

The Gift

Eric Nadler (Nadler Golf Car Sales) hands over the keys to Paul's new 2004 Club Car Precedent Champions Edition golf car.



As we are all well aware, our friend and longtime MAGCS member Paul Voykin was honored in San Diego this past February with Golfweek's SuperNEWS magazine's Superintendent of the Year award. What we may not all be aware of is that this award comes with a prize . . . a token of esteem . . . a gift, if you will.

I was fortunate enough to have been invited to the lovely Briarwood Country Club in Deerfield on May 6 to witness the presentation of this gift—a brand new 2004 Club Car Precedent Champions Edition golf car (complete with a larger-than-life-sized cardboard cutout of its new owner). Eric and Dave Nadler of Nadler Golf Car Sales brought the car to Briarwood under cover of darkness and much subterfuge in an attempt to conceal the gift from its recipient; but of course, word of the occasion had spread throughout the club, and a group of Paul's closest friends and members was present to celebrate his achievement with him.

Once unveiled, the car outshone any and all parking lot denizens, from Bentley to Boxster, and was probably better equipped than the lot of them. Needless to say, Mr. Voykin was moved by the show of affection and loyalty given him by his friends, who included general manager Steve Pedersen, locker room manager Willy Steinmiller, assistant superintendent Moe Sanchez, current board of directors member Mike Solow, and past club president, past green chairman, and the man who nominated Paul for the award in the first place, Shelly Solow.

Alas, all good things must come to an end, and the crowd dispersed after some last congratulatory handshakes and parting good wishes, and off rode Paul Voykin over the grounds he has so meticulously tended for the past 43 years. While I waved goodbye (not a tearful goodbye, as we'd be seeing each other again in a few hours at North Shore Country Club for the pro-super tournament), I thought about what a guy has to do to be honored in this manner. I wondered if I would ever have the kind of impact on my friends, my employers and my family that merits this kind of adulation. Moreover, I thought about what it is about Paul Voykin that brought him through his long, distinguished career to this special day. Then it dawned on me—the gift that made this day possible was not the golf car at all. The gift was Paul's all along. It was, and is, Paul's

(continued on page 21)



Paul with the man who has been at his side through it all—Moe Sanchez.

gift of life—of living it, of loving it and of letting everyone around him in on it. His is a gift of loyalty, compassion and humor. His gift might be summed up in these following words—penned by himself—about a stricken comrade. It is, if nothing else, about perspective.

**“Tribute to a Cowboy—
Compadres and Coronas”**

Many, many years ago I met Don Bridges at our national turf conference. Don was from Memphis Country Club in Hereford, Texas—population 14,000, and midway between Amarillo and Lubbock in north Texas. Don was skinny and bow-legged, stood 5’7” tall when standing erect and sporting his Stetson. Don Bridges was an out-and-out drunk.

Don was disqualified from our golf tournament for not keeping pace and for littering the pristine fairways with his empty beer bottles. His actions gave all of us a good laugh.

We would constantly tease Don about wearing his Stetson, and threaten to remove it from his head. A Gary Cooper glint would blaze forth and in a low voice he’d say, “I wouldn’t try that, pardner.” We’d order another round, nobody touching his prized hat.

Don was at his mother’s bedside when she passed away. He promised “maw” that he would never drink again. He NEVER did.

The police continued to pick Don up many times, but now to help other addicts. Don would counsel the drunks and escort them to AA meetings—a saint in the Texas desert.

When funds got low in Hereford, some Midwest members—call them Samaritans—sponsored Don’s expenses to the annual conference. We enjoyed his company, his pride, his Stetson.

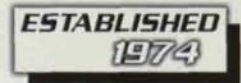
When I heard Don was suffering with lung cancer, I phoned him. “Hello Mr. Voykin,” he whispered. “I read about your award in San Diego.

Congratulations.”

Now fellows, some of you attend the national conference to win the golf championship; others to achieve points and maintain your certification. But a few of us old-timers go to just reminisce and relish the tales of the Cowboy.



L to R: Steve Pedersen, Moe Sanchez, Shelly Solow, Paul Voykin, Mike Solow and Willy Steinmiller.



Roll-Off & Recycling Division

Cartage and Disposal Services

Same Day Service

We Manufacture and Deliver A Large Variety of High Quality Mulch

Presently Servicing Itasca C. C., The Doral Eaglewood Resort and Mount Prospect G. C.



*JKS Ventures a Division of D&P

All Types & Sizes of Containers & Compactors

Residential, Commercial & Industrial

Serving The Entire Metro Area

Fully Licensed • Bonded • Insured
Recycling corrugated, concrete, newspaper, office paper, glass, landscaping waste and scrap metal

We Accept:



708-338-3534

3800 W. Lake St. • Melrose Park, IL
clementik@aol.com

