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News and Notes From WGCSA Members

By John Jensen and the Reinders Team

What a start to a brand new year. The Badgers made it to the Rose Bowl; the Green Bay Packers ended a season run that crowned them World Champions at Super Bowl XLV. (XLV, what a concept those Romans had. Now that's how we should start showing gas prices. It doesn't look so shocking that way. Hey, how much is per gallon? It will only cost you X, X, V's. Ok, back to my original message.) At the same time, we were witnessing a Ground Hog Day tradition cancelled throughout much of the country as many different states felt some effect from one of the largest blizzards on record. Luckily for many of us, it showed up before our travels to Orlando for the 2011 Golf Industry Show. This year's show from all accounts was a great success with attendance rising 11% above 2010.

If you were able to attend the Daytona 500 the week after the G.I.S. show, then you were one of over 15.6 million viewers that watched 20 year old Trevor Bayne become the youngest driver ever to win this prestigious race. Amazingly enough, Bayne doesn't even have a full time ride or a run at points for the Sprint cup series in 2011.

Politics, protests and economic uncertainty, looming NFL and NBA walkouts all seem to be the late winter themes and as I write this article, there are no decisions or directions on any of them. The Badgers basketball team is preparing for a run to glory in the Final Four scheduled to begin next week and from all indications they should be a strong force to deal with. (That's as much as I know about basketball)

Superintendent meetings throughout the state are starting to come to an end and spring is just around the corner. It's always an exciting time of year, as change is all around and it's up to us to make this the best year possible.

Industry News

Tod Blankenship, CGCS is returning to Wisconsin as the new Superintendent at Trappers Turn Golf Club located in Wisconsin Dells. Tod received his Bachelors of Science degree in Horticulture with an emphasis on Turfgrass Management from the University of Wisconsin-Madison and continued his graduate studies at the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point followed by Oregon State University-Corvallis.

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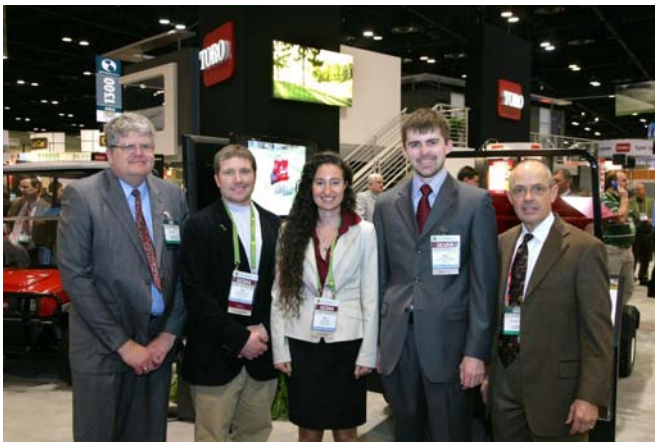
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Tod went on to become an assistant superintendent at Skaneateles Country Club in Skaneateles, New York before being given the head superintendent position at Wisconsin River Golf Club. After a few years, Tod was offered the opportunity and challenge of growing in a new Pete Dye designed course called Big Fish Golf Club located in Hayward, Wisconsin. After successfully achieving this goal, Tod was then asked to return to Oregon State University-Corvallis to take on the role of Turfgrass Specialist and Research Facility Manager where he remained until joining Trappers Turn.

Tod's family includes his wife LuAnn and his two daughters, Finley 3 and Stella 8. Congratulations, Tod, on the new job. I personally am glad I didn't have to type more complicated course names like Skaneateles in your bio. I would have moved from Skaneateles just so I wouldn't have to write that on an address label every day.



Tod was recently awarded a Watson Fellowship Scholarship for his graduate work at Oregon State. Pictured are Dana Lonn, (Toro) winners Tod Blankenship, CGCS; Emily Merewitz; Alex Putman; and Dr. Van Cline, (Toro) at the Golf Industry Show

Tom Rasmussen has accepted the position of Golf Sales Manager with the Toro Company-Irrigation Division. During the past 6 years with Reinders, he has won numerous Toro golf irrigation sales awards including the 2008 Blue Blazer award which is awarded to the person who achieved outstanding sales, and that continued to go above and beyond in meeting customer's requirements.

Tom will continue to live in Janesville and will work closely with Toro distributors and their customers in Wisconsin, Illinois and throughout the Midwest. Congratulations, Tom, and well done.

James Van Sickle former golf course assistant at Oconomowoc Country Club has been hired as the new superintendent at Koshkonong Mounds in Fort Atkinson, WI

Originally from Rockford, Ill, James migrated north to the Janesville area and worked as the assistant superintendent at Riverside Golf Course and Blackhawk Golf Course (both in Janesville) from 2000-2007. James Van Sickle joined Oconomowoc Golf Club in 2007 and held the position of 1st Assistant Superintendent. James graduated from Kishwaukee College in Malta, IL with a major in Horticulture with an emphasis in Golf Course Management. James wife Jillian and his son is Evan keep him on his toes when not at work.

Koshkonong Mounds Country Club was originally built as a resort in 1870, to host sportsmen who loved to hunt and fish. The course borders Lake Koshkonong which was once known to be one of the premier duck hunting destinations in the entire United States. In 1922, the initial golf course construction took place, utilizing many of the native effigy mounds as navigational hazards. After two short years, the new course opened for play in the summer of 1924. The additional nine holes opened in the summer of 1981. Congratulations, James, on the new venture!

Oconomowoc Golf Clubs second assistant superintendent, Harrison Beal has been promoted into first assistant position. Harrison joined OGC staff in spring of 2010, upon the completion of his 2-year turf certificate from Rutgers University. Prior to OGC, Harrison worked at Kenosha Country Club and completed an internship at Glenarbor Golf Club in Bedford Hills, NY.

Mike Werth has joined Jacobsen as a Territory Sales Manager for the Upper Midwest so we will still get to see him. He will stay in Monroe with wife Angie and daughters Lauren and Olivia.

Werth graduated UW-Madison in 1992 and has spent time at Lake Breeze GC, Hidden Glen CC, Monroe CC, Wisconsin Turf/Burriss and most recently with Pendelton Turf Supply.

Births

Jeff Rottier, superintendent of Janesville Country Club and his wife Hilari welcomed their new son, Roscoe Jeffrey Rottier into the world on February 11, 2011. He weighed in at 8lbs. and 2oz. Jeff says that both Roscoe and Mom are doing great!

Although Jeff remains a loyal Bear fan, I am sure that Hilari will continue to influence all of their kids and keep them on the path to becoming faithful Green Bay Packer backers.

What's your excuse?

Monroe Miller recently wrote a great article in Golf Course Industry Magazine titled "Are Chapters Dying?". In this column, Monroe discussed the changes seen in attendance at the local levels of superintendent meetings.

BADGER STATE TURF CLIPPINGS

Changes in family structure, economic structure and technology have all contributed to the decline in attendance and involvement in these chapters. If you get the opportunity, look this article up online, he points out some good things.

I was recently at the WGCSA spring business meeting and the Northern Great Lakes Superintendent Chapter Symposium. Each event included good topics that provided information that each of us can use, with information being presented by top leaders and researchers within our industry.

Yet, when I look around, it is usually the same few that take advantage of these opportunities. I typically do a head count at each event and then subtract the number of sellers from buyers and the numbers are shocking at times.

When I started in the industry, my boss Curt Larson

would say to me, "John, if you don't attend, you are more noticed by your absence". I used to agree with that, and in many ways as a vendor, I still do. But now the shoe seems to be on the other foot. Companies within the industry that do support these organizations and continue to advertise and pay meeting sponsorships may be starting to take notice of those few that are present. If it's not important to you, how can it continue to be important to others?

So, as I sat there on that Monday meeting I wondered, "What was their excuse?" Was it the weather? Can't be, other than a small area, the state was clear traveling. Was it budget, family, earthquake, typhoon?

To me it all comes down to this. For the older generation of us (after 23 years, I seem to slowly becoming an old timer) that remembers days of packed symposiums and monthly meetings, we must continue to encourage

new people to attend and get involved. To those of you that are faced with budget issues where your course or club won't fund these events, take advice from Jeffrey Gitomer who has written numerous sales and inspiration books. Mr. Gitomer says this, "If it is something that can help you further your career and adds value to you and your profession, and your employer won't pay for it, and then pay for it yourself".

Kids and family should always be a top priority, but remember, those that came before you had families as well. Take the time to be with family but also, take time to get a sitter.

If the topics are not what you were looking for, remember this. The power of who you know is always going to be stronger than what you may know. I have personally learned more from people over the years during a break or lunch conversation than I was ever going to learn in a class room.

Start becoming a regular attendee, get to know your neighbor, and get to know your fellow peers, Heck, get to know me. And when this Octobers Superintendent Couples Outing being held at Minocqua Country Club comes around, bring your wife, significant other or both and introduce her/him to the people you have gotten to know. Trust me, you, your family, and your career will not regret it.



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Spring Fever

By David Brandenburg, Editor

Governor Scott Walkers recent Budget Repair Bill grabbed the attention of Wisconsin residents and the nation as groups from opposite ends of the political spectrum let their opinions be known. The discussion briefly flowed onto the turf industries listserve, Noernet.

I say briefly because the Noernet is an extension of the University of Wisconsin – Madison so discussions are to be used for purposes that fulfill the mission of teach-

ing, research and public service. That leaves out politics, sports and religion. Listserv caretaker Tom Schwab needs to remind us of that from time to time.

The entire topic was a great reminder for those in the golf and turf industry to keep an eye on local, state and national issues and how they affect us as individuals and industry professionals. We are lucky to have many organizations and professors to keep an eye on pending regulation changes so we are not taken by surprise. However we as individuals still need to keep our ears to the ground and let chapter leaders know what is going on in your area.

I suggest you reach out to your state senator and assemblyman as well as your city or county elected official when they first take office to introduce yourself and let them know what your concerns are, and what experiences you have that they may be able to take advantage of. Getting to know them early will give you an advantage when they are considering an issue you have an opinion on.

If you hear of a local or statewide issue please contact Colin Seaburg and Mark Storby who serve as Chairmen for the WGCSA Environmental and Governmental Regulations Committee.

A new regulation that does affect every golf course is the new ban on landfilling used oil filters and absorbents. It is a good idea, but does add a budget and labor cost to our already stretched budgets. It is estimated that Wisconsinites throw away 187,000 gallons of used oil in disposed oil filters. The recycling effort will also save over 4.5 million pounds of steel for re-use each year.

Most homeowners can take their used filters to businesses that do oil changes but for a golf course that is not feasible. Crushed filters can be recycled at the scrap yard however applicable crushers cost a few thousand dollars and cause quite a mess.

Most oil recycling companies provide 50 gallon barrels to store the used filters in and then charge around \$50 to pick it up when it is full. At this time hydraulic oil filters are not included in the law, however common sense would say to include them on your own.



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EDITOR'S NOTEBOOK

The filter law is cut and dried but there is some thinking to do with the absorbents. Absorbents include rags, kitty litter, floor dry or sand but there is a exemption to allow the disposal of up to one gallon of oil absorbent materials from a non-routine spill. That is one gallon of rags or floor dry not one gallon of oil. You can go to the DNR website at <http://dnr.wi.gov/org/aw/wm/recycle/newpages/oilabsorb.htm> for more information or just do a google search if you don't want to type all that in.

I put on my general managers hat for a few hours recently and attended the Golf Course Owners of Wisconsin Spring Meeting at Hilly Haven Golf Course. WGCSA President Jeff Millies was there to represent the WGCSA and presented information on the Par4Research Program.

Phil Immordino presented "Increasing Golf Outing Business" on steps facilities can take to attract and keep golf outings along with how to help outings grow their participation rate.

Many courses need to increase their communication with current and new groups through phone calls and offers of help to existing events and follow-up communication for groups that call with questions. Often in the hustle of the season customer follow-ups get forgotten so Immordino

suggested busier courses may want to add staff to act as event coordinators.

He also gave tips on how to service a outings every need to increase your value by making it easier to administer a event. The GCOW offers a nice book on how to run a golf outing for its members.

GCOW Executive Director Jeff Schwister presented information on tourism and the possible availability of courses or groups of courses using local room tax dollars on advertising programs. Jeff presented that Michigan spends more to advertise just its golf courses in Wisconsin markets than Wisconsin spends on a whole advertising tourism.

Steve Stumbras, President, GCOW gave a presentation on the composting program the Bruce Company is using to reduce fertilizer and chemical use on some of their golf courses.

March 14 is the day spring fever hit me. A combination of the melting snow and forecast that might hit the upper 50's later in the week has golfers and non-golfers excited for the warm days of spring. I hope to see you at Geneva National on April 18th for our first meeting of the 2011 WGCSA season. I guarantee you a good time.



WGCSA Members recently won awards from the Golf Course Owners of Wisconsin

Above : Kasey VandeBerg, Scenic View CC - Leadership Award

Above Right: Harold and Mary Spink, Fairfield Hills - 9 Hole Maintenance and Appearance Award

Right: Pete and Kathy VanDeHey, Mid Vallee - 18 Hole Maintenance and Appearance Award

President Millies

By David Brandenburg, Golf Course Manager, Rolling Meadows Golf Course

Jeff Millies began his term as the 41 President of WGCSA a year early than anticipated when Past President Brian Zimmerman took a position in Cleveland. However it is a position he has been training for his entire life. In a way you can say Jeff was born into the golf industry. His great grandfather Louis Boeger farmed in Hillside, IL and in 1906 he bought a neighboring farm for \$10 a acre. His brother William Boeger was a lawyer, and one of the other lawyers in firm (Sears) kept telling them how great that piece of land would be for a golf course.

A land contract was drawn up and Sears began building a golf course in 1924 and in 1927 Hillside Golf Course opened for business. Unfortunately the depression soon followed and when Sears fell behind in payments Louis took control of the golf course. When Jeff's grandparents Louise Boeger and Fred Millies married, Fred was working as a caretaker of a cemetery and eventually became the Greenskeeper on the golf course.

Around 1959 the city of Hillside wanted part of the land the golf course was on to build a new high school (Proviso West). The course operated for a few more years as a 9 hole course before the land was sold for light commercial use and housing. The family purchased land in Big Bend WI and construction began on Edgewood Golf Course in 1966 with 9's opening in 1969, 1971, 1989 and 1999.

So really Jeff was born into the industry but Millies also

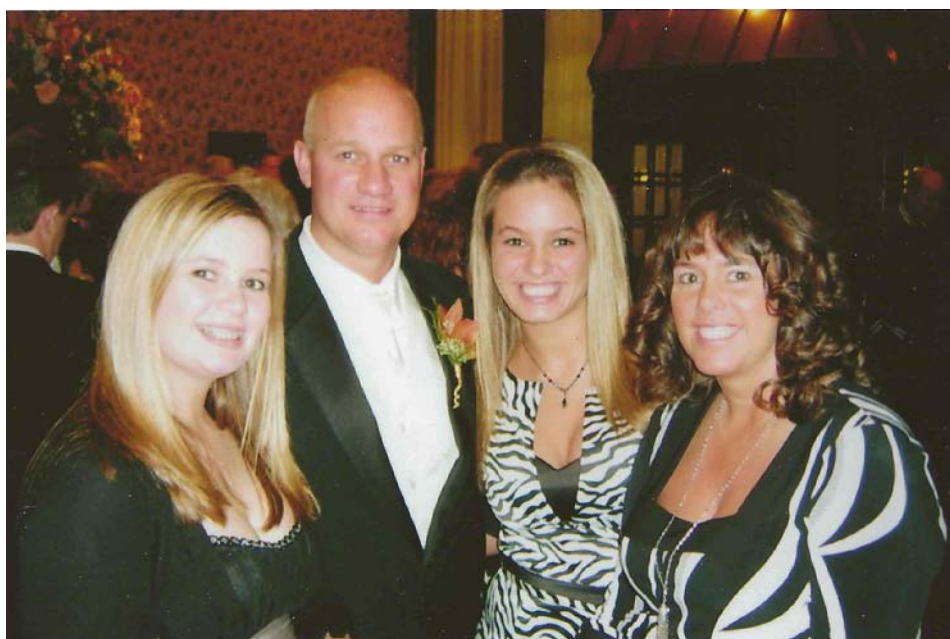
has experience outside the family run operation. A graduate of Iowa State University with a BS in Horticulture Jeff interned at Ames Golf and Country Club while attending Iowa State. He also worked at Medina Country Club in 1986 while the course was preparing for the 1990 US Open.

Jeff was the assistant Superintendent at Terradyne Country Club in Andover, KS working for Jack Tripp for a short time before returning home to help start building the third 9 holes at Edgewood. Never one to quite learning Jeff became a Certified Member of the GCSAA in 1996 and received his MBA from University of Phoenix in 2003.

Jeff is lucky to share his golf course time with his Dad Fred who is a 29 year member of the WGCSA and his brother Dan who is the clubhouse manager. Millies sister Kim and brother in law John Freeman the golf professional work in the golf shop and provide lessons.

He lives on the golf course with his wife Nicole and daughters Morgan and McKenna. Nicole is a real-estate broker for Shorewest and helps as needed with bartending, beer carting, mowing and helping with aerating in the fall.

Morgan is a sophomore at UW Madison, majoring in Biology and Spanish and bartends and drives the beverage carts in summer. McKenna is a sophomore in high school and is on the golf team and shows horses but still finds time to help in the golf shop. The family has 4 horses that live next to the course and pasture near one of the putting greens.



The Millies Family
McKenna, Jeff, Morgan and Nicole

Jeff feels he is taking over at a critical time in the industry with economic challenges affecting all courses. He hopes courses can “hold their own” through this time to survive for the future. Although he feels the golf industry has hit near bottom there are many challenges to overcome and it will take time to see a measurable recovery. Gas prices, interest rates, inflation and the housing market are key question marks that will affect consumer discretionary spending on golf.

Edgewood which operates as a semi private club with 135 members has made adjustments as the economy has changed. Reductions to mowing frequency, bunker work and other maintenance jobs have worked for the course while operating with a smaller maintenance staff.

As President Jeff is pleased with the strong shape of the WGCSA and the continued success we have had with a strong membership using the benefits the association provides. The relationship with Chapter Manger Brett Grams has been a huge benefit not only for the board but for every member. Millies stated before we had a chapter manager the board had good ideas but not the method to implement them but now those ideas can be implemented.

Brett provides the knowledge and drive to get things done for the success of the chapter. The administration of the Chapter can be a daunting task especially from Dec 15 to April when renewals for memberships and advertising peak along with the administration of activities and meetings.

With the PAR4RESEARCH program the association can increase its funding to the valuable projects the UW Madison Professors are working on at the Noer Center. Millies is thankful we have a full staff of turf professors and world class facility for them to do their work.

Jeff has been involved with GCSAA as a voting delegate and chapter officer and states our relationship with the national organization is “nothing but positive”. The staff in Lawrence is a valuable source of help, advice and knowledge not only for the chapter but individual members as well. Millies urges members to use the resources the national association provides.

Jeff Millies is only four months into his term but he has been training for this a long time as a student, turf manager and his many years in serving on the WGCSA Board. Good luck Jeff, and thank you for serving the chapter!



President Millies speaking at the Golf Course Owners Meeting about the PAR4RESEARCH program

Member 9 With Jeff

1. **First Vehicle? “1973 Cutless 442”**
2. **Favorite Piece of Golf Course Equipment? “Any one that is working properly”**
3. **18 Hole Handicap? “14 give or take”**
4. **Current Vehicle? “Work truck 2005 Dodge Ram 1500, with a wife and two daughters driving, there’s never any other vehicle left.”**
5. **Favorite TV Show? “It was Two & A Half Men, but with Charley Sheen’s recent idiotic behavior, I need to find some other comedy.”**
6. **Favorite pro sports team? “Packers”**
7. **Favorite Main Course Meal? “Steak”**
8. **Pets? “4 horses, 2 barn cats, 1 house cat, and 1 dog named Reese, Australian Shepherd/Border Collie who loves chasing geese and the horses.**
9. **Favorite thing about working in the golf industry? - “Every day is different and what could be better than being outside all day on a golf course.**