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MOVING OUT ... AND ON

Despite warnings to the contrary from some, retirement has been nothing short of wonderful so far. I now have the time to devote to my hobbies, visit kids and grandkids and plan a few trips to those places I've dreamed about for decades. I've started reading several of the thousands of books I own, and I'm chomping at the bit for spring so I can shape up my average home landscape.

The economic climate and its impact have caused some consternation, but not so much that I'm going to pull a Brett Favre and unretire. I'll just spend less.

The most difficult part of formally ending my career, surprisingly, was cleaning out my office. I wish I could've done what a friend of mine did – tossed the keys to his successor and told him to pitch whatever he didn't want. That would've been easy.

I'm one of those pack rats who saves everything that might have some historical value sometime in the future. I always assumed that when I reached this stage of my life there would be a Wisconsin Golf Museum and Library to receive my considerable collection of golf course books, memorabilia and correspondence.

Of course, the museum never happened. So I spent weeks going through a mountain of material, saving the irreplaceable and invaluable and discarding the rest. Much to my wife's distress, much of the valuable stuff is being organized, sorted and filed in our basement. When that's done, I'm not sure what I'll do with it.

I went through four closets, 11 file cabinets and scores of storage tubs piece by piece. I should've been an archivist or historian. It would've made this job much easier for me. Our golf course staff helped me, although I heard my assistant tell them, "Don't talk to him because it will just take that much longer." Slowly, almost painfully, I slogged my way through it.

What a trip down memory lane. My career was spent as a superintendent at the same golf club, which made acquiring so much material easy. I never moved. The

GCSAA Conference and Show was important to me, so I never missed a single one, going back to Boston in 1973. I have old burlap Penncross bags full of key chains, buttons, ball-mark repair tools, pens and pencils, tees, golf balls and every other trinket exhibitors have handed out. I have a Jacobsen hat from each of the 37 shows



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I attended, along with a collection of 700 different trade caps of every description and color.

My textbooks offered contrast from the 1960s and 1970s to more contemporary writing. I have Monteith and Dahl's publication about turf diseases, the first about the subject. Contrast Dr. H.B. Couch's first edition book about turf diseases and then his magnum opus about turf pathogens of a few years ago, and you get a feel for the changes I've seen. The same holds for Musser's excellent book of the 1960s and

Dr. Jim Beard's USGA book of just a few years ago.

One of the most interesting things I came across was a four-page, four-color ad piece distributed by Wisconsin Turf Equipment Corp., our Jacobsen dealer for 50 years. The entire Jake line was neatly parked on a golf course, and the owner was standing in the middle, smiling proudly. Does anyone remember the Rogers truckster, a three-wheeled vehicle with a loud engine and a lot of metal-on-metal contact? You could hear it coming 500 yards away.

The first triplex greensmower was part of their line, a tremendous development that saved a lot of labor. Every superintendent wanted one or two. The F-10 fairway mower, the G-10 tractor and airfield blitzer pull-frame rough mowers are all equipment from a time long ago.

My USGA files were full – Green Section reports from all those years. They consistently were well written and offered advice that was always on the mark. The first Green Section specs about putting green construction – I have a copy – demonstrate how experience modified them somewhat, but that the principles are firm. I enjoyed the writing of the national directors I've known – Radko, Benguefield and Snow.

I ran across photos of our crew from many of those years, as well as pictures from the first Jacobsen college student seminar back in the summer of 1968. I attended the first Toro turf professionals meeting and found the pen set given to each of us, along with a class photo. I made several life-long friends at that meeting.

It's been an exhausting job, moving out and moving on, but a rewarding one. As I look back, I'm inclined to say I worked during golf's zenith, but it's probably because my career was so rewarding and enjoyable. The trip from the morning side of the mountain to the twilight side of the hill seemed to go so quickly, and moving out of my office in this deliberate way gave me a chance to see it in a different light. I laughed about the good times, remembered so many people I had the chance to know, and felt melancholy and joy that it's over. I also realized I'd do it all over again. **GCI**