



Our founding father and first president John MacGregor (L) celebrates his 75th birthday at Ravisloe C.C. in 1960. Next to Mr. MacGregor is another prominent figure in the world of golf who contributed substantially to our Association's growth—John Coghill.

Fred Sherwood—all charter members of NAGA—along with their 12 comrades chose Mid-West Greenkeeper's Association (MWGA) to be our birth name, and planted the seeds from which our 700-member-plus organization has blossomed and flourished through these past 75 years.

**In the Morning,
In the Evening,
Ain't We Got Fun!**

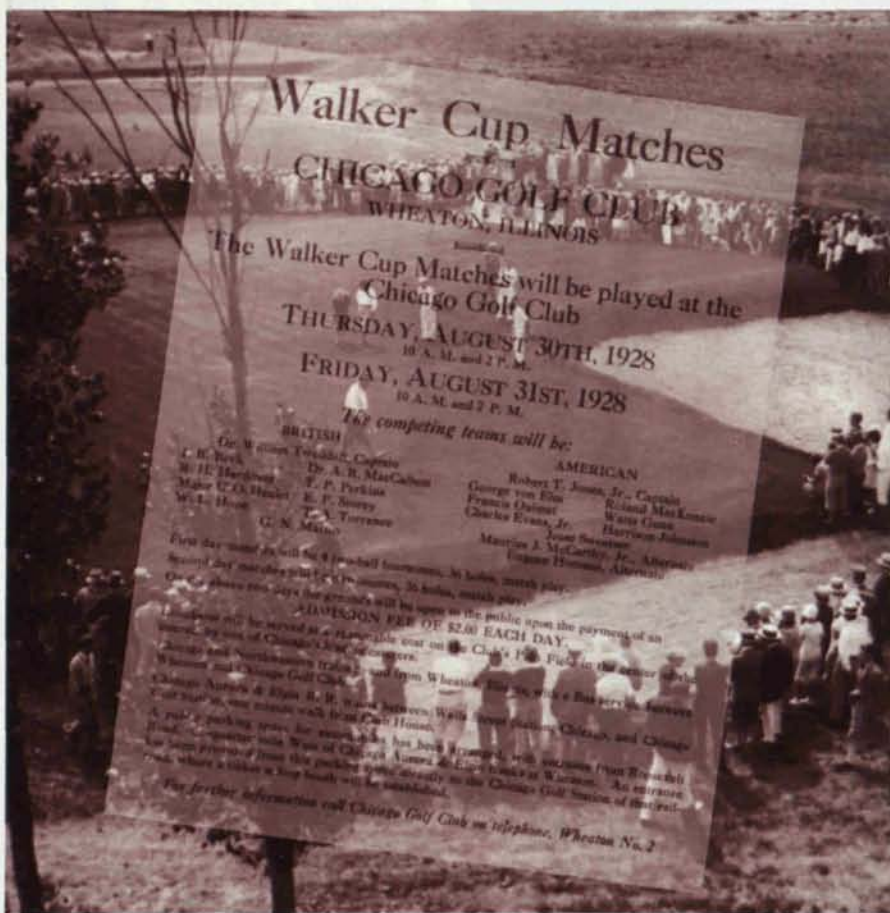
To understand why our profession's forefathers formed these two organizations at this particular time, it is important to know what was taking place in America and around the world. World War I had recently ended, and the brief economic boom that followed produced a nation starved for recreation. January 16, 1920 saw the enactment of Prohibition, which led many of America's law-abiding citizens to seek entertainment in speakeasies, where illegal liquor flowed and

flappers danced the nights away. Prohibition also led to the rise of organized crime syndicates in the country's big cities—most notorious of these being Al Capone's North Side gang in Chicago. After many years of intense lobbying, women now had the right to vote with the passing of the 19th Amendment. Four presidents held office during the '20s—Wilson, Harding, Coolidge and Hoover—while Americans were trading in their iceboxes for new electric Frigidaires and enjoying such new products as La Choy Chinese food, Good Humor ice cream suckers, Maxwell House coffee and Baby Ruth bars. Newly-formed Warner Brothers, Columbia Pictures and Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer were delighting America with the likes of Mae West, Rudolph Valentino, Greta Garbo and Charlie Chaplin; by the end of the decade, amazed moviegoers witnessed the first "talkies."

Professional sports were also becoming popular, as the first radio broadcasts of sporting events like as heavyweight prize fights and the World Series made household names of men such as Babe Ruth, Jack Dempsey and Gene Tunney. Golf was among the sports to enjoy huge popularity in the '20s, thanks in large part to characters such as Walter Hagen, winner of four PGA championships (including the 1925 tournament at Olympia Fields C.C., which also hosted the 1928 U.S. Open) and two Western Opens; Gene Sarazen, winner of one U.S. Open (at Skokie Country Club in 1922) and two PGAs; and Bobby Jones, the amateur phenom from Georgia who, from 1920 to 1929, captured the imagination of a country with victories in three U.S. Opens (and second place in four others), four U.S. Amateurs and two British Opens, to name but a few. Jones also led the United States teams to Walker Cup victories throughout the decade, including an 11-1 drubbing of the British team at Chicago Golf Club in 1928 (Bob O' Link Golf Club also submitted

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Golf was among the sports to enjoy huge popularity in the '20s, thanks in large part to characters such as Walter Hagen, Gene Sarazen and Bobby Jones.



The 1928 Walker Cup matches at Chicago Golf Club featured Bobby Jones and Chick Evans, shown on the sixth green with opponents Major Hezlet and W.L. Hope. The American team went on to post an 11-1 victory over Britain.

a bid for the event, but was declined in favor of Chicago G.C.). The “Georgia Peach” culminated his mastery of the game by winning the newly-coined “Grand Slam” of golf in 1930, with victories in the U.S. Open and Amateur and the British Open and Amateur. Chicago-area clubs were popular stops for the young PGA tour, and several of our local club professionals were very successful in competition against formidable opponents like “The Haig” (Hagen) and “The Squire” (Sarazen). Throughout the ’20s, in addition to the U.S. Opens held locally, the Western Open made stops in our neck of the woods in 1920 (Olympia Fields C.C., where Glen View Club’s Jock Hutchison won), in 1924 at Calumet C.C., in 1927 at Olympia Fields and in 1928 at North Shore C.C. Other

local club pros of the era who made an impact on the world of golf included Tommy Armour, the “Silver Scot” from Medinah C.C., Johnny Revolta from Evanston C.C., Harry “Lighthouse” Cooper from Glen Oak C.C. and Horton Smith from Oak Park C.C.

Yes, golf was the sport of choice for the upper-class, and was now gaining popularity amongst the masses as well. No longer was a suntan the characteristic pock-mark of the working man—it was now the fashionable look of the man of leisure. The USGA finally approved steel-shafted clubs, which became widely available to golf’s new generation. What was lacking were playing venues, and the ’20s saw golf course construction reach astronomical heights—

(continued on page 24)

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especially in the Chicago area. Some of the great architects of the era—Donald Ross, Harry Colt, Charles Blair MacDonal, Charles Hugh Alison, William Boice Langford, Charles Maddox, Albert Warren Tillinghast and Tom Bendelow among them—provided the Midwest with some of its finest and most revered tracks during this decade. The list of area golf courses built during the '20s includes Barrington Hills C.C., Bartlett Hills G.C., Briarwood C.C., Bryn Mawr C.C., Butterfield C.C., Calumet C.C., Edgewood Valley C.C., Knollwood, Medinah C.C., Naperville C.C., Olympia Fields C.C. North Course, St. Charles C.C., Twin Orchard C.C., Sunset Ridge C.C., Shoreacres, Mission Hills C.C., North Shore C.C., Ruth Lake C.C., Silver Lake G.C. North Course, Kishwaukee C.C., Rolling Green G.C. and Villa Olivia G.C. Outside Chicagoland, courses the likes of Seminole, Winged Foot, Olympic Club, Firestone and Pebble Beach took shape. This wave of golf course openings paved the way for the little-known greenkeeper profession to organize and assert itself as one of the game's leading players.

From the Ashes Rises the Phoenix

John Morley began his career as a vegetable farmer in his native England. Ohio's Youngstown Country Club hired Morley in 1913 to provide fresh vegetables for its new menu, a job that led to him becoming the greenkeeper of that club. He was later commissioned with the honorary rank of Colonel by the governor of Kentucky in 1930 when NAGA held its annual conference and show in Louisville. Col. Morley's directive to John MacGregor and the other charter NAGA members from the Midwest to organize the district was the spark that ignited the founding of our Association. The



When Lucky Lindy touched down in Paris on May 21, 1927, the door to traveling the globe opened to all.

founding fathers of the Mid-West Greenkeeper's Association, with MacGregor at the helm, received commission to arrange the first national convention of NAGA, which took place at the Hotel Sherman in Chicago in March 1927 (this would be the site of four future conferences). Some 80 greenkeepers from around the country came by rail and by road to the Windy City for the inaugural conference, and thanks to the hard work of our predecessors, the show was a great success. John MacGregor, the long-time superintendent of Chicago Golf Club, continued to lead the MWGA

until 1929, when vice president Alex Binnie from Shoreacres was elected to serve the now 90-plus membership.

The world was changing rapidly during our Association's infancy—the Scopes “Monkey Trial” resulted in a ban on teaching the theory of evolution in schools, Ford Motor Company started the 40-hour work week, 19-year-old Gertrude Ederle became the first woman to swim the English Channel, Mickey Mouse made his debut in “Steamboat Willie” and Charles “Lucky Lindy” Lindbergh made the his-

toric first trans-Atlantic flight from New York to Paris. The golf maintenance business was changing too, with the debut of USGA's *The Bulletin of the Green Section* in 1921 (forerunner to today's *Green Section Record*) and the first use of a green-speed measuring device in 1929—a pendulum on a tripod called the Arnott Mechanical putter. It is ironic that many of the 1920s revolutionary innovations are still in use today, and many of the agronomic problems faced by greenkeepers back then remain the hot topics in seminars and roundtable discussions to this day. Newfangled power mowers made their debut, and crazy notions such as bentgrass fairways, irrigation systems and Milorganite as a substitute for manure were fodder for debate. Pressing issues discussed among greenkeepers included earthworms, moss on putting greens, brown patch disease, grubs, Japanese beetles, attracting birds to the golf course

and fairway topdressing. The Midwest Greenkeeper's Association, under its strong and dedicated leadership, was poised to soar with the winds of these changing times.

All Good Things Must Come to an End . . .

The end of the '20s marked the end of America's idyllic mood. On October 29, 1929—Black Tuesday—the stock market collapsed, triggering the onset of the Great Depression. Even with this black cloud hanging over the country, golf continued its steady growth, as did the organization of which we are a proud part today. Did the Great Depression stop the growing game of golf in its tracks? How did the onset of World War II affect our industry? Find out the answers to these and other questions next month when Erwin McKone examines the '30s.



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On Course welcomes your letters on subjects covered in the magazine, matters of green industry interest and topics pertinent to the MAGCS/GCSAA. While each submission must carry a signature and identifying information, we will consider on a case-by-case basis withholding an author's name upon his/her request. Please note that the opinions expressed herein are those of the author(s) and not necessarily those of On Course or the MAGCS.

Gene Thompson bids farewell.



To my many friends and colleagues at MAGCS,

Someone once said that there is nothing so important as family and friends. Having already suffered more losses in my family than anyone should have to, I am as aware of this as anyone can be. Due to my Dad's current health situation, I am resigning from Indian Lakes Resort and preparing to move down closer to him in St. Simons Island, Georgia. It is extremely hard leaving all of our many friends here and we will miss you all greatly. Indian Lakes is

about to enter what will probably be its finest hour as they prepare to begin a complete renovation of all 36 holes, and I am deeply saddened that I will miss it. Making the decision to leave was a very difficult decision, yet it was also extremely easy. Some things are just more important.

Having been a member of the MAGCS since 1979, I have made many friends. I would like to thank the "older and wiser" superintendents who made me feel so welcome when I first joined the Association. Your kindness and warmth were greatly appreciated. I would also like to thank the many vendors whose knowledge, guidance and assistance always helped to make my life easier. To my many friends at the Wednesday night Fox Valley Golf League, I would like to say thanks for all of the good times and fond memories. I would be remiss if I didn't say a special thank you to Dave Meyer, for giving me a chance back in 1974, and allowing me an opportunity to work in the greatest profession in the world.

I look forward to hopefully seeing you all at the next convention in Orlando. May God bless you all.

Gene Thompson
511 Clement Circle
St. Simons Island, Georgia 31522

Paul Voykin can't stay out of trouble.

Coming from the Canadian Turfgrass Conference last week in Vancouver, I had to make a short one-and-a-half-hour stop in Seattle. At 10:55 a.m. the earthquake hit the city, and of course the airport where I was waiting for a 12:05 p.m. departure. WOW! What an experience, people crying and shaking. I was quite calm and helped some people regain their composure and then we were herded outside because of structural failure fears in the airport building.

Anyways—tornado last year, quake this spring. No rocking chair for me.

Sincerely,
Paul Voykin



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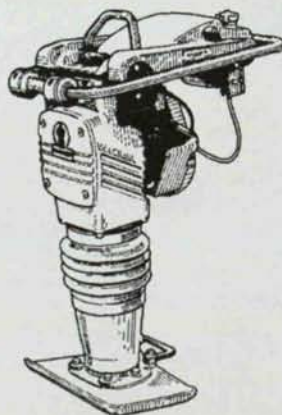
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the Bull Sheet

John Gurke, CGCS,
Contributing Editor

DATES TO REMEMBER

April 23 — MAGCS monthly meeting at Ruffled Feathers Golf Club, **Dan Albaugh** host.

May 6 — J.W. Turf Annual Consignment Sale Auction in Hampshire, Illinois. More details below.

May 7 — ITF Combined Golf Day at Kishwaukee Country Club, **Phil Zeinert, CGCS** host.

The 72nd GCSAA International Golf Course Conference and Show in Dallas is now a memory, and we are all hopefully back in one piece (no thanks to the choppy flights). Here are a few of the highlights (and lowlights):

Conference attendance was 20,600 (down 5% from last year), most of whom were privileged to see General H. Norman Schwartzkopf give a stirring talk that both amused and motivated the large crowd at the opening session. The 75th anniversary lapel pin given out at the door was a nice touch by GCSAA.

The annual meeting resolved several important issues, most notably the passing of the Professional Development Initiative (PDI) by a resounding 76%. Of local interest, **Tommy Witt, CGCS**, previously of Wynstone Golf Club, was elected president of GCSAA, while Hinsdale Golf Club's **Bob Maibusch, CGCS** was reelected a director, along with Sean Hoolehan, CGCS, pre-

viously at Butler National. For more on Tommy Witt, check out page 13 of your March 2 issue of *Golfweek's Superintendent News*.

On February 15, Chicago Turf & Irrigation, Inc. was recognized as Distributor of the Year for 2000 by Otterbine/Barebo, Inc. of Emmaus, PA. The award honors a combination of sales, marketing and service. **Rich Daly** of CTI accepted the award—the fourth he and CTI have received—in Dallas. Congratulations to Rich and the folks at CTI.

The biggest event of the conference was obviously the MAGCS Hospitality Suite in the Adam's Mark Hotel. Our generous donors and the people behind the scenes (**Paul Yerkes** of Lesco and **Kevin DeRoo** of Bartlett Hills G.C.) are the folks to thank for two very fine nights. Paul's director's column (p.7) goes into much more detail about this, but after enjoying the great food and refreshments, I had to chime in with another cheer of gratitude from all of us to our sponsors. I'd also like to point out an omission from the contributors' banner that was displayed in the room—Layne Western was mistakenly left off the banner, but was a generous contributor to the room. Thanks to **Tom Healy** for not taking the money back.

The trade show (however difficult it may have been getting to it in the dreadful weather) was very well laid out and had something to offer everyone in attendance. The 75th anniversary displays throughout the convention center were a nice way to revisit the past and learn about the history of our national association and its affiliated chapters. Prominently featured in the chapter history display (which was a disappointing out-of-the-way corner outside the trade show floor) were items and manuscripts from both MAGCS and the Chicagoland Association of Golf Course Superintendents.



(continued on page 33)