

norm...with the sweat/water weight just pouring out of me. I became quite the laundry expert...as wife Susan was really reluctant to handle my extremely wet and sweaty workout garb!

By April 15...I was feeling really good...the golf course was open...and life for our little family was really blossoming. Youngest son Tommy made the high school high honor roll...daughter Megan was finishing her first year at UW-Madison...and oldest son Ryan was soon to be graduating from UW-Madison and finishing his four-year Army ROTC scholarship program at UW.

On Sunday, May 20, 22 year old Ryan graduated from UW-Madison and received his commission as a second lieutenant in the U.S. Army in recognition of his completion of the Army ROTC Program. Any parent reading this can identify with the feeling of incredible pride...of all the years of child rearing now seeming to bear fruit...of the changes as a child transforms into an adult before your very eyes...with the inevitable feeling of it all being completed...and somewhat at an end.

I cannot describe to you the intense feeling of parental pride that rose up during the graduation ceremony and then during Ryan's military commissioning ceremony in which he and 23 other fresh UW grads were all commissioned together as officers into the various branches of the U.S. military. Part of the ceremony involved these fresh faced officer candidates receiving their 'first salute' from an enlisted soldier or veteran...in recognition of the help received along their way during military training and life in general. I think that Mr. Monroe Miller, Ryan's godfather, was pretty tickled to be involved in that part of the ceremony as he gave my son a very snappy 'first salute' and received an equally snappy first salute and ceremonial coin as a nice keepsake in return.

It washes over the mind even now as I think back on that day on May 20...and all of the months and years previous going back to his childhood. We have side by side pictures of a baby boy being held by Bucky Badger...and a young man in his red cap & gown on graduation day. Quite a nice pair of pictures. Simply understanding the series of events that led from one



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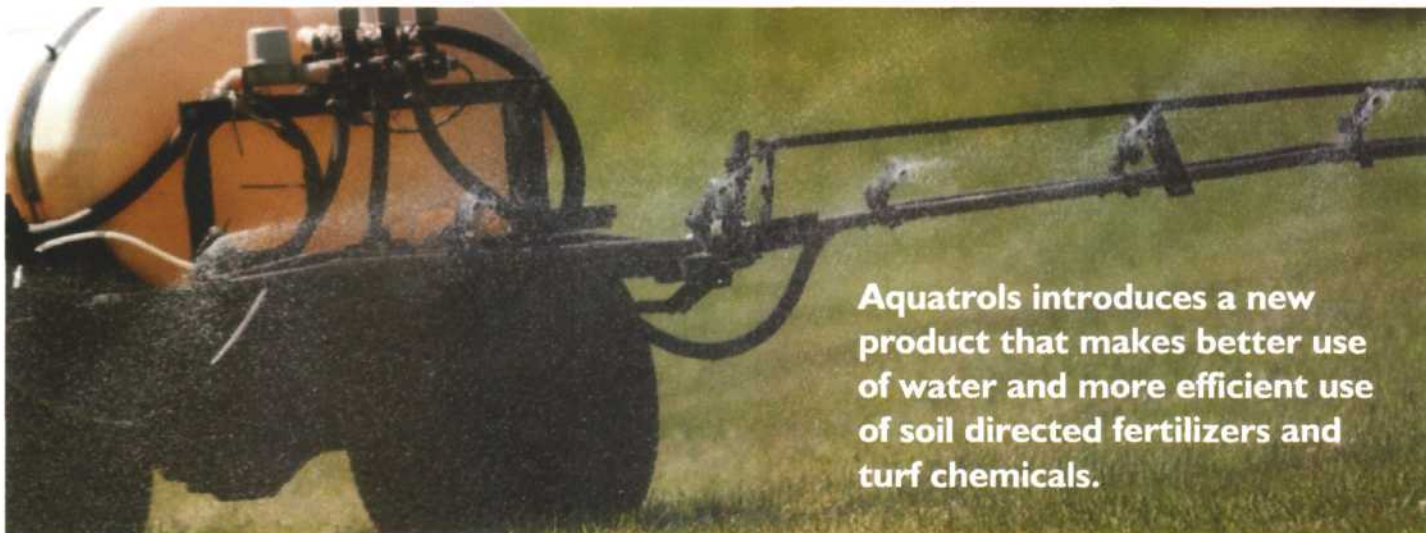
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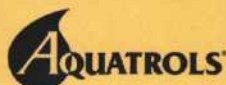
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to the other is a quite satisfying. Those two contrasting pictures pretty much summarize why parents everywhere...including all of the readers of this publication...work so hard for so many years.

We all work hard...as did our predecessors...because our families need us...because we all accept that responsibility...and because at the end...a child, now adult...stands there in a graduation gown and then his military uniform saying in essence that he is now ready to start accepting his own responsibilities in life.

It is a bit emotional to realize that not only is the eldest child finished with college...he is now really leaving the nest. A kid in college is still pretty much part of the household. A kid off four to five years of military duty really is leaving and embarking on his own life. As a parent, there is nothing more to be done to shield him...to protect him from possible harm. We must trust that his years of training...the leadership of his superiors...and the will of God...will protect him.

A parent eventually wins the right to reflect back on the developments, achievements, sacrifices, and failures made as offspring and parents repeat the process of successful U.S. citizens through the generations. Good parents usually make for good children. While not perfect...Susan and I have both always felt that our children were our highest priority. A good parent...a good father... does not place personal happiness above that of his wife and family. I have learned that their happiness is my happiness...and vice versa.

It all makes a guy suddenly feel very philosophical about life. I've had this strong feeling since my cancer episode that everybody is expendable, none of us is immortal, and should something serious have happened to me...life


for my family would go on.

Hey, I turned 50 a couple of weeks ago...meaning that my life is 5/8ths complete...and my purpose is 5/8ths complete also, right? My wife is strong...and my children are strong. They have been trained well...by us, by their teachers, by their coaches, by their college professors, and by other positive adult role models.


Just as we all train our children over their formative years...other

positive influences such as the military, employers, schools, churches, and future spouses come into the picture and take over where we as parents leave off.


Suddenly, one day we find that our children have responded well to the series of events that make up their lives and are ready for adulthood.

It all gives Mother's Day...and soon...Father's Day...a bit of new meaning and significance. 

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Our Unsung Heroine

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

As I look back over my decades of involvement in the Wisconsin Golf Course Superintendents Association, few events measure up to the decision of the Wisconsin State Golf Association to welcome our chapter as a partner with them in administration.

The days of late meeting notices, outdated and inaccurate membership rolls, no directory, and a thousand other missed details were over. The change in our chapter was immediate and overwhelmingly favorable. Officers and directors of the period were relieved that we really could begin to move forward with the times.

Those of us filling elected positions during that period had no clue of just exactly how positive the change was to be. Gene Haas, as the executive director of the WSGA, provided the leadership required for a smooth transition and was genuinely excited about being part of our culture. He helped design the protocol we would follow and led the development of mission and goals of this new alliance. I honestly believe this event strengthens his already strong advocacy of our profession.

But the true value of our partnership wasn't actually realized until the implementation took

place. That is where our good fortune took hold and we started the 25-year partnership we have had with Diane Haas. How incredibly lucky we have been to have her in our corner all this time.

Diane is the gold standard when it comes to details. Ask past treasurers about her help with financial details – from bank deposits to balanced checkbooks. We always knew who was a member in good standing and who wasn't. The correspondence required for communication among members was always on time and thorough and correct. Job notices were standardized and complete. Mailing

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lists were accurate (much to the glee of the Grass Roots editor, among others).

And so it went with other responsibilities that were part of running a fairly large organization like the WGCSA. Diane did her work without fanfare or even calling attention to herself. It was about the superintendents of Wisconsin.

The real perspective on her competence comes when you recall that she was also involved in the administration of the WSGA. Many of us got to know her person-

ally through WSGA tournaments when she would be there as a team member who help run thousands of amateur tournaments.

And for a period of time in the early years of the Wisconsin Turfgrass Association, when she did the same work for that organization she was doing for the WGCSA. Many WTA officials will tell you no one ever recruited more new members than Diane Haas!

She is retired now and we are going to miss seeing her and talking to her. But she and Gene are still extremely busy doing all the things

they didn't have time for during their working years. They are healthy and happy and on the go.

This spring a few of us got together with Gene and Diane for lunch. We wanted the chance to thank her in person and give her a gift from all of her golf course superintendent friends in Wisconsin. I was happy to be there but sad thinking that a significant part of our history was ending.

We were fortunate to have her in our corner for a long time. She deserves all the great things a life in retirement can bring. 🌿



L-R: Gene Haas, David Brandenburg, Monroe Miller, Diane Haas, Brian Zimmerman, Jim Vanderwynen and Mike Lyons.

*Dear Friends:
 Well you guys really knocked
 my socks off.
 The lunch, flowers and cash,
 plus the fact you took
 time from your busy schedules
 to "honor" me - I was and
 still am overwhelmed by it
 all.
 I really appreciate everything
 you did and a great big
 "THANK You" to all. You
 guys are the greatest. Sincerely,
 Diane*

Cruising Into Summer

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

For the most part, the spring has been pretty good in Wisconsin for golf and golfers and golf course superintendents. There have been pockets and areas that might not feel that way – persistent drought in northwest Wisconsin and recent storms in the Green Bay area, for example – but that is always the case. Mostly, we had minimal winter injury, aeration is over and the summer staff has arrived. We will train them quickly, hope for some real stars among them, and soon enough wonder, “Where has the season gone?”

It was a colorful spring in our town, less windy than usual. The beautiful pastel blossoms seemed to persist longer this year and were the perfect complement to the many shades of light green on our course. Summer brings the deep and consistent green; I like diversity of green the young plants bring to our landscape. It fades in August and becomes spectacular in October.

It is pretty much impossible, for me at least, to sleep much past 4:30 am these days. The birds are singing up a storm and some start even earlier. Their jubilation is one

of the pleasures of early rising.

Bluebird counts seem on the rise at our course again this year. If there was ever a wildlife success story, this is it. The thrill is still there when you watch them flit from tree to tree or open a bluebird house and see a family of four little ones.

We are also seeing a rise in the number of Baltimore Orioles on our golf course; seeing or hearing one just isn't the big deal it was five years ago when a sighting was uncommon. We suffer when we find a nest on the ground, victim to a windy day.

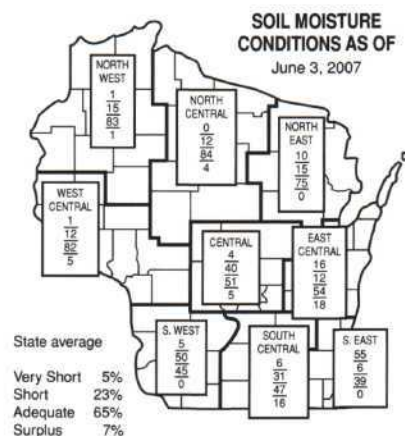
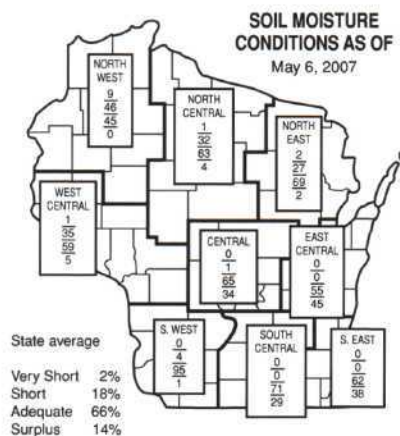
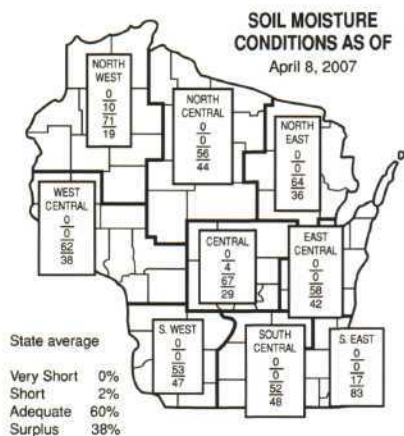
I always assumed the orioles have some long-standing relationship of some description to Baltimore, Maryland. It didn't take much research to put that notion to rest. The name 'Baltimore' comes from the black and orange color combo - they were the family colors of the Calverts. One member of the family, the second Baron Baltimore, was the patron of Maryland. When Linnaeus put a name on this bird, he decided to honor Lord Baltimore.

The mosquito population is also very present this spring, causing

some misery to golf players and golf course workers alike. Although I haven't noticed specifically, experts say our honeybee population is NOT experiencing a population increase. Quite the contrary, some say the numbers are seriously declining. Some losses are blamed on mites, but other bees are falling prey to a mysterious phenomenon named Colony Collapse Disorder. Bees are critical to agricultural enterprises other than actual honey production; bees are essential for crops requiring pollination.

Phil Pellitteri, WGCSA member and UW - Extension entomologist, feels this is not a new phenomenon, pointing to similar losses in 1975 and in 1963-64. He doesn't dismiss the seriousness, but doesn't know if it is cyclic, chemically caused or the result of pests. He thinks the current hysteria about the bee colony may end up being a bit overstated.

The weather data since the last issue of *The Grass Roots* is presented below, thanks to the important work of the Wisconsin Agricultural Statistics Service.



You can always count on the Wisconsin Turfgrass Association to step up for the welfare of the turf industry in our state. Funding problems necessitated the WTA assuming the funding for the Kussow position in Soil Science; as a result Dr. Doug Soldat was hired.

That storyline is being repeated, this time in the Plant Pathology Department at the UW - Madison. The same circumstances exist, and the WTA leadership agreed to one year funding of the turf pathology position. The goal is to have the position filled by 1/1/2008. A hiring committee was formed. It has met twice, the job has been advertised and we are reviewing applications. You are represented on this committee by Dr. Chris Williamson and by yours truly. It seems to me there are talented people out there; we need to convince the best to come to Wisconsin.

Stay tuned; the news on this effort will be reported here at length and in detail.

It seems only yesterday when Pat Norton was an undergrad student, working on our golf course crew. He graduated from the UW - Madison turf program and became our assistant golf course superintendent. It was easy to see he was talented - he left to become the superintendent at South Hills CC in Fond du Lac and then Cherokee CC in Madison. Bob Lohman hired Pat as a construction superintendent and he built Cedar Creek CC in Onalaska. He loved the course and area so much he stayed on after the course was built. It took an offer from his Uncle Bob to move to Nettle Creek in Illinois, where he has been for quite a long time.

While in Madison at our course, he met his bride. He and Sue had their first child - a son John Ryan - during their stay in Fond du Lac. Cheryl and I were very flattered when Pat and Sue asked us to be godparents and we were proud to stand with them when Ryan was baptized.

The years went by and the Norton kids, about ten years behind our family, grew up and prospered. Ryan and Megan left Illinois to attend their parent's alma mater,



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the UW - Madison. The steep out-of-state tuition was moderated somewhat when both kids were accepted by the ROTC program. Dozens of times we watched Ryan at football and basketball games command the ROTC detachment that presented the colors during the national anthem. Cheryl and I were proud of the kid and could only imagine how his parents must have felt.

I received a call from Ryan this spring, asking me if I would like to participate in the ROTC commissioning ceremony in Great Hall at the Memorial Union on campus. I was stunned and flattered, and I quickly accepted. As I learned the details of the ceremony and what it was all about, I was swept with emotion and honor.

The young officer candidates recognize that much of their training was provided by noncommissioned officers, specialists and sergeants in the case of the Army. In recognition of this, each newly commissioned second lieutenant presents a noncom a coin, symbolic of his/her thanks. The noncom then gives the newly commissioned second lieu-

tenant his first salute as an officer, which is smartly returned. In Ryan's case, I received a new silver dollar and gave him my best salute. It was a powerful moment for an aging Army vet who hadn't saluted anyone since leaving Vietnam in 1970.

Garrison Keillor wrote in his column a few months ago how impressed he was of our young military staff, noting he feels "small" in their presence. They are polite and helpful and disciplined and proud in service to their country. He said what I couldn't begin to say, but feel so deeply.

So, for a brief moment, I was back in time and part of an Army activity. I won't forget it. Lt. J. Ryan

Norton is headed for Ft. Lewis, Washington for part of the summer. From there it is to Ft. Sill, Oklahoma and the intense training for an artillery officer. No one knows yet where his first duty station will be, but I know this - he will be an outstanding young officer, proud and brave and deserving of the respect his unit will feel for him.

Before you know it, July 4th will be here and almost immediately after many WGCSA members will trek to Kohler and enjoy the fine work of Mike Lee, Dave Swift and their golf course staff to attend the U.S. Senior Open. It will be a highlight of the Wisconsin golf summer. 🌿



Ryan Norton, son of Pat and Sue Norton received his army officer commission from Lt. Col. John Bechtel and Cap. Ted Carter, commander of the aircraft carrier USS Carl Vinson.

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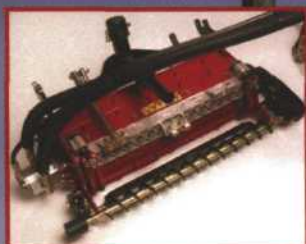
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