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UPDATING AN OLD GOLF COURSE

One of the biggest challenges we face in our business may not be that of growing grass but satisfying 325 members. We all grow grass differently in trying to achieve the same end product, that of smooth true greens, fairways that allow the ball to sit up and grooming to create a harmonious relationship of all the other aesthetic entities that make a successful golf course expression. You would think that our hands are full in achieving this desired end product. It's apparent that no matter how close we watch expenditures the bottom line is a tremendous price we are now paying and the high cost in the future to maintain the status-quo style of grooming we are putting forth today.

I feel there are many classifications of golf course maintenance, depending on type of course and type of competition. We are also at the mercy of the variable factors involved such as drainage, amount and kind of play, age, area, design and other innate agronomic problems. Many of us are at a turning point. I for one, am in such a situation. Being at a very old golf course one that is in dire need for renovation because of mostly age and the things that come with age. Hazards that have been edged back so many years that it is time to re-model. Greens and fairways that have lost their initial outlines over the years, now have a different variety of grass in those early outlines. Poor site selection of new tree plantings have added to a loss of the original architects intent, as well as the loss of key existing trees. Arriving at this turning point may be a blessing in disguise for my membership. We are now going to re-model with an economic awareness. We procured an architect, who we thought could deliver an economic remodeling plan. One that is not out to put his style of design foremost but will re-create the original architects intent with a streamlined maintenance program in mind.

Working closely with me, we arrived at our desired goal. We re-designed sand traps so they can catch the golf ball instead of the ball skipping in and out, keeping the original architects trap design in mind. With the loss of many key elm trees we re-contoured fairways and re-faced tees to create doglegs to play like they did forty years ago. We've shortened fairways and plan to eliminate them on par 3 holes to cut down on high maintenance areas. We put in redan style greens with bunkers in front and rear and plan to re-sod these approaches to bluegrass, further cutting down on a high maintenance area. We've eliminated sand traps with little significance and added some at distances where nowadays they'll come into play. Cart paths were added in heavy trafficed areas. Teeing areas that were too big were broken apart and made smaller. A tree planting scheme was designed into the plan for any future plantings. We have now devised a 10 year program to implement the master plan. I now have a more secure feeling regarding our maintenance approach in the future. I feel that I have done my job in creating a more affordable golf course that my members can enjoy without losing the original character that they've been so proud of in the past.

**John Berarducci, Supt.
Skokie C.C.**

Two goats were wandering on the field behind the movie studio. One was munching an old film that had been discarded when the other goat asked, "How is it?"

"Not too bad," answered the first, "but I liked the book better."