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Tee To Green

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**What to Do
When Your Turf
Goes South
Over the Winter...**

AND DOESN'T COME BACK

Feature page 2



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In this Issue

Feature

A Bitter End to a Bitter Winter2

Departments

Inside the National6

National Scorecard7

Chapter News8

Spotlights10 & 12

Member News11

Upcoming Events13

President's Message

The Good, the Bad, and the Utterly Ugly of Spring 2003

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pring 2003 has sprung a lot of things on us—affecting our lives as U.S. citizens, as spouses and parents, and as golf course superintendents.

As we entered spring, our country entered into war, with many citizens—our neighbors, family, friends, and for some of us, employees—dedicating their lives to protecting our country and our freedom, as well as the freedom of others. We owe a great deal of thanks to all of them—and can only hope that the outcome will merit the high cost of the war—one that extends far beyond any dollar amount.

The spring thaw has also wreaked havoc on many superintendent's lives, revealing one of the most dreaded turfgrass problems: winter kill. The severity varies from course to course, some having more than half their greens heavily damaged; others suffering no damage at all.

As you'll see in our feature article starting on page 2, there seems to be no rhyme or reason, no logical pattern to the winter injury. The only good news in all this is that you really can't point any fingers at the practices of any of these unfortunate superintendents.

Making the winter damage all the more difficult to stomach was the Masters week. Held every year at Augusta National, this televised event is always followed closely by club members who long for—and then often demand—similar conditions at their clubs. The question, "How come our course can't be like that?" will be repeated over and over again—more times than Johnny Miller's questionable knowledge and comments about course conditioning are on televised NBC events.

Onward and Upward

On the upside, however, is the article that ran in the most recent issue of the MGA's publication, *The Met Golfer*. As though coming to our defense on this very topic, the article discussed course conditioning from the superintendent's perspective.

I thought it did an excellent job in outlining the pressures we all are under and in explaining the serious downside of the increasing demands to overgroom our courses.



Tim Moore
MetGCSA President

The targeted audience—our own club members—could not have been better. I know this article has already been bandied about in the grill rooms of many clubs. It's too early to tell if it will alter any opinions out there, but perhaps, this is a step in the right direction. I think it should be a must-read for every greens committee member at every club.

Some Things to Cheer About

Though all the snow and rain has been problematic for many, it's also had one major benefit: The drought that has plagued us over the past several years is over and done with.

Let's hope the timely rains continue to come throughout the summer months. That will ensure the drought remains a thing of the past—even if only for a few years. I know we'll all welcome the break.

The other happening worth cheering about is Tim O'Neill's election to the GCSAA board as secretary/treasurer. Tim, superintendent at Country Club of Darien and a past president of the Met, has been on the fast track through the chairs to the GCSAA executive board level for the past several years. Anyone who has had the opportunity to work with Tim in the past knows how dedicated he is to the GCSAA cause and to the golf course management industry as a whole. We are all fortunate to have Tim there to represent us and our area at our national organization.

Three cheers and good luck, Tim.

As the season moves into full swing, I'll look forward to seeing you all at our association meetings.

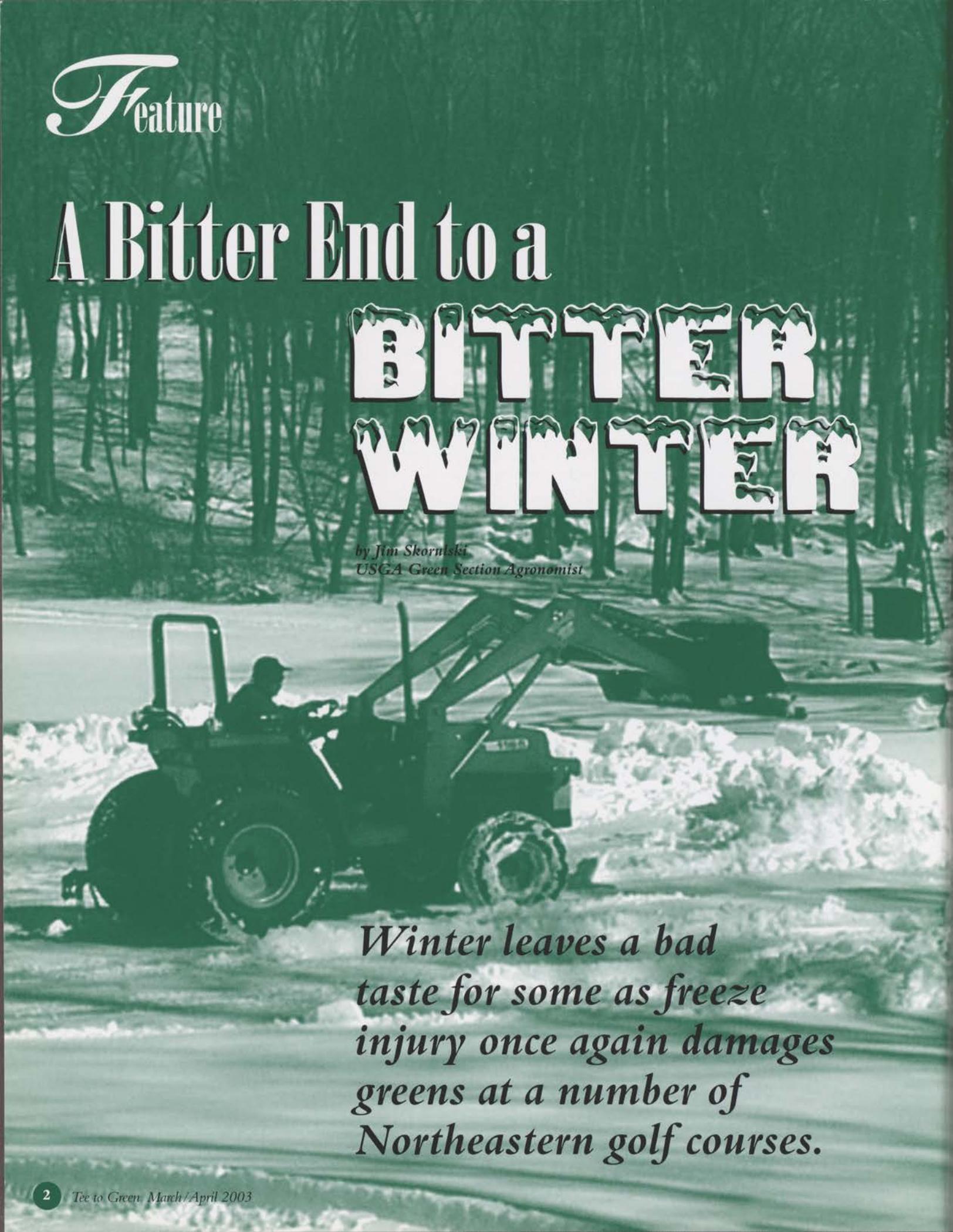
Tim Moore
MetGCSA President

Feature

A Bitter End to a

BITTER WINTER

by Jim Skorniski
USGA Green Section Agronomist



Winter leaves a bad taste for some as freeze injury once again damages greens at a number of Northeastern golf courses.

This winter will be remembered long into the future. For golf course superintendents, it's meant more than just record cold and snow; many are now faced with bringing their greens—and in some cases even tees and portions of fairways—back from a condition most shudder to even think about: *WINTER KILL*.

Hardest hit were golf courses in parts of Connecticut, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, and New York, with little rhyme or reason as to why it happened. There are so many variables to winter freeze injury that it didn't seem to matter whether superintendents covered greens, removed ice and snow cover, or simply let nature take its course. In each scenario, there are cases of winter damage.

The only thing you can be relatively sure of is that, when there are severely fluctuating winter temperatures, turf is highly susceptible to damage, with annual bluegrass (*Poa annua*) and perennial ryegrass in shady or poorly drained areas most at risk.

To help all those battling winter kill this year, here's a quick review of the common causes of winter damage and some practical turf management tips to undo the damage done. If nothing else, share this information with your greens committee and members to help them understand that winter kill is one turf trouble that's beyond your control.

What Went Wrong?

Assessing damaged greens to determine the cause of injury is difficult at best; though we do know there are three basic forms of freeze injury. They are:

1. Low Temperature Kill, which occurs when plants are exposed to extremely cold temperatures that freeze—and ultimately kill—cells near the base of the grass plant. This type of injury is most common during frigid winters with no snow. It's rarely predictable and not necessarily limited to poorly drained surface depressions.

2. Crown Hydration, which is thought to occur when plants that are hydrated become rapidly exposed to very cold temperatures. The water located in spaces around individual cells freezes with the sudden drop in temperature. As ice crystals

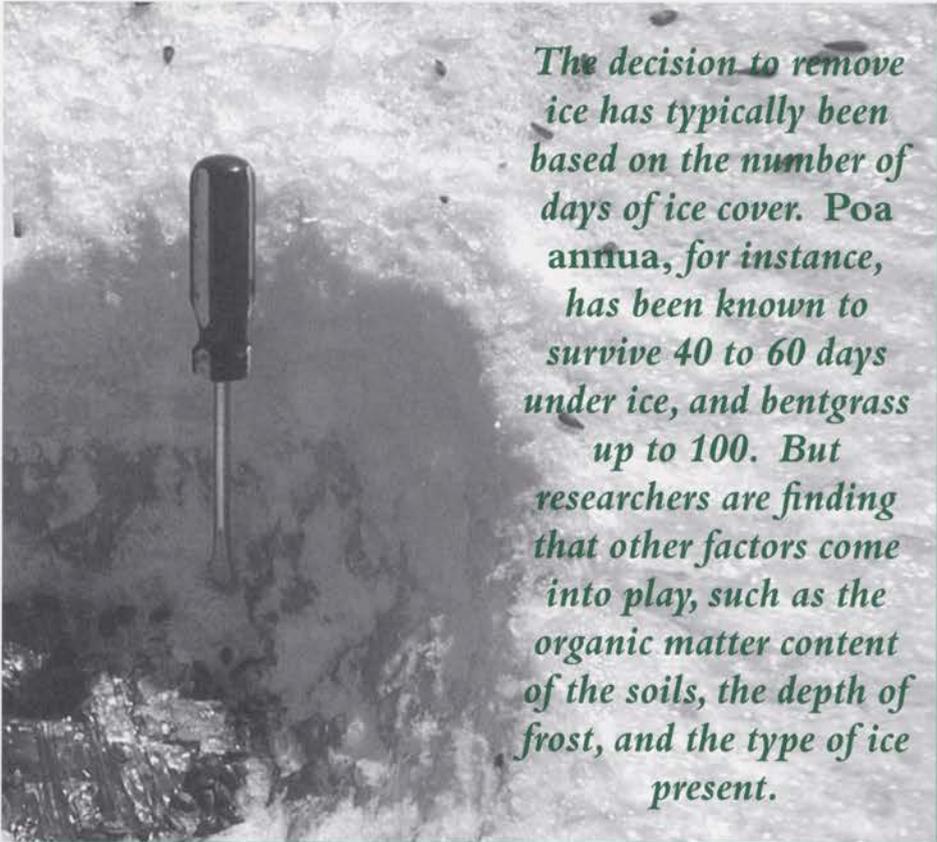
form, they pull water out of the plant's cells, creating a dehydrated condition in the cell and damage to cell membranes. If this happens in the leaf tissue, the plant will grow out of it and recover. If it happens in the crown or growing point of the plant, the grass plant dies, and you've got a more difficult problem on your hands.

No surprise that this type of freeze injury is more distinctive and usually seen in depressions where water collects.

3. Anoxia or suffocation, which is generally caused by a prolonged and impermeable layer of ice directly over the turf. The grass plants, though dormant, are still carrying on the functions necessary to keep themselves alive—just at a greatly reduced rate. A key component in that process is oxygen. That's why a prolonged ice cover can be dangerous. It keeps oxygen from getting to the plants, and in time, they actually die of suffocation or anoxia.

The foul odor that is sometimes present under an ice layer is an indication of an anaerobic condition and the potential for problems. Aside from the odor, a key indicator that can separate anoxia from other forms of damage is a uniform turf kill, except where the ice sheet may have been broken or disrupted and allowed the necessary gas exchange.

Note, however, that impermeable ice covers often take the blame for winter kill, but it's not that easy. In most instances, the turf damage is probably a result of one of the forms of freeze injury.



*The decision to remove ice has typically been based on the number of days of ice cover. *Poa annua*, for instance, has been known to survive 40 to 60 days under ice, and bentgrass up to 100. But researchers are finding that other factors come into play, such as the organic matter content of the soils, the depth of frost, and the type of ice present.*

Second-Guessing Game

Freeze injury is directly related to weather events and, as we've seen this winter, can vary in effect from golf course to golf course, influenced by such things as course elevation, surface drainage, soil type, growing environments, and grass species. Even subtle variations in a course's microclimates, light intensity, or green orientation can influence turfgrass survival.

Because of this, some superintendents have second-guessed their management practices. Two of the most frequently asked questions regarding winter turf management are:

- "Would green covers have prevented the damage?" The answer is no. Permeable covers alone, in most cases, will not offer adequate insulation to buffer against severe temperature fluctuations or prevent the hydration that leads to freeze injury.

They can protect against some temperature changes, offer excellent protection from desiccating winds, and may make it easier to remove ice sheets if that becomes necessary. However, grass dies from freeze injury whether it's covered or not!

- "Should we have cleared the snow and ice off the greens more frequently?" Removing snow and ice sheets is a more complex—and risky—issue, since the success of this operation often depends on the weather conditions that immediately follow the removal work.



Did you know we've had nearly 60 inches of snow dumped on our golf courses this season?

Generally, snow is a valuable insulating material that will protect the turf from damaging temperatures and can absorb light rains. The problems with snow occur during periods of thaw or heavier rains when water accumulates in lower areas where it can hydrate the turf. Snow removal during periods of thaw might be justified, especially if there are surface drainage issues. But removing the snow pack also opens up the turf to damaging cold temperatures. What might be the right move in one year may be the worst in another. It all goes back to the weather.

A decision to remove ice has typically been based on the number of days of ice cover. *Poa annua*, for instance, has been known to survive 40 to 60 days under ice, and bentgrass up to 100. But researchers are finding it's not that simple. Factors such as the organic matter content of the soils, the depth of frost, and the type of ice present all come into play when determining the amount of time turf can survive encased in ice.

The good news is that further research is underway to help us better quantify or monitor what's happening beneath the ice sheets so that we will know when action should be taken.

So if confidence in your practices this winter is waning, just remember that winter injury is most often a direct result of a weather event and preexisting site conditions, not any particular thing you did—or didn't—do.

And not to fear. . . . Help is on the way.

Undoing the Damage Done

Discovering you're going into the season with significant winter damage is far from a pleasant experience. The best you can do is focus your energies and resources on the recovery effort. Some thoughts:

- **Think positive.** Treat the situation as an opportunity to showcase your operation and management expertise.

- **Keep the lines of communication open throughout the recovery process.**

This is no time to be shy or reclusive. Talk frankly with your greens committee and members; respond to any questions and accusations with calm and confidence. The Green Section can provide articles and other specific information regarding winter injury and recovery programs. Use these—and any other credible sources—to back your story.

- **Formulate a realistic recovery plan.**

Remain optimistic with the recovery dates, but don't make overly optimistic promises that you know you can't keep.

- **Fight hard for temporary greens, where damage is extensive.**

This is one of the most important steps you can take in ensuring the success of your recovery program.

- **Begin cultivation and seeding efforts as soon as the soils permit.**

Grass seed will not germinate until soil temperatures reach 55 degrees, which in other years would have been about the last week in April in the Met area. Covers can help warm the soils and prevent desiccation of seedling plants. Light and frequent applications of soluble, balanced fertilizers will help

push the seedling turf. Soon after seedlings are up—after 10 to 14 days—it's appropriate to begin topdressing, as long as it's applied lightly and is aggressively dragged into the surface. Applications with walk-behind rotary spreaders or the new spinner applicators should make that possible. Be sure, also, to equip mowers with smooth rollers.

- **Consider resodding, if your damage is extensive.**

The success of the sod work will depend on the quality of sod available and the installation work itself. The sod will provide a bentgrass turf that will be less susceptible to winter injury in the future. The downside is that the uniform bentgrass turf will likely be inconsistent with the mixed grass types on the other greens.

- **Maintain conservative management practices.** Be sure to remain tame not only during the initial recovery, but also through midsummer or until the seedling plants have had an opportunity to mature. Pushing juvenile plants too hard and too fast can lead to stress-related diseases and a summer melt-down.

- **Expect the turf damage and related recovery efforts to wear down your staff,** both physically and mentally. An early summer outing or a few days off will be well deserved and helpful for the long season that lies ahead.

Luck of the Draw

Hopefully, your golf course was one of the lucky ones this year. Yes, there are things that can be done to prepare the turf for the winter season and reduce the chances for winter freeze injury. And I strongly recommend addressing any obvious shade or surface drainage problems that may have led to damage this winter. But the fact remains that little can be done to prevent winter freeze injury when weather conditions are right for its occurrence.

Sometimes it's just better to be lucky than good.

For additional information on winter injury, check the USGA website at http://www.usga.org/green/whatsnew/regional_updates/north_east.html.

Local Supers Struggle With Winter Damage

Area superintendents offer their candid thoughts on the damage winter's done and what they see as the best course of action for recovery.

How Did It Happen?

The frustrating part of this mess is that there's no rhyme or reason to the damage that occurred at Silver Spring. Open greens, shaded greens; greens cleared of snow and ice, greens left to clear naturally; well-drained greens . . . it doesn't matter. I've learned nothing from this experience, so naturally, it's difficult to formulate a plan for the future.

*Peter Rappoccio, CGCS
Silver Spring CC, Ridgefield, CT*

There was no rhyme to the reason. In 1999, I sustained winter injury to five of my uncovered greens. This year, I sustained damage to six of my covered greens. It didn't matter where the greens were located: shade, sun, low areas. The winter damage didn't discriminate. It hit areas on greens located throughout the golf course.

*Tony Girardi, CGCS
Rockrimmon CC, Stamford, CT*

As you know, there are many theories out there about winter damage: direct, prolonged ice kill, crown hydration, crown

dehydration, etc. There is probably some truth to these theories, but we need more than theories. I've always enjoyed the challenge of managing poa/bent greens, but winter kill is without a doubt my biggest challenge . . . and I am too often on the losing side of that challenge.

*Dave Kerr, CGCS
Ridgewood CC, Danbury, CT*

So much for knowing why winter kill occurs. The one green that I thought would be a problem—low spots, poor drainage, constant melting and freezing—is my best green on the golf course right now. Covered, uncovered; ice removed, ice not removed; high spots, low spots . . . it doesn't seem to matter. The only correlation I can make is the turf condition going into winter: All of the affected greens were being treated for moss throughout the fall. The presence of moss indicates an agronomic problem exists. It may be just a coincidence because I had greens that were treated and not damaged.

*Glenn Perry, CGCS
Rolling Hills CC, Wilton, CT*

Damage Control

If there is any damage, my philosophy is not to sod, but rather to plug or seed spots only and then aerify, fertilize, etc., to bring along the recovery. I've found that unless you have the same exact sod, the repair will be obvious for years—until the patches blend in.

*Scott Niven, CGCS
The Stanwich Club, Greenwich, CT*

It's essential to communicate the issues to your membership. I've sent emails and letters to everyone, and I'll keep them informed as often as needed. I plan to stay visible to face all questions and concerns.

*Peter Rappoccio, CGCS
Silver Spring CC*

If you do have damage, lightly spike areas and overseed, but remember, you will not get any germination until the ground temperature reaches 55 degrees. You can use turf covers and really drive the soil temperature up by filling your sprayer with hot water and spraying the top of the turf covers.

*Mike Mongon
Fairview CC, Greenwich, CT*

I was amazed by the support area superintendents have been giving each other. Whether it's lending equipment, turf covers, or just moral support, colleagues' thoughtfulness has made an undesirable situation a lot easier to deal with. I was happy and appreciative to see everybody come together and lend a helping hand.

*Glen Dube
Oak Hills Park GC, Norwalk, CT*

With all the tools available to superintendents today, there's a definite temptation to overmanage. However, I've learned that it's a balancing act, and patience is rewarded over the long-term. When you're overly aggressive before the grass actively starts growing, it's easy to set the turf back even further—causing more stress and aggravation to the membership and yourself.

*Glenn Perry, CGCS
Rolling Hills CC*



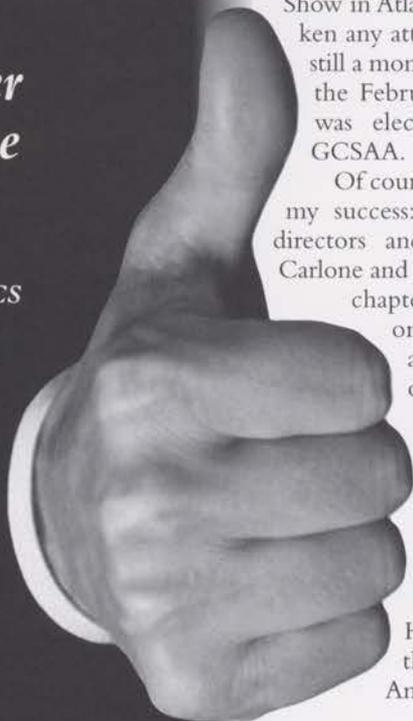
***Covered, uncovered; ice removed,
ice not removed; high spots, low
spots . . . it doesn't seem to matter.***

—Glenn Perry, CGCS

Success at the Polls

And Other Conference Notables

by Tim O'Neill, CGCS



This year's GCSAA International Golf Course Conference and Show in Atlanta, GA, may not have broken any attendance records, but it was still a momentous occasion for me. At the February 14 Annual Meeting, I was elected secretary/treasurer of GCSAA.

Of course, I have many to thank for my success: the MetGCSA board of directors and chapter delegates John Carlone and Bob Alonzi—and the entire chapter membership. Thank you one and all for your support and encouragement—not only in this election, but in the three before, when I campaigned for a director's position on the GCSAA board.

Election Results

Here's a look at how the other chips fell at the Annual Meeting elections:

Officers

- *President:* Jon D. Maddern, CGCS, Elk Ridge Golf Course, Atlanta, MI
- *Vice President:* Mark J. Woodward, CGCS, Dobson Ranch & Riverview golf courses, Mesa, AZ
- *Secretary/Treasurer:* Timothy T. O'Neill, CGCS, Country Club of Darien, CT

Directors

- Robert J. Maibusch, CGCS, MG, Hinsdale Golf Club, Clarendon Hills, IL
- Ricky D. Heine, CGCS, The Golf Club at Star Ranch, Austin, TX
- Mark D. Kuhns, CGCS, Baltusrol Golf Club, Springfield, NJ

Sean A. Hoolehan, CGCS, at Wildhorse Golf Club, Pendleton, OR, and David S. Downing II, CGCS, at Tri Star Golf, Pinehurst, NC, will serve the second of their two-year director terms. Mike Wallace,

CGCS, at Simsbury Farms Golf Club, Simsbury, CT, will serve on the board of directors as immediate past president, while Tommy D. Witt, CGCS, at The Kiawah Island Club, SC, is now retired from the board of directors after serving the past year as immediate past president.

Notable Notes

Other conference news:

- Overall attendance for the conference and show was 18,164. That was approximately 2,500 less (mostly guests and spouses) than last year in Orlando (20,613), but the 6,045 qualified buyers essentially equaled last year's mark in Orlando.

Education seminar attendance reached 6,295, down slightly from the 6,921 chairs filled in Orlando.

A total of 701 exhibitors covered 245,200 square feet of floor space. Last year, 729 exhibitors encompassed 273,200 square feet.

GCSAA conducts its annual event in Orlando every three years, and the city is traditionally the strongest draw for attendees, exhibitors, and education attendance.

- GCSAA announced that the National Golf Course Owners Association (NGCOA) will conduct a joint trade show, adding nearly 20,000 square feet of their own show space, beginning in 2005 in Orlando. Both associations will operate separate education conferences that will run concurrently with the trade show, which has the working title of the Golf Industry Show.

- GCSAA members approved a 20-percent dues increase at the Annual Meeting. Class A and superintendent members will now pay \$300 dollars per year; assistants will pay \$150.

- The amendment related to the relocation study was removed from consideration by the board prior to the Annual Meeting. The process of determining the best location for headquarters—Lawrence or elsewhere—will continue, but any determination of a move will include a full member vote at a future Annual Meeting.

New Roles, New Responsibilities

With my new position on the GCSAA board comes new responsibilities and commitments. As secretary/treasurer, I am directly involved in maintaining the minutes of board meetings, as well as overseeing and reporting the finances of the organization.

GCSAA is actually made up of three companies: the not-for-profit GCSAA and the Environmental Institute for Golf (formerly the GCSAA Foundation) and the profit-making GCSAA Communications. The annual operating budgets for all three combined exceed \$18 million.

Also along with my new position comes a seat on the Environmental Institute for Golf Board of Trustees. Other trustee members include some of golf's "heavy-

weights," such as Greg Norman, Jim Colbert, and Herbert Kohler.

Interested in taking an active role in golf course-related environmental issues, Greg Norman has entered into a five-year formal relationship with the institute and has presented the group with its single highest donation ever.

Other responsibilities for the year include chairing the Environmental Stewardship and Research committees, as well as the Institute Focus Group. The focus group is a member group that provides feedback and direction related to member contributions and communications.

Finally, as vice chairman of the chapter relations committee, 2003 is shaping up to be an extremely busy year.

So far, the new position has lived up to

all expectations. Since the Atlanta conference, I have represented GCSAA at the Canadian Turf Conference in Calgary and, most recently, at the Masters in Augusta, GA. Some things are obviously tougher to take than others.

Needless to say, these responsibilities, combined with my job as superintendent, are all-consuming—noted particularly by the *Tee to Green* editors, who joined forces in prodding me to produce this piece for our newsletter. Hopefully, our editors will be compassionate in the coming months with board and committee meetings fast-approaching.

Tim O'Neill, GCSAA's new secretary/treasurer, is superintendent at Country Club of Darien in Darien, CT.

National Scorecard

Met Scores in 2003 GCSAA Golf Championship

The 2003 GCSAA Golf Championship, presented in partnership with The Toro Co. for the ninth consecutive year, was contested over five courses on and around Hilton Head Island, SC.

A total of 580 competitors took part in the two days of the championship, with 452 playing in the four-ball competition that officially kicked off the

week's activities.

Concerns about Hilton Head's notoriously unpredictable winter weather may have kept some away from this year's tournament, but in reality, the weather during the three-day tourney wasn't half bad, with a brief rain shower on Monday and some scattered frost delays on Tuesday.

That meant competitors were able to

enjoy the courses that hosted tournament play this year: Harbour Town Golf Links, the Robert Trent Jones and Arthur Hills courses at Palmetto Dunes, the Arthur Hills Course at Palmetto Hall, and Old Carolina Golf Club.

Placing among the Top 10 in their respective flights were the following Met members. Congratulations to one and all.

First Flight

1st place gross: Scott Niven, CGCS, The Stanwich Club, Greenwich, CT

Third Flight

3rd place net: Rick Schock, Wee Burn Country Club, Darien, CT

7th place net: Jeff Wentworth, CGCS, Pelham Country Club, Pelham Manor, NY

5th place gross:

- John Streeter, CGCS, North Shore Country Club, Glen Head, NY
- Rick Schock, Wee Burn Country Club, Darien, CT
- Jeff Wentworth, CGCS, Pelham Country Club, Pelham Manor, NY

Sixth Flight

6th place net: Bob Neilsen, CGCS, Bedford Golf & Tennis, Bedford, NY

6th place gross: Kevin Quist, Lake Isle Country Club, Eastchester, NY

Four-Ball Net 1 Division

5th place: Gregg Stanley, CGCS, Hudson National Golf Club, Croton-on-Hudson, NY and Rick Schock, Wee Burn Country Club, Darien, CT

Front nine, closest to the pin:

Gregg Stanley, CGCS, Hudson National Golf Club, Croton-on-Hudson, NY

Rocky Mountain High-Five

Met's Good Deed Earns High Honor From Rocky Mountain GCSA

by John Carlone, CGCS

Though it's been more than a year since the tragedies of September 11, 2001, they're forever etched in most Americans' minds.

One of our fellow chapters out in Colorado, the Rocky Mountain Golf Course Superintendents Association (RMGCSA), couldn't let the one-year anniversary go by without doing something to honor the many people and families affected by the tragedy.

They scheduled their monthly golf meeting for September 11 at the River Course of Keystone Resort in Keystone, CO. The theme of the day—coined by RMGCSA Vice President Derf Soller, superintendent at Breckenridge Golf Club—was, "Let Freedom Play Through."

Before the golf began, they held a brief ceremony in which the teachers and students of the third grade classes of Dillon Valley Elementary School led them in singing the National Anthem and in citing the Pledge of Allegiance.

On the golf course, American flags replaced the customary flagstick flags, and each player in a foursome was asked to take a turn holding the flagstick while their playing partners putted. None of the flags were to touch the ground during play.

For the MetGCSA, the day had special

significance too: The RMGCSA decided to frame one of the flags used during the tournament and present it to our association in honor of our efforts in helping families of victims of September 11. Included in the frame with the flag were pictures of the third graders singing the National Anthem and leading the Pledge of Allegiance.

This beautiful framed memory was presented to our association by Greg Blew, CGCS, immediate past president of the RMGCSA, at the GCSAA conference in Atlanta. Several members of the MetGCSA board were there to receive this memorial flag from RMGCSA board members.

I had the opportunity to visit the Rocky Mountain association's hospitality suite at the conference on February 13 and had the distinct pleasure of meeting several members of the RMGCSA and, in particular, their board. I was able to say a few words to the group to express our deep appreciation for this recognition, which I told them we would humbly accept on behalf of all the surviving family members of those who perished on 9-11.

The flag will hang at our headquarters at Golf Central in Elmsford, NY, for all to see.

John Carlone is our past president and superintendent at The Meadow Brook Club in Jericho, NY.



Rocky Mountain GCSA's Greg Blew presents framed flag to Met board members (from left to right) Tony Girardi, Glenn Perry, John Carlone, Tim Moore, and Matt Ceplo.

Audubon Workshop Sheds New Light on Environmental Responsibility

by Matt Cepllo, CGCS

On Thursday, March 6, 19 brave souls trudged through the snow to attend the first MetGCSA-sponsored Audubon Workshop at Westchester Hills Golf Club.

Other than the weather, the day went off without a hitch. We started with testimonials from superintendents who have seen their courses through the process of becoming a Certified Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary.

I spoke about my program at Rockland Country Club, which has not only earned the respect and support of my entire membership, but was also helpful in my dealings with local agencies on water-use issues during the drought last season.

Paul Dotti, superintendent from Edgewood Country Club in Rivervale, NJ, described how, as part of his certification process, he worked with a local school, teaching the children the benefits of golf courses to the environment.

Pat Blum from Colonial Acres Golf Club, a small nine-hole facility in Glemont, NY, dispelled the myth that it's too difficult and too expensive to become Audubon Certified. With an annual budget of \$27,500, Pat not only became a Certified Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary, but was also the recipient of this year's GCSAA Environmental Stewardship Award for public golf courses.

Official Support for the Environment

Next on the program roster was a talk from Dave Oatis, director of the USGA Northeast Region Green Section. He reinforced that it's entirely possible to maintain playability while adhering to environmentally sound maintenance practices. Take Westchester Country Club. . . . Environmental responsibility hasn't stopped the PGA tour from playing there, and under Joe Alonzi's guidance, the club has been Audubon-certified since 1996.

The rest of the day, Joellen Zeh, a staff ecologist with Audubon International, spoke about the benefits of environmental management and planning. She also discussed, in detail, how to establish an envi-



USGA Northeast Region Green Section Director Dave Oatis and Audubon ecologist Joellen Zeh are flanked by Audubon certified supers Paul Dotti, left, (Edgewood CC) and Pat Blum (Colonial Acres GC).

ronmental plan to meet your goals and objectives.

Lots to Gain, Nothing to Lose

If nothing else, everyone who attended this meeting realized that becoming certified doesn't take a lot of extra time or money—just a slightly different perspective on some of your golf course management practices. I encourage everyone to become a member of the Audubon and to pursue certification. There's so much to gain—and nothing to lose.

If you have any questions or wish to contact Audubon International, their number is 518-767-9051. You can also e-mail

them at www.audubonintl.org. They will be more than happy to help.

Special Thanks

In closing, I'd like to thank all the speakers and participants who braved the weather to attend. I also want to thank Westchester Hills Manager Drew Bollard and Golf Course Superintendent Peter Waterous for helping set up and host our day. Last, but not least, a big thanks to Jeff Weld for loaning us an essential piece of equipment for the day: a projector.

Matt Cepllo is superintendent at Rockland Country Club in Sparkill, NY.

Drought Response Planning

Speak Now or Forever Hold Your Peace

The CT DEP, in conjunction with several other state agencies, has put together a preliminary Drought Preparedness Response Plan.

The MetGCSA and the Connecticut CAGCS, along with other local and state associations, are reviewing this working draft to make the necessary changes before it's finalized in June.

Our goal is to ensure that our golf courses' water-use needs will be given serious and fair consideration in the event of a drought.

We encourage MetGCSA members to review and comment on the working copy of the Drought Preparedness Response Plan by May 15. Once this plan is put into effect, all golf courses located in Connecticut will be required to adhere to its regulations.

If you have any questions or would like a copy of the drought plan to review, please contact Government Relations Chairman Tony Girardi at 914-764-5010 or tgirardi@optonline.net. Your input could mean a lot to the welfare of your course during a prolonged drought.

How Silver Spring Sprung to Life

by Greg Wojick, CGCS

Of all the MetGCSA golf events, it seems Peter Rappoccio has an affinity for the Superintendent/Manager Tourney. On May 15, he—and Silver Spring Country Club in Ridgefield, CT—will host this event for the fifth time, the last one in Y2K.

In his 26-year tenure at the club, Peter, who, by the way, is our recent Sherwood A. Moore Award recipient, has hosted five other association meetings—that's 10 in all, with the last being the November 2002 Annual Meeting.

Needless to say, with Peter's award-winning status and his activity as a Met host, most members probably know all they ever wanted to about Peter Rappoccio. So we opted for a change in venue for this profile. What follows is the story of how Silver Spring sprung to life nearly three-quarters of a century ago.

Though the club's history is colorful, probably more interesting is the insight it offers into the world of golf—and golf course maintenance—during a tumultuous time in our country's history: the Great Depression and World War II.

Enjoy the read—and a great day of golf at Silver Spring Country Club.

The Beginning

In the late 1920s, a small group of public-spirited residents in Connecticut's Ridgefield-Wilton area gave much thought to the creation of a modern 18-hole golf course that would serve the needs of the community. They formed a corporation; generated the necessary funds; and launched into construction.

Three years later, in May of 1932, the course was ready for play. It opened its doors with 113 members and a whopping \$16,000 operating budget. Initiation fees were fixed at \$100, annual dues at \$200.

Robert White, of the Wykagyl Country Club, was responsible for the course design. (He also designed Rockland Country Club in Sparkill, NY; Manasquan River Golf Club in Brielle, NJ; and the Shore Haven

Golf Club in Norwalk, CT.) Respecting the membership's vision, White created a course that was "sporty but appealing"—one "the entire family could play." At the same time, his design catered to members who wanted a layout that would meet competent golfers' requirements without penalizing too heavily the average player.

Apparently, White succeeded: The basic design of the course has remained largely the same over the past 73 years.

While course construction was underway, Architect Roger H. Bullard went to work on Silver Spring's clubhouse, designing it in the tradition of a simple New England farmhouse. Bullard's claim to fame also includes clubhouses' at Maidstone Country Club on Long Island and the Plainfield Country Club in New Jersey.

The total cost of the club, including the land and the golf course and clubhouse construction, came to about \$167,000. Money, needless to say, went a great deal further in those days. And it's no wonder: Club records show that laborers hired to construct the golf course were paid at a rate of 50 cents per hour!

Also interesting are the "height of rough" discussions that took place as far back as 1933 at Silver Spring. Here's a quote from a communication from one governor to another. Get a load of the heights they're talking about. . . .

"I would like to suggest that the short rough, which is referred to as immediately adjacent to the fairways, be properly trimmed and not allowed to grow two or three feet long. I refer you particularly to the run along the edge of the 6th hole which has been permitted to grow knee-high and is an unfair penalty for a ball rolling a foot or two off the fairway."

From Optimism to Great Depression

Though planned and initiated in an era of optimism—the roaring twenties—the club soon fell on hard times: a decade-and-a-half of depression and war.

In 1941, after a very shaky year financially, 37 members resigned—defense work

and military service claiming many of them. With World War II on everyone's mind, only 10 members attended the club's annual meeting that year.

Then, as if to add insult to injury, Japanese Beetle grubs ravaged the fairways, requiring an unexpected \$3,000 in expenses for an application of arsenate of lead to save what remained of the course. On many an occasion, a generous donation by a member made a necessary expenditure possible.

By the start of 1942—in the face of gasoline rationing and other wartime factors—members were giving serious thought to closing the club. A group of members eager to keep the club up and running agreed to underwrite the deficit—until November of that year. At that point, the membership numbers had dipped below 50, and it was apparent that the club was fighting a losing battle. Silver Spring just couldn't continue to operate, and it finally closed.

With hope of opening again one day, serious consideration was given to purchasing sheep for \$3,000 to keep the grass from going to seed. The Fairfield County Farm Bureau was consulted and approved the soundness of the idea. But once again, a few members came up with the funds to cut the course twice a year and maintain the club on a standby basis. To help the war effort as well as the club treasury, 200 of the club's trees were cut and sold for lumber.

A Reawakening

After the war ended, much effort and planning went into the club's rehabilitation and reopening. Professor Dickenson from the University of Massachusetts was retained to evaluate the condition of the course. He found it to be about 80 percent of what it should be—not half bad, considering. In 1944, Gino Torcellini was hired as the Silver Spring's first clubhouse manager, a position he held for 37 years—until 1982, when the club's current general manager, Robert Sommer, was hired.



Peter Rappoccio, CGCS

Member News

Longtime Met Member Wins Environmental Leadership Award

Silver Spring prospered in the 1950s. There was a big population migration into the Wilton-Ridgefield area. Fees were raised in keeping with the boom times: The initiation fee went from \$100 in '32 to \$500, while the annual dues remained at \$200, with an added 20 percent in federal taxes and \$50 for each member of the family living at home and not of junior membership age. Those were the days!

It was clear from the history records that, had it not been for a relatively small group of leaders determined to make Silver Spring succeed, the club would never have become what it is today.

In the year 2003, the course finds itself in the capable hands of Peter Rappoccio, Silver Spring's fifth golf course superintendent.

During his time at Silver Spring, Peter has certainly accelerated the improvement process. Over the past 12 years, he's installed a new irrigation system, completed a greenside bunker reconstruction project, contoured fairways, reclaimed green cupping positions, and completely rebuilt his maintenance facility.

Right now, he's in the final stages of completing a master plan with Golf Course Architect Roger Rulewich that will include updating various areas of the course. Plans include bumping up the size of the course's original tees built in 1929, repositioning fairway bunkers, and adding a practice area for chipping and bunker play.

Peter may have hosted numerous meetings, but in my mind, you can never golf Silver Spring too much. In 2003, Silver Spring and its members are, once again, living the high life. And they're willing, once again, to share it with all of us.

Greg Wojick, a member of the Tee to Green Editorial Committee, is superintendent at Greenwich Country Club in Greenwich, CT.

Congratulations to Met associate member **Tim Powers** who was among 17 chapter winners in the GCSAA/*Golf Digest* Environmental Leaders in Golf Awards for 2002. This award recognizes golf course superintendents and their courses for overall course management excellence in the areas of Resource Conservation, Water Quality Management, Integrated Pest Management, Wildlife/Habitat Management, and Education/Outreach. In addition, these categories are based on four criteria: sustainability, criticality, originality, and technology implementation/use.

Tim, who has been a MetGCSA member since 1989, is now superintendent at Crystal Springs Golf Course, a public facility in Burlingame, CA.



Tim Powers, CGCS

Member on the Move

Joseph Gardner Jr. is the new superintendent at Dellwood Country Club in New City, NY. Previous position: Assistant superintendent at the Seawane Club in Hewlett Harbor, NY.

In Sympathy

Our deepest sympathy to Tee & Green Sod's **Dave Wallace**. Dave lost his sister, Janet Huff, the end of March. Donations can be made to the Susan G. Komen Breast Cancer Foundation.

Our condolences, Dave.

Newly Certified

Congratulations to the following Met members who recently completed the coursework required to become certified golf course superintendents (CGCS) with GCSAA:

- **Bob Nielsen Jr.**, Bedford Golf & Tennis Club, Bedford, NY
- **Stephen Rabideau Jr.**, Hamlet Golf & Country Club, Commack, NY
- **Stephen Smith**, Lake Waramaug Country Club, New Preston, CT



For additional news
about our members and
upcoming events, visit
the GCSAA website at
www.Metgcsa.org.

A Return to The Canyon

by Greg Wojick, CGCS

I'm sure all who played in the 1997 MetGCSA Invitational at The Canyon Club will remember the sunshine, excellent playing conditions, and plentiful food and drink that made for a perfect day.

And if you weren't there, you have another chance: The MetGCSA Invitational Tourney returns to "The Canyon" again this year on June 18.

Our host superintendent, Paul Gonzalez, clearly has the kind of enviable working relationship with the club's management that affords him the opportunity to have all the "big wigs" in the Met area at his club. The foursomes will include course superintendents, club professionals, green chairmen, and club presidents.

Paul admits the impressive field of players can flash up feelings of nervous excitement, but he enjoys the challenge.

Accuracy is Key

"The Canyon Club was founded in 1963, originally called the Bel Air Country Club," says Paul, who has been the superintendent there since 1993. "The club was purchased by Mitsubishi International in the early '80s, which is when the name became The Canyon Club."

The course measures 6,356 from the "the tips," a short course by any standard. The emphasis here is on accuracy. "You have to put the ball exactly where it needs to go," says Paul. "Because of the hilly terrain, the elevation changes and the yardages play tricks. They play longer," he warns, "than they really are."

Designed by Albert Zikorus, the club is currently working with architect Ron Cutlip on a long-needed master plan, which will include entirely rebuilding several holes, the driving range, and all of the course's bunkers and tees.

Working behind the scenes is Paul's loyal and highly capable crew. "I have a small staff of nine guys who do the work of 20," says Paul, adding, "And my assistant, Nick Lerner, and mechanic, John Shea, are two of the best in the business."

Rooted in Turfgrass Management

Paul Gonzalez's background in turf has deep roots. "I've been working on golf courses every summer since I was 10," says Paul. "Fortunately for me, I had an uncle in the business." That uncle is none other than Bill Gaydosh, now superintendent at the Round Hill Club in Greenwich, CT.

Paul began working for his Uncle Bill at Edgewood Country Club in Rivervale, NJ, and then followed him to Hackensack Golf Club in Oradell, NJ. "I worked on the crew from 1986 to 1990," says Paul, "while earning a B.S. from Rutgers in plant science."

The following two years he worked as assistant at Brae Burn Country Club and then at Montammy, at the same time start-

ing—and almost completing—a master's in computer science at Iona.

A true computer guru, Paul and Joe Pishtay, his assistant at the time who also had an interest in computers, joined forces to develop a program that actually rivaled the Trims golf course operations software. "We felt it was more complete and user friendly," says Paul.

To help fund the program development, Paul and Joe took in partners. Unfortunately, they differed so much in their views about certain aspects of the program that, before its launch in 1995, Paul and Joe ended up selling their 50-percent share to their partners.

Their GCS program, as they called it, lives on, sold and marketed these days by Incircuit Development Corporation.



Paul Gonzalez,
CGCS

The Paul You Don't Know

When Paul's not toiling at the course, he's toiling at the house he and his wife of nine years, Terri, bought four years ago in Mahopac, NY. In between hammering a few nails, Paul enjoys swimming in their pool and making merry with the neighbors.

Sharing the house with Paul and Terri are their two children: their son, Brandon, who's 4 1/2, and their daughter, Brytany, who's 1 1/2. Though he didn't say so, word has it that Paul's replaced his passion for boating with a passion for his kids. His 21-foot Cuddy Cabin, which he had aptly named "No Grass," has been docked in his yard for the past three years.

"I have a small staff of nine guys who do the work of 20. And my assistant, Nick Lerner, and mechanic, John Shea, are two of the best in the business."

"When the kids are a little older," says Paul, "we'll buy a bigger boat that we all can enjoy."

"I've been fortunate," Paul says, again reflecting on his golf course experience. "Growing up in the business, I had the pleasure of knowing and having true gentlemen as role models. My Uncle Bill, Chuck Martineau, Fred Scheyhing, and Mike Leary were my mentors. They're guys who not only are great at what they do, but also always knew how to laugh and have fun—even in the toughest of times."

"Everyone should be so lucky," Paul says of his unique experience.

Greg Wojick, a member of the Tee to Green Editorial Committee, is superintendent at Greenwich Country Club in Greenwich, CT.

Upcoming Events

Save These Dates!

Meeting and Social Calendar is Filling Up

Though many of our meeting and social sites are now spoken for, we're still looking for an Annual Business Meeting site in November—and for volunteers for 2004.

To secure a golf meeting, don't delay in calling either of our Tournament Committee co-chairs—Tom Leahy, 914-941-8281, or Bob Nielsen, 914-234-3779.

To host a social event, contact Social & Welfare Committee Chairman Jeff Wentworth at 914-738-2752.

Two-Ball Qualifier – First Round Team Championship

Monday, April 28

Rockland Country Club, Sparkhill, NY
Host: Matt Ceplo, CGCS

Superintendent/Manager Tournament

Thursday, May 15

Silver Spring Country Club
Ridgefield, CT
Host: Peter Rappoccio, CGCS

Invitational Tournament

Wednesday, June 18

The Canyon Club, Armonk, NY
Host: Paul Gonzalez, CGCS

Summer Seminar

Thursday, July 24

Sunningdale Country Club, Scarsdale, NY
Host: Sean Cain

MetGCSA Family Picnic

Date & Site TBA

MetGCSA Summer Social

Date & Site TBA

Poa Annual Tournament

Monday, August 11

The Powelton Club, Newburgh, NY
Host: Bob DeMarco

Met Team Championship – Second Round Team Championship

Monday, September 15

Hampshire Country Club, Mamaroneck NY
Host: Tony Campanella

Met Area Team Championship

October TBA

Rolling Green Golf Club, West Chester, PA
Host: Warren Savini Jr.

Superintendent/Green Chairman Tournament

Monday, October 20

Greenwich Country Club, Greenwich, CT
Host: Greg Wojick, CGCS

Annual Assistants Championship

Date & Site TBA

Annual Business Meeting

November

Date & Site TBA

MetGCSA Christmas Party

Saturday, December 6

Woodway Country Club, Darien, CT
Host: Larry Pakkala, CGCS

Bogie, Par ... Watch the Birdie!



Audubon International is inviting everyone—Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary Program members and nonmembers alike—to participate in its sixth annual North American Birdwatching Open on International Migratory Bird Day, Saturday, May 10.

Here's how it works: Over the course of 24 hours, participants identify as many different birds as they can on their properties. It helps to have someone experienced in bird identification on the watch to ensure a more accurate count.

The data the Audubon gathers provides useful information about bird species commonly found on different types of properties. The greater the number of participants,

the greater the value of the information gathered.

The event is a fun and easy way to see what birds are on your course during this peak time of year, and it can help generate data about the diversity of birds on managed landscapes. Better still, it's a great way to publicize your course's interest in the environment and create some great local environmental connections.

To register for the event or get more information, visit...

<http://www.audubonintl.org/projects/birdwatchopen/birdopen.htm>,

or contact Jennifer Batza at 518-767-9051, extension 12 or jbatza@audubonintl.org.

Patron Directory

Patrons listed on this page are supporting our association. You are encouraged to support them.

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