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Tim Moraghan, Principal, ASPIRE Golf [tmoraghan@aspire-golf.com]. Follow Tim's blog, Golf Course Confidential at <http://www.aspire-golf.com/buzz.html> or on Twitter @TimMoraghan

A DELICATE BALANCING ACT

Herb Kohler has several passions – his family and the Kohler Co. that he commands and has been serving people for more than a century. In recent years his new motivation is golf. Through Kohler's connections and business savvy a global golf brand of top-level courses and resorts has been built, including Blackwolf Run, The American Club, The Dukes Course and the site of 92nd PGA Championship, Whistling Straits Golf Course.

Maintaining Kohler's golf interests

Lake Michigan waters at the edge of the golf course. We can focus our efforts towards course preparation and uncontrollable issues such as weather. Our weather issues are heavy rains, which impact the conditioning of the golf course and delay maintenance efforts, and fog, which won't affect turf but will impact our schedules. All we can do is wait for it to dissipate.

Currently, the set-up requirements, are similar to the 2004 PGA:

- Primary rough grass is 3 to 4 inches at the start of Championship

for every contour out there. As Pete walks the course he talks through what he wants to change next. It's hard to keep up with him, physically and visually. He tests your knowledge and ability to keep pace with his imagination. It's important to ask questions, but not too many because with Pete it's always a work in progress.

We made changes to the 3rd and 6th putting surfaces, primarily contour changes to putting surface areas by way of changing the size of the green. Pete wanted to be able to test the world's best players and at the same time, offer a course that allows the daily guest to enjoy their round. Not an easy task.

The par 3, third hole will have no rough behind the green setting and drop off into the water of Lake Michigan. The short drivable par 4, 6th hole will have a pot bunker in the center of the green making it tough if a player attempts to drive the green.

“As Pete (Dye) walks the course he talks through what he wants to change next. It's hard to keep up with him, physically and visually. He really tests your knowledge and ability to keep pace with his imagination.”

– Michael Lee, Kohler Co.

is manager of golf course maintenance Michael Lee, a 17-year veteran of the Kohler Co. Lee and I caught up recently as he prepared for his fourth championship and second major at Whistling Straits.

Q **Entering the final weeks before the PGA Championship descends onto Whistling Straits, how is the golf course and its conditions?**

A Our biggest concern is how we exit from the winter season of freezing temperatures and snow cover. Currently, we are doing well. The bent and fescue survived and we have no significant turfgrass replacement for the PGA Championship.

Since construction we capped fairways with 2 to 3 inches of sand. This has helped with winter to spring transition, moisture levels and surface compaction. This gives us a head start on the growing season with the cool

week with no graduated rough cuts merged into the taller fine fescue.

- Fairway height-of-cut is just under ½ inch with minor changes to contouring for better definition and gallery movement.
- Putting green speeds are from 11 to 12 feet.
- Bunkers – we have a whole lot of hazards!

Q **Pete Dye is known to be diabolical with his designs. Any interesting Pete Dye twists to the course? And, what is it like working with Pete?**

A (Laughs) First, it is a privilege to work with Pete. He is 84 and doesn't miss a trick. On his last visit he says he forgot what he ate for breakfast but that's because he missed it to catch a 4:30 a.m. flight to walk the course (Whistling Straits is not an easy stroll) ahead of play. He knows every square foot of the course and has a purpose

Q **Since your golf course property is so vast, does this impact your volunteer requirements?**

A We spend a lot of time on staff planning so we can match labor resources to the work that's required. We will use 60 to 70 volunteers coming from as far away as New Zealand. We have a large employed staff, about 85, when we combine the Irish Course work force that will accomplish much of the work but the volunteer corps will handle the extra chores. For the most part we do the exact jobs as any other week, but the Championship schedule demands we have half the time to do each job and we do them twice a day rather than once. Volunteers apply for their positions similar to our employed staff. The first obligation is to the golf course, followed by professional networking and the social aspect of the volunteer experience. **GCI**

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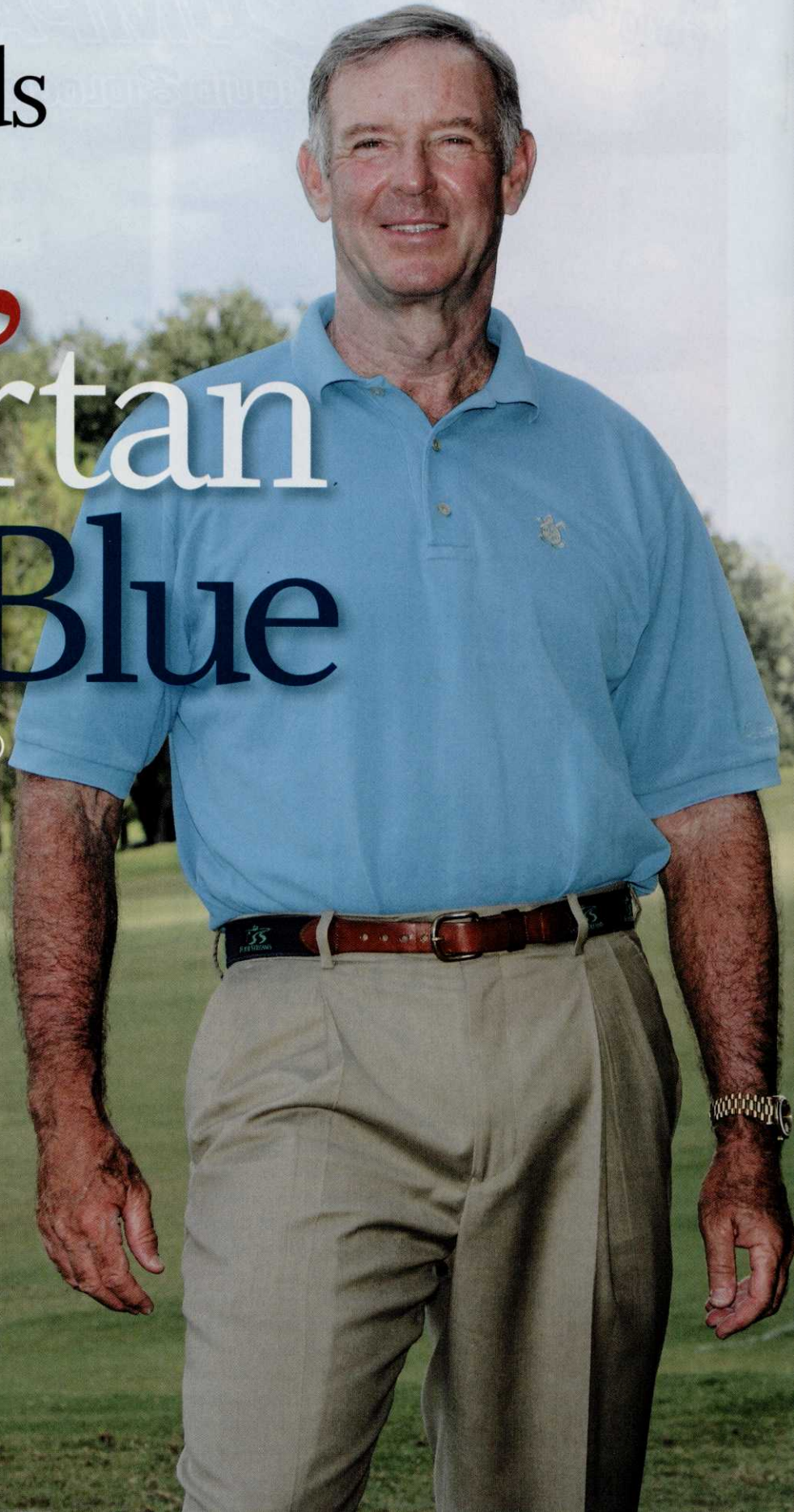
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The 2010 Builder Excellence Awards

We are very proud of the Builder Excellence Awards program offered each year by Golf Course Industry. These prestigious awards reflect Golf Course Builders Association of America's mission, which is dedicated to advancing and improving the profession of golf course construction while serving the interests of its member companies.

Our members build the highest quality golf courses in the world. This program recognizes this standard of excellence. Winners were recognized for their achievement at the Annual GCBAA Summer Meeting Awards Dinner in Milwaukee. On behalf of the GCBAA board and membership, I would like to extend our congratulations to the 2010 Builder Excellence Award winners and thank Golf Course Industry and this year's panel of esteemed judges for their time and effort in making these awards possible. Our members are already working on their 2011 projects and

I'm sure we'll have some exciting and innovative submissions for next year's panel of judges to consider.

The GCBAA continues to change with the market, add value to its membership and collaborate with the allied associations of golf to enhance the golf industry. Some recent changes include the following:

- New GCBAA Website;
- GCBAA social media participation – You Tube, Twitter, Facebook and SMS text contact;
- New education program requirement for its certified builders;
- Two new Builder Membership

Categories – Renovation Builder and Irrigation Contractor;

- Electronic version of its quarterly publication, EarthShaping News;
- New golf construction careers flyer for universities and students interested in careers in the golf construction business; and
- Outreach to organizations to use the free golf clubs available at the 510 Sticks For Kids programs.

Good luck in the remainder of 2010 and into 2011, and we look forward to building partnerships with you in the days to come.

PAUL FOLEY
Executive Director

The 2010 JUDGES

A special thank you goes out to this year's panel of esteemed judges.

Mike Benkusky, ASGCA, Michael J. Benkusky Inc.; **Charlie Birney**, Atlantic Golf; **Jim Dunlap**, industry journalist; **Bill Prest**, Sweet Briar Golf Course; **Tommy Sasser**, Recreational Community Consultants **Chris Schiavone**, RDS Golf Group; **Jason Straka**, ASGCA, Hurdzan/Fry Golf Design; **Todd Voss**, Double Eagle Golf Course

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Measure of success

The Sticks for Kids program has exposed underprivileged youth to the game of golf.

By Brittany Schmigel

What began as an idea to provide children with golf clubs has evolved into the Golf Course Builders Association of America Foundation's international Sticks for Kids program. Identifying children as the next generation of players, the GCBAAF developed Sticks for Kids in 1998 as an instructional program for underprivileged youth, designed to give them an opportunity to play golf and learn about the values the sport teaches.

Since then, Sticks for Kids has grown to more than 500 programs nationwide and 10 international military bases. The program has been so successful that China recently adopted the program and now has more than 120 programs of its own.

Paul Foley, GCBAAF executive director, says shortly after its inception they realized the program would need more than GCBAAF assistance. After talking to other youth-oriented organizations, such as the Boy and Girl Scouts of America and the Boys and Girls Club of America, Foley was directed to the National Recreation and Park Association. After the NRPA agreed to partner with the GCBAAF, the organizations decided they would donate 10 sets of new junior golf clubs to each program, provide funds to employ a PGA professional instructor and supply each program with marketing materials and teaching aids to assist in running their own camp. The participating golf courses would need to do the rest of the work, such as recruit volunteers to run the program.

"A big part of the curriculum ensures

the instructors teach life values – integrity, sportsmanship, etiquette, respect and safety. We hope they learn these things in addition to learning how to swing and putt," Foley says.

In addition, the program added an environmental stewardship segment. "We find that the age groups that attend have minds like sponges, so we teach them that you made that divot with your golf club – why do we tell you to replace it?" Foley says. "If you hit a tree, what should you do? Let's say you hit a ball into an environment friendly area and you're not supposed to go there, why?"

"It's all about life skills and golf and how to be good environmental stewards," he says.

Here are a few success stories:

Jim Ager Memorial Golf Course, Lincoln, Neb.

Dale Hardy, director of golf at the Jim Ager Memorial Golf Course, says the 9-hole par-3 course is perfect for the Sticks for Kids program. "The course was built by the city and donated to the youth of Lincoln in 1965," he says. "They wanted to develop a program in Lincoln along with the Ager course, so in 2000 they brought Sticks for Kids here and it's been going strong ever since." The program's first year gathered 82 kids and has had a steady following.

"It's been very well received in the community and everything we do and utilize is donated by different companies around the city, such as the snacks we give them every day," Hardy says. Businesses donate drinks, chips, granola bars, fruit and hot dogs. And to say the Lincoln community fully supports the Sticks for Kids program is putting it lightly: Guest speakers are part of the curriculum each day, such as coaches from the University of Nebraska and local amateur golfers – and Lincoln's Senior Men's Golf Association gives three memberships a year to Sticks for Kids graduates. In addition, donated clubs are cut down and re-gripped, so each child can leave the program with a new



The Golf Course Builders Association of America Foundation, in partnership with the National Recreation and Park Association, donates 10 sets of new junior golf clubs to each Sticks for Kids program.

golf club and a handful of golf balls.

"Part of our job as PGA professionals is to promote play," Hardy says. "We touch a lot of kids and a lot of people with the program, but to get them back to the course has always been an issue. So we're developing programs to get them involved in the game and then get them back to the course, too."

This year the course will hold a scramble and invite past participants back, to help stay in touch with the kids. "Lincoln is very fortunate because it's a big golf community and a lot of people step up when you ask them to, and they do above and beyond what it takes," he says. "That's one of the reasons why this program is so successful. I've been in the golf business since 1974 and if you take youngsters and give them some clubs and they get excited about the game, but then they learn life values while growing up and playing – then I don't think there's anything better."

Rock Island Parks Golf, Rock Island, Ill.

"There are an awful lot of kids up here and in the summertime, they'll never see a golf course unless someone provided a program for them. We wanted to make sure they got exposed to golf," says Bill Fetty, manager of golf services of Rock Island Parks Golf. The Rock Island, Ill., Sticks for Kids program grew from around 80 kids to more than 300 in just three years. The program was so successful the USGA funded the program's expansion. Unfortunately, when the economy began to worsen, the program lost players and Fetty was forced to cut staff.

Many of the companies that had supported and funded the program backed out, as well, so Fetty cut field trips, lunches, picnics and prizes – narrowing the program to its essentials: golf instruction and making available opportunities for the kids to play.

But Fetty is determined to keep the program running, even if he has to do it by himself. "The program is down to two days a week. I beg and borrow every



In addition to teaching the game of golf, The Sticks for Kids program instills important life lessons.

piece of transportation I can get; I even pay for it out of my pocket when I need to." Fetty says lack of transportation is what hinders the program, since most of the kids are without a way to get to the golf course. But his dedication to Sticks for Kids and the children pays off, every year at least 2 or 3 past Sticks for Kids participants make the area's high school golf teams.

"I had a kid that had gone on to college and came back to me," Fetty says. "He doesn't live in the area anymore, but he sought me out and thanked me for keeping him in golf because he had been heading down the wrong road. He said if he hadn't had the opportunity, he didn't know if he would've ever graduated from high school or anything."

Pekin Boys and Girls Club, Pekin, Ill.

After Keith Dunkelbarger retired, he wanted to give back to the industry. He began an indoor golf program at the Pekin Boys and Girls Club, using

Getting INVOLVED

If you're interested in becoming involved with the Sticks for Kids Program, applications will be available in September on the NRPA website at www.nrpa.org. For additional questions, please contact Colleen Pittard at 703.858.4741 or cpittard@nrpa.org

Snag golf clubs – which Dunkelbarger describes as "funny-looking plastic clubs with the swing weight of normal clubs." He recruited other retirees to assist and they began calling themselves the Junior Golf of Pekin. The program became so successful, JGOP was asked by elementary schools, churches and latch-key programs to hold their programs for the children there. As a result, JGOP has taught more than 1,000 children.

"The kids could learn how to hit real golf balls using golf clubs and it was fantastic," he says.

Paragon Golf also donated clubs to each child at the Boys and Girls Club. "When you see a 7, 8 or 9-year-old who comes from poverty, when they get a new set of clubs – it's like giving an adult a new car. The little ones are so happy and so proud. We know there are a lot of values that come from playing golf, because we've all learned them ourselves – like integrity, sportsmanship and courtesy.

"So we teach kids that you don't talk when others are hitting and you root when others hit a great shot," he says.

Dunkelbarger believes kids don't play sports like they used to, unless it's in an organized league.

"The kids aren't getting exercise, they don't care to play ball," he says. "It's a sad situation, but with golf, the kids are lining up at the door to participate." ▲

Not just another hole-in-the-wall

Ryangolf and Ron Forse team up to restore a Florida course to its original charm.

By Rob Thomas

While a fine wine ages well, this is not always the case with classic golf courses. While Hole-in-the-Wall Golf Course in Naples, Fla., was far from blighted, the layout had lost luster and much of the original charm from its 1957 opening.

Ryangolf and architect Ron Forse were tasked with bringing this layout – about which Gene Sarazen once said, “If I only had one golf course to play, it would be Hole-in-the-Wall” – back to life.

“Having experienced the ‘winning’ side already in 2005 and 2006, the joy of winning is already something we know, have relished, and built upon,”

“The project was drainage driven. The property was settling, while the water table was rising. Our goal was to make it drain better, but not change the character of the property. Don’t stop looking like Dick Wilson’s work.”

– Ron Forse, architect

says Ryangolf president Fidel J. Garcia, of his firm’s third award. “Therefore, this one means more than that. Getting this award means that we have succeeded in creating a culture at Ryangolf that goes beyond just getting the work done in accordance with the contract. It corroborates our belief that if you do your best at every level, the combined effort of the team will always reach the highest level of performance.”

For Hole-in-the-Wall and this major overhaul, the “highest level of perfor-

mance” was more than 50 years in the making.

Originally designed by Dick Wilson and opened in 1958, Hole-in-the-Wall had been touched by many architects through renovation efforts over the years. Everyone from Sarazen and Robert Trent Jones to Arthur Hills and Ron Garl placed their fingerprints on various aspects of the design. This time, however, the project would call for less of a “renovation” and more of a “redo.”

Drainage, irrigation, new greens, modern grasses on the tees and fairways, and landscaped perimeter... it all had to be done, and more.

When it came time to pick the architect, one name kept popping up – Forse. The Pennsylvania-based architect’s name was dropped to the search committee by a member of the club, who also belongs to Bald Creek Colony Club (N.H.), where Forse redesigned the Donald Ross course, as well as by superintendent Russell Geiger, CGCS, who had attended a seminar taught by the designer. Forse has a reputation of being knowledgeable and working well on Dick Wilson courses, which is

exactly what this called for.

As for the builder, Ryangolf had the impressive resume and familiarity with the area.

“We have a very strong presence in the Florida market and, much more than that, within the high-profile country club major-renovation market, as we have been involved in similar total reconstructions for many years for clients like Hole-in-the-Wall,” Garcia says. “We have been working in the area for years and knew of their plans to restore and update their facility for more than a year before it came to fruition. Since we had been renovating the adjacent 36-hole Royal Poinciana Golf Club in phases of 9 holes each for several years, we were very familiar with the club, and members of both clubs knew of our reputation and performance on these type of projects. The opportunity to work with this club and with architect Ron Forse was very important for us.”

Conceived as a 6,800-yard, Par 71 golf-only facility, the course had settled over the years and became unplayable without any significant rainfall. Beyond that, the course was actually built at only 6,200 yards – rendering it vulnerable to today’s golfer with enhanced equipment.

Geiger, who has been at Hole-in-the-Wall since 1997, is a self-proclaimed optimist, but he had his doubts – mostly stemming from the short project window, which began in May 2009 with a January or February 2010 scheduled opening.

“It was a very, very large project,” Geiger says. “So much had to be done, I had my reservations.”

Drainage and water quality

To begin, the team needed to get the property dried out. The region has a very shallow water table as the course is located in close proximity to the Gulf of Mexico. For this reason, the fairways remained wet. In addition, the lakes were not very deep and pipe connections between them were failing, which