



# Super builds, rebuilds in lifetime on course

*When Tony Caranci arrived at Ledgemont 40 years ago, he was in it for the long haul. He's made a history of improvements to the Seekonk, Massachusetts course.*

**A**nthony Caranci, Jr. was working on the third green at Ledgemont Country Club when he heard about the death of President Kennedy.

In fact, most of Caranci's most vivid life memories are tied to the golf course.

And it's a considerable life: 40 years at one golf course, located in Seekonk, Mass.

During that time, Caranci has rebuilt most of the greens and tees at least once, recontoured the fairways, installed all drainage systems, built cart paths and planted nearly every tree on the course.

"I guess you could say this golf course has been my second home," says Caranci.

"I can think of a lot worse places to spend your life. I'm proud to say that over the years, we've made this course into a country club."

Caranci freely shares the credit for the golf course's continued improvement and development with his assistant of 25 years, Bill Sherman.

#### **Swampy conditions**

"I started rebuilding the greens right after I came here in 1956," recalls Caranci. "The course was very swampy and the greens were flat and pancake-like. It was not a test of golf."

"I started on the second green, enlarging it and putting in rolls, and we put in one or two new greens each season for many years."

With little money to work with, Caranci raised his Penncross sod himself, sprigged it in May and pushed for growth all summer. He also selected most of the trees from the woods, root-pruned them and planted them on the course the following year. Caranci



**Caranci built a career at Ledgemont CC.**

tried to make each hole different, beginning by tipping the second green "like a pie plate," elongating the tee on the first hole to create space and making the fourth hole a water hole for more golf drama.

#### **Clay soil a challenge**

"We have the world's worst soil here," asserts Caranci. "It's heavy clay, and rocky. We had to get rid of \$60,000 worth of rock, which we used to build a

practice tee. We also put drainage in on every hole, and continue to add it each year. At first, we just put cart paths on the extra wet holes, Numbers 2, 11 and 13. But now, I have two left to finish and then the cart paths will be continuous."

Wet conditions, combined with the heavy clay soils on the Ledgemont course lead to disease problems each year, as heat and humidity rise. Caranci knows he will find brown patch and rhizoctonia each

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summer on most of the course. He uses ProStar fungicide to control the diseases, as suggested by Dr. Noel Jackson of the University of Rhode Island.

Caranci himself has taught turf management seminars for the University of Rhode Island and University of Massachusetts.

Caranci says the fungicide controls the disease problems very well on greens, tees and fairways.

"It lasts for a good 28 days, giving us control that is twice as long as any other product we've used."

Fewer applications is another benefit to the fungicide program.

#### **Aerification, IPM**

Caranci and his 12-person crew try to follow an Integrated Pest Management approach, and look for chemicals without restricted use designations.

Greens, tees and fairways are aerified twice each year, and pest control products are usually used on a curative rather than preventive basis. Each year, they overseed with one ton of a Penncross/bluegrass seed mix. In addition, they use a dragmat to spread and smooth the clippings.

The course features a variety of trees that Caranci has planted over the years, including Bradford pear, crabapple, dogwood, forsythia, lilac, and weeping birch.

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## Ekas of Saxon Course wins GPGCA service award

The Greater Pittsburgh Golf Course Superintendents Association has given its Christian Morup Award to Frank Ekas, Sr.

The Morup award is the association's highest honor, and is given annually to the person who "exemplifies the dedication, professionalism, and integrity of the turfgrass profession."

Ekas, 74, is owner/operator/superintendent of Saxon Golf Course, which he originally built in 1962 and owned in partnership with Bud Klingensmith. Today, Saxon is a 27-hole layout, and is considered to be one of the best public golf courses north of Pittsburgh. □

## More courses for youth needed, says ASGCA

The American Society of Golf Course Architects is happy that Tiger Woods is making such a positive impact on the game of golf. Now, says ASGCA, more courses are needed to meet the anticipated need.

"Woods is leading an army of youngsters onto the golf course. He's introducing them to a game that until now was virtually foreign to kids, especially minorities," reports the Association. "Unfortunately, there's not always a place for these young converts to play."

"Despite the fact that about 425 new municipal or daily fee courses opened for play in 1996, we're still short of affordable golf facilities in virtually every major market in the U.S.," says Denis Griffiths, ASGCA president.

Griffiths encourages golf course architects to make a greater effort to design courses that cost less to build, and will therefore cost less to play. He also suggests that the practice of some public courses limiting players' minimum ages to 14 or 16 may change.

The ASGCA has a library of literature for those interested in developing new course or remodeling existing ones. Address for the Society is 221 N. LaSalle St., Chicago, IL 60601. □



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## Pesticides, golf cars in Calif. GCSA news

The ban on city pesticide use in San Francisco may expand to cover city easements and property leased by the city, reports the GCSA of Southern California. This could include property that has city utility lines running over it. Advocates of the ban are determined to expand it, reports the Association.

Also, the use of golf cars on public roads and highways in California is being addressed in new legislation. □