

KISHWAUKEE, ILLINOIS

PAUL N. VOYKIN'S VISIT TO A RURAL COLLEGE

With his usual wry sense of humor, Voykin related that Kishwaukee will never claim to university status. The nickname "Kish U" would kill it. But, surprisingly enough, after a day's lecturing and visiting at this out state school, he says the school is a real sleeper--a find--for employers and serious students alike.

After comparing the little rural college with some of the big university campuses, he found, for example, that the costs for students were only about a third those at the "big" schools.

The equipment and grounds were also impressive. Two indoor barn-size shops trained students on tractor and small engine repair, while several greenhouses and domes were devoted to teaching grass and plant care.

Outside he noted orchards, extensive turf plots testing bluegrass, rye, and bents, plus nurseries and acres of garden.

Students, interestingly enough, were running tractors, backhoes, gang mowers; sod cutters, thatchers and even more important, keeping them in adjustment and repair.

The students were also an interesting group themselves. During lunch he reported getting a tip or two about trapping muskrats out of ponds and woodchucks from landscaped areas. Seems many of the fellows and girls, too, come from farms throughout the state.

According to one of the instructors (no pomp and titles like professor), many of the students run trap lines during winter to make expenses. As a matter of fact, by 8:00 A.M. when classes start, some of the fellows have already put in a half day's work.

About a third of the students also come from Chicago. These were, as you would expect, wirey, gaunt outdoor types, just as handy with a wrench as a pencil.

Voykin asked Larry Marty, one of the six full-time instructors, how they handle the hundred and thirty full-time horticulture students. Well, he says, when a student considers enrolling, we sit down with a coke or coffee and put our feet on the table and rap a while--get to know each other. Sometimes though, both student and instructor alike find that the unique "hands on" program at Kishwaukee is not for them.

But those that do survive the informal screening respond tremendously. One teaching method is the use of foreman and crews. Second year students are often foremen and freshmen learn with the foreman.

Voykin says that Golf Course Superintendents, who are acquainted with sound-headed practical fellows (gals too) may want to contact Larry Marty about their practical approach.

Phone 815/825-2086 or write Kishwaukee College, Malta, Ill. 60150. (Near DeKalb, Ill. -- one hour away from Chicago). They have quite a detailed packet of interesting free material they've prepared on all aspects of horticultural training, greenkeeping, greenhouse, tree experts, landscaping, nursery work, park management, etc.

As for Paul, he says he's going back to Kishwaukee to help lay out the first Easter indoor closed golf tournament in those barn-like mechanical shops.

By Richard DeLano, Chief Turf Instructor,
and Garden Editor, Chicago Daily News

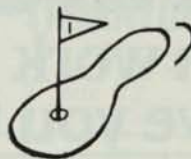
Editor's Note: This college also has some students available for golf course work.

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