



# Tee to Green

PUBLISHED BY THE METROPOLITAN GOLF COURSE SUPERINTENDENT ASSOCIATION

## Special Feature

### THE METGCSA HONORS DR. RALPH ENGEL

*Rutgers University Professor Emeritus receives the 1989 John Reid Lifetime Achievement Award*

When the noted 18th century philosopher, Alexandre de Talleyrand-Perigord, wrote that "the reputation of a man is like his shadow, gigantic when it precedes him," he could have had Dr. Ralph E. Engel in mind.

"In bestowing our coveted John Reid Lifetime Achievement Award to Dr. Engel, we not only pay deserved tribute to this distinguished, world-renowned turfgrass specialist, we are, in essence, honoring every single member of this association as well as every student who ever schooled under him. He's that deserving," says Bob Alonzi, superintendent of Winged Foot Golf Club and past president of the MetGCSA.

Bob presented the 1989 Reid Award to the noted Rutgers University professor emeritus, lecturer, and author before some 200 members and guests during the MetGCSA Invitational at Burning Tree Country Club.

Dr. Engel, whose turfgrass research and teaching have gained universal recognition, is the fourth recipient of the Reid Award. Previous winners are Guido Cribari, retired executive sports editor with the Gannett-Westchester Newspapers, Alexander Radko, retired head of the Greens Section of the United States Golf Association, and noted professional golfer and TV golf analyst Ken Venturi, the 1964 U.S. Open golf champion.

"I cannot tell you what an impact Dr. Engel has had on my life and, I'm certain, the lives of hundreds of superintendents and former students," says Bob.

"I schooled under Dr. Engel at Rutgers 25 years ago, and I'm still profiting from that fortunate association, thanks to the hundreds of papers, pamphlets, books, and magazine articles this knowledgeable gentleman has authored or coauthored over the years.

"Suffice it to say that if Dr. Engel isn't the world's most noted authority on turfgrass and turfgrass research, he is surely its most respected," Bob concludes.

Dr. Engel holds a bachelor of science degree from Hastings College, a masters from the University of Nebraska, and a doctorate from Rutgers. He has devoted his entire life to turf development and the ongoing research in improving the quality of turfgrasses.

Among the hundreds of periodicals he has written are two he coauthored with Jim Fulwider, retired golf course superintendent at Century Country Club, on "the effect of temperature and light on germination of seed of goosegrass," and "seed characteristics and control of goosegrass."

He also cowrote on "the influence of mowing procedures on roll speed of putting greens," with Al Radko, previ-



Winged Foot Superintendent Bob Alonzi welcomes Reid Award recipient Dr. Ralph Engel to the podium.

ous recipient of the Reid Award.

"Yes," says Bob in conclusion, "the old philosopher was right on target—particularly where Dr. Engel is concerned—when he wrote that a man's reputation casts a giant shadow when it precedes him."

In the case of Dr. Engel, it's a shadow that stretches across every single golf course in the land.

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## METGCSA SOCIAL EVENTS: MORE THAN JUST FUN AND GAMES

For the many members who attended the recent family picnic at the Woodway Beach Club, we owe a special thanks to Jeff Scott, chairman of our Social Committee, and to the thoughtful wives of the Family Relations Committee who gave their time generously to put on as good a picnic as we've ever had. You can also be sure that they'll show you a terrific time during the upcoming evening cruise down the East River to Manhattan and the Statue of Liberty.

These types of activities, including the Christmas Party, monthly golf outings, and even friendly games with your favorite foursome may look like just plain old fun, but if you listen in on superintendents' conversations, you're bound to hear more than a few discussions about the latest happenings on their golf

courses (much to the dismay of many superintendents' wives).

And it's this give and take of information among superintendents at social events that's a significant and valuable part of being a member of the MetGCSA. But more than that, this constant dissemination of trade secrets helps to make us all better superintendents.

If you haven't been attending our social events because you think they're not educational or that you can't afford them, think again. For the reasons I just mentioned, you should treat the costs of these events as a business expense—paid by your employer. And who knows, you might even pick up a tip that will help with a persistent problem on your golf course.

Hope to see you on the cruise.  
SCOTT E. NIVEN, CGCS  
*President*

### Notable Notes

#### BIRTHS

■ Kevin Michael to Mike and Mary Medonis, July 13, 1989. Mike is superintendent at Bonnie Briar Country Club in Larchmont, NY, and Mary is assistant superintendent at Westchester Country Club in Rye, NY.

■ Randi Leigh to Rick and Billie Schock, July 28, 1989. Rick is superintendent at Wee Burn Country Club in Darien, CT.  
*Congratulations!*

#### MEMBERS ON THE MOVE

Dave Pijnenburg took over as superintendent at Redding Country Club, Redding, CT. Previous position: assistant superintendent, Greenwich Country Club, Greenwich, CT.

#### LOOK WHO'S IN THE NEWS

Mark Fuller and The Quechee Club in Quechee, VT, were the subject of an article published in the August issue of *Turf*. Mark is property

manager at Quechee, which appears to be a mammoth undertaking. In addition to two 18-hole golf courses, Mark is in charge of maintaining the village green, woodlands and forests, a 52-acre man-made lake, a 680-vertical-foot ski area, a polo field, a pool, and tennis courts. There is also a clubhouse with numerous facilities for indoor sports.

This—and much more—are explained in this interesting and insightful piece entitled, "Keeping 'em Happy: Mark Fuller Keeps 1,300 Members Happy."

#### CONGRATULATIONS ARE IN ORDER

Mark Millett, superintendent at Old Oaks Country Club in Purchase, NY, recently qualified, out of 180 players at Siwanoy Country Club, to play in the MGA Amateur Tournament. The tournament was held the first week in August at Metropolis Country Club.



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# KEEPING MEMBERS HAPPY WITH YOUR HOLE PLACEMENTS

*The USGA Offers a Checklist of Recommendations for Everyday and Tournament Hole Locations*

*How many times have you had members gripe about the hole placement on one of your greens? If you're not following USGA specs when changing cups, then your members may have a legitimate beef. Read on for some rules and regulations on hole placement. Then, the next time a group of golfers ask, "Why'd you put that hole there?" you'll be able to tell them.*

## Everyday Considerations When Changing Cups

- ❑ First and foremost, don't try to outsmart golfers with tricky hole locations. Your job is to use good judgment in deciding on placements that will give fair results.
- ❑ Study the design of each hole so you know how the architect intended it to be played. To start, know the length of the shot to the green and how it may be affected by weather conditions. Consider, for instance, the wind, the condition of the turf from which the shot will be played, and the holding quality of the green.
- ❑ Never place a hole too close to the edge. Generally, it's recommended that the hole be at least five paces from any edge of the green. But there are times when holes should be placed even farther from the sides—for instance, when you have a bunker closeby or when the ground slopes away from the edge.

Another consideration: You have to be sure there's enough putting green surface between the hole and the front and sides of the green to accommodate the shot. For example, if the hole requires a long iron or wood shot to the green, the cup should be placed further from the sides than if the hole required a short pitch shot. But just as important is that your hole placement allow the golfer fair opportunity for recovery after a reasonably good shot just misses the green.

- ❑ Be sure a radius of two to three feet around the hole is level. You don't want holes located on slopes where the ball could gather speed. A test for proper hole placement: A player

above the hole should be able to stop the ball at the hole with little trouble.

- ❑ Consider the condition of nearby turf. It's especially important to avoid damaged turf, such as old hole plugs that haven't completely healed.
- ❑ Cut holes as nearly on the vertical as possible, not plumb with the contour of the green.
- ❑ Vary your hole placements throughout the course, making sure there's a balance of left, right, central, front, and back positions. Too many left positions, for instance, can give golfers with hooked shots an unfair advantage.
- ❑ The person who cuts the holes should make sure the Rules of Golf are observed. It's especially important that the hole liner not exceed four-and-one-quarter inches in outer diameter and that it be sunk at least one inch below the putting green surface.

## Placing Holes During a Competition

- ❑ During practice days before a competition, select your hole locations carefully. What you don't want to do is put your holes in any of the same the locations you plan to use during the tournament—or in spots that will encourage damaging foot traffic over your intended locations.
- ❑ For a competition played over several days, the course should be kept in balance daily in terms of degree of difficulty. In a stroke competition, for example, the first hole of the first round is as important as the last hole of the last round, so the course should not be set up appreciably more difficult for any one round.

One way to be sure you maintain a balance is to select six quite difficult

hole locations, six moderately difficult, and six that are relatively easy.

Remember, the old concept of making the course progressively harder round after round is just that—an old concept.

- ❑ Anticipate players' traffic patterns. Locate holes for early rounds so that prime hole locations for later rounds won't be spoiled by players leaving the green.

- ❑ In match play, a hole location may, if necessary, be changed during a round provided the players in each match play with the hole in the same location.

In stroke play, Rule 33-2b requires competitors in a single round to play with each hole cut in the same position, but see "exception to that rule."

When playing 36 holes in one day, it's not customary to change hole locations between rounds, but there's no rule prohibiting it. If you *do* change holes, all players must be informed.

Adapted from *The Bull Sheet*, July 1988.

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### TRACTOR ROLLOVERS: A POTENTIAL HAZARD ON YOUR GOLF COURSE?

On farms across the country, reports *The Wall Street Journal*, tractor rollover is the number one killer. In 1987 alone, 341 people died in rollovers, says Arnold Skromme, a 72-year-old retired agriculture engineer in Moline, IL, who has been waging a solo crusade against farm accidents.

Though fatal tractor accidents are far more common on farms than on golf courses, they *can* happen, particularly if your machines are not equipped with up-to-date roll bars and other protective devices. This past winter, Mike Reeb, superintendent of Country Club of New Canaan, had a close call on his course. A crew member going up an incline, with the front-end loader raised and filled with material, toppled over and landed on the roof.

"Fortunately, the tractor was equipped with a ROPS—a rollover protection system," says Mike. "It prevented the roof from collapsing and crushing him—he had only a few broken ribs—and it also prevented further damage from being done to the equipment. Without the ROPS, the tractor probably would have kept on rolling," he says.

Tractor manufacturers have been offering the option of rollover safeguards since the late 1960s. But because tractors are often replaced slowly, many still lack the devices. If you own an older tractor, retrofitting it with these life-saving devices may be worthy of consideration...serious consideration.

### GOLF COURSES CLEARED AS GROUND WATER POLLUTERS

A three-year research project conducted by Penn State turf scientist Tom Watschke confirms what many superintendents already believe: that turf chemicals have little to no effect on our ground water and streams.

Here, in brief, is the *Turf* magazine report on Watschke's methodology and conclusions after extensive tests with eight nutrients and pesticides.

#### Research Methodology

Watschke used twelve 21 x 62 foot plots, each with individual irrigation systems and plastic edging to prevent movement of water between the plots. All water that ran off or percolated down through the soil profile was automatically sampled and measured every 60 seconds in a building at the foot of each plot. Watschke experimented with three different turf mixes, and plots were mowed weekly to a height of two inches. No core aeration, spiking, or slicing was used.

Beginning in 1986, plots were treated four times annually with the pesticides and fertilizer—all according to label recommendations. Those used were Nitrate; Phosphate; Potas-

sium; Pendimethalin; 2, 4-D; 2, 4-DP; Dicamba; and Chlorpyrifos.

#### The Results

Final results were compared with U.S. drinking water standards. In the majority of cases, the chemicals were either not detected at all, or the levels were lower than the drinking water standard. Even those few over the limit were "just barely over," notes Watschke. And he emphasizes that the samples were taken essentially at the curb side, not from drinking water sources. Obviously, he says, considerable pollution would occur in the streets or in the storm water collection systems.

He also points out that there are no drinking water standards for 2, 4-DP, potassium, and phosphate, but all were tested anyway. Low levels of potassium were found in 28 of 29 samples. But get this: The concentration of potassium in runoff and leachate samples was generally lower than the amount found in the irrigation water being used. The best news, though, is probably the nitrates. Watschke's team collected 29 samples, and as you might expect, nitrates were found in all but two samples. But 28 of the samples tested below the drinking water limits.



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Even when collected at curb side.

In short, Watschke concluded:

1. Runoff of pesticides and fertilizer on dense, high-quality turfgrass stands is "insignificant." So is any movement of chemicals beyond the root zones—even when six inches of irrigation are applied per hour.
2. Good turf actually promotes degradation and utilization of turf chemicals by aiding infiltration and thus increasing biological interactions in the soil.

## WEEKDAY GOLF MORE BUSINESS THAN PLEASURE

Ever wonder what all those golfers are doing out there on a weekday while you're hard at work? According to the results of a study conducted by Epyx Inc., a maker of computer games, chances are they're doing a lot more than just goofing off.

Of the 1,000 U.S. executives polled, 90 percent of those who engage in sports during work hours use a round of golf to drum up business—not, as

you might think, to escape workaday pressures, reports *Industry Week*.

Another finding worth noting: Golf is the number one sport among senior-level execs—by a long shot. A full 82 percent play golf, followed by tennis (39 percent) and softball/baseball (39 percent). So it looks like golf—and superintendents—are here to stay.

## A FOUR-STEP FIELD TEST FOR DETECTING PATCH DISEASE

If you've got patch disease, 'round about now you're probably seeing that "frog-eye" pattern emerging in your turf. Though the beginning stages are generally characterized by seemingly healthy grass in the center of a full or partial ring of dead or dying grass, surrounded by more healthy grass, patch disease can be mistaken for other fungal diseases.

To be sure it's patch disease you have at work, try this four-step field test we discovered in the August issue of *Turf*:

1. Remove five to ten dying plants.
2. Place them in water to remove soil from the roots.

3. Place the washed plants in a container of water and spread the roots apart.

4. Observe the roots with a hand lens. The infected roots will show a few dark strands of fungal mycelia growing along the surface of the roots, crowns, and stems.

If a field test indicates that patch disease is present, you can then send the sample to a state or university extension plant pathologist for laboratory analysis and, ultimately, identification of the exact variety of patch disease that's attacking your turf.

Though a diagnosis may not benefit you this year, it's vital in helping you choose a fungicide that'll offer effective control next season for the particular patch disease you're battling.

As many turfgrass pathologists insist—and as we mentioned in our March/April article on controlling patch disease—you have to get the disease *before* it gets your turf. That means applying fungicides well before the symptoms appear—preferably early spring.

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## Qualifying for the Met Team Championship: First-Round Results

The first qualifying round for the Met Team Championship was held at the July 11 Bonnie Briar meeting. The top contenders and their scores:

✓	J.C. Fulwider, Century Country Club	76
✓	Earl Millett, Ridgeway Country Club	80
✓	Mike Medonis, Bonnie Briar Country Club	80
✓	Will Heintz, Hampshire Country Club	80
✓	Matt Ceplo, Westchester Hills Golf Club	81
✓	John Carlone, Middle Bay Country Club	81
✓	Jim Fulwider Sr., retired from Century Country Club	81

The second round will be held at Metropolis Country Club in September. The low six members will represent the MetGCSA at the Met Team Championship later this fall.

## Invitational Tournament Winners

Here's how the winning teams stacked up at the MetGCSA Invitational Tournament held at Burning Tree Country Club on June 20.

### Low Net Winners

1st	Hampshire Country Club <i>Will Heintz, superintendent</i>
2nd	Tamarack Country Club <i>Dave Arel, superintendent</i>
3rd	Fenway Golf Club <i>Joe Alonzi, superintendent</i>

### Low Gross Winners

1st	Old Oaks Country Club <i>Mark Millett, superintendent</i>
2nd	Patterson Club <i>Ray Beaudry, superintendent</i>
3rd	Willow Ridge Country Club <i>Tony Grasso, superintendent</i>



The winning team from Hampshire Country Club is awarded with the MetGCSA Invitational trophy for their enviable low net score of 59. From left to right: Green Chairman Ronnie Katz, Superintendent Will Heintz, club member Robert Goodman, and Golf Pro Jack Williams.

## MEET MIKE MEDONIS

*Host Superintendent for the July MetGCSA Meeting*

Bonnie Briar Country Club in Larchmont, NY, was the site of the July 11 MetGCSA meeting. Mike Medonis, host superintendent, has been at Bonnie Briar since 1987.

Though one of Mike's first jobs as a teenager was working on a golf course, back then, he was more interested in the golfing privileges than in learning the ropes of golf course management.

A dedicated—and skilled—golfer, Mike won a golf scholarship to Michigan State University, where, after spending some time as a therapeutic recreation major, he decided to pursue a degree in turf management. "Although this wasn't my first career choice," says Mike, "I thought it would be a great way to stay involved with golf."

After graduating in 1983, Mike accepted an assistant's position at Westchester Country Club. Then four years later, he moved on to Bonnie Briar as superintendent. There, he's initiated triplex fairway mowing and a bunker renovation program.

Mike admits that playing a round of golf now and then is still an aspect of the job he enjoys, but probably just as important to him is working outdoors.

When asked, Mike readily shares the philosophy that has guided his career: Hard work, patience, and honesty. But equally important to running a smooth operation, he says, is good communication with the membership and crew.

Mike lives in Pleasantville, NY, with his wife, Mary, and their newborn son, Kevin Michael. Mary is currently an assistant superintendent at Westchester, where she and Mike first met.

BERT DICKINSON  
*Westchester Country Club*



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\* Denotes MetGCSA member