

# Badger State Turf Clippings

By John Jensen and the Reinders Team

2.6 Million, that's the number of jobs lost in 2008. The highest in 50 some years, wow am I glad to know that. Do you ever wonder why the media feels it necessary to always report how bad things are? It is almost as if they don't scare us into a recession they will have failed. I personally wonder how bad the economy would be if we just eliminated the media from our lives. Think about it, we could discuss things like our children, our vacations, how satisfying our jobs are, how packed the tee sheet is, how big the budget has grown, and how we have no idea what the weather will be like tomorrow, but we will plan as though it is going to be warm and sunny. Maybe 2009 would just be better if everyone tuned out the media and got back to positive thinking. So, to start 2009 off right the rest of this article will be all about positive things.

## Births:

Jeff Rottier, Golf Course Superintendent of Erin Hills Golf Course and his wife Hilari, welcomed into the world their second child Samuel, born on January 4th. He weighed in at 8 lbs, 10 oz. This is the couples second boy, and mom is doing her best to steer them both in the right direction of being a loyal Packer fan but Dad is trying to draw them to the dark side and show loyalty to the Bears. Can you imagine game day in the Rottier household? Congratulations to the Rottier family.

Darren Dase, Golf Course Superintendent of Delbrook Golf Course might have had a tough year being a Lion's fan but his year has been saved by the birth of his second child, Hoyt Calvin Dase, born December 8th and the little lion cub weighed in at 6 lbs, 15 oz. Mother Jody and all are reported to be doing fine and we send them our congratulations and best wishes.

## New Hires:

Congratulation goes out to Dennis Dary who has been hired as a Sales Representative for Midwest Turf Products to cover Southeast Wisconsin. Dennis was a past Sales Rep for

Wisconsin Turf Equipment, former Superintendent of Stoughton Country Club and an avid sportsman. If you have not seen pictures of his monster bucks taken with a bow be sure to ask to see them, they are beauties. Way to go Dennis!

Mike Werth and Gary Hunnerberg have been hired on as new sales representatives for Burris Equipment Company headquartered in Waukegan, Illinois to cover territory in Southern Wisconsin. Mike is a UW-Wisconsin graduate and a former sales representative for Wisconsin Turf. Gary is a former Sales Manager and sales representative for Wisconsin Turf.

Jon Stahl former Superintendent of The Squires for the past 9 years has been hired as the head Superintendent for the Ozaukee County owned, Mee-Kwon Golf Course. Since The Squires property has been sold to a land trust and the 143 acre property is being turned into a nature preserve this was one door closing and another opening for Jon. Well deserved, and congratulations.

Pat Immel has been hired as the Golf Course Superintendent of Quit-qui-Oc Golf Course located in Elkhart Lake. Pat is a 2002 graduate of UW-Madison and has been an Assistant Superintendent for the past 3 years at Bishops Bay Country Club.

The WTA board approved Monroe Miller as the first Executive Director/Ambassador of the Wisconsin Turfgrass Association. Monroe will report directly the WTA board of directors, and will be the primary contact for official WTA business. Every industry should be as lucky to have an Ambassador as we do in this great business of ours.

## Industry Change and Personal Note:

"Opportunity of a lifetime", have you ever been given one of these? In April of 1988, I was 20 years old, one and a half years out of high school where I managed to graduate with a 4.0 GPA (that's adding all 4 years grades together). I had

hair down past my shoulders, wore an earring (in my left ear!) smoked about 3 packs of cigarettes a day, 6 months from my 1st wedding day, still lived with my parents and made a whopping \$3.45 per hour and had no clue about real life. Then along came word that a friend of my grandfather and my dad wanted to talk with me about a job opportunity. Some company called Wisconsin Turf which was located in Janesville and all I knew was it had to pay more than what I was currently making. So, on orders from my mom, I cut my hair and took out my earring and I headed off to talk with Ralph Christopherson, who was the original owner, and Curt Larson, who was their General Manager. The three of us sat down and Ralph looked at me and said "how would you like to be a salesman?" Now, this is the part where I had bad visions of every paint, welding rod, soap and car salesman, who I had seen or experienced so far in my first 20 years, NO WAY! But then I heard "it pays \$13,000 a year and we will help pay your way through Michigan State University. To this day, I still can't believe that Ralph and Curt had the guts to hire a kid with no experience, to go out into the market and help generate profit for a company.

"Opportunity of a lifetime", that's what Ralph Christopherson and Wisconsin Turf Equipment gave to me and many others throughout the companies 52 years as an equipment and soft-goods supplier. So, when I heard the news a few weeks back that Wisconsin Turf has turned over the Jacobsen distributor portion of their operations to Burris Equipment Company, it probably sat different with me as a former employee than it might for many others in the marketplace. But as the current owner, Lyle Christopherson always said to me, "Change is always around us and you have to be ready for it and willing to except it."

Wisconsin Turf will continue with their deep tine aerification service, overseeding and equipment rental. 