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## CHAPTER MEMORIES

In my career as a superintendent, it was rare for me to miss a Wisconsin GCSA chapter meeting. I might not have played golf, but I didn't miss a chance to see close friends and learn something in the process. And as an added bonus, I was able to see a good many of our state's golf courses.

One of my most memorable chapter meetings took place on a tractor drawn hayrack. We convened at a course under construction in Madison, and there was extreme interest in the grassing of the putting greens – they were stolonized.

The stolons were trucked in from an out-of-state nursery, spread, compacted, topdressed and watered. Although it was a method in use then, I have never seen a turf established this way since that meeting back in the mid-1960s. We toured the new course with our legs dangling over the edge of the wagon. Needless to say, there was no golf that day.

There was no golf the day our chapter saw Wisconsin's first automatic golf course irrigation system, either. The meeting, also in the mid-1960s, was called to order at lunch and we spent the afternoon listening to installation details and a demonstration of what was a technological wonder as we walked the course. We all went home totally impressed.

Chapter meetings that didn't involve golf were fairly common during my college years, too. Rather than having a speaker or golf, the meeting might convene in a new shop, giving the WGCSA members a chance to see what a colleague had planned and executed. The concept lost favor sometime in the 1970s. It wasn't until the summer of 1996 that Michael Lee invited us to the construction site of the new Pete Dye designed Kohler golf course named Whistling Straits.

Years ago our chapter occasionally

had a dual meeting with another state chapter at a course near the state line, giving members the chance to make new friends and learn about their problems. Old photos of chapter meetings from the 1930s and 1940s are fun to study. White shirts and ties were the norm, a tradition we resurrected in the 1980s for a while.

In fact, when compared to today, that period was really something. Today, the meeting format usually is a lunch buffet, a short speaker program, golf, hors d'oeuvres, golf prizes and an early departure. In the 1980s we would have lunch, golf, a sit-down dinner with members dressed in coats and ties and an after-dinner speaker. If we attempted that today, nobody would attend.

Our state chapter has always put emphasis on turf students and scholar-

sin's only five star hotel. Our roster of speakers over nearly five decades rivals any other state program.

Not all has been smooth over the past 45 years. There was modest controversy when some of us wanted to name it the Wisconsin Golf Course Managers Association. In the end, a close call went to tradition.

The issue of forced dual membership in our chapter and GCSAA was not pleasant to deal with. The proposal really chapped my backside, pitting the haves against the have-nots. I always side with the little guy, but we lost. It occasionally comes up in the discussion of declining membership, albeit in an anecdotal way. The satisfying part is knowing that no superintendent is really denied access to his state chapter, even if it is with a wink and a nod. But I have to confess

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ship, offering internship options and financial help. I won't forget riding with Professor Love to attend a chapter meeting at Wausau CC in late fall with another turf student to receive a GCSAA scholarship. We drove up late in the day, had dinner and stayed through the program that included us. What an experience. In the years since then scores of scholarships have been given to students in Wisconsin's turf program, most who, like me, went on to a career in golf course management.

When I was an undergrad, the WGCSA and Milorganite teamed up to present America's only true golf turf symposium to honor the late O. J. Noer. Initially held in Milwaukee's historic old German hotel – the Phister – it is still going strong today, only in Kohler at the American Club, Wisconsin's

aggravation every time I receive snail mail from my chapter – big, black, bold GCSAA on the return address and "Wisconsin Chapter" in tiny letters.

Not everyone in a state chapter is able to attend GCSAA conferences, seminars and the GIS show, but the WGCSA has filled the social, educational and professional needs in an exceptional way.

Chapter meetings have been essential to our prosperity over the years, a comfortable venue where advice is easily sought and freely given. And there is no better place for networking. For all of us, the overwhelming emotions that result from our chapter participation are pride, gratitude and loyalty, along with some great memories.

Plus, I must say it has been a whole lot of fun. **GCI**