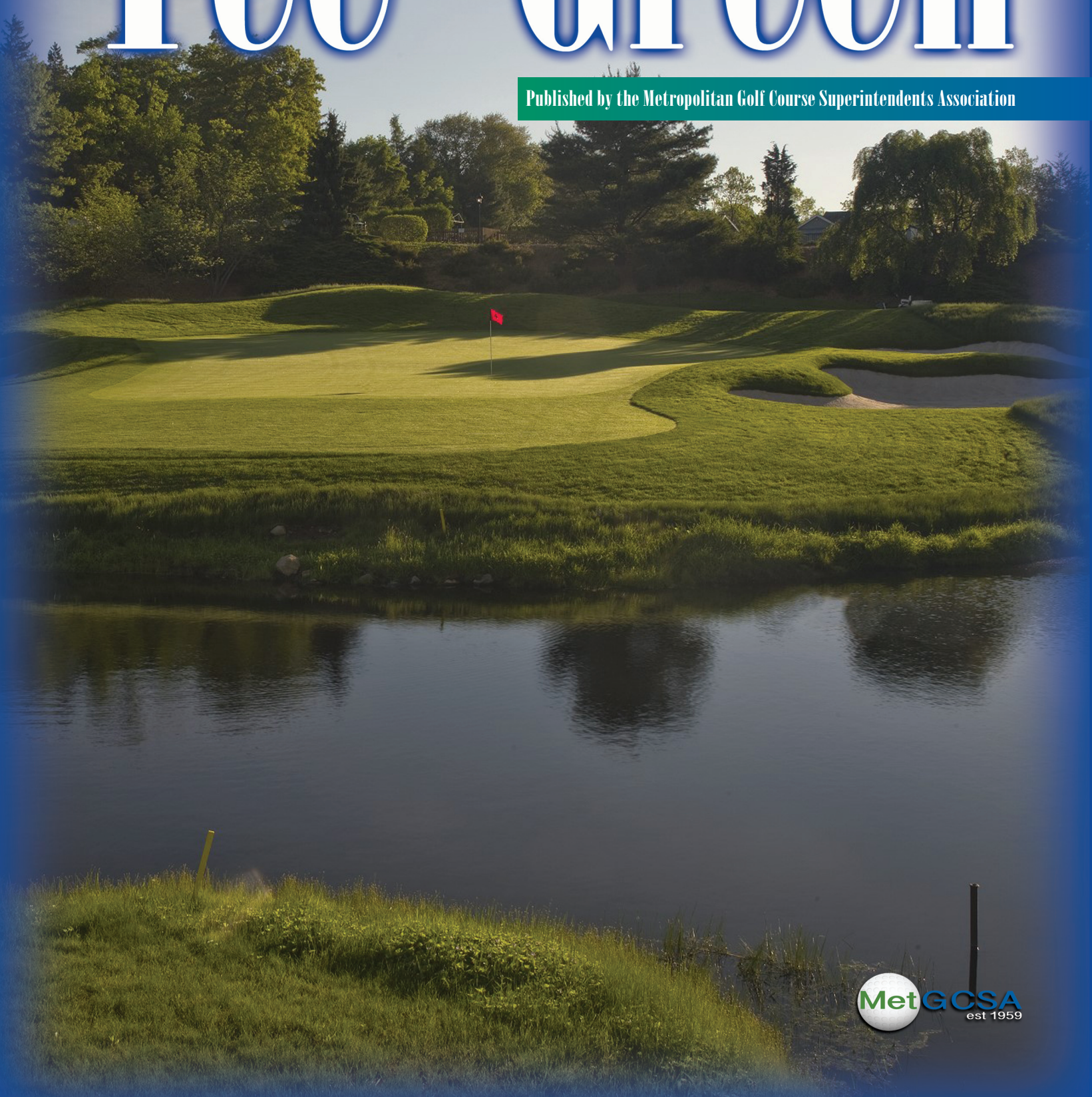


April - August 2023  
VOLUME 54 NUMBER 3

# Tee To Green

Published by the Metropolitan Golf Course Superintendents Association





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



Cover: Redding Country Club

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# President's Message

## Nurturing a Family Environment on the Job

I

t's that time of year when friends and family plan vacation getaways, backyard get-togethers, and find any excuse to slip out of the office early. I don't know about you, but I get a little jealous reading posts about people's lobster roll lunches on the coast of Maine or fresh oyster appetizers at the Cape.

I, like most other golf course superintendents, spend most of my summer months on the job, working alongside my coworkers—or what has become my second family at Redding Country Club (RCC). I have spent 17 years building a culture that promotes more than just teamwork, but also a caring and supportive environment . . . much like a family. We work hard together; we have each other's backs during tough times at work or at home; and we are there to willingly support each other. Creating this type of cooperative work environment makes employees feel valued and appreciated, which goes a long way toward encouraging a dedicated and productive work environment.

In early June, something happened that shook me and our RCC family. After a weekend morning of work as usual, I got a phone call that longtime employee Ryan Dexter had suffered a heart attack and wouldn't survive. I was stunned. Sure, many of us have experienced or heard about a tragedy like this, when a good person, a great friend, a husband, and an awesome father passes away. But when it's someone we have formed a special relationship with, it leaves a lasting, often painful, impression. I still remember where I was when I received the phone call that Dave Mahoney, a past Met president, a former boss and, more important, a valued mentor, passed away.

I've had the opportunity to speak in front of large groups—the membership at RCC, town meetings, Golf Industry Show seminars—but none of this prepared me to stand in front of my team at RCC and share the



*Brett Chapin*  
*MetGCSA President*

news of the loss of a member of our family. I came in to work an hour early; I wanted to be prepared and had written my thoughts down several times on paper. When it came time to lead the morning staff meeting, as I do daily, I walked out of my office, opened my mouth, and no words came out. There is no script for times like this. Hearing the news, my staff was clearly upset and, like me, at a loss for words. As the week went on, tears turned into stories, pictures from everyone's phones were shared, and laughs were had.

### **A Larger Family Unit**

A few weekends ago, I attended the second annual RCC Scholarship Luncheon where the membership gave out 18 scholarships to students who work at the club. Five of those students were green staff employees. RCC created a foundation with the intent of rais-

*continued on page 9*



# Feature

## Mike Maffei: Amazing Career, Amazing Man

by Bob Nielsen, CGCS

*Recognizing a Member Who's Gone Above and Beyond to Serve Our Industry*

Hudson Valley GCSA President Tim Walker (left) recognizes Mike for his 50 years as a member of the HVGCSA.

# A

superintendent's tenure at a golf course averages less than 15 years. A superintendent's career averages less than 30 years. So how would you characterize a career of 51 years—all at the same club?

How about “amazing?”

That's just one of the adjectives admirers use to describe Mike Maffei, the superintendent of Morefar, who retired this past December. His long tenure, however, is not the main reason Mike is so well-liked and admired. His contributions to the game of golf and his leadership in various associations are widely known and appreciated and have earned him another adjective: *Legend*.

### Mike's Launch Into the World of Turf

Mike was born and raised in Clinton, MA. His father, Albert, managed a dairy farm; his mom, Mary, was a nurse until she married Albert and started a family. In the mid-1950s, when the farm was no longer profitable enough to raise his family, Albert changed careers and went to work for a fuel distribution company delivering heating oil, diesel, and gasoline. Mike credits his success to his mom's stressing the importance of education and his dad instilling in him a strong work ethic.

That work ethic was evident at the age of 16 when Mike was looking for a summer job. One of his father's delivery stops was The International in Bolton, MA. Having developed a friendship with the golf course superintendent there, Albert asked about a potential opening for Mike. Though there were no positions available, the superintendent's brother-in-law, John Almonte, of Worcester County Club, had an opening on his crew and hired Mike for the summer—and then for the next five seasons.

Mike's hard work got noticed. He drew the attention of John's father-in-law, Simi, who was the superintendent at Worcester before John took over. Simi still spent time at the course and got to know Mike.



“Simi would always tell me that I should pursue a career in the turfgrass industry, that it was my calling,” Mike remembers. “But when he heard I was accepted at UMass and planned to major in Agricultural Engineering, he put on the pressure. Eventually, Simi won me over and I switched my major to Plant & Soil Science.”

With the legendary Joe Troll as his advisor, Mike completed his studies in 1971 and was hired by Pat Lucas, the superintendent at Morefar, to be his assistant. When Mike arrived, construction on the back nine—under the direction of architect and builder Ed Ryder—was winding down. Mike was given the responsibility of growing it in.

“How Morefar and I survived that experience is a miracle,” Mike recalls, laughing. “There I was, a 21-year-old kid from Massachusetts with no construction experience and no real experience with weather conditions in Metropolitan New York, in charge of growing in 9 holes. Quite a challenge.”

In June of ’71, Pat was promoted to general manager and, later that year, recommended Mike to fill the open golf course superintendent position. He was quickly promoted.

“With Pat’s support and Morefar’s excellent staff,” Mike says, “we met the challenge and opened the back nine in May of 1972.”

## Industry Devotion

Mike also followed Pat’s recommendation that he join both the HVGCSA and the MetGCSA in 1973. That work ethic was again turning heads, because the following year he was asked to join the MetGCSA board, which included some of the most revered superintendents anywhere: Ted Horton, Sherwood Moore, Gary Crothers,

Bob Alonzi, and Harry Nichol. They put Mike in charge of the Program Committee, which not only performed the function of today’s Tournament Committee, but also was in charge of securing a speaker at every meeting.

“It was a learning experience for sure. I was 25 years old and at one of the most northerly clubs in the Met at the time,” Mike says. “I didn’t know any professors outside UMass I could invite to speak or, for that matter, many of the Met superintendents.”

Well, Mike must have done a pretty good job at it, since he was elected secretary after serving only one term as director. Two years later, he skipped the treasurer position and became vice president. Then, in 1981 at the age of 32, he became the youngest MetGCSA president ever.

He says that one highlight during his tenure on the board was being able to support UMass researcher and respected entomologist Pat Vittum when she was just a graduate student doing fieldwork at Met area courses for ABW control. That has led to a lifelong friendship with yet another legend in the industry.

## Retired but Still Going Strong!

Mike has continued to support the MetGCSA and numerous other organizations. He chaired the Scholarship Committee for many years, helping to develop the scoring system that we use today. He is still a member of the committee and among the toughest of graders!

Even more impressive, Mike is the government relations go-to guy for many organizations. He knows the inner workings of the capitol in Albany better than most anyone, and he can tell you where just about every

senator and assemblyperson stands on an issue. He is a wealth of knowledge when it comes to advocating for our industry.

Mike’s support of the industry and his tireless efforts to give back earned him the Sherwood A. Moore Award in 1994. This is the highest honor awarded a superintendent by the MetGCSA, and Mike certainly earned it. In addition, Mike has served as New York State Turfgrass Association (NYSTA) president twice, currently serves on two other Industry boards, and serves as treasurer of a local condominium Board of Managers. He has won the Bayer Unity Award in recognition of his political leadership and in appreciation for his dedication to further a united turfgrass industry. In 2001, Mike received the NYSTA Citation of Merit Award for his many years of leadership to NYSTA and the Green Industry. Mike is also a past recipient of the GCSAA Outstanding Achievement in Advocacy for his efforts, and others’, in preventing the New York DEC from defining a golf course in such a way that it would make golf courses fall under stricter pesticide application regulations.

Mike reports that although he is getting used to retirement, he misses riding the course each morning and the daily interaction with the staff. He is proud to see that his second assistant for 18 years, James Simonian, is doing well since assuming the golf course superintendent position. Mike doesn’t play golf but will undoubtedly be attending a few meetings each year. When you see him, be sure to congratulate Mike Maffei on becoming the MetGCSA’s newest legend.

*Bob Nielsen, a member of the Tee to Green Editorial Committee, is superintendent at Bedford Golf & Tennis Club in Bedford, NY.*



*Mike (left) and NYSTA board member Greg Chorvas attend a fundraiser in Albany for NY Senator Michelle Hinchey, chair of the Senate Agricultural Committee representing the New York Green Industry Council.*



*Early in his career, Mike gives a regulatory update at an industry meeting.*



*Mike addresses Advocacy Day attendees.*



# Advocacy Day Legislative Meetings a Virtual Success

by Michael Maffei, CGCS

After two years where COVID shut down the New York State Capitol and forced our Annual Advocacy Day event to be held virtually, NYSTA's Government Relations Committee felt the time was right to, once again, meet in person, and they scheduled this year's event for March 14.

But as luck would have it, as the day approached, more than a foot of snow was predicted for Albany and the in-person event was canceled. The committee's only choice was to salvage all they had done to prepare by hosting a Zoom call for those who had registered for the legislative visits to discuss current issues and concerns.

There were three main points of discussion:

- Support for the Turfgrass Environmental Stewardship Fund (TESF)
- Pesticide Bans
- The transition to Battery-Operated Equipment

I feel the best way to communicate those issues to our readers is in the following statement written by Tom Kaplun for the attendees and every member of the New York State Legislature:

## Confronting Proposed Legislation

As the premier green industry association in New York State, NYSTA advocates for sound policy and environmental stewardship in the green industry. There are just over 3.4 million acres of turfgrass in New York State, and our industry employs more than 43,000 people at a payroll in excess of \$465 million. Advocacy and support for the protection of turfgrass in parks, athletic fields, golf courses, and home lawns are vital for the success of our industry. As a result, we are requesting the following:

### 1. Support for the Turfgrass Environmental Stewardship Fund (TESF)

NYSTA is asking that a line item of \$200,000 be appropriated by the New York Greengrass Association in the 2023-24 budget in support of the Turfgrass Environmental Stewardship Fund. This funding is essential for:

- workforce development through the New York State Apprenticeship Program-Phase II
- the continued development of the Best Management Practices (BMPs) for New York State Golf Courses and the implementation of Golf Facility BMPs
- launching the Water Conservation BMPs
- green industry educational webinars
- environmental stewardship education
- New York Greengrass Association outreach

**Update:** The legislature approved \$175,000 for the TESH.

### 2. An End to Proposed Pesticide Bans and Regulations

New York is only one of two states that conducts its own pesticide review process after federal registration. The NYSDEC is charged with reviewing and registering pesticide products before they can be used in New York (Article 33, EnCon Law).

On January 1 of this year, the NYSDEC made imidacloprid a restricted-use pesticide, allowing only New York State-certified applicators to use this chemical. Without the ability to apply imidacloprid, turfgrass sustainability would be greatly compromised due to the damage that can occur in untreated areas. There would be no preventive control for grubs, for instance, on lawns in Long Island.

Other legislation that would be economically devastating for New York's green industry and agriculture are:

- S01856/A03226 (Hoylman-Sigal/Glick), which bans the use of neonicotinoids as a protective measure for birds and bees.
- A02097 (Colton), which prohibits the use of pesticides containing neonicotinoids.

**Update:** These two bills passed at the end of the legislative session but have not yet gone to the Governor for her signature. Efforts are underway to convince her to veto the bills.

- S00261/A01615xz (Serrano/Rosenthal), which prohibits the use of glyphosate on state property.
- S4164 (Hoylman-Sigal), which prohibits the sale and distribution of glyphosate and products containing glyphosate.

We oppose any of the proposed legislation banning pesticides.

### 3. Greater Investment in Battery-Powered Equipment by New York State

Right now, the technology and infrastructure to support large-scale commercial use of battery-powered lawn and landscape equipment is inadequate. In fact, the cost difference between gas- and battery-powered equipment is a major obstacle for commercial users as it is two to four times more for battery power.

Facilities need significant resources to upgrade their electrical infrastructure to support safe battery storage and charging.

We support:

- federal and state funding for the research and development of battery-powered and electric equipment
- working with legislators to form action steps to make the transition away from gas-powered equipment

We oppose:

- S02132/A02133 (Liu/Dinowitz), which prohibits the use of gas-powered lawn and leaf blowers from May 1 – September 30
- A705 (Carroll), which proposes banning the sale of gas-powered leaf blowers and lawn mowers by 2025

**Update:** The above bills never came to a vote on the floor.

## Job Well Done!

Undeterred by the weather challenges, NYSTA was able to get the message out to our legislators and plan one-on-one Zoom calls with key legislators.

Many thanks to Tom Kaplun and Bob Nielsen, co-chairs of NYSTA's Government Relations Committee, and to Sue VanAmburgh, for their efforts in planning and then revamping the day's legislative visits.

We hope to see all of you at our Turfgrass Advocacy Day in 2024. Laws and regulations affect everyone, and your input at this event is important!

## Thank You to Our Sponsors

We would like to acknowledge the following sponsors who supported this year's Advocacy Day: BASF, Capital Region Golf Course Owners Association, GCSA of New York, Hudson Valley GCSA, Long Island GCSA, Metropolitan Golf Association, MetGCSA, Michael Bellantoni Inc., National Association of Landscape Professionals, New York Green Industry Council, Northeastern GCSA, Ocean Organics, RISE, Syngenta, Target Specialty Products, TruGreen.

*Michael Maffei, CGCS, is a Life A member and a past president of NYSTA and a member of the NYSTA Government Relations Committee. Tom Kaplun is vice president of NYSTA and co-chair of the NYSTA Government Relations Committee.*



# Boosting Golf's Image With Golf Facility BMPs

by Ken Benoit, CGCS

Executive Director, New York Golf Course Foundation

Golf, as we've heard all too often, has a problem: its public image. People just refuse to believe that golf course superintendents have the ability to maintain superior playing conditions without adversely impacting our water resources and wildlife. But after more than a decade of developing and implementing Golf BMPs in New York, we do have a reasonable solution to this problem: Golf Facility BMPs (GFBMPs)! So what is the difference between Golf BMPs and Golf Facility BMPs?

Not much, really. They use the same science; it's just that GFBMPs are tailored to address needs unique to each course. For example, an important BMP concept would have you protect open water by creating buffer zones. If your course does not have any water features, however, there is no need to create a buffer. The list goes on.

For the past several years, those superintendents who have benefited from implementing GFBMPs have been imploring their peers to do the same at their facilities. Creating a formal GFBMP document, after all, will send a positive message to your community, and ultimately legislators, by providing a vehicle for you to demonstrate your commitment to protecting resources, including the golf course and its customers. It will also provide the best opportunity to produce healthy and dynamic turfgrass conditions while protecting and preserving water resources, wildlife, and pollinators.

## Golf Facility BMPs: A Great Way to Get Started

The good news is that the GCSAA has eased the pain of getting your document off the ground by creating an online BMP tool. For

the past few years, the New York Golf Course Foundation (NYGCF) has been encouraging superintendents around the state to use this tool to formally adopt BMPs at their facilities and, ultimately, have the documentation to talk to lawmakers in Albany and Washington, D.C. about the positive impact golf courses have on the environment.

The NYGCF even went so far as to offer "BMP How-To" workshops in all five GCSAA chapter regions. During the workshops, participants spent a few hours being shown how to navigate the tool and, in the process, learned just how easy it is to edit and publish a basic version of their own Golf Facility BMP document. No surprise, the BMP workshops were well received in all five regions. In fact, the most common responses heard were, "I had no idea completing this document was so easy," and "Can we do more of these workshops?" The answer is "Yes." The NYGCF, via the Turfgrass Environmental Stewardship Fund grant from Albany, will conduct seven more of these workshops. Details of the MetGCSA workshop will be available later this fall.

As part of the 2022/23 Turfgrass Environmental Stewardship Fund grant, the NYGCF also assisted five superintendents, one from each New York chapter, in completing their own facility BMP document. Paul Gonzalez, superintendent at the Whip-poorwill Club, was chosen for the MetGCSA region. Paul recognizes the value of completing his Golf Facility BMP document and setting realistic goals for achieving a higher degree of water resource protection and improved turf health.

When asked about why adopting BMPs at Whip-poorwill is important, Paul explained, "As golf faces more and more pressure from lawmakers and environmental groups, it is

important that we demonstrate that we're doing everything in our power to protect our water resources. I have always tried to make decisions that benefit the club, and by adopting BMPs, I know that the future of Whip-poorwill and the game of golf is better off. The GCSAA online tool makes it very easy for superintendents to do the right thing."

As we move forward with this initiative, more and more superintendents in the MetGCSA region have followed Paul's lead by formally adopting BMPs through the GCSAA online tool. If you're not one of them, please consider completing your Golf Facility BMP doc. If you have any questions about how to get started with your facility BMP document, be sure to reach out to either the NYGCF or GCSAA.

## Proof Is in the Golf Facility BMP

Having State BMPs is great, but unless there is evidence that golf facilities are adopting them, there is no credibility to outsiders and critics. Custom-tailoring—and putting into practice—BMPs at your own facility will be the credibility-builder you need to fend off judgements by environmental stakeholders. And the hard work is done. By utilizing GCSAA's BMP online tool and the cooperative efforts of the NYGCF, this should be an easy undertaking for your facilities.

If you have any questions about how to get started with your facility BMP document, be sure to reach out to me at the NYGCF ([kenbenoit1@gmail.com](mailto:kenbenoit1@gmail.com)) or to Emily Fuger at GCSAA ([efuger@gcsaa.org](mailto:efuger@gcsaa.org)).

*Ken Benoit is executive director of the New York Golf Course Foundation and founder/president of Eco Turf Consulting.*



## Two-Ball Teams Take Patterson by Storm

by David Conrad

**O**n April 24, MetGCSA members kicked off their golf season with the Dave Mahoney Two-Ball Qualifier hosted by Jason Meersman at The Patterson Club in Fairfield, CT. The day started off on the chilly side but warmed up nicely allowing us to end the day on the patio of the beautiful clubhouse, where we were treated to a delicious barbecue.

To no one's surprise, Jason and his staff had the golf course in pristine condition, providing a tremendous challenge for everyone looking to qualify for the summer-long tournament. With the world returning to normalcy, the Two-Ball seemed to be returning to its pre-2020 popularity as we had a near-record number of teams trying to qualify for the two divisions. There were

so many, in fact, that there was a third bracket added this year so everyone could enjoy the camaraderie and networking Dave Mahoney so loved and believed was the real reason for this tournament.

### Event of the Day Results

#### Low Gross Team Winners

Tom Ashfield, *Quaker Ridge GC*  
Andy Drohen, *Allied Nutrients*

#### Low Net Team Winners

**1st** Steven McGlone, *Siwanoy CC*  
Josh Haugh, *Siwanoy CC*  
**2nd** Tony Grasso, *Class LA*  
Scott Tretera, *Harrell's, LLC*

### Qualifier Brackets and Match Deadlines

Check out [metgcsa.org](http://metgcsa.org) for the latest brackets and wins. And be sure to complete your matches by the following dates:

**First Round ~ COMPLETED**

**Quarter Finals ~ August 11**

**Semi-Finals ~ September 15**

**Finals ~ October 20**

Thanks, again, to Jason Meersman and The Patterson Club for hosting our event. And when playing your match, take a second to remember Dave Mahoney; he's certainly looking down with a smile and a joke for all of us.

*David Conrad, a member of the Tournament Committee, is a territory manager with Plant Food Company in Cranbury, NJ.*



# MetGCSA Superintendent/Guest Showcases Golf Excellence

by Zach Brooks

**O**n May 15, the prestigious Wee Burn Country Club, nestled in the beautiful town of Darien, CT, played host to the highly anticipated MetGCSA Superintendent/Guest Tournament. This annual gathering of Met area superintendents and their guests was nothing short of spectacular. Host Superintendent Doug Drugo and his team had the course in magnificent shape. With its immaculate fairways, challenging greens, and stunning vistas, Wee Burn provided an idyllic setting for this memorable occasion.

## The Results

The MetGCSA Member-Guest event featured a variety of competitive formats both net and gross, ensuring that both seasoned veterans and newcomers could showcase their skills in a leveled playing field. Here are the highlights:

### Gross Winners

- 76 Jason Meersman, *The Patterson Club*  
Sean Duffy, *The Patterson Club*
- 77 Jon Knol, *Dyker Beach GC*  
John Rogers, *Michigan State*
- 78 Michael Golden, *Sterling Farms GC*  
Jon Charpinsky, *Turf and Ornamental Solutions*

### Net Winners

- 65 Tony Girardi, *Rockrimmon CC*  
Herb Stevens, *Grass Roots Weather/T3*
- 66 Doug Drugo, *Wee Burn CC*  
Scott Tretera, *Harrell's, LLC*
- 67 Evan Weymouth, *Patriot Hills GC*  
Todd Apgar, *Metro Turf Specialists*

### Closest to the Pin

- Hole 4** Doug Drugo, *Wee Burn CC* ~ 2'3"
- Hole 7** Sacha Zarba, *Siwanoy CC* ~ 9"
- Hole 15** Sacha Zarba, *Siwanoy CC* ~ 13'10"

### Longest Drive

- Hole 18** Jon Charpinsky, *Turf and Ornamental Solutions*

## When the Golf Was Done

After a morning filled with accurate drives, challenging putts, and the occasional sand-trap escape, participants and guests were treated to a tremendous dining experience at the club's dining terrace, providing a well-deserved ending for hungry golfers.

Wee Burn's commitment to hospitality and the MetGCSA's dedication to promoting excellence in golf maintenance made this occasion an unqualified triumph.

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





# National Golf Day Returns to Capitol Hill

by Mike McCall, CGCS, MetGCSA Executive Director

The Golf Industry Coalition, a coalition of golf's leading organizations and industry partners, formerly known as WE ARE GOLF, hosted the 14th annual National Golf Day in early May on Capitol Hill in Washington, D.C.

Bob Nielsen, Ken Benoit, Rob Dorsch, Gil Perez, and I traveled to D.C. to participate in this year's event, which offered a unique opportunity for the industry to voice concerns, discuss issues, and share golf's many benefits with New York and Connecticut legislators.

This was the first time the event was held in person since 2019, drawing a healthy number of representatives from associations and organizations across the country, including GCSAA, which as usual, dominated the makeup of participants.

## The Points of Discussion

While extolling the many benefits of the game of golf, the Golf Industry Coalition had four specific items for us to address with our legislators, who were either congressional members or their staff. This year, the issues were focused on the following items:

**Supporting the 2023 Farm Bill, including expanding the National Turfgrass Research Initiative (NTRI).** This would include \$20 million annually for a dedicated Turfgrass Research Program and \$2 million annually for a comprehensive National Statistical Survey for Turfgrass. The survey would collect quantitative information, such as the number of acres of turf maintained, number of workers employed by the turfgrass industry, turf-related expenses, and contribution to the economy, as well as qualitative information, such as species of turfgrass used, product sales, market distribution channels, and maintenance practices.

**Supporting the Personal Health Investment Today (PHIT) Act** that would promote healthy lifestyles by allowing a medical care tax deduction for up to \$1,000 (\$2,000 for a joint return or a head of



*The New York delegation strikes a post with Congressman Marc Molinaro (NY-19), fifth from left, after their scheduled meeting.*

household) of qualified sports and fitness expenses per year. The PHIT Act would also make a variety of items—including greens fees, golf lessons, and other practices that promote physical activity and mental health—eligible for payment with pretax dollars in Health Savings Accounts, Flexible Spending Accounts, and other medical spending accounts.

**Advocating for increasing the available number of H-2B Visas for Foreign Workers** to fill seasonal positions in the U.S., as well as exempting those who have received the H-2B Visa and worked in the U.S. within the past three years from the annual 66,000 cap limit.

**Lobbying to have the golf industry removed from the "Sin List,"** which is a collection of businesses that a section of the IRS code considers unworthy of various forms of disaster relief and economic stimulus available to other similar businesses *not* currently listed.

On the Sin List are such businesses as massage parlors, hot tub facilities, suntan facilities, racetracks or other facilities used for gambling, or stores, the principal business of which is the sale of alcoholic beverages for consumption off premises. Private and commercial golf courses and country clubs have been unjustly grouped with such businesses.

## Promoting BMPs

In addition to presenting issues concerning the turf industry, the legislative meetings offered an excellent opportunity to extol the virtues of the Best Management Practices for Golf Courses and the current efforts underway to adopt Golf Facility BMPs. It's important to take every opportunity to demonstrate the golf course industry's commitment to preserving the environment.

## Beyond Advocacy

The day before the legislative visits, more than 200 volunteers took part in the customary community service project on the National Mall and participated in a variety of seeding, sodding, mulching, planting, and mowing operations. The National Golf Day community service project is the largest of its kind on the National Mall and is made possible with the generous donations of materials and equipment from sponsors.

## The Importance of Participating

With the National Golf Day being timed right at the start of the golf season, it was tough for many in the Northeast to justify being away from their courses, but the one or two days spent on Capitol Hill is time well spent.

The time is now—*before* we are faced with a crisis and it is too late—to build a strong New York coalition and make our congressional representatives aware of the many benefits of golf, present the scientific facts related to environmental stewardship, and emphasize our internal efforts to better the game. Those who attend from all across the country find it not only worthwhile, but also rewarding.

Please consider attending next year's National Golf Day's advocacy 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.*

## *President's Message continued from page 1*

ing money to make this a self-sustaining foundation that will support our students for years to come.

When I arrived at the event, the club president took me aside and shared that a college savings plan was approved for Graham Dexter, the son of Ryan Dexter, who spent 30 of his 47 years working at RCC in a full-time or part-time capacity. Seeing my surprise, the president explained that Ryan had been a member of the RCC family, and as a family, we look out for each other.

## Finding Your Own Work-life Balance

I chose my profession and wouldn't change it for anything in the world. My summer office is a golf cart. It may not overlook the crashing waves on the coast of Maine, but the views at RCC are special. I can look at the work and craftsmanship of my team every day, seven days a week when needed, while enjoying RCC's parklike setting. And at the same time, I've been able to carve out time for my own family. This year, I managed a 6th grade basketball team, coached an 8th grade girl's lacrosse team, and didn't miss a spring game of either of my children. Everyone's work-life balance is different. Don't focus on what others post on social media; do what's best for you and your family—at home and at work.

**Brett Chapin**  
*MetGCSA President*

## New Members

Please join us in welcoming the following new MetGCSA members:

- **Matthew Crawford**, Class C, Sleepy Hollow Country Club, Scarborough, NY
- **Nick Middleton**, Class AF, Ocean Organics, Ann Arbor, MI

## Members on the Move

**Worth Andrews** is now a Class B superintendent at Cavalry Club in Manlius, NY. Previous position: an assistant superintendent at Brae Burn Country Club in Purchase, NY.

**Brian Chapin** is now a vice president with LaBar Golf Course Renovations in Bernardsville, NJ. Previous position: superintendent at Rolling Green Golf Club in Springfield, PA.

**Rick Krok** is now in charge of irrigation with LaBar Golf Course Renovations in Bernardsville, NJ. Previous position: sales rep with Storr Tractor Company in Branchburg, NJ.



## New Baby

**Vincent Taylor**, superintendent at Winged Foot Golf Club, and his wife, Kimberly, welcomed their son, Jackson Charles, on May 13, 2023, 7 lbs. 11 oz. and 22.5 inches. Congratulations!

## Our Condolences

**Peter Waterous**, a lifelong resident of the Hudson Valley and long-tenured superintendent, passed away on May 22 at 53. A MetGCSA member for many years, he was the superintendent at Westchester Hills Golf Club in White Plains, NY, for over 30 years. He was then employed by Southern Dutchess Country Club in Beacon and, finally, Beekman Golf Course in Hopewell Junction.

Peter leaves behind his wife, Marie, and his two daughters, Danielle and Julia. Peter's father, Herb Waterous, who many Met members also know well, was a superintendent at Scarsdale Golf Club for many years, and is now a Class AF Life member of the Met.

Our sincere condolences to Peter's family. From all accounts, Peter was a dedicated family man and committed professional with a wonderful nature and congenial personality. He will be missed by all who had the good fortune to know and work with him.

Our condolences to Class LAF member **Frank Amodio** and his family on the passing of his mother Margaret on June 19. Margaret and her husband were the owners of Amodio's Garden Center in White Plains for more than 50 years. She served her community and her church, constantly going above and beyond for those she loved. She will be dearly missed by all who knew her.



# Bedford Golf & Tennis Recognized With MGA's Environmental Leaders in Golf Award

by Chip Lafferty

The highlight of this year's MGA Green Chairman Education Series was the presentation of the 2023 Arthur P. Weber Environmental Leaders in Golf Award. This prestigious award is presented annually to an MGA member club that has demonstrated exceptional environmental stewardship by meeting a rigorous set of criteria in five areas: Water Quality and Conservation, Wildlife and Habitat, Outreach and Education, IPM, and Resource Conservation. This year's worthy recipient was Bedford Golf & Tennis Club and Superintendent Bob Nielsen.

## Bedford Golf & Tennis Club's Award-Worthy Accomplishments

Together, Bedford Golf & Tennis Club and Bob Nielsen, have initiated an impressive number of award-worthy environmental efforts. The club owns 13 acres of undeveloped land that helps wildlife travel to a preserve and wetlands located on separate ends of the course. It also has 20 acres of wetlands and wetland buffer and 12 acres of land throughout the course property maintained as native areas. The club has been testing water quality for more than 20 years, with multiple practices helping results meet established parameters.

Congratulations to Bob and Bedford Golf & Tennis for their outstanding environmental efforts!

## About the Green Chairman Education Series

Designed to educate club leaders and the golfing public about issues affecting the golf course industry, the Green Chairman

Education Series offers highly informative talks from industry experts, in addition to recognizing a member club for its environmental efforts.

Held this year at Harrison Meadows Country Club in Harrison, NY, the event kicked off with a presentation by Steve Mona, former GCSAA CEO and current director of governance and leadership for Club Benchmarking. He covered the seven characteristics of highly effective green committees. High on his list was forming a well-rounded and knowledgeable committee and maintaining a true partnership with the golf course superintendent, a solid relationship with the board, and an open line of communication among all parties. He discussed how excellence at the green committee and golf course superintendent level translates into member satisfaction and loyalty.

Michael Lee, senior manager of government affairs for the GCSAA, discussed public policy challenges and solutions for the golf industry. Every year, new legislation and regulations are proposed regarding the use of pesticides and plant protectant products. If passed, they could seriously affect the way golf courses are managed. Lee emphasized the importance of engaging and educating legislators and shared how to go about ensuring a positive outcome.

Mike McCall, executive director of the MetGCSA, discussed how inflation has seriously affected golf course maintenance budgets. He noted rising product prices, many up by 20 to 30 percent, supply chain difficulties, and serious shortages of both skilled and unskilled labor. All this has placed significant pressure on golf course maintenance budgets. Mike discussed some of the short- and long-term solutions being

implemented to address these challenges along with suggestions on how green chairmen can assist their superintendents' efforts to ease the burden.

For the final presentation of the morning, USGA Green Section professionals Elliot Dowling, regional director of east region, and Darin Bevard, director of championship agronomy, held a lightning round discussion that focused on how golf course superintendents and green committees can manage expectations of course conditioning, working with fewer employees, a changing climate, and fluctuating budgets. They also discussed how to prepare for and execute a renovation, while addressing the various expectations that are associated with changing an area of the course. Dowling and Bevard also spoke to what a green committee chairman should expect from the superintendent and what the superintendent should expect from a green committee chairman.

The educational program concluded with the award presentation and an outstanding lunch. If you have never attended one of these sessions, I highly recommend that you carve out time for the next one in 2024. It offers a wonderful opportunity to connect with our industry professionals and even learn a thing or two about enhancing our job success and working relationships at our clubs.

If you'd like further information on this event, please contact Kevin Kline from the MGA at [kkline@mgagolf.org](mailto:kkline@mgagolf.org).

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

# Join Redding's Brett Chapin for a Mighty Fine Nine & Dine

by Kevin Collins

On September 19, MetGCSA President and Redding Country Club Superintendent Brett Chapin will host the Met membership for this year's Nine & Dine and customary four-man scramble. A wonderful venue for our annual Nine & Dine, Redding promises a great day of golf, followed by food and libations and a chance to commiserate about a long hard season.

## Your Nine & Dine Site: Yesterday and Today

In 1965, three local businessmen shared a dream. The dream was to create "a place of complete enjoyment and relaxation for families and their children, a place where you'd be proud to entertain your guests."

This dream became a reality when they purchased the Costello Farm and formed, along with 46 investors, the Redding Country Club Holding Corporation.

Golf course architects Ryder & Carlson (Morefar, Richter Park, Salem GC) were hired to design and build the golf course. The original nine holes were completed in 1968, and the first golf tournament was held September of that year on the only four holes that were playable. This led to what continues to be an RCC tradition: The 4-Hole Open. By 1969, the nine-hole course opened for play.

With club membership continuing to grow in the 1970s, RCC hired golf course architect Rees Jones to transform the original nine-hole course into a unique and challenging 18-hole layout. Taking advantage of the natural streams and ponds, Jones introduced precipitous elevation changes to carve out an aesthetically beautiful tract. The course measures 6,400 yards from the back tees but plays much longer. It offers a true test of golf.

## About Our Host

Brett was born in Washington, CT, in 1980. Washington is a sleepy little town in Litchfield County.

"I was mowing grass and string trimming at the age of 12," says Brett. "By the time I

was 14, I was working at Washington Country Club. My dad was a member and had worked there as a teenager. I worked on the grounds crew at Washington every summer through high school."

When it was time to pick a college, Brett knew exactly what profession he wanted to pursue. "I enrolled in the turf program at UMass-Stockbridge in 1998," recalls Brett, "and I graduated in 2002. The internships I served while in school really shaped and prepared me to be successful in this industry."

Brett's first internship was at the Golf Club of Purchase working for then Superintendent Bob Miller. "We had an intern dream team that year," says Brett. "Dave Lippman and Jeff Millett were on the roster. I was exposed to everything: spraying, watering, setup."

Brett's second internship was at The Apawamis Club working for then Superintendent Bill Perlee. "All was going smoothly until one day I was out spraying, hit a bump, and the booms on the sprayer were ripped off. I was lucky, though" says Brett with a smile. "Bill was great: very calm, cool, and collected. Besides that, the summer went off without a hitch."

Brett's last internship was at Siwanoy Country Club working for the late Dave Mahoney, "I was actually hired by Dave's assistant Scott Zalenski. I had not met Dave prior to working there. My first day, I was out spraying fairways and a guy in a cart cut me off and stopped me in my tracks. He asked me if I knew what I was spraying. I told him and he took off. I drove back to the maintenance building and discovered that guy was Dave. Dave was a wonderful teacher/mentor, a great guy to emulate."

After graduation, Brett was hired by then Seawane Superintendent Brian Benedict as his second assistant. In short order, Brian's first assistant left for a superintendent's job, and Brett moved up the ranks to first assistant. During Brett's five-year tenure, in addition to "working hard and learning tons," he also had the good fortune of meeting his wife, GraceMarie.

"GraceMarie was the assistant general manager. And there was definitely a spark



Brett Chapin

there. We started dating and before I knew it we were living together in my apartment at the club. I didn't know if she really loved me or she just wanted a shorter commute," laughs Brett.

In 2006, Brett was hired, at the young age of 26, to be superintendent of Redding Country Club. This year marks Brett's 17th season at the club.

"It's been an interesting 17 years," Brett says smiling. "There have been a lot of golf course and infrastructure projects. I actually served as the club's interim GM twice for a total of 12 months. I'm happy to say the club is very healthy financially and member-wise and is focused on continual improvement."

## MetGCSA Board Involvement

A MetGCSA member since 2001, Brett has played a key role in the association, serving on the board starting in 2010 as a director and climbing the chairs to president in 2021. November will mark the end of his two-year term.

"I've served with a lot of great presidents and board members. But I noticed the



## Upcoming Events

# Mark Your Calendars!

processes and procedures that guided the success of the association were never documented. It was just something that was in everybody's head. I wanted to memorialize and document these processes and procedures to develop a blueprint for future board members and officers to make their paths a little easier."

Probably the most momentous accomplishment of Brett's time on the Met board was the hijacking of the famed Nor'easter party held every year at the Golf Industry Show (I'm proud that I was a co-conspirator). Brett has turned this gathering into the go-to event at every conference with attendance that tops out at close to 500 attendees every year. And it's free, thanks to the many sponsorships we receive.

Brett and GraceMarie live at the Redding Country Club in a charming farmhouse with their daughter Adreanna, 14, and son Nate, 11. GraceMarie is now the executive director of the CAGCS.

Come on out for an afternoon of great golf and a chance to share war stories from a tough season with fellow members.

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

### **Nine & Dine**

*Tuesday, September 19*  
Redding Country Club  
Redding, CT  
Host: Brett Chapin

### **MetGCSA Invitational Tournament**

*Tuesday, October 5*  
Fenway Golf Club  
Scarsdale, NY  
Host: Rob Alonzi

### **Battle of the Bridges Assistants Championship**

*Monday, November 6*  
Wykagyl Country Club  
New Rochelle, NY  
Host: Dan Rogers

### **Fall Education Seminar/Annual Meeting**

*Thursday, November 9*  
Fenway Golf Club  
Scarsdale, NY  
Host: Rob Alonzi

### **MetGCSA / HVGCSA Tailgate Party**

*Saturday, November 11*  
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.

Watch for updates!

### **MetGCSA Winter Seminar**

*Tuesday, January 10*  
Westchester Country Club  
Rye, NY  
Host: David Dudones

## Industry Events

### **2023 GREEN EXPO Turf & Landscape Conference**

*Tuesday – Thursday, December 7 – 9*  
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](http://www.njturfgrass.org).

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