

Orland Park — World's Golf Center

by Pete Vandercook

Visitors to the Village of Orland Park always notice one of the towns seven water towers, which are lettered "Orland Park — World's Golf Center". The next question is always "Why is Orland Park the golf center of the world?"

This all started in the early 1960's when Bob Johnson, owner of Illinois Lawn Equipment, Inc., and the late Joe Henley, owner of The Farmer's Daughter Restaurant and The Farm House Inn Motel, were helping form the Orland Park Chamber of Commerce and searching for a fitting slogan for Orland Park. They ascertained that there were 13 - 18 hole daily fee golf courses within 13 miles of Orland Park and the motto was born — "Orland Park - The World's Golf Center".

Subsequently, the village board passed a resolution adopting the slogan. In the mid 1960's singer Andy Williams, a guest of the Joey Bishop late night talk show, referred to San Diego, California as the nations golf capitol. Orland Park Chamber of Commerce President, Noel Smith, immediately sent a telegram to Joey Bishop who apologized the following night explaining that Orland Park has 531 golf holes within a 13 mile radius and San Diego only had 513 holes. Joey went on to say that Orland Park was unquestionably "The Golf Center of the World".

The above information came from "The Orland Story — From Prairie to Pavement" (copyright Jan. 1991) and at that time, I was asked to update the Orland Park golf hole count. I took a protractor, calculated 15 miles (as the crow flies) and drew a circle centered at 143rd and LaGrange Road. The count was as follows:

Country Clubs — 387 golf holes
Municipal Golf — 99 golf holes
Daily Fee Courses — 603 golf holes
TOTAL — 1,089 golf holes

There have been additions since 1991 —
Hidden Meadows (Park Forest Municipal) — 9 hole addition
Ruffled Feathers (Lemont) — 18 holes
White Mountain (Orland Park) — 9 holes
Green Garden Country Club (Monee/Frankfort) — 18 hole addition
* Greystone Golf Course (Tinley Park) — 9 holes
* Alsip Park Dist. Golf Course (Alsip) — 9 holes
* Stony Creek Golf Course (Oak Lawn Park Dist.) — 9 holes
* The Meadows (City of Blue Island) — 9 holes
* New Lenox Community Golf Course — 18 holes
* Broken Arrow — 27 holes

NEW TOTAL — 1224 golf holes

*=Under construction or grow in

For the following part of this story you will have to accept my definition of the Orland area. (Notice that I have expanded Orland to include various incorporated and un-incorporated areas that are contiguous to Orland Park.

Golf course superintendents and owners who spent most of their adolescent years in the Orland area include:

Jim Evans - Turnberry Country Club
Ed Fischer - Old Elm Club
Dave Behrman - Riverside Country Club
Curt Adams - Thunderbird Golf Course

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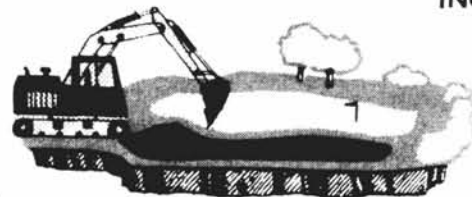
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(Orland Park continued)

Rick Wilson - Glenview Park District Golf Course
Tom Wilson - Asst. Supt. Deer Path Golf Course
Ted Mochel - Woodbine Golf Course
Keith Fuchs - Gleneagles Golf Club
Pete Lieponis - Old Oak Country Club
Mitz Duehr - Midlothian Country Club
Mel Duehr - Midlothian Country Club
Mike Rayman - Canton Country Club
Sean Daley - Arizona Golf Resort
Pete Mirkes Sr. - Pheasant Run
Ken Shepard - Wedgewood Golf Course
Renny Jacobson - Carillon
Rory Bancroft - Glenwoodie Golf and Country Club
John Coghill Jr. - Silver Lake Country Club
Dick Coghill - Silver Lake Country Club
Bert Coghill - Silver Lake Country Club
Greg Gee - Big Run Golf Club
Jay Druhan - Palos Hills Municipal Golf Course
Mark Kowaliczko - Joliet Country Club
Ron Austin - Westgate Golf Club
Kevin Czerkies - Sportsman Country Club
Scott Schafer - Hickory Hills Country Club
Scott Piper - Lockport Golf and Recreation
Jerry Cooper - Ravisloe Country Club
John Hogan - Shady Lawn Golf Club
Harold Frederickson - Edgewood Valley Country Club
Mark Schmitz - Asst. Supt. Edgewood Valley Country Club
Tom DiGuido - Green Meadows Golf Course
Jeff Smith - Springbrook Golf Course

Jock McIntosh — Formally Oak Hills, currently Arizona Club Car

Ken Zanzig - Retired Green Gardens Country Club
Jack Smith - Formerly Calumet Country Club
Al Rauch - Retired Bonnie Dundee
The late Dave McIntosh - Oak Hills
The late Don Strand - Westmoreland Country Club
The late Norm Kramer - Point O'Woods Country Club
The late George Dahlman - Cog Hill Golf Club
The late Bernard Kazich - Riverside Country Club
The late Don Duehr - Midlothian Country Club
The late Ted Wiersema - Ridge Country Club and Silver Lake

In addition the following vendors also need to be included:

Wally Fuchs - Turf Products
Rick Johnson — Illinois Lawn Equipment
Mark Johnson — Illinois Lawn Equipment
Chris Johnson — Illinois Lawn Equipment
Dave Louttit - O.M. Scott
Don Maske — Nor-Am
John Buck — J.W. Turf
Tracy Murphy - Lemont Paving
Jim Murphy - Lemont Paving

One of the main reasons for the above numbers is the fact that many aspiring superintendents trained at Silver Lake under Dudley Smith. Some were Orland Park boys and others came from various places to train at Silver Lake. Included in that second group are:

Brian Comiskey - Pinecrest Golf and Country Club
Bill Hargrave - Highland, North Carolina
Bob Rigney - Village Greens of Woodridge
Dave Wollenberg - Delaware Country Club, Muncie, IN
(Cannon Turf) (continued page 26)



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(Orland Park continued)

Tom Hildreth - Asst. Supt. Twin Orchard Country Club

There are also an abundant number of golf professionals from the Orland area. They are not being listed because of the difficulty of compiling a complete listing.

The Orland State Bank also played a role in Orland Park being known as The World's Golf Center. The bank, owned by the Gee family (who also own Big Run Golf Course) have played an important role financing golf course ventures over the years. They have worked with Silver Lake, Cog Hill, Glen Eagles, Westgate, Urban Hills, Lincolnshire and Oak Hills, to name just a few. George Gee, Jr. stated that years ago many lending institutions were not familiar with golf and tended to stay away from golf course loans. The Continental Bank of Chicago even sent people shopping for golf course loans to the Orland State Bank. The Gees, because of their golf ownership background, welcomed these loans, made many, many of them, and as George Gee Jr. proudly states, "Never had a bad golf course loan". As an aside, the Orland State Bank also donated to the Village of Orland Park, the land where "The First Golf Center of the World" water tower was erected.

I would be remiss if I didn't mention that Illinois Lawn Equipment headquartered in Orland Park has been selling turf maintenance equipment to over 500 golf courses in the greater Chicagoland area for the past forty years.

Two nationally known sod growers are also natives of the Orland area. Carl Habenicht, founder of H & E Sod, was born in a farm house on a family farm on the property now known as Silver Lake Country Club. The late Ben Warren of the Palos area founded and operated Warren Turf Farms for many years. In addition, Ben's wife Dorothy Carey Warren, over the years, was secretary to the Chicagoland Golf Course Owners Association, The Midwest Association of Golf Course Superintendents, The Illinois Turfgrass Foundation Central United States Equipment Distributors and The Sod Growers Association. She held most of these positions simultaneously.

You will note that certain liberties were taken with definition of the "Orland Area". Included was Orland Park, unincorporated Orland Park, the Palos areas, Lockport, Lemont and the very edge of Chicago that abuts the southwest suburbs. Although that may stretch the Orland area a little, everyone listed does have an Orland connection. If I had spread out just a little more to the Matteson, Chicago Heights, Homewood, Flossmoor area, I could have added more names like:

- Dave Ward - Olympia Fields Country Club
- Dale Pieper - Cherry Hills Country Club
- Tony Brzinski - Idlewild Country Club
- Ron Letorneau - San Marcos Country Club (California)
- Bill Nuessle - formerly of San Marcos Country Club
- Andy Dauksas - Glen Oak Country Club
- Tom Lively - Ruth Lake Country Club
- Bob Lively - Glendale Country Club
- The late Walter Pieper - Flossmoor Country Club
- The late Walter Domm - South Shore and Calumet Country Clubs
- The late Fred Wollenberg - Gary Country Club
- The late Mel Warneke - The Standard Club, Atlanta, GA
- The late John Boettger - Idlewild and Joliet Country Clubs
- The late Norm Stelter - Chicago Heights Country Club ...

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(Orland Park continued)

to name just a few. Imagine what would have happened if the names listed were expanded to the same 15 mile radius as the golf courses listed.

Just as this story was being completed, Channel 7's Tim Weigle aired a Hot Links segment proclaiming Mundelein as the Golf Capital of the World. He stated that Mundelein had eight eighteen hole golf courses within its corporate limits. Congratulations to Mundelein for being the Golf Capital of the World from Orland Park, the World's Golf Center.

I apologize in advance for any inaccuracies or omissions. This is not an easy list of names to compile. The possibility of error is good and the possibility of omission is tremendous.

I must acknowledge the assistance given me in this endeavor by Dale Piper and others, particularly Dudley Smith, who has a great memory, is an accomplished name speller and came up with some important additions and direction. Thanks again Dud.

Landscaping the Details

by Bob Lohmann

Landscape design for the golf course has two distinct phases. The first is the tree planting plan, which has an impact on how the golfer plays his game. Large tree plantings are positioned throughout the golf course for definition of target areas, strategy, depth perception, and safety. These trees should be deep rooted, high and open branching, and relatively litter free.

The second phase of landscaping the golf course is the detail planning, which provides the most visual and functional value to the golfer. These plans should include use of smaller structured plant materials including ground covers and flowering shrubs. Also included are retaining walls, planters, paths, mounds, and all other unique design features. These items should have a visual impact on the golfer without affecting the way he plays the game.

Color, texture, form, and scale are the characteristics of detail landscaping that provide a pleasant atmosphere for the golfer during the golf round. If he fails to notice the beauty of these design features, his golf game will not be affected.

The majority of the visual design features should be placed in the clubhouse areas or adjacent to tees and other out-of-play but not out-of-site areas. Flower beds and shrub masses should not be placed adjacent to greens, fairways, or areas that are in play for the golfer. These colorful plantings may be aesthetically pleasing, but they hinder the game by causing slow play and forcing local rulings.

The functional impact of detail landscaping is evident through the use of materials that direct circulation patterns. A curbed cart path, a heavily planted mound, or a raised flower bed can direct traffic to eliminate wear areas or unsafe conditions. The use of mulch beneath flowers, shrubs, or tree plantings eliminates grass cutting and reduces maintenance. Stone or timbers placed on creek or lake banks eliminate erosion problems and minimize the maintenance of cutting grass or removing weeds.

Similar to tree plantings, the detail landscaping plan must include all the proper techniques. Neglecting any of the design elements can result in a golf course that is merely decorated with plants. Detail landscaping designed and implemented in balance will accent the golf course design and create a completely shaped exterior space.

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