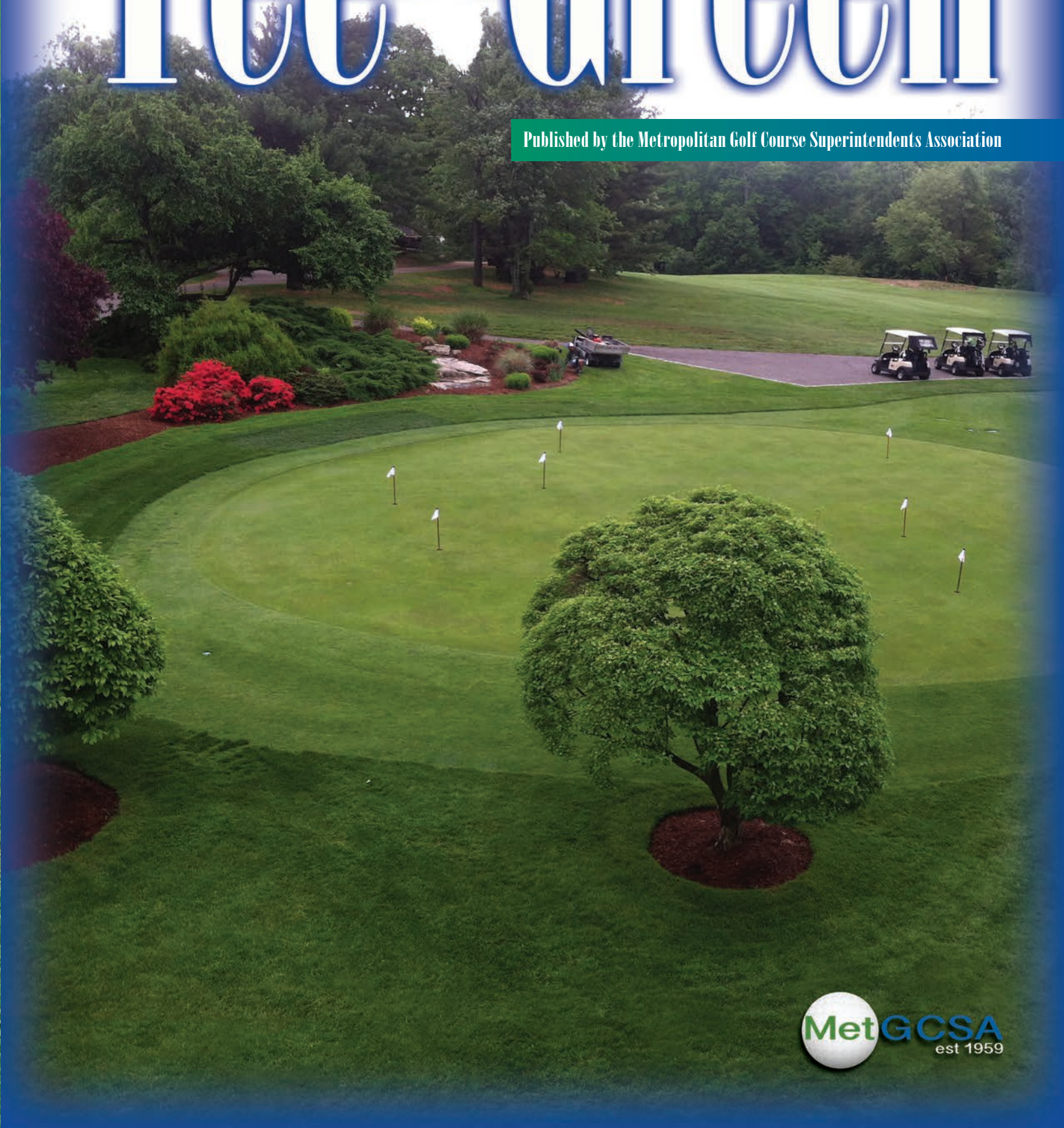


Tee To Green

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President's Message

So Far, So Good This Summer

Usually at this time of year, superintendents and staff are struggling to get through the hottest 100 days of the year. Top of mind is remaining vigilant for potential problems, everything from wilt and turf disease to heat stroke and lightning hazards for staff and golfers. Of course, this season so far, we've escaped many of the typical turf woes and other worries.

Before this recent bout of hot, humid weather, we had only two heat waves (just three consecutive days in the '90s), temps that frequently dipped into the '50s, and regular rain. Compared to other seasons, concerns about syringing, overheating, and lightning have been next to nothing. As I write this, I am knocking on wood!

In fact, things have been looking great for cool-season grasses around the area. This was certainly evident at our Invitational at Trump Golf Links at Ferry Point. Even the rain couldn't spoil the great conditions Noah McCahill and his staff provided. And topping off a great round of golf that day was an epic hole-in-one! (Read more on page 12.)

While the weather has been favorable for conditions, weekend rain has, no doubt, taken a bit of a toll on revenues for golf facilities and their employees. Cart fees, lessons, restaurant covers, as well as additional overtime hours for our staffs, have all been down.

Sadly superintendents' good fortune—full ponds, timely rains, and great conditions—does have a negative effect on line items throughout other areas of the club. I think that's why we all appreciate those overnight quarter-inch rains, which still help us but have little effect on the rest of the facility's operations.

Good Reasons to Get Involved

On another note, as our country's legislation gets crazier and more restrictive every year, I can't stress how important it is to get involved or at least have an ear to the ground for issues facing our industry. We should all be grateful to those professionals and organizations who have banded together to repre-



David Dudones
MetGCSA President

sent our industry in voicing concerns on everything from Tri-state-area water restrictions to how IPM is defined.

New York's researchers and industry professionals have joined forces in creating Best Management Practices for New York State Golf Courses, which reflect well on our profession's environmental efforts. Many other states are now following suit. And of course, we have to give great credit to those who faithfully attend NYSTA's annual Advocacy Day where they discuss numerous concerns and proposed legislation with state legislators.

If our industry members did not get involved, right now, we would likely be living with restrictions that would be making our jobs more difficult, at best. Far better to be where we are: sitting at the table with legislators helping to guide legislation, rather than fight it, after-the-fact.

Most recently, at the end of April, Mike McCall represented us at National Golf Day on Capitol Hill in Washington, D.C., along with Fresh Meadow's Joe Gardner. Our feature article this issue highlights our industry's work to voice concerns, discuss issues, and share golf's many benefits with Congressional leaders in D.C. Great job Mike and Joe!

continued on page 7

Feature

Touting Our Industry's Many Benefits at National Golf Day 2017

MetGCSA Makes Itself Seen and Heard at WE ARE GOLF's Tenth Annual National Golf Day

by Mike McCall, CGCS



WE ARE GOLF,

a coalition of golf's leading organizations, hosted its 10th annual National Golf Day on April 26 on Capitol Hill in Washington, D.C.

Fresh Meadow Superintendent Joe Gardner and I traveled to D.C. to participate as representatives from New York in this year's event, which offered a unique opportunity for the industry to voice concerns, discuss issues, and share golf's many benefits with Congressional leaders in D.C.

The event drew representatives from GCSAA and numerous reps from golf's leading organizations, from the Club Managers Association of America, Ladies Professional Golf Association, and Golf Course Builders Association of America to the National Alliance for Accessible Golf, National Golf Course Owners Association, PGA TOUR, and the U.S. Golf Manufacturers Council. The largest contingent of attendees was superintendents representing their local GCSAA chapters.

Golf Makes Its Mark With National Mall Makeover

Making this year's event all the more notable was that Joe and I joined more than 100 golf industry leaders, who arrived a day early to participate in a community service initiative on the National Mall the morning of April 25. Working in coordination with Michael Stachowicz, turf management specialist for the National Park Service and a retired 25-year member of the GCSAA, we focused our time and expertise on completing deferred turfgrass maintenance activities on the National Mall.

The National Mall recently underwent a \$40-million-dollar restoration. Yet, keeping up with regular maintenance on an area that sees in excess of 3,000 events and 30 million visitors a year can be challenging. The National Mall is divided into eight grass panels running between the Capitol building and the Washington Monument and are separated by walking paths and crossroads. Our focus that day was to concentrate on improving the three grass panels, walking paths, and other ancillary areas closest to the Capitol.

The almost certain threat of rain was not a deterrent for these motivated attendees. After a brief kickoff speech from World Golf Foundation CEO Steve Mona, this virtual army of predominantly golf course superintendents decked out in rain gear and safety equipment went into work mode for the next four hours, virtually transforming the National Mall.

A Mid-Atlantic John Deere dealer generously provided a wide array of equipment to get the job done. Teams of about five members each were assigned duties, such as mowing, aerifying, overseeding, trimming, weeding, repairing irrigation heads and changing out irrigation nozzles and rings, washing park benches and edging around them with a sod cutter, removing rocks wedged in storm-drain grates, and raking gravel walking paths.

I've heard it said that manual labor is good for the soul; on this day, that statement certainly rang true for me. Personally, I found the experience rewarding and felt a sense of pride helping to improve the aesthetics of the Mall.

Joe put it like this, "I feel like any time supers get together, things just get done. Guys roll up their sleeves and go to work to achieve great results. I believe the results from the community service project on the National Mall was the beginning of a new chapter for National Golf Day."

The next time you and/or your children are in D.C., make sure to take a stroll on the National Mall and check out our handiwork. Hopefully, you will feel some sense of satisfaction knowing that those in your industry generously dedicated their time and effort to enhancing one of our nation's treasures.

The Main Event: Legislative Matters

While the community service initiative was a great addition to National Golf Day that garnered additional attention to our industry's cause, the primary focus of the event was the meetings with congressional members and their staffs to discuss the benefits and concerns of our industry. A record 175 legislative meetings were conducted this

year, and nearly 200 attendees from 35 U.S. states participated.

Steve Mona kicked off the main event on April 26, which marked not only the 10th anniversary of National Golf Day, but also a significant milestone for the golf industry.

The game's economic, charitable, environmental, and fitness benefits echoed throughout Capitol Hill as we shared golf's contributions, both locally and nationally, with our country's decision makers.

It's easy to forget how many issues actually affect our industry. Forbes Tate Partners, a government relations firm representing WE ARE GOLF, provides a regular update on legislative issues that may affect some facet of the golf industry.

In their April/May report, they identified the following items: tax reform, small business tax relief, tax-exempt status, conservation easements, trade, disaster relief, wetlands, single rider golf carts, and labor. Within each of these areas, there are various Senate and House of Representative bills that could help, hurt, or alter our industry.

This year, WE ARE GOLF identified three priorities that we were asked to address in our congressional meetings:

1. Environmental Regulations: Clean Water Rule and National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permits

2. Business and Labor Regulations: H-2B Returning Worker Exemption, Comprehensive H-2B Reform, and Regulatory Reform

3. Promoting Healthy Lifestyles: Supporting the Personal Health Investment Today (PHIT) Act

The good news, here, is that when it comes to environmental regulations, it appears unlikely that under the current administration stricter regulations will be enacted or pursued. In fact, many environmental regulations introduced under the previous administration that potentially affected golf facilities are in the process of being rescinded or reworked.

Regardless of the political climate, our intent when discussing issues with lawmakers is to convey the uniqueness of golf course operations, either regionally or nationally,

The establishment of the BMPs has given New York a level of credibility that other states are just beginning to work toward with the assistance of the GCSAA and its initiative to establish BMPs for all 50 states by 2020.

and encourage legislators to seek our input so we can provide accurate industry facts and scientific research if necessary.

Labor issues are certainly near and dear to the golf course superintendent's heart. The Department of Labor overtime rule and minimum wage laws have a clear impact on the superintendents' budget and how they conduct business. To my knowledge, the Metropolitan area does not, however, rely heavily on H-2B visas, which are generally granted to those seeking seasonal, nonagricultural positions perhaps at a resort or other seasonal business.

Of course, though we, ourselves, may not rely on guest-workers to fill seasonal positions right now, we may down the road. It's important, therefore, to make lawmakers aware that there are golf facilities that do face the challenge of staffing for seasonal periods. And it can't hurt to advocate for colleagues in other parts of the country who might be affected.

The Personal Health Investment Today (PHIT) Act provides an economic incentive to invest in physical activity to help maintain good health and reduce rising health-care costs. The key message to communicate here is that golf is an activity that promotes fitness and health. Did you know, for instance, that walking 18 holes is the equivalent of a 3.5-mile run or 5-mile walk?

In addition to presenting the WE ARE GOLF agenda, Joe and I were able to inform or update legislative affairs directors about the Best Management Practices for New York State Golf Courses initiative and its ongoing development. The establishment of the BMPs has given New York a level of credibility that other states are just beginning to work toward with the assistance of the GCSAA and its initiative to establish BMPs for all 50 states by 2020.

"Visiting with the offices of Senate and House members was well worth the time and effort," says Joe of his first National Golf Day experience. "No matter who we met

with, we were able to get our message and concerns on the table. It's a wonderful platform to inform legislators where we are as an industry and that we are working hard to be leaders in environmental conservation and, just as important, that we take it very seriously. It also gives us the opportunity to show the depth of our industry from the local to national level."

As the Met's executive director, one of my goals when I go into any legislative meeting is to make sure that the legislators know they can call our association or me, directly, if they need additional information on any issue relating to the golf industry. We want to be a go-to resource to ensure they have the proper information before making a final decision.

Strength in Numbers

Golf is a \$68.8-billion industry that positively contributes to our economy by providing jobs, tax revenue, charitable dona-



tions, supplemental industries, tourism, and residential development to name several of the big ones.

New York State ranks fourth (\$5.3B) in state economic impact across the U.S. Only California (\$13.1B), Florida (\$11B), and Texas (\$6.3B) contribute more.

Our association and State of New York have a longstanding tradition of both state and local governmental advocacy. We talked about some of our efforts last issue in Mike Maffei's recap of NYSTA's annual Advocacy Event. Another prime example of our commitment to advocacy and environmental stewardship is the development of the Best Management Practices for New York State Golf Courses, now becoming an industry standard, as mentioned, thanks to the tireless efforts of leaders within the MetGCSA and other organizations around the state.

As a state, we can be proud of the work we've done to demonstrate and promote the value of the game of golf. Some of us have also elevated our advocacy efforts to a national level. The annual National Golf Day event in our nation's capitol provides a great opportunity for industry professionals to make their voices heard.

No doubt, taking time away from work for events like this can be challenging, particularly in late April when here, in the Northeast, the season is just getting started for golf course superintendents, PGA professionals, golf associations, and supporting industries. A great deal of work must be performed to get the courses prepared and

National Golf Day leaders assemble on steps of U.S. Capitol Building.



Talking Up Our Industry's Contributions

WE ARE GOLF has developed a list of golf's many benefits. You've, no doubt, heard much of this before, but it's worth repeating. As professional representatives of the game of golf, we should all keep them top of mind and be ready, when appropriate, to share them in our conversations with legislators. Here are a few facts and figures surrounding our industry's contributions.

Economic: Golf contributes \$68.8 billion to the American economy and impacts 2 million jobs. In fact, one in 75 jobs in the United States is impacted by the golf industry. Golf is a bigger job creator than spectator sports, performing arts, and the amusement and recreation industries.

Charitable: Golf raises more money for charity than all other sports combined. Annually, the game generates \$3.9 billion for philanthropic causes, almost all of which are unrelated to the golf industry.

Environmental: Golf offers scientifically proven environmental benefits through the preservation of green space, protection of wildlife habitats, improvement of water quality through properly managed eco-systems; they also have shown to offer a cooling effect on developed areas.

Health and Wellness: Golf provides a means of recreation, leisure, and social and health benefits for all who play the game. An excellent source of exercise, playing 18 holes of golf burns roughly 2,000 calories when walking and 1,300 when riding a cart.

A Game for All: Golf is very accessible, with nine out of 10 golfers playing public-access facilities. That adds up to 76 percent of golf being played at public courses.

Looking at these attributes, it's hard to understand why the golf industry has not been sitting at the table with our country's decision makers on Capital Hill, working to preserve and protect this game of great value and integrity!



Congressional putting challenge in the foyer of the Rayburn House Building.

operations up and running, but advocating for our industry is an essential part of our jobs as well.

After all, the success of our careers and the health and welfare of the golf industry depends on our ability to discuss misperceptions that could ultimately lead to legislation that will adversely affect the golf industry and our ability to do our jobs.

To reduce the anxiety of being away from your facility, it might help to plan now for next year's event, explaining to your club the importance of becoming involved in national advocacy efforts. Participating in events like National Golf Day can demonstrate to your club that you are a leader in your industry. Everyone I have spoken with who attended National Golf Day finds the experience both valuable and eye opening.

Taking It to the Next Level

National Golf Day 2017 was a success in my eyes because we increased participation, held a record number of legislative meetings, and raised awareness of our industry through the community service project on the National Mall.

Admirably, golf course superintendents have been leading the charge in national advocacy efforts, but to increase our influence in D.C., it's become obvious we need more stakeholders involved.

Labor issues, for instance, affect all facets of a club's operation. When last year's Overtime Rule made its way to Congress, everyone in the golf industry should have come out to challenge or at least raise awareness of the ill effects it would have on our industry.

And even though many of the environmental issues may fall under the purview of golf course superintendents, any environmental mandate that causes our costs to increase will eventually affect the facility's bottom line and may very well affect other departments as well.

That's why in addition to golf course superintendents, I urge more club professionals, general managers, and others associated with golf to attend next year or in the near future. There is, after all, strength in numbers.

"I would encourage everyone to attend NGD," says Joe. "It was great seeing all divisions of our industry come together to

support the game and its integrity at the national level. And it was equally special to meet people from all levels of facilities across the country focusing on our presence and making a difference. It was a well-organized experience from start to finish," adds Joe.

This is a long-term campaign with no finish line. And as is typically the case, establishing relationships and credibility go a long way toward getting things done. The time is now to build a strong New York coalition to advocate to our congressional representatives. We must continue to be a presence, doing our best to present honest assessments of the effects laws and regulations will have on our industry—and working to squash unjust legislation by emphasizing the many benefits of golf and the scientific facts related to environmental stewardship and our internal efforts to better the game. This is important not just to the preservation of the game of golf, but also our livelihood.

Mike McCall is the executive director of the MetGCSA and managing member of the McCall Management Group, LLC.

Counting National Golf Day 2017's Success

Judging by the results of National Golf Day's publicity and social media campaigns, you might gather that the 2017 event was the most successful to date. Here are a few of the highlights compiled by the WE ARE GOLF Coalition:

Publicity and Media Relations

- More than 900 million media impressions
- More than 50 publicity placements, including CNBC, USA Today, Forbes, BuzzFeed, FOX Business, and others

Twitter (#NGD17) Campaign

- 72.7 million social media impressions (up from 52.2 million in 2016 and just 7.2 million in 2013!)
- 24.3 million Twitter and Facebook unique accounts reached
- More than 90,000 WE ARE GOLF page views in April 2017



USGA Executive Director Mike Davis speaks at the 2017 National Golf Day kickoff event in the Rayburn House Building.

The Dawning of a National Golf Day

The esteemed American economist, Milton Friedman, once wrote, “Only a crisis—actual or perceived—produces real change. When that crisis occurs, the actions that are taken depend on the ideas that are lying around. That, I believe, is our basic function: to develop alternatives to existing policies, to keep them alive and available until the politically impossible becomes the politically inevitable.”

This aptly describes what happened in 2008 to spur advocacy efforts on a national level. That year, our country entered into the worst economic recession our generation has ever seen, and the golf industry was certainly not immune. A combination of both real and perceived economic and environmental challenges led World Golf Foundation’s Steve Mona to facilitate the creation

of a coalition of golf’s leading organizations named WE ARE GOLF that included the Club Managers Association of America, GCSAA, National Golf Course Owners Association, PGA TOUR, The PGA of America, United States Golf Association, the U.S Golf Manufacturers Council, and the World Golf Foundation. This group was formed to help educate elected officials about and advocate for the totality of golf’s positive benefits in an attempt to prevent legislation that may adversely affect the game.

The first National Golf Day was held in 2008 with 50 participants and approximately 25 legislative meetings. Fast-forward to April 26, 2017 where more than 200 participants from various industries made their way to Washington, D.C. One hundred seventy-five legislative meetings were held to advocate for a variety of issues affecting the golf industry. Of those 200 who attended, more than 100 were affiliated with the GCSAA.

We’ve come a long way and are still working toward even greater participation and success.

President’s Message continued from page 1

Off-the-Grid Events

During the height of the season, the Met holds several of my favorite events: the Summer Social, Summer Picnic, and the Scholarship & Parent/Child Tournament. By the time you read this, Met members will have enjoyed another wonderful Summer Social at Orienta Beach Club. This waterfront venue provides an excellent backdrop to enjoy time away from the course, with our colleagues and significant others, during our most stressful months. (See photos page 8.)

The Summer Picnic, held July 19 at Bedford Village Memorial Park, is one of those rare opportunities during the season for superintendents to enjoy some family fun: good food, great activities for adults and kids alike, and relaxed conversation with colleagues. (Scenes from the picnic to come!)

To top off the summer, we awarded \$20,000 in scholarships to our most deserving young college students at Mosholu Golf Course on August 1. This great afternoon kicks off with a round of golf open to all Met members and their kids and then finishes with an informal buffet dinner and scholarship awards. The event is great fun and free to all!

Here’s to an enjoyable rest of the summer. Be sure to visit our website to stay up-to-date on our Two-ball matches and our other not-to-be-missed association events!

David Dudones
MetGCSA President



Casual Camaraderie at the MetGCSA Summer Social

Orienta Beach Club, Mamaroneck, NY



**Birdie Rappaccio, Bob Alonzi, Greg Wojcik,
Kim Alonzi, Anne Maffei**



Mike Weber, Margie & Steven McGlone, Sam Heule



**Kait & Dave Peterson, Evan Weymouth
& Sally Difresco**

**Ken Gentile, Paul Gonzalez,
Jason Anderson, Greg Wojcik**



Doug Drugo & Scott Niven



**Seated: Kevin Collins, Terri Gonzalez, Yve Gentile,
Renee Pavonetti, Glen Dube, Jackie Apgar
Standing: Jim Pavonetti, Ken Gentile, Scott Tretera**



Matt Ceplo, Mike Maffei, Frank Buschini

Terri Gonzalez, Shayna Apgar, Renee Pavonetti, Yve Gentile, Jackie Apgar



Counter clockwise: Paul & Terri Gonzalez, Jackie Apgar, Kevin Collins, Scott Apgar, Rob Alonzi, Shayna & Rich Apgar, Evan Weymouth & Sally Difresco



Well Wishes

Sending prayers and well wishes to **Dave Parson** and his wife, Meighan. Dave, a former MetGCSA member and assistant at Apawamis and Whippoorwill, is now superintendent at The Orchards Golf Club, South Hadley, MA.

In Sympathy

We would like to offer our sincere condolences to Sleepy Hollow Superintendent **Tom Leahy**, whose father, Larry, passed away on July 4. He was 80.

Those who wish may make a contribution in Larry Leahy's memory to the Catskill Area Hospice & Palliative Care, 542 Main St., Oneonta, NY 13820, or to the Jack Thomas Martin Memorial Scholarship Fund, Victor Central School, Dollars for Scholars, 953 High St., Victor, NY 14564.

Upcoming Events

Mark Your Calendars With These Upcoming MetGCSA and Industry Events

Nine and Dine Event

Thursday, September 21
Birchwood Country Club
Westport, CT
Host: Justin Gabrenas

The Poa/Met Championship/ Met Team Qualifier

Monday, October 3
Sunningdale Country Club
Scarsdale, NY
Host: Sean Cain, CGCS

Met Area Team Championship

Tuesday, October 16
Westchester Country Club, Rye, NY
Host: David Dudones

Assistants Championship

Monday, October 23
Paramount Country Club
New City, NY
Host: Brian Chapin

MetGCSA/CAGCS Fall Seminar

Thursday, November 9
The Patterson Club, Fairfield, CT
Host: Jason Meersman

MetGCSA Winter Seminar

Wednesday, January 10, 2018
Westchester Country Club, Rye, NY
Host: David Dudones

Regional Events

NYSTA Challenge Steve Smith Memorial Tournament Fundraiser for the Environment

Monday, August 14
The Links at Union Vale
Lagrangeville, NY 12540

In its 18th year, the NYSTA Challenge, sponsored by NYSTA and the Hudson Valley GCSA, is an annual fundraising event supporting environmental issues. This past year, this event raised more than \$12,000 in support of the 2017 Turfgrass Advocacy Day, the New York Farm Bureau Agricultural Alliance, and the New York Alliance for Environmental Concerns.

The NYSTA Challenge begins at 12:30 with a Four-Man Handicap Scramble and concludes with a buffet dinner with open bar and prizes and raffle drawings.

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

2017 Turf & Grounds Exposition

Wednesday – Thursday, November 15 – 16
Rochester Riverside Convention Center
Rochester, NY

The Turf & Grounds Exposition offers an excellent opportunity to network while

remaining current on the latest research and trends in turfgrass management. As always, the expo will feature key speakers from all segments of the green industry, as well as a comprehensive trade show.

For further information, call the show office at 800-873-8873 or 518-783-1229, or visit the website at www.nysta.org.

2017 GREEN EXPO Turf & Landscape Conference

Tuesday – Thursday, December 5 – 7
The Borgata Hotel & Casino
Atlantic City, NJ

The New Jersey Green Expo offers a comprehensive educational program providing cutting-edge applications and tactics to guarantee green industry professionals' success on the job. Offering one of the largest trade shows in the tri-state area, the expo also provides attendees with the opportunity to view the latest and greatest products and services on the market.

For further information, call 973-812-6467 or visit www.njturfgrass.org.

Birchwood Offers Brand-New Venue for Met's Nine & Dine

by Greg Wojick

On September 21, MetGCSA members will be treated to an all-new venue for this year's Nine & Dine. Superintendent Justin Gabrenas will host the event at Birchwood Country Club in Westport, CT, where he has been superintendent for the past five years.

Birchwood's Beginnings

Opened in 1946 after the end of World War II, Birchwood sits on a pastoral 85 acres once home to the Westport Country Club, an 18-hole course that had fallen into serious disrepair.

The newly formed leadership at Birchwood engaged the services of Donald Ross protégé Orin Smith, a highly regarded golf course architect of that era, to develop the best plan to refurbish or redesign the course. The decision was made to create a challenging nine-hole course to replace the ill-conceived and decayed original 18.

That turned out to be a wise choice. In 1997, *Sports Illustrated* published an article on nine-hole golf courses in the U.S. and rated Birchwood in the top 10 in the country.

More recently, in 2010, *Golf Digest* recognized Birchwood Country Club as the 6th best nine-hole golf course in America.

Since its original redesign in the mid-1940s, the course you'll play in September has undergone numerous master plan renovations under the direction of Golf Course Architect Stephen Kay. Among the most notable are the tee additions and bunker renovations completed in 2010.

Building His Resume

After graduating high school, Justin took a position as a machinist, working alongside his childhood buddy, Winged Foot Superintendent Stephen Rabideau, in a shop in Waltham, MA.

"Steve left the machine shops sooner than I did," says Justin. "I worked in a several shops for almost seven years, but I was never happy being inside and punching a clock."

Justin was playing golf four or five times a week, and knowing Steve was having success in the turf business, he decided to give it a go. "I was done being a machinist," says

Justin. "I gave notice in early June 1997, heard of an opening at Oak Hill Country Club soon after, and started there in July."

By the end of August, Justin had sold his new truck and was driving a 1988 Geo Metro to his dorm at UMass, where he had enrolled in the Stockbridge School of Agriculture.

After graduating, Justin went to work for Stephen Rabideau at The Hamlet Golf & Country Club in Long Island.

"Steve really opened my eyes to what the business was really all about and the dedication needed to be successful. Those summers were brutally hot, and 70-hour weeks were the norm," says Justin.

During that time, Justin also had the opportunity to volunteer to work the 2000 Lightpath Long Island Classic with John Carlone at Meadow Brook.

While at The Hamlet, Justin decided to further his studies at UMass and, by 2001, had completed a B.S. in plant and soil science.

With degree in hand, Justin was offered an assistant's position at Echo Lake Country Club in Westfield, NJ, working for Chris Carson.

During his tenure there, the club hosted the 2002 USGA Girl's Junior Championship, allowing Justin the opportunity to experience all that goes into preparing for a major tournament. Among his most poignant memories of working at Echo Lake was standing on the first fairway and watching the Twin Towers fall on 9-11.

After two years with Chris, Justin elevated his status to senior assistant superintendent at Silver Spring Country Club in Ridgefield, CT. This time, Justin stayed put for five seasons absorbing all that then Superintendent Peter Rappoccio could teach him.

Justin landed his first superintendent's position at Lake Waramaug Country Club in New Preston, CT, and then four years later, after a long and intensive interview process, he found himself with an offer to be the successor to longtime MetGCSA superintendent of 43 years Ed Consolati as Birchwood's golf course superintendent.

"After five seasons at Silver Spring," says Peter Rappoccio, "Justin was more-than-ready to take on his first superintendent challenge. He proved himself tactically and

Justin
Gabrenas

was well respected by our veteran crew."

With 20 years of private country club experience, Justin is still quick to credit his overall success to Peter Rappoccio: "I can't stress enough how important Pete Rappoccio's mentoring was and how firmly I believe that having a strong mentor in this business is crucial to one's success," says Justin, adding, "It was those five seasons at Silver Spring that solidified my confidence as a turfgrass professional."

Striking a Balance

Justin has been more-than-accepted by the Birchwood members and has enjoyed his time there. He has found a balance in his life after working long and hard in all his previous positions. "Now, I have three daughters who I love to spend time with," says Justin.

Since 2012, Justin has coached his daughter Avery's softball teams and currently the Fairfield Little League Girls Softball Juniors All-Stars. "Right now," says Justin, "I'm managing my fourth all-star team."

During the summer, Justin enjoys playing a little ball himself, on a Men's League in Fairfield, where he lives.

Justin also enjoys hunting, fishing, and trapping. "I particularly love to hunt pheasants with my chocolate lab, Noonie, and bow hunt deer," says Justin.

Justin has been married to his wife, Erica, for 15 years. They have three daughters: Cassie, 23; Taylor, 18; and Avery, 14.

Fun Is the Name of the Game

Justin and his staff are hoping for a full field for this fun-filled afternoon on the links and offer contestants a word to the wise when playing the course: "The greens are small and undulated and can be tough if above the hole," cautions Justin. "And it can be challenging to play out of the rough, so do your best to keep it in the short grass."

See you all in September!

Greg Wojick is a member of the Tee to Green Editorial Committee and co-owner of Playbooks for Golf.

Sean Cain Pleased to Showcase a Sunningdale Transformed

Join Fellow Professionals for the Poa/Met Championship/Met Team Qualifier at the Newly Renovated Sunningdale Country Club

by Scott Niven, CGCS

MetGCSA members will be treated to a new-and-improved Sunningdale Country Club when they convene October 3 for the Poa/Met Championship/Met Team Qualifier. This will be the sixth meeting Superintendent Sean Cain has hosted in his 20-year tenure at the club, but only two, the last one being the 2013 Superintendent/Green Chair Tourney, offered the opportunity to get out and enjoy the links.

This trip, members will have the fortunate opportunity to play a course that has benefited from awe-inspiring enhancements since their last round four years ago.

A Course Transformed

The course's transformation started in 2006 when Sean began working with Architect Mike DeVries to recapture the course's original 1917 Seth Raynor design.

"Some of the changes we were proposing weren't an easy sell," remembers Sean. "but after some tough meetings, we were able to convince the membership of the value of reestablishing lost vistas and the integrity of many of the holes."

Having a firm grasp on how architects from the early 1900s worked with the land and its topography, Mike DeVries was able to flawlessly recapture many of Raynor's

design features. Sean cites the sixth hole as a prime example of DeVries handiwork. "Mike reestablished the strategy of this Alps hole. He lengthened it by more than 70 yards and added some of his own brilliance to the green and tee complex," Sean explains.

Also notable was DeVries' work on holes 8 and 4. "On 8," says Sean, "Mike realigned the tee and removed a number of trees behind the green. Then using his bulldozer like a paintbrush, he tied the 4th green into the 8th green with a shared chipping area, effectively making 4 and 8 the largest Biarritz green in the area!"

By the time Sean hosted the Super/Green Chair event in 2013, members were able to enjoy a portion of club's grand renovation scheme. They had reworked holes 4, 5, 6, 7, and 8 and completed green and tee complex work on 11, 12, and 14.

No rest for the weary, the next phase of the project took place in the fall of 2015 when the irrigation system was upgraded with HDPE pipe and Toro Infinity heads. In addition, they continued their unfinished business on the course, rebuilding the greens, tees, and bunkers on holes 1, 2, 9, 10, 13, and 15, as well as the practice green.

This multiyear, extensive master plan project finally wrapped up last fall (2016) when the tees, bunkers, and greens were redesigned



Sean Cain,
CGCS

on holes 3, 16, 17, and 18. A new club entrance was also built between the 15th green and 16th tee so that players will no longer have to hit over the road. The new 16th hole is now a 580-yard, par 5, and the 17th has been relocated to a new spot alongside the second hole. The old 17th green site is now the 3rd tee complex and the 17th teeing area is part of Sean's maintenance facility.

And last but not least, the 18th hole has been converted into a challenging 450-yard, par 4 uphill, which makes for a great finish to this wonderful challenging, classic golf course.

"Once the membership realized what we had here, they were behind our efforts 100 percent," says Sean. "And with Mike DeVries' help, we have been able to reveal what Sunningdale can be."



Just one example of Sunningdale's many course enhancements: Hole #8, before-and-after.



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Time Marches On

It doesn't seem that long ago that Sean began his career in turfgrass management with Fred Montgomery on the grounds crew of Mohawk Country Club near Sean's home turf in Schenectady, NY ... or that he completed his B.S. in Turfgrass Management at the University of Rhode Island ... interned at The Stanwich Club with Scott Niven ... and then, in 1991, landed an assistant's position with Jeff Scott, then superintendent at The Apawamis Club.

Clearly, time flies when you're having fun.

After four years at Apawamis, Sean knew he had gained the training, experience, and most importantly, the confidence to take the next step. "I learned a tremendous amount from Fred, Scott, and Jeff," he says. "I was ready for Sunningdale."

In addition to leading a highly regarded golf course, Sean has, over the years, led a number of MetGCSA committees, serving on the Board of Directors for a total of five years. He devoted most of that time to co-chairing the Tournament Committee, but also chaired the Membership Committee, and even had a stint in 2003 as *Tee to Green's* co-editor with college buddy, Rolling Hill's Glenn Perry.

"It was important to me to try to give back to MetGCSA and our members. 'Try' is the key word here," says Sean. "I give a lot of credit to the board members who have gone the distance, and become presidents of our association."

Life Beyond Work

For Sean, there's no life without sports. He's an avid cyclist and an accomplished low-handicap golfer—a force to be reckoned with at Met golf events. Sean's also been known to frequent the gym, where one of his prime objectives is prep himself for the ski season. A hard-core skier, Sean spends most weekends in the off-season at his "fortress of solitude," a home he owns near the slopes in Stowe, VT.

By the time the Poa/Met Championship/Met Team Qualifier arrives, Sean will start thinking about giving his clubs a rest and heading north.

"I go up to Vermont every chance I get in the winter," says Sean. "It gives me an opportunity to recharge my batteries and get ready for another challenging season ahead."

Be sure to join Sean at Sunningdale for this season-ending event, and enjoy all that the newly renovated course has to offer!

Scott Niven, a member of the Tee to Green Editorial Committee, is property manager at The Stanwich Club in Greenwich, CT.

Scorecard

Siwanoy Country Club Takes Home Invitational Trophy

by Zach Brooks

Trump Golf Links at Ferry Point proved the perfect venue for the MetGCSA's 2017 Invitational Tournament held, this year, on June 6. Host Noah McCahill proved his mettle as the club's new superintendent, providing tournament goers with great conditions and a fair and challenging setup (for those who could stay out of the fescue!).

We would like to thank everyone at Ferry Point for their hospitality. Being the first time hosting one of our association events, the staff truly did an excellent job in making this a day to remember.

This year's event had a packed field, consisting of club presidents, PGA professionals, green chairmen, and golf course superintendents representing their various clubs in the Metropolitan Area. Year after year, this event offers a tremendous opportunity to network with not only your club officials and coworkers, but also neighboring golf facilities.

When all was said and done, the team from Siwanoy Country Club, led by Superintendent Steven McGlone, claimed the Invitational Trophy, posting a 63. Also noteworthy, Josh Kopera of Harrell's shot a rare hole-in-one on hole #17, much to the surprise of teammates Scott Tretera of Harrell's and John Bresnahan and Brian Goudey of Syngenta. Congratulations to one and all!

Two-Ball Reminders

Those playing in this year's Two-Ball Tournament, please remember that the winning team for each match is required to report results to Tournament Committee Chair Steve Loughran, at sloughran17@yahoo.com. For up-to-date tournament results, visit our website at www.metgcsa.org.

Match Due Dates

Keep in mind that your matches should be completed by the following dates:

Sweet 16: June 30

Elite 8: August 4

Final 4/Semi: September 8

Finals: October 6



The team from Siwanoy claims this year's Invitational Trophy (left to right): Club President Greg Richter, Green Chairman James Steube, Superintendent Steven McGlone, and Golf Pro Grant Turner.

Here are all the top winners of the day:

First Place Net Team Winners

63 Siwanoy Country Club
Steven McGlone, Gregory Richter, James Steube, Grant Turner

First Place Gross Team Winners

68 Metropolis Country Club
Dave McCaffrey, Craig Thomas, Steve Abraham, Arnie Ursaner

Closest to the Pin

#12 Dave Moffett, Superintendent,
Mosholu Golf Course
#17 Craig Thomas, Golf Professional,
Metropolis CC
#8 Mike Johnson, Club Official,
Rock Ridge CC

Longest Drive

#2 Dave McCaffrey, Superintendent,
Metropolis CC
#2 Adam Zweig, Golf Professional,
Mosholu GC
#2 John Morrison, Club Official,
Redding CC

Low Professional

74 Mike Summa, Golf Professional,
Stanwich Club

Zach Brooks, a member of the MetGCSA Tournament Committee, is the Connecticut sales rep with Seeton Turf Warehouse in Mt. Laurel, NJ.

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