



## SPECIAL INTERESTS HIDE BEHIND THE ENVIRONMENTALIST'S FLAG

By Rob Schultz

CUNA Mutual Insurance Society is one of Madison's finest places to work. CUNA takes care of its employees and its community with special activities and projects. The health of its employees and community is a huge concern at CUNA.

Oh, CUNA also likes to make money. Lots of it. It does pretty well, thank you.

Since CUNA takes care of its employees and the community and also likes to make money, lots of it, a light bulb went off in the heads of its executives a few years ago.

CUNA owns a golf course called Pleasant View just outside the Madison city limits. It's a public facility, an OK layout in a wonderful, hilly setting that CUNA had ignored and leased to two businessmen. For years, the golf course lost money. CUNA execs just shrugged.

But now they had a great idea for the site. They unveiled plans to rip up the entire site and, with the land it owned adjacent to the course, build a new Jack Nicklaus course around a beautiful housing development.

It was a colossal idea. It was good for CUNA, good for golf, good for the community. Not only would CUNA benefit financially, but Madison and nearby Middleton would also stand to prosper from golfers flocking to the site to play one of the greatest golf course architect's only state project.

So why does this project stand no chance in hell of getting built?

Environmentalists. They have declared war on CUNA and their wonderful project because of concerns of groundwater, green belts and aquifers. They have made CUNA look like the bad guy even though they have not discussed the project or their environmental concerns with the CUNA executives.

It's doubtful if such a meeting will ever take place. You see, there are many in the Madison community who stand behind the environmentalist's flag but have other, deep-seated reasons for not wanting the project to succeed.

They don't like change. They don't like prosperity. They like everything as is in their own little safe world.

I had the chance to have a conversation with Ken Wade, the environmentalist who is leading the crusade against the CUNA project. Wade is the chairman of the town where the new golf course property would be constructed. Prior to calling him, I did some research and found that he lives in the country and detests urban sprawl. "And his idea of urban sprawl is two homes within one mile of each other," said the mayor of Middleton.

Not surprisingly, the residents of Wade's town, who stand to have their property values skyrocket after the CUNA project is completed, are trying to get a recall vote to oust him from office.

When I finally reached Wade, he filled my ears with facts about groundwater, aquifers and green belts and how the CUNA project would destroy all three. Then this self-serving, neophyte politician started attacking me. "What do you know about the environment," he bellowed. "Why is a sportswriter doing this story?"

My retort? "What do you know about golf courses?" I asked.

There was silence.

But so what. This is a story that Madison's liberal politicians love. They immediately sided with the environmentalists without ever finding out the facts from both sides. Even my very liberal newspaper, *The Capital Times*, sided with Wade and pulled me from the story without discussing it with me. They wanted their slant and they knew they wouldn't get that from me.

My paper has ignored my pleas that this is more than an environmental issue. One of our columnists who is leading the crusade against the CUNA project knows about as much about the environment as Jimmy the Groundhog. His real, deep-seated reason for crushing the project is his desire to keep Pleasant View as is; a cheap place to play golf. He knows a Nicklaus course will charge golfers at least \$50

to play 18 holes.

Once again, we have another hater of development and prosperity standing behind the environmental flag.

This whole scenario reminds me of the death of Oshkosh, the community where I was born and raised. At the turn of the century Oshkosh was booming. But by the 1950s and '60s, the rest of the state — especially the rest of the Fox Cities — caught up. Cities like Appleton and Green Bay had suddenly become as, if not more popular than Oshkosh.

City officials had to do something to keep up with the competition. But they did all the wrong things. The city officials with the most clout were born and raised in Oshkosh. They liked it just the way it was when they grew up. They resisted change. So when developers came to town with their new business ideas, Oshkosh city officials turned them away. So the developers went to Fond du Lac, Appleton and Green Bay and those cities continued to prosper and pass by Oshkosh.

Not long ago, the tunnel-visioned Oshkosh city officials suddenly wondered what was wrong. The downtown sat quiet, gutted and disgusting. The busiest business was a Burger King.

Now they have finally realized their mistake. With help from the Experimental Aircraft Association — the city's godsend — they have invited businesses to come to town. Oshkosh is just now beginning to shake out of its slump.

Politicians from Madison and its surrounding communities are in the same frame of mind as Oshkosh's politicians 25 years ago. Soon, Madison, too, will be wondering why all these wonderful business opportunities passed them by. But it should wonder why it let all those opportunities pass them by.

Narrow-minded city officials who listen to these half-crazed environmentalists know nothing about the golf boom that has taken the world by storm recently. They don't have the mind to call Kohler, Sheboygan and Stevens Point and learn what major golf course de-

velopments have done for those communities. Instead of wondering what is good for the many, they base their decision on what's good for the few.

If the Madison area officials are smart they will develop their own impartial task force — made up of out-

siders who understand both sides of the project — to study the idea before making a decision. If the task force decides the CUNA project is bad for the environment — then so be it. But if it isn't, then give the OK for change and prosperity.

However, don't count on that happening. And 30 years from now, we can go play run-down Pleasant View, stand on one of those beautiful hills overlooking Madison bypassed by the 21st century and wonder what could have been.

## USGA REGIONAL CONFERENCE SCHEDULED FOR MERIDAN HILLS C.C.

The 1990 USGA regional conference for Wisconsin interests will be held on March 22, 1990 at the Meridan Hills Country Club. The club is located at 7099 Spring Mill Road in Indianapolis.

The prepaid registration fee is \$30.00; at the door registration is \$35.00. If you've got a question, call Jim Farrell at 708-893-9955.

The program schedule and registration form are below:

### USGA REGIONAL CONFERENCE

#### Morning Session —

9:00 A.M. to 12:00 Noon

8:00 Registration — Coffee & Rolls

#### 9:00 WELCOME

Joe Luigs  
USGA Green Section Committee  
Indianapolis, IN

#### 9:15 THE USGA HANDICAP SYSTEM AND THE GOLF COURSE SUPERINTENDENT

Doug Sullivan, Manager  
USGA Handicap Services  
Golf House  
Far Hills, New Jersey

#### 10:15 BREAK

#### 10:30 A PRIMER FOR THE GREEN COMMITTEE — PUTTING GREEN SPEED MANAGEMENT

Dr. Clark Throssell, Assistant Professor  
Turfgrass Science, Department of Agronomy  
Purdue University  
West Lafayette, Indiana

#### 11:15 AN ENVIRONMENTAL AUDIT FOR YOUR GOLF COURSE OPERATION?

Pat Jones, Director  
Communications Department  
Golf Course Superintendents Assoc. of America  
Lawrence, Kansas

#### 12:00 LUNCHEON

#### 1:30 COMMON MISTAKES COMMITTEES MAKE

James A. Farrell, Manager  
North Central Region  
USGA Regional Affairs  
Roselle, Illinois

#### 2:00 A SHOCK — THE GOLF COURSE IS OUT OF PLAY

Edward W. Fischer, CGCS  
Old Elm Club  
Ft. Sheridan, Illinois

#### 2:30 THE GREEN SECTION, TURF RESEARCH AND MIDWESTERN GOLFERS

James M. Latham, Jr., Director  
Great Lakes Region  
USGA Green Section  
Brown Deer, Wisconsin

#### 3:00 U.S. OPEN VIDEO

"Strange Reigns at Oak Hill"

#### 3:50 ADJOURN

### RESERVATION FORM

#### USGA REGIONAL CONFERENCE Thursday, March 22, 1990

Enclose \$30.00 for each luncheon. Advance reservation payable to United States Golf Association. Fee must accompany advance reservation. Registration at the door — \$35.00 if space is available.

Please mail forms with checks payable to USGA to:

James A. Farrell, USGA Regional Affairs  
P.O. Box 72938  
Roselle, Illinois 60172

Names/Titles

(club president, manager, superintendent, professional)

Name \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Club \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_

State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone \_\_\_\_\_

## UWEX 1990 Turfgrass Conferences Set For March

The 1990 University of Wisconsin Extension Turfgrass Conferences will be held as follows:

**Milwaukee;** Wednesday, March 14 at the Wil-O-Way Underwood Rec. Center, 10602 W. Underwood Creek Pkwy. Registration is \$10 and includes lunch.

**Appleton;** Thursday, March 15 at the Columbus Club. The \$13 registration includes lunch.

**Madison;** Monday, March 19 at the Holiday Inn SE. Registration is \$13 and includes lunch.

**Eau Claire;** Wednesday, March 21 at the Holiday Inn. Registration is also \$13 and includes lunch.

In all cases, the registration is at 9:00 a.m. and the program runs from 9:30 to 4:00. The 1990 theme is "Better Nutrient and Pest Management for Turf." The topics include "Better Management Practices (For Nitrogen, For Weed Control, For Insect Control), Soil Nutrient Loss, Fungicides in the 90's, Lyme Disease Update and a AG29 Pesticide Law Review. The popular "Question Box" feature will also be a part of this year's program.

Use the handy registration form below to enroll.

### ENROLLMENT FORM:

#### 1990 TURFGRASS CONFERENCE

Assure enrollment by enrolling no later than three (3) days in advance of the program you are attending.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing Address \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_

State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Day Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Agency/Company You Represent \_\_\_\_\_

### MAIL TO:

Turfgrass Conference  
Horticulture Department  
University of Wisconsin  
Madison, WI 53706

Check location and enclose fee:

\$10 Milwaukee, March 14

\$13 Appleton, March 15

\$13 Madison, March 19

\$13 Eau Claire, March 21

Make checks payable to:  
**UW Horticulture Department.**

\$ \_\_\_\_\_ Amount submitted.

When two or more persons enroll and submit a single check, provide complete enrollment information for each person. **NO CONFIRMATION WILL BE SENT.** Request receipt at program registration.