

COVER STORY

To enter the 72 hole stroke play event players need have a index of 9.4 or less, be one of the approximately 36 exempt players or qualify at one of the 9 qualifying tournaments. Players must qualify in the district of their home course unless providing a good reason why they cannot do so. 180 players make the field with a cut after 36 holes to allow the top 70 players and ties to play for the championship.

Four days of championship play will provide for the true state champion and winner of the Sinnissippi Cup. The cup received its name from the first championship in 1901 when the amateur was played at Sinnissippi Country Club which is now the Janesville Country Club. While players compete for individual honors WSGA member clubs with three qualifiers compete for the Yule Cup awarded to the low club after the first 36 holes of play.

Past winners of the State Amateur include US Open Winner Andy North, and PGA Tour Players Steve Stricker, JP Hayes and Mark Wilson. At the Bull at Pinehurst Farms in 2010 Jordan Elsen won a rain shortened 54 hole event by 6 over Kyle Murphy or Eau Claire. Elsen who is from Kenosha played 4 years for the Wisconsin Badgers and turned pro at the end of the 2010 season.

Maple Bluff Country Club is a historic venue so it is fitting the course is cared for by a experienced superintendent. Tom Harrison entered the golf industry as a high school employee working for Peter Miller at Nakoma Country Club. At the time Harrison's interest was engineering but after college he joined the Navy for 4 years. Upon his return to Madison in 1968 Tom preferred his summer job in the golf industry and joined the staff at Maple Bluff Country Club working for William Eckert.

Tom had penned an article for *The Grass Roots* called "The Assistant" in which he described the productive working relationship he had with Eckert. The knowledge he obtained during that time made him a natural to take over in the mid 1970's when Eckert left.

With 43 years at Maple Bluff Tom knows how to prepare and maintain the course for membership and tournament play. Harrison uses a mix of tried and true methods but also is ready to try new products and methods to improve the facility. His experience and knowledge of the Maple Bluff soils will provide for fast and firm conditions during the tournament.



Hole 12 at Maple Bluff plays 410 yards and looks short from the elevated tee. However the fairway and green are well protected by bunkers.



Lake Mendota and the Wisconsin State Capital Building are visible from the clubhouse and parts of the course.

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Although Tom has been involved with the WGCSA as a board member and vice president he is best known for his work with the Wisconsin Turfgrass Association. Harrison is a founding member of the association and has been a board member for almost every year of the association's existence and was President from 1983 to 1986. In going through all the early WTA pictures in The Grass Roots file, Tom is in most of them as a leader of the association.

Tom also played an integral part in the formation of the O.J. Noer Turfgrass Research and Education Facility. Both the WGCSA and the WTA relied on his ability to work with governmental entities in regards to permits, public works and organizational paperwork. Along with Tom's commit-

ment to Maple Bluff and the turf industry he has served as a volunteer fireman for the Maple Bluff Fire Department and served three terms on the McFarland Village Board. Tom and his wife Diane live in Madison and have three daughters and two sons.

References:

Monroe Miller, "40 years and Counting" Page 46/47 November / December issue of *Wisconsin Golfer Magazine*,

Gene Haas, *Playing Through*, A History of the Wisconsin State Golf Association, 2001, pages 16 & 200

Gene Haas, *Caring for The Green*, The History of the Wisconsin Golf Course Superintendents Association, 2005, pages 103, 178, 179

Tom Harrison, The Assistant, *The Grass Roots*, June 1976,



WTA President Tom Harrison accepts a check from Bruce Schweiger then superintendent at Janesville Riverside and Blackhawk Golf Courses. (Photo from The Grass Roots files)

Member 9 With Tom Harrison

- 1. First Vehicle?** *First personal vehicle was a 1953 Pontiac Straight 8 Hardtop. First course vehicle was a 1966 Jeep CJ-5.*
- 2. Favorite Piece of Golf Course Equipment?** *My schooling was engineering so I am a "Gear Head". I like all our equipment.*
- 3. 18 Hole Handicap?** *No handicap - prefer not to play golf. Trying to enjoy playing the game of golf when I have worked on a course since 1965 is difficult at best. I prefer recreational activities away from my full time job.*
- 4. Current Vehicle?** *Current private vehicle is a 1984 Chevy C-10 "Street Rod". Current club vehicle is a 2002 GMC Sierra Pickup.*
- 5. Favorite TV Show?** *American Pickers.*
- 6. Favorite Pro Sports Team?** *The Packers*
- 7. Favorite Main Course Meal?** *Seafood*
- 8. Pets?** *No Pets*
- 9. Favorite Thing About Working In Golf Industry?** *I love the landforms of a sculptured golf course. I enjoy the satisfaction of viewing the course at the end of a day when everything is manicured and our staff has the course looking great for our members. It is above all else the satisfaction of a job well done.
I would like to add the favorite part of my job is my employees. I have great employees and I enjoy coming to work every day and working with them. My younger employees are beginning their working lives and its a real joy guiding them, mentoring them and following their paths as they begin their working careers. I have 15 part time retired employees who are on the other end of lifes spectrum and they bring a whole different skill set to the work place. They are great to work with as they come to work and solve all the worlds problems each and every day. These employees are truly what make my job a great job.*

WELCOME OUR NEW WGCSA MEMBERS

Kyle Anderson, Willow Run Golf Club (C)
Jens Arneson, UW Madison (S)
Daniel Barrett, Legends at Bergamont (A)
Dustin Bernau, UW Madison (S)
Tom Bjornberg, Yamaha Golf and Utility (H)
Tod Blankenship, Trappers Turn (A)
Justin Busick, North Shore Golf Club (C)
Robert Champion, Riverside Golf Course (C)
Anthony Gonzalez, The Bog (SM)
Jonathan Jacques, Erin Hills Golf Club (C)
Rob Jansen, WSGA (H)
Lucas Johnson, Dretzka Park Golf Course (SM)
Dave Kloss, JW Turf (H)
Brad Legnaioli, Bowes Creek Country Club (A)
Mike Lemke, Lawsonia (C)
Lee Mahnke, Old Hickory Golf Club (A)
John Miller, GCSAA (H)
Jeffrey Muller, Oconomowoc Golf Club (C)
Jeff Normandt, Meadowbrook Golf Club (A)
Alex Olsen, Ozaukee Country Club (D)

Lyle Olson, Frontier Ag and Turf (E)
Chuck Shouse, Davey Tree and Lawn Experts (E)
Jaime Staufeneil, Milorganite (E)
William Tracy, UW Madison (H)
Michael VanDeVelde (D)
Roger Venden, Columbus Country Club (D)
Craig Vincent, Blackhawk Golf Club (D)
Christian Visser, Hansen Golf Course (SM)
Todd Wenzel, Riverview Country Club (SM)

REMINDER: The WGCSA
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