



THE GRASS ROOTS

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WGCSA MEMBERS SERVE ON SELECT COMMITTEE TO STUDY UW GOLF COURSE

Seven members of the Wisconsin Golf Course Superintendents Association were appointed by Dr. Irving Shain, Chancellor of the University of Wisconsin — Madison, to serve on a Select Committee to study the feasibility of building a University of Wisconsin golf course west of Madison. Roger Bell of North Shore Golf Club, Tom Harrison of Maple Bluff Country Club, Rod Johnson of Sheboygan Country Club, Jerry Kershasky of Westmoor Country Club, Bob Musbach of North Hills Country Club, Pat Norton of the South Hills Club and Bill Roberts of SentryWorld accepted the charge from Dr. Shain in late February. They completed their work and presented it to the Chancellor on May 7.

The interest in a University of Wisconsin golf course goes back to the 1950s and the 1960s. Alumni, faculty and students encouraged the UW Foundation to assist the University in providing a golf course for the University community. In 1966, a faculty planning committee was appointed to provide guidance to the Foundation. After careful consideration, a site was chosen and purchased in 1971. It was a 585 acre tract of land between Madison and Verona, and is the same property that was the

focus of the Select Committee. It is a rolling landscape that offers a lot of variety in elevation and a pleasant combination of wooded and open areas. It has great potential for a golf course.

The University of Wisconsin Foundation selected the golf course design firm of Killian and Nugent in 1972 to develop plans for a golf course and recreational facility at the Verona site. At this time, it was anticipated that the golf course would open for play in the spring of 1974. Financing of the project was to be covered by two substantial bequests to the UW — one from Harry Culver of Chicago and one from Carl Dietz of Milwaukee. Both were former "W" men and avid golfers, and each had expressed a desire that their gifts be used for a UW golf course.

Preliminary studies led to the conclusion that residential development would be necessary if the project was to be financially feasible. Final plans, which included a housing layout on the property, were not completed until March of 1974. As soon as the inclusion of housing became known to the public, objections started to surface. Numerous special interest groups, environmentalists, concerned citizens and the Dane County Regional Planning Commission expressed concern about the golf course project. The principal objection centered around the issue of acceptability of the residential development and its potential impact on the surrounding environment, as well as its impact on local governmental bodies. The opposition was so strong that the University and the Foundation decided not to proceed.

There was very little said or written during the years following 1974. In 1982, several UW alumni made arrangements with the Fazio Golf Course Designers, Inc. of Jupiter, Florida to study the site and address the current feasibility of building a golf course on the property. Fazio submitted a golf course design plan for consideration, and his cost estimates concluded that a golf course could be built with the funds held in trust since 1974.

The introduction of the Fazio plan precipitated a cost comparison between that plan and an update of the Killian and Nugent design. The comparison was done by a panel of UW officials. This study led to the conclusion that

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there was still a substantial shortage of money to construct and operate a golf course. The conclusion of the UW study brought forth the issue of concern that additional fund raising efforts to make up any shortfalls in golf course construction monies could divert funds that otherwise might be available to support academic programs. In a period of difficult financial problems within the University, this became a significant consideration. The concern was amplified even more by the fact that any golf course construction proposal would require approval of the State Building Commission and the Wisconsin Legislature.

The negative tone of the UW study led to the release of another independent report, authored by Robert Graves, manager of the Spring Green recreational complex that includes a golf course, and Donald Schink, a land use and recreation expert in University Extension. Their report, presented to the UW Foundation on December 6 of 1983, concluded that the golf course was financially feasible. However, this report dealt with the Fazio plan, a plan that has absolutely no "official" standing with the University or the Foundation. It made any cost comparisons between "unofficial" groups and the University staff tenuous at best.

The "apples and oranges" situation presumably led to Dr. Shain's decision to solicit the help of independent experts to study the Fazio plan. Determining the background of an expert group was wisely handled by the Chancellor's office: who would be better than individuals whose chosen profession was the management of golf courses? Seven Golf Course Superintendents from Wisconsin were selected and asked to complete a review of the Fazio plan. Dr. Harry Peterson, UW—Madison Assistant Chancellor, said, "The committee members are highly respected individuals from the state of Wisconsin who actually operate golf courses. They will analyze the possibility of building a University of Wisconsin golf course and make recommendations to us concerning how much it

would cost to construct and operate and how much revenue we can expect to obtain." Peterson also felt that it would be very helpful to obtain an additional set of estimates, especially from people who are in the field.

A review of the report submitted by the Select Committee demonstrates the serious, sincere, objective and professional approach they took when they assumed the responsibility. It is an extremely thorough, very accurate and well written report. The committee concludes that, in fact, there is not sufficient money available at this time to build a quality golf course, a requirement all parties involved over the years have agreed upon.

The members of this committee are to be highly commended for the job they've done. They deserve praise for accepting the responsibility of any good citizen to help when a request is made by a public organization. They are to be admired for maintaining complete and total objectivity throughout the two months it took to study and analyze the various proposals and to prepare the report. And, most of all, they have earned a compliment from all of us for presenting the University with a truly professional document. We should all be proud of them.



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Start immediately, 6 Month position.

Contact Paul Domke
100 Oak Street
Hurley, Wisconsin 54534
(715) 561-3773

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The Telemark Lodge
Cable, Wisconsin
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Contact Tony Wise
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