

TWENTY (PLUS THREE)

From the Sunday, April 18, 1965 Wisconsin State Journal comes the following story about our profession.

Forgotten Man of Golfdom

Ever since golf was born in America on Nov. 14, 1888, at the home of John Reid in Yonkers, N.Y., the game's forgotten man has been the greenskeeper. Upon him went the burden of building and maintaining golf courses with the delicate touch of a doctor and the attentiveness of a nursemaid.

Greenskeeping was in the beginning a job of muscle, not mind, a chore done by physical strength alone—the hand hauling of mowers, the sanding and upkeep of bunkers, the planting of greens, flags, and the like.

Time brought research and agronomy, the study of plant and turf life akin to golf course upkeep. It brought chemicals to preserve grass and help it resist disease. It brought automation, machinery that gave added skill to the greenskeeper and finer grooming to the links.

TAUGHT IN COLLEGE

The greenskeeper became the course superintendent, a dignified title more in keeping with his work. The value of the superintendent became a little more pronounced, and with it came the urge for greater knowledge.

"Today, golf course maintenance is taught in many colleges," says Peter

LIFE IN THE "PAST" LANE



From L to R: Jerry Murphy-Director GCSAA, Jack Soderberg, Dennis Thorp and Robert Musbach-WGCSA President.

Two UW students, Jack Soderberg and Dennis Thorp, received scholarships from the National Golf Course Superintendents Association at the April meeting of the WGCSA.

GCSAA scholarships originated 14 years ago when the need for qualified golf superintendents became apparent due to the increase in the number of golf courses, technological advancements, and retirements. Since that time, \$146,000 has been distributed to deserving students.



A glimpse of Tom's workbench and a few of his trucks and tractors. Als, notice the picture on the right side of the shelf—Harrison was a freshman UW basketball player in 1965.



A couple of lucky kids with their dad, the toy collector!

Hobbies

COLLECTING TOYS

"Fortunate is the man who can carry some of the freshness, eagerness and simplicity of youth into his later years, who can have a boy's heart below a man's head."

John Burroughs

I think that if I was a boy looking for a surrogate father, I'd pick Tom Harrison. He is fortunate and much like the man described by that old New Englander, John Burroughs. Like the rest of us in the WGCSA, Tom has an ideal job. I could spend time outside with him, riding on golf cars and in trucksters, driving tractors and other neat equipment, and enjoying the seasons as they come and go. After work we would ride home in his bright red Firebird (loud mufflers, big engine, fancy wheel covers), hitch the Blazer (4-wheel drive) to our boat and cruise the beautiful four lakes of Madison. Once in awhile we'd go to the Village Fire Department and ride on a fire truck—my adopted dad is a volunteer fireman! On weekends we would go to a UW football or basketball or hockey game together—Tom loves sports. On occasion we would go and see the Brewers or the Bucks or the Packers. Never a dull moment!

Tom's game for anything (except playing golf!). Maybe we'd go to the Dells or trip out to Dyersville for the day.

Dyersville? Where is that and why would anyone go there?

Dyersville is in Iowa, west of Dubuque twenty or thirty miles or so. The fact that Tom likes to visit Dyersville is another reason I would choose him for my dad. Dyersville is the home of the ERTL Company, the world's foremost and largest manufacturer of toy tractors and of plastic models. The Scale Models Company also calls Dyersville home. They make toy tractors, too. The National Farm Toy Museum, the National Farm Toy Show and any number of other events relating to toys happen to be in Dyersville. It's a great town for young boys and big boys who love toys. You see, Tom Harrison not only likes big toys like boats and cars. He likes model toys—cars, trucks, trains and tractors.

And he's been collecting these kinds of toys since he was a boy. Let's see. Tom is forty now, so he's been a toy collector for over a quarter of a century and almost for three decades. That is a long, long time to be collecting anything.

E) YEARS AGO...

Peter Miller, then the Golf Course Superintendent at the Nakoma Golf Club, was the focus of the story.

Miller, superintendent at the Nakoma club here and public relations head of the Wisconsin Golf Course Superintendents' Association. "Seminars are held regularly by the various superintendents' groups at which every phase of our work is discussed."

"A recent turf conference at the University of Wisconsin emphasized how intensely interested our members are in their work. More than 100 of our 110 members were present. Manufacturers and salesmen, who are welcome to these sessions, sent the attendance to more than 200."

MONTHLY MEETINGS

Conferences follow a pattern, Miller said. They are broken down into turf grass management, weeds and control, soils and structure, plant life, hot weather turf diseases, treatment of soils to assure fertility, and, topping it off, the specific study of Wisconsin turf.

There will be conferences each month at a different club in various areas, Miller said, so that during the busiest time of the season the superintendent can keep apace of his work and his problems.

The superintendent is like the mailman on vacation. The conferences are held on Mondays—the forgotten man's "day off."

THE "FUNNIES"

You Know You're A Golf Course Superintendent When...



You spend time in the winter months catching up on the finest literature available.

His collection of model cars is probably the most extensive since he's been at that the longest. He still has his first model car—a 1958 Chevrolet—and that was the year this wonderful hobby started. Many collectors are very secretive about the details of their collections. They won't share dollar value or number of pieces; they won't even let many people see their collections. This is a very private business for some. Tom isn't that way; he's open about the fact that his model collection numbers somewhere between 700 and 800 pieces. He's got more models than I have hats!

Tom and I've been friends since 1966 and over the years I have watched his collecting go through several stages. The first stage was the "model car" stage. After the Navy and about the time he started working at the Bluff, he started to expand his collection beyond cars. He entered what I refer to as the "truck" stage. He started to add vehicles (models) similar to those he had experience with. For example, his work as a volunteer fireman inspired his interest in firetrucks. To this day, he continues to add firefighting equipment to his display shelves. You wouldn't believe the numbers of these kinds of models he has! And they are really beautiful.

I've often thought that the reason Tom has so many different models is because he is interested in so many different things. Believe it or not, but T.H. absolutely loves to plow snow. Maybe I am astounded by that fact because I despise the job. Anyway, his love of snow plowing has resulted in shelves showing many pieces of snow removal equipment. Pickups with plows, deuce and a half trucks with sanding equipment and wing plows, and even large horsepower snowblower attachments are on display. This equipment also came during his "truck" stage.

Rounding out the equipment he added during the "truck" stage is construction equipment. He has dozens and dozens of pieces of front end loaders, tandem and triaxle dump trucks, backhoes, articulated loaders, dozers, packers and many others I do not even recognize.

Of course, the truck stage collection also includes ordinary trucks and tractor/trailer rigs for hauling everything from fuel oil to livestock.

Tom's collection entered another stage in about 1980—the train stage. He has, since then, devoted a lot of time and energy to his HO gauge train collection. Apparently train collectors measure the size of their train operations not by the number of pieces (Tom has 300 cars and engines) but by the "layout" size. So, for those aficionados, his layout is 12'x16'.

The most recent stage in the elevation of the Harrison Hobby is the "tractor" stage. Although he wasn't raised on a farm, Tom did spend summers on a rural McFarland farm operated by a close relative. Also, he went through a period when, after working a full day at Maple Bluff, he'd head out to Blaney Farms and help with the seed corn harvest in the autumn and with the planting in spring. The big and powerful equipment used on the Blaney Farms piqued his interest. So, of course, he started to collect farm tractors.

This collection is one I readily relate to since I am also a tractor collector. Tom's tractor numbers run in the neighborhood of 150 and believe me, that is a considerable number, one I admit to being jealous over. And across the country, tractor collecting has grown by leaps and bounds in the past five years. There is a show, auction or sale within traveling distance almost every weekend in the fall and winter. There are many journals dealing with the the hobby—T.H. prefers *The Toy Farmer*. There are parts houses (will fitters!) and tire companies. Some individuals make a living from tractor repair and restoration (toy mechanics, we call them). There is so much going on with this hobby that it is difficult to keep up. But Tom, somehow, is managing to do that.

The first question most ask is, "Where in the world do you keep them?" Let me just say that he has had to build a new house and when I asked Tom if he had made provisions for all of his models, he replied, "Miller, I've got the whole basement of a six bedroom home!"

So if you see a red Firebird heading west on Highway 151, chances are four boys are headed for the toy stores around Dyersville—Tom (40), Monroe (41), Brandon (4) and Matthew (6).

"Hey Dad, can we buy a couple of new toy tractors, if we promise not to tell Mom?"

Believe me guys, Diane already knows. She has lived with Tom too long.

—Monroe S. Miller