

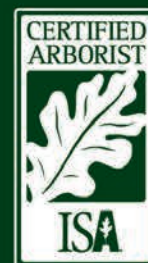


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front cover

MAGCS 2014 Leaders (l to r): Jim Pedersen, Kris Kvelland, Justin VanLanduit, Matt Harstad, Matt Kregel, Dave Kohley, Chuck Barber, Jeff Hoste, Dave Groelle CGCS and Ed Braunsky CGCS. How come it seems only the Past Presidents in the group are smiling?

PHOTO: Luke Cella



Joel Purpur, CGCS and MAGCS Past President enjoys the 61st Midwest Turf Clinic and Annual Meeting. Held in mid-November, this event marks the end of another golf season and the beginning of a new year for the Midwest.

DEPARTMENTS

- 03** Director's Column
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- 11** The Bull Sheet
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- 20** Education Recap
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DATES

2014 MIDWEST EVENTS

- 1/22/14 January Meeting & Wee One Fundraiser, Seven Bridges
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- 02/14 Annual Assistant Winter Workshop, Lemont IL

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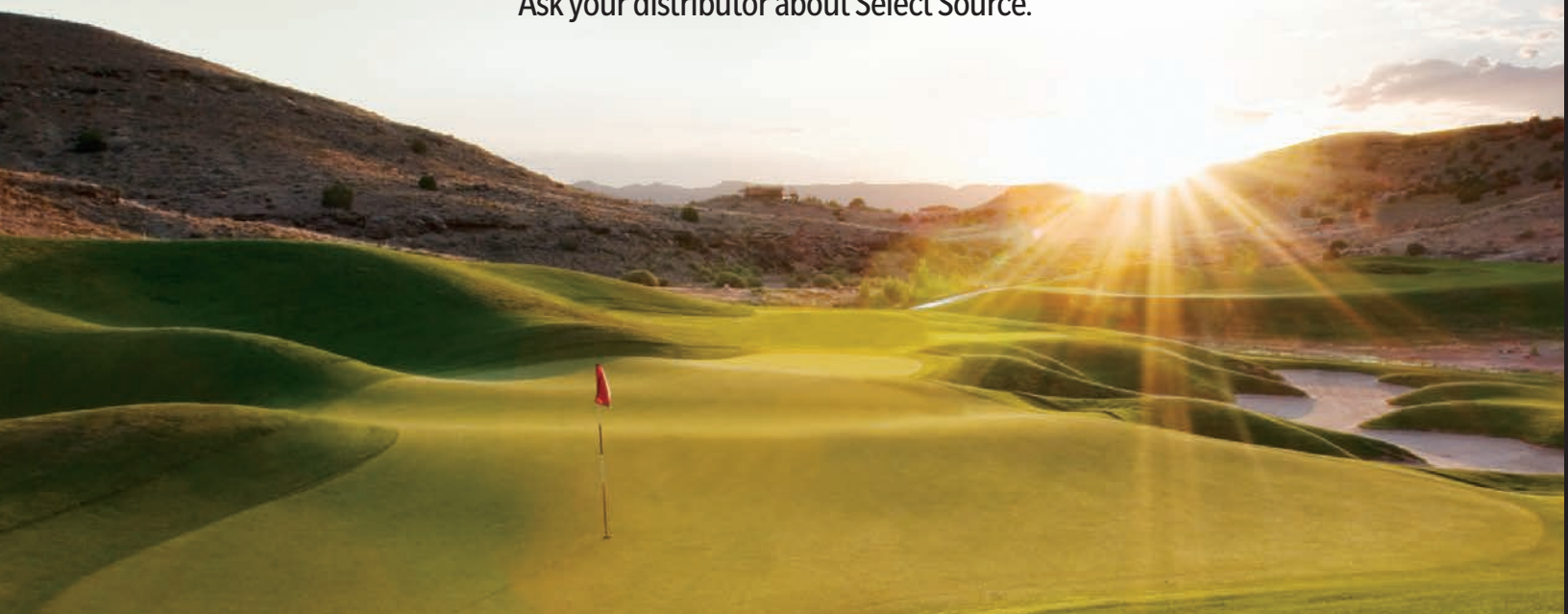
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Who You Know



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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The Work - Life Balance

Chuck Barber, St. Charles Country Club

This article started out as a few pages about how we in the golf course management position manage the “Work/Life Balance” we hear so much about. I went so far as to write a page or two with the help of some of MAGCS members that were kind enough to help out.

Then November 22nd, 2013 came and went like all the days before it, and it changed my focus. November 22nd is an important date for many of us, especially as we pass the 50-year mark on John F. Kennedy’s assassination in Dallas, 1963. This date, November the 22nd, means so much to me that it provided me with a perspective I have carried with me each day since. This date, November 22nd, formed the way I chose to view the world from that point on, at home, at work, from each vantage that I would gaze upon the world. November 22nd. In 1993.

Where were you when: The Challenger disaster occurred in 1986, when two separate airplanes struck the World Trade Center in 2001, when JFK was assassinated? These dates are significant and immediately take those who remember them back in time, if only for an instant. I can tell you that on the evening of November 22nd, 1993 I was watching television in the basement of our family’s Western Pennsylvania home.

I was 17 years old. My sister was in the midst of her sophomore year at Harvard (yes, Harvard) University. My father, a 30 year salesperson for a steel company, was on the road selling, well, steel. My mother and I were at home. It was a school night, a Monday if Google is right, and it was early in the evening. Our home was pretty big and it had a HUGE basement so when the phone rang upstairs (cordless phones hadn’t made it in to our home yet) I had to run to get it before the machine picked up.

My friend Brian greeted me with a “Hey, what’s up?” that indicated nothing special. I thought it was odd he’d call as late in the evening as he did but responded with the typical, “nothing, what’s up with you?”

“Are you sitting down?” Brian asked. There was nowhere to sit within cord’s reach from the kitchen.

“No”. I was anticipating some difficulty with Brian as his home life was not without difficulty. His problems were nothing serious but from time to time things became tense. I guessed that he needed an ear to complain to. I was wrong.

“Jason was killed in a car accident today” That was the next, and last, thing that I heard over the phone in that conversation. I went downstairs, told my mother what happened, and then I punched a hole in the door to the laundry room with my right hand.



My close friend Jason.

Jason was a very close friend. We were the type of friends you have for the rest of your life. We both had a lot of acquaintances. He and I were friends. As it turns out the only thing I could do for him instead of stand up in his wedding someday was to help lower his casket in to his grave.

There are 5 stages of grief and loss. I will not bore you with the list but just please believe me when I say I experienced them all. I grew up in a loving home where I wanted for nothing. I had no

mechanism to deal with this type of loss. I was devastated, I remember being inconsolable.

In time, I was able to talk my way through my feelings with my parents, my friends and Jason’s family. The final stage of grief and loss is acceptance. This is a gift not afforded everyone but I remember very clearly accepting that Jason was never coming back. From that point on I had a new appreciation for living. I

have viewed each day since then from that prism.

Someone recently told me that life is a lot like a roll of toilet paper: The closer you are to the end, the faster it goes. All potty humor aside, there's a lot of truth in that. There are only so many seasons we get out on the course. We are only allowed so many sales calls, site visits, construction projects and committee meetings.

At this point in my career I don't look forward to the season being over. I can look back and see what worked, what didn't, where we hit a home run and where we struck out. Life must be lived forward but learned in reverse. As 2013 comes to a close I find myself lamenting one less summer, one less chance to 'figure it out', one less opportunity to have fun doing a job that I love. Yes, there's much to do in the winter months but it's not quite the same when the game of golf is front and center every day.

I seem to be reminded more frequently than I would like that perhaps in another 20 years or so I might not be so enthusiastic about going to work every day. I hope that's not the case but I can't focus too much on the distant future. Therefore, I choose to enjoy today. I tell young people in high school and college that whatever it is you decide to do, you had better enjoy it. We all have the rest of our lives to work so it would be counterproductive to go to work and be miserable.



The Barber family at STCCC

I think of Jason still. My memories of him strike at odd times and when I least expect it. The pain of his loss has subsided. The sadness in his passing is still fresh even all these years later. It's hard to imagine that it's been 20 years since his passing. I suppose the only way I could ever hope to honor Jason's memory is to get the most out of the days I've been afforded. Both at work and at home. And I guess that's the balance I'm trying to find. @

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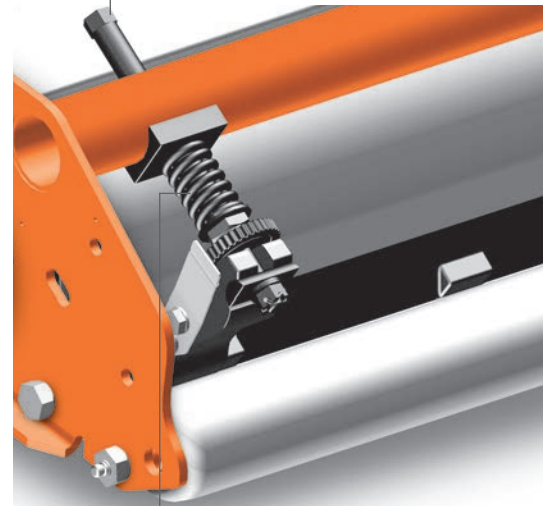
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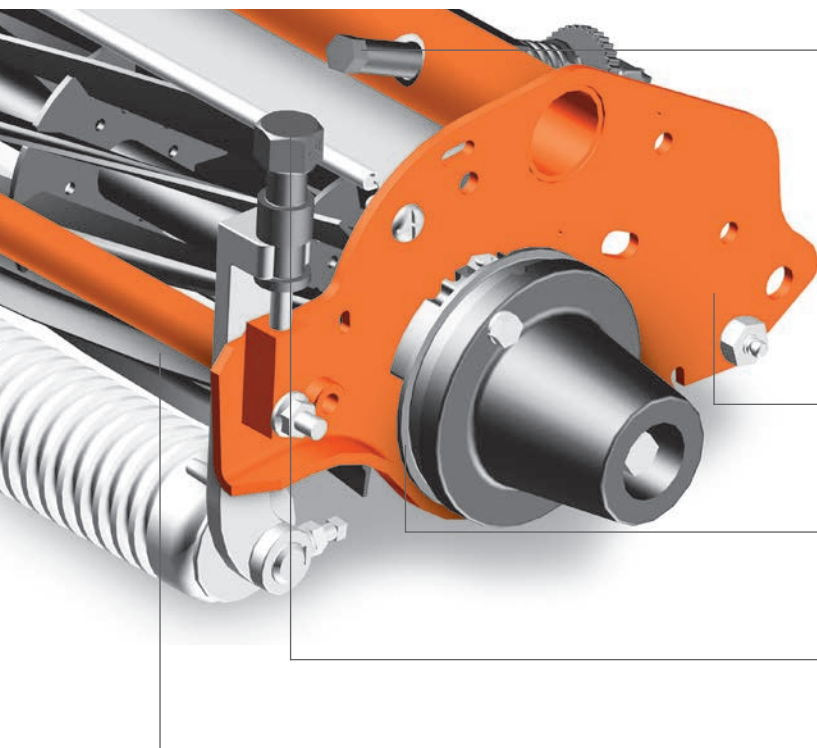
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Opening New Doors

Luke Cella, MAGCS

PHOTOS: LUKE CELLA

Chasing the prestige of being the superintendent at a private club and commandeering a large salary may not have been their top priority, but little did they know at the time, the benefits and the security of the job would lead them to a fruitful career in the golf industry.

I caught up with Fred Behnke, CGCS, Greg Thalmann, Gary Hearn and Steve Partyka over the past few months to shed some insight on how they successfully retired as golf course superintendents.



Every month is Movember for Greg Thalmann, captured here sharing a laugh with friends.

Greg Thalmann started working for Kenny Goodman at Mount Prospect Golf Club in 1978 and then followed him to Green Acres Country Club as his Assistant Superintendent.

Greg relates, “Kenny was a very hard person to work for and I learned quickly to do things the right way, Kenny’s way. Kenny led by example.” Greg learned from his parents as well, they owned their own landscaping business, and provided for their family through their hard work and dedication.

As a golf course superintendent, Greg stressed the importance of leading people. He explained to me, “you can’t wait for other people, you need to be a problem solver and lead your staff to create solutions.” As caretaker of Fox Run Golf

Links, Greg did what was best for the course and not always what was best for the individual golfer. The course is the largest asset at the facility and that is what he was hired to do, to take care of it, something he did since 1983. Looking forward, Greg knows he will miss the early morning tours and the sun greeting him each day, however he won’t miss the stress and worry that comes with the job. His accomplishments at the course are nothing compared to being married to his wonderful wife Trudi for 40 years and raising three great kids Sarah, Nathan, and Abby together.

Greg served the MAGCS as a director for several years and was Chairman of the first Scholarship Committee. Each summer, children and grandchildren of MAGCS members submit applications to the committee and a few are sent off to school with some aid to help in their studies – a process that all began with Greg at the helm.

When Gary Hearn returned from his tour of service in 1980 he needed to supplement his GI Bill to help pay for his computer science classes at Kankakee Community College. He liked the golf industry (his father worked at Kappa Golf Course near Bloomington) and decided to look there for work. He was hired by Bill Bonnett at Kankakee Elks and worked with Bob Miller, Bill’s assistant. It took a couple of seasons before Gary switched colleges and majors – he headed to University of Illinois and entered their turf program in Horticulture, where he finished his B.S. in 1985 while working part time for Frank Stynchula at Lincolnshire Fields CC in Champaign.

Upon graduation Gary worked for Rick Wilson at Oak Brook Golf Course, where he eventually became the Superintendent for a couple of seasons and ended up hosting part of the Western Open when Butler National flooded in 1987. The back nine of Oak Brook Golf Course became the first nine in the tournament. Imagine getting that phone call with a day's notice.

Gary continued his work in the public sector spending the majority of his years at Salt Creek Golf Course, a journey he calls worthwhile. He credits, his dad, Bill Bonnet, Oscar Miles and Al Fierst instilling in him a simple value to love what you do, do it the best you can, and enjoy everyday.



The two Steves, Partyka and Stewart. Partyka knows he'll miss the many friends that he has made over the years when he moves up to Wisconsin.

Gary knows he'll miss some of his colleagues but was ready to retire when the restrictions on his budget, man-power and worn out equipment started to take their toll. He has no regrets and feels a terrific sense of accomplishment. Gary looks forward to the future, and is not certain what he'll do – he just remarried and his new wife, a native of the Philippines,



Gary Hearn always enjoys a good laugh as he gets caught next to a sign that embodies his golf game.

has only been in the US for five years. He'd like to travel the States with her visiting friends and relatives in between trips to her homeland.

Steve Partyka, his name is easy to spell if you start with Party

and just add a ka, gave me updates on his retirement countdown clock each time I saw him in 2013. Steve has been at

the helm of White Pine Golf Course in Bensenville since 1994 and retires this month at the age of 55 with 39 years and 10 months of service with the Bensenville Park District. He credits his father, Ed who preceded him at the course for him being in the business and encouraging him to stay with it. In fact, his dad used to pull him out of high school so he could come and mow greens at the course. Steve graduated from the College of DuPage with his Associates in Horticulture after a stint at Elmhurst College where he studied Political Science.

He appreciated all the time that the late Lee Overpeck, a Scott's salesman spent with him on the golf course. Steve, like most, put many hours in at the course but always had the goal of retiring early in life to enjoy the time he has now. He credits his success to not putting things off and taking care of items as they arise. A project that he's particularly proud of is the installation of a 1500' deep well at the course and managing the high levels of sodium found in the soils. He also took part in starting a nursery on the property that has been the source of over 5000 trees planted within the Village of Bensenville.

Upon retirement Steve is moving to Door County, Wisconsin with his wife and daughter. He'll be closer to his mom and looks forward to fishing, riding his bike, and working at Lambeau Field during football season. Steve knows he'll miss his crew and the people at the park district when he makes the move, but looks forward to not working everyday of the week, waking at the crack of dawn, and worrying about the weather. Steve expressed a special thanks to all the sales representatives and other superintendents in the industry that made his work enjoyable.

Fred Behnke got his start in the golf business while he was driving a city bus. Well, at least he explained that he used to drive past a course on his route and, "it looked like a better place than where I was so I made some calls trying to find out about the business." Funny enough, he ended up speaking to Ray Gerber and Ray passed him off to Bob Williams who ended up hiring Fred at Bob'O'Link Country Club.

Fred graduated from Carthage College in Kenosha with a BA in Political Science and eventually completed a certificate at Harper College in Parks and Grounds Management.

When asked about his industry mentors, Fred credits



After finding out Fred was a Political Science major things really came together as I remember Fred in many meetings.

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