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Tee To Green

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President's Message

You Gotta Love This Business



I'm writing this after a MetGCSA board meeting. . . . The stock market is down. Our restricted funds are stagnant. I have an assignment I should have completed three days ago. And Pandora's screaming at me, "You're holding up the newsletter!"

Then there's my real job. I'm starting to appreciate the beauty and persistence of nutsedge. I'm beginning to use the term putting quality when it comes to goosegrass. And I've officially nominated Anthracnose for the John Reid Award. Mrs. Anthracnose will be so proud.

Then, I get the question from a golfer, "Is this an easy year?" Unfortunately, there's no such thing. All years are difficult because of the simple nature of our business: Cut it close and often; roll the death out of it, and ask it to grow. There are only less difficult years, not easy ones.

Rain, Rain, Go Away!

Right now, I'm finding things a little more difficult than they should be. This is the time—right now—that we should be implementing our aerification program. It's not for lack of planning that we haven't started. When it came to planning this process this year, I have to admit, I whipped up a beauty. Typed it out, double-spaced it and even highlighted everyone's assignments. Only problem is, it's raining. It has been raining. The course is saturated. But dammit, I want to aerify. If I wait, my two-week recovery window will bump against our Labor Day tournament. What to do. The easiest thing to do is draft up a plan; the hardest is to implement it.

I think I need to take a page out of the *Physicians Handbook*. No, not overcharge by 100 percent and hope insurance covers 50 percent, but rather adhere to the number one rule: "First, do no harm!"

I think if I went out now and plowed ahead, I'd have just that: a plowed golf course. Dr. Joe Duich used to tell us that we "kill more grass, all in the name of maintenance." It only took me 20 years for that to sink in. We're backing off.

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Dave Mahoney
MetGCSA President

Here's the rub: Our players, based on a look at their calendars, assume that everything is progressing as scheduled. I even get reports, "It was dry in the City." But I don't blame them. Who wants a perfectly good course ripped up in August? We need to get this work done with minimal inconvenience to our golfers.

I know it's not easy. I need to remind myself about what our goals are and what, first and foremost, we need to accomplish.

Are Your Warts Showing?

I always feel the end of August is a good time to really evaluate the weaknesses at your course and, perhaps, even in your maintenance program. This is the time of year we all have our warts showing. Determine if those warts are something you can improve on within your own practices or something that requires a capital infusion.

For example, we built our cart paths with Belgian block curbs and a stone-dust and red-gravel surface. The paths look great when they're freshly raked. When they're heavily trafficked, they look awful. When we get a heavy rain, many of them wash
continued on page 13

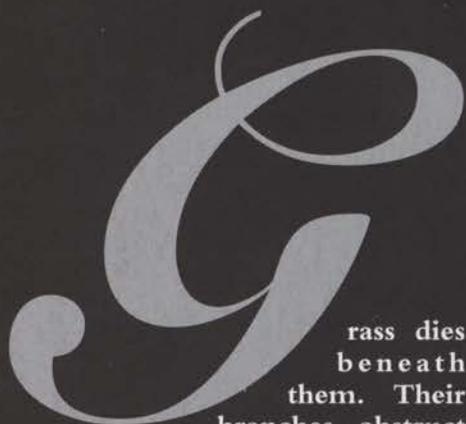


Feature

The Rocky Road to De-Treeing Your Course

by Sean Cain

*Area Supers
Reveal the Ins
and Outs of
Selling and
Implementing
a Tree
Management
Program on
Their Course*



Grass dies beneath them. Their branches obstruct the intended line of play. They hog sunlight and water and even pose safety hazards. Yet golfers insist on protecting them.

What are we talking about? The mature trees on our golf courses—of course.

Superintendents at older clubs throughout the country have long recognized the meddlesome effects of trees on golf course turf and playability. USGA agronomists, golf course architects, arborists, and turfgrass researchers have penned countless articles on the merits of selective tree removal. Yet trying to convince green chairmen and club members of the benefits of “de-treeing” our golf courses is still a delicate matter, if not uphill battle, for many golf course superintendents.

Tree removal is so politically and emotionally charged, in fact, that some courses begin chainsawing trees on the q.t.—to avoid the wrath of tree-hugging members.

One course that admits to such surreptitious tree removal is the famed home of seven U.S. Opens, Oakmont Country Club outside of Pittsburgh. In the dark of night, then superintendent Mark Kuhns assembled a SWAT team that worked by headlights clearing trees—and every bit of evidence—in the wee hours, while members were still asleep.

Sad that it had to come to that. But fortunately, that’s a practice of the past, taking place more than a decade ago. Since then, after much quiet persuasion and politicking, Oakmont has gotten the go-ahead to fell at least 3,500 trees, fully

restoring the golf course. Oakmont is, once again, just as architect Henry Fownes had intended it to be: with a renewed emphasis on the bunkering and the dramatic contours of its fairways and greens—rather than on trees, or as the Scots have dubbed them, “bunkers in the sky.”

Oakmont is not alone. Many of America’s 100 Greatest Golf Courses—and many Met area courses—have initiated tree-removal programs to bring back vistas, eliminate double hazards, and first and foremost, improve turfgrass conditions. The process for most have followed a similar path to Oakmont’s: initial wariness—even opposition—giving way to almost unanimous support of the results.

With more area courses looking to embark on tree removal projects of their own, we thought we’d ask member superintendents who have sold their clubs on tree removal to share their formulas for success. Here’s what’s worked—and how it’s helped their courses. Has it been worth the fight? All would give their efforts an unequivocal thumbs up.

Pelham Country Club Pelham Manor, NY Jeff Wentworth, CGCS

Our program was not an easy sell. We tried to soften the blow by marketing it as a tree *maintenance*—rather than removal—program. Pelham is serious about the 1,260 specimen trees on the property. We had a complete inventory done in 2002 by StrataPoint, Inc., which included a GPS map and tree care and tree removal recommendations.

We worked long and hard to convince “the powers that be” that various trees should be taken down. We targeted trees that were affecting turf growth and playability, that were in poor condition, or that were not indigenous to our area, such as willows, Siberian elms, and Bradford pears.

We started by digitally photographing each tree to be removed and describing its condition. This year, we did 98 trees, posting information on each of them on our website in addition to presenting the info to the Green and Golf committees and then to the membership at an open meeting.

When all was said and done, we had near-unanimous support to remove all 98 trees. Working with our arborist, we took down 78 of those trees this past January and February. In 2005, we’ll remove the remaining 20.

As part of this plan, we agreed to replace about one-quarter of the trees we cut. Most of them were placed along property lines, primarily near the first hole and range, where they were used as screens. We were careful not to locate any trees where they would affect play or fine turf areas.

This first go-round was a sort of trial run for the rest to come. And so far, so good. Turf health has improved in many areas, particularly on the 8th and 13th greens, which each had a 36-inch oak growing within two yards of the putting surface. The overall aesthetics of the course have also improved, and the features on the 1st and 4th are dramatically more visible. Better still, the members





**"HMMM, NOT MUCH
OF A RECOVERY SHOT
FROM HERE..."**

16th greens and on our 17th green and tee.

Before taking an axe to any of the trees, we formed a decision-making group made up of me and five members, including two of the most vocal tree huggers at the club. We toured the course, looking at all the trees in question and made a decision on each and every one. We agreed to remove most of the trees I proposed but decided to delay some others to see if turf conditions improved with pruning or more selective removals.

Tree replacement was also part of the program. It's easier to sell a tree removal plan if you promise to replace trees where needed. But really, it's wasted effort to cut down one misplaced tree and then plant another. In some cases, you could plant trees in places that don't affect turf areas, but at that point, it becomes a numbers game of cutting and planting trees.

The approval process was quick, requiring that I present a tree removal plan to my Grounds Committee and later to the board. I was spared presenting the plan to the entire membership.

In the end, we removed 30 mature trees on the three holes. It wasn't a large number, but the trees were all large oaks, which were noticeable to the average golfer. Despite the obvious void, the membership has been happy with the outcome, and better, the club is receptive to future tree work.

**Sleepy Hollow Country Club
Scarborough, NY
Tom Leahy, CGCS**

We called in numerous industry authorities to help us market our tree removal program at the club. We began the process seven years ago, seeking counsel from the USGA, ArborCom, our own arborist, and our architect, Ken Dye.

Our objectives were ambitious. Like most superintendents concerned with turf quality, I wanted to improve microenvironments around the property through selective tree and brush removal. In October 1998, we called in ArborCom to study six sites for us.

They sent Herb Waterous, who pin-

pointed trees that were blocking sunlight on some of our green and tee sites. We methodically removed those trees that blocked the most light, particularly morning sunlight, which is so crucial to long-term turf health.

Another part of our plan was to showcase our course's numerous majestic trees. Many were being choked by vines and underbrush that needed to be removed in order to improve their health and appearance.

Last but not least, we wanted to showcase rock outcroppings and vistas of the Hudson River that had become obscured over the years as saplings grew and trees matured.

In the past seven years, it's safe to say we've taken down several hundred trees per year. Most of those removed were nonspecimen trees or trees that were poorly formed due to overcrowding.

The membership was hesitant about our tree removal plans at first, but we moved slowly, making sure to build confidence along the way.

Now, everyone seems to realize that our tree program has enhanced the beauty of our site, improved our river views, and ultimately, enhanced turf conditions.

**Siwanoy Country Club
Bronxville, NY
Dave Mahoney**

We removed more than 250 trees throughout the course during our golf course renovation project, which we completed more than two years ago. We closely followed the recommendation of the architect in deciding which trees to remove.

We had the luxury of having the nine holes we were working on closed while the work was being completed. When the golfers came back out the following spring, the work was done, and the trees we removed were hardly missed.

Our goal was like everyone else's: We were overplanted and needed to remove trees to improve turf growth. We also strived to highlight one or two of the more impressive trees in various areas of the course by removing surrounding weaker trees that were clut-

are very happy with the results.

Next year, we plan to work with ArborCom Technologies to pinpoint trees surrounding the 10th and 15th greens to either be removed or selectively pruned so that we might improve growing conditions in those areas. We are also hoping that the service will help us to pinpoint and then do what's necessary to highlight the many specimen trees in those areas. The trees surrounding holes 9, 10, 13, 14, and 15 were specimens on the property before the course was constructed, and they're now an integral part of the golf course.

**Scarsdale Golf Club
Hartsdale, NY
Matt Severino**

Selling a tree management program at our club was relatively easy. It helped, of course, that I had Dave Oatis's USGA Turf Advisory Service report, which supported most of my recommendations. I was primarily concerned with improving the turf quality or poor growing environments on our 13th and

**"IS THIS ONE OF THE
TREES YOU VOTED TO
SAVE?"**

tering the area and impeding the growth of the more desirable trees. When the work was done, we were left with one or two trees in each area as beautiful focal points.

If I were to recommend one thing, it would be to be aggressive in the removal process. If you do a bare minimum, you're still going to have shade problems, and those who were against removing trees will still be upset. It's hard for anyone to argue against the process when the turf dramatically improves.

**Woodway Country Club
Darien, CT
Larry Pakkala, CGCS**

Marketing a tree removal program is always controversial, and when there's a large number of decision makers involved, it's difficult to get a consensus on what needs to be done.

Our decisions to remove trees took considerable time, research, and money. I met countless times with my Green Committee to discuss the agronomic, as well as design issues dictating tree removal.

Before initiating these discussions in 1998, I'd been struggling to grow grass in heavily shaded areas on several greens and tee complexes. They were located in a section of Woodway known as "the Hill"—a knoll thickly populated by beautiful old oaks.

I had learned to grow grass on the greens in these areas, but it required an extremely labor-intensive maintenance regime, and each year, by fall, the turf's carbohydrate reserves would start to become depleted, and the greens would begin to decline. Worse, they would become susceptible to disease problems. Finally after some of my greens were hit with necrotic ring spot, which didn't heal until the following spring, I called in ArborCom to conduct a formal sunlight analysis. We were the first in the area to use their service. The Care of Trees, Woodway's arborists for the past 45 years, had recommended we consult with ArborCom.

Working with the company's founder, Scott Robinson, and with Herb Waterous, whom we all know, we were able to pinpoint



the trees that were the culprits in impeding light beneficial for growing turf.

Scott and Herb recommended we remove 50 trees from the Hill, which is where our 6th and 10th greens and 7th and 11th tee complexes are located.

To date, we've removed 20 of those trees. Though this was a compromise, enough trees were removed to make way for the early morning sunlight necessary to substantially enhance turf growth. All the turf in this area is *Poa annua*, which tolerates lower levels of sunlight. If it were bentgrass, more trees would have had to come down.

I have to say, our tree removal project was a complete success. The membership was extremely pleased with the outcome, and so was I.

**Westchester Country Club
Rye, NY
Joe Alonzi, CGCS**

Tree removal is rarely popular to start. It's no different at our club. To help ease the controversy and assure the membership that our

decisions to remove various trees were well grounded, we consulted with the USGA, our arborist, and our architect. Together, we identified our weakest turf areas, which—no surprise—were shaded by trees. Then we agreed on a tree removal plan on a number of our green surrounds, tee surrounds, and specific landing areas.

None of the trees we removed were quality specimen trees. Most were silver maples, Norway maples, white pines, spruces, and willows. After our initial round of removals, the complaints and grumblings seemed to subside.

Our tree program is ongoing. Over the course of 10 years, we've removed hundreds of trees, all in the name of improved sunlight, less turf stress, and ultimately, better playing conditions. Some of the removals actually brought back the architect's original intent on how that particular hole should be played.

People, for the most part, were happy with the outcome—though there will always be those who disagree with any tree removal effort.

Did you know the time and money spent on maintaining weak turf could easily reach in the tens of thousands of dollars each year—especially when you factor in the added expense for additional fungicides, labor for hand watering, safety pruning, and other high-maintenance practices.



"THIS IS FOR THE BIRDS!"

**Oak Hills Park Golf Course
Norwalk, CT
Glen Dube, CGCS**

Seeing is believing in my book. I marketed our tree removal program by taking members of my Green Committee out on the golf course the spring of 2003 to show them how the shade from surrounding trees was hampering our greens' recovery from the severe ice damage we sustained earlier that year.

All went well until I tagged the proposed cut-downs with fluorescent tape. I did this so various tree companies could see what we wanted to take out and then bid on the job. That's when the tree-loving public

came out of the woods, protesting the fact that we were planning to take out so many large, healthy trees.

Needless to say, after the bidding process was over, the tape came down, and the controversy stopped—until the work was completed this past winter. Then some of the neighbors joined the tree-loving golfers and demanded to know why we cut down so many trees. After explaining the formula for photosynthesis and the role sunlight plays in that process, things settled down a bit.

When all was said and done, we had removed a couple of hundred trees from around nearby half of our green complexes. Selecting trees for removal was not a snap decision. I went out and inspected all of our

problem areas at various times over the course of six months to isolate only those trees that had to be removed. I call it the poor man's ArborCom.

One facet of the project that I found to be very important was that we cleaned up before we opened in the spring. All of the wood was removed from the course and stumps were ground out, filled, and seeded—even though it was March.

I'm happy to say that, this season, our greens are in much better shape. That usually equals happy golfers too. Many people think the course looks better without the trees. But the reality is, once the leaves on the surrounding trees came out, many golfers didn't even realize we had removed any trees. Out of sight, out of mind, I guess!

**Old Oaks Country Club
Purchase, NY
Mark Millett**

As part of the golf course restoration project we just completed, we took a long, hard look at all the trees on our course. Our objective was, first and foremost, to improve agronomics and playability. We've seen a big improvement in turf quality around green complexes, particularly on holes 4, 5, 14, and 17. We've also been able to reestablish much of the rough in strategic areas on various holes. The results have been so dramatic that our membership doesn't even blink an eye, now, when we talk about removing a tree. They've seen how selective tree removal can improve playability.

The other objective of our tree removal program was to highlight some of our specimen trees. Old Oaks has a number of beautiful, large hardwood trees that are positioned strategically throughout the course. These gorgeous specimens were being hidden by smaller, undesirable species that had sprung up over the years.

During the renovation, I worked with club members and Ken Dye, our golf course architect, to determine which of these trees should be removed to not only help reestablish these grand specimens, but also create

So deeply rooted are trees in American golf that one in every 10 courses has some leafy reference in its name: Think of our own Old Oaks, Birchwood, Willow Ridge, and Oak Hills to name several.

beautiful vistas throughout the course. This, like our other tree removal work, was well received.

Key to our success in reestablishing turf where we'd taken down trees was digging out the stumps rather than grinding them out. Completely removing stumps may seem more disruptive to the area initially, but the turf comes back faster in the long run.

Elements of a Successful Sale

When all was said and done, all the superintendents we spoke to seemed to have a similar formula for developing and selling a tree management program at their clubs. Here, in short, are the steps they recommend for gaining buy-in to your tree removal wants and needs.

1. Build credibility. Convincing influential people at your club that you're a knowledge expert, if not an authority, on tree removal is the most important step in getting a program approved and launched. Know the trees on your course and your golf course architect's original design strategies. Have credible sources—articles, books—on the subject at your fingertips to support your case.

It also never hurts to arrange a game with some of the powers-that-be and point out opportunities for improvement as you play the course.

2. Bolster your case. Conduct a feasibility study. Seek the counsel of outside professionals, such as a certified arborist, USGA agronomist, golf course architect, or a firm like ArborCom Technologies Inc. or Strata-Point, Inc., which uses computer modeling software to help identify shade problems for turfgrass (see page 10).

Each of these specialists can help you evaluate the trees on your course from a number of perspectives: tree safety and health, the strategic nature of trees relative to the course design, and how trees are affecting turf conditions.

During this step, it helps to take a tree inventory, identifying tree types and their environments (wetlands, exposed dry areas, etc.). Identify nonnative species that were planted over the course's life. This will help in justifying the removal of certain trees.

Always have the context of the original design in mind when choosing what stays and what goes. Original course photos and drawings are invaluable here.

Take pictures and incorporate them in your presentations to club officials and members for a more professional approach.

3. Submit your plan. Your plan should be chockfull of benefits, but light on details. Presenting an overly detailed plan at this point could do more harm than good. It may appear that you have a predetermined outcome in mind, and people will be more apt to dig in their heels.

Do be sure, however, to include some approximate costs and a timeframe for completion. Another helpful tack: Before formally presenting your plan, run it by any key influencers who support your efforts. They can give you the feedback you need to ensure your plan is well received.

4. Start with a "pilot" project. Begin with a small pilot project that is guaranteed to be a success. Pick a location that will visibly improve turf quality or create a beautiful vista. During the process, be sure that member play is interrupted as little as possible. That means working quickly to remove trees and clean up. Grind or remove the stump, backfill the hole, topdress, and seed. End of story.

5. Go for the "series." Let's face it. A great pilot is more apt to lead to a successful series—of tree removals, that is. With a successful start to your tree removal program, you're ready to seek approval on the full plan. Here's where the real selling begins. Recruit friends to begin conversing with other members about the success of your pilot project and the merits of a larger initiative. Get your key influencers to work on anyone who may be opposed to the plan

"WHEN IT COMES TO QUALITY TURF, SOMETIMES YOU HAVE TO GET TOUGH."



before your presentation.

When you present, be concise, discussing general benefits. Don't get into the details of every tree. You want to be and act knowledgeable. Those who call out or interrupt during a presentation generally aren't well informed. Be sure that someone on your board is prepared to help quiet these mindless intimidators by supporting your case.

Tip: It's best to begin by talking about how you'll improve the health of landmark trees before launching into a discussion about tree removal. This will put tree huggers at ease and point to the fact that this is an overall tree management plan, not a tree massacre proposal.

Sean Cain, co-editor of the Tee to Green, is superintendent at Sunningdale Country Club in Scarsdale, NY.

Giving Tree Removal

Disapproval the Axe

If you're struggling to convince club officials of the merits of initiating a tree removal program on your course, why not let the pros do the talking. What follows are industry professionals' no-holds-barred sentiments about ill-conceived tree planting on golf courses.

The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly of Tree Placement

Donald Ross, golf course architect

"As beautiful as trees are, and as fond as you and I are of them, we still must not lose sight of the fact that there is a limited place for them in golf. We must not allow our sentiments to crowd out the real intent of a golf course, that of providing fair playing conditions. If it in any way interferes with a properly played stroke, I think the tree is an unfair hazard and should not be allowed to stand."

Pelham Country Club's 4th hole before tree removal.

George C. Thomas Jr., golf course architect

"Trees and shrubbery beautify the course, and natural growth should never be cut down if it is possible to save it; but he who insists on preserving a tree where it spoils a shot should have nothing to say about golf course construction."

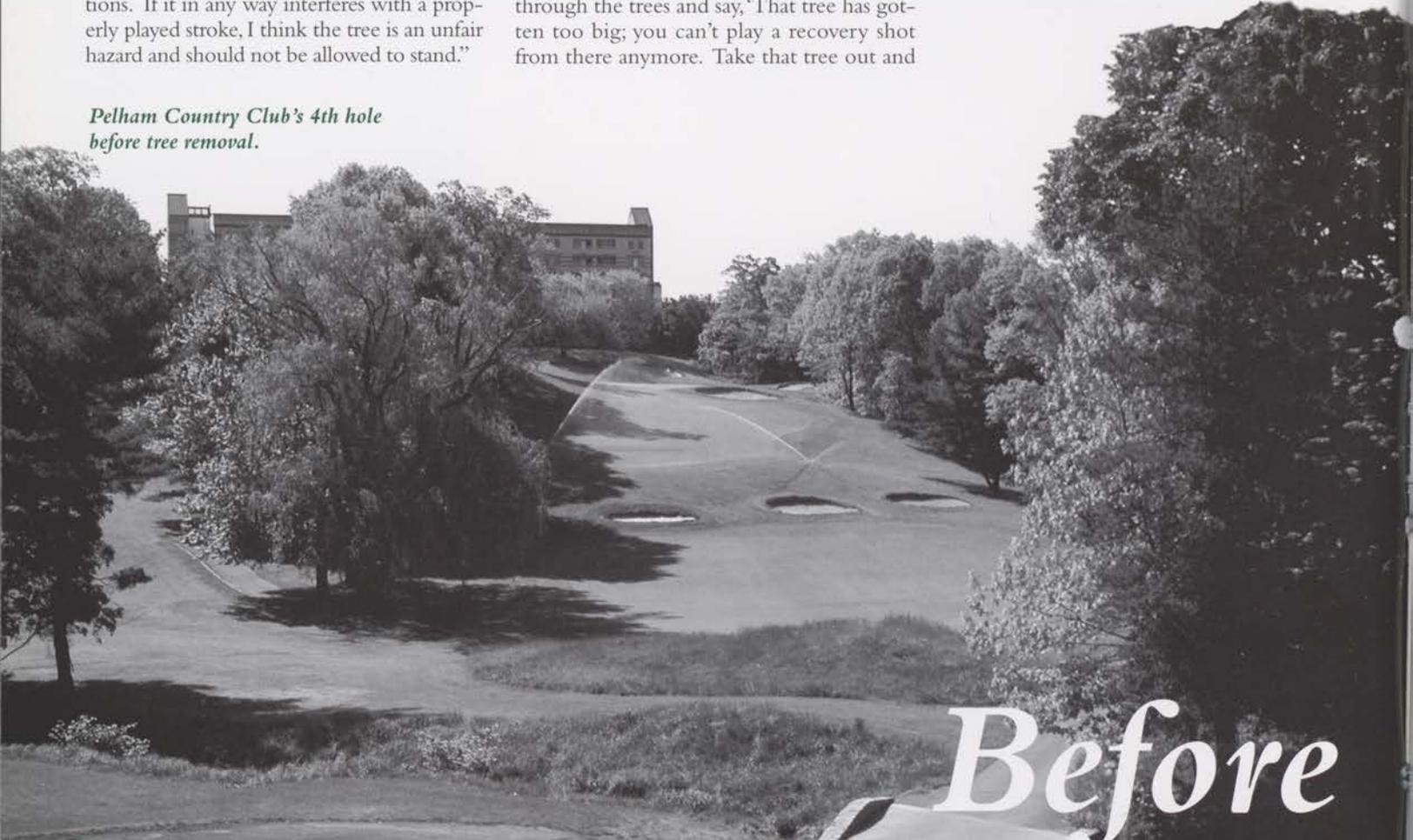
Jack Nicklaus, golf pro turned architect

Pinehurst No. 2 is the best course I know of from a tree-usage standpoint. It's a totally tree-lined golf course without one tree in the playing strategy of that golf course. I love what Donald Ross used to do at Pinehurst. Every year, Ross would walk through the trees and say, 'That tree has gotten too big; you can't play a recovery shot from there anymore. Take that tree out and

that tree out and cut the branches off that one.' Then if you hit it in there, you could get in and play a recovery shot back out. Too many trees prevent recovery shots, and I think the recovery shot is a wonderful part of the game."

Ben Crenshaw, professional golfer

"What I love most about Augusta National is that it allows 'full expression of recovery.' The wide corridors between the tree-lined fairways enable stray shots to still be played off turf, instead of punched sideways out of trees."



Before

After removing 18 trees, Pelham Country Club improved visibility and increased usable tee space on its 4th hole.



Ron Forse, golf course architect

“Golf courses were not intended to be arboretums. Many golf courses’ original design intents and strategies have been altered or nullified by trees. Golf courses should be designed and built predominantly around ground features, whether they be existing natural topography or manmade features, such as bunkers and swales.

“One of the principle aspects of a good golf course is that it is strategic. Without alternate routes to the green, a golf hole becomes one-dimensional and takes on the characteristics of just one repetitive avenue of playing the hole. And once our golf holes lose their interest and only reward the physically superior, the true thrill of the game is lost. It is a common misconception that one should not see another golf hole from one you are playing. Cutting off vistas violates the enjoyment of views across the golf property. Some of the great courses like Oakmont Country Club and Winged Foot Golf Club in our own back yard have done major tree removal projects in order to bring back the vistas and eliminate double hazards.”

On Tree-Induced Turf Woes

Jim Snow, national director, USGA Green Section

“Trees are a natural part of our landscape, and they serve a lot of practical purposes on courses, strategic as well as aesthetic. But trees sneak up on you. They get bigger little by little, and over 20 to 30 years, they have a huge impact on golf courses, even though

people around them all the time don’t realize what’s happening. Golfers need only look in their own backyards to be reminded of the inherent difficulty of growing grass beneath trees.”

Dr. Frank Rossi, turfgrass researcher, Cornell University

“It is a conundrum where trees are given equal value to the turf that provides the surface of the game. Superintendents are charged with managing an unnatural environment where turf must compete with trees for essential light, water, and nutrients.”

Gary Watschke, former agronomist, Northeastern Region, USGA Green Section

“Trees can strike turf at three angles. The negative effects can be from overshadowing, reduced air circulation, and root competition. A turf manager can play the game with one or two strikes, but given all three, his turf is out.”

Dr. Jim Baird, agronomist, Northeastern Region, USGA Green Section

“In general, turf that receives regular traffic and wear requires approximately 8 to 9 hours of daily sunlight to sustain growth and recuperation. Approximately half of this sunlight is required during the morning hours when photosynthesis is optimum and in order to dry out the turf canopy to reduce disease incidence. Moreover, competition from tree roots for available water and nutrients can be just as deleterious to the turf stand. Speaking from experience, most visits that I make involving extensive

turf loss are related to poor growing environments caused by surrounding trees. This was especially true of the winter injury that occurred on many golf courses in 2003.”

Ron Forse, golf course architect

“Green committees are often absent-minded to sunlight issues. Trees should never be planted so that important parts of the east and southeast sides on the golf course are severely shaded. It’s vital that the morning sun be allowed to reach the ground so the soil can warm up. This allows the turf to grow throughout the day, thereby helping it recover from stress and damage. Our tall wooded friends should also never be planted too close to greens, and shallow rooted trees, which bring so many safety problems with them, simply have no place on a golf course. In general, when it comes to trees, less is more.”

Reed Mackenzie, USGA president

“I hate trees. They end up costing you a lot of money. You get areas where you can’t grow grass. People become attached to trees, and their attachment is irrational. Trees get diseased and they fall down.”

Herb Waterous, consultant, ArborCom Technologies Inc.

“I wish I had access to computer modeling technology when I was a superintendent. The process of mapping trees is so valuable, it really should be factored into golf course superintendents’ budgets. It should be an integral part of their tree management programs—not called on as a last-ditch effort to save their greens.”

When Selling Tree Removal . . .

A Picture Is Worth a Thousand Words

If you're struggling to convince your club of the merits of tree removal on your course, here are two companies that have the technology to make believers out of even your most staunch doubting Thomases: ArborCom Technologies Inc. and StrataPoint, Inc.

Using specialized computer technology, these firms pinpoint trees on your course that are blocking crucial sunlight penetration to greens or any other areas that have ailing turf.

ArborCom, based in Florida, combines proprietary software that three-dimensionally positions trees in its Sun Shader program with the Global Positioning System (GPS) longitude and latitude of a course to calculate the sunlight hours reaching greens during the different seasons. "It involves more than simple shade profiling," notes Scott Robinson, ArborCom's vice president of technical operations. "It's a patented process that provides detailed quantitative information on the amount of square-foot hours of shade that each tree is casting and the total hours of direct sunlight that are reaching the turf-grass at any particular time of year."

ArborCom can look at one especially problematic part of the course—or every green, tee, or fairway. In either case, the company's objective is to help you target the appropriate trees for removal.

Herb Waterous, one of ArborCom's three consultants, notes that courses that attempt to determine which trees are affecting turf growth by just looking at them may be barking up the wrong trees.

"At one Met area course where we con-

sulted," says Herb, "the superintendent was convinced that a particular stand of trees was responsible for his turf problems, and he wanted to take them down. After we evaluated the site, the superintendent could see that the turf would, in fact, be better served by removing an entirely different group of trees."

Whew! The last thing you want to do is create a stir by removing trees and then *still*



have problems.

Speaking of that, ArborCom technology can also spare you the agony of planting a new tree in the wrong place by projecting how the tree will grow and affect the sunlight penetration in years to come.

Another handy aspect of ArborCom's service is that they will meet with your club committees or officials to explain their findings—and the technology behind it.

"I've seen many diehard tree huggers at the clubs where we've consulted agree to remove trees they'd argued to keep once

they saw the data we presented," says Herb. ArborCom has consulted with more than 300 golf courses throughout the country, many of them among America's 100 Greatest Golf Courses.

The price you pay for their service: approximately \$3,000 per green.

How to reach ArborCom Technologies Inc.: 888-786-5628 or ArborCom.com

StrataPoint, based in Minnesota, is another company that helps clubs identify shade-related problems. Using a GPS/GIS system, the company inventories every tree on the course, specifying the location and attributes—condition, size, health, etc.—of each tree. Then it takes this data and puts together a comprehensive tree management plan with recommendations for pruning, removals, plantings, and ways to improve tree health and course playability and appeal. But StrataPoint looks at more than just trees. It offers whole-plan studies of your entire golf course, compiling location data for all greens, tees, fairways, and bunkers.

As part of its service, the company provides superintendents with a software program, Point DataMap, that contains all the data drawn from the company's course study. This allows the superintendent to track and monitor nearly every aspect of course management, not the least of which is determining which trees should be targeted for removal. "Superintendents can create shade profiles on any of the inventoried trees—right on their own computer screens," explains StrataPoint President Jason Bass. "The shade-profiling module is easy to use, and it will help superintendents define their course's requirements for today and the future."

The price you pay for this service: \$25,000 for an 18-hole golf course.

How to reach StrataPoint, Inc.: 651-322-4000 or Stratapointinc.com.

Congratulations to Our 2004 Scholarship Recipients

The MetGCSA Scholarship and Research Committee awarded a total of \$11,050 in scholarships to 11 deserving members' children at the July 15 Education Meeting at Ridgeway Country Club. Congratulations to the following scholarship recipients and their parents:

Ryan Beaudry, son of Karen and Ray Beaudry of Atlantic Irrigation, will be beginning his freshman year at Manhattanville in Purchase, NY. He plans to pursue a business degree.

Jayne Donovan, daughter of Julie and Shawn Donovan of Turf Products Corporation, will be entering her junior year at Hartwick College as a biology major with a Spanish and chemistry double minor.

Katelin Flynn, daughter of Cindy and Dennis Flynn, superintendent of Brae Burn Country Club, will enter her freshman year at the University of Vermont as a studio art major.

Katherine Fuller, daughter of Kimberley Jones and Mark Fuller, superintendent of Connecticut Golf Club, will enter her freshman year at the University of Connecticut as a business major.

Elizabeth Maffei, daughter of Anne and Mike Maffei, superintendent of Back O'Beyond, will enter her junior year at Fairfield University with a major in marketing and a minor in business ethics and business law.

Colleen Moore, daughter of Denise and Glenn Moore, of Glenmore Landscape Services, will enter her senior year at Loyola College with a double major in political science and Spanish.

Kevin Moore, son of Denise and Glenn Moore, of Glenmore Landscape Services, will be beginning his freshman year at Providence College with a major in public and community service.

Adrienne O'Keefe, daughter of Margaret and John O'Keefe, superintendent of Preakness Hills Country Club, will enter her senior year at Fairleigh Dickinson University with a major in literature.

Maureen O'Keefe, daughter of Margaret and John O'Keefe, superintendent of Preakness Hills Country Club, will enter her freshman year at Fairleigh Dickinson University in the hotel/restaurant management program.

Alexis Reeb, daughter of Jaymie and Mike Reeb, superintendent of Country Club of New Canaan, will enter her senior year at Lynchburg College as an elementary education/child development major.

Again, congratulations to one and all of our scholarship recipients. Here's to a healthy and happy school year.

By the way, scholarship applications for the 2005 year will be available in March 2005. Watch for more details in an upcoming issue.

—Will Heintz

New Members

Michael Astram
Class AF, Northern Designs, LLC
Milford, CT

Gregory Boring
Class C, Preakness Hills Country Club
Wayne, NJ

Robert Dorsch
Class C, Silver Spring Country Club
Ridgefield, CT

Christopher Smith
Class A, Hudson National Golf Club
Croton-on-Hudson, NY

Well Wishes

Wishing Alfred MacDonald's **Glenn Gallion** a speedy recovery. Glenn is recuperating from a heart attack.

In Sympathy

We'd like to offer our condolences to **Bill Perlee**, superintendent of The Apawamis Club. Bill's father passed away in July.



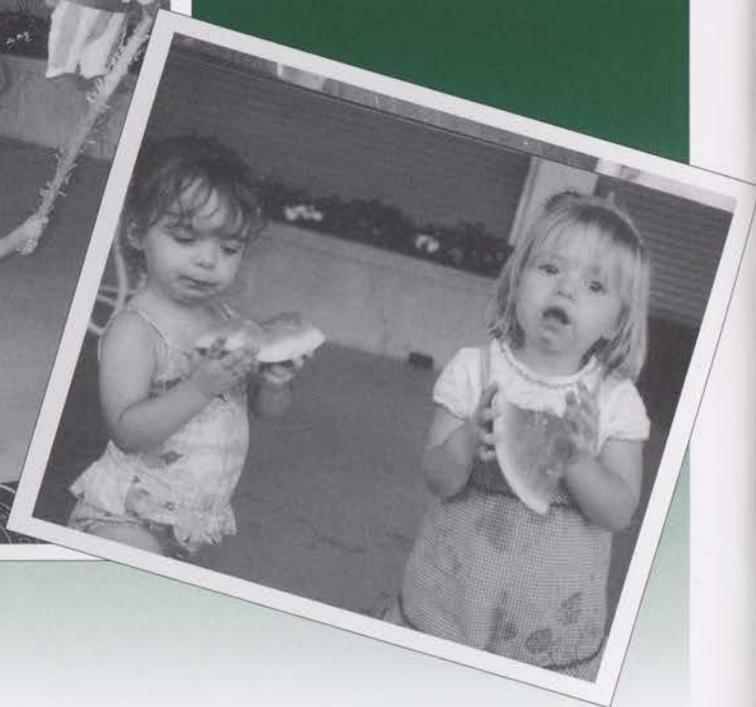
Social Events Revisited: A Lot of Fun and Games



If you weren't at the Summer Social at Old Oaks Country Club July 20, you missed a great time. Special thanks to Mark and Mary Pat Millett for hosting this event—and to the staff at Old Oaks for a great spread.

The weather, the food, and better still, the camaraderie made this event so worth attending that I feel sorry for those who missed it. Everyone should plan to attend next year!

—Tom Leahy, CGCS



MetGCSA members and their families convened for the Family Picnic at Woodway Beach Club on August 2 for a much-deserved break from the summer grind. With a total of 93 guests, this event was well attended to say the least.

An extra-special thank you goes out to Larry Pakkala for hosting this event. Those who attended would agree that the Woodway staff went out of their way to ensure a good time was had by all. Guests were treated to a tasty BBQ, a beautiful

August evening, and fun and games for kids and adults alike.

There was something there for children of all ages: Sand art, face painting, cupcake decorating, a water balloon toss, sack race, watermelon eating contest, and an always-popular piñata, bursting with candy. And then, we can't forget the inflatable bounce room that had kids bouncing off the walls—literally—for hours.

Thomas and Andrew McMurray, grandsons of Back O'Beyond Superintendent Mike Maffei, were co-champions of the water balloon toss. Ricky and Kennedy

Shook, guests of Mt. Kisco Country Club Superintendent Fred Scheyhing, claimed first place in the sack race. And Michael Astram, son of Northern Designs' Michael Astram, took the prize for the piñata thwacking, while his sister, Jennifer, won the watermelon-eating contest.

In the end, everyone was a winner, receiving a small bag of candy for giving it their all in the events and contests. We're pleased the picnic had a nice showing; we look forward to getting together for this fun-filled event again next year.

—Glen Dube, CGCS

Calendar Update

We are missing just one site for our 2004 Meeting/Social Calendar: the Annual Meeting in November. Please call either of our Tournament Committee co-chairs—Tom Leahy, 914-941-8281, or Bob Nielsen, 914-234-3779—to book this meeting at your club. Also, be sure to note the date change for our next meeting at the Seawane Club.

NOTE NEW DATE! **Golf Meeting/Second Round Met Championship**

Monday, October 4
Seawane Club, Hewlett Harbor, NY
Host: Brian Benedict

Annual Assistants Championship

Thursday, October 14
Country Club of New Caanan
New Canaan, CT
Assistant Host: John Mills

Superintendent/Green Chairman Tournament

Tuesday, October 19
Round Hill Club, Greenwich, CT
Host: Bill Gaydosh

Met Area Team Championship

Date & Site in Philadelphia area TBA

Annual Meeting

November
Date & Site OPEN

MetGCSA Christmas Party

Saturday, December 4
The Canyon Club, Armonk, NY
Host: Paul Gonzalez, CGCS

Fundraising Event

Joe Troll Research Center Benefit Outing

Tuesday, October 5
Hickory Ridge CC, Amherst, MA
Plan to attend this worthy outing to help fund the new UMass Joe Troll Research Center. The cost is \$150 per person with \$100 of the entrance fee going directly to the building fund. Your donation is tax deductible. Watch for a special invitation!



Educational Events

2004 Crystal Conference and Golf Classic

Wednesday – Friday, November 3 – 5
Crystal Springs Resort, Vernon, NJ
Mark your calendar now for this three-day conference and golf event. A conference package is available for \$250 and covers all educational seminars, access to vendor exhibits, entry to the 4-Man Golf Scramble on November 4, and all meals (3 breakfasts, 3 lunches, and 2 dinners).

For further information, contact Paul Dotti, GCSANJ's education chairman at 973-827-5731 or log onto GCSANJ.ORG.

NYSTA Turf and Grounds Exposition

Tuesday – Thursday, November 16 – 18
Rochester Riverside Convention Center, Rochester, NY
NYSTA, in partnership with Cornell University, Cornell Cooperative Extension, and the New York Golf Course Owners Association, welcomes you to participate in its 29th Turf and Grounds Exposition.

This year, you will find more opportunities than ever before to expand your knowledge, find solutions to your turf and grounds maintenance problems, and gain new insights from concepts and theories tested by others in a series of educational sessions and an expansive trade show.

For further information, call NYSTA at 800-873-8873 or 518-783-1229.

MetGCSA Winter Seminar

Wednesday, January 12, 2005
Westchester CC, Rye, NY
Host: Joe Alonzi, CGCS

President's Message continued from page 1

out. This is an example of a wart that needs a capital infusion.

Unhappy? Who Me?

What? Does it sound like I'm unhappy? No way. I'm in a great mood. Why? Because over the past month, I've been able to commiserate with friends and colleagues who share the same battles and appreciate the same difficulties and triumphs.

Fortunately, our association has done a stellar job of providing these commiseration sessions—with our peers, as well as with our families. I have to thank Earl Millett of Ridgeway, for hosting our now-annual—and again, successful—Education Dinner. And I want to thank Tom Leahy, Bob Nielsen, and Glen Dube for all their efforts in making both the Summer Social and the Family Picnic such a huge success (see write-up on page 12).

Of course, their efforts would be nothing without the support of Mark Millett at Old Oaks and Larry Pakkala at Woodway, who offered to host these events. We are so fortunate to have access to such terrific facilities.

On a final—and positive note—I want to congratulate Fenway Golf Club's Bob Alonzi. He will be honored by the Cornell Cooperative Extension of Westchester County for his years of service to the county and for his work in advancing environmental practices. There will be a dinner for the event, which will be held September 19 at the Blue Hill, Stone Barn in Pocantico Hill, NY. The Met board will have a table to support Bob. Anyone else interested in attending should contact Ineke Pierpoint at 914-347-4653. It promises to be a special evening.

I'll see you at the next meeting.

Dave Mahoney
President

On to Greener Pastures at Seawane

Brian Benedict Hosts Round Two of the Met Championship

by Eric O'Neill

The Seawane Club, located in Hewlett Harbor, NY, is the site of the second round of the Met Championship. Members will be treated October 4 to not only a new venue, but also what you might say is an all-new golf course.

When Seawane hired Brian Benedict in 2000 as their superintendent, they also hired Golf Course Architect Stephen Kay to redesign their bunkers. "We began with the idea of a bunker renovation, which then evolved into a major course renovation," says Brian.

Eager to enhance the beauty and playability of the 77-year-old course, Brian urged the club to take their renovation work well beyond the bunkers. Once given the nod, Brian and his crew—with the help of a course shaper, Kevin Wagar—have slowly but surely recrafted a significant portion of the course. In addition to building new bunkers, over the past four years, they've constructed new green surrounds and tees, recontoured fairways, and established an overall native fescue appearance.

"It's been a slow process, but it has also been a controlled process," says Brian, adding, "and it's benefited the course tremendously."

Brian is also quick to praise the key role his two assistants played throughout the process. "Joe Gardner, my assistant until last year when he moved on to Dellwood, and Brett Chapin, who's been with me since 2002, made the course renovation possible," says Brian. "Without them, it could never have been as successful as it has been."

The Making of Brian Benedict the Superintendent

Growing up in Oyster Bay, NY, not far from Glen Head Country Club, Brian has been involved in golf since he was 13 years old. His first view of the golf business was from the "other side," working summers during his high school years for Glen Head's golf pro. "I was the typical high school kid who hung around the club all the time and caddied, worked the bagroom, first tee, driving range," says Brian.

Yet, despite his longtime enthusiasm for the game of golf, after completing high school, Brian hopped on the business track and pursued a bachelor's in management and finance from L.I.U. - C.W. Post University, completing his degree in May 1991.

After college, rather than seeking out work in the business world, Brian returned to what he knew best: the golf business. "I never used my degree. I just continued working at Glen Head," says Brian, "doing what I'd always done there."

Finally, with the prodding and encouragement of Glen Head Superintendent Joe Graham, who's since retired from the business, Brian decided to pursue formal training in the turf industry. "You can't be a caddy the rest of your life," Joe told me. Heeding his advice, Brian enrolled, in 1993, in the turf management program at UMass, Amherst.

Again, at the recommendation of Glen Head's super, Brian pursued an internship during his summers off from UMass at the well-known Piping Rock Club in Locust Valley, NY. He spent two seasons there under the tutelage of Superintendent Richard Spear. "I am fortunate that Piping Rock was my introduction into the business," says Brian. "Richard Spear's work ethic and drive for perfection is above and beyond. I saw, firsthand, the kind of dedication it takes to have a well-conditioned golf course."

But Brian gained more than valuable experience and knowledge; he also gained lasting friendships. Brian was part of a great staff at Piping Rock, including now good friends Dave Pughe, superintendent at Rockaway River Country Club, and Craig Currier, director of golf at Beth Page State Park. "It was always an up tempo, positive atmosphere working with Dave and Craig," Brian remembers fondly.

Brian graduated from UMass in 1995 with an associate's in Turfgrass Management. And he, apparently, picked a great time to do it. That was the year UMass went to the Final Four. "It was an exciting time to be at the university," says Brian.

After graduating, Brian accepted his first and only assistant's position with James Fulwider Jr. at the exclusive Century Country Club. Jim's management style is where Brian benefited.



Brian Benedict

"Century was my first crack at responsibility," says Brian, noting that he enjoyed the challenges of becoming more involved in the daily management decisions and requirements.

Brian admits he was comfortable at Century, staying on as Jim's assistant for five years. He also felt that it gave him an advantage when pursuing a golf course superintendent position. "I wasn't desperate to leave for just any job," says Brian. Clearly, his patience paid off. In November of 2000 that right situation came along, and Brian said good-bye to Century and hello to Seawane.

Funny thing is, a few years later, his younger brother, Tim, joined Brian on the South Shore. Tim is the superintendent at the Woodmere Club, just one mile down the road from his big brother. "We share ideas and equipment," says Brian. "I love having him so close."

Life Beyond Seawane

As Brian prepares for the final phase of his course renovation, he's also looking forward to some downtime with his wife, Mari. Virtual newlyweds, they were married April 3 and are now looking forward to the birth of their first child in December.

During the off-season, Brian's known to snowmobile up in the Adirondacks, and then there's his annual fall golf trip with his superintendent friends to Scotland or Ireland.

That's one of the things Brian says he likes best about the business: "the camaraderie among superintendents and the willingness to share knowledge and experiences."

Brian's looking forward to offering that kind of opportunity for Met members October 4 at Seawane—camaraderie, knowledge sharing, and, of course, a good round of golf.

"Just leave a little extra time to find us," warns Brian. "We're notorious in the Tri-State area as one of the hardest clubs to locate."

Eric O'Neill is superintendent at Towers Country Club in Floral Park, NY.

Country Club of New Canaan Assistant Hosts Annual Assistants Championship

by Paul Boyd

On October 14, MetGCSA assistants will head up to Country Club of New Canaan in New Canaan, CT, to compete in the Annual Assistants Championship.

Noted by *Golf Digest* as one of the first 100 golf courses in America, this 111-year-old Willie Parks Jr. design will challenge its players with elevated greens, built-up tees, and deceptive hazards. And then, of course, our assistant host, John Mills, and Superintendent Mike Reeb will serve up some great conditions for a superb round of golf.

Hailing from the State of North Carolina, John Mills first laid eyes on Fairfield County turf in 1998 when he served the first of two seasons as an intern at Greenwich Country Club. For John, it was love at first—and second—sight. So after completing his B.S. in agronomy from North Carolina State University in 2000, he high-tailed it back to the area—this time, as the assistant superintendent at Country Club of New Canaan.

John's path to the turf business began, believe it or not, on the pitcher's mound of his collegiate baseball team. "When I was pitching," he says, "one of my favorite parts of the game was playing on a perfectly maintained field." But it was John's part—though small—in maintaining that field that whet his appetite for turfgrass management.

"As the pitcher," he explains, "I was responsible for the daily maintenance of the mound. I took great pride in maintaining that area of turf," he remembers, attributing that experience, along with his love for golf and interest in science, to his decision to pursue a career in golf course management.

Life on the Course

"I have no regrets with my career path," says John, when asked about the business. "There are always opportunities to learn and grow." Whether managing the crew, pesticide applications, or any other aspect of the job, John says his knowledge—and experience—are growing by leaps and bounds. Under Superintendent Mike Reeb's guidance, John feels he is becoming



John Mills

well versed in all the complexities of the business.

But he's not one to rest on his laurels. He is currently pursuing a master's in business administration. "I realized my passion is not just to create great golfing conditions, but also to succeed in all aspects of golf course management."

So what does the future hold for John? "My immediate goals are to find a superintendent's job in the area and to complete my MBA," says John, adding, "After that, who knows?"

Life Beyond the Course

John's energy and love for the outdoors certainly carries over to his free time. Besides golf, sailing, and tennis, he enjoys camping and traveling. He's also an exercise enthusiast, and apparently it's paid off: He and his girlfriend, Alexandra, just competed in this year's Falmouth, MA, 10K road race, finishing with very respectable times.

Tee to Green

"My best advice for playing the course is to play 'old man golf,'" says John. "It's more important to stay out of the rough than to be long," he advises, adding that while the course is short on length, it's infinite in challenge. "But in the end," says John, "all you really need to do out here is enjoy the day and have a great time."

Paul Boyd is an assistant superintendent at Greenwich Country Club in Greenwich, CT.

New Canaan Super Welcomes Assistants Tourney

"I couldn't be more pleased to welcome neighboring assistant superintendents to the Country Club of New Canaan for some late-season competition and camaraderie," says New Canaan's long-tenured superintendent, Mike Reeb, CGCS.

"When John Mills and I first discussed hosting this event, we both felt it was a great opportunity. Aside from the undeniable benefit of wanting to condition the course for a peer group, there's the valuable experience of working with colleagues at the club to plan the event," continues Mike.

"After our initial discussion, John took the ball and ran with it, handling all the arrangements, from gaining golf committee approval to scheduling with the pro shop and coordinating with the club manager. And he did this, I might add, with the same professional competence and cooperative spirit that he demonstrates daily on the golf course."

Mike has enjoyed being a part of the Country Club of New Canaan for the past 20 years. Citing a basic drive "to make things better," Mike's initiated numerous projects and practices aimed at enhancing a golf course that was originally constructed in 1893. He's overseen extensive drainage work, cart path construction, pond expansion, stream stabilization, large-scale tree removal, major irrigation improvements, and complete renovation of greens, tees, bunkers, and practice areas.

Over the years, Mike has demonstrated a serious commitment to the industry by serving on the committees of the Connecticut AGCS, the MetGCSA, and the GCSAA. A long-term interest in community service has kept him busy as a volunteer with New Canaan's ambulance corps, and he currently sits on the town's Emergency Medical Services Commission.

Living on club grounds, Mike tends to keep his nose to the grindstone, but he does enjoy slipping away—particularly during the off-season—to his home-away-from-home in Vermont with Jaymie, his wife of 27 years, and college-aged Alexis and Tyler, who love to join Mike for a little snowmobiling or a good run down the slopes.

Two-Ball Contestants Enjoy Friendly Game of Competition

by Blake Halderman, CGCS

The 2004 Two-Ball Championship is well underway with the #1 seeds in both flights making it to the semi-finals. In this round, they will face the #5 seeded teams, who are looking to upset them for a berth to the finals.

The Cinderella team of the year is the #14 seeded Johnston/Severino pairing who has made it to the semi-finals despite Matt Severino playing the first match solo, beating Apgar and Steinman. Yes, I did check his handicap. On the 18th hole, Steinman got sweaty palms and 4 putted a relatively flat green to hand over the match. Better luck next year, and we'll see you on the practice green!

We had some other exciting play out on the course this year as well, with two matches going to extra holes and many of them coming down to the wire. Martineau and Scheyhing pulled out a victory on the 20th hole of the first round, only to lose handily in the second round to Reeb and Wojick. Those two wily veterans must have still been exhausted from the first match.

Wicks and Ziesmer also defeated Leahy and Millett on the 19th hole at Millett's home course, but that is what happens when a 19 handicap hits it within 10 feet for a natural birdie on the first playoff hole!

On the other hand, no one is really sure what happened to the Mahoney/Renzetti

team as they defeated a strong Grasso/Tretera duo and then went down 7 and 5 to Ceplo and Swiatlowski. Looks like Mr. President has been spending too much time at work and not enough time on the links!

All joking aside, I want to thank everyone for getting their matches played in a timely manner. This year, there were some changes made in the format and timing of the matches, but we'll be reevaluating the process again for next year. Our goal is to continue to improve the Two-Ball Championship Tournament to make it fun and exciting for future years.

Thank you again for your participation!

And Now, the Results . . .

Round One Winners and Round Two Matches

First Flight

#1 Garceau/Steinhofer won in a BYE

vs.

#9 Benoit/Wentworth defeated
#8 Benedict/Lippman Jr. 2 and 1

#5 Dube/Halderman defeated
#12 Currie/Moore 3 and 2

vs.

#4 Dickinson/Lafferty defeated
#13 Fluery/Perry 1 up

#6 Cain/Denny defeated
#11 Lapinski/Rabideau 2 and 1

vs.

#3 Cook/Greytok defeated
#14 Niven/Weinert 5 and 4

#10 Mahoney/Renzetti defeated
#7 Grasso/Tretera 1 up

vs.

#15 Ceplo/Swiatlowski defeated
#2 Millett/O'Keefe in a coin toss

Second Flight

#1 Arlio/DeMarco won in a BYE

vs.

#9 Wicks/Ziesmer defeated
#8 Leahy/Millett 19th hole

#5 Reeb/Wojick defeated
#12 Alonzi/Alonzi 5 and 3

vs.

#4 Martineau/Scheyhing defeated
#13 Kennedy/Waterous 20th hole

#11 Flynn/Rappoccio defeated
#5 Quist/Roule 3 and 2

vs.

#14 Johnston/Severino defeated
#3 Apgar/Steinman 1 up

#10 Gonzalez/Quick defeated
#7 Nielsen/Perlee 4 and 2

vs.

#2 Girardi/Moran defeated
#15 Browne/Gallion 3 and 2

Look Who's Made It to the Semi-Finals!

First Flight

#1 Garceau/Steinhofer defeated
#9 Benoit/Wentworth 3 and 2

vs.

#5 Dube/Halderman defeated
#4 Dickinson/Lafferty 3 and 2

#6 Cain/Denny defeated
#3 Cook/Greytok 3 and 1

vs.

#15 Ceplo/Swiatlowski defeated
#10 Mahoney/Renzetti 7 and 5

Second Flight

#1 Arlio/DeMarco defeated
#9 Wicks/Ziesmer 3 and 2

vs.

#5 Reeb/Wojick defeated
#4 Martineau/Scheyhing 3 and 2

#14 Johnston/Severino defeated
#11 Flynn/Rappoccio 3 and 2

vs.

#2 Girardi/Moran defeated
#10 Gonzalez/Quick 5 and 4

Congratulations and good luck to our semi-finalists. Look for the outcome in the next issue of *Tee to Green*.

Superintendent/ Manager Tourney's Top Plays of the Day

One hundred players competed in this year's Superintendent/Manager Tourney held May 17 at Woodway Country Club.

Larry Pakkala and his staff had the course in great shape, and Manager Sam Kadi and all the folks at Woodway went out of their way to provide us with a great event.

Here's a look at the winning scores in the Two-Man Best Ball event of the day.

Superintendent/Manager Division

Gross Winners

Rich Browne/Pat Cothren 73
Garrison Golf Club

John Carlone/Dennis Harrington 74
The Meadow Brook Club

Chip Lafferty/Scott Yandraserid 76
Rye Golf Club

Net Winners

Mike Reeb/John Lipke 63
Country Club of New Canaan
(won in a match of cards)

Scott Ferguson/Howard Kelly 63
Mahopac Golf Club

Bill Perlee/Rob Schlingmann 66
The Apawamis Club

Superintendent/AF/Guest Division

Superintendents unable to attend with their manager were paired with a commercial member or guest to compete in a best ball event.

Congratulations to the following winners:

First Low Gross

Joe Stahl/Andy Drohen 73
Simplot Partners/Pursell Technologies

First Low Net

Lou Quick/Scott Apgar
Anglebrook Golf Club/Metro Turf Specialists

—Tom Leahy

So Much to Do, So Little Time to Play Golf

Leisure-Time Activities Suffer as People Push to Do More in Less Time

Did you know that over the past three years, total rounds of golf played have declined nationwide?

Surprising? Not really, if you listen to Dr. Madelyn Hochstein. According to a nearly decade-long study her company has conducted, people's time for golf—and other leisure activities—has been diminished thanks to a phenomenon she's aptly termed the "Time Crunch Convergence."

Speaking to Jeff Bollig in a March 2004 *Golf Course Management* article, Dr. Hochstein identified seven trends that comprise a "Time Crunch Convergence."

1. The technology trap. "The more technology empowers us," says Dr. Hochstein, "the more we're expected to do." Improved mowing equipment, computers, computerized irrigation, and GPS/GIS technology create expectations for superintendents to not only do more, but do it better and faster.

2. The communication trap. Innovations in communication, from cell phones and PDAs to email and fax machines, make it possible to conduct business 24/7. The result: More of our leisure time is devoted to work-related activities.

3. The endless choice trap. With the dizzying array of products and services available today, we spend more time and energy than ever before on making purchase decisions. Think about cars. At one time, you could choose among a Ford, Chrysler, GMC, and a few others. Today, consumers have 47 manufacturers to choose from, each with hundreds of models and thousands of options. The variety of choices available taxes the time people have to dedicate to other activities.

4. The experience pull. With increased competition for people's time, companies are marketing more than just their products or services, they're promoting "the experience." In other words, they're offering consumers more bang not only for their buck, but for their time as well. Take Harley-Davidson for example. The company promises consumers not just the motorcycle, but the whole experience: the clothing, reunions, clubs, etc.

This means that more time-intensive activities, like golf, are being passed over for those that require less time. To compete, golf courses need to create smaller slices of the experience by aggressively marketing driving range activity or nine-hole rounds (or even

three- or six-hole rounds). Offering additional services, amenities, or conditioning options can also increase the value of the entire golf experience.

5. The leisure time/work time integration. No longer is the day neatly separated by work, play, and sleep. Activities are now integrated. For instance, people will drive a child to soccer, stop by a fast-food restaurant for a meal, and conduct business on a cell phone—all at the same time. Though integrating our lives may be convenient, it leaves people little downtime. Larger chunks of pleasure, like golf, are frequently sacrificed for "bite-sized" leisure activities.

6. The child trap. Dr. Hochstein's research shows that people are serving more masters than ever before: In addition to work, spouses, and heaven-forbid themselves, they're devoting great amounts of time to the wants, needs, and desires of their children. The marketplace has capitalized on this in the areas of clothing (BabyGap, KidGap), food service (Chuck E. Cheese), TV (Nickelodeon, Disney Channel), and cars (minivans, sport utility vehicles).

If golf is to continue to grow, it must find ways to include the family and/or make it less time intensive.

7. The activity trap. Today, says Dr. Hochstein, status is determined less by the amount of money you earn, and more by the number of activities you engage in. Showing how busy you are implies that you're young, healthy, and interesting.

This mentality is costly to the game of golf. Faced with more activity choices, people have less time—and desire—to spend on the golf course.

Final Note

Those entrusted with growing the game and business of golf, have spent the past several years studying usage patterns of golfers and golf facilities. Working to increase participation, they've instituted a variety of player development programs and will continue to rethink their way of doing business.



Patron Directory

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

- Al Preston's**
Gary Shashinka
Massey Ferguson Tractors
203-924-1747
- All Pro Horticulture**
John Seib/Rick Wilhelm
721 Main Street
Farmingdale, NY 11735
516-777-8668
- ★ **Atlantic Irrigation Specialties, Inc.**
Ray Beaudry
111 Lafayette Avenue
N. White Plains, NY 10603
914-686-0008
- ★ **Blue Ridge Peat Farms**
Gene Evans
133 Peat Moss Road
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