

# SUPER-N-site

## Steve VanAcker & Crystal Lake Country Club



Brian Placzkowski, Royal Melbourne Country Club

PHOTOS: LUKE CELLA

The August Midwest meeting takes us to a faraway land that few of us regularly travel to: McHenry County. Crystal Lake Country Club (CLCC) is situated in, of all places, Crystal Lake, a far northwest suburb.

Having lived in the nearby town of McHenry for the past 26 years I amazingly, only recently discovered the location of CLCC. I have to tell you; it is definitely worth any travel time you may need to get there. I just had the opportunity to sit down and gain some insight with the longstanding CLCC superintendent and MAGCS member Steve Van Acker.

For those of you that don't know Steve, he has been the Golf Course Superintendent at CLCC for the past 23 years. He began his career in golf in 1974 as an intern at Turnberry Country Club. Steve's affinity for the outdoors and agriculture began at a young age as he grew up on a dairy farm in

nearby Huntley. He would later further his education and dedication to the field by attending McHenry County College to study Agriculture. Steve credits much of who he has become as a superintendent to the late industry icons Adolf Bertucci, Benny Kronn, and Peter Voykin.

When I met with Steve I asked him about his philosophies on being a superintendent, so that I might share his wealth of knowledge with everybody.

Steve believes in detail and imagination, "Don't be afraid to take on a renovation project in-house with your own staff. Take a step back and imagine how it's going to look before you even start and plan it through. This is a great way of increasing your value to your club."

Another great piece of advice Steve shared was to reach out to fellow golf course superintendents and not only offer help, but also ask for help. "We're all in this business together, each trying to provide quality turf conditions for our clubs. You never know when you'll need help, each of us does at some point in our career."

Another point Steve shared with me is to not become greedy and chase a paycheck. "Clubs will pay you what you're worth if you do the job they expect of you."

One last thing Steve shared with me, something he







wishes he were able to do now, is to thank your mentors. Let them know the impact they made on you, your career and your life. It takes a very special person to help those under their tutelage to become better than they are, one of the reasons our profession has advanced in such a short period of time.

Steve does occasionally find time to get away in the off-season. He enjoys traveling with his wife of 36 years, Mary Kay. A few of their favorite spots are Cabo San Lucas and Las Vegas. The most disappointing part of my meeting with Steve was the discovery of his long-term illness. You see, we've lost another Illinois soul to the dreaded green and gold scourge from the North. Yes, Steve is a Green Bay Packer fan, making two super-n-sites in a row.

Crystal Lake Country Club is beautiful 18-hole parkland layout situated on 135 acres and is just a short jog from downtown Crystal Lake. CLCC was built in 1922 by George O'Neil and Joseph Roseman (of Roseman Tractor Fame). The course has been renovated and updated over the past 25 years by Lohmann Golf Designs. The original layout encompassed 36 holes and was often considered a second Medinah

Country Club because of its proximity to the passenger train. The current 18-hole layout plays to 6800 yards from the tips and will present a challenge for the upcoming MAGCS Championship. Steve and CLCC have not hosted the Midwest since the 1999 Championship. Even if you played in that one, you'll want to make sure you don't miss the 2013 Championship on August 26 and experience the changes and improvements for yourself. @

## **Crystal Lake Country Club**

### **Site of 2013 Midwest Golf Championship**

**August 26, 2013**





