

Shady Oaks

Life Begins at 40



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It was July 1961 that Shady Oaks opened with only six holes in playing condition. Today, 40 years later, we have 18 holes with lush fairways and greens; the flowers, the trees and the well-kept grass all contribute to the overall beauty of Shady Oaks Country Club.

Undoubtedly the longest-playing foursome is the Dickinson-Glessner-Welty-Glaser 4. They were a foursome before Shady Oaks was even a twinkle in Louie's eye. They all returned from service in 1945, and by 1946, they were rising at 5 A.M. every Sunday, made 6 A.M. Mass and dashed off to Dixon, Rock River or Rochelle courses. So when talk of a course in Amboy surfaced, they were at the top of the list to get a place closer to home. They all helped to build the original course. Charley and Harold drove their trucks to haul greens down from Beloit. Ole rode up with Harold, and he said that loading was very heavy work, and the two of them loaded their truck alone. When they arrived back in Amboy, many volunteers, young and old, were waiting to help lay the greens, among them Bill Glaser and his sons.

When Shady Oaks opened, the foursome endeavored to be the first off every Sunday, as they "didn't like to play behind anyone." They also were some of the guys who were adamant that women should not play on Sunday mornings. (They played too slowly). However, before long some of the gals were playing better than some of the guys.

Getting back to our famous foursome- - About 3 years ago, Glessner was the first to decide he couldn't complete any more. The rest continued for awhile, but after 50 years, age has slowed the boys down and they're no longer the first to tee off every Sunday morning.

A great deal of planning, budgeting, shrewd spending, and the desire to build an outstanding golf course went into the success story that we enjoy today. In reviewing the minutes of the board meetings of the last 15

years one could only admire the dedication, hard work, and difficult decisions that the board members were called upon to make each month.

Mowers, which are often \$10,000 to \$15,000, had to be replaced regularly. The wells, the irrigation systems, and the tiling were all costly. There were clubhouse expenses, too. A gable roof replaced the flat one to avoid further water damage. Carpet wore out. The bar area needed to be enlarged. A freezer, a refrigerator, an ice maker, and ranges eventually had to be purchased. Tile flooring was installed in the kitchen, the bar area and the restrooms. Following several robberies a security system was installed. In 1999 the ladies' restroom was beautified. A computer was purchased, and among other things, members can keep their own handicaps. It was also necessary to buy a new cash register.

Out on the course two of the original greens were reconstructed. New trees are planted regularly, and dead ones removed. Jackie Full spent many hours beautifying the course with flowers. The groundskeepers worked hard to keep weeds controlled and grass fertilized and reseeded.

During the last 15 years a large number of cart sheds were built because many young members were becoming older members and were buying their own carts.

Bridges must be maintained, creeks cleaned and reinforced. In other words there is much work and expenses of which members/golfers aren't always aware.

In the last few years the club has purchased more and more carts and are rotating them regularly. Members are encouraged to rent these on an annual basis rather than buy their own.

Socially, many affairs have taken place. Since its inception, Shady Oaks has seen some great, and even scandalous, Fall Flings. The ladies have dressed as bunnies, Mother Goose and wild west characters, circus and Hollywood people, school children and hobos and on and on for 40 years. Now as we're getting older, let's hope our younger women will keep it going as it was some of the best of times.

Wednesdays are Ladies' Days. Since the beginning, committees served lunch on Wednesday noons and put the money into the ladies' treasury. The funds were then used to purchase small appliances, tables, chairs, loud-speaking systems, etc. Some place along the line, the ladies no longer prepared Wednesday noon lunches, and the clubhouse manager served us wonderful meals each Wednesday noon. Each year we hosted Ladies' Play Days, and our members attended out-of-town play days as well.

We had enjoyable couples' affairs such as Halloween parties, Luaus, Sunday brunches, Christmas parties and holiday golf with pot-luck suppers. There was night-time golf and backward golf.

Women's league meets on Monday nights and men's league is Tuesdays. Club championships are played near the season's end, and Rock River Classic tournaments are participated in by both ladies' teams and men's teams. Recently both the ladies' and men's over-50 golfers from Shady Oaks as well as from surrounding clubs have been enjoying play-days at each others' clubs.

We had several club-house managers in the past 15 years. Judy Stamp was hired in November, 1985 and took excellent care of the club-house for 7 years. In 1995 Jim ("Sparky") Larkin was hired and is our current manager. We enjoyed their food and their service to us.

In the 1970's with the cooperation and financial support of Shady Oaks, the high school decided to add golf to its sports program. So the A.H.S. Team plays its matches here. The high school Cross Country Invitational is held every Columbus Day.

The District 272 School Foundation has hosted the Lyle Reuter Golf Play Day for several years to raise money in order to provide special materials for all the schools in the district. Other organizations and businesses hold play days at Shady Oaks, too.

Having Woodhaven Lakes so near has been the source of many new members for whom we are very grateful and with whom we have made many new friends.

Just as the members have matured in the last 40 years, so our golf course has settled in, kept our property repaired and improved, and become financially stable.

So, much like putting an addition on our homes when we felt we could afford it, the stockholders met in October 1991 to determine the consensus of purchasing 41.5 acres of land at a cost of \$92,000. With 153 stockholders present, 135 voted in favor of buying the adjoining property. The final payment on this land was made this fall.

After completing several necessary projects on the original nine such as the aforementioned construction of greens, clubhouse improvements, bridge and creek repairs, the board began thinking about building our new addition. To help finance the new project, the decision was made to issue 200 shares of new stock at \$1,000 per share.

Pro-Course-Laverdiere was employed to lay out the new nine. Tile was laid, trees removed, fairways rough-graded, a new well was drilled, \$233,000 was borrowed, and our new addition was underway. The year was 1995.

In September a new maintenance building was erected on the south side of the #14 fairway with volunteer help and Don King directing the project.

As the grading and cleaning of the fairways took place, Little Leaguers came out and picked up sticks and debris; the high school golf team also assisted where needed; forty-one volunteers helped place sod. As the Shady Oaks family began to see the progress, interest and excitement developed, and members were anxious to lend a hand. Everyone was eagerly awaiting the completion.

Cart paths were blacktopped at a cost of \$30,000. Attractive granite tee markers were provided by the business people and friends of Shady Oaks. Several shelters were built on the course and porta potties have been placed at strategic places.

On July 28, 1996 the big day arrived. Members were invited to try out the new nine, enjoy dinner, and celebrate the grand opening. On August 1, 1996 Shady Oaks' 18-hole golf course was opened to the public.

Total cost of the additional nine holes amounted to about \$425,000, and over half is already paid today on our 40th anniversary.

A great deal of credit must go to the hard work of Brian Barger and his crew, as they had a personal interest in the success of the project. We lost a treasure when Brian left us.

In the past 40 years innumerable people have volunteered to help on many projects from plumbing and wiring to cleaning and decorating. All of them contributed greatly financially as well as making Shady Oaks a nicer, more attractive place. Many are gone, but who can forget the Marchesis carrying the heavy rock to the creek, Ken Spitz, Earl Gascoigne, Red Penhollow, Jack Edwards, and many more, all of whom gave immeasurable hours to get Shady Oaks on its way? We cannot list all of you who have devoted your time and talents, but we are eternally grateful to each of you. Without all of you we would not be where we are today. Thank you a million times over.

So in 40 years we grew and grew from a rugged, wooded cow pasture to a beautiful 18-hole golf course where approximately 12,000 golfers played this year.

Now we're beginning to enjoy our finished product. Life HAS begun for Shady Oaks!

- -And what are we planning for the future?- - Blacktopping the entrance road, planning for more parking space, maybe a driving range, and maybe some day enhancing the clubhouse.

For SHADY OAKS - - LIFE HAS BEGUN AT 40!