San Francisco is clearly a city of significant grade changes!

Monster Park is better known to my generation as Candlestick Park.

Candlestick Park. Bonds hasn't hit any steroid home runs there since 2000 when the Giants moved to a new stadium nearer to downtown.

Frankly, I was surprised at how rundown and tacky the stadium was, certainly nowhere nearly the quality of Lambeau Field or Camp Randall. It lacked even basic maintenance, to say the least. The field itself was pretty good, despite a fair amount of rain over the previous couple of days.

Some well known older players were at the alumni party. I was most pleased to meet R.C. (Alley-Oop) Owens and Steve Bono.

Best of all, the Packers won the game handily. It was part of a great final four games of the season for Green Bay; the Niners didn't have a chance against Brett that day.

We bused back to the hotel, walked to Fisherman's Wharf for some final seafood before our flight back on Monday.

An interesting sidelight was seeing the well-known entertainer Gallagher in the hotel lobby. He was in town for a show, and Scott introduced himself and had his picture taken with the great comedian.

The flight home started early and ended in Chicago because of fog and winter weather in Milwaukee. We drove the final leg, left our names for the luggage that would arrive on Tuesday and drove to our homes. It was late, but who cared?

After all, it was a terrific Christmas present that likely won't be matched for a long, long time.

It wouldn't have been difficult buying a ticket to a 49ers game, clearly a different situation than in Green Bay. There were a lot of empty seats.

Gallagher had a chance to meet one of his best fans – Scott Neary!

Questions from the Floor

By Dr. R. Chris Williamson, *Department of Entomology, University of Wisconsin-Madison*

Question: Ant baits don't appear to provide as effective of control as suggested by the manufacturer; what are some possible explanations as to the "lack of effective control?" Sheboygan County, Wisconsin

Response: Ultimately, the most effective means to manage ants in turf are to eliminate the queen. The queen is responsible for producing offspring (workers); until she is destroyed the colony will continue to exist and grow; allowing worker ants to build soil mounds that we so love to hate. Much like humans, ants are also particular as to what they eat; would you like to eat soggy/wet bread? Neither would an ant; the proper application of granular ant bait controls is critical for successful ant management. Granular ant baits must be as fresh (properly sealed and stored) as possible, applied around (near the base) and not directly to non-disturbed (mowed or flattened) mounds, and they must be applied to dry turf (withhold irrigation for at least 24 hours; don't apply when rainfall or dew formation is anticipated). By following these simple guidelines, your potential for successfully managing mound-building ants in turf will be maximized. Too often, granular ant bait failure can be linked to improper application.

Question: You've studied earthworm management on golf course turf for several years now; in a "nutshell," what do you conclude from your research? Rock County, Wisconsin

Response: The bottom line is that there are no "silver bullets" or quick solutions to managing earthworms in turf. My research revealed that abrasive soil aggregates including Black Jack (crushed coal slag), Amber Jack or Minergy (paper mill byproduct), and Best Sand (man-made sand; crushed quartz) provided significant reduction (compared to the untreated control) in earthworm castings where these products were applied to turf. These soil aggregates were simply applied as a conventional, light (1/8" coverage) sand topdressing application that is commonly applied to greens, tees, or even fairways. My research also revealed that repeated applications (i.e., spring and fall) of angular, abrasive soil aggregates are necessary to achieve maximum effectiveness. It is unclear as to the long-term agronomic implications of this management strategy. It is possible that this strategy could drastically disrupt the soil texture, potentially causing layering or result in plant pathogen infection sites on the leaf sheath or roots due to the abrasive nature of the soil aggregate.

Question: Recently, I read an article that contained information that suggested turfgrass managers in the northeastern U.S. are beginning to experience isecticide resistance issues with synthetic pyrethroids. How might this affect us here in Wisconsin? Dane County, Wisconsin

Response: What you've read is correct; researchers in the Northeastern U.S. are beginning to document numerous occurrences of pesticide resistance of the annual bluegrass weevil to synthetic pyrethroids. It is theorized that this phenomenon may be due to both the widespread use and multiple applications of synthetic pyrethroids for control the annual bluegrass weevil as well as other important turfgrass insect pests including but not limited to chinch bugs, sod webworms, and black cutworms. This phenomenon has also been reported with the southern chinch bug in Florida. Remember, effective management of any pest (disease, insect, or weed) begins with a comprehensive knowledge of the biology (life cycle, behavior, ecology, vulnerable life stage, etc.); "know thy enemy." To minimize potential pesticide resistance, it is essential to follow these guidelines: 1) regularly rotate insecticides from different insecticide classes when possible; 2) do not exceed or cut (reduce) label rates; and 3) avoid "wall-to-wall" or blanket applications. Practice IPM, make only targeted applications of pesticides where pests are likely or are problematic.

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Where Did All the Nematodes Go?

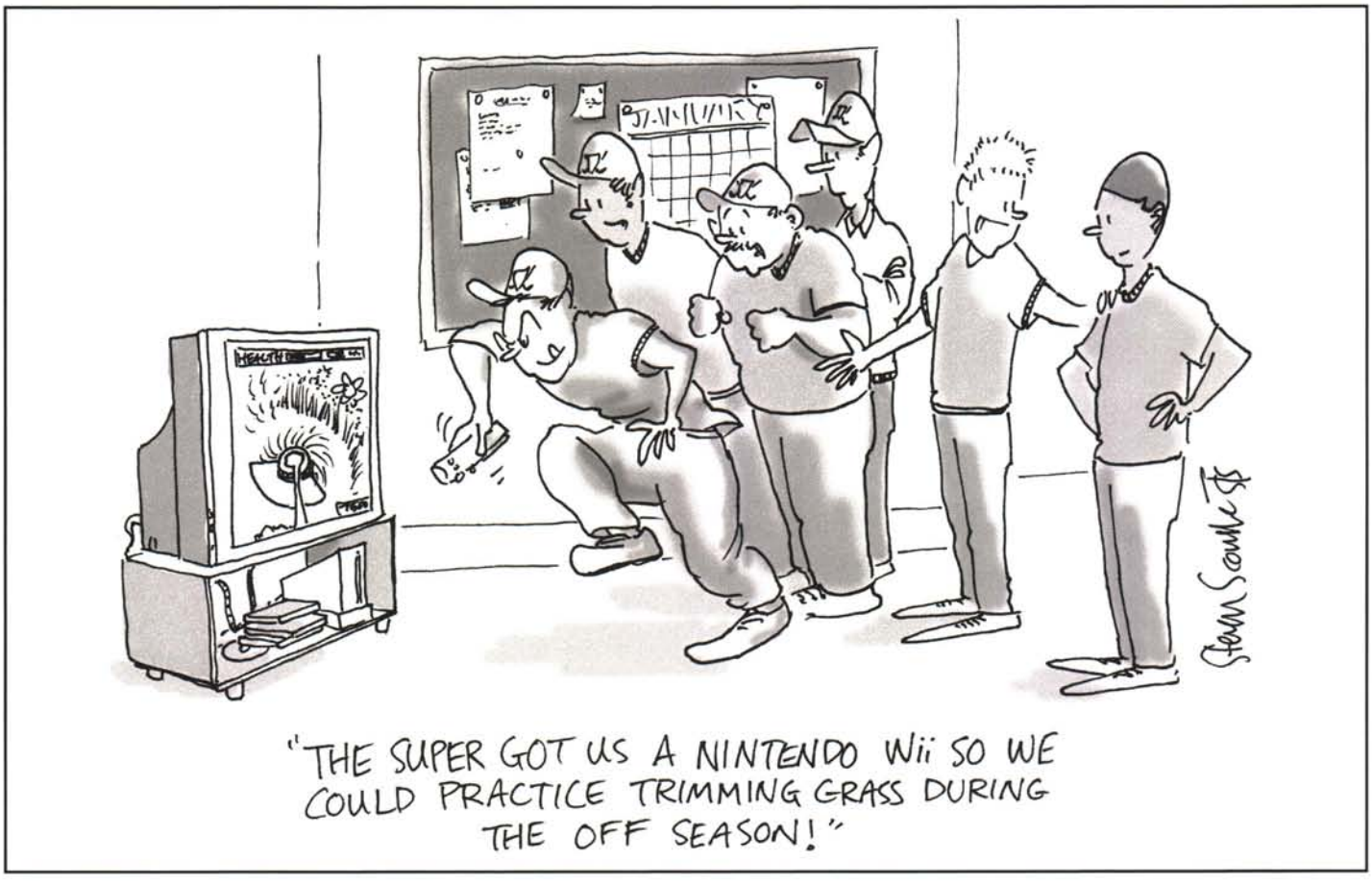
By Paul Koch, *Turfgrass Diagnostic Lab, Department of Plant Pathology University of Wisconsin-Madison*

We have reached the middle of winter for 2007, and aside from the blizzard that struck southeastern Wisconsin on the first day of December winter has been fairly benign to this point. Thinking back to the summer of 2005, it was anything but benign. Hot and very humid conditions coupled with a severe lack of rainfall across the entire state provided very stressful conditions for the turf and those who manage it. Collars were dying out daily, juvenile *Poa* from the spring's winterkill was wilting under the summer stress, and the lack of rain caused localized dry spots to form almost uncontrollably. Many golf courses had weak or dead turf despite their best efforts, fraying relations with golfers and board members.

Frustrated with the lack of response of their turf, two superintendents chose to have their golf courses sampled for possible nematode damage. The numbers came back astronomically high, and it was determined by the nematologist that significant damage had occurred to the turf through nematode feeding.

Fast forward to the summer of 2006. Word had spread that high nematode numbers were found the previous season, so more sampling was planned by three golf courses who had experienced nematode-like damage the year before. For the most part, the nematode population numbers in 2006 came in well below the numbers from 2005, and all three golf courses saw almost none of the symptoms they saw the previous year. This may suggest that nematodes were the problem in 2005, and that cooler temperatures in 2006 kept nematode populations down and turfgrass health up. But there are problems with that assumption.

Nematode thresholds on creeping bentgrass/annual bluegrass in the Midwest are very poorly understood. It is known that different species of turfgrass will have varying tolerances of nematodes (Couch, 95), but it is also true that regional weather conditions also play a huge role in determining the amount of nematode



feeding a plant can withstand. For instance, a creeping bentgrass plant in Kentucky may be able to withstand 200 nematodes per cm^3 while a bentgrass plant in Wisconsin can tolerate up to 2,000 nematodes per cm^3. Without this basic knowledge of plant thresholds for Wisconsin turf, it is impossible for us to make inferences about the amount of damage a particular nematode population is causing.

While it is possible nematodes caused significant damage to Wisconsin turfgrass roots in the summer of 2005, it is more likely in my mind that nematodes were just one of many stresses that added up to be too much for some turf. Heat, humidity, and extreme drought coupled with the intense cultural practices that were employed throughout the summer look to be the primary reasons for turf decline, and some minor nematode feeding may have enhanced the damage. Until more Midwestern studies are done looking at nematodes pathogenic to turfgrass, the debate will continue to rage on.

The TDL Wants You

If your course has had turf decline for unknown reasons in the past, or you need verification of a problem to prove to the board a certain action needs to be taken, or you just feel like supporting your local turf resources; then it may be time to consider becoming a contract member with the Turfgrass Diagnostic Lab.

The Turfgrass Diagnostic Lab does not receive any state or university money, so the money brought in from contracts form the foundation of the lab. While all samples submitted to the lab, from contract members and non-contract members, get our complete attention; there are some special benefits to becoming a TDL contract member.

Contract members that submit samples to the lab get a free written report, which is an additional $25 for non-members. The report includes color pictures and recommendations for controlling the pest that can be useful in explaining the situation to your staff or the clubhouse. Contract members also get biweekly email updates throughout the growing season with explanations of the most common problems being brought into the lab, and also what to watch for at your course over the next two weeks. This is on top of the disease alert emails sent out to contract members, which warns them if weather conditions will be conducive for a damaging outbreak of disease such as *Pythium blight*. Complimentary "University of Wisconsin Turfgrass Research Reports" are also mailed to those contract members who request it, keeping you up to date on the latest and greatest ways of managing your turf.

The fee system is also set up to allow for flexibility in membership depending on the financial capacities of your facility. For each $100 in membership you sign up for, you get one sample diagnosis with a free report. For example, a $500 membership entitles you to up to five sample submissions with report throughout the growing season. For those who become $1,000 contract members, a free site visit is included that is good for anytime throughout the growing season.

If you are interested, please fill out and return with check the contract membership order form provided on the next page. For any further questions, please do not hesitate to call me at (608) 845-2535 or email at plk@plantpath.wisc.edu. And a heartfelt thank you to the 2006 TDL contract members for all of your support.

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2. The 2006 UW-Madison Turfgrass Research reports will be available at the WTA Expo in January. The report will also be available online at http://www.plantpath.wisc.edu/tdl

   Do you want? ☐The results CD ☐hard copy of disease results ☐Neither

3. Do you wish to receive biweekly updates from the Turfgrass Diagnostic Lab on turf health issues commonly being seen at the time? If yes, please provide an email address to be reached at.

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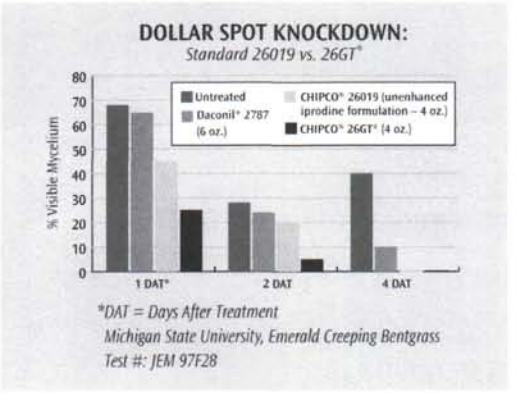

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Golf, It's As Easy As 3-2-1

By Rob Schultz, *The Capital Times*

It was a year when Steve Stricker re-introduced himself to the PGA Tour and the University of Wisconsin men's golf team took a major step toward becoming a player in NCAA circles.

It was a year when Northern Bay Golf Resort, located north of Wisconsin Dells, opened up to rave reviews and Erin Hills Golf Club, near Hartland, opened up to world-class reviews.

Erin Hills owner Bob Lang had the quote of the year. It followed a question about whether he'd ever consider making the majestic 19-hole course – which is so good that many believe it will host a U.S. Open someday – a private facility.

"I didn't build it so it could be played by 200 rich guys," Lang answered.

Take a look back at 2006 and it's easy to recall dozens of great golf stories and quotes. The best, of course, dealt with Tiger Woods and his return to dominance during a year when his father, Earl, died.

There were also some wonderful stories that were never told but definitely deserve to be mentioned.

For instance, I'd be remiss not to mention why Mark Disrud decided to withdraw during the first round of the Madison men's mid-amateur tournament last spring. Heavy rain postponed play during the first round at The Oaks but it finally stopped and there was enough light left to finish the round.

Disrud, however, had promised his twin sons, Brian and Bill, that he'd celebrate their birthday with them that evening. Although he was playing well and was in contention, Disrud – the 2005 men's city champion – withdrew because he knew if he continued to play he'd be late for his sons' birthday celebration. Thus, Disrud gets my nod for sportsman of the year.

The best story of the year that nobody knows about belongs to D.J. Schuett. The talented, long hitter from the New Glarus Golf & Rest Home in New Glarus and got progressively better every time he played the course's 326-yard, par-4 18th hole.

The first time he played the short, dogleg left par-4, Schuett drove the green and two-putted for birdie.

The second time he played it, Schuett drove into a greenside bunker and chipped in for an eagle two.

The third time he played it, Schuett accomplished the near-impossible and got a hole-in-one on the par-4.

That's a 3-2-1 finish for those of you who are keeping score at home.

Here's the best part of the story: "The next time I played the hole," said Schuett, "I got a 6."

That, folks, is golf.

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