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Tee To Green

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MetGCSA 47%

NEWS

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his issue of *Tee to Green* is jam-packed with great stuff! Check out the feature article covering the PGA Championship and what Director of Agronomy Andy Wilson is doing to ensure that this major event goes off without a hitch. This issue also spotlights two of our event hosts, longtime Met member and Anglebrook Golf Club superintendent, Lou Quick, and Met Board member and Burning Tree Country Club superintendent, Steve Wickstrom. We also have follow-up reports on some of the events that have taken place over the past few months.

New Tax Legislation Under Debate

By the time this issue of *Tee to Green* goes to press, I will have participated at a Town Hall meeting, hosted by the Meadow Brook Club, to discuss the proposed legislation in Albany which could have significant tax implications for all clubs in New York. The pending legislation, Senate Bill S4420 (Carlucci) and Assembly Bill A6444 (Galef), would allow municipalities to assess golf courses and clubs in New York based on the property's highest and best use rather than its current use. The impact would be significant, with a club or course paying an estimated four to ten times its current tax rate!

This town-hall-style meeting, which will include among others, superintendents, club golf pros, and general managers, is a great example of why it's important for these three professional organizations to build a fluid partnership and an open line of communication. Issues of this magnitude can be overcome only by joining forces and working together as a group. After this meeting, I will report back to the Board of Directors, and together, we will determine a proper course of action.

Association Reps at Work

In case you're wondering what some of our membership groups are up to . . .

Our AF Board of Directors representative, Todd Apgar of Metro Turf Specialists,



**Ken Benoit, CGCSA
MetGCSA President**

has established a committee of AF members and is busy learning more about what our commercial members would like to see improved within our association.

The MetGCSA Class C Board of Directors representative, Andrew Baxter of Fairview Country Club, has been doing a wonderful job organizing our Class C events. He began his role as Class C rep with a bang by organizing a very successful Class C Professional Development Seminar held at Sleepy Hollow in February. (Be sure to check out the seminar recap on page 6.) Many thanks to Tom Leahy for hosting the event! And thank you to Class C member attendees. We hope you had a great experience.

The New York Golf Course Foundation (NYGCF), curators of the New York State BMPs, will be receiving our 2019 donation after we complete the current golf auction season. We are hoping to improve on our 2018 auction season, which raised \$35,000. Thank you to all the clubs that participated this year!

Golf Day Revisited

I traveled to Washington, D.C., at the end of April with Bob Nielsen and Mike McCall, as well as a few other local superintendents and various golf industry professionals, to attend the 12th annual GCSAA-sponsored National Golf Day. National Golf Day offers the important opportunity to meet with members of Congress, the Executive Branch, and federal agencies to discuss the game of golf and its many attributes from its \$84.1 billion economy and its nearly \$4 billion annual charitable impact to its many environmental and fitness benefits.

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Feature

A Courseside Chat with PGA Championship Host Andy Wilson

*Bethpage Black Gears up for the 2019
PGA Championship*

by Dan Rogers



*Bethpage Black Superintendent
Mike Hadley, left, and Director of
Agronomy Andrew Wilson oversee-
ing course prep on #13 Black.*

Number 6 green perfectly groomed before the start of play.



his spring, one of Metropolitan New York's finest facilities, Bethpage State Park, will play host to the 2019 PGA Championship, its third time hosting a major golf event and its first PGA Championship. On May 15, the best players in the world will descend on the Black and, with them, an anticipated 200,000 or more of New York's always-passionate sports fans. For the uninitiated, playing the championship in May will be a first. Traditionally, the tournament is played in August, but with the PGA Tour's wholehearted support, the PGA of America made the switch.

No matter what time of year, Bethpage is an ideal facility to host golf's major championships. Aside from the Black being a Top 100 facility and a proven tournament venue, it combines the highest level of competition with the ability to accommodate pro practice facilities, thousands of spectators, corporate suites, and massive merchandise tents. It's clear why Bethpage has continued to play host to these large events: It just works!

Leading the Charge at Bethpage State Park

Director of Agronomy Andy Wilson began his career in the early 1990s at Bethpage State Park, working with clubhouse operations. In 1997 when the U.S. Open was announced, Andy started his turf career under Craig Currier. After graduating from Rutgers in 2000, he assumed the role of Green Course superintendent while also serving as overall assistant.

During his time on the Green Course, he worked closely with Frank Rossi and Cornell University on exploring sustainable methods to maintain a golf course with minimal inputs. Much of this work is now viewed as common practice and was a driver in creating the BMPs that we all rely on today.

When Craig Currier moved on after the 2009 U.S. Open, the choice was obvious:

Andy, the most tenured and experienced person on the team, would take over this truly massive operation, assuming his current role as director of agronomy. The park includes five golf courses pushing 225,000 annual rounds of golf, a polo field, picnic areas, softball fields, and more roadways and infrastructure than some small towns, not to mention arguably one of the finest tournament venues in the country.

Andy and his entire staff are no strangers to tournament preparation. Bethpage hosts the New York State Open annually in addition to LIGA and Met PGA events. Throughout his time at Bethpage, Andy has been a key figure in two U.S. Opens, the director of agronomy for two PGA Tour FedEx Cup playoff events, and is now eagerly preparing for the 2019 PGA Championship and the 2024 Ryder Cup.

Tournament Prep Behind-the-Scenes

I caught up with Andy to talk about what it takes to prepare for an event of this magnitude. In the following Q&A, Andy offers insight into not only what it has taken to gear up for this tournament, but also what is involved in putting all the pieces back together, once the pro players and throngs of spectators have come and gone.

Q: What are some of the challenges you and your staff might face hosting a major championship in the metropolitan area in mid-May?

A: Kerry Haigh, the chief championship officer for the PGA of America had asked me three years ago how the weather was in May, so that's when the idea of moving the PGA Championship entered our minds. Then two years ago, when the idea was for-

mally brought up, it seemed more realistic.

Our greatest concern was the possibility of winter damage to our *Poa* greens. But with that fear behind us, there's no doubt May will be a much stronger month for *Poa* than August. In 20 years, we have had winter damage twice. Conversely, we've had stressed greens in August 18 of 20 years, so the odds for the greens being in optimal condition in May are far better.

We began to really pay attention early in the season to things that could cause problems with creating tournament conditions. Mike Hadley, our Black course superintendent, and I have, in fact, observed conditions the past two Mays in the corresponding week of the tournament. The short grass has been in excellent shape at that time of year, which is promising. The rough, which is a mix of blue, rye, *Poa*, and even some tall fescue, can take a little longer to get going. We sod rough with bluegrass, and even as we enter May, there have been some areas just breaking dormancy. Last year was a fairly cold spring, and the rough needed a little extra fertilizer to get it going. I think soil temperatures play a bigger role than fertilizer, so the warmer temperatures this April are key.

Q: Leading up to the tournament, how do you manage for seed head suppression and schedule applications for grassy weeds, summer patch, fairy ring, and annual bluegrass weevil (ABW)?

A: We apply ethephon (Proxy) everywhere for seed head suppression. This past fall we even sprayed the rough. In the fall of 2017, we experimented with using Proxy in a few areas of the rough with positive results, and we have made applications on the short grass



Prepping the bunkers for play.

for a few seasons with equally good results.

We used last year as a trial run, so the majority of our plan will be the same this year. We will be paying close attention to growing degree days (GDD) and soil temperatures, then plan accordingly for our seed head suppression, fairy ring, and summer patch applications. These applications should have little effect on tournament preparation.

We use Dithiopyr (Dimension) for crabgrass on our fairways, tees, and rough. That application can wait until after the tournament if we have cold weather. We also won't be forcing a spray the week before.

We've been experimenting with eliminating adult ABW sprays on our other four courses for five years now and haven't seen any ill effects. In fact, we've had fewer ABW issues on those courses than on the Black. We have also scouted ABW and kept records of GDD the past several years, and our first larvae spray and the date we first noted damage has been late May, roughly a week after the tournament ends. It looks like we could be busiest the week after the tournament!

Q: What are your expectations for how the course will look and play given it's so early in the season and the fine fescues are so prominent?

A: The fine fescue will not be too vigorous mid-May unless we have some unusually warm weather. I would say the fescue will be more ankle high than knee high like it was when we hosted the U.S. Opens in

mid-June. We have broomsedge and bluestem plants that we left alone this fall. Those straw-colored plants dot the roughs and will provide some accent color and some randomness to lies for any balls sprayed into the high rough.

Q: How do you anticipate the remainder of the summer going parkwide, across the Bethpage courses trying to recover from the massive build-out?

A: We won't be lacking for things to do that's for sure. We have to restore several fairways and tees on our other courses, plus areas like crosswalks and beneath grandstands on the Black. We'll be cleaning and sodding and seeding until Thanksgiving. The weather, of course, has a big influence on our restoration. Sodding and seeding in July is not optimal so we may have to put off some of the restoration work for several weeks depending on how Mother Nature treats us. We will also be busy as our golf calendar fills with outings and tournaments beginning in June.

Q: Being one who likes to watch GCSAA TV, I could not help but notice that you were in many of the course preparation segments they produce. How did you prepare for this event and what did you get out of that preparation?

A: I've traveled to several other tournaments, on occasion even using vacation time to gain perspective and some behind-the-scenes experience. I went to Baltusrol and Hazeltine in 2016, and I've been to TPC Potomac for the past few Quicken Loans tour stops. Last year, I went to Shinnecock, Bellerive, and my wife and I combined a vacation in Paris with a stop at the Ryder Cup.

Superintendents like Shinnecock's Jon Jennings, Hazeltine's Chris Tritabaugh, Bellrieve's Carlos Araya, TPC Potomac's Stephen Britton, and Baltusrol's Mark Kuhns were very generous with their time, and I was able to learn a lot from them, whether it was about the agronomic side of preparing for the tournament, how they prepared their crew for the rigors of tournament prep or worked with tournament agronomy staff and officials.

I also have to thank Craig Currier, who pops in from time to time. His wealth of knowledge and experience, particularly at



Black Course Assistants Ryan Murphy, Pat Gleason, and Jake Suelflow topdressing #7 green.

Bethpage, is invaluable. We also benefit from our relationship with Cornell and Frank Rossi, who visits several times a year. Frank and I worked together on the Green Course Project for a decade, and we still have a relationship with Frank and Cornell. So we benefit from his travels and perspective when he visits Bethpage.

Hosting tournaments takes a team effort, and I'm happy to have Mike Hadley here at Bethpage. Mike and I have worked together for almost two decades at Bethpage, and I have complete confidence in him as our Black Course superintendent. I know that he, along with our other key Black Course staff—Vincent Herzog, Ryan Murphy, and Jake Suelflow—will have the course primed for success come May.

History in the Making

In just a few short weeks, Bethpage State Park will once again be making history as it hosts the 2019 PGA Championship for the first time in May at a public facility. So far, the weather has been on Andy and Mike Hadley's side, and with their extensive preparation and well-executed plan, this is sure to be one of the most successful events in the recent history of the Black. I know you all join me in wishing the entire agronomy team a successful tournament and a productive year.

Dan Rogers, co-chair of the Tee to Green Editorial Committee, is the superintendent at Wykagyl Country Club in New Rochelle, NY.

Calendar Update: New Dates to Remember!

Superintendent/Guest Tournament

Monday, May 13
Anglebrook Golf Club
Lincolndale, NY
Host: Lou Quick, CGCS

Nine & Dine

Monday, June 10
Burning Tree Country Club
Greenwich, CT
Host: Steve Wickstrom

Summer Social

Monday, July 8
Orienta Beach Club
Mamaroneck, NY

2019 UMass Turf Research Field Day

Wednesday, July 17
Joseph Troll Turf Research Center
South Deerfield, MA
For further information, call 413-545-2965
or email fieldday@umassturf.org.

Parent/Child Scholarship Tournament

Thursday, July 25
Mosholu Golf Course
Bronx, NY
Host: Dave Moffett

Rutgers Turfgrass Research Field Day (Golf & Fine Turf)

Tuesday, July 30
Horticultural Farm II
New Brunswick, NJ
Save the date, and watch for details. Call
973-812-6467 or visit www.njturfgrass.org
for further information.

Family Picnic

Wednesday, August 14
Bedford Village Memorial Park
Bedford, NY

The Poa Annuua/Met Championship/Met Team Qualifier

Tuesday, September 10
Bedford Golf & Tennis Club
Bedford, NY
Host: Bob Nielsen, CGCS

MetGCSA Invitational Tournament

Monday, September 30
Quaker Ridge Golf Club
Scarsdale, NY
Host: Tom Ashfield

MetGCSA/CAGCS Fall Seminar

Thursday, November 7
The Patterson Club
Fairfield, CT
Host: Jason Meersman

2019 GREEN EXPO Conference and Trade Show

Tuesday – Thursday, December 10 – 12
The Borgata Hotel
Atlantic City, NJ

The New Jersey Green Exp 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.

MetGCSA Winter Seminar

Wednesday, January 15, 2020
Westchester Country Club
Rye, NY
Host: David Dudones

Anglebrook Golf Club

Assistants Assembled at Sleepy Hollow for a Day of Professional Growth

by Andrew Baxter

This year, 43 assistants from Connecticut, New York, and New Jersey gathered at Sleepy Hollow Country Club for the fourth Annual MetGCSA Class C Professional Development Seminar. Many thanks to host Superintendent Tom Leahy and his team of assistants Royal Healy, Greg Coughlin, and Tyler Warren, as well as the entire clubhouse staff, for once again hosting this annual event.

Thanks also goes out to the Class C Committee for organizing a career-enhancing educational event, topped off with a highly informative panel discussion.

Getting Over the Hump of Building a Budget

The first speaker of the day was MetGCSA Executive Director Mike McCall. He ran the attendees through the ins-and-outs of creating and managing a budget. Mike has significant experience building and balancing budgets from past golf courses and the various entities he manages today, making him the perfect person to educate the group on how essential proper budget management is to the success of a superintendent.

Mike first canvassed the room to get an idea of where the assistants stood with their understanding of how to build a budget, as well as how to use the spreadsheet program Excel. He walked the group through how budgets are broken down, pointing out some of the biggest budget items. Labor, he noted, is 50 to 60 percent of most budgets, which makes it a wise place to start when putting one together.

Once the group had a grasp and overall understanding of the budget process, Mike went on to show what a finished budget would look like. He used Met-area expense averages based on the most recent Met budget survey data, with emphasis on labor, fertilizers, plant protectants, and equipment repair.

Assistants left Mike's presentation with the understanding and confidence they will need when they step into a superintendent's position one day. Mike encouraged assistants

to ask their supervisors to allow them to be part of the budget process, even if only in one category, such as plant protectants. Mike even went so far as to say assistants could experiment by creating a mock budget based on the facility where they're working or aspire to work as a head superintendent. He pointed out that while most interviewers will assume that budgeting is a given for candidates, demonstrating your knowledge of the budget process could be an impressive tool to use during an interview to set you apart from other candidates and win over a hiring committee.

Mike McCall can be reached at 914-204-9136 or at Mike@McCallmg.com.

The Things You Wished You Learned in Turf School

Brad Klein, a golf writer, author, ex-golf caddie, and a jack-of-all-trades in the golf industry was the second speaker of the day. Klein has lived and breathed golf from the time he was a young man, learning the game, playing, and caddying on Long Island. Klein caddied professionally on the PGA Tour from 1976-86, most notably for Bernard Langer, and was inducted into the Caddie Hall of Fame in 2006.

Klein drew from his vast experience in the industry to offer assistants a "crash course" on the dos and don'ts as a professional in the golf industry. Klein touched on a variety of practices that will help assistants during their careers. He, for instance, emphasized the importance of learning the value of hard work, managing the unexpected, understanding how to read people's character, and recognizing that it's a people business that requires a high level of interpersonal skills.

Klein emphasized that assistants understand they are in an industry where they have to balance pleasing people with doing what's best for the course and conditions. Whether it's a membership or a daily fee course, when you accommodate unrealistic expectations, you risk sacrificing the health and welfare of your golf course.

These unrealistic expectations, he points



Bradley Klein speaks to the assistant attendees about surviving club politics.

out, have only increased as technology has advanced. As we know, as a result of increasingly sophisticated mowing, cultural, and spraying equipment, the pressure to up green speeds has soared. Klein compared green speeds in 1977 with speeds expected today. In 1977, he showed us that New Canaan Country Club had green speeds of 5'11", Round Hill Club stimped at 5'10", and Winged Foot Golf Club at 7'5". Green speeds now at any one of these clubs are anywhere from 11'-12'.

Before concluding his talk, Klein offered parting advice for the assistants in the crowd, the first being to make sure there's a rhythm and simplification to your golf course. He explains that today golf courses are overcrowded with coolers, ball washers, and other things that take away from the beauty of the course.

The second, and perhaps most important, point he wanted to share was to beware of club politics. He noted that many times golf course superintendents take sides in club matters. In his experience, he feels it's best to be right up front and remain impartial. He continues by saying, "It only takes one member to make sure your time is unpleasant."

Last, Klein tells the group to never say "no" directly to a member or membership. He recommends explaining why you might not agree with a suggestion and then work with that member on coming up with a resolution that meets both your needs.

For more words of wisdom from Brad Klein, be sure to follow him on [Twitter@BradleySKlein](https://twitter.com/BradleySKlein).

Superintendent Panel Discusses Keys to Success

After a great lunch, thanks to the amazing staff at Sleepy Hollow, the seminar-goers gathered for a Q&A session with area superintendents. Sitting on the panel was MetGCSA Executive Director Mike McCall, Trump Westchester's Dan Coughlin, Willow Ridge's Josh Haugh, and Silvermine's Dave Peterson.

The panel discussion was moderated by

MetGCSA Class C Representative Andrew Baxter. After introducing themselves and offering a bit about their backgrounds, panelists were asked to discuss what they attribute to their success, as well as the role communication plays in superintendents' success within the industry.

Panel members began by answering, *"What things have you done in your career that have led you to become a successful superintendent?"* Here's what panel members had to say:

Mike McCall: "Being prepared and a self-starter; those things were instrumental in my success. No one in this industry will hand you a superintendent's position. You need to go out there and work for it and be as prepared as possible for everything that is thrown your way."

Dan Coughlin: "You shouldn't worry just because you don't have that big superintendent's position by 30. Work hard on the job and outside of work to make the most of your current position. I did this while I was an assistant, and I was better prepared when I got that superintendent's position. The big superintendent job will come."

Josh Haugh: "Set goals and do everything in your power to achieve them. Even though you're an assistant now, that doesn't mean you can't be making yourself a more well-rounded superintendent candidate. Ask for more responsibilities; run the crew for a week at a time; lay out a spray program; work with your super in any way you can. These are simple things you can do to help make yourself an attractive job candidate down the road."

Dave Peterson: "Be prepared for everything and anything. I'm a new superintendent as of January, but I have been preparing for this since I first entered the industry. The past few years, I've really been honing my craft. As an assistant superintendent, I took on as much responsibility as possible, and at the same time, I put myself in situations that would help me improve my skills in areas that I felt needed more work. Whether that's becoming the MetGCSA Class C Representative or going on as many interviews as possible, I was able to take something valuable away from each scenario."

Panel members were then asked, *"How important has communication been in your career and role as a superintendent?"* Here's what they had to say:

Mike McCall: "Communication is key in any job you have. Without proper communication skills, you will struggle in any endeavor you pursue."

Dan Coughlin: "Communication is one of the most important aspects of my job. I need to have clear communication with my assis-

ants and staff to make sure the task at hand is done correctly. I then have to communicate with the GM and golf pro on how things are going on the course so everyone is on the same page."

Josh Haugh: "Without communication you are destined for failure. Every day, I'm communicating with everyone involved in the golf course operation: the GM, golf pro, or green chairman, not to mention my staff. We are all in contact so everyone is aware of my plans on the golf course. Member communications are equally important. There are frequently times when a member approaches me with a question while I'm out on the course. Communicating intelligently with club members and staff can make or break their perception of you."

Dave Peterson: "Communication is essential in no matter what you do. It was, I discovered, the key to my being hired at Silvermine Golf Club. Once I got the job, the Golf Committee shared with me that they were impressed with my ability to communicate what I felt was best for the club and its members and how I would communicate that to the GM and golf pro. Communication was one of their top concerns going into the hiring process, and I

was able to alleviate their worries with clear communication."

End Note

I think everyone came away from the seminar with an appreciation for the value the MetGCSA places on the professional and personal development of all its members, in this case its Class Cs.

When all was said and done, I think we could gather from the speakers and panel discussions that there are many different roads you can travel to get to where you want to go. You may have to make adjustments along the way, improve on existing skills, learn new skills, be patient and take some risks. But if you are not continually gaining and utilizing knowledge and experience, then the road will be even more challenging.

Once again, many thanks again to Sleepy Hollow staff and Class C Rep Andrew Baxter for putting on a great event. We hope to see you at next year's Class C Professional Development Seminar.

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

MetGCSA Scholarship Award Applications Ready and Waiting!

Application forms for the 2019 MetGCSA Scholarship Awards are available on the Met website, www.metgcsa.org, or through MetGCSA Executive Secretary Susan O'Dowd at 914-909-4843 or at 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 Rob Alonzi at Fenway Golf Club. You can reach him by calling 914-472-1467 or by sending an email to ralonzijr@hotmail.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 3.**

Scholarships will be awarded at the Parent/Child Scholarship Tournament at Mosholu Golf Course in the Bronx on July 25. Watch our association website for registration details as the event grows closer.

The King of the Mountain Finally Dethroned at Nor'easter Cup!

Nor'easter Ski Day Recap at Killington

by Andy Drohen

On February 28 at Killington Mountain Resort, where the Women's World Cup has been competing each November, Cinderella finally found her glass ski boot! In ski racing, winners and losers are determined by hundredths of a second, so it's fair to say with a margin of 8 seconds the Northeastern GCSA team demolished the defending champions from Vermont in this year's Nor'easter Cup.

In what some would compare to a 15th seed beating the number 2 seed, the Northeastern GCSA team upset the Vermont team, which has won 4 in a row and 24 of the 26 races! In what is believed to be the oldest industry ski race in the country, dating back to 1993, the Northeastern group also won the VT Cup over Vermont. Vermont did all it could just to stay in the top two as the teams from the New England association and our own MetGCSA were right on their boots less than a second away!

Great winter conditions drew the biggest attendance yet with 11 different associations fielding teams for the giant slalom race. Overnight saw about 5 inches of powder fall at Killington, so conditions all over were perfect for the 200 folks who came up and skied with fellow industry folks from Maine to Cape Cod and all the way down to Long Island and New Jersey.

Each team totaled their fastest three racers, and prizes were awarded to the fastest overall male and female skiers and boarders! The Nor'easter Ski Day has become a "can't miss" event with inquiries coming in from Canada and as far away as Florida for next year's championship, so watch for the Save-the-Dates and help your association field the winning team!

Top Scorers at Killington

Trophies and prizes were awarded to the "Kings and Queens of the Mountain" as follows:

Fastest Male Skier: Steve Aspinall
from the Northeastern GCSA 26.23
Fastest Female Skier: Sally Vanderzee
from the Northeastern GCSA 31.06
Fastest Male Snowboarder: Steve
McPartlin from the LIGCSA 37.18



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

Team Scores - Nor'easter Cup

(Fastest 3 individual times totaled)

		Time
1st	Northeastern GCSA	1:19.75
2nd	Vermont GCSA	1:27.79
3rd	GCSA of New England	1:28.05
4th	MetGCSA	1:28.37
5th	GCSA New Jersey	1:36.64
6th	Long Island GCSA	1:37.13
7th	Rhode Island GCSA	1:37.27
8th	Cape Cod GCSA	1:50.04
9th	Connecticut AGCS	2:14.35
10th	New Hampshire GCSA	DNQ
11th	Maine GCSA	DNQ

DNQ: Did Not Qualify (Did not have three complete runs.)

A Fine Ending

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 folks 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 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 due to medical issues or natural disasters. The event has raised thousands of dollars so far this year. 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 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!

Many Thanks 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:

- **Platinum Sponsors:** Jacobsen, MTE Turf Equipment, and Vermont Precision Reel Grinding.
- **Gold Sponsors:** Sipcam Agro, Toro, Turf Products, and Grassland.
- **Silver Sponsors:** Atlantic Golf & Turf, GenNext, Koch Turf & Ornamental, Northeast Golf & Turf Supply, Rain Bird, Nufarm, BASF, Noble Turf, Putnam Pipe, FMC, Helena, Ocean Organics, Syngenta, Winterberry Irrigation, and Harrell's.
- **Bronze Sponsors:** Corteva Agri Science, CCE Golf Cars, Valley Green, Quali-Pro, Bayer, Saratoga Sod Farm, Intelligro, Winfield, Five-Star Golf Cars, Club Car, Read Custom Soils, John Deere Golf, Finch, the Vermont GCSA, and the Northeastern GCSA.

Make sure to watch for dates for 2020 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.

The New York State Turfgrass Advocacy Day Brings Legislative Issues to Light

by Michael Maffei, CGCS

The 20th Annual New York State Turfgrass Advocacy Day was held February 12 at the Empire State Plaza in Albany, NY. Despite a snowy forecast, 36 superintendents and other industry professionals ventured to Albany eager to discuss this year's priority issues: Support for the Turfgrass Environmental Stewardship Fund, the Adoption of a State Definition of IPM, Nitrogen Fertilizer Restrictions, and Legislative Bans of Pesticide Products.

Advocacy Day-goers made 62 visits to legislators' offices to drive home the importance of these legislative issues. Joining me in representing the MetGCSA were Ken Benoit, CGCS; Bob Nielsen, CGCS; John Carlone, CGCS; Blake Halderman, CGCS; Todd Apgar; Steve Whipple; 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 Bob Mann, and the Responsible Industry for a Sound Environment (RISE), which was represented by Matt Teffeau and Barbara Ahern. Also in attendance were Kevin Doyle, a GCSAA field staff representative for the Northeast Region, and Kevin Kline of the Metropolitan Golf Association.

Event Kickoff

The event kicked off with an association breakfast and welcoming remarks by NYSTA President John Carlone and NYSTA Government Relations Committee Co-chair Steve Griffen.

Todd Vandervort of The Vandervort Group spoke on the legislative climate in Albany. The 2018 fall elections brought a huge change to the State Senate with Democrats now in control. This is not good news for our industry since the Republican-controlled Senate was always the stopper for many onerous bills affecting the green industry. Devoting time and effort to educating legislators new to our industry and our issues is more important this year than ever.

Jeff Williams of the New York Farm Bureau discussed the various line items in the agriculture budget and stressed how impor-



Board members, left to right, Tom Kaplun, Bob Nielsen, Mike Maffei, Senator Skoufis, Steve Whipple, and John Carlone strike a pose at the end of the Advocacy Day presentations.

tant it will be this year to advocate with one voice for this budget.

Finally Guest Speaker Senator James Skoufis welcomed everyone to Albany and expressed his support for our issues. As an assemblyman last year, Senator Skoufis fought hard, and was successful in bringing to fruition parity for 3A/3B certified applicator fees. This means the annual 3A and 3B fees are being lowered to \$150 per year and the certification renewal time period will be one to three years. In appreciation for his efforts, the Senator was presented with a commemorative plaque.

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

Steve Griffen, New York State Turfgrass Association

Steve explained that funding for the Turfgrass Environmental Stewardship Fund

(TESF) comes out of the Department of Agriculture and Markets budget. Now, with changes in the Senate and Assembly Agriculture committees' chairpersons and the need to educate the new Democratic Senate, it has been agreed by NYSTA, the New York Farm Bureau, the Empire State Council of Agricultural Organizations (CAO), and other state organizations that during each group's individual lobby days, we would not only advocate for our own individual priorities, but also the entire Department of Agriculture and Markets budget.

With this in mind, Steve spoke specifically about not only the importance of the TESF, but also the importance of other programs essential to the turfgrass industry, such as honeybee research, the Pesticide Management Education Program (PMEP), Community IPM, and the CleanSweepNY program.

The 2018-2019 New York State Budget included a \$150,000 appropriation to support research that provides improved turf management solutions, as well as educational outreach programs.



Reviewing the issues of the day, left to right: the MGA's Kevin Kline, Brae Burn's Blake Halderman, Met President Ken Benoit, Bedford Golf & Tennis's Bob Nielsen, and Met Executive Director Mike McCall.

Continuing research is essential in providing turf management solutions that are key in preserving and protecting the quality of our environment. With this in mind, NYSTA recommended that legislators fund a \$150,000 line item in the 2019-2020 budget.

Fortunately, in the budget passed April 1, 2019, the legislature did allocate the \$150,000 for the TSEF.

In 2018, \$40,000 of this funding was earmarked for continuing support of the BMPs for New York State Golf Courses. MetGCSA President Ken Benoit emphasized the importance of continuing to fund BMP initiatives, and he updated the audience on the New York Golf Course Foundation, which replaced the original BMP Committee and is able to solicit donations that are tax deductible. The next phase of the BMP document will deal with the implementation of facility BMPs.

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 S920 (introduced by Senator Young) and A3632 (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.”

Unfortunately Senator Young has resigned from the Senate and has joined Cornell University as director of the New York State Center of Excellence for Food and Agriculture at Cornell AgriTech. As a result, her bill will be withdrawn from consideration. Our lobbyists are searching for another senator to introduce a replacement

bill as a companion to Assemblywoman Gunther's bill.

Nitrogen Fertilizer Restrictions

Tom Kaplun, New York State Turfgrass Association

Tom reported that Senator Kaminsky (S2130) and Assemblyman Englebright (A4568) have introduced legislation to limit the sale and use of nitrogen fertilizer on Long Island to no greater than 12 percent nitrogen by weight. Fertilizer stakeholders throughout Long Island have been working with the NYSDEC, the Long Island Nitrogen Action Plan (LINAP) Commission, and environmental advocacy groups for the past two years to develop science-based fertilizer recommendations that would have a far greater impact and meaning in protecting Long Island's water than the proposed bag analysis legislation.

NYSTA's recommendation is to oppose the Kaminsky (S2130) and Englebright (A4568) bills and continue discussion with the LINAP and the DEC to develop reasonable, science-based fertilizer recommendations for Long Island.



Met President Ken Benoit emphasizes the importance of ongoing funding for the BMP initiatives.

NYSTA Vice President Steve Whipple (right) presents Senator James Skoufis with a commemorative plaque recognizing his efforts in bringing parity of 3A/3B certified applicator fees.

Legislative Bans of Pesticide Products

Rick Zimmerman, New York Alliance for Environmental Concerns

Bills have been introduced to prohibit the use of certain pesticide products, such as chlorpyrifos, imidacloprid, and glyphosate. Chlorpyrifos and imidacloprid are widely used on golf courses for control of annual bluegrass weevil and white grubs and, in some cases, such as on Long Island, no alternative chemicals exist.

New York is only one of two states that conducts its own pesticide review process after a pesticide goes through an extensive evaluation and registration process by the Federal EPA. Legislative bans of pesticide products, reviewed and approved by the EPA and the New York State DEC, usurp science-based policy and set a bad precedent for New York State.

NYSTA recommends opposition to the pesticide ban bills.

The Legislative Visits and Closing Activities

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

After the legislative visits were finished, 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 legislative 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.

"Successful advocacy," says Zimmerman, "requires that our elected officials understand the impact of their decisions on their constituents, and no one can better deliver guidance to lawmakers than individuals directly impacted by their actions."



"Once again," he continues, "the annual New York State Turfgrass Advocacy Day organized passionate teams of volunteer lobbyists, with poignant messages based in truth and delivered with compelling conviction. This annual effort will continue to pay dividends throughout the remainder of the legislative session."

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. 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 2020. 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, Corteva Agriscience, Syngenta, Bayer Crop Science, Five Star Golf Cars & Utility Vehicles, SavATree, Funk Lawn Care, Harrell's, New York Lawn & Arbor Care Applicators Council, Michael Bellantoni, Inc., The Scotts Miracle-Gro Company, the Western New York Golf Course Superintendents Association, Woodfield Associates, Nutrien Solutions, and the Steve Smith Memorial NYSTA Challenge.

Fairview and Jim Pavonetti Earn MGA's Environmental Leaders in Golf Award

by Matt Ceplo, CGCS

At this year's MGA Green Chairman Education seminar, held March 12 at Willow Ridge in Harrison, NY, Fairview Country Club and Superintendent Jim Pavonetti were recognized with the 2019 Arthur P. Weber Environmental Leaders in Golf Award. As the name suggests, this honor is awarded each year to an MGA member club that has demonstrated exceptional environmental stewardship through golf course maintenance, construction, education, and research.

More specifically, the winning club must meet a rigorous set of criteria in five distinct areas: Wildlife and Habitat, Outreach and Education, IPM, Water Quality and Quantity, and Resource Conservation.

Fairview is the 13th club to earn this distinguished award. I have had the honor of being on the Evaluators Committee for all of the 13 years, and every year, I am equally impressed with what golf courses are doing for our environment.

Award-Worthy Efforts

The first of Jim's award-worthy environmental efforts that caught my eye was the

invasive species removal program Jim initiated. When Jim was hired, he began working with the Greenwich Inland Wetland commission to identify areas where invasive plants were growing. He was successful in not only removing them, but also in replacing them with more suitable and welcome native species. Since then, Jim has done a good job fostering the relationship between Fairview and the Town of Greenwich.

Jim was also the first in the country to sign up for the Monarch's in the Rough Program. Sponsored by Audubon International, this program encourages the growth of the butterfly-loving milkweed plant in out-of-play areas. The objective was to provide a natural habitat where butterflies can thrive. Since he has initiated this program, the members at Fairview cannot believe the increased amount of butterfly activity that they observe during their rounds.

Still another one of Jim's environmental efforts has been his pond management. Jim had battled algae for many years and finally resorted to bi-weekly applications of an algicide. In an effort to reduce his algicide applications, Jim installed diffusers, began using a black dye and placing barley



Environmental Committee Co-Chair Jesse Shannon (right) presents Fairview Country Club Superintendent Jim Pavonetti with the Arthur P. Weber Environmental Leaders in Golf Award.

straw bales in areas where water enters Fairview's five ponds. The barley straw, when it breaks down, creates a bacteria that inhibits algae blooms. He also has a machine made by Triterra that injects a beneficial bacteria into the ponds, which acts similarly to the barely straw applications, preventing algae from blooming and spreading. All combined, these pond management methods have enabled Jim to cut his algicide applications by 90 percent while still controlling his algae population.

Jim has also adopted a practice that has enabled him to save his club sizable amounts of water. Jim uses a FLIR Camera that attaches to his iPhone to take infrared pictures that flag hot spots. This allows Jim to instantly target areas that may need a little extra TLC and reserve water for only those areas, rather than spread water across a large section of the course. This practice, along with his 400 quick couplers, has enabled Jim to save a noticeable amount of water, upwards of 25 percent during a typical season.

Accolades

Jim was quick to praise Fairview's president, Mr. Steve Lowenthal, and his green chairman, Mr. Jeffery Parker, for all their support and leadership. "Without the support of the club's membership, board of governors, and green committee, accomplishments like these would be very difficult to achieve," says Jim.

Jim is not new to the environmental scene. In 2006, he won the Golf Digest Merit Award. In 2010, 2011, 2012 and 2017, he was recognized by *Golf Digest* with its Environmental Leaders in Golf Awards (ELGA). Most recently, he also placed "first runner up" in GCSAA/*Golf Digest's* new environmental award program for Natural Resource Conservation. Adding to his credits, Jim led the way to Fairview becoming an Audubon



Fairview's environmental programs include education and outreach (left) naturalized buffer zones (center) and barley straw bags for algae control (right).

Certified Sanctuary since 2010 and a certified Ground Water Guardian since 2014.

Jim is one of those who realizes that as an industry there are always opportunities to enhance our reputation as stewards of the environment. Congratulations to Jim, his staff, and to Fairview Country Club.

Final Note

The award presentation was the highlight of the Green Chairman Education Seminar, a program designed to educate club leaders and the golfing public about a wide range of issues affecting Met-area clubs and golfers. This year, more than 100 green chairmen, superintendents, and club officials enjoyed a lineup of outstanding speakers.

Agronomist Paul Jacobs of the USGA Northeast Region Green Section discussed the labor challenges plaguing the turf industry, while Echo Lake Superintendent Chris Carson discussed the pros and cons of social media as a communication tool. Cornell University's Dr. Frank Rossi was also there to share the findings of his research on golf footwear's effects on putting surface performance, while Dave Oatis, director of the USGA Northeast Region Green Section, shared his thoughts on what turf managers can do to increase golfer satisfaction and improve the course.

Matt Ceplo, a member of the Tee to Green Editorial Committee, is superintendent at Rockland Country Club in Sparkill, NY.

The Award's Beginning

The award is named in honor of past MGA President Arthur P. Weber, who died 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. He also was awarded the John Reid Lifetime Achievement Award by the MetGCSA in 1994.

Past recipients of the award include Bethpage State Park (2018), Newton Country Club (2017), The Whip-poorwill Club (2016), Neshanic Valley Golf Course (2015), Manhattan Woods Golf Club (2014), Wee Burn Country Club (2013), Rockland Country Club (2012), the Round Hill Club (2011), GlenArbor Golf Club (2010), Westchester Country Club (2009), Sebonack Golf Club (2008), and Trump National Golf Club (2007).

Jim McLoughlin Remembered



It is with deep regret that we announce the passing of Jim McLoughlin on March 9 at his home in Carlsbad, CA. He was 84.

A friend and supporter of many in the MetGCSA and throughout the industry, Jim devoted 50 years to the golf business

as a coach, golf industry consultant, and the executive director of the MGA, the GCSAA, and the MetGCSA. A true pioneer in the industry, Jim was committed not only to elevating the golf industry, but also to helping golf course superintendents put their best foot forward, whether it was projecting a professional image within the industry or among prospective employers.

A native of New York City and a graduate of the Fordham University School of Law, Jim was at times a controversial figure in the golf business, but his no-nonsense style was still appreciated by the many who recognized that he had the industry and the superintendent's best interests at heart. Many in the Met still credit Jim with their ultimate career success.

Jim is survived by his wife, Mary Ellen, and their children, Laura (Herb) Cunitz, Jim (Stacey) McLoughlin, Ken (Karen) McLoughlin, and several grandchildren.

Jim will be missed by the many who had the fortunate opportunity to know and work with him.

New Members

Please join us in welcoming the following new MetGCSA members:

- **Travis Garner**, Class C, GlenArbor Golf Club, Bedford Hills, NY
- **Bradley Green**, Class C, Birchwood Country Club, Westport, CT
- **Andrew Higgins**, Class C, Country Club of Darien, Darien, CT
- **Peter Lewis**, Class C, Trump National Golf Club ~ Hudson Valley, Hopewell Junction, NY
- **Ryan Medieros**, Class C, Aspetuck Valley Country Club, Weston, CT
- **James Slupatchuk**, Class C, Scarsdale Golf Club, Hartsdale, NY

- **Christopher Steffen Jr.**, Class C, Leewood Golf Club, Eastchester, NY
- **Kevin Writer**, Class C, Paramount Country Club, New City, NY
- **Eric Zwaska**, Class C, Connecticut Golf Club, Easton, CT

Newly Certified

Congratulations to **Doug Snyder** of Tashua Knolls Golf Course in Trumbull, CT, for completing the coursework required to become a certified golf course superintendent (CGCS) with GCSAA.

Lou Quick to Host Superintendent/Guest at Anglebrook Golf Club

by Steven McGlone

Our annual Superintendent/Guest Tournament is fast-approaching, so grab a partner (or three) and join our meeting host, Superintendent Lou Quick, at Anglebrook Golf Club in Lincolndale, NY, on May 13.

Lou has quietly and quite successfully managed this exquisite course as the club's one-and-only superintendent since its construction in 1994. But Lou's path into turfgrass management and eventually to Anglebrook was nothing short of circuitous, with stops and starts in more than one industry. I recently caught up with Lou to see what he and Anglebrook are all about. Here's his story.

Lou's Long and Winding Road

Louis Quick was born and raised in South Amboy, NJ. At an early age, he became well acquainted with the waters in Raritan Bay, where his family would spend time boating. Lou's love for the water blossomed, and in no time, he had his own rubber raft with oars, then a motorized dinghy, and eventually a 1963 17-foot Grady White Hatteras fixer-upper that was bought for \$100 and, after repairs, sold for \$1,700 several years later. An impressive return on investment!

His interest in boating led to a passion for marine life. After graduating high school and, on a recommendation from his biology teacher, he attended Texas A & M University as a marine biology major. But after just one semester, Lou realized that a career in marine biology was not what he had envisioned. He did some soul-searching.

"I thought about the fact that I had been rescuing near-dead houseplants from my apartment dumpster," Lou recalls. "My place was full of plants that I rehabilitated. My girlfriend at the time said I had a green thumb. I took this to heart. I went and talked to the administrators in the Horticulture Department and switched majors, focusing on greenhouse crops production and greenhouse management."

To pay the bills while completing his degree, Lou began building his turf industry experience working for landscape design firms in and around College Station and Dallas, TX. But then, in the late '80s, there was a recession and landscaping became an unaffordable luxury. "I was laid off," says Lou. "That's when I transferred my experience to the golf course industry. I found a position on the crew at the Pete Dye-designed Stonebridge Country Club in McKinney, TX, for \$6.75 per hour. I imme-



Lou Quick, CGCS

diately fell in love with the work," he adds. Lou spent a year-and-a-half there while construction finished up then headed on to a first assistant's position at Chase Oaks Golf Club in Plano, TX, a 27-hole public course. It was there that Lou made a valuable connection with Shigehito Suzuki, who was affiliated with the Japanese construction company working on approval for Anglebrook. They exchanged numbers before Suzuki's work was done and he set off for Japan. At the time, Lou had no idea the significance of this exchange.

Always interested in building his experience, Lou then accepted an assistant's position at the 27-hole Bentwater Country Club in Conroe, TX. While there, Lou helped build the final nine holes of the Scott Miller course. One afternoon after finishing work for the day, Lou's coworker mentioned that a Mr. Suzuki had called. Lou wasted no time in contacting him, and not long after, found himself on a flight to New York.

Apparently, a sizable Japanese construction company, Kajima International, was



Lou and his wife, Val, sailing the British Virgin Islands in their 40-foot catamaran.

slated to build a championship golf course on a 240-acre property an hour's drive from New York City. Suzuki wanted Lou to be the company owner's representative, because Kajima had never built a golf course.

That course, it turned out, was none other than Anglebrook Golf Club. Lou jumped at the opportunity, beginning as the lead on the construction team. Designed by the renowned Robert Trent Jones Sr., the course opened for play in 1997. This project, as it happened, came to be RTJ's last build on American soil. The aging Trent Jones positioned Roger Rulewich, his cohort, as the lead architect who ran much of the project. "The course was built very well," remarks Lou. "The green sites were placed in fantastic positions and bunkers placed according to fit."

Needless to say, after construction was complete, Lou was expected to stay on and maintain the layout as superintendent. Twenty-five years later, Lou still reports to the same shop and is the most senior employee at Anglebrook—having seen the course through the planning, development, construction, and now daily maintenance from 1994 until today.

Anglebrook Past and Present

Nearly a quarter of a century later, the course still plays as architects Robert Trent Jones Sr. and Roger Rulewich intended it," says Lou. The course itself is a serious test of golf. The championship layout stretches to 7,000 yards and will challenge players of all skill levels. "The course brings you back again and again," Lou remarks, noting that the membership is enamored with both the game and the course. "There are no homes, no traffic, no tennis, no pool, just a great course."

Though there have been virtually no design changes since the course's inception, the club did expand the irrigation and drainage systems and completed a minor bunker renovation, which included Klingstone liners.

Maintaining only 180 memberships and

producing less than 8,000 rounds a year, Anglebrook is always in top shape. "We have all the resources, a great maintenance facility, and an ownership dedicated to the golf course," says Lou. "It's a pleasure reporting to a single owner," he adds. "There are minimal conflicts over what is expected, no committees, just one person. There are literally no drawbacks to working here."

Lou is particularly proud of the fact that the course is still all bent. "Pba is the enemy. We do our best with pre-emergents and high maintenance standards to keep it clean," says Lou. And it shows.

Beyond Turf

While working in Texas, Lou met not just the love of his life, but the person he would share one of his life's passions with. Happily married for 31 years, he and his wife, Valerie, are avid sailors, spending much of the off-season in the British Virgin Islands sailing their catamaran named "Wavelength," a 40-foot Bavaria Nautitech Open 40.

The Quicks have three children—two sons and one daughter—who are grown and out on their own. His eldest, daughter Kelly, is a teacher in Connecticut; his son Jeremy is getting married in June and works for the postal service near Albany, NY; and his youngest son, Ian, is married and followed in his dad's footsteps, working in the golf industry in Naples, FL.

While Lou is knee-deep in turf during the rest of the year, Valerie is involved in a worthy pursuit, working with more than 150 dogs at Guiding Eyes for the Blind, an organization that trains seeing-eye dogs. Valerie is the kennel manager at the school's Yorktown campus.

Let's hope our spectacular spring weather continues so we can enjoy this true test of golf to its fullest. See you all at Anglebrook on May 13!

Steven McGlone, a member of the Tee to Green Editorial Committee, is superintendent at Swanoy Country Club in Bronxville, NY.

President's Message continued from page 1

On April 30, the day before the main event, we joined superintendents and other golf leaders in a community service initiative on the National Mall. The project focused on helping the National Park Service with the turf maintenance and beautification of the Mall.

On May 1, hundreds of industry leaders met with the members of Congress, the Executive Branch, and federal agencies representing 40 states to discuss golf's impact on our economy.

It's obvious there are many people dedicated to working hard to make a difference for our industry, and I hope those of you who didn't join us this year will, in the future, consider coming out to lend a helping hand and to advocate on behalf of golf's interests with our country's lawmakers.

Great Start to Golf Season

The annual David Mahoney Two-Ball Qualifier marked the start of a new golf season. This year's event was held at Trump National ~ Westchester, and drew a sizable crowd for good reason. What better way is there to keep up-to-date with your colleagues and have fun at the same time? Special thanks to our host club and its key staff—Superintendent Dan Coughlin, General Manager Gavin Arsenault, and Head Golf Professional Chris Marinaro—for making this an event to remember.

Objectives Met

All four of my objectives, as stated in the previous issue of *Tee to Green*, will be addressed in each of my forthcoming President's Messages. And in an effort to be held accountable by the membership, I will list the objectives I cover at the end of each of my messages.

- Association unification
- Supporting environmental initiatives
- Ensuring every member has a voice
- Boosting member participation

If at any time you feel there is some way we, as a board, could enhance our contributions in any of these or other areas, we want to hear from you!

Wishing you all a smooth start to the season and looking forward to seeing you all at our upcoming events.

**Ken Benoit, CGCS
MetGCSA President**

Get Fired Up for the Nine and Dine at Burning Tree

by Greg Wojick

Asked Steve Wickstrom, the golf course superintendent at the Burning Tree Country Club in Greenwich, CT—and our June 10 Nine and Dine host—what exactly influenced his decision to become a golf course superintendent.

“I loved the game of golf,” says Steve. “From the time I was 13, I played golf courses in the metro Detroit area near where I lived as often as I could.” After graduating high school, Steve even spent a summer working at The Grand Traverse Resort and Spa, where his uncle was the superintendent. “I realized then that not only did I love the game, I enjoyed golf course maintenance,” he says.

But Steve got sidetracked and instead of turfgrass management, he pursued a year of business studies and then, still not settled, entered into a program at Macomb Fire Academy. There he received certifications in firefighting, as well as water rescue, hazardous material operations, and medical first response. “These were all good life skills,” says Steve, “but certainly not my lifelong passion. Pulling around hoses and putting out fires on the golf course quickly became much more appealing to me,” he adds.

Steve returned to golf course maintenance, and after getting a few more seasons of experience under his belt, he enrolled in the turfgrass management program at Michigan State University.

Bound for the Northeast

Finally on the career path that he was destined for, Steve took his two-year degree in Turfgrass Management and headed East. “I wanted to be in what I considered the mecca of golf, the metropolitan New York area,” says Steve.

Having interned at Quaker Ridge and made a good impression, Steve was a shoe-in for the job as first assistant at the club. In 2008, he began his six-year tenure working under Superintendent Tom Ashfield.

“The course was primed for greens renovations and course restorations, which made the position all the more exciting to me,” says Steve. “And working with Tom and the rest of the crew to fine-tune the course went a long way in helping me hone my skills and gain the confidence that would eventually propel me toward my goal of becoming a golf course superintendent,” he adds.

In 2015, Steve saw an opportunity to gain another perspective in turf management, this time with Mike Barton, superintendent at Burning Tree Country Club. Steve left Westchester County for Connecticut and a position as Mike’s first assistant. One year later, when Mike retired, Steve found himself at the helm as Burning Tree’s golf course superintendent.

No sooner had Steve assumed the reigns as super, he had to jump into triage mode: An unfortunate chemical calamity compromised all of the club’s greens. The silver lining was that this unfortunate incident allowed Steve and the club to rebuild all the greens. With the guidance of Golf Course Architect Tripp Davis, Steve has also rebuilt all of the bunkers on the course. Tripp is still working with the club to guide them through a long-range plan with a focus on improving drainage deficiencies, tree removal, and enhancing the cart path system.

Steve is quick to point out how his two assistants help him attain his golf course goals. “Brian Conlon and Brad Green have been invaluable to the operation and the club,” says Steve. Brian has been the lead assistant for the past three years and Brad has come up through the ranks and is now Steve’s second assistant.

Steve Behind-the-Scenes

Old habits—and passions—die hard. Having played defensive back on his metro-Detroit high school football team, he was then, and still is, a loyal Detroit Tigers and Lions fan. Golf, another passion born during his



Steve Wickstrom

younger days in Detroit, has helped him fashion a respectable 13.7 USGA index. He, of course, still enjoys playing a good round of golf whenever he can find the time.

Steve and his family recently moved from City Island, NY, to the Byram section of Greenwich, CT. His shortened commute to work is eclipsed only by the shorter commute his wife of eight years, Tina, who works as a postpartum RN at the Greenwich Hospital. Outside of work, they are kept busy by their son, Owen, who is now 4 years old.

Steve is hoping Met members will get “fired up” to come out for this year’s Nine and Dine at the new-and-improved Burning Tree. Hope to see you all on June 10 for an enjoyable afternoon on the links.

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

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