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Number 12, 177 yard par 3 at Old Oak Country Club
site of the MAGCS June 2006 Meeting.
(photo credit: Luke Cella)

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The Midwest Association of Golf Course Superintendents (MAGCS), founded December 24, 1926, is a professional organization whose goals include preservation and dissemination of scientific and practical knowledge pertaining to golf turf maintenance.

We endeavor to increase efficiency and economic performance while improving and enhancing the individual and collective prestige of the members.

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ON COURSE WITH THE PRESIDENT

Gary Hearn Salt Creek Golf Club

Puppies at Large

Irony. Door closes and a window opens. Things happen for a reason. Supernatural powers beyond our control . . . the clichés of life. Last year, about this time, one hit me. Most of us, at some point, have had a puppy or a dog that has been a big part of life. Being Superintendents, we have had or worked on a course that had some kind of dog that ran around either chasing geese or golfers, but mostly being a companion throughout our long days.



Lexie and her pups on their birthday.

My companion for 16 years was a German shepherd mix. She loved to chase geese, was always friendly to the golfers, and was continually in my shadow. She never left the utility vehicle when I was in the clubhouse even for long periods of time. She was a difficult dog to replace (a big part of my life) and after she was put to sleep, it took me 15 months to start thinking about getting another dog. Finally, I purchased another German shepherd mix – Lexie. She was roughly about 11 months old, she seemed friendly, had a great color scheme, and devoted. But, she would chase anything that moved. I had her about two weeks when she took off after a deer along Salt Creek. By chance, the Bloomington Police found her that afternoon west of Interstate 355 along Lake Street near Medinah Country Club. At the time, I started to think I wasn't going to keep her anymore. However, I noticed she was gaining weight and her stomach was starting to bulge.

One month after getting Lexie, on April 24th, she delivered seven puppies in my front room. My girlfriend Mary and I helped deliver each puppy. It was fun and exciting, the whole process took about two hours. Mary and I didn't know who was the sire and figured she got pregnant in the kennel. After seeing the pups, a veterinarian took a guess – some bull mastiff was the father. I started everyday with a new routine. I would put each puppy in a shoebox and head for work with all eight animals in my truck. I fixed up an area in my office where Lexie and her seven puppies would live until they started to learn how to scoot across the floor. Last Mother's Day, I took the two-week-old pups to Kankakee to visit my parents and my 93-year old Grandmother. The puppies were a hit; it had been a long time since my Grandmother smiled all day.

(continued on page 4)



Puppies at Large (continued from page 3)

Thankfully, I had some help raising the puppies; Mary's three daughters helped me to bathe, feed, and puppy-sit. I thought we did great, we only had to make two emergency visits to the vet. When the puppies became three weeks old, I traded the shoebox for a dog carrier to take them to work every day. During the fourth week, we fed them dog food, taught them to drink from a water dish and spent several afternoons in the back yard – they had to poop and pee. The next three weeks, we watched all the puppies grow, knowing that they would be leaving soon. Over the several weeks, all but

one, found homes. This last, I kept and named him – Hoss. Hoss wasn't breathing when he was born – I had to revive him and guess I got attached to him. He now weighs close to 125 pounds and is still growing. Since then, I have had Hoss and Lexie both fixed and together they have become my new shadow. This spring has reminded me how those seven puppies brought me so much joy over those few weeks last year. So enjoy life, embrace the loved ones, and adjust to whatever is thrown at you along they way.



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Mission: Possible!



The MAGCS Board of Directors has been charged with a mission. The mission is to preserve, enhance, streamline, and grow the tremendous asset of On Course magazine. On Course has been recognized by the GCSAA as a leading publication for two years in a row. We, as members of MAGCS, are well aware of the value of the magazine not only to ourselves, but to people we need to educate on the virtues of our profession.

... 77% of noncommercial members say that the advertising in On Course does or could impact their purchasing decisions.

First and foremost, On Course exists to serve the members of the MAGCS. Our magazine provides a medium to connect the entire membership body. This common thread provides a tremendous value to more than 900 superintendents, assistant superintendents, equipment technicians, commercial representatives and others related to our industry. A 2003 *On Course* readership survey found that 77% of *noncommercial* members say that the advertising in On Course **does or could** impact their purchasing decisions. This figure represents hundreds of superintendents and assistant superintendents in the greater Chicago metropolitan area. 78% of *commercial* members said they viewed advertising in On Course as an **invaluable way** of reaching their target market and/or supporting the MAGCS. It is obvious that *On Course* is one of our association's most valuable assets and needs to be preserved and protected for our membership well into the future. With this in mind, the mission of promoting, enhancing and increasing the value of On Course has been given to our current Executive Director, Luke Cella. If you have not been aware of the change, Luke has been managing the magazine for the past several months.

Today's *On Course* has a central location within the MAGCS corporate headquarters at the Midwest Golf House in Lemont. Not only does this maximize efficiency of running the publication, but also promotes a professional look and feel to all aspects of the business of *On Course* and the MAGCS. It is our goal to be available to serve our membership on a timely basis. This central location provides greater exposure and accessibility due to the fact that there is a convenient single point of contact for ALL issues pertaining to the magazine and the association.

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Streamlining operations and providing a central location provides another benefit of potential cost savings. The MAGCS Board of Directors has worked diligently to be stewards of *On Course*. Fiscal management continues to be a top priority when it comes to the production and distribution of our great publication.

Another critical benefit of Luke taking the reins of *On Course* is that he has constant exposure within our membership. Luke attends every event, talks to many of us on the phone and continually fosters relationships with supporters of the association and beyond. It only makes sense to place MAGCS's most valuable asset into Luke's capable hands. Luke may not be growing grass anymore, but he understands our trials and tribulations. He knows our business like no other association executive. His management provides a dynamic environment of community with vendors, superin-

tendents and all members. Not only does this environment provide an excellent medium for service to the members but increases our network with each other.

The potential for growth requires *On Course* to evolve over time. Constant improvements are being incorporated into the magazine. Some of these changes have already taken effect; the accounting of the magazine has been automated, past issues are being archived, Brad Anderson will be writing his monthly "Midwest Breezes" column, and will be providing an education synopsis from monthly meetings. "Technically Speaking" is helping to educate our equipment technicians and superintendents alike. Furthermore, Luke's "MAGCS in Motion" will keep all reader's abreast of important items that impact MAGCS and more. John Gurke's endless wit will continue to entertain all who set eyes on "The Bull Sheet". New ideas will continue to

meld with the old in order to enhance our publication as plans are laid forth for the future of the magazine.

The bottom line is that we have an Executive Director that is now publishing our magazine with more fervor than ever before. Luke is at every event, and every meeting. He knows the business of greenskeeping and he stays abreast of current issues and topics both locally and nationally. Luke is at the heart of all the action, and he will be actively soliciting articles and ideas for articles from the members of MAGCS, whom he speaks with frequently.

Some may say "why fix what's not broken?". As Chairman of the Editorial Committee, I say "complacency will not accomplish the mission". The mission is to preserve, enhance, streamline, and grow. The MAGCS Board of Directors has commissioned Luke Cella for the mission. This mission : possible!



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Chad Walk -N-



Anne and Chad Walk with baby Hannah and dog Lady.



Established in 1926
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The year was 1926. Life was good. The stock market was on fire and there was money to spend. Liquor was prohibited, but you could get almost anything you wanted at the speakeasies that flourished throughout Chicago. America was deep in the throes of the Jim Crow era. Society was comfortable with keeping the races "separate but equal" – or at least white society was comfortable with the idea. A great migration of rural southern African-Americans was moving north along the railroad lines to find work in northern cities. In this separate (but equal) society many blacks carved out a successful life in Chicago. A group of wealthy African-Americans, including the famous physician Theodore K. Lawless, saw the need to provide black society with their own exclusive country club. Property was acquired in the rolling farmlands around Lockport and the Kinsman Country Club – named for the architect – was established.

The club flourished for several years even providing horse and carriage service for the patrons from the Stony Island area to the golf course. Joe Louis, the "Brown Bomber" is reported to have frequented the country club, but the club's success was short-lived. The depression took its toll on the membership

and the club was victim of racial attacks that burned the facility at least twice. Legend has it that surrounding farmers even went so far as to plow under several greens on one occasion.

The club fell into disrepair through the depression and WWII years until the mid 1950's and was re-opened. The golf course was acquired by Justas Lieponis in the early 60's under the name Old Oak Country Club. MAGCS' own Peter Lieponis is the current master of the domain, but Pete is the first to tell you that he's "just" one of the owners. The man with the plan is Chad Walk.

Raised in Mattoon, IL Chad discovered his love of the outdoors and dirty fingernails working at the Charleston Country Club as a kid. He graduated from the University of Illinois in 1995, made stops at Bellerive CC in St.

Louis, home of the 1992 PGA Championship, and St. Charles, IL where he teamed up with fellow Illini, Jim Keith, CGCS, during Jim's first year at the helm of the St. Charles Country Club. In 1998, another Illini grad, Mike Vil-

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Old Oak's Clubhouse.

lender, CGCS, was asked to hire his replacement at White Mountain G.C. before leaving to run Bon Vivant C.C. Chad was Mike's choice, (shocking how these Illini gravitate toward each other). Two years later Chad was at Old Oak where he is beginning his seventh season.

Chad married the love of his life, Anne, in 2003 and they have a daughter, Hannah, who will celebrate her first birthday about the time you are reading this. The Walk family has a four-legged member, Lady, a white German Shepherd (I'm told this coloring is quite rare). Chad and Anne enjoy going out for dinner, cultural sites, museums, etc. with Hannah in tow. Anne is even talking about learning to play golf. That should be "fun"!

Chad has received valuable mentoring from several sources over the years. He counts Keith Fuchs, Ted Mochel, Jim Keith, and Pete Lieponis (the boss - nice sucking-up Chad) among those who have helped him grow professionally.



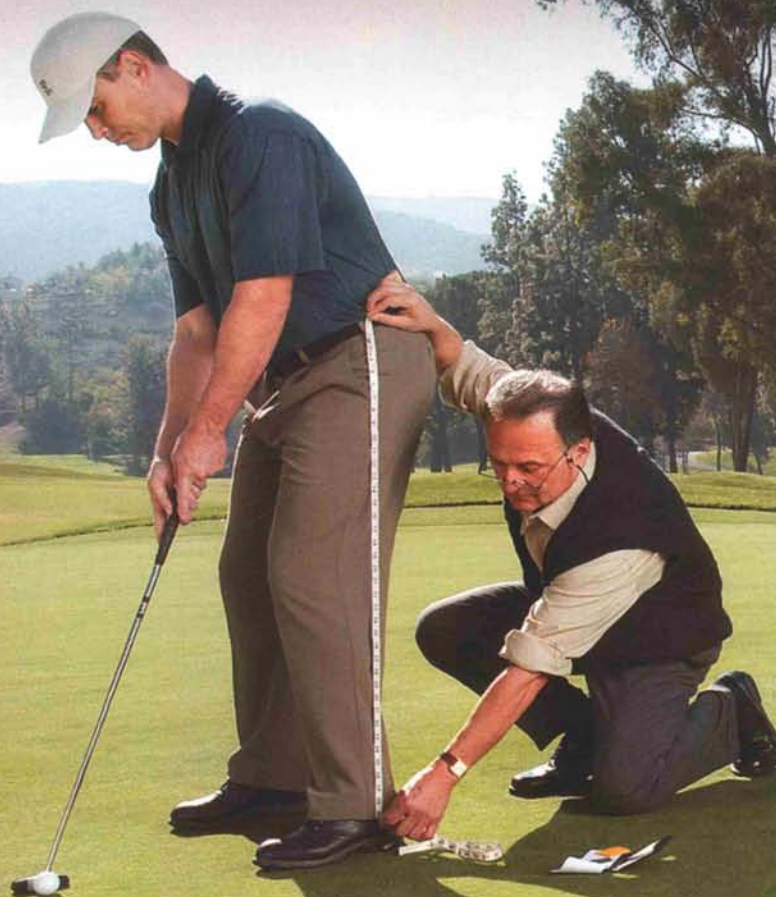
Number 12, 150 yard par three at Old Oak.

Old Oak, as you might expect is filled with old oaks and lots of other big trees. It's a great piece of property. The course has been tweaked over the years, but the majority of it is still the same rolling terrain that captivated the original developers in 1926. Chad (and Pete) are hoping to have put the finishing touches on a five-year renovation project in time for our June MAGCS meeting. If you've been to Old Oak before you'll see quite a few changes, Lots of good stuff has been completed including a lengthened layout, fairway contouring, rebuilt bunkers, irrigation upgrades, three new USGA greens and a couple of rerouted holes.

Part of the tapestry that is the golf course's rich history is the interesting sidebar that a club that was once exclusively African-American is now the home of the Chicago Police Department's golf league. Imagine getting those guys to keep pace.







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