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What A Difference 35 Years Made

When the golf season ends, Stan Marshaus will retire as the pro and then director of golf at Chautauqua Golf Club after 35 years. It will be pointed out that some of the major improvements to the facility during his tenure are the expansion from 18 to 27 and then 36 holes, and the opening of the Learning Center this summer. But when Marshaus is honored during an appreciation party on Aug. 17, it will take place in one of the first changes at the course that happened under his leadership.

The party will be in the new clubhouse building that was constructed after the original clubhouse burned down.

"It was my second year," Marshaus recalled. And then with a chuckle he said, "And I was accused of starting it, but I didn't".

That's because the original clubhouse had pretty much outlived it's usefulness after more than half a century.

"They called me about four in the morning," Marshaus said about the fire. "My wife stopped me and said, "You better put some clothes on."

When he reached the course, the president of Chautauqua Institution was already there and Marshaus recalled, "He's going in the building and pulling furniture out and I said, "The hell with the furniture, let's get the pictures. We can replace furniture."

What Marshaus saved were photographs of golf legends such as Sam Snead, Walter Hagen, Ben Hogan, Jimmy Demaret, Henry Picard and Horton Smith playing at Chautauqua. There were also the original drawings of the holes and greens by the infamous Donald Ross, who designed the course. They are now on display in the new clubhouse.

After the fire, a committee of eight, of which Marshaus was a non-voting member, was formed to discuss a replacement clubhouse and pro shop. They hired an architect who claimed the new facilities would be built in the style of Chautauqua, but it was far from it. While it was being built, I can recall one employee calling the new clubhouse the "ski lodge" and Marshaus remembers it being referred to as "Fort Apache."

"We've since remodeled those two building," he said. "It didn't fit and it wasn't functional."

It wasn't long after the new clubhouse was built that a new watering system was installed.

"John Connolly Sr. was very instrumental in that," Marshaus said.

One day Connolly and Marshaus were teeing off at No. 2, where the back of the tee was being watered with the old low-pressure watering system while they were hitting from the front of the tee.

"Is that all the farther that thing will shoot?" Connolly asked about the watering system.

That's when he went to work to raise funds for a modern watering system that the Chautauqua crew, including Marshaus, installed. Marshaus recalled when it was finished, the supplier said, "When you turn this thing on you're going to have a number of leaks. We had two leaks and the guy said, 'That's phenomenal.'"

Another plus was that the watering system was installed under budget and the remainder of the money was used to build a much-needed new equipment barn.

But the biggest improvement to the course began right away when Marshaus became the pro in 1974 after holding the same position for two years at Cassadaga Country Club. That was the addition of trees.

Before Marshaus arrived, the Chautauqua layout was wide open. For instance, the only thing between the parallel No. 1 and 10 fairways was rough and a bunker. And between the side-by-side par 5, 13th and 14th fairways was a strip of rough about 4 feet wide. Now there is a virtual forest between that pair of parallel fairways.

"We started that in '74," Marshaus said. "This place really needed trees."

In the first year, \$1,000 was raised and 250 trees were purchased. The first ones were planted between 13 and 14 (now 13 and 17 on the Lake Course). Then more circled 12 tee and 11 green, mainly for safety purposes because of off-line drives from the 10th and 18th tees.

"It just spiraled from there," Marshaus said about the tree planting that has continued every year. "We would go up in the woods and we would dig out trees and transplant them. They weren't perfect trees, but they certainly did the job."

All the trees on the left side of the third fairway on the Lake Course are transplants.

Other trees were donated. So how many trees have been planted during Marshaus' time at Chautauqua?

"It's been over 4,000," he said. "There were times we were planting 300, 400 a year."

But it's the destruction of trees that led to the expansion of Chautauqua from 18 holes to 27 in 1987 and eventually 36 in 1995.

In the fall of 1983, a tornado ripped through the back nine portion of the golf course and mainly in the adjacent woods that belonged to Chautauqua Institution.

"We had that devastation over there in the woods," Marshaus said.

They were going to have to clear the downed trees out of that area, so Marshaus suggested while clearing the downed trees, why not clear some more for another golf course. And for a good reason.

"We've always been a very busy golf course," Marshaus said.

And when the construction took place, Marshaus was out there riding along with the bulldozer operators. And that's one of the reasons the Cleveland, Ohio, native has stayed so long at Chautauqua.

"I had some opportunities that nobody has," he said. "The opportunity to expand the golf course from 18 holes to 36 holes and to be out there and be able to call the shots on it, no golf pro has had that opportunity."

So that's why he said, "I can tell you over the years I've turned down jobs because I wanted to stay at Chautauqua. In 35 years I never had a day when I didn't want to come to work."

He added, "There's some times when things are tough, but I used to tell people I'd go out and sit behind 14 green (now 17) and look at the lake."

But what does he plan to do now?

"I think I'm going to smile a lot," Marshaus said.

Plus he'll spend more time with his family, but on Aug. 17 he'll be spending time with his extended family of Chautauqua members and other friends during

an appreciation party from 5:30 - 7:30 pm. It is open to the public and the cost is \$15. More information is available by calling 357-6211 and reservations must be made by Wednesday.

So next year, Marshaus won't be a fixture around Chautauqua Golf Club. But maybe for old time's sake, I wouldn't be surprised if sometime you find him sitting behind No. 17 green looking at the lake.