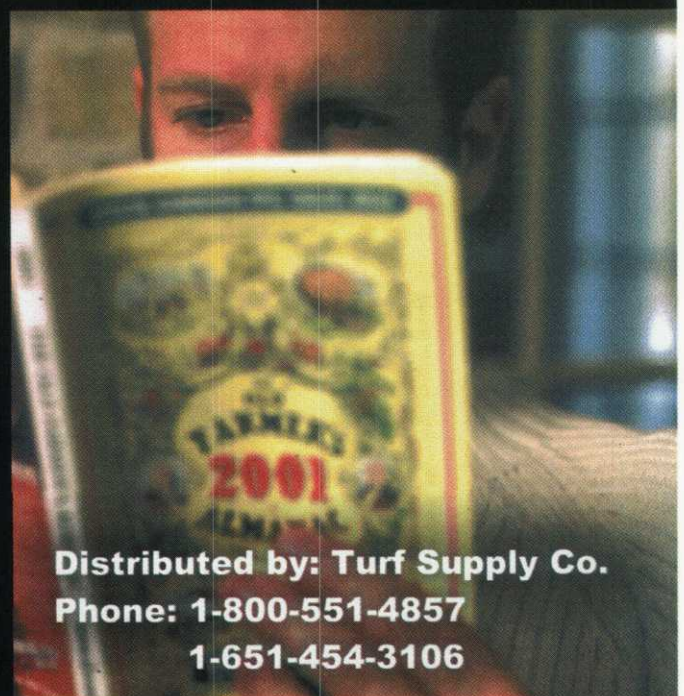


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Satisfying a Dream With A Trip to The Masters

By John Monson, Superintendent
Long Prairie Country Club

This April I finally satisfied a life long dream and went to The Masters Golf Tournament. Our club pro Michael Rey went along. If you ever have the chance, go. We were fortunate enough to have friends in Aiken, South Carolina (15 miles away) which solved the housing problem.

We arrived Monday late afternoon. Turned into gate 3 and asked for the will-call booth. It has its own little parking lot which made us feel special. After showing my supt. card and photo ID I got my pass and was on my way. A new pass has to be obtained each day, so you get to know the people in the booth. Everyone was so friendly and helpful.

Late Monday was the perfect time to do our shopping.

Everyone else was leaving. The merchandise was priced the same as other courses and the pop was \$1 and sandwiches \$1.50. Hootie has enough money. After shopping we walked down to Amen Corner and looked around. On the way back I heard the sound of many mowers and over the hill came 15 Ransomes mowing #14 fairway Augusta style. One pass mowing. Should we be so lucky. You may have noticed on TV that when the camera is shooting from green to tee the fairways appear shiny and when shooting from tee to green they look green. That's because they only mow in one direction - green to tee. No stripes.

Tuesday was spent walking, taking pictures and watching practice rounds. Most of the players converse with the galleries and it is fun to watch. After Gary Player hit his tee shot on #16 the gallery started shouting "skip-it, skip-it." I had no clue. He then asked his caddie for a 4 iron and proceeded to skip the ball 5 times across the pond and onto the grass in front of the green. All went wild. A good day to see the entire course and get close to the players.

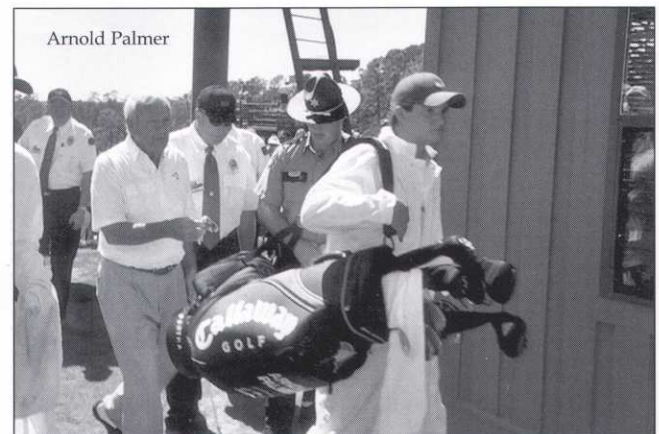
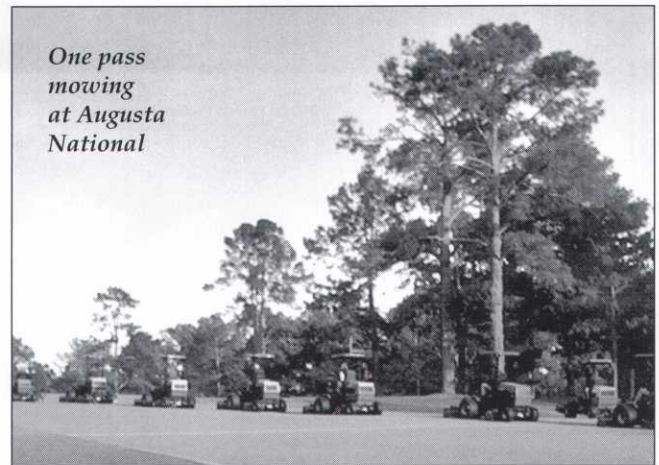
Wednesday during practice rounds Tiger, O'Meara, Haas and Howell lined up 4 abreast and skipped their balls across the pond on #16. Only one made it, not Tiger's. During the par 3 tournament I sat next to #2 green hoping for a hole-in-one. Weir answered that. As I sat there, two ladies sat down next to me and I heard them mention Sauk Centre. Turned out it was Dr. Dave

Mayer and his wife. I have known him for over 30 years. Small world. During the tournament we could not park next to will-call. All the course lots are reserved for badge holders. Parking on Washington Rd. is \$15 to \$20 but that was fine. Thursday I sat next to #14 tee with a great view of #13 green.

On Friday I sat next to #3 green with a great view of #4, too there were standing ovations as Arnie, Jack and Tom came through. Kind of gave one chills. Some said "thanks for the memories, Arnie" and some said "play for Bruce, Tom."

Because March was cool the azaleas were about 60% in bloom. When you make the trip, have good walking shoes. The course is very hilly. Most holes are either uphill or downhill. #10 is downhill big time. TV doesn't show that or the severe undulations on the greens. Augusta won't say but I would guess the greens rolled at 13 or 14.

Watching the back nine Sunday afternoon at home was unbelievable. Eagles, birdies, holes-in-one. Knowing I was there. I am content, my dream became a reality.



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Insight:

One Superintendent's Perspective

John Monson, Long Prairie Country Club



Course and statistics: Long Prairie Country Club is an 18-hole, semi-private course located at in Long Prairie, Minn.

Years in the Business and Bio: 28, college degree in biology and taught HS biology and astronomy for 34 yrs. Took care of the 9 hole course after school and summers. The additional 9 was built in 1998 the same year I was planning to retire from teaching so the transition was perfect to 24/7 superintendent.

Why and/or how did you enter the turf management industry?

By accident. I was on the Board of Directors at the course in the 70s and the gentlemen who oversaw the grounds was getting married and leaving town. We discussed what to do at a summer meeting and I said, "I suppose I could do it." 28 years later I'm still "doing it."

Who was your professional mentor and why?

All the superintendents who I talked to personally and those



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who took time to answer my questions over the phone. I asked many questions early on.

What has been the highest point in your career?

Being involved in the development of the new 9 and watching it change as it matures.

What has been your lowest point?

Haven't had any real low point.

Are your greatest challenges political, agronomic or managerial?

No problems politically or managerial. Agronomic is the biggest problem with poor soil conditions on three of the new holes. The cause was a limited budget during construction.

What is the most difficult disease to manage on your course and how do you?

Dollar spot and brown patch. Have had very good results with 26GT and weatherstix over the years

Is it hard to find good help in your area of the state?

Good help is not hard to find in my part of the state.

Where will our industry be in ten years?

Similar to where it is now but the equipment will constantly be changing. I don't think robotics will replace people.

Where would you like to be in ten years?

Alive and probably still getting up at 4:30 in the summers and watching the sunrise over the golf course.

What is your perspective of our state association and what would you change?

Because we are outstate, I don't get to many meetings. I guess the only thing I would like to see change is one or two meetings a year more centrally located.

Name your foursome, who would you play with and why?

Jesus (*He would be a calming influence*), Noah (*I would love to see him hit it in the water*), my wife (*she never misses the fairway*). Since I am of Swedish heritage I would make it a fivesome and take Annika along, too!

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In Bounds

By Jack MacKenzie, CGCS
North Oaks Golf Club

"License to kill gophers by the government of the United Nations. Man, free to kill gophers at will. To kill, you must know your enemy, and in this case my enemy is a varmint. And a varmint will never quit - ever. They're like the Viet Cong - Varmint Cong. So you have to fall back on superior firepower and superior intelligence. And that's all she wrote." - Carl Spackler, Caddy Shack

In many, many Turf Management Centers across our great state, there is a tally board denoting the number of "varmint" taken by trap or other means off of the golf course. Long ago, before wall-to-wall irrigation and a golfer demand for higher maintenance, thirteen stripe gophers were abundant. As were today's primary rodent, the lowly blind mole. And we cannot forget to mention the infamous pocket gopher. Historically I have had battles with each of these creatures.

While a youth I would carry my Sheridan Blue Streak pump air rifle across my lap as I cruised the fairways upon an F-10 seven-gang fairway mower. My gun had the capability of dispatching creatures up to the size of a woodchuck, but was most effective against the ferocious ground squirrel. With keen eye and determination I slaughtered many of my alma mater's mascots, and made White Bear Yacht Club a safer place to play golf. However fun the sharp shooting was, my favorite four-footed quarry was the ever-elusive mole.

Long before the safer hoop traps entered the market, the tool of choice to kill moles was a spring trap. Once set off, six very sharp prongs would be driven into the unsuspecting creature, piercing its flesh and pinioning it to the ground. The captured prey would then be harvested as proof for the "tally" board. I also learned of another, faster means to dispatch my enemy from John Steiner, Superintendent at the White Bear Yacht Club.

You see, Johnny was a real man who carried a piece at his side during the wee hours of the morning, just in case, if you know what I mean. And one day he demonstrated the BEST way to kill a mole. After parking our Cushman along side of an active mole trail he whispered to me the secrets of real mole combat.

"You see Jake (*Jake was a nick name I had picked up 'back in the day'*), the mole is a very odd mutha creature. The bastards are blind. Without the ability of sight they have trained their auditory glands to pick up all sounds. Even the soft rhythm of your heartbeat through the soles of your shoes can be heard. Thus we wait upon the seat of a Cushman, or other such vehicle, for the unwary filthy beast to renew excavation.

And once that soil slippery varmint makes

his move we whack him, with a little lead pill to the skullcap."

Much to my amazement we waited in silence until a mound of soil appeared moving beneath the cart. Slowly and silently John removed the chrome plated 45-magnum pistol from his hip sling. Taking aim just feet above the tunnel he pulled the trigger. Blam, blam, blam, blam, blam! Bullet holes riddled the area of activity.

John then looked up at me with an odd gaze in his eyes and said, "And that, my friend, is how we kill moles at the White Bear Yacht Club!"

Not unlike John's style, I also used a firearm to eliminate some pesky animals off of North Oaks Golf Club. A couple of years ago a flare gun pistol was delivered to my office, complete with a box of 50 screaming/report cartridges. The weapon was to supplement my Golden Retriever in the discouragement of geese from the course. It worked well; a loud screaming wail would be emitted from the projectile followed by a spectacular blast.

My new toy went everywhere with me for the first several weeks. One day I happened upon an active pocket gopher mound. Thinking my furry friend needed a little wake up call, I excavated the mound down to the tunnel opening. Then I placed the barrel of the gun into the hole and pulled the trigger, quickly placing my foot over the hole to prevent the missile from flying back into my face. To my enjoyment, I could hear the flare travel deep into the bowels of

the earth and then blow up. What fun!!!!

It wasn't a week later that my assistant and I were on our nursery green discussing a recently dug mole burrow under the green surface. Much to our surprise the tunnel began showing signs of activity. Reaching into my toolbox I grabbed the flare gun and a mighty cartridge. Carefully I uncovered the tunnel about three feet behind the varmint, lined up the gun and released the projectile with the intent of giving the said perpetrator a flaring hemorrhoid.

My assistant and I cried with sophomoric glee as the rocket screamed down the cavity just below the ground's surface. However, our giddiness quickly changed to ruckus laughter when the missile blew up, sending a 4-inch square of sod right smack into the middle of my forehead, where it stuck with resolve. We laughed until tears came to our eyes.

Ground squirrels, gophers and moles, oh my! There sure is a lot more to the management of fine turf than just laying sod green side up!

*"License to kill gophers by the government of the United Nations. Man, free to kill gophers at will. To kill, you must know your enemy, and in this case my enemy is a varmint. And a varmint will never quit - ever. They're like the Viet Cong - Varmint Cong. So you have to fall back on superior firepower and superior intelligence. And that's all she wrote."
- Carl Spackler, Caddy Shack*

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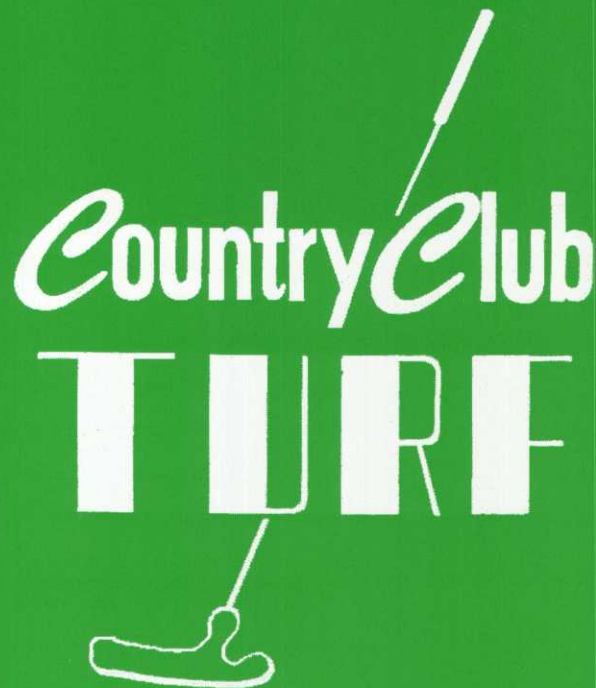
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