



In Bounds

By Jack MacKenzie, CGCS
North Oaks Golf Club

I like a good tree on the golf course. Something about three feet in diameter or maybe a spruce tree. In fact I really have two favorite big trees, one typically on the fourth hole and the other on the thirteenth hole. And in all honesty, the best tree is located about 45 minutes after I leave the men's locker room or half-way house.

If a tree isn't available on the course I am playing, or if I think I may be in need of something more substantial than a large shrub, I will identify and locate the on course restrooms PRIOR to my round of golf. Anticipation, of course, can make or break the concentration of a person's loop!

It wasn't until recent years that I fully appreciated the value of a really nice on-course bathroom. Prior to 1995 I was accustomed to the typical fiberglass and vinyl booths referred to as The White House, Jimmy's Johnny or Satellite. Although functional, they left, and still leave something to be desired.

Most lack running water, yet some do provide a creamy substance thought to reduce germs. Many have creepy crawly flying insects that land in the oddest of places. Fans are absent due to the lack of electricity. And we all know what direct sun and stagnant air combine to produce. And then there are the night stalkers.

Many of us have begun the day embracing a beautiful sunrise, the smell of fresh cut grass and the sounds of silence. And then there are those of us who have participated in the re-erection of toppled toilets. Those who remember can surely conjure up the unpleasant surprises beheld after said porta potty was again upon its foundation.

In the early 1990s the golf course building, restoration and renovation boom was underway across the country. And North Oaks Golf Club experienced growth as well. The membership began with the construction of a fine new Cape Cod style clubhouse, followed by work on the golf course in the form of bunker restoration and fairway re-definition. And finally, but not the least important, the building of permanent bathrooms.

An architect was brought on board to continue the Cape Cod theme out onto the golf course. Complete with grey painted shaker siding, white trim and porte-cochere entries, the bathrooms looked awesome on paper and even better on the fourth and thirteenth holes. I would be truly remiss if I didn't mention functionality.

Each building has its own septic field, well and electricity. Both his and her bathrooms are equipped with multiple toilets and urinals, tile floors and marble counter tops for convenience and beauty. Scent dispensers and air exchangers are in place and maintained to limit gas exposure. And each of the buildings is surrounded by paver stones to reduce the tracking of soil and grass inside the building.

Believe me when I say that the on-course rest rooms at North Oaks Golf Club are the Taj Mahal of biffys. They make a first class



Golfers appreciate the quality restrooms at North Oaks GC.

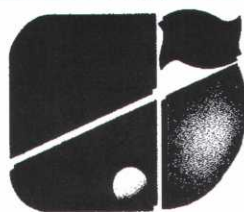
statement. My staff even places fresh flowers in the women's section when our gardens are producing. I will be the first to admit that our bathrooms are over the top.

This strong restroom endorsement isn't to say that I don't still use a tree on occasion. After all, when ya gotta go..... well, you get the message. My intent is to tout the impressiveness of a quality restroom experience. We are in the service industry and should take it to the next level where ever possible.

Of course regular service and cleaning is a must, often twice a day, but how about using quality toilet paper? Everyone knows and appreciates the difference between low grade and high grade paper products. When was the last time your units were changed out to the latest model? How about an upgrade to a larger unit? Perhaps the addition of running water would improve the functionality of your biffys. Almost anything can and will be done by your port-a-let provider to keep your business.

For example when I was the Superintendent at the Lost Spur Country Club, the St. Paul Winter Carnival would host its Winter Golf Outing on the course. A simple request to our out house company, well in advance of the event, elicited the creation of felt fabric toilet seat covers to lessen the impact of the freezing temperatures upon the extremities. This upgrade was the "talk of the town" that weekend.

Some might say that there isn't room in the budget for improvements. But the bathroom is one amenity that needs to maintain its integrity. After all, a little privacy in a clean facility, complete with soft tissue, a fresh scent and NO insects is truly one of the simple pleasures in life.



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