

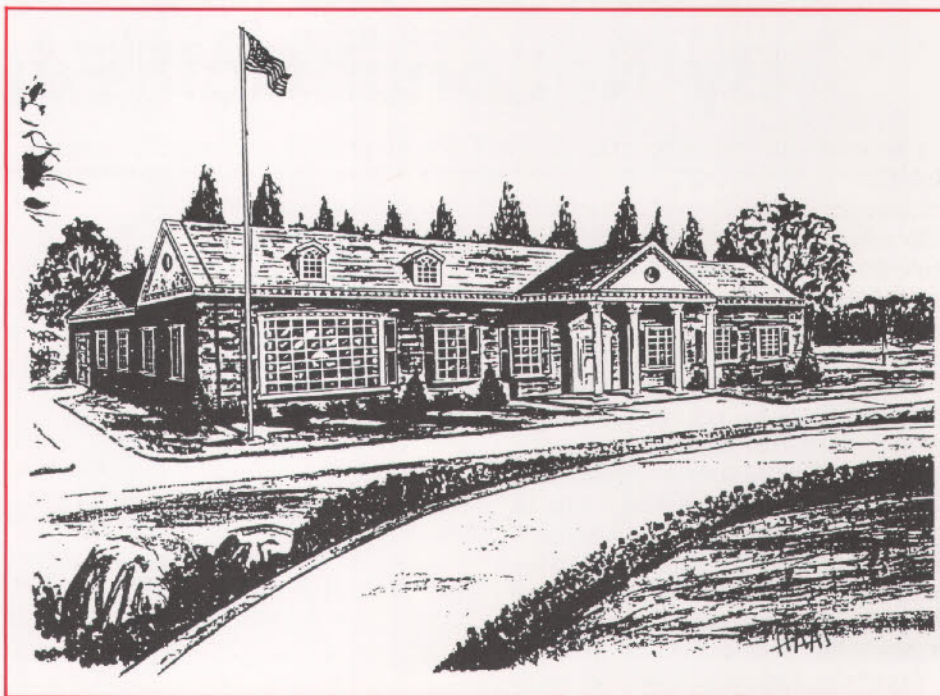
Golf House of Wisconsin — A Status Report

By Gene Haas — Executive Director, Wisconsin State Golf Association

It was recently announced that the Scottish government approved the construction of a golf museum to be located at the pristine "Old House" at St. Andrews, Scotland. The approval didn't come about that easily though; it required a second vote by the administrative authorities after the original architectural plans were rejected because it was a concern that the two-story building would detract from the famous view on the 18th hole. A new concept, featuring a one-story building, finally gained approval and the \$3 million dollar edifice will start taking shape sometime in 1989; with completion expected prior to the 1990 British Open, which is scheduled to be played at St. Andrews. It now appears that the history of the game of golf and many of its artifacts and implements will return to the site that many feel is the birthplace of golf.

Obviously, this is exciting news to golf buffs who "dig" this kind of stuff. There's only one thing wrong with this announcement though — Why has it taken so long to see this type of golf necessity take place? One would think that St. Andrews, or some other Scottish site, would long ago have gained worldwide recognition as the "Louvre" of golf. Apparently, this is not so and they are now taking steps to rectify this situation. No true Scotsman wants to see Pinehurst, NC and its Golf Hall of Fame and museum, USGA Golf House or any other American site be acclaimed as a center of golf history. What does all of this mean to anyone who has an avid interest in golf here in the State of Wisconsin? Well, there's some similarity in what is now taking place in St. Andrews Scotland and here in Wisconsin. The history of golf in Wisconsin got its start in the 1890's with facilities in Milwaukee, Janesville, Green Lake, Oconomowoc and a few other places, which are recognized as "birthplaces" of Wisconsin golf. As time advances, history becomes more precious. And so, we too in Wisconsin are taking steps to preserve that history through the formation and development of the Golf Foundation of Wisconsin, Inc.

Back in 1977, Frank Woodside and Bob Brue of Ozaukee CC, along with other influential leaders of golf in Wisconsin, gathered in a meeting at the Ozaukee CC to formulate the GFW, with a primary purpose of bringing all



GOLF FOUNDATION OF WISCONSIN — GOLF HOUSE

of the golf organizations together. This togetherness is perhaps one of the first ventures in the country that enables all of the major golf associations in Wisconsin to share the responsibility of planning and directing the future of the game as it relates to our state. The objectives are manifold — be it matters pertaining to tournament golf, caddy scholarships, green belt legislation, agronomical problems, junior golf development or the preservation and promotion of the game in every way possible. One of the earliest goals was to create a "Golf House" to serve as headquarters for all of the major golf organizations in Wisconsin.

In 1983 the GFW, under the leadership of President Jack Reif of Nakoma GC introduced a junior division in an attempt to introduce the game to youngsters all over the state. An invitational championship was initiated in 1983 at the SentryWorld GC along with a point system to determine the Wisconsin Junior Boy and Girl Player of the Year. An accelerated fund raising program to sustain its annual operational expenses was initiated, primarily supported by club members throughout Wisconsin, which continues to this day.

In 1985, the addition of Hal Metzen of Madison as Executive Director, along with increased WPGA involvement, brought the GFW message to high school coaches, recreation de-

partments and golf professionals throughout the state. Clinics and teaching centers staffed by PGA professionals introduced the game to more than 10,000 young golfing aspirants. This program continues under Metzen's direction and with the creation of a Wisconsin High School Coaches Association, it appears that golf in Wisconsin is in good hands.

The objective of creating a Wisconsin Golf House looms even more positive at this time. The GFW is about to initiate a major building fund raising project with the hope of seeing the Golf House become a reality within the next few years. It appears that it will be necessary to raise between \$300,000 to \$500,000 in order for this to happen. The Golf House will contain a golf library and museum as well as afford office space for those active golf organizations requiring such space.

Once again, the golfers of Wisconsin are being asked to support this project through contributions and other financial considerations. Also to be contacted will be commercial concerns and private individuals who have an interest in seeing the game of golf promoted and preserved. It is hoped that this project will reach completion within the next two or three years. The effort has begun and now it is up to the golf interested people of Wisconsin to make it all happen.