

Scott Witte -N- Cantigny Golf Club

Pat Norton
Nettle Creek C.C.

So how many good and faithful MAGCS members are out there who mispronounce the name of the club hosting the ITF Combined Golf Day on May 19?

According to Scott Witte, golf course superintendent at Cantigny Golf Club (can-teen-e, with a silent "g"), there are still a few out there who have trouble with the pronunciation!

And until talking with Scott recently for this interview, that's about all that I knew about this beautiful and very historic estate that just happens to contain, among its varied features, a great 27-hole public golf course. The golf course itself is a gorgeous



Roger Packard design, was built by Wadsworth Golf Construction, and opened for play in 1989. It was also recognized by *Golf Digest* as "Best New Public Course" in 1989.

The golf club is overseen by the Cantigny Foundation, a non-profit organization that insures that all of the Cantigny facilities, including the golf course, "give back to the community." In that spirit, Cantigny Golf Club hosts several annual outings sponsored by charitable foundations, such as Athletes Against Drugs, Make A Wish Foundation, and many others.

Cantigny is much more than just a great golf course. It's actually part of the 500-acre country estate founded by Col. Robert R. McCormick in the 1920s after returning from WWI and becoming editor and publisher of *The Chicago Tribune*. The estate for many years consisted of the McCormick mansion, formal gardens, guest homes, and the First

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Division Museum. Additions to the property, which is now open to the public, have grown over the years to include a visitor's center, production greenhouses, trails and picnic areas, and an outdoor bandshell—home to summer concerts that are open to the public!

The name "Cantigny," by the way, is in honor of the first American victory of WWI, which took place in the village of Cantigny, France. Colonel McCormick was the commander of the 1st Battalion, 5th Field Artillery, of the First Division during that war. Needless to say, Colonel Robert R. McCormick was a large part of American history during the first half of the twentieth century.


Young Mr. Witte also has an interesting history. He was born and raised in the Milwaukee area and graduated from Michigan State in 1991 with a B.S. in Plant and Soil Sciences. During his early years, Scott worked at clubs such as the Merit Club and Barrington Hills C.C., where he was assistant golf superintendent for four years following graduation. He became head superintendent at Cantigny Golf Club on April 28, 1995. He's also the happy husband of wife Susan for almost three years now, and both of them are "proud as punch" of their new daughter Kori.

So here's a young man who made the quantum leap from being an assistant at an 18-hole private club to becoming the head man at a 27-hole public facility. That's what they meant when they coined the phrase "from the frying pan into the fire"!

Cantigny's signature hole, according to Witte, is the 9th hole on the "Lakeside nine." It's a short par 4 with a most unique bunker. The bunker outline is that of the profile of Dick Tracy, a favorite comic strip of Col. McCormick, and also very well known to millions of Americans who saw their young children get crazy during the Dick Tracy revival just a few years ago.

Scott says that taking in the "Cantigny experience" requires

more than just a day, so why not check it out during the ITF Combined Golf Day and make plans to bring back family and friends to visit Cantigny and experience firsthand some of the flavor of America and Chicagoland during the early years of this century. It would be well worth it! ■



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