

for over 30 years and always promoted golf through his Locker Room column. M.A.G.C.S. presents a Charles Bartlett award to members of our Association for their editorials or articles promoting our Association and the game of golf. Carol McCue, who we all know as Miss Chicago District Golf Association. Carol was the designer of the CDGA computerized handicap system. Hubby Habjan, golf professional at Onwentsia Club, teacher of many assistant professionals and also known around the world for promoting the golf club professional. Joe Jensek, familiar to all of us for his many golf operations in the Chicagoland area.

The Illinois Section of the PGA, I am sure, with the input of our Association, will in the near future induct past or present Greenkeepers into their Hall of Fame for their contributions to the game of golf.

## Albie Staudt Retirement Party



*Albie Staudt with his family at the retirement party the Geneva G.C. held in his honor on August 14, 1989*



*Ed Braunsky, Albie and Mrs. Staudt*



*Left to right: Bill Kraft, Des Miller, President of Geneva G.C.; Albie Staudt, and Robert Middleton, Chairman of the Grounds and Green Committee.*

## What Has Happened to Our Courses

by Dave Esler

(Dave Esler is a golf course architect and professional golfer).

As most of us are well aware, the Chicagoland area is blessed with an abundance of extraordinary golf courses. Within a 40 mile radius of the Loop lies at least one course by virtually every acknowledged master of golf course architecture. Local designs by Donald Ross, Charles Blair MacDonald, A. W. Tillinghast, and Alister MacKenzie have played host to our nation's most important championships including USGA Opens and Amateurs, most of the Western Opens and Amateurs, as well as several PGA Championships. A great deal of golf history and perhaps even folklore lies under our very spikes at the many old clubs here in Chicago. The members of these clubs should be proud of their courses. They should also be ashamed, very ashamed of what they are doing to them.

In the last fifteen years, I have had the good fortune to play nearly every first-rate golf course in the Chicago area and many more out of town and country. Almost without exception I have been astonished at the insensitivity, and often absurdity with which the redesign of great old courses has been handled. The disruption and often destruction of the character of so many historic courses is irresponsible, if not reprehensible.

No one in their right mind would place Sears furniture in a building by Frank Lloyd Wright or Le Corbusier, nor would anyone have commissioned Andy Warhol to rework Leonardo da Vinci (when he did the result was a neon/dayglow Mona Lisa). However, this type of golf course architectural turkey-shoot redesign is far too common today. While golf course design is certainly not art in the high form of painting, nor arguably architecture, it is in fact a little of both, at least when performed well. I have no intention to blame any one association, institution, or group of individuals for such reckless redesign, because blame in itself is clearly useless. However, responsibility and solutions are useful.

The most responsible solution to redesign includes a master plan that identifies long term goals, and objectives of the membership, superintendent, and golf professional. It will also address solutions to immediate problems that can include, but are rarely limited to drainage, traffic flow, turf loss, and playability.

A master plan should also address restoring original playing strategy to a course within the context of improved equipment and turf conditions. It is of paramount importance that these new features be designed to fit the original aesthetic character of the course; unless the design intent is to create a whole new "look" for **all 18** holes. However, this is not often the case.

As a golf course architect, I assure you, nothing frustrates me more than seeing a seventy year old golf course that has on it one or two redesigned holes that look as if they belong on a municipal course circa 1974. That is tantamount to placing a Volkswagon Beetle front end on a Rolls Royce and expecting the value and aesthetic continuity to be maintained! That is simply not the net result.

The recent past has not been at all kind to many of our finest courses, both locally and nationally. While some of the unique, historical, and/or championship courses have remained unscathed by careless redesign, many have not been so fortunate. Even fewer have been redesigned or restored tastefully and effectively. I sincerely hope that the future is "kinder and gentler" to the remaining historic courses throughout Chicago and across the country.