



# Turf Times



The newsletter from the Northern Michigan Turf Managers Association

BI-Monthly Update May/June Volume 30, No. 2 [2001]



## President's Message

Save, save, save.... Forget, forget, forget... This message is brought to you by a senile old man. Had another long winded story for everyone and didn't hit save on the keyboard. What an excuse for Scott. I would use "the dog ate my message" excuse, but he doesn't like electronic components.

Well, spring has sprung and the Morels are in bloom. The snow mold damage is starting to green up. (Does anybody have an answer for this past winter???) The dandelions are a little more yellow than I remember. But then again, I may be having a flashback of Kevin Henley throwing snow in my face with the Ski-Doo MXZ. I

hope your spring is going well.

Don't forget the Michigan Turfgrass Foundation Fund-raiser this June 19th at Treetops Resort, The Tradition. Proceeds help support programs in education and turf research at Michigan State University. As you all know, remaining the leader in Turfgrass research needs our financial support.

The GCSAA is celebrating its 75th anniversary this year by offering a Brick and Balls program. A \$50 commemorative brick can be purchased to be placed around the Old Tom Morris sculpture at the GCSAA headquarters in Lawrence, Kansas. Also, a sleeve of golf

balls from your company is being requested for a fund-raising effort toward The Foundation. One golf ball will be on display at the International show in Orlando, Fla. next year, while the other two spheres will be auctioned off online. Details are available at the GCSAA website.

For a chuckle, take a look at the spring 2001 MTF Newsnotes. (NMTMA Award presentation). "So I've got that goin' for me."

Have a great spring!!!

Green side up,

Daniel J. Bissonette

## Founding NMTMA Member Passes Away.

Traverse City – Edward L. Karcheski, 86, of Traverse City, died on Sunday, April 1, at the Munson Medical Center in Traverse City.

Edward served his country in the U.S. Army throughout Europe during World War II. He was the Golf Professional and later Greens Superintendent

at Traverse City Golf and Country Club for 32 years and was an avid gardener.

Memorial contributions may be made to the Traverse City Junior Golf Association Scholarship Program or the Amy Karczewski Scholarship Fund c/o Northwestern Michigan College.

Traverse City Junior Golf Association  
Scholarship Fund  
C/O Robert Lober  
10090 E. Pickwick Court  
Traverse City, MI 49684

Amy Karczewski Scholarship Fund  
C/O Northwestern Michigan College  
1701 East Front St.  
Traverse City, MI 49684

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## Travels with Jim Tollefson

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It was not my first trip to Copper Harbor with my wife of 24 years but on this day, September 20, 2000, we decided to check out the Keewanau Mountain Lodge. This facility, located in Copper Harbor, is the northernmost golf course located in Michigan. This 9 hole course was built in the early 1930's. Because of the closure of all the copper mines in the area, unemployment in this area reached 70 to 80 percent. To help relieve the unemployment problem the Civilian Work Act (CWA) was put into action and as a result, the 9 hole layout got started in 1933. Timber that was cut from the fairways would be used to later construct the clubhouse in 1934.

Who was that "key figure" that was the superintendent? How long was the season up here? How big of a crew worked there? What were the joys and the difficulties of running such a facility? These, as well as a host of other questions were asked as I seceded to discover answers.

As I entered the pro shop I asked the lady working if she could direct me to the Superintendent's office. She didn't understand who I was asking for so I then asked for the person responsible for keeping the course in such great shape. She directed me to the clubhouse and there I met the Superintendent who was in a meeting with the general manager.

After a short wait I met

Bill Alband, a two-year M.S.U. graduate from the class of 1980. Bill grew up in Detroit and then at 13 years of age, moved with his family to Eagle Harbor, located down the Keewanau coast about 12 miles south of Copper Harbor. As a youth he spent 3 years working on the crew at the Keewanau Mountain Lodge. After that, he was infected with the "keeping of the green" bug. After graduating, Bill took on a stint with the Oakcrest Golf Club in Norway, Michigan. Finally, Bill's dreams came true and in the spring of 1999 found an opening at the club where he is currently superintendent.

Bill told me that he is employed for 8 months during the year and sees about 12,000 rounds played at the club. He oversees 3 other employees and finds his greatest frustration to be when one of the workers doesn't show up in the morning. Bill nearly has this problem taken care of however. You see Bill lives in Allouez (pronounced Al-oo-aa) a drive of 30 miles. On his way to work he stops at another small town called Mohawk and picks up two other coworkers, so they better be up and ready to go. It is normal for Bill's day to begin at 4:00 A.M. so he can get his chores done around home and pick up his coworkers so they can start by 6:00 A.M. After a busy day, Bill repeats the process, dropping his coworkers off and getting home by mid-afternoon if all goes well. In the process, Bill drives a minimum

of 60 miles everyday. In the meantime I have become thankful that I only have a 5 mile drive to work, a drive I sometimes make by bicycle.

Bill's mechanic, often times will get to work by 4 in the morning and begin mowing greens. The greens were found to be in fantastic condition. Bill told me that his greatest challenge at Keewanau Mountain Lodge is keeping the course green. At best the topsoil in the fairways and rough is 1 to 2 inches in depth. In other places it was less than that, with rock outcroppings here and there. The majority of the irrigation mains were found laying on top of the ground in the rough. The only way to get it in the ground would be to dynamite it through the solid rock below. Currently the crew is in the process of burying the pipe by getting dump truck loads of topsoil and covering the pipe. Also, when the course was built, sprinkler heads were often spaced too far apart resulting in many dry areas in the fairways. Never have I seen more undulating fairways than here; it is nearly impossible to find a level lie. With only 12,000 rounds played per year the predominately fescue fairways hold up very well. Trying to hit the fairways can be another problems; often times only measuring 70 feet in width. Irrigating the course takes a while due to undersized pipe and having to utilize manual valves to turn heads on

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and off.

Bill told me that about the only other problem he encounters is in keeping the members carts a good distance from the greens. "Oftentimes they will park right on the edge of the green," laments Bill. His greatest joy is keeping the course green and looking its best. A joy all of us fellow superintendents can relate to.

As I stood on the first tee with the American flag snapping sharply to a brisk northerly wind and looking southerly to a panoramic view of the Brockway Mountains behind the first green, I could see why Bill's love for the area was

so intense. However beautiful the landscape and surrounding areas are, Bill still finds the most stressful part of his job is maneuvering his vehicle safely to work day in and day out. After hitting both deer and bear on his morning commutes he has learned to be extremely wary of anything that moves.

When Bill first worked at the Keewanau Mountain Lodge as a teenager, there were only a few pieces of equipment to be found. Included in that early inventory was a working 1932 Model 'B' Toro tractor complete with steel wheels, a mid 1950's set of silver Worthington 7 gang mowers, a walking greensmower, and a rotary

mower. Fortunately Bill has a fantastic general manager to work for and has been able to update a lot of his equipment to make the job easier. The 1932 Toro tractor still remains on the course, not currently in running condition but definitely in restorable condition. "It's a good reminder to me," Bill relays, "of how difficult it was not that long ago to maintain this tract of land. I really love it here, it is a great place to be."

*James Tollefson, CGCS  
A-Ga-Ming G.C.*

### For Sale:

Jacobsen tri-king 1900-D reel mower. Like new 40hrs. \$10,000 or best offer.

Call Paul Emling at 231-889-3008 or 1-800-494-8666.

### Needed:

Jacobson verticut reels for a greens triplex

Lely fertilizer spreader

Contact: Denny Curtis at 231-313-5778

### Correction

Page 5 of the NMTMA 2001 Directory:  
Extension Consultant to NMTMA  
Area codes for L. Andy Norman should be (231)

Page 65 of the NMTMA 2001 Directory:

**L. Andy Norman**  
Net: norman@msue.msu.edu  
Campus number is: 517-355-6755

**Please Add:** Ed Carmody G-659  
Pursell Technologies, Inc.  
41638 Village Blvd.- #103  
Canton, MI 48187  
Phone: 734-844-0669  
FAX: 734-844-0709  
email: ecarmody@polyon.com

### NMTMA Events

- June 19**.....MTF Fundraiser  
Treetops Resort, The Tradition
- July 22**.....NMTMA Annual Picnic  
Beaver Creek Resort
- August 14**.....The Rock on Drummond Island
- August 22**.....MSU Field Day
- September 13**.....NMTMA Fundraiser  
Black Lake Golf Course
- October 2**.....Tuck Tate Championship  
Michaywe' Hills, The Pines

The NMTMA appreciates the support from the following businesses...

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**Tire Wholesalers Co., Inc.**  
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**Turfgrass Inc.**  
Now Serving Northern Michigan in Gaylord  
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**OTHER - Holiday Inn Grayling**  
Dawn Umphrey  
(517) 348-7611 / (800) 292-9055

...and we encourage you to support them

Northern Michigan Turf Managers Association  
P.O. Box 80086  
Lansing, Michigan 48908



Dr. James B. Beard  
International Sports Turf  
6900 E. Kelenski Dr.  
Cedar, MI 49621

NMTMA Executive Committee

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