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Tee To Green

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In this Issue

Feature

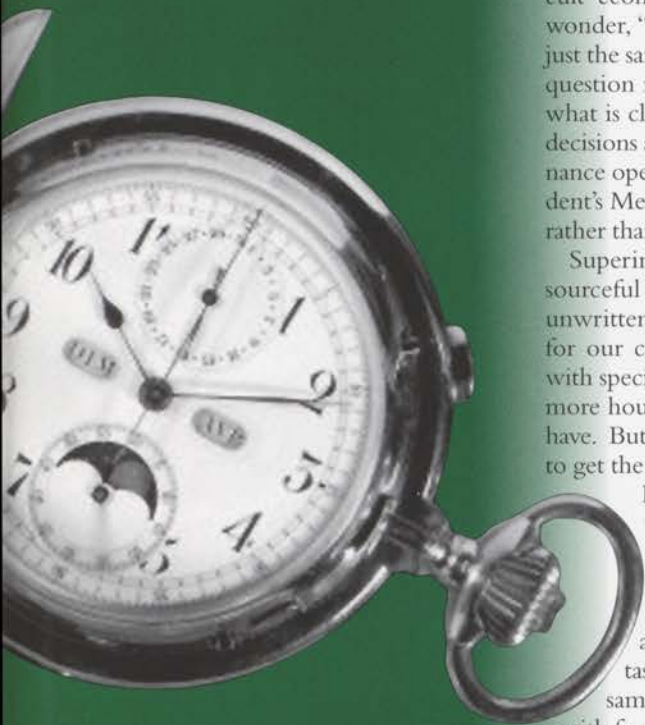
- The World Is Changing . . . So Is Golf2
- Managing With Less: What Area Supers Are Doing to4
Get More Bang for Their Buck

Departments

- Upcoming Events5
- Chapter News6
- Member News8
- Spotlights10

President's Message

Meeting 2009 Head-on



SERIALS

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whirlwind tour!

It's been about three months since I officially took over as the association's president, and I've appreciated everyone's support and words of encouragement. Though I've spent 12 years on the board, it still amazes me how efficiently our association runs. We have a tremendous membership who cares deeply about our association and an outstanding board of directors, whose commitment and above-and-beyond contributions ensure our association runs like a Swiss watch.

Bringing Value to Our Employers

Speaking of keeping things running smoothly... as we all attempt to adjust to this difficult economic climate, we can't help but wonder, "How can we do more—or even just the same—with less?" The answer to this question is far from clear at this point. But what is clear is that we have to make sound decisions about how we manage our maintenance operations. As I stated in my last President's Message, "Let's be part of the solution, rather than part of the problem."

Superintendents, as a whole, are very resourceful people. We've had to be. It's an unwritten job requirement. It's not unusual for our clubs or employers to come to us with special project requests that may require more hours, money, and manpower than we have. But somehow, somehow we find a way to get the job done.

Right now, in this financial climate, we're faced with a similar situation. But now, instead of being asked to accomplish a specific project or assignment, many of us are being asked to wrestle with the difficult task of doing, at the very least, the same for our courses with less... now with fewer employees and smaller budgets.

We could despair about the season ahead, or being the resourceful people we are, we could decide to use this time to demonstrate to our employers our value to the overall operation of our facility.

One approach, as Rich Spear of Piping Rock suggests in our feature article this issue, is to help members and golfing patrons adjust—i.e., lower—their expectations about various aspects of course conditions, from



Tony Girardi, CGCS
MetGCSA President

green speed to bunker maintenance. This is certainly an approach worthy of serious consideration for the long term. In the short term, however, it would benefit us all to scrutinize each and every one of our operational expenses—labor, fertilizers, plant protectants, topdressing, fuel, and general supplies—and develop a concrete plan of action for reducing expenditures in each area. Documenting this plan and our progress in a spreadsheet is a great way to demonstrate to our employers that we're not only committed to the overall success of our club or facility, but also that we're forward-thinking, proactive managers.

Quick Notes

Here are a couple of items that you should be aware of in the coming months. In the *Tee to Green* this issue, you'll find a preliminary schedule for our 2009 golf events and meetings. Please watch for mailings and website announcements updating our schedule of events so you can be sure to attend.

Second, our Website Committee, chaired by Ken Benoit and Paul Gonzalez, are in the process of updating and incorporating new features within the site. They have some great things planned to give our site a new-and-improved look. Thank you Ken and Paul.

Finally, our Annual Spring Business Meeting on March 25 is a great time to attend one of our association's most informative monthly meetings and to meet new people and foster relationships with current Met members. So please make every effort to attend this important meeting and catch up on upcoming 2009 association activities.

In closing, I hope everyone is enjoying their winter season. I look forward to seeing you all very soon.

Tony Girardi, CGCS
President

Feature

The World Is Changing . . . So Is Golf

by Richard Spear

Editor's Note: *In this uncensored—and unedited—article, veteran golf course superintendent Richard Spear points a finger at course conditioning excesses and offers practical, if gutsy, advice on how to go about adopting a more realistic, cost-conscious approach to conditioning your golf course. In this precarious and uncertain economy, it may well pay to heed his advice. The world is definitely changing . . . and golf, well, something's gotta give.*

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uperintendents have been commenting for years now on the escalation of golf course budgets and the increasing expectation for course perfection that accompanied this. We have been concerned about this trend and if—or when—it would ever end. It looks like we now know when it will end. Here's my take. These thoughts are my opinions. I am not speaking for any organization, and I am not speaking for the club where I am employed. As Dennis Miller always said at the end of his rants, "This is just my opinion. I could be wrong."

Several years ago, I began talking to friends and colleagues about some aspects of the game of golf that seemed misguided and were leading us down a destructive path. Charlie Robson, of the Met PGA, and I started putting some of our thoughts on paper this summer. The focus was that for many of our players the game of golf costs too much and takes too long to play. In recent months, with the further collapse of the financial markets, there is now one obvious impact on golf and golf facilities. Revenues will now be decreasing, at least in the foreseeable future. Pressure will be put on superintendents to cut costs, and it will come from people who, though well intentioned, may know little about the complicated processes of budgeting for, and maintaining, golf courses.

There is one historical reality about country clubs in America that we should remember when we're discussing how to proportion budget cuts at our clubs. Golf was the activity that precipitated the birth of these facilities. They didn't come into being because a restaurant or a tennis and swimming club had an extra 150 acres that they were not using. In most all cases, golf is the primary activity and everything else is peripheral. This fact should be considered when deciding where to make cuts.

Is Augusta to Blame?

Any comprehensive attempt to cut the expense of golf has to include a look at the presentation and maintenance of American golf courses. We've been spending a lot of

money preparing courses for the sport, and golf course conditioning has steadily improved. Obviously, golf course budgets have gone up also, and 18-hole facilities here in the New York Metropolitan area that are attempting to present high-standard playing conditions are probably going to spend between \$1.25 and \$2 million per year. One of the main reasons for the escalation to this level has been the attempt to provide very high-quality golf course conditions on a daily basis. We've done a great job of raising the standards, but the sport may no longer be able to afford them.

Those of us on the turf side of the golf business have commented for years about the Augusta Syndrome, and how those four days every April have changed golf course maintenance forever. Augusta showed us what the best looked like, and a lot of people wanted it. Golf course owners, club boards, and superintendents saw what you could do with a little imagination and a lot of money. For many of us, the money part of the equation is changing dramatically, so we need to identify a new model.

Blaming Augusta is not our goal, as any golf facility can determine how best to spend their money and what their expectations should be. If you can afford a Mercedes, you have every right to own one. If you cannot afford one, you would be foolish to embrace the mentality that you need one. It may be time to look for a Honda! We still need to provide a good playing field for the sport, but we may have to eliminate much of the detail work that we've added to the maintenance of our courses. They don't need it to provide a proper venue for the game. The Honda may have as much quality as the Mercedes, just fewer bells and whistles.

Streamlining the Maintenance Process

If we can come to the conclusion that an important way to make golf less expensive is to redefine golf course conditioning criteria to a realistic and sustainable level, then we must determine how best to do this. We are going to ask golfers to make sacrifices, but we must find the most cost-effective changes that have the least impact on the enjoyment of the game. We will need to stop providing tournament conditions for everyday play and, instead, maintain the course for healthy, sustainable, playable turf. One thing is clear. . . . The time is here to begin streamlining American golf course maintenance programs. However, club boards and course owners need to understand and endorse this principle before golf course superintendents can risk changing anything that may compromise the product.

If we do choose, with facility support, to streamline the maintenance process, then what programs could potentially save money?

Greens: For many golf clubs, the transition to much faster greens over the past 10 to 20 years has added substantial expense to golf. This is especially true on courses that have old pushup greens with less-than-perfect sunlight and air circulation environments. Consistent high-ball-roll expectations come with risk as well as cost. Constant mowing, verti-



cutting, topdressing, hand watering, babysitting, spoon feeding specific fertilizers and micronutrients, careful-but-necessary use of growth regulators, and lots and lots of spraying are all necessary to produce the greens that many golfers have come to expect. We're maintaining this turf in a weakened state, on or near the edge of death in some cases, the logic of which is questionable at best. If we can back off these expectations a little, we can take some stress off of the turfgrass, and lower the input requirements.

It's easy to forget that at the 1973 U.S. Open at Oakmont Country Club, which is revered for its lightening-fast greens, the speed was less than nine feet on the stimp-meter. Possibly, instead of trying to have the fastest greens, we should attempt to find the green speed that makes putting the easiest. This target speed would vary depending on amount of slope but is probably somewhere in the 9- to 10-foot range. This would make the game less frustrating, increase pace of play, and decrease cost by reducing chemical and labor inputs. It may not be as sexy as playing on greens that have been shaved and

starved to yield 12 or 13 feet, but it's much more logical. Greens are far and away the most expensive components of a golf course, on a cost-per-square-foot basis, and there is opportunity for savings, but only if we can throttle back our expectations.

Labor: Labor comprises approximately two-thirds of golf course maintenance budgets. It is clear, therefore, that any substantial reduction in cost has to include a reduction in labor. We've got to reduce crew size and reduce the total man-hours worked. Cutting the hourly wage of existing employees is not a good idea. We are going to require these employees to be more efficient and more flexible in completing their tasks, and possibly work fewer hours. We need their attitude to include some degree of optimism. An increase in hourly wage, in the long run, may save money. Having said this, reducing overtime is a viable option that should be explored. Cutting greens with triplexes on weekends and eliminating some weekend and evening tasks may be a possibility. Off-season labor may be another area where cuts can be made without noticeable effect on the product. We recognize that there are many valuable employees on our golf courses, and we have an obligation to provide them with a reasonable opportunity to make a fair living. In the future, when we have an opening on golf course crews, we could choose not to fill it with a new employee and see if the existing staff can pick up the slack at a lower total cost to the club.

Bunker Maintenance: These things are supposed to be hazards. The word hazard, as it relates to golf, gives the connotation that you might get a bad lie. Maybe we could eliminate the expectation that the sand surface in all of the bunkers should be perfectly smooth every day. We buy and place rakes by every bunker in the expectation that the golfers and caddies will rake them. Then we pay our crew to rake them almost every day based on the assumption that the golfers and caddies did not. We could argue about the logic of this practice, but it clearly is expensive.

Pine Valley, one of the world's greatest courses, doesn't rake its sand. The imperfections are part of the hazard that the golfer is expected to negotiate. Many courses, attempting to present a great golf experience, want the greens so fast that two-putting can be difficult; yet they insist that the bunker surfaces are so perfect that getting up and down is easy. This, I do not understand.

Mowing Frequency: There are times we mow areas on our courses when the turf growth may not warrant it. Possibly with, or without, slight increases in plant growth regulator rates, we could decrease the frequency that

we mow tees, collars, fairways, and roughs. The decrease in surface smoothness may be slight, and we could pull significant man-hours (and some fuel) out of the budget.

Turf Health Issues: Anything that can be done to improve the environment, drainage, or general growing conditions of the turf, should be done, even if it adds some expense in the short run. The healthier we can keep the turf, the less in chemicals and labor we will have to throw at it. Trees that compromise sunlight and air circulation near greens should be removed. The time has come to be totally logical and get the emotion out of this issue. We're probably going to be spraying a lot less in the future, and we should remove every natural obstacle to turf health.

Turf Species Selection: We might also consider increasing the emphasis on transitioning from *Poa annua* to bentgrass, or any other less chemical-dependent species, whenever possible. If we can get clubs or course decision-making bodies to endorse this and accept the possible bare spots that may accompany this transition, the long-term health of the course—as well as its budget—may benefit. This transition, especially to bentgrass, will be harder to do on golf courses that hold on to their trees.

Planning for the Unknown

I am not suggesting that every superintendent should immediately start cutting their spending. There are clubs where the future may well be “business as usual.” I am suggesting that superintendents would be wise to start thinking about forming a Plan B. Club officials should appreciate the proactive, opened-minded approach that will be necessary to navigate the unknown challenges ahead.

The decision-making body at any facility has to be onboard and understand and endorse this streamlining process and the level of resources that will be saved. Hopefully, they will understand and appreciate the importance of golf at their facility and point the process in an appropriate direction. Obviously, the more you cut, the more the product will change.

It looks like the future will be telling us to spend less on golf, and we will be wise to accept this probability, understand it, and participate willingly in a transition. If we are truly proactive and creative in addressing these issues, we have a better chance of not needing a Plan C.

Richard Spear is superintendent at Piping Rock Club in Locust Valley, NY.

Managing With Less: What Area Supers Are Doing to Get More Bang for Their Buck

by David Dudones

With many clubs tightening their belts, superintendents are finding creative ways to manage their maintenance operations with less. Here's a look at what several Met members are doing to make their budget dollars go farther.

Glenn Perry, CGCS

Rolling Hills Country Club, Wilton, CT

Going into this year, we needed to find a 10-percent reduction in our operational expenses. We're saving at least \$40,000 with our clubhouse renovation since we don't have to purchase flowers, prune trees, or maintain the surrounding grounds. We're also reducing labor costs by eliminating the second assistant position and cutting seasonal labor from a 36- to 33-week season. Overtime has also been cut by delaying play off the back nine for one hour. This allows for only one crew to stay ahead of play. Last, we're concentrating on using existing inventory, making most purchases on an as-needed basis and taking part in only a few early-order programs.

Joe Alonzi, CGCS

Westchester Country Club, Rye, NY

Even though we're a union shop and employees are entitled to raises each year, we've kept our budget flat by reducing our rough maintenance program by 90 percent. This year, we'll also be keeping fertilizer and pesticide applications to an absolute minimum.

Though our entire clubhouse was ahead of its time and converted to geothermal heating and cooling almost 10 years ago, my department will work to add to the club's energy savings by making a conscious effort to turn off all nonessential lighting and all machines when not in use. We're also hoping to save fuel by limiting wasteful movement of equipment.

Todd Raish, CGCS

Ridgewood Country Club, Paramus, NJ

One thing we started for The Barclays Golf Tournament in 2008 was mowing our fairways half and half. We have 27 holes and send out six mowers at a time to stay ahead of play. Each mower is saving 45 minutes for a total of 4.5 man-hours per mow. Add in the fuel, and we're easily saving \$10K per year.

Dennis Granahan

Navesink Country Club, Middletown, NJ

Not being a union shop, we have the flexibility of having our hourly crew work only 4 hours on Tuesday so we can maintain coverage for the much-needed weekend work. We also changed an assistant from hourly to salary

and then opted to lay off another assistant from January to early May. To stretch the dollar further, we're also making some adjustments to our maintenance practices. We plan to:

1. Cut our liquid fertilizer applications in half by only spraying every 14 days.
2. Experiment with growth regulators on fairways to reduce the number of times we mow.
3. Reduce bunker inputs by raking only green-side bunkers during the week.
4. Attempt to reduce the overall number of sprays by introducing an early-season fairway spray program using Emerald.

Scott Niven, CGCS

The Stanwich Club, Greenwich, CT

Here are cost-saving measures we plan to put in place this year:

1. Wages: Keep overtime to a minimum, and use more part-timers/interns and summer help.
2. Supplies: Use bid sheets to secure the most competitive prices for all chemicals, fertilizers, sand, seed, etc.
3. Spraying: Spot treat when possible and widen intervals.
4. Tree Work: Reduce to only safety pruning.
5. Flowers: Skip out-of-the-way beds, reduce planting density, and plant more perennials.
6. Bunkers: Reduce the number of complete rakings, doing just necessary touchups.

Rob Alonzi

Fenway Golf Club, Scarsdale, NY

We're waiting until March to replace an assistant that we lost in October. We're also planning to limit overtime during the season and forgo any tree work or capital projects.

Jeff Wentworth, CGCS

Pelham Country Club, Pelham Manor, NY

We've found that reducing striping in both fairways and rough areas has greatly reduced labor requirements. The split fairway pattern allows all units to work on the same fairway simultaneously, reducing the time needed to turn machines and the labor required to mow fairways. With this practice, we've reduced labor by about 20 percent. Another way we're saving labor dollars is by eliminating our intermediate cut and simply extending our fairways into that area. This has made no significant change to the playability of the course, and it's reduced the time and number of machines needed to maintain that turf. By changing the mowing pattern, we've gained about 12 additional work hours a week.

David Dudones, co-editor of the Tee to Green, is superintendent at North Jersey Country Club in Wayne, NJ.

Upcoming Events

2009 Met Events Still Looking for Sites!

As you can see, our 2009 Meeting and Social calendar is still a work in progress. If anyone is able to host 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: Ken Benoit at 914-241-0700 or Mark Chant at 631-643-0047. Our Social & Welfare Committee co-chairs are Mark Millett (914-949-4203) and Paul Gonzalez (914-273-3755). Both are available to discuss any upcoming social events.

Business Meeting

Wednesday, March 25
Rye Golf Club
Rye, NY
Host: Chip Lafferty

Dave Mahoney Two-Ball Championship Qualifier

Monday, April 27
Siwanoy Country Club
Bronxville, NY
Host: Steve McGlone

Superintendent/Manager or Guest Tournament

Wednesday, June 3
Brae Burn Country Club
Purchase, NY
Host: Blake Halderman, CGCS

MetGCSA Invitational Tournament

Thursday, June 25
The Stanwich Club
Greenwich, CT
Host: Scott Niven, CGCS

Family Picnic

Date & Site OPEN

Education Meeting

Date & Site OPEN

Summer Social

Date & Site OPEN

Met Championship and Met Area Team Championship Qualifier PLUS the Poa Annual Tournament

Tuesday, September 29
The Meadow Brook Club
Jericho, NY
Host: John Carlone, CGCS

Superintendent/Green Chairperson Tournament

Monday, October 19
Sleepy Hollow Country Club
Scarborough, NY
Host: Tom Leahy, CGCS

Annual Assistants Championship

October
Date & Site OPEN

Met Area Team Championship

October
Date & Site OPEN

Annual Meeting

November
Date & Site OPEN

MetGCSA Christmas Party

December
Date & Site OPEN

Educational Events

The 12th Annual New England Regional Turfgrass Conference & Show

Monday – Thursday, March 2 – 5
Rhode Island Convention Center,
Providence, RI

This year's annual conference and show's educational sessions will bring you cutting-edge turfgrass management tactics and techniques, as well as the opportunity to view more than 350 exhibitor booths at the three-day trade show.

For further information, call the NERTF office at 401-848-0004 or visit their website at www.nertf.org/show/.

NYSTA's 2009 Turfgrass Advocacy – Lobby Day

Wednesday, March 11
Empire State Plaza, Albany, NY

NYSTA extends this complimentary offer to all green industry professionals. Lobby day offers a priority issue briefing session to inform you about current legislation that could affect the turfgrass and green industry, legislative appointments with your local elected officials, and a luncheon.

Please contact Jill Cyr for more information at jill@nysta.org or 518-783-1229.

MGA/USGA 2009 Green Chairman Education Series

Thursday, March 19
Hackensack Golf Club
Oradell, NJ

This education series is designed to help green chairmen, course officials, and superintendents make informed decisions on issues common to many area golf courses.

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

UMass Snow Mold Research Field Days

Late winter – Early spring
Dates TBA

Ekwanok CC, Manchester, VT
Berkshire Hills CC, Pittsfield, MA
The Shattuck GC, Jaffrey, NH
Joseph Troll Turf Research Center,
South Deerfield, MA

These field days provide an opportunity to see first-hand the results of the UMass Turf Program snow mold field trials for turfgrasses maintained at fairway height. For further information on the snow mold research trials, contact Dr. Geunhwa Jung at 413-545-2243, jung@psis.umass.edu or the UMass Extension Turf Program office at 508-892-0382



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Hundreds Enjoy a Memorable Day at Winter Seminar

by Dave Moffett

It may have been an icy-cold day, but Winter Seminar attendees received a warm reception at the always welcoming Westchester Country Club. The site of the MetGCSA's annual Winter Seminar for more than 25 consecutive years, Westchester drew 285 met-area superintendents, assistants, and affiliate members January 14 for a day of educational sessions and a luncheon made all-the-more memorable by its John Reid and Sherwood A. Moore award ceremonies. A special thank you to Joe Alonzi and the staff at Westchester Country Club for their amazing efforts in hosting our largest annual event.

Also adding value to our Winter Seminar were our 27 exhibitor booths. We'd like to extend a special thank you to the commercial members who participated. You'll find their names and numbers listed on page 7.

We would also like to thank all of the day's speakers. We are indebted, as an organization, to the time these individuals invest in providing us with such highly informative lectures.

Last, but certainly not least, we would like to thank Educational Chairman Glen Dube for his efforts in, once again, making this event a worthwhile educational experience for all. This was Glen's last seminar as Education Chairman. He will be assuming his new role as MetGCSA Secretary, a responsibility he will no doubt approach with the same enthusiasm and effort he devoted to making the Winter Seminar such a great event.

The speakers Glen chose for this year's event spoke on topics ranging from techniques to keep your staff happy and motivated to promising new controls for the annual bluegrass weevil. Here are the high points, along with each speaker's contact information.

Beyond Praying for Rain

Our day at the Winter Seminar began with a talk by Mark Esoda, CGCS, from the Atlanta Country Club in Marietta, GA. He offered a cautionary tale—and prescriptive advice—on how to best protect our golf course water supplies. (Hint: It requires more than just praying for rain.)



Award presenters John Carlone (left) and Scott Niven (right) strike a pose with Sherwood A. Moore Award winner Tim O'Neill and John Reid Lifetime Achievement Award winner Jim Nantz at the MetGCSA Awards Luncheon at Westchester Country Club.

Mark began by describing how the severe drought conditions in the Southeast are affecting the golf industry in the State of Georgia. He talked about the many steps the golf industry there is taking to ensure their rights to the water that brings life to their courses and ultimately benefits the state's economy.

Mark stressed the importance of being involved in water issues at the government level, providing examples of their current efforts to preserve the industry's water supply. By forming the Allied Golf Group (an organization composed of superintendents, owners, and teaching professionals) and creating a Water Task Force, they were able to negotiate revisions to the water code, write reuse water guidelines, and produce an economic survey to show state legislators the financial importance of the turf industry. The organization also hired Georgia Links, a lobby group, to fight at the state level on the turf industry's behalf for water rights.

Mark cautions that these efforts aren't enough. Preserving our industry's water supply, he says, is a never-ending battle. His recommendation: Don't wait for a water crisis to act. The sooner you put an action plan in place—and seek representation on the state level—the better. "If you're not at the table,

they will take it away from you," he warned repeatedly, referring of course to our water allocations.

That's advice well taken.

You can reach Mark Esoda at 770-953-2229 or mesoda@atlantacc.org.

Motivation Made Simple

Next in the lineup was Nancy Patota, assistant vice president of advancement and alumni at Iona College. Her talk on techniques for keeping staff motivated couldn't have come at a better time, given that, with a depressed economy, many of us are forced to expect more from fewer staff members.

The motivational techniques she discussed were based on those she teaches to businesses seeking to increase productivity and profit. She began by describing the meaning of motivation in the workplace, noting how motivational techniques and theories have changed over the years as the workforce has evolved to include more women and minorities.

Introducing new-and-improved theories, she points out how today's motivational techniques are geared toward supporting employees' individual needs, including changing an individual's daily routine, allow-

ing for flexible work hours, and rewarding employees through recognition programs.

When asked how to best motivate golf course employees, Nancy pointed to five factors that she claims are more important to employees than pay: Recognition, respect, flexible work hours, increased autonomy and authority, and face time with management.

Food for thought. Seems to me that putting these techniques into practice can only help build goodwill among staff, and will, no doubt, pay dividends with increased productivity.

You can reach Nancy Patota at 914-633-2413 or npatota@iona.edu.

New Insight Into ABW Control

Slated to speak in the difficult slot just before lunch was Dr. Pat Vittum, professor of entomology at the University of Massachusetts. Pat is a veteran Winter Seminar speaker, who is always ready to share new and interesting findings. This time, feeling the pressure to make our lunch appointment, she unloaded a huge amount of information in little time.

Pat began by reviewing the importance of identifying the lifecycle of any insect you're looking to control before selecting an insecticide. She offered the latest findings on pyrethroid resistance of the annual bluegrass weevil, explaining why it occurs and how to get around it by alternating not just chemicals, but also products from different chemical classes.

Pat also covered the many chemical classes of insecticides, noting their modes of action, speed of efficacy, persistence, and toxicity. In addition, she reviewed combination products such as Allectus and Aloft, noting their use on the golf course. She stated that she has had success with these products when applied at the appropriate stage of the pest's lifecycle.

Pat was very excited to report the high rate of control she had on ABW, white grubs, chinch bugs, and cutworms using products from two new classes of insecticides: Oxadiazines, such as Provaunt and Advion, and Anthraciliac Diamides, such as Acelepryn. Though Acelepryn is not available for use in New York right now, many superintendents from surrounding areas have reported good results using Provaunt to control ABW.

I am sure everyone in the room will rest more easy knowing there are new weapons available to aid in the fight against these difficult-to-control insects.

You can reach Dr. Vittum at 413-545-0268 or pvittum@ent.umass.edu.

At the Half

It would be a mistake not to comment on the excitement and emotion that surrounded this year's Awards Luncheon. After announcing the winners of the 2008 MetGCSA Two-Ball Championship, Tournament Committee

co-chairs Ken Benoit and Blake Halderman announced that the tournament's name would be changed to the Dave Mahoney Two-Ball Championship, after its late founder and our dear friend, Dave Mahoney.

Receiving this year's Sherwood A. Moore Award was past president of both the MetGCSA and GCSAA, Tim O'Neill. A deserving recipient, Tim offered a meaningful and heartfelt acceptance speech.

The 2008 John Reid Lifetime Achievement Award was presented to Jim Nantz, sportscaster and the voice of golf on CBS for more than 20 years. Jim was gracious and wowed the audience with his thoughtful reflections on his career—and his proclaimed commitment to recognizing the contributions of the host superintendents and their staffs during his CBS broadcasts.

The Awards Luncheon was, again, "a tradition unlike any other." Special thanks to Will Heintz and the Awards Committee for putting together such a memorable event.

Back to the Future

After lunch, Met members returned to the education hall for the first of two afternoon speakers. John Moriarty of Brightleaf Green Industry Consultants was on hand to raise awareness of the role of natural and organic fertilizers and their future in the turf industry. John emphasized that the addition of organic material was beneficial to overall turf health—and the environment—by lowering the need for inorganic, salt-based fertilizers.

John reviewed his research, stating that the addition of 10 to 15 lbs. of an organic amendment per year will reduce the amount of fertilizer necessary by approximately 10 to 20 percent without affecting turf quality. He advised that the addition of organic matter should be varied according to soil microbial activity. Since soil temperatures are directly related to microbe activity, John recommends that a high nitrogen fertilizer with a low carbon/nitrogen ratio be applied in the spring and a low nitrogen product with a high C/N

Special Thanks to Our 2009 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 with their 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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ratio be applied in the summer when soil temps and microbial activity are up.

John noted that there is much more research that needs to be done on this subject but that early results are promising. There's no doubt that the turf industry, as a whole, is moving in the direction of a more organic-based approach.

For further information on organics, John Moriarty can be reached at 757-573-8741 or www.BrightLeafLLC.com.

Getting Physical

Dave Doherty, president and founder of International Sports Turf Research Center, ended the day on a high note with a talk about soil physical properties and the importance of aerification in maintaining adequate soil pore space. According to Dave, healthy greens maintain 40 percent pore space. He cites excessive organic matter and irrigation water high in salts as culprits in lost pore space and unhealthy turf.

To combat these problems, Dave reinforces the importance of maintaining a good aerification program. He was able to shed some light on the age-old questions of how much to remove and how often. His recommendation is to start with a soil characteristics test to help you determine the amount of organic material that needs to be removed. Using this number in combination with an aerification displacement chart, it is possible, he says, to choose a program that will best suit your course's needs.

Dave also recommends using smaller holes with closer spacing to decrease healing time. It was very interesting to see his slides on the significant financial gains courses realize with faster healing times. Dave was full of great information, and his speech was a great way to end the day.

For further information, you can reach Dave Doherty at 913-706-6635 or daveis-trc@hotmail.com.

Until Next Year

We continue to set attendance records at our Winter Seminar, thanks to the superb planning and organization of this event and the quality of our speakers. We thank one and all, again, who were involved in making this great event possible. We hope you will all take these lessons learned and have a great year. See you in 2010!

Dave Moffett, a member of the Tee to Green Editorial Committee, is an assistant superintendent at Ardsley Country Club in Ardsley-on-Hudson, NY.

Member News

Scholarship Raffle Wins

The Annual Bill Caputi Scholarship Raffle, held at the December 5 Met Christmas Party at Metropolis Country Club, raised an admirable sum for the Met's Scholarship Fund and awarded \$4,500 in cash prizes to 18 lucky ticket holders.

The raffle is the prime source of the scholarship awards we distribute to deserving Met member dependents each year.

Many thanks to all who contributed to this worthwhile fundraiser, and congratulations—and special thanks—to our \$1,000-grand-prize winner, **Paul Gonzalez**, superintendent of The Whip-poorwill Club. Paul generously donated his \$1,000 prize to the Dave Mahoney Fund.

The other prize winners were:

\$500 Winners

Bob Sessa, member of North Jersey Country Club

Tom Weinert, Plant Food Company, Inc.

Angela Renzetti, wife of Pinnacle Turf's **Steve Renzetti**

\$250 Winners

Matt Burrows, Winged Foot Golf Club

Les Kennedy, Blind Brook Club

Dick LaFlamme, Essex Fells Country Club

Pete Rappoccio, Westchester Country Club

\$100 Winners

Mike Cook, The Care of Trees

Glenn Gallion, Wilfred MacDonald, Inc.

Frank Cichocki, brother-in-law of The Care of Trees' **Mike Cook**

Carmine Voza, Fenway Golf Club

Bill Martin, member of North Jersey Country Club

Tony Grasso, Metropolis Country Club

Les Kennedy, Blind Brook Club

John Carlone, The Meadow Brook Club

Tim Benedict, Woodmere Club

Byron Johnson, The Terre Company of NJ, Inc.



New Members

Please join us in welcoming the following new MetGCSA members:

- **Alex Brown**, Class C, Country Club of Darien, Darien, CT
- **Keith A. Carper**, Class C, Sterling Farms Golf Course, Stamford, CT
- **Andrew Dykstra**, Class C, Scarsdale Golf Club, Hartsdale, NY
- **Gregory Eisner**, Class SM, Trump National Golf Club, Bedminster, NJ
- **Sean Foley**, Class SM, Round Hill Club, Greenwich, CT
- **Christopher Knapp**, Class C, Tamarack Country Club, Greenwich, CT
- **Brent Koning**, Class C, Silver Spring Country Club, Ridgefield, CT
- **Stephen Wickstrom**, Class C, Quaker Ridge Golf Club, Scarsdale, NY
- **David R. Wiggins**, Class C, Hollow Brook Golf Club, Cortlandt Manor, NY
- **Robert J. Wagner**, Class C, Trump National Golf Club, Bedminster, NJ

Well Wishes

We'd like to wish **Dan Madar**, superintendent of Spook Rock Golf Club in Suffern, NY, a speedy recovery from his recent hip replacement surgery.

Members on the Move

• **Jim Easton** is the new superintendent at Knollwood Country Club in Elmsford, NY. Previous position: Assistant superintendent at Winged Foot Golf Club, Mamaroneck, NY.

• **Steven McGlone** is the new superintendent at Siwanoy Golf Club in Bronxville, NY. Previous position: Assistant superintendent at Quaker Ridge Golf Club, Scarsdale, NY.

Birth

Congratulations to **Ron Cutlip** of Cutlip Golf Design and his wife, Cheryl, on the birth of their son, Evan, on December 19, 2008.

Christmas Couples

MetGCSA Annual Christmas Party, 2008

Tim & Jennifer
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Carole & Larry
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Tony Girardi

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Cindy Flynn

Dana & Scott
Niven

Ken Benoit on electric
guitar, jammin' with Greg
Wojick on air guitar.

A Special Thank You to Our Sponsors

Helping to make our 2008 Christmas Party at Metropolis Country Club all the more memorable were the generous contributions of some of our valued vendors. We'd like to extend a very special thank you to:

Bryan Bolehala of Cleary Chemical
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Chip Lafferty Welcomes 2009 Met Business Meeting

by Greg Wojick, CGCS

Chip Lafferty... to know him is to love him. He's a happy-go-lucky, what-you-see-is-what-you-get kind of guy who's always willing to extend himself to others. Case in point: the upcoming Business Meeting. A last-minute change in plans left the meeting without a site, until Chip stepped forward to volunteer his facility—the Rye Golf Club—for the event, now scheduled for March 25.

For the Love of Golf

Superintendent at Rye for the past seven years, Chip's not only an enthusiastic turfgrass manager, he's a great golfer, having played many a round as a youngster with his father and friends. Born in Buffalo, NY, Chip's family moved to Orlando, FL, when he was 12. "I took advantage of the sunny conditions and played golf just about every day at Sweetwater Country Club near where I lived," says Chip, recalling, "One night when I was out on the course with friends—I was about 14—we crashed a couple of carts. This turned out to be a fortuitous mistake. The price I paid actually jump-started my career," he adds, explaining that his penalty was to rebuild, by hand, the chipping green bunkers with the help of his "partners in crime."

"The work my friends and I did impressed the superintendent enough to land us a job on the maintenance crew. I worked there pretty much whenever I wanted until graduating high school," says Chip, fondly recalling the experience.

From high school, Chip enrolled in Georgia Southern College in Statesboro, GA. "It didn't take me long to understand what the Allman Brothers were singing about in their song 'Statesboro Blues,'" says Chip of his less-than-productive time spent at the Podunk town school.

After leaving Georgia Southern, Chip returned to what he knew best: golf course work, accepting a position at Sabal Point Country Club in Longwood, FL, where he received advice that eventually solidified his career path. "The superintendent there told me to go to Lake City Community College and get a degree in Golf Course Operations," says Chip. But it wasn't until he took a position at a new grow-in outside Orlando called

Alaqua Country Club that his eyes finally opened to the value of formal training. "I worked there as an irrigation tech and spray tech and eventually second assistant before recognizing that a degree from Lake City was the only way I'd ever be the 'big boss' one day."

An Eye-Opening Experience

Three years later, Chip had earned his A.S. in Golf Course Operations, interning at a course in Vierumäki, Finland, and then at Wykagyl Country Club, where, after graduating, he was hired by then Superintendent Steve Renzetti as the assistant superintendent.

"I worked with Steve six seasons," says Chip. "When he left for Quaker Ridge, he was good enough to recommend me for his position, which I eagerly accepted. I learned a lot at Wykagyl," Chip adds. "It was my first time sitting in the super's seat, hosting an LPGA event, and managing a very trying maintenance schedule at a club with lots of outings and club functions. Probably the hardest lesson I learned was about people."

"No matter how well a club treats you in good times," says Chip, "when some turf goes bad, you can expect the exact opposite. It hurts to think someone was a true friend for years and then suddenly all that changes. And over what? Grass? That's just silly."

From Wykagyl, Chip move into his current position at Rye Golf Club.

Progress at Rye

Though the Business Meeting won't give you the opportunity to view the course at Rye Golf Club, we're allowing Chip some bragging rights—given the sizable amount of work he and his staff have done to update the 88-year-old course's original Devereux Emmet design.

Over the past six seasons, they've rebuilt 52 of the 68 bunkers; extended, realigned, and leveled 17 sets of tees; recontoured all fairways; installed more than 90,000 linear feet of drainage; and are in the final stages of installing a continuous cart path system throughout the entire property.

"We did all of the work in-house," says Chip, "with the exception of the sod installation, which was far too extensive."



Chip Lafferty

Most interesting about the project is that the club didn't seek the counsel of an architect. "It was like an archeological dig," explains Chip. "Everything was right there beneath the surface. For instance, we found old bunkers that had been sodded over at some point."

Using old aerial shots, Chip and his crew were able to recapture some of the course's better older features, while updating aspects of design to accommodate Rye's more than 30,000 rounds per year. "This is something Devereux Emmet clearly hadn't planned for," adds Chip.

Currently in the works: Chip and his crew are retrofitting the irrigation system to utilize the water from a small pond on the property, which is fed by storm water and other drains. "That way," says Chip, "we won't have to rely 100 percent on City water."

Chip's hoping, in fact, to cut potable water use in half with the new system. "With its 85-foot change in elevation, Rye suffers from low water volume and pressure," says Chip to explain the club's dire need for the new-and-improved system.

Chipping Away at Fun

You can often find Chip on property walking his two dogs, Clue and Kruger. He claims it's not unusual for him to round the course at least four times a day with his dogs in tow—all in the name of keeping in top physical shape.

Chip also enjoys golfing with friends and playing classic courses around the country. But these days, he's staying a little closer to home, with Clare, his wife of six years, and him expecting their first child in August.

So keep your fingers crossed, everyone, for a good season ahead, because this new father-to-be will definitely have more than green grass on his mind this summer!

Greg Wojick, a member of the Tee to Green Editorial Committee, is the principal in Communitool, LLC, and founder of Playbooks™ for Golf.

Siwanoy's Steven McGlone Hosts Season's Opening Golf Event

by Paul Gonzalez, CGCS

Steven McGlone has some big shoes to fill, following the highly regarded and capable Dave Mahoney as Siwanoy Country Club's golf course superintendent.

But the former Quaker Ridge assistant superintendent is well prepared and eager for the challenge—and equally pleased to welcome Met members on April 27 for the association's annual Two-Ball Qualifier. Now dubbed the Dave Mahoney Two-Ball Championship Qualifier, the long-running event was renamed in Dave's honor. All the more fitting since Dave was one of this popular event's founders.

"Assuming the reins from a superintendent like Dave is a humbling experience," says Steven, who plans to continue the projects Dave had initiated, putting—as any new superintendent would—a bit of his own spin on them.

What to Expect When You Tee It Up

Over the years, Siwanoy's course has had a number of new spins put on it. Founded in 1901 and taking its name from a Mohican tribe that lived in the area, Siwanoy was originally a nine-hole course along White Plains Road. In 1913, under the guidance of Donald Ross, the club built an 18-hole course at its current site.

Typical of most Donald Ross layouts in the Northeast, this Bronxville, NY, course features a well-routed layout on a minimum of land—110 acres, in this case. The greens, though on the small side, are full of character and well protected.

In the late '90s, under the direction of Golf Course Architect Arthur Hills, the club worked to restore many of the age-old course's original Donald Ross design features—particularly around the greens and bunkers. At the same time, all the tees—which were shaded, undersized, and difficult to manage—were entirely rebuilt along with the course's irrigation and pond systems.

The work hasn't stopped there. The club is currently consulting with Mike DeVries of

DeVries Design to expand the course's greens to their original footprint and to restore the green complexes. A challenging start for Siwanoy's new superintendent.

Go West, Young Man

Steven is clearly well equipped for the rigors of the club's new renovation work. Like Dave, Steven attended Penn State. A scholarship winner, he completed the turf program in 2004, graduating with "Highest Distinction."

Interestingly, this turf program superstar didn't begin his higher education with a turfgrass management career in mind. In fact, he completed a B.S. in Geography from Ohio University with his sights set on becoming an Urban Planner. His plans were diverted, however, by Jim Noel, superintendent of Lakewood Country Club in Westlake, OH, where Steven had worked summers through high school and then college. Seeing his potential, Jim encouraged Steven to pursue a degree and career in turfgrass management.

After completing his turf education and a highly sought-after internship with Super Mark McCarrel at The Country Club in Pepper Pike, OH, Steven left his Ohio hometown for an opportunity to intern at the Cypress Point Club in Pebble Beach, CA. Working under Jeff Markow, who Steven describes as "second to none in his ability to delegate and manage a golf course," Steven catapulted from intern to second assistant to first assistant, all within 12 months.

He called Northern California home until March 2007. Then he accepted the assistant's position with Quaker Ridge Golf Club Super Tom Ashfield. Steven credits Tom for the guidance and impeccable training he provided. Bob Musich, Quaker Ridge's general manager, also had a significant impact on Steven. "Bob was an overall industry mentor to me," says Steven, adding, "He was a straight shooter who I admired for not only the way he managed the club, but also for how he presented himself."

This past September, Steven left Quaker to help Siwanoy after the tragic passing of Dave



Steven McGlone

Mahoney. "The greens chairman at Siwanoy contacted Quaker Ridge and asked if anyone could help the club in the interim," says Steven, who was more than happy to oblige. His goodwill paid off. After conducting an extensive search for a new superintendent, the club selected Steven for the position, which he assumed—officially—in mid-December.

Happily Ever After

In the midst of his interim assignment at Siwanoy, on October 19 to be exact, Steven squeezed in the time to get married to his wife, Margie Freeswick. So thoroughly committed to helping Siwanoy in a time of need, Steven and Margie postponed their honeymoon to St. Thomas until the end of January.

The two met while attending Ohio University and eventually got engaged while living in California. When Margie got her current position working with the Disney Company on Broadway, they both moved back to the East Coast. As Steven puts it, "She came west for me I went east for her." They currently live in Tarrytown, NY.

Forewarned Is Forearmed

Steven may not be a Siwanoy veteran, but he's still got a tip or two up his sleeve on navigating this Donald Ross layout. "First, stay below the hole," advises Steven. "Second, fix your ballmark. And third, appreciate the course for its magnificent routing and intriguing shot value."

Be sure to join fellow Met members on April 27 for the season's first golf event.

Paul Gonzalez, co-editor of the Tee to Green, is superintendent at The Whippoorwill Club in Armonk, NY.

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