

Tony Kalina -N-



Tony, Melora and Andy Kalina.



PRAIRIE LANDING

Out in western DuPage County, Prairie Landing Golf Club has been in the very caring hands of Tony Kalina since the year it opened for business. Many of you know Tony from the enormous amount of time and involvement that he has put into our Association. Currently, Tony is in his fourth year serving on the Board of Directors, and continues to contribute to many different committees throughout the year.

The Kalina family—Tony, his wife of 13 years, Melora, and their 9-year-old son, Andy—currently resides in Winfield, IL. Both Tony and Melora are originally from Omaha, NE, where they were born and raised. They graduated in the same high school class in 1979, but never dated. They got “reacquainted” 12 years later when each was living and working in the Chicago area. They have been happily married since October 1993.

Tony comes from a large family where golf is more than a passion, it’s a bloodline. Two of his older brothers were golf professionals, and Tony’s older

brother Charlie is a 25-year certified golf course superintendent who works for the Omaha Parks and Recreation Department. Tony’s father, Chuck, was a renowned amateur golf champion in Nebraska who competed nationally in two USGA Public Links Championships (1962 and 1963). In fact, given this family background, it’s fair to say that Tony has been involved with the game of golf for nearly his entire life. Father Chuck got Tony started playing when he was only 5 years old. Tony caddied for five years at the Omaha Country Club, from age 11 to 15. For seven years, Tony worked with the Omaha Parks and Recreation Department as an auto/golf equipment operator. In 1985, he enrolled at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln to



Left to right: Justin Wheeler, AGCS;
Brian Tameling, AGCS;
Josh Zartmann, technician; and
Rogelio Martinez, crew foreman.

pursue his goal of being a golf course superintendent. In 1990, Tony earned a bachelor of science degree in agriculture with dual majors (horticulture-turfgrass management, and agronomy-soil science).

Upon graduation, Tony was hired by Oscar Miles, CGCS to join the Merit Club as a construction foreman. Tony worked there until early 1992 when he started with Scott Nissley, CGCS, and Meadowbrook Golf Group to grow in an as-yet-unnamed golf course located at DuPage Airport. In late 1993, the DuPage Airport Authority (DPA) decided on a name for their course: Prairie Landing Golf Club. After the golf course was

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completed and when it opened for business on July 5, 1994, Scott Nissley became general manager, with Tony becoming the golf course superintendent in 1995.

Prairie Landing Golf Club is a Robert Trent Jones, Jr. course that was designed by Bruce Charleton. Considered to be a "prairie-linksland" design, the course has 21 holes that boast wide fairways, large, undulating greens that average 9,000 square feet each, and nearly 100 acres of naturalized plant communities outside the golf turfs. Being a self-confessed native-plant enthusiast, Tony is committed to restoring these communities at PLGC by attempting to convert fine-fescue roughs and managing existing natural plant communities around the course.

PLGC has 143 bunkers that dot the course. 2006 marks year seven of a ten-year plan to renovate the bunkers

in-house. Working with the original architect, Tony and his crew are rebuilding poorly performing bunkers and redesigning existing bunkers. As this project nears the ten-year mark, Tony realizes that such renewal may turn into a neverending process.

Since becoming PLGC's superintendent, Tony has dedicated himself to leading a team to produce high-quality golf course conditioning standards. Constantly communicating with the Airport ownership, the clubhouse staff and his own staff to produce a well-conditioned golf experience, all within the constraints of budget, is the challenge Tony most enjoys. Even when thrown a curve ball, Tony thrives on the challenge of creating their team's aim, which is "to enrich our customer's enjoyment of our golf course by exceeding their expectations on course conditioning, our service attitude, and increase our

course's perceived value."

Assistant superintendents Justin Wheeler and Brian Tameling, equipment technician Josh Zartmann, and foreman Rogelio Martinez have the attitude and actions of customer service that make PLGC shine. They, like the many who have served PLGC before them, are talented, dedicated and loyal. They make our golf course conditioning perception a reality that returning customers have enjoyed since opening day. Tony says he just tries to stay out of their way.

MAGCS members can visit with Tony and enjoy Prairie Landing's outstanding hospitality on January 24, 2006, when the MAGCS monthly meeting visits one of west suburban Chicago's finest venues.

