

that golf does not suffer the same fate as did tennis back in the 1980's.

It was pointed out to us in a seminar by Jim Baugh, president of Wilson Sporting Goods, that;

- Sports participation overall in the USA is declining...coincidentally... as the use of PC's and the Internet is rising dramatically! Americans, and American youth in particular, are becoming more sedentary than ever!

- Only a few sporting activities are really growing...soccer, roller blading, street hockey, hiking, rock climbing, etc.

- The traditional sports that we all grew up with...baseball, football, softball, golf, tennis...are taking their hits and are suffering declining participation! Totally can understand that for baseball...how slow and boring! Football never turned me on either...and is suffering a huge decline in youth participation as American youth goes for soccer in a big way...

- Golf...contrary to what the news media (of which GCSAA seems to be a part) is feeding everybody the line that golf has never been healthier!! In reality, there are about 3,000,000 new golfers every year in the USA. There are also about 3,000,000 golfers who quit the game every year also!! Obviously, golf is somewhat stagnant...contrary to what I would have thought before hearing this guy speak the truth! In other words...golf demand is flat...while golf supply continues to rise and rise and rise! It is no wonder that so many of the new, high end courses are battling for enough rounds and enough revenue...and ultimately, we are seeing many of these developments go under and be reborn with fresh ownership and capital...

- It has been proven that growth in participation in any sport is locally, not news media driven.

Soccer has exploded in the last ten years across the nation...and who is driving that growth? Local groups such as the Morris Soccer Association... who have overseen the growth in youth soccer in this little town of 12,000...to the point that over 800 kids play soccer in our

community. How many kids in this same age group (7-14) play golf locally? Probably about 200-300...if we're lucky. How many of them play golf at NCCC, our local public facility? About 50...if we're lucky and count all of the cart kids who love golf and hate soccer!

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IRRIGATION



-So what are new players/new golfers looking for when taking up golf? They are looking for the same thing that is described in the beginning of this article. They are looking for the 'golf experience'...a fun, enjoyable day with their friends out amongst nature in a sporting environment. When the basics of golf have been mastered...there is no other sport that is as maddening, and yet enjoyable, for people of all ages.

But, people that are involved with golf, such as ourselves, must be totally able to provide them with the 'golf experience.' Which means that, in addition to the playing field (the course)...we must provide for them the opportunity to learn the game (group lessons, junior golf, etc.) in a low pressure setting (practice range, practice course) where they can learn the basics before getting thrown out onto that racetrack known as a public golf course.

In other words, golf will grow when local facilities decide to get involved in providing the total golf experience. Obviously, this should mean that no matter the situation...each course should have an aggressive junior program in an attempt to become a birthplace of golf for legions of young golfers, right? This should be the case...with no exceptions!

Again referring to my own golf course...I am somewhat ashamed to tell you that we have no junior golf program whatsoever and an extremely limited group lesson situation! Ouch! Talk about practicing what is being preached...

Things were active here in that area through 1998, but then faded due to some ownership changes and the lack of a practice facility on which to conduct any sort of practice sessions.

We are now in the planning and persuasion stage of the process of building a practice facility...which we hope to build in 2001 and open

in 2002. Our vision for this facility is probably too limited...as I am beginning to understand. We might redesign a few areas and squeeze a range onto our existing land...which would be tough for me to support because it would mean basically butchering our already easy first hole!

A more intelligent idea...in the long run...would be to purchase farmland to our north and build a new practice facility and a practice course...executive length...for juniors, women, seniors, and all other types of golfers who only have time for nine holes.

This ideal vision has its drawbacks also...mainly that our owners are in their mid-70's and aren't so keen on investing another \$1,500,000 or so into this golf course! So we're definitely at a crossroads...and have some decisions to make.

Everybody involved in this great game has decisions to make, actually, for the future of the game of golf. Everybody really needs to analyze their own contributions to the growth of golf on their own local level.

Could my facility...little old Nettle Creek...be doing more to become a

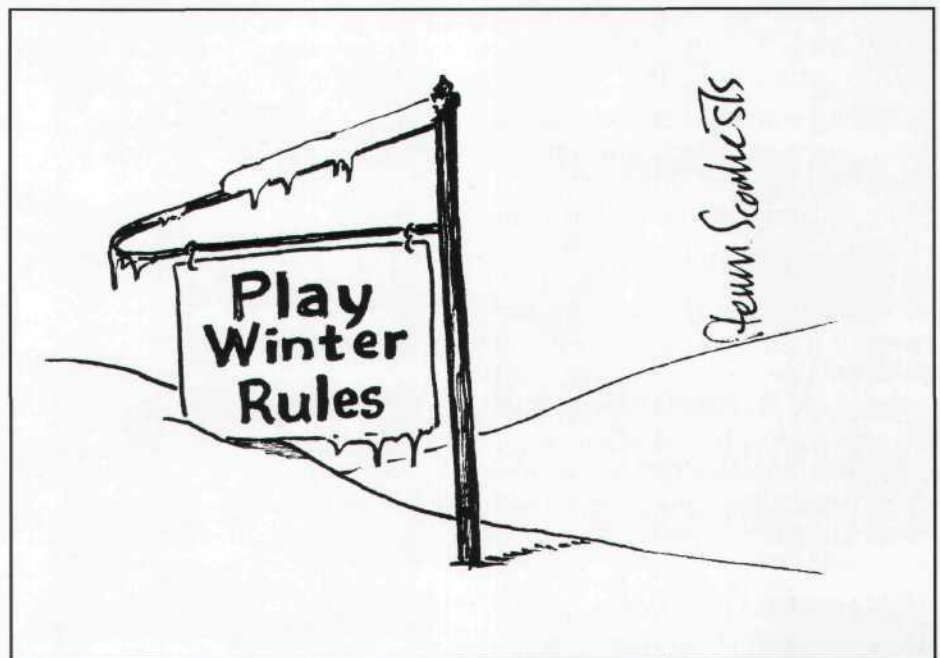
birthplace of golf? Most definitely! Are we going to do significantly more to become a birthplace of golf here in central Illinois? I certainly hope so...

Is the golf facility that you're involved with doing much to enhance and grow the game of golf? Are you finding it a constant challenge to find enough golfers to fill the course...or buy the memberships...or whatever?

Maybe you're in a situation in which golfers are just always busting down the doors...and you've got so much demand at your course that incentives and promotions are just not needed? You've got junior golf, senior golf, ladies golf, group golf, regular golf...so much golf that you can ignore the signs and signals of a crowded golf market? Then you are already a great birthplace of golf!

But if your course is like ours...doing pretty good...but could be better...with not the greatest program in place to encourage and retain beginning golfers...then it may be time for a reality check.

It may be that you need to start doing more to insure that your golf course becomes a true birthplace of golf. ♣





# Late Winter – A Great Time for Thinking

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

Someone asked me in January how I liked Wisconsin's winter so far this year. "Super!" I replied, "although January won't be able to match the wonderfully snowy (most snow ever for a December in our town – 35") and cold December (third coldest record in Madison, 10.5 degrees F. below normal).

I was right. January was the fourth least snowy January ever with only 1.6" of new snow. Temps averaged slightly more than five degrees above normal, which translated into a 10 degree differential between December and January. It even rained 0.75" at the end of the month.

Although the details are in yet, February at least started out good and cold (-4 on the second day of the month) and the Sun Prairie rodent saw his shadow, a clue of more winter to those believing in that fairy tale.

It does seem clear now, however, that we won't likely have the early early start we did last year. Thank goodness for that!

After enjoying an honest-to-goodness real Wisconsin winter, one wonders what summer might bring. A reliable source for an answer for many of us is *The Old Farmer's Almanac*. The almanac predicts the first hot spell for the summer in the upper Midwest will come in late May. June, July and August are forecast to be hotter than normal with a lot of rain.

If their forecast proves to be the case, it may be a good season for fungicide sales.

The U.S. Weather Service is taking another look at the current

wind chill system and may change it. The system we use was developed back in 1941 by the U.S. Army in Antarctica; it is known as the Siple and Passel formula. Basically, the Army researchers filled plastic containers with water and recorded how fast they froze under varying temperatures and wind spells. Not real complicated.

The current research takes into account factors like humidity, shade and sunlight. The Army tables measured wind speed at a height of 30 feet; we know winds at ground level are less than at that height. There are other factors that seem to cause the wind chill factor to be overrated – each person's unique physiology, how

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we are dressed, the influence of temperature itself, and more.

Just to give you a clue as to how significant the changes may be, the chart below compares wind chills when the air temperature is 10 degrees above zero. The proposed wind chill index on the right was compiled as a result of new research:

Wind Speed (mph)	Current Wind Chill	Proposed Wind Chill
5	6	10
10	-9	0
15	-18	-8
20	-24	-14
25	-29	-19
30	-33	-23
35	-35	-26
40	-37	-29

From the desk of my brother, slightly amended, and received on a cold day this past Wisconsin winter:

*Why I Love Wisconsin*

When it's  
 Winter time in Wisconsin,  
 And the gentle breezes blow  
 About seventy miles  
 an hour  
 And it's fifty-two below.  
 You can tell you're in Wisconsin  
 'casue  
 the snow's up to your butt,  
 And you take a breath of winter  
 air  
 And  
 Your nose holes both freeze shut.  
 The weather here is wonderful,  
 So I  
 Guess I'll hang around,  
 I could NEVER leave Wisconsin.  
 My feet are frozen to  
 The ground!

The grinch must be living in Racine. On the last full day of production before the Christmas holiday shutdown, Textron announced it will be closing the Racine Jacobson plant at the end of 2001. The move will

eliminate 275 jobs in the grass machinery manufacturing sector in Wisconsin.

It will also end almost 80 years of Jacobsen presence in Racine. The Danish family who founded the company had a prosperous business in one of the most Danish cities in America.

There were attempts to keep Jake where it belongs. Incentives, including \$950,000 in low interest loans by state, county and city leaders didn't help. I don't know details but I've heard over the years that UAW policies didn't help (when will they ever learn?). And the plant was dated.

So it goes in America. Whether it was vice president Dan Wilde or somebody else who timed the announcement, that person ought to be ashamed of how it was handled. It was close to mean.

Christmas is a time for, among other things, family and friends. A high point for alums in our town is when we gather for a holiday lunch with Jim Love, Chuck Koval, Bob Newman and Gayle Worf. They were powerful influences for us aging former students and it is always a treat to be with them again. They are interesting, interested and curious about everything, like they have been for their entire lives.

The photo here gives evidence that they are a vigorous group. They asked about many of you.



Plant hormones and plant growth regulators are slowly beginning to find their place in golf turf management. Dr. Folke Skoog conducted pioneering work with auxin, and while he was on the Botany Department faculty at the UW – Madison he discovered a major new class of plant hormones – the cytokinins. This PGR stimulates the division of plant cells and regulates plant growth and development. Outside of our business, Dr. Skoog's 32 years on the UW – Madison faculty had a profound impact on agricultural and horticultural practices around the world. He passed away in Madison on February 15, 2001. He was 92.

Professor Skoog was active in many botany and biology societies, and he was the recipient of untold numbers of honors. Foremost among them was the National Medal of Science given to him in 1991 in a White House ceremony. His discoveries are considered one of the major advances in the plant sciences in the last 50 years.

Barb and Frank Rossi welcomed their son, Tucker Angelo, into the world on November 30, 2000. He was born early and only weighed 3lb. 5 oz. Mother and son spent 20 days in the hospital, leaving Frank in charge of their daughters, Danielle (14) and Nicole (5) and the farm. Barb had to return to the hos-



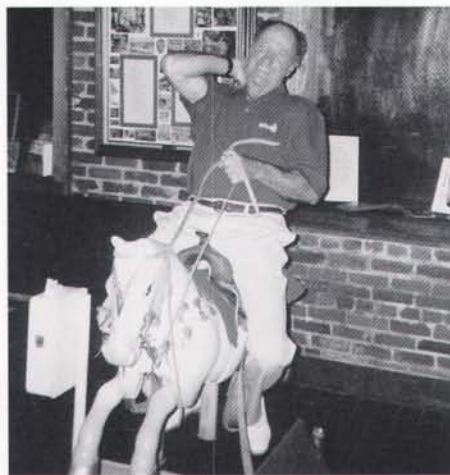
# WISCONSIN GOLF COURSE SUPERINTENDENTS ASSOCIATION

## MEETING SCHEDULE FOR 2001

<u>Date</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Speaker/Topic</u>
April 23 (Monday) (Lunch)	Lake Arrowhead GC - Nekoosa, WI Joe Fryman- GC Supt.	GCSAA Outreach Program
May 14 (Monday) (Lunch)	St. Germain GC - St. Germain, WI Steve Spears – GC Supt. <b>(Combined Meeting with the NGLGCSA)</b>	Jeff Gregos -UW-Madison Snow Mold Trials
June 18 (Monday) (Dinner)	The Ridges CC - Wisconsin Rapids, WI Jim Wunrow- GC Supt. <b>(Combined Meeting with the Dave Murgatroyd Memorial Open)</b>	
July 16 (Monday) (Lunch)	Evansville CC - Evansville, WI Jon Hegge – GC Supt.	
August 14	WTA Summer Field Day - O.J. Noer Research Center	
Sept 10 (Monday) (Dinner)	Oshkosh CC - Oshkosh, WI Kris Pinkerton – GC Supt.	Aventis Corp. Tech Rep “Research”
October 15 (Monday) (Lunch)	West Bend CC - West Bend, WI Bruce Worzela – GC Supt.	Mr. Bob Vavrek USGA Green Section “The Year in Review”
<b>OTHER IMPORTANT DATES</b>		
May 30	Super / Pro - Horseshoe Bay CC – Egg Harbor, WI	
June 18	Murgatroyd Memorial Fundraiser - The Ridges - Wis. Rapids, WI	
August 14	WTA Summer Field Day – Verona, WI	
Oct. 5,6	WGCSA Dinner Dance – Trout Lake Golf & CC	
Oct. 10	WTA Scholarship Fundraiser - Grand Geneva - Lake Geneva, WI	
Nov. 13,14	Wisconsin Golf Turf Symposium – American Club - Kohler, WI GCSAA Chapter Seminars – Fond du Lac, WI	
Dec 11	“Advanced Weed Management” - Dr. Fred Yelverton (Full day)	
Dec 12	“Understanding and Using Bio-Stimulants” - Dr. Karnoke (1/2day) “Managing Localized Dry Spots” - Dr. Karnoke (1/2 day)	
Jan 9,10 2002	Wisconsin Turfgrass and Industry Expo 2002	
March 4, 2002	Spring Business & Educational Meeting – Dr. Patt Schwab “Dealing With Jerks”	



pital when she got very ill after that, but now is on the mend. Tucker has doubled his weight since his birth and the proud father is back at work. He had a substantial role at conference – three seminars and a major presentation at the USGA Green Section Session.



"Tex" Otto in training for the trip to Dallas.

Wayne Otto takes our business seriously. And since the GCSAA Conference is part of our profession, Rod Johnson caught Wayne practicing up for the February trip to Dallas. "Get along, little doggie!"

Wisconsin's lucky – we have a state flower, tree, soil and a dozen other things that identify us and set us apart from the other states.

Do you know what America's national tree is? I mean, we have a national flower, the rose. Surely we have a national tree.

Nope. But the National Arbor Day Foundation thinks we should have. Starting back on January 1st, the Foundation gave Americans the chance to vote for one. Visit [www.arborday.org](http://www.arborday.org) before April 26th and vote for one of the 21 nominees. Or write your name, address and choice of a tree on a 3" x 5" card by April 1st and mail it to:

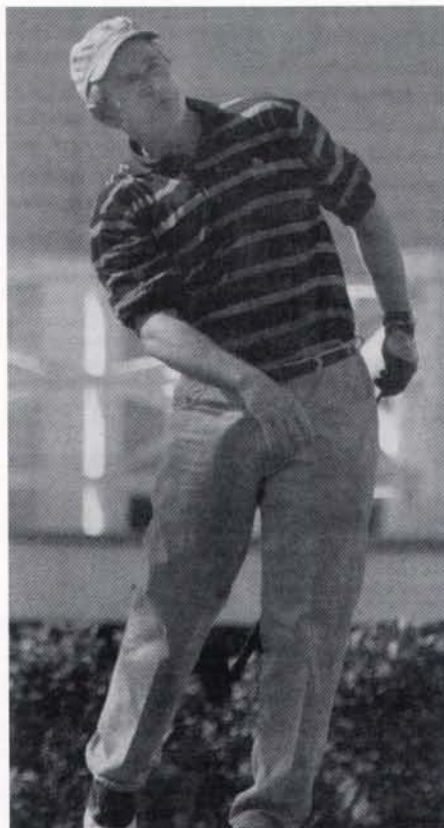
National Arbor Day Foundation  
Dept. P  
Nebraska City, Nebraska 68410

The results will be announced on April 27th, which is Arbor Day. It is expected that Congress will then designate the winner as our national tree.

As a point of information, every state has a state tree. Wisconsin's is the sugar maple. Eleven states have a type of pine, seven have an oak species, and five have followed our lead with a maple.

Cast your vote for your favorite by April 26!

One of the first things George W. Bush did after winning the presidential election was hit the links in Florida for a round of golf. He follows his father and grandfather in that way. In fact, his grandfather was a president of the USGA and won the U.S. Senior Amateur one year. What we will have to wait to see is if George W. can play an 18-hole round as quickly as his father could.



George W. Bush cannot help but be in a good position as our new president. He loves golf and he

dwarfs the small and petty administration that preceded him.

Entomologists from the UW – Madison expect a worse-than-usual gypsy moth infestation this spring. Despite our cold weather in December, we needed several consecutive days of –20 degrees F. to kill the eggs. And beyond that, the beautiful deep snow of December pretty well insulated the eggs from cold temperatures anyway. The number of moths will continue to increase until we have a really cold winter without deep snow.

Conversations I have had with WGCSA colleagues in eastern and northern Wisconsin scare me. "You have to see and hear trees covered with caterpillars in the spring to fully appreciate the seriousness of the threat." The USDA has a program that provides money to fight the moths, and in our state, Brookfield and Appleton have applied for a grant to spray for them.

The problem is troubling for golf courses. Trees are one of our greatest assets.

Congratulations to Tommy Thompson as he heads to D.C. to straighten out the USDHHS. If anyone can, he's the one.

Thompson held the governor's office longer than anyone else has or ever probably will. I like the job he did for Wisconsin. He has virtues that I respect: a humble, rural Wisconsin background, a tremendous work ethic, loyalty to friends, and a sincere and deep love for the state. He was proud to be governor and appreciated the chance to serve the people.

Golf courses don't run themselves. They are a lot like an old fashioned wheelbarrow – it doesn't go anywhere unless you push it.

And as the days lengthen and warm, Wisconsin superintendents know the pushing is about to begin.

May it be our best season ever. ♣





# Blooming Dates

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

It only takes a few warm days in February to get most golf course superintendents I know to thinking about springtime and a new golf season. Those few days this year, plus a chance encounter with Emeritus Professor Ed Hasselkus at a Wisconsin Genealogical Society Fair in town, reminded me of one of the most pleasant and educational activities I have ever experienced. I'd like to tell you about it because I suspect most of you would have enjoyed it also.

In the spring semester of 1971 I was only a few months home from the Vietnam War. Life was beautiful – I was a grad student home safely, enjoying Cheryl and Amy (1½ years old). I was learning by leaps and bounds and getting caught up with what I'd missed as a soldier in Uncle Sam's Army.

One of the things I had missed was the second semester of Dr. Hasselkus' course on woody ornamentals. Since it wasn't eligible for graduate credits, I was taking it purely to learn. The material was wonderful and, as most of you know, Ed was an exceptional teacher. Each class was exciting, until he told me he wanted me to do a phenology project that year as a part of the course. I wasn't sure what the word meant, but found out as he detailed what was expected of me.

Each year he assigned an appropriate student the task of recording the blooming dates of trees and shrubs in Madison. It seemed a simple proposition to me, even an interesting one. Although not arbitrary, it was subjective. First I chose "typical" plants either on campus or in the Arboretum, ones not influenced by a microclimate such as a lakeshore location or a site next to a building with a southern exposure. The specific date was determined by the subjective estimate of when 50% of the buds were fully open.

It was fun early on, and easy. I scouted the Arboretum twice a day, a simple proposition since I drove near there on my way to and from campus. I found trees and shrubs well before the buds popped and watched them.

But as the weather warmed, the task quickly increased exponentially. I was watching dozens of plants every day at both locations. On some woodies the 50% mark was reached quickly, while on others I waited and waited. As the semester lengthened we moved to the flowering crabapples and the lilacs. Suddenly it seemed like a full-time job! The Arboretum has an enormous collection of lilacs, one of the finest in the world. I put on miles by foot, walking

the campus, walking the Arboretum and sometimes trying to confirm my date with other trees located in Madison neighborhoods. At times it was almost overwhelming and I cursed my blind perseverance to get the job done accurately to the best of my ability.

But it was a great experience. On those days when Cheryl and Amy were with me at the Arboretum immersed in the color and fragrance of apple or lilac blossoms, I wondered, "how could life be any better?" The lessons learned went beyond the raw data. My sense of the pulse of nature, my sense of observation, and a subsequent interest in phenology were the result of Professor Hasselkus' project.

Actually, I would bet many golf course superintendents are phenologists. "Phenology comes from two Greek words – "phainestain (to appear) and "logos" (to study). It is an area of science that studies natural

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events that happen periodically in relation to seasonal and climate change. So if you pay attention to when the first robin arrives, you are participating in phenology. The same is true for the first skein of geese, the first day the ice is gone on your favorite lake (Mendota, for me) or the day you open the golf course.

There are all kinds of natural events on a golf course to make note of: the first 80 degree F. day, the first 90 degree F. day, and the first time we crack 100 degrees F. I note when the *Poa annua* seeds (50% of the plant population), the date when the soil temperature at a 2 inch depth at 2:00 p.m. is 60°F. (*Magnaporthae poae*), and the last night I hear the crickets chirping. Lots of folks notice the first time the thunder claps and the lightning strikes; supposedly we will have frost exactly six months after that. Many are interested in the date of the first snowfall, the last freezing day and the first killing frost. And of course, I still pay attention to the blooming dates of trees and shrubs on the course, in my yard and about town.

If you think about it, you would undoubtedly realize that Wisconsin and our land grant university in Madison were home to one of the best known practitioners of phenology in our time – Aldo Leopold. Read his famous “Sand County Almanac” and you will quickly see how detailed he was while recording seasonal events like bird migration and flowering dates. His work is an inspiration for curious amateurs like me.

Whenever you bump up against an interesting endeavor, whether it's genealogy or phenology, I have noticed that there are usually others similarly interested. In our state – you guessed it – we have the Wisconsin Phenological Society. I don't belong, although I am sure it would be a rich experience. I am perfectly happy keeping in tune with nature and the constantly evolving seasons in my little corner of the world at Blackhawk. It adds enormously to what is almost daily an intriguing experience.

And I thank Professor Hasselkus for that. ♻

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# Change Leads to Outstanding Symposium

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

In recent years the WGCSA/Milorganite Symposium Committee has been looking for a formula to move the meeting to a new level. They found it for the 35th annual meeting of this event, held on Tuesday and Wednesday, November 14 and 15.

The change came by starting the Symposium at 1:00 p.m. and carrying it forward for a full second day. The intention was to keep the majority of the program registrants around the second day. It worked.

To enrich the potential of the meeting, WGCSA added a one-half day seminar on the morning of the first day. Bob Vavrek, USGA Green Section Agronomist, and Ron Forse, well known golf course architect, designed and presented the seminar. The topic was "Trees On the Golf Course," a timely topic for Wisconsin superintendents. Ron addressed design and play issues relating to trees, and Bob looked at maintenance problems trees create and offered suggestion for correcting those problems. The seminar received excellent reviews from those who attended it.

The Symposium looked at the single issue of sand bunkers. Speakers talked about every conceivable aspect of sand hazards.

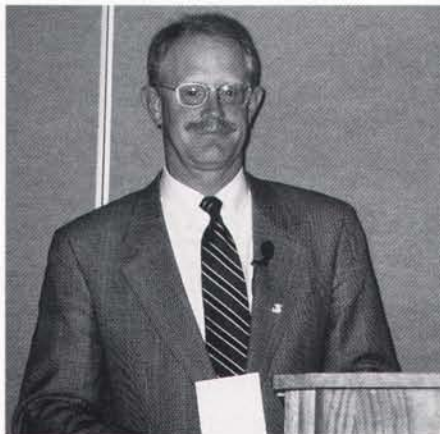
Especially enjoyable was Geoff Shackelford's keynote address – his "State of the Bunker" perfectly set the stage for the rest of the meeting. He talked about the look of them and their placement on the course, inviting players to make bold shots. Geoff also spent time talking about changes that will be necessary to restore the role of the bunker to the game. This was the first time many of us had heard this

well known author speak, and no one was disappointed.

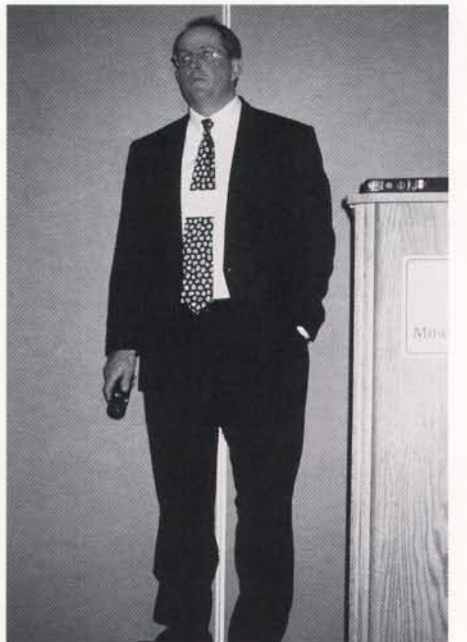
Ron Forse shifted gears from his morning subject of trees and spoke to the history of sand bunkers. His interest in classic courses and



**Tim Venes did a great job of pinch hitting for Carl Grassl on the discussion panel.**



**Ron Forse is especially qualified to speak about the history of sand bunkers in golf.**



**Mike Morris did a complete inhouse bunker renovation at his course, Crystal Downs.**



**Well known golf architecture author Geoff Shackelford.**



**Journalist & Golfdom editor Pat Jones.**