



CHIPS & PUTTS

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POCONO TURFGRASS ASSOCIATION

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April Meeting

Schuylkill Country Club

Host: William Schneider

Joint Meeting with Central Penn and Philadelphia Chapters

April will, hopefully, bring us plenty of sunshine and to our first of seven monthly golf meetings. April will be a three-way joint meeting with the Central Penn and Philadelphia Associations at the historic Schuylkill Country Club. Like many older clubs in the area, Schuylkill is loaded with history and an association with famous golfers and celebrities around the world. Originally designed as a 9 hole facility located in Pottsville by Willie Park in 1919, Schuylkill was reborn through a redesign of the original 9 holes and a layout of a new 9 holes by world famous architect Donald Ross on it's current site in Orwigsburg. Why the move you ask? Well, to get away from the prohibition era regulations in Pottsville, of course. When walking through the clubhouse you may not see them, but there are hidden passageways and rooms designed during that prohibition era so that members could safely enjoy their liquor away from the eyes of the law. Today, one of their most prominent members, Dick Yuengling, can enjoy his beverages without fear of repercussions.

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President's Message.....

What a strange year we are having thus far, and the season hasn't even begun. Hopefully, the extreme temperature shifts haven't negatively affected any turf. My hope is that winter kill isn't even a topic of discussion this year, but there is always that chance. If anyone needs any assistance or advice please reach out to the Association for help. Unfortunately, I know first hand about this topic, and its a no win situation for everyone involved. The best advice I can provide is to over inform your membership.

The Board has been working on a few things for the upcoming year. We have completed the golf calendar and I feel we have a great line-up for the members of the Association. We will also be assisting other associations in drafting a Pennsylvania BMP (Best Management Practices) document for golf courses to follow. This document, we hope, will show lawmakers we are being proactive in our management principles and practices. This will be a joint effort with all associations in the State, a representative from Penn State University and DEP. We are in the early stages now, but we hope to have this completed within two years from inception.

We are all looking forward to a great year and as always, if anyone needs anything, please contact us. We are all in this together. Thank you.

Gino Marchetti

Editor's Notes.....

Welcome to a new year and a new edition of the PTGA newsletter. As my predecessor has always asked of us in the past, I will be looking for and will welcome your (the member) input, such as articles, pictures, and/or whatever you deem beneficial to the newsletter. The newsletter will work best when we ALL contribute.

On behalf of the Board, I'd like to take this opportunity to recognize Brian Bachman for all his years of service and dedication to the PTGA and it's newsletter. Brian has decided to step down as Editor and from the Board after six years of service. His dedication and contributions to the newsletter over the years have proved to be invaluable to our Association. He deserves a big "Thank You" from all of us on the Board and our membership...I'd say I have some big shoes to fill...then again, he is a big guy!

I look forward to a great year and wish every member and their family the best, both personally and professionally in 2017. Go Golf!

Les Lear



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PA Golf Meeting with the Susquehanna River Basin Commission

-Chase Rogan, GCSAA—Mid-Atlantic Regional Representative

On January 10, the local golf community of central and eastern Pennsylvania met with staff of the Susquehanna River Basin Commission (SRBC) to discuss rules and regulations for “consumptive” users withdrawing from the Susquehanna River Basin. Fifteen representatives from the golf industry including golf course superintendents, owners, irrigation specialists and industry representatives were in attendance for the two-hour meeting.

The SRBC’s mission is to enhance public welfare through comprehensive planning, water supply allocation, and management of the water resources of the Susquehanna River Basin. In short, golf courses pay the SRBC for water they withdraw from the river basin. The SRBC has a responsibility to protect the water of the basin and make sure there is enough for all users, but also make sure there is enough water emptying into the Chesapeake Bay at an acceptable quality.

The meeting was solicited by stakeholders in the golf industry as a way to touch base with the SRBC, talk about the current state of the golf industry, and share our perspective regarding irrigation withdrawals from the Susquehanna River Basin. The price of water was also discussed (\$0.33/1,000 gallons of water). Since golf is a consumptive user (more than 10,000 gallons per day on a 30-day average), each course withdrawing from the basin is required to apply for a docket.

When a docket is close to expiring, the SRBC requires a complete review. New approvals are effective when old dockets expire, and new dockets last 15 years. Original dockets used to be longer, up to 25 years. In order to continue operation, new applications must be submitted six months prior to expiration. Costs to renew dockets can vary greatly. In some cases, a waiver can mitigate testing fees. Otherwise, applicants are required to perform aquifer testing and planning, so starting the process years in advance is smart. Consumptive use regulations have been in place since 1971, and in the 90’s the SRBC started an effort to track down users.

The take-home message was this: Many golf courses are up for review as time nears to re-apply. The SRBC advises that conversations should begin five years prior to docket expiration. The industry also raised its concerns with the cost of this re-application for a new docket, as it can be quite a large fee for courses that may already be operating on thin margins.

Other items discussed were drought mitigation plans, the effect of oil and gas industry on the river basin’s water, and golf’s role in re-charging ground water. We hope to host similar meetings in the future.



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One of Our Own Provides Support Beyond the Industry

Kidney transplant, support of friends give hope to recipient's family

By: John Reitman

It was not that long ago when Scott and Heidi Schukraft received the message that no parent ever wants to hear: "Your child is sick, and you need to get him to the hospital. Now!"

Andrew Schukraft is coming up on one year with a new kidney. The Schukrafts are among the lucky. Next month, their 17-year-old son Andrew will celebrate his first year with someone else's kidney filtering the blood that passes through his body. Life has returned as close to normal as it can be for a teenager in his final year of high school, say his mother, a school teacher, and his father, a former golf course superintendent near Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania. Days spent in dialysis have been replaced with more important things.

"The first Saturday we didn't have to go to dialysis we got in the car and went on a college visit," said Heidi Schukraft.

"We realized we'd taken a lot of things for granted."

The Schukrafts don't take much of anything for granted anymore, and their story is one of luck, love and the power of limitless friendship.

Only five months had passed from that day in August 2015 when Andrew Schukraft was diagnosed with an acute kidney disorder known as IgA Nephropathy and Feb. 17, 2016, the day he received a new kidney.

His "new" kidney was supposed to come from longtime family friend Mark McCormick, the 46-year-old superintendent at Huntsville Golf Club in Shavertown, Pennsylvania, who, despite the age gap, turned out to be a perfect match for Andrew. Instead, it came from an unknown 19-year-old donor who was killed in a car crash two weeks before the transplant was scheduled to take place.

The despair and anguish felt by one family opened the door to hope and healing for another.

For an adult needing a kidney transplant, the average wait time for a deceased donor is 5-10 years. For a minor, the wait time can vary from a few weeks to a few years depending on the state. For Andrew, the wait time was estimated at about a year. That's not awful considering there is a constant list of about 2,000 children nationwide in need of a new kidney.

The Schukrafts debated on whether to wait for a deceased donor, or seek a living donor willing to make such a sacrifice.

"It was not an easy decision," said Scott Schukraft, now the principal of Elite Sports Turf and Landscape Management. He has been a TurfNet member since 1994.

Ultimately, they decided to at least seek a living donor in hopes of speeding up the process for their son, who was undergoing dialysis four hours a day three days per week at a hospital an hour-and-a-half from home.

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Known for its fast, undulating greens, Par 3's, and its classic Ross design, Schuylkill C.C. has successfully hosted many events over the years, including the 1980 Philadelphia PGA Championship. The course is maintained by Superintendent Willie Schneider, a graduate of Penn State. He has been maintaining the grounds at Schuylkill for 19 years. He was the assistant to former superintendent Jim Rattigan for 10 years. Once Jim decided to move on, it came as no surprise that the membership called upon Willie to manage their 6,857 yard gem. Willie is assisted by his seasoned staff, and together they keep the course in peak shape year after year. Over the years, improvements and upgrades have been made to the greens, fairways, tees, and bunkers. This should be a great, fun filled day, and I hope to see everybody there!

The 2017 Golf Season In-Short

Steve Chirip, PTGA Golf Chair

Pocono Turfgrass members and guests, golf season is right around the corner, even if Mother Nature is messing with us. This upcoming year we have put together a great group of courses with some joint meetings thrown in. Our monthly meetings kick off on April 17. It is a joint meeting with both the Philly and the Central Associations at Schuylkill CC, a great Donald Ross layout. May is also a joint meeting with our friends from Hudson Valley and will be hosted at West Point GC on May 18. June brings us back to Honesdale, home of Masters Champion Art Wall on the 19th. July 18th takes us to the newly renovated and updated Fox Hill CC. Ron Garrison and John Polak will have it ready for us to enjoy. August is the Clam Bake, back at CC of Scranton on the 21st. The Championships are being moved to September for what we hope will be more favorable weather and a great representation. It will be contested at Great Bear on the 13th. We will close out the golfing season at one of our favorite venues, Huntsville GC on October 16.

Lastly, when you register for meetings this year, if there is someone you would like to play with, be sure to state that when you submit your registration. More and more courses are looking for tee sheets in advance of the meeting. If you sign up as a single, you will be paired up.

I hope to see a great turnout this year for our monthly meetings and hopefully have great weather.

See you all soon!




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Penn State University
Back-to-Back
STMA and GCSAA Turf Bowl Champions

Penn State students Kevin Heimann, Derek Buganza, Thomas Goyne, and Curt Moore took 1st place in the 4-year division at this year's Turf Bowl Competition at the Sports Turf Managers Association Conference (STMA) in Orlando! Students also took 2nd place in the 2-year division. This is the third year in a row that a Penn State team has taken first place in either the 4- or 2-year division. Penn State's Turf Bowl Team #10 took first place in GCSAA's Collegiate Turf Bowl Competition, presented in partnership with John Deere Golf. Penn State's Team #11 also took sixth place in the same competition. Team #10, Thomas Goyne, Derek Buganza, Curt Moore, Kevin Heimann (pictured), along with advisor Dr. Ben McGraw.

Congratulations to all the students and schools who competed this year! We Are...



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Heidi started a blog to tell Andrew's story, since, after all, there is no real conversation starter when your end game is to talk someone out of a kidney. To the Schukraft's surprise, nearly two dozen people, including McCormick, stepped forward offering to help their son.

Andrew Schukraft, here with his mother Heidi, is an advocate for organ donation.

McCormick's family and the Schukrafts have been friends for more than 20 years. It was Scott Schukraft, who in 1992, when he was superintendent at Huntsville, hired McCormick as an assistant. Today, their wives teach at the same school and McCormick's daughter, Payton, is classmates with Andrew, who spent a summer on a mower at Huntsville working for McCormick. When he learned of Andrew's condition, McCormick said stepping forward to help was an easy choice for him and his wife Janel.

"I talked to my wife about it, and she was all for it," McCormick said. "I've known Andrew since he was born. They needed help, and I was in a position to do something about it."

McCormick, and others, stepped forward within weeks of Andrew's diagnosis, which came a week after what should have been a routine sports physical. A soccer player at private Wyoming Seminary school, Andrew tested positive for high blood pressure during the exam. Doctors, figuring nervousness might be the cause, told his parents to monitor his blood pressure at home and return in a week. Nothing changed throughout the week, and seven days later, Andrew's already-high blood pressure was even higher. Testing revealed Andrew's kidney condition, prompting that ominous call: "Get him to the hospital. Now!"

"It was shocking news to hear at first," Heidi said. "We'd been at Hershey Park the day before, and he was having fun with his cousins. It didn't dawn on us that there was a major medical issue. We had no idea it was anything life-threatening."

The next several weeks were a whirlwind of treatments for Andrew and a barrage of information for the Schukrafts to digest. Andrew spent eight days in the hospital receiving dialysis. His mother never left his side.

"It was a lot of information, and I remember asking 'is this really happening?' " she said. "At the same time, he's looking to his parents for help. We had to keep our composure. I remember thinking 'I can't fall apart in front of him.' "

IgA Nephropathy, also known as Berger's disease, inhibits the kidneys' ability to filter waste from the blood. Left untreated, the prognosis ranges from remission to total kidney failure.

Once willing donors were identified, they were tested for a blood type match. Eventually, doctors whittled their list of volunteers to three and then one - McCormick - who then was subjected to a battery of tests to ensure his kidney was a match and that he was healthy enough to withstand the procedure.

McCormick laughs now when looking back on the scenario.

"I don't like needles. I don't like doctors. I don't like hospitals," he said. "I was a pretty unlikely candidate to go through something like that."

With all systems go, the procedure was scheduled for March 3, 2016. Two weeks prior to the operation, the Schukraft's phone rang.

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It was Andrew's doctor calling to inform them that a deceased donor's kidney was available after a 19-year-old male was killed in a car crash on Valentine's Day. Given the deceased donor's age, doctors determined that the 19-year-old's kidney would be a better match for Andrew.

McCormick, who for months had prepared himself mentally for the upcoming ordeal, experienced a wide range of feelings.

"When I found out, I was a little disappointed," he said. "It was kind of a strange mix of emotions. But at the same time, the important thing was for Andrew to get healthy. That was what mattered."

So far, Andrew's body has accepted the new kidney quite nicely. He's off dialysis and with a regimen of medication, a modified diet and lots and lots of water to keep his new organ hydrated, Andrew's new kidney could last 20 years or more, his doctors say. He has since become an advocate and spokesperson for organ donation.

The identify of the deceased donor and his family is kept anonymous by the Gift of Life donor programs. That didn't stop Andrew, who will graduate from high school in the spring, from penning a thank you letter that the organ-procurement group passed along to the donor's parents.

The Schukrafts are equally grateful to McCormick, who, along with the other potential donors, was welcome at any time to change his mind with no ill will.

"We were humbled that someone was willing to do that for us," Heidi said. "At the same time, we knew that at any time if they decided it was not right for them, they should not be afraid to say that. It's scary."

Instead, McCormick was unwavering in his commitment to helping Andrew. He was approved by doctors one day after another potential donor was rejected.

"At first, you don't know if you're going to be a blood match. Then, they identify about three possible donors. Then they get down to one," McCormick said. "It's a bit of a gut-check moment when you find out you're the one, and that it's going to happen."

To this day McCormick's approach to his role is beyond humble. Since he never went under the knife, he believes he really didn't do anything to help the boy, his parents and his sister, Alaina, who will graduate in May from Elon University in North Carolina.

"I still don't feel like I did anything," he said. "In fact, I didn't do anything."

That thinking, say the Schukrafts, is absurd. Just knowing they had a willing donor helped them get through some difficult times and gave them one more thing to be grateful for that Christmas.

"We got through Christmas because he (McCormick) decided to go through that testing, and that takes weeks," Heidi said.

"He provided relief and hope, because we knew he was there. As long as we had hope, we were able to function. He was our hope. He was our guy."

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POCONO ROUNDUP



The first Arnold Palmer Invitational without our beloved “King” of the game has come and gone. I find it only fitting to tee up a quote from one of the games greatest ambassadors, being so close to the start of our 2017 golf season.

*What other people may find in poetry,
I find in the flight of a good drive.
-Arnold Palmer*

Good luck this season and hit ‘em straight!

PTGA SCHEDULE

- April 17** Joint Meeting @ Schuylkill C.C.
(Phila. and Central Penn Associations)
- May 18** Joint Meeting @ West Point G.C.
(Hudson Valley Chapter)
- June 19** PTGA Meeting @ Honesdale G.C.
- July 18** PTGA Meeting @ Fox Hill C.C.
- Aug. 21** PTGA Annual Meeting and Clambake
@ C.C. of Scranton
- Sept. 13** PTGA Meeting and Championships
@ Great Bear G.C
- Oct. 16** PTGA Meeting @ Huntsville G.C.

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