

ON COURSE WITH THE PRESIDENT

Tony Kalina, *Prairie Landing Golf Course*



May 2009

As I sit and write this column, I can't believe I'm already almost halfway through my term as MAGCS President. It's going by fast.

Spring is in the air. Golf courses are open for play, and everyone is busy gearing up for the coming season. I am very optimistic about the great game and those employed in this industry. Is 2009 going to be easy? Probably not. At first glance, it appears as though 2009 may be a stern challenge. Change and challenge go hand-in-hand. The game of golf has survived world wars, our Civil War, the Great Depression, the introduction of the "Haskell" rubber core golf ball and steel golf shafts, many recessions, devastation from natural disasters, and our self-imposed societal divisions.

Right now, we are somewhere in the natural ebb and flow of a normal golf industry cycle, and it's severe. However, I believe our industry and game will continue to grow and provide the livelihood, recreation, and vitality that we expect in our lives. The growth curve may look just a little different. We are going to have to 'do more with less' and learn to live within our means or we will suffer farther. It's true. The uncertainty of the economy and the state of our industry has everyone watching every step. I feel that 2009 is going to be about survival, and I know that, when faced with great challenges, our members have the practical and logical abilities to prevail. I believe and know our profession is the fulcrum in the economic success of any golf facility. It's from this solid, basic foundation that every superintendent possesses that we achieve wisdom, wealth, and well-being – and we are not letting go anytime soon. This, too, shall pass. Golf will continue and thrive in new ways.

On the MAGCS Board front, I am very proud of the current board and their devotion to serving the needs of our members. I am benefitting from their service attitude and support – you are, too!

This year, Luke Cella and I have developed a new tool for Board use. It enhances productivity and ease of reporting for board members. We refer to this new tool as the Director's Dashboard. The Dashboard is an on-line, live, information manager which provides 24/7 unlimited access to our internal documents, calendar, meeting checklist, and agenda. The Dashboard is part of the family of services from Google called Google Docs, which are free to most users. The Dashboard is also a one-stop, web-based portal that archives all current and historical

documents pertaining to the board and membership activities. Board members can collaborate in any reporting aspect of their duties, live and on-line. As President, I can then log in for an instant update on the progress of any association item and make necessary changes. The board has used the Dashboard to conduct teleconference meetings with great ease. This feature allows the documents to be viewed live or saved in computer files. The environmental advantage of saving paper and printer ink are an added benefit, too. The only downfall is that the input must be timely. Procrastination in reporting causes a log jam in the process and creates tension. I am sure many of our board members are tired of my constant insistence on punctuality. All in all, the board has done well with their reporting duties.

Another new item at the board level this year is the creation of a special group called the Partnership Task Group. Since first being elected to the MAGCS Board in 2002, I have felt a growing need to enhance the value and recognition of our association's Class E Commercial members. This year, the Partnership Task Group was created as a special committee within the Board. The purpose of the Partnership Task Group is to explore ways in which our Class E members can maximize the return on their sponsorship investments, improve their sense of ownership at sponsored events, add value to our association's "touch" opportunities, and encourage greater Class A member participation. Our relationship with the Class E member is very important to the board. The board realizes that we are an association of golf course superintendents. However, at the same time, we have to reach out and welcome each member, address their individual needs, and deliver.

The work of this committee has been entrusted to Scott Witte, CGCS and MAGCS's Vice-President, as Chair of the group. In my opinion, there isn't a finer person or a more ardent professional to capture and carry the duties and goals of this group than Scott. In time, their crucial work will create a win-win situation for all classes of MAGCS membership. Good things are right around the corner.

The Class C Committee continues to be a vital and trusted part of our association and profession. This group of young men, led by Scott Verdun, continues in the traditions established

(continued on next page)

at their inception. The most recent example of their fine works came this year in New Orleans, with their coordination of the MAGCS's Habitat for Humanity Service Day. We are blessed to have such an active and willing group of assistants waiting in the wings. They are dedicated to our future and our success as an association. It's a great group.

There is a wonderful slate of MAGCS events this year:

- April starts the season, with the traditional four-person, Spring Scramble at Prairie Landing in West Chicago. Eric Mundt, Travis Dykstra, and I are thrilled with the opportunity to have our Midwest peers and friends together at our facility.
- In May, the ITF Spring Golf Day will be conducted at the Merit Club, in Libertyville. The Merit Club holds my personal distinction, resulting from John Nelson's efforts, as the most impeccable course conditioning standards I have ever played. Should be outstanding!
- In June, we'll have to trek to Kenosha, WI to test Matt Kregel's Club at Strawberry Creek. This venue promises a great maiden voyage northward.
- July is the annual MAGCS Family Picnic at the Kane County Cougars Baseball Game. Fun, fireworks, and frolicking with colleagues and family – what could be better? If you haven't been to this event, come see what you've been missing.
- In August, the new, two-day iTurf EXPO research field and commercial exposition will be held at the CDGA's Midwest Golf House in Lemont. This Expo will replace the IPTC Conference normally held in December. It's a new twist and an exciting change. The golf associated with the Expo is a new,

'little-known links' called, Cog Hill Dubsread #4. The course underwent a complete renovation to challenge the PGA Tour's best. Need I say more? It will be fantastic!

- In September, we visit Kemper Lakes Golf Club, hosted by Dan Tully on the 8th. Kemper Lakes will provide a formidable challenge for our Annual MAGCS Championship and thank you to Dan for hosting this event on short notice.
- Lastly, we visit Arrowhead Golf Club in Wheaton for the MAGCS College Championship. This will be Mike Mumper's second stint hosting a MAGCS meeting this year. Thanks, Mike for your willingness to step up and serve.

I am very optimistic about the coming golf season. Sure it will be different, but that is always the effect of change. With each passing year, I become more aware that things move along too quickly for some, too slowly for others. If we all do our part, we'll make this a better place to live, work, and share. There is an old saying that goes, "many hands help ease the lifting." Look around and find your lifting in the 'Midwest.' We can always use a good set of hands.

I pray that God's graces continue to bless you and yours this year. I hope to see you at the monthly MAGCS events. Have a great season.

Sincerely,
Tony Kalina, MAGCS President -OC

PALATINE OIL CO., INC.

Over thirty-four years of caring service
and delivery of quality products



"One call does it all"



PALATINE OIL CO.,INC.

847-358-3600

P.O. Box 985, Palatine, IL 60078