



Summertime Fun

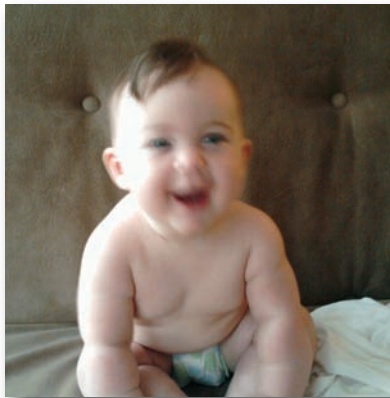
Luke Cella, our esteemed Executive Director, asked me if I could write a few pages for On Course. As a co-chair of the Editorial Committee I am responsible for content in the magazine. That was 48 hours ago and I thought long and hard about what to discuss and it came to me last night when I was getting my 7-month old daughter, Molly, ready for bed.

As golf course superintendents we are asked to give up much of our lives for the good of our employer and, by extension, the golf courses that we are tasked with managing. We wake up early, we stay up late, we have families, girlfriends, friends, and neighbors. In short, we have lives. I am currently in my fourth season as a superintendent and one of the most important things I've learned in that time is to know when NOT to be at work.

The reason we work the way we do is so that the lives we lead away from the golf course are possible. The reasons vary from person to person and none of us has the same life as the next. I recognize the need to be away from work throughout the year to be with my family. My wife, Tina, and I have two kids. Molly is seven months and Tom is three years old. I keep a file of images of my family on the computer at work and I look at them from time to time. My most recent visit to the file was the inspiration for this article.

As a new parent, I am preaching to the converted for those of you with children, no matter what age they are. I can say with a great deal of certainty that nothing can prepare you for having kids. Nothing. The advice will come from everywhere: Friends, family, neighbors, co-workers, strangers and acquaintances. Politely acknowledge the advice, smile and go about raising your children in the way you see fit.

The position I hold at Indian Lakes allows for a great deal of freedom in my schedule and it is our general manager's policy that no one works seven days in a row if it can be avoided. I know many of you reading this work every day and I won't attempt to change that. I will say that when I did that over the



last few years I stepped back and realized I had missed a great deal of my son's life.

I make a point of it now to bring Tom to the golf course on my day off (if we're able) as he loves playing in the sand traps, driving with me and the dog on the golf cart, and sitting on the machines. I will bring our clubs with us and we have a great time. On the occasion when that isn't possible or necessary we take advantage of Chicagoland as much as we can. The whole world is literally at our doorstep and much of it can be done on the cheap if you know how to work the system:

- The Chicago Public Library system has museum passes for each museum in town and you can check them out just like a book. Getting in two adults and up to 4 kids in for free is a great way to see the Museum of Science and Industry, Art Institute, Field Museum or the Shedd Aquarium.
- Chicago has one of the most extensive parks systems in the country. It could be argued that the Chicago lakefront is unique among virtually every other city in the world in that it is wide open for the citizenry to

enjoy. Furthermore, there seems to be one playground per block in many neighborhoods both in the city and in the suburbs. These places offer fun, free entertainment as well as good exercise for both you and the kids.

- The Lincoln Park Zoo is free and accessible by public transportation. If you haven't seen the ComEd Zoo lights at Christmas you don't know what you're missing.
- A two-year membership to The Brookfield Zoo is \$177 and pays for itself after the second visit. Tom and Molly enjoy

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going and I love seeing them experience the wildlife and habitat the park offers. My father, George, is a volunteer and we try and co-ordinate our visits with his shifts so the kids can see their Grandpa. There is a METRA stop right next door, which makes the zoo even more accessible.

- All of us have a driving range or mini-golf course within a short drive from home and while that is never free, it is a great way to whack some balls and it is relatively inexpensive. I will tell you the kids have to be 3 or 4 before they can be trusted with a busy driving range. I speak from experience here.

These are just a small sample of some of the great experiences available to all of our families in Chicago and the suburbs. I didn't even mention the Morton Arboretum, the forest preserves, bike paths and trails, and other public facilities that dot our landscape.



Don't forget to take some time for yourself. I play in a golf league once a week to have a little "Chuck time" though work is frequently discussed during play. Tina has yet to find her 'thing' away from the kids and me. Your spouse or significant other needs to have a life outside of the family. I encourage Tina to find time with friends away from the home. Some other things I think "we" as a collective profession need to do better is to schedule and keep regular doctor's visits and get involved in our own communities. Some group near your home needs your help. Hopefully all of us have employers who encourage us to be with our families and to spend time away from work. The real lesson to remember is that, despite all evidence to the contrary, we work to live. It shouldn't be the other way around. -OC

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