

A Visit To Western Wisconsin

By Monroe S. Miller

It was a long anticipated day — our September meeting at Cedar Creek near Onalaska on the 10th.

September signals an end to summer and the first days of autumn. This month's meeting is usually well attended and is an opportunity to visit with friends and see how all went over the summer golfing months.

I was anxious to see my former assistant's new golf course; it was rural field and pasture and woodland when Pat Norton first went to the La Crosse area. That ground was transformed into a golf course under Pat's supervision.

Pat (Zurawski) and I left Madison at 6:30 a.m. to give us time to do a couple of other things before his 12:30 tee time at Cedar Creek.

We pulled into Tomah for a quick look at the Toro factory. Most of the Toro commercial equipment used on golf courses all over the world is manufactured in Tomah, Wisconsin.

A Writer From The Middle Border

Our next stop was Hamlin Garland's hometown — West Salem. His childhood home is on a main east/west street and we found it quickly. That excitement turned to disappointment when we discovered it was closed for the year.

We sought out the headquarters of the West Salem Historical Society, found it, and I was able to purchase three of Garland's books for my library there — *Son Of The Middle Border*, *Daughter Of The Middle Border* (which won him a Pulitzer Prize) and *More Main Travelled Roads*.

Finding A Rarity

For years I've been interested in the American Chestnut; a healthy pair of them is growing between the 13th fairway and Lake Mendota Drive on my golf course. Several years ago I read about an isolated grove of these trees in Hoyer Coulee, north of West Salem.

We found Hoyer Coulee Road in my *Wisconsin Atlas and Gazetteer*, and headed up that route. Pat drove slowly and we both scouted left and right for some sign or clue of an American Chestnut woods.

I was nearly ready to give up the hunt when Pat noticed a homemade sign on the east side of the road near a mailbox: *Am. chestnuts 4 sale*.

Bingo! The clue we needed turned out to be my dream come true. Pat pulled into the farmyard driveway and swung around in front of the house. We piled out, but before we made it to the doorbell, Ron Bockenbauer came from the backyard to greet us.

Ron was obviously used to having strangers stop in with questions about American Chestnuts. I told him of my interests and wondered where the chestnut grove was located.

He pointed southeast. "Over there," Ron said, "are the trees you've read about."

He has scores of younger trees planted around his homestead. The grove was growing on the farm settled by his great grandparents and now farmed by his brother-in-law.

On his invitation we jumped into Ron's 4X4 pickup and headed south on Hoyer Coulee Road and turned into the farmyard. The road took us through the barnyard and wound past corn and alfalfa fields and uphill toward the woods edge.

After he parked, we started walking. "Do you see them?" Ron asked.

Sure enough. Everywhere we looked were the familiar leaves of the American Chestnuts, growing on hundreds and hundreds of chestnut trees.

Some were saplings; others were so big that the three of us together couldn't have gotten our arms around one.

Ron told us of how his grandmother came to Hoyer Coulee from the East with chestnuts to plant. The results are obvious.

Interest in the Hoyer Coulee chestnuts is widespread. I couldn't help notice, while signing Ron's guest book, that he'd been visited the previous day by the president of the American Chestnut Society. That gentleman travelled to Wisconsin from Bennington, Vermont.

Our visit was made complete with the purchase of two small chestnut trees. They are now growing near the other two we have on the golf course.



Ron Bockenbauer and one of his American Chestnut trees.



A coulee golf hole — one of several at Cedar Creek.

Golf In Coulee Country

Twenty minutes after we left Hoyer's Coulee we arrived at Cedar Creek Country Club.

What a beautiful golf course! Designed by Bob Lohmann, who was there for the day, the course plays up and back a couple of coulees and through the convergence of two valleys.

The rolling putting surfaces of the greens and the sculptured fairways not only challenge the player, they add to the enormous natural beauty of the site itself. Autumn at Cedar Creek should be breathtaking.

There was some good golf played at Cedar Creek. Here are the winners:

Championship Flight

1st place — Mike Drugan with a 76

2nd place (tie) Steve Blendel and Rob Udelhoven with 81s.

A Flight

1st place — Brad Wagner with a 79

2nd place — Dan Quast with an 84

3rd place — Don Ferger with an 88

B Flight

1st place — John Gallus with a 95

2nd place — Dave Murgatroyd with a 100

Senior Flight

1st place — Al Vrana with an 87

2nd place — Woody Voigt with a 107

3rd place — Howard Metcalf with a 110

Affiliates Flight — Calloway System

1st place — John Skemp with a net 71

2nd place (tie) — Ed Birke, Paul Byron, Gene Kohlmeyer, and Bob Swift — all with a net 72

Hole Event Results

Long Putt

#9 — Tom Schwab

#18 — Steve Meyer

Closest To Pin

#7 — Bruce Worzella

#14 — Bob Gentilli

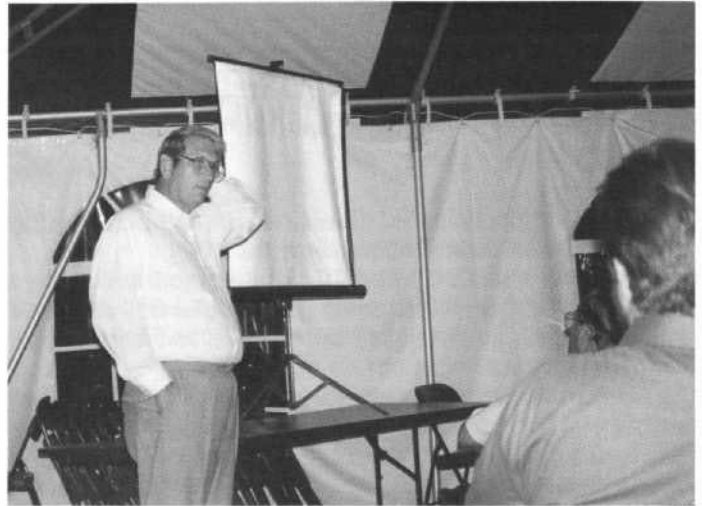
Long Drive

#2 — Dewey Fortney

#17 — Craig Peterson



Southeast corner of Cedar Creek; that's Pat Norton's shop in the center of the picture.



Son of the middle border — Danny Quast.

Son Of The Middle Border?

The meeting speaker was Medinah Country Club golf course superintendent Danny Quast. He was also the host of the 1990 U.S. Open and came to Onalaska to share his experiences of this huge event with his colleagues.

His lecture was fascinating, as were the many personal conversations everyone had with him.

The Middle Border is defined as that part of the U.S. that includes the Dakotas, Nebraska, Minnesota and Wisconsin. Despite his Ohio upbringing, and his Massachusetts education notwithstanding, those of us in the WGCSA like to think of Dan as a Wisconsin native. After all, he spent the majority of his professional career in Milwaukee and still maintains his WGCSA membership.

And I'll bet every one of us felt a lot of pride reading and seeing and hearing about the great job he did with the world's most prestigious golf tournament.

Congratulations from all of us.

1990 U.S. OPEN GOLF COURSE FACTS

Golf Course Staff: Dan Quast had 65 employees on duty each day to prepare Medinah for the day's competition.

He had one of his course superintendents every six holes to supervise the work and follow up on his instructions.

Putting Green Speed: 11.5' to 12.0' on the stimpmeter. The exception was #2 — the severity of the green forced P.J. Boatright to slow it to 9'.

Putting Green Height: Medinah's greens were cut at 0.120". The turf groomers were set at 0.110".

Putting Green Equipment: The 1990 Open greens were cut with Jacobsen walking greens mowers. The turf grooming was done with a Jacobsen Greensking triplex mower.

Grass Species: Medinah's putting greens are about 50% *Poa annua* and 50% creeping bentgrass.

Cutting Frequency: All play areas (except roughs) were double cut every morning of the tournament. Greens were cut and groomed until the required speed was reached. The number of cuts varied among the greens.

Bunker Preparation: The bunker sand was packed (rolled) with power sand trap rakes without the rakes. Leaf rakes were used to scratch the sand surface and even it out after the packing. Caddies were hired to operate the leaf rakes. There were absolutely NO bad bunker lies during the Open.

Green Collars and Approaches:

These areas were cut with walking mowers set at $\frac{7}{16}$ ".

Tees: Walking mowers were used here, too. They were set at $\frac{5}{16}$ ".

Intermediate Roughs: These fairway collars were cut at $1\frac{3}{4}$ " with Jacobsen Trim Kings.

Member Play: Member play was cut off the Sunday before the Open. At 2 p.m. that day, by contract, the golf course was turned over to the USGA for the duration of the tournament. The club had NO say in decisions relating to the golf course or the tournament.

Roping: An experienced USGA crew roped the entire golf course in one day. The rope was 21' off the fairway unless trees or other features interfered.

Post-tournament Notes:

- the golf course opened for member play only three days after the Open.

- the sixteenth hole was the most difficult Open hole for 1990.

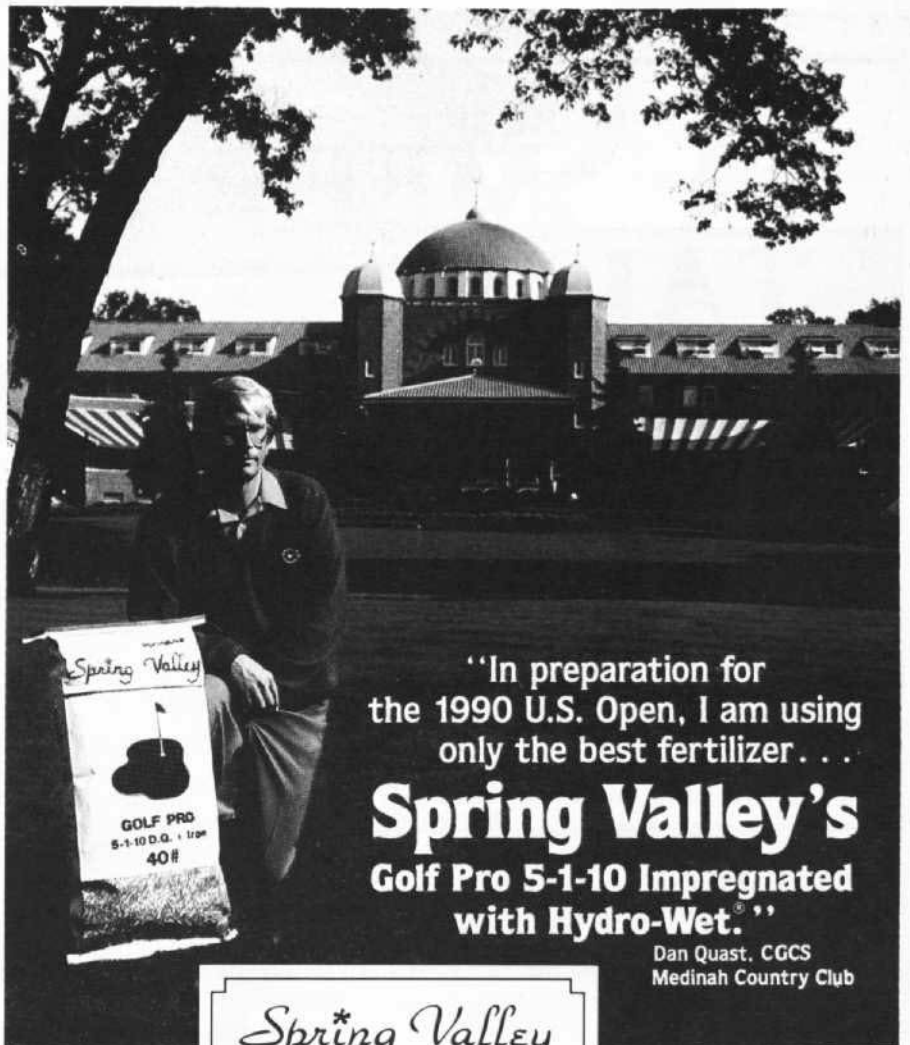
- the July issue of *Golf Digest* is recommended reading for a good report on the 1990 U.S. Open.

- the most notable phone call to the press tent came from a golf player who lives in the White House. The press tent, incidentally, was an air conditioned tent put up over the club's tennis courts!

- ABC television people were very enjoyable to work with. Dan says they were real professionals who truly respected the golf course.

- Jim Latham and Tim Monahan are credited by Quast for helping prepare for the Open. He was generous with his praise for both men.

- the 18 hole playoff on Monday was the first ever in U.S. Open history.



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Woehrle Returns to Tripoli

By Tom Schwab

Jim Belfield was the gracious host of the October 1 meeting of the Wisconsin Golf Course Superintendents Association at Tripoli Country Club. It was a sunny day with a temperature in the mid-60s and just breezy enough to challenge everyone's golf game.

Enough cannot be said about the excellent condition of the golf course. The greens drew the most attention from the 72 golfers in attendance — they were nearly perfect. The rest of the golf course was in equally fine condition and was a great start to the rest of the meeting.

A delicious prime rib dinner preceded our special guest speaker for the evening, Mr. Ted Woehrle of Oakland Hills Country Club. Ted has been the golf course superintendent at Oakland Hills in Birmingham, Michigan for the last 23 years.

Nicknamed "The Monster" by the great Ben Hogan, Oakland Hills is one of the world's greatest golf courses. It is frequently referred to as America's toughest golf course.

Ted Woehrle is the third golf course superintendent in the history of OHCC. The course, designed by Donald Ross, was built in 1917.

In 1950, Robert Trent Jones was hired to update Oakland Hills. His work included narrowing fairways, relocating fairway bunkers and adding greenside bunkers. When Jones was done, the golf course had 200 bunkers!

In planning for the 1961 U.S. Open, the USGA recommended "softening" OHCC and 30 of those bunkers were removed. Today, the golf course boasts a more "reasonable" 118 sand bunkers.

The course has hosted five U.S. Open tournaments — 1924, 1937, 1951, 1961 and 1985. For us, the 1985 victory was easily the most memorable since Andy North was the winner.

The USGA tournament returns to Birmingham in 1996, and much of Ted's talk dealt with preparations already underway for that event. In the fall of 1988, all new tees were built, including separate ladies' tees. Currently, Woehrle's staff is working on rebuilding the greenside bunkers. Forty years of play have resulted in excessive sand on the bunker faces. When the project is complete, the classic look of the Oakland Hills C.C. will have returned.



Three respected veterans in the world of golf turf management — Wayne Otto, Ted Woehrle and Bob Welch.

The bunker project of 1990 wasn't unusual for Ted. In his 23 years at Oakland Hills he has never gone one year without a major project.

Woehrle, a past president of the GCSAA and a 20 year veteran editor of Michigan GCSA newsletter "A Patch of Green", pointed out that this meeting wasn't his first trip to Tripoli C.C. He remembers the golf course from one of the first GMOs. It was a pleasure to have him return to Milwaukee.

The evening ended with the presentation of golf awards. The winning team in the one bestball foursome tournament was Ken Robers, Paul Rohde, Steve Blendell and Paul Feldhake. Second place went to Ed Devinger, Chad Ball, Skip Willms and John Feiner. Third place winners were Mike Kactro, Fred Kutz, Lloyd Reed and John Wilmet.

Individual flag prizes were:

- Closest to the pin on #3 — Ed Witowski
- Closest to the pin on #7 — Jim Belfield
- Closest to the pin on #14 — Skip Willms
- Longest putt on #9 — Dan Williams
- Longest drive on #1 — Ken Robers.

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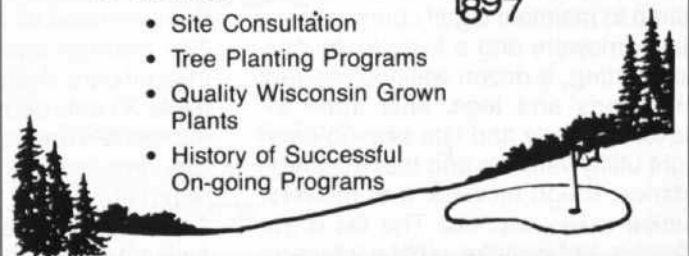


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A Tough Sell

By Monroe S. Miller

The question most dreaded by the majority of colleagues I know is "what do you do in the winter?"

Neighbors ask it. Family members ask it. Friends do, too.

Unfortunately, golfers ask it. So do club members.

I gave up trying to explain our winter work years ago. Nowadays, I answer with impertinent and cute answers like, "I spend three months in Florida" or, "we play euchre and hearts all winter."

But the fact that golfers wonder what we do all winter makes it difficult to convince them of the need for a capable, well-trained and well-paid, full-time staff.

In my own instance, I've found the need for that full-time staff increasing significantly in recent years. It seems that in the past three years we haven't moved inside until mid-December.

Our routine work ends with topdressing during Thanksgiving week. The days following turkey day are spent with tree trimming, bunker work, small construction projects and other similar jobs.

Frequently, we decide to begin our shop work when the fear of not finishing it takes us over. The result of that is that a lot of good projects aren't done when they best could be — in the absence of golf players. What an ideal time to have a larger full-time staff.

My own efforts to increase both the numbers of full-time staff and their quality have been reasonably successful. But it has taken a long time. It seems like only yesterday when Vince and I worked shoulder to shoulder all by ourselves all winter.

The tough sell has been made a little easier by acknowledgment of the sheer numbers of machines now required to maintain a golf course: seven triplex mowers and a fiveplex for fairway cutting; a dozen walking mowers for greens and tees, plus three triplexes for early and late season duty; eight utility vehicles and four trucksters; rotaries, rough mowers, trim mowers, bunker rakes, etc. etc. The list is impressive and includes eight aerifiers as

well as four tractors. And a load of tee and green equipment.

Then there are the golf course superintendents who run the club's golf car fleet. More work. Add in the snow plowing some are responsible for and you begin to worry already how it will all get done.

Additionally, many of us are forced into winter vacations with our families, for obvious reasons. Then consider the fact that most of our major educational conferences are held in the winter months.

All the questions about "winter staff" are especially frustrating because they are the ones charged with keeping the course in playing condition during the spring and autumn months when student employees aren't available. There never is any question about the importance of that mission. It seems obvious that it is sensible to keep them intact for the entire year; it saves paying costly unemployment compensation and receiving nothing in return. It also satisfies the need competent people have to work all year.

This all makes you wonder how any official with any authority in any golf course operation could question the numbers of our full-time employees.

It also made me wonder just how many people did staff Wisconsin's golf courses on a full-time basis. So I posed the following question to 45 members of the WGCSA at either the August or the September meeting: "NOT including yourself, how many full-time year 'round employees do you have?"

Here are the results:

1. The average number of employees for each of the 45 golf courses was 3.18.

2. Since two of the courses are 36 hole facilities, I ran the average with them counted as four 18 hole courses. The average was lowered to 3.04, an insignificant change. However, one of these 36 hole courses was a muni with access to a central shop where a lot of the equipment is repaired and refurbished.

3. One of the respondents operated a nine hole golf course. Compensating

for this changed the initial average by 0.03, another negligible change.

4. The specifics of the data went like this:

- NO full time employees (gcs only) . 4
- One full-time employee 8
- Two full-time employees 8
- Three full-time employees 6
- Four full-time employees 3
- Five full-time employees 10
- Six full-time employees 4
- Seven full-time employees 1
- Eight full-time employees 1

By the way, I work with Dave, Pat, Brian, Val and Joel during the winter months (as well as spring, summer and fall). And we all agree that we could do so much more with just one more . . .

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POP QUIZ

By Monroe S. Miller

It's your worst nightmare coming true. You sit down in class for an enjoyable lecture and an hour of rewarding learning.

Instead, the professor says, "clear your desk top of everything except a pencil and a piece of paper. We are going to have a pop quiz."

Well, welcome to *THE GRASS ROOTS* pop quiz. Take it seriously — it will influence your final grade.

Only the best of you will ace this baby!

1. The ample rainfall of 1990 made managing a Wisconsin golf course a lot easier this year than it was in each of the three previous seasons. That fact leads to this two-part weather related question: What was the state's all-time high precipitation and when did it occur? In contrast, what was the state's all-time low and when did that rain not fall?

2. What Wisconsin golf course had the first new, completely automatic irrigation system? When was it installed?

3. Has a Wisconsin resident ever been selected to receive the prestigious USGA Green Section Award? If yes, who was it and when did it happen?

4. Who holds the distinct honor of being on the speaker program of the Wisconsin Golf Turf Symposium more times than anyone else?

5. What golf course purchased the first triplex greensmower in Wisconsin? When?

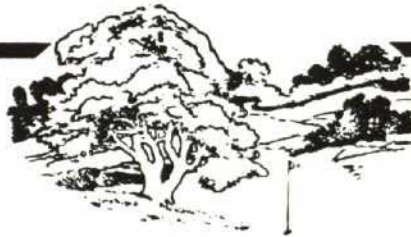
ANSWERS

1. The year was 1969. Wisconsin Turf's shopyard machine in on trade, and it is sitting in enough, Curt Larson recently took the a Jacobsen Greensking. Interestingly Crest Country Club in Somers. It was in Wisconsin was purchased by Maple 5. The first triplex greensmower sold Symposiums. monies for nearly every one of the 25 NOT include the fact that Jim has been the luncheon master of cere- posium speaker eight times. This does

1. High - 42" in 1938. Low - 21" in 1976. 2. The Nakoma Golf Club in Madison. The Jack Walsh Co. installed a brand new (valves, heads, controllers, pipe and pumping station) in 1967. It was Johnson. Paul Bando supplied most of the equipment itself. 3. Yes. O.J. Noer in 1963 and Charles G. Wilson in 1982. 4. This one is a gimme — the answer was in the last issue of *THE GRASS ROOTS*. Jim Latham has been a Sym-

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