

# Don Cross -N- Skokie Country Club



*Dave Blomquist, Naperville C.C.*

Our MAGCS championship will be played at one of the area's best when we visit Skokie Country Club in September. Skokie C.C. will be celebrating their centennial anniversary next season and is a club rich in tradition. A Donald Ross design, in 1922 Gene Sarazan won the US Open there; and they also hosted an early Western Open. From the back tees, it plays over 6,900 yards long; and the greens roll a consistent 10+ foot on the stimpmeter, so the 1996 MAGCS champ will earn the title.

While interviewing our current MAGCS president for this profile, it occurred to me very early on that Don has been a very busy man! When he assumed the golf course superintendent position at Skokie C.C. six years ago, he knew he had a lot of work ahead of him. A casual review of the list of achievements to date will surely make any normal-thinking, spare-time-loving, sore-back-hating human being absolutely cringe. This is but a short list of achievements while at Skokie:

- Rebuilt four greens
- Leveled tees
- Installed irrigation system on greens
- Rebuilt bunkers
- Installed double-row irrigation system on fairways
- Began Audubon certification
- Installed 25 birdhouses
- Relandscaped clubhouse
- Dredged and rebuilt pond edge (see photo)

All these were accomplished while serving on the Board of

Directors of the MAGCS and spending as much time as possible with his wife and two children!

This past year has been particularly challenging not only because of the severe weather, but the aforementioned pond project



*Construction on the 3rd hole pond.*

was a major undertaking. The 3rd hole is a great par 3 with a pond that serves as a detention area for storm runoff. Sediment buildup cuts the water depth to as little as two feet in some areas. Engineering studies called for removal of three feet of silt; however, more than six feet ended up being removed. A steel retaining wall was eliminated, and the edges were regraded to blend into the pond. Where it wasn't possible to blend the edges into the water because of the severe grade, Lannon stone outcropping was placed. He is still putting the finishing touches on the project, but this is a review of what was done:

**Subcontractors:** Removed more than 30,000 yards of fill, dug a 40-foot deep hole to bury the silt from the pond, and con-

structed berms on most of the southern portion of the course.

**In-house:** Cut out the steel wall with a cutting torch and placed 675 tons of Lannon stone with a backhoe while keeping pumps running all winter to prevent the pond from refilling with water; restored drainage, cart paths, and irrigation lines; transplanted trees and irrigated the

berms, which ate up over 20,000 yards of sod.

Today, the pond is as deep as 12 feet; and although the water is still dirty from all the work, when everything settles, it will be clear and weed-free.

Don regrets not being able to go on his annual ski trip last winter as he was busy keeping the gas tanks full on the water pumps. He does, however, plan on returning to the slopes in a big way this year. He would also like to be able to devote more time to the business of running one of the largest superintendent associations in the country; but make no mistake, in his tenure on the Board and at Skokie C.C., much has been accomplished. ■

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