

Editor's Note: This variation on "The Way We Were" is the brainchild of one Dudley Smith, who has also penned the inaugural column. On Course welcomes contributions from our "elder statesmen," experienced superintendents and seasoned commercial members alike. Please share your stories with your Midwest friends!

There are many tall tales that we can relate over a pitcher of beer; the true stories are always the best. One humorous incident involves my friend "the Hoosier," Bill Krafft.

Wild Bill Krafft, two Fs please, was a member of the PGA, an early certified GCSAA member, a Midwest Association and Michigan chapter member. The license plate on his Buick read "PGA." Bill Krafft never missed a monthly meeting, even in such remote places like Bull Valley or Eagle Ridge. He was easily recognized on the course by his dapper attire: long-sleeved white shirt with necktie and white buckskin Footjoys, a la Walter Hagen. Bill was pro-superintendent at Valparaiso Country Club, a private nine-hole club in northwest Indiana. He surveyed the course early each morning, assigned the outside work and then returned to the pro shop to assume his lesson

schedule. His wife, Mary, supervised the dining room and the kitchen in the clubhouse. The Kraffts had a unique "Ma and Pa" operation, and the members loved them.

After the golf season ended, Bill informed his schoolboy helper that he was taking Mary on a vacation to Florida for six weeks. "I have ordered a dozen trees to be delivered, bagged and burlapped. I will mark where I want them planted with these 2" x 2" stakes. You can plant them before the ground freezes."

After the Kraffts had departed for their well-deserved holiday, the area experienced a mild weekend. The

members all came out to get in a final nine holes, but lo, the flagsticks had all been brought in. Aha! There is a stake that will serve the purpose . . .

When the lake-effect snow finally melted in March, and superintendent Krafft toured the layout, no. 8 green now had a 6' Douglas fir growing dead center.

No one could chuckle more when he told this story than Wild Bill Krafft, God bless him!



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