



We Should Lay Our Claims

by Ed Wollenberg, Retired Supt.

Joyce Kilmer, in his famous poem, "TREES", wrote, "I think that I shall never see. A poem, lovely as a tree".

The membership at the Innsbrook Country Club in 1983, dedicated a Purple Beech tree in my honor, naming it, "The Wollenberg Tree". It's the greatest tribute ever bestowed me, and my love for this tree, or all trees, is only exceeded by the love for my family.

Everybody should own a tree, a valley full of trees, or a whole hillside of them. Not legally, in the formal "Know ye all men" way, written on a piece of paper, but in the way that one comes to own a tree by seeing it at the turn of the road, down the street, in a park, or, admiring them on our many beautiful golf courses. Watching them day after day, and seeing the magnificent phase in the cycle of nature.

When the time arrives, for shade and ornamental buds to swell and break, as we cross over into the spring equinox. To see the maples prepare to open their florets prior to the bursting of leaves, and how the white pines put forth each annual whorl of five branches. Also the bursting of the blossoms on crabs, pears, apples, plums and all fruit bearing trees, that sustain man, animal, and birds, and in months to come in beauty, shelter and food.

To enjoy the summer when they are in their full greenery, shade for cool and relaxing, and their various shapes and statuesque forms to admire. And then the panorama of colors in the fall, and the stark and lifeless forms of winter sleep of the deciduous.

Some 35 years ago, I once owned a sugar maple that way. It stood at the turn of a road I drove along every day, and it was a tree of wonder and beauty, for it turned red, orange and gold each year in a different combination in the fall.

I also owned a clump of flowering crabs along a rural roadside. I watched them bloom in the spring and grow through the summer, and deck itself with lacquered miniature apples that looked like berries in September, and turned wonderfully crimson in October. During my tenure at the Innsbrook Country Club, I planted a few quacking aspen, which I have seen slim and off-white at the trunk in winter, laced with green in spring, watched the silvery movement of leaves at the slightest air movement in the summer, and that looked like a flow of molten gold in October.

At Innsbrook I inherited and laid claim to all their wonderful and many varieties of trees. Such as the row of 'Schwedler' Maples along the road and the 13th hole. Where I have walked in their shade and watched them shed their seed, and seen their stark reality in leafless winter. But in October I would revel in their gold, which is like sunlight even on an overcast day, and I would scuffle in their leaves and own them in that fashion.

And, the larches on the second and sixth holes are my trees. In the spring they take their time about putting forth any new needles. All summer long they are a beautiful spire of green, and by Novmeber they shed their yellowish tan needles, for they are the "woodchucks" of the conifers — the only ones along with the Bald Cypress or rare tamaracks in our area which "hibernate" in the winter.

My ownership is beyond legal title. Others may own them too, if they like. Trees are anyone's for the finding. To own and love forever, each, in your own special way.