



THE NEWSLETTER

March-April 2021

of the **Golf Course Superintendents Association of New England, Inc.**

Sponsors and administrators of the Troll-Dickinson Scholarship Fund – Awarded yearly to deserving Turf Management Students.

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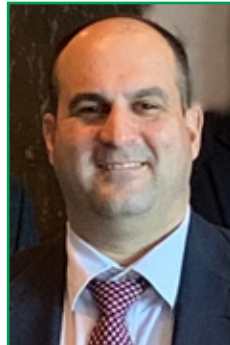
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President's Message by Peter J. Rappoccio



Dear Member,

I hope the season has started for all of you in a great fashion! Spring has certainly come quick with this warm dry weather, which has been great for getting things done on the course so early! I am sure many of you have opened already or are in the process of doing so. I know at my club we have been busy since opening day and it looks that way for the near future!

Our golf chair, Bob Dembek, has a great schedule of meetings and events this season and we are excited to get together as best we can. I hope many of you will be able to make one or more meetings this year. Our first one is at the end of the month, the Bear Cup that we cohost with our friends on the cape. I am looking forward to a great event and hope to see many of you there! Thank you to all who have volunteered to host us this season!

There are many great things happening in the association this year. I would like to thank all of the board members for their commitment to serve our membership. In particular, there is a lot happening with Government Relations and our ever-changing landscape of rules and regulations. Eric Richardson has been doing a great job staying in front of many issues, which will be challenges for our industry.

Over the winter, the Massachusetts BMP document came out; I hope everyone had a chance to look at it. This document will be a good resource for industry professionals especially when dealing with legislators or interested parties who may not be familiar with what best management practices on a golf course are.

I am hopeful 2021 will be a great year for golf, for our industry, and for all of us personally as well. I hope that the effects of 2020 are behind us and brighter days are ahead. I think we are getting closer to normal see, which is a welcome change. I certainly wish everyone great success in the 2021 season and hopefully you are off to a great start this spring.

Regards,
Peter

Divot Drift

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

Mike Brace, Affiliate, The Air Traffic Controllers

Jacob Disick, Assistant Superintendent, Essex County Club

Scott Lynch, Assistant Superintendent, William Devine Golf Course

Nicholas MacDuffie, Affiliate, The Air Traffic Controllers

John Raikos, Assistant Superintendent, Vesper Country Club

The Air Traffic Controllers, Friend of the Association

Turf & Golf Services, Friend of the Association

CONGRATULATIONS TO

Dan Brandt who has taken the position of Superintendent at Cyprian Keyes Golf Club. Dan was formerly Superintendent at Shaker Hills Country Club. Jason Paradise, former Superintendent at Cyprian Keyes moved on to Clark University.

Robert "Chip" Fitzgerald on his selection as Superintendent at Renaissance. Chip was formerly Assistant Superintendent at National Golf Links of America and was an Assistant Member of the Association.

Willem Geldenhuys on his selection as Superintendent at Nabnasset Lake Country Club. Willem was formerly Assistant Superintendent at Vesper Country Club and an Assistant Member of the Association.

Kevin Corvino on becoming Assistant Superintendent at George Wright Golf Club. Kevin was formerly Superintendent at Wayland Country Club.

Back Issues!



Past issues of the NEWSLETTER are available using this link: <http://bit.ly/GCSANEnewsletters>.

As in the past, *The Newsletter* continues to invite Affiliate members to submit a press release about new personnel, new products or a company bio. We will print each and every release **free of charge**. This is a great way to advertise for free. Who said nothing in this world is free? Free advertising to better your company, wow what an offer.



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Thoughts From Your Executive Director by Don Hearn

One of the benefits of being a GCSA of New England member is the opportunity to obtain a GHIN handicap. Our friends at Mass Golf make this possible. If you would like to obtain a GHIN handicap, please contact me at donhearn@gcsane.org. There is no cost to you. It's a benefit of your membership.

I don't know if it comes with age or being lucky to not have had problems, but skin cancer is something I've become more aware of. During my many days spent as a younger person on the golf course I didn't consider using sunscreen. Nah, that stuff was for people who sit on the beach all day. Well, I've been lucky to have only a few small areas that required any attention. All, thankfully, were minor issues and when removed caused no more problems. Now, when I go outside for an extended time, I wear either a long sleeve shirt and hat or apply sunscreen and wear a hat. Since I've been doing this, I've had no incidence of sun related skin problems. I'm sure some people look at me wearing a long sleeve shirt during a sunny and warm, even hot, day and wonder – "is he really that cold?" Think what you want, but not being a slave to fashion allows me to pay no attention to those who think it strange to wear a long sleeve shirt during hot weather. Better to be safe than sorry. Please – use sunscreen or keep your skin covered when you expect to be outside.

Enrollment in the 2021 Partnership Promotion Program (PPP) remains strong with 33 companies enrolled in this year's program as of April 7. The companies that have offered their support at this enhanced level are listed elsewhere in this issue. Please keep in mind that these companies and their representatives offer their support to help you and our Association succeed. Remember to support those who support you. In addition to those in the PPP are the many who offer their support at the Friend of the Association and Affiliate Member level. These companies and their representatives stand behind you to offer their expertise and support when you have problems and try extremely hard to provide solutions to them. We're lucky to be part of an industry that cares about helping each other when solutions are needed. Don't forget – no one is an island. As long as all is going well, it's easy to believe you have all the answers, golfers love what you do and how you do it, home life is great and everyone is healthy. There's not much to worry about. That's correct. Not much to worry about until the time arrives when there is much to worry about. Don't be cocky. If you haven't hit a bad stretch yet, you're lucky and you have my best wishes to keep it that way. When the bad stretch does hit make sure you left some room on your island for others to lend a hand. You'll realize just how helpful others can be.



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March-April 2021



Thoughts continued

As I write this, the future of our monthly meetings and events looks like they will be taking place. There might be some changes from what had been business as usual, but for the most part it seems like “back to normal” isn’t far away. Because of last year’s cancellations some events had to change dates. This year the Bear Cup host will be the GCSA of Cape Cod rather than the GCSA of New England. Due to some schedule changes last year the Cape has asked us to switch this year’s hosting, which we gladly did. We’re all in this business together and whatever helps others, helps us. To keep up to date with event dates you can access the confirmed events on the Association’s website at gcsane.org. Click on the EVENTS tab.

One of the most annoying things that really bothered me during my days as a superintendent was an employee arriving late. I’m sure you have experienced it. The most challenging aspect of the problem was – when will the person show up? If you received a call or a text at least you would know if the person was on the way and you could plan based on the estimated arrival time. If there was no call or notice of any kind it was impossible to know if the employee would be five minutes or five hours late or never show up at all. The following article offers some ideas you might be able to incorporate in your plan to help with the problem.

What To Do When an Employee Always Shows Up Late *Kelly Spors*

One day, it’s 10 minutes. The next, it’s 30—or 50.

Whether it’s bad traffic, oversleeping or caring for a sick pet, employees offer up lots of different excuses when they show up late for work. As the manager, you may overlook it the first time. But what if it becomes a pattern?

Employee lateness is a widespread problem. A 2016 survey by CareerBuilder found that one in four employees admits to showing up late for work once a month, whereas 13 percent of employees say it’s a weekly occurrence. Managers say they hear all sorts of excuses: “A black bear entered my carport and decided to take a nap on the hood of my car.” “I was detained by Homeland Security.” “My hair caught on fire from my blow dryer.”

Employees who rarely arrive late to work should probably be given the benefit of the doubt—as there are valid reasons for being late. (Tires really do go flat!) But it’s generally in a manager’s best interest to confront employees who frequently—or always—show up late.

Late employees can reduce productivity. Moreover, it hurts the morale and work ethic of other employees who might resent that the late arrivers aren’t getting called out or disciplined for their lateness. It might even encourage other employees to start showing up late to work if they see no consequence for the bad behavior.

But don’t despair. You have many opportunities to boost the odds that employees will show up when they’re supposed to. Here are ways to discourage employees from arriving late, as well as how to deal with those who regularly do:

Use a time clock.

It may seem old-fashioned or like you’re micromanaging, but a time clock holds people accountable. It not only records when employees check in and out for the workday, but it also lets them know that you know when they come and go.

Employees will feel more compelled to show up on time if they know they’re being monitored.

Companies can buy a physical time clock that requires employees to punch in and out each day.

Schedule the staff meeting and work assignments first thing in the day.

Even if it’s a quick five-minute “check-in,” if employees know they are required to attend an all-hands-on-deck meeting with the boss first thing in the workday, they will have good reason to show up on time—or face questions about why they were absent.

Be clear and consistent about the rules.

If you’re not actively communicating that you expect employees to show up on time, they may think you don’t care if they’re late.

Make sure the employee handbook spells out the expectations about work hours and arriving on time and remind employees of those expectations on a regular basis, such as in staff meetings. Also, make sure the rules are enforced consistently across all employees—or you could be accused of favoritism or unfair treatment.

Having an established way to track lateness—such as using a time clock—can help ensure that consistency.

Require phone calls or texts.

Make it a requirement that employees who are running more than 15 minutes late must call into the office or send a text. Employees are less likely to show up late if they know they have to discuss it with someone.

Institute consequences for lateness.

Depending on your workplace culture and Federal and state employment laws, you may want to create penalties for employees who show up late to work more than, say, once per month. It could start with a warning letter or email

You might consider docking employees’ pay for tardiness but you would have to tread carefully. Many states allow employers to dock the pay of employees classified as nonexempt—those who qualify for overtime pay when they work more than 40 hours per week—as long as those employees are given advance written notice of



penalties. Salaried employees classified as exempt—meaning they do not qualify for overtime pay—cannot generally have their pay docked under the federal Fair Labor Standards Act rules.

Also, an employee's paycheck cannot generally be docked if their hourly wage would effectively drop below their state's minimum wage by doing so.

Of course, any time you create penalties, there can be concerns of unfair treatment. Make sure the consequences of tardiness are spelled out clearly in advance in writing, such as in the employee handbook. Then carefully and consistently enforce those rules as required by law.

Make punctuality part of the employee performance review and compensation.

If being on time is essential to doing a good job, make it official by evaluating employees for their timeliness in their annual performance review. Perhaps even make it a performance goal for employees who frequently have trouble showing up on time.

By formalizing it as part of the review process, there should be no question that it's an important part of their performance evaluation.

Timeliness can also be factored into their compensation. Consider tying punctuality to the raises or bonuses. For example, employees who are never late may receive an extra bonus amount,

whereas those who are late more than once per month or week receive little or no bonus.

Create a reward program for punctual employees.

Offer rewards—whether an extra day off or a \$50 gift certificate to a popular restaurant—for employees who show up on time to work every day for, say, six months straight. This reinforces that being punctual is a key workplace goal.

However, you will need to track punctuality carefully if you're offering such rewards to avoid being accused of errors or favoritism.

Talk directly to the persistently late employee.

Once you've tried hands-off approaches to encouraging punctuality, you may still have an employee or two who pushes the envelope on punctuality. In these situations, you need a more direct approach.

Sit down privately with the employee. Let them know you've noticed they've been regularly late to work and ask them to explain why. (It's possible they have a personal reason, such as caring for a child before the school day—in which case it may make sense to discuss setting a different work schedule for that employee or creating another workaround.)

Stress to the employee the importance of punctuality to the business' success and to being part of the team. Remind them that employees are required to arrive to work on time.

Ask them to come up with an action plan for arriving to work on time. Rather than enforcing penalties, it can be more effective to make the employee responsible for correcting their behaviors. They know better than you do why they are persistently late to work, so they are better positioned to find a solution.

Ultimately—if all other strategies fail—you may have to consider taking more severe measures with an employee who doesn't respect your punctuality rules. If the employee underperforms due to their lateness and continues to show up late, you might consider whether that employee is worth keeping around altogether.

Remember that a manager's job is keeping employees motivated to work hard—and an employee who consistently breaks the rules is only going to hurt morale.

This article was edited to be more specific to golf course employees.

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Thoughts *continued*

Many times when I write a sympathy note I stumble over what are the appropriate words to use and what am I trying to say that makes sense to the recipient. Maybe you have a similar situation. With this in mind I've attached an article with the hope it will help with the problem.

Do you ever wonder what to say after someone passes away? Whether it's the mother of a close friend, the spouse of a coworker, a friend's sister, or someone's father, the right words are often hard to find. Don't let fear keep you from sending a comforting message. It's important to take the time to write something to show you care.

If you've ever felt at a loss for words following someone's passing, you're not alone. You know that the family and close friends of the deceased are hurting, and no matter what you say, that pain won't go away. However, also know that expressing our condolences is the right thing to do, and it needs to have comforting words that show your heartfelt sympathy.

Prepare to Write the Sympathy Note

It's always a good idea to write down a few thoughts on a separate sheet of paper before you begin. If you are sending flowers, you may want to jot an additional [brief note](#) to include with the delivery, but a separate message should still be mailed.

Remember that your words need to sound natural and heartfelt, so feel free to use the examples of one of the templates below but edit them to make them your own. Make sure your comments are personal. Your message doesn't have to be long. Even a brief note will be enough to let the [survivor or survivors](#) know you are thinking about them.

Sympathy cards should be written out or printed on a [sympathy card, blank card, or good stationery](#). It's best not to [send condolences](#) in email or text messages. Try to send the note as soon as possible after the death, but there is no time limit. If you don't hear about the person or pet's passing until a year later, you should still [send a note](#) to show that you care. Notes may be included alongside a [sympathy gift for the survivor](#), or sent on their own.



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Things you may want to include in your sympathy note:

- *A brief, positive, personal story about the deceased*
- *Anything positive that you remember about the deceased*
- *How the deceased has impacted something in your life*
- *An offer of help, a shoulder to cry on, or getting together just to talk*
- *A closing note about how the deceased will be missed*

Examples of Letters if You Knew the Deceased

Sample 1

Dear _____,

I'm sorry to hear about the loss of your mother. I'll never forget her warm smile and gracious welcome when our families got together. I know that nothing anyone can say will take away the pain of your loss, but if you feel like talking, please give me a call.

Deepest sympathy,

Sample 2

Dear _____,

I just heard about your husband's passing, and I want to let you know that I am deeply sorry for your loss. Jim was a good father who set an excellent example for other men in the community. I'll never forget his willingness to serve as Little League coach. The kids will always remember him as Coach Jim, a man who cared deeply about each of them, understood sportsmanship, and laughed easily.

If you need someone to help with errands, I'll be happy to lend a hand. I would also like to extend an invitation to your children to join mine at the skating rink early next month. I'll call you next week with the details.

In the meantime, if you need to talk, don't hesitate to pick up the phone and call me.

Warmest regards,

Sample 3

Dear _____,

Thank you for sending us the email, letting us know about your sister Janet's passing. Margaret and I were sad to read the news. The few times I was around Janet, I could tell that she adored you and her other brothers. I know there is nothing I can say to ease the pain, but please know that my family is praying for yours.

With sympathy,

Sample 4

Dear _____,

Words cannot express the depth of my sorrow over the **terrible tragedy** of the accident and loss of your son. My thoughts are with you, your husband, and your daughter. If there is anything I can do or if you need someone simply to listen, please don't hesitate to call.

Love and sympathy,

Example of a Letter if You Didn't Know the Deceased

Sample Letter

Dear _____,

I am sorry to hear about the loss of your mother. I know how much you loved her, and I'm sure she appreciated all the time you were able to spend with her in her final days. Please know that my thoughts are with you during this difficult time.

Sincerely and with sympathy,

Show of Support

No one expects your sympathy note to be perfect. The main thing is that you're showing that you care for the person who is grieving, and you want to offer some comforting words.

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Thoughts from the Northshore *By Eric Richardson*

Dear Member,

For those of you unaware, the USGA recently announced a partnership with GGA Partners to, in their words, “help identify and place highly qualified superintendents with golf facilities.” Before continuing, I will give you a few seconds to pick up the pieces of your brain matter off the floor, though I needed more than a few seconds. Post-hiring process, the USGA and GGA will offer “ongoing support to deliver outstanding playing conditions and improved golfer satisfaction.” Please visit the USGA website for the full details. My thoughts regarding this initiative/partnership are as follows.

There are extremely few maintenance operations globally that operational resources match golfer expectations. This simple truth results in us prioritizing certain aspects of our operations while neglecting other items on the golf course to achieve our club’s most important goals. The leadership at your club most likely developed these goals with you or before your employment. Insert a consultant into an already unfair equation, and undoubtedly there will be many critiques. Before this announcement, many of us viewed the USGA’s respected agronomists and their TAS reports as a fair assessment of our operations. We considered their communications with our club’s leadership as a non-threat to our job security and beneficial for our personal growth. With this new agreement, the USGA’s TAS reports will no longer be an aide to us. Whether intended or not, these third-party reports will provide certified documentation to our employers and ultimately aid our employers in terminating Golf Course Superintendents and replacing us with a USGA-approved candidate.

Another layer to this announcement is the lack of inclusion of

the GCSAA and current Superintendents in developing this initiative. Please do not take that as a fact; it is just my interpretation from various recent communications, but I will expound on my perceived assumptions. The hurdles we crossed in 2020 were challenging, painful, and exhausting, but we would not have successfully navigated the dark and foggy waters of 2020 without our partners. When various golf entities/associations work in tandem, it results in tangible positive outcomes for all. GCSANE has spoken up against similar Initiatives not because we all should stay in our lane but because we share the same road. Divisive initiatives such as this push us and others off the road and further devalue our profession and abilities. A surefire way to not capitalize on the first golf boom in many years is to create, unintentionally or not, animosity amongst the various golf associations. If we work together as equal partners, we will sustain this current influx of new golfers and increase participation in golf. In my not-so-humble opinion, the USGA is proceeding down a dangerous path detrimental to our profession, all golf associations, and ultimately to the game of golf.

GCSAA is actively communicating with the USGA, and locally, GCSANE will continue to advocate for our profession. Please keep an eye out for upcoming local initiatives that will directly advocate our value as equals partners in the golf world. Please reach out to any GCSANE board member or our hall of fame Executive Director, Don Hearn, with your thoughts or comments.

I hope everyone has a great and healthy season.

Eric Richardson

The logo for Atlantic golf & turf features the word "Atlantic" in a large, bold, green, sans-serif font. To the left of the letter "A" is a stylized green grass tuft. Below "Atlantic", the words "golf & turf" are written in a smaller, green, cursive script font.

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March-April 2021





If it has not happened yet, soon the phone will begin ringing with seasonal employees checking in to verify their positions for the upcoming 2021 season. Ads need to be placed for open spots on the crew, and perhaps there are new Assistants or equipment technicians in the plans for this year as well. Whatever your crew situation is, they will soon descend on your maintenance facility and

fill the winter void with life.

Ponder just for a moment, what will this year's staff be like? Staff makes such an indelible mark on your season. Superintendents can rattle off the good and bad as easily as the end of the year results of your favorite sports teams. Championship year, high potential with disastrous results, good free agents (read: new hire) and bad deals, and the dreaded trip to the IR (injuries or accidents on the job are never a good thing, and rarely forgotten). That is what we see and remember, but what does your staff see? What do they remember?

If I were to ask your staff what the culture is like at your facility what would they say? I get a chance to visit different facilities when I travel; what would I see when I enter your facility, what is the vibe like? Culture in a workplace can help define staff motivation, level of engagement, productivity, and help control employee conflicts. Simple physical cues can aid in a positive culture. Is your shop clean and organized? Is your equipment clean and maintained? Do you place a priority on care of equipment no matter how old it is? If your employees respect the equipment and their environment, they will transfer that respect to their jobs.

Is there an emphasis on being on time? Our shop motto was nothing new to many of you: "Early is on time, on time is late, and late is unacceptable." With that there needs to be accountability for any policy. Is there a policy for tardiness, and is it adhered to? A lack of accountability can undo every good effort to build a culture.

Who do you want your staff to emulate? Would you be happy if your staff tried to be like you? Are you a "do what I say, not what I do" type, or are you a model for what you want your staff to achieve? Good leaders hold themselves to the highest standards. Your staff will notice any time you stray from that standard, and they will react accordingly. They will hold you accountable, maybe not in words, but in actions.

There are many ways to adapt a culture for your specific needs, but remember, your staff will dictate the success of that culture not you. A staff of Baby Boomers will not react positively to a loose culture with too much flexibility. Conversely, a military style approach might not get the most out of your staff if it is full of younger workers (Gen X and Gen Y characteristics). Get to know your

staff personally. Have fun when the time is right. Stress can take a toll on a staff just like it does to you. Keeping things light in those times can often have positive results. If you have built the respect within your staff, they will understand when the light and loose time is over and back to business must happen. Engage them, as they will almost tell you what type of culture will motivate them. Considering their needs will help develop a workplace culture that will maximize productivity.

The Covid-19 pandemic turned our industry on its ear, in good ways and bad. Minimum staff and maximum play increased stress on the course and those working towards facility success. Be a leader and set a standard for excellence at your facility. Develop guidelines that will maintain structure and maximize productivity while stressing the required safety protocols. Hold yourself and others accountable for all actions. Finally remember, during the golf season we spend more time with those on our staff than we do with our friends and families, so keep it light. A good culture is self-perpetuating and contagious. You will not have to ask people to adhere to it; they will want to be a part of it.

GCSAA Resources and Deadlines you Get Cool Stuff from your Association Already

UPCOMING Scholarship Deadlines

GCSAA believes in investing in the future of the profession. To ensure this, GCSAA's philanthropic arm, the Environmental Institute for Golf, administers a number of different scholarships for students pursuing careers in the golf course industry, future turfgrass researchers and educators, children and grandchildren of GCSAA members, and foreign students studying in the United States.

Par Aide's Joseph S. Garske Collegiate Grant Program - *March 15th*

Gcsaa Legacy Awards - *April 15th*

Visit [Scholarships | GCSAA](#) for details and the application.

Environmental Leaders in Golf Awards Applications OPEN!!

Presented by GCSAA and Golf Digest in partnership with Syngenta, the Environmental Leaders in Golf Awards recognize golf course superintendents and golf courses around the world for their commitment to environmental stewardship.

We have moved the application period. ELGA applications are open from February 1 to April 30, 2021.

In 2018, the ELGAs were updated to recognize more superintendents in more focused areas of environmental sustainability. The ELGAs are based on the environmental best management practices that GCSAA recommends all courses utilize.

There are four ELGAs available:

- Natural Resource Conservation Award
- Healthy Land Stewardship Award
- Communications and Outreach Award
- Innovative Conservation Award

There will be one winner and two runners-up recognized for each award. GCSAA members may apply to one, two, three or all four awards in a single year. However, an individual can only win one award per year.

All applicants will be notified by December whether or not they have been selected as a winner. Winners will be recognized at the Golf Industry Show.

Upcoming Webinars

Tall Fescue for Golf - Opportunities and Limitations

presented by the Oregon Tall Fescue Commission

Apr. 6 @ 10 a.m.

Sam Bauer

The Importance of Being Sharp

part of our equipment management series

Apr. 20 @ 2 p.m.

Tod Blankenship, CGCS

Regenerative Greenkeeping - The Biological Approach

Apr. 28 @ 10 a.m.

Randy Booker

Identification and Management of Fine Fescue Diseases

presented by the Oregon Fine Fescue Commission

May 4 @ 10 a.m.

Paul Koch, Ph.D.

Water You Doing about Water Quality?

May 6 @ 10 a.m.

Becky Grubbs-Bowling, Ph.D.

Again, if I can be of any assistance, please feel free to contact me.

Kevin Doyle

GCSAA Field Staff

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Attention: Important Notice

Dear Member,

This spring the renewal for those with Water Withdrawal Registrations will happen for the first time since 2007. There are currently 87 golf courses with water withdrawal registrations and 62 with water withdrawal permits. More information regarding permit renewals will be forthcoming in future communications. This notice pertains to the water withdrawal registrants only.

Important Dates

- Current Registrations Expire 12/31/2021
- April 2021, MassDep mails renewal forms
- Early June, MassDep sends renewal reminder
- June 30, 2021, Last day for registrants to file renewal request forms

Per the Water Management Act (M.G.L. c. 21G, Section 5), "the registrant shall be entitled, upon the filing of a renewal registration statement, to continue existing withdrawals specified in the registration statement for a period of ten years."

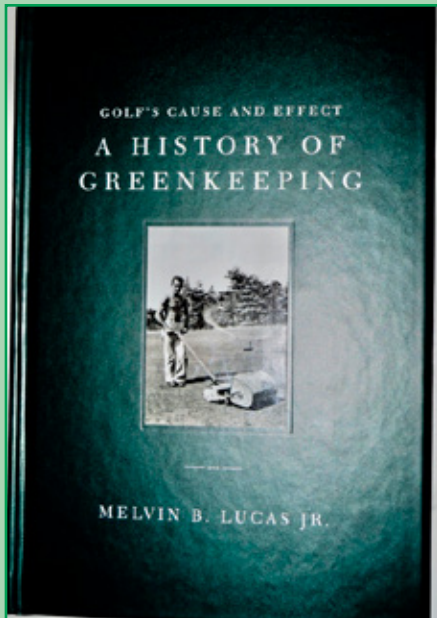
The renewal process was supposed to occur in 2017. After the 2016 drought, MassDEP extended the current registrations four additional years to evaluate possible water usage restrictions during various drought stages. Finalizing the regulation reducing water usage for registrants during a drought is scheduled to be completed by year's end. We will continue to work with MassDep and our green industry partners as the regulation process continues, and we will promptly report new information to you.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding your registration or permit, I urge you to contact MassDep directly. From my experience, the people of MassDep are there to help.

Eric Richardson
GCSANE Government Relations, chair

TARTAN FARMS





A History of Greenkeeping

The book is hard cover, 422 pages, with illustrations, is indexed and covers the first known person called a Greenkeeper in the 1760's in Scotland. It follows golf in Scotland, its spread across the United Kingdom and then to North America. A lot of the book covers the Northeast part of the country and notes Franklin Park hiring the first woman greenkeeper in 1901. There is also mention of two longtime past members of the GCSA of New England, Manuel Francis and Bert Frederick.

Mel graduated from the UMass Winter Turf School in 1963. During his military obligation he was stationed at Ft. Devens where he and Bert Frederick designed and built a golf course on the property in 1964-65. After completing military service, he became golf superintendent of Garden City Golf Club, NY. In 1978 he took on the added responsibility of golf

superintendent at the Piping Rock Club where he was superintendent at both the Piping Rock Club and Garden City Golf Club. He left these Long Island clubs in 1986 to design and build The Links at Round Hill, in South Dartmouth, MA, where he still resides.

He has been President of the Long Island GCSA, Nassau County Cooperative Extension Agency, New York State Turfgrass Association, GCSAA in 1980 as well as the Golf Collectors Society. He is an Honourary Member of both the Slovenian and Austrian Greenkeepers Association.

The cost of the book is \$50.00 and can be ordered through this link <https://links-counsellor.ecwid.com>. The link also includes more about Mel, the book, and reviews of the contents.

Mel Lucas, a well-known superintendent and Massachusetts resident has published a book that takes a journey through the greenkeeper/golf superintendent profession.

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Getting to Know Justin Gagne, Superintendent Hopkinton Country Club



Growing up in Salem, New Hampshire, Justin knew his calling early on in life. At the age of 12, his uncle pulled him out of bed to mow greens with him at Vesper Country Club and that is where it all began. “I developed a lifelong passion for turf. I eat, sleep and breathe the business,” says Justin.

From Vesper he worked at Atkinson

Resort and Country Club in his high school years and on to the Stockbridge school of Agriculture at UMASS where he obtained his Turf Management Bachelor’s degree. Internships included Quail Hollow in North Carolina and Oak Hill Country Club for the 2013 PGA Championship where his experience paid off and he landed his first Assistant Superintendent position at Greenwich Country Club in Fairfield County, Connecticut. There, he led the team through a complete renovation of all 72 bunkers. After 3 years at Greenwich, Justin wanted to plant some roots back home in New England and that is where he linked up with Mike Luccini at Franklin Country Club serving as the Assistant Superintendent for 4 years and forming a strong friendship. At this point, his goal of becoming a head Superintendent was within his grasp. He was ready and eager to get his chance to put his stamp on his own course. Through his hard work and dedication to the industry, Justin was able to land the Superintendent position at Hopkinton Country Club. He inherited a property with major tree and thatch issues, but he took the challenge head on, taking down

220 trees in-house this past winter, most averaging 4 feet in diameter. Beyond that, he rebuilt one of his problem greens and grew back another within his first few months on the job and is in the process of building a new maintenance facility. Finally, Justin went about rebuilding the team at Hopkinton. He tried to surround himself with “smarter” people than him as he said, emphasizing camaraderie and communication amongst all levels of the organization. His work has only just begun at Hopkinton but he’s got it on the right track.

Beyond the golf course, Justin enjoys spending time with his wife Kirsten and two border collies, snowmobiling up North or sneaking away to Wellfleet on a slow day in the summer. But really it’s all about the profession. “My hobby is my job, I wouldn’t do anything else,” Justin says.



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A Very Public Life *Ryan Green, CGCS*

Preface: This article is written with a sense of humor and please read it as such! If I had stayed in the private club world, I might have a very different view. Some of this might be written with a tinge of bitterness, but I always have a good sense of humor and write in jest and hope to make you laugh, or go public!

The world is a judgmental place, and I believe I am in a better place because of it! I write this article to illustrate the positives and value of being a public golf course superintendent. My view of the golf turf world was shaped as I began my career, interning at a top 10 US course and then landing a job at a private club in New Hampshire. I believe I saw the same thing that many young assistant superintendents did at the time. Long hours with not too much pay, and in those poor economics times after 2008, as much hope as to become a superintendent as calling on a Friday for a 9am Saturday tee time at Trull Brook in the booming 2020 'pandemic golf' season. I also witnessed the horrible pressures and ridiculous expectations which golfing members at private clubs place on their superintendent. As I progressed in my career as a second assistant, then first assistant to superintendent, one could possibly say that I downgraded the perceived 'quality' of course I was employed with. After a job as a first assistant came to an abrupt halt due to a chapter 7 bankruptcy, I found myself landing on my feet at NH based 27 hole facility. One day I was tending to

the 18 holes at the East Course (a.k.a. the Mini-Golf Course) I had thoughts of 'man I should have taken that second assistant job at 'x' course in the top 100 when it was offered'. Things, however, have a way of working out for the best.

'Quality' as mentioned above, I will define as the *Golf Snob Factor (GSF)*. A perceived 'great' course to a golfer would be a 10 on the GSF and your average 'dog track' would be a 1. Well, my first 18 hole course, Crystal Lake Golf Club was a solid 2! More so in turf vs. layout. However, I believe what the golfer can perceive as a 2 can be a 10 on the *Superintendent Golf Course Job Quality Scale*. When there is room for improvement that it becomes a proving ground for the superintendent and a great learning experience, the 'quality' sense of job satisfaction can be tremendous. Not only this, but I believe the best part is the pressure and stress to perform the job is primarily self-induced. Your time, to an extent, is your own. I say this now, but I know I will be working this summer and telling my wife 'I need to go back in', or 'I'll be home late'. This is just part of being a superintendent, as we all know. However, there is a big difference between needing or wanting to be there and feeling like you have to be there.

Over the years I have been a second or third place finisher for private club superintendent jobs. In one interview I was asked, 'how

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many hours will you put in?’ During the course tour that followed the only place we stopped to look at was a waste bunker near one of the search committee members homes asking ‘what can we do about the weeds here? I live on this hole and I don’t want to look at them?’ As I strongly resisted the urge to roll my eyes, visions of missing the next 10 years of my son’s baseball games and my daughter’s gymnastics in order to make their needy members happy flashed through my mind. I thought to myself ‘what the hell am I even doing here??’ I think that is an important question to ask in general sometimes, and it can be difficult to reason with people who want things for their own purposes, versus the good of the golf course and other members, especially if those people hold positions of power at the club. While this surely doesn’t represent every private club member at that club, I think anywhere that the same people play every day inevitably leads to complaining about trivial issues that distract from a superintendent’s real goals for the golf course. I also believe it is a good practice to put some perspective into why we do what we do and how to best use our time and energy.

I have had some of these same feelings at other interviews as well. I’ve also questioned all of the work

I did to become a ‘certified golf course superintendent’. I’m still proud of it, and I suppose I did it to prove to myself that I could accomplish it, but there were also some career aspirations behind why I chose to complete the program. With that under my belt, I’d definitely score the big club job! The thing is, about 1% of golfers, if not even most club managers, know what it means. At one interview I was asked ‘certified golf course superintendent, what is that? The school of hard knocks?’. In another instance, a private club GM told me that I had the best interview with the owner of the club, but the pro and the GM himself basically talked them out of hiring me based on my recent 7 years of public golf experience. Oh, I don’t blame them...the shame they would have felt having to present a public super to the private club members of such hallowed mid-tier grounds! Despite the CGCS designation, I was a ‘public’ (*private club member pronunciation guide*: ‘Pub’, *like where you go to get a pint, and then ‘lick’, as in lick my a***) golf course superintendent. This type of discrimination runs rampant in golf. The funny part is that typically there usually is not one person on a hiring committee who knows how to actually qualify a new potential superintendent. In that same aforementioned hiring process, the GM, who must have been feeling very safe with me as the public golf guy, asked me to tell him what a push-up green was, and that he just learned what topdressing was the previous year. This is not to say anything bad about all GM’s, but most clubs wouldn’t think to have the superintendent interview a new potential GM or head chef. What would we know about what to even ask? These stories make me laugh now, but at the moment of rejection, only to see a young assistant from a big name club get hired, it stings a little. But that only lasts as long as taking a moment to look at what I have, and then questioning why I even looked at those types of jobs in the first place. It is so hard to put a dollar amount on your time. We only have so much of it after all.

Ok, let me stop here to be clear, this is not written with any slight to any superintendents in the private world. I have many good

friends at these type of clubs and they all do an excellent job. For a while I even prided myself on how much I worked like a badge of honor. I remember coming home from my internship at a top ten club, and telling one of the other assistants about how much I worked -and I did love it - which is probably why I still do this job I suppose. His response was ‘you’re an idiot!’. He did go on to flip real estate and make much more than your average golf course superintendent. Maybe he was right and I am an idiot and maybe we all are but there is a true enjoyment in what we do. When attending a Sunday bar-b-que I am definitely in the minority of people looking forward the work week, and not many people actually want to go and check on their place of work on the weekend. As I write this I know I will take my 6 year old son on Sunday afternoon drives to get some Dunkin’ Donuts or something and conveniently drive by the course so we can take a ride and check the greens. My overall point, however, is that part of my enjoyment of public golf is the stage of life I am in with a young family and the freedom and autonomy it provides relative to the pressure cookers which some clubs can be. While you can be dedicated, being there is a choice, not an expectation. Also there is much more tolerance and understanding that we cannot control everything. I also want to point out that I am always happy to see someone else get an opportunity and thrive. It’s just getting the powers that be to appreciate the background an experienced superintendent, and also the work of the people they do indeed hire. After all, if your greens committee chairman is a physician or a lawyer, he must know everything there is to know about turf, and agronomy, right? When is the last time one of their patients came in with a case of brown spot and annual bluegrass weevils? Even your doctor sends out seemingly routine issues to specialists. If we had to send our patients (our greens) to a specialist, say a fungalologist (*definitely a made up word!*) or Entomologist for every turf diagnosis how long would members tolerate that?? Imagine going to a board meeting at the hospital and saying ‘Well, Dr. Smith, you lost 2 completely hopeless patients in surgery last year, we’re going to have to let you go’.


The takeaway I want to provide is that if you are public super, life can be pretty good. Enjoying your job without the politics and unrealistic expectations. Yes, resources and labor can be less, but the trade off I believe is worth it. If you are a stressed out private club super, if its financially manageable, it’s not the worst thing to consider public golf. The level of appreciation from public golfers I find to be unparalleled. I can truly enjoy being a superintendent and look forward to the next day at work when there is positive energy. Compliments come in all the time, even for things I know need improvement. This is not to say I am doing any better of a job than any other superintendent. It is simply a perception issue. The public golfer is just so happy and excited to be out golfing, they are generally in a good mood and enjoy giving positive feedback.

It was the near misses at private clubs that actually gave me more perspective on life and to appreciate-other interests. To sum it up simply, I’ll take a 3-day camping trip with the family over a 3-day member guest any day of the week and twice on Sundays!



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The Newsletter

The Olympic Club in San Francisco is hosting the 76th U.S. Women's Open and will be celebrating women in turf. The following article highlights how this will be accomplished.

Not Your Traditional Volunteer Program Rick Woelfel

The Olympic Club celebrating women in turf as part of the 76th U.S. Women's Open

The upcoming U.S. Women's Open Championship, which is scheduled for the week of May 31-June 6 at The Olympic Club in San Francisco, will be played amidst an assortment of historical overtones.

It marks the 76th anniversary of the most prestigious event in women's golf. It will be the first women's professional event contested at the historic Olympic Club, which has hosted 10 USGA national championships, including five U.S. Opens.

And it will also be an occasion for women in the turf industry to come together in support of the game they love and the industry that is their passion.

Troy Flanagan, the club's director of golf maintenance, is planning to supplement staff of 43 with 50 outside volunteers, about 25 to 28 of whom will be women.

Flanagan, who has been at The Olympic Club since 2014, began contemplating the idea of a more female volunteer corps around five years ago, after the club was officially designated as the host of this year's Women's Open.

"I just started thinking, 'What a great thing to do,'" Flanagan says. "We have the Women's Open, it's our first women's professional golf championship at The Olympic Club we've had so many great (championship events) over the years. It's the first women's event we've done.

"'Why wouldn't we want to do something like this?' And not just make it a volunteer experience but make it another kind of educational/networking event. Being able to volunteer, and help out, but then during the day, do other things as a group."

When the pandemic hit last year, the concept had to be shelved until the USGA assured Flanagan that outside volunteers would be permitted on site during the championship. With that assurance, Flanagan reached out to Kimberly Gard, a territory manager for Syngenta, with whom he has an existing professional relationship. Gard started making phone calls and in relatively short order Flanagan had all the volunteers he needed and more. His list includes 31 women, 28 from the United States and three from Canada who, as of this writing, will unlikely be able to make the trip to San Francisco because of COVID-19 restrictions. The respondents included a high school student who is looking to make a career in the turf industry. "She sent a nice letter to Kimberly saying how much it would mean to her to come and be a part of this," Flanagan says. "Something like that is just super cool."

Flanagan is envisioning a week that will see the volunteers not only assisting with the tournament but also taking advantage of educational and networking opportunities.

"The whole thought was they would volunteer in the morning," Flanagan says. "Each late morning or afternoon it could be one of three things. It could just be a fun day, go out and watch golf relax. It could be a networking day, a day where they all get together and they have speakers. or a day where they get together and have a roundtable."

Flanagan has drawn up a list of potential speakers for the event that includes several members of his club, including two-time U.S. Women's Amateur champion, former LPGA Tour player and now television commentator Kay Cockerill; Marissa Marr, the club's green chair; and 2012 U.S. Curtis Cup captain and veteran amateur competitor Dr. Pat Cornett.

Shannon Rouillard the USGA's senior director for the U.S. Women's Open and U.S. Senior Women's Open, will be on site during championship week. Flanagan is hoping to add her to a list of potential speakers as well. Rain Bird will join Syngenta as a sponsor of the program. Flanagan has a lot on his plate between now and the Women's Open. But he's passionate about an event that he hopes that will encourage and inspire women who are currently involved in the turf industry and encourage others to follow in their footsteps.

"The more we can reach to women in the industry, all these different means of getting the word out, that's what's huge," he says. "It's going to be great for the women that come out, but (also) for everybody else to see that 'Hey, this is happening, this is becoming more prominent.' Why wouldn't I want to do it?"

Rick Woelfel is a Philadelphia-based writer, frequent Golf Course Industry, and host of the Wonderful Women of Golf and Women's Golf Report podcasts.

Last year Owen Stone completed the GCSAA Assistant Superintendent Certification Series. He wrote an article on leadership that is being published in this edition of *The Newsletter*.

Three Keys to Becoming a Better Leader Owen Stone

I'm sure that you've heard many successful turf professionals say that the hardest part of their job isn't growing grass, it's managing people. The further I have progressed in my career, the more I have come to realize that such is true. In order to successfully manage people, you need to become an excellent leader. These are the three keys that have helped me become a better leader.

1. Communication

There are many different traits that go into successful leadership. One that all leaders must excel at is communication. Now how do you successfully communicate? The goal when communicating any message is to have the audience fully understand what it is that you are saying. Whether that be certain instructions for a task at hand or why you are aerifying greens in a greens committee meeting. The less chance of misinterpreting the message you give the audience, the better communicator you will be.

It is vital you know your audience. The way you communicate can vary greatly depending on your audience due to the fact that everyone interprets things differently. You can explain directions to two different crew members, the same exact way, one of them may fully understand the message and one may not. It is your job as a leader to know how each individual comprehends your message. By doing this, you put everyone in the best possible position to succeed, including yourself.

2. Motivation

As with many professions, completing all the tasks at hand is impossible by yourself. That is why leaders need to learn and excel at the art of motivation. Your goal as a leader and a motivator is to get your team to be just as passionate about their work as you are. Your team and yourself, should have the same goals in mind along with the same desire to accomplish them.

Respect is a vital part of being a leader and a motivator. From your first day on the job to your last, you should always be striving to earn the respect of your team. Everyone's respect is earned differently. There is no formula to follow that will earn your team's respect. One of the most important jobs as a leader is to find what it takes to earn each individual's respect and what motivates them. Without their respect, it will be impossible to motivate them to be as efficient as they can be. With respect comes motivation. A key point to remember, respect must be earned not demanded.

3. Problem-Solving

One of the greatest aspects of the turf industry is that no matter how long you have been in the industry, you experience different problems regularly. Therefore, being an adequate problem solver is essential.

The best leaders are also the best problem solvers. When faced with adverse situations, you must keep your composure to successfully solve the problem at hand. Occasionally, it can be overwhelming to continuously face various challenges, but it is vital to remain in control of your emotions. An effective problem solver is always

practicing what I call "The Three C's"; Cool, Calm, and Collected. Despite how a given situation makes you feel, you must not let that show to your team members. When your emotions are in check, problems are almost always not as big as they seem. Successfully finding the right solution will be much easier when you are in control of yourself and you will instantly become a better problem solver.

In conclusion, becoming a better leader relies on successfully communicating and motivating your team. Along with developing problem-solving skills to your ever-changing tasks. Applying these three skills helped me become a better leader and I believe practicing them in your daily routine will do the same for you.

More from Owen:

I am 24 years old and currently work as an Assistant Superintendent at The Quechee Club in Quechee, VT. I have been with The Quechee Club for going on 5 years. Originally, I am from Littleton, NH. I graduated from Littleton High School in 2014 and then attended Texas State Technical College in Waco, TX for Turfgrass and Landscape Management. I graduated from TSTC in 2016.

Growing up I enjoyed playing all sports from basketball to soccer to baseball and of course golf. Playing the game of golf is how I got into the turf side of the industry. I quickly fell in love with the game and knew that I wanted to make a career of the golf industry. Other hobbies that I enjoy doing outside of work include hunting, snowmobiling, and skiing.

I also have a twin brother who is in the Turf Industry. Ironically, he actually works at The Quechee Club as well. We both completed our internships in Quechee and took jobs elsewhere only to come back in early 2017. Where we have both been employed since.

Note: Owen's twin, Cody, published an article in the March-April 2020 issue of The Newsletter

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