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ON COURSE

08|2021



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08 THE UNHEARD SKILL FOR SUCCESS

We hear a lot of things throughout our day. Most of it we tune out, so when we need to listen, it can be a difficult task. Learn about listening and steps to become better at it.

Luke Cella



16 SUPER-N-SITE

John Otis is a veteran golf course superintendent who still loves his craft. Many golfers have enjoyed the fruits of his labor over the years, and the members of Ravinia Green are benefitting from his watchful eye and skill.

Luke Cella

SERIALS

AUG 24 2021

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LIBRARIES

05 Director's Column

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COVER

Larry Packard, the golf course architect was known to make the golf course play tougher as the round progressed. The 13th hole at Ravinia Green Country Club is a difficult short par 3 with penalty areas down the right side.

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Midwest Association of Golf Course Superintendents (MAGCS) exists to promote professionalism and integrity, to provide networking, education and career enhancement opportunities to all members who facilitate the growth and enjoyment of golf.

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TAKE CARE OF THE STAFF

Mike Paciga, Kemper Lakes Golf Club

This summer has been difficult for superintendents due to the drought in spring and early summer. The "dog days of summer" effect was experienced sooner than expected with the added heat early on and lack of rainfall. We eventually received much needed rain and began to experience more typical course conditions but some of our staff members still lagged from the expended energy early on in the season.

Our current challenge is to confront an annual problem: How to keep staff motivated during mid-summer (July 15 – August 15). The days are long and hot; we're tired of waking up at 4 am and being in the sun all day, and the repetitiveness of the job is making our teams weary. It's an important time of the year for clubs and courses as member events are peaking, championships are being contested and many facilities are hosting golf and non golf events including

Simple, but thoughtful, gestures of appreciation are welcomed by staff. Nothing says thank you like a meal provided for the crew by the managers. It's a great way to build a team and let them know they matter.

Summers fly by -be sure to enjoy them. I know I do! I encourage each of you check the MAGCS event schedule and attend at least one event before the year ends. Find one that interests you, grab a buddy and sign up!

ON COURSE



Mike Paciga is currently a Director on the Midwest Board and oversees the Golf and Arrangements Committee.



I purchased a deep freezer and filled it with the original Fla-Vor-Ice popsicles. The crew loves them on a hot summer day.



For our member guest event I cooked a brisket. I've never seen meat move so fast!

weddings once again. As superintendents we like to add the extra special touches that may not fall under a normal work week to make the courses shine a bit extra and sometimes it can be difficult to share our mindset with our crews as we try to motivate them. It's especially important to find ways to keep them interested in their tasks, keep it fun and provide the casual work atmosphere that we all enjoy.



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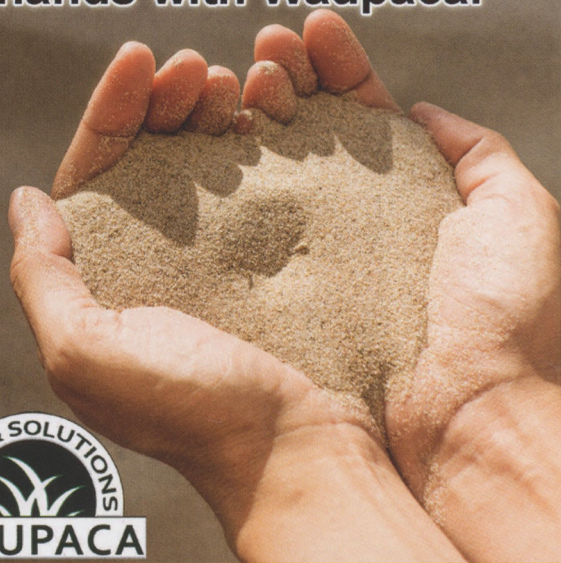


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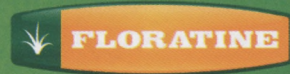
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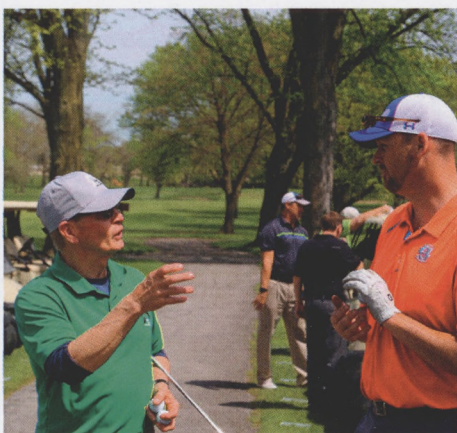
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THE UNHEARD SKILL FOR SUCCESS

Luke Cella, MAGCS



Listening to others takes effort. You should give them your undivided attention. Fully concentrate on what they are saying to you. This is a conscious choice and doesn't just occur naturally, you have to make the effort to move the sound they are making from your hearing to listening.



Universities, technical schools and colleges do a great job of teaching our next generation of greenkeepers the basic foundations and principles of turfgrass science. You'd be hard pressed to find a fresh graduate of one of these programs who didn't know what CEC stood for or that organic matter holds more nutrients than sand. While the science to turfgrass has advanced since I sat in a classroom, many of the basic principles remain the same. Remember doing those calculations to figure out which bag of fertilizer was the best value for the cost? I still do that when I'm picking up a bag for the backyard but now more concerned with the source and release rate as I don't want to have to keep feeding my lawn. Perusing through my old textbooks, there are still really only two mower types used to maintain turf – reel and rotary (sorry flail mower, you're really not for maintenance, just a more of a one night stand type of mower). There are still only three different particulates that are used to classify

a soil's texture: sand, silt and clay and that a soil is still defined as a mixture of air, water, organic matter and minerals. While we are discovering more about organic matter and the world it supports, the basic tenets of managing soils for turf has not changed all that much: compaction bad, pore space good. All of these things and more are important to know to grow fine turf and manage the playing grounds of a golf course well. However, there is one key subject and skill that will help you advance your career like no other and that is how to listen to others.

Listening is a focused exercise and takes effort. We hear things all day long, mowers, traffic, even the birds chirping in the morning. Our world is full of sounds and hearing them is an involuntary action that takes no effort on our part. What is worse is that it is easy to employ this reflex when someone is speaking to you. Most of the things we hear during the day are unintentional and part of the background of life. Stop

right now and what do you hear? I can hear the washing machine, a couple of dogs barking, the keys on the computer, my wife yelling at one of the dogs that is barking, and some air moving from the fan in my office. That's a lot of stuff that somehow my brain filters out and allows me to focus on the task of writing words in an order that makes sense. No wonder it is hard to listen to people sometimes – we are working against our innate ability to tune them out, even if we are trying to listen to them.

Knowing that listening takes effort is the first step to getting better at it. You have to listen to someone on purpose



and focus on what they are saying through their words and their body language. It takes a conscious effort on your part, turning off the the automatic "this is just another noise my ears are picking up and passing through my brain" reaction and turning on the part of your brain that puts that person into the focus of your attention and nothing else. It is an intentional move that is deliberate and takes practice. It is not easy to do, especially if you're not interested in the topic or the person speaking is not very charismatic in their delivery. Combine both of these (especially in a seminar after lunch) and it becomes a snooze fest. It helps to get in the right frame of mind in these cases and judge the content of the speaker, not the delivery. Thankfully, we do most of our listening in less formal situations and it is a little easier to work on your skill.

Once you make the conscious decision to listen to someone there are non-verbal actions that you need to be aware of and work on as well. Be aware of your facial expressions, a smile and a

few nods can go a long way to show the speaker that you are agreeing to what is being said or at the very least you are listening to and understanding the message. Use appropriate eye contact for the situation knowing that sometimes it can be intimidating. Often eye contact, a few nods and a smile can be combined to reassure the speaker that you are receiving their message. Most know that posture is a dead giveaway to tell if someone is actively listening or not; leaning slightly forward if sitting or standing and/or even slanting your head down a bit in the direction of the speaker shows you are listening. Don't get distracted, no matter how many

times your phone chirps, just quickly excuse yourself and silence it, returning immediately to the person. Other signs of distraction are glancing or watching others around you, checking your watch, fidgeting, even picking your fingernails.

You can verbally engage and encourage the speaker too. Occasionally reaffirming what they are saying with short phrases or words such as, 'I see', 'got it', 'sure', and 'very good' can indicate that you are paying attention. However, using them too often can be distracting to the speaker. Make it a point to remember the name of the speaker, this is way easier said than done, especially as you get older! It may help to bring up details from prior conversations (if you've had them) with this person from before. This shows you listened well before and can encourage the speaker to continue. Furthermore, this shows the speaker that you can be trusted that their words are not falling on deaf ears – they may not be actively thinking about this, but it can be very reassuring or give them the confidence to share more so. It's another

confidence boost when you ask relevant questions or make statements clarifying what the speaker is saying. You're telling them you have an interest in what they are saying by providing immediate feedback even if you're not giving them an answer or solution.

Because we're in the customer service industry it is easy to make the association that listening to someone is usually fielding a complaint on the golf course. Most of you probably do that more than you want, but maybe look at these as opportunities to practice your listening craft. Why? Being a good listener is one of the skills of successful leaders. When you listen to your employees, you are meeting their needs to be heard, to be recognized and in return you can give them honest feedback and support. Everyone wants loyal employees who will have the same pride in the work as you; loyalty is bred by trust, trust is bred through listening and finding and fulfilling their needs. Your workforce is more diverse and multigenerational more than ever and so are the needs of your individual employees. You can't treat your whole staff in the same way anymore, you need to find out the individual needs of each crew member and be responsive to them. The only way you'll figure out their needs is to listen to them. Think about how you feel when someone doesn't listen to what you're saying; undervalued, unimportant, insignificant. It can be terribly frustrating, but when someone is listening there is a satisfaction of being heard, that what you are sharing is valued, that you matter. Most of us are not good listeners because listening is not a recognized skill that is taught formally in school, in fact, I'd bet only a few of you have ever had any formal education to help understand and improve your listening skills and techniques.

There are many other things that you can do to develop this skill.

Keep an open mind. When someone is telling you something don't immediately judge or criticize, this can severely impact your effectiveness as a listener. Related to this is not jumping to conclusions thinking, 'I know what this is about'. If you're finishing their sentences for

□ —————> II



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them (even if you're not doing it out loud), you're never going to be able to hear their true thoughts and feelings. Don't cut people off. We live in a world where many people make their living by cutting others off, in fact many reach the most powerful position in the world by interrupting others. We don't all think and speak at the same rates, allow others to finish, it takes thoughtfulness to recognize someone else's cadence. Ask questions. If you don't understand something, ask them to clarify the point they are trying to make. Summarize to ensure understanding. When people share complex ideas or you're hearing about something for the first time, this is a really good idea to make sure you understand what the speaker has told you. It's also a nice way to move into a new topic of conversation. Be empathetic. This is probably the best piece of advice I can share with you to become a better



listener, and probably a better person. We never really know where people are coming from and their life experience. If you make this effort, you're going to make every other effort to hear what they are saying.

Most of what we know comes from listening. Tests of listening comprehension show that most people listen with 25% efficiency. This is a pretty amazing statistic; the good news is that your efficiency can be raised with practice.

When you're ready to really practice the skill, there's no better place than a Midwest meeting to give it a shot. Finding an area of interest is one of the first steps to learning to listen. Not only will you meet new people, conversations flow very easily and there is always something talked about that you can use. In some ways working a room at a Midwest meeting is almost like cheating – you're in a group with others that do what

you do every day. You already know you have something in common. It's a great place to test yourself on your listening, learning names and opening up your experiences with new people. Listening is a skill like any other and needs to be practiced to train your mind and body to be proficient at it. The nice thing about it is all you need is another person to begin mastering it and the dividends you will receive are endless. **ON COURSE**

Listening involves non verbal cues as well: Pay attention to their body language. Nonverbal actions can offer clues such as differing facial expressions and their physical posture. Pay attention to your body language as well: maintain eye contact, nod your head and smile, agree by saying something like yes and offering positive feedback so the person sees that you are engaged with what they are saying to you.

Tips to Remember a Name when Meeting a Person for the 1st Time

There are many different ways to help remembering people's names when first meeting them. The most common across all methods is to use their name as soon as possible in the conversation (This can go along way to reaffirm that you're listening too). Use it often in the conversation. Hi "Tom, it is nice to meet you". Tom, again nice to meet you. Tom, I'll look into that..., that's and interesting point Tom, I see where you are coming from Tom.

Spell it out – especially if they have a difficult or unusual name. This creates a visual cue for memory as well. Ask for a business card – or their contact – put it in your phone and make a note or two about them that you learned in the conversation – where they work, live, kids, went to school.

That's the next thing thing to do is associate them with something that is easy to remember. Dale Carnegie training courses tell you to picture images that sound like their names and combine it with other things that you know about them: I just met a guy named Tom Bowman recently and I remember his name by picturing him carrying a bow over his back and while playing a tom tom drum.

Another way is to make connections with someone you already know who has that name. The last tip to remembering someone's name is choose to do it – you'll be way more apt to get past just hearing it and listening for it at the start of the conversation.

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THE BULL

John Gurke, CGCS

A warm Midwest welcome to MAGCS newest member: Steve Schiller, Class E, Burris Equipment Company

Here's a fun fact—this past June was the hottest June in North America EVER.

Cheers to a couple of lucky guys! Dave Ward and Kerry Anderson are now officially retired and living the dream.



Dave (left), former superintendent at Coyote Run Golf Course in Flossmoor, plans to do a bit of traveling with his wife along with doing volunteer work at Coyote Run managing the prairie plantings on the course. Look for an occasional article in this publication from Dave as well! Kerry (right), who has

been our regional Nufarm rep, made his retirement official on June 30th. MAGCS wishes nothing but the best to both of these longtime members.



Due to the previous announcement, we send congratulations to Phil Knight, the new superintendent at Coyote Run. Phil has been Dave's assistant since the grow-in at Coyote Run, and Dave's spray/irrigation tech back in his Olympia Fields days. Filling Phil's assistant spot is Niki Munroe—best of luck to them both.

Also with a new, first-time superintendent gig is Zane Hartley, formerly an assistant at Rich Harvest Links and currently the superintendent at Edgewood Park Golf Course in McNabb, IL. Congrats Zane!



Sadly, we lost one of our longtime members last month. Tom Diguido passed away on July 4th from Parkinson's Disease. Tom was a 62-year member of MAGCS and GCSAA, serving as superintendent of Oak Meadows GC from 1971 to 1991, and at Green Meadows from 1992 until his retirement in 2001. May he rest in peace.

August's "Clavin-ism:" Did you know—it's a little-known fact—that in a normal year, the portion of precipitation that reaches streams in the United States produces an annual average streamflow of approximately 1,200 billion gallons each day? It's true! By that measure, the daily water usage of all golf courses in the U.S. of approximately 2 billion gallons (an average of about 130,000 gallons per course) is relatively minor, accounting for about one tenth of one percent.

One year from now, on August 2-5, 2022, Cog Hill Golf & Country Club in Palos Park will host the 46th Boys and Girls Junior PGA Championships. 156 players will compete in a stroke play format for the Championships, which have served as springboards for many of the PGA and LPGA Tours' most accomplished players

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Important Dates to Remember

August 9 - MAGCS Annual Golf Championship at Ravinia Green Country Club in Riverwoods, IL, John Otis Day and the Knights host superintendent.



September 13 – 18th Annual Wee One Fundraiser and Golf Event at Pine Hills Country Club in Sheboygan, WI, Rod Johnson host superintendent, brat cooker and taco maker.

October 13 - Illinois Golf Course Superintendent Play Day, Nettle Creek Golf Course, Morris IL, Craig Watson host.



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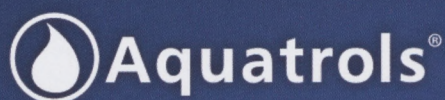
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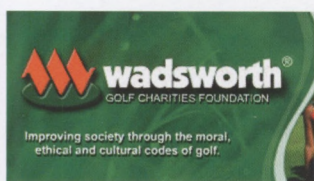
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including Tiger Woods, Jordan Spieth, Justin Thomas, and Phil Mickelson on the boys side, and Inbee Park, Yuka Saso and Lexi Thompson on the girls side.

John Leibold is now back to being strictly Leibold Irrigation, Inc. This is because he has sold J.W. Turf to the Turner Revels company which has John Deere Golf distributorships throughout the eastern part of the country.

Deerpath Golf Course in Lake Forest, IL (**Kyle Weibenga** superintendent), in partnership with the Friends of Lake Forest Parks and Recreation and the Wadsworth Golf Charities Foundation have recently broken ground on "The Lawn," a



community asset featuring a free-to-use 30,000 square foot putting and chipping experience

designed by MAGCS member Todd Quitno. Inspired by the public-access Ladies' Putting Course in St. Andrews, Scotland and renowned putting courses such as The Punchbowl at Bandon Dunes, The Gauntlet at Streamsong, and Thistle Due at Pinehurst, The Lawn will offer an 18-hole putting course and a 3-hole chipping course that are slated for opening in the spring of 2022.

OK, why not? I went into this horrible bar called the Fiddle. It really was a vile inn.

scholarship to attend Grand Valley State University where he will major in orthodontics. Congratulations to the Gelino family!

If you're looking to get your Donald Ross itch satisfied at a bargain price, head over to Homewood, IL and Calumet Country Club. Although it's closed, it's open. Confused? Back in November of 2020, the club was sold to Diversified Partners which planned to use the property as a trucking hub. An ensuing land-use fight has thrown a monkey wrench into the plans, and the new owner is making the best of it by keeping the 120-year-old course open for public play this season until a solution is figured out.

The story for Valley Green Golf Course in North Aurora does not have the same Cinderella ending—it closed for good last month after its owner sold the property to a developer. The par-60, 3,831-yard 18-hole course opened in 1962.

After hearing complaints from golf course superintendents, the USGA has ended its short-lived superintendent search service.

Golf witticism of the month, from Lee Trevino: There are two things that won't last long in this world—dogs chasing cars and pros putting for pars.

The Sunshine Course at Midwest Golf House has been rededicated, and will

henceforth be known as the Bob Berry Sunshine Course. Other aspects of the Midwest Golf House complex receiving new namesakes are the Don Gardner Library and the Brent Wadsworth Clubhouse.

Kurt Sams and his "Dragon" got famous in July's Chicago District Golfer magazine. In an article highlighting Idlewild Country Club's new \$1.3 million irrigation system, Kurt talked about the 1969 system that it replaced, which he "fondly" referred to as the Dragon. It also looks like a complete renovation of the 113-year-old course may be in the offing—stay tuned.

In the same magazine, another southsider was featured. Flossmoor superintendent **Luke Braun's** story was told in the Superintendent Spotlight section, highlighting Luke's youth spent working on his father's course in Decatur, Indiana.

It's everyone's Hope to be a Champ, right? Check out the Midwest's take on this: Midwest Doopelgänger.

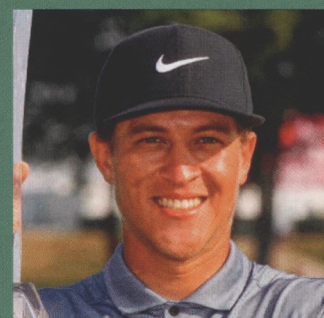
ON COURSE



Have you heard? The Golf Industry Show is no more. This is because it has been rebranded as the GCSAA Conference and Trade Show. This rebranding (including May's renaming of EIFG to the GCSAA Foundation) is part of a strategic effort to bring all GCSAA entities under the association name as it moves closer to its 100th anniversary in 2026.

Speaking of GCSAA, the winners of its 2021 Joseph S. Garske Collegiate Grants were announced last month, and Trevor Gelino, son of **Dave Gelino** (Seven Bridges Golf Club) has earned a \$1,000

MIDWEST Doppelgänger

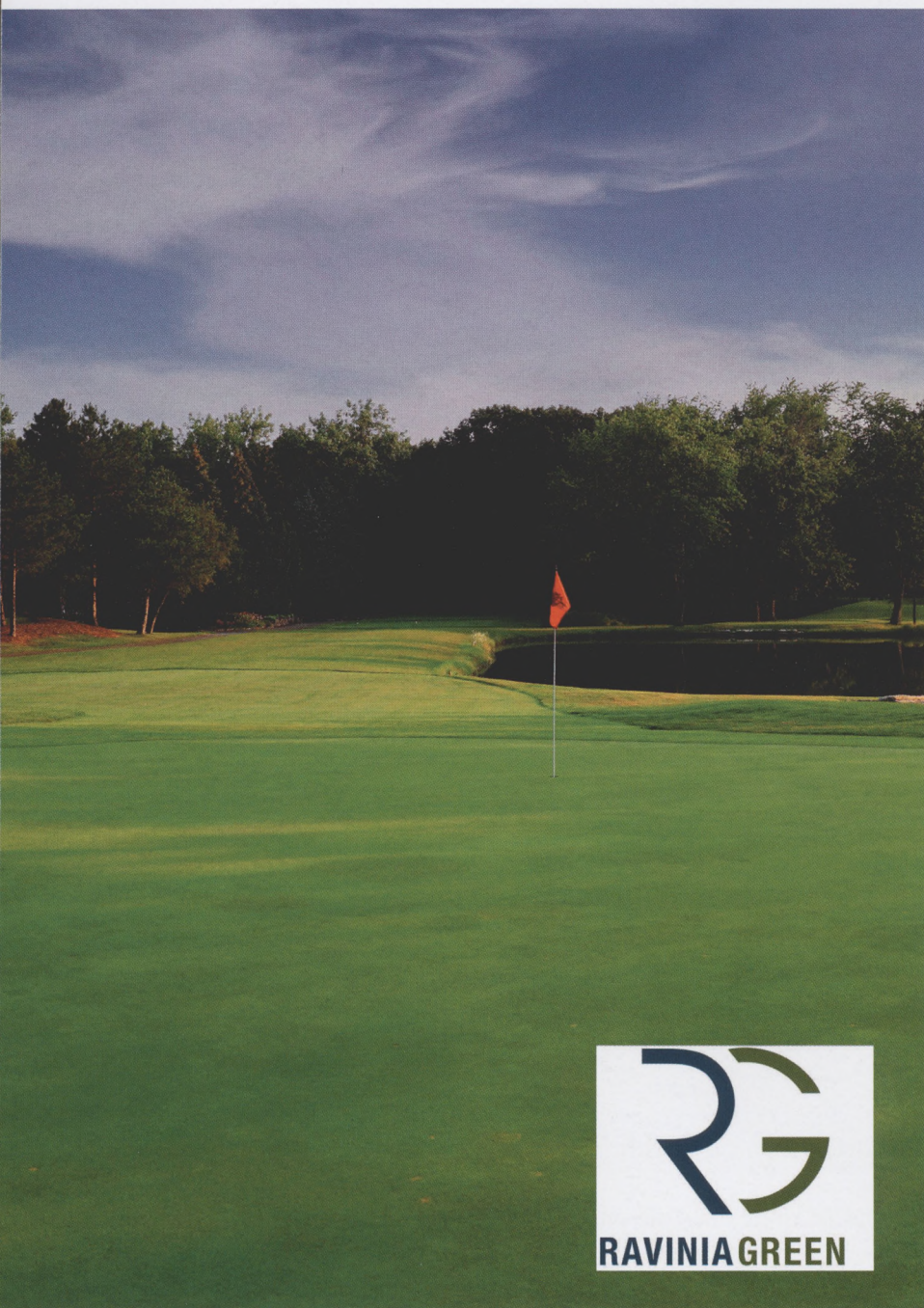


Was it Stephen Hope or Cameron Champ who had a timely win last weekend in Minnesota at the 3M Championship?

JOHN OTIS

RAVINIA GREEN COUNTRY CLUB

Luke Cella



John Otis has moved into the realm of a veteran superintendent. His veteran status is bolstered by the fact that he worked at Geneva Golf Club before Ed Braunsky, CGCS Retired. He grew up in Geneva, working at GGC during his high school summers, until he was fired when Braunsky became Superintendent and cleaned house. John chuckled when he told me it was the only job that he has ever been let go from. Shortly thereafter he started to work at Pottawatomie GC with John Stephenson CGCS -Deceased in St. Charles, then moving west to Kishwaukee CC when he worked for Dan Murray, CGCS Retired. Are you starting to see the pattern? John has been around a while, working in the industry for over 40 years. Knowing he didn't want to work inside the rest of his life he began to study Horticulture/Turfgrass Science at Kishwaukee College in Malta before landing his first superintendent job at Weber Park GC in Skokie. It wasn't long after that John worked at Mission Hills for 18 years, then a few years at Ruffled Feathers in Lemont, and now he's been at Ravinia Green for the past 7 seasons.

John gives all the credit to his staff, "When things are going well, it's all on them. When there's things are out of place and need to be done, it's on me. I'm blessed to be working with such a talented and dedicated group of people." He realizes that without his crew, the golf course would not be in the fine



Packard is known for not moving a lot of earth in his designs, keeping things simple for easy maintenance and expressing the strategy of the hole from the tee. Many of his greens were designed with gentle slopes so they could be cut with triplexes. He must have known something about how good triplexes would become and labor shortages. The bunker style Packard employed is still apparent on some at RG, where they are fit into the mounding created by the excavation of the depression. The bases of the bunkers are slightly above the surrounding land and it's hard to roll a ball into them. They're surrounded by rough and often the playing side is elevated a bit. When John started at RG he wrapped up a Better Billy Bunker project on the property. The bunkers have held up very well and are not part of the green committee's agenda anymore.



There are many water features at RG, some are not directly in the line of play while others might surprise you if you're not paying attention.

ing and then an afternoon crew begins work about 1:30 and will work until 8:00 pm. There are other benefits as well, like mowing dry turf, the quality of cut is much better and there is virtually no clipping residue left on fairways or rough.

One of the ongoing projects they've been working on is tree removal at RG. There is no shortage of them on the property and it would behoove you to work on your punch shot before the championship. Most of the trees they've removed have been done in house, however John says it's time to bring in "Nels" to work on some of the larger ones.

The course was designed by Larry Packard and built in 1962 and it used to be 36 holes (the other 18) are across Saunders Road – Deerfield Golf Club. Though all of the bunkers have been rebuilt, there is still the Packard feel to the layout.

The turf on the golf course is a "Heinz 57" mixture of bentgrass and Poa annua. The majority of it is grown on very poor clayey soil, as John describes the whole course is a flood plain. Traversing the



Tino Villagomez (RG's longtime Assistant Superintendent and John Otis are responsible for keeping the place in tip top playing condition.

shape the members of RG come to enjoy day in and day out. His greatest asset is also one of his greatest challenges (even more so this year); filling out his crew each season is a challenge given the location of the club. One solution is to share labor forces with nearby golf courses and clubs. John uses a split staff with 10 crew members working each morn-



John has been married to his wife Karen since 1988 and they have two daughters Alex, who lives in Grand Rapids and Hannah who resides in Dixon, IL. His free time is spent with them; they enjoy traveling when they are able, and visiting new breweries and restaurants together.

ON COURSE

The 11th hole at RG is a dog leg par 5. It's 502 yards from the tips but accurate shot making is imperative from the tee. It's easy to see where the hole goes like most Packard designs from the tee, especially with the tree canopies guiding the way.

grounds, there is a lot of water and water ways on the property, with 7 water features on the front side and 5 on the back that come into play. Some are not very large by today's standards but can force you to reach into your bag to reload if you happen to find them. Keep an eye out for them, as some of them might sneak up on you if you've never played the course before. John keeps some taller plants around the edges of many of the water features so you can see them from afar.

John has been in the business a long time and doesn't have plans to stop anytime soon. He's not sure what he'd do or want to next, he hasn't given it much thought. He enjoys the peaceful mornings, sometimes just sitting still in his cart, waiting for the sun to come up and his day to begin. Maintaining golf courses has been a big part of his life and he still enjoys it every day. The best piece of advice John was given and a mantra he follows is to worry about what you can control, the rest will fall into place.



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GCSAA UPDATE

Shane Conroy, GCSAA Field Staff



Shane Conroy is the GCSAA's Field Staff Representative for the Great Lakes Region. He assists the Midwest and other local chapters in his region through many avenues of support.

This season has seen a bit of everything – and then some. As days continue to grow shorter, I hope you and your teams are finding an appropriate work/life balance and making the most of this challenging season.

As you have undoubtedly stayed busy on the course, I want to relay some of the advocacy areas GCSAA has been focusing on off the course.

Recently, House lawmakers, led by Rep. Henry Cuellar (D-TX-28), introduced bipartisan bill HR 3897. HR 3897 aims to enhance access to H-2B workers, which are crucial to not only golf, but many seasonal industries across the country. GCSAA has blog post and action alert on the Advocacy Hub page of GCSAA.org which can be utilized to send a message to your members of congress in support of the Returning Worker Exemption. A new one-pager is available for download when communicating with your members of congress.

Additionally, the EPA and the Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) have revealed their intention to alter the 2020 Navigable Waters Protection Rule (NWPR). Since taking office, it seemed likely the new administration would address this issue in some way. This announcement is the first official declaration that the NWPR will be "remanded" back to the agencies – meaning they will attempt to replace it with their own rule. The final rule will be shaped by future discussions, and until then the NWPR law is still in effect across the country.

Furthermore, a new FIFRA bill was launched last year that would overhaul the Federal Insecticide Fungicide, and Rodenticide Act (FIFRA). The GCSAA government affairs team has yet to see bill text, but they have had two meetings with staff from Sen. Booker's office who are indicating they will be lead author in the Sen-

ate this year. Once the GA team has seen the bill, more information will be shared. There is a one-pager discussing this bill in greater detail available for download on GCSAA.org.

Finally, switching gears, the Golf Industry Show has a new name, the GCSAA Conference and Tradeshow. "The GCSAA Conference and Trade Show rebranding is not about changes to the event but is based on the strength of the GCSAA brand," says GCSAA CEO Rhett Evans. "As GCSAA's brand recognition has grown over the years, it makes sense to have our premier event share in that. Along with our partners, we'll still feature opportunities for collaboration and team building among superintendents, architects, builders and more."

The new name will debut at the 2022 GCSAA Conference and Trade Show, February 5-10 in San Diego and is part of a strategic effort to bring all GCSAA entities under the association name. The announcement comes on the heels of the rebranding of the association's philanthropic organization to the GCSAA Foundation in May. Registration for the 2022 GCSAA Conference and Trade Show opens on November 2. **ON COURSE**

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