



TEE TO GREEN



Published by the
Metropolitan Golf Course
Superintendents Association

President's Message

Something Concerns Me . . .

It's the future of our golf courses. I don't have to tell you, with the threat of more stringent pesticide controls—or even their elimination—it looks pretty bleak. Biological controls show promise, but there's so much more research that needs to be done before these become viable alternatives.

Fortunately, we have groups like the Tri-State Turfgrass Research Foundation, which since its inception in November 1990, has funded research targeted toward resolving these and other turfgrass-related problems specific to Met area golf courses.

The first project the foundation sponsored was Dr. Bruce Clarke's now-infamous summer patch research. This two-year Rutgers study, as many of you know first-hand, has produced effective programs for controlling the deadly disease. But these kinds of results don't come cheap. This study, alone, cost the foundation more than \$50,000.

Right now, the group is seeking funds to support a four-year study being conducted by Cornell University's Dr. Michael Villani. He will be exploring the use of microbial control agents for scarab grubs, such as Japanese beetles, Oriental beetles, Asiatic Garden beetles, and Black Turfgrass Ataenius beetles found on golf courses in the Northeast.

This study has the dual benefit of aiding us in our search (continued on page 2)

Special Feature

Course Grooming: The Pro's Perspective

Wykagyl Pro Lloyd Monroe Offers His Philosophy on Grooming a Course for Fair Play

When Wykagyl Superintendent Steve Renzetti asked me for my thoughts on how superintendents affect the game of golf at their clubs, my mind wandered. I pictured myself as a superintendent, my idol "Red" Wender at Plainfield New Jersey. But that's the devious side of me who wants to take control of my course.

Actually, I believe it's not solely up to a club's superintendent, golf professional, Golf Committee, or Greens Committee to decide the way the course is to be prepped. In a way, it's up to the players. Golf is a sport, and the course is a testing ground. The golfers at your course want to be tested fairly.

As a golf pro and coach to my members, I can help the superintendent define what's fair. But in general, I can say it's not how high or low you cut your grass; how hard or soft you keep your turf; how fast or slow you make your greens; or how firm or soft the sand is in your bunkers. None of that's a problem if your grooming strategy is consistent and, perhaps more important, compat-



Wykagyl Pro Lloyd Monroe leading the charge at a Member-Guest.

ible with the course's design. Then the test can't help but be fair.

Settling on a Suitable Green Speed

Take green speed. I feel it's critical that you match the speed with the size and contour of the green. (continued on page 4)

Also in This Issue

- ② Season's First Meeting Site and Host
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Something Concerns Me . . .

for biological controls, while demonstrating golf courses' environmental stewardship. But this, too, will require significant funding—\$37,500, when all is said and done.

The foundation has been deriving much of its funding from its five member associations. For the uninitiated, the foundation is run by representatives from the MetGCSA, LIGCSA, NJGCSA, CAGCS, and the MGA, and each of these associations contributes \$2,500 annually to the Tri-State.

Unfortunately, these funds alone can't support the kind of research we need to protect the health and welfare of our golf courses. That's why the foundation has also sought support from MGA-member clubs—only \$150 per year.

In the past, we've had a disappointing response: Only 20 percent of the 500 clubs we solicited contributed. If every club participated, we could raise \$75,000 above and beyond what the member associations contribute. Imagine the valuable research we'd be able to

support with those kinds of funds!

You'll be receiving a contribution form soon. And—you know what I'm going to say next—I urge all of you to support this worthwhile endeavor. It's a small price to pay for the benefits you'll receive in return: the knowledge to perform your job more effectively and the peace of mind that you'll be prepared with viable alternatives when the inevitable chemical controls hit our industry.

There's so much valuable research being done—or waiting to be done—out there, the foundation has to make some tough choices. As a member of the foundation's board, I hope you feel we've made the right ones. Please don't hesitate to call me to discuss the Tri-State's work or any ideas you have for future projects we might fund. I'll look forward to hearing from you. And on behalf of the foundation, let me thank you all, now, for your support.

JOE ALONZI, CGCS
President

Spotlight

Sleepy Hollow Superintendent Joe Camberato Hosts Season's First Meeting

On May 2, MetGCSA members who attended the season's first golf meeting had the opportunity to swing their clubs on one of the most picturesque—and historic—golf courses in the Met area: Sleepy Hollow Country Club in Scarborough, NY.

Well over a century ago, the 338 acres that make up Sleepy Hollow today were part of a grand estate known as Woodlea. The magnificent clubhouse, offering superb views of the Hudson River across to the Palisades, was originally constructed as a mansion for Colonel Elliott Fitch Shepard, founder of the New York State Bar Association.

Built during the latter part of the 19th century in the style of a neoclassic Renaissance palazzo, this home-turned-clubhouse was one of the last great

works of Architect Stanford White, whose notable credits include Madison Square Garden and Penn Station.

The estate was sold to William Rockefeller and Frank Vanderlip in 1910, who, in turn, sold it to the organizers of Sleepy Hollow. By 1914, golf course architects Charles Blair Macdonald and Seth Raynor had completed their work, and Sleepy Hollow opened its doors to members, who, today, enjoy much more than just golf on these wonderful grounds.

There are eight tennis courts, a swimming pool serviced by a snack bar and locker rooms, a three-court squash building, four paddle tennis courts, and a skeet and trap facility. But setting Sleepy Hollow apart from even the most elaborate clubs in the area is its riding facility. It includes both an in-

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door and outdoor ring and access to the beautiful Rockefeller trails.

Overseeing every aspect of this vast but extraordinary piece of land—no doubt wearing a black Stetson and puffing on a pipe—is our host superintendent, Joe Camberato. He manages the club's two courses—one 18-holer and another 9-hole executive course—which, together, total 44 acres of fairways and six acres of greens and tees.

Adding to this already sizable responsibility is his obligation to maintain everything outside the buildings—from trees, shrubs, and gardens to the horse paddock areas and trails. "It's not easy," says Joe, "but I live on the course, so I'm always available."

Though you'd never get him to even *hint* at it, Joe is one of those superintendents who gives the job his all—and then some. One of his former assistants, Bill Perlee, now superintendent at Burning Tree in Greenwich, CT, can attest to Joe's dedication: "I'd be in at 5:15 a.m. during the season, and I'd see Joe's cart tracks in the dew. He would already be out on the course."

Further testimony to Joe's good work: Five full-time and three seasonal workers have stayed with him for more than 20 years.

In his three-and-a-half decades at Sleepy, Joe's handled his fair share of special projects. One of his most recent—not to mention disruptive—was a three-year bunker renovation program. Completed in 1993, it involved completely revamping all of the 18-hole course's more than 50 bunkers.

Another of Joe's "special projects" has been preparing the course for the Commemorative Seniors Tournament. The club has hosted the tourney for the past seven years, with Joe and his crew working tirelessly to not only prep the course beforehand, but also "pick up the pieces" afterward.

Joe describes the 16th hole as the Commemorative contestants' toughest challenge. Considered the "signature hole," players on this 150-yard, par 3 may find themselves choosing an 8-iron one day and a 4-iron the next, depending on conditions. "Wind coming in

from the West drastically changes the degree of difficulty," explains Joe.

Although he doesn't have a chance to play golf very often, Joe says he loves the game—and apparently always has. He was 11 when he began caddying at Siwanoy in Bronxville, NY. Then at 13, he took his caddying experience to the course where his father, Sam, was superintendent: Vernon Hills—now called Lake Isle—in Eastchester, NY.

Not long after, he decided to give golf course maintenance work a go under his father's watchful eye. Three seasons later—in 1951—Joe joined Pelham Country Club's crew.

Knowing, by this time, that turfgrass management would be his life-long career, Joe enrolled in Stockbridge, UMass's two-year turf management program. He completed year one before embarking on a two-year tour of duty in the Army.

Once back in civilian clothes, he

spent a second year at Pelham and then a final year at UMass, completing his turf management degree in May 1957.

The rest, you might say, is history. Within a month, Joe was offered his current position as superintendent at Sleepy Hollow. Hired by former USGA President James Hand, Joe was the youngest superintendent in the Met area at the time.

Joe has lived on club grounds since day one with his wife, Barbara. This couple of 36 years, raised two children: a daughter, Lisa, and a son, Jim. Lisa, who decided manicuring turf wasn't for her, manicures hair instead, at a nearby salon. Jim, who Joe fondly calls "digger" because of his childhood affinity for playing in the dirt, is now, appropriately, a soil chemist and extension specialist at the PD Research Center at Clemson University.

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Course Grooming: The Pro's Perspective

In the quest for championship conditions, which the New York area desires, I have seen many courses make greens faster than they're designed to be.

You know you've crossed the line when you can't use key pin placements, or when a golfer's ball rolls back on an uphill putt or won't stop when it's close to the hole on a downhill try. Don't get me wrong; I'm fond of fast greens, but for most golfers, the ideal is between 8 1/2 to 9 1/2 on the stimpeter.

The people cutting the holes have to know more than how to execute the procedure. They have to consider other factors that might affect green speed, such as double cutting, rolling, or even that it's an exceptionally dry, windy day.

Fairways That Play Fair

You have to take two things into consideration when contour mowing and grooming your fairways. First, the terrain and hazards and, second, the number or location of tees you have to accommodate the various skill levels.

If, for instance, you have a hole with only one tee, then you don't want to narrow the fairways so much that most of your players' shots end up in the rough. That's not a fair test. Your objective should be to give every golfer a fair shot at playing the rhythm and strategy of a hole.

Building a Better Bunker

The trend toward firming up the sand in bunkers is great; although it makes the test a little easier. The softer the sand and/or the deeper the rake furrows, the tougher the test.

When I come across a course with the latter type of bunkers, I avoid them as much as I would water hazards. If that's the key strategy you want to give your course, that's fine, but you have to strive for consistency. Try to avoid deep soft sand on the faces or rock-hard areas in the belly or downslopes. That's tricky or unfair grooming. Bunkers that I find both fair and tough have deep furrows across the line of play.

Uniformity From Fairway to Green

Matching grooming techniques from

fairway to green is just as important as achieving consistency from green to green, fairway to fairway, and bunker to bunker. For instance, if you've decided that your greens should be firm, then your fairways should follow suit. Lush, long, wet fairways against dry firm greens is a mismatch.

If you want to get my dander up, water an apron in front of a firm front pin placement. I swore this was a trick the USGA used when setting up for all its major championships.

If you don't want players bouncing their balls onto the green, grow some rough or put in a bunker, but don't make watering isolated areas a part of your strategy.

Hazard Areas That Won't Hold Up Play

If there's one thing that can bog down play it's hazard areas that haven't been clearly defined. And by that I mean keeping a clean area right up to your hazards. That way, when golfers don't immediately spot their ball, they can assume it's been lost to a hazard and won't hold up play trying to hunt for it.

I also feel it helps play to either leave wooded areas very woody so that, when a ball enters the area, the player knows "No shot from there. I better hit a provisional," or clear the underbrush entirely so that a ball can be found quickly.

The Making of a Memorable Course

In the end, I believe it's the grooming, not the design of the course, that most golfers remember after a round of golf. Pick a strategy or test that's consistent not only with the design but also from tee to fairway to green, and you'll create a fair—and memorable—playing field.

Some courses I remember because length made it a challenging test, others because of the severity of the rough or the greens, and still others because of how precise I had to be with my shotmaking.

So when I go to Winged Foot, don't make me play the front tees. When I go to Westchester, don't mow the rough down. And if I ever get a shot at Augusta, I don't want the greens stimping at seven.

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How the Winter Seminar Can Help You With Your Spring Programs

The Winter Seminar may have been a while ago, but the principles discussed still apply. In fact, now that the season's begun, we thought it might be useful to offer a quick review of—and for those who didn't attend, a crash course in—some of the golf course management tips offered by two of the seminar's speakers: Dr. Martin Petrovic of Cornell University (607-255-1796) and Gerald Smith of Aquatic Control Technology (508-393-8846).

Dr. Petrovic on the Fate of Fertilizer and Pesticides in the Soil

With all the controversy surrounding the effects of nitrogen (N) and pesticide applications on the environment, it's important that we do our best to prevent them from leaching into the soil and, ultimately, the groundwater.

When talking about nitrogen, it helps to know the fate of fertilizer once it's applied. Basically, it takes three courses:

1. *It's absorbed by the plant.* Research shows that plant uptake occurs within the first three weeks after an application. Generally, half the N is absorbed from the soil, the other half directly from the fertilizer.

2. *It's stored in the soil.* Studies show that two pounds of N per year are "tied" up; 14 to 20 percent is stored in the soil itself, while another 20 to 25 percent is stored in thatch.

Note: "Young" soils need more N than mature soils. Over time, more N becomes available as the stored N is released from decaying soil organic matter.

3. *It's lost to the atmosphere.* What isn't absorbed by the plant, soil, and thatch is lost by volatilization as ammonia or nitrous oxides.

Factors that increase volatilization: humidity, temperature, and application of dry rather than liquid urea fertilizers. Volatilization can be decreased by watering in fertilizer applications.

Interestingly—and contrary to the beliefs of many overzealous environmentalists—very little N has been found to leach into water tables. One study showed, in fact, that half the N applied

was found in clippings, while as much as 40 percent remained in the soil.

Other noteworthy research findings: When looking at the amount of N in clippings, researchers found creeping bentgrass clippings to have 60 percent N and Kentucky bluegrass clippings to have 40 percent N during the first three weeks after an application.

To avoid leaching, Dr. Petrovic recommends the following:

- *Select your N source with care.* Favor slow-release over quick-release fertilizers.
- *Time your N applications carefully.* Avoid heavy N applications between November and May, when the plants are basically dormant and the ground is often hard or frozen. Under these conditions, the N is less apt to be absorbed by the soil or plant.
- *Reduce N applications.* This bit of advice is particularly critical during dormant or slow-growth periods—i.e., late fall.

One of the best times to apply fertilizer: Summertime, as long as you take care not to overwater.

- *Irrigation practices.* Be sure not to overwater when applying fertilizers. Dr. Petrovic suggests using an evapotranspiration instrument to more accurately determine your turf's water needs.

Note: Coastal areas, where soils are generally sandier and the ground rarely completely freezes, are more subject to leaching than noncoastal areas.

- *Soil texture.* N is most apt to leach through sandy soils and least apt to leach through silt loam.
- *Age of the site.* Reduce N applications on older sites, because more N is stored in the soil.

As with nitrogen, pesticide leaching can be kept to a minimum—if not prevented—by understanding the parameters that affect whether or not a pesticide will leach through the soil.

In general, 35 to 70 percent of the pesticides dry on the leaf of the plant, while 96 to 99 percent remains in the thatch zone.

Environmental properties that can affect leaching of pesticides are:

1. *Precipitation.* Leaching increases when a pesticide application is followed

by rain. So watch the forecast to time pesticide applications around wet spells.

2. *Temperature.* The cooler the temperature, the more persistent the pesticide.

3. *Evapotranspiration.* In warmer weather, most rainfall and irrigation water is lost to the atmosphere. That means pesticides are less apt to leach into the soil.

Soil properties also play a major role in pesticide leaching. Among them:

1. *Organic matter content.* The more organic matter, the less likely pesticides are to find their way into the water table.
2. *PH.* Some pesticides are less soluble at higher pHs.
3. *Soil structure.* The tighter the soil—clay being the tightest—the less leaching you'll have.
4. *Level of water table.* Areas with high water tables are, naturally, wetter and less apt to absorb and carry pesticides down to groundwater.
5. *Moisture content.* Dry soils act like sponges and are more likely to encourage leaching.

Management practices that Dr. Petrovic recommends to prevent leaching:

- Select pesticides with short half-lives. They're more apt to be retained on organic matter and are less water soluble.
 - Be cautious when applying pesticides to sandy soils.
 - Irrigate only to replace the amount of water absorbed by the plant.
- A final fact to figure in to your management practices: USGA study suggests that root zones with added organic matter slow down leaching.

Pond and Lake Management Made Easy

Gerald Smith of Aquatic Control Technology offered the following tips and techniques for superintendents battling weeds and algae in their ponds and lakes.

- First and foremost, know the plant you're battling so you can initiate the appropriate—and most effective—treatment.
- Next, take action (continued on page 6)

How the Winter Seminar Can Help You With Your Spring Programs

before your weeds gain a strong foothold in your lake or pond. To avoid infestation of rooted plants, it helps to maintain an 8- to 10-inch water depth.

Smith found some of the following chemicals effective in controlling aquatic weeds and algae:

Herbicides

- Diquat (Reward)

Note: When using Diquat on floating weeds, use a surfactant. If Diquat is used in an irrigation pond, you should wait 14 days before irrigating.

- Comine

Note: This chemical has no permit restrictions!

- Aquathol-K
- 2, 4-D (Aquaclean)
- Rodeo (Round-up)
- Sonar

Algicides

- Copper-Sulfate
- Cutrine
- Aquazine
- Hydrothal 191

Dyes

- Aquashade
- True Blue

One word of caution: Before using a pond dye, be sure there is little to no outlet so the dye won't flow downstream.

Smith also pointed to two nonchemical control options: aeration and mechanical harvesting.

Fountain aeration discourages aquatic plant life by oxygenating the water and bringing cold water from the pond's bottom up to the top. In addition to increasing oxygen levels, this process benefits ponds and lakes by decreasing CO₂, reduc-

ing iron, and improving fish habitats.

Mechanical harvesting has the advantage of allowing you to remove the plant biomass, phosphorous, and N at 6 to 50 pounds per acre. The one drawback is that the cutting depth is shallow, so you're getting at only the rhizomes and tubers.

Several mechanical harvesting techniques Smith mentioned:

- *Mechanical raking:* This removes weeds 12 feet deep but disrupts the pond bottom.
- *Dry dredging:* This process is done by the shore line and is costly.
- *Hydraulic dredging:* This is for larger bodies of water and is not terribly efficient.

Other pond management techniques worthy of consideration include such biological controls as fungal pathogens, aquatic insects, and sterile grass carp.

KEVIN QUIST

The Stanwich Club

Creative Ways to Keep Your Crew Happy

Tips From Superintendents Far and Wide

Here are some simple measures superintendents across the country have used with great success to recognize—and reward—their maintenance staffs for a job well done.

Most, you'll see, go beyond monetary fringe benefits and simple pats on the back. They show forethought and creativity that translate into a happier, more productive crew.

Try incorporating one of these practices into your maintenance operation, or think up a few of your own. A little effort on your part can go a long way.

- Hold employee golf tournaments, with an awards party afterward. Two-person teams are popular, with a scramble or alternate shot format. An added morale booster: Take the winning team's picture, blow it up, frame it, and put it on permanent display in the crew's lunchroom.

- Plan a fishing tournament, where each employee catches as many fish as

possible in a two-hour time frame; then hold an awards party afterward. Again, displaying the winner's photo on a lunchroom wall works well.

- Give each employee two movie ticket certificates for use on a day of their choice.
- Have an employee luncheon in the clubhouse, in addition to the usual employee Christmas party.
- Give out gift certificates to a favorite local restaurant chain for the employee and spouse and maybe even the kids.
- Hold annual family picnics off course property.
- Give employees their birthdays off with pay.
- Hold a soda machine party, where all profits from the lunchroom vending machine go back to the employees following some sort of regularly scheduled event.

Adapted from Golf Course News, October 1993.

Meeting Objections Head-on

When you have a suggestion you're certain won't go over well, you'll meet less resistance if you pile on all the supporting evidence you can up front.

If, for instance, you were to suggest—cold turkey—that your assistant drop a project he's almost completed and pick up another more pressing assignment, you'd probably get slapped with an objection and then have to argue your case.

You can save that step by combining your suggestion and supporting argument like this: *"Jim, I'd like you to set aside the tree planting project and get that chemical application out. I know you're really close to finishing the other job, but it looks like it's going to rain and I want to be sure we get the application out before it does. As you know, the chemical will be significantly more effective if the rain has a chance to wash it in."*

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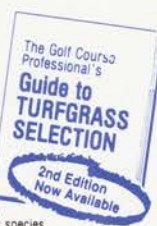
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Tee to Green Receives Honorable Mention

Tee to Green received honorable mention in the GCSAA 1992-93 Chapter Publications Contest.

Competing in Category 3—publications produced by professional editors/publishers—the *Tee to Green* was up against such tough-to-beat publications as the California GCSA's *California Fairways*, which won Best Overall for the second year in a row in this category, and Florida GCSA's *Florida Green*, which was this year's runner-up.

Winners in Category 1 for volunteer

editors were Wisconsin's GCSA, *The Grass Roots*, which earned best overall and Georgia GCSA's *Through the Green*, which was runner-up. In Category 2 for paid editors, New Jersey's *The Greenerside* won Best Overall and Northern Ohio GCSA's *Northern Ohio Turf* was selected runner-up.

Judging this year's contest were participants in the Chapter Editors Forum held February 3 at GCSAA's Dallas Conference and Show.

In Memoriam

It is with deep regret that we announce the death of two MetGCSA members: **Clifford Larson**, January 9, while vacationing in Florida.

Cliff was the superintendent/manager of Beckman Country Club in Hopewell Junction, NY, for 27 years.

He is survived by his wife, Mary, two daughters, Corrine and Kristen, and two grandchildren.

Vince Pentenero, February, at his winter home in Sarasota, FL.

Vince was one of the founding fathers of the Met, serving as president in 1967. Though he retired several years ago from Siwanoy CC—his last post as superintendent—he remained active in both the association and the business. He worked as a starter at Westchester and Lake Isle and attended Met meetings regularly.

Vince is survived by his wife, Mary, and a son, John.

New Members

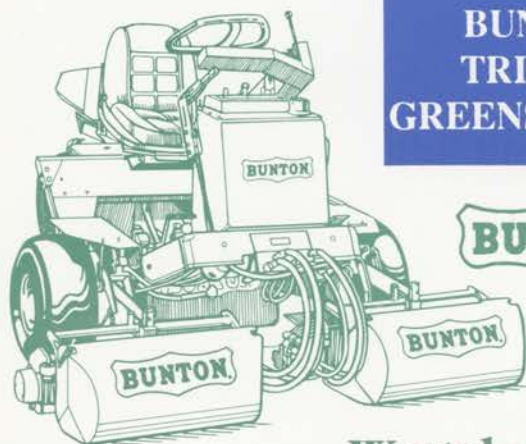
John Alexander, Class B, Wykagyl Country Club, New Rochelle, NY
Greg Kolodinsky, Class AS, Woodcrest Country Club, Syosset, NY
Kevin Quist, Class B, The Stanwich Club, Greenwich, CT
Bruce Rickert, Class AS, Medford Village Country Club, Medford, NJ

Recently Certified

Two MetGCSA members have recently been designated Certified Golf Course Superintendents by the GCSAA: **Matt Ceplo**, superintendent, Westchester Hills GC, White Plains, NY
Gregg Stanley, superintendent, Rockrimmon CC, Stamford, CT
 Congratulations!

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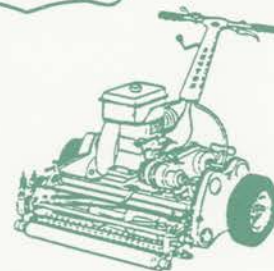
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Winners in the 1994 GCSAA Golf Championship

Ten MetGCSA members refused to let a little snow—Austin's first in nine years!—stop them from posting winning scores at in the 1994 GCSAA Golf Championship in Austin, TX.

Placing third in the Frank Lamphier Team Competition were MetGCSA Team #2 members:

Bob Alonzi of Winged Foot Golf Club, Mamaroneck, NY

Joe Alonzi of Westchester Country Club, Rye, NY

Dennis Flynn of Brac Burn Country Club, Purchase, NY

Tim Powers of Pound Ridge Golf Club, Pound Ridge, NY

In the First Flight (7-11) category: **John Gallagher** of Racebrook Country Club, Orange, CT, won second place gross

Scott Niven of The Stanwich Club, Greenwich, CT, won sixth place gross

In the Second Flight (12-16) category:

Joe Alonzi won third place net
Phil Anderson of Old Westbury Golf & Country Club, Old Westbury, NY, won fourth place gross

Wayne Remo of the Rock Spring Club, West Orange, NJ, won ninth place net
Rick Schock of Wee Burn Country Club, Darien, CT, won sixth place gross

In the Third Flight (17-22) category:

Bob Alonzi won first place gross (The legend shot, a 79 on the second day, won by a 12-shot margin. All those who golf with Bob should take note and check his handicap postings.)

In the Senior II (57-64 years) category:

Frank Lamphier of Aspectuck Valley Country Club, Weston, CT, won first place gross
Congratulations to one and all!

Meeting Reminder

Golf/Meeting

Monday, May 16
Westchester Hills Golf Club, White Plains, NY
Host Superintendent: Matt Ceplo, CGCS

Those interested in participating in the **Superintendent Two-Ball Tournament** will play their qualifying round at this meeting.

For the uninitiated, this tourney is a two-man best ball net, match play, played at 100 percent handicap. To enter, you and your partner will play a round at the May 16 meeting, posting a best ball net score. This score will be used to determine the low 16 qualifying teams for match play. Participants will then select a site and time to play their matches. The tournament lasts throughout the summer, with the winning team being awarded The MetGCSA Superintendent Two-Ball Championship traveling trophy.

Educational Event

UMass Turf Research Field Day

Thursday, June 23 (rain or shine!)
South Deerfield, MA

There will be research updates and vendor displays. For more info, call 413-545-2353.

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