



# TEE TO GREEN

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Metropolitan Golf Course  
Superintendents Association

## President's Message

### MetGCSA Off to a Strong Start

**T**his promises to be a very good year for the MetGCSA—if our beginning is any indication. We're off to a strong start with honors, new undertakings, and numerous planned events.

First, the *Tee to Green*, for the second year running, has won top honors in the GCSAA Chapter Publications Contest (see mention on page 7). Our hats off to Editor Tim Moore, Managing Editor Pandora Wojick, and the rest of the Editorial Committee.

Second, John O'Keefe and his Membership Committee have spent many long hours designing and, as you know by now, distributing a comprehensive golf course survey. Its purpose is to offer you the kind of comparative information that will help you keep abreast of how others in our industry are managing their maintenance operations. But the survey's success—and ultimate utility—depend on your participation. The more participants we have, the more extensive and valuable the comparative data you'll receive. So let's shoot for 100 percent participation.

If you've all responded by the February 15 deadline, there's a good chance the Membership Committee will be able to compile and distribute the results sometime in April. Remember: Only those who complete all sections of the survey will receive the results.

Third, as you may have read in our November/December (continued on page 2)

## Special Feature

### Dealing With Boss Problems... And Problem Bosses

**G**olf course superintendents—probably more often than most people in the work world—find themselves reporting to a new boss.

Whether it's a new green chairman, general manager, or an entire board or committee, a change in command can be unsettling. But inheriting a boss you don't like—or worse, find intolerable—can turn a job you once enjoyed into pure drudgery. That's not to say that you can't suddenly find yourself at odds with your current boss, who you may have thought was a staunch supporter.

In either case, you don't have to resign yourself to a dismal situation. What follows is a distillation of expert wisdom on the subject.

#### Adjusting to a New Boss

**Problem #1:** A new green chairman who makes little effort to get to know you, your staff, or department.

**Strategy:** Ideally, a new boss should take the initiative to find out what makes you and your department tick,

says psychologist Peter Wylie, who co-authored the book *Problem Bosses* (Facts on File Publications, New York, NY) with Dr. Mardy Grothe. But unfortunately, not all of them do. When that's the case, Wylie and Grothe recommend that *you* take responsibility for getting to know your boss:

- Write a memo (see page 4) to let your new green chairman know what you and your department have been up to. Keep it simple, and don't go gang-busters with recommendations on how you'd like to change things. You don't want to risk going against your boss's fondest ideas or deepest-held biases.

Another tip: Keep your old boss out of your memos and conversations.

- Whether the motive is self-interest or genuine concern, learning your boss's preferences and showing your support can pay off. Here are a few things to consider—and then adapt to:

1. How does your boss like to get information: in writing, by phone, or over lunch? (continued on page 4)

## Also in This Issue

- ② MetGCSA Committee Chairmen at Your Service
- ③ Reid Award Nominations...Equipment for Sale...Position Available...Eligible Hire
- ③ 1991 Meeting Schedule
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- ⑦ Tee to Green Claims High Honors...Member Notables
- ⑦ Upcoming Conferences and Seminars

## MetGCSA Off to a Strong Start

issue, the Tri-State Turf Research Foundation is up and running, with a newly elected Board of Directors.

The foundation is comprised of officers from the Met, Long Island, and New Jersey superintendent chapters. We've banded together not only to acquire funds for research, but also to pinpoint new ways to enhance the turfgrass industry.

The foundation has already helped further patch disease preventions and cures by funding Dr. Bruce Clarke's research endeavors at Rutgers for the past two years.

Finally, under planned activities, we have a repeat of last year's Professional Turfgrass Field Day. With some of the enhancements we have up our sleeves, you'll find this year's show even better (if you can imagine that).

The monthly meeting sights are also set (see schedule, page 3), and I have to say, the year ahead promises to be a good one. I hope to see all of you at the monthly functions, and I wish you all good luck and much success in the 1991 golfing season.

LARRY PAKKALA, CGCS  
President

### Official Business

## An At-a-Glance Guide to MetGCSA Committee Chairmen

Please feel free to contact any of the following committee chairmen with questions or comments. We've provided their numbers, here, for your convenience.

#### Awards

Scott Niven, CGCS, *The Stanwich Club*  
203-869-1812

#### Bylaws

Tim O'Neill, CGCS, *CC of Darien*  
203-656-0600

#### Communications

- Tim Moore, *Knollwood CC*  
914-592-7829
- Earl Millett, *Ridgeway CC*  
914-948-5606
- Matt Ceplo, *Westchester Hills GC*  
914-948-5023

#### Education

John Carlone, *Middle Bay CC*  
516-766-1838

#### Government Relations

- Joe Alonzi, CGCS, *Fenway GC*  
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- Class B Rep: Dan Breton,  
*Silver Spring CC*  
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- Class C Rep: Bob Lippman,  
*Westchester Turf Supply*  
914-248-7476

#### Long-Range Planning

Scott Niven, CGCS, *The Stanwich Club*  
203-869-1812

#### Membership

John O'Keefe, CGCS,  
*Preakness Hills CC*  
201-694-0260

#### Public Relations

Tony Grasso, *Metropolis CC*  
914-949-4840

#### Scholarship and Research

Tim O'Neill, CGCS, *CC of Darien*  
203-656-0600

#### Social and Welfare

Jeff Scott, *Apawamis Club*  
914-967-2100, ext. 149

#### Tournament

- Matt Ceplo, *Westchester Hills GC*  
914-948-5023
- Earl Millett, *Ridgeway CC*  
914-948-5606

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DOMINIC RICHICHI

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ADDRESS: P.O. Box 396, Mamaroneck, NY 10543.

## Reid Award Nominations

**H**ave any ideas on who you'd like to see win this year's John Reid Lifetime Achievement Award? Call Scott Niven at 203-869-1812 with your nominations.

## Equipment for Sale

**T**he Stanwich Club is selling the following used equipment. Anyone interested should contact Scott Niven at 203-869-1812.

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- 65 Duo Aluminum Trap Rakes (Standard)
- One 3" Water Pump

## Upcoming Events

## 1991 MetGCSA Meeting Sites

**H**ere is the near-final schedule for 1991 MetGCSA golf and business meetings. Be sure to note these events on your calendar, and we'll keep you posted on any updates.

**March 26** Fairview Country Club  
Greenwich, CT  
Business Meeting  
*Rich Marcks, CGCS*

**April 17** Arcola Country Club  
Paramus, NJ  
*Mike Mongon*

**May 23** Silver Spring CC  
Ridgefield, CT  
*Peter Rappoccio, CGCS*

**June 10** Patterson Club  
Fairfield, CT  
Invitational Tournament  
*Ray Beaudry, CGCS*

## Seeking a Monthly Meeting Coordinator

**T**he MetGCSA is looking for a Monthly Meeting Coordinator who would be responsible for managing the details of our monthly golf meetings and ensuring that our events run smoothly.

If you know of anyone who might be interested in this paid position, please contact Scott Niven, 203-869-1812.

## Assistant Super for Hire

**S**ean P. Cain, a University of Rhode Island graduate with a B.S. in Professional Turfgrass Management, is looking for an assistant superintendent's position in the tri-state area. His experience includes six summers on two different golf courses: four summers at Mohawk Golf Club in Schenectady, NY, and the past two summers at The Stanwich Club in Greenwich, CT.

Anyone interested in Sean's services can contact him at 516-399-7847 or 401-782-1304.



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## Dealing With Boss Problems

2. What's your boss's management style? Is he a "high-involvement" type who likes frequent bulletins on work in progress, or would he prefer that you report only on major issues or projects?

3. Does your boss make snap decisions or take a painstakingly long time to act?

The more insight you gain into your new boss's work style, the better you can tailor your habits to his. The payoff: a more productive—if not amicable—working relationship.

**Problem #2:** Your new green chairman is pushing hard for what, in your view, are ill-advised projects, work methods, or course "enhancements."

**Strategy:** If you have any doubts about what your boss is directing you to do, discuss your reservations, but then respect your boss's final word. (*Just be*

*sure to document the situation should it become serious enough to warrant going over your boss's head.*) If you and your boss end up working at cross-purposes, you'll be the loser. Here are a few points to keep in mind:

- Deal with your anger, skepticism, or worry outside of work. You can make a lifetime friend in the first week by your show of support or a long-term enemy by being too challenging.

- Listen for the question behind the boss's question. "How would you handle this problem?" is a test of your loyalty as well as your competence. A response like, "I'll prepare a list of options and then discuss them with you," demonstrates both.

### New Problems With Your Current Boss

**Problem #1:** Pressured by a group of low-handicap members, your boss now continually looks over your shoulder.

**Strategy:** This can be more trying than adjusting to a new boss. Everything looks the same, but it's not. Don't waste time fuming or second-guessing. Invite your green chairman to lunch, and open a discussion by explaining—factually, not emotionally—your perceptions of the changes in your relationship. Some options:

- If you have a sense of what's causing the problem, you might say: I know the greens have been a little slower than usual, but that's because we've had a lot of rain lately and they're soft."

- Draw your boss out; then listen closely: Is your boss more concerned about his standing with members than the condition of the golf course?

- Show you have your boss's—and the course's—interest at heart. If you know, for instance, that your boss is taking heat because you syringe when the course is under heavy play, explain

## Pruning the Deadwood Out of Your Business Communications

In all your communications—whether it be with your green chairman, general manager, board of directors, or colleagues and suppliers—it's important that you make each word work. If there's one that doesn't, get rid of it.

Watch out for weak words that rob your sentences of their vitality:

**Quite** (I quite agree.)

**Rather** (I was rather concerned.)

**Indeed** (I am indeed grateful.)

**Frankly** (Frankly, I'm puzzled.)

**A bit** (You seem to be a bit upset.)

**Overall** (Overall, I think the course looks much better.)

**Largely** (We aerify largely to reduce soil compaction.)

Also, be ruthless in pruning the deadwood out of your sentences:

**Bad:** Enclosed herewith please find a copy of my proposed budget.

**Better:** Enclosed is my proposed budget.

**Bad:** It was certainly a pleasure speaking

with you on the telephone today, especially so in learning of your plans regarding the green committee's forthcoming inspection trip to our maintenance facility.

**Better:** I'm looking forward to the green committee's visit to our maintenance building.

**Bad:** My background is largely in the field of horticulture, not agronomics.

**Better:** I have a degree in horticulture, not agronomy.

**Bad:** I maintain that the purchase of this piece of equipment will result in a significant improvement in the consistency of green speed.

**Better:** Purchasing this piece of equipment will mean a more challenging, consistently maintained green speed—for all 18 holes.

A third pointer: Slinging the slang and using lots of buzzwords can make you sound unimaginative and phony (if not silly). Some of the more popular offenders these days are:

**Impact:** As a noun, it's fine. But don't get caught writing—or uttering—"The rainy spring will impact course conditions."

**Interface:** A computer term best left in the computer world. Computer programs interface; people don't (no matter how interesting it sounds).

**Communicate:** Don't use this as a substitute for "talk," "tell," and "speak." Example: "He didn't communicate that change to me, so I didn't take it into consideration when preparing my budget."

**Indicate:** You don't want to use this instead of "said," as in, "Last time we spoke, you indicated..."

**Appreciate, hear:** An attempt at super-managerial empathy, these words are often used inappropriately instead of "understand." Example: "I can appreciate what you're saying" or "I hear what you're telling me." Ugh.

*Adapted from Four Steps to Better Business Writing (\$7.50), which is available through Brown House Communications, P.O. Box 536, Wilton, CT 06897, 203-834-0050.*

why it's necessary; then ask how you can help. You might suggest, for instance, publishing an explanation to the membership.

• Finally, avoid negativity. Critical comments, even the most general ones, may be perceived as a personal attack. Instead, ask your green chairman to get approval on what you think you need—time, equipment, more staff, contract help—to meet any new demands, whether it be undertaking a new project or patching up an old problem.

**Problem #2:** Your boss seems to be disenchanted with you and your work.

**Strategy:** If the feeling persists for more than a week, don't look away, warn Wylie and Grothe. Analyze:

- Has the quality of your dealings with your boss diminished?
- Have you been asked to meet more frequently with your green chairman and committee?
- Has your green chairman made it

clear that a piece of your work was unacceptable and then told you not to worry about it?

If you can answer yes to some or all of these questions, try Wylie's script for smoothing over a relationship that's gone bad:

1. "I've had the sense lately that your view of me or my work has changed. It's hard to put my finger on it, but I've noticed that you haven't been quite as enthusiastic about what I'm doing on the course, and the frequency of our green committee meetings seems to have increased suddenly. If there's something I'm doing—or *not* doing—that bothers you, I'd like to know about it so I can try to change."

2. Most bosses, eager to avoid a touchy subject, will reply, "No, no, nothing's wrong." But don't let it go at that. Ask, "So as you think about it, there's nothing I'm doing that annoys or troubles you?" Then pause, and give your boss a chance to respond.

3. Chances are, your boss will say something to fill the void. Keep quiet, listen, and don't give in to the urge to defend your behavior or actions.

4. Instead, paraphrase what your green chairman has said so you know you've got the point. "Let me make sure I'm with you. It sounds like what's really bothering you is..."

5. Once you understand, don't dwell on the problems. Take steps to move toward a resolution: "Sounds like there are things I can do to solve these problems. I'll do..., and you can help me by..."

In the end, it's your ability to communicate with your boss that can make or break your working relationship—and prevent those inevitable "little blunders" from turning into job-threatening misunderstandings.

*Source: Learning International Inc., a sales, service, and management training company in Stamford, CT.*

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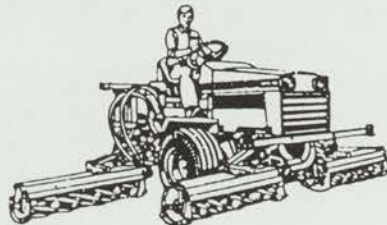
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**T**ee to Green, for the second consecutive year, took the prize for *Best Overall (among periodicals 16 pages and under)* in the GCSAA Chapter Publications Contest. We'll be honored, along with six other winning newsletters, at the 62nd GCSAA International Golf Course Conference and Show in Las Vegas.

A panel of three judges evaluated *Tee to Green* and nearly 30 other eligible contestants on overall excellence, appropriate design, editorial judgment and content, scope and quality of writing, and presentation.

*The Florida Green* of the Florida GCSA won in the Best Overall category for periodicals more than 16 pages, while New Jersey's *Greenside* made first runner-up. Four other periodicals were honored for Best Cover, Best Flag, Best Original Editorial Content, and Best Visual Format.

The 1990 contest judges were Jerome Ducker, CGCS, of Hallbrook Farms Country Club; Nancy Harper, owner of Harper & Associates, an advertising/communication firm; and Lois Wolfe of the National Federation of Press Women.

### New Members

**Larry Dodge**, Class A, Essex Fells Country Club, Essex Fells, NJ  
**Robert Dwyer**, Class A, Somerset Hills Country Club, Somerset Hills, NJ  
**John Streeter**, Class A, Woodbridge Country Club, Woodbridge, CT  
**Stephen Tibbels**, Class B, Sterling Farms Golf Course, Stamford, CT

### Members on the Move

**Larry Grasso** took over as superintendent at Lake Isle Country Club, Eastchester, NY. Previous position: assistant superintendent, Westchester Country Club, Rye, NY.

### Congratulations

**Terry Mulligan** of Silver Spring Country Club in Ridgefield, CT, was the grand prize winner in the Annual Bill Caputi Scholarship Raffle. The

\$1,000 prize was drawn at the December 7 MetGCSA Christmas party at Sleepy Hollow Country Club in Scarborough, NY. Other raffle winners:

**John Carlone**, Middle Bay CC, \$500  
**Timothy Clinton**, Woodway CC, \$250  
**Pio Salvati**, Elmwood CC, \$250  
**Frank Amodio**, Valley View Greenhouse, \$100  
**Jean Amodio**, wife \$100  
**Peter Brazell**, Middle Bay CC, \$100  
**Peter Burnham**, Heritage Village GC, \$100  
**Joyce Fiore** of Yonkers, NY, \$100  
**Eddie Kopec** of Yonkers, NY, \$100  
**Maria Lippman**, Bob Lippman's wife, Westchester Turf Supply, \$100  
**Justin O'Neill**, Tim O'Neill's son, CC of Darien, \$100  
**George Pierpoint**, Ardsley CC, \$100  
**Dick Sarta**, Preakness Hills CC, \$100

The raffle raised \$4,000 for our Scholarship Fund.

Reminder: You can get your 1991 scholarship applications by contacting the MetGCSA at P.O. Box 396, Mamaroneck, NY 10543 or Tim O'Neill at the Country Club of Darien, 203-656-0600. The deadline for submissions: April 10.

**Earl Millett**, superintendent at Ridgeway Country Club in White Plains, NY, was awarded a plaque by the New York State Turfgrass Association (NYSTA) for hosting this year's Poa Annual Tournament. This and other tournaments are held throughout the state to raise funds for NYSTA's

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Research and Education Fund.

**Mike Maffei**, MetGCSA past president and superintendent of Back O'Beyond, Inc. in Brewster, NY, was recently elected vice president of the New York State Turfgrass Association. Voted in as president was **Steve Smith**. A former superintendent, Steve is well known in the Met area and is currently associated with P.I.E. Supply Co. Located in Milford, CT, P.I.E. is one of *Tee to Green's* back-page patrons. Congratulations to both.

### Upcoming Conferences & Seminars

**60th Massachusetts Turf & Lawngrass Conference & 15th Industrial Show**  
 Tuesday-Thursday, March 5-7  
 Springfield Civic Center, Springfield, MA

For further information, contact Joseph Troll, P.O. Box 489, Hadley, MA 01035, 413-549-5295

**GCSAA Seminar: Environmental Considerations in Golf Course Management**  
 Tuesday & Wednesday, March 12-13  
 Sheraton Valley Forge Hotel, Philadelphia, PA

For further information, contact GCSAA at 800-471-7878.

**USGA Northeast Regional Conference**  
 Tuesday, March 19  
 Fiddler's Elbow Country Club, Far Hills, NJ

For further information, contact the USGA at 201-234-2300.

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## Irrigation Systems Incorporated

Installation, Service, & GC System Design  
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## James Barrett Associates, Inc.

Golf Course Irrigation Design & Consulting  
Jim Barrett  
201-744-8237

## James Carriere & Sons, Inc.

Bill Carriere  
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914-937-2136

## Landscape Supply Company

Wholesale Landscape Supplies  
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## LESCO, Inc.

800-321-5325  
Seed, Fertilizer, Control Products, Equipment  
Greg Moran: 914-838-1650

## Lofts Seed Inc.

John Morrissey  
P.O. Box 146, Chimney Rock Rd.  
Bound Brook, NJ 08805, 201-356-8700

## Magovern Co.

Peter M. Moran & Joe Schnieder  
Windsor Locks, CT  
800-243-7718

## Metro Milorganite Inc.

Rick Apgar & Joe Stahl  
365 Adams St., Bedford Hills, NY 10507  
914-666-3171

## Montco/Surf-Side/Zap!

Surfactants-Deformers  
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Robert Oeschle: 215-836-4992/215-628-3144

## Nor-Am Chemical Company

David J. Sylvester  
Area Sales Representative  
203-828-8905

## Partac Golf Course Top-Dressing

Kelsey Park, Great Meadows, NJ 07838  
Jim Kelsey: 800-247-2326  
Bill & Joe Carriere: 914-937-2136

## P.I.E. Supply Co.

Paul Roche & Pete Otte  
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## Proform High Performance Turf Products

Turf Seeds, Fertilizer, Control Products  
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203-792-3032

## SAV-A-TREE

Complete Tree & Shrub Care, Naturally  
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## Shemin Nurseries Inc.

Horticultural-Irrigation Supplies  
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## Stephen Kay, Golf Course Architect

495 New Rochelle Rd., Office 2B  
Bronxville, NY 10708  
Office: 914-699-4437 Home: 914-738-3399

## Steven Willand, Inc.

Dave Marmelstein  
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## Tee And Green Sod Inc.

Bluegrass, Bentgrass, & Blue/Fescue Sod  
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David Wallace: 401-789-8177

## The Scotts Company

Area Technical Representatives  
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CT: Al Arison, 203-336-9890

## The Terre Company of NJ, Inc.

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Paving, Cart Paths, Parking Lots,  
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Growers of Kentucky Blue Grass/Fescue Turf,  
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## Turf Products Corporation

Turfgrass Supplies  
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## Valley View Greenhouse

Frank Amodio  
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## Westchester Ford Tractor Inc.

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