

# CHIPS & PUTTS

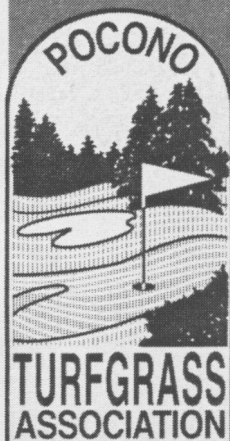
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POCONO TURFGRASS ASSOCIATION

[www.ptga.org](http://www.ptga.org)

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## Whitetail Golf Club April 18, 2006 Meeting Site

This month the Pocono Turfgrass travels to the southern region in search of a warmer site for our monthly meeting. Jeremy Reph, Golf course superintendent since 2000, has offered us the use of Whitetail Golf Club. This course was built in 1993 as a daily fee course with a housing development surrounding the property. The does about 40,000 rounds annually.

Jeremy, a Rutgers University graduate in 2000 took the reigns as superintendent after working at the course during grow-in as a laborer, then as the assistant for 3 years. He is a life long resident of the Lehigh Valley residing in his current home with his wife and two children.

Whitetail has a peak season crew of 12 and a winter crew of just Jeremy and his equipment technician Glen Slack. Glen has been at the club since 1996 and has proven to be a valuable asset to both Jeremy and the club. The staff maintains 4 acres of Bent/Poa greens, 4 acres of Rye/Poa tees and approximately 30 acres of Rye/Poa fairways.

The course plays to a Par 72 with a length of 6432 yards. Jim Blaukovitch was responsible for both the design of both the course and the irrigation system. The course has a large practice facility with grass only tees, a chipping and putting green as well as practice bunkers. The club is currently considering a renovation of the 3rd Hole to improve turf quality due to poor air movement and shade issues. Also there is discussion of renovating all the sand traps to improve playability of the features.

Keith Smith, of AG Edwards will be speaking this month on financial planning and retirement issues. Thanks also to Finch Services Inc. and Harrell's Turf Specialties for sponsoring this months meeting.



## President's Message.....

It feels as if spring is here, at least temporarily. It is kind of a bittersweet feeling to see golfers back on the course. It feels good to be back outside in the fresh air and warm sun but you also know that the twelve hour days are not far ahead.

The PTGA board has been busy this winter finalizing the golf schedule and budget for 2006. If you check the website at [www.PTGA.org](http://www.PTGA.org) you will see a copy of this year's golf schedule. Darrin Larkin has also been busy setting up speakers for each of the meetings. I know in the past there have been some complaints about not having educational speakers at our meetings. Unfortunately some golf course owners do not see the benefit of sending their superintendents to a meeting just to play golf and have dinner. I, however, gain a tremendous amount by discussing different issues with other superintendents and salespeople. Hopefully with educational speakers on a regular basis and PDI credits available, the attendance at our meetings will continue to grow.

The budget for 2006 has also been approved. One thing I would like to ask is that anyone that could receive the newsletter and meeting notices through email would please do so. This is one way you can help to reduce expenses for our Association. We are offering two scholarships this year, one turf related and one non-turf related. The deadline for applications is drawing near, so if anyone is interested, please contact me.

I look forward to seeing many of you at our upcoming meetings and hope all of you have a good season.

*Duane Schell*

## Editor's Notes.....

As March rolled in I have to stop and remember the winter that wasn't. With snowfall below normal and last years drought I have to hope that averages find their way to Pocono's as another drought would not be appreciated by most. Although an April snowfall might also not be appreciated either.

In the round up you will find our golf schedule for the upcoming season so please mark your calendar now and try to take the time to attend our meetings and share your trails, tribulations and laughter with the members of the PTGA. We have great meeting sites and I hope to see those large meetings continue. Also, Darrin Larkin has spent time lining up great speakers and will be seeing to it that service and education points for you certification and PDI will be available at these meetings.

Thanks also to Darrin Larkin for making the newsletter available as a PDF file on the website as this was a welcome addition and a great service to our members. Darrin also found time to secure the discussion section on the website so login and tell everyone what your up to or post your questions at [www.ptga.org](http://www.ptga.org).

*Jim Gurzler*



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## An Open Letter regarding the Allied Golf Course Superintendents of Pennsylvania

At the November 15<sup>th</sup> board of directors meeting of the Allied Golf Course Superintendents of Pennsylvania, the board approved sending John Ferruchie, President, and Michelle Shaw, Administrator, to GCSAA Headquarters for two days of training. The following people provided the training involved in starting a state-wide affiliated chapter:

Hannes Comest, CAE, Managing Director, Member Programs  
David Fearis, CGCS, Director of Membership  
Janet Satterlee, Senior Manager of Chapter Services

With the exception of the Keystone Association of GCS, each of the seven local chapters of the Allied Golf Course Superintendents of PA is affiliated with GCSAA. They are:

Central Pennsylvania GCSA  
Greater Pittsburgh GCSA  
Keystone Association of GCS  
Mountain & Valley GCSA  
Northwestern Pennsylvania GCSA  
Philadelphia Association of GCS  
Pocono Turfgrass Association

The following statements were addressed concerning the formation of an affiliated state-wide chapter.

### **Value in forming a state association** – The following value points were identified:

Strength in numbers (unified body) for advocacy purposes – New Jersey, New York and Canada have addressed more legislative issues impacting them – it's likely to have an effect on Pennsylvania soon

Larger critical mass – The Allied will represent more members and have more resources to execute association initiatives. This will allow the board to focus on policy making and strategic planning and allow the executive director to focus on the day-to-day operations of the organization.

Financial synergies as a result of chapters' consolidation of resources – This will lead to more effective communications (providing more consistent messaging) with members via one web site, one publication (will be electronic) and one membership directory. Currently, two chapters have a web site. Consolidation of resources may also lead to one statewide employment referral service and more effective communication about career opportunities and services among members and employers. A publications committee consisting of representatives from each of the local chapter will be formed.

Accrediting body for PDI – The Allied will co-host all education events so members can continue to earn education and service points through their local chapters.

Enhanced relationships with the media and a stronger public relations program – A statewide focus on media/public relations efforts will strengthen the position of the golf course superintendent. Consistent messaging on behalf of all golf course superintendents in Pennsylvania has more impact on target audiences, such as the media, influential golfers, employers and the general public.

More effective communication with allied organizations – The Allied will have the opportunity to strengthen relationships with groups such as the PGA section, the local chapter of the Club Managers Association of America, and the state golf association to address issues common to the golf industry.

Enhanced partnership with the Pennsylvania Turfgrass Council and Penn State University – The Allied has great opportunity to work more closely with the PTC and help position them to be more successful as a fundraising body. The Allied will need to work with the PTC on the benefits of having one statewide conference and show, and having more input in education programming and allocation of research and scholarship dollars in support of the Penn State turfgrass program.

Revenue growth – As services are expanded to a statewide basis, there is opportunity to consolidate sponsorship efforts and appeal to commercial members (minimize or eliminate competition for industry dollars with local chapters).

**Goals** – The following goals were identified:

*Continued on Page 4*

Develop a model similar to the Carolinas GCSA (one affiliated chapter that works closely with local, unaffiliated chapters)

Be an association that is 100% electronic – have an online publication, one web site and disseminate all member communications via list serves and other electronic means

Develop ways to be a bigger contributor and benefactor from the turfgrass conferences in Pennsylvania – the shows combined currently net @ \$170,000

Demonstrate that the Allied represents a stronger legislative voice

Develop a dues structure and membership requirements for local chapter and Allied members, as it relates to affiliation with GCSAA

Establish committees to address strategic communications, research and education, membership, a business plan and budget, and Pennsylvania hospitality room for the Golf Industry Show

Define the roles of the local chapters and the Allied – examples: Will the local chapters continue to have their own executive staff? Will the local chapters continue to have their own boards or will they become districts? What events and member programs and services will the local chapters offer vs. the state chapter?

**Timeline** - The following tentative timeline was developed:

Feb. 1 - Allied board meeting – Review outcomes from John Ferruchie and Michelle Shaw visit to GCSAA Headquarters. Develop a mission statement, vision statement and goals. Discuss issues and develop frequently asked questions that members will have about the formation of a state association.

Early March – Allied board meeting with Chuck Borman, Carolinas GCSA executive director, to discuss the Carolinas GCSA model

Mid-March – Allied board training session – review talking points and PowerPoint presentation for local chapter meetings (Janet Satterlee from GCSAA staff to develop PowerPoint presentation and talking points)

Late March – John Ferruchie and respective Allied board representatives meet with each local chapter to answer questions

Late March – Send follow-up letter with frequently asked questions to all Pennsylvania members; establish an e-mail account or listserve where members can pose questions to the Allied board; post PowerPoint presentation and talking points on Allied web site (look at hiring a college student to create the web site)

Fall – Potential vote taken at each local chapter's annual meeting

Spring 2007 – Tentative date to launch the state association and apply for affiliation with GCSAA

The above compilations are the steps that have been advised by the GCSAA that need to be taken to achieve a state wide affiliated chapter. A state wide chapter will bring more benefits to the local chapters and the state as a whole, rather than staying as all small local chapters.

The environment of the golf business has changed and continues to change at an accelerated pace. We, as the stewards in the turf and golf business, are being looked upon to lead the state and its turf managers into this new arena in the industry. We currently are having problems seating boards in local chapters, adhering to the demands of the GCSAA and keeping current with the business trends and times. We are less as individual affiliated chapters.

We have little if any political clout with legislature. Surrounding the state of Pennsylvania are some of the most strict pesticide legislation in the country. New York and New Jersey are heavily restricted. Canada has outlawed the use of 2, 4-D. It will only get worse and we have no one representing us in the turf industry.

We, the Allied have been asked to become the leaders in the state. It is our stewardship, protection of the environment, and the skills that we have to offer that make us a strong unified group. What we are committed to do is help lead this state into the ever complicated process of staying current with all things needed that will let us do the jobs that we are asked to do. We will run into negativity, but we are asking the local chapters to come on board with us. Good dialog and discussion is what has taken us this far. Continued dialog and discussion is what will take us to the next level, and that is what has been lacking in the State of Pennsylvania for a long while. Be it water usage, pesticides, fertilizer, or manpower, the more organized and efficient we are as a state will only lead to a better industry in the future. The future is all that counts, because there is nothing that we can do to help the past.

Sincerely,  
John Ferruchie  
President





### **Fourth Annual S.N.O.W. Meeting**

by: Darrin Larkin

One foot of snow fell in the Elk Mountain area a few days before the fourth annual **S**uperintendents **N**eed **O**ther **W**eather meeting. This made our Friday, January 27th meeting the best ski conditions of the year so far. Add in the mild, sunny weather, and it was the perfect day for our skiers to enjoy themselves on the slopes.

We had an excellent turnout. Over 40 people came to ski, while a total of 52 came for lunch. PTGA members were able to bring their families and their friends. This created a casual atmosphere where everyone was able to get to know each other in a non-golf related setting. As always, we had beverages and snacks at the halfway house, a great meeting place while skiing at Elk. Lunch was served at the main lodge in the Winter Garden Restaurant. The menu included Italian wedding soup, meatloaf, penne with chicken and broccoli, and Lasagna. We had about 10 people come to just eat lunch, so even if you aren't a skier or just don't have time to spend the whole day, it's still easy to just come up for a while.

After our day at Elk, the group moved down the road to Chet's Place. Again, friends and family of all ages stopped in for a bite to eat and shoot some pool. The day ended well as no one was healing any wounds from the day, maybe just some sore muscles.

We would like to thank everyone that came to the SNOW meeting. We would especially like to thank our vendors who helped make this meeting doable. They are *Steve Chirip* with *Grassroots*, *John Vojick* and *Scott Andre* with *Andre & Son Inc.*, *Matt Brown* with *Philadelphia Turf Company*, and *Andy Jubinski* with *Finch*. We had good turnout all year for our meetings and the SNOW meeting was no different. Hopefully we can continue to build on our momentum as an association.

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## **Giving the Golf Course a Tune Up**

***Presented by the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America***

Unlike an old set of clubs, a golf course can't be traded in for a new model. However, it can be renovated or remodeled to be brought up to modern standards.

Mature golf courses often undergo renovations or restorations as a means to improve conditions for golfers. The passing of time and effects of weather may necessitate rebuilding bunkers; or the desire for better drainage could be the reason for a conversion from "push-up" greens to those built to USGA specifications. Developments in turfgrass science have produced new grasses that may be more suitable for the facility's traffic and climate. The superintendent is the point person in leading the project from the idea stage to completion. As the on-site representative, the superintendent is an ongoing, integral part of the planning and development team on any construction project. Even before the first spade of dirt is turned, he/she assists with final design decisions. In fact, many superintendents have designed and built their own courses.

*Continued on Page 6*

On the same lines, constructing a golf course from scratch and transforming a tract of land into a golf facility requires the input of many individuals. Once again, the superintendent is a key player and extremely vital to the development of a golf course. Regardless of the ownership and management arrangement, the superintendent is often the first person brought on board to oversee what is called the "grow-in." Working with the golf course architect and the golf course builder, the superintendent assists in creating a facility that will serve the needs of the consumers, yet be an aesthetic and environmental asset. After the architect and builder have performed their obligations, the superintendent continues his role as the project manager in preparing the facility for opening.

Once past the initial differences between constructing a new course from ground zero or remodeling a current one, the superintendent's roles are very similar.

To begin, a master plan provides the structure for the superintendent's participation in a golf course construction or remodeling project. It is designed to be a long-term framework to which plans and specifications conform. Not only does the plan provide for the long-range needs of the facility, but it also may detail preparations for future projects. Most importantly, the master plan should incorporate the superintendent's input, which ensures that maintenance has been taken into account. When considering a master plan, a superintendent will keep these basic, but important, factors in mind:

- ⇒ Budget
- ⇒ Staff
- ⇒ Equipment

Keeping the lines of communication open among the superintendent, the architect and the builder ensures a thorough understanding of a design's maintenance implications. For example, elevation, a critical dimension in the design of a golf hole, can be achieved through the creation of hazards. But these are also often the cause of maintenance headaches. The parties will discuss the maintenance capabilities, types of players and vision for the course before construction or remodeling begins to eliminate any foreseen problems.

The number, shape and style of bunkers on the course have a dramatic effect on maintenance and are critical components that require the superintendent's input. Bunkers with intricate fingers require difficult maintenance work while more open-shaped bunkers with shallow faces are easier to maintain, but have less aesthetic value. Tees may not always receive a great deal of aesthetic attention, but they require a great deal of maintenance. Tees are often the most difficult features to construct properly because they must be as level as possible and drain properly at the same time. Surface drainage on and around the tees is crucial to the health of the turf. Like tees, fairways can dramatically affect the playability of a course. Drainage is key fairway maintenance. All areas of the fairway and rough should be sloped to provide drainage. A superintendent will make sure these three elements are designed correctly during construction to prevent future problems.

Golf course construction and remodeling is a complicated process, involving a team of golf industry professionals and regulatory bodies, not to mention owners and green committees, and a variety of other wide-ranging opinions. Some of the things a superintendent can do to influence the process include:

Meet with the architect as soon as possible.

Prioritize course needs. The superintendent understands the positive and negative characteristics of the site more than anyone.

Understand that they're the experts. The architect relies on the superintendents for intimate knowledge such as drainage problems, golf car circulation patterns and misplaced trees on a course set for renovation.

Offer input for each master plan redraft and proposal.

Whether a new course is being built from the ground up, or an existing one is just getting a fresh makeover, the golf course superintendent plays an integral part in the process. He/she holds the key to a finely tuned golf course.

For more information regarding golf course maintenance and etiquette, contact your local superintendent or the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America at 800/472-7878 or [www.gcsaa.org](http://www.gcsaa.org).



# Thank You

The Pocono Turfgrass Association would like to thank the following sponsors for supporting the Allied Hospitality room in Atlanta at this year's GIS show. Thank you for very much for helping us have another successful Suite!

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## POCONO ROUNDUP

### 2006 GOLF SCHEDULE

*April 18 Whitetail GC*

*May 16 Iron Lakes*

*June 13 Indian Hills*

*July 17 Shawnee Inn and Golf Resort*

*August 15 Green Pond CC*

*September 18 Fernwood Golf Course*

*October 16 Glen Oak CC with  
Annual Meeting*

### Scholarship Deadline

*The Deadline for Scholarships is  
March 31, 2006.*

## REMINDER

Pocono Turfgrass Association Annual Membership  
Dues Due April 1, 2006

# Congratulations

2006 Election Results for GCSAA

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Ricky D. Heine, CGCS -- Vice President

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