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MAY 2004

Volume 57 No.12

FRONT COVER

No. 18 at Seven Bridges Golf Club, host of the May ITF/MAGCS combined golf day, is a 569-yard par 5. "It plays downhill, downwind, allowing big hitters to reach in two," says superintendent Don Ferreri. Photo by Jim Trzinski.

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The Midwest Association of Golf Course Superintendents (MAGCS), founded December 24, 1926, is a professional organization whose goals include preservation and dissemination of scientific and practical knowledge pertaining to golf turf maintenance.

We endeavor to increase efficiency and economic performance while improving and enhancing the individual and collective prestige of the members.

The MAGCS member is also an environmental steward. We strive to uphold and enhance our surroundings by promoting flora and fauna in every facet in a manner that is beneficial to the general public now and in the future.







WHAT A PAIR!

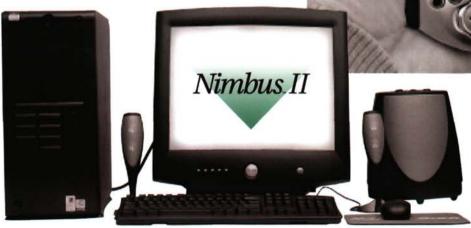
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ON COURSE WITH THE PRESIDENT

Fred Behnke, CGCS Mount Prospect Golf Club



Do You See The Elephant?

I was a recent participant in a focus group. You know, the kind where you sit around a table with other supers and have a conversation guided by a facilitator about insecticide, or equipment, or whatever. I do this every once in a while for a little pocket money and the experience of looking at that big bank of one-way glass on the wall and wondering who "big brother" is. There's a kind of mysterious and creepy aspect to the experience that appeals to my inner child. I know—I have to get a life.

Anyway, at this gathering there was the typical "getting to know you" time of introductions and opening comments during which several of the supers in attendance allowed that our business is unique in that, even though we may work for competing golf courses, we are not in competition. Superintendents, as a group, are more than willing to lend a helping hand or a piece of equipment to a fellow super in a time of need. There is a sense of "we're in this together" that sets us apart from the typical "dog eat dog" way of doing business.

As this symbiotic relationship was put forth, a chorus of agreement ensued from the assembled participants until one individual chimed in with the comment, "Well, that's not entirely true."

Every head turned to the new speaker, and the facilitator asked him to elaborate on his comment.

Now, I know this super; he runs a top-notch private course in the western suburbs, and though I have never had the pleasure of joining him, I know he has been known to hoist a few, so let's call him Killian's Red.

Back to the story. Killian's Red goes on to say, sure it's true that supers aid and abet each other in the course of their duties, but to say there isn't competition among us is just plain fantasy.

Truer words were never spoken.

The plain truth of the matter is that successful superintendents are on the constant lookout for a leg up. While none of us would wish ill on our peers, we sure do measure ourselves against them.

- Private versus private
- Public upscale versus private
- Municipal versus public
- Public versus resort

Mix them and match them as you will, but it's there. When was the last time you played golf somewhere and didn't notice something that . . .

- A) You would do differently.
- B) You wouldn't do at all.
- C) You wished you'd thought of, and couldn't wait to get home to try. This business has ruined the way we enjoy the game. Playing golf has become work, not because of the toil associated with swinging the club so many times to get around a course, but because we, maybe subconsciously, are constantly evaluating, measuring and critiquing our operation against "others."

Is this a bad thing?

It doesn't matter, because good or bad it's out there whether we like it or not.

(continued on page 4)

Competition drives us to excel like no other motivator, be it the drive to lead the way, or the fear of being left behind . . . competition is the elephant in the room nobody is talking about.

Americans love a winner. From day one we are taught to compete. How soon was the baby toilettrained? Who got the better grade on the final exam? Who got the lead role in the school play? Not to mention t-ball, soccer and other athletic pursuits. Complacency breeds stagnation. Competition drives us to excel like no other motivator, be it the drive to lead the way, or the fear of being left behind; it's really what makes us go above and beyond the call of duty.

Enter the Midwest Association of Golf Course Superintendents. One thing I have observed in lo the many years I have been a member of this Association is that the best supers, the ones that run the prestigious clubs, the profitable public tracks and the finest-conditioned municipal courses really use the Association. They may say it's because of the magazine, or the education, or the networking options, but competition is the elephant in the room nobody is talking about.

Chicagoland has a plethora of outstanding golf venues from which the discerning golfer can choose. What is acceptable in another part of the country is simply not an option here. You need to measure up or you're gone, simple as that. It may be harsh to say, but as an Association we really don't care who gets what job. The plums will go to the person that seizes the opportunity. We want the best and the brightest in our area. Their presence will push the rest of us to match or exceed their performance. This is the big time.

Our job, as an Association, is to provide our members with certain tools to help themselves excel. It's up to you to pick them up and put them to work. If you think something is good enough because you've always done it that way, watch your back because somebody's gaining on you.

- Just

Our job, as an Association, is to provide our members with certain tools to help themselves excel.



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DIRECTOR'S COLUMN

Tony Kalina Prairie Landing Golf Club



Monthly Golf Meetings: Fun for ALL

I am proud and honored to chair the MAGCS Golf Committee again this year. The 2004 edition of this committee has an exciting menu of golf experiences planned for each monthly meeting this season. Our committee is comprised of 22 enthusiastic volunteers, united in a dedication to serving our membership. We have worked very hard to put together this slate of golf events and formats that will uphold the Midwest's tradition of conducting competitive, worthwhile and enjoyable monthly golf meetings.

Chairing the 2003 Golf Committee was a learning experience for me. Last year, it was the consensus of the standing MAGCS Golf Committee, and the Midwest Board of Directors, to modify our monthly golf meetings so they could be shorter and more fun, and would be perceived by our members as more meaningful.

Recognizing a real opportunity, the Golf Committee met and discussed ways to accomplish this task without diminishing the value of the experience to our superintendents and commercial members. Since scoring and the number of scored events were directly associated to the time it took to conclude a golf event, we decided that by minimizing the number of scored events, we could expedite the finale of our golf meetings. We incorporated scorecard raffles, all proximities and door-prize drawings into the regular format of play in 2003. These were a big hit because they are fun and fair to all regardless of golfers' abilities, and they required no additional time to conduct or calculate winners, thus saving time.

We are dedicated to bringing the fun of playing golf to every member who chooses to attend a monthly golf meeting. To that end, we are cognizant that every member has a different notion of fun. This is our opportunity. Some of our members think the heat of a grinding competition, or breaking 76 for 18 holes is fun, while for others, fun often means camaraderie, networking or just breaking 110! Remember, golf is a game. It's supposed to be fun, and fun for everyone. The traditional championships—the Annual, Senior, Super Seniors, Dom Grotti and College competitions—remain scheduled as part of the monthly meetings in 2004 for those competitive players within our membership.

Our members also have a strong preference of "playing their own ball" during monthly events. We have been told that it is just more fun to play each shot, and I agree. We have scheduled only two scrambles this year, April's four-person Olds Scramble format and October's College Team Championship.

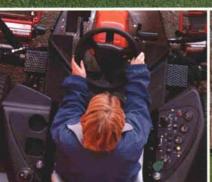
Venues for this season's monthly golf meeting also promise to be outstanding. We visited Nettle Creek in April and this month, we are at Seven Bridges. Next is Glen Erin Golf Club in June, Fox Run Golf Links in July, Biltmore Country Club in August, Oak Grove Golf Club in September and Calumet Country Club in October. Some of our most exemplary members, and their clubs, will be hosting events, and I am certain their courses will play to the highest attainable level of quality in conditioning.

On behalf of the MAGCS Golf Committee volunteers, we wish every member health, happiness and satisfaction at the monthly golf meetings this year. May all your putts be one-putts!

We are dedicated to bringing the fun of playing golf to every member who chooses to attend a monthly golf meeting.

To that end, we are cognizant that every member has a different notion of fun.









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Don Ferreri –N–





Geri and Don Ferreri with daughters (L to R) Brenda, Bridget and Brittany.

The May Illinois Turfgrass Foundation (ITF) fundraising event will take place at Seven Bridges Golf Club, hosted by superintendent Don Ferreri. Seven Bridges, a true but fair test of golf, challenges every player from the first to the eighteenth hole. This Nugent design has water in play on 13 of the 18 holes and can stretch to over 7,100 yards.



No. 17 green, the end of a long par 4.

The name of the game at Seven Bridges is service. From the moment you arrive at the course, through the time your clubs go back in the trunk, you receive truly first-class treatment. My clubs have always left Seven Bridges in far better shape than they arrived.

On a surprisingly warm, although wet, March afternoon, Don and Seven Bridges treated me to a very enjoyable round of golf. My game was incredibly out-of-tune, but the course and the staff were as friendly and pleasurable to be around as the reputation that precedes them. Throughout the day it was remarkable to see how much, after 13 years, Don still enjoys playing his course.

While the course brought me in at a slick 83, Don and I were able to get in some questions and answers. Hopefully, this will afford some insight into the man who has dedicated so much time and energy to our industry.

Brian Baker: How long have you been at Seven Bridges Golf Club? Don Ferreri: I was hired in 1987 to help with the development and construction of the golf course. The golf course opened on July 2, 1991.

BB: In that time, what do you think has been the biggest change in the industry?

DF: No question, the acceptance of alternative spikes. I cannot even imagine how we tolerated the damage caused by steel spikes.

BB: Any professional mentors?

DF: All I could ever hope to learn in golf course maintenance was provided by Art Benson. The man can flat out grow grass. He taught old-school agronomy and was very innovative. He provided country club conditions before most people knew what country club conditions were.

BB: Through your years at Seven Bridges, what has been your proudest moment as a superintendent?

DF: I think anytime the grounds crew is given recognition for the outstanding job they perform. I am proud to lead a great team.

(continued on page 8)

BB: How about your proudest moment as a father?

DF: My three daughters provide me new moments almost weekly. Their mother has done a great job.

BB: As past president of the MAGCS and current president of the ITF, how do you envision the future of those organizations? First the MAGCS?

DF: I was extremely proud to serve the Association. The Midwest continues to be a leader in the industry as a local chapter; it has more to offer its members than any other in the country. The future is only limited to the imagination of its leaders.

BB: The ITF?

DF: What a fantastic time to be leading the ITF. We are taking giant steps forward in our efforts to provide research funding and education to the state of Illinois. The presence of Luke Cella and the Midwest Golf House is providing us many resources and relationships today that were only a dream a few short years ago.

BB: Favorite hole at Seven Bridges?

DF: Number 8, because the first seven holes are behind me. At this point in my round it is time to relax.

By the way, they are all good.

BB: What is the best number you have posted at Seven Bridges? DF: 82, all the stars were lined up.

BB: I first met you in 1999 when I moved into the Chicago area. Since that time I have been amazed by your Cubs trivia. As an avid Cubs fan, you have more usable knowledge than anyone I know. So who played second base for the Cubs in 1969?

DF: Glen Beckert, even a Sox fan might know that. On second thought probably not, they don't remember 1969.

BB: Who played center field in 1974?

DF: Now there is a year Cubs fans are trying to forget. They were 45 games out of first place. The answer is Rick Monday (protector of the American flag). Ask me a tough one.

BB: What was your feeling on the Steve Bartman situation during the 2003 Cubs playoffs?

DF: I am trying to erase it from my memory, thanks for bringing it up. I think a taller left fielder would have caught it. I really wonder why Kyle Farnsworth was pitching as though he had been drinking all day!

The stage is set at Seven Bridges for May 18th, so get a group together, buy a few extra golf balls (or, if you're the type, a telescoping ball retriever) and come out and support the ITF.



Going by handicap rating, hole no. 7 is the toughest at Seven Bridges.

THE FERRERI FILE

RESIDENCE Naperville

FAMILY

Wife Geri; daughters Brenda, Bridget and Brittany

EDUCATION

Joliet Junior College, 1980

INTERNSHIP

Riverside Golf Club, Riverside

ASSISTANT SUPT.

Butterfield Country Club, Oak Brook

HEAD SUPT.

Seven Bridges Golf Club, Woodridge

> MAGCS President in 2000

> ITF Current president

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Court TV. If I wasn't a superintendent, I would want a job as a lawyer.

FAVORITE MOVIE

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FAVORITE GOLF COURSE

Augusta National. If I could play one round of golf anywhere, this is it.

FAVORITE OUTSIDE TEMPERATURE

Strange question, I am quite fond of 82°.

VEHICLE

H.G. Wells, Time Machine. How cool would that be?

DINNER GUEST

Pope John Paul II. I would let him say grace.

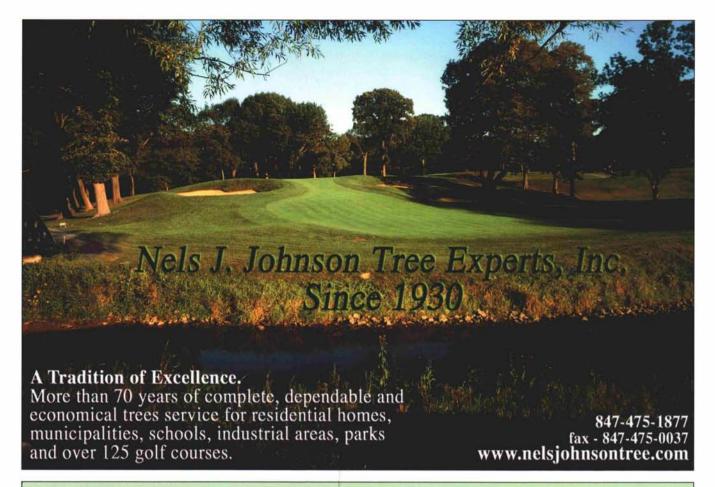
FOURSOME

Tiger, Bobby Jones and Babe Ruth. Now that would be fun.



(Left) The Seven Bridges grounds crew is "the reason Seven Bridges continues to be one of the best," says Don Ferreri. (Below) No. 9, looking across the east branch of the DuPage River.







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