



CONNECTICUT  
ASSOCIATION OF  
GOLF COURSE  
SUPERINTENDENTS



# Connecticut Clippings

Volume 39, No.1

March 2005

## SUPERINTENDENT OF THE YEAR : JIM MACDONALD

Presented By John Callahan

First I would like to thank the association for the privilege of presenting to Superintendent of the year award. This is our associations most prestigious and coveted award because it is voted on by the recipients peers. This award is presented annually to a Class A member of CAGCS who has shown exemplary skills in managing and maintaining a golf facility and has devoted his or



her time and effort to help benefit fellow superintendents at both the local and national level.

This is my fourth opportunity to present this award and I want to confide to you that our 2004 recipient has always finished as the bridesmaid. If I had to use one word to sum it up. It would be perseverance.

35 Years. Where does the time go? In the case of Jim Macdonald GCS (Ret) New Haven CC it was spent providing the membership with great playing conditions and most importantly superb greens. Our membership got to see the results of his work several times, when Jim hosted CAGCS meetings. He has always been there to lend a helping hand to both fellow superintendents and vendors. And I can vouch for this, as there are several products that I sell today that were brought to my attention by Jim Macdonald. Jim also found time to serve on the Board of Directors for four years and hosted some great summer picnics.

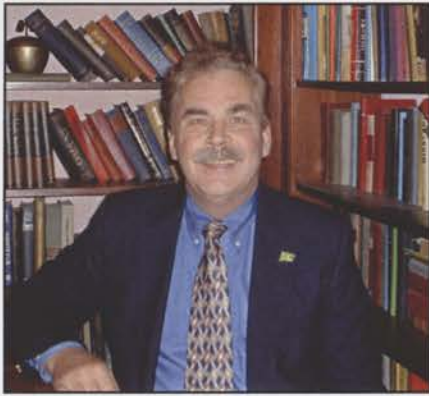
Born in Maine and raised all over New England, Jim and his wife of 40 Years Jan raised two Children

while at NHCC. Jan a native of Winchester Massachusetts attended many GCSAA conferences with Jim, and as Mary Jo Kennedy pointed out is very savvy about the golf superintendent business. Brian their oldest child is an Air Marshal working out of Miami. Which Jan stated is very nice when you want to escape the harshness of winter. Daughter Heather who worked for Jim at New Haven CC is now working at Yale.

Jim a 1964 graduate of the Stockbridge of Agriculture majored in turf but admits to the fact that his favorite course was trees. Fortunately his mentor Bob Grant, GCS (Ret) Brae Burn CC kept Jim focused on turf. A science teacher ...continued on page 3

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Wayne Urban, President

# The President's Message

Finally "Ground Hogs" Day. Have we reached the proverbial light at the end of the tunnel? According to that lovable, fat varmint "Punxsutawney Phil" probably not! Although this winter has not been (so far) as cold and wild as last years, these winter months seem to be getting longer and far more uneventful. I know I'm getting tired of that "grinding dust",

nicks and bumps from turning a wrench and seeing that incessant look of boredom and bewilderment from your winter full timers.

February is a short month. A lot of us are able to break up the monotony by using vacation time, GCSAA's Golf Industry Show and setting our sights on the annual early March Providence Turfgrass Conference. I am fortunate enough to be putting myself in the position to spend a couple of weeks on some semi-deserted Caribbean Islands. Lying on the beach with my tootsies bobbing in the water and a cool beverage(s) close by is my panacea to this winter tribulation. You need something to wash away all that grinding dust and diesel smell.

Unlike my close associate, Jud Smith, who prefers to vacation in the even colder, more desolate atmosphere of Canada and northern VT riding a snowmobile, I opt to serve my monastic, obligatory self by riding the surf. Who knows, maybe I'll even perfect my sand game.

Anyway, how we beat those winter doldrums are always a great exercise in self-fortitude. Remember, "Good Friday" and "Easter Sunday" are early this year and you all know what that means!

Finally, I would like to make mention of those member stalwarts who have retired

from this business - Jim MacDonald (2004 Superintendent of the Year), Ron Holcomb, Bob Witkoski and Peter Pierson. Good luck and thank you for your years of service. Congratulations to Timothy O'Neill, CGCS, Country Club of Darien, on becoming the President of GCSAA.

Wayno

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...continued from front page  
 in high school influenced Jim to pursue a career in Golf Course Management. What course should they teach in school to aspiring golf course superintendents? Public Relations 101.

After serving as superintendent at the Country Club in Brookline, MA he took a job as superintendent at New Haven CC. His career would span for 35 years until his recent retirement.

Changes, they are always taking place. Jim feels that the most significant change in golf is members (golfers) demands. And in the same breath Jim stated that the successful golf course superintendent must exhibit patience. His most difficult challenge over the 35 years at NHCC however was dealing with the weather. This in most cases reverts back to player demands and patience. Other changes of significance new turf varieties are not what they are cracked up to be, heights of cut are too low, and USGA greens need more compost. Jim feels that topdressing that

was sometimes put off is one of the most important practices a golf course superintendent can do.

Some of the GCSAA changes bother Jim. He does not feel the general managers should be involved with the GCSAA Conference & Show. They will eventually take over. "It's in their genes".

On looking back over the years Jim is disappointed in that golfers want everything perfect. You know, perfect grooming, perfect rough, and perfect bunkers. Oh, if I could do it over again "I think I would enjoy sales/marketing or maybe be a USGA Agronomist". "You know, write a critique, make some recommendations and then leave". Jim what would you advise those that are considering the golf course superintendent profession - "find another job".

When recently asked what he looked forward to most about retirement he responded "putting things off, and more sex". When his wife Jan was asked the same question she stated

"not putting things off, and less sex". They'll have plenty of time in their retirement to come to a mutual agreement on that one.

Jim quit playing golf several years ago when his clubs were stolen. His interest never regained to the degree of going out to purchase a new set. Or maybe he just put off getting another set of clubs. What will he do in retirement? Fishing and hunting are his two loves after his family. Jan likes to visit our two local casinos.

Jim and Jan plan to sort of retire to their home in Claremont, NH. The dropping of nickels at the local casinos will have to take place in Canada or a trip back to Connecticut. When not fishing and hunting, Jim may work part time in the garden section of his local Home Depot. And perhaps, buy another camper and do some traveling.

Jim congratulations on a long and successful career! And may you and Jan have a healthy and long retirement. ●●●●●●●●●●

**CAGCS 2005 SCHEDULE OF EVENTS**

Thursday, April 28	The Course at Yale	Scott Ramsay, CGCS Host Superintendent
Monday, May 23	Tower Ridge CC	James Budny Host Superintendent
Monday, June 13	River Ridge GC	Charles Rustici Host Superintendent
Monday, July 18	Simsbury Farms GC	Michael Wallace, CGCS Host Superintendent
Monday, August 8	The Patterson Club <i>CAGCS Invitational</i>	John Garcia Host Superintendent
Monday, August 15	Oak Hills Park GC <i>MET/CAGCS Poa Annual Tournament</i>	Glen Dube, CGCS Host Superintendent
Sunday, Sept. 11	Lake Compounce	CAGCS Family Day
Monday, Sept. 12	Orange Hills Country Club	Jud W. Smith Host Superintendent
Monday, October 3	Clinton Country Club <i>Scholarship &amp; Research Tournament</i>	Michael Decker Host Superintendent
Tuesday, October 25	Pequabuck Golf Club <i>Superintendent/Assistant Tournament</i>	Kevin Jaracy Host Superintendent
Tuesday, November 1	Birchwood Country Club <i>CAGCS Annual Meeting</i>	Edward Consolati Host Superintendent
December TBA	CAGCS Christmas Party	



Jim, Daughter Heather, John Callahan wife Jan seated.

**PETER PIERSON**

**ACTIVE MEMBER PLANS MOVE TO NORTH CAROLINA**

It is finally time to wish Peter Pierson a happy retirement. Peter got his start in the golf business when he was fourteen, working for Eddie Anderson at the Edgewood Golf Club. Peter's father, Andrew, acquired the course in 1949 while running his business, Rose Horticulture. Upon graduation from Clemson University, Peter served with the 1st Infantry, in Vietnam. He worked for his father in the rose business for eight years. In 1978, along with his brothers and mother, Peter bought out his father's interest in Edgewood Golf Club and began to work there as Superintendent. The PGA Tour needed a new site for the Greater Hartford Open and found the great drainage of Edgewood to their liking. They purchased the course from the Pierson's and Peter remained as Superintendent for a couple more years. He then became the Superintendent at Pequabuck Golf Club and remained there until last year.



Peter Pierson

Peter always had stellar participation in our association and has been an activist in the turf industry during his career. He has served as:

- CAGCS President and Board member
- President of EIC
- Coordinator for the CT Water Resource Commission, which helped determine the best water management practices for golf courses.
- He has also been a great

liaison with state agencies and golf organizations, such as the DEP & CSGA. His efforts have always been critical in helping superintendents stay ahead of the curve when it came to state regulations and any potential legislation.

Peter and his wife Sherry make their home in Cromwell, CT. They will be moving to North Carolina this coming year where they have two grown children and three grandchildren. His son Tad, a salesman with Mizuno, and his daughter Kimberly, is a stay home mom.

Peter's hobbies include golf, yard maintenance and learning to use the computer.

The CAGCS Board and members what to thank Peter for the many years of dedication to this Association and on his retirement.

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# Ron Holcomb Retirement Party





**BOB WITKOSKI**  
**GC SUPERINTENDENT**  
**WASHINGTON GOLF CLUB**

After many years in the northwest corner of Connecticut, Bob Witkoski, Superintendent of Washington Golf Club, has decided to retire. Growing up in Union City, CT, Bob was always interested in golf. He first went to work for Bill Leahy at the Highfield Golf Club in Woodbury, CT.

Bob served in the USAR in 1964 and then went to UMASS Winter School in 1965. In the spring of 1966 Bob became the Superintendent of Washington Golf Club.

A very fine read was an article about Bob in the "Golf Digest" February 2003 entitled, "The Greenskeeper Tale". A follow up article was printed in "Golf Course Management" in June 2003.

One of Bob's signature trademarks was his L.L. Bean gum rubber shoes, painter's overalls, plaid shirt

and Parodi cigar. At his recent retirement party at the club, the entire membership came dressed in this attire.

Bob and his wife Diane, a part-time teacher will continue to make their home in Washington. Their daughter Sage is a nurse. They plan on some traveling to Maine and North Carolina and Bob will spend more time enjoying his life long hobby of fishing - any type of fishing, fly-fishing, ice fishing, etc. Best of health and enjoy your retirement!!



Bob Witkoski

**RONALD HOLCOMB,**  
**IDEA MAN, RETIRES**

Another one of the good guys is calling it quits. Ron Holcomb, the longtime sales representative for Hart Seed Co. retired in December. Ron has been an active part of our association over the years. He served on the CAGCS Board for many years as the Membership and S & R Chairman, and as Secretary/Treasurer. Ron was integral in the formation of the Association pins, the Superintendent of the Year Award, and the Superintendent and Club Biographies that go out with the Meeting Notices. He has always been more than willing to assist the association with his time, energy and new ideas.

Ron grew up on a farm in Amherst MA and stumbled into the golf business. He attended the Stockbridge School of Agriculture at UMASS for two years. He worked at Crestview Country Club in Agawam, MA for Felix Thompson from 1959-1971 minus two years spent in the 7th Army in Germany from 1963-65. Ron was the Golf Course Superintendent at Cliffside Country Club for 15 years after which he worked for Imperial Nurseries for a few years and then for the Charles C. Hart Seed Co.

Ron lives in Granby with his wife Barbara, a Manager of the Simsbury Bank & Trust. He will enjoy playing golf, reading, doing home repairs in his free time and thinking up more ideas. The CAGCS membership and Board of Directors wish you the best for a happy and healthy retirement.

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# Grass Catcher

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## New Members

James Budny  
Class B  
Tower Ridge Country Club

Shawn Daigle  
Class B  
Hopyard Golf Club

Gregory DuBois  
Class A  
Wintonbury Hills Golf Course

Eric Holm, CGCS  
Class A  
Hop Meadow Country Club

Ryan O'Neal  
Class C  
Country Club of Farmington

Mark Pelky  
Class C  
Wintonbury Hills Golf Course

William Stevens  
Class B  
Glastonbury Hills CC

George Thomas  
Class C  
The Connecticut Golf Club

Charles Walnoha  
Class A  
Pistol Creek Golf Club

## Reminder!!

CAGCS Scholarship applications are available. A member must request application in writing to: CAGCS, P.O. Box 3678, Woodbridge, CT 06525. Deadline for requests of an application as April 4, 2005 and deadline for submitting is May 2, 2005.

## Congratulations

Congratulations to Tim O'Neill, CGCS, CC of Darien on his election to President of GCSAA. More to follow later.

"It is truly an honor and one which I share with all those who have worked with me and before me in Vermont. As you know, our state likes to lead the charge in the environmental forum, so it is a constant struggle. The environmentalists seem to have endless time and funding to pursue their goal of zero pesticide usage." Ken Lallier, CGCS, Quechee Club and Newsletter Editor, Green Mountain greens on receiving the 2005 GCSAA Excellence in Government Relations Award.

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*Golf Tournament at Hickory Ridge CC Caps Fund Raising Event*

By Steve Goodwin, Associate Dean College of Natural Resources and the Environment, UMass

The Joe Troll Research Center is now under construction thanks in part to a successful golf tournament. Over one hundred and fifty golfers and twenty-five sponsors raised over \$40,000. That sum is being matched by \$20,000 from state funds.

Much of the credit for the event's success is due to Bob Ruszala, superintendent at Hickory Ridge CC. Bob chaired the tournament committee and did much of the leg-work that built participant enthusiasm and created a sell out. Cathy and Doug Harper, the club's owners generously donated the golf course and Jim Bernier, of Golf Cart Service, Inc. donated the golf cars.



*Dave Sylvester & Joe Troll - Dave sat out on the 8th hole passing out cigars, sharing jokes with friends and raising over \$1,000.*

"This building is one of the central steps in a concerted plan to revamp the turf program" noted Cleve Willis, Dean of the College of Natural Resources and the Environment. "We're also hiring new turfgrass specialists and renewing our focus on research. New England deserves the highest quality turf programs and we intend to make that a reality here at UMass Amherst."

**WELCOME DR. JOHN KAMINSKI**

**UCONN PATHOLOGIST  
EAGER TO GET STARTED**

Although John Kaminski has been an avid golfer for many years, he didn't get his start in the profession of turfgrass science until mid-way though his studies at Pennsylvania State University. Initially enrolled in the Landscape Contracting Program, John added Turfgrass Science as a second major after working at Desert Mountain golf course in Scottsdale, Arizona in 1996. While completing his degrees at Penn State, John interned at Congressional Country Club in his home state of Maryland where he helped to prepare the course for the 1997 U.S. Open. It was there that Paul Latshaw introduced John to Dr. Peter Dernoeden (Turfgrass Pathologist, University of Maryland), who later became his graduate advisor.

While at the University of Maryland John's primary graduate work involved a USGA-funded investigation into bentgrass dead spot, a previously unknown disease of creeping bentgrass putting greens. In

addition to his work with bentgrass dead spot, John was actively involved in various other research projects including:

- Impact of soil amendments and fertilizers on soil microbial activity and disease
- Impact of various herbicides on bentgrass establishment
- Seasonal germination patterns of annual bluegrass
- Spore distribution patterns of *Pyricularia grisea* (gray leaf spot)
- Herbicide and fungicide efficacy evaluations

John has over 50 publications in the form of scientific manuscripts, abstracts, extension bulletins, newsletters and trade journal articles. In addition, Dr. Kaminski often presents his research at local, regional and national conferences and meetings. John has been the recipient of numerous awards and scholarships including the Watson Fellowship, which is designed to identify and recognize outstanding postgraduates who will be the leading industry educators and researchers of tomorrow.

Dr. Kaminski has already begun to

develop his research and outreach program at the University of Connecticut. Although John just began in January, various plots have already been established at the UCONN Plant Science Research Facility and he has given, or is scheduled to give several seminars throughout New England this winter. In addition, John will open the University of Connecticut Turfgrass disease Diagnostic Center this spring that will serve commercial turfgrass managers throughout the area. For more information on the diagnostic center or turfgrass pathology research at UCONN, please contact Dr. John Kaminski (860.486.0162 or john.kaminski@uconn.edu).



*Dr. John Kaminski*

**GCSAA PRESIDENT:  
TIMOTHY T. O'NEILL, CGCS**

Timothy T. O'Neill, CGCS, has been superintendent at the Country Club of Darien (Conn.) since 1981. He has a bachelor's degree in turfgrass management from the University of Rhode Island in Kingston.

A 23-year member of GCSAA, O'Neill has been on the board of directors since 2000. He currently serves as GCSAA's vice president and chairman of both the chapter relations and environmental stewardship committees. He is also chairman of both the conference and show resource group and the industry advisory council. O'Neill is on the board of trustees for The Environmental Institute for Golf.

O'Neill is a member and past president of the Metropolitan GCSA, and is also a member of the Connecticut Association of

GCS and the Rhode Island GCSA. O'Neill also is a member and past president of the Tri-State Turf Research Foundation, a participant in the Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary Program, a member of the Environmental Industry Council of Connecticut and the USGA.

**Statement**

It's hard to believe that five years have passed since I began my term on the GCSAA Board of Directors. After a busy and productive year as vice president, I am honored to now be nominated for the position of president by my chapter, the Metropolitan GCSA. I accept the challenge with great confidence and anticipation and look forward to leading a team dedicated to furthering our profession's, and our association's, mission and goals.

Through my various committee and board involvements, I remain convinced of the critical role GCSAA plays in promoting our profession,

protecting our environment and furthering the professional development of superintendents everywhere. As president, I will continue to support each and every one of these efforts.

On the top of my list are efforts like:

- The Professional Development Initiative, which is working to elevate superintendents' standing and the stability of their work environment.
- GCSAA's commitment to finding new and creative ways to bring educational opportunities to superintendents. Our new webcast training, which allows us to deliver top-notch education directly into the superintendent's office via the computer, is just one example of how GCSAA is working to offer members learning opportunities that are more accessible and affordable.

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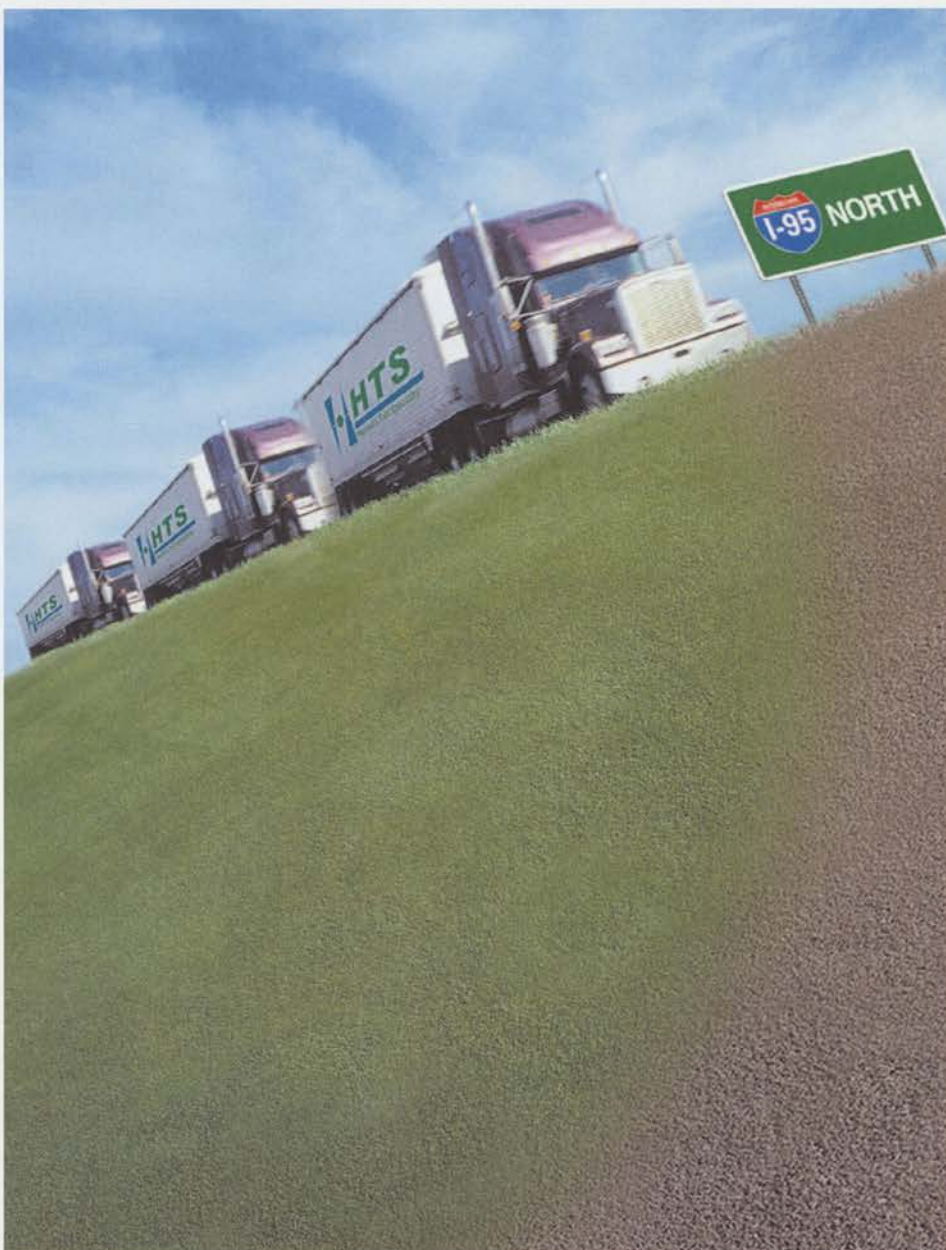
- The development of a new affiliation agreement, which is designed to enhance the relationship between GCSAA and our chapters, and between our chapters and their members.

- The Environmental Institute for Golf's ongoing work to provide superintendents with the research and know-how to produce fine turfgrass conditions while remaining attentive to the environment.

- The partnership - in - the - making between GCSAA and the National Golf Course Owners Association, which will take effect this year when we combine our trade shows for the first time as the Golf Industry Show. I can't think of a better way to showcase the value of our conference and show within the industry.

I am proud of the position GCSAA enjoys today in both the golf and environmental communities, and I look forward to using all my resources to help elevate that standing. With your support at our 2005 Golf Industry Show in Orlando, I will commit all my energy to building a future for GCSAA that we can look back on with a deep sense of accomplishment and pride.

Many thanks to all who have supported me throughout my time on the board, and a special thank you, again, to my chapter for its vote of confidence in nominating me for president. I also want to thank the Country Club of Darien and my wife, Jennifer, and kids Justin and Kristen. I could not have done this without their unwavering support.



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  - Golf course landscaping and

maintenance

- Golf course agronomy
- Academic achievement
- Financial need
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- Awards
- Golf-related activities and achievements, including work experience and school or AAU sports teams
- Work history
- Essay

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### CAGCS WINTER SEMINAR

The CAGCS Winter Seminar held at the Hawthorne Inn was a huge success. Construction at White Manor CC in Pennsylvania with Bobby Weed, GCA, Chis Monti, Associate Designer and Don Brown GCS highlighted the days presentation. Attendees were taken through the steps of a drastic golf course remodeling job.

The Ten Commandments Of Golf Course Remodling were explained in detail. They are as follows:

- I. Thou Shalt Seek Out Objective Analysis
- II. Thou Shalt Educate Committees
- III. Thou Shalt Educate The Golfers
- IV. Thou Shalt Develop A Plan And Stick To It
- V. Thou Shalt Understand The Economies Of Scale
- VI. Thou Shalt Seek A cohesive Team To Do The Work And A Small Committee To Oversee It
- VII. Thou Shalt Respect Mother Nature
- VIII. Thou Shalt Be Reasonable With respect To The Difficulties Of the Job
- IX. Thou Shalt Keep Thae Golfers Informed
- X. Thou Shalt Make arrangements For Golfer Play During Construction

Dr. John Kaminski, UCONN Turf Pathologist, spoke on his position at UCONN and disease work that he has done. John stated that "golf courses are probably the most environmentally friendly business in Connecticut."

Dave Oatis, USGA Agronomist spoke about problem greens, and the fact that some problems could be avoided. To be specific, use pesticides judiciously. Dave also spoke about being careful about rebuilding greens. You may want to uses a dirty mix to avoid having greens that are dissimilar.

"Pesticides are under attack and Connecticut is the Faluja of the pesticide applications". Dick Tice of EIC says to keep a close watch on activists in Connecticut. The Audobon Society and PETA are on his watch list. For a list of organizations to keep an eye on contact Dick Tice, Executive Director, EIC 800/964-5219.

It is not easy to produce our Winter Seminar. Much planning goes into this one day production. Speakers and there presentations must be lined up. Food & beverages for lunch and breaks must be ordered. Vendor tables arranged, and literature and pesticide credit reports must be printed ahead of time.

Please do your part and notify Mary Jo Kennedy at the CAGCS office early if you plan to attend. This year we had about 25 walk ins. That is why seating was a little tight and some had to wait for more pesticide credit reports to be copied.



Dave Oatis



Some networking during the break.



Manny at work.

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