

## SUPER -N- SITE

Joe Schneider, *Beverly Country Club*

# Kurt Sams, CGCS -N-



*“Call me Kurt”. From the second email I received from Kurt Sams, CGCS, at Idlewild Country Club, I could tell a lot about Kurt’s nature. He isn’t a flashy guy. He doesn’t demand the spotlight. He is just a laid back individual from Ohio that loves his job. And he is pretty good at it.*

Idlewild Country Club, located in Flossmoor, celebrated its Centennial in 2008. Although, Idlewild is a par 72, it does contain five par 5s and five par 3s. Butterfield Creek flows throughout Idlewild giving it some scenic views but also giving challenges to the golfers and to Kurt and his staff. The creek does flood on occasion and can leave some turf covered in water. Adding to the water features at Idlewild are two ponds and a pool. As you move through the grounds, you notice there are many memorial trees and benches in place. Kurt considers being a steward of the environment a must. Idlewild has continued to maintain its Audubon Certification. Yearly they add and replace birdhouses. They also have some areas of native prairie and a variety of trees. Although the course sits surrounded by houses and right along the Dixie highway, you might as well be in the middle of the quiet countryside.

As you pull up to the maintenance shop you are greeted by Brutus, Kurt’s Lab. And if naming his Lab Brutus didn’t give it away that he was an Ohio State guy, the decals all over his truck would. Kurt was born in Ohio and went to Ohio State University (OSU), originally for engineering. After two years, he decided that engineering wasn’t the right path for him. Kurt then met with Dr. Danneberger, thus starting his career in turf. Later that day, he talked to Carl Wittenaur, CGCS at Brookside Golf and



*The Sams, Kurt and his wife Vanessa with Hunter, Nolan and Lexy.*

Country Club in Dublin, Ohio and started work the next day. Kurt credits Carl with giving him a great start in his career. After graduating from Ohio State, Kurt ventured out to the New York Metropolitan area. From New York, Kurt made his way to Chicago and to Idlewild and has been happy ever since.

During Kurt’s tenure at Idlewild he has made many changes and improvements to the grounds. Year by year, Kurt and his staff have renovated bunkers and added and moved tees. They have also expanded a few of the greens and improved the overall aesthetics of the course, all in-house. But true to Kurt’s nature, he takes little credit for it. He insists that the credit go to his crew and to his assistant Dion Pearce. He said that he is only steering the boat, they are doing all the paddling.

When Kurt isn’t running the helm of Idlewild or cheering for OSU, he loves golfing and spending time with his family. Kurt is joined at home by his wife Vanessa, his sons Hunter (11) and Nolan (5), his daughter Lexy (7), and lastly by Brutus. Kurt loves to spend time with his kids doing their sports and activities. He is happy that they are now old enough to start golfing, giving him a chance to share golf with his family. Golf has been very important in Kurt’s life. He met his wife, Vanessa, at the Conference Show in Orlando. **-OC**



*One of Kurt's ongoing projects is to clear out the non-native plant species along Butterfield Creek and plant native herbaceous materials.*

