

# Tee To Green

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ROB ALONZI      DAVE DUDONES  
914-478-5713      973-942-0566

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TERRIE DUNKELBERGER

### Photographer

BILL PERLEE

### Advertising Manager

ROB ALONZI, 914-478-5713

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# Tee to Green



Cover: The Stanwich Club.

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# President's Message

## You Gotta Give a Little

*H*

ope you all enjoyed the conference and all that our national association has to offer. It was tough leaving sunny California for the snowy Northeast—and just when I thought we'd escaped the drudgery of having to plow!

On a more serious note, I wanted to devote this message—the first of the new year—to reviewing the goals that have guided our association since it was founded, some 48 years ago.

In general, I'd like to use my messages as a forum for reporting any late-breaking information, addressing any concerns, and discussing new goals that may surface over the next few years.

In this message, my focus on the association's longstanding goals is out of concern for our profession—and for what all of us can be doing to better ourselves, our jobs, and our standing in our communities.

The Met's goals were established to guide our board of directors in promoting the welfare of the game of golf and the science and art of golf course management. These goals also spell out the board's obligation to promote our organization, conduct our business in a professional manner, improve our professional image, and advance the well-being of our individual members.

As I looked at these goals, I realized that they relate not just to our board members, but to each and every one of us. We should *all* be striving to do these things.

### Daunted?

At first glance, this may seem like a daunting task. You might think, "How can I promote the game or the science of golf course management? I don't have a multi-million-dollar budget. I can't host a tour event. It's enough for me to keep my parcel of land in good shape. I'm just one guy, etching out a living for myself and my family."

In truth, it may be easier than you think. Sometimes, it's as simple as doing a good job, showing our memberships that we can not only keep a well-conditioned course,



*Matt Ceplo, CGCS  
MetGCSA President*

but that we're also astute communicators, good managers of people and budget dollars, and that we're respectful of our environment—and the homes and properties surrounding our courses.

How can we do this more easily? You don't have to look too far for help. We have plenty of support in our local and regional meetings, conferences, and seminars—and in our national convention and education sessions. Participating in the events and educational sessions these organizations provide will keep us on top of industry trends and well-versed in new turf equipment and management techniques. They will provide us with the support we need to do our jobs well and project the type of image that will keep our jobs—and the tools we need to do them well—secure.

But these organizations who support us—our local chapters and regional and national organizations—are due something in return. They are due *our* support and cooperation.

### Help Us Help You

I will tell you what got me thinking about all this. I've been receiving numerous emails regarding the GCSAA online survey. Admittedly, it was a little difficult to fill out, and there were some problems with the way it was set up. But one member chimed in on how he saw the problem. He wrote:

"It blows my mind to think that superintendents can't manage to take 10, 12, 16, 30 minutes once a year or biannually to fill out survey information for GCSAA salary and benefits, EIFG environmental profiles, etc."

*continued on page 11*



**Editor's Note:** In an industry filled with unpredictability and uncertainty, there's one thing most golf course superintendents can count on: At some point in their careers, they'll be faced with a course improvement project. Whether it's a small-scale project that involves rebuilding a green, tee, or several bunkers or a program to renovate an entire golf course, the key to the project's success is often not as much in the design and execution as it is in the planning. Without a well-laid plan, many clubs find themselves embarking on a costly, labor-intensive project that is both financially unfeasible and inappropriate for the character of the course.

"Too often," wrote Dave Oatis, director for the USGA's Northeastern Region, "fine old designs have been ruined through well-intentioned but thoughtless renovation."

To help you sidestep the many pitfalls of golf course renovation, we spoke to fellow MetGCSA member Scott Niven about his recently completed renovation project at The Stanwich Club in Greenwich, CT. In the following pages, you'll find Scott's detailed account of his renovation-project-gone-right, as he takes us through every phase from planning through construction. His story is chockfull of helpful advice and cautionary tips that all superintendents—novice and veteran renovators alike—will find useful when it comes time for that next renovation project on their course.

Feature

# Anatomy of a Golf Course Renovation

by Scott Niven, CGCS



Thanks, in large part, to a favorable economic environment in the U.S., an increasing number of golf clubs are spending what it takes to make their old courses look new again. The Stanwich Club was no exception. During the winter of 2003, we embarked on a plan to comprehensively restore the golf course, which has had little work done to it since it opened in 1964.

The course was originally designed by

golf course architects William and David Gordon and built for \$475,000. This is quite a bargain considering our current renovation work has cost the club roughly \$4.5 million.

Stanwich has 500 members of various categories and does about 20,000 rounds of golf per year. We've hosted many tournaments over the years for groups such as the LPGA, USGA, MGA, WGA, MetPGA, and CGA. The course was listed on *Golf Digest*





*Bunker washout before rebuilding.*

*Rebuilt bunkers do not wash out.*



magazine's TOP 100 LIST for 20 years, until it "fell from grace" at the last posting.

The real impetus for renovation came, however, after we hosted the 2002 USGA Mid-Amateur event, which spotlighted some of the shortcomings of the course. After the event, the USGA suggested that we "recontour a half-dozen greens and cut down 1000 trees." It also became clear that we needed to modernize the course by increasing its length for today's longer hitters and softening the highly contoured putting greens to accommodate faster green speeds. At the same time, the membership wanted to enhance the architectural features on a number of holes and improve the bunkers, which they agreed needed to be rebuilt.

From this, the concept of a Master Plan was born. All of the golf course feature work was completed two years after the start of the planning process—during the 2005 growing season—with final completion of other infrastructural improvements expected by the end of this year.

Here's the renovation process—from planning through implementation.

## Master Plan in the Making

Before we could enter into the master planning process, we had to sell the renovation plan to the membership. The board spent two years working to acquire the approval of the vast majority of the members, and they succeeded by holding open forums and enlisting board members to "plant the seed" among individual members.

After securing buy-in from a full 88 percent of the membership, we were ready to create a master plan for the golf course improvements.

## Selecting an Architectural Team

The first step was to secure the services of a top-ranked architectural team. After considering numerous firms, we hired the Tom Fazio Golf Course Design Company. Our project was directed primarily by senior architect Tom Marzolf and associate designer Jeff Dickson, who proved to be both

talented and highly professional in their relationship with the club. In short, we were very pleased with their work.

## Planning by Committee

With our design team in place, the next task was to form a committee that would be responsible for working with the Fazio designers in defining the details of the master plan. A committee of 10 was put together, consisting of both high and low handicappers, men and women, and then the golf pro and me. We met four times over the course of six months, spending our time together walking the course and discussing the design—in great detail.

In the end, the final version of the master plan seamlessly wove together the members' wish list and Fazio's recommendations, leaving few stones unturned and even fewer areas of the golf course untouched.

## Putting the Plan on Paper

Providing for a rather comprehensive reworking of the entire golf course, the plan called for:

- Building 20 new tees—10 forward and 10 back tees—which would increase the total yardage by 300 yards, making it 7,455 yards
- Rebuilding all existing bunkers and adding 23 new fairway bunkers (87 in all)
- Rebuilding seven greens to USGA specifications to soften the contours
- Realigning fairway/play direction on five holes
- Removing hundreds of trees
- Dredging and lowering 6 ponds
- Adding drainage to all holes
- Updating the irrigation system (new sprinklers, valves, wires, satellites, and central Toro VP)
- Repaving cart paths

## Preparing for Takeoff

Before we could launch into the project, we had to work out a tangle of logistics. Among the questions we debated: Who would manage the project? How much should be budgeted for the work? Which

contractor should we hire? How should the work be timed? All in all, the process took about two months.

## Assigning Overseers

Essential to the success of our project was, first and foremost, selecting people to oversee it—from start to finish.

The club chose two people for the job: Me and a club member. Having the superintendent involved is nothing new, but selecting one of the most trusted, respected, knowledgeable individuals at the club to watchdog the process was a stroke of genius by our club president, Tim Cassidy. This member, Steve Green, also happened to be a past president, green chairman, seven-time Club Champion, and 10-time Member/Guest winner. Having him at the helm gave the membership a sense of confidence; they felt the project was in good hands. And they proved right. The master plan not only progressed flawlessly, but also remained on budget.

While Mr. Green watchdogged the master plan, I was assigned to carry the torch in actually getting the work done. That meant overseeing not only the day-to-day course maintenance, but also various details of the course construction.

It became my responsibility to:

- Identify the work to be done and provide a list of potential contractors
- Identify specifications for all materials to be used and methods for their implementation
- Design bid documents
- Develop and approve contracts with the club's counsel
- Identify all existing utilities on the course: drainage, irrigation, electric, water
- Oversee daily work and budget

A job of this magnitude is a major challenge and requires not only extra effort on the superintendent's part, but also dictates the need for highly competent assistants who can help in managing the course maintenance plus the extra details of the project. I've been fortunate to have two capable assistants, Jim Schell and David Polvino, working with me throughout the project.



## Building a Budget

High on the list of priorities is establishing a budget. This, along with the bidding process, took months of in-depth study to complete.

*Word to the wise:* If at all possible, it's best to create the total budget for the project after all the bids have been received. Unfortunately in our case, due to time constraints and a lengthy membership approval process, we developed the budget for the project before receiving competitive bids.

We still might have come in close to our budget target, however, had we been able to complete the bulk of the project during the '05/'06 season as planned, but we hit a stumbling block: The Town of Greenwich required us to get a wetlands permit. The process took two years, pushing our dredging and irrigation installation back by one year.

The expenses related to obtaining the permits, coupled with having to rebid the dredging and irrigation projects, resulted in the total budget escalating by nearly \$400,000. It's amazing how much current market conditions can influence the ultimate cost of a project from one year to the next.

*Take-home lesson:* If you're budgeting for the future, don't underestimate the potential effects of inflation—or deflation—in the total cost of your project.

## Securing Bids

Next, the bidding process. We solicited bids from seven certified golf course builders. Tom Marzolf and Jeff Dickson produced detailed bid documents that requested "unit" prices for each portion of the work. Included were such things as stripping sod, hauling fill, shaping bunkers, installing drainage, installing liners, sand, sod, etc. This type of bidding ensured that we paid only for the materials we used. In return, however, we had to carefully monitor the hours worked and the materials used each and every day of the construction process.

*Word to the wise:* The key to working within the designated budget is to be sure that the estimated sizes of the new features (bunkers, tees, greens, etc.) specified in the bid documents are right on or slightly generous; otherwise the costs are sure to overrun the budget.

## Setting the Schedule

Deciding when and how to do the work is key to a project's success and to keeping the membership happy throughout the process. Due to the broad scope of our project, we had no choice but to work through the 2005 growing season. We began April 1 and stopped work by December 1, capitalizing on the good weather and growing conditions that time of year.

To avoid closing the golf course to play, we decided to limit the construction to only two holes at a time. We did, however, make sure to finish our tournaments a little earlier—by September 26—so that we could begin rebuilding our seven greens.

*As an aside:* In anticipation of reduced play due to the disruption caused by construction, the club finance committee budgeted for a loss during 2005. Much to our surprise, the golfers enjoyed watching the construction process so much that we had more—rather than fewer—rounds, resulting in a \$200K profit for that fiscal year.

The windfall gave me the opportunity to offer my two hardworking assistants a special bonus for their extra efforts that year.

## The Implementation

With everything in line—and little time to waste—we hit the ground running: Bunkers, tree work, and greens construction, from late September through November.

At every phase of the project, we kept the members informed about the work in progress. We posted a sign at the first tee each day, indicating which holes would be under construction. And every week, I would post an update on the club's website. Then, once a month, I would supply pictures and descriptions of the work being done for the club newsletter.

I would also keep our general manager, Peter Tunley, and golf professional, Mike Summa, informed of construction activities to take advantage of their frequent interaction with the membership. And periodically, we would also have Master Plan Committee meetings.

Communication to the membership, I feel, was key to ensuring the project's hitchless implementation.

## Bunker Rebuilding

The bunker design was of particular importance to the membership, since bunkers, probably more than any other feature, define the character of a golf course.

The design of the first few bunkers was excellent and quickly gained member confidence and acceptance. As the work progressed, the bunkers—though consistent in style—became deeper and more three-dimensional than the first ones. Many trees were sacrificed to fit the new bunkers—23 in all—into the landscape of each hole. The tree removal, coupled with the new bunker design, yielded great results: Not only was the view from the tees greatly improved, but the strategy of those shots was also enhanced.

All bunkers were built with a comprehensive drainage system and lined throughout with the Sand Trapper II bunker liner. The

average cost for each bunker was about \$9K.

*Word to the wise:* These types of bunkers—with their many capes and vertical banks—are dramatic-looking, but more costly to maintain. They've required more inputs in mowing, irrigation, pest control, fertilization, and of course, labor.

Fortunately, we've realized some savings to offset the increased costs. Thanks to the liners and plenty of drainage, washouts are practically nonexistent. This provides significant savings on labor, especially during a wet year. It also follows that our bunkers are spared from contamination, which means they're likely to last longer, allowing more time between renovations.

## Tree Removal

We've removed 750 trees to date. Many were cut down to accommodate the new bunkers and tees. Others were removed to:

- Enhance turfgrass quality by eliminating shade and root competition and improving air movement
- Maintain an open corridor for golf shots
- Create vistas to other parts of the property
- Reduce costs for trimming and maintaining trees
- Remove damaged trees for safety and aesthetic reasons

Our tree removal program actually began about five years ago with our willow trees. We started with 80, and as they began to decline, we removed them. Today we have none.

## Greens Reconstruction

As I touched on earlier, the idea of reconstructing some of our greens was prompted by the loss of many cupping areas due to increased green speeds over the years.

When the golf course was built in 1962, speeds of about 7 feet were common, and cups could be set on virtually all areas of the putting surfaces. With today's stimp meter readings often approaching 11 feet, cupping areas have been reduced—in some cases, to less than 10 percent of the total green area. This meant little variety in hole locations—and a less satisfying game for golfers who were limited to just a few sites on each green, and, worse, there was always the potential to 3- or 4-putt on the many highly contoured greens.

The final decision to reconstruct seven greens was a tough one for our members, who are very passionate about their putting surfaces and didn't want to lose the "magic" in those storied, challenging greens. Taking their concerns to heart, we worked to reconstruct the greens—numbers 2, 3, 7, 10, 13, 17, and 18—in the mirror image of the old ones, except with less slope.



### Matching Old to New

More of a challenge was making sure that the seven new greens would play the same as the remaining 11. In the end, because the contour changes were so significant, rather than try to modify the existing native soils, we decided to completely rebuild the greens using the USGA method for greens construction. That is the best, most predictable way to build a green today. The "perched water table" created by this method helps to conserve moisture, while at the same time, draining well and resisting compaction.

We reused the existing Poa/Bent sod to help maintain the uniformity of turfgrass throughout the entire 18 holes. The seven greens were all topdressed very heavily last fall to correct imperfections caused by the sodding and to get them ready for play first thing the following spring.

*Word to the wise:* One of the most important things we learned when resodding the greens was that the final result was best when the sod was cut thinner (1/2") rather than on the thick side (1+"). The average cost per green for our 5,000-square-foot putting surface was about \$60,000.

### Meeting the Deadline

Because we wanted to minimize disruption to the golf course, we scheduled our greens construction as late in the season as possible, after September 26. That left us two months before the absolute end of the growing season to build seven greens.

In order to accomplish what seemed an impossible mission, we decided to hire two construction companies. (More on that below.) Temporary greens were created in the fairway for those seven holes for the last two months of the year. The plan was to

open the new ones as soon as possible the following spring.

Thanks to a dry, warm March, we were able to begin playing on the newly contoured greens on April 1 of last year. Needless to say, this quick turnaround made the whole process fairly painless for our golfers.

*A word to the wise:* Though using two construction companies for the same job might raise some eyebrows, it actually worked to our advantage. They were both certified and highly qualified. Though each had their own approach to getting the job done, the end result was the same. In fact, you'd be hard pressed to figure out where one company's work began and the other's ended. Having two contractors on the job also set the stage for some friendly competition, which prodded each of them to do the work not only quickly, but also to the highest standards.

If there were any difficulties with this process, it would be that it required double the monitoring. I had to watchdog the work of two contractors instead of just one. The other less desirable, though important, aspect of this process is that you have to house double the amount of equipment and materials. These inconveniences were, in the end, a small price to pay for the outcome.

### It's Not Over Yet

I am happy to say that, after one season of playing these new greens, tees, and bunkers, the members are quite pleased with both the playability—and the look—of their newly renovated golf course. They are happier still with the recent recognition we

received in the December 2006 issue of *Golf Digest*, where we were ranked "Best New Remodel" for 2006 among golf courses in the U.S.

*And as an aside:* Our Poa/Bent turf has performed very well on the new USGA root zone mixture.

But we still can't rest on our laurels. This past fall, we leapt back into the project to carry out the remaining pieces of our master plan:

- Dredging and lowering (14") six ponds and a half-mile stream
- Adding drainage to wet areas on each hole
- Installing a new irrigation system and pumphouse
- Repairing all cart paths
- Continuing selective tree removal

Now that the Stanwich membership has become comfortable with change on their golf course, it's probable that, from this point forward, the course will remain a "work in progress."

And I have a feeling we won't be alone. As long as favorable economic conditions continue, it's likely that most clubs will continue the quest for perfection on their golf courses through the master planning process.

*In addition to being property manager at The Stanwich Club, Scott Niven is a long-tenured member of the Tee to Green Editorial Committee.*

No. 11 after remodeling.

No. 11 before remodeling.





# 2007 Met Events Update

Our 2007 Meeting and Social Calendar is still a work in progress.

If anyone is interested in hosting a meeting or social event that does not have a site, please contact the appropriate committee chairmen. For professional events, contact either of our Tournament Committee co-chairs: Blake Halderman at 914-946-1074 or Ken Benoit at 914-241-0700. Our Social & Welfare Committee co-chairs are Tom Leahy (914-941-8281) and Bob Nielsen (914-234-3779). Both are available to discuss any upcoming social events.

### Business Meeting

Thursday, March 15  
Silver Spring Country Club  
Ridgefield, CT  
Host: Peter Rappoccio, CGCS

### Two-Ball Qualifier

Tuesday, April 24  
Centennial Golf Club  
Carmel, NY  
Host: Glen Dube, CGCS

### MetGCSA Invitational Tournament

Monday, May 14  
Whippoorwill Club, Armonk, NY  
Host: Paul Gonzalez, CGCS

### Superintendent/Manager or Guest Tournament

Thursday, May 31  
Scarsdale Golf Club, Hartsdale, NY  
Host: Matt Severino

### Family Picnic

Date & Site OPEN

### Poa Annual Tournament

Monday, July 9  
Powelton Club, Newburgh, NY  
Host: Bob DeMarco

### Education Meeting

July  
Date & Site OPEN

### Summer Social

August  
Date & Site OPEN

### Met Championship and Met Area Team Championship Qualifier

September  
Date & Site OPEN

### Superintendent/Green Chairman Tournament

Tuesday, October 9  
Tuxedo Club, Tuxedo Park, NY  
Host: Tim Garceau

### Annual Assistants Championship

Thursday, October 11  
Dellwood Country Club  
Host: Brian Chapin

### Met Area Championship

Date & Site TBA

### Annual Meeting

November  
Date & Site OPEN

### MetGCSA Christmas Party

December  
Date & Site OPEN

## Educational Events

### 2007 Lower Hudson Golf Show

Saturday – Sunday, March 17 – 18  
Westchester County Center  
White Plains, NY  
More than 2,500 golfers are expected to attend the 2007 Lower Hudson Golf Show. Sponsored by *The Journal News* and LoHud.com, this event offers companies and organizations in the golf industry the opportunity to market their goods and services to the public. The MetGCSA will have a booth again this year to showcase the role of the superintendent and to educate the public on how the work we do on golf courses enhances the environment.

For further information, contact John Zanzarella at 914-945-0480 or [jazmc@aol.com](mailto:jazmc@aol.com)

### MGA/USGA Green Chairman Education Series

Wednesday, March 21  
Willow Ridge Country Club, Harrison, NY  
This education series is designed to help green chairmen, course officials, and superintendents make informed decisions on issues common to many area golf courses. Among the session topics:

- Drainage: The ill effects of poor drainage—and remedies, new and old
  - Irrigation: The design and operation of effective irrigation systems, as well as help in determining when it's time for a system upgrade
  - Greens: Options for improving the performance of problem greens
- Attendees will also have the opportunity to hear updates on Tri-State research in progress and New York State pesticide legislation.

For more information on the series or to register, contact the MGA at 914-347-4653.

### UMass Turf Research Field Day

Wednesday, June 20  
UMass Joseph Troll Turf Research Center  
South Deerfield, MA  
Watch for details. For further information, contact the UMass Turf Program office at 508-892-0382 or visit [fielday@umassturf.org](mailto:fielday@umassturf.org).

### Rutgers Turfgrass Research Field Day (Golf & Fine Turf)

Thursday, August 2  
Horticultural Farm II, New Brunswick, NJ  
The field day will focus on research currently taking place at the Turf Research facility. Among the studies are:

- Anthracnose management on *Poa annua* greens
- Current efforts to convert *Poa* fairways and greens to bentgrass
- New bentgrass cultivars for greens/fairways
- Irrigation management studies on bentgrass
- Advances in disease, insect, and weed control

Registration for field day activities runs from 7:30 to 9 a.m. Tours are conducted from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. followed by lunch from 1 to 2 p.m. For further information, call 215-757-6582 or visit [www.njturfgrass.org](http://www.njturfgrass.org).



## March Into the 2007 Golfing Season With a First Stop at Silver Spring Country Club

by Greg Wojick, CGCS

Peter Rappoccio loves the game of football. He'll return this fall to begin his 10th season as freshman coach of the Fairfield Prep School football team. In fact, when I called Peter for this interview, he had just returned from Miami and his first trip to the Super Bowl. He called it "an amazing experience" that he hopes to do again when his favorite team, the New York Giants, make their next appearance. Let's hope Peter doesn't have to wait too long for that to happen.

He admits that keeping up with his two sons in the carnival-like atmosphere of the Super Bowl was a challenge. (More about his sons later.)

Right up there with his love of football is his passion for our profession and the club he's worked for for the past 30 years, the Silver Spring Country Club in Ridgefield, CT. His pride is evident as he boasts of the newly completed clubhouse renovations, which were budgeted at \$8.5 million but, according to Peter, came in under budget and on time.

### What a Change There's Been

Those who attend the March 15 Business Meeting will see the fresh new grill room and dining room, and you'll have the opportunity to be wined and dined from the clubhouse's all-new kitchen. "There's also a new bag drop area, and outside the clubhouse, there are new plantings, a new irrigation system for the garden areas, and a newly rebuilt putting green, which was the result of the clubhouse addition," explains Peter.

Guided by a master plan the club created with the golf course architectural firm The Roger Rulewich Group, Peter is in the throes of renovations designed to update portions of the course over the next five years. Plans include bumping up the size of the course's original tees built in 1929, repositioning fairway bunkers, and rebuilding all of the greenside bunkers.

A practice area for chipping and bunker

play was added in 2005. And with the help of Dennis Flynn's construction company, D & D Turfworks, Peter has supervised substantial improvements to the seventh hole. The lowest part of the #1 handicap hole has been raised about 3 feet with roughly 3,000 feet of subsurface drainage added. A new back tee adds 30 yards to this challenging hole. The left greenside bunker was rebuilt, and a new fairway and greenside bunker were added.

This spring, Peter will oversee the installation of a new artificial surface at his practice facility's tee.

### A Met Man Through and Through

Peter is a very familiar face in the Met area. He's hosted close to a dozen Met meetings and deservedly earned the distinction of being selected, in 2002, for the Met's Sherwood A. Moore Award. Peter served in 1985 and '86 as our association's president and has continued to serve the Met by sitting on probably more committees at one time than any other member. At last count, it was six.

Peter clearly demonstrates that same commitment on the job. In a past write-up, I echoed what so many visitors know about the conditions at Silver Spring: "They're perfect!"

And I'm not just talking about the fairways or the smooth-as-silk greens, but everything. And Peter accomplishes all this while being a regular guy: easy to get along with, approachable, and fun-loving.



Peter Rappoccio, CGCS

### Back to the Superbowl

Now, where was I? ... Ah, the Super Bowl and Peter's sons. Peter exclaimed that the tequila shots and the beers at the stadium were expensive. "It's funny though," he says, "my sons Peter and Tim didn't think so. It's clear I've been out of the party circuit too long."

Peter Jr., by the way, is the assistant superintendent at Westchester Country Club. Tim, Peter's youngest son, was recently promoted to associate director of tax operations for UBS in Stamford, CT.

Peter and his wife of 31 years, Birdie, live on the club grounds in Ridgefield, where Birdie is active in the community and serves as a registered nurse for the school system.

Greg Wojick, a member of the Tee to Green Editorial Committee, is superintendent at Greenwich Country Club in Greenwich, CT.

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# Another Super Winter Seminar at Westchester

## *The MetGCSA's Annual Educational Extravaganza Draws Record Numbers*

by Dave Moffett

**O**n January 17, a record-setting crowd enjoyed a day of education and camaraderie at the annual MetGCSA Winter Seminar. Superintendents, assistants, and affiliate members from all over the region converged at the beautiful Westchester Country Club, which true to form, provided the impeccable service and attention to detail that always makes this event special for MetGCSA members.

Also a credit to the event's success was the careful planning of Education Chair Glen Dube. Glen secured an informative—and entertaining—lineup of speakers who discussed everything from current Dollar Spot controls to weather disasters.

Our 29 exhibitor booths provided added-value information and products that we can put to use on the job and in our maintenance facilities. We'd like to extend a special thank you to the commercial members who participated. You'll find all our exhibitors' names and numbers listed on page 9.

The educational sessions kicked off with an update on regional and national research projects being conducted to provide golf course superintendents with environmentally friendly solutions to turfgrass pests.

### The Latest Buzz on Area Research

Providing this information was the USGA's Director of Education, Dr. Kimberly Erusha, who highlighted projects underway at Rutgers, Penn State, Cornell, and UConn.

Rutgers, she noted, is experimenting with using parasitic nematodes to control white grubs. At the University of Connecticut, researchers are looking at alternative controls for Dollar Spot, and Cornell is testing Acetic Acid (vinegar) as a herbicide. Penn State continues its Anthracnose study, as well as research on seed head suppression through plant growth regulators.

Dr. Erusha also spoke about the USGA's initiatives to support native golf course habi-

tats, emphasizing the importance of providing a safe and supportive environment for creatures, big and small.

Last, but not least, Dr. Erusha reminded us of the various information sources we have available to us, free to charge, online. On the list were, of course, the USGA's [www.usga.org/turf](http://www.usga.org/turf) and its Turfgrass and Environmental Research Online at <http://usgatero.msu.edu>. Also noted was Michigan State University's Turfgrass Information File at <http://tic.msu.edu>. All three sites are chock-full of useful turf-related information.

### Fairway Topdressing: Should You or Shouldn't You?

Next up for discussion was the hot topic of fairway topdressing. Filling us in on this increasingly popular practice in fairway grooming was Dr. Jason Henderson, associate professor of soil and plant sciences at the University of Connecticut.

Dr. Henderson was quick to point out that not all courses are strong candidates for a fairway topdressing program, which is costly, labor-intensive, and highly disruptive to play. He believes, however, that each course should carefully evaluate their fairway conditioning needs and consider the pros and cons of this type of program.

Dr. Henderson also presented a to-do list for those preparing to initiate a fairway topdressing program on their course. Topping his list of recommendations: Choose the right topdressing material and test all materials (at an AL2A-accredited lab) for particle size, coefficient of uniformity, particle shape, pH, and hydraulic conductivity.

He pointed to research projects underway in Connecticut at both Burning Tree Country Club in Greenwich and Blue Fox Run Golf Course in Avon, CT. At Burning Tree, UConn researchers are working closely with Superintendent and MetGCSA member Mike Barton in field testing different topdressing frequencies. Similar test plots have also been established at UConn's research facility in order to compare data.

Research underway at Blue Fox Run Golf Course involves applying different topdressing materials at various depths to native soils in the lab.

Dr. Henderson will continue his trials over the next several years.

### It's All About Communication

Before lunch, Bill Cower—oops—I mean Pat Jones (great joke), founder of *Golfdom Magazine*, provided us with on-the-job survival skills that go above-and-beyond turf maintenance. Now the owner of Flagstick LLC, a consulting firm that provides sales and marketing intelligence to green industry businesses, Jones emphasized the importance of communication to job success. Though simple, he told the audience, communication skills are not easy to implement. They take conscious effort and practice.

Jones stressed the importance of not letting minor problems become major issues by communicating... with club officials, committee chairs, and your membership. Your objective, he noted, is to keep everyone informed about what is happening on the course—and to nip in the bud any misperceptions or incorrect information before it has a chance to circulate.

He validated the effectiveness of many of the old standards: walking through the grill room, "working" the driving range, and greeting members on the course. He's also a proponent of networking with other superintendents and sharing ideas. That, he believes, is another critical form of communication.

### Snuffing Out Dollar Spot

After our lunch break and the Annual Bill Caputi Scholarship Raffle, Dr. Bruce Clarke of Rutgers University took the podium.





He revealed his latest findings in his search for an effective Dollar Spot control. After conducting trials in New Brunswick, NJ, using various nozzle and fungicide selections, Dr. Clarke's research team determined that the amount of water used in an application is critical, depending on the type of fungicide and nozzle that is being used.

To date, his team has had the greatest success tank mixing Propiconazole and Chlorothalonil and applying it in 2 gallons of water per 1000 sq. ft. from a flat fan nozzle. Dr. Clarke's trials will continue.

## ABC-7 Meteorologist Talks Weather

Our final speaker of the day was ABC-7 Meteorologist Bill Evans, who offered interesting—sometimes contrary—perspectives on weather patterns and global warming's effect on the environment.



He began by talking about the El Nino weather phenomenon, which he explained is caused by a warm pocket of water off the West Coast of South America. The stable, warm air mass above is drawn into North America, causing the jet stream to recede into Canada and supplying the Northeast with mild weather. Evans feels this may explain the tough growing seasons we've had in this area over the past few years.

He did, however, offer some hope: He said that meteorologists at the National Weather Service have been recording cooler ocean surface temperatures in the area and that the El Nino cycle may be ending.

Evans also reminded us of the importance of being prepared for the possibility of a major hurricane. He gave numerous examples of why a direct hit to the Metro Area would have disastrous effects on our industry.

His lecture then took an unexpected turn to the hot topic of global warming. Contrary to popular belief, Evans feels that the Earth is not a fragile environment and that Mother Nature will always find a way to balance things out. He did, however, admit that there is limited data on the subject, making it very difficult to draw any concrete conclusions.

## Many Thanks

A great big thank you goes to Glen Dube and all of the Education Committee members for their hard work in making this a record-setting event. Many thanks, also, to our speakers, our hosts Joe Alonzi and Westchester Country Club, and to our exhibitors.

*Dave Moffett, a member of the Tee to Green Editorial Committee, is the assistant superintendent at Trump National Golf Club in Briarcliff Manor, NY.*

# Special Thanks to Our 2007 Winter Seminar Exhibitors

We'd like to thank all the vendors who participated in this year's Winter Seminar. As a show of appreciation, we're listing the exhibitors here, along with the areas of specialty and phone numbers.

When the opportunity arises, we hope you'll show these contractors and suppliers the same support they've shown us during our Winter Seminar—and throughout the year.

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# Another Successful Scholarship Raffle

The Annual Bill Caputi Scholarship Raffle, held for the first time at our Winter Seminar on January 17, raised an admirable sum for the Met's Scholarship Fund and awarded \$3,900 in cash prizes to 17 lucky ticket holders.

The raffle is the prime source of the scholarship awards we distribute to deserving Met member dependents each year. In 2006, we awarded \$10,600 to 10 students.

Many thanks to all who contributed to this worthwhile fundraiser, and congratulations to our \$1,000-grand-prize winner, **Rob Alonzi**, Superintendent of St. Andrew's Golf Club.

The other prize winners were:

### \$500 Winners

**Chad Esposito**, Highland Golf Club  
**Gene Westmoreland**, Metropolitan Golf Association

### \$250 Winners

**Glen Dube**, Centennial Golf Club  
**Tim O'Neill**, Country Club of Darien  
**Bill Salinetti III**, National Golf Links of America  
**Bob Steinman**, Metro Turf Specialists

### \$100 Winners

**Frank Amodio**, Valley View Greenhouses  
**Brian Benedict**, Seawane Club  
**Ken Benoit**, Glen Arbor Golf Club  
**Joe Dube**, father of Centennial Golf Club's **Glen Dube**  
**Larry Grasso**, brother of Metropolis Country Club's **Tony Grasso**  
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## Scholarship Application Deadline Around the Corner

Don't delay in calling for your 2007 MetGCSA Scholarship Award application! Any Class A, AL, B, SM, C, AF, or AFL member of the MetGCSA or a dependent of a member is eligible to win. But the deadline for submissions is fast approaching. **All applications must be RECEIVED by Friday the 13th of April 2007.**

Application forms are available through MetGCSA Executive Secretary Ineke Pierpoint at 914-347-4653. If you have any questions about the application process, feel free to contact S & R Chairman Tony Girardi at Rockrimmon Country Club, 914-764-5010.

The Scholarship & Research Committee will select recipients based on leadership, maturity, scholastic capabilities, activities, and commitment to a chosen career.

Scholarships will be awarded at our July Education Meeting. Watch our Calendar of Events in the *Tee to Green* or on the website, [www.metgcsa.org](http://www.metgcsa.org), for the precise date of the event.

## Members on the Move

- **Brett Chapin** is the new superintendent at Redding Country Club in Redding, CT. Previous position: Assistant superintendent, Seawane Club, Hewlett Harbor, NY.
- **Hermen VanDunk IV** was promoted from assistant to superintendent at Leewood Golf Club in Eastchester, NY.

## New Members

Please join the board in welcoming the following new members:

- **James Ashwood**, Class C, Country Club of New Canaan, New Canaan, CT
- **Brian Chapin**, Class C, Dellwood Country Club, New City, NY
- **Matt Mullany**, Class C, St. Andrew's Golf Club, Hastings-on-Hudson, NY
- **Jake Parchen**, Class C, Dellwood Country Club, New City, NY

## Births

Two Met members had baby boys! Congratulations to:

- Towers Country Club Superintendent **Eric O'Neill** and his wife, Denise, on the birth of their son, Michael Albert, on January 9.
- Mosholu Golf Course Superintendent **Erik Feldman** and his wife, Shelley, on the birth of their twin boys, Andrew Jonathon and Devin Joseph, on January 26.

## Well Wishes

Sending well wishes to **Glenn Moore** of Glenmore Landscape Services.

## In Sympathy

Our condolences to:

- **Eric O'Neill**, who lost his mother, Suzanne, on December 26.
- The family of **Jose Juan Medina**, an employee of Tamarack Superintendent Jeff Scott, who passed away recently on the job. The MetGCSA is donating \$1,000 to Jose's family.
- The family of life member **Red Altomaro**, who passed away February 1. A member of the MetGCSA since 1968, Red studied agronomy at the University of Massachusetts. He was superintendent at Greenwich Country Club for 10 years and later retired from E. Gaynor Brennen Golf Course in Stamford, CT, moving with his wife, Jo, to The Villages, FL. Red turned 75 on January 25.



# Holiday Memories

MetGCSA Annual Christmas Party, 2006

Chris Alonzi, Neil and  
Gina Laufenberg, Eric  
Yount.



Robyn Gould and  
Dennis DeSanctis



Kevin Seibel,  
Mark and Mary  
Pat Millett



Tom and Paula  
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Carla Ashfield



Dennis and Cindy Flynn, Peter  
and Birdie Rappoccio, Joe Alonzi,  
Anne and Mike Maffei.



## A Special Thank You to Our Sponsors

Helping to make our 2006 Christmas Party at Mount Kisco Country Club all the more memorable were the generous contributions of some of our Class AF members. We'd like to extend a very special thank you to:

John Callahan of The Cardinals, Inc.  
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President's Message continued from page 1

Filling out this survey is an example of supporting an organization that is working hard to support us. Certainly the format and software can be improved, but I find it hard to believe that an investment of 12 to 15 minutes could be a barrier to protecting your profession and industry.

In case some of you haven't heard, cities, towns, counties, and states across the U.S. are actively pursuing regulations and ordinances to curtail the use of various products we apply regularly to maintain quality conditions on our courses. The need for current, viable data is critical. You don't have to go in droves to attend county commission meetings, but thousands of you can fill out a survey. If you have to work at it just a little, and it isn't so "quick" and "easy," we'll keep in mind, neither is advocating for our profession and the products we live by. Help us help you!

## I Know You Care

I do believe most members really care and perhaps just don't understand the importance of some things. But I'm hoping this message will serve as a wakeup call... a reminder of how important it is to contribute to the organizations that give so much to us.

At the risk of sounding like a broken record, be sure to participate in our local and regional meetings and seminars. Attend our national convention and education sessions. And respond to surveys—both the Met's and the national's—which are designed, in the long run, to help you.

Start right now by filling out that GCSAA survey, if you haven't already. Put on your calendars as many of our monthly association events as you can, and plan to bring your assistants to our meetings. Invite your green chairmen and club officials to the Invitational and other events. These are perfect opportunities to demonstrate your professionalism and your commitment to the job you do and to the industry.

In closing, I want everyone to feel free to call me anytime with ideas, suggestions, and concerns. I believe we have a great association with even greater members. And I look forward to working with each and every one of you toward the good of your association and our industry.

See you in March at Silver Spring for our annual Business Meeting.

**Matt Ceplo**  
President



**To Our Readers:** What follows is the first of our superintendent spotlights to appear in a new, abbreviated format. We will be using this format for those hosts who have held a meeting at their clubs within the past three years. We'd like to avoid burdening our readers with too much information on a per-

son—too soon. We will, however, tell you when the superintendent's full-length profile last appeared in the Tee to Green—for those who might be interested in doing further reading. Past issues are available on the website and can be easily accessed at [www.metgcsa.org](http://www.metgcsa.org). Enjoy!



## Glen Dube Brings Two-Ball Qualifier to Centennial

Anyone who attempted to qualify last year for the Met's annual Two-Ball competition, will know what to expect when they tee it up on April 24 for this year's Two-Ball Qualifier. This hotly contested qualifying round will take place at the picturesque Centennial Golf Club in Carmel, NY, and will determine who will make the cut for the season-long Two-Ball Competition. Our meeting host, Glen Dube, joined the club as superintendent just a season ago.

### About the Course...

**Design:** Centennial Golf Club is a 350-acre, 27-hole daily fee course located in Carmel, NY. Built in 1996 by golf course architect Larry Nelson, the course comprises three distinctive nine-hole tracts. Aptly named Meadows, Lakes, and Fairways, each course provides the golfer with both a traditional and a links feel—and ultimately, a rewarding golf experience.

**Word to the Wise:** Approach shots should come to rest below the hole. Centennial is a lot easier when you putt uphill. Everybody's golf games will have plenty of rust on them. Bring an extra golf ball—or 12.

### About Our Host...

**Training Ground:** Glen's been Centennial's superintendent since the spring of 2006. He came there from Oak Hills Park Golf Course in Norwalk, CT, where he was superintendent for eight years.

He spent his early years as an intern at Muirfield Village in Dublin, OH, at TPC at River Highlands in Cromwell, CT, and at the Country Club of Darien. Last stop before Oak Hills: Silver Spring Country Club in Ridgefield, CT, where he worked as Peter Rappoccio's assistant for three seasons.

**Education:** B.S. in Turfgrass Management, University of Rhode Island, 1995.

**Professional Notes:** Glen, a certified golf course superintendent, has been a member of the MetGCSA Board of Directors since 2003, serving on numerous committees and currently chairing the Education Committee.

**Family and Fun:** Glen and his wife, Erica, have been married five years and have a 4-year-old daughter, Madison, and a 4-month-old son, Jake. Among Glen's favorite pastimes are fishing and golf.

**For More on Glen:** Please refer to our website, [www.metgcsa.org](http://www.metgcsa.org), to retrieve the archived May/June 2005 issue where his full profile last appeared.



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