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Tee To Green

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President's Message

Preparing Our Profession for the Future

September 8 – 10, I attended the Annual Chapter Delegates Meeting in Lawrence, KS, and Kansas City, MO. The 100 chapter delegates, the GCSAA Board of Directors, and the GCSAA staff covered a lot of useful ground, some of which I thought I'd share with you.

First and foremost, let me talk about the main focus of this event, which is to meet the candidates for the GCSAA Board of Directors. I'm pleased to report we have a strong roster of candidates for 2001, and we really can't go wrong in

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electing any one of them. Our own Tim O'Neill gave an outstanding presentation and, in my opinion, is a shoe-in for reelection to the board.

GCSAA's State of Affairs

The meeting kicked off with a detailed state-of-the-association address from GCSAA CEO Steve Mona. This, as you can imagine, involved a lot of statistics about membership, salaries, education, and future goals.

Secretary/Treasurer Mike Wallace and CFO Julian Arrendondo reported on incoming revenue, as well as on how GCSAA spends its \$21-million budget.

The most eye-opening statistic, however, had to do with how much we all profit from corporate sponsorship. Without it, Class A and B members would have to pay \$1,270 in dues each year to sustain our current roster of programs and services! This figure is more than five times greater than the \$250 we currently pay in dues. (Thank you corporate America!)

GCSAA staff and board members covered several other topics regarding the current status and future plans of GCSAA's programs and services. The show stealer among them was, as you might guess, the Professional Development Initiative (PDI).

If you're a GCSAA member, you received a copy of the final PDI proposal in late August. If you haven't seen the proposal, you can get a copy by calling the GCSAA Service Center at 800-472-7878, or you can go to the Web—www.gcsaa.org—and call up the PDI section under the Learning Center.

PDI will be up for vote at the GCSAA Annual Meeting on February 16, 2001 in Dallas, TX. If passed, it will go into effect on July 1, 2003.

At the MetGCSA Annual Meeting and elections at Knollwood Country Club on November 8, we will discuss—and take a vote on—PDI. Tim O'Neill and I will be available to answer any questions you may have on the initiative.

Every Class A and B member of the Met, who is also a GCSAA member, will be allowed to cast a vote. Anyone failing to cast



John Carlone, CGCSA
MetGCSA President

a vote will be recorded as a "yes," in favor of passing the PDI. As the MetGCSA's voting delegate, I will register the association's votes in Dallas.

To help you all make the most informed vote possible on this important initiative, be sure to review the complete report. In the meantime, I thought I'd hit on a few of the high points of the Professional Development Initiative: how it came about and a little bit about what appears to be one of the most controversial pieces of this initiative, classification.

The Long and Short of the PDI

Several years ago, GCSAA members began to understand that superintendents exist in a changing professional environment. More is expected now from superintendents than ever before. And more will be expected in the future. GCSAA members have said—and continue to say—that they want greater recognition, compensation, job security and opportunities.

A Membership Standards Resource group was formed to look at how to achieve these goals in the future. SRI International was retained to research what superintendents do and which of these tasks employers value most.

Taking all these factors into account, a mission statement was developed for the PDI, which stated its prime purpose: "To improve the knowledge, skills, and abilities of the professional superintendent that contribute toward improved playing conditions and the enjoyment of the game of golf."

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GCSAA

Feature

VIEWS

From Seasoned Veterans

MetGCSA Past Presidents Talk About the Way Things Were—and Where They're Headed

by Peter R. Rappoccio, CGCS

A

t this year's Winter Seminar, I was sharing the table with some of the MetGCSA's more experienced superintendents: Bob "The Legend" Alonzi (Fenway GC), Joe Alonzi (Westchester CC), Dennis Flynn (Brae Burn CC), Greg Wojick (Greenwich CC), and Mike Reeb (CC of New Canaan). We covered everything from turf-related problems to who had the most suspicious golf handicap. (Guess who was the hands-down winner?)

Joe Alonzi, CGCS, 1984

As The Legend was pontificating on his favorite subject—which is any subject—I glanced around the room and noticed a lot of new and young faces. It was strange not knowing all of them.

I thought back to when I was one of the new kids on the block, fresh out of turf school and an “unknown” to the more established members of the MetGCSA. I wondered if this new breed of turf professional is concerned with the same things I was at that age: *What was it going to take to become a good superintendent? How could I network with the established supers to improve myself and excel in this industry?*

With the industry changing as it has—some good changes, some less than good—I thought it might be interesting to speak to several of the association’s veterans and past leaders. I wanted to get their perspective not only on how the industry—and association—have evolved over the past 20 to 30 years, but also on what the new generation of turf professionals can do to up their odds of succeeding in our increasingly competitive business.

In the Q & A that follows, four MetGCSA past presidents—Larry Pakkala, CGCS (Woodway Country Club), Scott Niven, CGCS (The Stanwich Club), Bob Alonzi, CGCS (Fenway Golf Club), and Joe Alonzi, CGCS (Westchester Country Club)—reflect on the changes that have occurred. In some of their comments, you might detect a note of disappointment, in others, a longing for the way things were. But overall, I think, you’ll come away with a great sense of optimism about where our profession, as golf course superintendents, is headed.

What was your impression when you attended your very first MetGCSA meeting? Who did you consider the “legends” of the time?

Scott Niven: I was very impressed with the professionalism of the group and the way educational information was disseminated at every meeting. I considered Sherwood Moore and Ted Horton the legends of the time.

Larry Pakkala: My first experience was actually outside the Met area—in Philadelphia, where I worked for Merion Golf Club and Philadelphia Country Club. So naturally, the association experiences I had and the legends I’d think to name wouldn’t apply to the Met area. I did have the opportunity, though, to see, firsthand, one of the Met group’s legends in action when I was an assistant at Merion. I’ll never forget hearing a young, 26-year-old Canadian gentleman speak at a Philadelphia association’s meeting. He was introduced as the new superintendent at Winged Foot—and none other than Ted Horton. From the moment I met him, a fire was lit in my belly.

Bob Alonzi: I remember the MetGCSA as more of a fraternal organization. Our monthly gatherings were more informal than they are now; they were less social with more information being exchanged between superintendents. Many times, we would play golf at a club and then adjourn to a local restaurant for a meal and meeting.

The legends of the time? Sherwood Moore, Harry Nichol, Gary Crothers, and Ted Jozwick.

Joe Alonzi: The MetGCSA in my early years was a group of guys willing to help each other in any way they could. Meeting time was spent discussing and solving problems. Everything was out in the open. I would say the legends of the time were Sherwood Moore, Everett Wood, Harry Nichol, and Bob Dependier.

How have assistants’ roles and responsibilities changed over the years?

Scott: As an assistant 20 years ago, my job was not much different than other staff members’ except that I handled the more technical aspects of the job, like setting up the course, spraying, and irrigation. Today, we expect our assistants to do all those things plus assume some responsibility for managing the crew. My assistants are also more involved in office work and planning than I ever was.

“You must show true dedication to each and every job you take. Work for several different superintendents to gain a varied perspective on how to manage turf, people, and a maintenance operation.”



Scott Niven,
CGCS, 1984

*Legends Bob Alonzi, CGCS (L)
and Sherwood Moore, CGCS (R), 1984*



Larry: I don't think the role has changed a great deal unless you're at a multi-course facility. Assistants are still doing the spraying, irrigation, and night watering (but now with computers and handheld radios). Hand watering hasn't changed. If anything, we're doing more of it than we ever did, and our assistants are taking charge of that responsibility. I'd also say assistants are better informed and held in higher regard by superintendents than they were in the earlier days.

Bob: The title of assistant superintendent did not really exist 30 years ago. Most clubs had foremen who ran the crew with the same capacity of the assistant today. The first club to have an assistant, I believe, was Winged Foot. As interest in the industry increased, programs at schools were developed for turf students interested in becoming assistants and superintendents. Jim Fulwider Sr. and Ted Jozwick were two of the first superintendents to have a formal turf-related degree.

Joe: I was one of the few individuals with the assistant title back in my early years. Since very few clubs had full-time mechan-

ics, the assistant also doubled as a part-time mechanic. The duties of course setup, spraying, running the crew, and daily course inspection, like today, were also among the assistant's prime responsibilities. Today's assistants are expected to do those things plus take a more active role in making decisions, running the crew, and even helping with the budget process.

What, in your opinion, are the biggest changes in the industry in the past 15 to 20 years?

Scott: The biggest change is the increase in the amount of money clubs are willing to spend on golf course maintenance. This shift has allowed us to do whatever is necessary to create conditions of the highest quality on an everyday basis. Triplex or hand mowing of fairways, hand cutting greens and tees, hand raking bunkers, lots of hand watering, as well as spraying, irrigating, fertilizing and mowing roughs with small machines... these are very expensive and labor-intensive maintenance procedures. Budgets for capital improvements have also grown phenomenally in the past 20 years at many clubs.

Larry: The biggest change I've seen is the introduction of computer technology in turfgrass maintenance. We didn't have computers when I was an assistant. Now, students graduate from college computer literate. Lightweight mowing and clipping removal on fairways is another major milestone over the past 20 years. Our mowing equipment is far more sophisticated, and pesticide performance and safety has improved. Educational events and materials have also revolutionized the industry.

Bob: The standards have changed by leaps and bounds. Thirty or so years ago, people were just happy to play golf. They weren't as hung up on conditions. The change in demands began to happen when the televised golf began to change. In the late '70s, early '80s, for instance, when they televised an event—and they wouldn't televise many, only two or three of the major ones—they would show maybe the last four or five holes. Now, today, you can see golf almost every day on TV, and when a major event is televised, you get every hole, with aerial views and replays of the shots. Conditions are emphasized, and they're there for all to see.

Our growing resources—equipment and budget—also play a part in golfer expectations. At the better clubs during that era, fairways were cut at 5/8" to 3/4". But as equipment and budgets improved, expectations escalated. Height of cut, speed of greens... they became the focus.

Another of the major—and among the more positive—changes in our industry have to do with pesticide regulations. I keep waiting for the doctor to tell me I've got the Big C because of my exposure to chemicals years ago. The harmful ones are now banned, and more important, we're educated in how to apply and handle these materials responsibly.

Still another change is the formal educational level of superintendents: It's much higher. Recognition and respect for superintendents as leaders in the field has become the norm, as well. And superintendents' compensation packages are far more impressive. Maybe that accounts for the surge in the number of people hoping to become superintendents.



Larry Pakkala, CGCS, 1984

“Be flexible. Make the course you select, not the part of the country it’s in, your priority.”

On the negative side, the makeup of crews has changed: Finding quality people and keeping them is a challenge. What ever happened to the old Italian gardener who had to be asked only once to do something before it got done?

Sadly, too, the business has become more cut-throat. It used to be that you retired when you didn’t want to work anymore. Today, you make a lot more money, but it’s more like the corporate world: You never know when the ax is going to fall.

Joe: The biggest change has to be environmental awareness. Today’s superintendents have to be stewards of the environment, particularly with the growing pressure from the public to conserve our natural resources—and minimize pesticide use. Other major changes from the early years, I’d say, are increased budgets, the demand for perfect turf, and committee involvement in golf course operations.

If you had the chance to change something in your progression through the ranks, what would it be and why?

Scott: I suppose I would have liked to work for what we’re referring to here as one or two of the legends in turfgrass management before becoming a superintendent. Training under the best—and at the best clubs—offers a perspective on managing turf and staff that’s really beyond compare.

Larry: I feel good about how my career has progressed. I guess if I were to change something, it would be the number of hours I’ve had to spend every day getting to where I am. Now that my kids are grown—one’s in college, the other’s graduated—I regret not having spent more time with my family.

You’d think with all our technological advances, the time we have to invest in the job would have changed. But during the growing season, it’s still 24/7. Have you ever taken a summer vacation with your wife and kids?

Bob: That’s hard to answer. I worked my way up from the bottom to the top. I probably would have liked to learn, early on, to schedule my time better so that I could have spent more time away from the job and with my family. It’s just that it always seemed that problems occurred when I was away from work. It’s hard to change that way of thinking.

Joe: I’m happy with the path my career has taken. I wouldn’t change a thing. I have made many good friends along the way—some of them still among my closest friends in the business.

How do you see the superintendent’s role changing in the next few years?

Scott: Though superintendents’ jobs have begun to resemble more closely an “executive style” of management, I think the pendulum may begin to swing back a little the other way with superintendents trying to spend more time on the course and less time in the office. Hopefully, with the new communication technology—cell phones, Internet, fax, e-mail—we’ll be able to become efficient enough to do that.

Larry: I see a trend expanding that’s already started: superintendents assuming the role of general manager. I also see many more superintendents hiring second assistants to help them manage a workload that is becoming increasingly difficult to accomplish with the growing demands and expectations of club members.

Bob: I see the role of the superintendent expanding beyond turfgrass management to other areas of the club. I see superintendents, for instance, becoming facilities managers or even filling the role of general manager.

Superintendents will continue to be challenged to meet the increasingly high standards set by today’s clubs. But no matter how the role of superintendent evolves, I only hope the day-to-day satisfaction we’ve derived in the past from our jobs still remains.

Joe: Different clubs will take different paths. Some clubs may look to expand the role of the superintendent to complete facility management, property management, or even the role of general manager.

What advice do you have for graduating turf students or young assistants to help them progress in the profession today?

Scott: You must show true dedication to each and every job you take. Work for several different superintendents to gain a varied perspective on how to manage turf, people, and a maintenance operation. Ask a lot of questions. And last but not least, work on your golf game.

Larry: Don’t think you’re an expert upon graduation. Be humble, eager, and a good listener.

Vary your experience by working as an assistant at more than one course or club. And whatever you do, don’t pass up a good opportunity just because it’s outside the Met. This area, after all, isn’t the only one with great golf courses.

Be flexible. Make the course you select, not the part of the country it’s in, your priority. Remember, the more impressive the club—and superintendent—the better your learning experience and, ultimately, your resume will be.

Understand that the profession is much more competitive than it was 20 to 30 years ago, making it harder to find a job as a

superintendent. But I'm a firm believer that if you work hard and stay focused on your dream you can make it a reality.

Bob: I'm from the old school, so I believe there is no substitute for hard work, both physical and mental. Position yourself to strive for higher goals, both in the field and educationally. Be on the leading edge of what is going on with the maintenance standards, education, and turf products. Those who have retired will tell you that success comes from constantly expanding your knowledge of turf, equipment, and people skills. This is essential in dealing with all aspects of golf course maintenance.

Joe: Work at as many clubs as possible for as many superintendents as possible. Don't settle into one club. Continue the educational process after college. Be selective in choosing your first superintendent's job; don't jump at the title.

Personally Speaking

I vividly remember my first MetGCSA meeting in 1976 at Winged Foot. During dinner, I shared a table with Sherwood Moore, Ted Horton, and my boss at the time, Ted Jozwick. I was impressed with how willing these legends were to share information. They made me feel comfortable; it was like I'd been a member for years.

Over the past 20 or 30 years, it's true, the industry has changed. To those who have been in the business a long time, it's a whole new world, with many exciting advances and, along with them, a number of new—and sometimes unwelcome—challenges. But as with any change, we have to take the good with the bad and, most of all, learn from our mistakes.

If I were to leave young professionals with any lessons learned, I'd say: Always be willing to help others in the field; keep a strong network of friends, and make time for those friends and family too. Don't be all-consumed by the job. Enjoy the ride, but try to give something back to the business. And the most important bit of advice I can give: Never, and I mean never, give Bob Alonzi shots!

Peter Rappoccio, a member of the Tee to Green Editorial Committee, is superintendent at Silver Spring Country Club in Ridgefield, CT, and also a past president of the MetGCSA.

It Wouldn't Happen Today

Long-time Superintendents Offer Their Personal Testimony on How the Industry Has Changed—for Better or for Worse



When the Job Was Fun

Stanwich, like most clubs in the Met area, has changed over the years. The club really seemed to shift into high gear about the time I arrived in 1983. Before that—particularly back in the late '60s—according to some of the long-time members of my staff, play was much lighter and the atmosphere more relaxed. So relaxed, in fact, that one hot afternoon a couple of our grounds crew located a pair of water skis and a rope. They tied the rope to the back of a tractor and tried to pull the skier the length of our #17 pond. My sources admitted that the tractor couldn't get going fast enough for any quality skiing, but it was sure fun trying.

There's certainly no time—or tolerance—for those antics nowadays.

Scott Niven, CGCS, The Stanwich Club

Professional Status: We've Come a Long Way Baby

When I was at Winged Foot, one of the female members would refer to me as the "head gardener." So you can only imagine how upset she was when she saw me hav-

ing lunch one day up at the clubhouse. She made it known that the gardener should not be allowed to eat in the grill room.

Bob Alonzi, CGCS, Fenway Golf Club

Environmental Stewardship: A Welcome Change

When I first started in the golf course business, we used chemicals that have long since been banned: Mercury, DDT, Clordane, to name several.

When I was 19 or 20, working summers on a golf course crew, the superintendent would have me spot-treat crabgrass with mercury. He, like everyone else in those days, never thought about taking precautions. So I was totally unaware that it would be harmful to have it touch my skin—until one day, I was pouring the mercury from one container to another and it spilled on my hands. I sustained third-degree burns; the skin on my hands blistered and turned black. I had to have surgery, and the doctor told me I'd be scarred for life. Fortunately, he was wrong about that. My hands are okay.

Similarly, back then we used to buy DDT in 50-gallon drums and didn't do anything by specific weight. We'd use a coffee can to measure one pound of material and we'd put out three coffee cans of material on the fairways every week. Every fall, we'd spray Clordane on the fairways, whether they needed it or not. When we reached the bottom of the DDT barrel, we'd stick our heads in to fill up our coffee cans.

If I behave kind of funny, now you know why. Actually, those chemicals have probably affected my immune system—and I'll live forever.

Bob Alonzi, CGCS

When There Was a Limit to What You Could Spend

A USGA Green Section agronomist relates the story about calling on a club that was about to embark on a major greens reconstruction program. The green chairman asked the agronomist where they could buy "shallow cups." It seems a budget crunch was beginning to hit the club, and they wanted to consider reducing the amount of topsoil to be put on the greens. Hence, "shallow cups."

Oh, How Maintenance Has Changed

I distinctly recall, when I was the assistant at Merion Golf Club in Ardmore, PA, one August day in 1976, standing on the 15th tee with my boss, Richie Valentine, and looking at the severe fairway turf loss we'd suffered that summer. (Back then, we were always searching for ways to prolong turf survival in July and August.)

Richie kept remarking how good the 4000-square-foot teeing area looked while the fairway surrounding it was gone . . . cooked. Trying to surmise what the difference in maintenance practices was, it became quite obvious that the tee was always mowed with a triplex, and the clippings were caught.

After making that observation, Richie added that maybe someday all golf courses would be mowing fairways with triplexes and catching clippings.

Little did we know that those days were just around the corner—in the '80s!

Thinking about it now, I can't understand what took us so long to accept a practice that, I think, has revolutionized the way we maintain our golf courses today. Now, many superintendents are maintaining fairways like greens. Several, in the area, are even topdressing fairways regularly. What's next?

Larry Pakkala, Woodway Country Club, CGCS

Could You Get Away With That Today?

I'm not naming any names, but here's a story that comes to mind when I think about something that might not have had a positive outcome—for the superintendent—had it happened today.

Back in the early '80s, a certain green chairman was out golfing and hit his ball into a sand trap. When he hit it out, the ball struck the branch of a nearby tree. The chairman marched into the superintendent's office and asked the superintendent to take down the branch. But the branch was sizable, and had it been removed, it would have disfigured the tree.

Rather than succumbing to something that he didn't believe would profit the course, the superintendent told the chairman that he doesn't make changes to the turf or trees just to suit a golfer's game.



When the green chairman persisted, the superintendent told him that if he wanted the branch removed, he'd have to do it himself—and with his own tools.

Needless to say, the branch never came down—nor did it cost the superintendent his job.

Joe Alonzi, CGCS, Westchester Country Club

Here's a story I'll never forget Bill Smart telling me. For those who haven't been around as long as I have, Bill was the author of the Hudson Valley *Foreground* newsletter and the legendary "greenkeeper" at the Powelton Club, where I'm now superintendent.

"It was a hot summer day in the mid-'60s," Bill said. "I had guys going out to spray greens, and due to some sort of chemical mix-up, we 'smoked' all 18 greens. The next day, all the greens were as brown as the Sahara Desert! I shook in my boots as I prepared to call my green chairman.

"When I finally told him what had happened, the first thing he said was: 'Bill, how will they putt?' I was stunned! After a second or two, I thought about it and said: 'Probably not bad and pretty fast!'

"Then my green chairman said, 'Will they come back?' And I replied, 'Oh yes, this fall they should be fine.'

"Well then, Bill," my green chairman said, 'carry on.' And that was that."

Bob DeMarco, Powelton Club

Other Stories Worth Repeating

This is a story that Bill Smart told me at one time. I thought it had a good moral for every superintendent.

"I was standing on one of our Powelton fairways when a female golfer approached me and told me how good the course looked. I said nothing and remained staring at the turf. When she repeated herself again, I replied that the course was not in good shape and asked her to look at THAT, pointing down at the turf.

"Look at what?" she asked. "I don't see anything but grass." Getting down on my hands and knees, I proceeded to show her that we were beginning to get some clover in the fairways. "Oh," she replied, and went on her way.

"About two weeks later, the entire club was in an uproar. Over what? You guessed it: clover in the fairways!"

Pat Lucas, CGCS, Innis Arden Golf Club

It was the early '80s, and we were experimenting with controlling Canada Geese by floating Styrofoam swans along the shore of our irrigation lake. One morning, we came in and found that some of the swans were broken with Styrofoam pieces scattered around and floating in the pond. When you have some 60 homes bordering your course, vandalism is all too common a problem.

Well, that evening my son, Scott, told me that, at school, he overheard "Johnny Jones" bragging that, the night before, he had gone into Innis Arden and smashed some swans. This fifth grader even had the heads and necks hanging in his room as souvenirs!

The next day after school began, I telephoned Johnny's mom. I told her that some of our swans were damaged, and I had heard that maybe Johnny had found some of the pieces. If Johnny had them, I told his mother, I'd appreciate it if he could drop them off at my home after school.

About 4 p.m., Johnny's mom pulls up in a big Mercedes. Johnny gets out of the car, head hung low, and walks up to my house. Handing me the swan parts, he apologizes, saying he's really sorry for what he's done.

Maybe a good lesson learned at an early age. But I wouldn't be surprised if Johnny was still wondering how on earth I found out.

Pat Lucas, CGCS

A fellow superintendent and I were talking about how some green chairmen like to build "monuments" to themselves while in office. This super told me the story about a green chairman who wanted to build a pond on a short Par 3 hole for his monument. He tried to explain to his boss that the tee was much lower than the elevated green, and if the club built the pond, it really wouldn't be seen. Exasperated, the chairman replied: "Can we tilt it or something?"

Shenwood Moore, CGCS (need we say more?)

MetGCSA Scholarships Awarded at Tamarack Invitational



*From left to right:
Timothy Rappoccio,
Peter Rappoccio,
Brian Moore,
Meredith Moore,
Carly Amodio,
Jennifer Apple,
Kelly Fuller
(Christina Finamore was
not present for the picture.)*

The MetGCSA Scholarship and Research Committee awarded a total of \$8,500 in scholarships to eight deserving members' children at the June 26 Invitational at Tamarack Country Club.

Scholarship funds are generated largely from the Annual Bill Caputi Scholarship Raffle, which has become an institution at our yearly Christmas party. The raffle was named in honor of Bill, who was superintendent at Hampshire Country Club and died unexpectedly at a young age. Bill would have been proud to be associated with the fine group of students who have been awarded our scholarships over the years.

The Scholarship Committee selects candidates based on their maturity, academic history, ambition, extracurricular activities, and effort exhibited in completing their application.

Congratulations to this year's scholarship recipients—and their parents:

Carly Anne Amodio, daughter of Jean and Frank Amodio of Valley View Greenhouses, is a sophomore at Boston College and a past recipient of the award.

Jennifer Apple, daughter of John and Donna Apple of Westchester Ford Tractor, is in her freshman year at Boston University.

Christina Finamore, daughter of Janet and Steve Finamore, superintendent at Alpine Country Club, is a sophomore at Montclair State University.

Kelly Fuller, daughter of Kimberley Jones and Mark Fuller of Connecticut Golf Club, is a freshman at the University of Massachusetts.

Brian Moore, son of Beth and Tim Moore, superintendent of Knollwood Country Club, is a freshman at SUNY-Potsdam.

Meredith Moore, daughter of Beth and Tim Moore, is a junior at SUNY-Plattsburgh and a past recipient of the award.

Timothy Rappoccio, son of Birdie and Peter Rappoccio, superintendent of Silver Spring Country Club, is a freshman at University of Delaware.

Peter J. Rappoccio, son of Birdie and Peter Rappoccio, is a senior at Virginia Technical University and a past recipient of the award.

This year, two additional scholarships—donated by the Bayer Corporation—were awarded for outstanding scholastic achievement. Jeff Weld represented Bayer in personally delivering the scholarships to Kelly Fuller and Timothy Rappoccio. Congratulations!

New Members

Please join us in welcoming the following new members:

Gerardo Forgione, Class D, The Stanwich Club, Greenwich, CT

James Schell, Class D, The Stanwich Club, Greenwich, CT

Herb Williams, Class C, Quaker Ridge Golf Club, Scarsdale, NY

Ted Zabrenski, Class AS, The Golf Club at Mansion Ridge, Monroe, NY

Members on the Move

Blake Halderman is the new superintendent at Trump National Golf Club in Briar Cliff Manor, NY. Previous position: Superintendent at Minisceongo Golf Club, Pomona, NY.

Kevin Quist is the new superintendent at Lake Isle Country Club in Eastchester, NY. Previous position: Assistant superintendent at Ardsley Country Club, Ardsley-on-Hudson, NY.

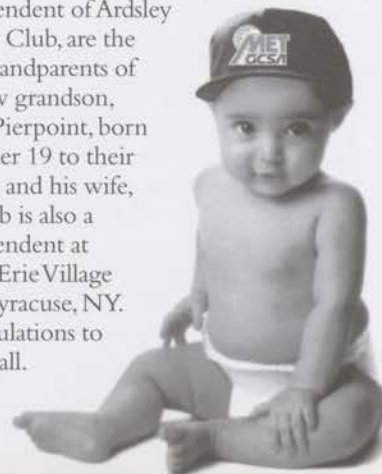
Ed Walsh is the new superintendent at The Golf Club at Adelphia in Coudersport, MA. Previous position: Superintendent at The Golf Club at Mansion Ridge, Monroe, NY.

Jason Ziesmer is the new superintendent at Minisceongo Golf Club, Pomona, NY. Previous position: Assistant superintendent at Minisceongo Golf Club.

Births

Congratulations to Westchester Country Club Assistant **Neil Laufenberg** and his wife, **Gina**, who had a baby boy, Kyle, on August 17.

Ineke, the MetGCSA's Executive Secretary and her husband, **George Pierpoint**, superintendent of Ardsley Country Club, are the proud grandparents of their new grandson, Garrett Pierpoint, born September 19 to their son Rob and his wife, Sue. Rob is also a superintendent at Links at Erie Village in East Syracuse, NY. Congratulations to one and all.



Upcoming Events

What Are You Waiting For?

If anyone is interested in hosting a MetGCSA golf or social event next year, it's not too early to volunteer your club. For golf meetings, call one of the Tournament Committee co-chairs—Jeff Wentworth, 914-738-2752, or Sean Cain, 914-723-3238. To host a social event, contact Social & Welfare Committee Chairman Joe Alonzi, 914-798-5361.

Met Professional Events to Remember

MetGCSA Annual Meeting

Host: Tim Moore

Note the New Date: Wednesday, November 8
Knollwood Country Club, Elmsford, NY

Don't miss this important opportunity to discuss and cast your vote for the new Professional Development Initiative!

MetGCSA Winter Seminar

Host: Joe Alonzi, CGCS

Wednesday, January 10, 2001
Westchester Country Club, Rye, NY

A star-studded lineup of speakers is in store for you at this always-informative event. Among the speakers and their topics: Tom Campbell on Global Positioning Systems (GPS) for the golf course. Dr. Frank Rossi on the moss research we are helping to fund. Steve Bernhardt on reel grinding: the history and the agronomic impact of super-sharp mowers. And David Ravel on the selection and development of products for the future.

NYSTA Conference and Professional Development Program

Turf and Grounds Exposition 2000

November 14 – 16
Oncenter, Syracuse, NY

NYSTA, in partnership with Cornell University, welcomes you to join other green industry professionals for an exciting educational opportunity where you'll find solutions to a host of turf and grounds maintenance problems, research updates and legislative news, and an outstanding Trade Show with more than 350 vendors.

Further information: Conference Hotline at 800-873-TURF or 518-783-1229.

Executive Business Management Program

Part I: Monday – Wednesday, November 13 – 15
Sheraton University Hotel, Syracuse, NY

Part II: Tuesday – Thursday, January 9 – 11, 2001
Statler Inn, Ithaca, NY

Geared specifically for the green industry, this Cornell/NYSTA program is designed to offer practical and well-rounded guidance in business management in a two-part session. Topics covered include: time management, productivity, cost analysis, employee training, communications skills, coaching, and self-development.

Further information: NYSTA office at 800-873-TURF or 518-783-1229.

Met Social Event

MetGCSA Christmas Party

Host: Fred Scheyhing, CGCS

Saturday, December 9
Mt. Kisco Country Club, Mt. Kisco, NY

Scorecard

Big Draw for the Poa Annual at Brooklawn

The 2000 Poa Annual Tournament drew 114 golfers August 10 to Brooklawn Country Club in Fairfield, CT. The historic track, finely groomed by host Superintendent Peter Bly and his staff, proved challenging to even the most seasoned golfers.

Many thanks to Peter and to General Manager Mike Sessam and PGA Pro Brad Worthington and staffs for their work in making our annual fundraising event so enjoyable.

Here's a look at the day's winning scores:

Low Net Winners

59 Mike Cook, *Alpine, the Care of Trees*
Rob Goring, *Golf Club of Purchase*

60 Tom Weinert, *Plant Food Company, Inc.*
Scott Tretera, *Metro Milorganite, Inc.*

61 Matt Severino, *Scarsdale Golf Club*
Ed Harrison, *Scarsdale Golf Club*

62 Joe Stahl, *Turf Partners, Inc.*
John Rizza, *Turf Partners, Inc.*

Low Gross Winners

68 Bill Day, *Racebrook Country Club*
John Gallagher, *Racebrook Country Club*

70 Rick Haldas, *Brooklawn Country Club*
Bob Grant, *Brooklawn Country Club*

71 Jud Smith, *Orange Hills Country Club*
Steve Gettings, *Orange Hills Country Club*

Closest to the Pin

Ron Kopp, *Pelham Country Club* 4'6"

Longest Drive

Ernie Steinhof, *Metro Milorganite, Inc.*

New Jersey Club Hosts Superintendent/Green Chairman Tourney



Steve Finamore

by Blake Halderman

The Alpine Country Club in Demarest, NJ, proved a challenging course for the MetGCSA's 2000 Superintendent/Green Chairman Tournament held October 10.

"Of all the holes," notes Steve Finamore, the club's long-tenured superintendent, "the 10th plays the toughest—despite the short, Par 4. It's a straight uphill tee shot with another uphill approach shot following," he says of the newly renovated hole, which boasts an easier-to-navigate, wider fairway and a new tee, complete with nearby wetland plantings. "It's certainly a hole that all who played will remember," he says.

Designed by one of the greats, A.W. Tillinghast, Alpine opened its doors in 1931. Steve has headed up the club's maintenance team for the past 12 years, which, in addition to the usual turf skills, has required the astute management of a constant stream of renovations. "We have been working on reconstruction projects since the day I started here," says Steve, who has been guided by a master plan developed by golf course architect Brian Silva.

Since 1988, the club has leveled several greens, built a new range facility, improved stone retaining walls around the ponds, built additional tees, and reconstructed every bunker on the course. Three years ago, Steve also oversaw the installation of a new irrigation system.

Though he's quick to tell you that the course construction has been a great learning experience, he's pleased that the club's focus is shifting to landscape beautification.

"Right now, Alpine is looking at building a new clubhouse. When this is completed," says Steve, "things should get back to normal."

It All Started When...

Steve started in the golf business when he was 14 as a caddie in Western, MA. "Even then," says Steve, "I thought working on the maintenance crew looked a lot more intriguing."

In high school, Steve had brief stints on the crews at Wayland Country Club and The Country Club in Brookline, MA. During those years, his love for the game of golf grew,

right along with his appreciation for the science of golf course management—so much so that Steve decided to pursue a B.S. in Turfgrass Management.

He earned his degree in 1974 and promptly took his new-found knowledge to New Jersey, where he worked for Al Rachens at the Raritan Country Club.

Steve landed his first superintendent's position at the Momouth County Park System, where he was able to fine-tune his management and turf skills. After six years there, he made a few pitstops—one at Wykagyl in New Rochelle, NY, and another at Essex Fells in Essex Fells, NJ—before landing his current position in 1988. He also found time to become certified, earning his CGCS status with GCSAA in 1985.

Once established in New Jersey, Steve became the president of the New Jersey GCSA, serving in 1989 and 1990. Steve says of his term in office, "Being around all those outstanding people in the industry was truly rewarding."

Also professionally rewarding for Steve was establishing a Club Relations Committee for the New Jersey group and serving on the Tri-State Turf Research Foundation's board since its inception.

Family First

When Steve manages to pull himself away from his work, he spends time with his wife of 24 years, Janet, and his four children: Sara, 21; Christina, 19; Michael, 15; and Corinne, 10. But Steve's quick to admit it wasn't always this way: "I used to work on the course and then spend any free time I had playing golf. I finally decided to play—and coach—sports that gave me time with my kids."

Steve coached the traveling softball and baseball teams for the past 11 years and, last year, coached the high school hockey team. Between work and play, there's no doubt this superintendent sleeps well at night!

Blake Halderman, a member of the Tee to Green Editorial Committee, is superintendent at Trump National Golf Club in Briar Cliff Manor, NY.

2000 Met Area Team Championship Comes Closer to Home

by Bill Perlee

The Met Area Team Championship continued its tradition of fine venues when it enlisted the Country Club of Fairfield in Fairfield, CT, to play host to eight regional teams on October 16.

This spectacular Seth Raynor-designed layout overlooks Long Island Sound and Southport Harbor. Several classic holes are represented, including the "cape," a "redan," and an "eden."

The native fescue and natural areas are contrasted by the well-manicured, smooth, slick, and undulating greens at Fairfield, which host Superintendent Pat Sisk readily admits can drive even the most seasoned golfer a little batty. The lack of trees and the close proximity to the water bring the wind heavily into play; for the fortunate regular golfer at Fairfield, this creates a different challenge every day.

Pat's overseen these idyllic grounds since 1995, when his former boss, Ted Maddocks, headed for the hills of Vermont and the classic Ekwanok Country Club in Manchester.

On the Road Again

Pat's route to Fairfield began at UMass, where he earned an A.S. in Turfgrass Management. During the course of his studies, he interned at Cherry Hills Country Club in Denver, CO. Among his more memorable experiences there was bumping into Arnold Palmer on the first tee. This was the site of one of Arnie's greatest triumphs, his victory at the 1960 U.S. Open, where he ironically drove the first green en route to a win in which he came from seven strokes back in the final round. Needless to say, Pat is a proud member of Arnie's Army.

After graduation, Pat made his way to Mesa Arizona where he did a stint at Alta Mesa Country Club. "The myth that dry heat is not that bad is just that, a myth," says Pat. "I couldn't wait to get back to normal weather and the seasonal changes."

Pat left for greener pastures after a year, becoming Ted Maddock's assistant at the Country Club of Fairfield. "This was a perfect training ground," says Pat. "Ted was a great mentor and good friend."



Pat Sisk

After four years there, Pat accepted his first superintendent's job at Mahopac Golf Club. But no sooner had he installed a new irrigation system, than he learned about Ted's move.

Pat wasted no time in applying for the job. Though it seems like just yesterday, January will mark Pat's sixth year as superintendent at the club. Since his arrival, Pat and his crew have renovated all the tees, enlarged the practice tee to four times its original size, and added a chipping and short game area. The club is currently planning an irrigation system upgrade and is also in the process of selecting an architect for an upcoming bunker renovation.

Professional and Personal

If you know Pat at all, you know that no grass will grow under his feet. Pat joined the MetGCSA nine years ago and has served on the board for the past three. In that time, Pat has co-chaired the Tournament Committee and now the Communication's Committee, ushering in the new design of the *Tee to Green*.

He spoke earlier in the year at the GCSAA International Conference and Show in New Orleans on a subject he's come to know well: "Building Professional Relations Through Communication." The talk was a success and, according to Pat, a personal milestone.

Among his other interests—and recent accomplishments—was running in the New York Marathon. He and his admirable finish time made it into the pages of *Golf Course Management* and, of course, our own publication.

Growing just as fast as his list of contributions and accomplishments is Pat's family. Gina, his wife of eight years, and their children: Elizabeth, 3, and Patrick, 17 months—compete for his time away from the golf course but give him more satisfaction and pride than any of his other recent successes.

Bill Perlee, a member of the Tee to Green Editorial Committee, is superintendent at The Apawamis Club in Rye, NY.

MetGCSA Annual Meeting Goes to Knollwood Country Club

Y

by Mike Cook Jr.

You know it's a busy time of year when you hear the clanging of a hammer against the metal on an aerification machine. Though in the throes of aerifying the course, Superintendent Tim Moore was kind enough to take time away from his hectic schedule to tell us about Knollwood Country Club, the site of the MetGCSA's November 8 Annual Meeting, and a little about himself.

Too bad this meeting doesn't come at a time when you can try your hand at the new-and-improved links, because this 108-year-old Raynor/Banks design has undergone numerous changes—first in the hands of golf course architect A.W. Tillinghast, then Stephen Kay, and finally, Jim Blaukovitch, who has been hard at work at the club over the past few years.

It's with Blaukovitch's guidance that Knollwood completed a new short game practice facility, which you could see from the clubhouse, constructed a new 8th hole tee-to-green, and completed a bunker restoration project.

Adds Tim, "We're also in the midst of building a brand-new driving range facility scheduled to open next spring, and we're rebuilding several new tees each year. The course is dramatically different now than when it opened in 1894."

Helping to keep day-to-day operations on track in the midst of the course's numerous renovations are Tim's assistants, Frank Buschini Jr. and John Ferruccio Jr., along with his maintenance staff, which numbers 12 during the season.

Professional Preoccupations

For Tim, it was first things first: He was schooled in turf, then got a job. "I started my education at SUNY at Alfred State; then in 1974, I transferred to the University of Massachusetts Winter Turf School and completed my certificate that same year."

Tim's first job out of school was as the assistant at Beekman Country Club in Hopewell Junction, NY. After two years



Tim Moore

there, he secured his first superintendent's position at Mahopac Golf Club in Mahopac, NY. He stayed at Mahopac for eight years, moving on to Knollwood in 1984.

A strong advocate of the profession, Tim has been a very involved member of the MetGCSA since 1977. He's served on numerous committees, not the least of which was the Communications Committee where he was editor of the *Tee to Green* for seven years.

A member of the Met Board of Directors for 12 years, Tim has moved through the chairs, serving as treasurer and now vice president.

As if that's not enough on his plate, Tim is also a member of the Tri-State Turf Research Foundation board and a past president and current member of the Hudson Valley GCSA.

A strong advocate of our national organization, Tim touts GCSAA's educational programs. "The ongoing educational opportunities GCSAA offers are second to none," says Tim. "I also applaud GCSAA's public relations efforts, both in helping promote our profession and in working to build government relations behind the scenes."

Personal Pursuits

Born in rural Newburgh, NY, and raised in Kingston and Woodstock, Tim is a country boy at heart. He and his wife, Beth, of 23 years enjoy the outdoors together: skiing, golfing, and taking their boat out on the Hudson. "Once in a while, I can escape after work and enjoy the peace of the river," says Tim.

Tim's two children are in college: His son, Brian, is a freshman at SUNY- Potsdam, and his daughter, Meredith, is a junior at SUNY-Plattsburgh. Both, by the way, are recipients of MetGCSA scholarship awards.

Mike Cook, a member of the Tee to Green Editorial Committee, is a district manager and certified arborist with Alpine, the Care of Trees in White Plains, NY.

It only follows, then, that the classification standards developed in the PDI are designed to ensure that superintendents meet certain baseline educational requirements—or on-the-job competencies—that would make them more valuable to an employer.

Class A members, for instance, must have a valid pesticide license (the Met's required this of Class A members since 1987!) or pass a GCSAA-developed pesticide test, the theory being that this will illustrate to employers and community that superintendents are committed to responsible pesticide use and environmental stewardship.

Ongoing education is another of the classification standards designed to demonstrate to employers that superintendents are actively seeking knowledge, in this case to stay abreast of the latest industry developments.

Service points will also be awarded for contributions and activities outside the traditional educational events, such as serving golf-related and civic organizations. Participation in these types of activities, after all, can help build a superintendent's leadership and management skills.

In all the classification requirements, the PDI has one goal in mind: Helping superintendents document what they are doing well and then communicate those competencies—expertise, knowledge, and skills—to current and prospective employers.

Don't Miss This Opportunity

I hope each and every one of you will make an effort to attend our Annual Meeting November 8 and cast an informed vote—hopefully in support of this important initiative. Please keep in mind that the PDI was thought of—and developed by—superintendents. It is not, as some seem to believe, a grand scheme created by GCSAA to make our professional lives more difficult and GCSAA staff jobs more important.

This is an exciting time in both the history of our national organization and our profession. I hope you'll take this opportunity to make a positive impact on the future of our profession.

John Carlone, CGCS
President

Regional News

SUNY-Delhi Offers State-of-the-Art Training Ground for Supers, Pros, and Club Managers



The State University of New York (SUNY) at Delhi has launched a four-year curriculum that is not only expanding the educational opportunities of aspiring golf course superintendents, but also adding majors for golf professionals and club managers.

Clustered under the newly conceived Department of Business Administration and Golf Course Management, this new core of studies will add an important dimension to golf course management training: Students in each area of concentration—turfgrass management, professional golf management, and golf club management—will be expected to take many of the same courses to gain a better understanding of—and appreciation for—what is involved in each profession.

According to Dominic Morales, turfgrass professor and chair of Delhi's golf, plant sciences, and recreation department, Delhi's umbrella program was two years in the making, beginning with separate task forces of superintendents, club managers, and club pros. Each group met to discuss their profession's essential competencies and what they needed to learn to succeed on the job.

"Superintendents said they needed agronomic principles," says Morales, "but they felt, as they moved up the ladder, management skills became nearly as important."

Realizing that 60 to 70 percent of a superintendent's job is management, Delhi developed a curriculum that was heavy in agronomics the first two years, heavy in management the last two.

Among the courses added were Golf Course Management and Planning, Advanced Golf Course Operations, Golf Course Governance and Public

Relations, Argumentation and Debate, Strategic Management, Organizational Communication, Organizational Theory, and Public Policy.

"Each area of concentration has a group of core courses," explains Morales. "In the club management major, for instance, you'll have such things as Hospitality Marketing and Risk Management, but then they're coupled with coursework in horticulture and grounds equipment. The club pro will also take turf courses," notes Morales.

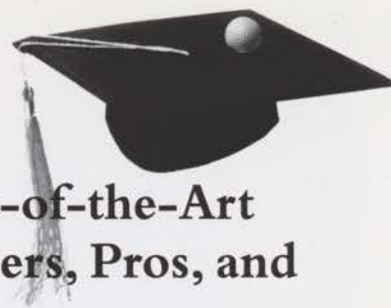
"Delhi College will provide golf majors with an educational experience that is second to none."

Guiding the program is an advisory board that comprises a cross-section of the golf world. Also in the program's favor: the Delhi College Golf Course. Expanded to 18 holes a few years ago, this serves as a training facility and "laboratory" for students.

"The front nine was built in 1963," explains Morales. "It's a traditional older design, with pushup greens and unirrigated fairways. The back nine is high-tech, with sand greens, wall-to-wall irrigation, and a sophisticated pumping station. It's quite a contrast to learn on."

"Delhi College will provide golf majors with an educational experience that is second to none." Adds Morales, "From facilities to internships to industry support, Delhi's new bachelor's programs are a cut above."

For more information on this impressive new program, contact the Office of Enrollment Services at 800-96DELHI.



Beware of Bentgrass Dead Spot: The New Disease in Town

by Jim Baird

Move over Take-all Patch, there's a new disease in town. Known unaffectionately as Bentgrass Dead Spot, this new turf-killer is caused by the fungus *Ophiosphaerella agrostis* and was first identified in the Mid-Atlantic region in 1998.

The disease has been observed on at least 12 cultivars of creeping bentgrass turf that are less than six years old and maintained as greens or tees. Although the name implies that it's a disease affecting strictly bentgrass, this pathogen has been found to infect other turfgrass species as well, including bermudagrass and *Poa trivialis*.

There appears to be a strong relationship between disease incidence and root zone mixes that contain a high content of sand and/or inorganic amendments. Furthermore, the disease seems to favor hot, dry weather, appearing July through October, primarily in open, sunny areas.

The Great Impostor

Disease symptoms are sometimes similar to damage associated with other diseases—e.g., copper or dollar spot—or even ball mark injury. Infected areas become sunken, and turf recovery is extremely slow.

When infections are active, spots have a bronze-colored outer margin, and on close inspection, the presence of black, flask-shaped fruiting bodies can often be found imbedded in sheath and stem tissue.

Do not expect to find mycelium of this fungus in the field, and although this pathogen belongs to a genus of root-infecting fungi, it does not infect roots.

Seeing Is Believing

Recently, I attended the Bentgrass Dead Spot Field Research Tour at Charleston Springs Golf Course in Englishtown, NJ. The prime focus was to view the results of a fungicide study being conducted by Dr. Bruce Clarke and his staff from Rutgers University on one of the golf course's regulation 18 greens.

The green—which is large, level, and in open sunlight—was constructed with a high-sand content root zone mix conforming to USGA recommendations. It was then seeded with a blend of creeping bentgrass in the spring of 1998.

In July of this year, Dr. Clarke and his team set out to determine the effectiveness of various fungicides and biological controls in preventing this disease. Their study was prompted by an outbreak of Bentgrass Dead Spot during the summer of last year.

According to Dr. Clarke, this was one of the most ideal settings he's ever had for a fungicide trial. There was strong disease pressure, an ample testing ground (i.e., a large, flat putting surface), and great cooperation from Superintendent Ron Luepke, who agreed not to apply any fungicides other than those used in the experiment.

The study involved 39 treatments that included a variety of fungicide mixes, a number of biological controls, and one untreated control. Each treatment was applied on either 7- or 14-day intervals.

Preliminary Results

Dr. Clarke's trials identified the following seven products as providing the best preventive control of Bentgrass Dead Spot:

- Banner Max
- Chlorothalonil (Daconil Zn, Ultrex)
- Cleary 3336
- Aliette Signature
- Medallion
- Spectro
- Fore Rainshield

Among the other findings was that the Dead Spot fungus seems to release a toxin



that prevents new turf growth in the dead spot area for an extended period of time.

In fact, field observations have shown that it takes between two to four months to reestablish these areas from seed once the disease activity is stopped. Superintendent Luepke has demonstrated success with overseeding by removing an inch or so of the root zone mix within the dead area and replacing it with a new supply of the mix.

Dr. Clarke also plans to examine whether using activated charcoal in the dead areas might expedite the overseeding process.

Simple Precautions

There is still much to be learned about this new disease. Fortunately, we have two major universities on the case. In addition to Rutgers University's work, there are studies being conducted at the University of Maryland, under Dr. Peter Dernoeden.

Either of these research teams will tell you, prevention is always the best medicine, and there are numerous cultural disease control strategies you can employ to keep your turf out of harm's way.

First, maintain a balanced fertility and avoid stress on the turf. Mechanical injury caused by overzealous cultivation practices and excessive traffic help to incite infection of this pathogen.

Use of surfactants or wetting agents appears to play a positive role in reducing disease incidence or severity and also in increasing fungicide efficacy.

Stay tuned for more results to come from both Rutgers and Maryland.

Jim Baird is an agronomist with the Northeast Region, USGA Green Section.

Patron Directory

Patrons listed on this page are supporting our association. You are encouraged to support them.

* Alpine, the Care of Trees

Mike Cook, NY: 914-948-0101
Ken Clear, CT: 203-847-1855
Peter McFarland, NJ: 201-445-4949

* Al Preston's Garage

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914-347-5151, FAX 914-347-6323

* Argento & Sons, Inc.

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* Blue Ridge Peat Farms Inc.

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* Bruedan Corp.

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Great Meadows, NY 07838
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Bill and Joe Carriere: 914-937-2136

* Plant Food Company, Inc.

Tom Weinert/Ted Platz
800-562-1291/914-262-0111
WEBSITE www.plantfoodco.com

* SavATree

Thomas Marino, NY: 914-244-1700
Mike Schoeni, CT: 203-853-9526
Paul Carbone, NJ: 201-891-5379

* Sawtelle Brothers, Inc.

George Wise/Jason Bassi
65 Glen St., Lawrence, MA 01843
800-999-TURF

* Shemin Nurseries Inc.

Horticultural and Irrigation Supplies
Guy Romano: 203-531-7352
1081 King St., Greenwich, CT 06831

* Stephen Kay, Golf Course Architects

Stephen Kay/Doug Smith
499 New Rochelle Rd.
Bronxville, NY 10708
914-699-4437, FAX 914-699-4479

* Steven Willand, Inc.

Bruce Pye/John Ferruccio/
Mark Ericson
4 Production Dr.
Brookfield, CT 06804
203-775-5757, FAX 203-775-6435

* Sullivan's Construction Services Inc.

Golf Course Construction and
Renovation
P.O. Box 854, Suffield, CT 06078
Kevin Sullivan: 860-668-2129

* Tee and Green Sod, Inc.

Owen Regan/Dave Wallace
Sod Supply and Installation
401-789-8177

* Terre Co. of New Jersey, Inc.

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* Turf Partners, Inc.

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* Turf Products Corporation

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* Winding Brook Turf Farm, Inc.

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