



WESTERN VIEWS

September-October, 1996

Official Publication of the West Michigan Golf Course Superintendents Association

WMGCSA 1996 Meeting Schedule

Nov. 1 Fall Party,
Walnut Hills C.C.

MEMBER NOTICE...

Meeting Payment Policy - Beginning in 1996, all meeting expenses will be on a CASH ONLY BASIS. There will be NO CHARGES ALLOWED. This will give us more control of all transactions and will eliminate having the host club having to handle all the billings.

Meeting Cancellation Policy - This is a reminder of a current policy. If you make reservations for a meeting and are unable to attend, and you do not cancel, you will be billed and expected to make a payment.

President's Message

It's hard to believe that it's October. It seems that the old adage "time flies" may be true. Our 1996 Golf Day was a great day, a special thanks to Gull Lake Country Club and host, Jon O'Connor. The Golf course was in superior condition and, as always, the food and hospitality are second to none. Golf Day Chairman, Doug Boyle, and Secretary-Treasurer, Keith Paterson, did an outstanding job in putting this all together. Of course, none of this could have been accomplished without the support of our member suppliers and also our many members and their guests who joined us on this sun drenched day.

Our annual meeting was held on October 8th at Silver Lake Country Club. Elections and a by-laws vote were conducted. The by-laws vote was to keep our Chapter an affiliate of GCSAA. The

passage of this amendment will help keep our association at the forefront in an ever changing industry. A change of member classifications will also be a part of this change. Now our classifications and GCSAA are different. A special thanks to Tom McGuinness and Silver Lake Country Club for hosting our event. At this time, I also want to thank Tom for his years of service on the board of directors. Tom helped greatly with our monthly newsletter, as well as with the membership and monthly meeting committees.

In the months ahead, your Board of Directors will be plotting a course for 1997 and beyond. I hope that all members become involved with this association. Remember, it only works as well as we all do.

Paul Schippers
President

Research Dollars Raised

Golf Day this year, held at Gull Lake Country Club, was again a big success. Thirty groups attended and at \$80 per man, plus the excellent contributions from the tee and green sponsors, that equals a few dollars that the Western Michigan Superintendents Association can be proud to send to Michigan State to help support Turfgrass Research in this area. Thanks again to all who supported the day!

The afternoon was more popular with only ten groups playing in the morning. The morning winners were the group of

Collins, Fifer, Eccleton, and Dible. The afternoon winners were O'Connor, Ross, Crouch, and Kirk. The buffet lunch was excellent and the golf course was in great shape. We appreciated the opportunity to play Gull Lake Country Club. It was interesting to see how the renovation

project that was completed a few years ago has blended in nicely with the older character of the course. It was also interesting to see how the ball rolled so smoothly on those well maintained greens. Nice job to Jon O'Connor, Golf Course Superintendent.

Wet And Cool!!

Wet and cool were the words to describe the conditions of the Annual Chapter Championship recently held in conjunction with the Annual Meeting at Silver Lake Country Club. The Championship was won by Tim Pratt of Crystal Springs Country Club with a gross score of 80. Quite a good score for the extreme conditions of the day. The golf course was in excellent shape and the greens rolled very good also. We appreciate the hospitality that Tom

McGuinness, Golf Course Superintendent at Silver Lake and Tom Rosely, owner, extended to us. Thank you to their staff as well!!

Along with the golf, elections were also held. Paul Schippers, Doug Boyle, Keith Paterson were re-elected to their positions. President, Vice President and Secretary-Treasurer, respectively. Al Bathum and Roger Barton were elected to the vacant directors positions. Many thanks to Tom McGuinness for his service on the board and his work on the newsletter and other committees.

SERIALS

Editor's Note: Please write me if you have any corrections, or if you are interested in doing an article for us at:

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Vintage turfgrass equipment collection display dedicated

Kenyon T. Payne, a pioneer in the study of turfgrass science, has left a lasting impression of his work with the restoration and renovation of a historic turfgrass equipment compilation.

Composed of 130 exhibits, the Kenyon T. Payne Collection of Vintage Turfgrass Equipment was dedicated Aug. 15 at Michigan State University, East Lansing, Mich. The Golf Course Superintendents Association of America (GCSAA), which will manage the collection along with the University Museum, sponsored a reception the night before the ceremony. Speakers at the event included GCSAA President Bruce R. Williams, CGCS, and Immediate Past President Gary T. Grigg, CGCS. Grigg is also chairman of GCSAA's Historical Preservation Committee.

Payne passed away June 15, 1994, after a distinguished career in turfgrass science. At the dedication, his wife Jane said the collection was initiated as a means to "instill the values of patience, diligence and camaraderie" preached and practiced by her late husband.

Payne was a driving force behind the

establishment of the Golf Turf program at Michigan State, serving as chairman of the Department of Crop Science from 1952 - 68. Among the honors bestowed upon Payne was his selection in 1988 as GCSAA Distinguished Award recipient and the USGA's 1994 Green Section Award.

Intent on preserving the past, Payne began collecting turfgrass equipment in the 1970's, and students refurbished many of the items while under his tutelage. The display has special significance for Williams, who studied under Payne's watchful eye at Michigan State.

"Doc, as he was affectionately known, knew the equipment well," Williams said. "Somehow Doc understood that this equipment would have yet another important role to play. He wasn't doing something he felt he had to do. He was doing something he was compelled to do. Dr. Payne's program excited me. Little did I know that all those things I learned I would use later in life."

The GCSAA Foundation will administer the collection along with the

Michigan State University Museum. Museum staff members are currently inventorying and cataloging each item for public display. The two groups will carry out Payne's mandate of worldwide exposure for the tools and devices invented for the betterment of turfgrass science by making the collection available to interested parties. GCSAA displayed a portion of the collection at its two most recent international golf course conference and shows, and will do so again next year in Las Vegas.

Since 1926, GCSAA has been the leading professional association for the men and women who manage and maintain golf facilities in the United States and worldwide. From its headquarters in Lawrence, Kan., the association provides education, information and representation to more than 16,700 individual members from more than 50 countries. GCSAA's mission is to serve its members, advance their profession, and enrich the quality of golf and its environment.

*GCSAA News Release,
September 21, 1996*

News From American Society of Golf Course Architects

ASGCA Hold Design Contest For Superintendents; Nicklaus, Hills, Jones To Judge Entries; Review At Show.

To help mark its 50th anniversary, the American Society of Golf Course Architects has announced a golf course design contest for golf course superintendents.

Dubbed the "ASGCA Golden Anniversary Challenge," the Society invited superintendents to submit entries to be evaluated by ASGCA members Jack Nicklaus, Art Hills and Rees Jones. The winning designs will be announced and reviewed during the Society's annual educational session presented at the 1997 Golf Course Superintendents Association of America Conference and Show. Nicklaus, Hills and Jones will explain what they liked and disliked about the three winning entries at the ASGCA session scheduled for Monday, Feb. 10, from 9 a.m. to noon.

According to Denis Griffiths, president of the Society, the contest spotlights ASGCA's Golden Anniversary, and gives superintendents a fun opportunity to try their hand as architects. "On a daily basis, members of the GCSAA manage existing golf courses and even grow-in the new ones, but how often do they get to design one?" he asks. "Here's their chance."

All proceeds from the contest (\$100 entry fee) will go to the ASGCA

Foundation, which funds numerous programs for the golf industry. Created in 1973, the Foundation has in recent years helped fund activities such as turfgrass research and the development of informational literature such as the popular booklet, "An Environmental Approach to Golf Course Development."

Contest Details:

Superintendents can register for the contest by filling out a registration card and sending it along with a check for \$100 to the ASGCA Foundation. Registration cards are available by contacting the ASGCA, Attention: Golden Anniversary Challenge, 221 N. LaSalle St., Chicago, IL 60601. Phone 312/372-7090 or fax 312/372-6160.

Upon receipt of an entry form and payment, contest participants will receive a "Golden Anniversary Challenge" package that will include the materials upon which to base their designs. These include: Topographic map, sheets on which to sketch a design, description of the property (topographic, climatic and meteorological conditions), and complete contest evaluation criteria. Deadline for receipt of the entries is Dec. 31, 1996.

The entries will be judged by the

Nicklaus, Hills and Jones design teams during January. Each will choose a winning design entry that will be announced at the GCSAA educational session. The three-hour educational session will permit each architect to discuss, praise and critique the entry he has chosen as the winner.

Winners will be invited on stage to be recognized, and will receive their layout framed and autographed by Nicklaus, Hills and Jones. They will also receive an autographed copy of *Golf Has Never Failed Me: the Lost Manuscript of Donald J., Ross*, recently published by the Society as a 50th Anniversary project.

Award Criteria

The exact criteria used to evaluate the entries will be spelled out in the registration packets. In addition, Griffiths offers the following advice: "We'll be looking for layouts that take maximum advantage of the natural elements present on the site; minimize disturbance to the environment; account for the prevailing wind and other site conditions; challenge golfers while not treating them unfairly; and generally offer a golfer a pleasurable, memorable golf experience."

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ASGCA Hold Design

Contest... *continued from page 2*

The Judges

Nicklaus heads Nicklaus Design in North Palm Beach, Fla. Among his designs are Muirfield Village Golf Club in Dublin, Ohio; Shoal Creek in Birmingham, ALA; Castle Pines Golf Club in Castle Rock, Colo.; Desert Highlands Golf Club in Scottsdale, Ariz.; and Colleton River Plantation in Hilton Head Island, S.C.

Hills, a Past President of the Society, heads the Toledo-based firm bearing his name. He claims such designs as Bonita Bay in Naples, Fla.; The Golf Club of Georgia in Atlanta, Geo.; Bighorn Golf Club in Pal Desert, Calif.; The Champions in Lexington, Kent.; and Hyatt Hill Country Resort in San Antonio, Tex.

Jones, also a Past President of the Society, heads Rees Jones Design in Montclair, N.J. His designs include Atlantic G.C. in Bridgehampton, N.Y.; Haig Point Club in Duafuskie Island, S.C.; Ocean Forest G.C. in Sea Island, Geo.; Oxfordshire G.C. in Oxfordshire, England; and Sandpines Golf Resort in Florence, Ore.

Tour Bunkers are too easy

Tour players tend to whine about course conditions. We always want to know why the fairways are better, the greens aren't smoother, the bunker sand isn't harder ... you name it.

So this one time when I told Jay Haas, a fellow player director on the tour's policy board, about how soft the sand was in Hartford and how my shots plugged in the bunkers there, well, I expected Jay to overwhelm me with sympathy. Instead, he gave me one of those looks. "Brad, I always thought bunkers were *supposed* to be hazards," he said. "Your not *supposed* to get good lies."

It was an eye-opening slap in the face. I was being a typical spoiled tour pro, bitching that something wasn't easy, that it was too hard, and man, Jay nailed me. I deserved it.

Later, I was at Newport CC and its pro, Billy Harmon, who also happens to be Jay's teacher, told me a story about a member who hit several bad bunker shots and complained that the sand wasn't consistent, that it was hard in one trap and soft in another. Billy told him., "When you hit into a creek, you don't get mad because the ball gets wet, do you?"

I got his point. Jay Haas won't stop laughing when he reads this coming from

me, but I believe playing out of bunkers has become too easy on tour.

It's true. At the British Open at Turnberry last year, when there was a pot bunker on the left side of the fairway, you made darn sure you drove it right. There was no question you didn't want to be in that thing. Not so at the U.S. Open. When a player hits an approach shot off-line at the Open, you usually hear, "Get in the bunker! Get in the bunker!" You would never hear that at the British Open. Or at Pine Valley, where you have to look hard to find a rake, or Oakmont, back when they used furrowed rakes.

Tour players do not fear bunker shots - at the Open or any other tour stop. Not when we have a good lie and firm sand that has a little give under the ball, which allows us to control the distance.

How did the bunker play get so easy? It happened gradually. Sand on tour is uniformly and meticulously raked to a consistent depth and is usually a consistent type of sand, without rocks and shells. Bunkers are even raked in the direction of play, never against the "grain".

People have become accustomed to lush

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Tour Bunkers too easy... *continued from page 3*

green grass and perfect greens and tees, and now, firm white sand in the bunkers so the ball sits up. When I was growing up and playing at Rhode Island CC, a good course right by the ocean, they used beach sand for the bunkers. It was inconsistent and had shells and stones and gave you a lot of different lies. You had to get used to getting a lie you couldn't spin it from, or maybe hit a low, running shot.

It wasn't the perfect sand we get on tour nowadays. We're spoiled, no question. Muirfield Village, site of the Memorial tournament, is a good example. The sand is so good there, it's almost the same as being in the fairway.

Nobody ever complains about the bunkers at Muirfield. If you catch a lie where your ball isn't sitting up or it's in a spot that wasn't raked perfectly, you feel like you got the worst break in history. I hit into a bunker there last year and the lie was so good, I couldn't decide whether to hit 2- or 3-iron to the green.

Compare that to last year's World Match Play at Wentworth, England. I was 1-up on Ian Woosnam going to the 36th hole, where I hooked my drive into a fairway trap. It was a long, flat trap but the sand was soft and you could see barely half

of the ball. It was not sitting up. I took out a 4-wood and hit, to me, the best shot of my life. It was perfect - over a lip, 220 yards into the wind. I made birdie to tie the hole and win the match. That lie almost made me take a different club, but the situation and match made me take a 4-wood. That's what a bunker is supposed to do. It should make you play a shot and work to get a par.

Things like that go back to why the European players keep beating the Americans in the big events. Less-than-perfect conditions make you a better player. You learn how to hit more shots. Maybe just as important, you learn how to mentally handle bad breaks.

I remember reading golf magazines growing up. The old theory was if you hit it in a trap, you were happy just to get it out. Well, that philosophy is as dead as hickory shafts. Given a good lie, a typical short bunker shot for a tour pro will be inside five feet every time.

The softest sand we had all last year was at the PGA Championship at Southern Hills in Tulsa. Guys were plugging low-hook 2-irons into those bunkers, which shouldn't really happen. A lot of guys complained to me because I'm a player director. The thing is, I'm sure Nick Price didn't get

as many plugged lies as the guy who finished 20th because he didn't hit as many bunkers.

That's the whole idea, isn't it? That's part of the game. Look in the rules book. Bunkers are hazards. If you don't want a bad lie, don't hit it in there. And if you do hit it in there, don't whine about it. It's not supposed to be an easy shot - even though on the PGA tour these days, it usually is.

Source: Golf World

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