



THE NEWSLETTER

April 2017

of the **Golf Course Superintendents Association of New England, Inc.**

Sponsors and administrators of the Troll-Dickinson Scholarship Fund – Awarded yearly to deserving Turf Management Students.

Scholarship and Benevolence Committee Prepares for 25th Annual Tournament at Oak Hill Country Club *By Bob Healey*

This year's tournament will be held July 17 at Oak Hill Country Club. The event marks a milestone as the GCSA of New England celebrates the 25th Annual S&B golf tournament. A tribute to Dick Gurski, this year's honoree, will be an important part of the event.

It's amazing when you think about the long journey since our initial golf tournament at the Wachusett CC on August 24, 1993.

As the late astrophysicist and author Carl Sagan famously noted, "You have to know the past to understand the future." How did we get to where we are today and what does the future bring?

Our timeline begins in 1992, when the Board of Directors asked then Trustee, Jack Hassett to begin the formation of a Benevolence and Scholarship Fund. Jack formed a committee and during those first meetings the committee dreamed of getting the fund to

\$100,000.00 as a base line, similar to the Troll–Dickinson Fund, to support Benevolent and Scholarship aid to members and their families. One of the first actions of the committee was to change the name to the Scholarship and Benevolence Fund, hoping that the scholarship side would see more activity than benevolent aid. Second, the guidelines insured that all GCSANE members are eligible, who have been a member for three or more consecutive years and are current and active GCSANE members.

That committee established the criteria, application forms and guidelines during late 1992 and early 1993. Those same basic principles, other than some tweaks for today's technology, guides the committee now 25 years later.

Over the past 24 years, our Association is privileged to have 18 different clubs host this annual event. The Association graciously extends our sincere thanks to these clubs and host superintendents:

8/24/1993	Wachusett CC	Don Marrone, Jr.
8/16/1994	Wachusett CC	Don Marrone, Jr.
5/22/1995	Poquoy Brook GC	Charlie Dickow
5/21/1996	Green Harbor CC	Manny Francis, Jr.
5/05/1997	Cohasset GC	Jim Carroll
5/18/1998	Wellesley CC	Dave Barber, CGCS
5/19/1999	Wachusett CC	Don Marrone, Jr. / Matt Marrone
6/19/2000	Franklin Park GC	Kevin Osgood / Dave Laffey
5/08/2001	Marlborough CC	Ken Crimmings, Jr. CGCS
5/06/2002	Belmont CC	Arthur Silva, CGCS
5/12/2003	Wachusett CC	Don Marrone, Jr. / Matt Marrone
5/17/2004	Pine Brook GC	Mike Iacono, CGCS
6/16/2005	The Country Club	Bill Spence

5/08/2006	Wachusett CC	Don Marrone, Jr. / Matt Marrone
5/29/2007	TPC Norton	Tom Brodeur
6/16/2008	Tedesco CC	Peter Hasak
10/15/2009	Hatherly CC	Rich Caughey
6/28/2010	Belmont CC	Arthur Silva, CGCS
5/23/2011	Cohasset GC	Glen Misiaszek, CGCS
8/06/2012	Dedham Country & Polo Club	Mike Stachowicz
9/23/2013	Essex County Club	Eric Richardson
6/30/2014	Walpole CC	Mark Gagne
9/14/2015	Vesper CC	Steve Hicks
6/27/2016	Cyprian Keyes GC	Jason Paradise Dick Zepp, CGCS

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Thoughts From Your Executive Director by Don Hearn

With the golf season at our door, I want to remind you that one of the benefits of your membership is the ability to obtain a GHIN card from the Association. There is no additional charge for this. If you need a GHIN card please let me know and I will add you to the system.

This is a reminder that Superintendent, Assistant and Associate Members' dues should be paid by now. Virtually all invoices were sent by email during January. For the few who have not provided their email address a paper invoice was sent by mail. Some Affiliate Members have received invoices. Others haven't because they are included in their company's Partner Participation Program (PPP) sponsorship or are still pondering if they will be joining this program. The same is true for some Friend of the Association Members. The PPP enrollment period ended at the end of this month. Companies that did not enroll in the program by March 31 will receive invoices for their 2016 dues and Affiliate Members employed by these companies will also receive invoices. Please contact me if you have any questions about your payment status or participation in the 2017 PPP.

March was a busy month for all with course preparations for opening day and arranging the many details needing to be nailed down before the season begins. March is also the month that GCSAA hosts the Chapter Leaders/Executives Symposium at the headquarters in Lawrence, Kansas.

This year I attended the symposium with Don D'Errico, the Association's Secretary/Treasurer. We arrived on Monday, March 13, which is mostly a travel day for us. Tuesday was a work and education day. Wednesday was the same with all leaving by late afternoon for travel to home.

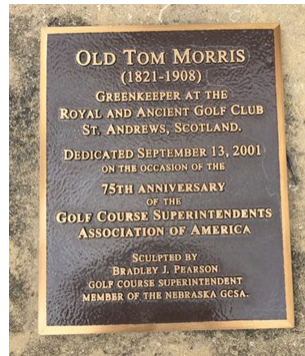
This year's meeting, like others, was one filled with information about GCSAA, its mission, how it represents our best interests from a professional and association standpoint and how we can perform our responsibilities in a way that makes for a more proficient organization.

Just as we learn from each other as superintendents, Don and I learned from others, particularly during the roundtable discussions where a lot of ideas were shared, successes noted and not so successful ideas were reviewed. Overall, this was a good learning experience for us.

All the GCSAA Field Staff representatives were in attendance and the Northeast Region's Kevin Doyle served as our guide and host during our stay in Lawrence. Kevin made sure those from his region were well taken care of and served as an ambassador of good will.

I'm constantly impressed by the talent, much of it unrecognized, that superintendents have. The sculpture of Old Tom Morris, flanked by Kevin and Don in the photo, was created by a golf

course superintendent! Bradley J. Pearson from Nebraska created the beautiful sculpture at our national headquarters. The sculpture's significance is captured on the plaque at the base of the "Old Tom" figure.



Kevin Doyle, left and Don D'Errico

This is the time of year when I remind our members and readers to think of others who might not be enjoying good fortune and are dealing with poor health or issues that make life difficult. Please read the following about the Wee One Foundation and what it does for those needing support. I met Wayne Otto many years ago at one of the GCSAA golf tournaments and I, like many others, became a friend of this wonderful, happy person. Please help others by contributing to this foundation.

The Wee One Foundation...

In 1985, four friends traveled to Scotland on a golf trip. The caddies were making wagers as these golfers stood on the tee. One caddie declared, "My money's on the wee one!" The "wee one", Wayne Otto, CGCS, our dear friend and colleague, passed away October 21, 2004 losing his battle to cancer. Wayne dedicated his life to the betterment of the golf maintenance profession he loved and the individuals who shared his passion.

Our Mission

The Wee One Foundation was developed as a tribute to Wayne to assist golf course management professionals (or their dependents) who incur overwhelming expenses due to medical hardship without comprehensive insurance or adequate financial resources. Through the Foundation's work, Wayne's legacy will never be forgotten.

More In Need

Since its inception in 2004, membership within the Wee One Foundation has grown to over 350 in 27 states. More importantly, the Wee One Foundation has gifted over \$1,000,000 to families in Arizona, California, Colorado, Connecticut, Florida, Georgia, Iowa,

Illinois, Kansas, Kentucky, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Montana, North Carolina, New York, Ohio, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania, Texas, Virginia and Wisconsin—As the Wee One grows more people are helped and more funds are needed to distribute. Please consider contributing today.

Join the Wee One Become an Annual Contributor (Member)

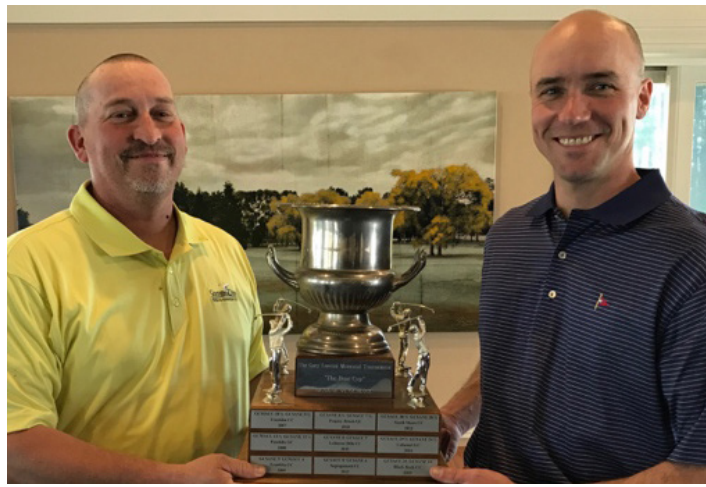
The 11th edition of the Bear Cup was played April 10 at the Country Club of Halifax in Halifax, MA.

The course was in great condition thanks to the work of superintendent Ed Gianni, assistant Dave Devin and the talented staff. There was a good turnout where the players enjoyed the course, the camaraderie and the mid 70's temperature.

The Cape members arrived with the Bear Cup, which they had been in possession of the past year. The New England team hoped to leave with the Cup. This didn't happen. The Cape has possession of the Cup for another year, winning by a score of 9 ½ points to 6 ½ for New England.

Though it would have been nice to hold the Bear Cup for the upcoming year, the Cape members played better than us. Maybe next year will be our time to win.

The Bear Cup came about by the joint effort of the GCSA of Cape Cod and the GCSA of New England honoring Gary Luccini, a longtime member of both Associations who passed away unex-



Brian Smoot, left, President of the GCSA of Cape Cod and Dave Johnson, President of the GCSA of New England holding the Bear Cup.

pectedly. The event is a way to honor Gary's memory and create camaraderie among members of both Associations at a joint meeting in the early part of the season. The winning Association retains possession of the Bear Cup for one year.

Gary's sons, Mike and Brian, followed Gary's footsteps and both are superintendents. Mike succeeded his father as superintendent at Franklin Country Club. Brian works as a client representative for the Tom Irwin Company where he advises those in the commercial and sports turf industry.



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A Trip to the Masters By Greg Cormier, CGCS

I have always wanted to attend the Master's Tournament to see Augusta National in person. Like everyone else in New England, I was always busy preparing the golf course for opening and couldn't think of leaving the state at that time. With a job change this year going from Nashawtuc Country Club to Tom Irwin Inc, I decided to make a quick trip down and see what it was all about. The first thing I did was confirm with GCSAA that our membership cards actually get us in for free. All Class A and CGCS members can use their card to redeem a ticket at no cost. When I researched purchasing a ticket online I found prices from \$500 to \$4,000 so I would say this is a very nice benefit of being a GCSAA member.

I went down for the Sunday round with my good friend and colleague Harris Schnare. When we arrived at the property there was no charge for parking, and it was all very close to the course and organized. No cell phones or cameras were allowed in. The walk in was on a freshly paved road and all turf along the road looked like it had all been recently sodded (without any seams visible). There was a heavy security presence including dogs sniffing everyone on the way in. Most impressive was that everyone was extremely friendly. This included all security and police. We showed our gold membership cards and we were directed to a designated area to get our tickets, which went very quickly.

Next we came to the Pro Shop which was the largest one I have ever seen at a tournament. It was a building as opposed to a tent like at most tour events. Once again, everyone working the event was very nice and it was so well organized that lines moved along quickly. The concession stand was the same with fast moving lines, friendly people and unbelievable prices. You could get a sandwich, drink and a snack for under \$5. Try and find that at any other sporting event! There were Pro Shops, concession buildings and bathrooms all in permanent structures located around the property. The bathrooms were immaculate with each one having its own cleaning crew working all day long. There was never a wait for anything despite the massive crowds in attendance.

The golf course was amazing. What I never really thought of until arriving, is that all the tees, fairways and rough are over seeded with ryegrass. This is why the place always looks so uniform and has that shine. We could never achieve this look in the northeast unless we re-grassed our entire golf course. This was the first time I had ever seen pigments and green sand used in fairway crosswalks, and other gallery areas. The high traffic areas were all heavily top dressed with course sand and were hard as a rock. With the thatch mat from the dormant Bermuda grass and years of top dressing all of the gallery areas were firm and undisturbed by traffic. This is a big difference between what we see up north with greasy, muddy areas requiring wood chips and then sod after an event. (cont)

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April 2017



A Trip to the Masters *continued*

You could have driven a forklift around without making a mark in these areas. The drainage grates, valve boxes and other utilities were all edged perfectly and painted green to mask their appearance. All TV towers and scoreboards were permanent structures which kept the clean look going. There were people walking the property all day picking up even the smallest piece of paper or gum wrapper left on the ground. If you can picture the cleanliness and hospitality of Disney World at a golf tournament, that would be my best description.

There were very few grandstands around the course. Most people bought a little green fold up canvass chair from the Pro Shop and would set it up somewhere on the course and leave it for the day. The chairs have a slot for a business card or name tag so that you can find it among the sea of green chairs. The crowds were pretty quiet relative to other tournaments and you just didn't see people

having too much to drink or getting too crazy. I didn't hear anyone yell "get in the hole" when a player hit a tee shot. There was no autograph signing and very little media presence, or at least they were well hidden. One of the coolest things, was there was no advertisements or logos of any kind except for the Masters logo. Even the food and drinks just had the Masters logo. You would have to ask what kind of beer was being served or else you wouldn't know.

For anyone who could possibly get away for a few days in the spring, I would highly recommend attending at least once. You can tell all your non-superintendent friends and club members entering the lottery to get the chance to buy a \$1,000 ticket; that if they get one you will split the cost of a hotel with them and walk in for free.

Some Good Advice *By Don Hearn*

The following are some thoughts that might reinforce what you already know and do. Some of these could possibly open your eyes to a different approach to the way you're doing things now.

- 1. Say thank you, and please.** *The store clerk will remember that. And don't forget to say thank you when a person holds open a door for you.*
- 2. Don't burn bridges when you quit your job.** *Leave like you want to return. Well, maybe not like you want to return, but at least leave with civility.*
- 3. When someone offers you their food, don't take 3/4 of it.** *Leave the major chunk for them.*
- 4. If you are the aisle or window seat, leave the armrest for the person in the middle.** *Don't fight and nudge them.*
- 5. When you visit someone's house, clean up your mess.** *Don't leave the bed untidy, and your plates just lying on the table, offer to help the host clean up. Also, change the bed sheets before you leave.*
- 6. Wish your coworkers good morning.** *Don't be aloof. Everyone I know appreciates a "good morning."*
- 7. If another person is buying your meal, don't order the most expensive item on the menu.** *Seriously, would you like that?*
- 8. Be careful with your alcohol intake.** *Stupid things can, and do, happen when alcohol is in control of your brain.*
- 9. Spend time with your staff in the lunch room.** *This is a great way to let them know more about you and let you know more about them.*
- 10. Don't tailgate. Just don't.** *If someone driving slow upsets you, just pass them. I know it's tempting to be on their bumper but it's a childish thing to do and it's unsafe!*
- 11. When somebody is talking, allow them to finish.** *Don't butt into their sentence. Hold your thought. And guess what – if you forget your thought, no one will care anyway! It's not that important.*
- 12. Finish everything on your plate.** *If you're having dinner at a board meeting. When you are invited for dinner with friends. In other words, everywhere. The trick is to take small quantities.*

GCSAA—Working For Us *By Don D’Errico*

While the Boston area was dealing with Winter Storm Stella, I had the good fortune of missing the snow entirely by heading out to GCSAA Headquarters in Lawrence, Kansas for the annual Chapter Leader/Executive Symposium March 13-15. I had been looking forward to this trip for quite some time, admittedly not knowing much about what to expect. I knew I would be accompanied by our own Executive Director along with another 60 individuals from affiliated chapters around the country, many of whom turned out to also be first timers to Lawrence. It did not take me long to figure out that Kansas had much more to offer than flying farm houses, and yellow brick roads, but the main event awaited at GCSAA Headquarters where I would spend the next couple of days.

As a member of GCSAA for 20 years, as many of us, I knew the association existed and was “somewhere in Kansas”. I paid dues every year, got a cool magazine, occasionally made it to the GIS, and took a broad range of accredited seminars over the years.

The real education of what GCSAA is began as soon as I entered the building. I was greeted by the many people, of whom I’ve seen their names in print, or have heard of over the years, and engaged in good conversation with all of them. Of course being alongside Don Hearn, a Past President and well known figure in Lawrence, and our Northeast Field Rep Kevin Doyle, I was provided friendly greetings and introductions from many other Executive Directors and Superintendents from around the country, as well as employees of GCSAA. Over the course of the next two days we heard from many of the folks that run the association, got a tour of the building, and had a meet-and-greet of sorts with many of the other staff members at Headquarters, who all work together as a unit to provide the professional services and support that we as members are so used to having. I would like to offer some of the highlights and takeaways that I got, and how I feel that they relate to us at GCSANE...

- GCSAA is very connected to all of the 98 affiliated chapters in the US. I felt that they knew a lot about GCSANE and our efforts, significantly much more than I expected. For example, I was asked to share some of the positive experiences we have had with winter meeting attendance at different venues such as Fenway, Gillette and Warrior Ice Arena as well as how our Partnership Promotion Program (PPP) is being received by Friend and Affiliate Members. Other associations have recently adopted, or began researching, ways to build excitement into their own.
- Each of the GCSAA employees, and there are many, are focused and dedicated individuals with our best interest in mind... period. If there is a stone unturned as it relates to our profession and our success, they will find it first if it hasn’t been found yet. Field Representatives, Administrative Staff, Statisticians, Scientists, Government Liaisons, Lawyers, Social Media/Website Professionals, Analysts, Event Coordinators, etc.... Everyone works together in a way that any successful entity would and should. And what is the added bonus? They know it and want to share how!

- Rhett Evans, CEO and JD Dockstader, COO each provided information regarding the state of golf, our industry, leadership practices, and other success stories from GCSAA. In short, GIS attendance, membership, and overall participation in golf has risen over the past 15 months. Unfortunately, Student enrollment in turf programs remains extremely low, as much as 70% less than its peak a decade ago! Obviously this has been a concern, but to this extent? You can bet this issue is top priority and is discussed intently. “Stay tuned” is NOT part of a leader’s vocabulary and as such, is not the action to take here. “Making a Difference” was the title of Rhett’s presentation and in some small way each of us can reach out to even one prospective student and do just that.
- Best Management Practices (BMP’s) continue to be at the forefront of topics. Several states have completed their respective plans for adaptive management and GCSANE is in the process of development.
- Roundtable discussions also took place in an effort to compare problems and come up with solutions to many of the same issues that other chapters have or will have faced. Meeting attendance, golf event attendance, student enrollment, educational opportunities and chapter proliferation were compared. GCSANE has certainly stepped forward in successes regarding most of these topics.
- Other key figures at GCSAA also presented topics both large and small including...how to take advantage of the services we are provided, new website walk-thru, upcoming mobile app, GIS San Antonio 2018, Grassroots PAC/Government Relations projects, Water Quality and Environmental concerns, individual success stories presented by other members and a Leadership presentation by motivational speaker Paul Long.

Personally, I couldn’t have gotten more out of the trip to Lawrence and the educational opportunity presented. Again, there are many very dedicated and passionate individuals working for GCSAA and working for us. Take a look at their new website and upcoming mobile app. I assure you that under every tab and category there is indeed someone there to support and deliver anything a member may need. Just as our own affiliated chapters practice, GCSAA learns from us and we learn from them. Together, we all move our important piece of the golf puzzle forward. “Up and to the right” as the statisticians say.

Don D’Errico-GCSANE

Secretary/Treasurer
GCSAA Liaison



The tournaments in 1993, 1994 and 1995 at Wachusett and Poquoy Brook, along with some seed money from the Board of Directors, established our initial funding level to where in 1995 we began issuing scholarship awards. The Association named the top award in honor of the recently passed, long-time treasurer of the Association and Superintendent at Wellesley CC, Tom Schofield.

Then in 2012, the Association named the second highest award in honor of Dave Comee, the long-time chair of the Scholarship and Benevolence Committee, after his sudden passing in 2011.

In the preceding twenty-four years, we have memorialized 22 individuals during our annual tournament. These honorees are part of the GCSA of New England's legacy:

Don Marrone—Joel McKeon—Red Schultz—Manny Francis—Arthur Washburn - Tom Schofield—Pierre Coste—Garry Luccini—Jack Cronin—Emma Marrone— LeRoy Allen—Ken Turner—Glenn Ackley—Richard Blake—Jack Petersen—Dave Comee—Leon St. Pierre—Gerry Finn—Joe Rybka—Bob Grant—Dr. Joseph Troll and James Beane

True to the name, through 2016, the committee awarded scholarships to 89 individual students totaling \$129,750.00.

Additionally, the committee quietly disbursed to members and their families, in times of medical or personal issues, benevolent aid totaling \$147,200.00 over the same 24 years. This is what our Scholarship and Benevolence Fund is about.

In 2015, the Board of Directors established the Scholarship and Benevolence Charitable Trust, and appointed 5 trustees to oversee it. Noted previously, the committee's dream in 1992 was to get to a base line fund of \$100,00.00. The committee, as of April 1, 2017, oversees a Trust balance now at \$203,341.08. Yes, quite a milestone.

The fund's success over the past 24 years has been accomplished with, unfortunately, only a 25% support level from The Association's membership. The committee has difficulty understanding why 75% of the membership does not support the S&B year after year. Your participation this special year, and beyond, is encouraged.

Please make an effort to actively support the Scholarship and Benevolence tournament. This annual event is the sole fundraising mechanism for the Scholarship and Benevolence Charitable Trust Fund that supports scholarship and benevolent aid for all members and their family.

Moving forward, the S&B tournament committee is finalizing plans for the 25th Annual Scholarship and Benevolence Golf Tournament at Oak Hill Country Club in Fitchburg on July 17, 2017.

Those not familiar with this year's venue; Oak Hill has a long and distinguished past in Massachusetts golf.

Established in 1918, work began on nine holes in May of 1919, under the direction of golf architect Wayne Stiles of Boston, and opened for play on July 4, 1921. The success of the club encouraged the club's founders to expand the golf course to 18 holes. Famed golf course architect Donald Ross was hired in 1925 to develop plans for the new holes. Work on the new nine began in 1925 and was ready for play on July 27, 1927.

The grand opening featured a 36-hole match between U.S. Open Champion Tommy Armour and Massachusetts Open Champion Johnny Farrell, where Farrell established the initial course record with his 2nd round 70, defeating Armour by three shots. History buffs will note that Johnny Farrell went on to win the 1928 U. S. Open, defeating Bobby Jones in a 36-hole playoff by one stroke at Olympia Fields Country Club outside of Chicago.

Oak Hill has hosted, 12 MGA Championships, 3 New England Amateurs, 3 New England PGA Championships, 2 WGAM Championships, the 1996 Tri-State matches and countless MGA and USGA qualifying events.

Our host for the 25th annual tournament is Scott Lagana, CGCS, superintendent at Oak Hill since 2001.

Affiliate and Friend members should note that solicitations for sponsorship options are in the works. Contact the Association's Executive Director, Don Hearn for specific details.

As we celebrate the 25th anniversary of the scholarship and benevolence tournament, we lay the groundwork for the next 25 years and beyond. The fund benefits all members and their families but only exists with your active support.

Look for details in future NEWSLETTERS and mailings, circle the July 17, 2017 date and make the commitment to support your scholarship and benevolence fund.

Get involved, plan on playing Oak Hill CC, or donate your time at the day of the event if you cannot play, attend the dinner, donate a round of golf or a special prize or become a sponsor.

If you have not participated in the past, get off the sidelines; plan on this year as your personnel stepping off point. This tournament supports all GCSANE members and your families.

See you at Oak Hill.

By Bob Healey

Massachusetts Golf Association & Women's Golf Association of Massachusetts Memberships Approve Plans to Merge Operations in 2018

For Immediate Release: April 5, 2017



Memberships from the MGA & WGAM gave the green light for the organizations to merge in 2018

Norton, MA — The Massachusetts Golf Association (MGA) and Women's Golf Association of Massachusetts (WGAM) announced that the two organizations will merge operations, effective January 1, 2018.

Following a successful vote of the WGAM membership on Saturday at a Special Meeting prior to its Annual Spring Meeting, the merger was approved by the MGA membership by a unanimous vote during a Special Meeting of the MGA Members held on Tuesday, April 4th at Golf House in Norton, Massachusetts.

“It is a historic time for amateur golf with our two organizations coming together for the good of the game,” said **Tom Bagley**, president of the MGA. “This merger will allow us to continue what these two organizations have established but also bring a concerted focus to growing golf and bringing it to even more people throughout the Commonwealth.”

The long-standing organizations serving their respective golf communities for a combined 231 years will become one under the name of Massachusetts Golf Association and will proudly represent and serve the golfers and member clubs of the Bay State.

As previously announced, the consolidated structure will have one governing board comprising men and women and a melding of enhanced services, including grow-the-game initiatives, championships, member events and tournaments, junior golf, handicapping, course rating, volunteer resources and opportunities, communications, marketing and business operations. It will also continue to provide a comprehensive suite of services to member clubs and expand the work of The First Tee of Massachusetts.

“We had more than 80 members brave a New England snow storm on April 1st to show their support of this merger,” said **Leslie Logan**, president of WGAM. “We are unified in our belief that this merger is in the best interest of women's golf in our state. We are excited to move forward with our MGA partners to promote golf while respecting the history of the WGAM.”

The Letter of Intent to Merge was signed on November 7, 2016, and since that time the two organizations have been working together on a plan to fully integrate operations and governance beginning in January 2018.

“Much work and effort has been put forth by the WGAM and MGA board of directors and staff to prepare for the merger,” said **Jesse Menachem**, the MGA's executive director. “Over the past six months, we have worked closely together to learn more about each other's operations. This has been a tremendous opportunity for us to collectively identify best practices and streamline processes so that we can improve our services from top to bottom.”

Both organizations will continue to operate independently in 2017 and no changes to the championship and special events schedules are anticipated in 2018.

“By becoming one organization, we will be able to significantly enhance our programs and more effectively meet the ever-changing demands of current and future golfers,” said Cathleen Beach, the current WGAM executive director who will take on a new role beginning in 2018 as the director of women's golf and player development.

For more information on each organization, please visit MGALinks.org and WGAM.org.



7

areas of greatest friction you and your GM will wrestle with, and how to fix them now before you're down for the count.

By Bruce R. Williams, CGCS

The relationship between a golf course superintendent and the general manager can be likened to a marriage of sorts. Two people coming together and working as a team. Inevitably there will be a honeymoon period that is pure bliss, but there will also be times that are challenging over the years together. Marriages remain strong because people work at it. Each individual knows their role and also knows what makes the other person happy. Such it is in so many ways with the golf course superintendent and general manager relationship.

There was a time in which many clubs operated with independent department heads, but that has long been trending toward the general manager/COO concept and many superintendents find themselves reporting to a general manager rather than a green chairman or directly to a club's board of directors. The general manager needs the superintendent to perform their magic and the superintendent needs the GM to help get things approved and be supportive of the initiatives of the department. Similar to a marriage, it is a give-and-take proposition. When a relationship works there is nothing better, but when it sours it becomes difficult for people to work with each other. If a superintendent does not have the respect and support of his general manager, then it is likely that a job change is on the horizon.

To understand what makes for a great relationship it is important to know the areas of greatest friction between these two key management positions at a golf course.

1. COMMUNICATION

More superintendents lose their jobs over an inability to communicate than over an inability to grow grass.

It is extremely important to meet with the general manager as often as possible in a formal setting to discuss what has been accomplished and also what is planned for the days, weeks and months ahead. Knowing what the membership/players want is often expressed through membership comments to the board of directors or general manager directly. Like it or not it is imperative that they be shared. Through proper communication the general manager can become an advocate of the department and the work that is being done to meet or exceed expectations.

2. UNDERSTANDING CLUB GOALS

Golf course superintendents are trained to provide exceptional golf course conditions. Anything that stands in the way of that is counter-culture to most superintendents' way of thinking. However, the goals of the club are more important than the goals of any one department head. Superintendents should never put the goals of the department ahead of the goals of the business. While tee times with 7-minute intervals or hosting Monday outings may not be met with open arms by superintendents, if they provide the finances that support an operating budget and buy adequate equipment then it all contributes to the success of the facility.



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For more

Check out this issue's app version, as well as the Superintendent Radio Network, for an exclusive podcast between SRN Host Kyle Brown and Bruce Williams that continues the discussion about how to improve your relationship with not only your general manager, but with other department heads at your facility.

“Loyalty is not something that you can turn on or off. You are either loyal or you are not. **Be honest and be supportive.** It is very important to be there working alongside the GM not only when times are good but when they are bad as well. Be the go to guy that gets it done”



Advancing your career

Some superintendents desire a long career at the facility where they work and stay there for decades. Others choose to move up the career ladder and move on to greater responsibilities and much higher compensation levels. I have found that the general manager can be so important in helping the superintendent in his career advancement.

I consider all of the managers who I have worked with and the general managers that I have worked for as key people in mentoring me over the years. Watching, listening, learning from how they manage people and handle leadership responsibilities has been important. Those GMs that take the time and have an

active interest in helping your grow are the best kind of people to work for.

What are your existing skills and what skills might you need to move on in your career? The gap that might exist can be learned when given opportunities to take on more responsibility or learn new skills through external education and support of networking opportunities and service through industry associations.

Some of my peers have attained certifications, received graduate degrees, learned a new language and managed other departments and projects beyond the normal scope that they were hired for. All of that bodes well to advance within the organization you work for or if you will need those skills on your next job.

3. INTERDEPARTMENTAL COLLABORATION

A general manager who I worked for told me how important it was for his department heads and departments to get along. One of the roles of the general manager is to keep as many people happy in the organization as possible. With any type of disharmony this can create major problems for the GM. The golf professional, superintendent, chef, HR department head, controller and all must work cohesively. Superintendents should go out of their way to make this happen.

4. TEAM CONCEPT

There is an old adage of “together we win and divided we fall.” Every department is a part of the success of the operation of a club. From the receptionist at the front desk to the locker room attendant each and every person and department adds to the experience of a member. Thoughts of giving blame to others and compartmentalizing things with the thought of “that’s not my job” will encumber operations and develop ill will in the organization.

5. BUDGET ADHERENCE

It should always be important for any department head to meet their budget expectations. Clubs are a business. General managers run the business and are often judged partially on adherence to the overall club budget. Golf course maintenance is a big figure in that overall club budget. Many managers are given a bonus that has a component they are graded on for meeting their forecasted budget. When the golf course superintendent’s portion of the overall budget is greater than forecast then it could cost the manager some money.

6. LOYALTY

In a beautiful relationship there is a huge amount of trust between the superintendent and GM. There are often private discussions of a sensitive nature and those comments need to be considered privileged information. There will be times to disagree behind closed doors but it is very important that the two individuals be supportive of each other and work with a united front when dealing with the board and committees.

7. PROFESSIONAL ANIMOSITY

Nobody likes to talk about it but egos can get in the way of superintendents and GMs. There is no room for this and ultimately it is seldom that a superintendent will win the battle of egos. Set the egos aside. If the facility succeeds there is plenty of room for accolades for all and that often ends in above-average compensation or bonuses.



“When a relationship works there is nothing better, but **when it sours it becomes difficult** for people to work with each other. If a superintendent does not have the respect and support of his general manager, then it is likely that a job change is on the horizon.”

MAKING THE MAGIC. If we know what the major potential issues are in a relationship then what can be done to be sure the honeymoon lasts forever? Several ideas that will work should be put on a checklist to evaluate each and every year.

As a superintendent use effective communication with weekly meetings with the GM. It is best to also play the golf course or at least tour it so there are no surprises. I have never met a general manager that likes surprises. Hearing about a mainline break in the irrigation system should not come from golfers but be reported immediately to the front office. With today's technology we can be in touch almost instantaneously with our supervisors.

Early on in my career I was told of a general manager that had a plaque on her wall, behind her desk, that said “Bring Me Solutions, Don't Bring Me Problems.” Any superintendent that follows that premise will surely have a great relationship with their GM.

Be sure to understand the mission, vision and goals of the facility. This should be shared with your staff and explained thoroughly to all new hires. If those items don't exist then

departments may be headed in different directions and the left hand won't know what the right hand is doing.

Check your ego at the door. I worked for a wonderful GM in Jim Brewer who was at LACC for 37 years. Not a day went by in which I would tell myself that I was entering Mr. Brewer's kingdom and he was King! He was the boss and I had the utmost respect for him. The buck stopped with him and while we both were well respected in our industries there was no room for any level of discord. Department heads worked in unison and that was all a part of what made The Los Angeles Country Club the great club that it was.

Budgets are guidelines that a superintendent tries to adhere to. Through the use of proper purchasing, labor management and resource management most years' budgets should be met. In the years disasters take place, or unexpected circumstances, then it is important the GM be informed monthly of any variances and also if the board needs to make overall adjustments due to down revenues.

Loyalty is not something that you can turn on or off. You are either loyal or you are not. Be honest and be supportive. It is very impor-

tant to be there working alongside the GM not only when times are good but when they are bad as well. Be the go to guy that gets it done. When the superintendent is the guy you can count on and also the guy that has your backside covered it is the glue that holds the relationship together.

TIES THAT BIND. The happiest of superintendents are those people who love going to work each and every day. A major part of that is liking the people you work with and who you work for.

We don't always get to choose who we work for but we all get to choose whether or not we want to make that relationship work. There are so many upsides for you, your career and the success of the facility to not want to work hard to make the superintendent and general manager relationship work. Make it a priority each and every day and you won't be disappointed. **GCI**

Bruce Williams, CGCS, is principal for both Bruce Williams Golf Consulting and Executive Golf Search. He's GCI's senior contributing editor.

The benefits

Some of the benefits of a strong relationship have been discussed. But none is more important than having the general manager serve as an advocate for the golf course superintendent.

Each club has a different governance structure but most utilize the general manager as the conduit for information from department heads to the board of directors, finance committee, etc. Therefore the GM should be serving as an advocate and spokesperson to advance the needs of the greens department.

If the superintendent communicates effectively, is a team player, is loyal and runs his department with fiscal prudence then it is likely that the GM will carry the proper message to the leadership of the club to get the resources required to meet the goals and expectations of the club.



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Golf Course Superintendents Association of New England The Newsletter—Rate Schedule

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Company Name: _____ Phone: _____

Address: _____

Contact Name: _____ Email: _____

Issues (List month and total number): _____

Amount of Check: _____ (Made payable to "GCSANE")

Member Rates:	Monthly Rate	4 Times Per Yr. (Save 5%)	6 Times Per Yr. (Save 10%)	8 Times Per Yr. (Save 10%)	Annual Rate (Save 15%)
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