical cord and 100 watt colored bulbs - red, green, blue, white and yellow. He was stunned at the

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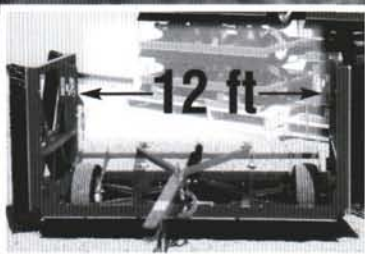
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beauty the lights brought to the park at night during the Christmas season.

A few days and a few phone calls later gave him a source for these giant decorations. Using money from the scrap metal fund, he ordered enough lights to light the big Norway spruce at the club entrance. His local tree trimmer had to help, obviously, with a sky worker. When they were done the sheer size of the lighted tree was stupendous.

Dutch carefully place his sale lights around the grounds, and on the first night after Thanksgiving he turned them all on. Honestly, the sight was fantastic.

And so was the response from the Big Piney members. Their enthusiastic response only inspired Dutch to make an annual vow - "next year the Christmas display will be even better!"

Always working on a shoestring budget ("That's half the fun!" Dutch declared.), he let his imagination go. The only limits were his common sense.

The golf course had an old Aero windmill behind the first green. He outlined it with small twinkling lights one year. Groups of evergreens and deserving individual spruce and fir and pine were lighted, starting from the clubhouse and reaching out to the far ends of the course a couple of years later.

One of his most popular displays was the Ford 8N hitched to a set of Worthington Airfield Blitzers that he parked in front of the practice putting green. He dressed the rig with lights and put chasing lights on all four tractor tires and the tires of the rough mower. When the lit in sequence, it looked as though the wheels were turning!

Then there was his antique cutter he hitched to cutout reindeer that were "running" across the lawn. And kids loved the brightly lit figure of Santa Claus,

putting out on the 18th green. Dutch didn't miss a trick.

He mapped out a snowmobile trail on the course and led groups on a tour of the lights. His cousin, a farmer from Oneida county, hauled his team of horses up and hitched them to a sled. The rides were a popular part of Big Piney's Christmas party. And of course the hayrides during Christmas were filled as soon as the signup sheet was posted in the big house.


Recently people have started coming from miles away to drive around the perimeter of the golf course to see the best Christmas decorations of any golf course in America.

The electric bill got to be large enough that Dutch had to create a budget line for it. But the extra dining room business on those nights between Thanksgiving and Christmas more than offset the cost.

All in all, it was a wonderful community asset. The do-gooders had succeeded in taking the Christmas season out of the schools and this was Dutch's small

way of compensating for that. "It may seem a little old fashioned," Dutch remarked. "But so what. My Christmas lights have brought joy to lots of people, young and old. And that's a good thing."

"Merry Christmas, everybody!"

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# Integrated Turfgrass Management Workshop

By Kevin L. Hensler, ITM Specialist, O.J. Noer Turfgrass Research and Education Facility, University of Wisconsin-Madison



The 2003 Turfgrass and Greenscape EXPO, scheduled for January 6th-8th, will include a workshop on developing Integrated Turfgrass Management guidelines to satisfy plant health and protection needs, with an emphasis on the **entire turfgrass system**. It will guide you through all aspects of developing a management plan that will impact aesthetics and performance at your site, while considering environmental consequences.

The ITM workshop will provide operationally feasible, agronomically sound, and environmentally sensible guidelines to serve as a technical foundation for the development and implementation of a site specific program. ITM is the selection, integration, and implementation of a management approach for producing and maintaining quality, functional, and healthy turfgrass. ITM also involves understanding pests associated with turfgrasses. In fact, the idea of ITM is derived from the Integrated Pest Management (IPM) philosophy whereby all man-

agement strategies (i.e., biological, chemical, and/or cultural) are considered. ITM is about making knowledgeable, informed decisions based on the challenges presented by a particular turfgrass site.

Implementing an ITM plan at your facility is important for several reasons. Firstly, developing and implementing a strategy to accomplish the goals of your facility gives you a direction. Without a plan, it can sometimes be difficult to arrive at your destination. Secondly, it also provides a working document to justify actions and expenditures directly related to the management of your facility. Presenting a management plan to the powers that be indicates a manager with foresight and organizational skills to make objectives or goals happen.

Another reason to implement an ITM plan is the challenge of maintaining quality turf more efficiently. The ability to deliver high quality turfgrass with less inputs will require greater efficiency by turfgrass managers. To meet this

challenge, managers will require more than technical expertise of how something is done, but an understanding of proper turfgrass selection and what effects a cultural or chemical practice have on the turfgrass ecosystem, and the environment.

Topics of discussion at the workshop will include: identifying and mapping potential problem areas; developing and maintaining an organized library of turfgrass management materials; monitoring pest and environmental stress problems, and developing thresholds for a variety of pest or stress problems; keeping a record of weather conditions; implementing cultural practices that enhance turf health and pest resistance; and developing and evaluating a management plan that accomplishes state objectives.

For more information on how to register for this workshop, or on developing an ITM program for your facility, call (608) 845-2545, or (608) 845-6536. ♣



## EXPO 2003 Workshop

### *Developing Guidelines for an ITM Plan*

The Integrated Turfgrass Management (ITM) workshop will provide operationally feasible, agronomically sound, and environmentally sensible guidelines to serve as a technical foundation for development and implementation of site specific programs. For more information on registering for this workshop or developing an ITM program for your facility, call (608) 845-2545 or (608) 845-6536.

*The Integrated Turfgrass Management philosophy emphasizes an environmentally responsible management approach to plant health and protection.*

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# Ghostly Images of Golf

By Pat Norton, Golf Course Superintendent, Nettle Creek Country Club

The guy was a veteran superintendent, husband, and father. He had tons of experience in all three areas, yet found himself at age 45 still having the same fears... and letting the same things haunt him as had plagued him as a young man.

Fear of the dark is something that's never completely conquered. The veteran still got the spooks sometimes...like one night recently when traveling his normal night route checking on some troublesome controllers. He had just passed between some homes next to the carpath and did notice the barking dog. He continued on to his next stop...with the headlights shining on the cluster of Toro controllers. He immediately heard the sound of the barking dog...only this time seemingly much closer. Finishing up quickly...he jumped back into the cab...and thought it strange and a bit unnerving that a dog would follow a truck across the golf course.

His next stop required a walk back fifty feet into the prairie grass, which in September is head high, very thick, and moves in the nighttime breeze. Walking back through the grass...he heard the dog barking again...and not too far away! Got to hit the

right keys now...get this water started...and get back into the truck! Almost instantly, the dog barks again...this time from much closer! That damn dog!! Realizing full well that he had no flashlight, no shovel, no nothing to use against the dog...he became very aware of his vulnerability as he waded back out through the deep grass to the safety of the truck.

His final stop for the evening took him farther out away from the dog...which still didn't stop the veteran from quickly starting up his last quarrelsome controller and retreating back into the truck! A dog really wouldn't stalk and then attack a stranger in the dark, would it? The veteran was not about to find out...

As he got back onto hard pavement and headed for home, the veteran settled down and let his mind wander back to his early days as a night waterman...to that one night when he failed to really keep track of the summertime weather.

The moon was out earlier on that particular evening...but he was too busy squirting water to really notice. Later on...even in the darkness...he did notice the weather start to change. Nothing too serious...could be a false alarm...need to keep grinding through these fairway settings, right?

When the moon disappeared and the nighttime wind began to rise, the rookie knew something was up. But...he had enough experience to know that shutting down prematurely would result in much more work if rain passed by. The quandary was...shut the irrigation system down...or keep moving until the thunderstorm was certain to hit?

That night...the thunderstorm did hit...with a big vengeance. Sometime after midnight...the wind came up in a big way. The neophyte finally realized that he was in trouble...and started disconnecting his 808's as fast as possible.

Suddenly and completely...it was a race against the weather and the night! It was quite a scary feeling for the 19-year old to be out there alone...knowing that fleeing the course in the face of the storm was not an option! His mind and his Cushman raced as he furiously counted the sprinklers yet to disconnect...**only eight more to go!**

The rain and the adrenaline kicked in simultaneously as the air started to crackle with thunder and lightning. As he slid over to the 12th fairway...in one motion...in one series of seconds that stay burned in the human memory for a lifetime...the kid knelt down



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to quickly crank out the sprinkler. The hair on the back of his neck prickled suddenly and sent a huge shiver down his spine.

Instantly the young man braced himself for the impact...as the huge lightning bolt seemed to tear into the earth just out on the invisible western horizon. He realized in an instant that it was much closer than that...the lightning and thunder were only a second apart! He also realized instantly that he had both hands on the brass impact sprinkler...**which would readily conduct electricity, wouldn't it? Better keep moving and get out of here!!**

As happens with summer thunderstorms, lightning seemed to release the torrential rains as the storm hit with full force! The kid still had a half dozen to disconnect, but at this point things were moving so fast...that an army couldn't have stopped him from finishing up! Then...the slippery trip down to the lake to secure the pumphouse...and the last mad dash back across the course to safety! **Don't dump this truckster in a bunker...don't hit a tree...and don't run this thing across a green...they probably won't understand in the morning!!!** Top Cushman speed that night felt like about 100 mph!!!

Finally, the dark outline of the shop loomed ahead as the rain pelted the kid into submission. He felt a strange mix of fear, exhilaration, and accomplishment as he gunned the truckster into the shop and shut off the engine. He stood outlined in the open doorway...watching the rain bounce hard off of the concrete...and felt his neck prickle one more time as the lightning turned night into day.

The kid was still a little pumped up and yelled out into the storm... **"Rain on...you SOB...tonight, I won the battle!"**

Needless to say, it took awhile for the storm to abate and for the kid to calm down and later get some well deserved sleep...

The veteran chuckled as he thought about that evening so long ago. As the old truck ate up the few remaining miles, the veteran let his mind click back to another scary night when he was a younger and more enthusiastic superintendent. He couldn't recall why that particular valve had to be closed that night...but knew that it had to be closed.

He did remember that it had to do with a newly established golf course that was getting too wet.

A big thunderstorm had come up...and the new superintendent knew that the irrigation had to be shut down and that particular valve shut off. He quickly jumped out of bed...checked on wife and little kids...all sleeping soundly...and scooted out to the course. On this night the young super knew that a CarryAll was the vehicle of choice...no weight and no tire marks. He realized when he got out onto the course that lots

more rain had fallen than expected. In fact, the valve in question was under about three feet of water in a drainage area between fairways...so wading out to there was the only option.

On this night the young man did carry a flashlight...which shone upon a metal valve wrench sticking up out of the water! On this night the thunder and lightning show had already begun, but for some idiotic reason the young super felt that wading out into the water to turn off a valve with bare hands on metal was a good idea. Only when cranking down on the valve and having lightning show him the immensity of the water all around him...did he realize that maybe this wasn't such a good idea!! Boom!!! Another lightning/thunder combination did a number on his nerves...and an electric awareness overtook him that...on this night...he was suddenly in the wrong place at the wrong time!

He retreated out of the water cursing himself...and then cursing the Club Car Corporation for making such a slow vehicle!! Needless to say...the young superintendent was a bit wiser as the comfortable lights of the open shop door beckoned through the

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