

Tee To Green

January/February 2006
VOLUME 36 NUMBER 1

Published by the Metropolitan Golf Course Superintendents Association



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TEE TO GREEN is published bimonthly by the Metropolitan Golf
Course Superintendents Association
49 Knollwood Road, Elmsford, NY 10523-2819
914-347-4653, FAX: 914-347-3437, METGCSA.ORG
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Tee to Green



Cover: Centennial Golf Club.

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Thinking about the season to come, I started to reflect on the season past. It was a time that many golf course superintendents would rather forget. A time when horrific weather conditions closed greens, and, in some cases, entire courses.

Then I began to think back on the President's Message I wrote for our September/October '05 issue. It focused on weak links in our maintenance and agronomic programs.... How they become obvious during periods of high stress or peak demand.

Thinking further, I decided that, in all likelihood, the major reason some superintendents lost greens and others didn't had more to do with a particular weak link than with the superintendent's lack of talent. That weak link, I believe, was *Poa annua*.

In most cases, I think we are asking *Poa* to perform beyond its capabilities. I'm convinced it is no longer a suitable grass for modern-day golf. And as we know, modern-day golf is asking us to push even the most tolerant of grass species beyond their capabilities in producing—and consistently maintaining—fast greens. But despite the ill effects of undercutting our turf, fast greens seem to be here to stay, and the turf species we use has to be able to handle it.

Poa Annua Meets the Theory of Evolution

Now, you might argue, from an evolutionary standpoint, that *Poa* has survived the times and is the superior species. But I challenge that position. *Poa* has flourished in the past 20 years because its primary competitor, *Pennクロス Creeping Bentgrass*, has been unable to withstand today's lower heights of cut. Until the recent arrival of the A and G strains of bentgrass, *Poa's* encroachment was unchecked. This resulted in unusually high percentages of *Poa* (20% to 100%) on our putting greens.



Will Heintz
MetGCSA President

Poa's Achilles Heel

Although *Poa* is a fierce competitor, capable of adapting to almost any height of cut, its primary weakness lies within its own biology. In a recent presentation by Rutgers' Dr. Jim Murphy, he reminds us that the weakest part of *Poa's* life cycle is right after its May/June flowering and seed head production.

Yes, if nature had its way, *Poa* would die naturally during the months of July and August. Is it any wonder why we have to go to the lengths we do to keep it alive, especially during our most stressful months?

Speaking From Experience

After managing *Poa* for 13 years and bentgrass for the past 8, I can honestly say that bentgrass is far superior. *Poa's* major inherent problems—winter kill, bacterial wilt, seed head abundance, hyperodes weevil, anthracnose, and summer patch—are nonissues when managing bentgrass.

Bentgrass's two major obstacles are its intolerance to shade and its high tendency to produce thatch. It also, along with *Poa annua*, is susceptible to dollar spot, brown
continued on page 5

Feature

Tim O'Neill Talks Candidly About His Journey as GCSAA President

...And Offers Insight Into the Initiatives of Our National Organization



In February 9 in Atlanta, GA, Tim O'Neill addressed an audience of 2,000 at the GCSAA Opening Session, kicking off the 2006 Golf Industry Show and GCSAA Education Conference—his last as the organization's president.

Now that all the fanfare—the numerous banquets, meetings, and celebrations—honoring the outgoing president has ended, Tim has time to reflect on his term as GCSAA's president.

Here, he speaks to us about what it was like to preside over one of the largest associations in the golf industry and what GCSAA has up its sleeve for the turfgrass management industry ... today and into the future.

How did you spend this past year as GCSAA president?

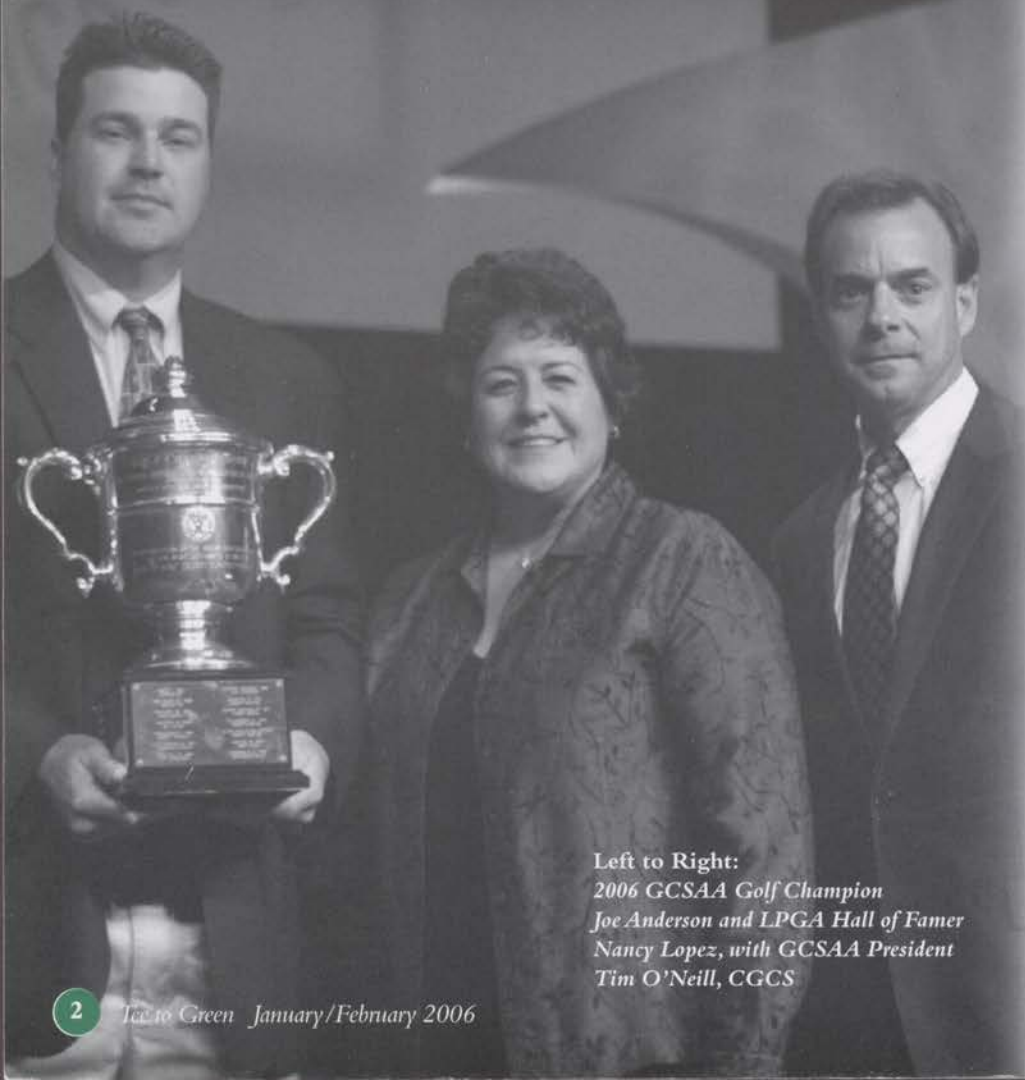
Not surprisingly, 2005 was a busy year, juggling the responsibilities as GCSAA president and as a superintendent during one of the most challenging seasons, weatherwise, we've had in a long time. Thanks to the work of my assistant, Chad Anderson, the operations at the club went smoothly.

As president, I represented GCSAA at more than 30 events and meetings that required more than 90 days away in 2005 and early 2006. Those events included each of the major U.S. golf championships; industry events such as the John Deere Classic Pro-AM in Moline, IL, and the annual 20/20 Meetings and Hall of Fame Inductions in St. Augustine, FL; trips to annual conferences in Canada and England; and board meetings in Phoenix, Chicago, Washington, D.C., New York City, and Pinehurst.

What did you enjoy the most?

I have to say, it was extremely exciting to be the "spokesman" and representative for GCSAA at each of these events. If I was not running the meeting, I was usually asked to make comments to the group on behalf of the association. That's not to say that, at first, being in the limelight wasn't nerve-wracking. It was. But as time went on, I did begin to feel more comfortable with my ability to speak in front of large audiences.

It was interesting preparing to talk at the show's major sessions. I practiced my script



Left to Right:
2006 GCSAA Golf Champion
Joe Anderson and LPGA Hall of Famer
Nancy Lopez, with GCSAA President
Tim O'Neill, CGCS

The association Mission: "GCSAA is dedicated to serving its members, advancing their profession, and enhancing the enjoyment, growth, and vitality of the game of golf."

weeks before and then had to learn how to use a teleprompter. All the major sessions at our shows are done with teleprompters. I guess it was nice to know that I had a backup if my mind went blank.

Probably one of the greatest rewards of serving on the board as president of GCSAA was having the opportunity to get to know many prominent—and interesting—people in our industry: Greg Norman, Jaime Ortiz-Patino, Jack Nicklaus, Arnold Palmer, Jim Colbert, Herb Kohler, Rees Jones to name several. The opportunity to work and interact with all of them has been amazing.

I also enjoyed having the opportunity to work with Steve Mona and the GCSAA staff. I gained an even greater appreciation for the talent and dedication of everyone out at headquarters. Just seeing them handle the change in venue for this past show was impressive. They essentially did two years' worth of work in five months. And the show went off without a hitch.

Any challenges?

I'd say one of the challenges I faced was running the board meetings. It was rewarding, but also stressful—primarily because I was so intent on making the best use of everyone's time and the association's resources.

Otherwise, GCSAA made everything as simple as possible for board members. While I did have to travel a considerable amount, I knew about it well in advance, and most of my lengthier trips were during our off-season. I'm not going to say traveling was easy. At times it was tiring, and it was often stressful having to pack up and leave my family and regular job behind, but for the most part, I had very few problems. It gave me the opportunity to visit some great places—and many great courses.

What was the highlight?

I'd have to say it was the Golf Industry Show and GCSAA Education Conference in Atlanta. The weeks leading up to Atlanta, along with events at the show, were an exceptionally busy time. I had major roles in the Opening Session, General Session, and the President's Celebration along with

chairing the association Annual Meeting. I had my last meeting as a trustee with the Environmental Institute for Golf Board of Trustees. I chaired a past presidents meeting, attended various receptions, and enjoyed industry client get-togethers throughout the week. In all, it was a successful week for GCSAA in many ways.

What are your responsibilities as immediate past president?

I will continue to serve on the board for another year as an officer of GCSAA and will join the new president in representing the association at many of the same meetings and events I attended last year.

As immediate past president, I will chair three committees: the Standards/Bylaws and the Historical Preservation Committees, as well as the Facility Task Group.

As you can see, my job for the association isn't done. I will still have a voice in GCSAA's direction and initiatives. I welcome that.

What would you say are GCSAA's top initiatives or areas of focus in 2006?

First and foremost, we plan to focus on growing our membership. In fact, we've earmarked \$100,000 in additional funding toward recruiting—and retaining—members in 2006. The saying, "There's strength in numbers," applies here. The larger our organization and more involved our members, the more influence we can have in our industry. During the 1990s, for instance, solid growth of our organization mirrored increases in superintendents' compensation and an enhanced image among golfers and others in the industry.

Our objective is to continue this trend—and strengthen our ability to promote the golf course superintendent's professional standing, as well as opportunities, within the golf industry.

We will be more aggressively marketing the benefits of our association and our programs to current and potential members, targeting nonmember clubs and working with local chapters to guide them in communicating the value of GCSAA membership to their members.

Is it true that GCSAA also plans to promote members over nonmembers to employers?

Yes. That will be yet another benefit of GCSAA membership. We will promote superintendent members, but we will also recognize Class A members as having met a membership standard that superintendent members have not. Certified members, those who have achieved and maintained CGCS status, will be recognized as having attained the highest standards set forth by GCSAA.

We want to encourage our members to be the best that they can be. By achieving and maintaining Class A and CGCS status, superintendents demonstrate their commitment to ongoing professional development and, ultimately, superior performance on the job.

By the way, keep in mind that July 2006 marks the deadline for the first wave of Class A membership renewals. We've divided the renewal process into three phases over the course of three years to enable the GCSAA administrative staff to more effectively process these renewal applications.

For the uninitiated, as part of GCSAA's Professional Development Initiative, we established a list of criteria that superintendents must meet to achieve Class A and CGCS status within GCSAA. Superintendents must renew their status every five years and are responsible for reviewing their "transcript" of qualifying criteria to make sure all their activities are being recorded. To check your transcript, you can log on to the GCSAA website at www.GCSAA.org.

Do you think members will take these standards more seriously when they realize that they will carry some weight—with GCSAA planning to promote their significance to employers?

I do, but it won't happen overnight. Unfortunately, some members may give up something that may be more difficult to acquire in the future. Anyone who is "grandfathered" from the education requirement will lose that status if their membership lapses. Yes, I do think that by

aggressively promoting the brand of the A member and the certified superintendent others will feel there's merit in achieving these higher professional standards.

Any other areas of focus for 2006?

Another important area of focus for GCSAA this year will be communicating its "Success of the Facility" concept. It's become increasingly apparent that the "silo approach," where each department functions independently, is outdated. Employers in all industries are looking for "bridge builders"—people who can think and act beyond their own areas and form productive working relationships across other departments. For superintendents, that means looking beyond the golf course to issues affecting the health and welfare of the entire facility. Today, a golf course superintendent's success hinges not just on the conditions of the course, but on the overall success of the facility.

GCSAA is taking steps to equip members with the knowledge and skills they need to assume this facilitywide perspective. It also plans to step up communications with employers about the value GCSAA members bring to a facility's success.

Getting away from the superintendent for a minute, I understand that the GCSAA board has decided to take a more public stance on issues that relate to the game of golf. What, exactly, does this mean?

First, the issues we're talking about are only those that we, as superintendents or an association, can have a direct impact on. Issues related to golf balls or club shafts are not in our bailiwick. Pace of play, a long-standing issue affecting rounds of golf and golfer satisfaction, is.

After considerable feedback and discussion on the issue, GCSAA has decided to lead the charge in developing ways to improve the pace of play on golf facilities across the country. In fact, we've already generated interest in this initiative from all the associations that have joined us in presenting the Golf Industry Show (including CMAA, which joins the event in 2007), as well as from the PGA of America, PGA TOUR, USGA, and International Association of Golf Administrators.

The ultimate goal in attempting to manage the pace of play is to enhance facility targets for revenue generation and customer satisfaction. Again, we are encouraging our members—and the allied and industry organizations—to approach this issue from a facilitywide perspective.

Each allied association will offer strate-

gies that can be implemented in its own area of facility management for the good of the entire facility. GCSAA, for example, will focus on how course setup and maintenance practices might be modified to enhance pace of play. We'll be announcing a plan of action sometime soon.

Speaking of the allied organizations and industry partners, what is GCSAA currently doing to foster these relationships?

GCSAA is continuing to work on relations and cooperative projects with allied organizations and industry partners. We'll be continuing discussions, this year, with officers from the USGA, PGA of America, CMAA, and others.

Discussions last year led the USGA to provide complimentary membership to GCSAA superintendents for two years. As a long-time member of the USGA, I appreciate the benefits of belonging to this organization and know that, once superintendents have a taste of all that the USGA has to offer, they'll become long-time members too. We are hoping the USGA will become a more formal partner in the GIS.

Future discussions with other allied org-

anizations will lead to more cooperative partnerships. In 2008, an interesting opportunity may arise. The GIS and the PGA Merchandise Show are back-to-back in successive weeks. I am hoping we will capitalize on the proximity of the shows and offer our members and industry partners and the PGA of America members to attend each other's shows and take advantage of all the educational and trade show opportunities available.

The year 2008 promises to be a great opportunity for golf to have a significant "spotlight" during the conference week.

I understand the board just approved the creation of a Board Policy Oversight Task Group. What is this group's purpose?

Over the past few years, the board has committed to improving the "transparency" of its operation. In other words, information about board practices and procedures that was once confidential, like the details in the standard operating procedures, is now readily available to the membership. This, as you can imagine, has caused some of the membership to question the way the board is handling its expenditures.

The solution we came up with was to



Tim O'Neill, CGCS

form what we're calling the Board Policy Oversight Task Group. This group will convene every three years—beginning this year—to evaluate the board's expense policies. It's composed of members of the GCSAA Nominating Committee plus two additional members: a member at large and a past president who has never served with any of the present board members. In other words, I couldn't be selected for the committee this year.

Any recommendations for change that this task group might want to propose would have to be presented at the Chapter Delegates Meeting.

During your term as president, the GCSAA board voted to revise the association's vision and goal statements to reflect its new focus on the "success of the facility" concept, but also to reflect the importance of its diversity initiative. This is the first I've heard of this initiative. What does it involve?

This initiative was introduced last year with the creation of a Diversity Task Group, which consists of members and nonmembers in and outside the golf industry. This group has been appointed to work on expanding the diversity of the golf course management profession by exploring ways to promote the increased representation of minority racial, ethnic, and gender groups and by working to identify any barriers that may exist within the organization and profession which may limit or prevent us from achieving a more representative membership profile.

Like anything worthwhile, this initiative will evolve slowly. It will take a good deal of time and effort to effect change in this area. The task group will be meeting again sometime this year to discuss their action plan.

Looking back, now, on your term as president, what would you say some of your proudest achievements have been?

I am extremely proud of the overall effort of the GCSAA board and staff. The board has been progressive, open, and sensitive to the interests of the membership, and the staff has implemented the programs and objectives established by the board extremely well.

I'm also proud of the fact that we were able to successfully integrate into our long-range planning the perspectives and expertise of industry colleagues and chapter members. At our spring board meeting in Arizona, for instance, we invited Kemper Sports Chairman Steve Lesnik, President of the Golf and Environmental Foundation of Arizona Henry DeLozier, Arizona Golf

Association Executive Director Ed Gowan, Southwest PGA of America Section Executive Director Kathy Wilkes, and the local superintendent association's board of directors.

Plans for the Golf Industry Show and several of the initiatives we're involved in were the result of this type of collaborative thinking process.

The work we completed in 2005—the numerous initiatives I mentioned and our partnerships with industry organizations—will only help our relations going forward. I'm proud to have had a hand in that.

How does it feel to step down from your post as GCSAA president?

Stepping down as president is bittersweet, for sure. Part of me is relieved because I realize that serving any more than one year as president would be too much of a burden for my club and probably for me, personally. But I truly enjoyed representing GCSAA and will miss my interactions with others in our industry.

It's funny. Already, my phone doesn't ring as often as it did two weeks ago. And I do feel that some of the pressure's off. Still, I know I will miss serving as president.

But stepping down as president won't really hit home until a year from now, when I leave the board entirely. Right now—and for the next year—I will be doing almost as much as I did in 2005. To start, I'm headed to Hawaii for the CMAA conference, then to Vancouver for the CGSA conference. Later in March, I have the spring board meeting in San Francisco and, following that, the Master's in early April.

I just want to end by saying that I am thankful to many people for the wonderful opportunity to serve as president of GCSAA. I am grateful to my employers at the Country Club of Darien, as well as the staff who helped things run smoothly while I was busy for the association. Again, I can't thank my assistant, Chad Anderson, enough. I'm not sure I could have done it without him.

I am also thankful to the Met members who have supported me throughout my time on the board, as well as the members from the CAGCS and the Rhode Island chapters that I also belong to.

I may be leaving GCSAA service soon, but I don't think I can ever stop thinking about what I can do to enhance our profession. As my GCSAA responsibilities eventually wind down, I hope to become more involved in helping my local chapters again.

President's Message continued from page 1

patch, pythium, and leaf spot. Nothing, unfortunately, is perfect.

Although I would like to credit our success last season to my talents and the diligence of my staff, I firmly believe our success was the result of having bentgrass, rather than *Poa annua*, on our greens. We did not have that weak link to fail when the heat, quite literally, was on.

Eliminating the Weak Link

Even if *Poa* didn't prove to be a disastrous weak link for you this past summer, keeping it alive and well during the summer months is an additional stress—and expense—none of us need.

The solution, of course, isn't simple. The USGA's January/February '06 *Green Section Record* article "Rebuild or Regress" covers this subject in great detail. Unfortunately, more often than not members will focus on the short-term obstacles and put the kibosh on any attempt to make the switch. Among their objections are the cost, the inconvenience, and the perception that "a masterpiece" is being tampered with.

I maintain that ridding your greens of *Poa* saves time and money in the long run, particularly when you factor in all the effort it takes to baby-sit and chemically treat *Poa* greens going bad. I also maintain that there are ways around the inconvenience to members through reciprocity at neighboring clubs. And about the masterpiece: Using today's GPS technology to replicate putting green contours will ensure you recreate the same masterpiece once again.

Nobody wants to go through what we did last year. Unfortunately, if we don't change, history has a way of repeating itself.

Will Heintz
President

2006 Golf Industry Show Earns High Marks—and Admirable Numbers

Not even the prospect of being relocated twice could dampen the spirits of organizers, attendees, and exhibitors of the 2006 Golf Industry Show held in Atlanta, GA, February 5–11.

“Early feedback on the event is overwhelmingly positive,” says GCSAA Chief Executive Officer Steve Mona, CAE, noting that both exhibitors and attendees reported being highly impressed with the show. And though attendance for the event was down from 22,723 in Orlando to 18,900 this year, Mike Hughes, chief executive officer of the National Golf Course Owners Association (NGCOA), feels our second Golf Industry Show was “a major win.”

Says Hughes, “The Atlanta show added more evidence to our belief that this is the year’s most important gathering of industry leaders. Owners were impressed with the quality and consistency of educational offerings, solutions to their business problems, and the networking opportunities. I think we left Atlanta with a lot of momentum for Anaheim in 2007 and the years ahead.”

Other GIS facts and figures:

- A total of 74 countries were represented, including 1,659 international attendees.
- At week’s end, the total number of semi-

nar seats sold was 7,229, exceeding the projected 6,760 seats. This also happens to be the fourth highest total ever.

- There were 756 exhibitors, surpassing the projected 750.
- The total footage of trade show space sold was 244,200 square feet, which is just under the projected 245,000.
- The number of qualified buyers (those who can influence purchase decisions) walking the show floor was 6,650, compared to the projected 7,500.

“All in all,” says Mona, “we are pleased with the attendance totals, but our true satisfaction comes in the positive feedback we have received from those who were there to conduct business.”

At the 2007 Golf Industry Show, the Club Managers Association of America (CMAA) will join GCSAA and NGCOA as a presenting partner. Also participating as supporting organizations again next year will be the Golf Course Builders Association of America (GCBAA), the American Society of Golf Course Architects (ASGCA), and the National Golf Foundation (NGF).

The show will be held in Anaheim, CA, February 18–24, 2007.

Who Made the Final Cut? GCSAA Board Election Results

Voting GCSAA members attending the February 10 Annual Meeting in Atlanta were asked to elect three officers and two directors to the GCSAA Board of Directors. Here’s who made the final cut:

Officers

President: Sean A. Hoolehan, CGCS, Wildhorse Resort GC, Pendleton, OR

Vice President: Ricky D. Heine, CGCS, The GC Star Ranch, Austin, TX

Secretary/Treasurer: David S. Downing II, CGCS, Rivers Edge GC, Shallotte, NC

Immediate Past President: Timothy T. O’Neill, CGCS, CC of Darien, Darien, CT

Directors

Newly elected to board:

- Patrick R. Finlen, CGCS, The Olympic Club, San Francisco, CA
- Sanford G. Queen, CGCS, Overland Park GC, Overland Park, KS

Continuing term on board:

- James R. Fitzroy, CGCS, Wollaston Recreational Facility/Presidents GC in North Quincy, MA
- Mark D. Kuhns, CGCS, Baltusrol GC, Springfield, NJ
- Robert M. Randquist, CGCS, Boca Rio GC, Boca Raton, FL

Mark J. Woodward, CGCS, golf operations manager for the City of San Diego, is retiring from the board of directors after serving the last year as immediate past president.

Stiff Competition at the 2006 National Championship and Golf Classic

The 2006 GCSAA National Championship and Golf Classic was held February 5–7, in Houston, TX. The weather was quite comfortable—despite the two-club winds and some morning frost. Contestants also experienced a slight change in format: The Championship competitors (those with handicaps less than 5.0) played a three-day, 54-hole stroke play tournament, while the rest of the field played the traditional quota system.

Due to the change in venue of the Golf Industry Show after Hurricane Katrina, attendance was considerably lower than in past years. About 15 players from the Met made the trek to Houston. Three of them played in the three-day event at Redstone Golf Club, while the others competed in the Golf Classic at The Oaks Course and Panther Trail Golf Course at The Woodlands Resort.

The National Championship

At Redstone Golf Club, Texan superintendent Joe Anderson shot a 227 and defeated fellow Texan assistant superintendent Chris Webster on the first playoff hole. Looks like they had a little home field advantage!

Met players in this division were Les Kennedy and Sean Cain, both posting scores of 254, followed by John Carlone who posted a 260. Great job to these guys!

The Golf Classic

In the Golf Classic, there were three flights this year, and although we had a couple of players finishing in the top 25 percent of their respective flights, only Rick Schock, playing in the Second Flight, was able to place 3rd Low Gross. Second Flighters were Glen Dube, Larry Pakkala, and Chad Esposito.

In the First Flight, James Swiatlowski led the Met, followed by Chris Smith, Jeff Wentworth, and Scott Niven. Jason Ziesmer was the Third Flight Met leader, followed by Ken Benoit and Bob Nielsen.

The Chapter Team Event

The MetGCSA also was involved in the Chapter Team event, which consisted of 60 teams in both the gross and net divisions. Our best finish was in the net division. We came in 17th out of 60 with the team of Benoit, Nielsen, Pakkala, and Ziesmer. The gross division also fared pretty well, finishing 18th out of 60 with the team of Cain, Kennedy, Niven, and Swiatlowski.

—Blake Halderman

Upcoming Events

2006 Met Calendar of Events Inching Toward Completion

Our 2006 Meeting and Social Calendar is nearly complete. Stay on the lookout for changes as we confirm meeting dates and sites. There are still some events looking for hosts. If you're interested in volunteering your club, you know who to call. For professional events, contact either of our Tournament Committee co-chairs: Blake Halderman at 914-946-1074 or Chuck Denny at 914-669-5959. Our Social & Welfare Committee co-chairs are Tom Leahy (914-941-8281) and Bob Nielsen (914-234-3779). Both are available to discuss any upcoming social events.

Business Meeting

Wednesday, March 22
Metropolis Country Club
White Plains, NY
Host: Tony Grasso

Two-Ball Qualifier

Tuesday, April 25
Centennial Golf Club
Carmel, NY
Host: Will Heintz

Superintendent/Manager or Guest Tournament

Tuesday, May 9
Wykagyl Country Club
New Rochelle, NY
Host: Mike Scott

Family Picnic

Date & Site OPEN

MetGCSA Invitational Tournament

Thursday, June 1
GlenArbor Golf Club
Bedford Hills, NY
Host: Ken Benoit, CGCS

Education Meeting

July
Date & Site OPEN

Poa Annual Tournament

August
Salem Country Club
North Salem, NY
Host: Chuck Denny

Summer Social

August
Old Oaks Country Club
Purchase, NY
Host: Mark Millett

MetGCSA Championship and Met Area Team Championship Qualifier

Tuesday, September 5
Hudson National Golf Club
Croton-on-Hudson, NY
Host: Chris Smith, CGCS

Superintendent/Green Chairman Tournament

Tuesday, October 31
Sleepy Hollow Country Club
Scarborough, NY
Host: Tom Leahy, CGCS

Annual Assistants Tournament

Date & Site OPEN

Met Area Team Championship

Date & Site TBA

Annual Meeting

November
Bedford Golf & Tennis Club
Bedford, NY
Host: Bob Nielsen, CGCS

MetGCSA Christmas Party

Saturday, December 2
Mount Kisco Country Club
Mount Kisco, NY
Host: Fred Scheyhing, CGCS

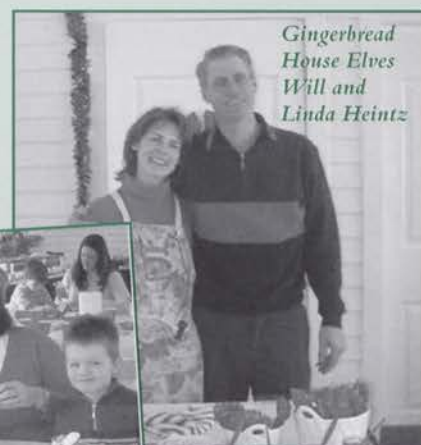
Scenes From the Gingerbread House Party

If you missed the MetGCSA's Gingerbread House Party December 11, you missed a great afternoon of family fun. Hosted at the Centennial Golf Club in Carmel, NY, this first-ever event drew about 70 Met members, spouses, and children.

Our Met President's wife and former chef, Linda Heintz, was the mastermind behind the event, cooking up 20 pounds of dough to create the gingerbread houses that the children—and some adults—later decorated.

Everyone was served a light lunch and then went straight to work, supplied with a bag of icing and an assortment of candy to decorate their ready-made houses.

Special thanks to the Social & Welfare Committee, who were on hand to help, and of course, to Linda and Will Heintz, for organizing and hosting the event.



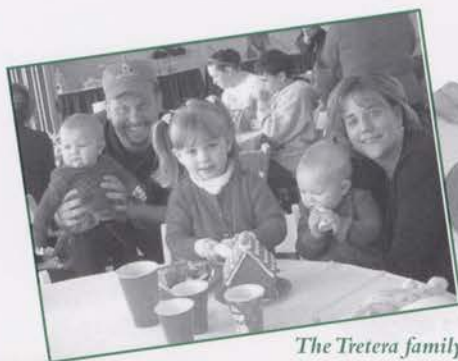
Gingerbread House Elves
Will and Linda Heintz



The Leahy family



Met Executive Secretary
Ineke Pierpoint
and grandchildren



The Tretera family



Sarah Jean Siemers

Attendees 'Blown Away' by Winter Seminar

by Glen Dube, CGCS

It wouldn't have been a MetGCSA Winter Seminar without inclement weather. This year's seminar goers were greeted January 18 by dangerously high winds with gusts up to 60 miles per hour. Fortunately, no one was "blown away" until after they had attended the educational sessions, which included an impressive lineup of speakers and topics ranging from environmentally friendly golf course grasses to anthracnose-inhibiting cultural practices.

MetGCSA President Will Heintz kicked off the day with his opening welcome and round of thank yous to the Education Committee for a seminar well planned and to Joe Alonzi and the rest of the Westchester Country Club staff for agreeing, once again, to host this annual event.

We'd also like to extend a special thank you to all the commercial members who purchased a table for the trade show. Our exhibitors, who you'll find listed on page 9, provide valuable information and products that we all can put to use at our facilities.

The educational sessions began with an environmentally friendly topic: low-maintenance grasses for golf courses.

Growing Environmentally Friendly Grass

Speaking about these grasses was Marie Pompei of F.M. Browns from Sinking Spring, PA. She described the many benefits of establishing low-maintenance grasses, not the least of which is that they are environmentally friendly. They require fewer chemical and fertilizer applications, less frequent irrigation, and they make an attractive habitat for wildlife. In addition to being good for the environment, these grasses are relatively low cost to maintain, putting less of a strain on your maintenance budget.

The next part of Pompei's presentation covered native grass establishment as well as a rundown on which varieties would be best suited to our particular region. Interestingly, cool-season native grasses aren't the only varieties that will work well; warm-season grasses can make wonderful and attractive selections for planting here, as well. She



Awards Committee member John Carlone presents the Met's coveted John Reid Lifetime Achievement Award to the MGA's Gene Westmoreland.

stressed that perhaps the most important aspect of establishing a stand of native grasses, be it cool- or warm-season, is to be patient. Many of these grasses are slow to establish and may take a year or two to achieve the expected results.

Keeping Wetlands Safe and Sound

The next topic of discussion dealt with wetlands and water quality issues. With more than 30 years' experience in this field, Carmine L. Labriola presented strategies for dealing with multi-regulatory agencies and described how these agencies go about ensuring that the wetlands and native habitats are preserved.

He used many site-specific photos to show us the types of control measures that can be put in place to keep wetland disruption to a minimum. From silt fences, coir logs, and drainage systems, we learned about a wide variety of techniques and equipment that can be used to ensure that we stay in compliance while we are performing projects in environmentally sensitive areas.

Preventing Phosphorus Runoff

It's a wonder that our next speaker ever made it to the Winter Seminar. Cornell University's Dr. Marty Petrovic was scheduled to fly in the morning of his talk. After his plane experienced 90-mile-per-hour wind shear and two failed attempts at landing, he almost missed his call to the podium. But on the third try, the plane was able to touch down and he landed at the session in the nick of time. He spoke about phosphorus runoff in surface waters and how we, as turf managers, can minimize this form of water pollution.

Dr. Petrovic stressed that a dense, healthy stand of turf will help keep runoff to a minimum. By contrast, applying a fertilizer containing phosphorus to a sparse stand of turf, and/or bare soil will increase the chances of runoff into our surface waters. He also advised that we clean up any fertilizers that spill over onto driveways or roadways. When left on a hard surface, fertilizers can be washed into a storm drain by rainwater. Most drains, he cautions, empty into a body of water, which will then suffer the ill effects of phosphorus runoff.

The Ins and Outs of Sprayer Nozzle Selection

After a scrumptious lunch and an awards ceremony in which Gene Westmoreland, the MGA's assistant executive director and tournament director, was honored with the Met's coveted John Reid Lifetime Achievement Award, the talks continued with Dr. Mike Fidanza of Penn State University. He discussed the role sprayer nozzle selection plays in our ability to apply pesticides and fertilizers more safely and effectively. Basically, the efficacy of certain products can be greatly influenced by the type of nozzle configuration we have in our sprayers. According to Dr. Fidanza, operating pressures, wind, the type of material being applied, and the particular pest you're trying to target, should all be factored in to your sprayer nozzle selection.

Anthracnose Antidote

Our final speaker of the day was Dr. Jim Murphy of Rutgers University. Updating us on his research, Dr. Murphy provided a promising plan of action we can use to avoid anthracnose disease on *Poa annua* turf.

His trials have shown that increasing nitrogen fertility will dramatically reduce the incidence of disease. Furthermore, he's discovered that rolling, even up to four times per week, and the use of certain types of plant growth regulators, namely Primo, do not affect disease severity as much as lower mowing heights do.

His formula for anthracnose disease prevention is to apply more nitrogen and raise your height of cut. Though we know raising mowing heights will reduce green speeds, Dr. Murphy claims that if you increase rolling frequency and use plant growth regulators on a regular basis, green speeds will improve and the risk of disease severity will be greatly reduced.

Glen Dube, the MetGCSA Education Chairman, is superintendent at Oak Hills Park Golf Course in Norwalk, CT.



MetGCSA President Will Heintz looks on as Tournament Committee Co-chair Tom Leahy recaps the year in golf.

Special Thanks to Our 2006 Winter Seminar Exhibitors

We'd like to thank all the vendors who participated in this year's Winter Seminar. As a show of appreciation, we're listing the exhibitors here, along with their areas of specialty and phone numbers.

When the opportunity arises, we hope you'll show these contractors and suppliers the same support they've shown us during our Winter Seminar—and throughout the year.

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Allan Yust
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206-255-9635



MetGCSA President Will Heintz presents Past President Tim Moore with the infamous green jacket.

Winter Seminar goes break for lunch.

And Now a Thank You to Our Sponsors

Helping to make our 2005 Christmas Party at Westchester Country Club all the more merry and bright were the generous contributions of some of our Class AF members. We'd like to extend a very special thank you to:

Frank Amodio of Valley View Greenhouses

Scott Apgar of Metro Turf Specialists

John Apple of Westchester Tractor, Inc.

John Callahan of The Cardinals, Inc.

William Carriere of James Carriere & Sons, Inc.

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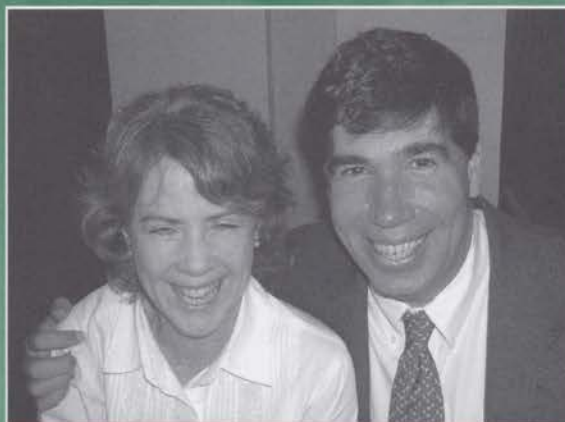
Joe Stahl III of Turf Connection

David Sylvester of Bayer Environmental Science

John Wickes of Ira Wickes/Arborists

PICS of the P

2005 MetGCSA Christmas



Bill & Lorah Perlee



Party host Joe Alonzi, Dom Richichi, Bob Alonzi



Tony & Lucille Grasso



Kim Alonzi & Kevin Collins



Gina & Neil Laufenberg



Birdie & Peter Alonzi



Halderman, Glen Dube, Kristen Halderman, Dube, Melodee Benoit



Marie & Alonzi



Rappoccio, Bob Alonzi & Fred Scheyhing, Joe & ne & Mike Maffei

Member News

Scholarship Raffle a Success

The 2005 Annual Bill Caputi Scholarship Raffle, held at the December 3 MetGCSA Christmas party at Westchester Country Club, not only raised a sizable sum for the Met's Scholarship Fund, but also awarded \$4,500 in cash prizes to 18 lucky ticket holders.

The raffle is the prime source of the scholarship awards we distribute to deserving Met member dependents each year. In 2005, we awarded \$10,600 to nine students.

Many thanks to all who contributed to this worthwhile fundraiser, and congratulations to our \$1,000-grand-prize winner, **Scott Niven**, Property Manager of The Stanwich Club.

The other prize winners were:

\$500 Winners

William Bartells, Tanto Irrigation
Elaine Denny, mother of Salem's
Chuck Denny
Bobby Steinman, Beekman Country Club

\$250 Winners

F. Fudeh, outside contributor
Byron Johnson, The Terre Company of NJ, Inc.
Caroline Perry, daughter of Rolling Hills' **Glenn Perry**
Bill Salinetti, National Golf Links of America

\$100 Winners

Rob Alonzi, St. Andrew's Golf Club
Frank Amodio, Valley View Greenhouses
Carly Amodio, daughter of **Frank Amodio**
John Callahan, The Cardinals, Inc.
Tony Chateauvert, Bedford Golf & Tennis Club
Bob Lippman, Westchester Turf Supply, Inc.
Mike Maffei, Back O'Beyond, Inc.
Chuck Martineau, Whippoorwill Club
Bob McFee, Westchester Country Club
Bill Perlee, The Apawamis Club

Speaking of Scholarships...

Don't delay in calling for your 2006 MetGCSA Scholarship Award application! Any Class A, AL, B, SM, C, AF, or AFL member of the MetGCSA or a dependent of a member is eligible to win. But the deadline for submissions is fast approaching. **All applications must be RECEIVED by Friday, March 31.**

Application forms are available through MetGCSA Executive Secretary Ineke Pierpoint at 914-347-4653. If you have any questions about the application process, feel free to contact S & R Chairman Matt Ceplo of Rockland Country Club at 845-359-5346.

The Scholarship & Research Committee will select recipients based on leadership, maturity, scholastic capabilities, activities, and commitment to a chosen career.

Scholarships will be awarded at our July Education Meeting. Watch the Calendar of Events in *Tee to Green* for a time and place.

Members on the Move

Brian Kishpaugh was promoted from assistant to superintendent at Minisceongo Golf Club in Pomona, NY.

New Members

We'd like to welcome the following new members:

- **Chris Burnett**, Class C, Tamarack Country Club, Greenwich, CT.
- **Scott T. Campbell**, Class C, Silver Springs Country Club, Ridgefield, CT.
- **Jason Green**, Class C, Country Club of New Canaan, New Canaan, CT.
- **Andrew Joseph Hannah**, Class C, Century Country Club, Purchase, NY.
- **Kyle McNerey**, Class C, Tamarack Country Club, Greenwich, CT.
- **Daniel Schultz**, Class C, Silver Springs Country Club, Ridgefield, CT.
- **Brian Upton**, Class C, Woodmere Club, Woodmere, NY.

Well Wishes

Wishing Lucille Grasso, wife of Metropolis Superintendent **Tony Grasso**, a speedy recovery.

Met Veteran Tony Grasso Steps Up to the Plate—Once Again—to Host the Spring Business Meeting

by David Dudones

This year's MetGCSA Business Meeting will be held March 22 at Metropolis Country Club in White Plains, NY. All members are encouraged to join host Superintendent Tony Grasso and the Met Board of Directors to discuss association affairs for 2006. There will be no golf on the agenda. We'll catch only a glimpse of one of the finest conditioned courses in the Met area from the recently renovated clubhouse.

For Tony, this meeting is just another "notch in his belt" when it comes to his contributions to the association. Having hosted three Met meetings, two Christmas parties, and a few other social events, including last season's Summer Social, this will be the seventh event held at Metropolis over the past 10 years.

What You See Isn't Always What You Get

For the few of you who haven't met Tony, think of a brick wall with a smile. His mere 6'2" presence can be intimidating, especially for a new superintendent playing in his first Two-Ball match against Tony.

My partner and I didn't really know Tony, except in passing, so when he suggested playing the round at his course, we decided saying no wasn't an option.

When we arrived for the match, we were greeted with the firmest handshake on record—and some background on the course and the latest Ken Dye renovation. It didn't take my partner and I long to realize that first impressions aren't always right. Tony was a lot more ap-

proachable than he looked. In fact, he made us feel downright welcome.

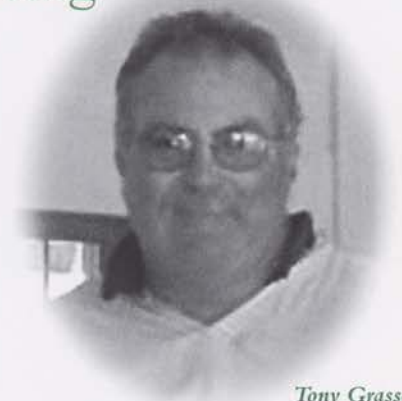
The hospitality continued throughout the day, ending with cool drinks and appetizers on the clubhouse veranda. Golf was great, stories were endless, and even some excellent advice was handed down to the rookies: "Take care of your assistants and they will take care of you, and remember the importance of spending time with family."

All in the Family

For Tony, spending time with family was all part of the job. His father, Anthony, was one of the original owners of Metro Milorganite until 1991, when he sold the company to Rick Apgar who has since passed it on to his son Scott. Educated at UMass with a B.S. in soil science, Tony's hands-on experience began with his first assistant's position at Metropolis under his then future father-in-law, Bruno Vadala.

During Tony's four-year term, he began dating Bruno's daughter, Lucille; they married in 1980. A year later, Tony accepted the superintendent's job at Willow Ridge, where he remained for 10 years. Metropolis came calling for his return—this time as superintendent—in 1991, and it's there he's remained for the past 15 years.

Tony and Lucille have been married for more than 25 years and have three children: Anthony, who's a college grad working in Florida; Katie, who's an education major in her junior year; and



Tony Grasso

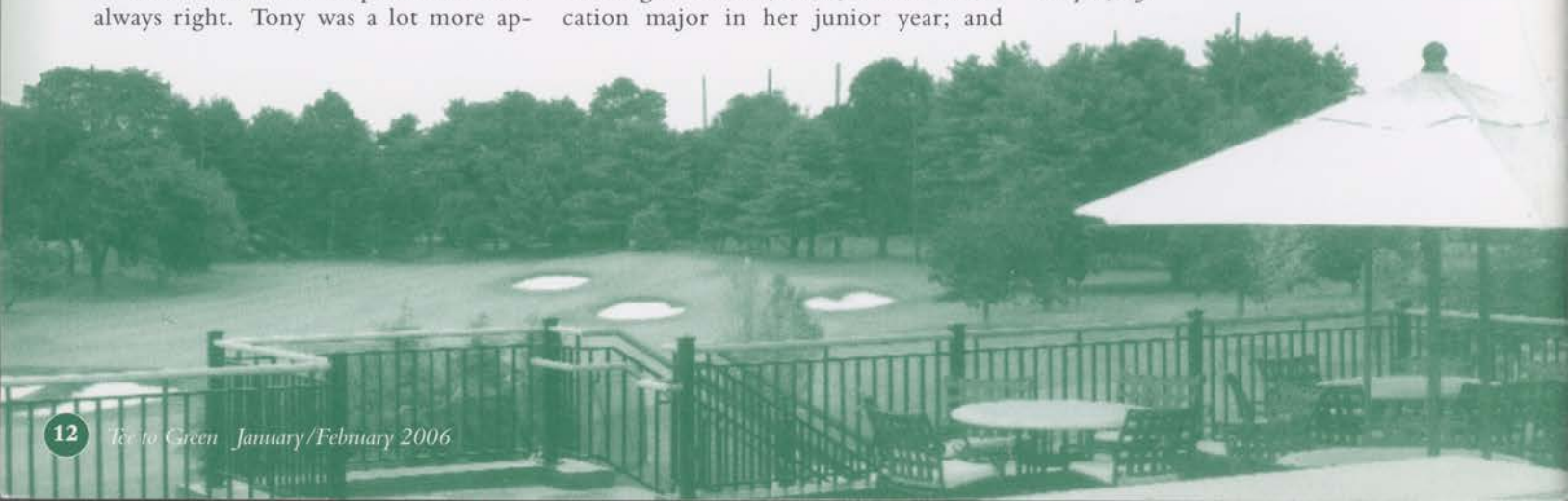
Joseph, who is a 13-year-old middle school student.

So far, the kids have stayed out of the business. However, Tony's brother, Larry, is an assistant at Century in Purchase, and Lucille's brother, Greg, is the superintendent at Montclair Country Club in New Jersey.

For the past 28 years, Tony has also served as a member of another family: the MetGCSA. From the Board of Directors, numerous committees, and his continued commitment to volunteering his facility for our functions, Tony's service to the association continues to be an excellent example for all of us to follow.

If you haven't met Tony, take time at the Business Meeting to get to know one of our most storied veterans. Behind that brick wall there's a really fun-loving, caring individual—not to mention a great superintendent.

Dave Dudones, a member of the Tee to Green Editorial Committee, is superintendent at North Jersey Country Club in Wayne, NJ.



Centennial—and Met President Will Heintz—to Host Two-Ball Qualifier

by Kevin Collins

On April 25, Superintendent Will Heintz and Centennial Golf Club of Carmel, NY, will host the season's first golf meeting: the MetGCSA Two-Ball Qualifier. This is the third MetGCSA golf event Will has hosted at Centennial; the last was in September 2001.

Centennial is a 27-hole layout with three distinctive nine-hole tracts. Aptly named Lakes, Meadows, and Fairways, each course provides the golfer with both a traditional and a links feel. This Larry Nelson design takes great pains in not being redundant. Every hole is unique, which makes for a rewarding golf experience. The course has matured nicely. In fact, if you didn't know better, you'd think it's been around a lot longer than 10 years.

Will explains, "The last few years have been mostly about course maintenance. There haven't been many major projects. We're given the resources to keep the course in great shape. It plays well, and the players like it. The conditions are a testament to our focused team approach."

The Early Years

Will knows all too well about teamwork. As one of 12 children, he was raised as part of a team—on a 200-acre dairy/hobby farm in upstate Clinton, NY, which his father, a now-retired oral surgeon, decided to activate when Will was just 8 years old.

"My siblings and I grew up with a strong work ethic," remembers Will. "At an early age I learned to operate equipment, work the soil, care for livestock, and face the elements. We all worked together."

Will's farm experience led him to pursue a degree in biology. But after graduating from St. Lawrence University, he realized that he wasn't cut out for a career in scientific research. He opted, instead, for a job at a stone quarry.

"Fortunately, it didn't take me long to see I was going nowhere quickly," says Will. "That's when I decided to pursue a career in Turfgrass Management." Will enrolled in UMass's Turfgrass Management Program, receiving his associate's degree in 1977.

The Career Trail

Will's first job out of school was as an assistant at Teugega Country Club in Rome, NY. But his real training ground was Westchester Country Club under then Superintendent Ted Horton.

Despite Will's previous experience, it was back to square one. "I started on the divot crew at Westchester," says Will, "and had to work my way back up to assistant superintendent." Will was quickly brought up to speed, learning the ins and outs of what it takes to maintain one of the most mammoth golf course operations in the area.

After five years of skill-building, Will accepted his first superintendent's job at Hampshire Country Club where he worked 12 years before accepting the superintendent's position at Centennial midway through its construction.

That was a busy time for Will—both on the job and at home. Just 17 days after arriving in Carmel, Will Jr. was born.

The house provided by the club had to be renovated and prepared to accommodate its first tenants in many years. And the contractors involved in building the course had to be organized and unified to complete the construction phase and grassing of the course.

Will's leadership and personable, positive style motivated everyone. Centennial opened to rave reviews and, to this day, is a professionally run and successful enterprise.

At Your Service

Despite his busy schedule, Will has devoted the past 16 years to the MetGCSA Board of Directors and is currently in his final year as the Met's president. Will comments, "I look at the current board and see that we have a strong team doing a mountain of work in unison with all the committees that conduct the Met's business."

Clearly committed to the welfare of our industry, this past year Will was appointed the new chair of Westchester County Pest Management Committee, a group charged with evaluating and monitoring all pest management programs used in the county.

"I consider this a great opportunity for our

industry to promote our ability to deal with sensitive issues regarding pesticide use, public health, and the environment," says Will.

From Turf to Tunes

When he's on the job, it's hard to imagine Will talking anything other than turf. But there are those of us fortunate enough to know another side of Will—Will the musician.

In addition to being an accomplished banjo player, he's got quite a talent on the bass guitar. Having jammed with "Will the Thrill" many times, I think he's at his best when he can sit in with some buddies and play music. His passion for playing is contagious. It makes everyone around him play better, taking the music to a new level. If we ever hit the road, we'll post our club dates in the *Tee to Green*.

When he's not out strummin', Will enjoys spending time with his wife, Linda, and now 8-year-old Will Jr.—particularly when they can escape to their home away from home in Willsboro, NY. It's a farm—which includes a stone house, a barn, and 25 acres—and is located on Lake Champlain. The property provides Will with a venue for his "This Old House" carpentry and plumbing skills.

Being interviewed for this profile was not something Will enjoyed. Will's not comfortable drawing attention to himself and would rather deflect praise to the people around him. All Will cares about is the final result. The sum total of his years of accomplishments, dedication, and hard work on behalf of the MetGCSA speak volumes about a person who has definitely made an indelible mark on our industry and it's people.

When asked about the future of our industry, Will said he had just one wish: "I'd like to see more clubs gain a better understanding of the resources and time required for superintendents to make their golf courses great."

Amen.

Be sure to join fellow Met members at Centennial—for a little two-ball and some friendly competition on a golf course Will, I'm sure, will make great.

Kevin Collins, a member of the Tee to Green Editorial Committee, is Northeast territory manager for Aquatrols Corp. of America.



Will Heintz

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