

TEE TO GREEN

Published by the
Metropolitan Golf Course
Superintendents Association

President's Message

Time Flies When You're Having Fun

At our Annual Meeting on November 13, my tenure as MetGCSA president officially ended, and I stepped down, leaving the association in the very capable hands of our new president, Earl Millett.

It seems like just yesterday that I was accepting the title. During my acceptance speech, I said my goal was to leave the association at least a little better than the day I took it over. Inheriting an already strong association from Joe Alonzi, I knew this would prove to be a challenge. But I took the ball from Joe and just kept on rolling—sometimes surprised at how smoothly things went. With the help of many, I feel I've reached my goal.

Here are just a few of the things we, as an association, have accomplished—and can be proud of—over the past two years.

GCSAA Chapter Affiliation. In my first year as president, we were faced with the task of fulfilling the many requirements necessary to remain affiliated with GCSAA. This meant instituting a significant number of bylaw changes and included revamping our membership requirements, reporting procedures to GCSAA and much, much more. (You gotta love that paperwork!) We're proud *(continued on page 2)*

Special Feature

Earl Millett Takes the Helm as the MetGCSA's 23rd President

On November 13, John O'Keefe completed his two-year term as MetGCSA president, leaving the association in the capable hands of Ridgeway Superintendent Earl Millett—a fellow classmate and graduate of UMass's Stockbridge School of Agriculture.

Involved in the MetGCSA for 21 years, Earl has become well versed in the inner workings of the association. "I started on the ground floor and worked my way up through the chairs. This has enabled me to see how—and what it takes—to run one of the finest superintendents associations in the nation," he says.

Earl's goal as president is to not only elevate an already strong association, but also the image of the superintendent and the entire profession. "We work and live in the finest area in the country for golf. With this comes the great responsibility to be leaders in our profession both on and off the course," he says. "As president, I hope to lead our group in showing others what a superintendent is and should be: a



Ridgeway Superintendent Earl Millett assumes presidential role November 13.

dedicated, highly regarded professional."

In addition to the Met, Earl has also been actively involved in the New York State Turfgrass Association (NYSTA)—he hosted this year's Poa Annual Golf Tourney—and in the Tri-State Turf Research Foundation, where he serves on the board.

An Early Start

Earl's dedication to *(continued on page 4)*

Also in This Issue

- ③ MetGCSA Concludes Season at Preakness Hills
- ⑤ Member Notables
- ⑦ MetGCSA Team Places Third in Met Area Team Championship
- ⑦ Superintendent/Green Chairman Tourney Results

Time Flies When You're Having Fun

to be one of the first chapters to complete all the affiliation requirements.

Image Building. Enhancing our image as superintendents is high on our list of priorities. To aid the cause, we took nearly every opportunity to participate in activities that put us in the public eye and allowed us to demonstrate our professionalism and our commitment to protecting the environment.

For instance, we participated in the Westchester County Earth Day at Lasdon Park and Arboretum in April. I, and several others from our association, manned a table displaying information about our profession and our concern for the environment. We were available to answer questions and, just as important, to right any misconceptions. More than four thousand people attended, and those who stopped by seemed to leave with a favorable impression.

Will Heintz, our Government Relations chairperson, is also representing the Met—and our profession—by joining numerous environmentally minded groups and committees. Among them are the Westchester County Pest Management Committee and The Coalition to Prevent Destruction of Canadian Geese. Will is also actively involved with The Cornell University Cooperative Extension of Westchester County. He is obviously committed to breaking through the negativity and many misconceptions about our profession. Keep up the good work, Will!

Last but not least, our new Club Relations Committee is well on its way to being an effective vehicle for promoting superintendents and our profession. Chairman John Carlone and his committee have made efforts to meet with clubs and provide us with a survey to enable us to be better prepared to make our career choices.

Beyond Party Planning. Thanks to Family Relations Committee Chairman Joe

Alonzi, this committee is expanding the scope of its work to include more than just party planning. It is truly reaching out to the needs of our members and their families by working to provide a network of peers—or mentors—who will be willing to talk through personal or professional concerns or crises. We hope you won't hesitate to make use of this wonderful resource. Watch for a list of participating mentors.

Finale

It's been a great two years, and it really has flown by. I want to thank the many people—I think you know who you are—who have made this a truly worthwhile and meaningful experience for me. And before I go on, let me just say that I couldn't have done all this without the support of my wife, Margaret, and my two girls. (But then, I find it hard to do anything without the love and support of my family.)

Thanks is probably not enough to say to a green chairman who gets up and says how proud he is of you in front of all your peers. Bill Green's comments at the Superintendent/Green Chairman meeting here at Preakness will remain with me forever.

I've had many wonderful experiences at this club, but that one will be unsurpassed. The board members, my fellow employees, and especially my crew at Preakness have always helped me to shine.

I would be remiss if I also didn't thank two individuals who make the Met shine and help to keep it running smoothly: our executive secretary, Ineke Pierpoint, and this publication's managing editor, Pandora Wojick. Thanks for putting up with me for the past two years.

Last but not least, I want to thank all of you out there. The members and board of directors have given me this opportunity and have supported me through this very exciting time. For that I will be forever in your debt.

JOHN J. O'KEEFE
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Met Golf Tour Stops at Preakness Hills

It's only fitting that the Met end its golf season with its Superintendent/Green Chairman Tourney at Preakness Hills, the club of our association's outgoing president, John O'Keefe.

One look at this pristine, 18-hole Northern New Jersey course, and you know that the operation is in great hands. The club's superintendent for 11 years, John has prepared the course for several notable events, not the least of which are the NJSGA Mid-Amateur in 1992 and both the IKE and USGA Senior Women's Amateur in 1993.

In his tenure, John has also worked to spruce up this 71-year-old William Tucker design by completing a host of tee and bunker renovations and a variety of drainage improvement projects.

Next on the docket, he says, is to begin picking away at the club's ambitious master plan, which includes a new irrigation system, maintenance building, and, yes, course design.

"Helping me get the job done," says John, "are 19 staff members, which includes my three assistants, Tim Kerwin, Bill Milarczyk, and Steve Deoliveira.

"Not included in this count," he's quick to point out, "is the most important person, my guiding light and inspiration, my wife, Margaret, of 18 years.

"I owe a huge amount of my success to Margaret for her continued support of my career and for her dedication to building and maintaining our great family . . . my two kids, Adrienne, who's 14, and Maureen, 12."

Continues John, "Another person who's allowed me to develop as a professional is my green chairman, Bill Green. He's always positive, and though he's a great golfer, he can still look at the operation from the whole membership's perspective—not just from the better golfers' viewpoint. That's not only made my job easier, but also made for greater harmony among the members."

The Climb to Preakness Hills

The route to Preakness was relatively smooth. Born and raised in the Berkshire Mountains in the rural Lenox, MA, John worked as a teenager for a landscaper, eventually becoming superintendent of a large condominium complex, complete with putting green, pool, and tennis facility. "It was like a little country club," remembers John.

"On my way to work everyday," he continues, "I'd pass Pittsfield Country Club and admire how well maintained it was."

Once John began to play the game, he was not only impressed by the beauty of golf courses, but also intrigued by the maintenance practices and requirements.

That was the beginning of the end. John entered the Stockbridge School of Agriculture and earned an AS in Turf Management in 1979, graduating with the likes of Joe Kennedy (Irra-Tech, Inc.) and Earl Millett (Ridgeway CC).

Having done his placement training the year before at Longshore Club Park in Westport, CT with then Superintendent Mark Fuller, he was a shoe-in for the well-timed opening for assistant there. John stayed at Longshore until 1981, when he landed his first superintendent's job at Westchester Hills Golf Club in White Plains, NY.

John put his knowledge to the test there for five years, before taking over his current position at Preakness Hills Country Club in Wayne, NJ, where he became a certified golf course superintendent in 1987.

No Rest for the Weary

Through the years, John has become a more-than-just-active member in the turfgrass management world—his involvements almost too numerous to list. Let's see. He's been involved with both the New York and New Jersey Turfgrass Associations. He's spent five years on the board of the Tri-State Turf Research Foundation and has been an



Preakness Hills Superintendent John O'Keefe brings season to a close with Superintendent/Green Chairman Tourney.

increasingly active member of GCSAA since 1977.

To say that he's also been dedicated to the MetGCSA is probably an understatement. John joined in 1981 and was elected to the board in 1985, chairing numerous committees, including Bylaws, Communications, Membership, Public Relations, and Scholarship & Research. He made his way up through the chairs, serving as secretary, vice president, president, and now past president.

Just when you'd think John might take a year or two to rest on his laurels and enjoy his favorite leisure-time pursuits—golf, family, especially the kids' extracurricular activities; and cooking now and then—he's decided to run for the New Jersey GCSA board and has volunteered to serve on GCSAA's Foundation Capital Campaign Committee.

No rest for the weary. But then, John wouldn't have it any other way. We thank him for his leadership and dedication to this industry for the past 20 years—and wish him all the best in his future pursuits.

MICHAEL H. COOK JR.
ALPINE the CARE of TREES



Don't miss the MetGCSA Winter Seminar on Wednesday, January 7 at Westchester Country Club!

Earl Millett Takes the Helm as the MetGCSA's 23rd President

the business began back in Turner Falls, MA, where he and his superintendent brother Mark Millett of Old Oaks Country Club just about grew up on a nine-hole golf course, the Thomas Memorial Golf and Country Club. "I started out there pushing a mower when I was about 12," remembers Earl.

Growing increasingly interested in the profession, Earl was persuaded by his cousin Chuck Martineau, superintendent of Whippoorwill Club, to come down to Armonk and learn the ropes by working as a laborer on his crew. Earl worked with Chuck for three years, then in 1978, accepted the assistant's position at Fenway Golf Club, under then superintendent Al Tretera. Earl stayed there until 1980, completing his AS in Turfgrass from UMass along the way.

"I've always said that I learned how to run a crew from Chuck and how to grow grass from Al," says Earl of his years in training for his first—and

present—superintendent's job at Ridgeway Country Club in White Plains, NY.

Earl has been with the club since 1980 and, in that time, has overseen numerous improvement projects. Among them: a new pump house and irrigation system, as well as tee and bunker restoration. One of Earl's most recent projects was to oversee the reconstruction of Hole #8, which included expanding a sizable pond and creating—and restoring—wetlands.

Involvement Is Key

"There's more to a superintendent's job than the club and course itself," notes Earl. "Becoming involved in local and national industry associations—like the Met and GCSAA—can have a tremendous impact on a superintendent's ability to succeed, both professionally and personally."

Earl's one wish is that all area superintendents carve some time out of their

hectic schedules to participate in the Met—to volunteer on a committee or perhaps even serve on the board. "I'm not the first president to say that the association could always profit from a helping hand," he says. "And talk to anyone who's served the association, and they'll tell you there's a significant payback to participating: It looks great on your resume, and it gives you a tremendous opportunity to swap information and share concerns—both personal and professional—with people who are in the same boat."

Optimistic for a Strong Future

Earl's quick to tell you he's thoroughly devoted to the game of golf—the rules and, most important, the betterment of the conditions we all play on. And anyone who knows Earl at all, knows that if he's not working on his course, he's looking for the opportunity to fine-tune his game on someone else's. A

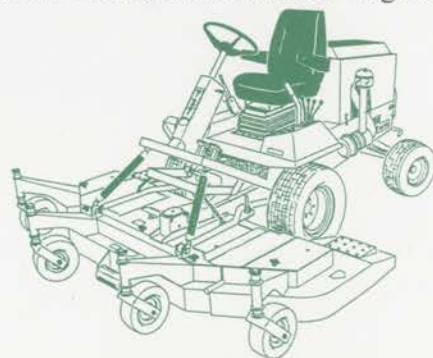


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sportsman, he also likes to spend his leisure time fishing, hunting, and collecting sports cards. But most important, he enjoys spending time with his family: his wife of 18 years, Donna, who's manager of human resources at MasterCard in Purchase, NY, and his 5 1/2-year-old son, Ian—with whom he especially enjoys golfing and swimming.

"You spend the first 10 years of your career working to prove yourself. The next phase, you devote to your family—and to meaningful personal pursuits. Now in that second phase of his career, Earl's ready for the challenge of running our high-profile association.

"I look forward to the next two years," says Earl, "and to working with all of you in moving our association forward to even greater heights of accomplishment. Let me wish all of you a Merry Christmas and a very Happy New Year. I'm optimistic that, for our association, it will be a great one."

MICHAEL H. COOK JR.

ALPINE the CARE of TREES

Newly Certified

Glenn Perry, superintendent of Potowomut Golf Club in E. Greenwich, RI, was recently designated a Certified Golf Course Superintendent by the GCSAA. Congratulations, Glenn!

In Memoriam

We regret to announce the death of **Dr. C. Richard Skogley**, one of the great pioneers in the turfgrass industry and an Honorary member of the MetGCSA.

Dr. Skogley, among many other things, is known for his contributions to the selection and development of bentgrasses and fescues.

His legacy lives on in the many turf students he's advised and guided to become leaders in the turfgrass industry. Among those in our midst: Meadow Brook Club's John Carlone, Stanwich Club's Scott Niven, and Lakeover National's Dennis Petruzzelli.

We, and the turf world, will miss him.

Births

Congratulations to:

Bill and Patricia Jones on the birth of their son, William Edward IV, on August 25. Bill is superintendent of The Creek Club.

Doug and Laura Belmont on the birth of their son, Peter James, on October 27. Doug is the assistant at Metropolis Country Club.

Special Recognition

Congratulations to **Bob Dwyer**, for earning his club—Somerset Hills CC—the distinction of Certified Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary through his efforts in providing a sanctuary for wildlife on the golf course property.

"This has been positive for me, my assistants, and my membership," says Bob. "We've gained an enhanced appreciation for the environment and the wildlife that inhabits Somerset Hills."

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Met Area Team Championship Convenes at Country Club of Darien

Tim O'Neill and the Country Club of Darien were hosts on October 6 to ten Met Area Associations for the 1997 Met Area Team Championship. A beautiful fall afternoon, great golfing conditions, and good company made for a fantastic day. Tim had the course playing very fast.

The Met was coming off three successive championships. A fourth, however, was not in the cards. The New Jersey team ran away with the trophy, scoring 462. They were led on the gross side by Ian Kunesch and Tom Grimec, both with 77s.

Seven other teams competed for the grand prize, with Long Island placing second with a 475 and the Met placing third with a 483. Tim O'Neill from the MetGCSA came closest to the pin with 3'3", and Jeff Hemphill from the Long Island group, made the longest drive at 312 yards.

Also participating in the tourney were teams from the Connecticut AGCS, Eastern Shore GCSA, Hudson Valley GCSA, Mid-Atlantic GCSA, Northeastern GCSA, Philadelphia GCSA, and the Pocono Turfgrass Association.

Special thanks to Country Club of Darien Professional Randy Nicholson and all the professional staff for setting up the day and being involved with the tournament. And congratulations to all the championship participants.

DAVE MAHONEY
Siwanoy Country Club

Preakness Superintendent/Green Chairman Tourney Results

John O'Keefe and Preakness Hills treated 31 superintendent/green chairman teams in a field of 86 golfers to a wonderful day of golf, camaraderie, and education October 14. John had the golf course in great shape.

Those able to negotiate the slippery, undulating greens and go on to win prizes were:

Superintendent/Green Chairman Best Ball

Gross Winners

- 72 John O'Keefe/Bill Green
Preakness Hills Country Club
76 Larry Pakkala/J. Graham
Woodway Country Club
77 Gregg Stanley/Peter Stanley
Hudson National Golf Club

Net Winners

- 64 Mike Miner/David Halpern
Montammy Golf Club
65 Patrick Lucas/Keith Vass
Woodcrest Country Club
65 Jeff Scott/Mike Fierstein
Tamarack Country Club

Met Best Ball

Gross Winners

- 71 Rob Foster/Burt Gambanko
Preakness Hills Country Club
73 Tony Grasso, *Metropolis CC*
Earl Millett, *Ridgeway CC*

Net Winners

- 62 Joe Alonzi, *Westchester CC*
Earl Millett, *Ridgeway CC*
63 Charlie Siemers/John Hawthorne
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Closest to the Pin

Green Chairman:

Pat Davey, *Silver Spring CC* 16'
Met: Mike Cook, *Alpine* 11'11"

Longest Drive

Green Chairman:

Doug Milne, *Wee Burn CC*
Met: Gregg Stanley, *Hudson National*

Special thanks to Preakness Hills Manager Craig "J.J." Magraaf for his extra efforts and to the club's golf professional, Rob Foster, for his generosity on the prizes.

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- ☆ **Steven Willand, Inc.**
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