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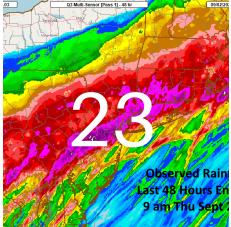
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A recap of the destruction caused by Hurricane Ida.



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Navigating the rough seas of social media.



Upper Montclair Country Club Michael Brunelle, Superintendent



## **The Ask**

Find out who your fellow members chose to play with in their dream foursome.

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## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Joe Kinlin, Chapter President Bey Lea Golf Course



I am filled with so many emotions as I write to you for the last time. These two years serving GCSANJ as your president have been both the most challenging and rewarding of my career. I continue to feel proud of our organization and am grateful for the support it has given me and all members.

On a cool afternoon in October 1998, Shaun Barry photographed a young assistant superintendent who happened to make a hole in one at the Class C tournament. The memory of a hole in one stays with you forever, but it's the welcome Shaun gave that inspired me to be of service to GCSANJ. He manages to adopt us all. For me, he is the godfather of GCSANJ, the true heart and soul of our association, and for his support, I am incredibly grateful.

I also need to thank Bill Murray. Bill asked me to fill a vacated spot on the Board in 2010. He showed and continues to show me a path with his service to GCSANJ and the GCSANJ Foundation.

I am fortunate to have served under some great presidents who continue to provide me guidance—Bill Murray, Paul Dotti, Lance Rodgers, Jim Cadott, Gary Arlio, and Russ Harris. Each of these men left GCSANJ better than they found it.

I am proud of the many things our Board accomplished over the past two years. We hosted a board orientation event to welcome and train new members and emphasize committee and board structure. Turf Fest was introduced, a unique educational event with pesticide credits, equipment demos, food trucks, and NJ craft beer. We worked better than ever with our charitable arm, the GCSANJ Foundation, to create structure, delegate, and assume responsibilities to serve the membership better. We modernized our by-laws to reflect our ever-changing industry. We have empowered our immensely talented Executive Director, Maureen Sharples, to lead and grow our organization. I witnessed firsthand how she established herself as a true leader in the NJ golf industry. We all benefit from improved relationships with the NJ Club Managers Association, NJ PGA Section, NJ State Golf Association, and the NJ Golf Course Owners Association.

Finally, what I am most proud of is you, the members of GCSANJ. Your strength and hard work over the past two years led us to emerge from the Covid pandemic stronger than ever. As a member of GCSANJ, you made other people's lives in New Jersey better. Your vast talents gave them hope and a safe place to play golf. The spotlight shined on our industry, from local municipal courses to top 100 private clubs, and you delivered. You got the job done.

Thank you for allowing me to serve as your president. I wish you, your families, and your clubs health and success.

Stay well,

JOE KINLIN Chapter President

## FROM YOUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

## Maureen Sharples

After a year's hiatus and a lot of uncertainty, I'm excited to return to Green Expo with all of you this December. Our education committee, led by Paul Ramina, put together a great program with Chris Carson, Dr. Jim Murphy, and Keith Kubik. It's packed with dynamic speakers and topics and multiple opportunities for credits, including CORE.

I hope you will join us for our Tuesday morning GCSANJ session. It kicks off with a networking breakfast followed by our annual awards. Gina Rizzi of Radius Sports Group will be our keynote speaker. She will present how to use our state BMP to create a facility BMP and how it can be an excellent tool for budgeting and communication. Our printed copies of the New Jersey BMP will be available at the morning session.

New to this year, there will be a general session on Tuesday afternoon to honor and celebrate Dr. Bruce Clarke's career and retirement. Join us in showing appreciation for all of Dr. Clarke's contributions to our chapter and our industry.

Grass Roots will be hosting their Wednesday evening Mix and Mingle, followed by the GCSANJ social at the Water Club indoor pool.

I look forward to seeing you all at Green Expo!

MAUREEN SHARPLES

**Executive Director, GCSANJ** 



Let's Connect



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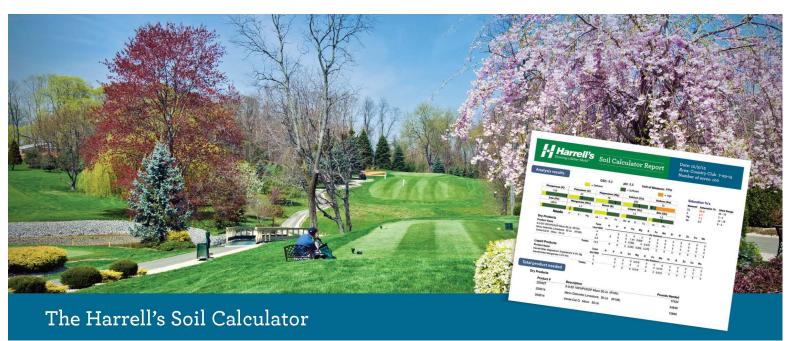
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## NEW JERSEY GREEN INDUSTRY COUNCIL HONORED WITH EXCELLENCE IN GRASSROOTS AWARD

The New Jersey Green Industry Council – along with their board of directors and members were honored during this year's 2021 RISE and CropLife America Joint Annual Meeting with RISE's 2021 Excellence in Grassroots Award for their extraordinary commitment to grassroots advocacy in the state capital. This award honors an individual, an allied association, or a group that demonstrates outstanding effort and contributions in furthering the mission, vision, and goals of RISE's advocacy through grassroots engagement.



(From left to right) Stephanie Jensen, Chair of RISE's Governing Board, Marney Stauffer, Vice-President of NJGIC Board and Account Manager at Corteva Agriscience, Megan Provost, President of RISE.



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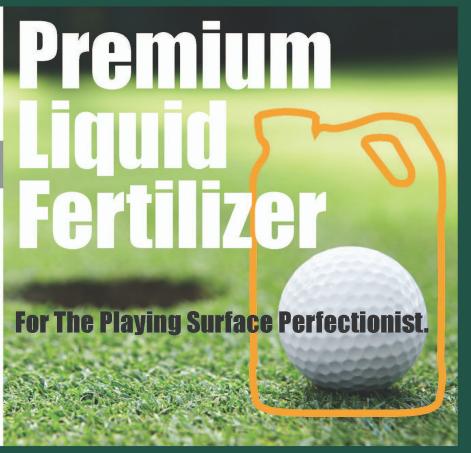
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**Rich Sweeney:** (609) 580-0402 rsweeney@plantfoodco.com



## MOVERS AND SHAKERS

After 36 years at Echo Lake Country Club, Chris Carson is retiring. His assistant, Brian Kahl is the new superintendent.

Kent Rickenbach is retiring from Merchantville Country Club. Doug Davis is the new superintendent.

Dave Hershey is retiring from Pennsauken Country Club. Eli Rodriguez is the new superintendent.

Steve Aspinall is the new golf course superintendent at Watchung Valley Golf Club.

Patrick Husby is the new superintendent at Due Process Stable.

## **GROWING FAMILIES**

Tyler Otero of Harrell's and his wife, Meredith, welcomed their daughter, Sienna Capri Otero on August 26th. Sienna is welcomed by her big brother, Charlie.



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- Harry Turner, Rams Hill Golf Course



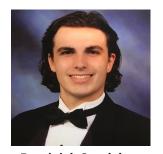


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## GCSANJ FOUNDATION SCHOLARSHIPS

The GCSANJ Foundation awarded \$18,000 in scholarships to 10 applicants this year. The applicants ranged from recent high school graduates to graduate school students. Many of the applicants earned a high GPA in challenging courses; they are leaders in their school or community and have committed to and excelled in extracurricular activities and sports. Their academic careers and integrity are impressive, and their parents should be proud of their accomplishments.



Dominick Candeloro
GCSANJ Presidents
Scholarship
Dominick is studying
exercise science at Sussex
County Community College.
He is the son of Michael
Candeloro, superintendent
at Flanders Valley GC.



Isabella Candeloro
John Farrell Scholarship
Isabella is studying nursing
at Rutgers University,
Newark campus. She is the
daughter of Michael
Candeloro, superintendent
at Flanders Valley GC.



Emily Gray
GCSANJ Foundation
Scholarship
Emily is pursuing a degree in
Sports Media & Analytics
with a minor in Business
Leadership at Virginia Tech.
Emily is the daughter of
Doug Gray of The Turf Trade.



Richard Krok

Ed Casey Scholarship

Richard Krok is studying
mining engineering at
University of Utah. He is
the son of Rick Krok of
Storr Tractor.



GCSANJ Foundation Scholarship Tim is studying mechanical engineering at Rutgers University. He is the son of Keith Kubik of Grass Roots Turf Products.

**Timothy Kubik** 



Stephanie Lane
Jim McNally Scholarship
Stephanie is studying new
media and digital design at
Fordham University. She is
the daughter of Rich Lane,
superintendent at
Hackensack CC.



Francesca Marra
John Anderson Scholarship
Francesca is pursuing a
Master's degree in College
Counseling & Student
Services at Kean University.
She is married to Chris Marra,
superintendent at
Maplewood CC.



GCSANJ Presidents
Scholarship
Isabel is pursuing a degree in
physical therapy at the
University of South Carolina.
She is the daughter of Fred
Parcells, superintendent at
Skyway GC.



Patrick Campbell Scholarship Tyler Seeton is studying Turfgrass Management at Rutgers University. He is the son of Troy Seeton of Noble Turf.



Ricardo Torres
Fran Owsik Scholarship
Ricardo is enrolled in the
Rutgers Professional Golf
Turf Management Two Year
Certificate Program.
He is the son of Jennifer
Torres, superintendent at
West Lake CC





## THE GCSANJ FOUNDATION RETURNS TO HUDSON FARM

By Shaun Barry







On August 31st, Hudson Farm hosted the GCSANJ Foundation for its third annual Sporting Clays Shoot and Pig Roast. This is one of the Foundation's fundraisers to help support its research commitments, scholarships, and benevolent efforts. This event was suggested by trustee, Les Carpenter. After retiring from Newton CC, Les was asked by the owner of Hudson Farm, Mr. Kellog, to join him at Hudson Farm and Les happily accepted.

This year was our third event at Hudson Farm, and we chose to move our number of shooters up from 40 to 60. The change slightly reduced our profits, but it gave more people the opportunity to make the event. We had 60 people signed up, but only 56 could make it that day. Those that could make it weren't disappointed. Keith Bennett organized registration and had a nice gift for everyone as they signed in.

We owe our sponsors a sincere thank you because without them the cost of the day would have been more than \$100 higher per shooter. I will list those sponsors below and please take the time and review their names. You will know most of them but you may find a company that supplies a service/product that you might need and can't find anywhere else.

We had dinner in a new building that gave us much more room than previous years and was needed because of the larger field. People enjoyed a beverage of their choice as they moved freely around an uncrowded room. Laughter was everywhere especially when they saw the results from the day's shooting on one of 5 big screen TVs because not everyone is a Davy Crockett. Watching and listening to that laughter it was apparent that everyone needed a chance to do something different and relax with friends in a social atmosphere.

When dinner was served I somehow ended up first in line. That was a first but I did leave some pig for everyone else. The food was so good, I was almost first in line for seconds, and no I didn't go for thirds but I thought about it. All I know is that I was thanking Grass Roots and Toro/ Storr Tractor for sponsoring this wonderful meal.

After dinner, the winning teams and shooters were announced. Frank Horan from Groff Tractor is still learning how to shoot but he is very good at picking friends that can shoot. His team has won twice and finished second once. They are excellent.

- 1. Groff Tractor: Frank Horan (24), Will Perrine (50), Alan Perrine (50) and Doug Sutphen (56). Their team average was 45.
- 2. Brooklake CC.: Scott Carpenter (39), Mark Brady (46), Cliff Schafer (46), and Clay ( quite an appropriate name for this event) B. Barba (35). Their team average was 41.5.

There was one shooter whose score needs to be noted. Bob Kalantari is from Fairway Green Inc, and he was part of Jeff Weld's Bayer team. Bob hit 57 out of his 60 shots. That is superior shooting.

Hudson Farm offers a free certificate for four shooters to return and enjoy a day of shooting. Keith and Les decided that everyone should have a chance to win this, so one name is picked randomly, and that winner was Nick Kelly from Fairmount CC. I am sure that that team will enjoy this.

This was a fun day and I hope we can accommodate even more people in 2022. Please consider attending and supporting the GCSANJ Foundation.

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Shaun Kennedy, Craig Kraft, Keith Bennett



Dylan McManus, Anthony Neumann, Keith Kubik, Michael Campbell



Phil Page



Les Carpenter, Mike Weber, Mike Paluzzi



Craig Lambert and Scott Bosetti



Will Keyser





## **RUTGERS TURFGRASS RESEARCH FIELD DAYS**



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Adam Moeller and Chris Carson



Jim Devaney and Phil Page



Ken Kubik and Kevin Doyle



Dr. James Murphy



Stephen Kay and Kevin Driscoll



Andy Berenty and Lance Ernst



Brian Bontemps, Rob Johnson, Mike Molchan



Steve McDonald and Tom Weinert

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Dennis Granahan



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## TAKE IT BACK TO THE FIRST TEE

Michael Brunelle, CGCS Through the Years



Mike and his dad at the 2009 LPGA Sybase Classic

Mike volunteered at the LPGA JAL Big Apple Classic at Wykagyl Country Club, where he met Steve Renzetti and was hired as an intern that summer. For his final internship, Steve encouraged him to look outside the metropolitan area. Mike interviewed all over the country and decided to intern at Oakland Hills CC in Bloomfield Hills, MI for Steve Cook.

## 1999



Mike and Scott Tretera

## 1991

Michael Brunelle grew up in Southampton, MA. At 13 years old, he began working on the grounds crew at Pine Grove Golf Club in Northampton, MA. His mother encouraged him to take the job to keep out of trouble.

## 1993

Mike's grandparents took him to watch his cousin compete in the U.S. Amateur at Champions Golf Club in Houston, TX. After declining an offer to caddy for his cousin, he was encouraged to check out an up-and-coming player named Tiger Woods. This trip was the first time Mike got to experience a higher-end, manicured golf course. He remembers thinking the fairways at Champions GC were like the greens at his course back home.

## 1995

Mike graduated high school and went on to study business and play baseball at Saint Michael's College.



## 1998

graduation.

After his first year, he realized he didn't see himself in a suit and tie and missed working on a golf course. Mike transferred to UMASS and enrolled in the four-year turf management program. His uncle knew Matt Lapinski, who set Mike up with his first internship at Elmwood CC in Ardsley, NY with superintendent, Scott Tretera.

1994

Mike began working on the

Golf Club in South Hadley,

MA. He worked there until

grounds crew at The Orchards

## 2001

After graduation, Mike was the Assistant-in-Training at The Old Collier Golf Club in Naples, FL. It was the first grow-in of 100% paspalum. After eight months, Mike wanted a change. As a true New Englander, the South Florida heat didn't agree with him, and he missed the rush of the busy golf season in the Northeast.

## 2001

Mike called Steve Renzetti, who was at Quaker Ridge GC. The timing was perfect because his first assistant, Ken Benoit, was leaving to be the superintendent at GlenArbor GC. Steve hired Mike to be a co-assistant. Mike wanted to expand his experience in mechanical operations, so he spent a lot of time in the shop during the winter. In June, their mechanic resigned, and Mike unexpectedly honed his new skills to get them through the summer months.

## 2002

Once a mechanic was hired, Mike came out of the shop, and the team dynamic was different. The staff treated him like a second assistant, and he knew he needed to make a change. He went to work at Bedford Golf and Tennis Club as the first assistant for Bob Neilsen.

## 2013

Became a certified golf course superintendent.

Mike and Jenni welcomed their first

child, Grace.



## 2014

Mike was elected to the Board of Directors of the MetGCSA. He served as Advertising Chair, Education Chair, Secretary, Treasurer and is currently Vice President.

## 2016

**UMCC** hosted the US Senior Open Qualifier.



Mike with his twins, Emmy and Norah.

## 2012

Mike had to hire a new management team. He brought the team structure they used at Trump Bedminster to ÚMCC. He gave each assistant nine holes to manage as superintendents. This strategy has served him well, and many of his assistants have moved on to become superintendents.

## 2011

Mike married his wife, Jenni.

## 2010

UMCC began a two-year golf course renovation which included a new irrigation system and new shop.

## 2015

Mike and Jenni welcome their second child, Tedy.

Mike enrolled in Penn State to pursue a Master's in Professional Studies in Turfgrass Management.



The Brunelle Family

## 2009

Mike missed working out on the golf course. He saw the ad for Upper Montclair CC and decided to pursue it. He worked with David Shaw from Country Club Advisors and was hired as the Director of Grounds.

## 2017

Mike and Jenni welcomed twins, Emmy and Norah.

Mike is elected to the Board of Directors of the New Jersey Turfgrass Association.

UMCC hosted the US Amateur Championship Qualifier.

## **Present**

Mike and his family recently moved to Sparta, NJ. With four kids, his hobbies are on the back burner, but he still golfs when he can. He loves spending his spare time with his wife and kids.

## 2007

Mike was in pursuit of a superintendent job. He recalls sending over 75 resumes. He interviewed with Greg Nicoll at Trump National Bedminster and got the superintendent job on the Old Course. Tom Pepe was Mike's assistant but quickly moved up to work with Tyler Otero on the New Course as the grow-in superintendent. Greg Eisner was then hired as Mike's assistant.

He became a GCSANJ member.

The corporate life wore him down, and

UMCC hosted the LPGA Sybase Classic.

## 2007

After seven months, Greg Nicoll left to work for Harrell's, and Mike became the Director of Grounds. He was always a working hands-on superintendent who now had to learn the business side of the corporate world to succeed in this position. Mike reflects on this time as a great learning experience that helped him build a dependable, strong team.



Tom Pepe, Mike Brunelle, and Tyler Otero



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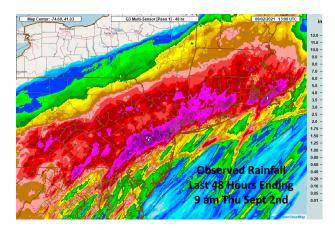
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During the last week of August and early September, the remnants of a hurricane caused serious damage to New Jersey, including significant damage to multiple golf courses across the state. While hurricanes have a history of causing destruction and losses throughout New Jersey, the remnants of Hurricane Ida caused noteworthy damages to the interior portions of the state with a combination of strong winds, flooding downpours, and multiple tornadoes. Making landfall in Louisiana as a Category 2 Hurricane, the remains of the storm passed through the northeast two days later with a powerful fury. The National Weather Service confirmed five tornadoes in Pennsylvania and New Jersey, including an EF3 tornado near Mullica Hill, New Jersey. With winds associated with those tornadoes ranging between sixty-five and onehundred-thirty-five miles an hour.

Observed rainfall in New Jersey ranged from 4" to almost 8" of rain, causing creeks and streams to rapidly overflow, resulting in severe damage.

After several days of clean-up, the storm left millions of people without power, roads destroyed, and billions



of dollars in damage to the Philadelphia, New Jersey, and New York region. It was reported that 40 people also lost their lives throughout the area.

The impact on New Jersey's golf course superintendents was severe and widespread. Golf course superintendents throughout the state are dealing with major damage to not only their golf courses, but the bridges, irrigation systems, and course structures.

## The Bedens Brook Golf Club

James Bryson, golf course superintendent at Bedens Brook Golf Club in Hopewell, was in the process of recovering from a previous storm when Hurricane Henri struck. "After Hurricane Henri, we had significant damage to the second green and most bunkers throughout the property," James recounted, "and after Hurricane Ida, we had significant damage to all of the bunkers and five holes that were completely underwater." The damage from those storms was severe and impacted the golf course, "Hurricane Henri and Ida put our second and fourth hole out of play for the remainder of the season while we rebuilt and started the grow-in," James stated. Damage was not only isolated to the golf course as a "fifty-five by eighteen-foot steel bridge was carried fifty yards downstream," Bryson recounted of the damage.

With a Master Plan developed in 2015 with Andrew Green, Labar Golf Renovations, and Michael Kuhn & Associates, Bedens Brook quickly moved into action to repair the golf course while moving forward with

planned renovations. "We were able to rebuild our second and fourth hole in correlation with our Master Plan that Andrew Green proposed in 2015," he added, "with an optimistic mindset, these storms helped get the Master Plan started. Our membership is very excited to be able to play these holes in the Spring of 2022."

He credits the hard work of his crew for weathering through the damage, "Our assistant superintendents, JP Newman and RJ Blanchard, did a fantastic job of leading the crew with the clean-up process. Our equipment manager, Shawn Towne, helped with rebuilding bridges and modifying equipment to get mowers across bridges to holes that were not accessible after the storms."

As Bedens Brook continues to recover, James and his crew continue to see reminders of the storm throughout, "The damage will take months to fix as we are reminded daily by the lingering debris, down fences, and eroded creek banks."









## **Maplewood Country Club**

Chris Marra, superintendent of Maplewood Country Club, had only been on the job for five months when Hurricane Ida caused the most damage the course and club have seen in decades. Although new to the job, Chris is no stranger to MCC; he worked as Mark Miedler's first assistant for two years. With half of the course low-lying with a creek running through it, flooding seemed inevitable as the club prepared for Hurricane Henri. Following the storm, a few fairways flooded as expected, and there was turf damage due to the heat immediately following the storm.

A week later, when Hurricane Ida arrived, Chris again prepared for more flooding. Chris did not expect the severe destruction and infrastructure damage the course and clubhouse suffered after the storm had passed. "I was shocked. Knowing the property, I knew we would flood, but I never expected what I saw. It looked like a scene from a movie," he recalled speaking with the GCSANJ Executive Director, Maureen Sharples. The golf course took on significant damage by losing four out of six bridges. A substantial amount flooded, including eight greens and eight acres of fairways. The storm was so strong that a few cars washed up onto the 12th hole. "I quickly had to start prioritizing things because the damage was so widespread that we would not have been able to pack all these issues into one day," Marra said.

Damage was not limited to the golf course as the clubhouse basement flooded, including their grill room and pro shop. The maintenance shop took on about four feet of water that stored their equipment.

Chris commends his team and their knowledge and expertise of the property as they quickly got a game plan together. Chris and his crew were able to open the course a week later with a nine-hole routing at the drier top of the golf course. Over time, additional holes were added as they were repaired and recovered. As of mid-October, MCC had 17 holes open. As one of the more severely damaged holes, the third fairway needed to be reseeded due to a foot and a half of silt on the fairway from the river.









## "Being Wendell"

Out of all the news of storm damages and impacted golf courses, a positive story exists. Wendell Beakley, of The Turf Trade, went above and beyond to help his local community, where he lived less than a mile from an area devastated by storms. "Being Wendell," as Shaun Barry shared with the editor, "he went to the local dairy farm that lost over 100 cows to try and help out. When he got there, the dead cows had been removed, and a private company was installing telephone poles, so they could have power to continue running the farm. He probably spent 3-4 hours there helping to clean up." Days after the storm, Wendell continued to help as, "He [went] to the neighborhood that suffered so much damage. He [had] his chainsaw to help clear trees from the roads and driveways and properties. His initial goal was to help an elderly couple clear their driveway. He had never seen any destruction like this."

## Damage Not Limited to Hurricanes - Copper Hill County Club

While many GCSANJ members felt the effects of Hurricanes Henri and Ida, Pat Dolan, superintendent at Copper Hill Country Club's tumultuous weather season started on July 18th, when a severe thunderstorm hit Hunterdon County and the surrounding areas. Copper Hill CC lost 30 trees from the 60-70 miles per hour winds and got six inches of rain, resulting in week-long course closure. The clubhouse and golf shop staff joined Pat's crew to clean up the debris, covering about 2/3 of the golf course. Pat was fortunate enough to have 60-70 members volunteer to help the clean-up efforts, even showing up with their own rakes. A new member

recognized a need for quick communication after a storm like this and volunteered to be Pat's contact person to start a phone chain for clean-up efforts amongst the membership. This strategy came in handy when Hurricane Ida hit.

Copper Hill Country Club's course consists of 30% wetlands, so Pat and his team expected flooding when Henri and Ida hit. "Hurricane Henri was the worst flooding I have seen in the past ten years; Ida was the worst flooding I have ever seen here." Pat has been at Copper Hill for 23 years, and after Hurricane Floyd in 1999, they installed three pump station panels above the flood line from Floyd. After Ida hit, all three panels were submerged, and the water level was 6 feet higher than the Hurricane Floyd flood line.

Entering the post-golf season of 2021, superintendents in New Jersey can breathe a sigh of relief from the immense pressure and work created by two hurricanes and multiple severe storms. Thanks to the dedication of these superintendents, their staff, and the support of their golfers, courses were able to take action and quickly get players back onto their courses.













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## TECH TIPS 36 55 NAVIGATING THE ROUGH SEAS OF SOCIAL MEDIA

Early in my days of using social media, people who recognized me from my Instagram or Twitter would say, "Oh, you're the guy who runs and drinks beer." Unfortunately, it was an accurate description of my social media profile as I was running half marathons and sharing my craft beer adventures, taking photos along the way. Thankfully, after eight years on Instagram, I have received more attention for my drone photos, golf course photos, and my dog, and far less for my craft beer exploration. While we think that everyone sees the whole picture of our life, social media has a way of optimistically filtering, and thanks to algorithms, focusing the content that we want to see. We only post the good and people tend not to post the bad stuff in their life unless they are in the mood to share their misery or complain. Combine that with the fact that everyone has an opinion that can be shared from the protection of distant

conversation and social media can be a battlefield. I feel I have learned a thing or two about posting content on

If you don't want it on the front page of a newspaper, don't share it on social media.

Posts on social media can as visible as a bulletin.

social media, and below are some tips that I feel are helpful.

Posts on social media can as visible as a bulletin board on the side of a busy hallway or a billboard, pretty much anyone can see it. While most are harmless, posts can contain private information, location data, or even something compromising.

- Be Professional. I have never been a proponent of writing "Views Are My Own" in social media bios. Yes, they are your own views, but you still represent who you work for or the community that you serve, even if you are speaking on a personal basis. If what you are doing on social media is not in line with the company you work with or you are gaining negative attention from it, there is a good chance that you might not want to post it.
- Remember who might see it. I always remember what my middle school principal said: "When you're out of school, you still represent your school." That same principle applies to our places of work and our community. Your employees, coworkers, members, owners, managers, and industry partners can see what you post, and you represent those parties in some capacity.

- **People have opinions.** Everyone has opinions on the internet with little reservation to hold them back. Comments and replies to posts are combat zones of differing opinions with limited common ground. Engage people in conversation but keep it hospitable. If you feel the conversation is getting aggressive or uncomfortable, don't respond or change your privacy settings. Be prepared for people who are looking for a fight.
- Respect privacy. I took a drone photo of a staff member walk-mowing a green and after sharing the photo with the associate, he said to me, "It's ok if you share that one." At that moment, it had never occurred to me to check to see if he was ok if I posted the photo on Twitter, Facebook, or Instagram. If you are going to share something like that or tag a person in a post, check with them to make sure they are comfortable with it. On some turf social media groups on Facebook, group members share photos of associates who have accidentally placed a mower in a pond or broken a piece of equipment. Even if meant as a warning to be careful, shaming an employee even in a minor accident is unprofessional.

- It's out there... FOREVER. It may not be out there for all of eternity, but there is a very good chance something that you post will drift on the digital waves for the remainder of time. While you may delete a post, if something really offended someone or it was something that people shared, it may exist beyond your ability to remove it.
- Take a moment and review. Look at what you are about to post or comment on. Is this something that you want everyone to see? Is this how you want to be represented? Take a pause and review what you are about to send out.
- The minefield of politics / religion / sex. We
  are now not limited to those three topics in our
  highly reactive world and some topics are a tightrope walk. It's extremely challenging to navigate
  those topics without angering or insulting
  someone and the best course of action is to steer
  clear. These topics are currently swirled into an
  explosive mixture that can generate a lot of
  energy and explode out of your control.

- If in doubt, change your setting to "private"

  Twitter, Instagram, and Facebook all have settings to change the privacy of your postings to limit it to your followers or close friends. If you feel more comfortable sharing content inside of your smaller circle of people, this may your best route.
- It's not all arguments. The world golf course agronomy community is a well-knit group on social media and is an excellent source of information, ideas, and entertainment. Engage with our peers around the world and continue to bond and share information with turf managers.

Donovan Maguigan is the golf course superintendent at Springdale Golf Club in Princeton and can be found on Twitter/Instagram at @McBuckeyeAT



## QUESTIONS WITH RYAN TUXHORN

By Maureen Sharples

Somerset Hills Country Club golf course superintendent, Ryan Tuxhorn recently sat down with The Greenerside to discuss his career.

- 1. Tell us a little about where you are from? I grew up in Bloomsbury, NJ, which is about 25 miles from Somerset Hills CC. It's a small, quaint town.
- 2. How long have you worked at Somerset Hills CC? I have been at Somerset Hills for 13 years.

## 3. Why did you become a superintendent?

When I was 12, I started my own lawn mowing business and eventually went to work for my friend's dad, who owned a landscaping company. After working for him, I wanted to study landscape architecture. I liked working outside and the science behind it all, but he encouraged me to look into turfgrass management.

I went to Delaware Valley University and earned a 4year degree in Turf Management. I didn't step foot on a golf course until I interned at Wyoming Valley CC after my sophomore year of college. The superintendent spoke at my school, and I applied for the position. It was a smaller-budget course, but I gained a lot of great experience.

## 4. What are the unique aspects of the course at Somerset Hills?

There is a lot of contrast from the front nine to the back nine. I was brought in to dry the course out and provide firmer and faster conditions. As a result, we lean more on playability than aesthetics. We like providing a "bouncy" golf course.



## 5. Tell us about your family.

I have been married to my wife, Kristina, for 14 years. We have a son, Carter. He's ten years old. Kristina owns a dance studio in Bucks County that has 360 students. Her studio recently won a "Best of Bucks County Award" for the second year in a row. Outside of the summer, she probably has a busier schedule than me.

## 6. What are your interests outside of work?

Most of my interests outside of work are spending time with my family, including going on trips, fishing, and skiing. I help coach my son's baseball team in the spring and fall. He also competes in America Ninja Warrior competitions, which I always try to attend.

## 7. What is your favorite aspect of working on a golf course?

Like many other superintendents, I like being outside and the physical work of the job. One of my favorite aspects is the comradery of working on a team. It's rewarding to achieve goals as a group and seeing my younger staff grow into good managers.



I love the science of it as well and the challenge of figuring out a problem. The weather patterns are constantly changing and it is fun to evolve our agronomic programming with it.

8. What are your biggest challenges at Somerset Hills? The obvious answer is staffing. It's challenging to find younger turf professionals today. As a result, we haven't had interns in a few years. I have had to evolve my staffing strategies because you can have the greatest plan in the world, but you need people to perform it.

My biggest fear is becoming complacent. We have a very appreciative and supportive membership, and we want to continue to exceed their expectations. I have been in this position for 13 years, and as each year passes, it becomes more challenging to raise the bar. I am always looking for a new idea to optimize our program, embrace technology, or improve my management style.

## 9. What change would you most like to see to your operation?

One of the claims to fame of Somerset Hills is that it stuck to its original form. Through the years, they have exposed what was there with the architect rather than renovate it. We have the original set of Tillinghast greens except for the 10th hole. It was changed 50+ years ago from par 4 to a par 5. The club and I have wanted to resolve that, and we have discussed it in depth. I have been working with Brian Slawnik of Renaissance Golf since I started, and it has always been a question if we should restore or renovate that hole.

## 10. What does a typical summer day look like for you as a superintendent?

I arrive 45 minutes before the crew. I don't like to sit around, so I usually get on a mower or start the course set up until the crew gets in and someone can take over for me. I'm a working superintendent, so I like to get out there and see the course and work with the crew to help the operation. My assistants rotate managing the team, and I am there helping guide them as needed.

11. Early in your career, you moved up the ranks at Merion Golf Club. How did you get your start there? Paul Latshaw Sr. was a guest speaker at a Delaware Valley Turf Club meeting. I asked him how to get an internship at a more prominent club, and he mentioned Merion. I was utterly clueless and told him I didn't know of it. He connected me with Matt Shaffer. I started as a graduate intern and moved my way up the ranks to the superintendent of the East course and then the West course.

12. What did you learn from your time at Merion? Matt Shaffer taught me a lot about championship conditions. People often throw around the words firm and fast, but he programmed us to achieve those conditions daily and to the extreme. We were never worried about how green it was. We wanted manicured ruggedness. He would always say, "you can train grass." We would toughen it up by finding ways to reduce water, which is now the focus of my agronomic plan. Everything revolves around water, drainage during wet times, and agronomic scheming minimizing the amount of water that needs to be applied.

13. Who is your mentor in this industry, and why? I don't have one mentor but rather multiple people who have influenced me throughout the years. First, my parents, blue-collar factory workers, always had a strong work ethic and pushed me to attend college. Matt Shaffer, who at the time seemed difficult or intense, but I realized he was preparing and teaching me to be the best superintendent I could be. Jamie Kapes was ahead of me at Merion and was very supportive and willing to help me out. I have also been fortunate to work with excellent Greens Chairmen and Club Presidents who have helped me develop and succeed at Somerset Hills.



## 14. What has been the most trying experience of your career?

In 2014, we were hit hard with winterkill, which I never experienced before. When it comes to winterkill, you get asked questions but can't provide a good answer. It's so unexpected. Once we figured out a game plan, the membership was very supportive. We ended up coming out of it very well, but that first realization that four greens were going to be closed at the start of the season was a gut check I will never forget.

A close second was the 2005 U.S. Amateur at Merion. We worked 15-hour days for 70 days straight. It was physically and mentally exhausting but in the end, it was very rewarding.



## 15. List four things we don't know about you.

1. I'm a Detroit Lions fan. I was a big Barry Sanders fan as a kid, and I have stuck with the team ever since. They haven't won a playoff game since I became a fan. My friends in the industry always joke that I have had the best luck in my career. All my bad luck is wrapped up in the Lions. If they ever win a Super Bowl, my career may be in trouble.

- 2. I'm extremely sarcastic, almost to a flaw.
- 3. My crew is my second family; I care about them a lot.
- 4. I really enjoy understanding how fertility can affect your soil which then, in turn, affects the turf. Similar to this, I have a keen interest in nutrition and understanding how different foods and eating styles affect your body in many regards.











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One talking point that has been a lead topic at every site visit I can remember is labor. In the early years, it would typically revolve around the quality of the crew. Now, of course, discussion leans more towards volume. Are you able to find enough labor?

Forward-thinking people are undertaking creative ways to solve those issues, and enterprising individuals are blazing trails to assist others. One recent site visit reminded me that the oldest marketing strategy may still be a very effective method. While word of mouth may work for some, would it work for you?

I was delighted to hear Chris Johnson at Bellport CC tell me that his labor was in good shape. For this to occur on the south coast of Long Island was truly surprising to me. I know so many superintendents on the Island struggle to find labor.

Johnson explained to me that a 2020 hire had recommended employment at the club to a family member. She was brought on this year and was a great fit!

If I approached a friend of mine, one of your employees, and asked if they are hiring. I didn't receive the aforementioned information; instead, I got the opposite. Pay is ok, no flexibility to handle personal items, some people are nice, but all I do is string trim and rake bunkers. If you have tried to utilize current employees to fill out your staff, they may indeed have already given you a heads-up about your operation. If it worked, you might have found a great mix of the items employees are looking for. If your word-of-mouth initiative wasn't successful, understanding why could help grow your crew/business.

This area of the Greenerside has expanded on employee feedback before. The staff performing daily tasks are often the best resources for ideas to maximize efficiency. We have highlighted off-season strategic planning and how building a plan with the entire staff can build ownership in those new-innovative ideas. Consider utilizing your best possible sales staff, your current employees, to ensure your facility and employment opportunities are the best they could possibly be. If your employees are seeking to bring friends or loved ones to your team, you know you have built an employee package and inclusive culture that everyone at the facility can be proud of.

Check out the resources area for information to help: https://www.gcsaa.org/resources/research-information/secure/communication





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How to participate

Superintendents should check their email inboxes or spam filters for an email sent on GCSAA's behalf by the National Golf Foundation (NGF) for their individual

access to the survey. The data from the survey will provide much-needed facts that enable GCSAA to advocate on behalf of the profession and industry to maintain the resources needed to ensure success. Without the data, we can't provide the facts behind what we say about golf and the superintendent's professionalism and environmental stewardship. If you did not receive the email, you can still access the survey by visiting gcsaa.org/environment/golfcourse-environmental-profile.



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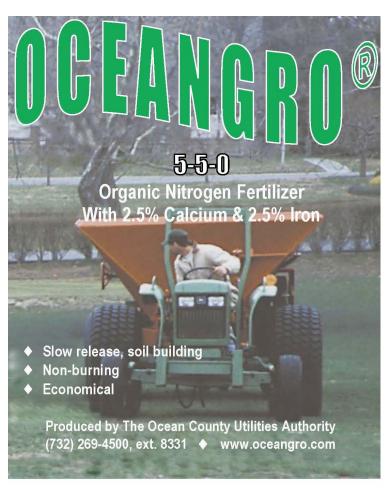
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Will Bowden

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## To access the webinars, visit gcsaa.org/education/my-learning-hub







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"I'd like a front-row seat to Jack Nicklaus in his prime and Tiger Woods in his prime so that we could settle the debate once and for all. And my brother, Mack, so I wouldn't come in last, and I would have someone to share the memory with."

-Nick Adams, Helena

## "Who would be in your dream golf foursome and why?"

"I'm a presidential nut (no matter what party), so I'm going to say Presidents Bush (W), Clinton, and Obama. In the real world, I'd choose my dad and brother, so to make them part of the day, they can caddie for us."

-Todd Raisch, The Ridgewood Country Club

"Michael Jordan: Have to have the GOAT.

**Phil Mickelson:** One of the greatest golf swings of all time and great for oncourse banter.

**Bill Murray:** One of my favorite comedians/actors and has a passion for the game of golf.

**Location:** Augusta National, Pine Valley, Cypress Point, or National Golf Links...flip a coin!"

-Chris Krno, Francis A. Byrne Golf Course

**"Bob Feller:** Cleveland Indians pitcher in 1936-1956. I had the pleasure of talking to Bob Feller several times during spring training games growing up. He always had the best stories about the Bronx Bombers of the '30s, World War 2, and life experiences in general. I would love to hear more of those stories.

**Arnold Palmer (as my caddie):** He was the first golfer to write me back as a kid. I always loved his game and attitude towards life.

**Otto Graham:** QB of the Cleveland Browns last time they were a dynasty. I would love to hear about what a winning Cleveland Browns football team feels like because I haven't seen one in a while.

**My Grandpa:** He got me obsessed with this game at an early age. I'm sure he would be proud of me for continuing my professional career in the game of golf, even though it wasn't on the playing side of the game."

-Brian O'Malley, Rivervale Country Club

"Young Tom Morris, Bobby Jones, and Ben Hogan. They were the best of their eras, and it would be great to compare their games with the modern players." "My dream foursome would be Derek Jeter, Jorge Posada, and Paul O'Neill. Those were good years for me as a young Yankees fan."

-Ken Anson, Trump National Philadelphia

-Shaun Barry, GCSANJ Foundation

"Mike Ditka, Jim McMahon, Walter Payton. They are the members and leaders of the best football team in history. I would love to learn how they got the whole team to play as one."

-Fred Parcells, Skyway Golf Course

"If my father were alive, it would be him, my son, and Jack Nicklaus. My father and I watched Jack Nicklaus most weekends to get me interested in golf, and later in life, my father wished he could've golfed with my son, Marc. So in my mind, that would've been a great round of golf."

-lan Kunesch, Soldier Hill Golf Course



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