



A Book We Are All Going to Love

By **Monroe S. Miller**, *Golf Course Superintendent, Blackhawk Country Club*

I can hardly wait to see Gene Haas' latest book, "Caring For the Green — The history of the Wisconsin Golf Course Superintendents Association." If it is even half as good as his first book - the history of the Wisconsin State Golf Association, it will be a great addition to golf literature.

Honestly, Dave Brandenburg and I cannot believe the confluence of positive circumstances at the time of our 75th anniversary. We thought the best way to celebrate it was with a book about our association and its history. We needed an author, first and foremost. We needed an author who might have the time. We needed an author who had the interest. And we preferred an author who knew golf and who loved the game. After only a brief discussion, Dave and I knew we had to ask Gene Haas if he would do the job.

Gene has had a strong tie to the WGCSA for a long time, a relationship that was made stronger when he and the late Jim Belfield formalized an agreement with the WSGA to house our association in their office. It was one of the high points of our history, actually.

Mr. Haas was always very involved with WSGA tournaments, and over the years met with and got to know hundreds of WGCSA members. He knows us and he knows our association.

Dave and I drove to Elm Grove about two years ago, hats in hand and fingers crossed, to pop the question to Gene. We had a great visit, asked if he would consider writing the book and promised to help where we could. We left town with "I'll talk to Diane and I'll think about it." I guess at that point, we really couldn't have hoped for more. Maybe we were fearful of an outright and immediate "not interested." Before too much time after that had passed, Gene called us as said he would tackle the job. Brandenburg and Miller were on cloud nine for weeks!

A 75th anniversary is a big deal. Other states have spent the whole year celebrating their 75th - Minnesota, New Jersey and Rhode Island come to mind. Tournaments were held; Rhode Island had a tourney where the players used hickory shafted clubs and period clothing. Usually the highlights of their history were carried in one or several issues of their chapter publication. But as far as I know, no chapter put together a book like ours is about to do.

Gene dedicated a ton of time to the task. A history writer needs to be a sleuth, and when Gene would unearth a piece of information about us or our

chapter, half a dozen more questions came up that he would pursue.

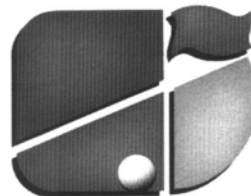
Of course, I worried that he wouldn't have enough information. Rather, he asked, "how long do you want this book to be?" He used every resource he knew about, both in the world of golf and out. He visited public libraries and museums, investigated sources in the USGA and the GCSAA. He visited with untold numbers of individuals both in our profession and out, and studied the past journals of the WGCSA, the GCSAA and individuals clubs. He read and read and read. He digested the events and their meaning and put it all in perspective. He reviewed, literally, thousands of photos and selected those that helped best tell our story. He read minutes of our board meetings, chapter meetings and consumed accounts of our educational offerings. He left no stone unturned, as near as I could tell.

Diane was a big help - she has been his whole career — and their son Gary is a talented graphic artist and designer who lent his talents to the layout and design of his dad's latest book.

Gene knows so many people in Wisconsin that it was inevitable that he knew enough printers to select one that would best combine value and quality.

It comes down to great anticipation, and I guess I am so excited because I have carried the chapter historian responsibilities for so long. For that, my thanks to Gene are beyond my ability to express them, other than to say he has made a dream come true.

As I write these paragraphs, I haven't seen Gene's book yet. But I know he has written a great story. Once again, he has proven to be the best friend we could ever hope to have. "Caring For The Green" will be evidence of that. ♣



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