

SUPER -N- SITE

Brian Placzkowski, *Royal Melbourne Country Club*

# Jim Knulty -N-

*Is it November yet?! Not quite, but September will be upon us shortly, which hopefully means we are on the downhill side of another tough summer. It also means it's time for the MAGCS Championship at Big Foot Country Club. I recently had the great pleasure of meeting with this year's host superintendent Mr. Jim Knulty. Jim is one of our association's longest tenured superintendents, having been at the helm at Big Foot Country Club for over 30 years, 33 to be exact.*

Big Foot Country Club is located just over the Cheddar Curtain in Fontana, Wisconsin. This hidden gem is situated on roughly 200 acres of beautiful rolling terrain near the western shore of Lake Geneva. Built in 1924 and opened 1926 this Tom Bendelow inspired design has survived the years to maintain most of its original routing. This 6,669 yard par 73 track with its tight tree lined fairways and tricky greens, provides quite a test for all levels. Over the past few seasons Jim has been hard at work alongside fellow MAGCS member Dave Esler on a project to standardize the bunker style at Big Foot. Over the years minor tweaks have led to a collection of different styles with the membership settling on a rugged naturalized look. Currently they have completed two holes with plans to do a few holes a year over the next



handful of years. Another interesting project Jim is involved in is the utilization of ArborCom Technologies to help him address shade problems that have developed with time. For those of you that don't know, ArborCom is a consulting firm that uses computer modeling to map tree placement and their level of light penetration. This can be a useful tool to help realize the gains that can be made by removing certain trees. This can be very helpful when handling memberships sensitive to tree removal.

For those of you who don't know or haven't had the opportunity to meet Mr. Knulty, I'd like to take a few minutes and give you a glimpse at how he got to where he is today. Jim was introduced to the game at the age of about 10 by his father who was an avid golfer and as a caddie at another



*The Knulty Clan. Jim is pictured in the pink shirt with his arm around his wife Sandy surrounded by their children and grandchildren this past summer.*



local favorite, Midlothian Country Club. After initially deciding school wasn't for him, very similar to my own path Jim decided to join the Army where he would serve three years. Again strangely similar to my own path, after his service Jim began to pursue a formal career in golf at the local community college and eventually Southern Illinois University. During his younger years Jim had gained a feel for the game working minor maintenance jobs at places like Twin Ponds and Crystal Lake Country Club, finally reaching the level of superintendent at Woodstock Country Club. After only a short time at Woodstock, a member there who also happened to be the greens chairman at Big Foot Country Club mentioned to Jim that the superintendent position was available at the club. Jim applied for the job and took the reins in late 1979 and the rest is history. Jim informed me that he had very little formal experience when he started and really learned the job just by doing it and by surrounding himself with a good bunch of friends in the business. I asked Jim if he had any words of wisdom about his philosophy he could share with some of us young superintendents and I'd like to share a few of them with you.

"There is no cultural practice more important than aerification."

"Don't succumb to members need for green speed, because they remember dead greens a lot longer than slow ones."

"If you find yourself in a stretch of tough weather wondering whether you should be doing more, DON'T. Keep it simple."

I'm sure we have all heard a version of these statements over the years, but they are all very true.

Just like we all attempt to, at least during the summer anyway, Jim also enjoys his time away from the golf course. When he manages to get away, Jim enjoys spending time with his wife Sandy of 37 years, as well as his three daughters and four grandchildren. They especially enjoy traveling in

the winter making frequent trips to Mexico and Florida. As we all know, in this business you can't beat the winters. Oh! I almost forgot! I am very proud to report that even though his path has taken him north of the border he has not been infected by the deadly blight...Jim is most definitely a diehard Bears fan.

So, if you find yourself at the MAGCS Championship this September, be sure to stop and say hello to Jim, I guarantee you won't regret it. **-OC**

*(more course photos on page 13)*





