



**Figure 1.** This picture from Sentryworld GC in Stevens Point, WI shows how devastating snow mold can be to untreated bentgrass, as well as how important an effective snow mold control program is in Wisconsin.

may seem easy to find one, two or three which will give you quality protection throughout even a harsh winter. However, with a struggling economy, flat golf play, and higher fuel prices every dollar of the maintenance budget must be stretched to the maximum. Using university research trials can assist you in developing a program to control snow mold that is both effective and affordable at your course. The University of Wisconsin's Turfgrass Diagnostic Lab, in concert with the Wisconsin Turfgrass Association, conducted snow mold fungicide trials at six different sites across the upper Midwest in the winter of 2007-2008. Trials were conducted at the OJ Noer Turfgrass Research and Education Facility in Verona, WI; Sentryworld GC in Stevens Point, WI; Timberstone GC in Iron Mountain, MI; Edina CC in Edina, MN; The Legend Course at Giants Ridge in Biwabik, MN; and the Quarry Course at Giants Ridge in Biwabik, MN.

Disease pressures varied greatly over the six sites, but surprisingly the only site with pressure high enough to show significant breakthrough on several treatments was held at The Legend Course at Giants Ridge up in northern Minnesota (Table 1). Snow cover in northern Minnesota was shallow but present from mid-November until late March. A short period of open ground was then followed by two monster snowstorms that dumped multiple feet of snow across the

area. Disease pressure was high as untreated controls averaged 76.3% disease. Despite this high disease pressure and unusual snowfall distribution, many treatments were quite effective at controlling snow mold (Figure 1).

Thanks to golf course superintendents Gary Tanko, Bill Kehoss, Mike Powers, and Jared Finch for hosting the trials last winter. Special thanks go out to the companies who tested their products in our trials this year, which provides a vital source of funding to our turfgrass pathology program here at UW-Madison. When ordering your snow mold fungicides please keep these companies in mind; Arysta LifeScience, BASF, Bayer, Cleary Chemical, PBI Gordon, Quali-Pro, Syngenta Professional Products, and Valent Professional Products. ♣

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# November December 1994

*Editors Note: We go back to November of 1994, and an article titled "Latham's Long and Productive Career in Wisconsin Comes to a End. A bit of a roast with a lot of respect and appreciation thrown in, the article covers Jim Latham's career by 4 friends, James Snow, Danny Quast, Monroe Miller and the late Wayne Otto as Jim retired from the USGA.*

*Jim passed away at home in Florida on July 16th, 2008. If you ever head Jim speak the drawl he developed from his hometown of Hillsboro Texas was a pleasure to listen to. A long time friend to the Wisconsin golf course industry Jim will be missed by all who knew him. His wife Lois can be contacted at 699 Cloverleaf Blvd, Peltona, FL 32725.*

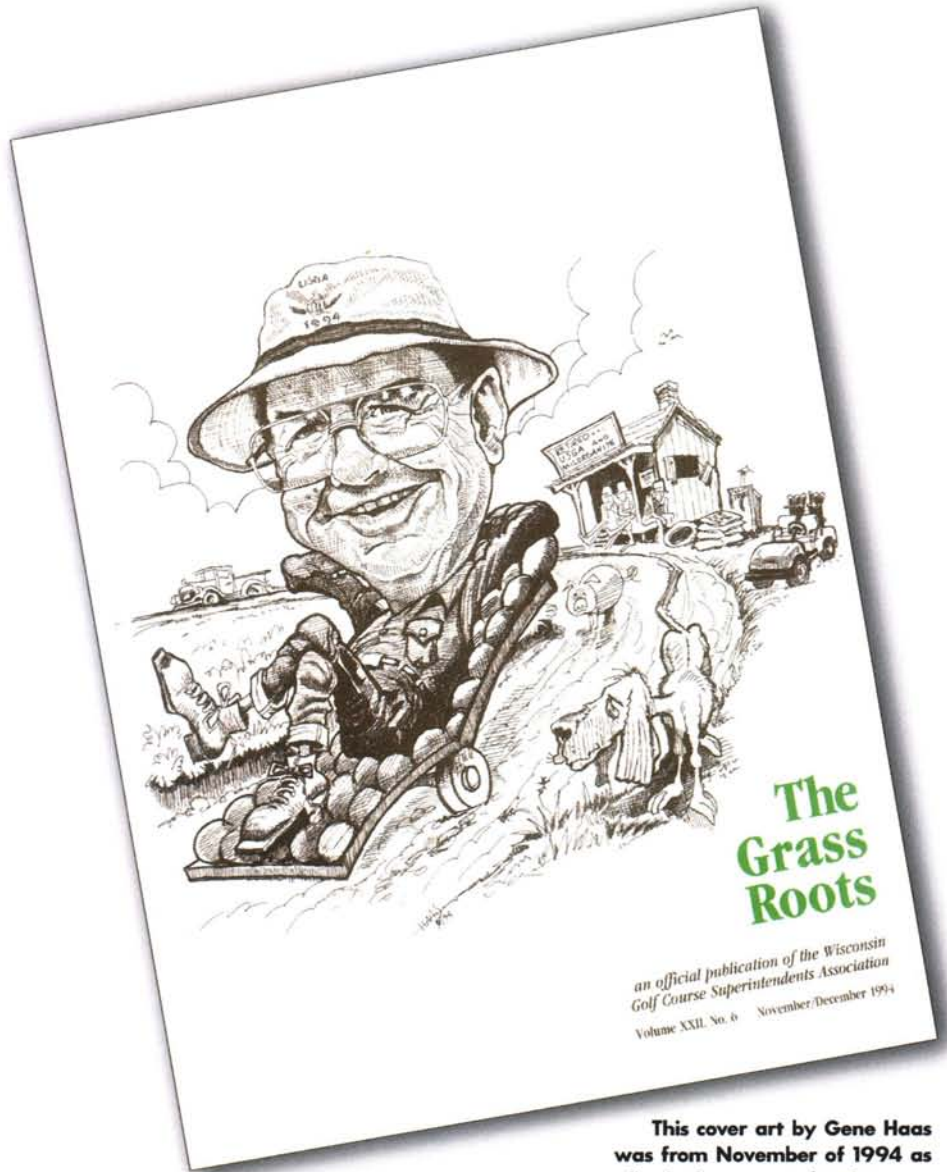
*Jim started with the USGA in 1956 as an agronomist in the Northeast and Southeast Regions, before spending 25 years with Milorganite and the Milwaukee Sewage Commission. He then returned to the USGA in 1984 gracing the Great Lakes Region for 10 years before retiring.*

*Following his retirement from the USGA, he actively volunteered as a member of the Turfgrass and Environmental Research Committee for eight years. In 2003, Jim was named a recipient of the USGA Piper & Oakley Award.*



## **Good Friends to All, By Danny Quast.**

Jim and Lois Latham-good friends to all. We are going to miss them, and Lois' cornbread.



**This cover art by Gene Haas was from November of 1994 as Jim Latham neared retirement.**

I've had sweet memories this morning thinking about my friendship with Jim and Lois over the past twenty-five years. It brought a smile to my face and laughter to us as I was telling some of the stories to my wife Beverly. Let me share a few with you.

We need to establish the fact that Jim is the best "soils" person in the business. His knowledge of

soil and soil conditions helped to bring Dr. James Madison, who spoke on sand topdressing to our Symposium years ago. Jim had advocated this program and helped establish the technique. He worked closely with superintendents in finding the right material and, through his efforts, had a big part in establishing the best putting surfaces in the country.

Most stories stem from a trio - Jim, Wayne Otto and myself... "The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly!"

Many years ago, while I was at Milwaukee Country Club, Jim was working for the Skunk Works (MMSD). The only fertilizer that had ever been used on Milwaukee Country Club fairways was Milorganite. I decided to supplement the Milorganite with potash. Discussing this with Wayne, I told him not to tell Latham - "it would break his heart." You guessed it. Otto spilled the beans. The next time I saw Wayne "The Squealer" Otto, he told me that Latham would probably never speak to me again and I should consider getting out of town until things cooled down!

Every time anyone of us got into trouble, Jim was the first person we called. Come to think of it, he still

is! If he didn't know the answers, he knew where to find them.

I can remember being at the Country Club Softball Games (I think it was the year Milwaukee CC won). I had just installed my new irrigation system and the central didn't work. I had one, two, maybe three beers and was complaining to Jim about it. He went home so fired up he called friends in higher places. The next day I had not only one but two centrals in my office. I still don't know, to this day how he did that. He's an amazing guy!

There was a sign in my room at college that read "You here again? Another hour shot to hell." Usually on Saturday mornings, but anytime I wanted to find out what was happening, I would stop by Jim's office in Brown Deer. We would

hash and rehash the world of turfgrass for the week or for however long I hadn't seen him. Until Lois showed up. I can still hear her... "Quast, Out Out Out. Jim has to get some work done." I never did like that office; there wasn't even a back door!

When I came to Medinah, much work needed to be done and programs needed to be changed. We were getting ready for the U.S. Open. Jim was there for me with recommendations and support. He helped me sell programs that were necessary for the betterment of Medinah. Jim also helped many of my assistants obtain jobs which bettered their careers. I like many, will be forever in his debt.

I know Jim and Lois will enjoy their retirement. If Beverly and I are among the missing and can't be

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found, we might just be down Texas way, visiting good friends and eating hot cornbread.



**A Tireless Professional, By Wayne Otto**

Yes, there was a day when Jim Latham was young and not so well known as he is today. It was in Omaha, I believe in 1961, when I received a soil analysis report from the Milwaukee Sewerage Commission (That's where Milorganite came from in those days), and it was signed by Jim Latham. I knew O.J. Noer and Charley Wilson, but where did this Latham character come from? Back then I believed everyone was immortal, and that nobody would ever retire from anything.

It didn't take long to get to know Jim Latham. He spoke at our Nebraska conference and Harold Glissmann, whom I worked for

during a very learned internship in Omaha, was the Milorganite distributor for that area. Harold would bring Latham to town to "ramrod" roundtable discussions with groups of area superintendents. Jim also came to town when we had turf problems during the "dreaded hot and humid" Nebraska summers.

After moving to Wisconsin in 1967, I really got to know Jim. We spent many hours talking about "grass" over a lot of beers, pizza and even "Black-Eyed Peas". We would always end up talking turf no matter what or where the event.

Jim was in charge of putting the Wisconsin Golf Turf Symposium together for many years. One of the all time great ones was in 1974 when he got Dr. John Madison from the University of California Davis to give a presentation. He devoted the entire morning session of the first day of the Symposium to a discussion about

using straight 100% sand for topdressing putting greens. That did much to change not only the lives of superintendents but the playability of a whole lot of golf courses. Other than some golf courses in California, no one in the northern tier of the U.S. was using straight sand for topdressing, so a few of us right here in southeastern Wisconsin were really the "guinea pigs" about 20 years ago. Consequently, good or bad or whatever, Jim had much to do with this pivotal event.

In September of 1984, Steve Blendell and I were sitting in a hotel room eating pizza and listening to Stanley Zontek, our USGA Agronomist, tell us that he was leaving the Great Lakes Region and moving to Philadelphia in the Mid-Atlantic Region. He said "you'll never guess who is going to take over this area after I leave." After a brief silence, as "Blender"

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and I were swallowing, Stanley told us that it was to be Jim Latham. We were both surprised and shocked at the same time. The decision was, in my estimation, an excellent one. I am firmly convinced that it would have been a huge mistake if the USGA had hired a "green horn" to replace Zontek. Jim was a first class agronomist with a distinguished career. So after taking a 25 year sabbatical to work with the city of Milwaukee - Milorganite Division - Jim Latham went back to work for the United States Golf Association. He has done a tremendous job for the USGA. We will all miss Jim, but we know that he will never retire from something that he loves so much.



### The Road Warrior, By Jim Snow

From both a personal and professional standpoint, I'm awfully sorry to see Jim retire from the USGA Green Section. During the past ten years, Jim has brought a perspective to our staff that only 40 years of experience in the turf industry could build. From his days as a Green Section agronomist in the 1950's to his years with O.J. Noer and Charlie Wilson at the Milwaukee Sewerage Commission to the past decade as the Green Sections Regional Director in the Great Lakes, there isn't much that Jim hasn't seen. Most of our current staff are a generation younger than Jim, so that alone should indicate what a loss his retirement is to us.

One of the things that has kept our staff in awe of Jim is his attitude toward work and travel - he's an extremely hard worker and seems to thrive on travel. We kiddingly refer to him as our Road Warrior for his frequent journeys through the hinterlands of Minnesota, the Dakotas, Montana and Wyoming, visiting golf courses with nothing between them but hundreds of miles of pavement and lots of interesting scenery ("for the most part," he says). I think he enjoys it because it gives him lots of time to think about his favorite subject - TURF!

That's what is most remarkable about Jim Latham. After nearly 40 years of roaming the world looking at it and talking about it, there's nothing else he'd rather do than get into a good discussion about turf. Of course, he knows a lot about it and has seen it in just about every condition imaginable, so he has lots to offer the conversation. And his enthusiasm is catching, too. The agronomists on our staff who have been fortunate enough to travel with Jim really appreciate the breadth of his knowledge and the enthusiasm with which he shares it.

You might ask how we can let someone with Jim's talent slip away when he clearly has so much yet to offer. Well, we're not! I am please to say that Jim as accepted a seat on the USGA's Turfgrass Research

Committee. So, although our staff is losing a highly respected associate with Jim's retirement, the Research Committee is gaining a seasoned veteran whose knowledge of the industry is matched only by his enthusiasm for the potential of the research program. How's that for a nice ending to the story!



### A Sterling Career, by Monroe S. Miller

It won't be the same in the golf turf business in Wisconsin next year. Jim Latham will retire at this year's end. Come January 1995, he and Lois will be relaxing in their retirement in Texas, not far from where they grew up.

Today, Jim Latham may well be the most savvy, experienced and well trained turf expert in the country. By way of his education at Texas A&M, training under O.J. Noer, and experience of 25 years with MMSD and more than a decade with USGA, no one rivals this man's background. Therefore, who else could rightly claim the title?

I've enjoyed Jim's USGA Green Section visits to my course over the years and prospered from them. The scores of talks and lectures, from the Symposium to the Green Section regional conferences to our WGCSA monthly meetings, proved time and again that he is a articulate and accomplished speaker.

Despite being close to retirement, there was Jim at our summer field day, taking pages of notes during the research tour and kicking tires during the morning hours. That tells a lot about this dedicated turf man.

And for an editor, there's nothing like a straight up, tell-it-like-it-is article from Jim Latham's pen. His writing for the Green Section Record and The Grass Roots were always the best.

It is pretty easy to answer the question "does Latham pass the Miller 'did he make a difference' test?" For everyone I have talked with, the answer is a loud and bold YES. This is a guy we will surely miss. 🌱

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# 2008 UNITED STATES OPEN CHAMPIONSHIP An Interns Perspective

By **Shane Griffith**, Student of Soil Science - Turfgrass Management, University of Wisconsin-Madison

*Editors Note: Shane was one of three participants selected by Toro based on work experience and an essay about future goals. Shane is entering his senior year at University of Wisconsin-Madison, and has experience at Beaver Dam Country Club, Blackhawk Country Club and is currently interning at Whistling Straits.*

*The editor and readers of the Grass Roots appreciate and welcome all turf students to contribute articles.*

The 2008 United States Open was a tournament that will long be remembered by every faithful and casual golf fan. At the end of the week I heard numerous fans and sportscasters claiming that the excitement we witnessed on the shores of the Pacific Ocean at Torrey Pines, made for perhaps the greatest Open ever played. Through the TORO Championship Tournament Training Program, I was fortunate enough to be right in the middle of that excitement all week long.

The program sponsored by TORO and backed by the GCSAA aims at giving aspiring golf course superintendents the chance to volunteer on the maintenance crew for the week of the tournament. To apply I needed to fill out a short application and write an essay about where I see my professional career heading in the next ten years. I never expected that essay to place me on the 18th fairway of Torrey Pines, witnessing Tiger Woods knocking down a birdie putt to force an eighteen-hole playoff on Sunday of the Open.

For me and the other 100 volunteers on the maintenance staff, our day started at 4 a.m. when we caught a shuttle from the nearby University of San Diego to the course. We would have a morning meeting and then begin our assigned duties until they were complete. The rest of the day was ours to watch golf and get swept up in the excitement. At 4 pm, we would again meet at the maintenance shop and then head out onto the course to complete our afternoon assignments. Our day would end at approximately 9 p.m. when we would once again catch a shuttle back to the University of San Diego. This schedule kept us at the course for nearly 17 hours every day for a week. As you can imagine, sleep came quick and easy when we arrived back at the University.

My intern position allowed me to rotate through many of the different jobs that needed completing for tournament preparation. Most days I mowed tees or helped set cups. I also participated in various other duties including; mowing greens, hand watering, raking bunkers, fluffing rough, and filling divots. For me, the



**Torrey Pines maintenance staff prepares to head out for afternoon course work.**



**A line of fairway mowers on hole 5 at Torrey Pines.**

most intriguing job was assisting in the cup setting process. We would meet with a USGA agronomist and rules official who would pace off the green and communicate to us the exact position of each pin. Then, we would go to work trying to get the pin to stand as straight and proud as we could. While we were doing this, other USGA agronomists would be on the green taking measurements. The speed of the greens was measured with a stimpmeter and as we were directed to tell those who asked, the greens were rolling "championship speed." The moisture content of the upper soil



profile was measured with a TDR probe and the firmness was measured with the "Thumper." Of course, none of this would matter if it were not for the final measurement that was made, playability. This was measured the old fashioned way, with a putter, golf ball, and steady stroke.


Some other interesting characteristics about the south course at Torrey Pines and the maintenance operation include the various grasses used at the course. The greens are Poa and were able to withstand the low height of cut, .100 in. while retaining excellent playability and consistency from day to day. Because sprinkler head irrigation was eliminated from the greens for the week of the Open, many dry spots were noticeable through the week. At one point, we used 16-ounce water bottles to treat the driest areas of the greens with the greatest accuracy possible (an amusing process).

One of the reasons the greens were able to withstand the immense stress applied to them was because of the 22 aerifications that were performed on them in the two years leading up to the Open. The fairways at Torrey pines are Kikuyugrass along with a little Poa mixed in. Because of Kikuyugrass's dense and rigid growth, golf balls sit on top the grass as if the ball were placed on a

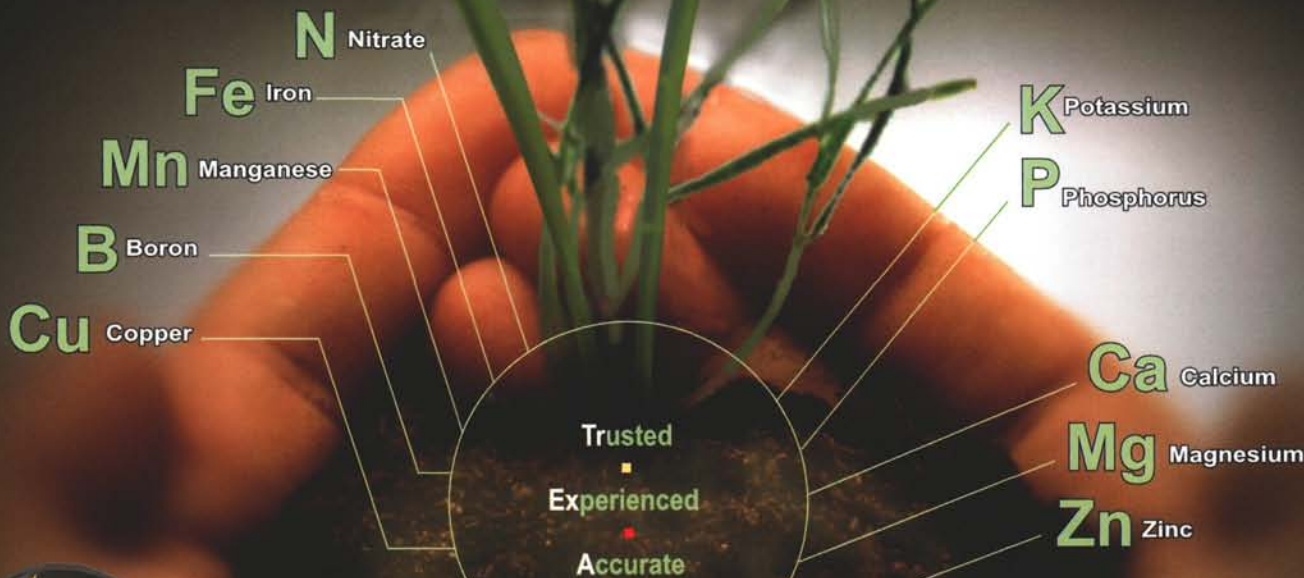
tee. This dense growth habit also makes for very difficult rough as the world's best golfers found out all week long.

Surprising to me was that since the Buick Open occurred at the course in February, the rough and greens have received only very small amounts of fertilization while the fairways have received none. The TORO Championship Tournament Training Program allowed me to see the massive amount of work that goes into hosting a major tournament by all the parties involved. Before this, I did not have nearly the appreciation for the extent of the work necessary.

This truly was a great experience that I will remember for the rest of my life. I would like to thank the TORO Corporation for setting me up with this opportunity. I would also like to extend thanks to Mark Woodward, Jon Maddern, the rest of the Torrey Pines staff, and all the sponsors who provided great meals for us throughout the week.

Now that the tournament is complete, it is back to work at Whistling Straits for me with a new excitement for the upcoming 2010 PGA Championship that will be hosted there. I can only hope it lives up to the thrill of the 2008 U.S. Open at Torrey Pines. 

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# The Alarm Clock

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

The most necessary, yet hated tool in the arsenal of any summertime superintendent is definitely the alarm clock. Over the past 90 days, my relationship with my own personal alarm clock has definitely deteriorated. It has come to the point where writing about it may just generate some tolerance and understanding on my part...permitting me to survive another early rising golf season.

Back in April and May, I relished the chance to answer the alarm, spring out of bed, and get to the course bright and early. It felt so good to be outside...and multiple days without a break from the clock bothered me not one bit. The alarm clock was, in fact, my friend that let me know on a daily basis that winter was indeed a thing of the past. I enjoyed setting it...and smiled a bit as I answered it each morning.

As the days and weeks have passed from then until now, I am finding it much more difficult to motivate myself out of bed at 4:30-4:45 AM. It is a daily battle these last few weeks to get enough sleep so that having to answer that AM alarm isn't such a chore.

There are a few typical reasons as to why I and my clock are starting to develop a hate/hate relationship...such as frequency of answering it! Where in my non-existent contract does it say that I am responsible for being at the golf course by 5:00-5:30 AM each and every weekday...Saturdays... Sundays...all days...from April 1 through the end of October? Hey, I love the golf business and I really love being out there at Nettle Creek...but this every day romance needs a little bit of a break! My only day off in recent memory was last Monday, July 7th...which consisted of 5-9AM scrambling around the course like a madman...then leaving for a GOLF OUTING up in Elgin!

What have I become that I spend a day away from my course at someone else's golf course? Am I that addicted? Or do I simply realize that if I had chosen to stay home that day...I simply would have been working as per normal.

Going to a golf outing for any superintendent, by the way, is nothing more than an exercise in patience and futility. Where else can a turf guy have so much fun playing golf with strangers... waiting for golfers (that's a new experience)... drooling over the size of that new maintenance shop off in the distance...and realizing quite quickly that this upscale suburban park district course eclipses one's home course in every possible way! I made the mistake

that evening of returning home and touring my own course before dark...and immediately realized that my tour should have waited until after dark as to not notice all of the flaws...

On a positive note...the four working days since Monday last have seen two rain events...much grooming of this course...beautiful Penncross everywhere...a beautiful transformation of the bunkers on our 7th green...and an appreciation here that we also have an attractive golf course...simply different in that it is produced on a much lower...but very adequate maintenance budget.

The rain events of summer...be they strong or mild...are the blessing of every course and of every superintendent. Strong rain on a Thursday night notches down the alarm clock battle a little bit in that on the following morning...the awakening is more relaxed...the arrival more serene...and the upcoming weekend is anticipated as a chance to relax instead of being felt as something to endure.

Weekends this season consist of early mornings full of too much work...followed by afternoon naps for the exhausted ...with the remainder of the day spent recovering from the grogginess induced by the two hour cat nap. My wife and kids say that I am just a barrel of fun and a load of laughs each and every weekend!

Rain before or during a summer weekend is a beautiful thing. That is...until the pythium season starts to build up. Additional possible rains over this weekend could quite possibly rapidly transform this relaxed feeling into that uneasy feeling of entering the 'pythium zone' for the next sixty days.

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