

# Who You Know



Dave Kohley  
Silver Lake Country Club  
MAGCS President

As I start my Presidency I have a lot to reflect about for the Association and myself. In my 22 years of being a member, our association has grown by leaps and bounds, let alone since 1925. Some years go by faster than others, but I have learned a lot about our Association since joining the board.

I take a great deal of appreciation on how strong we are and how hard the board of directors want and work to make the MAGCS stronger. We, as a board, will keep on working on getting *On Course* out in a timely fashion. We have changed printing companies and have streamlined our production process. By doing so we are able to stay on budget for another year and will be on budget for this coming year. The digital version, as you know, is up and running and will also continue for the upcoming year. One of my goals is to apply these same streamlining principles to keep things running in the most efficient way possible; from committee meetings, to board meetings to our monthly meetings.

As I stare out my office window watching it finally rain, I wonder how 22 years in this business goes by so fast. I often wonder of how I got here? I owe a great deal of thanks to my parents and also my current employer, Silver Lake Country Club. I look back and see that life is not always about what you know but just sometimes who you know. I grew up in a small farm community called Rensselaer, Indiana. Some of the elder statesman may have heard of Rensselaer because of St. Joseph College, the place where the Chicago Bears held training camps back in the 1970's. Yes, I am old enough to have watched Gale Sayers and Brian Piccolo practice. I was fortunate enough that our town had a small semi-private country club called Curtis Creek. My parents belonged to there and I played golf there all the time. I also played many outside sports but never thought I would be working at a golf course. The summer that I turned 16 that all changed. I remember my dad coming home from his Saturday morning tee time one spring. He had talked to Cary, the head groundskeeper at the club, and he said I could work on Monday. All that went through my head was "WORK? And who is this Cary fellow?" I didn't know who or what a superintendent was or what they even did. I soon found out the Superintendent was Cary Jefferies and over the next 7 summers I learned more and more each year about his craft. We had a very small crew of 6 guys and 4 of them were my classmates. I do know one thing, working at Curtis Creek were some of the best times and memories I'll never forget. I decided to go to Eastern Kentucky University to play golf and study Wildlife Management. I remember coming back year after year to work at our little ma and pa country club that I loved and Cary asked me if I had ever thought of becoming a superintendent. I didn't even know you could get a degree in this. After talking to Cary more over the summer I learned that he went to Purdue University for turf and was Certified through the GCSAA. I thought I would give the profession a try. My junior year, I went back to Eastern Kentucky and was fortunate enough to find they had a four-year turf degree. Next came graduation.

What were my plans after? Play golf? Or Work? Of course, my parents didn't think going down to Florida and trying all the mini tours was such a great idea. But at 22 years old, I did. I think they

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Bob Williams and Mike Bavier, Sr. "Bob made me go back to school and take it seriously. Mike let me take flowers from his greenhouse to woo the girl who became my bride. I'm alive today because of her." Fred worked for Mike Bavier, Sr. at Inverness prior to working at Mt. Prospect Golf Club for the past thirty years.

Fred has realized knowing how to grow grass is the least important part about being a golf course superintendent. Maybe knowing his audience, he told me, "there are a lot of people out there smarter than you – listen and learn and don't be afraid to ask for help." He went on to explain, "imagine what your job would be like without your staff on your side, be proactive, let them know what you want."

Fred worked a variety of jobs before getting into golf; working on a road crew, factory shifts, and the bus thing – he did sell women's shoes (like Al Bundy) and all this has formed him in some way. Looking back his life at Mt. Prospect Golf Club, "I am grateful for the opportunity to see some of the best golf course operations in the world through my professional associations and to have had the opportunity to try my hand at putting together a semi-reasonable facsimile of one."

Those who know Fred, I think will agree, he's a kind and gentle soul and when asked what the best thing he's learned on his own, he responded, " Be kind, everyone you meet is going through some hardship."

Fred won't miss being the boss, of that he is certain. He does miss the dawn and getting the day started at the course. It is peculiar, three of the four mentioned to me they'd miss the early mornings on the course. I'm not sure that will ever go away, but I can tell you from experience, you can still wake up early and go outside. You just have to open the door.

Congratulations Fred, Greg, Gary and Steve.



were tired of funding my endeavors and wanted to take me off their payroll. To make them happy, I went on some job interviews but nothing really panned out or piqued my interest. Then along came another gentleman, Dave Wollenberg. At the time, Dave was a salesman for Canon Turf Supply out of Indianapolis and called on Cary at Curtis Creek. Prior to working for Canon Turf, Dave was the assistant at Silver Lake Country Club under Dudley Smith (past president 1967). Dave told me that Dudley was looking for an Assistant. This lead that Dave gave me led me to where I am today. I'll be starting my 23<sup>rd</sup> season at Silver Lake Country Club. If you were wondering, my golf career was put on hold. Sometimes it's not about what you know, it's who you know.

As we enter the holiday season and winter months take time from work and spend more time with your family and friends. 22 years goes really fast and the next 22 will be even faster.

Happy Holidays and New Year.

**THANK YOU  
MAGCS MEMBERS!**  
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We look forward to working with you in 2014 and beyond.

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