

CONNECTICUT CLIPPINGS

Volume 34, No. 2

May, 2000

The Professional Development Initiative and you — fact not fiction —

Steve Cadenelli, CGCS, Member MSRG Committee
Past President of GCSAA and CAGCS

During the very early spring of 1997, newly elected GCSAA President Paul McGinnis, CGCS, called to ask if I would consider serving on a newly created resource group/committee to examine the current standards of membership for our profession and association. He explained how for several years while serving on

the board that many members from throughout the country had expressed concerns regarding the flood of graduates entering the profession, saturating the job market resulting in lower salaries and lessened job security. Members were, and are genuinely concerned that for the profession of golf course management to further develop and prosper, new standards of entry to, and continuance in, the profession may be needed. Thus, the Member Standards Resource Group (MSRG) was born.

I believe it is important to explain/discuss a few points of interest that are relevant to this overall discussion.

Fact: The MSRG was put together with the idea of addressing member concerns as to the future of their professions. There did not exist then, or do they now, preconceived ideas as to what the ultimate recommendations, if any, would be.

Fact: The MSRG is representative
(continued on page 10)

CAGCS well represented on GCSAA Board

Michael Wallace, CGCS, Hopmeadow CC, was elected Secretary/Treasurer of GCSAA, and Timothy O'Neill, CGCS, CC of Darien, was appointed to a one-year term as a Director at the 2000 Conference & Show in New Orleans, LA.

Both Mike and Tim want to thank the CAGCS members for their support.

Also elected at the annual meeting were:

President
Scott Woodhead, CGCS

Vice President
Tommy D. Witt, CGCS

Directors
Jon Maddern, CGCS
Ken Mangum, CGCS

Bob Maibusch, CGCS, was also appointed to a one-year term by President Woodhead.

Mark J. Woodward, CGCS still has one year left on his two-year term and will continue to serve on the board.

GCSAA home page
www.gcsaa.org

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Brian Skelly
CAGCS President

President's message

Brian Skelly, President

Inland the flowers are blooming, trees are budding, greens are mowed, and grass is growing. Here on the shore, the wind off the water has delayed everything about about two weeks. But everything is mowed (at least the lines look good). Now, if the weather will cooperate and stay warm, maybe some grass will grow.

What has happened to the weather? Forecasters say that the last three months have been above normal in temperature, and drier than normal. Somebody better recalibrate whatever is used to measure normal. The Masters used to get the golfers' juices flowing with courses around here opening about two weeks later. This year, just about everyone is open about two weeks before the Masters.

Normal appears to be that golf courses open earlier in the spring and close later in the fall or winter than they used to. If this trend continues, we

all might as well move down south because we will all be open year round.

Maybe those volcanoes erupting in Japan and the Philippines will affect the weather this summer. The last time there was a major eruption (I don't remember where), we had a very cool and wet summer. So long as last summer does not repeat itself.

Our meetings get off to a good start on April 24th at Norwich CC. Bruce Morse, supt., will have the place in excellent condition as usual, I'm sure. Bruce has offered up his course every other year for the past few years for which I would like to thank him and the City of Norwich.

The schedule is set for this year, but we are looking for sites for next year and beyond. So, go to your clubs and request a date. Remember, if every one offers their club, we would only come back once every eleven (11) years. That does not seem to be too much to ask.

Well it finally arrived, even though we tried to ignore the signs, spring is here. The National Conference is over. The New England Regional Turfgrass Conference & Show has come and gone. Warm days have brought the golfers out of their shells and onto the courses.

However, they still do not understand how the air temperature can be in the 50's and 60's during the day, and grass still won't grow. Tell them about the soil temperatures one more time.

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Newsletter Editor
Robert A. Chalifour, CGCS (Ret.)

Newsletter Committee
David Basconi, Heather Garvin,
Edward Goodhouse, Ron Holcomb
and Jud W. Smith

The *Clippings* is open to all commentary. Please send your comments to Bob Chalifour, Newsletter Editor, 39 First Street, Groton, CT, 06340.

"Every morning in Africa, a gazelle wakes up. It knows it must run faster than the fastest lion or it will be killed... every morning a lion wakes up. It knows it must outrun the slowest gazelle or it will starve to death.

It doesn't matter whether you are a lion or a gazelle... when the sun comes up, you better be running."

Mr. Hyde takes a vacation

by Dan Rackliffe, CGCS

May is here, and if you're behaving like the typical superintendent, you are concentrating 100% of your efforts into the health and vigor of your golf course. Before you get completely caught up in the job, maybe now is the time to not only formulate an operational plan for your course, but also an operational plan for yourself.

All too often, come August, we are all very near our wits end. How many of you begin to look and feel like Dr. Jekyll's alter ego during the late summer? I believe that all too often we tend to overlook our own well being in favor of the golf course's.

I realize that not many superintendents are fortunate enough to be able to vacation in the summer, but is that a result of the club's desires or is that the pressure you put on yourself? More than likely, the pressure is, for a good part, self-inflicted. Is the dedication to your job worth the self-sacrifice that it forces on you and your family? I believe that it is not. It is indeed important to take your job seriously, but take your health seriously too.

I have been one of the fortunate few. I do take a week off in the summer and believe it or not, I do it in August. No, I'm not crazy. I keep my bases covered. I have a capable crew and I don't go far. I check in with the course, and key personnel always know my location. Put simply, I am a telephone call away,

and need to travel only one to two hours to be back on site. If you have been in contact with your assistant, you've told him what to do initially, and you can be back shortly to correct any problem.

I have had reason to get back to the club to ease my mind and take some necessary steps to correct a potential problem.

If you can't go for a week, how about a weekend? How many of you have two-way radios? Go a step further and get a pager or cellphone. It will keep you in constant touch and at the same time give you an occasional break from your job. Maybe your assistant could handle an occasional Saturday or Sunday. After all, you hired him to assist you both when you're there and in your absence. Don't take the weekend off during your member-guest, but surely there is some room for a break. Everybody deserve that — everybody!

Maybe that small but vocal group of unhappy golfers would be more tolerable. Wouldn't it be nice to avoid those "in your face" confrontations? If you're as tight as a banjo

string, you are not helping yourself and confrontations are more than likely going to happen.

We all have to work hard during the summer months. I'm not saying you need to limit your week to 40 hours—that's not really possible. What I am saying is that you need to find quality time for yourself and your family.

I have missed five years of my family's growth because I not only insisted on being here but to add insult to injury, I had a business as well. Seventy to 90 hour workweeks are simply not conducive to raising a family. I will never get that time back.

I couldn't tell you what finally turned me around, but I can tell you that selling my business and working a reasonable workweek is the best thing I have ever done. I can no longer remember who Mr. Hyde is.



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**Ward Weischet, CGCS
Oronoque Country Club
Stratford, CT
Host of May 22nd Meeting**

Our host superintendents

Host superintendent for our May monthly meeting is Ward Weischet, CGCS.

Ward has been a superintendent for 15 years, formerly at Pilgrims Harbor which along with the addition of 9 new holes built by Ward is now called Harbor Ridge.

Ward and his assistant, Greg Drewry, are involved with several projects, including a driving range expansion, pumphouse renovation, tree clearing (that won't be done before we play) and some bunker renovation, along with a five-year plan to renovate the course.

Oronoque's signature hole is a 176 yard par 3 over water, but Ward adds

that all the par 3's at Oronoque are great. The Desmond Muirhead course built in 1972 plays tight with difficult slopes on the greens.

Ward credits Mike Chrzanowski, superintendent at Madison CC, for the reason that he got into the profession. Ward says "Mike was always finding ways to improve Madison CC while making it fun to work at."

Ward and his wife, Susan, along with two very active girls, Kelsey age 5, and Taylor age 1 1/2, live in Guilford. Ward loves the game of golf but mostly enjoys gardening, snow and water skiing, reading and spending time with his family.



**Frank Polizzi, CGCS
Shennecossett Golf Course
Groton, CT
Host of June 12th Meeting**

6,088 yards from white with a par of 71. The course is a mixture of Donald Ross and Cornish/Silva/Mungean.

In 1998, three new holes were built along the Thames River when land was traded with Pfizer.

Five other holes were redesigned at the same time and three of those greens were rebuilt. The new holes include the signature 16th that runs along the Thames and has a view of Fisher Island Sound. The wind is a big factor in club selection on this hole as well as the rest of the course. The 4th hole is rated one of the toughest holes in Connecticut. The 208-yard par 3 has you hit to an elevated green, with the prevailing wind in your face. Many of the original greens are the turtle back design, a Donald Ross trait, and most of the fairways are not irrigated as originally designed.

Each year, Shennecossett hosts the CT Section Senior PGA Championship.

This year the Tall Ships, called OpSale, will be sailing in view of the course in the beginning of July.

Our host, Frank Polizzi, CGCS, has

been the superintendent at Shennecossett for two years. Frank began working in golf when he was discharged from the Army in 1980 and took a job at Averstraw GC in New York. Neighboring superintendent, Frank Bevilacqua, at Blue Hills GC, had a great influence in his continuing in the business. Frank has also worked at Neverly GC (NY) and Flanders Valley GC (NJ).

He has an Associates Degree in Business Management, attended the two-year turf management program at Rutgers, the National Golf Foundation's Golf Management Program two winters, and is currently enrolled in UCONN to obtain a Bachelor of Science Degree. He became a certified golf course superintendent in 1990.

Frank lives with his wife, Sarah, and 12-year old son, Christopher, in Mystic. In his free time, he likes both fresh and salt-water finishing and aerial photography. Frank has an 18-foot remote control helium filled blimp that he uses for this.

We look forward to a nice day along the shore with the wind in our favor.

Our June monthly meeting will be held on Monday, the 12th, at Shennecossett Golf Course in Groton. Shennecossett is a Donald Ross design that was opened in 1898. The length from the blue tees is 6,562 yards,

Bob Johns, Superintendent at Fishers Island Club, retires

How many superintendents were groomed by their father and mother to maintain and preserve the integrity of Fishers Island Club? I only know one. How many superintendents have hosted over 25 consecutive "CAGCS Board Meetings" not only preparing the course but also helping with food and beverages? I only know one.

How many superintendents meet you in the parking lot or help you tie up? I only know one. How many superintendents say good bye to each guest when they leave? I only know one. How many superintendents untie your dock lines and wave good bye? I only know one.

How many superintendents have worked at the same club for 40 years? I only know two.

How many superintendents have the respect and admiration of everyone he meets? I know many, but Bob Johns is the "Captain of this ship".

On Friday, March 31, 2000, Bob Johns retired from Fishers Island Club after 40 years, 26 of those years as superintendent. Bob's assistant, Donald Beck, has taken the superintendent's position.

Bob and his mother, Mrs. Maxine Johns, have retired to their home at 16817 Donna Drive, Paris, IL, 61944.



Bob Johns

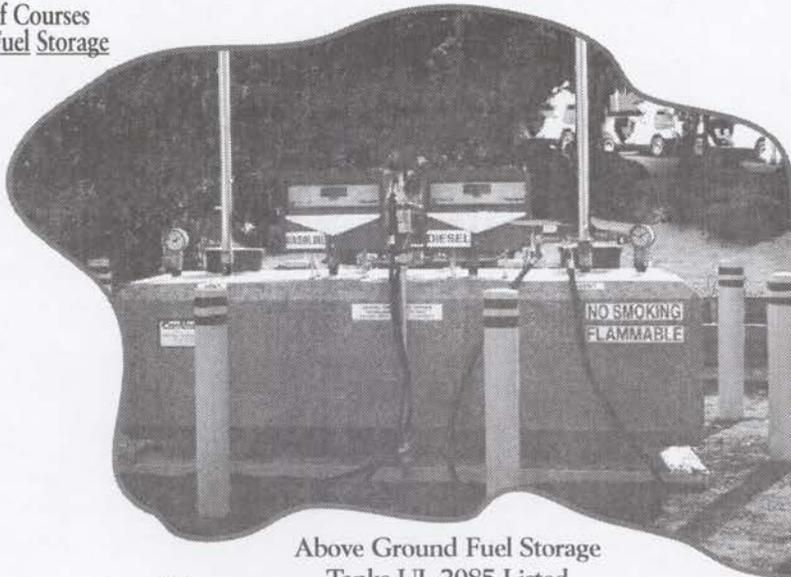
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* * * * *

Congratulations

Kevin and Katie Balocca on the birth of their son, Jonathan Vincent;

Art and Grace DeAtienza on the birth of their daughter, Jessica Ann;

Bert Frederick, recently retired from Vesper CC; and

Dave Clement, recently retired from Framingham CC.

Condolences

Greg & Sue Bradley on the passing of Sue's father.

The 2000 Membership Directory is presently being printed and will be mailed out to the membership in late May or early June.

* * * * *

So far a great Spring! This year, superintendents rather than finding problems, are instead looking for problems in the roughs and not finding any there either.

Labor shortages continue to be a problem for many.

* * * * *

Twenty years ago

Question — How does one write a few brief lines about Charlie Baskin, host of the 1980 CAGCS Invitational at the CC of Waterbury?

Answer — one doesn't! One simply states that here is a man who is widely respected throughout the country as a leader. He is past president of GCSAA as well as of CAGCS. Possibly his greatest honor has been his election into the Connecticut Golf Hall of Fame, the first golf course superintendent so honored.

Some interesting history exists con-

cerning the CC of Waterbury. First constructed in a flood plain, the golf course was moved to its present location in 1908.

Donald Ross then redesigned and rebuilt the course in 1926 & 27. Assisting in that reconstruction was a young foreman by the name of Charles Baskin, Sr. When the course opened in 1928, young Baskin moved on with Mr. Ross. However, the crash of 1929 slowed golf course reconstruction and caused Charles, Sr. to return to Waterbury, temporarily!

He remained there 35 years as superintendent passing the responsibility of the golf course to his son upon his retirement.

* * * * *

G H O
June 29 - July 2

CAGCS has again a Blue Sponsorship of the Greater Hartford Open at the TPC at River Highlands in Cromwell, CT. The GHO is from June 29 to July 2. With our sponsorship of the GHO, we receive two parking tickets, a quantity of daily passes (good for one day only) and ten sponsor badges.

The "Will Call" trailer will be at the Millane Nursery Garden Center on Route 99 in Cromwell. Parking passes and sponsor badges should be signed out and returned after use, so someone else can use them.

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Dogs of summer

In this issue, we are pleased to introduce Miss Kitty. Shown here, Miss Kitty is wintering in the office of CAGCS Membership Chairperson, Wayne Urban.

Miss Kitty is a constant fixture at the maintenance facility and surrounding golf holes.

Part of an Integrated Pest Management Program, Wayne is quick to credit Miss Kitty for the huge drop in his budget for rodenticide expenditures. At Farmingbury Hills GC, Miss Kitty reins. Just ask the big dog chained up outside that belongs to an employee.

Farmingbury Hills GC has a new maintenance building and will be building a new clubhouse this year.

Editor's note — Dogs of summer is open to all members who have their pets with them at work. In my travels, I have seen birds, cats and dogs.



Deadline for submission of ads and/or commentary for the July issue is June 9th.

* * * * *

Biennial Survey

Thank you to those superintendents who completed and returned the biennial survey. Remember, the results of this survey are made available only to those who participated and completed all sections of the survey.

Enclosed with this newsletter is the golf schedule for the remainder of the year.

Please understand the importance of a timely reservation. The deadline date indicated on the meeting notice is the date by which the office must receive your reservation. If you are mailing your reservation on or about the deadline date, please call the CAGCS office (203/387-0810 or 888/561-7778) and leave a message on the answering machine.

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Upcoming Meetings

May 22nd
 Oronoque Country Club
 Ward Weischet, CGCS

June 12th
 Shennecossett Golf Club
 Frank Polizzi, CGCS

July 11th
 Westwoods Golf Club
 Kevin D'Amico, CGCS

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An inside look at what it's like as a newcomer on the GCSAA Board

Campaigning for the GCSAA board isn't unlike campaigning for political office. It takes a tremendous amount of energy and countless hours of thought and preparation. After two years on the campaign trail, Tim's efforts finally paid off when he was appointed to the GCSAA Board at the GCSAA annual meeting in February.

Tim hopes to share his experiences with us throughout the year.

My first real experience as a GCSAA director—when it all really hit home—was at the GCSAA banquet. My wife, Jennifer, and I met the other board members and their families. It was extremely exciting and, at the same time, kind of strange to be looking out at the audience, rather than up at the cast of board members as we always had before.

The next day, I attended the post-conference board meeting that included the executive staff. Among other things, we reviewed the conference and show, as well as the golf tournament, discussing what went well and what we might do to make it all even better.

A week after the conference, I joined fellow board members for a formal orientation. When you're new to the board, GCSAA makes certain that you get oriented quickly, not only with your roles and responsibilities, but also with the technology necessary to keep you closely linked to GCSAA events, board members, and staff.

At the same time, we were given committee assignments. I was appointed chairman of two committees: the Membership Committee, which recommends strategies for recruiting new members, reviews classification requirements, as well as benefits and services for GCSAA members—and

the Student Resource Group, charged with suggesting services for GCSAA student members and student chapter members, as well as providing a student's perspective on associationwide programs and activities.

GCSAA representatives then traveled to the CC of Darien with the goal of getting acquainted with my operation, my crew, clubhouse staff, and club officials—all the people they might need to communicate with during my term on the board.

The summer promises to be busy, too, with PDI discussions and planning heating up. I hope that everyone in the membership will feel free to contact me with any questions or GCSAA-related issues. Many thanks, again, to all of you for your support.

Tim O'Neill, CGCS
Country Club of Darien

*This is an excerpt from the
MET Tee and Green Newsletter.*

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— fact not fiction —

*"A profession resting on the status quo is a profession in decline.
Times change - expectations change - standards change."*

(continued from page 1)

of the membership, both geographically and demographically, to a very large degree.

Fact: Never, has the MSRG discussed the success or lack of success of the certification program as it relates to the mission of the MSRG. (Certification is a separate entity - it is a volunteer program for individuals who seek to challenge themselves for personal reasons and who commit themselves to continued education. Decisions regarding possible changes in the certification program will be made by the Certification Committee.)

Fact: The consultants hired by the association were sought out and chosen after submitting RFP's when it became evident by the MSRG and BOD that extensive research and evaluation of the

membership, employers, golfing public, and existing educational opportunities was necessary to understand the (then) current perceptions of the golf course management industry by all involved.

GCSAA staff nor committee members did not and do not have the expertise to gather, evaluate, and interpret the necessary information without the assistance of those who specialize in professional development and career opportunities.

Fact: Yes, this type of research and evaluation is not inexpensive. However, it would seem nothing is more important than developing standards and corresponding programs that will result in a thriving and robust golf course management profession. Is it not also cost efficient to solicit the input of as many individuals as possible in such an endeavor. Is it not cost efficient to retain the most effective consultants to assist in developing such standards/programs! Is it not cost efficient to communicate the progress of the endeavor while continuing to solicit input!

Fact: Research conducted by SRI (Stanford Research Institute) did find that superintendents were held in high regard in many areas. They also found that superintendents were also found to be often times lacking in communication skills, appreciation for the business side of the industry, and less than welcoming when approached with concerns or suggestions.

Fact: It is currently impossible to define or market a Class A member of GCSAA. There is no standard for becoming a Class A professional. The only requirement is three years experience.

How can an organization be expected to represent a membership in the governmental, environmental or business world when there essentially is no credential by which its most prominent member can be defined?

Fact: GCSAA's educational program has evolved over the past twenty plus years without direction or coordination. Yes, the program has been successful and very useful. However, does it meet the current needs of today's course management professional? Is it broad based? Is it well taught? Do courses build on one another resulting in significant learning in specialized areas? Is it not time to link employers' needs with basic educational requirements, ongoing educational requirements and professional evaluation?

— Summary —

A profession resting on the status quo is a profession in decline. Times change - expectations change - standards change.

The PDI, as currently proposed, may indeed not be the total answer; however, it is a beginning.

Change must come if the golf course management profession is to thrive and prosper. The golf course superintendent must be well educated, current and dedicated to remaining so. The profession must be judged by the highest common denominator not the lowest.

Finally, this discussion is not about GCSAA, the organization. It is about GCSAA, the membership, not some vague entity in Lawrence, Kansas, seeking to reek havoc on its members. It is not about prestige, strength within an industry or influence. Rather, it is members, nothing more - nothing less, seeking to ensure a prosperous future for all who seek to join.

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