



TEE TO GREEN



Published by the
Metropolitan Golf Course
Superintendents Association

President's Message

Getting Involved With the Met . . .

Personally and Professionally

Summer's end—or near end—is filled with many opportunities for members to become more closely involved with the association—both personally and professionally. This is the time of year, for instance, that we try to encourage everyone to take a much-needed break at our family picnic and summer social.

This year's picnic was a blast. (See Scott Apgar's take on the event on page 2.) Special thanks to Joe Alonzi and his committee for planning such a wonderful event—and to our host Larry Pakkala, who always makes sure everything is perfect.

My kids—and all the other kids, young and old—enjoyed the sun and fun on the beach and in the water. The food was delicious and the menu so broad that everyone was well fed.

Another summer favorite—for big kids only—is our annual summer social. Superintendent Richie Marcks welcomes us again August 26 at Fairview Country Club. Be sure to join us for an evening of fun—and knowing our Social and Welfare Committee, probably even a few surprise activities.

Professionally Speaking

On a more professional level, now's also the time to run for the MetGCSA Board of Directors—particularly this year, with a new incoming *(continued on page 2)*

Special Feature

So You Think You'd Like to Leave the Business

GCSAA Member and Former Superintendent Frank Maxell Jr., CGCS, Tells What It Takes to Make a Successful Break From Turfgrass Management

The season's coming to end, but if you're like a lot of superintendents, you're thinking, "not fast enough." The seven-day-a-week worry has, once again, made you wonder why you got into this business in the first place—and if you've been at it for any length of time, you're probably thinking, "How do I get out?"

Even if these thoughts have never crossed your mind—hah!—you'll find the following story about Mississippi Superintendent Frank Maxwell's break from the business a worthwhile read. His advice about making a near-flawless transition from superintendent to sole proprietor can be just as eye-opening to those committed to staying put—and making their current position and golf course operation a success.

AND . . . Since it 'Tis *almost* the season that superintendents seem to take stock of their career goals and positions in the industry, along with this piece you'll find two quick takes from GCSAA that will aid you in a job search—or in negotiating a more motivating employment contract.

Seizing the Day

When casino gaming came to Mississippi, many people saw it as an opportunity to open hotels, restaurants, and tourist attractions. But GCSAA member Frank Maxwell, CGCS, saw it as a chance to start his own golf course design, construction, and club management company.

Now Maxwell Golf Group Inc. (MGG) is leading the state's golf boom. MGG has designed the 18-hole, semi-

private Caroline Golf Club and added nine holes to Pearl Municipal Golf Course, making it an 18-hole facility. In addition, the company is managing the construction of an 18-hole municipal course in Flowood and another casino golf course. They've also secured the club management contract for a Mississippi state park golf course in Jackson, and they're expanding beyond the Magnolia state by developing an 18-hole muni- *(continued on page 4)*

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Getting Involved With the Met

president. When a new president takes the helm, directors frequently shift positions and openings become available.

Why shouldn't you step into that open slot? I know, a lot of you—particularly if you're relatively new to the association—think, "Will anyone vote for me?? Do they even remember my name?? Is it going to take too much time away from the job??"

Hey, those are the same anxieties I had when I first got involved. But if you can get past them and go for it, the rewards are great. First of all, the time required is minimal in the scheme of things. A meeting a month isn't going to make a difference in our already busy schedules. And there are few other ways in our business to gain the kind of fellowship—and opportunities for fun—that are available to you when you serve on the board.

Beyond that, your involvement will not only earn you the respect of your peers, but perhaps, more important, the powers-that-be at your club. Clubs always like to see their superintendents thrive professionally; it speaks well of their choice in a superintendent—and they can brag about your credentials.

But if your club isn't as impressed with you and your credentials as you'd like, don't worry: Your service on the board also makes a great resume builder.

All this to say, the Met is your association, and you can make a difference by comin' on board. Peter Rappoccio (203-438-6720) and Mike Maffei (914-279-7179), our nominating committee chairmen, would be happy to talk to you. Give them a call, even if it's just to do a little fact finding.

JOHN J. O'KEEFE
President

Event Revisited

Time-Out: Peace Prevails for an Afternoon at the Beach

Area superintendents, assistants, secretaries, and salespeople scrambled to get their work done and race off to meet their families for one of the most fun events of the year: the Met Family Picnic. This annual event made a return trip July 28 to the Woodway Beach Club. A sunny afternoon and comfortable evening temps went hand-in-hand with the always warm hospitality and pleasant facility provided by the beach club members and their employees.

Sponsored by Metro Milorganite, Inc. in conjunction with Bayer Corp. and area rep Jeffrey Weld, the event offered children young and old plenty to do.

Thanks to everything from a nine-hole miniature golf course—instituted by Kathy Stark (wife of Fenway GC super, Scott)—to the cool Long Island Sound water provided by his holy one (God—not Bob Alonzi), the kids had a ball.

Two mini golf tournaments highlighted the evening; one paired husband and wife, the other parent and child. No blows were thrown as tempers were kept

in check. The competition did, however, get off to a confusing start with questions about scoring. Joe Alonzi did, finally, step in to set things straight, explaining, in no uncertain terms, that the ability to add scores was all that was necessary. Whew, let the games begin!

George and Ineke Pierpoint led the way in the spouse tournament, and Joseph and JJ Stahl topped the leader board in the parent/child event. Winners and runners up were awarded Barnes and Noble gift certificates. Murmurs could be heard during the awards ceremony about George's healthy new physique, which no doubt helped him endure through the challenging nine holes—but was certainly not the cause for Joe Stahl's success.

In case you can't tell, it was a terrific afternoon. For those of you who couldn't make it, it was your loss. Hopefully, you'll come to your senses, and we'll see you there next year.

SCOTT C. APGAR
Metro Milorganite, Inc.

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Pelham Country Club: Site of Met Area Team Championship First-Round Qualifier

Anyone crossing over Pelham Country Club on I-95 July 22 got a bird's-eye view of the first round of the 1997 MetGCSA Championship. "Tremendous conditions," says MetGCSA President John O'Keefe, as he introduced third-year superintendent Jeff Wentworth.

This proved to be yet another spectacular meeting, from the golf course to the hospitality, from club employees to the belly-filling spread of fine food and drink. Not even the cars and trucks on I-95 could mar this great day at a club unmatched by golf history.

It wasn't quite as exciting as Gene Sarazen beating Walter Hagen in sudden death here at the 1923 PGA Championship, but the new quota system used for scoring made first-round action very interesting. This unique scoring method awarded points for one's success on each individual hole and was implemented with our second-round site—Purchase Country Club—in mind. The format helps speed up play by allowing the golfer to pick up after it's clear a bogey isn't in the cards. Pelham proved worthy of this quota system as well, with its unforgiving, narrow uphill fairways and thick rough around the greens.

Not-So-Subtle Changes

The golf course has undergone a few changes since Jeff started back in the fall of '94. "The membership wanted the course improved quickly, so they've allowed me to go at it pretty aggressively," says Jeff, who's aerified greens on the average of five times per year for the three years he's been at the club. "We've also installed subsurface drainage in our six wettest greens," he continues. "The improvement of all greens has been dramatic."

But at Pelham, aesthetics have been almost as important as playability. "Members are ecstatic about the two new championship tees we've built on holes 6 and 17, and the original contours we've recaptured on greens 1, 10, 14, and 15 have also earned kudos. But we've gotten at least as much praise on the stone retaining wall we built to

replace the topless tin convert pipe that ran around the stream and across the 12th fairway."

Jeff has also worked hard to enhance many sections of rough and out-of-play areas. "We felt it was important to improve the existing open areas on the course, as well as increase the number of them," he explains. In his short tenure, Jeff has taken down more than 100 trees and, in the fall of '95, sprayed a nonselective herbicide on seven acres of rough.

"We've now increased the number of native grass areas from zero to six, and we've replaced the bent and poa, which had overtaken the rough on holes 11, 12, 16, and 17, with ryegrass," he says.

Golfing His Way to Success

Born and raised in Belchertown, MA, Jeff started playing golf at the age of 12. "Golf and skiing are the only two hobbies I have," admits Jeff. "If I weren't such a golf enthusiast and didn't play so much, I probably wouldn't take my job as seriously as I do. I like the idea of constantly putting a product on display and producing the kind of course I enjoy playing myself."

Jeff's road to success began in 1988 at the Myopia Hunt Club, where he worked as a Stockbridge placement student for Superintendent Dave Heroian.

"Dave suggested I work at as many different clubs in different areas as I could in my early years to build experience," says Dave. "So I spent a year at Ridgewood Country Club in New Jersey in 1989 and a year at Columbia Country Club in Maryland in 1990 before coming back to this area, where I gained unmatched experience at Westchester Country Club." In the midst of his many career moves, Jeff completed the two-year turf program at Stockbridge in 1989 and a B.S. degree in Urban Forestry from UMass in 1991.

Jeff stayed at Westchester for four years before landing his first and current superintendent's job at Pelham.

"I was fortunate to work for superintendents who were not just knowledgeable, but classy," says Jeff. "I hope I can



Pelham Superintendent Jeff Wentworth emerges from first round MetGCSA Championship qualifier as medalist.

help young people coming into the industry like my bosses helped me.

"This is the only business I know," he continues, "where competitors— young and old—actually help each other, sharing equipment, giving advice. The camaraderie of the guys continues even as the business becomes more and more competitive."

Milestones: Present and Future

Jeff's immediate professional goal: to continue to improve his ability to maintain golf course turf, which he says means staying on top of cutting-edge products and maintenance techniques. "In time, after I get a little more experience under my belt, I'll become more involved in our local and, perhaps, national associations," he promises.

But this new guy on the block has already gained some notoriety in the industry, appearing in a USGA commercial that ran at the U.S. Open and was designed to promote the game of golf.

Despite his all-encompassing professional pursuits, Jeff managed to reach an important personal milestone last year: He got married to his wife, Mimi, in October—off-season, of course.

For '98, he has his sights set on a new maintenance facility. Still in the planning phase, construction is slated to begin in the spring.

SCOTT C. APGAR

Metro Milorganite, Inc.

So You Think You'd Like to Leave the Business

cial course in Burleson, TX, that MGG will then manage when it opens in the fall.

Taking the Plunge

Well schooled, Maxwell graduated from Mississippi State University's agronomy/turfgrass management program and started his course management career as an assistant at The Country Club of Jackson. Soon after, he landed a position at the then relatively new Tournament Players Club (TPC) at Sawgrass.

In 1984, he was lured back to The Country Club of Jackson by the prospect of renovating all 27 holes and the practice facility. After overseeing the renovations, he stayed on as superintendent. Then, on the 10-year anniversary of his position as superintendent, he did what few people get the chance to do—let alone have the nerve to try: He resigned from a great job to start his own company.

"I had always wanted to design golf courses and manage them," he says. "I felt that with my experience and my reputation as a competitive amateur, I would be able to open some doors in Mississippi."

But Maxwell is also quick to point out that key to his company's success has been its personnel, particularly his partner, Brett Matthews, and chief design associate and director of marketing, Nathan Crace.

Tips for Making the Transition

Maxwell offers these tips for making a successful jump from superintendent to owner of your own company:

1. Before deciding to make the jump, be sure there's a market in your area for the service you'd like to offer. "I wouldn't have been as successful if I had opened my office in Florida, because that part of the country's becoming saturated."
2. Watch your startup costs to avoid being buried by a lot of overhead expenses. Don't be in too big a hurry to become the biggest name in the business.
3. Always do more than the job requires. If you're the type who likes to cut corners rather than go the extra mile for people, you won't be in business long.

4. Strive to be efficient and cost effective in all your projects. "With design, for example, we want an aesthetically pleasing course that won't break our client's maintenance budget," Maxwell says.

5. Don't shy away from politicking. Networking—and striving to project a likable personality—are a large part of any successful venture. "When I was the superintendent at Country Club of Jackson, I was a Mississippi State graduate working for 1,200 Ole Miss graduates. Now that takes politics," he says.

6. Never do anything to jeopardize your ethics and integrity. It doesn't matter how lucrative the deal may be, nothing is worth being dishonest or acting unethically. No one wants to work with someone they can't fully trust.

7. Be choosy about who you hire. "I've been fortunate to find the right partner and personnel, and that mix of people has contributed to our success," he says. "As with any service industry, nothing

will hurt you quicker than having the wrong people representing you."

8. Write down your goals, but don't be afraid to adjust them. Every plan has to be flexible. After all, if nothing else, your opinions on certain matters will change as you gain more experience.

"For example, when I was superintendent, I wouldn't allow a car path less than eight feet wide on my golf course," he says. "But when I saw the situation from a course designer and developer's perspective, my priorities changed."

9. If you truly believe in your company's mission, don't give up just because your first project isn't an unprecedented success. Every project brings with it a degree of knowledge that you didn't have when you started. "I became frustrated after a slow start with my company, but I hung in there, learned from past experience, and now I can't believe how well we're doing."

Adapted from Newsline, Oct. 1996, Vol. 1, No. 10.

Superintendents Reap Bigger and Better Benefits With Employment Contracts

When raise time rolls around—or if you're negotiating your benefits package at a new job—you may want to join the growing number of superintendents throughout the country who are lobbying for bigger and better benefits with employment contracts. Among the many perks, aside from the typical vehicle and house, are:

- computer
- cellular telephone and pager
- office assistant
- golf package: balls, gloves, shirts, and one set of clubs
- signing bonus and quarterly bonus program
- health club membership
- multiyear guaranteed maintenance budget with inflation increases
- multiyear employment contract with buy-out/resignation clause
- once-a-week golf round with green chair or other committee member
- all expenses paid for superintendent

and family to attend GCSAA's national conference, show, and golf tournament

To request a free, sample employment contract that can be customized to fit your needs, contact the career development department at 800-472-7878, ext. 421.

With or without employment contracts, the following percentage of members report that these benefits are paid by their employers. How do your benefits stack up?

GCSAA Dues	96%
Vacation	94%
Chapter Dues	90%
Seminars/Tuition	90%
Facility Privileges for Family	89%
Holidays	76%
Sick Leave	70%
Medical Insurance	67%
Life Insurance	65%
Company Vehicle	64%

Resume Writing Made Easy

If you're one of the many out there who would like to go for a new position but just can't face the prospect of writing your resume, GCSAA might be able to help. Their career development department will critique a resume you've written free of charge—or, for a minimal \$25 fee, will help write your resume and provide a master copy and five laser-printed copies on high-quality paper. For \$30, you can have an electronic version.

Better still, just \$5 more will get you a custom-written cover letter with several areas for you to personalize.

In an industry where openings at good clubs attract hundreds of candidates, it's critical that your resume and cover letter present a positive—and distinctive—first impression.

For further information, contact GCSAA's career development department at 800-472-7878, ext. 421.

Upcoming Events

MetGCSA Championship/Met Area Team Championship Qualifier, Round 2

Tuesday, September 2
Country Club of Purchase, Purchase, NY
Host: Bob Miller

Met Area Team Championship

Monday, October 6
Country Club of Darien, Darien, CT
Host: Tim O'Neill, CGCS

10th Annual Duke Polidor Memorial Golf Tournament

Saturday, September 13
Heritage Hills Golf Club, Somers, NY
Host: Todd Polidor
A 9 a.m. shotgun start is preceded by a 7:30 a.m. registration and breakfast. The \$135 entry fee is fully tax deductible. If you'd like to play, call 914-227-4919 and leave a message.

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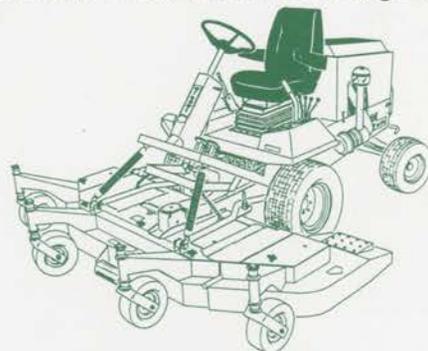


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Pelham Gets Good Results

Jeff Wentworth and Pelham Country Club have obviously had a great summer. Not only was the golf course in great shape, but our host superintendent also had his game in top form. Jeff was medalist among all superintendents in the first round of the MetGCSA Championship.

The winners for the first round and Class AF Championship were:

Met Area Team Championship First-Round Qualifiers

Points vs. Quota

+11 Skip Deubel, *Tuckahoe Turf Farms*
 +6 Pete Kearney, *Pound Ridge GC*
 +6 Ray Beaudry, *Westchester Ford*
 +6 Scott Stark, *Fenway GC*
 +5 Bob Nielsen, *Bedford Golf & Tennis*
 +4 Scott Tretara, *Elmwood CC*

Total Points

35 Jay Antonelli, *Club Car*
 31 Jeff Wentworth, *Pelham CC*
 30 Earl Millett, *Ridgeway CC*
 30 John Carlone, *Meadow Brook Club*
 29 Jim Fulwider, *Century CC*
 29 Matt Ceplo, *Rockland CC*

Longest Drive

Mark Millett, *Old Oaks CC* #6/266 yds

Closest to the Pin

Earl Millett, *Ridgeway CC* #8/4'5"

Class AF Championship Tourney

Gross Winner

35 Jay Antonelli, *Club Car*

Net Winner

+11 Skip Deubel, *Tuckahoe Turf Farms*

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- Montco/Surf-Side/Zap! Defoamer**
Bob Oechsle/Tom Hunter
Box 404, Ambler, PA 19002
800-401-0411
- ☆ **Portac Golf Course Top-Dressing**
Kelsey Park, Great Meadows, NJ 07838
Jim Kelsey: 800-247-2326/908-637-4191
Bill and Joe Carriere: 914-937-2136
- ☆ **Rhone-Poulenc Co./CHIPCO**
Greg Hutch
877 Yellowbank Rd., Toms River, NJ 08753
908-929-4657
- ☆ **Robert Baker Company/Winfield Nursery, Inc.**
Jeff Rogers
1320 Mountain Rd., West Suffield, CT 06093
860-668-5225, FAX 860-668-5714
- SAV-A-TREE**
Thomas Marino
360 Adams St., Bedford Hills, NY 10507
914-666-8202
- ☆ **Sawtelle Brothers Inc.**
65 Glenn St., Lawrence, MA 01843
21 E. Dudley Town Rd., Bloomfield, CT 06662
800-999-TURF
- ☆ **Shemin Nurseries Inc.**
Horticultural-Irrigation Supplies
Jim Hespe: 203-531-7352
1081 King St., Greenwich, CT 06831
- ☆ **Stephen Kay, Golf Course Architects**
Stephen Kay/Ron Turek/Doug Smith
495 New Rochelle Rd., Bronxville, NY 10708
914-699-4437
- ☆ **Steven Willand, Inc.**
Bruce Pyc/John Ferruccio
23 Route 206, Augusta, NJ 07822
201-579-5656
- Sullivan's Construction Service Inc.**
Golf Course Construction and Renovation
P.O. Box 854, Suffield, CT 06078
Kevin Sullivan: 860-668-2129
- TBS Maintenance and Improvement**
Tony Bettino: 914-949-3362
Black Top, Stone Work, Landscaping, Excavation
102 Fulton St., White Plains, NY 10606
- ☆ **Tee and Green Sod**
Owen Regan/David Wallace
P.O. Box 418, Exeter, RI 02822
401-789-8177
- ☆ **The Cardinals, Inc.**
John E. Callahan
166 River Rd., Unionville, CT 06085
860-673-3699
- ☆ **The Scotts Company**
Tom Marmelstein
Fertilizer, Fungicide, Growth Regulators
516-679-1961
- ☆ **The Terre Company of New Jersey, Inc.**
Byron Johnson Jr.
206 Delawanna Ave., Clifton, NJ 07014
Office: 201-473-3393 Home: 203-748-5069
- ☆ **TurfNet Associates, Inc.**
Peter L. McCormick
21 Brandywine Rd., Skillman, NJ 08558
800-314-7929, FAX 908-359-3389
- ☆ **Turf Products Corp./TORO**
George Gorton, Irrigation/Al Tretera, Equipment
P.O. Box 1200, Enfield, CT 06083
800-243-4355/203-763-3581
- ☆ **Turf Products Corporation**
Ernie Rizzio/Buddy Rizzio
47 Howell Rd., Box 296, Mountain Lakes, NJ 07046
201-263-1234, FAX 201-335-2491
- ☆ **Valley View Wholesale Greenhouses**
Frank Amodio
229 Smithridge Rd., So. Salem, NY 10590
914-533-2526, FAX 914-533-2050
- ☆ **Westchester Ford Tractor Inc.**
John Apple/Ray Beaudry
Meadow St., Goldens Bridge, NY 10526
914-232-7746
- ☆ **Westchester Turf Supply, Inc.**
Bob Lippman Sr./Bob Lippman Jr.
"It's the Service That Counts"
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- ☆ **White Contractors**
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- ☆ **Wilfred MacDonald, Inc.**
Chris Santopietro
2 Terminal Rd., Lyndhurst, NJ 07071
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