

## OAKS COUNTRY CLUB NOSTALGIA

In the summer of 1920 our Club became more than an idea. Col. William P. Weichel, a newcomer to Tulsa, applied for membership in the Tulsa Country Club and found he was stymied by a long waiting list. He then gathered together a group of friends to organize a new country club. At the same time, Walter Ahrens was busy agitating for a second country club in the Tulsa area and placed a notice in the papers calling for a meeting of all interested parties. The two groups met and in June formed a 45-member charter called the Golfer's Country Club.

A special site selection committee spent weeks looking over every available property in the area. It finally recommended our present location eight miles out in the country from downtown Tulsa a long distance at that time and, six months after being Chartered the Golfer's Country Club, for \$40,000.00 purchased 312.5 acres of which 160 acres embracing the highest hill SW of Tulsa were set aside for the golf course and the Club House. In June of 1921, work started on clearing more than 2,000 Jack Oaks and other trees and the Club's name was changed to the Oakhurst Country Club.

We are indeed fortunate in the Golf Course Architect selection as our layout was designed by A. W. Tillinghast, who also designed the Tulsa Country Club. Born to a comfortable living in 1874, he was one of the cadre of arrogant, flashy, reckless, heavy drinking playboy rogues of his acquaintance during his late teens, and early 20's. Because of his golfing skill and knowledge of every facet of the game he was asked to design and supervise the construction of the Shawnee-on-the-Delaware course in 1909. This assignment started his career in becoming the Dean of American born golf course architects. He took hold and held on. One hundred thirty one of his courses are listed in *The Course Beautiful* (a copy of which is kept in our Pro-Shop) covering original designs plus reconstructions, expansions and additions. None of his course designs look alike. Each is as distinct from the others as the Mona Lisa is from the Last Supper. All of his courses are now legendary classics, still demand the best from expert golfers, and many continue to host big tournaments. All this from the spoiled son of a prominent Philadelphian who grew up doing exactly as he pleased and never finished a single school he attended. He was a spellbinder talker, an impeccable dresser, his trademark was a magnificent waxed mustache, he was one of the founders of the PGA of America, and he died in 1942 content with the title he gave himself -the "Creator of Golf Courses". His record shows his uncanny ability of being able to fit 18 holes of golf to the natural contour of the land available for the course. His basic philosophy was that nature must precede the architect in the laying out of a golf course. He would spend weeks at the site, selecting innumerable possible layouts before making his final selection. He did not intend for you to see the course until you play each of its 18 holes. For example, at the Oaks he starts you out with three relatively easy holes and finishes you off with three of the finest and toughest finishing holes in the State of Oklahoma. In between, you will be required to fade shots from hook stances and vice versa, using all the clubs in your bag. When you look at the lists of America's and the world's 100 greatest golf courses, you will be proud to tell your guests that the Oaks was designed by A. W. Tillinghast. His outstanding courses on the list includes: Winged Foot West, built in 1923 in Mamaroneck, NY, the year after he built the Oaks, Baltusrol Golf Course, Springfield, NJ, built in 1922, the same year as the Oaks, Quaker Ridge Golf Course, Scarsdale, NY, built in 1916, San Francisco Golf Course, San Francisco, California, built in 1915, and Baltimore Golf Course (Five Farms), Baltimore, Maryland, built in 1921. He has 10 golf courses in the list of the 100 Best Courses in the U.S.A. and or worldwide by then.

All of these courses have matured with time and money as has the Oaks.

You should also note that the configuration of our course around a hill, where normally there is a cooling breeze on the hottest days and where there is natural drainage which, together with the cart paths, permits year-round play, except in the most inclement weather. These are conditions that no other club in the Tulsa area enjoys.

During construction of the course which cost \$295,000.00, Bermuda grass had to be selected for the greens, and through the courtesy of Tulsa Country Club, Oakhurst started its own propagation plant farm for its greens. The greens were originally sand which was changed to Bermuda grass in 1924 and then to Bent grass in 1930.

Again we are indeed fortunate in the selection made when construction, which amounted to \$115,000.00, was started in 1923 on the Club House. Plans were drawn by John Vincent McDonnell's firm using an Old English Inn architecture typical of the Elizabethan period. This firm designed at least 16 of Tulsa's Historic homes and many of Tulsa's commercial projects. The Club House opening was celebrated on June 19 and 20, 1924, at which time the Club had 450 members and then promptly developed a waiting list over the 500 level limit. The Club House has withstood the test of time, remodeling and character since it was opened.

In the building and operation of the Club House, water and gas were needed. Five miles of pipeline would have had to be laid for gas, so instead, the resourceful members drilled for gas, to a total depth of 1660 feet, and Bingo, they had a gasser. Pipe was laid from the well to the Club House and Oakhurst had its own fuel for heating and cooking. Cosden and Company allowed the Club to hook on to its water line for water in the Club House.

We were also lucky to have a retired banker and great Golf Course designer rework seven of our greens and make some minor changes in their location in 1937. This was the same year that he rebuilt six of the greens at Augusta National and with the help of Bobby Jones completely redesigned the #10 hole from the Tee to the Green to its present format. He was employed to improve the chance of keeping our Greens playable in times of severe drought and heat such as was experienced in 1936. This man was not merely a greens expert, he was also a noted golf course designer with a course in the First Ten, Second Ten and the Third Ten in the best 100 golf course listings. Thus the two men responsible for our present layout have 12 of the best 100 courses in the United States to their credit and eight worldwide. You have probably guessed that this second Golf Course Architect is none other than Oklahoma's own Perry Maxwell, the designer of Southern Hills. Other Oklahoma courses that he designed are Twin Hills in Oklahoma City, Hillcrest in Bartlesville and his first course Dornick Hills in Ardmore, which was his home course plus the Oklahoma City Golf and Country Club, Indian Hills in Catoosa, which is now a part of the Cherokee Casino Complex and the Cushing Golf Club. He designed 75 great courses and redesigned 50 others. All of these courses are a delight to play and it is worth an extra effort to play them if you have never had the pleasure. Dornick Hills where Perry is buried on the course, which he felt was one of his best efforts, is particularly recommended.

In 1938, Oakhurst was host to the Women's Trans-Mississippi Golf Championship, in which Miss Patty Berg won her first major title.

Depression years, World War II and gas rationing in effect virtually closed Oakhurst Country Club, as the membership gradually declined to below 50 members. The late Bob Ervine and his wife Charlotte moved into the Club House. Mr. Ervine kept the golf course in playing condition

and his wife attended to the Club House. The late Marion Askew, the Club's professional worked part time after working hours at the Douglas Aircraft Company and on weekends.

On April 12, 1944, there was a foreclosure and Sheriff's auction of the Oakhurst Country Club. The Club was purchased for \$38,600.00 by W. H. Ahrens along with Joe Parkinson, Col. Weichel, Dexter Moss, Ray Grimshaw and his sons and Frank Orr. In 1947 a committee was selected by Mr. Ahrens to start a membership drive. With the start of the membership drive the name of the Club was changed to the Oaks Country Club and a proviso was made to sell the Club to the members, with the purchase to include the Club House, its furnishings and the grounds consisting of 160 acres plus its working equipment. When it had 420 members, 350 of whom paid \$500.00 for their share of stock as they were existing members under the Ahrens group, plus 70 who were solicited as new members who paid \$750.00, of which \$250.00 was the transfer fee, for their shares of stock, this transaction was completed in 1952 at the purchase prices of \$196,000.00. Leonard Reitz wrote the check and the Club started out debt free with \$30,000.00 in the bank. However, it was soon discovered that the premises required rewiring and replumbing at the cost of \$275,000.00, so the Club then went into debt, giving a mortgage on the property. Social memberships were then established for help in carrying the financial load.

Leonard Reitz felt that the Oaks would not have survived after the members purchased the Club from the Ahrens group had it not been for the late O. G. Roquemore, its first President, who also was Chairman of the Committee that supervised all purchases and expenditures and quarterbacked the Committee's development of the bylaws to be certain the Directors could not spend money beyond certain limits without the approval of the Shareholders, thereby precluding the Club being saddled with debt it could not stand.

In 1957, the Club House underwent extensive remodeling. A new kitchen and Ladies Locker Room were built and the lounge was extended. Also, the Club went deeper into debt. Ten year five percent Bonds having face values of \$100.00, \$500.00 and \$1000.00 were sold to finance these developments and some \$140,000.00 was raised.

Before construction of the water tower at #5 green; there was only a 2" supply line, which the Club had laid to the closest Tulsa supply connection. Because waterless houses along the line often tapped on to it without permission, frequently there was not enough pressure to take showers. The manager tried to collect \$3.00 a month from the interlopers but was not always successful.

As a condition of the purchase of the Club lifetime dues free memberships were given to Mr. Ahrens and his children in exchange for the use of the top seven feet of water from his lake to be pumped by the Club to its lake alongside #10 fairway.

In the early 1960's John R. Allen set the course record by scoring a 65, which has subsequently been tied by Bob Karlovich, Jr., he also, in 1970, set the course record at Burning Tree in Bethesda, Maryland, and according to a newspaper release out of Florida, he shot his age 61 times. In 1974, Tony Jacklin put together back to back nine hole scores of 32 on the back nine and 31 on the front nine, but on successive days because of rain and no one would give him the time of day concerning the record. Phil Davidson, at one time had only seven putts on the back nine, which feat was recognized by Believe It or Not. One day when Bob Dickson was Assistant Professional under Marion Askew, he shot a 28 on the front nine. He then announced he had to quit as Marion had told him he could play only nine holes that day. Charlie Bryant tried to get him to continue, but he would not ask Marion for permission to do so. Bob Karlovich, Jr. has a 30 year combined 18 hole low total score of 41, which includes 12 eagles. Joey Dills set the official U.S.G.A. course record

of 67 while qualifying for the U.S. Open, which was tied in 1989 by Jim Sorenson while also qualifying for the U.S. Open. Frank Cox set a record of two birdies in one round at 17 when his drive accidentally killed a bird and he went on to actually get a three. In 1999 Randy Crews shot a 64, and in 2000 Frank Genzer shot a 62. Jim Morrison reported that Art Werner shot his age at the Oaks when he was 97 years old, a year before he passed away. K. B. Hatfield has shot his age or better 103 times and the Pro-Shop has lost count of how many. He is 90 years young. One time in January when the temperature was below freezing and the greens were frozen Don Bixler, Reavis Page, Jack Hogan, Ray Hilburn and Tony Jacklin had 5 Birdies on #6 which is probably a world record. Jack Frost had 5 holes in one on all the par 3 holes in 2001, has had 18 in his life and he is 79 years young.

Dale Fleming McNamara, Ron Streck and Adelle Lukken Peterson grew up at the Oaks. Dale, who Marion Askew thought had a promising swing as a thirteen-year-old, won the Oklahoma Women's State Championship seven times. She is now the retired Assistant Athletic Director and Women's Golf Coach at the University of Tulsa where her teams won three NCAA National Championships. Ron is active on the Seniors PGA Tour. Adelle, who was Miss Golfer of the year of 1979 and who Lee Trevino said is too pretty to play golf as he scrambled to tie her birdie on #14 at Cedar Ridge during an exhibition match, now lives in Minnesota. Bob Dickson, by a two-stroke penalty as a youngster, lost the USGA tourney at Southern Hills Country Club in 1965 to Bob Murphy by one stroke because someone accidentally put an extra iron in Dickson's bag.

The greens and fairways sprinkling system were first installed in 1965 by Les Snyder and his crew. The Board then wrestled with the problems of finding an assured water supply for the golf course and with installing a fence to fence sprinkling system. In the meantime, according to the Forest Service, more than \$10,000,000.00 worth of our trees died because of the lack of mulch that naturally protects wooded areas from hot dry spells. Most golfers don't realize that heavy rough and/ or mulch in the wooded areas, to keep water in the ground, is necessary to protect the trees and not just to hide their errant shots. Lightning, ice, old age and wind has destroyed at least an additional 1000 of our trees having a value of about \$5,000,000.00. Thus our tree retention situation is critical to the future of the Club. At one time, every member of the Club donated a new tree, but because of the lack of water nearly all of them died. In 1992, the Shareholders voted to redo the greens, to replace the sprinkler system with a new fence-to-fence satellite controlled sprinkler system and to obtain an assured water supply system emanating from A1 Geigers brother Philip's property on Polecat Creek all of which were completed in 1996. Thor Brandt had searched the area and found the only viable solution, a pipeline from Polecat Creek up 49th West Avenue to the Club. Mark Hayes, a most successful professional golfer who has upgraded several Tillinghast designs was hired to redo the greens at which time #11 green and #12 tee were moved to the South, which action was not approved by the Shareholders, thereby getting rid of one of the best par 3 holes in Oklahoma, replacing it with a nondescript par 3 and changing the character of #12 negatively. During the above renovation of the course, the contours put in by Tillinghast on the greens were altered considerably, humps were put in at the front of many greens and the sand traps were so altered as to eliminate the possibility of putting out of every trap as designed by Tillinghast, none of which were authorized by the Shareholders in the approval of the program because the Board assured them the Tillinghast design would remain intact. The Bylaws of the Club now preclude negating the basic Tillinghast design. It is too bad that this requirement wasn't in the Bylaws at that time as these changes significantly desecrated one of Tillinghast's classic designs concerning the difficulty of putting, approaching the greens and keeping the ball on the greens. Also, in this connection, as reported by Russell D. Karns, our 2<sup>nd</sup> President, Tillinghast designed #10 for the tee shot to go directly over the lake for the long hitters but letting other players shoot to the left of the lake and there was a large tree in the middle of the fairway; however,

at some time trees were planted around the lake when the first swimming pool was installed where the present putting green is located, thereby negatively changing the character of the hole.

In the 1950's and the 1960's the Oaks was renowned for its many outstanding parties where big bands like Shep Fields, Ray McKinley, Chuck Cabot, Frankie Masters, Jan Garber and Lawrence Welk plus many others performed under special decorative themes. One, which was a luau where two bands played, started the members and their guests out at the gate with a Lei and a Mai Tai to sip on while driving up to the parking area. The libations, the food, the decorations and the music were fabulous at every party, and those bands didn't rely on or use high-powered amplifying systems. The music was sweet, pure and uptown. No one went home with blown eardrums. Parties were held once a month and every night between Christmas and New years and the place was packed. After one of these parties, someone who was not properly parked accidentally backed his car into the lake.

A new Golf Shop was completed in 1967.

In 1970, when the bank couldn't find the last five Bondholders, our President, O. B. Johnston did and two of them were members of the Club. The Bonds were then retired.

A new swimming pool and recreational complex located north of the Club House was completed in July of 1969.

One day when Reavis Page was President, his inside man at the skunk works gave the alarm that the Sheriff's office was processing a search warrant, so he rushed to the Club, put emergency plan Do It Now in effect, and as the posse came through the gate going south his team passed them going north driving a truck bulging at the seams with incognito slot machines thereby postponing their ordained removal.

In 1972, Bill Noble donated the shelters at numbers one, six and fourteen tees and a new roof for the restrooms at #14 tee and Gene Campbell donated the aluminizing. The shelters were discarded in 2000 except the one at #6 tee, which was rebuilt in 2001.

In 1974, the present putting green was constructed over the area where the old swimming pool was located.

Also, in 1974, the slot machines, which were not owned by the Club, that had helped support the Club's capital improvements through the years, except for shortages occasioned by certain employees skimming the take, were retired somewhat forcibly by minions of the Creek County Sheriff's Department, and our general manager spent an uncomfortable night in the Bastille until the late Troye Kennon arranged for his release.

In 1975, both the Men and Ladies' locker rooms were remodeled using Blaine Imel's architectural plans and the drive into the Club plus the parking lots were resurfaced. Also, most importantly, the mortgage was burned by A. L. Bennett and Jim Gilmore at an appropriate ceremony on July 4, and from that time, until the vote in 1992 for the redoing of the greens, replacing the sprinkler system, putting in the Pole Cat Creek pipelines and pumping system, the Club remained debt free.

During the 1960's the Oaks was rated among the leading Golf and Country Clubs of the nation having 500 members, according to the U.S. Golf Foundation of New York City.

The Oaks clearly showed its golfing stature in 1975. First, during the FORE OF TULSA PRO-AM, where only three of the thirty two touring professionals, eleven played two rounds, were able to score under par (Terry Dill shot two 70's, Dave Hill shot 69 and Doug Ford shot 68). Second, it hosted the 45<sup>th</sup> Annual Women's Trans National Amateur Championship. Mabel Hotz who served two terms as President of the Oaks Women's Golf Association was instrumental in bringing that Tournament to the Oaks. Sadly, she passed away prior to the Tournament.

There is no standard measurement on which to rate a golf course, so rating becomes very much a matter of opinion. If that is true, then what makes a golf course great and how can experts pick the best 10 or whatever golf courses in the United States? A great course should test the skills of a scratch player from the championship tees, challenging him to play all types of shots. It should reward well-placed shots and call on the golfer to blend both power and finesse. Each hole should be memorable, and not a repeat of some other hole. There should be a feeling of enticement and a sense of satisfaction in playing the course. The design should offer a balance of both length and configuration and the course should be properly maintained. The Oaks certainly meets all of these qualifications. Its members and guests average about 125 rounds a day, year-round, which attests to its popularity.

Since showing its stature in 1975, upgrades, maintenance and manicuring of the grounds along with the addition of sand and grass traps, both the lengthening and shortening of tees, the maturing of replaced and older trees, et cetera, has increased the playability skill requirements of the Oaks. It is now a truly great course, and in the opinion of many widely traveled golfers, its present configuration is one of the finest tests of golfing skill anywhere. What a wonderful layout it is that A. W. Tillinghast so carefully prepared for us. A legacy, no less. No wonder we nurture it so meticulously.

Construction started in 1980 on a major renovation of the Club House when the Oakleaf dining room was added and the lounge, ballroom, lobby, Ladies powder room and offices were all remodeled. At that time the cozy lounge atmosphere was changed to resemble the cold appearance of a hospital waiting room. Basically, the lounge then became usable only for serving libations prior to large dinners. It had previously been a great gathering place that was used every evening.

Also, in 1980, Don Bixler's penchant for throwing clubs was curbed by a trick Don Pittman pulled on him at the lake on #10. Pittman purposely hit his tee shot in the water and by prearrangement the driver of his cart went off without him. So Bixler who was alone on a cart took Pittman to the drop area. Pittman noted that he had the wrong club and supposedly borrowed one of Bixler's brand new clubs, but it was an old club that Pittman had purposely planted in Bixler's bag. Pittman promptly dropped a ball and hit it in the lake. He swore and threw what Bixler thought was his new club after it. It is a shame we could not have all been there to witness the reaction. However, Pittman and the rest of the fivesome wasted little time in describing the details of the incident far and wide. This has to be the best trick ever pulled on a golf course, and where else but the Oaks.

In 1983, the Board inadvertently mistook the signal, without concurrence by the members of the Greens Committee, of a questionnaire and opted to undertake a radical, costly and time consuming revamping of the golf course; however, at a special meeting, petitioned by the Shareholders, the proposal, which the members called the Finger Fiasco, was rejected.

In 1984, the membership was down because of the Finger Fiasco and the Board proposed very inadequate new Bylaws which were approved by the membership only because they were better than the old ones.

In 1985, O. B. Johnston arranged for the Club to purchase the approximately one third acre of land adjacent to #6 green, and Max True arranged for the Club to be granted an easement on the roadway land owned by one of his daughters in order for the Club to be able to move the fence and close the area. Again in 1986 O. B. arranged for the purchase of the lot adjacent to #5 green, which is now properly fenced. The Eagle overlooking the waterfall to the right of #11 Tee honors his service and contributions to the Club.

Since the Finger Fiasco in 1983, countless deliberative man hours have been expended by the Board in making proposals for revising the Club's Bylaws and Rules thereby resulting in significant improvements viz-a-viz the pre-Finger Fiasco requirements and limitations. However, these revisions do not now appear to meet all of the standards necessary to assure proper personal etiquette together with attaining big business success in a domicile of excellence such as the Oaks is now purported to be.

In August of 1986, the Club was able to close the road through the golf course to public traffic as the result of a court order.

Easy access to the Club from all directions is now a fact as a new road and entrance gate to the Club from 71<sup>st</sup> Street was constructed in 1987. Also, the parking lots were enlarged, the practice range was updated for the third time and the old putting green was removed as the road went right through it.

Because the new entrance road encroached on the ninth green, the green was rebuilt in 1988 but the Tillinghast contours were changed and the tee was lengthened to maintain the same yardage. Also, the chipping green was built and the men's locker restrooms were remodeled.

To speed up play on the golf course, a new halfway house type facility was constructed in 1989. The men's locker room was also partially remodeled.

Early in 1990, the grill, lobby, Ladies powder room, lounge, and ballroom were beautifully renovated under the talented direction of the Brandt's, Joe and Emily. Also, the kitchen received a thorough maintenance overhaul.

In 1993, Phillip Snyder, Les Snyder's son, was President of the Club.

In 1994 restroom facilities for the Handicapped were installed adjacent to the office as a result of Art Werner's prodding.

After Dick Boerger's incumbency as President in 1988 there was agitation to either scrap the Club House or put it through a significant revamping and a Long Range Planning Committee was authorized to study the matter. After several years the Board in 1997 engaged Design Masters of Lake Worth Beach, Florida to develop an over all plan for renovation of the Club House, which it did and after a dog and pony show the membership voted twice to go in debt in the amount of \$3,500,000.00 to complete the renovations. Unfortunately, the Florida concern's plans were found by Clint Hays, Byron Steele and Tony Jacklin to be lacking in many respects including placing the men's locker room away from the main Club House facility which meant the men would have to go outdoors after golfing and showering. The Board then contracted with Tom Hoch of Oklahoma City to do the design properly. Bids on construction were taken and the job was contracted with Crossland Construction and with Tom Hoch Interiors.

In June of 1999 the old pro-shop and part of the men's locker room were torn down, a "Tornado Proof" cellar was built for golf cart storage, and the new men's locker rooms, golf bag storage room and new pro-shop were then built over the golf cart storage room. The old golf cart building was razed and that area and the area around the 1<sup>st</sup> tee was relandscaped.

The old men's locker room was completely redone for use by the ladies as their locker room and card room.

The old ladies locker room was converted to a new grill with additional space added for the A. W. Tillinghast Bar.

A new ramp system was installed between the basement and the kitchen through the old grill room for use in bringing in supplies to the kitchen and the removal of trash to the dumpster site through the basement.

The Club's electrical system was completely updated.

The kitchen was completely renewed.

The old Harvest Kitchen was revamped so that it now seats more than 100 for meals. It is now called the Regency Room.

A porch was added facing the eighteenth green and the halfway house was revamped with direct access to the kitchen for the employees plus a through passageway for golfers to use in obtaining refreshments or food.

Particular attention was paid in the overall arrangement to provide for easy access and egress for the handicapped through "Peacock Alleys" for halls involving the use of external and internal ramps plus ample restroom facilities.

The Oakleaf room was refurbished and the new Portecochere and vestibule were completed as well as the remodeling of the remaining portion of the old club house including the lobby, foyer, ladies upstairs powder and restrooms, corridors, administrative office, bar lounge and main ballroom areas.

While the Club House renovation was being accomplished the Board found enough money to also tear down and replace the swimming pool housing complex.

Whoever triggered the Board to ask the Ladies of the Club to decorate the Club probably needs a big pat on the back from everyone. Judy Genzer was chairman of the decorating committee assisted by Jacque Young, Mary Cole, Ellen Edwards, Cindy Collingsworth and Pat Compton. They did a magnificent job with the funds allotted. Only two significant omissions can be recalled; first, no padding was installed under the carpet, thereby causing the noise level to be many decibels over what it would be with good padding; and second, the lounge was still left with a cold atmosphere. Judy and Jacque finally prevailed on the Board to let them redo the lounge to its current attractive atmosphere. About the only thing they missed was providing dominoes so that domino players will be attracted to use the lounge. The lounge is now such a pleasant place that it should be used for luncheon and dinner traffic everyday for those members and guests who would appreciate a step up from the informality of the grill and the Tillinghast bar.



We still have a world-class facility Club House. Dave Johnson received a pat on the back for carrying this project to fruition during his Presidency as did the many employees, members and contractor employees who participated. Dave spent at least 75% of every day overseeing the work in assuring the Club House continued its role in being a domicile of excellence for its members and guests.

During 2001 the sliding security gate was installed, and half of the Abe Lincoln rail fence at the north of the Club was replaced. The half of the rail fence that was not replaced is still a significant eyesore, especially for Sapulpa members, and a security problem for the Club concerning vandalism of the greens, swimming pool and Club House.

After not fulfilling the fence-to-fence sprinkling mandated by the Shareholders, many many thousands of dollars were spent in eliminating those parts of the Club's greensward by killing the Bermuda grass and planting so-called wildflower areas where there were no sprinklers, but it turns out that these areas become unsightly eyesore weed patches and fire hazards as they grow.

When Ron Shotts was Chairman of the Greens Committee he resodded the eyesore to the right of the #10 fairway, planted trees and installed sprinklers. He also saw to it that the lake was rebanked with attractive stones. The leak from the lake was supposedly fixed at that time but it is again leaking.

In 2004 all of the sand traps were rebuilt but unfortunately improperly, and hopefully we won't have to rebuild them again.

In 2006 more of the unsightly wildflower areas were replaced between the 10<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> fairways and back of the 11<sup>th</sup> green for use in practicing up to 100 yard pitch shots.

The 2005-2006 and 2007 Boards concentrated on reducing costs and in running the Club as a big business in maximizing profits versus the investment of sizeable sums of money where required to assure the Club of being financially sound in this worldwide time of recession; and the Club concentrated not only on the big business aspects of its operation but also in improving the quality of food to at least that of the best Clubs and restaurants in the Tulsa area.

Phil Hesler, the first Professional at Oakhurst reported for duty in March of 1923. He was followed by Willie Brown and Jack Guild. Marion Askew was appointed Head Professional in 1937 and retired from the Oaks in 1967, at which time Larry Crummett was appointed. Larry's retirement party was held on February 22, 1997 and Rick Reed was then appointed to replace him.

Bob Ervine was Greens Superintendent from 1934 to 1951, when he left to work at the Oklahoma City Golf and Country Club. His successor, Lester Snyder came in November of 1951 from the Elks Country Club in Shawnee. As a young boy, Les caddied at the Club and played in the Caddy Tournament held at the Club in 1933. His twin brother Leslie was also the Greens Superintendent at Southern Hills. It was very hard to tell which Les you were talking to until, unfortunately, Leslie broke his leg and then walked with a limp.

When Les came to the Oaks, his working equipment consisted of one pickup truck, one flatbed dump truck, one new tractor and two obsolete tractors plus some old gang and hand mowers. Mowing and spiking the greens was done manually. One of the biggest and most time consuming

jobs was carrying cans of gasoline to the pump at the lake. The pump engine used five gallons of gasoline an hour so it was a continuous problem.

Les would get up in the middle of the night to move hoses. He was accused of having 18 babies, the greens, and always carried a knife to cut away any crab grass he might spot. He considered the golf course a 24 hour per day job every day of the year. He got the job done with very little money, equipment and help to assist him. His statue is located on the #10 Tee. He retired in 1982.

One day when the late Sax Judd was Chairman of the Greens and Grounds Committee, Les told him the Club needed a new tractor. This sounded like a good idea to Sax so, he and Les went out and immediately purchased one. The late Roy Gardner, who was President, put others on the Board up to the idea that it would be fun to slow Sax's pace and when he moved that the Club buy a new tractor, they rejected the proposal. You can imagine the effect this had on Sax. The Board, however, rectified the matter shortly thereafter. Sax was a long hitter and often put his second shot on #16 into the pond at the foot of the hill in front of the green so he had the pond filled in, thereby reducing the character of the hole considerably.

Les and his crew rebuilt twelve greens in the late 1970's.

In 1983, the maintenance facility was constructed. The summer of 2006 was a heat repeat of the summer of 1936 and our greens were very adversely affected. Analysis of the situation revealed that years of plugging with sharp sand had resulted in the root system of the Bent grass staying at the surface in not being able to penetrate deeply, thereby not reaching the cooler ground effect on the roots; 15" to 18" makes a significant difference in ground temperature. Consequently the greens were re-plugged in September, earlier than usual, but with river sand which is round and permits both the Bent grass roots and water to go as deep as possible under the surface of the greens where the ground temperature is the coolest, which change in plugging procedures appears, (along with fertilizing, seeding, spraying for algae and pre-emergent weed seed killing, plugging with Bent grass sod and sodding larger areas, top dressing, et cetera), to have alleviated the problem with the greens. Provisions have been made to set the Blue tees on each hole to obtain the maximum length per hole in the space available without negating the Tillinghast design. No wonder the course looks so beautiful.

It is believed there is no better Golf Course than the Oaks in the Tulsa Area. It is further believed that only Southern Hills has a better Club House with the exception that its men's locker room doesn't compare favorably with the Oaks men's locker room. Southern Hills' Swimming and Tennis facilities are second to none anywhere, whereas, such facilities at the Oaks compare favorably or are better than such facilities at other Clubs in the Tulsa Area.

Caddy Masters have been Stevenson, Brock and Bill Thornbrugh who came to the Oaks in March of 1946. He had 25 regularly employed caddies and on weekends 95 caddies. In 1946, caddy fees were \$1.00. In 1965, the Oaks purchased eight electric carts which were kept in the cart barn where the tennis court complex, which was built in 1971, is now located. As more electric carts were purchased, the locker rooms of the old swimming pool were revamped so the building could be used for both storing and maintaining the 85 carts now utilized by the Club.

Pat Fowler, who is Les Snyder's stepdaughter and our office manager, came to the Oaks in 1951, during the transition period when the members were buying the Club, as a part-time bookkeeper. She can probably find information about everything that has happened at the Oaks in the meantime. She is a real performer.

In 1997, the Board mistook the signals of a questionnaire and endorsed three proposals at the annual meeting concerning the status of Senior members of the Club which proposals were rejected by the Shareholders. We are indeed fortunate to have Senior members. All of the Senior Members have supported the Club, many for more than 25 years and some for more than 50 years, through tough economic times and through all of its physical growing pains, have paid all of the dues, fees and significant assessments that have been required to bring the Club to its current stage of development, have made valuable gifts to the Club, have guided the Club's development and the Oaks would not exist if it weren't for them. The Oaks Country Club did not just fall out of the blue, it took lots of guts, sweat, work, planning, nurturing, time and ingenuity to get where it is and the Seniors were there all the way, pushing and shoving, holding back when necessary, but always helping to keep the Club on an even keel so that it is now a remarkable asset.

Fortunately, many squirrels and birds live at the Oaks and the Bluebirds have the late Walt Schwamb to thank for their many houses. Also many deer either live in the woods or jump over the fences and a family of geese lives here year round.

The Oaks is a great place. Ask any member. And, when you are checking the wind, remember that probably the highest flagpole in the Tulsa area is the late Jack Anthony's salute to the Oaks and to all of its members. Jack's ashes were spread on the Oaks golf course, which he really loved.

Prepared in the Spring of 1990, Updated the Spring of 1997, the Fall of 2000, the Fall of 2006 and the Fall of 2009; by the cooperative efforts of Bette Riddle, Lester Snyder, Charlie Bryant, Leonard Reitz, Bill Noble and Tony Jacklin with further acknowledgments of 1975 research to: Bob and Francis Ahrens, Harry Gale, Marion Askew, J. R. Koberling, Ray Grimshaw, H. R. Lohmann, Ralph M. Black, Lee Murray, Pat Fowler, Jewell Holland, and many others.

#### ADDENDA

Why is the Oaks Country Club great? Probably because it is one which is so recognized basically as a result of meeting the characteristics involving a great country club as defined by the National Club Managers Association, the professionals who manage the operations of America's approximately 5,200 private clubs, to-wit:

**“Universal Acknowledgment of Greatness** – Great clubs are widely known as such by the strata of American society that frequent private clubs and are well traveled. They tout them universally. This perception extends well beyond a club's community or the venue (i.e., a great golf course, etc.) for which it is best known. From time to time a great club will have a poor leader or board – or even a bad apple or two in the membership – but the truly great clubs are like great families. They possess the wisdom to progress, cope and have fun being together.

**A History of Excellence** – The top private clubs have been around for a long time. Some, from their inception, and many others through accumulated passage of time, have been recognized by all who know them as being domiciles of excellence. Whether this heritage is perpetuated in a formal mission statement, membership admission practices or informally passed along within its membership and staff, it is deeply imbued in the fortunate who belong or work there. The membership and staff alike consider the perpetuation of this history of excellence as a mission.

**Quality of Membership** – No club can be great without having great members. This means a membership that represents the best qualities of those communities in which the club exists. Acceptance and compatibility transcend all discrimination issues. Members like each other

and the staff that serves them. They are knowledgeable about matters that affect the club and treat the facilities as though they were their own – which, in a real sense, they are. Great members care so much about their club that they work hard to attract prospective new members who are equally great.

**Condition of Facilities** – A celebrated golf course or magnificent club house by themselves do not make a club great. Rather it is the total array of facilities, their general excellence and fulfillment of member needs in every function and activity. These clubs invest on a regular and planned basis in the maintenance, supervision and replacement of the grounds, plant and equipment. They ensure that each piece of equipment, all furnishings and every facility is well maintained. (Emphasis added) They do not have to be brand new.

**Caliber of Professional Staff** – Many is the club with rich heritage and renowned amenities that does not qualify as a great club. Without a staff of equally high quality, such a club is missing on its most important cylinders. This excellence must be as well exhibited by the newest dishwasher or waiter as it is by the club's longest tenured staff. The club will be recognized in its community as a good place to work, where the pay, benefits, work environment: and job security are attested to as excellent year after year. Ladies and gentlemen serving ladies and gentlemen is a maxim of the finest clubs.

**Enlightened & Consistent Governance** – Great clubs are led by presidents and directors who understand that their roles are strategic and policy setting. It is the professional staff that carries out the policies and day-to-day operations. Boards of this caliber work hard at ensuring that there is continuity of effort and direction, term after term. The nominating committee takes its work seriously, ensuring that the best qualified members serve on the board and that the board itself is broadly representative of the club membership as a whole.

**Adaptable to Changing Times** – As social institutions, clubs themselves undergo change – gradual as that will be. A club that resists this, sometimes because of restrictive bylaws or the resistance of elements on the board or membership, will slowly wither and eventually perish. Great clubs have a mission statement that says who they are and a strategic plan that says where they want to be. They view this plan not simply as a document to put on the shelf and refer to periodically, but as a road map that they are now moving along.

**Member Devotion to their Club's Distinctive Culture** – Great clubs celebrate their heritage and religiously observe their time honored traditions. There is pride and togetherness in observing traditions and practices handed down through generations of members – oftentimes the older and more nonsensical they seem, the better. There is a true cult of culture in great clubs and it is stringently observed.

**Spirit of Generosity in the Community** – Many of America's premier private clubs were founded around a spirit of giving to its community or the nation. They developed their philanthropic and participatory relationships with cause and community through the caring nature of members. Their motivations for acts of generosity are not done to generate overt publicity for themselves but in the spirit of genuine care – with as little publicity as possible.

**Prudent Fiscal Management** – No institution of any kind can go through decades and generations without from time to time encountering financial challenges. Great clubs have had the wisdom to plan well and invest well. Member services and facilities are maintained at an

affordable and exceptional level. Their boards understand the need for regular dues increases and occasional assessments.”

The above characteristics explain why there is so much tugging and pulling concerning any changes at the Oaks and why it sometimes takes what seems forever to attain what someone or group believes should have been accomplished long ago.

It seems clearly apparent that only executive effectiveness as described by Peter Drucker will enable any country club to harmonize its needs concerning the above defined characteristics by:

**Fulfilling** – The need of the Club to obtain from all individual members and employees the contribution it needs.

**Fulfilling** – The need of the individual members and employees to have the Club serve as a tool for the accomplishment of each individual’s needs and purpose for belonging to or working for it.

**Establishing** – Within the limits of its resources its position in the hierarchy of greatness which is directly dependent on the level of executive effectiveness attained over time throughout all of its operations by its echelons of individuals, both members and employees.

In other words, they are thinking responsibly. Responsible thinking concerns for every individual at least three basic requirements: First, the duty to verify all facts and all evidence; second, the humility to admit the possibility of error in judgment and to guard against bias dogmatism; and third, a willingness to work out as thoroughly as can be determined all possible consequences that may ensue and holding themselves morally responsible for those consequences. Hence, in effect, all necessary action at the Oaks should be supported by every involved individual THINKING RESPONSIBLY.

**QED**