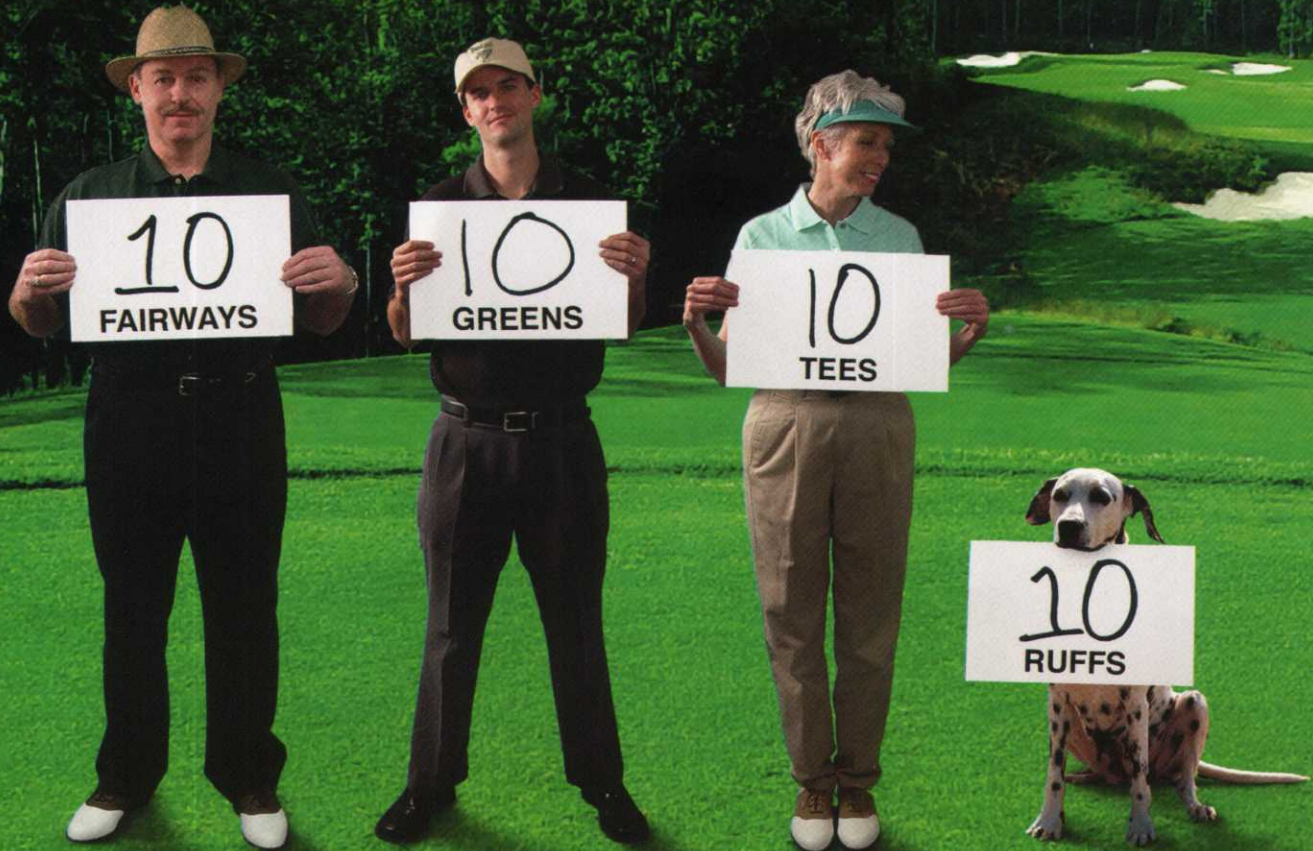


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About the Cover:

No. 2 green at Bellwood Oaks Golf Course, site of the 2009 MGCSA Spring Mixer. Last month's answer to the course under snow was North Oaks Golf Club.

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MGCSA EVENTS

May 12
MGCSA VENDOR
APPRECIATION DAY
Keller Golf Course
Host: Paul Diegnau, CGCS

May 18
MGCSA SPRING MIXER
Bellwood Oaks Golf Club
Host: Bill Gullicks

June 1
MGCSA SCHOLARSHIP SCRAMBLE
Wild Marsh Golf Club
Host: David Deem

July 6
MGCSA HAROLD STODOLA
RESEARCH SCRAMBLE
Stone Ridge Golf Course
Host: Jeff Girard

September 14
MGCSA CHAMPIONSHIP
Northland Country Club
Host: Chris Tritabaugh

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Handling the Stresses of Spring

By *Richard A. (Rick) Traver, CGCS*

Spring is a great time of year, but as another superintendent and I discussed the other day, it can also be one of the most stressful as well. We both know our courses like the back of our hands, having been at them over 20 years. We also discussed that for the most part we get a ton of support from our members, yet there is always some member or small group thereof that makes us entirely uncomfortable because he/they believes that the course should be open "today."

Despite the snow banks, ponds where ponds shouldn't be and the fact that one can't get the staples that hold the covers out of the ground because the frost is still only inches from the surface. Adding to my personal stress this year, spring break this year for my teacher wife and daughter fell on the third week in March and we were going down to Branson for a vacation. A vacation I almost cancelled (Man, is my wife a saint) except that the weather did a 180 and the pressure to open the course subsided.

I know many superintendents open their courses earlier than I usually can and to those people, God bless you. You give my members a place to play so that the spring itch to golf that coursed through their bodies gets scratched. I have always opened when I felt the course was ready, but my work ethic and concern for the club's finances has always stressed me out in the spring. Here's hoping all of you handle it better than I do and have a wonderful start to the golf season.

We had a great turnout at the March Mini-Seminar despite the threat of terrible weather. Thanks to Wes Stoneback, superintendent at The Wilds, for arranging to have us use the Wilds beautiful clubhouse. Thanks also to Paul Diegnau for the excellent job he does in bringing in all the speakers for these events. His speaker this time was Dr. Rossi from Cornell University and what an engaging speaker he is. Whether you agree with what he says or not, you have to love his enthusiasm and passion. Being the conservative person that I am, dropping all my phosphorus and potassium fertilizer from my program is too drastic a change for me, but for those of you looking to save a few bucks, it may be the way to go. Thanks also to Syngenta, our platinum sponsor, for stepping up and supporting this event.

On the Board, we are looking at a proposal by the Class C members to designate one of the directors positions such that a Class C member will be seated as that director. It would be a position that is voted on by everyone, much the same as all the other directors' positions. It will also require some bylaws changes so everyone will ultimately have a voice in whether this takes place or not. If you have any input or questions, please contact one of the current board members or myself.

I am repeating this paragraph from last month because it is important. I hope everyone took the opportunity to renew your phosphorus certification. Even if you plan on following a fertilizer program with no phosphorus, please renew your certification by sending in the form found in the last March issue of Hole Notes, it can also be found online at www.mgcsa.org. All that is needed from you is to read the article and send in the signed response form. This is extremely important to the MGCSA, MTGF and MNLA, as it is a method of handling hot issues with the legislation. If we can prove to the legislators that we can self regulate, it will help us to continue to get written out of upcoming regulatory bills. If you are participating, encourage others to do so as well.

*Take Care,
Rick Traver*

HOLE NOTES

Official publication
of the MGCSA

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Bellwood Oaks Golf Course Set To Host Spring Mixer on May 18

By BILL GULLICKS

Superintendent, Bellwood Oaks Golf Course

Bellwood Oaks Golf Course opened in the Spring of 1972. I have been the Superintendent since April 1994. The par 73 course measures 6,791 yards.

History And Course Overview

Bellwood Oaks was designed by Don Raskob and built by Don Raskob and Leonard Swanson of Hastings. The Raskob family has successfully run the course since its opening in 1972.

As a daily fee course, Bellwood Oaks limits memberships with its goal to keep

"At Bellwood Oaks we have tried to keep things simple. Producing the best product with the appropriate amount of resources is the philosophy we work towards."

tee times easily accessible to the public.

The clubhouse is simple, serving as a glorified starter shack. Golfers can find sandwiches, beverages and the essential golf supplies necessary to enjoy their round.

Bellwood Oaks was built on rolling farmland just south of Hastings. Portions of the property are wooded with mature oak trees while the remaining areas were planted with ash, red pine, and white pine. All the planted trees were grown from seedlings and then spaded onto the course. The now mature trees have really changed the overall look and feel of the course.

The greens at Bellwood Oaks are fairly flat, but can be deceiving at times. The



No. 7 at Bellwood Oaks Golf Course, site of the May 18 MGCSA Spring Mixer.

slopes on a few greens can quickly bring most golfers putting prowess back to reality.

The course layout has a different feel from the front nine to the back nine. The front nine can be summed up by the famous saying, "What you see is what you get." Whereas the back nine offers a few sharp dog legs and four tough finishing holes. Elevation change, a long par 4 and a long par 3 have been known to bring ruin to many good rounds of golf.

At Bellwood Oaks we have tried to keep things simple. Producing the best product with the appropriate amount of resources is the philosophy we work towards. It is continually a challenge to have quality conditions and remain a good value to the customers.

Changes and Challenges

During the past years there have been many changes at Bellwood Oaks. A complete irrigation renovation was completed during the 1996-1997 seasons. The addition of forward tees was completed in 2004, allowing us to utilize four sets of tees. In 2006 seven fairways were sprayed with glyphosphate and reseeded with a Blue Rye mix.

The agronomical challenges we have are few. We are lucky to have naturally nutrient rich, sandy loam soil along with excellent drainage. There is only about 100 ft. of drain tile on the entire course, which allows us to utilize carts on almost any given day.

(Continued on Page 7)

Bellwood Oaks -

(Continued from Page 6)

The main challenge we battle is Poa. We are continually trying to improve our bentgrass population on the greens through the use of cultural and chemical means. The results have been promising, but as we all know it is an ongoing struggle for many courses.

Superintendent Bill Gullicks

I have been married to my wife Kristen for 16 years. She is an elementary teacher in Hastings and keeps the lives of our four children Andy, Abbey, Brady and Ellie organized. I graduated from Concordia College, Moorhead and Anoka-Hennepin Technical College. My work experience has included being Assistant Superintendent at Apple Creek Country Club in Bismarck, No. Dak. and New Prague Golf Club in New Prague, Minn. In my free time I enjoy watching my kids in their various activities and checking off home improvements on the "Honey-Do" list.

Owner Dan Raskob

Dan Raskob is the owner of Bellwood



The 17th hole at Bellwood Oaks Golf Course.

Oaks along with his wife Jennifer. They have three children: Charlie, Annie and Willie. Dan spends most of his winter following his boys to hockey rinks throughout the Midwest. In his free time he is an exceptional woodworker, which has come in handy at the course many times.

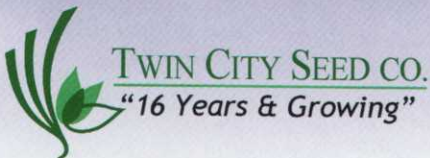
Dan has been involved with Bellwood Oaks since the beginning. I am fortunate to have him extremely involved with the everyday grounds portion of the golf

course. He supports the idea that the golf course can make or break a facility.

Our support staff consists of 10 seasonal employees and a seasonal mechanic.

I hope that everyone is off to a great start for the 2009 season and will have the opportunity to come and enjoy the Spring Mixer at Bellwood Oaks.

Let's hope for good weather and I look forward to seeing many of you on May 18!



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Spring fertilization varies greatly on a number of factors. Cultural practices performed, soil amendments made, irrigation and drainage upgrades, fertilizers applied, and what happened last fall plays a significant role with this season's success. However, having a sound fertility program will provide you with your best chance of success for the upcoming season.

Typically, spring applications are applied after the early flush of shoot growth has occurred, but predicting spring weather can be a challenge when it comes to soil and air temperature, and precipitation. That's why choosing a fertilizer that performs in cool climates is so vital.

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John Meyer
Regional Manager
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Although fine-tuning a spring fertilization program varies on many factors, its importance will be felt all summer long and even into the fall. The benefit of using an all-weather, long-lasting performer such as UMAXX provides immediate benefits, as well as a positive long-term impact. UMAXX gives the freedom to apply as a nitrogen component in a blend or part of a soluble fertilizer program. UMAXX offers consistent performance regardless of temperature or application type.

For more information on UMAXX contact me at 952-334-6845 or jmeyer@agrotain.com

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Assistant Superintendents: Are you submitting your external education approval codes? By submitting those approval codes, you are jump starting your advancement through GCSAA membership levels by recording points that count towards entry requirements into Class A. It's not too late to record those approval codes: Simply submit them via the online education point affidavit found in the **My Points** section of the website.

Superintendent Norma O'Leary's Curling Team Wins Championship in New York

Norma O'Leary's curling team won the U. S. Women's Club National Championships in Utica, New York and in Marchand tied for 6th place in the U. S. Olympic Trials in Denver. "My team lost 4 games by one point at the Olympic Trials. If we could have gotten another break or two, and won two of those four games we would have made the playoff round." said Norma, who is Superintendent at Silver Bay Golf Course in Silver Bay, Minn.

O'Leary added that "the Championship game from the New York was webstreamed on-line by NBC Sports and the United States Olympic Committee. A bunch of people got together at the Two Harbors Curling Club and watched our game live on the internet. It was pretty cool. My husband couldn't stand to watch though, so he went home and then got a play-by-play of the last end over the telephone. Fortunately, we won on the last shot!"

Do You Have a Golfer at Your Course That You Seem to See Every Day?

Think that golfer plays a lot of golf? Think again. After posting the most rounds played in an association in 2007 with 502 rounds, Jim Mahoney, of Waverly, Ga., did it again last year with a whopping 711 rounds. So who is this guy? Really, just a guy who likes to play. He plans to cut back to one round a day this year, focus on practice and lower his handicap.

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March 2009

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Respectfully submitted,
Jeff Ische,
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Superintendent Al Hanson Breeds, Raises and Trains Racing Pigeons

By DAVE KAZMIERCZAK

Golf course superintendents enjoy a wide variety of hobbies when not tending to their respective golf courses. Some hunt, fish or snowmobile while others chase birdies on the courses they care for. For Al Hanson, Superintendent at Viking Meadows in Cedar, Minn. birdie chasing has a completely different meaning.

Hansen breeds, raises and trains racing pigeons. The birds Hansen raises aren't your average pigeons often seen nesting in the nooks of buildings or gathered in a park for a free meal. They are a specific type of pigeon with a keen homing ability that allows them to find their way back to their nests from hundreds and sometimes thousands of miles away.

"They're called homing pigeons. It's not like the ones you see on the railroad tracks," Hanson said. "Those are what we call scrubs. These are homing pigeons and they're bred for it and we pay a lot of money for them."

Man has found these birds very useful over the centuries for a variety of needs,

and many messages throughout history have been delivered via "pigeon mail."

"They were very useful during World War II," Hanson said. "They would release the birds to tell the troops where other people were."

"They still use racing pigeons right now in remote countries to bring blood samples back to hospitals. They bring the pigeons with them, and they always go back to the hospital."

Technology may have made the pigeons' postal value obsolete but a group of individuals have found another way to celebrate the birds' unique ability. They have formed flight clubs that race their pigeons a variety of distances. There are six pigeon clubs in the metro area and many others across the country and the world.

The birds are raced by first banding the birds around their legs. The birds are then brought to a central area on race day and



placed in a module where an electronic scanner is used to identify the bird. The birds are then transported by trailer to a specific location and released all at the same time for each race. Each trailer can hold about 2100 birds. The time it takes the birds to fly back to their individual house or "coop" is recorded by a scanner at the coop and a winner is crowned. The basic measuring tool is yards per minute since every coop is not of equal distance to the release point.

The racing season in Minnesota parallels the golf season. Races are anywhere from 100 miles to 600 miles for the local racing clubs. Some races can go up to 1,000 miles nationally. The season is somewhat divided into old bird races, roughly from early May until July 4 and young bird races that start in early August and last through September. Distance of races varies within the season. Each race can be number specific (five birds entered per person) or open to as many entries as a racer wants to enter.

The races Hansen enters have the possibility of moderate monetary gain or

(Continued on Page 11)

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