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SEPTEMBER 2010 Volume 64 No. 5



Fox Run Golf Links, the site of the 2010 Midwest College Championship, supports many nice mini-groves of trees that have been planted since its inception.

FRONT COVER

The 10th at Fox Run Golf Links looking back from the green. The 400 yard par 4 opening hole on the back challenges the player from the tee forcing a carry over water to be in position for the approach.

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.

The MAGCS member is also an environmental steward. We strive to uphold and enhance our surroundings by promoting flora and fauna in every facet in a manner that is beneficial to the general public now and in the future.

All editorial and advertisement inquiries should be directed to Luke Cella, Publisher, *On Course*. 11855 Archer Avenue, Lemont, IL, 60439. (630) 243-7900 or visit www.magcs.org for rates and requirements. Statements of fact and opinion are the responsibility of the authors alone and do not imply an opinion on the part of the officers or members.

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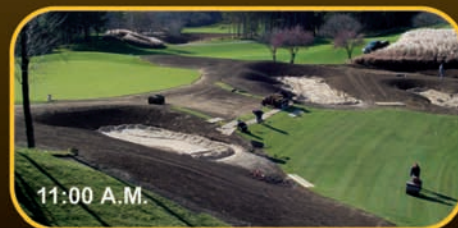


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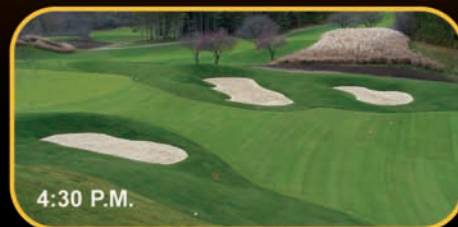
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DIRECTOR'S COLUMN

Luke Cella, MAGCS



The Future of *On Course*

Most people hate to do two things that are vital to successful organizations—volunteer and fill out surveys. Thankfully, MAGCS has a tremendous pool of willing volunteers and survey takers who make the Midwest what it is today.

This past Spring MAGCS members were asked to fill out a short anonymous online survey about *On Course* (OC). The survey was designed as a tool to measure the value of OC to our members and to help in the creation of a new sponsor package dubbed "Midwest Core Sponsors."

MAGCS thanks all the members who took the time to complete the survey. Your feedback is greatly appreciated and allows for an open and honest look at operations and helps us make things better for the OC readership. The results have been tallied and can be found below.

Here's the Good Stuff

96.7% of you look forward to receiving OC each month and out of all those people, only one of you doesn't read it (I could insert an explicative about that one subhuman, but he or she would never see it).

22% of you read half of the magazine, 44% of you read three quarters of it and 30% of you read all of it.

The question that interested me most (from a publisher standpoint) was how much time passes before you read the magazine – 49% of you read it on the day of delivery and the rest read it within a week of receiving it. This tells me what I knew all along, but never was able to put it into words – our members like to read OC magazine because it is about people, places, problems and solutions that they know and understand. It's about us.

We asked the same question (how much time passes before the magazine is read) of other industry publications. All of them combined did not reach the same number of readers that read OC has on the day of delivery.

When it comes to advertising, 95% of you notice the advertising in OC. 68% of you said the advertising presence in the magazine will influence your decision to purchase products/goods/service. And 91% say there is a good balance between advertising and article content in OC. Several of you use OC

as a reference for finding new companies and it serves as a solid directory for locating products and information. Golf course are more comfortable doing new business with companies who advertise in OC.

We also tracked your favorite article to read, and to no surprise "Bull Sheet", is still the favorite. Accolades to John Gurke, CGCS who has never failed to submit and put a smile on my face each month. Our feature articles were ranked number 2, thanks to all those that tap these out each month and provide the meat of the magazine.

To Make Better

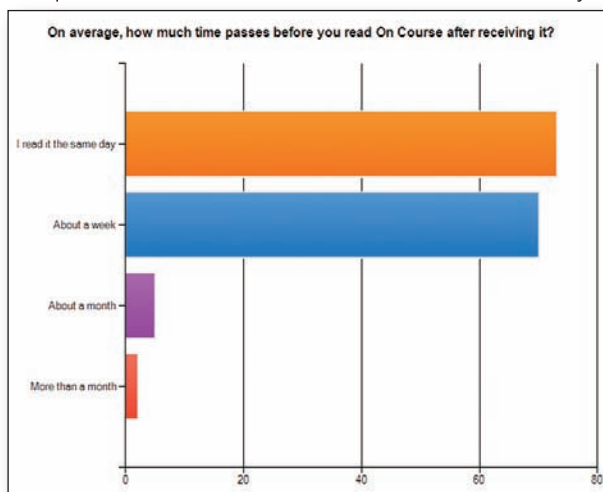
Survey results can be like discovering a piece of lettuce caught in your tooth and trying to remember who you've talked with since chomping down that

Caesar salad during lunch. The problems have been there but no one has told you about them; hence, there is no fixing them. Here's the lettuce:

- Get the issue to us at the beginning of the month so that information is relevant to us.
- Cover more local issues in our industry.
- List the authors of the articles that are up for consideration in the Gerber and Opperman Awards – so recognition will be given to all contributors.
- Mail a week before the monthly meeting profile.
- More pictures of courses and projects around town – it is nice to see what is going on instead of just reading about it.
- Less droning on about meeting participation, etc.

There were a few comments associated with delivery – it being a little erratic each month. For those of you that don't know, we are now using a printer in Batavia, called BFC. We made the switch with our May 2010 issue and have worked out a few kinks since then with the publishing process. As always,

(continued on next page)



our timeliness depends on getting material so we are able to edit, layout and print. The process from pieces - to proof - to print has been shortened but we still need content and we still need to get it done each month.

We are quickly approaching the winter months where Association activities begin to gear up. Many items gleaned from the survey will be used to direct the editorial committee as it meets and plans the future issues. Topics suggested for future articles include:

- What other courses are going through
- Facility type topics
- Superintendent experiences
- Science related information
- Course projects
- Practical applications, new ideas and innovations
- Business and budget advice
- CDGA and U of I research articles
- Unrelated to golf
- Construction topics
- Member biographies
- Golf course histories
- Environmental issues and stories
- Local news and time sensitive topics
- Maintenance standards and budgeting
- Reviews and uses of new chemicals and equipment
- Personal finance, writing wills and trusts
- Create an opinion section containing many viewpoints
- Recap of articles in other magazines, especially during the busy months of our year

Future of *On Course*

We surveyed you on the "Future of *On Course*", a topic that always seems to come up given the state of the publishing and print industry. 68% of you said you would read the magazine in a digital format and 59% said we should pursue options to print and distribute the magazine digitally beyond our current offering. The board has discussed this option (and will continue to visit this) but don't expect the printed version to go away anytime soon. If anything, this survey has shown in its current print form it is still a true value to all who receive and read it – and we only sent the survey out via email! *On Course* will be offered in print and electronically to satisfy all of our members.

Keeping it Up

Members value *On Course*. Our articles are authentic, written by members who know their topic and care to share their successes and failures with other professionals. Our articles are first rate. They are not written by professional writers who are paid to research a topic, but written by those in the trenches, living the life that their words describe. Our articles are first-run. If it is published in *On Course*, it was written for *On Course* with our member in mind. 45 of you said you are willing to contribute to *On Course*- see what I mean about the volunteer thing with MAGCS. You all rock! Look for a communication from Mike Mumper, our soon to be editorial chair for 2011. **-OC**



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Jury Duty, Why Me?



A few years ago, that dreaded jury duty notice arrived in the mail. Many of you have received these notices and I would guess that like me, you really wanted nothing to do with the request to serve. Those horror stories all have to be true, because we had heard them for years.

When my notice first came, I thought I would be ineligible because I had changed my residence from one county to another county. Therefore, I thought I'll just avoid the dreaded task by sending in my change of address. Much to my surprise the court system forwarded my address change and in a few days I received another notice at my new address.

My new notice sent me to one of the courthouses in Lake County. The selected date was in early spring. Rather than putting it off and delaying the task of serving, I filled the card out with all the pertinent information about family, occupation, age, etc. I was to be at the court house early Monday morning.

Monday morning arrived quickly and I was nervous about getting to the courthouse on time. I was driving during rush hour and needed a parking space. The notice had inserted a parking permit for certain areas within the city. Like all golf superintendents, getting up early and getting to the courthouse was the easy part.

Upon arriving, everyone is checked through security and directed to the location of the rather large waiting room where each of us was giving a number. After waiting patiently for about a half hour, a judge came in to make a speech. He said we would only be needed at most a week. If we were not called the first day we would only have to phone daily to see if we would be needed another day. He was a very humorous man, interesting and very dedicated to his service within the system.

After he left, we were then told we could take a break. This must be the dreaded waiting time I had heard about.

To my surprise, while talking to other potential jurors, I discovered that we all came with the same opinion of this duty – not so much that it was a dreaded task, but a meaningful acknowledgement and privilege as part of our responsibility of being an American Citizen. How many of us think how great our country is and what we can do to help keep it that way?

Now after only a half hour or so – my number is called. I am assigned to go to a court room, where the judge, a few lawyers, the defendant, and some police officers are waiting. Now, things are finally starting to get really exciting. I am thinking to myself, should I be nervous. They call twelve numbers – mine is not called. The lawyers interview four potential jurors at a time. They ask various questions, including their employment, if they have ever been a victim of a crime, and other related questions that may pertain to the defendant. The lawyers then go up to the judge and decide if one or more of the group will be selected.

More numbers are called, including mine. I was selected to serve on the jury, but as an alternate in case there was an illness or other excused absence by one of the original jurors. An alternate sits through the entire trial, the same as the other jurors. We chatted together during the recesses. One of selected jurors happened to be a golf member at a private club. That made things a little more interesting for me – we always had plenty to talk about when the discussions were not involving the trial at hand. On the final day, I was dismissed because none of the jurors dropped out.

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To shorten the story a bit, the trial went well. I was actually saddened that I did not get to give my opinion on the outcome. After two and a half days of listening to the lawyers' questions and statements, back and forth, I actually thought I had something worthwhile to articulate. I really had the desire to be a part of the complete process. Unfortunately, I had to wait until the next day to find out the verdict. Just as I had anticipated, the defendant was found guilty as charged. This was not one of the trials of our ex governors – and that I'm sure you could figure out by the length of the trial.

Now here is the real story. Maybe you have thought of ways to get out of serving as a juror. But from my perspective this is first not only your duty, it is also a very fulfilling and important service that you can do for yourself as well as your fellow citizens. You might just enjoy the time spent and feel a sense of satisfaction that I did. So, next time when that notices arrives in the mail, smile—you can look forward to a rewarding time. -OC


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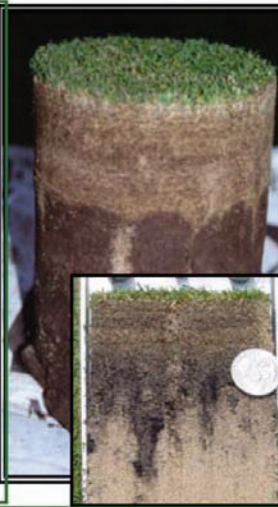
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Luke Cella, MAGCS

Greg Thalmann, CGCS -N-



Since 1982, the year before Fox Run Golf Links opened for play, Greg Thalmann, CGCS has been at the helm, quite literally. In his 28 years at Fox Run, Greg has overseen many different projects including installation of a continuous cart path system, irrigation system upgrades, planting plans and landscape improvements. Among the more recent projects at Fox Run Golf Links has been the renovation of the clubhouse in 2006-07. An addition was added to the building that now houses the pro shop and grill area. A few walls were added to create an event room that can seat 120 guests comfortably.

Another project that never ends is the shoreline stabilization of the Salt Creek. Greg has utilized many different methods to hold the banks together, each gets tested every year. In fact, if you are in the market for a stabilization project, give Greg a call, I know he can help you out. Sharing of information is one thing Greg loves about the profession and looks to MAGCS as the conduit in which this occurs. Greg is a proud member of MAGCS, having served on the Board for five years starting in 1996. Greg spear-headed the Scholarship Committee back then and is to thank for all of the good that it has done since then.

Greg happily offered up his par 70 / 6300 yard facility at the last minute because of a conflict at our scheduled venue for September. To the tenured superintendent, rolling with it has always come easy. The course, thanks to Greg and his staff will offer a fun and challenging venue for our college scramble.

Fox Run Golf Links was built in the floodplain of a branch of the Salt Creek, on property donated to Elk Grove Village by a home builder. The course was designed by William Newcomb, a Michigan native. The course is not intentionally penal in design but the water does come into play on 12 of the 18 holes. To offset this, Newcomb sparingly placed bunkers in areas to direct golf shots toward the desired line. Greg has created buffer zones and let plantings grow along the water banks, there are not many hazards that sneak up on you. Large greens are very receptive to both the air and ground game, offering a shot for players of all talents.



Greg Thalmann, CGCS (third from left) with his "Midwest Family" - Tom Savage, Luke Strojny and Ernie Corsi at the Hospitality Reception in San Diego this past February.

Upon entering Fox Run, one can't help but notice the annuals and perennials around the clubhouse. Thigh high impatiens greet each player as they walk through the entrance. Greg explained many people ask him how they get so big. He attributes their size to a seaweed based fertilizer he has been using for several years. "I think the nutrients have just built up in the soil over the years and offer a steady stream of food throughout the growing season." Gardening is one of Greg's pleasures away from the course but it comes to life in the clubhouse landscape.

Greg has been active in the business a long time and sees the computer as one of the greatest technological advances that has changed the way he operates. He loves the way he can store information on his computer and pull it up with a few keystrokes. This process becomes more valuable with each year, Greg jokes. Recently the Village of Elk Grove upgraded its intranet. One advantage Greg has utilized is a shared calendar.

(continued on page 10)



Stored online, anyone on the staff can access it and view what is scheduled for the entire facility. It certainly makes things easier when secluding maintenance around outings and other events and vice versa.

Hiring the right people is very important to Greg. "I have a lot of good people around me and I let them do what they were hired to do." Greg believes one must have a solid knowledge and understanding about an operation to oversee it. But just as important is hiring the right people and letting them do their job. Greg has been successful with this mindset and Fox Run Golf Links is the testament.

Certainly the trials of this summer have pressed Greg, but one thing he is used to – turf under water. If the property receives $\frac{3}{4}$ -1" of rainfall, the course takes a day to drain. It is not uncommon for Fox Run to close for a day following a heavy rain, something the regular players have all figured out. However, the regulars always return to play as the water recedes because of the conditions and golfing value Greg and his staff provide. Greg's assistant Pascual Perez has been with him since 1984, a testament to Greg's ability to surround himself with good people. This belief has allowed Greg to be the successful General Manager of the property for the village of Elk Grove since the late 1990's.

Greg looks forward to retiring one day, but not until his next project is done. Fox Run Golf Links has hired Greg Martin to design a facelift for the course. Though none of this will occur at least until 2011, Greg is excited about the changes that are to come under his care. After sharing a few moments with him, it is easy to see his passion and share his excitement about golf course superintending.

Greg and his wife Trudi live in Mt. Prospect and have welcomed their first grandchild into this world, Cora born to their daughter Abby and son-in-law Lewis only a few weeks ago. Their other daughter, Sarah, currently lives in St. Louis and works for the St. Louis Zoo as a meeting planner. Sarah wishes to relocate back to the Chicago area as the job market opens. Their son Nathan lives in Chicago and works for CDW.

The last time Greg hosted the Midwest was in July of 2004. I remember, I had to play with Braunsy and ever since then I've had trouble with a ringing in my ears. I look forward to Fox Run Golf Links this September, as I know Greg is happy to have us back. **-OC**



As I was packing up my camera gear, I overheard one player upon completion of his round at Fox Run Golf Links say, "I lost seven balls out there today,"



"When we had the 4" rainfall this summer, the tee sign on 7 was completely submerged," Greg explained. Built on a floodplain, Fox Run Golf Links was planned to take on water from the get go.