

Over the past decade or so, I have found myself forgetting things. Things like the location of my keys. Recollections like when and where I last used a certain credit card. And I have to cop to once even misremembering my – gulp! – wedding anniversary. Despite those ghastly memory lapses, I have never forgotten the first time I stepped onto the tee of a William Langford-designed golf course.

For the uninitiated, Langford thrived during golf's "golden era," when the likes of Donald Ross, Alister MacKenzie, Harry Colt, A.W. Tillinghast, and Stanley Thompson roamed the earth creating spectacular courses that would somehow maintain their integrity and challenge 80, 90, or 100 years later.

Imagine an America a little more than 100 years ago that had less than 750 courses. Over the ensuing 14 years from 1916 to 1930, nearly 6,000 new courses dotted the American landscape. In an era when Colt was designing Royal Portrush in Northern Ireland (1929) and Tillinghast was designing Winged Foot Golf Club and Baltusrol on the East Coast, Langford was plying his trade across the Midwest, first alone and quickly in partnership with Theodore Moreau, who was his longtime shaper.

William Langford, whose courses have style and provide a fair and sometimes stern test, is finally getting his due. He's one of six notables slated for induction into the Illinois Golf Hall of Fame in October. He'll be the fifth full-time professional golf architect so honored, joining Tom Bendelow, Robert Bruce Harris, Charles Maddox, and Dick Nugent. (Members Charles Blair Macdonald, who brought golf to Chicago, and the three Foulis brothers, contemporaries of Macdonald, also designed courses, but for Macdonald it was an avocation while the main job of all three Foulis brothers was golf professional.)

Langford's early works on private clubs in the greater Chicago area include original designs of Aurora (1914), Ridge (1917), Park Ridge (1919), Gary (1919, now known as Innsbrook), Bryn Mawr (1921), the 27 holes of Butterfield (1922), Ruth Lake (1922), Acacia (1923) and Westmoor (1926, now public and known as Schaumburg Golf Club), plus revisions of Riverside (1916), La Grange (1918), Westmoreland (1919, with a return visit in 1939), Idlewild (1920s), Glen Oak (1922), Ridgemoor (1927), and Skokie (1938).

The Great Depression all but stopped the golf business well before his Skokie assignment, but after World War II, he scored one more private club assignment: Village Green in Mundelein in 1955.

While many of Langford's projects were for private clubs, he was a great supporter of public golf and even operated a number of daily-fee courses in Illinois during his lifetime. He also served for many years on the USGA Public Links Committee.

His public course designs in the greater Chicago area include a trio of courses that still exist: what's now known as Winnetka Golf Course (1917), Marquette Park on Chicago's South Side (1925), and Hieland Lodge (1927), which after several ownership changes is known as Kankakee Elks. Of the several other courses that Langford designed, one he also owned is notable: Mid-City Golf Course at Western and Addison, just north of the Riverview Amusement Park, was an 18-hole course Langford and Moreau designed on the site of a filled-in brick quarry. It might have been the first landfill course. Their design headquarters was in the clubhouse, and from 1924 through its closure in 1951, after several revisions, it was where Langford ran his operation. (Today, the WGN television studio complex sits on some of Mid-City's acreage.)

Besides being a prolific designer, Langford was also a visionary. A member of the three-time NCAA champion Yale University golf teams from 1906 to 1908, Langford applied his master's degree in mining engineering to create stunning courses that took advantage of natural hills, ravines and valleys of a property. He

Langford, the Great Forgotten Architect

By Neal Kotlarek

PJKoenig Golf Photography

began writing about the art of golf course design in the 1910s and championed the construction of six-hole golf courses that could accommodate modest budgets and would also cater to the time constraints of busy working folks. (The one six-hole course he designed was for the Doering family on their private estate in 1931.)

Of the over 250 courses Langford built, his public course gem was the very property I encountered way back in the summer of 1973 that introduced me to his work. The Links Course of Lawsonia finished construction in 1930 and to this day has remained one of the top public golf courses in not just Wisconsin but in all the Midwest. Meticulously built using 1920s-era steam shovels, the course features wide-open, flowing fairways, cavernous sand bunkers and, of course, Langford's signature plateau greens.

While many of the works of Langford's contemporaries have diminished in challenge due to the onset of club technology, it is critical to note that the Links course at Lawsonia has not just stood the test of time over 89 years, it continues to challenge even today's top players.

In July, the course hosted the Wisconsin State Amateur and was praised by contestants for its quality and beauty. Long-time Wisconsin golf writer Gary D'Amato writes that he'd be "hard-pressed to pick a course in Wisconsin that is more interesting, challenging, and memorable, including the ones that have hosted major championships." A heady statement, indeed, considering that the state's impressive championship course line-up includes the likes of Whistling Straits, Blackwolf Run, Erin Hills, and Sand Valley.

The best way to truly appreciate the magnificence of the Links course is in the early morning or early evening, when shadows are cast across the fairways and bunkers. One cannot truly appreciate the steepness of the undulating fairways and bunkering during the mid-day sun. Of course, the imposing depth – some more than 10 feet – of the bunkers becomes blatantly obvious to players as soon as they are confronted by a greenside shot that requires nerves of steel and a wide-open sand wedge.

With broad fairways lined by wispy fescue and a virtually treeless landscape, the Links course prods players to bomb away off the tee. Approach shots are another matter altogether as anything left or right of the massive greens may stray into the aforementioned precarious bunkers. Even shots that reach the greens require refinement as all of the putting surfaces are quick and steeply undulating.

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Langford on Hazards

Hazards Should Encourage Thoughtful Golf

By William Langford

Hazards should not be built solely with the idea of penalizing bad play, but with the object of encouraging thoughtful golf and of rewarding the player who possesses the ability to play a variety of strokes with each club. John L. Low has said that no hazard is unfair wherever placed, and while this is true, a hazard is obviously the wrong place to play one's shot, yet the proper placing of hazards will bring about very much more interesting golf than a haphazard arrangement of them is apt to do.

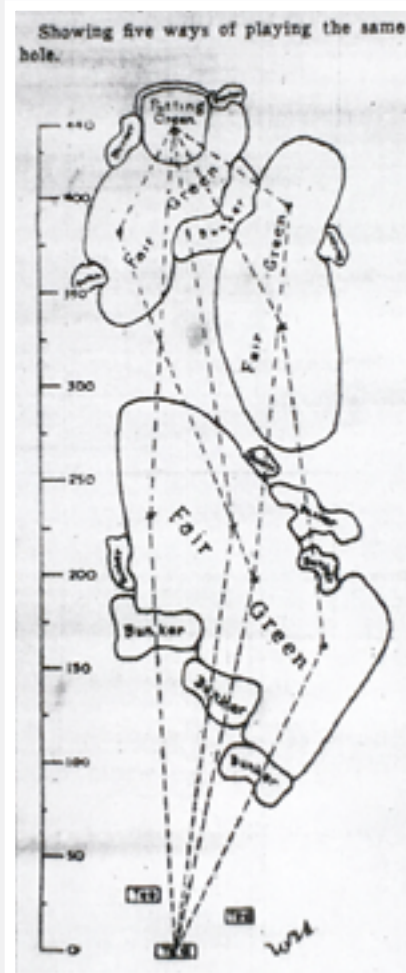
Topographical features may arbitrarily determine the location of hazards on a hole, and if the ground is at all rolling, will certainly influence the bunkering system to a large extent. As the number of topographical combinations are infinite, so is the possible arrangement of hazards on holes of any given length.

The only general statement that can be made is this: Hazards should be placed so that any player can avoid them if he gauges his ability correctly, so that they will make every man's game more interesting no matter what class player he is, and offer a reward commensurate with the player's ability.

The accompanying sketch is an attempt to show shot hazards arranged according to this principle. The dotted lines show the course taken by the ball.

Here, there are five ways of playing the same hole, at least one of which is well within the ability of every golfer. The echelon arrangement of bunkers for the tee shot allows three carries of widely varying length. The second shot bunkers are placed so as to offer a reward proportionate to the risk taken at the tee.

This essay is adapted from one that originally appeared in The Chicago Evening Post of February 25, 1915. The diagram of the hole is Langford's, with "fair green" the terminology for fairway at the time.



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Located in Green Lake (about 35 minutes from Fond du Lac), the Links of Lawsonia is ranked 58th on *Golf Digest's* 100 Greatest Public Golf Courses list and 64th among *Golfweek's* Top 100 Classic Courses in the U.S.

The Chicago area includes two of Langford's public course projects – the first nine of the 18 holes at Winnetka Golf Course (known as Skokie Play Field when it opened in 1917), and the design in 1960 of a short par-3 course on that same property. While neither course parallels the size and scope of the Links at Lawsonia, Langford's touch can be found around the subtly rolling greens on both courses.

Four years before they opened the Lawsonia course, Langford and Moreau designed Hieland Lodge, 18 holes financed by Sid McHie, the publisher of the Hammond Times on the banks of the Kankakee River near Aroma Park just east of Kankakee. With at least three owners, including the Kankakee Elks club in recent decades, and reopened for public play a few years ago, the property itself contrasts greatly from the Lawsonia project, as it was built through dense forests and incorporates only a handful of bunkers. That said, the course remains preserved virtually as originally built with the par-3 No. 5 the only change. Grass mounds at the edges of fairways, a throwback to the early days of American golf course architecture, are notable. While relatively short at 6,430 yards, the course is made more challenging by the sharp angles called for in approach shots to the plateau greens.

Ranked among the state's top 15 courses you can play by *Golfweek* in 2017, the course is highlighted by a series of short, fun par 4s and a delightful set of par 3s. Best yet, the course can be played for a bargain \$40 with cart on weekends and \$30 with cart on weekdays.

Given the vast number of courses built by Langford and Moreau, one can't help but wonder why the duo never achieved the acclaim of contemporaries like Colt and MacKenzie. Indeed, superstar contemporary designer Tom Doak considers Langford "underappreciated." Bradley Klein of *Golf Advisor* contends that the pair did not have the wealthy client base nor were provided prime property opportunities.

No matter, the legend of William Langford has only grown over the decades as more golfers become exposed to his vision and genius. In a word: unforgettable.



ON THE CORKSCREWS

STEPHEN HAWK

We're two-thirds through summer, and it's just too damn hot to be drinking much of anything other than ice-cold beer or some chilled vino, in a can no less. So this seems like an excellent opportunity to review some wine terms you may not be familiar with, but should prove helpful.

Acidity is one of wine's essential components, along with others such as tannins, alcohol, and fruit. But a wine should have just the right amount. Too high, and the wine will be tart, biting, and sharp. Too low, and it will be dull and flat, commonly characterized as flabby. In dry table wines, appropriate acid levels are between .6 and .75 percent. Sweet wines go a bit higher, with a range of .7 to .85 percent. As important as acidity is, its contribution should be subtle.

Aeration is the process by which air is deliberately introduced to wine, sometimes called letting a wine "breathe." While air in a sealed bottle is anathema to wine, many are convinced that aeration, especially for young, high-tannin red wines, softens them and opens their flavors. This is the main reason for decanting or swirling the wine in the glass. There are also a number of gadgets available to hasten the process. Some people even suggest whirling a bottle of wine in the blender!

Aging a wine allows it to mature, especially high-quality red wines. Once fermentation is complete, the wine is aged in barrels or casks (usually oak). This time spent in wood softens flavors and adds tannins. After some months, the wine is bottled and further aging can occur in the bottle. If a producer chooses to bottle age, it will increase a wine's cost, as the winery must maintain the inventory. Fortified wines such as port and sherry can be, and often are, bottle aged for years.

Appellation in the wine world is a designated growing area governed by rules and regulations that vary from country to country. The goal can be to define and maintain quality, to demarcate a unique growing area, or both.

Botrytis is a fungus that can be either friend or foe to a winemaker. In its benevolent form, it is known as noble rot.

Say What? (Part 1)

It causes grapes to shrivel, concentrating both sugar and flavor, while the acid level remains high and deters a cloying sweetness. Dessert wines particularly benefit from botrytis, most famously Sauternes. Too much moisture just before harvest, however, can cause botrytis, which is then called gray rot, to destroy an entire harvest.

Brix is the system used in the U. S. to measure the sugar content of grapes and wine. The grapes of most table wines have about 20 grams of sugar to 100 grams of juice. About 55 percent of the sugar is converted to alcohol during fermentation, so juice with 20° Brix will result in about 11 percent alcohol. Brix measurements are taken throughout the growing season.

A **Bung** is a plug, usually cork, used to seal the **Bung Hole** in a wine barrel. The winemaker periodically removes wine through this hole to check its progress in barrel.

The **Cap** is the mass of grape solids that float on the surface of red juice during fermentation. The cap needs to be frequently agitated to help extract color, flavor, and tannins. Traditionally a long paddle was used to submerge the cap several times a day, but pump overs are more common today.

Clarification is the process of removing particles of expired yeast and grape matter. The winemaker can simply let the particulates drop to the bottom of the storage container, or the wine can be fined or filtered. Neither process is used in some so-called "natural" wines.

Cooking Wine is an unnecessary abomination. It is made from wine you wouldn't drink on its own, and has been heavily salted. When cooking, use the wine you'll be drinking with dinner, or something equally compatible.

Corked Wine has been contaminated by 2,4,6-Trichloroanisole in the cork. Detectable at levels as low as 30 parts per trillion, TCA is harmless to humans but lends the tainted wine a moldy, wet cardboard odor and flavor. Cork taint is much less common than even ten years ago, thanks to alternative closures as well as strenuous efforts to eliminate it by growers in Portugal, where most of the world's natural cork comes from.



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Cuvée is a French term meaning "contents of a vat." In the Champagne region, it refers to a blended wine, as almost all Champagnes are. These traditional house styles are closely guarded secrets, passed down through generations of family-owned wineries. In other parts of France, cuvée can also apply to still wines, referring to wines blended from different vineyards or varieties.

Domaine, also French, means "estate" or "property." Historically the term has most often been used in Burgundy, but shows up in California as well, usually when the estate is owned by a French company.

Eiswein, German for "ice wine." It is a rich dessert wine made by picking grapes that are frozen on the vine and then pressed in unheated wineries before they thaw. The meager but concentrated juice is quite flavorful and high in sugar and acidity. These wines age extremely well. Canada is also suited for the production of ice wine, and now outpaces the Germans. Because of extremely low yields at harvest (and some years cannot be harvested at all), ice wines are often sold in 375 ml bottles and at rather high prices. Unfortunately, due to climate change it is predicted that the production of ice wine will become ever more difficult and isolated, further driving up costs.

