

# Luke Cella -N-



*The Cellas: Jennifer, Henry and Luke.*

*This month, the MAGCS will be kicking off the 2002 golf season at Tamarack Golf Club in the fine city of Naperville. Tamarack has 18 holes, and there's some water out there. It was built sometime last century and designed by some architect. The golf course even has a clubhouse and a pro shop. From what I hear, they even serve a fantastic brunch on Sundays. I could tell you a lot more about the golf course, but that is not our purpose here. What I'm talking about is the man—Luke Cella serving as our host.*

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I believe Luke's first step into the business was taking a job at a putt-putt golf course. He fell in love with the work while syringing the Astroturf in an effort to keep his customers' feet cool. From there, he started working on the maintenance staff at Pottawatomie Golf Course during his high-school years. In 1992, Luke graduated from the prestigious University of Illinois in Chicago, having earned himself a bachelor of arts in English. As a graduate of UIC myself and the only other Midwest "Flame," I know that's an accomplishment.

Luke continued his education at Kishwaukee College, completing a degree in golf course management while serving as an assistant at Pottawatomie. Luke was promoted to the superintendent's position there and remained until 1999. While at Pottawatomie, Luke's accomplishments were many. In 1997, the golf course became the first nine-hole course to achieve certification in the Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary Program. An Environmental Steward Award merit winner in 1998, Luke also found the time to attain his CGCS status that same year.

Looking for new challenges, Luke married Jennifer Joy in 1998 and decided to leave the St. Charles area for yet another diploma. This time, his travels would take him to the other University of Illinois campus. Not only did Luke return with an M.S. in natural resources/environmental science/turfgrass specialization, he also mastered the art of baby-making with the birth of his and Jennifer's son, Henry. This brings us back to the present.

In 2001, many of us were glad to hear that Luke would return to the area as the superintendent at Tamarack Golf Club. In November, Luke was elected

to the MAGCS Board of Directors. The future of the Midwest only looks brighter with Luke's hard work and dedication to the industry coming into play in a leadership role. I encourage you to play at the April meeting and while you're at Tamarack, pull Luke aside and ask him what he's up to now. I'm sure that if you do this, you'll make an instant friend.

### A Conversation with Luke Cella

Here are a few further thoughts from Luke Cella, host of our April golf meeting.

*On Course:* Why did you enter the greenkeeping/golf course management profession?

Luke: *I was attracted to working outdoors but didn't want to be a park ranger.*

OC: What do you consider to be the most challenging aspect of your job?

Luke: *The largest challenge I face everyday is also one of the chief reasons I enjoy what I do. The challenge is staying organized to face adversity everyday, but I also welcome the adversity.*

OC: Do you consider yourself an environmental steward? Why or why not?

Luke: *I'm not sure "steward" is a good word to describe what we do as golf course superintendents. I'm not sure the environment can be managed in the true sense of the word. I would argue that we are more of environmentalists. After all, they are described as advocates of the environment.*

OC: What do you consider to be the most rewarding part of your job?

Luke: *I've always looked at golf as recreation for the mind and body. I like to see people happy and enjoying themselves. I am rewarded when I can offer people a pleasant place to come and play and escape.*

OC: What is your opinion of GMOs (genetically modified organisms) such as resistant bentgrass?

Luke: *I think that we are all GMOs, that is, if you believe in evolution. I think the real issue is who is doing the modification and for what purpose.*

OC: Do you aspire to become the general manager of a golf facility?

Luke: *I would rather become an owner of a facility than a GM. I like the business side of golf, but I love the science side of it much more.*

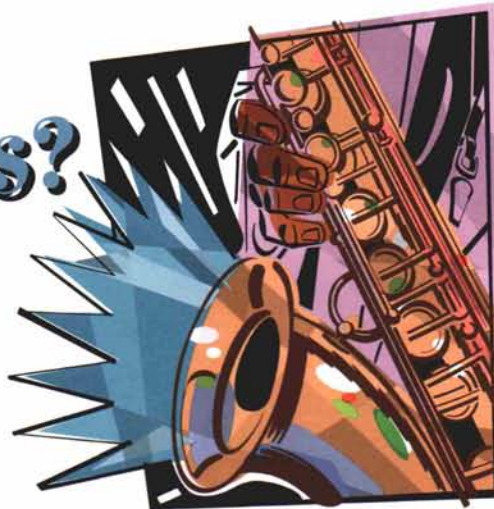
OC: What is your most humbling on-the-job experience?

Luke: *1995, my first year as a superintendent.*



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