

April 2018  
VOLUME 49 NUMBER 2

# Tee To Green

Published by the Metropolitan Golf Course Superintendents Association





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



Cover: Brae Burn  
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# President's Message

## What Did You Say? Stop Texting and Tweeting and Call You?



*I*

s it me, or was this the hardest year for spring aerification in recent memory? Those who usually aerify in late March or early April had their aerification plans delayed by unexpected nor'easters that brought snow, wind, and downed trees. Many of us were forced to squeeze our aerification into small windows when the ground wasn't frozen or completely saturated. Just about everyone I talked to was in a similar situation. It's times like these, times when weather gets in the way of expected course activity, that it's essential to communicate with club members or paying guests to keep them informed and, ultimately, satisfied.

### Finding the Best Form of Communication

With all the communication options out there today, deciding on the best method to relay information can be confounding. The MetGCSA board is constantly deliberating when and how to best communicate with the membership. Sure, we have the *Tee to Green* and our website. Yes, we publish our Membership Directory annually, and all three are excellent tools for learning about our association and fellow members. But when we want to disseminate more time-sensitive information to the membership relating to association business, what is the best way to do this?

After some debate, we have settled on email—with the hope that no one finds the emails overly frequent or intrusive. Email does allow us to inform the entire membership quickly with just the push of a button, and the information is sent in a form that is likely to be seen—and read—by the majority of members. What's more, the information can remain in the recipient's email for future reference, or be deleted once read.

Tweets, texts, and social media just don't perform the same function. They're not reliable vehicles for information since many people still don't buy in to using them, particularly not to communicate important informa-



David Dudones  
MetGCSA President

tion with others. And besides, we may not want the general public seeing all our information, when some is intended for members' eyes only.

### Every Form of Communication Has Its Place

If you want my opinion, I'd say emails and every other form of high-tech communication have their place—a tweet for broadcasting an opinion or small piece of FYI-type information; a text for a quick comment or question; social media to broadcast who and where you are—but in some situations, nothing can replace a phone call or face-to-face meeting. When people talk on the phone or better, talk face-to-face, there's far less room for a miscommunication. You can hear or see a person's emotion. You know if they're angry, joking, or if they truly mean what they say. There's often little ambiguity.

I can't tell you how many times I've caught myself and deleted a text, or even an email, that I felt might be taken the wrong way or sound too harsh when it wasn't meant to. I opt, instead, for a face-to-face meeting where the issues can be addressed or defused in person rather than from behind a device.

Face-to-face and phone communications can also be far more persuasive. Think about trying to drum up people to attend an upcoming association event. If we email, people are sure to see it, and probably read it, but let's face it, it won't have the same pull that a personal phone call from a board member might have.

If you get a call from a board member or are approached at a meeting and asked, personally, to attend an event or become an

*Continued on page 12*



Feature

# MGA Spotlights Area Clubs' Environmental Efforts

by Jim Pavonetti, CGCS



Gene Westmoreland of the MGA strikes a pose with Bethpage Director of Agronomy Andrew Wilson, accepting this year's Arthur P. Weber MGA Environmental Leaders in golf Award for Bethpage State Park.





Every year, the Metropolitan Golf Association honors an MGA member club with its coveted Arthur P. Weber Environmental Leaders in Golf Award. Reserved for clubs that have demonstrated exceptional environmental stewardship through golf course maintenance, construction, education, and research, the award is the MGA's way of celebrating and holding up for emulation golf clubs that have exemplified outstanding contributions to the environment.

Though presented to only one club each year, the MGA believes there are many golf clubs that have brought the game innumerable contributions while providing golfers with the highest level of playing conditions.

This year's award was presented on March 14 at the annual MGA Green Chairman Education Series held at Edgewood Country Club in River Vale, NJ. The recipient: Bethpage State Park in Farmingdale, NY. MetGCSA Executive Director Mike McCall was there to present the well-deserved award to Bethpage's director of agronomy, Andrew Wilson.

Upon receiving the award, Wilson not only expressed his appreciation, but also described the origin and progression of the facility's environmental efforts, which date back to 2000 when they began working with Dr. Frank Rossi and Dr. Jen Grant from Cornell University on what they call the Green Course Project.



"This project developed the philosophy of taking a long-range view at how our park can be managed to provide sustainable green space for our community," says Wilson, who was quick to note the excellent guidance and support he received from former and current park directors Dave Catalano and Elizabeth Wintemberger.

He also went on to acknowledge Bethpage State Park Horticulturalist Vic Azzareto and Ecologist Yael Weiss for their significant role in executing the facility's environmental goals. "It is because of their diligence that Bethpage has received this recognition," says Wilson.

"Their successful efforts with our wildlife and pollinator gardens provide a foundation for more expansive projects and outreach programs," Wilson adds, noting that they now have relationships with Cornell University, Cornell Cooperative Extension, SUNY Farmingdale, Suffolk Community College, the local Girl Scouts, as well as area beekeepers.

"Receiving the Weber Award," he continues, "is not only validation for our past efforts, but also a standard to live up to with a resolution to continue improving our park."

*Vic Azzareto, Bethpage State Park horticulturalist, and the park's director of agronomy, Andrew Wilson, lead a horticulture class in Bethpage's pollinator garden.*

## Bethpage's Award-Worthy Environmental Efforts

Among Bethpage's award-winning environmental initiatives:

- Enhancing the facility's wildlife habitat by creating five pollinator gardens and installing 45 nesting boxes across their property.
- Educating the public through a variety of measures, Bethpage hosted numerous scout troops and spoke in several university classes. In addition, Park Ecologist Yael Weiss has created an educational blog that golfers can follow. There are also QR Codes installed at various gardens on the property. When golfers scan the code with their smart phones, it brings them to the blog site and illustrates what the garden's purpose and features are.



*Dr. Rossi with course crew during one of his visits.*



- Implementing an integrated pest management program developed in cooperation with Dr. Frank Rossi, Dr. Jennifer Grant, and Carl Schimenti of Cornell University. The backbone of their program is utilizing the Environmental Impact Quotient (EIQ) system to reduce risk when applying pesticides.

- Protecting Bethpage's pond water quality with buffer strips and using moisture meters to monitor soil moisture for irrigation decisions.

- Conserving resources by installing LED lighting and timer switches throughout the entire facility.

Commenting on Bethpage's MGA honor, Dr. Frank Rossi, who along with Dr. Jennifer Grant, has conducted years of research at the park, noted, "Cornell's long-term collaboration with the park, and mine specifically with Andy Wilson, makes this very special for everyone associated with Bethpage's environmental initiatives."

Dr. Rossi went on to emphasize just how special it is that a facility like Bethpage State Park, with five busy public courses, has had the ability to focus on—and implement—a progressive IPM program and do it across all five courses.

"Bethpage State Park is a Multiple Major Championship venue and a massive operation," explains Dr. Rossi. "Andy is expected to provide a quality experience for the state residents who enjoy golf at the 'people's country club,' and at the same time, it's his job to maintain the state park feel for the picnic areas, polo grounds, riding trails, etc."

But apparently, Andy is not one to let day-to-day maintenance obligations stand in the way of his commitment to preserving the environment. Dr. Rossi continues, "Andy and his staff are constantly asking questions, trying to improve every aspect, including the playing experience, course conditioning, and product and practice selection. They're also looking to technology to begin moving toward being a data-

## The Arthur P. Weber Award Revisited



For the uninitiated, the Arthur P. Weber Environmental Leaders in Golf Award is named in honor of past MGA President Arthur P. Weber, who passed away in 2008. Weber wrote an Environmental Code of Conduct for golf course maintenance at his home club, Old Westbury on Long Island, nearly two decades ago that many Met Area clubs still use as a model. Weber was a longtime member of the USGA Green Section and helped found the MGA Green Committee and the Tri-State Turf Research Foundation.

Past recipients of the award include:

- Newton Country Club (2017)
- The Whippoorwill Club (2016)
- Neshanic Valley Golf Course (2015)
- Manhattan Woods Golf Club (2014)
- Wee Burn Country Club (2013)
- Rockland Country Club (2012)

driven operation." Data collected from testing (soil testing, tissue testing, water testing, etc.) and monitoring devices (weather stations, moisture meters, soil temperatures, etc.) can help in making decisions on product selection, rates, irrigation inputs, and other aspects of course maintenance that will be best for the environment.

In addition, Andy has taken it upon himself to pursue external public relations initiatives. "The multiple efforts Andy and his staff employ," says Dr. Rossi, "are a model for many courses to consider as they embark on developing a natural resources outreach program for their facility."

Despite the strides that Andy and his environmentally minded counterparts have made, Dr. Rossi acknowledges that our industry has a long way to go. "To align more fully with state golf course BMPs, we must demand the development of more

environmentally friendly products to help us further improve our practices in the science of golf course maintenance."

Pleased, however, with Bethpage's environmental efforts, Dr. Rossi finished by saying, "Over the 20 years Dr. Grant and I have worked with the folks at Bethpage, we have seen it evolve into an excellent model of an environmentally progressive facility."

Also pleased with Bethpage's honor, Dr. Jennifer Grant launched a congratulatory Tweet: "Congrats to the whole crew at Bethpage—excellent partners and leaders in environmental golf course management. They hosted 14 years of reduced-chemical research, and they continue to demonstrate best management practices. They know how to walk the talk!"

Congratulations to Andy Wilson, his staff, and Bethpage State Park!

## The Other Finalists

There were four other finalists for the award this year: Baltusrol Golf Club, TPC Jasna Polana, Rye Golf Club, and The Stanwich Club all submitted very strong applications.

- Baltusrol's IPM program is highlighted by extremely intense monitoring and scouting with specific thresholds set for various pests on their courses in order to reduce pesticide use.

- TPC Jasna Polana removes invasive plant species to keep the forests and buffer areas as "native" as possible.

- Rye Golf Club employs an organic approach to their IPM program, while also using the EIQ as a guide for product decision-making.

- The Stanwich Club has planted native wetland plants on their property to enhance wildlife habitat, and their new maintenance facility has a solar panel system that saves the club 45 percent in energy costs.

This year's panel of judges, which included journalists, scientists, superintendents, and MGA officials, was challenged with some of the strongest applications this award process has ever seen. Congratulations to one and all who applied!

Next year offers yet another opportunity to showcase your club's environmental efforts with an application for the Arthur P. Weber Environmental Leaders in Golf Award.

*Jim Pavonetti, editor of the Tee to Green, is superintendent of Fairview Country Club in Greenwich, CT, and a member of the Arthur P. Weber Environmental Leaders in Golf Award Executive Committee.*

*Park Ecologist Yael Weiss with local Girl Scouts for a pollinator garden planting project.*



## Upcoming Events

# Update on Season's Upcoming Events!

### MetGCSA Invitational Tournament

Monday, June 11

Brae Burn Country Club, Purchase, NY  
Host: Blake Halderman, CGCS

### Summer Social

Monday, July 9

Oriente Beach Club, Mamaroneck, NY

### Summer Picnic

Wednesday, July 18

Bedford Village Memorial Park  
Bedford, NY

### Nine & Dine Event

Tuesday, September 25

Rock Ridge Country Club  
Newtown, CT  
Host: Steve Loughran

### The Poa/Met Championship/Met Team Qualifier

Tuesday, October 9

Old Oaks Country Club, Purchase, NY  
Host: Jason Anderson

### Assistants Championship

Tuesday, October 30

Preakness Hills Country Club, Wayne, NJ  
Assistant Hosts: Tony Espe, Miguel Ortega,  
Kyle Cross  
Superintendent: John O'Keefe, CGCS

### MetGCSA/CAGCS Fall Seminar

Thursday, November 8

The Patterson Club, Fairfield, CT  
Host: Jason Meersman

### MetGCSA Winter Seminar

Wednesday, January 16, 2019

Westchester Country Club, Rye, NY  
Host: David Dudones

## Regional Events

### 2018 University of Connecticut Turfgrass Field Day

Tuesday, July 17

UConn Plant Science Research and Education Facility, Storrs, CT

The field day will offer guided tours of a variety of research projects underway at the university followed by a delicious lunch and an opportunity to connect with fellow turf professionals. Exhibitors from across the region will also be present with product and service information for the turfgrass industry.

Watch the website for further details as the date approaches: [www.turf.uconn.edu](http://www.turf.uconn.edu).

### Rutgers Turfgrass Research Field Day (Golf & Fine Turf)

Tuesday, July 31

Horticultural Farm II, New Brunswick, NJ

Save the date, and watch for details. Call 973-812-6467 or visit [www.njturfgrass.org](http://www.njturfgrass.org) for further information.

### The 14th Annual Joseph Troll Turf Classic

Tuesday, September 4

Winged Foot Golf Club, Mamaroneck, NY

Superintendent Steve Rabideau will host this year's UMass Alumni Turf Group fundraiser in support of turf education and research at the University of Massachusetts. Steve was also selected as this year's event honoree.

Please plan to attend this worthy fundraiser, and watch for details. Entry forms and additional information will be available online at [www.alumniturfgroup.com](http://www.alumniturfgroup.com).

### 2018 GREEN EXPO Conference and Trade Show

Tuesday – Thursday, December 4 – 6

The Borgata Hotel, 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](http://www.njturfgrass.org).

### MetGCSA Scholarship Award Applications Ready and Waiting!

Application forms for the 2018 MetGCSA Scholarship Awards are available on the Met website, [www.metgcsa.org](http://www.metgcsa.org), or through MetGCSA Executive Secretary Susan O'Dowd at 914-909-4843 or [sodowd@mgagolf.org](mailto:sodowd@mgagolf.org).

Any Class A, Life A, Life A/AF, B, C, Life C, AF, or Life AF member of the MetGCSA or a dependent of a member is eligible to win. Applicants must be enrolled in a short course or in an associate's, bachelor's, master's, or Ph.D. program.

If you have any questions about the application process, please feel free to contact Scholarship Chairman Ken Benoit at Glen Arbor Golf Club. You can reach him by calling 914-760-3575 or by sending an email to [kbenoit@glenarborclub.com](mailto:kbenoit@glenarborclub.com).

The Scholarship Committee will select recipients based on leadership, maturity, scholastic capabilities, activities, and commitment to a chosen career. **All applications MUST be RECEIVED by end of business day on Monday, June 4 either by mail or email.**

Scholarships will be awarded at an upcoming event. Watch our calendar of events in the *Tee to Green* or on our association website for the precise date and location of the event.



# The New York State Turfgrass Advocacy Day Highlights Legislative Issues

by Michael Maffei, CGCS

The 19th Annual New York State Turfgrass Advocacy Day was held February 28 at the Empire State Plaza in Albany, NY, with 59 superintendents and other industry professionals eager to discuss this year's priority issues: Support for the Turfgrass Environmental Stewardship Fund, the Adoption of a State Definition of IPM, Parity for 3A, 3B Pesticide Applicator Fees, and proposed Call-In Pay Regulations.

Advocacy Day-goers made 67 visits to legislators' offices to drive home the importance of these legislative issues. Joining me in representing the MetGCSA were Rob Alonzi; Brian Benedict; Brian Bontemps; Ken Benoit Jr., CGCS; Bob Nielsen, CGCS; Matt Ceplo, CGCS; John Carlone, CGCS; Blake Halderman, CGCS; Todd Apgar; and Mike McCall, CGCS.

Also joining us again at this year's event were two national associations: the National Association of Landscape Professionals, which was represented by Paul Mendelsohn and Bob Mann, and the Responsible Industry for a Sound Environment (RISE), which was represented by Riley Titus and Barbara Ahern.

## The Event Kickoff

The event kicked off with an association breakfast and welcoming remarks by NYSTA Vice President Jim Hornung Jr. and NYSTA Government Relations Committee Co-chair Steve Griffen.

Todd Vandervort of The Vandervort Group spoke on the legislative climate in Albany and budget issues currently being debated in the Legislature. He also noted that the time was right to meet with legislators since they were in the midst of final budget negotiations.

Guest speaker Senator Catharine Young welcomed everyone to Albany and expressed her support for our issues, especially the Adoption of a State Definition of IPM. Senator Young annually introduces a bill legislating this definition and the bill passes the Senate each year.



*Advocacy Day draws a full house.*

## The Issues of the Day

After the introductory speeches, industry leaders spoke to attendees about the following issues:

### Garnering Support for the Turfgrass Environmental Stewardship Fund

*Jim Hornung Jr., President of the New York State Turfgrass Association*

Jim spoke about the status and importance of the Turfgrass Environmental Stewardship Fund (TESF), reporting that it was our Number One issue for the day. The 2017-2018 New York State Budget included a \$150,000 appropriation to support research that provides improved turf management solutions, as well as educational outreach programs.

Continuing research is essential in providing turf management solutions that are key in preserving and protecting environmental quality. With this in mind, **NYSTA recommended that legislators fund a \$200,000 line item** in the 2018-2019 budget.

In the budget passed April 1, the legislature did allocate \$150,000 for the TEF.

In 2017, \$25,000 of this funding went toward supporting the ongoing development of the BMPs for New York State Golf Courses. Glen Arbor Superintendent Ken Benoit emphasized the importance of continuing to fund BMP initiatives. He also introduced the newly formed New York Golf Course Foundation, which replaces the original BMP Committee. The foundation is a 501(c)3 corporation with board members from each New York State golf course superintendent association, ensuring repre-

sentation from the entire state. The foundation serves the same function as the committee did. It's just that the foundation is able to solicit donations that are then tax deductible.

In addition to focusing their discussions on the issues of the day, attendees were encouraged to present the BMP concept to legislators during each of their visits.

### Adopting a State Definition of IPM

*Steve Whipple, New York State Turfgrass Association*

Steve reviewed the Adoption of a State Definition of IPM, stating that NYSTA believes New York State would be best served by adopting the IPM terminology recognized by the Food Quality Protection Act, the National Integrated Pest Management Network, and the Empire State Council of Agricultural Organizations. Several legislative proposals define IPM as using pesticides as a last resort. As we all know, pesticides are used as a tool in an IPM program.

**NYSTA supports S524 (introduced by Senator Young) and A526 (introduced by Assemblywoman Gunther)**, which define integrated pest management as a "systematic approach to managing pests that utilizes a diversity of management options to minimize health, environmental, and economic risks and impacts. These options may include biological, cultural, physical, and chemical tools to prevent pest infestations or reduce them to acceptable levels."

The good news: Senator Young's bill has passed the Senate and Assemblywoman Gunther's bill is currently in the Assembly Environmental Conservation committee.

### Parity for 3A, 3B Certified Applicator Fees

*Larry Wilson, Chairman of the New York Alliance for Environmental Concerns*

Larry explained that 3A, 3B certified commercial pesticide applicators have been paying \$200 per year (\$600 over three years) and have an annual certification period. By contrast, the other 25 classifications have paid \$450 every three years and have a three-year certification period.

**NYSTA requested parity within the certified commercial system by lower-**





*Mike Maffei, Back O'Beyond Super and NYSTA Government Relations Committee co-chair, explains proposed revisions to call-in pay requirements.*



*Glen Arbor Super and BMP Committee Chair Ken Benoit emphasizes the importance of supporting the ongoing development of the BMPs for NYS Golf Courses.*

ing the annual 3A and 3B fees to \$150 per year and realigning the certification time period from one to three years. NYSTA, therefore, supports bills S1045 (introduced by Senator Funke) and A1630 (introduced by Assemblyman Skoufis).

I am pleased to report that the requested change was approved in the State budget and went into effect on April 1.

### Proposed Revisions to Call-In Pay Regulations

*Mike Maffei, New York State Turfgrass Association*

In November 2017, the New York State Department of Labor published proposed regulations that would revise call-in pay requirements in New York State. What is call-in pay? In short, call-in pay requires that employers provide four hours of compensation to employees whose shift is cancelled less than 72 hours before the start of the shift ("cancelled shift"), when the employee is required to be in contact less than 72 hours before the shift to find out whether to report to work for that shift ("call for schedule"), and when the employee is required to be available to report to work ("on-call"). Two additional hours of call-in pay are required when a shift is scheduled less than 14 days before the start of the shift ("unscheduled shift").

Adhering to any further regulations in call-in pay will be especially difficult for those businesses affected by weather: landscaping, lawn care, snow removal, and golf course maintenance to name several.

Mike explained that this is not a legislative issue, but rather a regulation proposed by the New York State Labor Department. It's important that we speak to our legislators about how these proposed regulations will adversely affect our businesses and also emphasize that if these regulations do get adopted, we need legislation to rescind them.

## The Legislative Visits and Closing Activities

Rick Zimmerman from The Vandervort Group offered attendees tips on how to make the most of their visits. After the presentations, attendees had the opportunity to meet with legislators and share their views and recommendations on the issues.

When the visits were completed, attendees returned for a luncheon and wrap-up of the morning's activities. They also had the opportunity to share any feedback they received during their legislator visits with NYSTA Government Relations Committee Co-chair Steve Griffen for follow-up.

Pleased with the outcome of the legislator visits, Zimmerman felt this year's Advocacy Day was highly successful in fostering an

understanding and appreciation of our industry by New York State legislative leaders.

"Our efforts solidified \$150,000 in support for the Environmental Stewardship Fund," he noted, "and secured a reduction in certified applicator fees by \$50 per year. I want to thank those of you who made the time and effort to participate in this year's Advocacy Day. It was a great success because of all of you."

## The Benefits of Being Involved

If you are not a member of NYSTA, please consider joining. Your membership provides NYSTA with the resources needed to plan and implement many informative industry-related events, not the least of which is our annual Turfgrass Advocacy Day. Particularly important to preserving our livelihood, the Advocacy Day is designed to:

- Protect you and your golf course from losing the tools needed to perform your job
- Prevent any onerous new regulations from adversely affecting our industry
- Advocate for changes to—or the repeal of—laws and regulations that affect our clubs

If you would like more information on NYSTA or the New York State Turfgrass Advocacy Day, you will find it on the NYSTA website: [www.nysta.org](http://www.nysta.org). Though you may not have been able to attend, consider visiting your assembly member or senator in their district offices or writing them to discuss these issues.

Please give serious consideration to attending the Turfgrass Advocacy Day in 2019. Laws and regulations affect everyone, and your input is important!

*Michael Maffei, golf course superintendent at Back O'Beyond in Brewster, NY, is a past president of NYSTA and co-chair of the NYSTA Government Relations Committee.*

### Special Thanks to Our Sponsors

We would like to acknowledge the following sponsors who helped make this successful event possible: the Metropolitan Golf Course Superintendents Association, the Hudson Valley Golf Course Superintendents Association, the Northeastern Golf Course Superintendents Association, the Long Island Golf Course Superintendents Association, the Nassau Suffolk Landscape Gardeners Association, the National Association of Landscape Professionals, RISE (Responsible Industry for a Sound Environment), Helena, Dow AgroSciences, TruGreen, Syngenta, Bayer, Five Star Golf Cars & Utility Vehicles, SavALawn/SavATree, the Capital Region Golf Course Owners Association, Harrell's, Jim Diermeier, Lawn Medic, Michael Bellantoni, Inc., The Scotts Miracle-Gro Company, the Snow & Ice Management Association, the Western New York Golf Course Superintendents Association, Woodfield Associates, and the Steve Smith Memorial NYSTA Challenge.



# Camaraderie and Competition Reign at the Nor'easter Ski Day

by Andy Drohen

For the fourth time running, the host team from Vermont won the Nor'easter Cup at Killington Ski Resort in Killington, VT. Unfortunately, this year, the MetGCSA team lost its fourth place position and fell behind the entire pack.

Ten superintendent associations from New Jersey, New York, and all around New England competed at the fourth annual event on March 1, where more than 100 golf course superintendents and industry representatives, along with their families came together for a day of camaraderie, skiing, and competition on the slopes of Vermont.

The race was held again this year on the challenging black diamond "Highline" course where the Killington Race Program trains all winter long, along with Olympic racers from around the world.

Spring-like weather created heavy mash-potato snow that made for tough racing, not the usual prime skiing conditions. After several racers blistered through the giant slalom course, turns became rutted up fast. No matter, the Vermont team wasted no time in defending their string of victories despite the rough conditions!

Not only was Vermont led by the fastest racer on the hill, but the team also had the top three overall racers. Scott Watelet (25.75 seconds) narrowly edged out fellow teammate Mike Boisbert (25.80 seconds) by just 0.05 seconds, and Wes Whitaker was close behind at 26.20 seconds.

Along with the fastest male, Vermont also had the fastest female, Wes's sister, in fact, Claire Whitaker at 30.71, edging out Barbara Fahey from the Northeastern association. While Vermont owns the downhill skiing category, New Jersey dominated the snowboarding competition with Craig Craft edging out teammate Patrick Quinlan for the top two spots.

Each team totaled their fastest three racers and prizes were given out to the fastest overall male and female skiers and boarders! Vermont also successfully defended their title over the Northeastern group in the VT Cup, a rivalry that dates back to 1993!

## Recap of the Top Scorers at Killington

Trophies and prizes were awarded to the following "Kings and Queens of the Mountain," from the Vermont and New Jersey GCSAs!

<b>Fastest Male Skier:</b>	<b>25:75</b>
Scott Watelet from the Vermont GCSA	
<b>Fastest Female Skier:</b>	<b>30:71</b>
Claire Whitaker from the Vermont GCSA	
<b>Fastest Male Snowboarder:</b>	<b>35:27</b>
Craig Craft from the New Jersey GCSA	
<b>Fastest Female Snowboarder:</b>	<b>No racers</b>

Here's a look at how the teams fared in the competition:

Team Scores (Fastest 3 individual times totaled)		Time
1st	Vermont GCSA (Winner of Nor'easter Cup and Vermont Cup)	1:17.75
2nd	GCSA of New England	1:26.03
3rd	New Jersey GCSA	1:28.00
4th	New Hampshire GCSA	1:28.05
5th	Connecticut AGCS	1:29.05
6th	Rhode Island GCSA	1:30.59
7th	Northeastern GCSA	1:32.00
8th	Long Island GCSA	1:36.43
9th	GCSA Cape Cod	1:36.43
10th	MetGCSA	1:38.68

## Last but not Least

If the skiing and racing did not provide enough excitement for folks, then the Après Ski party at the Wobbly Barn proved a fine ending to a competitive day on the slopes. Support from our generous sponsors helped the staff at Killington provide great food and an open bar for a few hours after skiing. Proving this is the place to be during the winter, Killington provided highly discounted ski passes for the group through the weekend and affordable pricing on lodging.

As in years past, this event also serves as a fundraising opportunity to help support our industry members in times of need, whether they are a victim of a natural disaster or bat-



Koch Agronomic's Andy Drohen, announces the winners of the day's ski events, while Almstead Tree & Shrub Care's Jeff Thrasher looks on.

tlung an illness. The event has raised thousands of dollars so far, and this year, we are pleased to have increased that number. Fortunately, right now, we do not know of anyone in our industry who needs immediate help. If you want to send us a message recommending someone in need, please do so to any of the board members.

We are all fortunate to be associated with such great folks, and we encourage all of you to join us next year as we continue to use the event as a means to help our own. Thanks to all who donated so generously, and special thanks to Augie Young of Sipcam, who generously donated to our raffle!

## Thank You to Our Sponsors

The Nor'easter Ski Day was made great because of the overwhelming support of its sponsors! We would like to thank the following companies for their help in making this event a huge success:

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Special thanks go out to the folks at Syngenta for supplying everyone with great T-shirts that are sure to become a collector's item over the years!

Make sure to watch for dates for 2019, and join your associates for a great day on the slopes during the off-season!

*Andy Drohen, a member of the Tee to Green Editorial Committee, is the Northeast Sr. Territory Manager with Koch Agronomic Services.*



# Assistants Convene at Sleepy Hollow for Day of Professional Development

by Andrew Baxter

This year, 48 assistants from Connecticut, New York, and New Jersey attended the third annual MetGCSA Class C Professional Development Seminar hosted once again by Sleepy Hollow Country Club in Scarborough, NY. Many thanks to host Superintendent Tom Leahy and his team of assistants, Greg Coughlin, Royal Healy, Dan Nicolaisen, and Evan Weymouth, as well as the entire clubhouse staff, for hosting this event.

Kudos as well to Class C Representative Dave Peterson and his committee for putting together yet another outstanding educational event with highly informative talks and a panel discussion that made for an informative, career-enhancing day.

## Putting Your Best Foot Forward

The first speaker of the day, Carol Rau, PHR, of Career Advantage Golf, offered assistants valuable tips and techniques for optimizing their job search process.

She recommended “stacking” your resume with “wins.” Wins are those things that you may be uniquely qualified to do or any special on-the-job accomplishments. This includes describing your role in a major renovation project at a past club or even how you saved a former employer money.

Before walking into an interview, Rau suggested that everyone ask themselves, “Why would this club want to invest in me?” and then prepare based on what you feel the club is looking for. Rau also stressed the importance of knowing both the environment at the club and who will be present at your interview. This will help you focus on the skills and goals that will appeal most to the people in the room.

*Anyone seeking career planning assistance can contact Carol Rau at 785-856-3802 or at CareerAdvantageGolf.com. You can also follow her on Twitter @CareerGolf.*

## Sound Financial Advice

Joshua Weinerman, an associate wealth management advisor from Northwestern Mutual in Poughkeepsie, NY, was the second speaker of the day. Joshua stressed that life is full of unknown circumstances and the better you plan, the better you will be able to

handle any challenges that might arise. Weinerman feels it is a must that everyone have life and disability insurance.

Weinerman also encouraged everyone to find a fiduciary advisor. These are financial advisors who are required to put their client's interest above their own.

Weinerman emphasized the importance of meeting at least once a year with your advisor to discuss the status of your portfolio and potential changes in the coming year. He also urged everyone not to be afraid of asking questions. It could be something as simple as “What are your fees?” to the more involved “How can I be more aggressive with my portfolio?” It's up to you, he pointed out, to make sure that your advisor is not only aware of your future goals but is also working to help you achieve them.

Weinerman's take-home message was to plan for the future but also to acknowledge that there are always risks with investing. He encouraged making more aggressive moves with your portfolio while you're young. Conversely, as you near retirement years, it's best to shift priorities and make safer, less aggressive moves.

*If you would like to contact Joshua Weinerman, you can reach him at 845-224-0027 or at Joshua.weinerman@nm.com.*

## Panel Discusses Keys to Career Success

After an amazing lunch, seminar-goers convened for a roundtable discussion with panelists from within the industry. Sitting on the panel were MetGCSA Executive Director Mike McCall; Upper Montclair Director of Grounds Mike Brunelle; Silver Spring Superintendent Bill Cygan; former New York Country Club Superintendent Matt Topazio, now of Metro Turf Specialists; and Carol Rau, career consultant.

Moderated by MetGCSA Class C Representative Dave Peterson, the discussion centered on panel members' thoughts on how to best position yourself for success.

When asked, “What do you perceive as good traits to possess in our industry?” here's what panel members had to say:

**Matt Topazio:** “Attention to detail is key in our industry. Without that, it will be tough to succeed.”



*Carol Rau of Career Advantage Golf offers tips for conducting a successful job search.*

**Bill Cygan:** “Execution and attention to detail. Without good execution, your grand plans will never truly happen.”

**Mike Brunelle:** “An eagerness to learn and keep on learning. Pay close attention to what your mentors are doing. Observe what they do well and take note of what you don't like. When it's your turn to run your own course, you'll have a good idea of what type of superintendent you'd like to be.”

**Mike McCall:** “Be a self-starter, and take initiative. We are in a get-it-done industry.”

*Carol Rau was asked to discuss what place technology has in the interview process.*

**Carol Rau:** “Technology can play a significant role in the interview process. The Internet and social platforms are particularly useful in helping you gather information about the audience you will be marketing yourself to. This will allow you to tailor your pitch in ways that give you an advantage.”

Rau also mentioned the importance of knowing what potential employers will find if they Google your name. “If there is something out there that doesn't reflect well on you—a Facebook post, a Tweet—then take the necessary steps to have it removed.”

## The Takeaway

Mike McCall was quick to note just how fortunate we all are to be associated with the MetGCSA, an organization that values professional and personal development. He summed up the seminar with equal adulation for the material covered during the event. “I think it all boiled down to the realization that there are many different roads you can travel to get to where you want to go.”

The MetGCSA would like to thank Sleepy Hollow, Class C Rep Dave Peterson, and title sponsor Northwestern Mutual for making this event possible.

*Andrew Baxter is an assistant superintendent at Fairview Country Club in Greenwich, CT.*



## Dan Rogers and Wykagyl Welcome Superintendent/Guest Tournament

by Todd Apgar

On May 15, MetGCSA members will have the pleasure of contesting our Superintendent/Guest Tournament at Wykagyl Country Club, a venue that we, as an association, have not had the pleasure of playing since our 2010 Invitational. Dan Rogers, the club's superintendent since 2012, couldn't be more pleased to host this annual event and reintroduce this course to fellow Met members.

### Wykagyl's Evolution

Wykagyl Country Club got its start in 1898. Club member Lawrence Van Etten designed the original 18-hole course, which was completed in 1905. Over the years, many of the game's most talented men and women have played Wykagyl, as it was a tour stop for the Palm Beach Round Robin from 1948 to 1952 and, again, in 1956 and 1957.

In 1949, NBC made the first national television broadcast of a golf tournament at Wykagyl, where Bobby Locke won. Wykagyl was also a stop for the LPGA from 1976 to 2007.

The dedication of Wykagyl's members to continually improve spurred the most recent project completed in 2006 by architects Coore and Crenshaw.

"Their goal was to build upon and restore the work that A.W. Tillinghast, and Donald Ross before him, did to make Wykagyl such a special place. Each year, we continue to tweak things here and there to keep making it better," explains Dan.

The Coore & Crenshaw team restored the strategic intent of the golf course while improving playability. The restoration consisted of expanding green complexes, bunker renovation, and fairway line adjustment, along with new irrigation and drainage. Remarkably, the course remained open for play through the entire construction process.

The cumulative impact of the restoration and Wykagyl's commitment to superb conditioning led to the inclusion of Wykagyl in *Golfweek's* Top 100 Classic Courses rankings and brought accolades from golf course architecture expert, Ran Morrisett, who profiled the course on *GolfClubAtlas* in 2016.

### Dan's Journey

At a young age, Dan knew that golf was destined to be a large part of his life. Dan began working on a golf course when he was 15 at Fenner Hill Golf Club in Hopkinton, RI.

"I was hired during the construction phase of the course, so from the very beginning, I was able to participate in things that many 15-year-olds don't get the opportunity to," says Dan, who was also able to put his aptitude in mechanics to good use.

"In high school I was involved in auto shop," says Dan, "which gave me a skill-set that proved very useful to the club's grow-in superintendent, Bill Sandborg." It was so useful, in fact, that at 16, Sandborg made Dan the club's mechanic.

Dan worked for Sandborg after school, at night, and on weekends and holidays, and then as much as he could through college. When it came time to consider colleges, recognizing Dan's potential, Sandborg suggested he attend a turf school.

"If it had been left to me, I'd be in a shop turning wrenches right now," says Dan. "But thanks to Bill, I became a turf guy instead! I'll admit it," Dan continues, "I do still work in the shop now and then, and I enjoy it."

In 2000, Dan enrolled in SUNY Cobleskill and began working toward his bachelor's in Ornamental Horticulture & Turfgrass Management.

"I couldn't be happier with my decision to go to Cobleskill. It was there that I met Bob Emmons, a professor and mentor to me and many others," says Dan. "After a field trip to Bethpage State Park, I knew I wanted to pursue an internship there. The fit was right, and the scale of the operation allowed considerable experience to be gained with five golf courses to look after."

Dan interned at Bethpage while completing his bachelor's degree—in just three years. He stayed on after graduating and eventually was promoted to assistant superintendent on the Black Course.

"I owe a lot to all the people I worked with at Bethpage, mainly park superintendent at the time, Craig Carrier," says Dan. "The experience I gained while working there was invaluable, and the friendships I made will last a lifetime."

Dan Rogers

After four-and-a-half years at Bethpage, Dan accepted his first superintendent's position at New London Country Club in Waterford, CT. He oversaw the operation for five years, before seizing the opportunity to come back to the New York area as the new superintendent at Wykagyl Country Club in New Rochelle. He's made Wykagyl his home for the past six years.

Wykagyl is looking forward to hosting yet another notable event, the Metropolitan Open. "It has been 90 years since Wykagyl has hosted the MET Open," says Dan. "The tournament was played here in 1909 and again in 1927. I am proud to be part of the history of this club."

### Life Beyond Wykagyl

Though Dan's full-time job keeps him more than busy, two years ago, he was pleased to assume a vacancy on the MetGCSA board as a director while serving, first, on the Website Committee and, most recently, the Advertising Committee.

"Serving on the board has been a good experience," notes Dan, "and it's definitely given me an appreciation for the work that those who currently serve and those who have served in the past have accomplished."

When there's a window of time, Dan never misses the opportunity to spend it with his family. Included in that mix are his wife of 10 years, Samantha, and their 8-year-old son, George, and 5-year-old daughter, Abigail.

"Sam and the kids enjoy staying active and are kept more than busy during the season when I'm pulled away by work," says Dan. "They enjoy traveling to Rhode Island to enjoy the beaches and my family or to upstate New York to visit her family and enjoy the fresh air."

Be sure to join Dan and fellow Met members at Wykagyl on May 15 for what promises to be an exciting day of golf!

*Todd Apgar, a member of the Tee to Green Editorial Committee, is a sales representative with Metro Turf Specialists.*



## MetGCSA Invitational Is Brae Burn Bound

by Chip Lafferty

**T**his year's MetGCSA Invitational goers will convene at Brae Burn Country Club in Purchase, NY, on June 11. If past meetings at Brae Burn are any indication, then our meeting host and Brae Burn superintendent, Blake Halderman, will have the course in superfine shape for our association's long-running and always-popular annual event.

Founded in 1964 by a group of friends from Harrison Country Club, Brae Burn was first known as Purchase Hills. The club quickly abandoned the name, however, because of its similarity to another club in the area, and in a "name-the-club" contest, members settled on the current Brae Burn Country Club.

Open for play in June 1964, the course was designed originally by Frank Duane, a long-time protégé of Robert Trent Jones Sr. In the fall of 2006, Brae Burn brought in another Trent Jones disciple, Golf Course Architect John Harvey, to produce a master plan for the property. In the fall of 2007, the club put the plan into motion, embarking on a multi-year renovation project that has left few areas of the now 54-year-old course untouched. With the current layout playing at 6,850 yards, tourney contestants will enjoy a competitive round of golf on the club's renovated 152 acres.

### A Turf Manager in Training

Blake began his career in golf course management in his home state of New Hampshire when he was just 15, working at the local nine-hole Angus Lea Golf Course for Scott Niven's father, Russ, and then Scott's brother, Curt. One of three employees on the club's crew, Blake credits his experience working with the two Nivens for his motivation in pursuing a career in turfgrass management.

He enrolled in the turf program at the University of Rhode Island and interned at The Stanwich Club under Scott, completing the Niven trifecta. Broadening his scope beyond the Niven clan, Blake interned next at Muirfield Village Golf Club in Dublin,

OH, home of Jack Nicklaus's Memorial Tournament. Blake gained valuable PGA Tour experience that season while, at the same time, getting to work alongside his longtime friend and college-mate, Glen Dube.

Convinced that the New York Metropolitan area was the place to be, Blake landed an assistant's position at Woodway Country Club working for then Superintendent Larry Pakkala. In looking back on his experience at both Stanwich and Woodway, Blake offers high praise for the two superintendents who provided him with superb training grounds:

"I couldn't have asked for better mentors, both professionally and personally, than Larry and Scott. They understood—and have demonstrated—just how much it means to provide guidance and support to those who work for us and just how important it is that we all work together to ensure our profession continues to be strong for the next generation."

In the fall of 1997, after just two-and-a-half years as an assistant, Blake left Woodway for greener pastures: his first superintendent's position at Minisceongo Golf Club in Pomona, NY. After three years as a full-fledged turfgrass manager, Blake moved on to Trump National in Briarcliff Manor, NY, enticed by the opportunity to work on building a course from start to finish.

"I just couldn't turn down the opportunity to be part of a grow-in experience while working alongside construction manager, Vinnie Stellio, and the highly regarded father-and-son design team of Jim and Tommy Fazio," says Blake. "The knowledge you gain from hanging around people with that kind of expertise is invaluable."

And then, of course, spending many days with the club's owner and now our country's president, Donald Trump, was an added bonus. "It was interesting," says Blake with a smile, "and I think I'll just leave it at that."

Trump National was completed in a year-and-a-half and opened for play July 2002. Blake was, once again, on the lookout for the right next move. "My goal was to do



Blake Halderman, CGCS

the grow-in and get my GCSAA certification as soon as possible so my resume would be ready for the job that was a perfect fit for me and my family," says Blake.

And don't you love it when a plan comes to fruition? In October 2004, Blake was offered the superintendent's position at Brae Burn Country Club, where he is now entering his 14th season.

"I couldn't ask for a better membership and staff to work with," Blake says of his longest-tenured position. "The membership has supported many projects over the years that have continually enhanced the playability of the course. And my staff has been key to my success. They understand we are here to make the golf course as pleasurable as we can for our current members and as inviting as possible to prospective members and guests."

"I remind them," adds Blake, "that we can't rest on our laurels. The new member who just joined the club has no idea (and probably doesn't care) about the work it took to get the course where it is today. We have to keep our sights set on improving the course each and every year."

### A Little Involvement Goes a Long Way

Like his entrée into the turfgrass management business, Blake's service to the industry began early on—when he was just a 23-year-old assistant at Woodway Country Club. With then Superintendent Larry Pakkala's encouragement, Blake ran for—and secured—the position as Class C rep on the Met board.

Blake rejoined the MetGCSA Board of Directors in 2004, beginning 12 years of service to the association. His tenure on the board included chairing eight committees and his rise through the chairs to Met president in 2012.



Blake also continues to be actively involved with the Met Area Team Championship, which he and fellow Met member Andy Drohen worked long and hard to resurrect in 2005. As a result of their combined efforts and dedication, it is now a must-attend event for more than a dozen associations spanning the mid-Atlantic and Northeast.

Grateful for the many benefits that serving the association has provided him, Blake notes, "I believe that if you have aspirations of leading the association one day, it pays to be as well rounded as possible. That means sitting on a variety of our committees, understanding the finances, getting to know the lawmakers in the area, and engaging in, at least on a small scale, some speaking engagements so you're at ease speaking before the membership at meetings and educational events."

Although Blake's MetGCSA board service ended several years ago, he still serves on committees and is vice president of the Tri-State Turf Research Foundation and the New York Golf Course Foundation, which took the place of the BMP Committee.

Blake is equally committed to prodding his assistants to become involved in the industry and to network as much as possible. Following in Blake's footsteps, his assistant, Dave Peterson, is currently serving as Class C rep on the board. Blake is extremely proud of the wonderful present and past assistants he has worked with and is pleased to have a hand in shaping their careers. To date, Blake has mentored eight assistants who have moved on to superintendent positions.

## The Draw of Family

Despite the demands of Blake's job and industry commitments, he still manages to carve out time for family. Blake, and his wife, Kristen, have been married 19 years and have two wonderful children: Emma, 15, and Brendan, 13, who keep them more than busy.

Emma plays high school varsity lacrosse as well as varsity field hockey, which has claimed the state championship nine years in a row. Right now, Emma has her sights set on playing field hockey in college. Brendan's passions lie with hiking, camping, skiing, and Tae Kwon Do. He's just earned his second level Black Belt and is wasting no time in starting to work toward achieving level three.

Back to business . . . be sure to come out and enjoy the course's ever-evolving enhancements. Blake's recent favorite: the water features. Brae Burn has 14 ponds and numerous streams. Over the past couple of years, the club has purchased a system to vacuum-dredge the ponds in-house and has put almost all of the streams, waterfalls, and pond outfalls on a recirculating system.

"Working on the waterfalls at Trump National made me realize just how much flowing water can add to the player's experience," says Blake.

So come on and add to your golfing experience on June 11 while competing for this year's Invitational trophy.

*Chip Lafferty, a member of the Tee to Green Editorial Committee, is superintendent at Rye Golf Club in Rye, NY.*

*President's Message continued from page 1*

advertiser, volunteer for a committee or board position (the possibilities are endless), I think you'd agree that there's a greater chance you would accommodate the request than if you were to simply get an email.

Similarly, an organization that wants to introduce a new product would be much more successful promoting it at a meeting where he can talk up the product and build rapport with potential customers. Tweeting about it or running an ad may help with name recognition, but aren't you more inclined to bend in and listen, maybe even be sold, when a person you know, and have come to trust, is talking to you about it?

These same principles, of course, apply to communicating with our memberships. Don't tweet about your course conditions and expect members to see it. Instead, seek out the form of communication that you know the majority of your membership prefers. And of course, letting members know you're an actual person by greeting them on the first tee now and then, can never hurt.

## Swinging Into the Season

As course preparations become all-the-more demanding throughout the season, it's important not to lose sight of the importance of communication—with staff, club members, and just as important, your fellow association members!

With our golf season now in full swing, I urge all members to look at our golf and meeting schedule (page 5), get the dates on your calendar, and come out and enjoy some great events where you can, yes, get in some face time with your fellow members and colleagues.

The calendar is loaded with excellent venues and even better meeting hosts! The recent Dave Mahoney Two-Ball at Pelham Country Club and, next, the Superintendent/Guest at Wykagyl are great starts to our season with minimal phone calls needed to drum up support for the outings.

Our marquee event, the Invitational, being held this year on June 11 at Brae Burn Country Club should follow suit. Not making one phone call to boost member participation would show we have an engaged membership and have done our job in communicating the event.

I want to thank you for your support, and I'll look forward to seeing you all at our next event!

**David Dudones**  
*MetGCSA President*



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