

KILLIAN

DESIGN GROUP INCORPORATED

GOLF COURSE ARCHITECTS

639 First Bank Drive, Palatine, Illinois 60067 (312) 358-8884

FOR SHADE AND ORNAMENTAL TREES HAMMER NURSERY INC.

400 WEST FIRST STREET
ELMHURST, ILLINOIS 60126



MARK W. KROEGER

NAPERVILLE, IL

McGinty

BROS., INC.

LAWN CARE TREE CARE
Weed, Crabgrass and Disease Tree Spraying, Feeding,
Control/Fertilizing Surgery, Trimming, Removal

HYDROSEEDING

RT. 2, BOX 518, LONG GROVE ROAD
LONG GROVE, ILLINOIS 60047 / (312) 438-5161

JAMES R. BURDETT

Grounds Maintenance Supplies



Post Office Box 52
Lombard, Illinois 60148
(312) 620-5558

BOJO TURF SUPPLY CO.

ALL MAJOR TURF SUPPLIES



- PAR-EX
- Vertagreen
- Du Pont
- Daconil - Dacthal
- FMC Sprayers
- Chipco
- Naiad
- Aqua-Gro

R R 1, Box 101

Peotone, Ill.

312-258-3485

History of the Midwest Clinic

by John C. Ebel, Supt.

Barrington Hills Country Club

INTRODUCTION: "The Search for Knowledge"

As in all fields of endeavor there are the pioneers. Those who are not content to be in a state of inertia. People who are willing to climb a few mountains, cross a river or two in search of knowledge.

Ray Davis, Frank Dinelli, Ed Stewart, Bob Williams, Bert Rost, Norm Johnson, Peter Bild, Bill Stuppel, Wes Updegraff, Al Johnson, Amos Lapp, Paul Burdett, Walter Fuchs, Ray Gerber, Don Strand and Gordon Brinkworth are all pioneers of the Midwest Clinic.

These men had a common desire to know more about their profession and a willingness to put that desire in motion. Men of dedication and strong conviction. They hungered after knowledge to find the truth and to acquaint themselves with the facts of turfgrass culture; to study in more detail topics that had previously been superficially touched upon. They knew their "onions", but were concerned more about what they didn't know. What to do?

The following story is a synopsis of how these men set in motion the Midwest Turf Clinic.

"The Birth of a Clinic"

Some of our pioneer superintendents would meet informally to share their knowledge and understanding of golf course maintenance techniques. Contrary to rumors that most superintendents were secretive and unwilling to share what they had learned the hard way, these men would gather to such places as the Glen Oak Gun Club or in Frank Dinelli's rustic and nostalgic old office at Northmoor C.C., which was sometimes used for potting flowers among other things and discuss their problems and share ideas and solutions.

This embryonic group received support from other turf pioneers in the fields of education and business.

The first efforts to formalize their impromptu meetings came on Dec. 17-18, 1953. It was a bone chilly 10 degrees below zero day that found 50 hearty souls attending the first clinic at Medinah C.C. through the gracious invitation of Supt. Ray Davis. They met in the Directors Room with Bob Williams as chairman of proceedings. Formal education was lacking in most superintendents in those days and the presence of Dr. R. Voight, Director of the U. of I. Drug and Horticultural Experiment Station and also in charge of turf plots at the Morton Arboretum, added a touch of class. Bringing additional academic strength to that first clinic was Dr. Klomprens, who was instrumental in procuring microscopes to be used in a hands on demonstration of plant disease identification. For the first time for some they could actually see some of the little buggers under glass that were destroying their beautiful turf.

Dr. Bill Daniels, professor at Purdue University was also in attendance, as well as Dr. James Watson from the Toro Company. They helped in developing a chemical application chart which could be used by superintendents in choosing the best chemicals for disease control. The clinic was now launched.

Clinic No. 2 was held Dec. 2-3, 1954 at the U. of I. College of Pharmacy in Chicago with 60 participants. Attendees were urged to commute by train via the Northwestern Station because

(cont'd. page 16)

of the lack of parking facilities near the college. Two days of intense lectures and lab work was led by **Dr. Jim Watson**. The topic was SOILS, THEIR ORIGIN AND SUBSTANCE.

With two successful clinics under their belts, our Midwest pioneers returned to the U. of I. College of Pharmacy on Dec. 7-8, 1955 for the 3rd Fall Clinic.

The subject this time was insects. **Dr. Voight** along with entomologist **Dr. Bernard Greenburg** presented information on the identification and life cycles of many major insects bugging the superintendent.

By 1956 it was evident that the Midwest Fall Clinic was for real and here to stay. Nov. 27-28, 1956 marked the beginning of the Olympia Fields era. Hosted by Supt. **Gordon Brinkworth, Frank Dinelli**, educational chariamn presented a program in which assistant superintendents and trainees shared results of practical research projects from the previous year. Prominent guest speaker was **O. J. Noer**. This was our first big show. Olympia Fields was a long trip for some and overnight accommodations could be had in the immense club house. We had really turned the corner now.

In the early years of the clinic it was difficult to obtain speakers and many superintendents lacked confidence to stand up and speak. Someone once said, "It is better to keep your mouth shut and be thought stupid, than to open it and remove all doubt."

One of the basic educational concepts of the clinic ws to help superintendents articulate their public speaking skills. Thanks to the clinic, today we have a wealth of good speakers in our ranks.

The Olympia Fields era continued from 1956 through 1963 with **Warren Bidwell** taking over as host superintendent in 1959. Some of the clinic themes during those years were "Practical Research at Work"; "Progress Through Understanding"; "The Stride of the Superintendent".

Dec. 6-7 saw such names on the program as **Doug Jabaay, Tom Burrows** and **Jack Mauer**. They were all assistants then and presented talks on the role of the assistant superintendent.

History was also made at that clinic. Our banquet featured a talent show, with hairy-legged exotic dancers, musical interpretations from the Music Man and a banjo playing flapped by the name of **Charley Rack** singing and playing Shine on Harvest Moon. You had to see it to believe it.

The 10th Clinic Nov. 27-28, 1962 reached a new high in attendance — 116! On Nov. 17-18, 1964 the clinic moved back where it all started, Medinah C.C. **Gerald Dearie, Jr.** was host supt. Panel discussions were becoming popular and some distinguished panel members were **Jim Latham, Jim Holmes**, and **Dr. Mike Britton**. A Dialogue Skit with **Gerald Dearie** and **John Ebel** as Supt. and Green Chairman was presented. No Oscars were awarded. Celebrity guests graced the podium at the Dec. 6-7, 1966 Clinic in the persons of **Mrs. Richard Daley** and Hey-Hey man, **Jack Brickhouse**, voice of the Chicago Cubs. A touch of beauty was added when **Suzie Frederickson**, (you know Harold's better half) gave a delightful talk entitled "Honey Your Supper Is In The Oven".

The Medinah years continued with a new host, Supt. **John Jackman**, who replaced **Gerald Dearie** after his tragic and untimely death in 1968.

The clinic was a one day affair in 1974. Maybe the education committee was a little tired that year. The theme for the

clinic in 1976 was "50 years of Beautiful Golf Courses". The title chosen in recognition of the Midwest AGCS' 50th anniversary. The keynote speaker was **Dr. Fred Grau**. This clinic proved to be the most traumatic we have ever had. Fred's wife, Francis, suffered a fatal heart attack during lunch and we were all stunned and felt so helpless.

1979 found a new superintendent at Medinah C.C. in the person of **Don Pakkala**. It was at this clinic that one of its authors was honored on his retirement, with a "This Is Your Life **Bob Williams**". Bruce Sering was the main conspirator in the well thought out and humorous presentation complete with color slides and testimonies.

The Medinah years continued through 1981, and it was with some reluctance that we left the hospitable confines of the majestic temple.

One of the problems facing turf managers in recent years was the frustration of having so many good educational activities going on at the same time in Illinois. A solution was found through the efforts of the Illinois Turfgrass Foundation, Inc., the Central Illinois Golf Course Superintendents Association' the U.S.G.A Green Section; U. of I. Cooperative Extension Service; and the U. of I. Office of Continuing Education and Public Service.

They founded the North Central Turfgrass Exposition in 1982. These combined groups drew 900 people in 1983 to the Arlington Park Hilton Expo Center. With the premise of continued growth and need for more space the NCTE was moved to the O'Hare Expo Center in Rosemont, IL.

The search for excellence has brought us a long way in the past 32 years. Although the Midwest Clinic was been somewhat absorbed by the NCTE, it should be remembered that the Midwest Clinic and its pioneers have been instrumental in establishing a reputation of leadership in education for the Midwest AGCS, and it's accurate to say that the clinic has been helpful to such educational meetings as the Milwaukee (Wisconsin) Symposium and as a steering committee for the G.C.S.A.A. Turf Conference.

The Midwest A.G.C.S. Clinic is truly a pioneer and will always keep its identity.

The author apologizes for any and all errors and any omissions concerning the history of the Midwest Clinic. The many helps from our business and educational communities are acknowledged. Without them the struggle would have been much greater.

A special thanks to the "Bull Sheet" and its editors, and to Bob Williams for providing all the information.

"Are any of you lacking in wisdom; let him ask of God, who gives to all men liberally and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him."
James 1:5 KJV

*Special Note:

A one day Turf Conference was held on March 14th, 1953 at the U. of I. Drug and Plant and Horticultural Experiment Station near Downers Grove, IL with 200 people in attendance from 17 related fields. The Midwest Clinic as we know it today was begun in December, 1953.