

The following announcement has been received by the Editor's office from Mr. Michael J. Williams, 1979 Conference Chairman of the Wisconsin Arborist Association.

EDITOR

The Wisconsin Arborist Association will hold its 1979 Annual Conference on February 7 and 8, 1979. The Ramada Inn in Janesville, Wisconsin will be the site of the 2-day conference. There will be a wide variety of topics presented of interest to all municipal and commercial arborists.



The following article about former WGCSA member, Mark Prindle was written by Tom Goff, Appleton Post-Crescent staff writer. The article originally appeared in the Post-Crescent's September 23, 1978 Leisure Section. Our thanks to Bill Sell, Golf Course Superintendent, Chaska Golf Course for passing it along.

EDITOR

100 - No Handicap for Prindle

by TOM GOFF
Post-Crescent staff writer

Mark Prindle doesn't know the exact secret to his longevity. But he feels that limited smoking, an occasional nip or two and leading a good life are all contributing factors.

Prindle, who reached the century milestone Friday, was the guest of honor Wednesday at a joint celebration of his 100th birthday and the 50-year anniversary of Ridgeway Country Club in Neenah where he spent some 32 years as developer, groomer and greenskeeper.

"I used to chew a little, but I never smoked heavily and I liked to take a nip every once in a while although I wasn't a heavy drinker," said Prindle, his thin face nearly hidden by a well-trimmed mustache and pair of dark glasses.

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Members of the WAA will be receiving program and registration information in the mail later this fall.

Non-members who are interested in the conference may get additional information from:

Michael J. Williams
Conference Chairman
18 N. Jackson Street
Janesville, WI 53545

Phone: (608) 752-0581

Individuals interested in membership information may contact:

Richard Haas
554 W2366 Hickory Ridge Drive
Waukesha, Wisconsin 53186

Phone: (414) 258-4230



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Despite his age, Prindle is remarkably spry. Naturally, he doesn't get around as well as he used to, but he is still able to walk at a pretty good pace without any type of supporting device and in fact is more than willing to lend a supporting arm to others whenever needed.

Except for a hearing deficiency, the rest of his senses are keen - and that includes his sense of humor.

While taking a cart-tour of the plush 18-hole layout that was once his father's farm, Mark spotted an isolated weed growing on the 14th fairway.

"You better get the greenskeeper out here and get rid of that," he said to former club president Ed Christoph who acted as his personal chauffeur. The remark was intended to poke a little good-natured fun at present greenskeeper Tom Wenzel.

On a more serious note, however, he had nothing but praise for the current condition of the course and the job Wenzel has done.

"It just couldn't be better and that pleases me very much," he said. "It's the same as I remember it, except that its bigger and the trees have grown up."

On his tour, he also took time to note the growth of many of the trees he had so carefully planted during his tenure as greenskeeper from 1927-59 when he retired at age 80.

After his retirement, a son Orrin took over greenskeeping duties for the next eight years until 1964.

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Ridgeway members Christoph, Art Drews and John Schaefer were the three men primarily responsible for setting up the tribute to Prindle, along with present club president Gene Patterson.

Orrin was there. So was Mark's brother Frank, who came all the way from Reno, Nev. Frank is Mark's "baby brother" - he's only 96 and the two hadn't seen each other in 12 years.

A huge birthday cake was prepared and Mark had the honor of blowing out the six candles on the cake, while members guests and well-wishers serenaded him to a chorus of "happy birthday." He got the first four candles with the first puff but needed another breath to blow out the last two.

As a remembrance of the occasion, he was also presented with 100 silver dollars.

Before the indoor ceremonies, Mark braved cold, misty weather to belt a few golf balls and stroke a few putts for the benefit of the press. He is reported to have knocked a three-iron over a lake on the course, which now bears his surname, Prindle Lake. He also dropped an eight-foot putt on the 18th green after a little bit of practice.

The land that was destined to become Ridgeway Country Club was first recorded in the Town of Clayton in 1847 and in 1854 it was mortgaged for \$470; a substantial amount in those days.

Seymour Prindle, Mark's father, acquired the property in 1855 for \$840 and when he died left it to his wife Julia. She, in turn, signed a deed in July 1908 giving the land to Mark, who was 30 at the time.

In April 1927, Mark sold the land for \$18,000. to the Neenah-Menasha golf club, the first ancestor of Ridgeway golf club.

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Mark stayed on as the club's first greenskeeper and when the club ran into financial straights, he also doled out \$1,000 to keep it going.

In 1935, the depression took a harsh toll on the club. At the time, the Neenah-Menasha Golf Club disbanded, leaving a mortgage of \$13,000, a debt of \$3,000 and advances to the club by six individuals, including Mark, and unpaid dues amounting to \$1,700.

In order to preserve the course, the Clayton Land Co. was formed "for the sole purpose of possessing and holding property of the Neenah-Menasha Golf Club." The disclosed purchase price was \$1, plus "other valuable considerations," the stock holders report said.

Stockholders were permitted to buy shares in the company, and a plan was laid for the formation of a future club which would lease that same parcel of land from the Clayton Land Co. with former stockholders given the privilege of becoming charter members of the newly organized golf club which was named Ridgeway Golf Course.

During the next few years, the Clayton Land Co. struggled to meet mortgage payments and keep up and improve the land and buildings.

In 1947, articles of the Ridgeway Golf Club and Clayton Land Co. were amended with the two organizations consolidated to form the new Ridgeway Country Club Inc.

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The club prospered with the times and the new clubhouse was built in 1963.

Today, Mark is living with a daughter (Hazel Schmidt) in Zittau, just outside of Freedom, where he still enjoys gardening and family gatherings.

Besides Orrin and Hazel, he has one other daughter, Julia Abraham of California, 10 grandchildren, 22 great grandchildren and five great-great-grand children.

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