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# Tee To Green

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*Sneak Peak at Craig Currier's  
Championship Preparations, page 2*





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# Tee to Green



Cover: Brae Burn Country Club.  
Photo by John Harvey of The RBA Group.

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**Editor's Note:** These are our abbreviated spotlight formats for superintendents who have been profiled within the past three years. At the end of each article, we explain how to access the superintendent's last, full-length profile, should you want to read more.



# President's Message

## Building Bridges ... to Somewhere

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There's nothing like spring. The first song of a robin, the smell of freshly cut grass, and of course, The Masters. . . . These are just several of the things that signal the start of a new golf season—and just as important, a fresh start . . . an opportunity for us to rethink our programs and practices and build on our previous year's accomplishments. We're fortunate in this way; few industries give people this kind of opportunity for a new beginning.

#### Allied Associations: Another Thing to Be Thankful For

Also fortunate, in this time of uncertainty, is that we've developed a wonderful network of allied associations. Unlike—do I dare mention her name?—Sarah Palin, we, as an association, have built many bridges . . . to somewhere. And I'm pleased to report we continue to foster relationships with allied associations.

**A case in point:** *The relationship between Charlie Robson, executive director for the Met PGA, and Richard Spear, golf course superintendent of Piping Rock.* Putting their heads together for the past year plus, they compiled their thoughts on how to go about adopting a more realistic, cost-conscious approach to golf course conditioning. I don't know if they had a crystal ball or simply were ahead of their time when they decided to document methods for trimming excesses in golf course maintenance practices. What is important is that two individuals from allied associations joined forces—combined their knowledge and expertise—to create an actionable guide to streamlining maintenance practices that will be useful through this economic downturn, and for many seasons beyond. (Check out the article by Richard on p. 2 of the January/February 2009 issue of *Tee to Green*.)

**Of equal importance:** *The Metropolitan Club Managers Association's work to foster relationships with golf course superintendents and other professionals in the golf course industry.* I'm speaking, in particular, about the two immensely popular MCMA-organized "State of the Club Symposiums," in which a



Tony Girardi, CGCS  
MetGCSA President

panel composed of industry leaders from allied associations and the business and banking industries was gathered to update and answer questions on the current state of the club environment. Managers, superintendents, golf professionals, controllers, and club officials were all invited to attend, free of charge.

Many thanks to MCMA President Todd Zorn and everyone behind the scenes who helped organize these events. The sessions provided valuable insight into management efficiencies and practices that can help clubs weather the economic downturn. Beyond that, these symposiums made it clear that we're not alone in our efforts to support our clubs through lean times.

**Also noteworthy:** *The MGA's willingness to promote and support our industry.* The annual MGA/USGA Green Chairmen Education Series is an example of an effort that goes a long way toward promoting the job we do by bringing together green chairmen, club officials, and superintendents for a day of discussion on a variety of topics of interest to club leaders.

I can't thank MGA Executive Director Jay Mottola and everyone at MGA headquarters enough for their key role in supporting our efforts to promote our industry to clubs and the golfing community in our area.

#### In Closing

I'd like to wish everyone a happy and healthy start to our 2009 golf season. As always, the MetGCSA board remains available to respond to your questions or concerns. Please feel free to contact any one of us . . . at any time.

Tony Girardi, CGCS  
President



Feature

# Morning Coffee With Craig Carrier



*Excitement Builds as Bethpage Black Preps  
for Upcoming U.S. Open*

by Greg Wojick, CGCS

*I*

t was 6:30 a.m. on April 9. A frost on the ground restricted Craig Carrier to the cart paths and roads around Bethpage State Park's golf courses, as he spoke with me about the buildup for the upcoming U.S. Open on the Black Course, one of the five courses at Bethpage.

Craig Carrier, at first blush, seems like a guy who may want to consider switching to decaf coffee. Hardworking, focused, and to the point, he didn't miss a beat, speaking to crew members one moment and to me the next, downloading—in an affable way—his entire clip of thoughts, practices, and emotions going into the 2009 U.S. Open Championship, the second Open held at Bethpage Black since 2002.

## Getting Into Condition

"There will definitely be some art, as well as science, going into how we treat the rough this time around," Craig explained. "Fairway

widths will be a bit wider than they were in 2002, but the rough will be a bit more gnarly as we attempt to interject some variability. We don't want the pros simply hitting wedges out of the rough and then wedge to the green," he continued. "We want the lie to challenge them to think through the kind of risk/reward shot they'll attempt from the rough."

Carts and equipment whizzed by, seemingly in all directions; still, Craig stayed on topic: "The first six feet of the rough will be cut at about an inch and three-quarters; the next 15 to 20 feet will be at 3 to 3 1/2 inches; and then the last 15 feet at 4 to 6 inches—depending on thickness—followed by the native areas.

"The gallery ropes will be pushed back at least an additional 5 to 10 yards from where they were in '02," he said, explaining, "We're trying to avoid an errant shot from getting a good lie in gallery-trampled areas."

Interjecting a personal note, Craig admitted, "Yes, my wife may think, right now, that I love the courses more than her and the kids, but that'll change after the Open." A multi-tasker by nature, Craig, during the 2002 Open, found himself speaking to Tiger Woods one minute, then proposing to his

wife a half-hour later. No doubt she knew, then, what she was getting into!

With that said, Craig quickly shifted back to business: "We'll be focusing solely on grooming from now until the tournament—ummm, I mean the championship, Craig said, intimating that the USGA discourages anything other than the term "championship" to describe the annual televised event. "We'll be doing lots of hand-brushing, topdressing with spreaders, hand-brooming . . . all attempts to cut as much of the grass as we can.

"Play," he continues, "has been reduced by half. Then, 13 days before the championship, it will be stopped completely. The greens that are 80 percent *Poa* will receive growth regulators and weekly nitrogen and micronutrient sprays. We'll alternate between soil spray and foliar spray fertilizers every other week. No granular fertilizers will be used this spring. We'll also be applying wetting agents."

Hastily making our way through the network of cart paths, Craig pointed to the various bunker additions and enhancements initiated by Rees Jones, the architect responsible for Bethpage Black's 1997 renovations: "Rees added a cross-bunker on #4, a fairway bunker on #9, two new fairway bunkers on #13, and a greenside bunker on #14. The





fairway bunkers on #18 were deepened, and bunkers on #11 were extended out into the fairway," Craig noted.

But this was only part of the total enhancement picture. The par-70 course, which played 7,214 yards in 2002, was stretched by 222 yards to 7,436 yards for the upcoming Open.

### How Very Fortunate Craig Is . . .

An upstate New York native, Craig graduated from the SUNY Cobleskill in 1993. He worked at Piping Rock Country Club and the Garden City Golf Club, both on Long Island, as an assistant superintendent before coming to Bethpage in 1997. He enhanced his skill set working winters at Augusta National during his three years at Piping Rock.

"I can attribute my strong work ethic to working on a dairy farm as a kid and my turf knowhow to a series of great mentors in the golf course industry: Bob Ahrendsten (Cedar Lake Club), Rich Spear (Piping Rock), Eddie Butler (Garden City), Marsh Benson (Augusta National), and my advisor/turf professor Robert Emmons from SUNY Cobleskill.

"I'm fortunate enough to get personal industry updates and advice from Cornell researchers Frank Rossi and Jennifer Grant, the USGA's Dave Oatis and Mike Davis, and Architect Rees Jones. I have close friends in Rich Spear (Piping Rock), Brian Benedict (Seawane), John Carlone (Meadow Brook), Steve Rabideau (Wheatley Hills), Harry Bahrenburg (Huntington Crescent), Dave Pughe (Garden City Golf Club), and other supers in the area.

"I work with the best 'green chairman' in the world, Bethpage's Director of Golf Dave Catalano, and I have a terrific group of people around me," Craig continues. "I have 12 turf-degreed, full-time staff, combined with another 15 student interns and dozens and dozens of volunteers. Tim Gravert and Kevin Carroll are my superintendents on the Black Course; Andy Wilson handles much of the purchasing and shepherds the Green Course;

Mike Hadley handles the Red Course; and Ryan Vogler manages Yellow and Blue.

"Working with industry leaders and with a terrific crew at Bethpage . . . if this doesn't excite a superintendent, I don't know what would."

### It All Comes Down to Weather

When asked how his gut handles the inevitable roller coaster of emotions associated with the Open Championship, Craig said, "After having gone through it once before, it's a bit easier, but butterflies do set in when I think about the fact that 30- to 40-million viewers will be watching the golfers and the course that we've prepared.

"And then, there's the weather," he lamented. "We're constantly worrying about it and preparing for its inevitabilities. We dodged a bullet this winter. I thought we'd have more ice damage than we did, but shoveling the snow three separate times proved to help immeasurably," said Craig, who I first met in mid-January on a green at the Yellow Course aerating to break up the ice.

To help insure he can outgun Mother Nature during the Open and beyond, Bethpage has upgraded its water supply. "We've just finished installing a 4,000-gallon-per-minute, five-pump upgrade that uses reclaimed water from the Oyster Bay Township Water Treatment Facility," Craig explained of the park's water system, which though gaining acceptance, still defies convention.

### Green Course Goes Green

But then Bethpage is a bit of a trendsetter. In 2001, Craig, who happens to be intensely aware of pesticide use on his Long Island golf courses, has agreed to participate in a pesticide-use study on the Green Course. Funded through Cornell and the USGA, the study began in 2001.

"We divided the course into three sets of six greens," explained Craig. "On the first six, we've been following a normal program, using pesticides. On the second six, we've followed an IPM program, while on the third six greens, we use no pesticides whatsoever.



"The first two years of the experiment proved that the golf course needs more than just cultural inputs," Craig admitted. "It needs plant protective materials and fertilizers, but we use the 'softest' pesticides available. By altering the height of cut, rolling, and topdressing, the greens have done remarkably well with few pesticide inputs.

"Also interesting is that the three velvet greens didn't hold up with the amount of play we get. As part of the experiment, we poll the golfers to see how they feel about their golfing experience," continued Craig. "They detected a difference on the velvet greens—not necessarily good or bad, just a difference or interruption in consistency. And when the velvet looked bad, the average golfer definitely could tell. We'll probably be switching them back to bent/*Poa*."

### The Grass Couldn't Get Any Greener

"I have everything I could possibly want in a job here at Bethpage. Dave Catalano provides me with all the tools I need to get the job done. I have office support staff who allow me to go out into the field and get my hands dirty when I want to. Although I'm like other superintendents relying on each day's work as my contract for job security, I can't see myself working at another job. Dave Catalano and I have told each other, 'If you go, I go.' We've both stayed and love it."

Perhaps this year, after Johnny Miller and Dan Hicks pack up the broadcast tents and discussions with Tiger and Phil have come and gone, Craig and the entire staff at Bethpage can relax . . . bask in the glory that comes from hard work. Oh, and then Craig can find time to enjoy his wife, Joanna, 2 1/2-year-old daughter, Ryan, and 6-month-old son, Gavin.

Best of luck to Craig and the entire team entrusted with the significant task of preparing for this year's U.S. Open Championship.

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



## John O'Keefe Re-elected

**J**ohn J. O'Keefe, director of golf course management at Preakness Hills Country Club in Wayne, NJ, and past president of the MetGCSA, was re-elected for a two-year term on the GCSAA Board of Directors at the association's Annual Meeting February 6. Congratulations, John! Here's a look at the full election details:

### President

**Mark D. Kuhns**, CGCS, director of grounds at Baltusrol Golf Club in Springfield, NJ

### Vice President

**James R. Fitzroy**, CGCS, director/superintendent at Wollaston Recreational Facility/Presidents Golf Club in North Quincy, MA

### Secretary/Treasurer

**Robert M. Randquist**, CGCS, director of golf course and grounds at Boca Rio Golf Club in Boca Raton, FL

### Immediate Past President

**David S. Downing II**, CGCS, vice president of operations and construction for Signature Golf Group in Myrtle Beach, SC

### Directors

**John O'Keefe**, CGCS, of Preakness Hills Golf Club in Wayne, NJ

**Peter J. Grass**, CGCS, of Hilands Golf Club in Billings, MT

**Keith A. Ihms**, CGCS, of Country Club of Little Rock in Little Rock, AK

**Sanford G. Queen**, CGCS, manager of golf operations for the City of Overland Park, KS

**Patrick R. Finlen**, CGCS, of The Olympic Club in San Francisco

## See You Next Year

Be sure to join fellow professionals at the 2010 GCSAA Education Conference and Golf Industry Show in San Diego, CA. The USGA will be joining us as a participating partner in the GIS, and all who attend the conference and show will enjoy a new-and-improved format with events scheduled on weekdays only.

For more information, visit [www.gcsaa.org](http://www.gcsaa.org).

## MetGCSA Makes a Few Waves at 2009 National Golf Tournament

by Mark Chant

**T**he Gulf Shores area of Alabama played host to the 59th GCSAA National Championship and Golf Classic, February 1-3. More than 20 MetGCSA members enjoyed the three days of competition, networking, and laughs. Here's the lowdown on how the Met fared on the links.

### The National Championship

National Championship contestants played three rounds of stroke play at Kiva Dunes Golf Club, an impressive and challenging Jerry Pate-designed course. The greens, undulated and quick, were guarded by deep bunkers. The fairways were wide, but if you missed them, you'd find yourself in the native vegetation and, in the end, with a big number.

Tom Ashfield of Quaker Ridge and Mark Chant of Colonial Springs finished in the middle of the pack. Tom shot 80-85-79 to finish tied for 32nd place at +28. Mark shot 80-83-79 to tie for 29th place at +26.

Sean Cain of Sunningdale struggled through his first round with an 87 but came back stronger to finish with rounds of 82 and 84. Brae Burn's Blake Halderman also struggled with a first-round 87. Unlike Sean, however, Blake never got it going, shooting an 87 and 91 in the final two rounds.

Two-time champion, Seth Strickland of Miami, FL, defended his title again this year with a winning score of 78-76-73 +11.

### The Team Events

More notable was the Met's success in the Four-Ball competition played on Sunday before the Golf Classic. Here are the results:

#### In the Second Flight . . .

- David Dudones of North Jersey and John Alexander of Royce Brook GC paired together to win the Second Flight by four strokes.

- Ken Lochridge of The Muttontown Club and Mike Keone of Brookville CC finished 5th in the Net Division.

- Matt Severino of Scarsdale GC and Glen Dube of Centennial finished 10th in the Gross Division.

**In the Third Flight . . .** Matt Topazio of New York CC and Dennis DeSanctis Jr. of Syngenta tied for 7th in the Gross Division.

### The Golf Classic

The Golf Classic, which featured two rounds of play using the point quota system, was played this year at the Cotton Creek and Cypress Bend courses at Craft Farms and Peninsula GC. Here's a look at who came home with a prize:

**In the First Flight . . .** Les Kennedy of Blind Brook and John Carlone of Meadow Brook finished in the bottom half. Though they didn't play as well as they would have liked, they had more fun than anyone, catching up with the friends they'd made over the years. Les did win a Closest to the Pin prize on the 16th at Cotton Creek.

**In the Second Flight . . .** The Met shined.

- Scott Niven of Stanwich and Rick Schock of Aspectuck Valley both placed 6th in the Gross Division.

- Grover Alexander of Hudson Hills placed 9th in the Gross Division.

- Muttontown's Ken Lochridge and Wheatley Hill's Steve Rabideau, representing Long Island, placed 5th and 6th in the Net Division, respectively.

- Glen Dube's and Matt Severino's success in the Four-Ball did not carry over into the individual rounds. Glen was hampered by a shoulder injury and Matt was more concerned about the UConn basketball team.

**In the Third Flight . . .** New York CC's Matt Topazio had a strong showing of 13th and a Closest to the Pin prize on the 17th at Peninsula.

**In the Fourth Flight . . .** Bob Nielsen of Bedford Golf & Tennis finished 9th in the Net Division.

**In the Senior I Flight . . .** Mark Millett of Old Oaks and Tim O'Neill of CC of Darien both finished just outside the Top 10.

**In the Super Senior Flight . . .** Life A member Frank Lamphier dominated the flight and won by 8 points!

#### In the Affiliate Flight . . .

- Syngenta's Dennis DeSanctis Jr. placed 4th in the Net Division.

- Andy Drohen of Agrium Advanced Technologies won a Closest to the Pin prize on the 8th at Cotton Creek.

*Mark Chant, a member of the MetGCSA Board of Directors, is superintendent at Colonial Springs Golf Club in Farmingdale, NY.*



## Upcoming Events

# 2009 MetGCSA Calendar of Events

Our 2009 Meeting and Social Calendar is inching toward completion. 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.

### **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**

*Monday, September 28*  
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

### **UMass Turf Research Field Day**

*Wednesday, June 17*  
UMass Joseph Troll Turf Research Center  
South Deerfield, MA

The field day will focus on the wide range of research projects that university faculty, staff, and graduate students currently have underway at the research center and at other locations. The field day will also feature displays and demonstrations from turf industry vendors.

For further information, contact the

UMass Extension Turf Program office at 508-892-0382 or visit [www.umassturf.org](http://www.umassturf.org) and select "Conferences & Workshops."

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

*Tuesday, August 4*  
Horticultural Farm II  
New Brunswick, NJ

Save the date, and watch for details. Call 973-812-6467 or visit [www.njturfgrass.org](http://www.njturfgrass.org) for further information.

## Scholarship Application Deadline: Be Sure Not to Miss It!

Don't delay in calling for your 2009 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, June 12.**

Application forms are available through MetGCSA Executive Secretary Ineke Pierpoint at 914-347-4653. If you have any questions about the application process, please feel free to contact S & R Chairman Bob Nielsen at Bedford Golf & Tennis Club. You can reach him by calling 914-234-3779 or by sending an email to [rnbgtc@optonline.net](mailto:rnbgtc@optonline.net).

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 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.



# Every Voice Counts at NYSTA's 2009 Turfgrass Advocacy Day

by Michael Maffei, CGCS

**G**reen industry members who attended the New York State Turfgrass Association's (NYSTA) 2009 Turfgrass Advocacy Day on March 11 had nothing but high praise for the day's activities and discussions.

Held for the 10th consecutive year at the Empire State Plaza in Albany, NY, the event drew 44 participants from all parts of New York. Among them were MetGCSA members Blake Halderman of Brae Burn and Bob Nielsen of Bedford Golf & Tennis—in addition to me.

The Advocacy Day kicked off with an association breakfast and a presentation by Jeff Lane of the Vandervort Group and lobbyist for the New York Alliance for Environmental Concerns. Jeff provided an overview of the current legislative climate in Albany and introduced this year's top issues, which revolved around the Local Regulation of Pesticides, the Preemption of Fertilizer, renewed appropriations for the Turfgrass Environmental Stewardship Fund, Using Less Than Label Rates of Pesticides, funding for the New York Farm Viability Institute, and the Pesticide Product Registration System.

Before the mid-day break for lunch, attendees had the opportunity to meet with senators and assembly members representing their districts to discuss regulatory issues and concerns that were important to them. All told, 52 legislative visits were made.

As Advocacy Day participants lunched, Senator David J. Valesky provided an informative update on State budget issues.

Reflecting on the day, Steve Griffen, past president of NYSTA and one of the founders of Turfgrass Advocacy Day, noted: "I thought it was a very effective Advocacy Day. Being our 10th Turfgrass Advocacy Day, our attendees were well prepared and more effective than ever in communicating what is important to us. Legislators and their staffs knew us from years past and were pleased to give us the time to present our issues."

## The Day's Discussions

To give Met members insight into the



**Senator David Valesky joins NYSTA board members after his update on State budget issues at the 2009 Turfgrass Advocacy Day. From left to right: Rick Holfoth, CGCS, of Country Club of Rochester; NYSTA Secretary/Treasurer Bob Sanderson of Sodexo Campus Services at Nazareth College; NYSTA Vice President Greg Chorvas of Cantine Veterans Sports Complex; Senator David Valesky, vice president of Pro Tempore; NYSTA Past President Michael Maffei, CGCS, of Back O' Beyond, Inc.; Saratoga Sod Farm's Steve Griffen, a NYSTA past president and past chair and current board member of the Empire State Council of Agricultural Organizations.**

behind-the-scenes support our industry receives, here is a recap of the discussions of the day. If nothing else, it makes clear NYSTA's critical role in supporting our industry and shows what you, personally, can do to support NYSTA's work. Every voice counts.

**In Opposition of Local Regulation of Pesticides.** Jeff Lane presented the first issue, "Local Regulation of Pesticides," which refers to legislation that would allow local municipalities to create their own pesticide ordinances or regulations.

Our position is that if localities were allowed to enact their own pesticide laws, we would be left with a confusing patchwork of ordinances that differ from township to township. Concerned green industry members had the opportunity to meet with legislators and remind them that the State has "preemption" with regard to pesticide use.

**Pushing for Preemption of Fertilizer.** I presented the next issue, "Preemption of Fertilizer." This issue focuses on county governments that are beginning to pass local laws regulating the sale and application of fertilizers. As is the case with pesticides,

local regulation of fertilizers will enable application requirements to vary from municipality to municipality and, as a result, make it difficult and costly for applicators to achieve compliance.

Assemblyman Koon and Senator Young have introduced legislation (A6039/S2475) that would prohibit county governments from adopting fertilizer regulations and void any existing legislation. We support legislation providing "preemption" to the State through the New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets for fertilizer application and use.

**Turfgrass Environmental Stewardship Fund Seeks Ongoing Support.** Once again, I had the opportunity to brief participants on the status of the Turfgrass Environmental Stewardship Fund. For the uninitiated, this fund was established to support environmental research that extends beyond the traditional turfgrass management practices and techniques.

For the past three years, the New York State budget included \$175,000 in appropriations for the fund, which have allowed us to support a variety of worthwhile research endeavors, including:

- "Prospecting for Resistance to the An-



nual Bluegrass Weevil in Improved Cultivars of *Poa annua*," conducted by Dr. Daniel Peck of Cornell University

- "Development of Molecular Diagnostic Techniques for Identification of Invasive Pest Crane Flies in Turfgrass," conducted by Dr. Daniel Peck and Dr. Ping Wang of Cornell University

- "Benefits of Turf: Reasons Why Pesticides and Fertilizers Applied to Turf are Not Just for Cosmetics," conducted by Cornell University's Dr. A. Martin Petrovic

- "Integrated Cultural Practices to Reduce Dollar Spot on Golf Course Fairways," conducted by Dr. Alex Ellram of SUNY Cobleskill.

- Allocating funds to Cornell University for research in turfgrass and landscape weed management

- The development of an enhanced NYS diagnostic system for turfgrass insects, weeds, and diseases

This year, unfortunately, there is no appropriation in the budget to support the Stewardship Fund's work. We are recommending, therefore, that legislators restore the \$175,000 line item for the Turfgrass Environmental Stewardship Fund so that we can continue to support research targeted at enhancing turf management solutions that protect environmental quality.

**Using Less Than Label Rates of Pesticides.** Steve Griffen presented information on the issue of "Using Less Than Label Rates of Pesticides." Right now, in New York State, commercial applicators need to obtain NYSDEC approval for applying pesticides at less than label rates.

Our recommendation is to create a new section in the Environmental Conservation Law that allows a pesticide registered for use in New York State to be applied by commercial applicators in a dosage, concentration, or frequency less than specified on the label—unless the labeling specifically prohibits such use.

**Maintaining the Viability of the New York Farm Viability Institute.** Steve stayed at the

podium to update us on the New York Farm Viability Institute, an independent, nonprofit organization that is dedicated to strengthening the agricultural and horticultural industries in New York. The institute ensures industry success by supporting applied research, education, information transfer, technology adoption, and market analysis.

In previous years, direct state funding has allowed the institute to support research of economic and environmental importance for the turf industry. Grants have helped fund research on:

- Accelerated Sod Production Methods
- Practices for Reducing Annual Bluegrass Sod Losses
- Curbing the Economic and Environmental Effects of the Invasive European Crane Fly on Production Sod Farms

We recommend a State appropriation of \$3.3 million in the 2010 fiscal-year budget to support the New York Farm Viability Institute.

**Legislative Oversight of the Pesticide Product Registration System.** Elizabeth Seme, NYSTA's executive director, presented the final issue, which centered on the New York State's current "Pesticide Product Registration System."

The problem: The pesticide industry is continually developing products with new modes of action that provide more targeted and effective controls. The use of these more favorable products is being delayed, however, because of New York State's current pesticide product registration system.

Our recommendation is to have ongoing legislative oversight of the pesticide registration program to address delays that prevent the use of new pesticide products, including new formulations with enhanced modes of action, less potential for pesticide resistance, and improved efficacy and compatibility with the goals of integrated pest management (IPM) programs. We also believe New York State should recognize and accept the registration decisions of the United States Environmental Protection Agency.

## A Great Day, Overall

Attendees of this year's Turfgrass Advocacy Day immediately grasped the importance and industrywide effect of each and every one of the issues presented by NYSTA representatives. Equally important: Legislators were receptive to our issues.

According to Steve Griffen, the issues that generated the most interest from legislators were the "product registration" and "less than label rates" issues. "Legislators are also concerned, however, with the budget, government waste, and unnecessary regulations that could impede business," says Griffen, noting that they're more interested now than ever in legislation that has an economic impact.

From Jeff Lane's perspective, the 2009 Turfgrass Advocacy Day was all-the-more meaningful this year because NYSTA members and industry participants were able to clearly communicate concerns to legislators on every issue, but especially about "less than label rates" and the "preemption of fertilizer."

"I'm already getting positive feedback from supportive legislators who want to pass turfgrass proposals into law," says Lane.

## Our Many Thanks

We'd like to thank our loyal sponsors who help make this event possible. They are the Northeast GCSA, the Sullivan County Challenge Golf Tournament, the New York State Lawn Care Association, RISE-Responsible Industry for a Sound Environment, Grassland Equipment & Irrigation Corp., Helena Chemical Company, and Dow AgroSciences.

For more information regarding the issues discussed at the 2009 Turfgrass Advocacy Day, please visit the NYSTA website at <http://www.nysta.org/events/lobbyday2009/lobbyday2009.html>.

*Michael Maffei, superintendent at Back O' Beyond, Inc., in Brewster, NY, is past president of NYSTA and co-chair of the NYSTA Government Relations Committee.*

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# Meet Your MetGCSA Board Members



*From left to right: Class AF Rep Steve Renzetti, CGCS, of Pinnacle Turf, Inc.; David Dudones of North Jersey CC; Mark Chant of Colonial Springs GC; Ken Benoit, CGCS, of Glen Arbor GC; Vice President Bob Nielsen, CGCS, of Bedford*

*Golf & Tennis; MetGCSA Executive Secretary Ineke Pierpoint; Past President Matt Ceplo, CGCS, of Rockland CC; President Tony Girardi, CGCS, of Rockrimmon CC; Paul Gonzalez, CGCS, of The Whippoorwill Club; Mark Millett of*

*Old Oaks CC; Class C Rep Scott Olson of Scarsdale GC; Secretary Glen Dube, CGCS, of Centennial GC; Rob Alonzi of Fenway GC; Treasurer Blake Halderman, CGCS, of Brae Burn CC.*

## Your 2009 Committee Chairmen at Your Service

We've provided a list—with phone numbers—of each of the MetGCSA's committee chairs. Please feel to contact any of them with questions, comments, or helpful suggestions.

### **Awards Committee**

**Matt Ceplo, CGCS, Rockland CC**  
845-359-5346 / Cell 201-965-7641

### **Bylaws Committee**

**Bob Nielsen, CGCS, Bedford Golf & Tennis**  
914-234-3779 / Cell 914-525-0604

### **Club Relations Committee**

**Ken Benoit, CGCS, Glen Arbor GC**  
914-241-0700 / Cell 914-760-3575

### **Communications & Advertising Committee**

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973-942-0566 / Cell 973-417-0415  
**Paul Gonzalez, CGCS, Whippoorwill Club**  
914-273-3755 / Cell 914-424-3603  
**Mark Millett (Advertising)**  
Old Oaks CC  
914-949-4203 / Cell 914-588-0731

### **Education Committee**

**Rob Alonzi, Fenway GC**  
914-472-1467 / Cell 914-484-0373

### **Government Relations Committee**

**Glen Dube, CGCS, Centennial GC**  
845-279-8960 / Cell 845--803-1020  
**Blake Halderman, CGCS, Brae Burn CC**  
914-946-1074 / Cell 914-469-1987  
**Bob Nielsen, CGCS, Bedford Golf & Tennis**  
914-234-3779 / Cell 914-525-0604  
**Steve Renzetti, CGCS, Pinnacle Turf, Inc.**  
Cell 914-384-9227

### **Long-Range Planning & Steering Committee**

**Matt Ceplo, CGCS, Rockland CC**  
845-359-5346 / Cell 201-965-7641

### **Membership Committee**

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### **Scholarship & Research Committee**

**Bob Nielsen, CGCS, Bedford Golf & Tennis**  
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### **Tri-State Turf Research Subcommittee**

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845-359-5346 / Cell 201-965-7641

**Tony Girardi, CGCS, Rockrimmon CC**  
914-764-5010 / Cell 203-904-8715

**Blake Halderman, CGCS, Brae Burn CC**  
914-946-1074 / Cell 914-469-1987

### **Social & Welfare Committee**

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### **Special Events Committee**

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### **Tournament Committee**

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### **Website Committee**

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**Paul Gonzalez, CGCS, Whippoorwill Club**  
914-273-3755 / Cell 914-424-3603



# Committee Explores Merits of Hiring an Executive Director

**B**y now, most of you probably know that the MetGCSA is considering the feasibility of hiring an executive director to run our association. The concept of an executive director for the Met is not new. In fact, if you were a member back in the early '80s, you, no doubt, remember the days when Jim McLoughlin (1993 John Reid Lifetime Achievement Award winner) represented our chapter as its chief executive. When he moved on, however, the chapter returned to its traditional way of operating, relying, once again, on volunteer boards and committees to run the association.

Despite this, the thought of hiring an Executive Director has never died. In fact, chapter boards and members have toyed with this idea on and off for years.

Finally, late last year, a committee was created to research and discuss the merits of the Met resurrecting the executive director position. Chaired by Tim O'Neill, CGCS, the committee consists of the following members: Matt Ceplo, CGCS • John Carlone, CGCS • Scott Niven, CGCS • Tony Girardi, CGCS • Robert Nielsen, CGCS • Bob Alonzi, CGCS • Joe Alonzi, CGCS • Peter Rappoccio, CGCS • Blake Halde- man, CGCS • Larry Pakkala, CGCS.

## GCSAA Chapters Across the Nation

Tim was asked to chair the committee due to his involvement during 2007-2008 as chairman of GCSAA's Chapter Relations Committee. In this role, Tim met with chapter representatives from across the country and saw, firsthand, how chapters ran their organizations.

In all, there are about 100 affiliated chapters of the GCSAA. Of those chapters, approximately 10 have true executive directors. Another 30 to 40 chapters employ an executive assistant similar to the Met association's position filled by Ineke Pierpoint through the Metropolitan Golf Association.

It became evident that a number of the most highly successful chapters were represented by an executive director. Responsible for the day-to-day operation of the association, these executive directors were also charged with achieving the chapter's long-term goals, including program development, fundraising, and membership growth and participation.

## Examining Local Associations

Over the past six months, the Met Committee has also looked long and hard at the operating models of other local and regional chapters and associations to understand both their challenges and successes.

Committee members contacted such groups as the MGA, Met PGA, NYSTA, the New England Regional Turf Foundation, the Club Managers Association, and a number of local superintendent chapters. Though, in the end, it was clear that a number of different models exist to operate an association effectively, the Met Committee concluded that hiring an executive director makes the most sense for our chapter. Keep in mind, however, that our objective is not to replace an executive assistant with an executive director; rather our intent is to complement our current staff with a new chief executive.

## The Job in the Making

The group is working to build a job description that will outline the responsibilities required for the executive director position. In addition to being well-acquainted with programs, activities, issues, and opportunities that affect golf course superintendents, the executive director would be expected to work on behalf of the MetGCSA to educate the regional golf community about the chapter's mission and also liaison effectively with regional entities, such as GCSAA and its chapters, local and regional golf organizations, and universities with turf programs.

The committee is also putting together a list of general chapter duties and responsibilities, as well as specific fiscal responsibilities.

## A Focus on Funding

One major stumbling block to resurrecting this position has been finding a way to fund it without disrupting the overall fiscal health of the chapter. The committee, therefore, will also be looking at funding options over the next several months and, later this spring, will make its final recommendations to the board with the hope of pursuing an executive director for the MetGCSA sometime in 2010.

# Seeking Sherwood A. Moore Award Nominations



**T**he Awards Committee is now accepting nominations for the Sherwood A. Moore Award. This award is presented to a golf course superintendent who has advanced the professional image, status, and reputation of the golf course superintendent.

Sherwood, the award's first recipient and namesake, was a leader both locally and nationally, having served as president of the MetGCSA, GCSA of New Jersey, and the GCSAA. He was also an articulate spokesman for the profession and mentored a number of the nation's finest superintendents, many Met members among them.

Although Sherwood passed on, we continue to celebrate his life and many contributions to our profession through this coveted award. If you'd like to nominate a candidate, contact Matt Ceplo at 845-359-5346 or by email at [groundskeeper@optonline.net](mailto:groundskeeper@optonline.net), and he will send you a nomination form. But don't delay. *All nominations must be received by June 20, 2009.* You can send them by fax to 845-359-5346 or by mail to: Matthew Ceplo, CGCS, Rockland Country Club, 380 Route 9W, Sparkill, NY 10976.



## Blake Brings Met Back to Brae Burn for Super/Manager Tourney

by Mike Tollner

**O**n June 3, Brae Burn Country Club Superintendent Blake Halderman will welcome MetGCSA members and their managers for the association's annual Superintendent/Manager Tournament. When the Met last visited Brae Burn in 2007 for the association's Education meeting, the club was just shy of embarking on a renovation project that has left few areas of the 45-year-old course untouched. With the current layout playing at 6,850 yards, tourney contestants will enjoy a competitive round of golf on the club's newly renovated 152 acres.

### About the Club

**Its Origins:** Founded in 1964 by a group of friends from Harrison Country Club, Brae Burn was first known as Purchase Hills. The club quickly abandoned the name, however, because of its similarity to another club in the area, and in a "name-the-club" contest, members settled on the current Brae Burn Country Club.

Open for play in June 1965, the course was designed originally by Frank Duane, a long-time protégé of Robert Trent Jones Sr.

**Where It Is Today:** In the fall of 2006, Brae Burn brought in another Trent Jones disciple,

Golf Course Architect John Harvey, to produce a master plan for the property. In the fall of 2007, the club put the plan into motion, embarking on a bunker renovation project that would not only make fairway bunker slopes gentler, but also create multiple areas to enter and exit the bunkers.

The renovation included everything from reshaping the bunker floors to installing new drainage, liners, sand, drip irrigation on south facing slopes, and sod on most bunkers. Several entirely new bunkers were also created.

As part of the project, Brae Burn also made a large cut on the par 3, 11th hole to create better visibility to the green complex. The 9th green was expanded an extra 1,500 square feet to provide more pinable areas.

Drainage was installed to pick up bunker outfalls and fix any problem areas in the roughs and fairways. And fairway expansions were added in many locations to bring the fairway closer to the new bunkers, enhancing playability and visual appeal.

Next on the list: A clubhouse renovation that will, in turn, lead to more work on the course. "The club plans to move the pro shop to the upper level and create a sports bar grill overlooking the finishing hole," explains Blake, adding, "As part of the project, we'll be lowering the 18th green complex 10 feet, raising and expanding the range tees, and building a new putting green near the pro shop. This will create a new member entrance directly into the pro shop, provide the membership with enhanced views of the golf course, and keep all of the golf operations in a central location."

### About Our Host

**Education:** Blake received a B.S. in Turfgrass Management with a minor in Business Administration in 1995 from the University of Rhode Island.

**Training Ground:** Blake began his career in golf course management when he was just 15 in his native New Hampshire. He worked at the local nine-hole Angus Lea Golf and Tennis Club for Scott Niven's father, Russ, and then Scott's brother, Curt.

While pursuing his turf degree, Blake interned at The Stanwich Club with a third Niven; this time, it was Scott. To round out his experience, he also completed an internship at Muirfield Village Golf Club in Columbus,

Blake Halderman, CGCS

OH, alongside friend and Two-Ball partner Glen Dube; the two are reigning First Flight champions.

His first job out of school was as an assistant at Woodway Country Club with then Superintendent Larry Pakkala. After just two-and-a-half years there, Blake landed his first superintendent's job at Minisceongo Golf Club in Pomona, NY. "I just wanted to be a superintendent," says Blake of his speedy rise to the top. "I applied everywhere, from Puerto Rico to California."

After three years at Minisceongo, Blake's next stop was Trump National-Westchester as the grow-in superintendent. In 2004, just four years later, Blake accepted his current position at Brae Burn, where he's quick to tell you, he is grateful for his members, coworkers, and especially his two assistants, Matt Plosila and Brian Gallagher.

**Professional Affiliations:** Blake has been a member of the MetGCSA since 1995, and five years ago, joined the Board of Directors. Currently serving as treasurer, Blake co-chairs the Government Relations Committee and serves on the Tri-State Turf Research Committee, after having served for the past four years as co-chair of the Tournament Committee. He is still very involved with the Met Area Team Championship, which he, along with fellow member Andy Drohen, worked long and hard to resurrect.

**On a Personal Note:** Away from the course, Blake enjoys spending time with his family: Kristen, his wife of 10 years, and their two children, Emma, who's 6, and Brendan, who's 4. "We enjoy skiing as family," says Blake, noting that he and Kristen are also kept busy with the many sporting, club, and outdoor activities the kids are involved in.

**For more on Blake:** Please refer to the Met website, [www.metgcsa.org](http://www.metgcsa.org), to retrieve the archived May/June 2007 issue where Blake's full profile last appeared in the *Tee to Green*.

Mike Tollner, a member of the Tee to Green Editorial Committee, is an assistant superintendent at The Apawamis Club in Rye, NY.



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## Spotlight

# The Met's Annual Invitational Makes a Return Trip to The Stanwich Club

**I**n his 26-year tenure at The Stanwich Club, Property Manager Scott Niven has played host to numerous association golf events, including at least one other Invitational and one of the very first Met Area Team Championships. On June 25, when Met members return to Stanwich for the 2009 Invitational Tournament, they'll play the same 186 acres but on an all-new course—the result of the club's highly acclaimed \$4.5 million golf course renovation project.

### About the Club

**Its Origins:** Owned originally by burglar alarm magnate Edward T. Holmes, the club was once a 330-acre gentleman's farm, complete with horses, chickens, and cows. Called Semloh Farm (Holmes' name spelled backwards), the property featured numerous lakes, carefully cultivated gardens, and 15 fountains. Stanwich Club founders bought 186 acres of the estate in 1962, including the main house and four other buildings, for a mere \$475,000. Golf course architect William Gordon and his son David were hired over the celebrated Robert Trent Jones to design the course, which opened its doors in 1963.

**Where It Is Today:** Stanwich's solid design has put the course on *Golf Digest's* TOP 100 LIST. After hosting the 2002 USGA Mid-Amateur, it became clear to the club that it needed to "modernize" the course by increasing length and softening highly contoured

putting greens to accommodate faster green speeds. It embarked on a three-year renovation project that, in 2006, put the club on another of *Golf Digest's* lists: "Best New Remodel" among courses in the U.S.

### About Our Host

**Education:** Scott received a B.S. in Turfgrass Management in 1976 from the University of Rhode Island.

**Training Ground:** Scott, it seems, was destined to become a turfgrass manager. Starting at age 9, he worked alongside his father at the Claremont Country Club in Claremont, NH, and then at the Angus Lea Golf and Tennis Club in Hillsborough, NH, which his father purchased when Scott was 12.

After earning his turf degree, Scott accepted an assistant's position at Greenwich Country Club, landing, three years later, his first superintendent's position at St. Andrew's Golf Club in Hasting-on-Hudson, NY. After two years there, he accepted the superintendent's position at Siwanoy Country Club in Bronxville, NY—his last stop before Stanwich.

**Professional Affiliations:** Scott has been actively involved in numerous industry associations. For GCSAA, Scott has served on nearly every committee, most recently chairing the association's Research Committee.

He's president of the Tri-State Turf Research Foundation, a member of the USGA Research Committee and the New York

Scott Niven, CGCS

State and New Jersey Turfgrass associations, as well as a long-tenured member of the Connecticut AGCS. And if all that's not enough, Scott continues to serve our own association, which he led as president in '88 and '89, sitting on nearly half the Met's committees, including the Communications Committee, where for the past 10 years, he's been a regular contributor to the *Tee to Green*.

**On a Personal Note:** Besides being an avid golfer (since age 7), Scott enjoys mountain biking, running (he's a four-time New York Marathon runner), and lifting weights at the gym. Skiing and travel—from Japan and Australia to parts of Central America and Europe—are other passions Scott shares with his wife of 25 years, Dana, and his son Nick, a college freshman, and daughter Heather, a Greenwich High School senior.

**For more on Scott:** Please refer to the Met website, [www.metgcsa.org](http://www.metgcsa.org), to retrieve the archived November/December 2007 issue where Scott's full profile last appeared. Also worthy of an online read: Scott's comprehensive account of Stanwich's renovation project. Titled "Anatomy of a Golf Course Renovation," the article appeared in *Tee to Green's* January/February 2007 issue.



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