

# Revisited



*Tall, queen of the prairie, perennial flowers in backyard.*

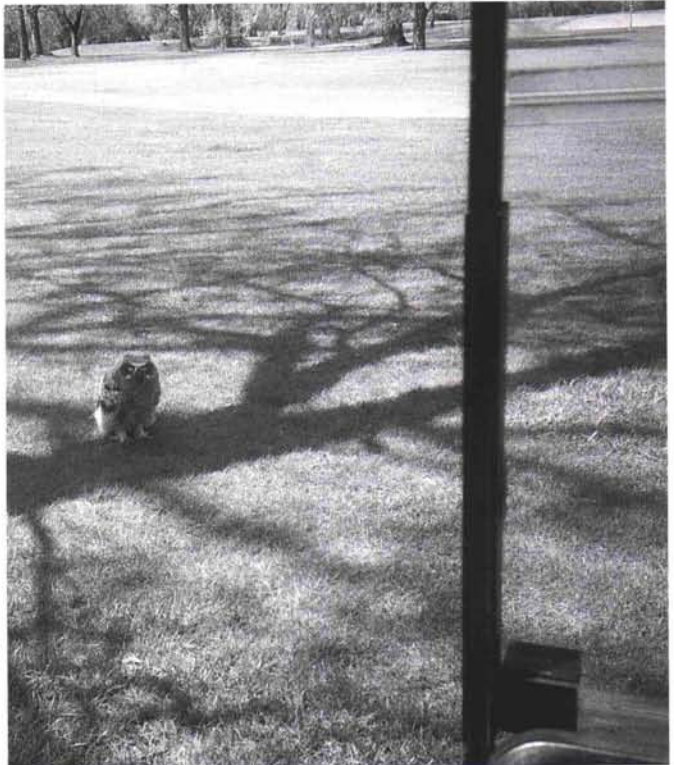
“So we brought in more and more other such areas, and it took some educating of the members, but they learned to appreciate it. The members of Briarwood are the ones who deserve the praise for what you see.

“At the time we were doing this, there were no seed suppliers of prairie plants, so we had to harvest our own wherever we could. I planted areas here and there, and then I began to see birds and butterflies that I never saw here before.

“When I came to the Chicago area in 1956 from my birthplace of Saskatchewan, Canada, I missed the prairie chickens, the partridges and the wild things in general. I remembered when my brother Peter and I used to walk home from school, and we would pick wild crocus for our mother. We lived in the country, and so many

*(continued on page 22)*

*A baby great horned owl at Briarwood C.C.*



*Yearly perennial flower burn in spring before nesting.*

wonderful birds would migrate right over our house.

“Everything on the golf courses had become square and sterile; the wildlife was vanishing, and we were mowing everything from fence to fence. We even mowed the grass right to the water’s edge of our ponds and streams; even a crayfish was not welcome on a golf course.

“In the beginning, everyone thought I was crazy to quit mowing these areas. Some people called it Paul’s elephant grass, but I knew I was doing the right thing. We had pushed nature off the golf course, but I believed we could bring her back and make the game better at the same time. Look at all of the flowers blooming on my golf course. Have you ever met anyone who doesn’t like a flower?

“Then, in 1970, I was asked to give a speech for the USGA, before approximately 600 people at the Biltmore Hotel. The title was ‘Overgrooming Is Overspending.’ I showed slides of some of the wild areas on my course, and it was obvious that some people thought I was absolutely nuts, but the majority seemed to think that this idea was long overdue. At the conclusion of my talk, at least 30 people came up to ask me questions.

“It was my perception at the time that the architects in particular were most against natural areas on golf courses, but when the public began to express concern over the environment, the architects pointed to the efforts of myself and others as evidence in favor of the environment. I think that those of us who did this work in the early stages, were in our own way, influential in helping the game continue to grow.

“Now we have golf courses that are 50% wild areas. I was just

giving the right speech at the right time, when people were becoming concerned about endangered species and overdevelopment. People were beginning to damn the impact of golf courses on the environment, but as we all know, the opposite is true, and the members of Briarwood just took it a step further.

“And it’s not only grasses and forbs that attract wildlife. Trees are the best birdhouses. I tell my friends with birdhouses that I have a problem at Briarwood, I have so many birds that they are flying into each other. The Audubon Society once asked me what I spend on birdhouses and I told them I spend \$25,000 per year, except I call them trees. We even have great horned owls here, and this year our friends fledged the most beautiful baby owl you have ever seen.

“All of my natural areas are unique, planted with different varieties of prairie plants. Some of them are adorned with large rocks modeled after the Japanese Triangle, a trick that I learned from my old friend Ray Rawyn, who recently

passed away. The stones provide a focal point of interest for when the grasses and forbs are dormant.

“The most important thing is, I have done this because I like doing it. I don’t seek any medals; this is not to get another certificate for Paul, but to give something to the dragonfly. The members of Briarwood have given something back to nature, and that is all that matters to Paul Voykin. Before all of this, we cut everything down and the prairie creatures had no place to nest and live.

“I will tell you that I hardly ever take a day off, and I do not like to leave too early, because I am afraid that I might miss something beautiful on the course. When my brother Peter and I were young men, we went to see Ben Hogan, and he told us that if we worked in the golf business, we would be able to live like millionaires. After Peter and I heard Ben Hogan, we became greenkeepers for life, and we truly have lived like millionaires. So tell me, why would I want to leave the golf course for more than a moment?”



Paul’s three-year-old granddaughter, Bethany Rose, in front of one of his next-to-tee creations.

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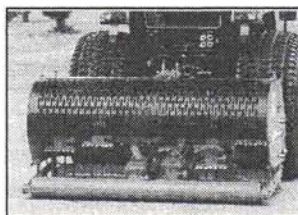
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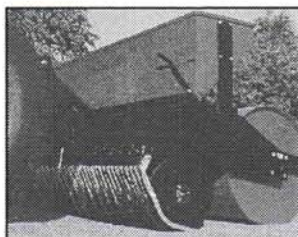
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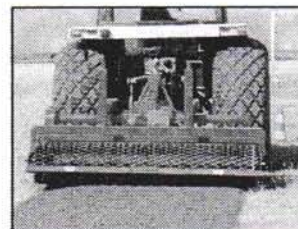
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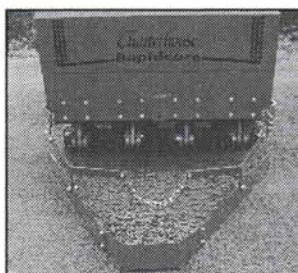
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# Trium



*The Merit Club's Executive Committee for the 2000 U.S. Women's Open.*



*Superintendent Oscar Miles rallies the troops during a special kick-off meeting for volunteers and staff the Monday of Open week.*



*A picturesque, wooded entrance greeted spectators.*



*John Nelson, assistant superintendent and course manager for the Open.*



*Custom tee markers created for the Open.*

*The Merit Club rose admirably to the challenge of hosting the women's premier Major.*

"After the tournament concluded on Sunday, I drove around the course, said a prayer and thanked the golf course for holding up so beautifully. I said, tonight we're going to give you some champagne. And we did—we turned the sprinklers on."

Oscar Miles, CGCS, superintendent of The Merit Club, chuckles with no small degree of satisfaction as he reflects on the 2000 U.S. Women's Open. After negating drought predictions with a soggy spring and early summer, Mother Nature cooperated by providing dry, cool, sunny weather for the tournament's duration. Crew and volunteers alike performed with professionalism and passion. And any minor crises—such as a hydraulic leak on #18 fairway early on in tournament week—were quickly averted.

One surprise came when the USGA requested that Merit Club staff bring the greens to a 12 Stimp for the event. Prior to tourney week, a reading between 10 and 11 was the expectation. Oscar and his Stimpmeter team went to work, doing the requisite mowing and rolling to add the extra challenge to the course's putting surfaces.

Despite the grueling hours, John Nelson, assistant superintendent, expresses a common sentiment about the week's activities: "It was more fun than work." The staff and volunteers did have a moment in the limelight, however. Tournament director Peter de Young arranged for them to surround the left side of #18 green as champion Karrie Webb approached the grandstand during her final round. After Karrie clinched her title, the assembled group came out for a bow. It was a beautiful moment.

Oscar reports that Bert Getz, founder of The Merit Club, has asked him how he feels about hosting another tournament in the future. Oscar's response? "Put up the ropes tomorrow. We're ready."

# nph!



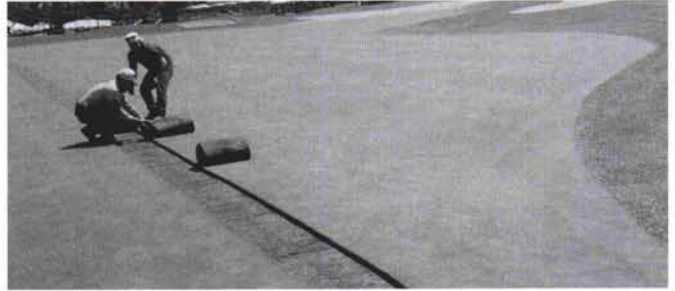
Volunteer Dave Schlagetter, Indian Hill C.C., (L) inspects the playing field with Oscar and Clarabelle.



Rolling #18 green to achieve a speed of 12.



Crisis: hydraulic oil leak, #18 fairway, week of the Open.



Crisis averted: stripping the damaged sod out, putting new sod in.



Intern Steven Craig places protection around the area where he will cut a cup.



A lovely touch: special player bridge built behind #2 green.



Hostesses with the most: (L to R) Enrique Valadez's wife Rebecca, Oscar's sister-in-law Dorothy Ryan (hailed as "Mom Dorothy" by the crew) and John Nelson's mother Peggy helped feed the hungry crew and volunteers.



Course foreman Enrique Valadez (L) and equipment operator Raphael Morales.

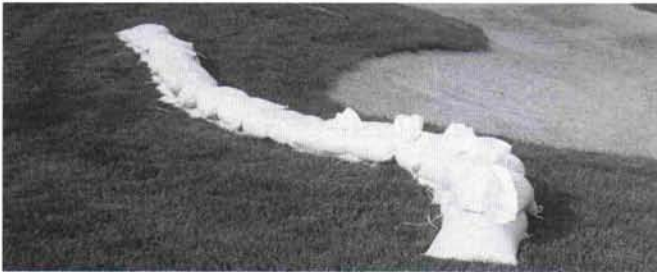
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*Straight from Pebble Beach: the Palmer Group erects the Monsterboard frame.*



*Construction of temporary access roads to parking areas was a priority. Now, crew are cleaning up and overseeding this area.*



*Because of heavy rain prior to the Open, Oscar and staff experimented with bunker protection methods. Here, sandbagging.*



*Here, plastic tarp and sandbags. The method worked well, but it was ultimately a moot point—Mother Nature was kind!*



*Sealing the service road to control dust.*



*Applying Aquashade (a dye) to color the water and algae, #7 hole.*



*The staging area. Maintenance headquarters (L) with adjacent hospitality tent.*



*Volunteer Jon Jennings, Chicago Golf Club, mows #18 fairway.*



*Landscaping around merchandise tent with native trees from The Merit Club's nursery.*



*The special Stimpmeter team: (L to R) Dr. Jeffrey Grigos, University of Wisconsin; Dr. Tom Voigt, University of Illinois; Dave Schlagetter, Indian Hill C.C.; Dave Ward, Olympia Fields C.C.; and Tom Lively, Ruth Lake C.C.*

## A Thousand Thanks

Oscar Miles warmly thanks all those volunteers, including many members of the MAGCS, who gave of their time and efforts during the 2000 U.S. Women's Open at The Merit Club.

They contributed enormously to the tournament's success.

### *Hospitality/Catering*

Brent Miles (Oscar's son)  
Mardelle Miles (wife)  
Dorothy Ryan (sister-in-law)  
Don Ryan (brother-in-law)  
Mary Lammers (sister-in-law)  
Chris Nelson (John Nelson's wife)  
David Nelson (John's father)  
Peggy Nelson (John's mother)  
Sue Salemi (Oscar's daughter)  
Judy Turlay (daughter)  
Terry Turlay (son-in-law)  
Jammie Turlay (grandson)  
Louis Turlay (son-in-law's father)  
Sid Kemmis (nephew)  
Carleen Kemmis (niece)  
Carolyn Goodman (Arthur Clesen, Inc.)  
Clarabelle (Oscar's dog)

### *Stimpmeter/Course Health Team*

Dave Schlagetter (Indian Hill C.C.)  
George Ott (Hillcrest C.C.)  
David Ward (Olympia Fields C.C.)  
Thomas Lively (Ruth Lake C.C.)  
Dr. Tom Voigt (University of Illinois)  
Dr. Jeffrey Grigos (University of Wisconsin)

### *On-Course Care*

Greg Benson (Bonnie Brook)  
Craig Lewis (Shepherd's Crook)  
David Smith (Abbey Springs)  
Jim Pederson (Family Golf of Chicago)  
Jon Jennings (Chicago G.C.)  
Pete Kiraly (Hilldale G.C.)  
Brian Bossert (Bryn Mawr C.C.)  
Kerry Satterwhite (City of Bloomington)  
Al Jansen (Baraboo C.C.)  
Matthew Springer (Sunset Ridge C.C.)  
Rumon Ruiz (Indian Hill C.C.)  
Michael Bavier, Jr. (Ivanhoe Club)  
John Girolamo (Steeple Chase G.C.)  
Josh Laughridge (Augusta National)  
Aaron Willings (Chicago G.C.)  
Evan Haney (Wynstone G.C.)  
Rob Nixon (Wynstone G.C.)  
Tyler Applegate (Inverness G.C.)  
Justin Schroeder (Knollwood Club)  
Jess Jansen (Baraboo C.C.)  
Dave Schingel (Lohmann Golf Designs)

### *Merit Club Caddies*

Joe Rierden  
Greg Lynn  
Andy Lynn  
Matt Lyons  
Sean Maher  
Greg Gottfried  
Rod Boyce  
Tim Brooks

### *Equipment Service & Repair*

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Don Pieper (The Merit Club)  
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Randy Wahler (Knollwood Club)  
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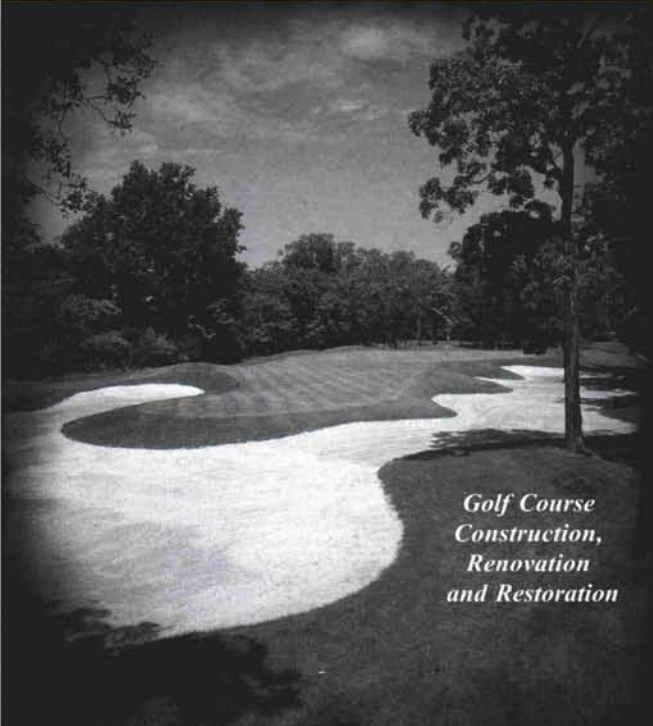
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