

# Director's Column

by Ed Braunsky



## “El Nino”

Last fall one cool November night, I stood up at the Geneva Golf Club annual meeting and thanked a number of people for the support they had given me during the past season. I ended my comments with the following, “I finally would like to thank my wife for putting up with me for always looking at the TV to watch the weather report!”

Like most golf course superintendents, I eat, sleep, and live for the weather. This past season was a bear. Early heavy spring rains, a summer drought, a very cold fall temperatures gave us a wide range of crazy weather.

Well, that stuff is old hat. With the cold weather we had in the fall, it looked like easy sailing for the winter, but as the famous beer commercial states, “NOT!”

This past winter has had more ups and downs than my checking account. For kicks, I thought I would look back at the first weeks of weather we have had in Februarys since 1988. I keep a daily journal with activities, weather data, and the many times Jim Burdett takes me to lunch. 1988 and 1989 were very cold and snowy, but 1990 and 1991 were very mild and snowless. What about 1992? Well, as I write this article, the weather man is talking about how the temperature on this day, February 2nd, was a record setting 57°.

What is causing this yo-yo winter? The culprit seems to be a weather trait called “El Nino”. Translated into English, “El Nino” means “the Christ child”. This childlike weather is as wild as my four year old son, Benjamin.

I came across an interesting book entitled “Ice Time” by Thomas Levinson. In it he has several items on the El Nino. He states, “El Nino is just a current of warm water moving southward from Ecuador to the northern coast of Peru during December and January, bringing with it a characteristic pattern of sea breezes. Full-scale El Nino, with strange and dangerous events that include bath-warm ocean currents and several months of heavy rains, recur every three to eight years.”

Levinson continues, “As far as Peru was concerned, until very recently El Nino was a familiar, unwelcome, but tolerable companion. It has been a feature of the climate of the area for as long as anyone has been able to check ... and there are records dating back to 1726 that mention El Nino’s effects.”

I also thought I would try and talk to one of my heroes on the subject. Since Art Benson, Jr. was busy building a lake, I called the weather office at WGN Television. One of my other heroes, Tom Skilling, was out to lunch, but I was able to get

some answers from a very knowledgeable person — Steve Goolsby.

Steve said that the Pacific Ocean was a lot warmer and the winds were flowing in a different direction than the normal winter breezes. The jet stream was also split and allowed for a more moderate temperature range. The storms of winter have gone either north or south. Someone up there must know I have two paddle tennis courts to keep clear of snow. Steve also went on to talk about how we have had very little snow so far this winter. He additionally brought up a few other points. It seems that the average lows have been a lot higher than the average highs over the last two years. He added that the “El Nino” really does not have any bearing on the weather to come.

“El Nino” — friend, foe, or frustrated weather cycle? All in all, it is an interesting weather pattern. Maybe the rest of 1992 will be “El No Problemas”. Let’s hope!

Just one side note: Clubs are needed for meetings in 1993. Please give me a call at 708/232-0627. 1992 is already full, so get your club in line before all the slots are gone for 1993.

## Geoses

by John Stephenson, CGCS  
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Goose-geese-flocks-herds-gaggles or geoses or other verbs — adjectives — cuss words, etc.

They are a problem on a golf course, and the one of which I am Superintendent of is located on a river, which is on a major flyway.

I have seen as few as one and as many as five thousand geese during the migrating periods, and annually 20 to 30 pair during the nesting season, which amounts to an average of four goslings per pair. When you add this all up it amounts to a lot of stuff which geoses are best at, and if you didn’t know, geese are the closest to perpetual motion of anything I know, in one end and out the other.

Over the years I have tried most everything I have heard of to solve the problem with practically no success.

Then a player said, “John I can solve your problem”. With skepticism, I said, “let’s have a go”. He gave me some rolls of tape, silver on one side, red the other. I put up stakes along the mighty Fox and attached my ribbon. Lo! and behold, two days went by and no geese on the course, the third day I saw about 15. Aha! I knew it wouldn’t work. I checked along the river and saw the ribbon was down. I tried to herd them back and as they approached the ribbon they would panic. I finally get them back into the river, and then repaired the down section. Five days passed with no geese on the golf course. I couldn’t believe it. This was May, 1991, and the rest of the molting season, the only geese that were on the course would come in where the ribbon was down.

Then I said, “wait till they start to fly”, but to my surprise, they would land on the areas far from the river and would not stay long. Don’t ask me why or how, but it works.

The Source of the Tape — Nishizawa Ltd., 112 W. 9th St., Suite 903, Los Angeles, CA 90015 (213) 627-7491.

My next project will be **golfers**.