



WELL KEPT SECRETS

By Rob Schultz

The serenity of Lawsonia, the unmatched difficulty of Americana's Brute and Briar Patch, the sweet smell of pines at Telemark, the panoramic, spine-tingling views from Peninsula State Park, the brutal, yet glorious 18th hole at the Springs.

These are a few of my favorite things.

Whenever I pick up one of the national golf magazines and read about the beauty of playing golf in the Smokies or the wonder of Michigan's gold coast, it sickens me to think that Wisconsin's resort golf courses must take a back seat to these places for the simple lack of a decent marketing approach.

Wisconsin is supposed to be a hotbed for tourism. Yet, the state does absolutely nothing to promote what I feel is one of its greatest assets. Sure, Michigan has a Jack Nicklaus course and an Arnold Palmer course to promote. But how many people know that Nicklaus helped Pete Dye design the Briar Patch in Lake Geneva; or that Dye is designing a beautiful new resort course in Kohler; or that Robert Trent Jones has designed one course and his son, Bobby, has designed two with a third on its way?

It's unfortunate that the University of Wisconsin bypassed renowned Florida architect Tom Fazio for its proposed golf course. That would have meant the state had three of the top architects in the world here to design courses that the public could play.

Still, this state isn't doing too badly. Wisconsin's resort golf courses are the Midwest's best kept secrets.

Some might say that's the way it should be: Leave Wisconsin's golf courses for Wisconsinites. They certainly would be one of the few amenities left here that haven't been trampled to death by our neighbors to the south.

However, that means many courses which I believe rate among some of the nation's best public and resort courses

won't receive the recognition they truly deserve.

I dare anyone to try to match the wonderful maintenance records of any of the state's public and resort courses such as SentryWorld and Brown County near Green Bay.

What golf courses in the Midwest can match the views from Peninsula? Or Lawsonia? It amazes me every time I travel to Green Lake to play that wonderful old course located within the American Baptist Assembly. With the gentle chimes from a nearby chapel always making such beautiful music in the background, I sometimes have to pinch myself to remember that I'm not vacationing in Valley Forge, where I spent many of my summers as a boy. Yet, who outside of Wisconsin and Chicago know about Lawsonia's illustrious history?

What resort courses can match the beauty and difficulty of the Briar Patch and the Brute of Americana? A former Playboy Club, Americana has everything a golf resort needs. It even has a location perfect for luring golfers from Chicago and Milwaukee.

Finally, and most important, what resort courses in the nation, let alone the Midwest, can match the greens fees around this state? Some state golfers grumble about \$30 fees at Sentry and Americana or \$15 fees at the Springs. Are they kidding? Golfers pay \$60 to \$70 to play golf at the Nicklaus and Palmer courses in Michigan and nobody is going to convince me those places are twice as good as any in Wisconsin.

Yet, few seem to care that Wisconsin's resort courses are on the verge of extinction. The buzz words from those who could save them continue to be: "Let's keep it a secret." But that also means the state's resort courses will have a tough row to hoe in order to make ends meet.

The Springs near Spring Green has been for sale for nearly six years. Despite carrying a modest price tag of

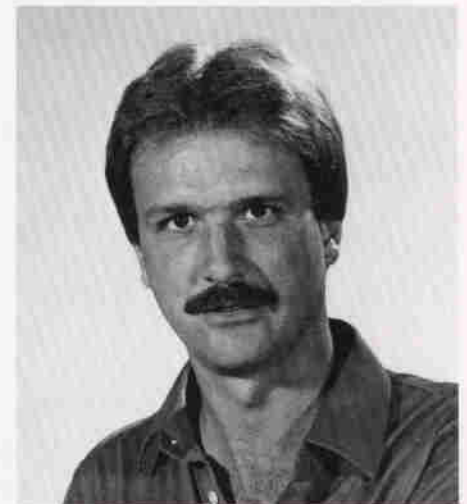
\$4 million (and that includes a ski hill and 2,500 acres of land), few have shown much interest. In the meantime, it must labor with a pro shop harbored inside a mobile home.

Nevertheless, the Springs is better off than Rainbow Springs, which continues to look more and more like a ghost town, and Telemark, yet another state resort forced to close its doors.

Maybe this state needs a golf sugar daddy; somebody who can build a resort, make it financially sound and bring in more golfers who, while here, will look around the state for other places to play. That's what saved Michigan. Maybe Kohler's River Run will be the answer in Wisconsin.

But instead of waiting around for Mr. Golfbar, the resort courses in this state should band together and create a solid marketing approach. Few ever follow the old adage: *You have to spend money to make money.* Golf course managers are famous for being tightwads. But in this case, maybe they should open up their pocketbooks a little bit more.

In fact, it may be a matter of survival.



Editor's Note: Bernard Darwin brought sports writing from jumbled figures at the bottom of a page in the London Times newspaper shortly after the turn of the century to a branch of literary journalism. Many believe him the first true writer of golf, as well, and among the very best of very many who have written about the game we love. Mr. Darwin once described writing about sports as a job "into which men drift." That may be true for some sports writers, but it cannot be said of our newest contributor to the GrassRoots, Rob Schultz.

A native of Oshkosh, Rob attended high school at Oshkosh North and graduated from the UW-Oshkosh in 1978 well prepared for a career in journalism and sports writing. Immediately after receiving his B.S. degree in journalism he went

to work for the Cardinal Free Press in Carpentersville, Illinois. After four months in Illinois he accepted a position with the Green Bay News-Chronicle. His primary duties while there were covering the Green Bay Packers and playing as often as he could at Paul Delfose's Brown County Golf Course.

In December of 1980 Rob moved to Madison where he became the Special Sections Editor for Madison Newspapers, Inc. It took his supervisors about a year to realize that he belonged in the world of sports news and he moved from MNI to The Capital Times. He's been covering the

Packers for TCT for the past two years and has been their golf writer for the past four years. Rob and his wife Pat were married in May and now reside in Verona.

Rob feels a certain kinship with Wisconsin's Golf Course Superintendents. He helped pay his way through college by working summers at the Lake Shore Municipal Golf Course in Oshkosh, right adjacent to Highway 41. He is a member of the fraternity of "former golf course watermen" and recalls watering the old-fashioned way: with hoses. Fairway quick couplers are not foreign to him, either!

I've been reading Rob's columns on golf for all his time in Madison and can testify he is an excellent golf reporter. But I quickly realized that he is more than just a reporter. His sentences and paragraphs reflect a deep and abiding love of the game and he obviously derives satisfaction in capturing many of the sentimental and romantic feelings we all find in the game. And few things please him more than a trip around a golf course attempting to better his 9 handicap.

Rob is an inspired writer about golf and I think you are going to enjoy reading his columns in the months and years ahead.

MSM

WISCONSIN TURFGRASS ASSOCIATION SUMMER FIELD DAY

The 1987 edition of the Wisconsin Turfgrass Association Summer Field Day will be held on August 25th. As in the previous two years, Red Roskopf will be our host at his Camelot Golf Course near Lomira. Red, who chairs the WTA Field Day Committee, promises that this year's version will be bigger and better than ever.

Equipment and products important to the maintenance of golf turf will be available for close inspection. Factory representatives and distributor personnel will be on hand to answer questions. Once again, University of Wisconsin-Madison faculty will be presenting results and recommendations from their season's research.

Information regarding registration will be forthcoming from the WTA. Please reserve August 25th now for attending this popular event.

Lora Ripp Chosen To Receive WGCSA's James R. Love Scholarship



Lora M. Ripp, a senior in the University of Wisconsin - Madison's Turf and Grounds Management program, has been named recipient of the WGCSA James R. Love Scholarship for the 1987-1988 academic year.

In a letter to WGCSA members, Lora wrote:

"I am writing to express my sincere appreciation for your donation of my scholarship. As I draw closer to the end of my college career, I find a money contribution especially helpful so I may

concentrate on my studies and learning experiences. I am somewhat anxious to enter into the full-time working situation so that I may then help others out as you have helped me. Once again, thank you."

Sincerely,

Lora M. Ripp

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Silica Sand Top Dressing Screen Analysis

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40	11.0
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