



President's Message

MY HERO

Everyone should have a hero. I have one and I am proud to admit it. Age shouldn't be a factor — one is never too old to have a hero. There are so many exemplary and outstanding people in our society that finding one to suit your interest, regardless of your age, is really very easy. For as long as I can remember, I've had a hero. They have changed over the years, but for the last ten or so years the same man has been the focus of my hero worshipping.

My first recollections of heroes go back to the late 1950's when the Milwaukee Braves were the terror of baseball. So many of the Braves' players were heroes — Aaron, Mathews, Crandall, Spahn, Burdette and Burton. But my favorite player was Joe Adcock. My dad knew him personally. Joe's wife was from Mineral Point and Joe was occasionally in that area on his off days, looking for horses to buy for his Louisiana ranch. The fact that I could get so close to him, through my father, made him an easy choice as a hero. He was a big man and a good hitter — I can vividly remember the day he hit four home runs in one game! Joe was a better hero than any of the other Braves and even better than Mickey Mantle as far as I was concerned.

Things started to change in 1959 and 1960. Vince Lombardi moved to Green Bay and started to coach the Packers. At a time when I was playing football in high school and when the Packers were winning lots of football games, baseball and Joe Adcock faded. The Packers had a lot of great players worthy of a heroship — Hornung, Taylor, McGee, Kramer, Gregg, Thurston, Nitscke and Starr. Poor Joe didn't have a chance! Suddenly, I couldn't get enough news

about Bart Starr. Bright, aggressive and cool under pressure describe him best. He was a great player and he had a great name. For years he filled the role of hero for me. He did the same for thousands of kids across the country.

I never felt limited to just one hero. Often, several people captured my attention for extended periods. What young American in the early 60's couldn't feel a certain amount of awe over President Kennedy? He was our youngest president and a war hero. He was courageous in his decisions and his actions. He was a particularly special person to me because, during the primary campaign against Hubert Humphrey in 1959, he was in my hometown of Fennimore to campaign and I was able to get his autograph. That impressed me then, as an eighth grader, and every once in awhile to this day I look at that autograph and feel a certain inspiration. It is one of my prized possessions. John Kennedy was everyone's hero, I think, not just mine.

golfers, for obvious reasons. Managing a golf course tends to narrow and focus one's interest in games, and golf caught my attention more and more, in terms of those playing it. An interest in a game begets an interest in the players and, showily and subtly, there was a gathering of my intrigue in one and only one player — Arnold Palmer. My admiration and respect for him have grown by leaps and bounds since then and he has been the perfect hero for me. I suspect he always will be.

Although he had passed his zenith when I started to take an interest in him, that didn't seem to matter. There are so many appealing things about him that I really didn't, and still don't, care about how many championships he's winning.

Undoubtedly, for myself or for any other Golf Course Superintendent, the greatest trait Palmer has is his love for golf courses. He once wrote, "A golf course is an intoxicating place," music to the ears of a man (me) who will spend many of the working years of his life on a golf course. He grew up on



Monroe Miller and Arnold Palmer discussing — what else? — golf courses.

There was a period of time, from the late 60's until the early 70's, that I didn't think much about heroes. I was either in the Army in Vietnam, starting a family, finishing school at the UW or getting my professional feet wet. There didn't seem to be much time for it. I lost track of Joe Adcock's career, John Kennedy was gone and Bart Starr retired as a player. But by 1973 I was paying more attention to

a golf course and lived in a house near the 3rd hole at Latrobe Country Club in Pennsylvania. Arnold's dad, Deacon, was the "Greenkeeper" at Latrobe when Arnie was born in 1929, and soon after that he became the golf pro as well, a "temporary" economy move by the club during the depression years. Deke Palmer not only gave golf lessons, he mowed fairways too. As a youngster, Arnold worked in

the golf shop and on the golf course. This had to influence the affection for golf courses he carries today. I think it is this connection Palmer has with my profession that makes him so special to me. Unlike so many other golf professionals who conjure up hatred for the golf course in order that they may "beat" it, Palmer has never lost his deep affection for them. He has put his knowledge of the game together with his love for golf courses and designed some of the world's greatest layouts. It was also great to learn, in 1983 from Arnold himself, that his father was a long time member of the GCSAA. One of Arnold's brothers, Jerry, is a Golf Course Superintendent at Latrobe Country Club. And Arnie didn't hurt us when he did the series of ads for Pennzoil using the Toro tractor on the golf course.

The GCSAA has done many many great things over the dozen or so years that I have been a member, but none of those comes even close to the stroke of genius they showed when they selected Arnold Palmer as the first recipient of the OLD TOM MORRIS AWARD. He was the perfect choice, the same one I would have made. And when Bob Hope received the 1984 award in Las Vegas, Palmer was there to observe the proceedings. What a guy! It is a wonderful feeling to know that he has respect for us and our profession.

Not only has he been kind to our profession, he has been great for

the game of golf and has probably done more for it than any other man. He is able not only to capture great respect for his game abilities, but also for his warmth, honesty and kindness. I think no one in golf ever has or ever will match this man for his charisma, his personality or his verve. His playing style is courageous and he approaches tough spots with bravado. He probably is the most determinedly aggressive player the game has known and he has an absolutely transparent desire to win. But he is also the ultimate sportsman — not a cryer or a complainer. This past summer he missed qualifying for what would have been his 32nd consecutive U.S. Open. The USGA has a requirement that he qualify, even though he is a past winner. Did he object? Nope. His only comment was, "I missed. I had every opportunity to make it. I feel that if you can't play, you shouldn't play." A great man with a great attitude.

Reporters like him — he always gives them the time they need and will talk with them, good round or bad, win or lose. And the reason "Arnie's Army" became such a big thing on the Pro Tour was that this man always has (and still does, as I can personally attest) signed autographs during a round of golf, almost no matter what.

The image of Arnie on the golf course is legend too. The sight of him tugging at his glove, hitching his trousers up, flicking his

cigarette into the rough, walking up to the ball and hitting it quickly and powerfully has thrilled millions of people, none more than me. And I always appreciated the way he tastefully dressed, avoiding the "distracting" clothes some golf pros like to wear. He always exudes class.

I am fairly serious in my hero worshipping. I have seen Arnold play golf three times. And believe me, there is nothing like standing so close to him that you can actually hear him ask his caddie for a club, to be so close that you are sprinkled by bits of sod after he has drilled a shot with his patented controlled lunge. I never had the chance, nor does anyone ever get the opportunity, to stand behind the umpire when Joe Adcock hit a home run! I have gotten Arnie's autograph on five different occasions, once even asking him to sign a can of Pennzoil for me, which he happily did. I collect books by him and about him. Several pictures of the man hang in my office. And next year, during our annual trip out East, Cheryl and I plan on making a side trip to Latrobe, his hometown in Pennsylvania, and visit the golf course where this marvelous man started his unparalleled career in golf.

He is a great man — greater than great and bigger than life. If you are looking for a hero, you'll never do any better than bestowing that honor on Arnold Palmer.

Monroe S. Miller
President

An Editorial

LOOKING BACK — WHAT VALUE IS HERITAGE?

We've all experienced the great anticipation that fills everyone at a family reunion when three or four, and sometimes even five generations congregate for a really good time. When the picnic and games are over and when the youngest of the kids have quieted down, the parents and grandparents and great-grandparents gather together visit and reminisce. Usually the sad times and dark moments are set aside and all conversations are happy and joyful. Family ties

are renewed. This is a part of "our past" that we cherish, a segment of "our heritage" that we treasure.

There are other times when our past conjures up other pleasant memories which are enjoyable and even soothing, too. In our more thoughtful moments we review our errors and recognize that mistakes are also important in shaping us. This is all part of our past, and things learned over generations have been as important in molding us as is the present.

And so it is, I feel, with our corporate past and with our professional past. Our corporate past, as a community or a state or a nation or an association, is celebrated on patriotic holidays and special observations. We make note of the birthdays of

tant and inspiring documents and books of years gone by. And, we keep in our minds those undying concepts that make this country great. We must recall these things so that they won't ever be lost. Our professional heritage is important to us for these same reasons.

We need to look at our predecessors and learn of the problems they struggled with. We need to study the solutions they derived for such problems. It is interesting to read that some of the same chaotic situations that existed on golf courses 50 years ago are still with us, and it is equally interesting to find how our professional forebearers dealt with those situations in their time. These presences of our past are practical and pragmatic.