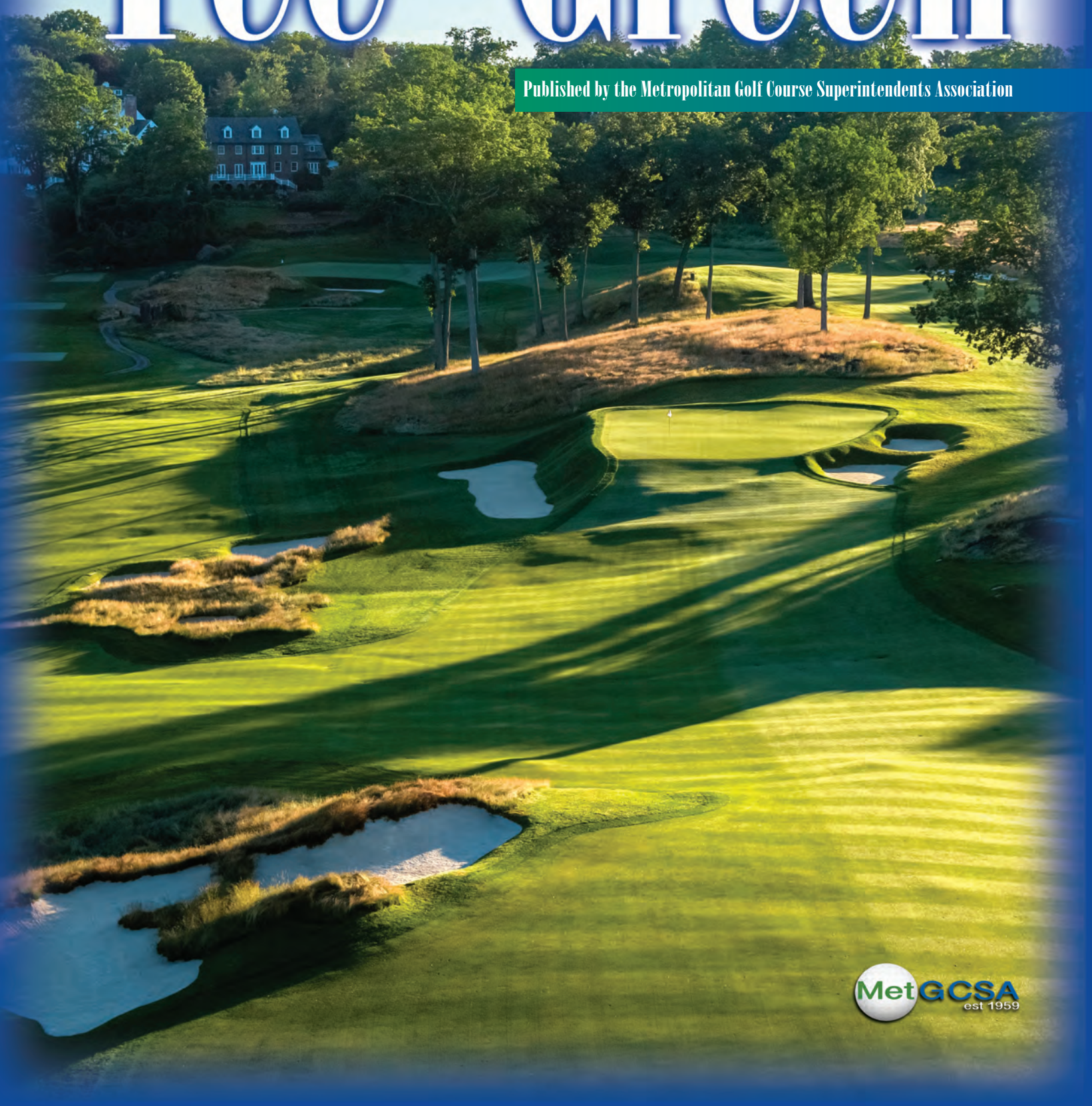


Tee To Green

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President's Message

It Takes an Army—and an Association

Twelve months ago, the entire Met area was dealing with record rainfall. We had more than 15 inches of rain in Redding in a 14-day period. With all the challenges superintendents face during stretches of hot, wet weather, it was a trying time for many of us pressured to make just-the-right decisions about plant health applications, mowing frequency, and course closures or delays. These decisions were made all the more stressful when memberships failed to understand the critical need to protect the grass when it's most vulnerable.

Fast forward to July 2022. Many clubs had just recovered from winter injury when we found ourselves in a widespread drought. Rainfall slowed during June, and sunny days with high winds and low humidity took over. (Great for sunbathing but not growing grass!) Superintendents at clubs without access to city water have had to make some tough decisions about which areas to cut back on irrigation, while others have struggled with whether or not to purchase city water at a high cost.

Of course, the challenges don't stop there. Dealing with a drought and now higher-than-average temperatures, has begun to take a toll on staff, especially when they've been working 12-hour-plus days watering and grooming the course to member satisfaction. Without any relief, employees become tired and easily distracted, or as a local superintendent described it: They develop "August eyes."

This is the time to put your creativity to the test. You might try cross-training your staff, for instance, so that the watering, or whatever the task, continues, while other staff members take a much-needed break. And know that even when the going gets impossibly tough, it pays to project a positive, can-do attitude. A good—or bad—attitude can be contagious.

Support Is Just a Phone Call—or Event—Away

As an association, we all deal with similar



Brett Chapin
MetGCSA President

challenges, whether they're agronomic or related to personnel, member relations, or another issue. If it's happening to you, you can be sure someone, somewhere in the MetGCSA has faced a similar issue—or at least knows someone who has. Of all the benefits our association offers, none is more valuable than knowing that anyone in our directory will answer your call and offer assistance in any way they can.

Even if you've never met the member before, don't let your ego get in the way of dialing the number. If you're not sure where to start, call me or Mike McCall, our executive director, and we will drop everything to talk to you—except maybe the hose, if I'm in the middle of watering!

Our association's social and golf events are also great opportunities to share information and hash out concerns. The hot topic at this year's Summer Social was, of course, the dry conditions. But the 100-plus attendees were also able to put the day's challenges aside and enjoy a wonderful evening catching up with friends and their spouses who many haven't seen since the

continued on page 6

A full-page background image of a golf course. In the foreground, a golfer wearing a dark jacket, light-colored pants, and a cap is walking across a green, holding a long-handled tool (a TDR) vertically. To the left, a yellow flag on a pole is visible. The background features a large, leafy tree and a distant view of a golf course under a blue sky with scattered white clouds.

Feature

The Ins and Outs of Creating Maintenance Standards for Your Course

by Jim Pavonetti, CGCS

Either under the irrigation or greens management sections, or both, include how you manage moisture. Things like TDRs (shown here), evapotranspiration gauges, weather stations, subsurface moisture meters, etc. will show how much thought and effort is going into your programs.



olf courses, like any other business, serve thousands of customers each year and should have a formal set of standards and long-range plans to guide daily operations and maintain customer satisfaction.

What's more, developing maintenance standards for your golf course can be an effective way to show your customers—your golfers—what goes into maintaining their golf course. It can also identify current and future needs and allow course leadership to budget for them.

Though many golf courses have some sort of maintenance standards in place, a fair share of them aren't documented or based on golfer feedback. If creating formal maintenance standards seems like more trouble than it's worth, read on. This article will highlight the many benefits of documenting your maintenance standards; it will provide an outline of what to include in your document; and it will detail how they should be established and administered.

Why Create Maintenance Standards?

One of the reasons for documenting your maintenance standards is to clearly define the club's current expectations and match them with the maintenance procedures. Because these expectations are defined by direct feedback from the players and other club-affiliated professionals, this document becomes a very valuable tool in determining whether time and money spent in maintaining certain aspects of the golf course are actually the areas most important to the players. If you discover you're a bit off track, you can adjust your priorities.

Another advantage to creating formal maintenance standards for your course is to provide a lasting guide sheet for green committees that come and go. New committees may have agendas that don't match the goals of the membership—or the budget established. Formal maintenance standards can help keep committees on the straight and narrow.

Finally, maintenance standards will also protect the operating budget. Since each part

of the operation will be listed with labor and other associated costs, the document becomes helpful in illustrating how a proposed budget cut will affect playing conditions. The document can also help forecast future budgets as certain maintenance goals become more important to members and decisionmakers at the course.

How Does Creating Maintenance Standards Benefit You and the Club?

- **Benefits to the superintendent.** When defining your maintenance standards, you're also defining what the next level of maintenance will be and what's involved in getting there. By creating and presenting formal standards with an eye toward future improvement, you will be recognized as a golf course manager who is not only forward-thinking, but also fully capable of leading any course-improvement initiative as soon as the resources become available.
- **Benefits to the club or facility.** The club or facility benefits by having every aspect of the maintenance operation defined. If the club hits hard times, it has a clear roadmap

to what things cost and what the operation can live without until it rights the ship. If funding becomes available, a list of potential improvements and required funding will already exist. Any improvements on the list should have been prioritized beforehand by the Green Committee.

- **Benefits to the green committees and green chairmen.** Committee members come and go. So do green chairmen. When their term is up, what better way to quickly acclimate a new committee member or chairman to the golf course maintenance operation than provide them with your formal maintenance standards document? Spelling out future goals and daily maintenance functions are certain to smooth the way for a quick and easy transition.

- **Benefits to board members and presidents.** Like committee members, every few years a new president and board members will cycle onto the board. With golf course maintenance department standards and goals clearly defined, the board will quickly get up to speed on your department's daily operations and priorities and hold you and your department in high regard. After all,



Each task should be outlined in the manual. Include equipment used, staff numbers, and any other materials needed.



Don't forget to include things like soil testing, ISTRC testing (shown here), and water testing.

how many other departments in a club have their operating procedures spelled out in a formal document? When it comes time to decide which department's budget requests or capital improvements get approved, which department is going to be poised for the additional funding?

• **Benefits to the course finances and finance committees.** Finance committees all have one thing in common, no matter what level the club or course: They all hate surprises. Having defined standards and short- and long-term goals will help finance committees plan and forecast for the future. Every finance committee will appreciate knowing what their golf course will need several years in advance.

Who's Involved in Setting the Standards?

One mistake you want to avoid making is creating standards in a vacuum; in other words, setting standards without seeking the feedback of the people who matter most: your golfing members, who, of course, include your green chairman and committee and oftentimes your club president and board of directors.

You can gather player feedback by way of actual surveys or even your daily interaction with players while on the course. It never hurts to keep a notepad handy to record their comments and observations. Couple player feedback with green committee and board member notes and you will have your main source of information to get started on your document.

Other individuals you might call on for

guidance include your assistants, interns, staff members, equipment managers, consultants, USGA agronomists, architects, men's and women's golf committees, and golf professionals. Of course, you don't want to get mired down in too many opinions, so pick and choose who you think might offer the best counsel. Among my favorites are the agronomists and golf pros. Golf course agronomists know, firsthand, golfer expectations, and when they visit your course, they note the cultural practices needed to meet those expectations. They are also helpful in identifying and adding credibility to long-range improvement projects. Golf pros are the individuals who meet and greet your golfers on a regular basis, so who is more aware of common issues and concerns, as well as golfer skill levels, which might dictate conditioning?

What Do You Include in Your Maintenance Standards Document?

While there aren't any hard-and-fast rules for formatting your standards, you might want to include a cover page, table of contents, mission statement and introduction, and sections on the main areas of the golf course, including greens, tees, fairways, rough, bunkers, ponds, trees, and any other area you feel is worthy of documenting. Here are the sections I've created for Fairview's maintenance standards document.

Mission Statement/Introduction

I like to start off with a mission statement and an introduction or narrative on the

purpose of the document. But it's also helpful to include some specifics: a brief description of the course architecture and turfgrasses used, as well as a basic idea of how the course will be maintained. You might also introduce your management staff, such as your assistants and equipment managers to name a few possibilities.

This is also a good time to mention that the standards are not meant to be a fixed set of guidelines. Because things change over time, the standards should be revisited and updated at least every other year. Achievements can be noted and new standards and goals can be set.

The Main Turf Areas on the Golf Course: Greens, Tees, Fairways, and Rough

For turf area sections of the course, there are a number of standards to consider. You might start with the number of employees each task takes, the equipment that is currently used, necessary cultural practices, such as mowing heights and frequencies, including time of day and when it needs to be completed to accommodate play.

Example: *The greens are mowed each day using three staff members. The height of cut is .125". We use Jacobsen Eclipse mowers set up with grooved front rollers to complete this task. The greens are mowed starting at 6 a.m. to accommodate the 7 a.m. first tee time.*

This can be helpful in justifying tee sheet start times and labor requirements in order to make it all happen.

For greens, in particular, other cultural practices to include would be when and how you aerate, specifying depth and the type and size of the tine, as well as whether the course is closed during the process.

I like to use an example of an ISTRC report to illustrate why we aerate as much as we do. If you use turf fans or subair-type systems, you should include what the parameters are for using them.

Example: *We use fans at night when temperatures are above 65, and during the day when the dewpoint averages about 69.*

Note topdressing procedures: What kind of topdressing is used, how much, and how is it incorporated into the holes? You might also include similar specifications for verticutting, grooming, and rolling.

Discuss how these areas are irrigated (hand water, automatic, etc.), and spell out how you judge how much to irrigate (sensors, scouting, TDRs, E.T.).

It's also important to include standards, such as speed, smoothness, firmness, turf density, color, and pest thresholds. You will undoubtedly want to include other standards depending on whether you are referring to greens, tees, fairways, or rough.



Cultural practices should be included. Aeration, verticutting, topdressing, venting, and similar processes should be part of your manual content.

Bunkers

For bunkers, it helps to start by including the frequency of raking, as well as how you rake—footprints vs. full raking, for instance. Specify whether you are using the traditional method of raking or the Aussie method. Next, note how many employees are required to rake and what time the general raking needs to be completed to accommodate play.

You should also specify the standard sand depths of your bunkers and how often you check those depths. In addition, note the desired moisture content and firmness of the sand, as well as how often bunkers are edged and what equipment is used.

Water Features

Ponds, streams, lakes, bays, etc., are other aspects of many golf courses that require maintenance. You should discuss how you are protecting these water features: For instance, are you using weed and algae control methods, such as aerators or diffusers, fish, dyes? What are you doing to maintain buffer zones?

Irrigation

Another critical component of course maintenance is your irrigation system. It can be helpful to include descriptions of the current control system, piping, sprinkler types, age, pump station, sensors, TDRs, weather station, etc., as well as any work associated with its upkeep. For instance, how often do you audit the coverage and efficiency of the system? How often do you edge the sprinklers and valve boxes?

Drainage

Like irrigation, a section on your general drainage infrastructure is useful in pinpointing areas that will require time and money to renovate. Include drainage systems on greens, tees, fairways, and rough. Note the larger catch basins and culvert piping that all the six- and four-inch pipes run to. How old are these pipes? What is their condition? How often are you edging all the inlets?

Landscaping

Landscaping is another golf course feature that requires a high level of maintenance. It's useful, therefore, to specify practices needed to properly maintain the beds, shrubs, native areas, and walls and hardscapes surrounding the clubhouse and throughout the course.

It's also helpful to acquire proper labor and budget dollars. Note how much labor is required to keep landscaped beds maintained and the conditions of the current hardscapes, walls, or other similar items.

If you have native areas, note their composition and the programs you have in place to maintain them at their best. If you have a predominance of native areas, you may want to spell out your maintenance standards for these areas in a separate section.

Trees

Trees are an important part of the golf course landscape that require ongoing maintenance and attention. Before setting standards of tree care, it's wise to start with a tree inventory and then a policy for future tree planting and removal. As we know, poorly placed trees can seriously affect turf quality, particularly on greens and tees. At

the same time, feature trees that are important to hole design should be noted and preserved.

Standards should also be established for such ongoing maintenance practices as cabling, limb and root pruning, pest management, and any other tree maintenance concerns.

Roads & Paths

Document your current roads and paths, including the materials used to pave them and any intentions for relocating, adding, removing roads or paths.

Equipment Maintenance and Replacement

I like to divide this section into two parts: equipment maintenance and fleet replacement.

Fleet replacement: In this section, first include the equipment that is owned versus leased. Then create a five-year replacement schedule and mention what will be purchased and what will be leased. Of course, include costs, what the new equipment will do to improve efficiency and course conditions, and the age of the equipment it will be replacing—if, in fact, it will be replacing something. And will the new equipment save labor or require additional labor?

Equipment maintenance: In this section, include recordkeeping, reel sharpening standards, back-lapping, servicing, tools, and shop equipment (lifts, tire mounting machine, grinders, hydraulic hose makers, etc.). Also include any computer programs you might be using for inventory and repair/maintenance tracking.

Environmental Measures

In an era dominated by public environmental concerns, every superintendent should have environmental standards spelled out for their golf course maintenance operation. In this section, it pays to include all of your environmental initiatives, such as the Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary Program, the Groundwater Guardian Program, and any case studies/projects that you have initiated on the course. List buffer zones, no-spray zones, wildlife habitat, nesting boxes, water body protection measures, and pollinator enhancement and protection.

You can also note best management practices, including chemical safety data sheet locations and how often they are updated, spill kit locations, mix-and-load areas and how they are maintained, and anything else that could fall into this category. If you use a computer program to track chemical and fertilizer applications and inventory, you should include that here as well.

A facility BMP plan can be created easily, using the GCSAA's new template. Go to



Include all the detail work, when describing the daily setup of the golf course.

<https://facilitybmp.gcsaa.org/> for access to the BMP tool. You may want to create a separate section for your BMPs, but you can reference it in this section.

Maintenance Facility

Include a section on your maintenance facility. Be sure to mention the age, size, function, equipment washdown system, pesticide and fertilizer storage, safety, organization, shelving, job board, and facilities.

Staff

Staff, the most important asset of any maintenance operation, deserves its own set of standards. Here, note such things as the size of your staff, their level of experience, and whether or not they're supplied with uniforms, training, annual reviews, and educational opportunities. Also note any safety standards you've put in place.

It's also wise to include a seven-day staffing plan. If you're seeking your GCSAA Certification, you're required to provide this information already in your portfolio section. This will justify your daily staffing needs to committees and boards. Include any computer programs you might be using to track labor, post job boards, payroll, etc.

Notes

Cap off each section of your standards document with a page for notes on any progress made or new needs that have cropped up in that standards category. This will give your facility direction on what needs to be done, what could be done, and how much it is going to cost. It will serve you well when it comes time for your two-year updating.

Presenting Your Standards

Developing maintenance standards clearly requires time and effort, so it is worth devoting the extra effort to presenting them in a professional manner. Adding high-quality photos, for instance, can enhance your document, making it more engaging for the reader, while at the same time informing

readers about any unfamiliar maintenance practices or documenting the need for future improvements, such as added drainage in an area. A picture, after all, is worth a thousand words!

Once all your facts, figures, and photos are compiled, I recommend distributing spiral-bound color copies of your maintenance standards to the Green Committee members and Board members and also having a PDF on the club's website or your department website for easy access.

I take it a step further and have a page on the club's website that states the course conditions and rules for the day. I also use this page to mention special course maintenance or project news. I post the link to the maintenance standards PDF there with a brief summary of what it is and the reason to have it.

In the End

Like any well-run business, successful golf course operations have an idea of where they're headed and how they'll get there. There are a wide range of standards out there, depending on your course size and budget. There may be sections mentioned in this article that don't pertain to your operation or other standards that you'd like to add. Feel free to make any adjustments you see fit.

In every case, establishing a formal set of golf course maintenance standards helps take your course in the right direction by managing expectations, establishing necessary resources and future needs, and ensuring continuity in management objectives from year to year. Not only will you elevate your department's status in the eyes of your course leadership and golfers, but you'll also have a clear roadmap for future success.

Jim Pavonetti, a member of the Tee to Green Editorial Committee, is superintendent of Fairview Country Club in Greenwich, CT.

President's Message continued from page 1
start of Covid.

Hopefully, you were also able to enjoy a little R&R at the Parent/Child Tournament at Mosholu, which is always great fun and a great opportunity to share a part of your profession with family members. Unfortunately, due to some rescheduling of events and the dry conditions, we decided to cancel the Family Picnic in August and roll it into the West Point Football game in November. Keep your eye out for the details on this great event.

As we expected, the Invitational Tournament at The Stanwich Club, hosted by Scott Niven, is a sell-out. So next up is the Poa Tournament at Apawamis, hosted by Mike McCormick. He has done some amazing work at the club over the past six years. Be sure to check it out.

Winston Churchill once wrote to Eleanor Roosevelt, "You know one works better when one has a chance to enjoy a little leisure now and then." We all would do well to heed Churchill's advice. Put yourself and your staff members at the top of your to-do list, and schedule even just a momentary break from your frantic pace. You will, no doubt, return to your work with a renewed focus and a healthier perspective.

Brett Chapin
MetGCSA President

Member News

Summer Socializing

*I*t's been a very tough summer for everyone. And for some, a tough few years. What a wonderful break from the stress of the season was this year's Summer Social! Orienta Beach Club always offers spectacular evening views of the Sound, a delicious lobster buffet, and music to get you in a summertime mood—not to mention focus on enjoying and catching up with industry friends! This year, there was a wonderful reggae band, specialty cocktails, and firepits to end the evening as if we were all on an exotic vacation—even if just for a few hours. If you didn't make it this year, we missed you. Make sure we see you at the next Met event!
~ Carolyn Nielsen



Greg Wojick, Tony Girardi, Larry Pakkala, and Scott Niven



Cocktail hour at Orienta



Carolyn Nielsen and Shayna & Rich Apgar



Bob Nielsen and Yve & Ken Gentile



Chuck Alpern, Hunter Coulthard & Kayla Hamilton, and Alexa Mennuti & James White



The Summer Social by night



David Dudones, Brian Gjelsvik, and Rob Alonzi

Birth

Congratulations to Apawamis Club Superintendent **Mike McCormick** and his wife, Jamie, on the birth of their 7 lb. 11 oz. baby boy, Miles Timothy McCormick on July 11.

In Sympathy

Our condolences to Century Country Club Superintendent **Kevin Seibel** and his family on the passing of his father, Norman H. Seibel, on July 17. Norman was 81 years old.

Woodway's Anthony Garzia Hosts Successful Superintendent/Guest

by David Lippman

MetGCSA returned to Woodway Country Club in Darien, CT, on May 23 for the Superintendent/Guest Tournament. Ten years had passed since the Met last made an appearance at the 106-year-old club, which by all accounts, was in superb condition for the Met's special event.

Property Superintendent Anthony Garzia and his staff were poised to show off the work completed in recent years to restore the classic charm Woodway is so well known for. The very popular sloping parkland design was revitalized, allowing for breathtaking site lines and a return to its golden age playability. As contestants saw, Woodway's challenges lie not in pure distance, but in strategic shot-making opportunities and challenging large greens with beguiling, yet subtle breaks.

Golden Age Roots

Woodway shares a story similar to many "golden age" clubs in the Met area. In the late 1890s, a group of golf enthusiasts created a rudimentary 6-hole course on Darien farmland. Over the next 20 years, as the group expanded and golf gained in popularity, the club splintered into what would become the Wee Burn Country Club and Woodway Country Club, which moved to a property of its own.

In 1916, Woodway's founding members purchased a dairy farm on Darien's Hoyt Street. Willie Park Jr., the famed golf pro, greenskeeper, Open champion, and a prolific designer in the region at the time, was tapped to create the new club's vision. The result was a course revered for its rolling hills and exceptional putting surfaces.

A parcel of beachfront property was purchased to establish Woodway Beach Club. Coupled with a popular paddle sports program and an exceptional clubhouse, Woodway offers its 600-plus members a full family country club experience.

South Jersey Start

Anthony was raised in the South Jersey town of Delran, just across the Delaware

River from Philadelphia. Growing up, Anthony lived near the now-closed Willow Brook Golf Course. He was drawn to the beauty of the property and became curious about what went into the day-to-day management. He took a job on the maintenance crew as a 16-year-old high school student.

After graduating high school, Anthony enrolled at Delaware Valley College to study environmental science with a concentration in turfgrass management. His first internship took him to the famed Plainfield Country Club, where Anthony got his first taste of high-end golf course management. It was his next internship, however, that proved pivotal in kickstarting his impressive career path.

Anthony would spend the next 13 years at the legendary Pine Valley Golf Club. After a successful internship there, Anthony was asked to return a second summer. The second summer turned into an offer for a full-time second assistant position upon graduation. Then two years later, in 2010, Anthony's hard work was recognized with a promotion to first assistant.

Four years later, he was tapped to manage from tee to green the club's short course, which is a fabled part of the Pine Valley experience.

Then in 2016, Rick Christian, Pine Valley's superintendent, brought Anthony in to be his senior first assistant. This promotion put Anthony on the front lines of the daily operations for the entire property.

It was his experience at Pine Valley that gave Anthony the confidence to move to Woodway in the fall of 2018. "When you've worked at Pine Valley, you've seen just about everything," says Anthony.

Hitting the Ground Running

Anthony jumped right into his role as property superintendent by continuing Woodway's long-term golf course improvement plan. "The club made it clear that bunker restoration was a priority and funds were ready and waiting," says Anthony.

He wasted no time in securing McDonald and Sons to begin the bunker restoration. The club then signed on architect Bruce



Anthony Garzia

Hepner to supervise the project. Hepner had completed a similar project at The Piping Rock Club on Long Island.

By August 2019, less than six months after taking the job, Anthony broke ground on relining and reshaping most of the course's bunkers. But the work didn't stop there. With construction already mobilized, Anthony and Hepner embarked on a tee renovation plan that included squaring up and aligning the tee boxes for a more connected feel hole to hole. The project also included raising the 10th green two-and-a-half feet to increase pin locations. Two additional greenside bunkers were installed on the 10th green, which had been part of Willie Park Jr.'s original design.

This project also included strategic tree removal and native area installations, bringing back the original vistas from the 10th tee, as well as the sweeping view from the 7th tee, which offers one of the best views on the property.

This leg of the project also included moving the site of the original golf course "dump" from the center of the property to an area where exposure to players would be minimal. "This, we really knocked out of the park," says Anthony. "While relocating the dump, we lowered 11 and 7 tees, and everything blended beautifully!"

Work also went into restoring the first hole area. Once utilizing two separate greens that could be rotated, the extra green was eliminated, bringing the hole back to its original design. Next to the first tee complex (on the right side of the club's main driveway) is a short game area which was revitalized. Plans are also in the works to redo the driving range area, which is located on the left side of the main entranceway. "One thing very important to me is the initial impression as you drive into the property," Anthony says.

Winning Scores at MetGCSA Superintendent/Guest

by Zach Brooks

With an 8- to 10-year master plan in place, work on the course has only just begun. Soon, three more tee complexes will be renovated, and drainage work will be completed in some of the lower lying areas. But as of now, the club will pivot towards a large-scale clubhouse addition that will include updated "outdoor" amenities designed to enhance the post-round experience for players.

"The new-and-improved site will include a putting green and expanded patio with outdoor firepit and dining areas," explains Anthony. Members will also enjoy the striking views of the 8th and 9th holes, as well as the action on matches wrapping up on the 16th and 18th greens.

On the Home Front

Anthony and his wife, Valeri, met as youngsters in their hometown, reconnected after college, and were married in 2016. Life moved quickly in 2018, when in just a matter of months, Anthony began his new job at Woodway, he and Valeri moved from South Jersey to Norwalk, CT, and they welcomed their first child, Vienna. Anthony laughs, "All at the same time, new job, new kid, new place to live!!"

On March 21, Anthony and Valeri welcomed their second child to the family: their son, Dominic, born just before the spring rush began.

Anthony enjoys spending time on the boat he has owned since his days in South Jersey. Living in Norwalk allows him similar access to the water. "With the boat being 10 minutes away, it makes it easy to get out on the water and get a quick ride in and clear my head," Anthony says.

Anthony is a huge New York Yankees fan, a passion he shares with his wife, Valeri. They enjoy getting out to as many games in the Bronx as they can. Ironically, he is also a huge Dallas Cowboys fan! He laughs, "I was brainwashed in the '80s about America's Team."

David Lippman is VP of Sales and Operations with Westchester Turf Supply in Lincolnale, NY

Superintendent Anthony Garzia and his team had Woodway Country Club in pristine condition for the 2022 MetGCSA Superintendent/Guest Tournament. Since arriving at Woodway in the fall of 2018, Anthony and his staff have worked tirelessly with Hepner Golf Designs to complete a restoration of the 1916 Willie Park Jr. design, revealing the course as Park had intended it.

Despite Mother Nature's attempt at a slow start to the season, the course played as a true challenge, highlighting the club's unique and deceptive greens and making for a fun return of an event tradition, the Yellow Ball Tournament. The Yellow Ball is a Best-Ball Net event played along with the customary Superintendent/Guest Gross & Net competition.

After the round, participants were treated to fabulous dining, a perfect way to cap off such a great event. Many thanks to everyone at Woodway for hosting our association. General Manager Steve McVey and Head Professional Michael Crawford went out of their way to make the day special for all who attended. Justifiably, the club is annually ranked by *Golf Digest* as one of the best in the state!

Here are the results for the competition:

Gross & Net Competition

First Place Gross Winners ~ 71

Joe Rafferty, *Hudson Hills GC*
John O'Shea, *Hudson Hills GC*

Second Place Gross Winners ~ 71

David Dudones, *Westchester Country Club*
Mike Ballo, *Guest*

First Place Net Winners ~ 64

Tony Girardi, *Rockrimmon CC*
Jim Calladio, *Guest*

Second Place Net Winners ~ 65

Blake Halderman, *Brae Burn CC*
Matt Snyder, *Guest*

Skill Prizes Awarded

Closest to the Pin ~ #3

Matt Luger, 13'10"
Redding Country Club

Closest to the Pin ~ #9

Craig Hatt, 6'3"
Guest

Closest to the Pin ~ #12

Grover Alexander, 5'7"
Hudson Hills GC

Longest Drive ~ #16

Davis Wade
Guest

Yellow Ball Event's Winning Results

A Yellow Ball was given to each foursome prior to teeing off. The yellow ball was then played by each member of the foursome, rotating through and recording the individual's Best Ball Net Score for that particular hole. The goal is to finish the 18-hole event without losing the yellow ball. If the ball is lost, your team is out of the competition.

The winners of the Yellow Ball portion of the tournament were Rolling Hills' Glenn Perry, Harrell's Scott Tretera, Wee Burn's Doug Drugo, and Valley View Greenhouses' Frank Amodio, firing an impressive 64. Nice shooting, fellas!!

Zach Brooks, a member of the Tournament Committee, is a sales consultant at Noble Turf in Mt. Laurel, NJ.



Apawamis's Mike McCormick to Host Three-in-One Event

by Chip Lafferty

Hosted by Apawamis Club Superintendent Mike McCormick, this year's Poa Annual fundraiser and Met Championship/Met Team Qualifier, scheduled for August 29, promises to be a treat for all. A short course, playing just under 6,800 yards, Apawamis offers a unique and challenging golf experience. Playing over typically rugged Westchester terrain, the course demands accuracy off the tee. The greatest challenge, however, lies in the small greens, which are fast and severely undulated, demanding defensive approach shots to specific target areas below the cup. But don't take my word for it. Take it from golf great Ben Hogan, who called Apawamis "the toughest short golf course" he ever played.

Apawamis, Old and New

The golf course at Apawamis is interesting and varied—like its history. Celebrating its 132nd anniversary this year, Apawamis was founded in 1890 but did not begin building an 18-hole course until 1896, when the club's current site was purchased. Purported to be one of the first 100 golf clubs in America, its name, Apawamis, came from an American Indian word used to describe an area near Rye, NY.

Scotsman Willie Dunn of Shinnecock fame was hired to design the course, though there have been modifications made over the years by famed architects Herbert Strong (1906-1911), Donald Ross (1930), George and Tom Fazio (1977), Gil Hanse (2001-2002), Tom Marzolf (2014), and during Mike's tenure, Keith Foster (2017-2022). The latest string of enhancements with Keith Foster began the year Mike took the reins from long-time Superintendent Bill Perlee, who retired in 2017.

Foster's "Golf Course Enhancement Program" began in 2017 with more than 20,000 sq. ft. of green expansions and grade adjustments to all existing putting surfaces, the construction of three new USGA specification greens, the renovation of all bunkers, expansion of fairways from 19 to 28 acres, the removal of more than 1,000 trees, and adjustments to several tee complexes.

But the enhancement program didn't end there. Every fall since 2017, the club has worked with Foster to carry out further improvements, including additional work to tee complexes, fairway expansions, the addition of fine fescue/native areas, and further tree removal to open up sightlines throughout the property.

The club's enhancement program culminated in a complete overhaul of its irrigation system, including a full rebuild of its pump station in the winter of 2019, and the installation of a new Rain Bird, two-wire, HDPE wall-to-wall irrigation system between the summer of 2021 and the spring of 2022.

Over the years, the club has played host to several prominent golf tournaments. The most famous among them being the 1911 U.S. Amateur, the 1978 Curtis Cup, and the 2005 Senior Women's Amateur. Apawamis has also hosted numerous American Junior Golf Association events.

No event, however, is more closely woven into the Apawamis fabric than the United States Seniors Golf Association's Annual Championship. It was the brainchild of member Horace Hotchkiss, who in 1905 invited a group of friends and acquaintances, all of whom were at least 55 years of age, for a one-day tournament. Some 50 players gathered for the world's first-ever "seniors" tournament.

The event has evolved over the years into a two-day, 36-hole competition, with about 500 players at Apawamis, Blind Brook, Round Hill, and Bedford Golf & Tennis Club. This tournament brings amateur golfers together from all over the country every year, holding a place close to the hearts of the Apawamis members.

Mike's Story

Making the course a fine playing field for the club's notable events is Mike McCormick, who is in his sixth year as The Apawamis Club's superintendent. Mike began his career in the industry when he was 11 working as a caddie at Nawshatuc Country Club, which neighbors his Sudbury, MA, hometown. At 14, he began working on the grounds maintenance staff at nearby Stow Acres Country Club where



Mike McCormick

he developed an immense passion for the industry. At the recommendation of then Stow Acres Superintendent Erick Koskinen, Mike decided to pursue an education in turfgrass management at The University of Massachusetts.

While working toward his degree, Mike seized the opportunity to intern at several of the industry's pedigree clubs, starting first, in 2008, at The International Golf Club in Bolton, MA. Working with Dick Bator, a seasoned veteran in championship golf preparation, Mike got a taste of the excitement and challenges of high-end golf course maintenance. This piqued Mike's interest in pursuing work at other elite golf courses in the Northeast.

Bator supported Mike's ambition and directed him toward an internship at Oak Hill Country Club the following summer, working under Jeff Corcoran. "Jeff offered me yet another perspective on high-end maintenance," says Mike, who had completed his associate's degree from UMass, and with Jeff's encouragement continued on to earn his bachelor's from UMass in Plant, Soil, and Insect Science. While pursuing his B.S., he interned at yet another highly desirable venue, Oakmont Country Club outside Pittsburgh, PA.

"I worked with Oakmont Super John Zimmers and was able to experience all that went into preparing for a major event, the 2010 U.S. Women's Open. What better training ground is there than that?"

Having proved his mettle, Mike was offered a full-time grounds maintenance position at Oakmont, which he gladly accepted upon graduating in 2011 with his bachelor's from UMass. Working his way up the ladder, Mike earned first assistant status in the winter of 2014. While in this role, the club went on to host the 2016 U.S. Open. "I

had to shift into high gear seeing that Oakmont was kept in tournament shape year-round," says Mike.

With Open experience under his belt, Mike decided it was time to step up to the plate and take a swing at his own gig. In August of 2016, he pursued the superintendent's position at Apawamis and began work in his new role on October 1, 2016.

Mike is quick to admit that the maintenance operation at Apawamis is far more than a one-man band. "Though I can't list everyone who supports the operation," says Mike, "I'd like to acknowledge and thank my senior assistant, Jace Roman, Second Assistant, Dan Schena, my assistants in training, Bailey Warren and Sean Murphy, and my intern, Evan White.

"I have been very fortunate to have extremely motivated and dedicated staff working beside me throughout my tenure. Without their incredible work ethic and passion for the job, the transformation of this property would never have been possible," adds Mike.

Off the Course

When Mike is off-duty, he is on-duty with his family. Married to his wife, Jamie, for four years, the two are more than busy with their two young boys: Jackson, who is 20 months old, and Miles, who is barely a month old! Congratulations!

Mike and Jamie's love story began when Mike worked at Oakmont. Jamie just happened to be the club's event planner, which I'm sure came in handy when they planned their wedding. They began dating six years before the 2016 U.S. Open and maintained a long-distance relationship once Mike moved to Rye, NY.

"Having worked in the industry for years, Jamie just gets it," says Mike. "She has always been supportive and understanding of my career goals and is an unbelievably committed mom to our young children."

If and when Mike has a moment to himself, he immerses himself in everything music, whether it's playing the piano or guitar, or going to as many concerts as time allows.

If you've never had the pleasure of playing this not-so-hidden gem, be sure to sign up for the fast-approaching Poa/Met Championship/Met Team Qualifier and enjoy the strategy and conditioning that's sure to bring you back, again and again.

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

Upcoming Events

Upcoming MetGCSA and Industry Events

MetGCSA Invitational Tournament

Thursday, August 18
The Stanwich Club
Greenwich, CT
Host: Scott Niven, CGCS

The Poa/Met Championship/ Met Team Qualifier

Monday, August 29
The Apawamis Club
Rye, NY
Host: Mike McCormick

Nine & Dine

Wednesday, September 28
Centennial Golf Club
Carmel, NY
Host: Glen Dube

Army Black Knights vs. UConn

Saturday, November 19
Michie Stadium, West Point
Join fellow MetGCSA and HVGCSA members, friends, and family for the West Point Family Football Day and Tailgate party. Food & beverages will be compliments of our two associations.

To register or for further information, contact Susan O'Dowd at 914-909-4843 or sodowd@mgagolf.org.

MetGCSA Holiday Party

Thursday, December 8
Emma's Ale House
White Plains, NY

MetGCSA Winter Seminar

Wednesday, January 11, 2023
Westchester Country Club
Rye, NY
Host: David Dudones

Industry Events

The 16th Annual Dr. Joseph Troll Turf Classic

Monday, September 12
Pelham Country Club
Pelham, NY
Host: Jeff Wentworth, CGCS
This year's UMass Alumni Turf Group fundraiser will be hosted by Pelham Country Club in support of turf education and research at the University of Massachusetts. MetGCSA member and Pelham Country Club Superintendent Jeff Wentworth is this year's honoree, recognized for his achievements in the turfgrass management industry.

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

2022 GREEN EXPO Turf & Landscape Conference

Tuesday – Thursday, December 6 – 8
Borgata Hotel & Casino
Atlantic City, NJ
The New Jersey Green Expo offers a comprehensive educational program providing

cutting-edge applications and tactics to guarantee green industry professionals' success on the job.

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


26th Annual New England Regional Turfgrass Conference and Show

Tuesday – Thursday, March 7 – 9
Rhode Island Convention Center
Providence, RI
For the 26th consecutive year, the conference and show provides turfgrass professionals from all areas of the industry the opportunity to see the newest products, supplies, services, and equipment available while offering a host of informative educational sessions, pesticide recertification credits, and endless networking opportunities.

Watch for details on www.NERTF.org, or call 401-841-5490 for further information.

National Golf Day Gives Voice to Industry Concerns

by Mike McCall, MetGCSA Executive Director

 On May 11, the 14th annual National Golf Day was held virtually. National Golf Day is an initiative of the World Golf Foundation that was rebranded this year from *We Are Golf* to the *American Golf Industry Coalition* and is heavily supported and attended by golf course superintendents. Their goal: To prevent any laws and regulations that might adversely affect the industry from being adopted through legislative visits. This year saw more than 200 participants representing all 50 states and conducting in excess of 260 congressional meetings.

A Bill We Must Stop in Its Tracks

Every year, there is at least one major federal issue that affects or could affect golf course superintendents in the Metropolitan section, and this year was no exception. Senate Bill S.3283, the **“Protect America’s Children from Toxic Pesticides Act” (PACTPA)** sponsored by Senator Cory Booker (D-NJ), may at first blush seem worthwhile, but on closer scrutiny, it becomes clear that it would completely undermine the current pesticide review and registration process.

Let me explain. Currently, the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide, and Rodenticide Act (FIFRA) governs federal pesticide law, while the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) administers that law. If the PACTPA is put in place, it would essentially override any independent evaluation, as well as the science behind pesticide evaluation and basically leave the decision making to foreign governments and/or local elected officials.

Here are two examples taken directly from two different sections of the bill’s text to demonstrate the importance and impact of wording:

Excerpt 1

The Administrator (EPA) shall immediately suspend the registration of any active ingredient or pesticide product that is . . .

(A) “banned or otherwise prohibited from entering the market by the European Union, 1 or more countries in the European Union, or Canada” and (B) “registered for use within the United States.”

Excerpt 2

IN GENERAL—Section 24 of the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide, and Rodenticide Act (7 U.S.C. 136v) is amended by inserting . . .

(A) “. . . or any political subdivision of a State,” after “A State” and (B) “. . . or political subdivision” after “the State”

There is a great deal more to digest in the bill; however, the loss of state pesticide pre-emption laws, that allow local municipalities to create their own pesticide use laws or enforce product bans, is a completely untenable position for golf course superintendents, putting our industry in a position where we will have to battle for exemptions in each of our municipalities. *We, as an industry, have no choice but to stop this bill in its tracks.*

The good news, for the moment, is that this bill is currently in committee (Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry) and does not have a House companion bill. You can read the full text and keep an eye on updates of the bill at <https://www.congress.gov/bill/117th-congress/senate-bill/3283/text>.

Other Topics on the Table

The other topics discussed during our visits were familiar ones covered over the past couple of years. As labor shortages continue to confront the golf and hospitality industries, the issue of increasing the available number of **H-2B Visas for Foreign Workers** to fill seasonal positions in the U.S. has gained traction.

One of the current measures that would help in this area is House Resolution H.R. 3897, the H-2B Returning Worker Exemption Act, which would exclude those who have received an H-2B Visa and

worked in the U.S. within the past three years from the annual 66,000 cap limit.

Finally, significant progress has been made toward the **Personal Health Investment Today (PHIT) Act S.844 / H.R. 3109** in both chambers of Congress. The PHIT Act would make a variety of items—including green fees, golf lessons, and other practices that promote physical activity and mental health—eligible for payment with pre-tax dollars in HSAs, FSAs, and other medical spending accounts. The PHIT Act enjoys bipartisan support and continues to gain cosponsors every year.

It’s a Wrap

After many years of attending predominantly New York congressional meetings, this year I was assigned mostly western Connecticut congressional districts due to my recent change of residency along with a few New York meetings. Unfortunately, no congressional members were in attendance this year, though I will say that the staff we met with were very engaged and allotted us the entire 30 minutes to discuss our concerns and promote best management practices for golf courses. Just as important, each of the offices we met with supported our positions on all three issues.

Next year, National Golf Day is planning to return to an in-person format. Please consider attending this advocacy day event. The last thing you want to do is allow legislators to impose rules and regulations without legitimate input from those being affected! Communicating our message and building relationships on the federal level is as important as ever to our industry and to ensuring a viable future.

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

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