

# Doug Pool -N-



Doug and his fiancée, Stefanie.



## The CDGA Sunshine Course

*Doug Pool's occupation is officially "superintendent of field operations" at the Chicago District Golf Association (CDGA) Three-Hole Sunshine Course located at Midwest Golf House in Lemont. In other words, Doug is the person at the Sunshine Course who knows how to use tools and resources to manage turf. He has a unique opportunity to showcase his management skills as a superintendent.*

*Managing the Sunshine Course, which serves as a living laboratory for turf research, entails unique challenges. Doug notes that even as he employs his education to protect the vitality and health of his turf, Dr. Randy Kane and Lee Miller are trying to infect, weaken and kill it!*

His experience did not start there. It started long ago and far away. Doug was born 24 years ago in Avon, IL, a small, rural town a half-hour south of Galesburg, IL. His first experience with golf course management came at Shaw Creek Golf Course, a nine-hole course in Bushnell, IL. His first steps in golf course work were huge. He cut cups, set up tees, picked up trash, mowed greens, etc., etc. . . . Doug was a part-time employee on a two-man crew made up of him and Larry Ebbert. Larry is Shaw Creek's superintendent. He saw in Doug those certain attributes that all superintendents seek within teenaged labor: a warm body; capable of listening, following directions, waking up early and working hard; someone who didn't let his friends disrupt him from working. At Shaw Creek, Doug learned quickly that he loved using tools and resources while working on the golf course.

Doug's interest in golf course management work brought him to Illinois State University, where he graduated in 2001 with a bachelor of science degree in agricultural business/horticulture. He has worked for Kerry Satterwhite, CGCS at The Den at Fox Creek in Bloomington; Ken Mangum, CGCS at Atlanta Athletic Club, Atlanta, GA; and Scott Witte, CGCS at Cantigny Golf in Wheaton. Doug feels a strong indebtedness to these three men because of the overwhelming experience and guidance they provided him. "I am very appreciative of these three men in the faith and trust they showed in mentoring me. They taught me how to work the tools and resources of our trade into an employable skill," Doug says.

In 2003, the CDGA conducted an employment search for a superintendent's position at the Sunshine Course. Doug earned the job and found that golf course management there came with a twist.

The Sunshine Course, to be dedicated on June 6, 2004, is an ever-changing, living laboratory of research science and an arboretum, all created by the CDGA Foundation. Built with the inspiration and generosity of Joe Jemsek, Brent Wadsworth and I\*Mag\*Jen Charities, the Sunshine Course is truly a "field of dreams." The Foundation's "Sunshine Through Golf" initiative provides recreation and purpose to lives of disadvantaged children and adults through golf. "It is a special place," notes Doug. "The joy in the eyes of these children as they experience playing golf here on 'their' course is

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emotionally overwhelming.” A bit teary, Doug adds, “There’s something very special about watching their joy indeed. The course is there for them to enjoy like they own it.” Ownership has privilege.

The Sunshine Course also serves Illinois’ Green Industry’s allied associations with a resource unmatched anywhere in the U.S. The course is a comprehensive selection, evaluation and research facility for turfgrass, native plants, ground-covers, trees, shrubs, perennials, construction materials and methods, displayed for your knowledge and enjoyment. “There is something here for every profession: golf, sod, nurseries, horticulture, arboriculture, lawn care, academia, research and landscape design,” says Doug. “The Sunshine Course is an unbelievable tool and resource site to further advance their professions, products and research ideas.


“The strangest thing about my job is dealing with turf research pathologists, Dr. Randy Kane and Lee Miller. I was educated and trained to

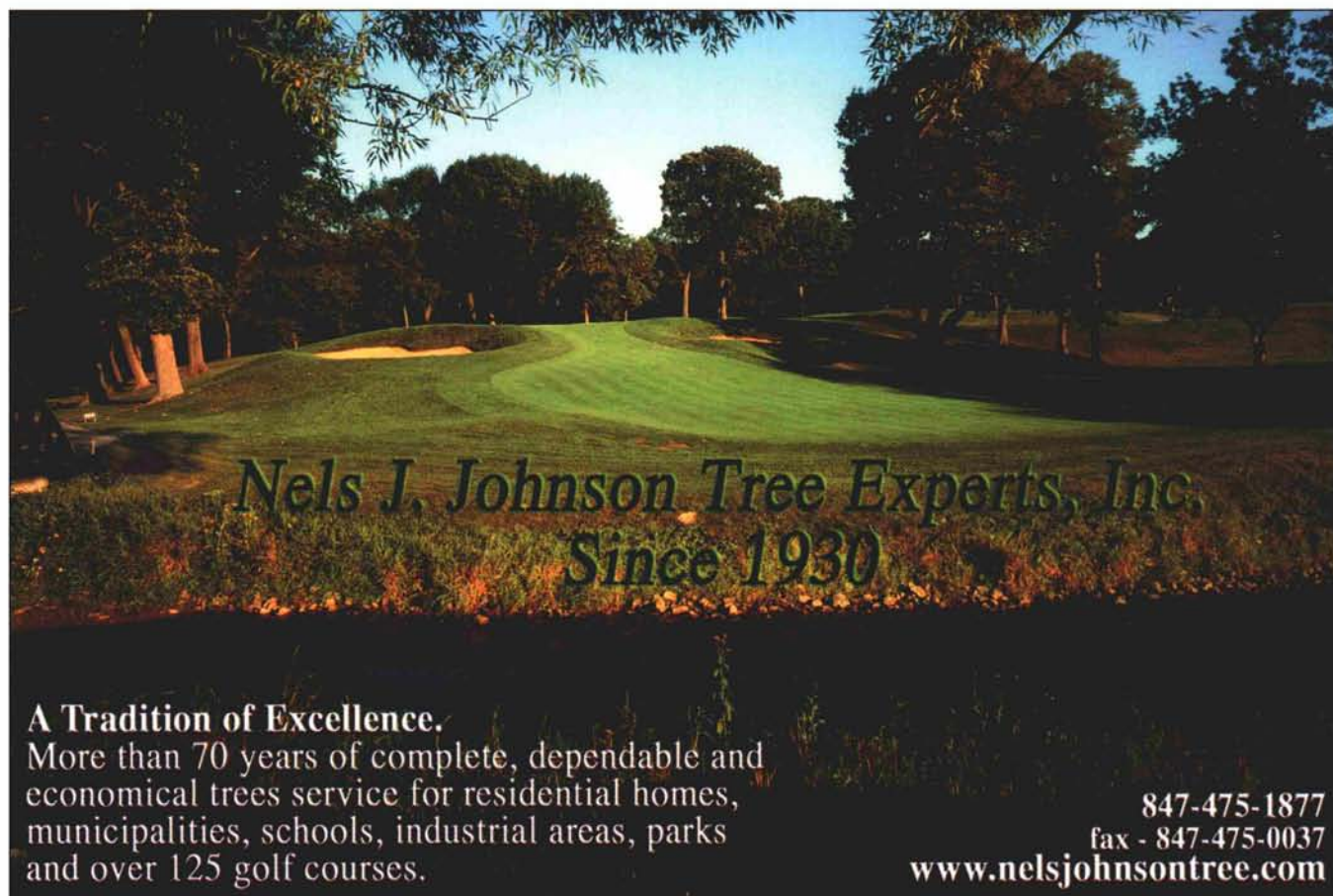
protect the vitality and health of desirable turfgrasses, while they’re trying to infect, weaken and kill it,” comments Doug. “I think Kane and Miller have a peculiar way of earning a living. I have learned so much from Randy and Lee this past year, and they in turn from me I hope. Not unlike any other superintendent, sometimes this job makes me want to pull my hair out! But they do make working here fun.”

All joking aside, Doug’s job differs from that of every other golf course superintendent’s job in the area because everyday he deals with ongoing research, research plots, data collection, grow-in responsibilities, golfers, administrators, visitors AND daily course-conditioning concerns, all at the same time, on the same place. “Sometimes things can get out of whack but that is the nature and duty of furthering research and recreation,” Doug says. “The varied routine of my responsibilities is one of the reasons why I enjoy my profession so much. There is great variety and personal satisfaction here.”

As if Doug does not have enough variety in his life, he has big plans for the future, including marriage. He and his fiancée, Stefanie Mussman, are planning a September 2004 wedding. Plus, he is working on a project with Dr. Tom Voigt, studying turf and native grasses for naturalized golf course roughs.

Make certain that you take a moment during the March 10th MAGCS meeting at Midwest Golf House to track Doug down and schedule a personal summertime tour of the facilities at the Sunshine Course. You’ll be glad you did.

Doug, on behalf of the MAGCS and the members within, we wish you and Stefanie the very best. It is this author’s opinion that you have the tools and resources to manage, and manage very well. 



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