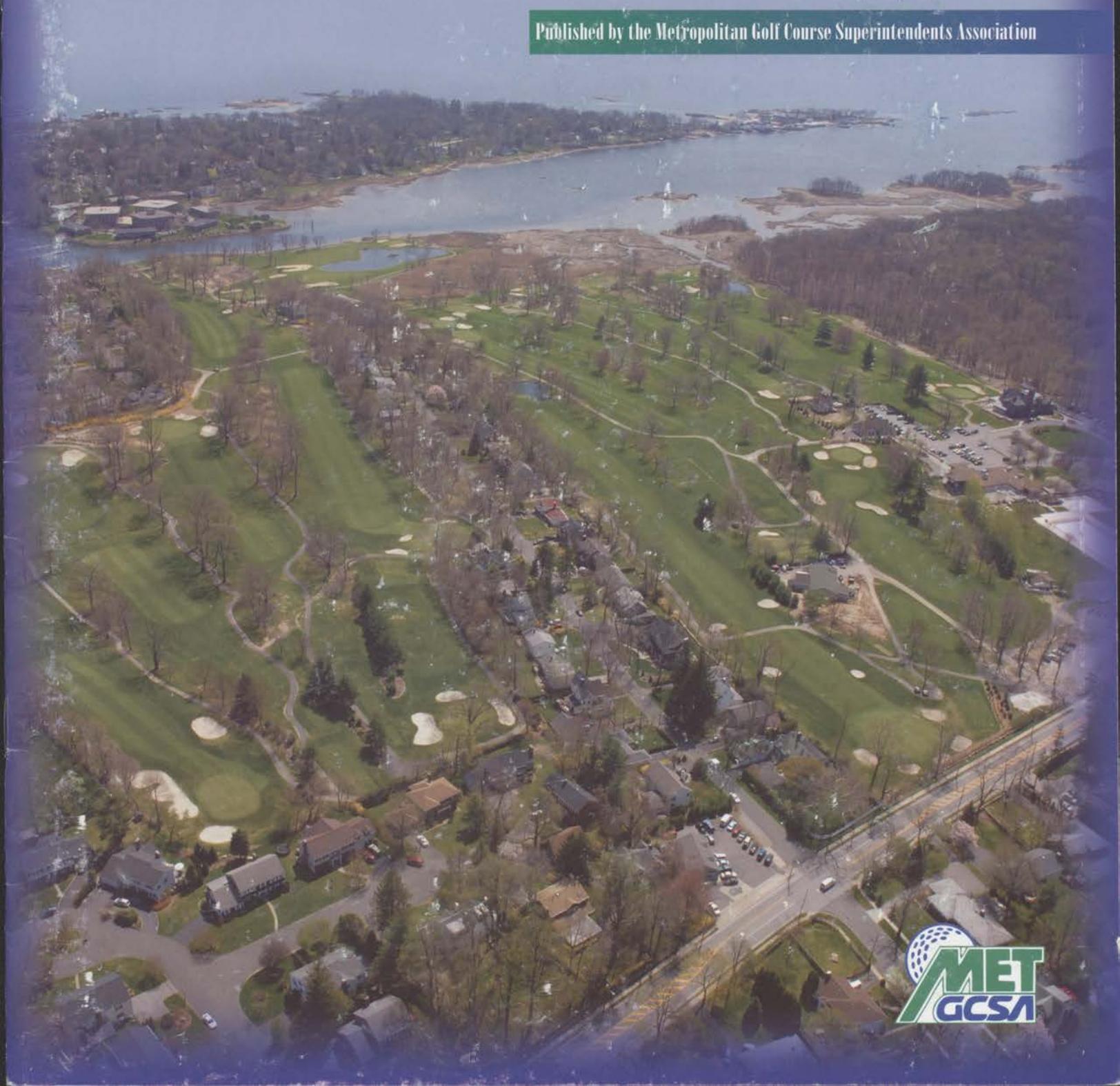


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Tee To Green

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Tee To Green



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I am sure most superintendents will agree that one of the questions we hear most is, "What do you do in the winter?" In a recent issue of *The Met Golfer*, that question was answered by our executive director, Ed Brockner. Interviewing several Met superintendents, Ed outlined the three main areas we all focus on during the winter to ensure we're well prepared for the following season:

- *Preparation*: finishing up fall renovations, tree removal, stonework, drainage, irrigation, and equipment repairs.
- *Evaluation*: reviewing budgets, staffing and training, equipment fleet, and fertilizer and spray programs.
- *Education*: attending seminars and conferences to stay current on industry trends and practices.

I want to give a special thank you to Ed and the MGA for working together to educate others about an important aspect of our profession. I also want to say how proud I am to be part of an industry in which allied associations are so willing to work together in promoting and sharing information about each other.

Noteworthy Efforts and Events

Speaking of working together . . . in December, over the holiday break, our board agreed to take a trip to Coney Island in Brooklyn, NY, to bring food and supplies to those still displaced by Superstorm Sandy. (See story, page 14.) I personally want to thank those who made this charitable trip. I know it was appreciated by those in Coney Island, and I'm sure it was just as fulfilling for those who participated.

In January, we had our Annual Winter Seminar at Westchester Country Club. I want to thank the nearly 300 people who braved the snow (what else is new?) to join us. (See story, page 10.) Once again, it was well worth the effort. Rob Alonzi and his committee had a wonderful lineup of speakers, and the tradeshow vendors offered an interesting array of products and services. Thank you to all the sponsors who joined us.

The other noteworthy event of the day: our two award presentations. Congratulations, again, to Sherwood A. Moore Award winner and Meadow Brook Superintendent John Carlone and to John Reid Lifetime Achievement Award winner and Cornell Professor Marty Petrovic. The association is honored to have these great gentlemen as recipients of our most prestigious awards.

At the conclusion of the Winter Seminar, Cornell's Dr. Frank Rossi, the lead author on



*Blake Halderman, CGCSA
MetGCSA President*

the New York State BMPs, provided everyone with a summary of the project and stayed on to answer any questions. Our thanks to Frank, first, for advocating for this important effort and, then, for taking the time to discuss with our group what he describes as the single most important project he's ever been involved with in New York State.

The following week, the New York State Turfgrass Association held its annual Southeast Conference where there was another wonderful lineup of speakers, a DEC update, and a Q&A session on the New York State BMPs by our past president and government relations chair, Bob Nielsen. So between all the associations in our area, there is certainly ample opportunity to stay current with the necessary government relations concerns and keep your pesticide and GCSAA credits up-to-date.

Education Conference & Golf Industry Show Delivers

Returning to its normal time of year, the Education Conference & Golf Industry Show was held February 3–8 in San Diego, CA. For those of you who didn't make the West Coast trip, you missed out on some wonderful learning opportunities, the trade show, and a really great Opening Session. We hope you can join us next year on the East Coast when it returns to Orlando.

continued on page 9

Feature

CGCS

The Ins and Outs of Getting Certified: It's Well Worth the Effort

by Jim Pavonetti, CGCS

A

As just about every turf professional knows, the Certified Golf Course Superintendent (CGCS) designation is the highest level of recognition a golf course superintendent can achieve. In the job market, it is a professional designation that sets you apart from others, especially when pursuing a higher-level position. Once hired, it shows your employer that you are continually striving to enhance your skills and remain on the pulse of the industry as you pursue the continuing education needed to maintain your certification.

Though earning this status has always meant satisfying a series of criteria, in 2001, GCSAA made the requirements for becoming certified considerably more stringent. About 25 percent of GCSAA Class A members currently hold the CGCS status, but, admittedly, the numbers pursuing certification seem to have fallen off. The word on the street is that many superintendents are discouraged by what now appears to be an overbearing and time-consuming amount of work.

Well, having recently gone through the new certification process, I can assure you that it's not all that bad—and actually well worth the effort. I feel that completing the process has made me a better manager and better superintendent, which in effect, has made me more valuable to my club. I learned more effective ways of managing my time and my staff. I discovered things that I could be doing better or that I should be doing but wasn't. And working through the program gave me the tools I've needed to enhance any areas of weakness and also capitalize on my strengths.

What follows is a rundown on what it takes to become a certified golf course superintendent—as well as a roundup of Met member sentiments on what earning CGCS status has meant to them. I hope that after reading this article, you'll be inspired to carve out the time to pursue your certification—and join the ranks of the 79 Met members who are certified golf course superintendents today.

First Things First: Becoming Eligible

Before you can begin the certification process, you have to be sure you meet the minimum requirements. These include years of experience as a superintendent and level of education. Your educational level will dictate how many years of experience as a superintendent you will need and how many education points you will have to complete before moving forward with the certification process. The chart on page 4 specifies these requirements.

The eligibility requirements don't stop there. You also must:

- Be currently employed as a golf course superintendent.
- Possess a pesticide applicators license or pass the GCSAA's IPM exam if your state or country does not have a pesticide license.
- Complete the online Self-Assessment Tool, which can be found on the GCSAA's website.
- Complete a certification portfolio.

About the Self-Assessment Tool

Working through the online self-assessment helps you identify how you measure up to the competencies needed to perform successfully as a superintendent—and on the exam. Under each competency, you'll find the education resources—seminars, books, or articles—available to help you strengthen any gaps you might uncover in your knowledge and abilities in all areas. Another bonus: You'll receive .5 CEUs for completing this assessment.

About the Portfolio

Here's where things get a little more challenging. The certification portfolio is a collection of 33 sections that have to be completed before you can submit your application for the program. These sections are divided into three parts: Work Samples, Skill Statements, and Case Studies. The portfolio was created to evaluate your understanding and application of the management and problem-solving skills needed

to run a successful golf course operation.

I know, right now you're thinking, "You have to be kidding me, right?" Admittedly, the portfolio is one of the biggest stumbling blocks in superintendents' motivation to become certified. I'm not going to say it's not a lot of work, but you can begin building a portfolio at any point in your career, even as an assistant, and if you're a superintendent, you're probably already doing what's required in some of the sections anyway. Take the Work Samples section. Here, you have to provide evidence of tools and documents that you use to manage staff. This might include employee reviews, employee training, job descriptions, or a meeting agenda... things you have pretty readily available.

One thing that you should be sure to download from the GCSAA's website is the Portfolio Scoring Rubric. This is a great vehicle for helping you make sure that you do not leave any part of an answer out. It is what the judges use to grade your portfolio, so reviewing it can prove to be a great time-saver, particularly since any errors or omissions will require that your portfolio be returned to you for revision. Ugh.

I have judged six portfolios in the past three years, and the most common reason any section is sent back for a redo—believe it or not—is because of grammar, punctuation, or spelling errors. I strongly suggest having someone else proofread your work before sending it in. It will save you a lot of time and aggravation.

Right now, you have two options in putting together your portfolio: You can create an electronic portfolio, or you can submit a paper-based version. Regardless of which method you choose, GCSAA provides helpful templates on its website that are designed to guide you in the creation of your portfolio while ensuring that you include all the necessary information.

If you choose the paper-based portfolio, you have to download the templates onto your computer, type in the answers, and print three copies of everything. Then you have to put them into separate binders and

GCSAA Point Requirements

Level of Education	Superintendent Experience	Total Points
Bachelor's degree in turf or plant science	3 years	3 (2 edu)*
Other bachelor's degree plus associate's degree in turf/plant science, or equivalent two-year turf certificate (i.e., Michigan State, Penn State)	3 years	3 (2 edu)
Other bachelor's degree	4 years	5 (3 edu)
Associate's degree in turf/plant science, or equivalent two-year turf certificate (i.e., Michigan State, Penn State)	4 years	5 (3 edu)
Turf certificate/short courses (400-hour minimum) (i.e., Rutgers, Penn State World Campus)	5 years	10 (6 edu)
Other associate's degree	6 years	10 (6 edu)
No degree or recognized certificate	7 years	40 (32 edu)

*Points in parentheses represent the minimum education points required to reach total points.

mail two of the copies to GCSAA, where they would then be sent to two different judges to be graded.

The new-and-improved electronic option allows you to enter your information directly into your e-portfolio by copying and pasting your information from the templates or from something you might have already saved on your computer. Your portfolio will be accessible for five years from the last time you opened it. Another plus with this method is that you will receive your results from the judges more quickly because there is no time wasted waiting for items to be mailed back and forth.

Completing the Certification Eligibility Worksheet

You'll complete this worksheet, which you can find on the GCSAA website, to establish and document your eligibility requirements. Once you've met the requirements, GCSAA will send you a certification application form to complete and submit with an application fee and your portfolio.

The Application

When your eligibility is approved and you have your portfolio ready to go, you can submit your application. Once the applica-

tion is received, you will have one year to complete the remainder of the certification process, which includes the written exam, the attesting of your golf facility, and the evaluation of your portfolio. The exam and attesting can be completed in any order within the one-year period.

This means planning ahead is essential. You have to keep in mind that:

- The attesting of your course must be conducted during the growing season.
- A 60-day waiting period is required between exam retakes. So if for some reason you have to retake a section of the exam (you're allowed two retakes), you have to be sure there's ample time remaining in your one-year applicant period for completion. It really pays to wait until you're well prepared to take the exam before submitting your application.
- If any additional information or materials are needed for your portfolio, it must be returned for reevaluation during your applicant period.

I, personally, submitted my application in the early fall, which gave me the off-season to pass the exam and the whole summer to get my attesting done.

The Exam

The exam is a closed-book, multiple-choice test consisting of three parts with a total of 211 questions. You must pass each section of the exam with at least a 67 percent.

The Self-Assessment Tool mentioned earlier will identify for you the materials or seminars that will help you pass this exam, so it's important that you be honest with your-



Helpful GCSAA Seminars and Webcasts

Here are several resources GCSAA has designed to make the certification process as painless as possible.

- A half-day seminar, "Preparing Your Way to Certification," is offered both online and twice during the Golf Industry Show.
- The Certification 101 Webcast Series is another great tool to get you started. These webcasts review the various aspects of the certification process. Among the webcasts are: "Working Toward Certification Eligibility," "Self-Assessment," "Portfolio," "Examination," and "Golf Course Attesting." The webcasts can be found on GCSAA's website under the "Certification" section.

self when you work through this online assessment.

On the test, there are some things that you're expected to know from memory, such as the volume of a cube, converting cubic feet to cubic yards, calculating the percent slope, USGA specifications for greens, the GCSAA's Code of Ethics, general knowledge about turf species from all geographical areas, and how to figure depreciation. You are also expected to have some general knowledge about the Audubon Sanctuary Program for Golf Courses. Formulas for other, more difficult math problems are provided.

As I noted earlier, you have one year to pass the exam, but there is a 60-day waiting period between retakes, so plan ahead!

The Attesting

Fulfilling the attesting requirement may be the easiest part of the program for some and the most nerve-racking for others. This is when your local chapter assigns two certified superintendents to come and evaluate your golf course operation. This evaluation is conducted during your course's growing season and covers four major areas: course conditions (based on your budget), maintenance facility, recordkeeping methods, and communication skills.

You can prepare for this visit by downloading the grading form that the attestors will use to evaluate your course. There is also the "Attestor Guidelines" booklet available as a PDF, and an "Attestor Training Video," which also covers everything the attestors will be looking for.

Maintaining CGCS Status

Once you become certified, you must maintain your CGCS status by obtaining 15 points every five years. (At least five of the points have to be education points; the remainder can be service points.) If 15 points are too much, you can retake the exam and obtain only 5 points. (At least two have to be education points, in this case.)

Maintaining CGCS Status When Retired

What about the people who have been certified but are now on to other things like sales or retirement? You may be eligible to maintain a "CGCS Retired" status, which means you no longer have to renew with CEUs. You simply have to meet the requirements for a retired membership classification in GCSAA, such as Class AA (Life Member), and you have to have maintained your certified status up to the point of retirement.

To be eligible for Class AA (Life Membership), one has to have retired as a golf course superintendent and been an assistant superintendent or golf course superintendent member of the GCSAA for 25 years, of which a minimum of 20 years has been spent as a golf course superintendent.

For Questions About the Certification Process

If you have any questions or concerns about the program, a great resource is Penny Mitchell, the program's Senior Manager of Certification. She can be reached at pmitchell@gcsaa.org or at 800-472-7878.

Good luck!

Jim Pavonetti, editor of Tee to Green, is superintendent at Fairview Country Club in Greenwich, CT. Jim has served on the GCSAA's Certification Committee for the past three years and also serves as a Portfolio judge.



ATTESTOR GUIDELINES AND INSTRUCTIONS GCSAA Certification Program

1421 Research Park Drive • Lawrence, Kansas 66049-3859 • (800) 472-7878 or (785) 832-4484

Guidelines & Instructions

When serving as an attestor in GCSAA's Certification Program, please familiarize yourself with all aspects of this booklet. Course evaluations must be conducted during the course's growing season, which is determined by the two appointed attestors. Both attestors may conduct evaluations at the same time; however, immediately following the course visit, must work independently when completing this report. **All reports are to be mailed to GCSAA within five working days after the course visitation.**

There are four major divisions to be considered when conducting course evaluations:

- Course inspection
- Record keeping
- Maintenance facility inspection
- Communication skills

Each of the major divisions is outlined in this booklet, and list areas to be reviewed during the course evaluation. Points of emphasis for each area are listed, which will help guide your evaluation of that particular area. Are there any problems within the areas indicated? If so, discuss with the applicant what steps have been taken, or will be taken to alleviate those problems. If a particular area does not exist on the golf course, water areas for example, or the superintendent is not responsible for that area, mark that section as not applicable; otherwise, rank each area as pass, pass with recommendations, or needs improvement. **Keep in mind budgetary factors and unique conditions for each course, and remember GCSAA is certifying the individual, not the course.**

Scoring

All sections must be ranked, or marked as not applicable, to be considered a valid attesting. Upon receipt by GCSAA of both completed attestor evaluation reports, staff will tally and combine rankings from both reports to determine an overall final score. An 85% cumulative score from both reports (which includes the pass and pass with recommendations rankings) is required for passing. A copy of the completed report, less this cover page, will be forwarded to the applicant; therefore, comments will not be directly attributed to an individual attestor.

Applicant's Report to Attestors

The applicant must submit this report to you prior to your course visitation. The following areas will be covered in this report:

- Demographic Information
- GCSAA Involvement
- Education
- Course Information (budget, rounds per year, employees, months in growing season)
- Professional Goals
- Résumé

Affidavit

By signing below, your signature attests to your knowledge of the aforementioned procedure and you accept the responsibility of complete professional integrity as you conduct the purpose for your course visit is in an official capacity serving as...

Superintendents Talk Certification

*W*e surveyed local certified superintendents to get a sense of how they feel about their certification. Most couldn't say enough about the value they've derived from earning—and maintaining—their CGCS status. Here are their insights:

Many enjoyed the “feel good” aspect of adding CGCS to the end of their names. . . .

“In my 25th year of certification,” notes Preakness Hills’ John O’Keefe, “I am confident that career advancement is just one of the benefits of certification. The CGCS designation is something that makes me feel proud and also gives me a feeling of significant accomplishment. I especially appreciate the distinction my club has enjoyed by having a certified superintendent. At the certification luncheon in San Diego in February, it was a great feeling to look around the room and see that I am among some of the best in our business.”

The Stanwich Club’s Scott Niven notes a similar sense of accomplishment: “I have always felt proud to be able to tell members of my club that I am certified as a relatively small percentage of individuals in our business can say that. The CGCS distinction is also a very prominent and valuable item on my resume and website.”

“For me,” says Country Club of New Canaan’s Mike Reeb, “it has been a professional qualification of intrinsic or core value, a goal that’s provided personal satisfaction throughout my career.”

To Larry Pakkala, superintendent at Silvermine Golf Club and superintendent-at-large for Plant Food Co., certification was a means to an end: “I always have looked for ways to improve my self-image, and certification was a means to do that. I didn’t do it for financial gain. It was a personal goal I set for myself. In our industry, unlike many others, certification isn’t required. It’s up to the individual. Many superintendents take the same number of GCSAA and other courses

as a CGCS without becoming certified. And there’s value to that too. I, personally, am proud that I went through the process of becoming certified—and that I’ve maintained that status for 30 years. I’m looking forward to remaining a CGCS well into retirement.”

For Bedford Golf & Tennis Club’s Bob Nielsen, it’s what certification stands for that’s important: “Certification is presently the highest standard by which an individual can be held in our organization. While I don’t believe certification increases an individual’s ability to become a better superintendent, I do believe it demonstrates a commitment to the profession. This is, and always has been, important to me.”

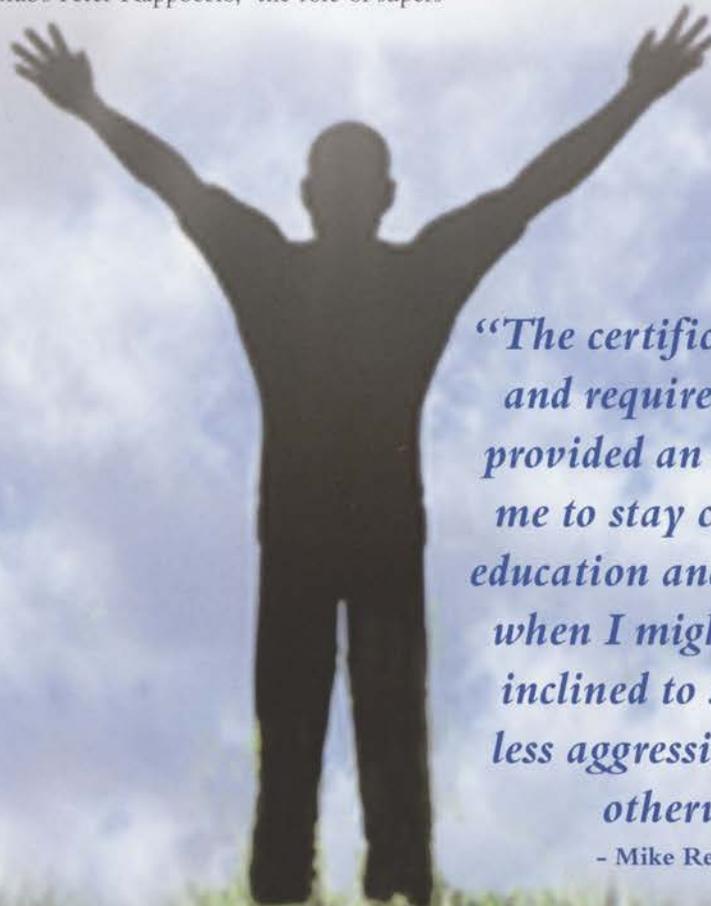
Others feel it has given them a leg up in a competitive industry. . . .

“Back in 1986,” says Silver Spring Country Club’s Peter Rappoccio, “the role of supers

and our status within our clubs was nowhere near what it is today. Many of us looked at certification as a way to distinguish ourselves within the industry and take our jobs to the next level. Though the industry has begun to change and the important role of the superintendent has become clearer to club members and others in the golf industry, I still feel that certification is a distinction that all superintendents should try to attain—and maintain. I have been certified for 27 years, and I already have enough points to be recertified in 2016!”

Emphasizing the importance of CGCS status, Scott Niven adds, “I have always been the kind of person who wants to climb as high in the industry as possible, so as soon as I heard about the certification program back in the early ’80s, I immediately went on a search to find out what I had to do to obtain that classification. Certification holds a certain amount of status in many industries, so whenever you tell a club member, golfer, etc., that you are a certified golf course superintendent, it always indicates to them that you are a professional in your field at the highest level and your work will be representative of what could be considered state-of-the-art in golf course management. I have never questioned my decision to be certified and feel that it has only helped me to achieve a fairly high level of success in this great business.”

Like Scott, Brae Burn Country Club’s Blake Halderman regarded earning CGCS status



“The certification process and requirements have provided an incentive for me to stay current with education and new trends, when I might have been inclined to settle into a less aggressive approach otherwise.”

— Mike Reeb, CGCS

Although certification does not guarantee success, statistics show that it can enhance our career opportunities, job security, and lead to better managed facilities.

- Tim O'Neill, CGCS

as a solid career move. "When I was a young superintendent, my entire goal was to put myself in the best possible position to get the job I truly wanted. I felt if I wanted to be viewed as one of the top 10 percent, then becoming certified was necessary."

Similarly, Meadow Brook Club's John Carlone felt becoming certified would set him apart from others in the industry. "When I earned my certification in 1991, I felt it would make a statement to my peers and potential employers that I desired to be the best I could be in my profession. I remember feeling, 'All good superintendents are certified.' Of course, I've long known that there are plenty of highly capable superintendents who are not certified. Yet I still think that every young superintendent should challenge themselves by pursuing their certification!"

Rockland Country Club's Matt Ceplo feels certification is all the more essential in an economy where job competition is fierce. "I would urge every superintendent to become certified. Completing your certification, in my opinion, demonstrates to current and prospective employers your commitment to the industry and to the profession of golf course management. And because you have to stay current with the latest developments and technology to maintain your certified status, employers know that they are hiring or employing someone who is on their game."

Echoing Matt's sentiments, Country Club of Darien's Tim O'Neill notes: "Although certification does not guarantee success, statistics show that it can enhance our career opportunities, job security, and lead to better managed facilities. Moreover, in this highly competitive industry, certification is a demonstration of a superintendent's passion for the profession, and it allows a superintendent to be recognized for meeting established levels of competency. It goes beyond 'growing grass' by requiring knowledge in business, communication, leadership, and the environment. It was a personal goal of mine when I started my career as a superintendent in 1981, and I believe it has been a sig-

nificant factor in my success as a golf course superintendent."

Still others enjoy the educational nudge the certification process provides. . . .

As Glen Arbor Golf Club's Ken Benoit notes: "I became certified in 2004, and my experience has been 100 percent positive. In studying for the certification exam, I rediscovered the joy of learning and take great pleasure in keeping up-to-date on turf-related science and participating in the continuing education process. My involvement in the GCSAA certification program has been nothing short of a wonderful experience."

John Carlone sings the praises of certification's educational requirements: "After 22 years, I still appreciate how being certified ensures that I stay current with every aspect of our changing profession through ongoing education."

"Truth be told," says Mike Reeb, "the certification process and requirements have provided an incentive for me to stay current with education and new trends, when I might have been inclined to settle into a less aggressive approach otherwise. I'm proud to be certified and intend to remain a CGCS for as long as I'm able to renew."

"No doubt," adds Blake Halderman, "the certification process forces you to stay current in the industry, which is a positive for both you and your club."

Peter Rappoccio is one who feels the educational benefits of the certification process far outweigh any potential for financial gain: "I didn't pursue certification with the goal of getting more pay. I viewed it as a means to take my status, through education, to the next level. Those who say becoming certified is not worth the effort because financially it means nothing, have their priorities out of whack. It was, and still should be, a means to continue to improve our knowledge of the business, which, in turn, makes us better supers."

And some feel there's just no good reason NOT to become certified. . . .

"A superintendent may or may not feel the need to become certified as it relates to his ability to do his job on a daily basis," says Ken Benoit, "but in my opinion, there is no good answer when asked by a current or potential employer why you are not certified."

Bob Nielsen echoes Ken's sentiments, saying, "One question I always asked myself when deciding whether or not to pursue certification was how I would explain, if it came down to me and another certified superintendent for a position, why I wasn't certified. I have never been able to come up with a good answer."

To Blake Halderman, becoming certified is one of those "why not?" things: "If all those around you are certified and your club finds out you're not, I don't think it will sit too well. You will have to play defense. With the ease of maintaining the certification these days with online courses, I don't see any reason not to get certified and keep it."

While many superintendents were pleased with the recognition and support they received from their clubs for earning and maintaining their CGCS status . . .

A number of respondents admitted their clubs have little idea what CGCS stands for. . . .

"I don't believe my employer gives me any more credit for being certified," says Bob Nielsen, "but that is as much my fault as anyone else's. I have not promoted it."

And according to Blake Halderman, "I don't think 99 percent of my club knows what CGCS stands for or what it takes to keep that status. While being a CGCS may not mean much on a daily basis, I still feel the long-term benefits make it worthwhile."

Larry Pakkala, on the other hand, felt more clubs are aware of the benefits of certification than most of us realize: "For many years, I've noticed that some job notices state that being a certified superintendent is a plus. So there are clubs out there that do know about it."

In the end, few certified superintendents would deny the many personal and professional rewards of earning—and maintaining—their CGCS status . . . even if no one knows it but themselves.

Upcoming Events

Plan NOW for These Upcoming Events!

Dave Mahoney Two-Ball Championship Qualifier

Monday, April 29
Rye Golf Club
Rye, NY
Host: Chip Lafferty

MetGCSA Invitational Tournament

Monday, June 17
Wee Burn Country Club
Darien, CT
Host: Doug Drugo

Nine and Dine: Superintendent/Guest Tournament

Tuesday, July 16
Pelham Country Club
Pelham Manor, NY
Host: Jeff Wentworth, CGCS

Educational Events

2013 MGA/USGA Green Chairman Education Series & Arthur P. Weber MGA Club Environmental Leaders in Golf Award

Wednesday, March 27
Willow Ridge Country Club
Harrison, NY

The Metropolitan Golf Association Foundation, in conjunction with the United States Golf Association Green Section, has put together another informative program in its ongoing Green Chairman Education Series. An impressive roster of presenters from the USGA's Green Section and the golf industry will address a variety of turfgrass-related issues. Each of the presentations will be followed by a question-and-answer session.

Special Note!

Cornell's Dr. Frank Rossi will offer an informative lecture on the New York State Best Management Practices (BMP) project. Please make every attempt to attend this event with your green chairman as this will be an important opportunity to not only learn more about the BMP project, but also market it to the "influential golfer" segment of our industry.

The day will conclude with the seventh annual Arthur P. Weber MGA Club Environmental Leaders in Golf Award Luncheon.

For further information, see our website, www.metgcsa.org, or contact Kevin Kline (kkline@mgagolf.org) at 914-347-4653.

18th Annual Rutgers Turfgrass Research Golf Classic

Monday, May 6
Fiddler's Elbow Country Club
Far Hills, NJ

Join fellow industry professionals for this annual fundraiser and a day of golf, education, and fun. Your participation helps continue turfgrass research and breeding programs at the Rutgers University Center for Turfgrass Science.

For further information, call 973-812-6467 or log on to www.njturfgrass.org.

Rutgers Turfgrass Research Field Day

(Golf & Fine Turf)
Tuesday, July 30
Horticultural Farm II
New Brunswick, NJ

Save the date, and watch for details. Visit www.njturfgrass.org or call 973-812-6467 for further information.

UMass Turf Research Field Day

Thursday, August 1 (8:00 a.m. – 1 p.m.)
UMass Joseph Troll Turf Research Center
South Deerfield, MA

The field day will focus on the wide range of research projects that university faculty, staff, and graduate students currently have underway at the research center and at other locations. Among the studies you'll see: the biology and integrated management of turf-damaging insects, short- and long-term weed management, pesticide exposure, fertility, drought management, as well as a range of National Turfgrass Evaluation Program fine turf trials. The field day will also feature displays and demonstrations from turf industry vendors. A barbecue lunch is included with registration.

For further information, contact the UMass Extension Turf Program office at 508-892-0382 or by email at fieldday@umassturf.org.



President's Message continued from page 1

Matt Ceplo Shines at Opening Session

During the Opening Session, our very own Matt Ceplo, superintendent at Rockland Country Club, was awarded the President's Award for Environmental Leadership. (See write-up, page 15.) Maybe I just paid more attention because it was Matt, but I thought he gave one of the best speeches I've ever heard at the conference. His supposed three-minute speech turned into a good 10 to 15 minutes and was a perfect combination of storytelling, emotion, and environmental advocacy. It should make us all proud that Matt is one of us and he is telling the great story of how our profession works to protect the green spaces in the world, while providing a benefit to the environment. We need to all follow his lead in promoting our profession and working to keep this great game of golf strong for many generations to come. Congratulations, Matt!

I also attended many meetings and the Chapter Presidents Breakfast and would like to share with you some of the great ideas the MetGCSA will be able to take advantage of to help us stay current and share that message of environmental advocacy.

Fundraising Through Rounds 4 Research

One of the most important programs you may have heard talk of is called Rounds 4 Research. This is an innovative program administered by GCSAA's Environmental Institute for Golf that's aimed at helping affiliated chapters, as well as local turfgrass foundations and other industry partners, to generate funds for research. The way it works: Golf facilities donate rounds of golf for foursomes, "stay and play" packages, or other items that can be auctioned off online to generate funds for turfgrass research. The EIFG will then distribute monies back to the participating organizations to fund research in their local areas.

So if a MetGCSA club were to donate a round of golf for a foursome to be auctioned off, we would receive 80 percent of the money raised in that auction to put toward research. The remaining 20 percent would go to the EIFG, whose primary function is to support research revolving around environmental concerns. The Rounds 4 Research program will be particularly helpful to us in providing funds for the New York State BMP project, but I am also pleased to announce that we have gained support from several local associations in funding this important statewide project. Everyone realizes that it is time to come together for the good of the game.

The Many Facets of Golf 20/20

It was also great to hear from Steve Mona, former GCSAA CEO and present CEO of the World Golf Foundation. He reviewed the Golf 20/20 initiative and discussed the goal of having 30 million golfers in the year 2017, which would be up 2.5 million from today. Under that umbrella is also:

- *Get Ready Golf.* This is a program designed to bring new golfers—and former golfers—into the game by providing reasonable education and instruction at golf facilities throughout the U.S. that have been certified to participate in the program.

- *We Are Golf.* This is a coalition formed by the Club Managers Association of America, the GCSAA, the National Golf Course Owners Association, The PGA of America, and the World Golf Foundation. Their mission is to showcase the economic impact of golf: the tax revenues it creates, the tourism it spawns, the charity it generates, and the environmental benefits it provides. At latest count, the industry generated \$70 billion in annual revenues, created 2 million jobs, and generated 4 billion in charitable contributions. That's more than all of the other four major sports combined!

- *Image of Golf.* This is a program designed to change public perception of golf from an elitist sport to one everyone can enjoy. The World Golf Foundation is taking a lead role on behalf of the U.S. golf industry to better communicate golf's many positive contributions to society.

I am proud to report that the MetGCSA has supported many of these endeavors in the past and will continue to do so in the future.

Annual Meeting Outcomes

I also had the opportunity to attend the Annual Meeting, which was particularly exciting since our very own John O'Keefe of Preakness Hills was running for secretary/treasurer. I am happy to report that John did, in fact, secure the position, so we can look forward to his presidency in two more years. I hope you all get the chance to congratulate John. He's worked very hard to get where he is, and it is wonderful for us to have such a great friend and ally in this important leadership position.

On a less popular note, I do have to report that GCSAA members voted in favor of a dues increase from \$340 to \$365 for Class A/SM. We can't really complain, however, since this is the first increase in three years.

We closed the Annual Meeting on Thursday, and then the reality of getting home started to set in as we were being bombarded with blizzard warnings on our

phones and TVs. As the blizzard approached the Northeast, flights were coming off the board at an astonishing rate. Many members were stranded a day or two, and it was a real-life *Planes, Trains, and Automobiles* for those trying to get back home. I truly appreciate everyone taking the trip to San Diego, and I trust everyone made it home safely.

Educational Opportunities at Home

For those of you who didn't make it to the West Coast, there were a number of local educational opportunities I hope you took advantage of. We just had the New England Regional Turfgrass Show in Providence and the Turfgrass Advocacy Day in Albany, where we worked hard to show our state legislators that the golf industry is, indeed, an important asset to their state.

Still to come is the MGA Green Chairman Series on March 27 at Willow Ridge. This is always a great kickoff to the season and a chance to spend the day with your chairman (or come alone) before spring officially roles in. If you missed the USGA Green Section Series at the conference, this is a great opportunity to hear Dave Oatis, director of the Northeast Region of the USGA Green Section, and Adam Moeller, USGA Northeast Region agronomist, provide information directly related to our area. Dr. Frank Rossi will also be there to talk about our BMP project.

Final Notes

If there is one message I want to emphasize in all this, it's the importance of working closely with our allied industry partners and GCSAA in promoting the many benefits of our industry. Being proactive with the BMPs, meeting with the DEC and New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets, and working with GCSAA to communicate to local and national media the many health, economic, and environmental benefits our industry has to offer are just some of the ways we can elevate our profession and the game of golf.

I hope you all find time to prepare, educate, learn, and recharge your batteries this off-season, but just as important, let's all reflect on our facilities and see if we can take a page out of Matt's book and find even just a small way to make a positive change. If we can all do that, those small changes, collectively, will make a huge difference in the world of golf.

Blake Halderman, CGCS
MetGCSA President

2013 Winter Seminar Offers Something for Everyone

by Jim Pavonetti, CGCS

The wintery mix of sleet and snow couldn't keep the nearly 300 Winter Seminar-goers away from Westchester Country Club on January 16. And no wonder: Rob Alonzi and his Education Committee put together another outstanding lineup of speakers who offered many innovative approaches to managing long-standing turf challenges and woes. There was something for everyone.

What follows is a quick take on the talks, along with the speakers' contact information so you could easily pursue any of the topics that interest you.

Topics for Discussion

* The day began with Rick Fletcher of Cleary Chemical Company speaking about tank-mixing techniques and how to avoid mishaps when combining different products. He stressed the importance of understanding your water quality and pH before mixing and suggested jar-testing mixtures before filling an entire spray tank with them. For more information, Rick can be reached at 800-524-1662, ext. 1029, or at rick.fletcher@clearychemical.com.

Past Sherwood A. Moore recipients. Left to right: Scott Niven, CGCS, superintendent of The Stanwich Club; John O'Keefe, CGCS, superintendent of Preakness Hills Country Club; Larry Pakkala, CGCS, superintendent of Silvermine Golf Club and superintendent-at-large for Plant Food Co.; Mike Maffei, CGCS, superintendent of Back O' Beyond Golf Club; the 2013 Sherwood A. Moore Award recipient, John Carlone, CGCS, superintendent of The Meadow Brook Club; Tim O'Neill, CGCS, superintendent of Country Club of Darien; and Joe Alonzi, CGCS, superintendent of Westchester Country Club.



Special Thanks to Our 2012 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 contact information.

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.

* Next, we had Dr. Lane Treadway of Sygenta Crop Protection discuss the complexities of managing pythium. Pythium blight, he noted, has dozens of strains, making it unlikely that any one fungicide can control all of them. To ensure better results, Dr. Treadway recommended rotating the different fungicides available. He also spoke about the two types of hard-to-detect root pythium diseases: pythium root rot and pythium root dysfunction, giving us pointers on when and where these diseases occur and how to diagnose them. If you have any questions on pythium management, Dr. Treadway can be reached at lanetreadway@me.com.

* It wouldn't be a Met Winter Seminar if one of our speakers didn't discuss hyper-odes. Dr. Harry Niemczyk of Ohio State University gave us new insight into managing these insects, which may actually change some of our current practices. He has been working at several area clubs, including Burning Tree in Greenwich, CT, and Metropolis in White Plains, NY, on methods for more effectively managing these pests by applying a granular insecticide along the rough and wood lines where the adults are believed to overwinter. His intent is to create a barrier around the fine turf in order to intercept the adults when they are on their way to the fairways, tees, and collars. Dursban, in the granular form, seemed to show the most promise. For more information, Dr. Niemczyk can be reached at niemczyk.1@osu.edu.

* After lunch, Dr. James Kerns, formerly of the University of Wisconsin-Madison and now from North Carolina State, discussed ways to get the best value from our fungicide programs. The main thrust of his talk was to stress the importance of getting at the root cause of a turf problem before treating it with chemicals. Your problem may stem not from a fungus, he noted, but rather from poor

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Staff Uniforms
201-488-1276
merrick160@aol.com

Aquatrols, Inc.

Kevin Collins
Soil & Water Quality Management Solutions
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kpc10512@yahoo.com

Bayer Environmental Science

Dave Sylvester
Plant Protectants
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Cleary Chemicals

Bryan Bolehala
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201-874-8060
Bryan.Bolehala@ClearyChemical.net

Davisson Golf Inc.

Thomas Tuttle
Golf Course Supplies
215-431-0393
tatatdgi@gmail.com

DeLea Sod Farms

Mike Hollander
High-Quality Sod & Root Zone Mixes for Golf Courses
631-484-1211
mhollander@deleasod.com

DryJect NE/TurfPounders

Kevin Collins
DryJect & Aeration Specialists
914-672-6029
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Executive Turf Products

Ken Gentile
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203-496-0891
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ezLocator

Jon Schultz
Greens Pin Location System
214-995-3150
jon@goezlocator.com

Grass Roots, Inc.

Ryan Batz
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973-252-6634
ryan.batz@GRIturf.com

Harrell's LLC

Scott Tretera
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203-426-7055
stretera@harrells.com

LaCorte Equipment

Jim Calladio
John Deere Golf
631-891-2425
marketing@lacorteequipment.com

Matrix Turf Solutions, LLC

Greg Moran
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845-849-8640
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Metro Turf Specialists

Scott Appar
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203-748-4653
scott.appar@metroturfspecialists.com

Plant Food Company, Inc.

Dick Neufeld
The Liquid Fertilizer Experts
973-945-6318
dneufeld@plantfoodco.com

Playbooks for Golf

Golf Course Field Guides, Aerials, Consulting, Career Development
Greg Wojick: 203-219-0254
gwojick@goplaybooks.com
Matt Leverich: 913-221-8052
mleverich@goplaybooks.com

Power Performance Ind.

Michael Liebler
Power Generation System Design, Sales, Service, & Rental
914-966-3200
mliebler@ttipower.com

Seeton Turf Warehouse

Brian Bontemps
Golf Course Supplies
856-273-5939
brianbontemps@seetonturf.com

Steven Willand Inc.

George Corgan
A Jacobsen Golf & Turf Equipment Dealer
203-775-5757
georgecorgan@charter.net

Storr Tractor Company

Rick Krok
Golf Course Equipment & Supplies
908-722-9830
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Tanto Irrigation, LLC

Bill Bartels
Irrigation Installation Services
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The Care of Trees

Michael Cook
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914-345-8733
mcook@thecareoftrees.com

Turf Products LLC

Pat Cragin
Toro Irrigation & Equipment
800-305-2525
pcragin@turfproductscorp.com

Westchester Turf Supply, Inc.

Dave Lippman
Golf Course Supplies
914-447-5192
westturf@comcast.net

Wilfred MacDonald, Inc.

Glenn Gallion
Golf Course Equipment
888-831-0891
ggwilmac@aol.com

William A. Kelly & Company

Eric Kelly
Conventional & Pre-Engineered Construction Management
914-232-3191
eric@wakellyco.com

XGD Systems

Mark Luckhardt
Golf Course Drainage Specializing in Greens & Fairways
772-286-3419
admin@greensdrainage.com



2013 Sherwood A. Moore Award presentation. Left to right: Les Kennedy, CGCS, superintendent of the Blind Brook Club; John Carlone, CGCS, the 2013 Sherwood A. Moore Award recipient and superintendent of the The Meadow Brook Club; and Tim O'Neill, CGCS, superintendent of the Country Club of Darien and past SAM Award recipient.

drainage, insufficient air circulation, or another agronomic condition. His word to the wise: Correct things that affect turf health first; your fungicide applications will invariably become more effective. For more information, Dr. Kerns can be reached at 608-516-8917 or at jkerns0@gmail.com.

✳ The last talk of the day, given by Dr. John Inguagiato from the University of Connecticut, was on cutting-edge chemical programs to control annual bluegrass on greens and fairways. Dr. Inguagiato has been conducting trials on a chipping green at The Stanwich Club in Greenwich, CT, using a new chemical from Korea that will come to the United States as Poa Cure. A likely game-changer in the industry, this chemical slowly controls annual bluegrass without harming surrounding Kentucky bluegrass, creeping bentgrass, or perennial ryegrass. Trials will continue. The product is expected to receive EPA registration in the spring of 2014, so stay tuned! For more information on Poa Cure, Dr. Inguagiato can be reached at 860-486-0682 or at john.inguagiato@uconn.edu.

2013 John Reid Lifetime Achievement Award presentation. Left to right: Bob Nielsen, CGCS, superintendent of Bedford Golf & Tennis Club; the 2013 John Reid Lifetime Achievement Award recipient and professor from Cornell University, Dr. Marty Petrovic; and Cornell professor Dr. Frank Rossi.

Mid-Seminar Awards Luncheon

As always, seminar-goers and vendors were treated to an extra-special Westchester Country Club lunch during our Awards Ceremony, which this year, included the presentation of our Sherwood A. Moore Award to Meadow Brook Club's John Carlone and our John Reid Lifetime Achievement Award to Cornell's Dr. Marty Petrovic.

First at the podium were two of John Carlone's longtime friends, Tim O'Neill and Les Kennedy. Along with some great stories, they gave everyone insight into the

professionalism and dedication that John has demonstrated through his many years of industry service. A truly admirable person—both personally and professionally—John serves as an outstanding example of excellence in our industry and of what our Sherwood A. Moore Award stands for.

Cornell's Dr. Frank Rossi did the honors in presenting the John Reid Lifetime Achievement Award to colleague Dr. Marty Petrovic. Dr. Rossi highlighted Dr. Petrovic's many award-worthy accomplishments, noting that he was among the first to focus on environmental issues, writing in particular about best practices for protecting water quality on our golf courses. Much of his early work is still referenced today. Dr. Petrovic is now assisting golf course superintendent chapters in New York in writing a comprehensive Best Management Practices manual for golf courses. Throughout his career, Dr. Petrovic has always been an advocate of the golf course superintendent and the golf industry. He rightly joins our growing list of Reid Award recipients.

When all was said and done, attendees



meandered through the vendor booths where company reps were on hand to answer questions and discuss the latest products and services available to our area.

Special Thanks

We would like to offer a special thank you to all of the vendors who sponsored the event, especially our title sponsor Metro Turf Specialists, and to those who had tables for the trade show portion of the day.

Finally, we would like to extend a sincere thank you to host Superintendent Joe Alonzi and the entire Westchester Country Club staff for doing such a wonderful job—once again—in making this a thoroughly enjoyable experience for all who attended.

See you all next year!

Jim Pavonetti, editor of Tee to Green, is superintendent at Fairview Country Club in Greenwich, CT.

Scholarship Raffle: A Gamble Worth Taking

The Annual Bill Caputi Scholarship Raffle, held at the January 16 Met Winter Seminar at the Westchester Country Club, raised an admirable sum for the Met's Scholarship Fund and 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 members and dependents each year.

Many thanks to all who contributed and also to those who sold tickets for this worthwhile fundraiser. Congratulations to our \$1,000-grand-prize winner, **Mike Cook**, from The Care of Trees.

The other prize winners were:

\$500 Winners

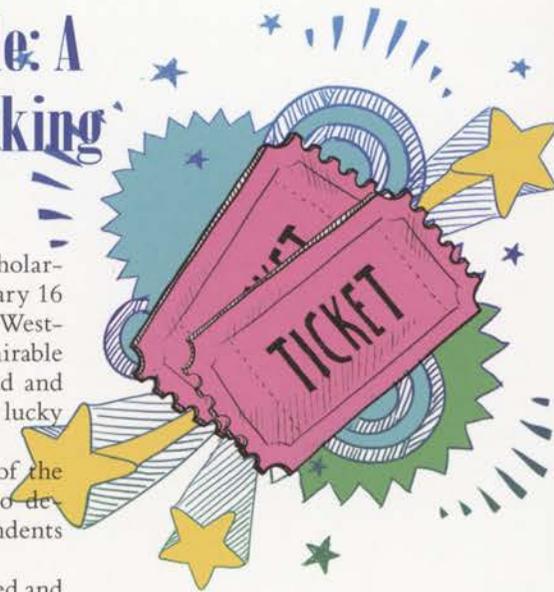
Todd Apgar, Metro Turf Specialists
Kevin Collins, Aquatrols, Inc.
Jim Pavonetti, Fairview Country Club

\$250 Winners

Frank Amodio, Valley View Greenhouses
Kevin Collins, Aquatrols, Inc.
Kevin Collins, Aquatrols, Inc.
Tony Decicco, Soil Solutions, LLC

\$100 Winners

Megan Baggott, guest of Edgwood's Bob Wolverton
Bill Bartels, Tanto Irrigation
Danny Carlone, son of Meadow Brook's John Carlone
Les Kennedy, The Blind Brook Club
Bob Miller, Golf Club of Purchase
Tim O'Neill, Country Club of Darien
Brian Rusnak, sold by Metro Turf Specialists' Scott Apgar
John Ruzsbatzky, Country Club of Farmington
Paul Samanchik, member at North Jersey Country Club
Kevin Seibel, Century Country Club



MetGCSA Board Member Attends 2012 GCSAA Leadership Academy

Redding Country Club's Brett Chapin was one of 20 individuals from around the nation to participate in the GCSAA's Leadership Academy, held in partnership with The Toro Co., at association headquarters in Lawrence, KS. Brett was selected to represent the MetGCSA at this annual event. The chosen superintendents were expected to take the knowledge they gained back to not only their facilities, but also their local associations.

Participants heard speakers and shared best practices that helped them learn practical leadership skills. The program also addressed current issues and future trends affecting the golf course superintendent profession and association management and helped attendees begin building a professional network of peers with whom to share best practices and innovative ideas.

A leadership panel consisting of representatives of allied associations discussed trends affecting the golf industry and why it is critical for superintendents to take a leadership role at their facilities, in their chapters, and in their communities.

"I spent two days in Kansas discussing leadership, the future of golf, and comparing notes on what does and doesn't work across the country," says Brett of his experience at GCSAA headquarters. "It was clear the GCSAA staff is dedicated to supporting our success as superintendents. Understanding the tremendous resources chapters have available to them through the GCSAA has helped open my eyes to the support system we have created in the golf industry," Brett adds.

GCSAA President Sandy Queen could not be more pleased with the ongoing success of this member program. "We continually hear how the two days have helped to advance careers and make our members better leaders," says Queen. "Those selected to attend this event should be congratulated because they've been recognized by their peers as having the talent to be a leader."

Met and MGA Volunteers Aid Superstorm Sandy Victims

by Brett Chapin



Front (L to R): Pam Harris of Coney Island, Brett Chapin of Redding CC, Glen Dube, CGCS, of Centennial GC, Makeisha Rampersant of Coney Island, Justin Morey of Brae Burn CC.

Back (R to L): Ryan Dexter of Redding CC, Chris Kelly of Loren Findorak Drilling, Steve Kubicki of Tanto Irrigation, and Jeff Nicolaisen of Edgewood CC.

Sandy pelted the Northeast with near-hurricane force winds and rain that caused not only extensive flooding and power and transportation outages, but also more than 130 deaths and tens of billions of dollars in property damage.

For many Metro New York area golf course superintendents and their staffs, recovering from the after-effects of Sandy has required months of hard labor. As the Met reached out to these association members, it became evident there were many individuals and communities who also needed help—months after the destruction took place.

MetGCSA President and Brae Burn Country Club Superintendent Blake Halderman learned about an area in Brooklyn, NY, that was looking for volunteers who could not only offer a helping hand, but also provide the equipment to cook and feed hundreds of individuals for an afternoon. Blake, along with fellow board member Brett Chapin of Redding Country Club, coordinated an effort to arrange for the equipment, supplies, and volunteers to spend a day assisting a community in need.

On December 28, several MetGCSA

members traveled to the Coney Island section of Brooklyn. They provided supplies to residents who were still suffering the effects of Superstorm Sandy and brought and cooked more than 1,400 hot dogs, served chili and soup, and provided beverages to local volunteers and contractors dedicated to helping the people of this community get their lives back in order.

Met volunteers also dispersed supplies the MGA had collected from a number of local clubs, such as food, clothing, toiletries, and other needed supplies. The MetGCSA purchased the food and beverages they served, along with a number of supplies, while Redding Country Club and Edgewood Country Club prepared food, provided equipment, and also donated supplies to help make the day a success.

More than five truckloads of donated goods were distributed from the MGA, MetGCSA, and several of our association members. We want to thank all the individuals involved, as well as the Met-area golf clubs that were willing to donate time and supplies to make this day possible.

Brett Chapin, MetGCSA advertising manager, is superintendent at Redding Country Club in Redding, CT.

New Members

Please join us in welcoming the following new MetGCSA members:

- **Rob Capecelatro**, Class C, of The Stanwich Club in Greenwich, CT
- **Carlos Guerrero**, Class C, of Manhattan Woods Golf Club in West Nyack, NY
- **Tyler Sandefur**, Class C, of Westchester Country Club in Rye, NY
- **Jim Santoro**, Class AF, of Valent Professional Products in Fall River, MA.
- **Eric Sharb**, Class C, of Sleepy Hollow Country Club in Scarborough, NY
- **Eric Slekovich**, Class C, of The Patterson Club in Fairfield, CT
- **Jason VanEngen**, Class C, of Bedford Golf & Tennis Club in Bedford, NY
- **Evan Flynn Weymouth**, Class C, of Sleepy Hollow Country Club in Scarborough, NY

Members on the Move

- **Tony Grasso** is the new territory sales manager for Jacobsen/Textron. Previous position: Superintendent at Metropolis Country Club in White Plains, NY.
- **Guy Gurney** is the new superintendent at Hollow Brook Golf Club in Cortlandt Manor, NY. Previous position: Superintendent at West Hills Country Club formerly Orange Country Club in Middletown, NY.
- **Stephen Kubicki** is a new employee with Tanto Irrigation in Elmsford, NY. Previous position: Assistant superintendent at Redding Country Club in Redding, CT.
- **Scott Olson** is the new superintendent at Hampshire Golf Club in Mamaroneck, NY. Previous position: Assistant Superintendent at Scarsdale Golf Club in Hartsdale, NY.

In Sympathy

We would like to offer our sincere condolences to:

- Towers Country Club Superintendent **Eric O'Neill**, whose father passed away January 23.
- Century Country Club Superintendent **Kevin Seibel**, whose mother passed away on January 24.

Two Members Honored With Environmental Stewardship



Matt Ceplo, CGCS

Congratulations to Rockland Country Club Superintendent Matt Ceplo, winner of not one, but *two* environmental stewardship awards presented at the February 6 Opening Session at the 2013 GCSAA Education Conference in San Diego, CA.

Matt was selected by GCSAA and *Golf Digest* as the solo Private Facility Merit Winner of their 2012 Environmental Leaders in Golf Award (see last column for more on this award). Matt was also selected by the GCSAA Board of Directors to receive the 2013 GCSAA President's Award for Environmental Stewardship. A high honor, this award was established in 1991 to recognize "an exceptional environmental contribution to the game of

golf; a contribution that further exemplifies the golf course superintendent's image as a steward of the land."

"GCSAA is fortunate to have member superintendents like Matt who are wonderful environmental stewards at their courses," says GCSAA President Sandy Queen. "The board is proud to recognize Matt as a passionate leader in this important area, and to congratulate him on his many accomplishments."

Matt is a 27-year GCSAA member and has spent most of those years—18 to be exact—at Rockland Country Club, which he guided through certification in Audubon International's cooperative sanctuary program for golf courses in 2000. He has expanded his involvement with the organization to become a member of the Audubon Steward Network and has been a tireless advocate for various environmental initiatives, especially among fellow members of the Met and the MGA. As a member of our association's board for 18 years, Matt served as president in 2007 and 2008 and is currently serving as vice president of the Tri-State Turf Research Foundation.

When Matt's area experienced a period of extended drought, he organized an initiative with green industry representatives to convince the Rockland County Health Department to change its public policy for water use and now chairs the county's newly formed Water Quality Committee. It's no surprise, then, that Matt previously has been recognized with a number of environmental honors, including the MGA's 2012 Arthur P. Weber Environmental Leader in Golf Award and the Global Sports Alliance's 2011 New York Environmental Steward Award.

Congratulations, again, to Matt, a true steward of the environment.

For the third consecutive year, Fairview Superintendent and *Tee to Green* Editor Jim Pavonetti has been recognized for his commitment to environmental stewardship on the golf course with one of the GCSAA/*Golf Digest* Environmental Leaders in Golf Awards (ELGA). Presented annually, the ELGA recognizes golf course superintendents and their courses for overall course management excellence in the areas of resource conservation, water quality management, integrated pest management, wildlife/habitat management, and education/outreach.

An independent panel of judges selected national and also chapter and merit winners in three categories: public, private, and resort courses. Selected from GCSAA's 99 affiliated chapters, Jim was one of nine 2012 ELGA Chapter Winners for Private Facilities. Matt Ceplo was the one-and-only 2012 ELGA Merit Winner for Private Facilities.

Congratulations to both Jim and Matt for their noteworthy contributions to our environment.



Jim Pavonetti, CGCS

Chip Lafferty to Host Season Opener

David Mahoney Two-Ball Championship Heads to Rye Golf Club

by Ed Brockner, MetGCSA Executive Director

Con April 29, Rye Golf Club will host the Met's first big event of the season: The David Mahoney Two-Ball Championship Qualifier. Welcoming contestants to this ever-popular outing is Superintendent Host Chip Lafferty. "I'm looking forward to having everyone back to Rye—this time to play the course," says Chip, who hosted Met members for a Business-only Meeting in 2009. In addition to showcasing the many improvements made to the course during his tenure at Rye, this event also offers Chip the opportunity to host an outing named in memory of his close friend, Dave Mahoney.

On His Game

A low single-digit handicapper, Chip will surely be among one of the top qualifiers for this year's Two-Ball event. But no surprise there: Chip spent a good deal of time as a youngster playing golf with family and friends. Born in Buffalo, NY, Chip's family moved to Orlando, FL, as he was entering his teen years. "I played golf just about every day through high school at Sweetwater Country Club near my home," says Chip. "I would pick up range balls in exchange for lessons from Sweetwater's pro, Larry Galloway. It was Larry who taught me how to hook the ball," says Chip, with a smile.

Sweetwater was also Chip's first training ground in the science of turfgrass management. "I worked on the crew there pretty much whenever I wanted all through high school," says Chip, who had his hands in just about every aspect of course maintenance, from pulling weeds to rebuilding bunkers.

Chipping Away at Formal Training

After graduating high school, Chip went on to college at Georgia Southern University in Statesboro, GA, where he admits his studies were not necessarily his top priority. "Even though the school had a reputation for having a party atmosphere, it unfortunately didn't offer a degree in my chosen field of fun," jokes Chip.

He left school and returned to what he knew best: a job in golf course maintenance. He accepted a position at Sabol Point Country Club in Longwood, FL, working under Joe Yorty, who showed him what it meant to be a professional golf course superintendent. "Joe tried to convince me to go to Lake City Community College and get a degree in Golf Course Operations," says Chip, "but I decided to continue my 'hands-on' education instead."

Chip took a position at a new-construction course: Alaquia Country Club outside Orlando. After working his way up to second assistant there, under the tutelage of superintendent Steve Wright, Chip decided that earning a degree at Lake City was probably his only shot at becoming the "big boss" one day.

In addition to helping him land "the big one," five years after graduating, his Lake City education offered Chip the unusual opportunity to practice his trade in a far-from-run-of-the-mill location: Vierumaki, Finland, where he interned at the Finnish Sports Institute, the training ground for all of the country's Olympians. Although the season was short, the summer hours were long since the sun never set during the month of June. An interesting training ground, Chip learned the ins and outs of managing turf in an all-new growing environment.

His second internship brought him back to the States and the Met area, where he worked with then Wykagyl Superintendent Steve Renzetti. "When I graduated from Lake City," says Chip, "Steve was kind enough to offer me a job as assistant superintendent." Chip worked for Steve for six years and then assumed the reigns as superintendent there for three before moving on to his current position as superintendent at Rye, where he's been for more than 10 years.

The Rebirth of Rye

Rye Golf Club is a unique facility. Purchased by the City of Rye in 1965, the club boasts a more-than-century-old castle as its clubhouse, which was built in 1852 overlooking Long Island Sound as a private residence for William Chapman. In 1921, 40 acres of the



Chip Lafferty

estate were combined with the adjoining Allen Estate to form Rye Country Club. Devereux Emmet designed the course, which was later sold and renamed Rye Wood Country Club before finally becoming the Rye Golf Club we know today.

In his tenure, Chip has faced the challenge of updating aspects of the course to accommodate Rye's more than 30,000 rounds of golf per year while preserving some of the more distinctive course features that had been lost. Guided by old aerial photos, bunkers were rebuilt, tees leveled, fairways recontoured, and additional drainage was installed, all without the guidance of an architect. "Right now," says Chip, "we are looking into using a pond on the property for irrigation so that we won't have to rely 100 percent on City water." Chip's goal: to cut the club's potable water use in half.

When His Workday Is Done

A true people person, Chip enjoys playing golf with his many friends in the MetGCSA, as well as spending time with his wife of 10 years, Clare, and their three wonderful children, Jessica, age 3; Mackenzie, 2 ½; and 15-month-old Travis. "Clare is a saint and the matriarch of our family," says Chip, "and she often jokes that she's a single mother in the summertime, which many other supers' wives can empathize with."

He's also known to spend a good deal of time walking his two goose dogs, Clue and Kruger, on the course. "Clare refers to the dogs as our original kids," says Chip, who uses those walks as an excuse to get a little exercise and keep his eye on the turf.

"Rye has been an exciting place to work over the past decade," says Chip, replaying in his mind just how much the course has changed. "And the list of possible improvements... it really never ends."

Be sure to join Chip for this season-opening event—just a drive, chip, and a putt away!

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