



WTA president Rich Riggs accepts a Reinders/ Daconil promotion check from Dean Musbach during the awards and scholarship program.



Dr. Doug Soldat, right, pictured with several of his UW turf management program students. The students helped with logistics during the presentations.

WSTMA were held at EXPO. Another highlight was the presentation of scholarships and turf research donations during the opening session. The list of this year's recipients and donors are shown below. Also listed on page 33 is a description and contact information for all the exhibitors who help to sponsor the great education. Be sure to return the favor by calling them with all your commercial needs in the coming season.

Everyone finished off the day with some fun during the Wisconsinizing social gathering.

The numbers of attendees were down this year despite the great conference. There were 202 attendees and 85 exhibitors staffing 36 table top displays. The balmy January weather can't be blamed for attendance, with temps in the low 40s and no precipitation. Regardless of the low attendance, everyone left with a great experi-

ence and new ideas.

These new ideas are what make the Wisconsin Turfgrass and Greenscape EXPO such a great way to start out the year. The planning committee is already working to bring the best education to you for next year's show. The format of the trade show will remain and the education will be worth the wait. Stay tuned to hear about the exciting new theme of EXPO '08. You won't want to miss it! 🌱

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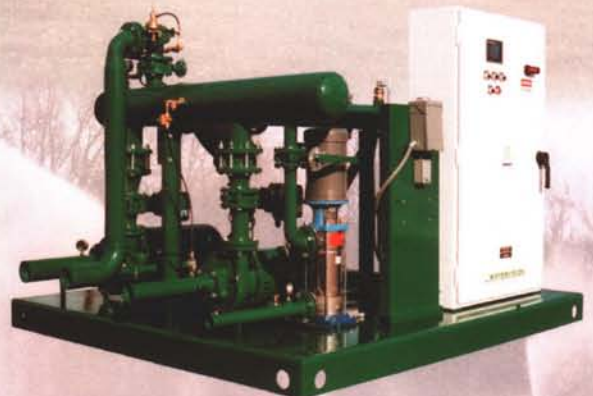
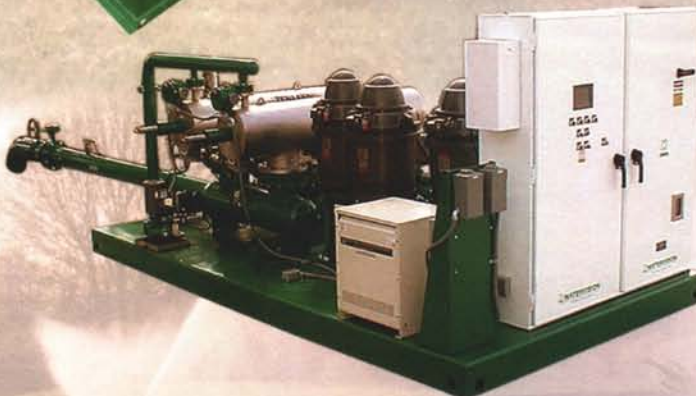
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A Bit of Summer in February

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

GCSAA conference this year served up a reminder why I prefer to drive to this event each February instead of flying. It was, in a kind phrase, a pain in the neck, going and coming back home.

Anaheim, California is a long way from Middleton, Wisconsin, too far to reasonably drive in the winter. That reality left me with the ugly hassle of flying and suffering what anymore are the inevitable problems associated with commercial flight.

Needless to say, the experience was what we expected. Problems with snow in other parts of the country bled over to airports far from the weather, including Madison. Aircraft and pilots weren't available for our scheduled flight and we started out three hours late. We missed our flight connection in Chicago for LAX, and instead of arriving in California at a time when we had a good part of a day to head out to some local golf courses, we arrived just in time for the Los Angeles rush hour. At least we arrived.

I have been stuck in LA traffic before and it is difficult to describe or understand – six lanes of cars in each direction stopped or barely moving for no apparent reason. It took an hour and a half to get 25 or so miles north to find a motel for the night. I cannot imagine why anyone would want to live and work there.

California was in the midst of a heat wave (and drought), which felt really good to a couple of pale Midwesterners. We took off early the morning after arrival and headed north out of the mountains to drive the big agricultural valley that runs north out of Los Angeles to south of Sacramento. Almost



Rough mountain California landscape.



Not exactly your picturesque Wisconsin dairy farm!

immediately after hitting the big valley, the familiarity of home filled the air - ah, the aroma of fresh cow manure! It was pervasive and my guess is that travelers and city folk alike were appalled. Chad and I chuckled at the thought of all the turned up noses as we breathed deeply and enjoyed the country air

we grew up with.

Dairying in California is not what it is in Wisconsin. Tens of thousands of dairy cattle were confined in acres of sheds and feed lots – they are hardly barns anymore – and milking goes on around the clock. It was stark and a far cry from the 20 - 30 cow



The pickup and camper used by John Steinbeck and his dog that resulted in the book, "Travels with Charley."



Everything you'd want to know about the great writer John Steinbeck can be found here.

herds in Wisconsin when I was young. Personally, it seems crazy to me to use my tax dollars to subsidize irrigation so these producers can harvest seven crops of alfalfa for their dairy herds. Go ahead; grow vegetables and fruit in California if they pay for the water. We get 30 - 35 inches of precipitation in the Middle West, plenty to grow forage for livestock WITHOUT a subsidy. But that makes too much sense and in America these days we don't seem to do many things that make sense.

Halfway up the valley we headed west over the mountains, across the San Andreas Rift Zone, down through the Peachtree Valley and over to the Salinas Valley. It would have been foolish not to take a quick look at the new John Steinbeck Center, and it was certainly worth the time and admission charge. Many of his stories were set in the Salinas area. Then it was north to Monterey, 17 - mile drive and all of the great courses there.

The ATT tournament was just completed the previous weekend at Pebble Beach and the bleachers were just coming down. It was quite a mess despite the acres of plywood, but I would guess that by now the recovery is complete. The course is quite accessible and we took advantage of that to look



Links at Spanish Bay with the Pacific Ocean in the background.



The Links at Spanish Bay.



Another ocean hole, one of many found on the Monterey Peninsula.



18th green at Pebble Beach; the tide is out.



18th hole at Pebble; note retaining wall.



The practice green at Pebble Beach, and...



...the well known iconic clock.

around. I also spent a bit of time in a golf antique shop on the property and perused the books – some priced at \$10,000! Clearly, guys like me aren't the intended market; where I come from you could buy a pretty decent car for that kind of money. The volume I really liked was a first edition of Tulloch's book on the life of Old Tom Morris. The price was a mere \$1,500.

Cyprus Point, Poppy Hills, Spanish Bay, Monterey Bay CC, Spyglass, and Pacific Grove add up to an almost singular golf destination in the world.

It was too late to stop at Pasatiempo in Santa Cruz, the home course of Allister MacKenzie. It was as I'd remembered from previous trips – there aren't many motels along Highway 1, or other highways and intersections in that part of the state. We had trouble finding a place to stay, finally settling on a near fleabag motel near the ocean in Pacifica.



The AT&T is one of the early tournaments of the season.



First tee at PBGC.



Poppy Hills from the clubhouse deck.

The next morning we swung up to San Francisco, filled with anticipation of visiting the Olympic Club and the San Francisco Golf Club. Pat Finlan is the talented superintendent at Olympic and a member of the GCSAA board of directors. I got to know Pat when he lived in the Kansas City area and edited the Heart of America GCSA chapter publication. And the San Francisco Golf Club is where Johnny Miller played golf as a youngster. It also happens to be an A. W. Tillinghast designed golf course. Both were inspiring visits on what felt like a beautiful spring morning in Wisconsin.

From there it was across the Golden Gate Bridge north for a while, down to Berkeley and Oakland and south through the valley that would lead us back to Los Angeles and Anaheim and the GCSAA conference. We did stop at one beef production operation that dwarfed even the dairy farms - hundreds of acres of fat cattle being fed to market weight.

We crashed at the same motel we had the first night in California and used it as a launch site to the final round of the LA Open at Riviera Country Club on Sunday. What a great event for golf fans to attend. We left for the tournament early and there was no traffic at all. We parked at

the VA hospital and hopped a shuttle bus to the Riv. The PGA could not have been more accommodating of GCSAA members. We were in early, with plenty of time to see players warming up on the range.




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Riviera has such a great history, one well written about by Geoff Shackelford. Many Hollywood stars of the film industry were members and active in the club. The clubhouse on the hill with a view of much of the course is superb. The course was in great shape and the greens were firm and fast. Apparently, a few years ago, the course conditions weren't the best, but for this event they were tip-top as far as I could tell from outside the ropes.

What a great way to spend a day in February – on one of America's historic golf courses, in record

warmth, watching the world's greatest players compete. Phil collapsed again. I actually expected a bigger crowd but appreciated the room to move around so easily. We found the tourney to be inspiring.

At the day's end we shot down to Anaheim in modest traffic.

The area around the convention center has greatly changed over the years. I first attended conference in Anaheim in 1974 and literally all around the Disney/convention center area were irrigated strawberry fields filled with workers harvesting and



Views from 17 mile Drive.



Entrance to the "O" Club.



Late winter golf felt like spring at the Olympic Club in San Francisco.



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