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Tee To Green

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est 1959

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Tee To Green



Rye Golf Club

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President's Message

Targeting Goals for the Health and Welfare of the Association

S

itting down to write my first president's message, I couldn't help but reflect on how I've arrived here as the MetGCSA's 35th president. Certainly, having had family members pave the way has played a significant role. I could not have been more fortunate to have both my father, Bob, and my uncle, Joe—both accomplished industry professionals—as mentors. Learning by their example and inspired by their enthusiasm for and commitment to the industry, I could not help but become actively involved in our association. Now after 15 years on the board, I am excited to accept the reigns as MetGCSA president, and I look forward to carrying on the standards and traditions that have been set by those before me.

Worthy Goals and Objectives

Over the past few years, the Board of Directors has identified goals and objectives for our association that will help us continue to support our membership and enhance our operations. Among the target goals the board and I will be working toward:

- **Promoting MetGCSA members for local jobs.** The Met has some of the most talented and professional turfgrass managers in the country. The Club Relations Committee, led by Mike McCall, continues to offer help and direction to any facility with a job opening to encourage prospective employers to interview and, ultimately, hire locally.
- **Continuing to strengthen the relationship between the MetGCSA, MetPGA, CCMA, and the MGA.** The MetGCSA Executive Committee will meet regularly with these organizations to discuss industry-related issues, share information, and work collectively to maintain mutually beneficial relationships, while meeting the needs of our Met area memberships.
- **Supporting environmental initiatives.** It is our goal to continue to help fund golf-course-related programs, such as the New York State BMPs, which have helped give New York State legislators and policymak-



Rob Alonzi
MetGCSA President

ers a better understanding of the environmental stewardship practiced daily by golf course superintendents. It has also helped give superintendents a voice and a seat at the table when legislation is being considered that may have a negative impact on the industry.

- **Improving meeting attendance.** Promoting an active membership is essential in ensuring that our association continues to flourish and maintain its leadership status, locally and nationally. The Tournament, Education, and Social committees regularly gather feedback regarding the timing, format, cost, and overall satisfaction of our events, working diligently to keep association events fresh and relevant in hope of maintaining healthy attendance numbers.
- **Promotion of the MetGCSA member.** We are working toward promoting our membership's notable industry-related activities using social media, local newspapers, and other prominent industry publications like *The Met Golfer*. One of most recent examples of this type of publicity is our recent tweet calling attention to Ken Benoit's recent appointment to the position of executive *continued on page 9*



Rob Alonzi Assumes Reigns as the MetGCSA's 35th President

by Kevin Collins



R

ob Alonzi, after 15 years of service on the MetGCSA Board of Directors, assumed the reigns as the Met's 35th president at the November Annual Meeting. Rob was first appointed to the Met board in 2004 by then President Will Heintz and quickly got his feet wet as co-chair of the Communications Committee and then advertising manager of the *Tee to Green*.

His next charge was to chair the Education Committee. "I have to admit," says Rob, "I approached the appointment with some reservations, but I was very lucky that Glen Dube preceded me. He was organized and shared with me his blueprint for success, which made my job much easier."

Rob joined the Executive Board five years ago, climbing the rungs from secretary, treasurer, and vice president to his current role as president. Like his predecessors, Rob has begun his tenure with a clear vision of where he wants to take the association.

Goals for the Association

"My goal is to continue the same types of initiatives that David Dudones and Ken Benoit promoted during their tenures," Rob explains. "This includes encouraging area clubs to select from the pool of highly qualified MetGCSA members to fill their job openings. There is no reason why local supers and assistants shouldn't be the ones hired at our member clubs.

"I'd also like to continue to foster open communication among the different allied associations. MetGCSA representatives will meet annually with the club managers, head pros, and the clubs comptroller associations. It is vitally important that all club management staff be on the same page, keeping an open line of communication, while building and maintaining productive working relationships. Collectively, we can work to meet the needs of our Met area members. The success and longevity of our clubs rely on this."

Rob talked about the challenges that every Met president has faced since he's been on the board. "Getting the association's members to participate, come to events, and serve on committees is so important for



All in the family: Rob Alonzi joins his uncle, Joe Alonzi (left), and father, Bob Alonzi (right), after his election as the Met's 35th president.

our association,” says Rob. “Information-sharing, networking, and camaraderie will make for a stronger and much tighter membership.”

The current political climate in New York State is another concern of Rob's. “We're facing more and more regulations, and an increasing number of control products are being taken off the market,” explains Rob. “We must do what we can to make ourselves and our environmental stewardship known among New York State legislators and policymakers. The hard work put in by Ken Benoit, Bob Nielsen, and Blake Halderman to write the BMPs has given us a seat at the table. It's opened people's eyes to our professionalism and our commitment to protect the environment and water quality. It's been a game changer.”

When It All Began

For Rob, turfgrass management had always been a family tradition, with his father, Bob, and his uncle, Joe, working in the business for many years. But interestingly, when Rob first settled on a career path, it wasn't golf. He enrolled in Iona College's business school as an accounting major, and only after a bit of soul searching, decided to transfer to UMass and return to his roots, completing a B.S. in plant and soil science.

From a young age, Rob had spent time with his father at work, learning early on what goes into maintaining some of the finest courses in the area, but when it came time to intern or begin his career as an assistant, instead of pursuing a position with his dad at Winged Foot or his Uncle Joe at Westchester, Rob decided to broaden his horizons. “I wanted to learn how other turf managers did it,” says Rob. “I felt it was important for my education and development.”

Rob interned for two summers at Caves Valley in Maryland in 1993-94, working for

Bruce Cadenelli. “We might only get four to eight golfers a day playing the course at Caves,” Rob remembers. “Bruce taught me whether you did 2 or 200 rounds a day, it was important to have the course in pristine condition . . . always. It was a great experience,” adds Rob. “It let me see what went into maintaining courses in a different part of the country.”

After graduation in '95, Rob returned to the Met section and gained valuable experience as a first assistant with Steve Renzetti at Wykagyl Country Club in New Rochelle, NY. Rob's two years spent at Wykagyl were another piece of the puzzle he needed to succeed as a future superintendent.

“With Steve, I developed some important skills that would serve me well,” recalls Rob. “I was involved for the first time in managing the crew and communicating with the staff and management. I also got some great tournament experience, prepping for the LPGA JAL Classic, which was held there every year.”

Remaining in the Met area, Rob went to work for Jeff Scott in 1998 at Tamarack Country Club in Greenwich, CT. “Jeff was just hired at Tamarack, so my first day there was also Jeff's first day on the property,” laughs Rob. “Working for Jeff really got me ready for my first superintendent's position. I improved my ability to communicate and gained a substantial amount of construction experience. We built a new maintenance facility, installed a new irrigation system, and did a number of renovations on the course. The experience was invaluable.”

In January 2001, Rob landed his first superintendent's position at St. Andrews Golf Club in Hastings-On-Hudson, NY. “St. Andrews is a golf club. There's no tennis, no

pool, only golf,” says Rob, pointing out that though the membership was supportive, expectations were high. Charged with raising the level of playing conditions at the club, Rob rose to the challenge, leading a number of projects in his seven-year tenure to enhance both the course's conditioning and architecture.

In May of 2008, Rob came full circle and went to work for his father, Bob, at Fenway Golf Club, an A.W. Tillinghast gem in Scarsdale, NY. When Bob retired, Rob succeeded him as superintendent.

“It's been busy,” says Rob. “We're at the tail end of a Gil Hanse master plan update. We're doing greens expansions, lengthening some holes; we've added and moved bunkers and changed some fairway contour lines. We probably have a year to go to complete everything.”

A New Generation of Alonzis

While working at Caves Valley, Rob met his future “better half,” Ann Marie, at The Rusty Scupper, a restaurant/bar located in Baltimore's Inner Harbor. After Rob graduated from UMass and began his career at Wykagyl, Ann Marie found a job and relocated to New York. They married in 1999 and have two great kids, Nicholas, 18, and Sarah, 15. Nicholas is going off to college this fall and, like his dad, is choosing to start his studies outside the world of turf as a finance major.

Will another Alonzi make his way back to the family tradition? Only time will tell.

We wish Rob the best of success in his new role as MetGCSA president.

Kevin Collins, a member of the Tee to Green Editorial Committee, is NE/Mid-Atlantic Territory Manager for Ocean Organics.



Home for the holidays: Rob with his daughter, Sarah; son, Nicholas; and wife, Ann Marie.

Talking Turf Woes and Weather Trends at Winter Seminar

by Chip Lafferty

Westchester Country Club once again hosted the MetGCSA's annual Winter Seminar, held this year on January 15. Special thanks to our host, David Dudones, and the Westchester staff for a tremendously successful event.

Our 27 exhibitor booths provided that added value that makes this annual event worthwhile. We'd like to thank the commercial members who participated; we have provided a list of their names and numbers on page 6 for easy reference.

Last but not least, we would like to thank Education Committee Chair Mike Brunelle and his team for their hard work in organizing the event and selecting an excellent lineup of speakers. We all walked away with valuable lessons learned on the latest techniques and programs available in managing a variety of turf issues in a safe and environmentally sensitive manner.

What follows is a quick take on the speakers' words to the wise, as well as their contact information.

Achieving Optimal Growth Rates and Turf Health

The day began with University of Nebraska's Dr. Bill Kreuser's discussion of turf growth patterns and how to manipulate fertilizer, water, and plant growth regulators (PGRs) to achieve optimal growth rates and turf health. Dr. Kreuser noted the importance of monitoring clipping yield as a tool to determine PGR applications. Height of cut, he said, is another prime factor to consider when determining PGR applications.

He explained that the majority of collar problems that arise over the course of a season are in direct relation to height of cut. Plants at collar height are not growing as fast as the neighboring turf on greens, so they cannot metabolize the growth regulator as quickly as the greens-height turf can. Gearing PGR applications for greens-height turf, therefore, can end up jeopardizing the health of the collars, creating a stacking effect of regulation on the collars. What's more, over-suppressing the collars' growth makes the turf susceptible to wear damage when subjected to greens maintenance

activities, such as mowing and rolling. Some of the ways Dr. Kreuser suggests combating this problem without sacrificing green speed is to apply PGR sprays in between normally scheduled sprays and either wash off overspray from collars to avoid absorption of the PGR or get one of the individual nozzle GPS sprayers. Testing is being done at University of Nebraska on the practicality of using these types of tools to enhance and improve our jobs and properties.

Dr. Kreuser also encourages the use of Growing Degree Day (GDD) models for growth regulation. By tracking the GDD, we will be able to stabilize the growth of our turf, which will create a much more consistent putting surface. After learning about regulation and the issues that can arise from using a greens regulation program on collars, any step to reduce the applications on both greens and collars would be advantageous for collar health and playability.

For additional information, Dr. Kreuser can be reached at wkreuser2@unl.edu or at 402-472-1869.

Controlling Nematodes on Golf Course Turf

Dr. Nathaniel Mitkowski, from the University of Rhode Island, took the podium next, shedding light on methods of control for the growing nematode populations on golf course turf. Dr. Mitkowski explained that though nematodes have been around a very long time, he has seen an uptick in nematode counts over the past decade.

The culprit in their rise is multi-faceted. As Dr. Mitkowski explained, in the early days of turf management, turfgrass managers had some very powerful chemicals, like mercury and cadmium, at their disposal. These chemicals were used preventively for pretty much anything that ailed the turf: earthworms, disease, insects, and included in that mix, nematode populations. Fast forward 80 to 100 years. With proficient use of sand topdressing, we have built away from the heavy metal soils and helped to dilute those soils as well.

The result: Nematode populations have surged where they hadn't been a problem before.

Nemacur was a chemistry that took the place of the heavy metals, and it did a fantastic job, so much so, that we could make an application once a year and not have to worry about nematodes for the rest of the season. Nemacur, it turns out, is highly toxic to mammals and has since been banned. Without Nemacur, golf course superintendents were left with very few options to control nematode populations on their course.

Dr. Mitkowski pointed out that other organophosphates, labeled for turf ills other than nematodes, were shown to lower nematode counts. But in order to succeed in controlling the pest, off-label rates were needed, which, as we all know, is an illegal practice. Following label instructions, after all, is the law.

Now, the chemical companies are working on less toxic chemistries to control nematode populations. Divanem, Nimitz, and Indemify are three that show promise but not on a wide range of species, so knowing the kind of nematode you're dealing with is essential.

Because nematodes have a patchy distribution pattern, Dr. Mitkowski noted that sampling technique is key to detection. He recommended that one person do all the sampling and, keeping a consistent zigzag pattern, collect a sample every four paces. In the case of significant decline occurring in patches, Dr. Mitkowski recommended using a cup cutter to sample the worst patches, and wrapping the samples so that they are airtight before sending them out for analysis. He also explained that, while disease samples should be overnighted, it's not necessary to use next-day shipping for nematode samples. Ground shipping is fine.

In his closing remarks, the overall takeaway was that sometimes your best defense is to simply work toward improving the turf's growing environment through good cultural programs and by controlling other pathogens that affect the grass plant's root health.

For additional information, Dr. Mitkowski can be reached at mitkowski@uri.edu or at 401-874-5996.

Challenging the Climate Change Crisis

Next up was Meteorologist Herb Stevens, who presented data-based evidence refuting the existence of human-induced global warming. Stevens showed us a pie chart of what comprises the entire atmosphere. Nitrogen is the main player, making up nearly 78 percent of the atmosphere, followed by oxygen at 21 percent; together, the two gases make up 99 percent of our atmosphere.

Interesting is that global warming proponents want us to believe that CO₂ is the culprit or villain in the earth's climate shift and that it's the CO₂ we are spewing out at a rapid rate that will cause our demise if nothing is done to stop it.

Stevens challenged that claim and went on to recommend that we look at atmospheric CO₂ levels as they relate to temperature. He pointed to one chart which claimed that CO₂ levels have increased, but then showed statistics provided by NOAA that demonstrated there were no appreciable CO₂ gains over the past 100 years. You see, he said, doomsday folks depend on computer models, which have been wrong about this for more than 25 years.

By computer models, Stevens was referring to such things as climate models, those five-day forecasts that predict our weather and rarely paint a reliable picture of conditions to come. So how, Stevens argues, can we depend on something looking forward 100 years? We can't and we shouldn't.

When it comes to climate change, golf course superintendents can't be too careful. After all, the success of our livelihood relies on the weather.

For further information, Herb Stevens can be reached at skiwxman72@gmail.com or at 203-981-4457.

An Award-Winning Lunch

After the morning sessions adjourned, the awards luncheon began, with two awards presented this year to deserving recipients. The first was the MetGCSA's inaugural Distinguished Member Award presented by Biltmore Turf Specialties' Joe Alonzi to Frank Amodio of Valley View Greenhouses. This award is reserved for members who might not meet the criteria for the Sherwood A. Moore Award or the John Reid Lifetime Achievement Award but have made a significant impact on the association and its members. Frank, a longtime Class AF member and friend to the MetGCSA and its superintendents, was aptly chosen for the honor. (See page 6 for details.)

The second award, the John Reid Lifetime Achievement Award, was presented by Ken Benoit and is one of the MetGCSA's most prestigious honors. The USGA's former Green Section managing director, Dr. Kimberly Erusha, was this year's recipient. Working for the USGA for the past 29 years, Dr. Erusha has embraced and promoted a wide range of initiatives that promote the art, science, and welfare of the game of golf and golf course management. Officially retired from the USGA, she embodies the organizational and business skills that project and promote the image and well-being of superintendents all over the country, if not the world, through her timely and efficient use of present-day educational, communication, and management methods.

For more on Dr. Kimberly Erusha, please see the December issue of the Tee to Green.

Waging War on Weeds

The afternoon session opened with Dr. Matthew Elmore from Rutgers University who discussed goosegrass and False-Green Kyllinga as two emerging weed problems in cool-season turfgrass. He also covered how to integrate herbicide options and cultural management practices into existing weed management programs, delving into the many chemistries available to combat the toughest woody perennial weeds that seem to thrive in fine turf and naturalized areas.

He did caution that some of the products he was discussing were not labeled for use on Long Island. He also pointed out that while these products will combat pesky weeds, they also do a good job of controlling *Poa*, bentgrass, and bluegrass. Care must be taken, therefore, to steer clear of these turf areas when applying herbicides targeting the weeds.

When trying to manage these weed populations, Elmore noted it might be best to attack them when they are young and susceptible. Another viable option is to apply a pre-emergent late fall/early spring to keep the prior season's seeds from breaking through. But one of the oldest tricks that still is relatively effective with the woody species weed, Elmore concluded, is just mowing.

For additional information, Dr. Elmore can be reached at matthew.elmore@rutgers.edu or at 848-932-6324.

Memories of Growing Seasons Past

Last, but certainly not least, in the lineup of speakers was a man everyone in the Met knows and loves, Dave Oatis. Dave has recently retired as regional director of the USGA Greens Section's Northeast Region, but during the course of his lengthy career as a USGA agronomist, he has consulted with a countless number of golf courses and seen a countless number of turf woes.

Dave shared stories of some of the most difficult growing seasons he witnessed in the Northeast Region over the past 30 years. There were numerous difficult years where substantial turf loss occurred, and losing turf was commonplace in the 1970s, '80s, and '90s. The tree planting programs started in the 1920s and '30s, combined with decade-by-decade mowing height reductions, produced huge challenges for maintaining putting greens.

Dave stated that winter injury occurs every few years, but the extreme winter injury events seem to come along every 20 years or so. The winter of 2014 was devastating in the upper Midwest but left the New York Met area relatively untouched. The ice storm that swept up the East Coast in January of 1994 caused widespread and extreme turf loss in the Met area. "You could have ice skated from Georgia to

Maine that winter, and the ice left an extreme trail of death in its path," said Dave.

There were numerous difficult summers, and 2005-6 were among the most challenging for area courses. Dave pointed to 1988, however, as having resulted in the most turf loss. An extreme drought ended with torrential and prolonged rain in late July, and it was, of course, accompanied with extreme temperatures. The icing on the cake was when an old Pythium fungicide that was contaminated with atrazine was applied and caused even more damage to 200 courses in the mid-Atlantic and Northeastern states. Due to the lack of modern communication tools, such as cell phones, texts, email, and social media, many courses applied contaminated products simply because they couldn't be warned quickly enough. "Grass died by the acre that year," said Dave.

Incremental lowering of heights of cut combined with tree growth over the years led to many of the problems that occurred in the 1980s, 1990s, and 2000s, but the trigger always is extreme weather. Fortunately, the development of improved technologies, including moisture meters, fans, PGRs, better disease prevention, better putting green cultivation programs (conventional and deep), and internal drainage systems have greatly improved superintendents' ability to get their turf through periods of extreme weather. Critical research, better education on pre-stress conditioning, disease prevention, and improved communication have put superintendents in a much better position to produce topnotch playing conditions and deal with extreme weather patterns.

Thankfully, Dave Oatis and the USGA helped us all navigate the fallout from turf loss and the sensitive topics of green speed, cultivation, and tree removal at our clubs.

Should you want to tap into Dave Oatis's fund of turf knowledge, he is available for consult at 908-347-9436 or at david.a.oatis@gmail.com.

An Event Well Worth Attending

Our Winter Seminar, as always, was worthy of the time spent, offering a great mix of education and the opportunity to view vendor products and services. I would like to extend a final thank you to all involved in making our Winter Seminar a success—from Westchester staff to our Education Committee, speakers, and vendors. Thank you one and all!

I hope, next year, to see more members come out for this exceptional educational event and not-to-be-missed opportunity to rub shoulders with fellow turf industry professionals. See you next January!

Chip Lafferty, co-chair of the Tee to Green Editorial Committee, is superintendent at Rye Golf Club in Rye, NY.

Amodio Honored at the Winter Seminar

by David Dudones

This year's Winter Seminar debuted the inaugural Distinguished Member Award. Four years in the making, the award was the brainchild of the Awards Committee, which after much discussion and consideration felt an award should be established to honor those members who might not meet the criteria for the Sherwood A. Moore Award or the John Reid Lifetime Achievement Award but have made a significant impact on the association and its members.

Past presidents of the MetGCSA will nominate recipients based on such award-winning criteria as displaying exceptional participation in association events and activities and cultivating comradery and goodwill toward the membership.

Frank Amodio from Valley View Greenhouses was our unanimous choice for the Met's inaugural Distinguished Member Award. Presenting the award was Frank's long-time friend and former Sherwood A. Moore Award recipient Joe Alonzi of Biltmore Turf Specialties. When Joe reached out for comments about Frank, there was no shortage of responses. John Carlone, Scott Niven, Tony Grasso, Mark Millet, Bob Nielsen, Peter Rappoccio, Bob Alonzi, Glenn Perry, and Doug Drugo were just some of the many, who along with Joe, praised Frank not just for his commitment and generosity in helping his customers, but also for the many lasting friendships he has formed during his long-tenured service to association members.

When Frank learned of his selection for our inaugural award, he was with many of his friends at Bob Nielsen's house in Bedford, NY. Frank was appreciative and honored to be recognized by the association he has been affiliated with for more than 40 years. Thanking his family and friends, he recounted the many informal member gatherings, legendary Giant tailgates, and golf days where he cultivated many lasting personal and professional relationships with Met members.

Congratulations, Frank, on your well-deserved honor as the MetGCSA's Distinguished Member Award recipient.

David Dudones, former Awards Committee Chair, is director of golf and grounds at Westchester Country Club in Rye, NY.

Special Thanks to Our 2020 Winter Seminar Exhibitors

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

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

All Pro Horticulture, Inc.

John Seib
Golf Course Supplies
631-789-6680
john@allprohort.com

Aquatrols

Tom Valentine
Soil & Water Quality Management Solutions
609-841-2077
tvalentine@aquatrols.com

BASF Corporation

Paul Ramina
Golf Course Supplies
908-413-2944
Paul.ramina@basf.com

Bayer U.S.

Dave Sylvester
Golf Course Supplies
860-841-3173
david.sylvester@bayer.com

Cushman | E-Z-GO

Reed Williams
Golf Course Utility Vehicles
516-662-3554
rwilliams01@textron.com

DeLea Sod Farms

Scott Geiser
High-Quality Sod & Root Zone Mixes for Golf Courses
800-344-7637
sgeiser@deleasod.com

DryJect North East

Steve Jordan
DryJect & Aeration Specialists
914-602-2857
Jordan781@msn.com

Executive Turf / Synergy Turf Supply

Ken Gentile
Golf Course Supplies
203-496-0891
executiveturf@aol.com

Finch Services

George Corgan
John Deere Sales & Service
914-893-0868
gcorgan@finchinc.com

Fisher & Son

Mike Weber
Lawn Care & Landscape
347-486-0480
mweber@fisherandson.com

Grass Roots Turf Products

Ryan Avery
Golf Course Supplies
973-252-6634
ryan.Avery@GRLturf.com

Harrell's

Scott Tretera
Golf Course Supplies
914-262-8638
stretera@harrells.com

K & J Tree Service

Edward Grant
203-248-8733 x108
edward@kjtreeservice.com

Metro Turf Specialists

Todd Appgar
Golf Course Supplies
203-948-4941
todd.appgar@metroturfspecialists.com

Noble Turf

Brian Bontemps
Plant Protection Products
845-239-7959
brianbontemps@seetonturf.com

Nufarm

Jim Santoro
Crop Protection
508-207-2094
jim.santoro@nufarm.com

Plant Food Company

Dave Conrad
The Liquid Fertilizer Experts
800-562-1291
dconrad@plantfoodco.com

Playbooks for Golf

Coverage System Software, Conditions App, PractiShot App, ezPins, Irrigation Playbooks, Career Development Materials
Greg Wojick: 203-219-0254
gwojick@goplaybooks.com
Matt Leverich: 913-221-8052
mlleverich@goplaybooks.com

Synergy Turf Supply

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Valley Green

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Landscape & Golf Supplies
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Westchester Tractor

John Apple
Equipment Dealer
845-278-7766
www.tractor.com

Westchester Turf Supply

Dave Lippman
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914-447-5192
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Who's Who on the 2020 MetGCSA Board



From left to right: Class AF Rep Todd Apgar of Metro Turf Specialists; Class C Rep Worth Andrews of Brae Burn CC; Dave Peterson of Silvermine GC; Bill Cygan of Silver Spring CC; Past President Ken Benoit, CGCS; Aaron Crouse of The GC of Purchase; President Rob Alonzi of Fenway GC; Chip Lafferty of Rye GC; Treasurer Mike Brunelle of Upper Montclair CC; Steve Wickstrom of Burning Tree CC; Mike McCall, Executive Director; Secretary Jesse Shannon of Manhattan Woods GC; Vice President Brett Chapin of Redding CC; Dan Rogers of Wykagyl CC.

MetGCSA Committee Chairs Here to Help

We've provided a list of each of the MetGCSA's 2020 committee chairs, including their phone numbers and emails. Please feel free to contact any of them with questions, comments, or helpful suggestions.

Awards Committee

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kenbenoit1@gmail.com
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Club Relations Committee

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Cell 914-760-3575

Communications Committee

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914-835-3205 / Cell 914-760-3331

Dan Rogers (Advertising)

Wykagyl CC
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Cell 914-400-5918

Aaron Crouse (Website)

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Bill Cygan (Website)

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Fulling Elected 84th President of GCSAA

Members Elect New Board of Directors at 2020 Annual Meeting

John R. Fulling Jr., CGCS, grounds and facilities manager at Kalamazoo (Mich.) Country Club, was elected to a one-year term as president of the GCSAA at the association's annual meeting January 30, held in conjunction with the Golf Industry Show in Orlando. He is the 84th president in the association's history.

Fulling served as vice president of the association in 2019 and has been a member of the association's board of directors since 2013. A 30-year member of GCSAA, Fulling is also a member and past president of the Michigan GCSA.

Since 1993, Fulling has served as the superintendent at Kalamazoo Country Club. Before that, he served as superintendent at Berrien Hills Country Club in Benton Harbor, MI, and as a course superintendent at Medinah (IL) Country Club.

He has a turfgrass management degree from Kishwaukee College in Malta, IL, and previously studied music performance at Northern Illinois University in DeKalb.

Addressing the group, Fulling thanked the membership delegates for their trust. "I will do everything in my power to not let you down," he told them. "We have a lot of great initiatives going forward to serve members, advance the profession, and bring young people into the game. That's our mission. That's what we are going to do."

Fulling succeeds past president Rafael Barajas, CGCS, who served as GCSAA president in 2019. Barajas will continue on the board as immediate past president.

GCSAA Board of Directors at a Glance

President

John R. Fulling Jr., CGCS, grounds and facilities manager at Kalamazoo (Mich.) Country Club

Vice President

Mark F. Jordan, CGCS, natural resource leader at Westfield Country Club in Westfield Center, OH



John R. Fulling Jr., CGCS

Secretary/Treasurer

Kevin P. Breen, CGCS, golf course superintendent at La Rinconada Country Club in Los Gatos, CA

Directors

- T.A. Barker, CGCS, superintendent at Fore Lakes Golf Course, Taylorsville, UT
- Douglas D. Dykstra, CGCS, golf course superintendent at White Mountain Country Club, Pinetop, AZ
- Paul L. Carter, CGCS, at Bear Trace at Harrison Bay in Harrison, TN
- Kevin P. Sunderman, director of grounds at Isla Del Sol Yacht & Country Club, St. Petersburg, FL
- Jeff L. White, CGCS, superintendent at Indian Hills Country Club, Mission Hills, KS

Immediate Past President

Rafael Barajas, CGCS, the director of golf course operations at Boca Grove Golf and Tennis Club in Boca Raton, FL

Darren J. Davis, CGCS, golf course superintendent at Olde Florida Golf Club in Naples, FL, retires from the board after serving the past year as immediate past president.

MetGCSA Holds Its Own

by Michael J. Brunelle, CGCS

Orlando didn't offer the warmth GCSAA Golf Championship contestants were expecting, but even with the cool and blustery conditions, it beat the Metropolitan area at the end of January. And it didn't stop me from wearing shorts for every round!

Held in conjunction with the 2020 Golf Industry Show, the golf events were contested this year at four of Orlando's true tests of golf: The Ritz-Carlton Golf Club, Grand Lakes; Shingle Creek Golf Club; and the two ChampionsGate Golf Club courses (National & International). Played over the course of three days, the golf events ran from January 25 -28 and offered an excellent opportunity for networking, friendly competition, and a lot of laughs.

Though many of us from the MetGCSA were trying to replicate a swing we haven't used since October, we were able to sprinkle the leader boards with some noteworthy scores.

In the Four-Ball Championship

In Flight I, Tom Ashfield of Quaker Ridge Golf Club and Andy Drohen of Koch Turf & Ornamentals were able to pull off a tie for 7th finish in the Gross Division.

Flight II had a number of MetGCSA members on the leader board with new member Mike Dachowski of Shelter Harbor Golf Club and his brother, Matt, finishing 2nd Low Net & Gross. Tom Weinert of Plant Food Company and Mike Brunelle of Upper Montclair Country Club weren't too far behind the Dachowski duo in a tie for 4th Gross and 5th Net.

In the third flight, Blake Halderman of Brae Burn Country Club and Dave Moffett of Mosholu Golf Course finished in a tie for 10th.

We did have a couple of pin seekers during the Four-ball Championship. In Flight II, Jason Meersman of The Patterson Club had two closest to the pins (5' 4" & 10' 6") and in Flight III, Justin Carlson of Winged Foot Golf Club also had another shot close to the pin at 10' 2. Good luck in preparations of the U.S. Open this year, Justin.

In the National Championship

Though none of our players took home the National Championship trophy, we did have a couple MetGCSA superintendents make a respectable finish at ChampionsGate. Jason Meersman of The Patterson Club tied for 17th, and Tom Ashfield from Quaker Ridge Golf Club finished in a tie for 35th. Congratulations to both of you.

Deron Zandt claimed his second National Title at the Golf Championships. The superintendent from Pine Tree Golf Club in Boynton Beach, FL, battled through the back nine holes to take home the trophy with a final two-day tally of -5 (139). That's some golf right there, and plenty for Jason and Tom to think about going into next year.

In the Golf Classic

More than a few Met supers made their mark on the Golf Classic. Steve Whipple of West Point Golf Course placed 22nd Gross in the Classic I Flight, while John Carlone of the Meadow Brook Club finished tied for 9th Gross and 29th Net in the Classic II Flight.

In the Classic III Flight, Mike Brunelle of Upper Montclair Country Club placed 6th Net and 11th Gross. Our MetGCSA President, Rob Alonzi, of Fenway Golf Club finished in a tie for 4th low Net, bringing home a plate.

In the Senior I Division, Tim Gerzabeck of Helena Chemical Company, placed 2nd in the Net Division, while in the Senior II Division, Jim Swiatlowski of Montammy Golf Club was the highest place finisher in the Met coming in 2nd in both Gross and Net respectively. Well done, Jim!

Special Thanks

We would like to send out a special thank you to the GCSAA staff for their efforts in putting this special event together and to all of the sponsors who make this event possible, especially the Toro Company for their generous partnership in being the title sponsor for the past 26 years.

Congratulations to all who participated in this year's golf championships. This annual preconference golf event offers a great opportunity to not only play some of the country's best courses, but also to network with superintendents from across the U.S. and around the world.

Next year, the GCSAA Golf Championships will be held in Palm Springs, CA. I hope to see you all there!

Mike Brunelle is the director of grounds at Upper Montclair Country Club in Clifton, NJ.

Golf Industry Show Highlights

At this year's GCSAA Education Conference, held in conjunction with the Golf Industry Show, seminar attendance was up more than 12 percent over 2019, with nearly 6,200 seminar seats filled. In addition, thousands attended complimentary sessions and panel discussions throughout the week. Events included a full-size replica of a maintenance facility on the trade show floor and the Drone Zone.

A total of 12,000 attended the two-day trade show, which hosted more than 500 exhibitors covering more than 450,000 square feet of exhibit space at the Orange County Convention Center. In 2020, the Golf Course Builders Association of America (GCBA) and American Society of Golf Course Architects (ASGCA) both increased their commitment to the event as presenting partners. With the involvement of GCBA and ASGCA, all attendees in Orlando had the opportunity to experience enhanced education and information that furthered the close links between the design, construction, and management of golf courses.

The 2021 Golf Industry Show will head to Las Vegas, NV, January 30 – February 4 at the new Las Vegas Convention Center.

President's Message continued from page 1

director of the New York Golf Course Foundation (https://twitter.com/NYS_GolfBMP/status/1222861207910146050).

A Little Commitment Goes a Long Way

I believe the goals we've established can be obtained with your commitment to helping our association remain vibrant in the industry. Thank you to all who took the time to attend this year's Turfgrass Advocacy Day in Albany, NY. I hope to see more of you attend next year and support this and other legislative issues that have an impact on the health and welfare of our industry.

Let us also support our goal of improved meeting attendance by signing up, if you haven't already, for the Dave Mahoney Two-Ball Qualifier on April 27 at Rye Golf Club. This is a great venue, and as always, this event promises to be a good time.

I look forward to a productive term ahead. Please feel free to contact me with any thoughts you might have on how we might enhance any aspect of our association. Enjoy the rest of the remaining off-season. Spring will be here before you know it.

Here's to a happy and healthy 2020 season!

Rob Alonzi
MetGCSA President

MetGCSA Attendance Boom to Begin With Season Opener at Rye

by Greg Wojick

On April 27, Rye Golf Club will host the Met's season-opening event: The David Mahoney Two-Ball Championship Qualifier. Stepping forward to volunteer his facility for this popular outing is Superintendent Chip Lafferty. Hosting both a business meeting and then seven years ago, the Met's Two-Ball Qualifier, Chip is one of the members on the Met board hellbent on the idea of improving meeting participation.

"Our past presidents (and now Rob Alonzi) have strived for better attendance at our meetings. I want to do all that I can to have a record number of members come to Rye in April," says Chip. "It's the camaraderie stupid, so please put down your phones and come and play. If you can't play for some reason, then come for the social part. Stalking social media sites isn't going to do it; you have to be there in person and talk face-to-face with your colleagues!"

Chip credits the camaraderie for creating the tight bond he has with the association and hopes that others will develop the same sense of loyalty to a group that offers not just friendship, but infinite support.

"I'd like to see both new and veteran members feel welcome and drawn to participate," he says. "If you think about it, attending our monthly meetings is a mild form of giving back. Each member has their own story to share, one that may be of value to someone else. I rely on the relationships that I've made with the association as a valuable professional and personal resource," adds Chip. "And I can only hope to provide the same type of support to others as well."

Chipping Away at Course Enhancements

Chip's enthusiasm extends beyond the industry and association to his job as turf-grass manager at Rye Golf Club where he's been superintendent for the past 18 years.

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

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

In his tenure, Chip has enjoyed the challenge of updating aspects of the course to accommodate Rye's more than 30,000 rounds of golf per year while preserving some of the more distinctive course features that had been lost.

Since Met members last convened at Rye for the 2013 Two-Ball Qualifier, the club has begun an all-out effort to address the microenvironments above and below the greens. "We cut down trees around the greens and then added drainage, which allowed us to use our two existing practice putting greens to expand eight greens, add hole locations, and spread the wear-and-tear more evenly throughout the greens," says Chip.

The next task was to rebuild the putting greens, enlarging them with chipping bays and slopes consistent with what golfers will encounter on the course. "We also realigned the first tee putting green to accommodate the new location for our starter shack," explains Chip.

As if all this weren't enough, the club decided to utilize a large vacant area between the pool and the 12th hole to construct a 13,000-square-foot putting course/short game green.

Tree work continued beyond the greens to the playing areas, with identifying and removing old species of trees that had been planted in the wrong locations and eradicating invasive species that had gained a foothold on the course.

Work didn't stop there. The club also addressed several tees and combined several greens with the next hole's tee complex to give a true feel of flow.

"All in all," says Chip, "the improvements have enhanced the quality of the turf and the playing experience."

More to Chip Than Meets the Eye

If you don't know Chip, I can tell you there's a lot more to him than his course commit-



Chip Lafferty

ments. Here are a few teasers. He . . .

- Is a low-single-digit handicapper.
- Was born in Buffalo, NY.
- Moved to Orlando, FL, as a young teen where, at the age of 12, he began playing golf just about every day at nearby Sweetwater Country Club.
- Got the golf course maintenance bug after a nighttime escapade with friends, where they crashed a few carts on Sweetwater and were penalized by having to rebuild, by hand, the chipping green bunkers.
- Was hired on the Sweetwater maintenance crew at 14 after demonstrating he "had what it takes."

But how did he launch his career in the business?

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

He left Georgia Southern and returned to what he knew best: a job in golf course maintenance. He accepted a position at Sabol Point Country Club in Longwood, FL, where he received advice that eventually solidified his career path.

"The superintendent there told me to go to Lake City Community College and get a degree in Golf Course Operations," says Chip. But it wasn't until he took a position at a new grow-in outside Orlando called Alaqua Country Club that his eyes finally opened to the value of formal training.

"I worked there as an irrigation tech and spray tech and eventually second assistant before recognizing that a degree from Lake

Upcoming Events

Upcoming MetGCSA and Industry Events

City was the only way I'd ever be the 'big boss' one day."

While working toward his A.S. in Golf Course Operations, Chip had the unusual opportunity to intern in Vierumaki, Finland, at the Finnish Sports Institute, the training ground for all of the country's Olympians. Although the season was short, the summer hours were long since the sun never set during the month of June. An interesting training ground, Chip learned the ins and outs of managing turf in an all-new growing environment.

His second internship brought him back to the States and the Met area, where he worked with then Wykagyl Superintendent Steve Renzetti. "When I graduated from Lake City," says Chip, "Steve was kind enough to offer me a job as assistant superintendent." Chip worked for Steve for six years and then assumed the reigns as superintendent there for three before moving on to his current position as superintendent at Rye in 2002.

Afterhours

A people person through-and-through, Chip enjoys playing golf with his many MetGCSA friends, as well as spending time with his wife, Clare, and their four children: Jessica, 10; Mackenzie, 9 ½; Travis, 8 ½; and Matthew, 6.

"Clare is the glue that holds our family—no, our whole world—together," says Chip of his partner of 17 years. "She and the kids are everything to me." Also an important part of the family is their dog, Larkin, who accompanies Chip on his morning and afternoon walks on the course.

"Rye has been great place to work," says Chip, replaying in his mind just how much the course has evolved. "And the list of possible improvements never seems to end."

Be sure to join Chip and your fellow association members for this season-opening event—and become a part of the Met's boom in attendance.

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

2020 MGA Green Chairman Seminar & Arthur P. Weber MGA Club Environmental Leaders in Golf Award Luncheon

Thursday, March 19

Garden City Country Club
Garden City, NY

The annual Green Chairman Education series is tailored for club superintendents, professionals, green chairmen, and club officials, and discusses current issues and trends that are emerging for courses in the Met Area. A highlight of the meeting is the presentation of the Arthur P. Weber MGA Club Environmental Leaders in Golf Award, which recognizes an MGA member club that demonstrates environmental leadership through their efforts in golf course maintenance, construction, education, and research.

National Golf Day

Monday, May 4 – Wednesday, May 6

Capitol Hill, Washington, D.C.

In its 13th year, National Golf Day offers the important opportunity to meet with members of Congress, the Executive Branch, and federal agencies to discuss golf's 15,000 diverse businesses, two million jobs impacted, tax revenue creation, and tourism value.

On May 5, the day before the main event, superintendents and other golf leaders are once again invited to participate in a Community Service Project on the National Mall. The day will include turf restoration projects between the Lincoln Memorial and the Washington Monument. There will be opportunities to lay irrigation pipe along the Reflecting Pool, mow near the Vietnam Veterans Memorial, and lay sod near the Washington Monument.

Consider coming out to lend a helping hand and to advocate on behalf of golf's interests with our country's lawmakers.

25th Annual Rutgers Turfgrass Research Golf Classic

Monday, May 4

Fiddler's Elbow Country Club
Bedminster, NJ

Plan now to join fellow industry professionals for this annual fundraiser and a day of golf, education, networking, and fun. Your participation helps fund research grants, student scholarships, equipment, and special projects for the Turfgrass Research, Teaching, and Extension programs at the School of Environmental and Biological Sciences/Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey.

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

The 16th Annual Dr. Joseph Troll Turf Classic

Monday, May 11

Westchester Country Club
Rye, NY

This year's UMass Alumni Turf Group fundraiser will be hosted by Westchester Country Club in support of turf education and research at the University of Massachusetts.

Please plan to attend this worthy fundraiser. Entry forms and additional information are available at www.alumniturfgroup.com.

Rutgers Turfgrass Research Field Day: Golf & Fine Turf

Tuesday, July 28

Rutgers Horticultural Farm II
New Brunswick, NJ

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

MetGCSA Events

Dave Mahoney Two-Ball Qualifier

Monday, April 27

Rye Golf Club, Rye, NY
Host: Chip Lafferty

Superintendent/Guest Tournament

Thursday, May 28

Fenway Golf Club
Scarsdale, NY
Host: Rob Alonzi

Six Prizes Awarded in Annual Bill Caputi Scholarship Raffle

This year's Annual Bill Caputi Scholarship Raffle, held at the January 15 Winter Seminar, raised an admirable sum for the Met's Scholarship Fund and awarded \$4,000 in cash prizes to six lucky ticket holders.

The raffle is the prime source of the scholarship awards we distribute to deserving Met member dependents each year. Many thanks to all who contributed and also to those who sold tickets for this worthwhile fundraiser.

Congratulations to our \$2,000-grand-prize winner, **John Gallagher** of Racebrook Country Club. John purchased the ticket through the website.

The other lucky ticketholders were:

\$750 Second Prize Winner

Brian Bontemps, Noble Turf. Brian bought the winning ticket from The Golf Club of Purchase Superintendent Aaron Crouse.

\$500 Third Prize Winner

Marc Boulet, Wykagyl Country Club. Marc bought the winning ticket from Wykagyl Country Club Superintendent Dan Rogers.

\$250 Prize Winners

• **Frank DiRende**, Pasquale Ristorante. His ticket was sold by Mike Cook of The Care of Trees.

• **Vinny Graziano**. Vinny bought the winning ticket from Mike Cook of The Care of Trees.

• **Jim Schell**, Oak Hills Park Golf Club. Jim bought his ticket from Burning Tree Country Club Superintendent Steve Wickstrom.



Members on the Move

- **Justin Adams** is the new superintendent at Westchester Hills Golf Club in White Plains, NY. Previous position: Assistant superintendent at Upper Montclair Country Club in Clifton, NJ.
- **Mark Chant** is now a territory manager with Harrell's on Long Island. Previous position: Sales consultant with Turf Science of Connecticut.
- **Aaron Crouse** is the new superintendent at Golf Club of Purchase in Purchase, NY. Previous position: Superintendent at Westchester Hills Golf Club in White Plains, NY.
- **Michael Hill** is a new assistant superintendent at Ridgewood Country Club in Danbury, CT. Previous position: Assistant superintendent at Innis Arden Golf Club in Old Greenwich, CT.
- **Jim Seaman** is now a territory manager with Harrell's in New York's Capital Region. Previous position: Superintendent at Shaker Ridge Country Club in Loudonville, NY.

Retired

Please join us in congratulating the following members on their retirement:

- **Glenn Gallion** has retired from Wilfred MacDonald, which is no longer in the golf industry business.
- **Mary Jo Kennedy** retired in January from her position as chapter executive for the Connecticut Association of Golf Course Superintendents.
- **Joe Stahl** has retired from his position as Sales Director for Harrell's

Kudos!

- **Jim Pavonetti** of Fairview Country Club in Greenwich, CT, was first runner up for the Natural Resource Conservation Award, one of the 2019 Environmental Leaders in Golf Awards (E jiiLGA). Way to go, Jim!
- **Grace-Marie Chapin**, wife of Redding Country Club Superintendent Brett Chapin, has been appointed the new chapter executive for the Connecticut Association of Golf Course Superintendents. Congratulations, Grace-Marie!

Condolences

- We would like to extend our deepest sympathy to MetGCSA Executive Secretary **Susan O'Dowd** on the passing of her brother Frank O'Dowd on February 3. He was 56. Please know that our thoughts are with you and your family, Susan.
 - We would also like to offer our condolences to Class LA member **Mike Reeb** and his wife, Jaymie, on the passing of their son, Tyler, on October 14. He was 34.
- Donations may be made to the irrevocable TYLER M. REEB TRUST F/B/O HAILEY B. REEB, care of Michael C. Reeb Trustee, 456 Chandler Road, Chester VT 05143. Expressions of sympathy or questions for the trust fund can be sent directly to the Reeb family at reebfamily@gmail.com.

Patron Directory

Patrons listed on this page are supporting our association. You are encouraged to support them.

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