

Chelm Gets a Municipal Golf Course

by Philip *Fishl* Kutner

Poverty-stricken Chelm decided that the only way the shtetl could survive, and even thrive, was to foster tourism. All of the American magazines that were purchased in Lublin showed hotels and golf courses.

The hotels were not a problem, for they read about B & B's (Bed and Breakfast) that were small individual homes. There were plenty of such homes in Chelm and the women were excellent cooks. However, when it came to golf courses, it was quite another matter. Not only had they never seen a golf course, but also they did not know what it was.

Further research showed that it was a Jewish sport, for it had chai holes and par is four times chai. Gimpel the Gardener was put in charge, for they read that it was important to take care of the greens.

He set out to visit the Paczoltowice Golf Course in Malopolska. After filling many pads of notes and speaking with the grounds-keepers and the person who ran the clubhouse Gimpel returned to Chelm to report to the mayor and city council.

Gimpel's long report could be summarized by grouping the list of problems that needed to be solved to have a championship golf course into three categories.

- Where would the golf course be located?
- How would they get the right kind of grass?
- How would they maintain the greens?

Locating the Golf Course

The location of the golf course proved to be simple. It was decided that the community pasture on the edge of town was the solution. This was where the Chelemers brought their cows and goats to graze. Since it already belonged to the shtetl, there was no need to raise the already scarce money.

Getting the Right Kind of Grass

Gimpel suggested that the grass should be easy to maintain and be able to be used for animal feed. Crabgrass, Crabgrass, Crabgrass was the answer. You don't have to take care of it, for everyone knows that it crowds out other grasses—it's a weed (an unwanted plant).

Our Chelm expert agronomist knew that Crabgrass is an annual plant that germinates in April, sets seed in August, and dies with the first frost. He told the council that there are 235 varieties of crabgrass and they fall into two common types-- hairy crabgrass (*Digitaria sanguinalis*) and smooth crabgrass (*D. Ischaemum*).

Gimpel contacted the Polish National Agricultural College who contacted the Elstel Farm and Seeds Co. in Ardmore, Oklahoma (1-800-858-7333) distributors of the best Red River Crabgrass seed for advice. Naturally they agreed to help.

Maintaining the Turf

First the course had to be laid out. When Tiger Holts heard about the plan he was so excited that he flew to Chelm on his private jet and volunteered his time to lay out the course. Tiger said, "First you need to have traps. So clumps of bushes, the watering holes and gullies were located."

There was a stumbling block with the size of the hole. Holts wanted it to be the size of a cup, but the City Council decided that it would be better to use a bucket. This way the players would have better scores and be able to brag back in Amerike. The pails would still have their handles left on so that after the season, they could be used to feed the livestock.

The goats and cows would graze the pasture, I mean the golf course and when the crabgrass got too high the Chelemers would go in with their scythes and make hay. This would be fodder for the cows and goats in the winter.

The golf course has now been laid out, and all is ready to go except some minor items. You may be a manufacturer or know someone who is able to supply these items.

- Magnetic golf balls and strong magnets to be placed in each hole.
- Two inch spikes for the golf shoes so that the golfers could walk on the golf course and not have the goat droppings hit the golf shoes.

If you can supply these items, please send a certified letter to the:
American Friends of the Chelm Golf Committee
Yenemsville Yiddish Club
Yenemsville, USA. 00000-0000