

# Tee To Green

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### Advertising Manager

BRETT CHAPIN, 203-938-9240

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# Tee To Green



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# President's Message

## Weathering Another Tough Season

I generally try to refrain from discussing the one thing we're battling on the job all the time: the weather. This season, however, I feel I would be doing us all a disservice if I didn't take a moment to reflect on the season's perfect storm of events that led to highly precarious growing conditions.

We started in the spring with very cool conditions, which left little time for the turf to recover from aerification or to make headway on essential root growth heading into summer. Then, in a large portion of the tri-state area, June brought with it record-breaking rainfall that, in turn, brought on disease and a host of other issues associated with wet surfaces and anaerobic conditions. If that wasn't bad enough, July brought with it a heat wave that left turf managers with soil and canopy temperatures approaching 110 degrees in certain microenvironments. Throw a little rain into the mix and your grass is cooked—quite literally.

Whether you hosted a PGA Tour event or just prepared for normal member or guest play, we all have had to deal with the same challenges . . . and a relentless Mother Nature. The only positive outcome in all this was that it seemed people actually adjusted their level of expectations, particularly when it came to summer green speeds. It was nice, for instance, to hear all the commentators supporting slower greens on the PGA and Senior PGA Tours this season. I heard one announcer say, "Although the greens don't look great on TV, they are alive and playing well. They need to give the course back to the members on Monday, and the maintenance staff must protect them."

Then at the PGA Championship, the head of the PGA Tour declined to discuss the green speeds in number terms because, as he put it, "It's not fair to other golf courses to expect tournament conditions on a daily basis." He went on to say only that the green speeds that week were right where he wanted them to be.

Now that's what I like to hear!



*Blake Halderman, CGCSA  
MetGCSA President*

### MetGCSA Rounds 4 Research Yield Impressive Results

On another positive note, I want to thank all of you for your support in raising funds for the MetGCSA, which will be used to offset costs associated with the New York Best Management Practices Initiative and other research-based programs, such as education, scholarships, advocacy, and agronomic research throughout the Met area.

The MetGCSA led all associations with the highest bid-to-value ratio. Rounds won for more than 68 percent of their value, which translated into more than \$13,500 for our association to allocate to worthy causes. For those of you who donated rounds, we can't thank you enough for your support. For those who missed out on this great opportunity to support the MetGCSA, we hope you will consider joining us next year!

### Pre-Delegates Meeting News

Once again our past president, Bob Nielsen of Bedford Golf & Tennis, will represent the MetGCSA in Lawrence, KS, in early October at GCSAA's Chapter Delegates Meeting. As our chapter delegate for the past eight years, Bob is not only a skilled rep of our association, but also a great source of knowledge about GCSAA and its inner workings. At this meeting, one of the major topics of discussion will be to talk about what our profession and industry will be like in the year 2020 and what we will need to do to meet the expectations of our club members.

Another focus is to meet and greet the candidates running for the GCSAA Board  
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Feature

# Safety Doesn't Happen by Accident

*When it comes to maintaining a golf course, safety training is one of those not-so-obvious keys to success.*

by Ryan Segrue



*Lake Isle Superintendent Ryan Segrue and crew foreman Mike Mulqueen review features of the triplex mower.*



Let's face it. Safety at the golf course is often overlooked in favor of doing what we do best: providing our clientele with superb playing conditions while meeting that increasingly important bottom line. So yes, sometimes employee safety training takes a backseat to venting, rolling an extra day, or double-cutting greens. It's a tradeoff most superintendents don't think twice about . . . until, perhaps, an accident happens. Then they realize that ignoring safety training is one of the costliest mistakes a golf course manager can make.

The reality is that no matter how good your golf course looks, your job can be in jeopardy if there are serious accidents, workers' compensation claims, or injured golfers. But beyond that, golf facilities—like any business—have a moral and legal obligation to provide a safe work environment and also a safe place for golfers to play.

In my second season as superintendent at ValleyCrest Golf Course Maintenance at Lake Isle Country Club, where my organization puts a high priority on employee safety training, I realize now, more than ever, the extreme importance of taking the time to properly train employees. Not only does it help to keep employees—and golfers—out of harm's way, it offers great peace of mind knowing that while you can't always take danger away, you can provide the tools needed to help your staff avoid dangerous situations.

I'm so convinced of the merits of safety training that I've combined some of the thoughts and practices of area superintendents, culled from a recent survey I conducted, with some of the many principles I've learned in implementing—and maintaining—a successful safety training program on my course at Lake Isle.

Whether you are thinking about implementing a safety program for the first time or just enhancing the one you have, the article that follows should give you a few tried-and-true measures to help you make safety a priority on your course.

### Where Do I Start?

As the property manager at your facility, it's up to you to develop a safety program tailored to your property's specific safety hazards and challenges. You might start with an internal audit to assess your facility's shortcomings. Then prioritize the things that need to be done. Are your MSDS sheets accessible? Do you have well-stocked first-aid kits? Do you provide personal protective equipment along with instructions for using it? Do you have an emergency evacuation plan in place? Equipment safety training? And the list goes on.

If you find this task too overwhelming—and it certainly can be—you have the option of hiring a consultant to do it for you. There are people out there who were inspectors in a past life and are knowledgeable about the rules and regulations on golf courses. You might also find guidance from your facility's insurance company.

Ted Horton of THC-Ted Horton Consulting and former superintendent of Westchester, Winged Foot, and Pebble Beach golf courses, suggests a slightly more do-it-yourself approach, looking outside of our industry for successful safety programs that can easily be adapted to your facility's particular needs. His favorite: The Dupont "STOP for Safety" program. "This program became a very important base for safety programs that I used for years," says Ted. (See article on page 8 for more tips from Ted.)

Another highly recommended resource is called Golf Safety ([golfsafety.com](http://golfsafety.com)), which is a risk-compliance company. Not only does this organization have a firm grasp on golf course maintenance safety, it's also intimately familiar with OSHA regulations, state-by-state.

Quaker Ridge Superintendent Tom Ashfield enlisted Golf Safety's help in building a training program for his club: "This company will write a comprehensive safety program for your facility that includes hazards and exposures specific to your property, as well as OSHA-required programs, current Material Safety Data Sheets, and other

safety management policies and procedures necessary to prevent injuries and illnesses in your workplace," says Tom. "We've used the club's monthly DVD safety training service, which is based on topics you'd like to cover. Included with the DVDs is an instructor's guide and quizzes for staff—basically, everything you need to conduct a safety meeting," he adds.

Like many other companies out there, Golf Safety's videos and custom programs are available in both English and Spanish. But as with any outsourced program, the deeper you get into a safety program, the more money it will cost. This organization's basic safety video plan starts at \$200 per month, which is a pretty good deal when you consider what it might take to get out of a worker's comp claim or an OSHA violation!

Among our survey respondents, videos and live demonstrations tend to be the training methods of choice. Several, like Tom at Quaker, also have their employees go through more formal training, using booklets and quizzes to ensure they've learned the essentials. "We've used training manuals and SOPs for all our mowing and standard jobs," says North Jersey Country Club's David Dudones. "Then we have the employees sign to acknowledge they've reviewed the information."

### Ensuring Your Facility Is Up to Snuff

No matter which program or video option you settle on for your facility, safety training starts by ensuring your maintenance facility is orderly and free of hazards and violations—inside and out. At our facility, we started with keeping not only a well-organized storage area, but also a tidy break room and, yes, restrooms as well, rotating responsibility among crew members for managing these areas.

In and around our storage area we ensure, among other things, that:

- each piece of equipment has its own parking area to avoid time wasted moving several mowers to get to the one you need

*Time invested in educating employees on proper equipment operation is time well spent. Not only will it result in greater employee safety, but also fewer repair bills as employees learn to operate equipment appropriately and recognize minor problems before they become major headaches.*

Lake Isle crew foreman Mike Mulqueen and mechanic Chris Morra discuss equipment operation.



- tools are well marked and placed where they are easy to find
- designated walkways are marked and painted to eliminate tripping hazards and ensure a safe flow of traffic throughout the facility
- combustibles, e.g., paint, oil, and gas, are stored in fire-resistant cabinets to avoid an explosion in the event of a fire

We also ensure that our facility's outside yard is as neat and pristine as the golf course. With these practices in place, employees start and end their day thinking about cleanliness and safety.

### **Learning the Ins and Outs of Equipment Operation**

We all know of a person or two who's lost a finger or toe in an equipment mishap. So job number one at the start of each season is bringing employees—particularly new ones—up-to-speed on the various pieces of equipment used in golf course maintenance. The training can be as simple as taking employees through the basics of how to safely operate a machine or as complex as requiring employees to complete a step-by-step equipment certification checklist that details how to use each machine and requires employees to sign the checklist, stating they understand how to properly operate the equipment.

Shorehaven Country Club's Shannon Slevin, like most everyone we surveyed, makes sure to document the training sessions he runs, which is a smart way to relieve your facility of any liability if an accident were to happen.

Another, often more palatable training method, is to have employees watch operator and safety videos available through your equipment suppliers in both English and Spanish. The saying, "A picture is worth a thousand words" might ring true in your operation. Many times it's not what you tell employees, but rather what they see that makes a lasting impression.

Last but not least, why not enlist your mechanic to demonstrate how to operate the machinery in a safe and prudent manner. After all, who knows better than your mechanic the hazards of reels, blades, belts, chains, and saws? Having the most knowledgeable person on your staff custom-tailor an equipment safety program to your operation makes a good deal of sense.

At the same time, it's the mechanic's responsibility to make sure each piece of equipment is in top repair before it goes out. Checking all safety switches and making sure all guards are in place and functioning properly is of vital importance. These meas-

ures ensure the safety of not only our employees but the golfing public as well. If a switch or guard is not functioning correctly, it should be locked and tagged out until repairs can be performed.

A lot of our equipment also features roll-over protection safety (ROPS), which consists of a roll bar and seatbelt. To serve its purpose, the ROPS needs both the roll bar and seatbelt to function properly. If one or the other is damaged, the machine should be tagged out. Employees should always wear their seatbelt when a roll bar is on a machine or run the risk of being crushed by the equipment.

In the end, time invested in educating employees on proper equipment operation is time well spent. Not only will it result in greater employee safety, but also fewer repair bills as employees learn to operate equipment appropriately and recognize minor problems before they become major headaches.

### **Keeping Employees Out of Harm's Way**

Right behind operating equipment safely is requiring that employees use personal protective equipment (PPE). I'm sure most of us offer our employees safety glasses, earplugs, gloves, chaps, and helmets, but how many of us actually *require* that they wear them? All but one of our survey respondents required their employees to use PPE, but often only to protect their eyes and ears. Top on my must-wear list:

- **Safety glasses.** Every employee should be issued a pair of safety glasses and educated on the importance of wearing them for all duties on the golf course. With the amount of debris and rocks that bunker raking or trimming and rotary mowing alone can kick up, employees who don't wear safety glasses are at risk for lifelong vision problems, loss of vision, or worst case, loss of an eye.

I did hear of a super who purchased a more contemporary style of safety glasses that he outfitted with chums (straps) and found that employees not only took better care of the glasses, but also enjoyed wearing them. That's a small investment to make to protect your employees' eyes.

- **Helmets.** If you don't require that helmets be worn on your property, you might want to reconsider. The OSHA rulebook states, "The employer shall ensure that each affected employee wears a protective helmet when working in areas where there is a potential for falling objects." The most likely "falling objects" on a golf course would be—you guessed it—golf balls.



While this OSHA standard does not specifically mention golf courses, there's little doubt that if you had a surprise inspection and your employees *weren't* wearing helmets, you'd get hit with a fine. And you can be even more certain that if an employee were injured or, worse, killed by a "falling object" while not wearing a protective helmet, you would be opening your checkbook.

You could try to entice employees to wear helmets by varying from the standard

white. I've heard of supers supplying helmets imprinted with employees' favorite sports logos, and locally, Fairview's Jim Pavonetti bought helmets that look like safari hats. "The guys who mow rough actually seem to enjoy wearing them," he says. If this tack works, it's well worth the extra expense and effort.

- **Earplugs or earmuffs.** Excessive exposure to high levels of noise can, over time, cause permanent hearing loss, so it's essential that employees using power equipment, as well as those working in close proximity to them, be outfitted with earplugs or earmuffs. It's also important that they be trained on the proper fit, use, and care of these hearing protection devices.

We also ask that employees never wear earphones that play music while operating machines. Not only does it impair their ability to hear if there's a problem with the machine while operating it, but playing music loud enough to enjoy over the machinery is sure to cause hearing loss down the road! Hearing loss happens gradually, and it's our responsibility to protect employees from damaging noise exposure while on the job.



### Ensuring Safety on the Course

Another important aspect of employee—and golfer—safety is to train your staff to be on the lookout for any unsafe situations on the golf course and property. My top three:

- **Potential physical hazards.** Are there any low-hanging or dangling tree limbs, uneven steps or other areas that could cause a golfer or employee to slip, trip, or fall? Are there areas where poison ivy or bee or hornet nests could present a threat to employees or golfers with serious allergies? There are myriad other potential hazards that your employees should be trained to note and report—before an accident happens.

- **Golf cart safety.** The golf cart is the most widely used piece of equipment on the golf



*Wearing a safari-type helmet, Fairview Country Club crew member Enrique Martínez makes safety look fashionable.*



course by both staff and golfers, yet it's the one thing that often gets overlooked when developing a safety plan. It's important that we scan cart paths regularly for potholes or debris that can knock a cart off course. And if your property has guardrails, they should always be in good repair. Sharp turns and steep slopes are other potential hazards that should be properly marked with signage to warn employees and golfers to drive with caution.

- **Lightning.** Lightning is the most dangerous hazard that golfers and staff can encounter on the golf course. The wide-open spaces, tall trees, and the metal clubs being used are all reasons to seek shelter when lightning is in the area. More people than you think are killed every year due to lightning.

Most properties have lightning detection and warning systems already in place. If your property does not, it may be an investment worth making. Signs should be posted in visible areas—on golf carts, bag tags, scorecards, in locker rooms, and in the pro shop—informing players of the proper protocol



*More people than you think are killed every year due to lightning.*

when the lightning system is activated. The golf maintenance staff should be privy to this information as well, not only to help golfers do the right thing, but also to protect themselves in a lightning storm.

One often overlooked aspect of lightning safety is ensuring the safety of rain shelters. To protect against a lightning strike, these structures need to be properly grounded or they can become dangerous targets during a storm.

With these simple precautions, accidents that a facility can be held accountable for can be greatly reduced, if not eliminated.

### Knowing How to Respond in an Emergency

A crucial aspect of any safety training program is to have an emergency plan in place and employees who have been taught how to respond in the event of an emergency.



Here are a few key points:

- Maintenance staff members should be aware of the location of all Automated External Defibrillators (AEDs) and first-aid supplies on the property. Just like with lightning safety procedures, the locations of these items should be listed in conspicuous areas for all golfers to review in case of an emergency.
- At least one person trained in the more technical aspects of emergency response (e.g., CPR and defibrillator operation) should be onsite at all times. Golf courses are one of the top five places where cardiac arrest occurs, so we need to be properly trained and prepared to react to those types of situations.
- Publicize emergency procedures in your facility's monthly newsletter; at the same time, make members aware that your maintenance staff is prepared to help. Of course, it's likely that not every member of the maintenance staff will be capable of responding in an emergency situation, but every employee should know the appropri-

ate people to contact in an emergency. Assistants, mechanics, and foreman are generally well informed about emergency procedures and should, without a doubt, be the go-to people on your staff.

- It's a good idea to run drills to ensure employees know how to handle an emergency situation—particularly a life-threatening one—before it happens.

If and when an accident occurs, first responders and others on the scene will need to fill out a written accident report indicating what happened and what the area looked like when they arrived. Insurance companies and legal counsel frequently request these reports. For that reason, it's important that the form be filled out accurately with the date and time, as well as any corrective measures planned to prevent future accidents. It's also helpful to include photos or a video.

Interestingly, the majority of the people we surveyed did not have a formal emergency response plan in place, but those who did seemed to hit the high points. Quaker's Tom Ashfield and Fairview's Jim Pavonetti have plans they review with employees at least twice a year, detailing in particular how to handle fires, heavy storms (hurricanes), injuries, and electrical storms.

Stanwich's Scott Niven makes sure that his assistants and a few selected staff members are aware of their emergency response plan, while North Jersey Country Club's David Dudones puts his time and energy into a Hazard Communication Plan, which not only puts him in good stead with OSHA, but also ensures employees know how to handle hazardous materials responsibly and respond appropriately if a spill were to occur.

Also interesting was that the superintendents at only two clubs in our survey—Quaker Ridge and Fairview—were actually held to any safety standards. "At Quaker, we're expected to have an employee safety program in place that includes a safe chemical handling program and first-aid and CPR training," says Tom. Jim Pavonetti is required to remain CPR and First-Aid certified. "Certification is good for two years, so we hold classes every year at the club," says Jim. "I go every other year, and my assistants and mechanic go the opposite years."

### Don't Let OSHA Get You

Through the survey process, I came to realize that few superintendents are aware of the OSHA requirements that could come back to bite them if their course were ever subjected to an inspection. No matter how thorough you feel your safety program is, it's in your best interest to be sure it takes into account OSHA requirements, which are de-



*Though it is relatively rare for OSHA to conduct golf course inspections, they can and do happen, especially if an accident occurs on your property.*

signed to ensure that facilities “provide a place of employment free from recognized hazards that will or are likely to cause death or serious physical harm to employees.” This is also known as OSHA’s general duty clause and one of the most cited violations during OSHA inspections.

Though it is relatively rare for OSHA to conduct golf course inspections, they can and do happen, especially if an accident occurs on your property. In June, a freak accident where several employees were injured by lightning on a course in Connecticut led OSHA to come calling the following day. During the inspection, the course was fined a whopping \$11,600 for violation of the general duty clause. Keeping our properties and employees OSHA compliant is clearly important not just from a safety perspective, but from a financial perspective as well.

Here are the five OSHA requirements you’d do well to weave in to your maintenance staff safety training program if you haven’t already:

- **A Hazardous Communication Program** covering the basics of working around hazardous materials. Each employee should also be able to locate and use MSDS data sheets and spill kits.

- **Lockout/Tagout training** designed to teach employees to shut off and then tag dangerous machines so that everyone is aware that those pieces of equipment are out of commission until proper maintenance has been performed.

- **Blood-born Pathogen guidelines** to ensure employees avoid on-the-job transmission of hepatitis-B and the HIV virus. Should this rare, but possible, type of situation present itself on the golf course, employees need to know the procedures and precautions.

- **Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) training** to ensure employees recognize how and when to use PPE required by law for operators and applicators.

- **Fire safety training** to ensure employees are well versed in how to handle a fire, including operating a fire extinguisher and executing an evacuation plan.

If incorporating these five topics into your training program seems like more trouble than it’s worth, keep in mind that

you can cover this material with your staff on a rainy day or break it up into five 10- to 15-minute meetings over the course of the season.

Once the training is complete, be sure to document and keep it on file for OSHA to review in the event of an accident. Maintaining accurate training records can save you a huge headache if an inspector calls.

If you would like more information on OSHA requirements, you’ll find it on OSHA’s website: [osha.gov](http://osha.gov).

### **Making a Program Work**

Once you have a safety program in place, there are several steps you can take to ensure its success. Here’s what I, and other superintendents I surveyed, have found helpful.

- **Keep it consistent.** I have found that committing a minimum of 15 minutes a week to teaching and reviewing safety topics with your staff is ideal. If you can spare a little more time, it’s nice to allow another 15 minutes or so for discussion. This is a great opportunity to review any accidents or close calls that anyone has experienced.

Along with a meeting time limit, it’s good if you can establish a consistent starting time for your training sessions. One superintendent felt rounding up the crew a half-hour before the scheduled lunch break worked best.

Time spent on training among our survey respondents ranged from one to five hours over the course of a month. Pelham’s Jeff Wentworth, along with a number of the others we spoke to, found rainy days the best time to squeeze training into a busy schedule. In addition to capitalizing on bad weather, The Stanwich Club’s Scott Niven

tries to create a consistent awareness of safety by bringing it up at regular intervals during the season.

New staff training seems to trump all other training, which makes sense. David Dudones runs a lengthier meeting at the beginning of the season for newcomers to the staff, while, in addition, Jim Pavonetti offers added training for anyone performing a task or operating a piece of equipment for the first time.



- **Add interest to your sessions.** To spice things up now and then, it’s great to call in a guest speaker who could offer some real-life experience. Some of the more interesting ideas I’ve heard about were a chiropractor presenting safe lifting practices and back injury prevention; a first-aid supplier reviewing the various components of a first-aid kit; a fireman on fire extinguisher safety; and an EMT on emergency response. Get creative. Do anything to make safety training something to look forward to, rather than dread.

- **Enlist the support of your supervisory staff.** Most everyone we surveyed seems to involve assistants or mechanics in training employees. Ridgewood Country Club’s Todd Raisch was one who gave both his assistants and mechanic the lion’s share of the responsibility for showing staff the ropes.

Employees look to their higher-ups for cues on proper conduct, which means that in addition to training employees, you and your assistants, foreman, and mechanic must consistently demonstrate the program’s principles in your daily practices. If, for instance, you want crew members to wear safety glasses when raking bunkers, then wear the glasses yourself while showing them how to do the job. As the Dupont program espouses, “You will achieve the level of safety that you demonstrate you want to achieve.”

- **Reinforce safe work practices.** Another tack that seems to work in driving home the

### **The Seven Key Points of a Well-Planned Employee Safety Program**

An effective employee safety program incorporates the following points:

- Responsibility for administering the program
- Compliance with the program
- Communication of safety and health information
- Identification and evaluation of workplace hazards
- Investigation of occupational injuries and illness
- Correction of unsafe conditions or behaviors
- Employee information and training

importance of adhering to your safety program is to empower key people on your staff—your assistants or foreman, for instance—to reinforce safe work practices and correct any unsafe behaviors. This not only sends a strong signal that safety counts, it also gives your assistants or foreman a bit more authority in your staff's eyes, increasing the likelihood that staff will comply. They'll come to know that "Big Brother" is watching!

"At North Jersey," says Dave, "we are always quick to point out any issues that we know have the potential to cause harm because of unsafe actions."

Tom regularly reminds his crew to be aware of their surroundings. "The golf course has many areas that compromise safety," he says. "We emphasize areas that present a hazard and also seeking safety when there's a dangerous situation out there—a lightning storm, for instance."

Though it may seem a bit stringent, a formal disciplinary system should be put in place to identify repeat offenders of your safety policy. Those offenders should have to do more training, or perhaps have their positions within your department reevaluated. While correcting unsafe behavior works, reinforcing safe behaviors can be even more motivating. You might try rewarding your staff with a cookout every other month if the group has managed to steer clear of violations, or you could recognize high performers with an award at the end of the season. ValleyCrest Company has an annual Safety Celebration in which four Ford 250 Pickup Trucks and numerous other smaller awards are presented to employees who have exhibited safety on the job.

The key is to encourage, rather than force, employees to buy in to your safety program. This will, no doubt, yield more lasting results.

### **In the End . . .**

Safety training is always a work in progress. We have to continually evaluate what works and what doesn't, while ensuring that our programs keep pace with the changing needs of our facilities and the changing rules and regulations of our industry.

With just a little bit of effort, you can put a program in place that demonstrates your commitment not just to safety, but to the long-term success of your entire operation.

*Ryan Segrue, a member of the Tee to Green Editorial Committee, is superintendent at ValleyCrest Golf Course Maintenance at Lake Isle Country Club in Eastchester, NY.*

# **Ted Horton's Words to the Wise on Employee Safety Training**

**T**ed Horton, who is currently owner of Ted Horton Consulting, as well as the consulting superintendent to ValleyCrest Golf Course Maintenance and the consulting advisor to the Asian Pacific Group, has more than 45 years of highly successful work experience in private golf and country club, resort, and public daily fee golf course maintenance operations. As a veteran in the golf course industry, Ted has long been a proponent and practitioner of golf course employee safety training.

In the mid-'80s, well before employee safety training was "in vogue" and Ted was superintendent at Westchester Country Club, he and his then assistant Mary Medonis penned an Employee Safety article that earned them the highly respected GCSAA Leo Feser Award.

Now, with golf course safety among his long list of consulting services, Ted was happy to share with us a few of his core beliefs about initiating and maintaining a successful employee safety training program on your course.

1. I think it is important for every superintendent to recognize/admit that "we have a moral and fiduciary responsibility to keep our employees and guests safe. It's that simple in my mind."
2. Skilled superintendents give safety the same attention and effort that they give to quality, morale, cost, and production. Why? Because when each of these areas is given proper importance, they work together to create a strong performance. But if even one of these areas is neglected, the others will suffer too.



3. Zero accidents should always be the goal. Celebrate safety often!
4. Safe and at-risk behaviors (safe and unsafe acts) are always done by people, not machines. This is why we must look at everything in the workplace but concentrate on people and their actions to see whether they are working safely.
5. You maintain standards by setting an example through your own behavior and by making sure that you are following the desired behavior.
6. When it comes to correcting at-risk behaviors, silence is consent. Why? If you see an unsafe behavior and don't address it, the person may think they are performing satisfactorily. Others in the area will also think the behavior is satisfactory. There will be no reason to change.
7. When you actively address safe or unsafe behaviors, you send a signal to the people around you that your safety standards are high.

***When you actively address safe or unsafe behaviors, you send a signal to the people around you that your safety standards are high.***

## Upcoming Events

*President's Message continued from page 1*

of Directors. I am proud to announce that we have officially nominated John O'Keefe of Preakness Hills Country Club for the office of vice president for the 2014 GCSAA board. John has been a long-time Met member and past president, and we wish him well as he enters his final three (but extremely important) years on the board.

If you have any questions for Bob or John about the GCSAA or would like to be more involved in our national organization, please don't hesitate to reach out to them.

### Get Onboard

It is never too early to start thinking about running for the MetGCSA board, joining a committee, or hosting an event next year. Our November Annual Business Meeting is fast approaching, and that's where elections will take place for important positions.

Serving on the board allows you to be involved in the kind of decision making that shapes the future of golf in our area and keeps you at the forefront of the latest developments in our industry. If you are interested in running for the board, please contact Matt Ceplo, our Nominating Committee chairman.

Speaking of getting involved, please be sure to join me at our season-ending golf events: the Met Championship and Met Area Team Championship Qualifier PLUS the Poa Annual Tournament at Spook Rock and the Superintendent/Green Chairperson Tournament at Sunningdale. What a great way to close a challenging season!

**Blake Halderman, CGCS**  
*President*

### **Met Championship and Met Area Team Championship Qualifier PLUS The MetGCSA and Hudson Valley GCSA Poa Annual Tournament**

*Tuesday, September 17*  
Spook Rock Golf Course  
Suffern, NY  
Host: Daniel Madar

### **Met Area Team Championship**

*Monday, September 30*  
Mountain Ridge Country Club  
West Caldwell, NJ  
Host: Cliff Moore

### **Superintendent/Green Chairperson Tournament**

*Tuesday, October 8*  
Sunningdale Country Club  
Scarsdale, NY  
Host: Sean Cain, CGCS

### **Annual Assistants Championship**

*Wednesday, October 23*  
Quaker Ridge Golf Club  
Scarsdale, NY  
Assistant Host: Stephen Wickstrom  
Superintendent Host: Tom Ashfield

## Educational Events

### **NYSTA's Winning Fields, Winning Fairways Seminar**

*Tuesday, October 1*  
Bethpage State Park Golf Course and  
SUNY Farmingdale, Farmingdale, NY

*Winning Fairways* will take place at Bethpage and will kick off with Cornell's Dr. Frank Rossi leading a tour of the Bethpage Green Course. He will discuss turf varieties and selection, as well as how to manage turf without pesticides. Also from Cornell, Dr. Marty Petrovic will discuss fertility and his latest research. And Dr. Ben McGraw of SUNY Delhi will address how to best manage the annual bluegrass weevil on Long Island.

At *Winning Fields*, held at SUNY Farmingdale, Dominic Morales, professor emeritus of SUNY Delhi, and Dr. Tamson Yeh of the Cornell Cooperative Extension of Suffolk County will present sports turf management strategies. In addition, SUNY Farmingdale's Assistant Athletic Director Tom Azzara and The LandTek Group's Kevin Malone will lead a tour discussion of the installation and maintenance of the newly renovated sports facilities.

For further information, contact NYSTA at 800-873-8873 or 518-783-1229, or visit the website at [www.nysta.org](http://www.nysta.org).

### **Turf & Grounds Exposition**

*Tuesday-Thursday, November 12-14*  
Rochester Riverside Convention Center  
Rochester, NY

The Turf & Grounds Exposition offers an excellent opportunity to network while remaining current on the latest research and

trends in turfgrass management. As always, the expo will feature key speakers from all segments of the green industry, as well as a comprehensive trade show with more than 100 exhibitors.

For further information, call the show office at 800-873-8873 or 518-783-1229, or visit the website at [www.nysta.org](http://www.nysta.org).

### **MetGCSA/CAGCS Fall Seminar**

*Wednesday, December 4*  
The Patterson Club  
Fairfield, CT  
Host: Jason Meersman

Save the date, and watch for details.

### **38th Annual New Jersey Green Expo Turf and Landscape Conference**

*Tuesday-Thursday, December 10-12*  
Trump Taj Mahal Resort Casino  
Atlantic City, NJ

The New Jersey Green Expo offers a comprehensive educational program providing cutting-edge applications and tactics to guarantee green industry professionals' success on the job. Offering one of the largest trade shows in the tri-state area, the expo also provides attendees with the opportunity to view the latest and greatest products and services on the market.

For further information, call 973-812-6467 or visit [www.njturfgrass.org](http://www.njturfgrass.org).

### **MetGCSA Winter Seminar**

*Wednesday, January 15, 2014*  
Westchester Country Club  
Rye, NY

Save the date, and watch for details.

# 2013 Scholarship Recipients Named at the Mosholu Parent/Child Scholarship Tournament

by Glen Dube, CGCS, MetGCSA Scholarship Chairman

The 2013 Scholarship Awards Ceremony was held on August 6 as part of the third annual Parent/Child Scholarship Tournament at Mosholu Golf Course. One of America's premier First Tee golf courses, this was the perfect venue for our members and their children to get out and enjoy playing the game that is such a large part of their parents' livelihood.

Our gracious host, Dave Moffett, who is in his second season at Mosholu, had the course in great shape. And the nine-hole, 2,300-yard par 32 course proved to be the perfect setting for kids and adults of all golfing abilities.

Nearly 40 participants (parent/child teams) played in a nine-hole shotgun and were divided into two divisions. One division was for children 12 and over, the other for kids 12 and under. The tournament was free to members and, by all accounts, was a great success. Of course, the superb weather didn't hurt!

### How the Teams Fared

Rockland Country Club's Matt Ceplo and his daughter, Megan, took first place in the 12-and-over division with a one under score of 31. Meadow Brook's John Carlone and his son, David, took second place with an even par score of 32.

First place honors in the 12-and-under di-



At the Mosholu Parent/Child Golf Event, MetGCSA scholarship winners receive their well-deserved awards (left to right): Teddy Norman, MetGCSA member; Frank Amodio with his daughter, Katherine; Bill Perlee with his daughter, Sarah; John Carlone with his son, David; Mike and Lisa Cook with their daughter, Courtney; Greg Wójcick accepting the award for his daughter, Kara; Samuel Kerr, son of David Kerr, with his grandfather.

vision went to Team Dube. I partnered up with my son, Jake, and nephew, Cole. Thanks to their putting prowess, we shot an even par score of 32. Second place went to Kevin Doyle and his daughter, Bailey, with a score

of 37, while third place honors went to Rob Dorsch and his daughter, Savanna, who came in with a score of 38.

When all was said and done, and my son, nephew, and I got in the car to go home, the

Brendan, son of Brae Burn's Blake Halderman



Kylie (l to r), Taylor, and Avery, daughters of North Jersey's David Dudones



Kate (l) and Sarah with their dad, Greg Gutter of Mt. Kisco





*Centennial's Glen Dube with son Jake (l) and nephew Cole*

first thing they said was how much they were looking forward to doing this again next year. If you saw the look on the kids' faces when they swung and finally connected on a shot, you'd know that more than just my son and nephew are looking forward to a repeat event.

Congratulations to this year's winners!

## The Scholarship Award Winners

After golf, everyone reconvened at the clubhouse for a delicious dinner on the patio overlooking the ninth hole, which offered the perfect opportunity to enjoy the great weather and beautiful sunset. After dinner was served and the prizes from the golf event were distributed, scholarship awards were presented to 12 deserving recipients, who were either MetGCSA members' children or a member themselves. In addition to maintaining stellar GPAs, these students are all very involved in their communities and participate in many extracurricular activities. It's amazing how they can get it all done and still maintain exceptional grades.

Please join me in congratulating this

*Kelsie (l) and Carlie with their dad, Scott Tretera of Harrell's*



year's scholarship recipients—and their proud parents:

**Katherine Amodio**, daughter of Jean and Frank Amodio of Valley View Greenhouses, is a senior at Boston College working toward a Ph.D. in psychology.

**Jack Bresnahan**, son of Tami and John Bresnahan of BASF Chemical Company, is a senior at Plymouth State University working toward a B.S. in adventure education with a minor in music.

**David Carlone**, son of Leslie and John Carlone, superintendent of Meadow Brook Club, is a junior at Hofstra University studying film.

**Courtney Cook**, daughter of Lisa and Mike Cook of The Care of Trees, is a sophomore at the University of Delaware studying communications.

**Austin Garceau**, son of Mariane and Tim Garceau, superintendent of Haworth Country Club, is entering the masters program at Western Carolina University studying clinical mental health counseling.

**Sarah Garceau**, daughter of Mariane and Tim Garceau, superintendent of Haworth Country Club, is a senior at SUNY Cortland majoring in economics with a double minor in history and sociology.

**Amanda Gross**, daughter of Elizabeth and Doug George, superintendent of Waccabuc Country Club, is a junior at Northeastern University studying civil and environmental engineering.

**Samual Kerr**, son of Betsy and Dave Kerr, superintendent of Ridgewood Country Club, will be a senior at Liberty University majoring in business marketing.

**Teddy Norman**, is a member of the MetGCSA, working as an intern for superintendent Joe Alonzi, at Westchester Country Club in Rye, NY. He is a junior at the University of Massachusetts-Amherst Stockbridge School of Agriculture.

**Sarah Perlee**, daughter of Lorah and Bill Perlee, superintendent of The Apawamis Club, is in her freshman year at The University of Vermont majoring in animal science.

**Jane Sylvester**, daughter of Julie and Dave Sylvester, sales representative for Bayer Environmental Science, is in her senior year at Michigan State University studying music education and performance.

**Kara Wojick**, daughter of *Tee to Green* Managing Editor Pandora Wojick and Greg Wojick, principal, Playbooks for Golf, is a senior at the University of Connecticut, pursuing a bachelor's in English and a master's in secondary education.

In addition to congratulating our recipients, I'd like to recognize those past boards who had the foresight to initiate our Scholarship Fund, which has enabled us to assist in the ever-increasing college costs thanks to our Annual Bill Caputi Scholarship Raffle, the 50/50s at our monthly meetings, and last but not least, a portion of our dues. Finally, a special thank you needs to go out to the entire Scholarship Committee for their hard work in reviewing and awarding each scholarship.

Please remember to support our scholarship raffle. It is the major income-generator for our Scholarship Fund!

*Glen Dube, CGCS, chairman of the Scholarship Committee, is superintendent at Centennial Golf Club in Carmel, NY.*

## Member on the Move

**Carlos Gonzalez-Guerrero** is a new assistant superintendent at The Tuxedo Club in Tuxedo Park, NY. Previous position: Assistant superintendent at Manhattan Woods Golf Club, West Nyack, NY.

## Birth

Congratulations to **Scott Olson**, superintendent of Hampshire Country Club in Mamaroneck, NY, and his wife Brook Hanna, on the birth of their twin boys, Grant Asher (7 lbs., 4 ozs.) and Blake Abram (8 lbs., 5 ozs.), on August 15.

# A Fond Farewell to Ineke Pierpoint

*The MetGCSA's Longtime Executive Secretary Retires After Nearly 20 Years of Service*

by Matt Ceplo, CGCS

**A**tribute, a thank you, accolades for a job well done. This article is just a small token of our tremendous appreciation for Ineke Pierpoint's many years of service, working diligently behind-the-scenes to assist our association and our membership as the MetGCSA's executive secretary.

"Ineke has been the backbone of the association for nearly 20 years," says MetGCSA President Blake Halderman, commenting on Ineke's hard work and dedication. "She was extremely knowledgeable about the day-to-day operations, and being part of a family of golf course superintendents, she fully understood the membership and its needs."

## Steeped in the Turf World

Well before her involvement with our association, Ineke was immersed in the world of golf course management. She married George Pierpoint in October of 1967 when he was the golf course superintendent at Orange County Golf Club. George was an accomplished superintendent his entire career. And as the wife of a superintendent, Ineke became more than familiar with the inner workings of the job of a turfgrass manager.

I remember talking to Ineke about George when he was working at the Concord Resort and Golf Club in Kiamesha Lake, NY. That was when the Catskills were the place to be, and George was managing the resort's two courses: The Monster Course, which was, at the time, nationally known, and the International. If managing two courses wasn't bad enough, he also operated the resort's ski slope. George was putting in long hours year-round, and Ineke was right there alongside him, offering her understanding and support.

Two years after they were married, Ineke and George began a family. They have two sons, George IV and Rob. No surprise, they've both followed in their father's footsteps, becoming superintendents. George is at Harbor Pines Golf Club in Egg Harbor Township, NJ, and has three boys: Travis, 16; Logan, 14; and Ryan, 11. Rob is a superintendent at Onondaga Golf & Country Club

in Fayetteville, NY, and has two children: Megan, 16, and Garrett, 13.

## Putting Her Knowledge to Work

In the midst of growing a family of turfgrass managers, Ineke seized the opportunity to become further involved in the industry she knew best, accepting a position as client administrator with the MGA at the start of 1994.

Some of you may be surprised to know that Ineke is actually employed by the MGA and that the MetGCSA is actually an MGA client.

When Ineke was hired, our association was the only organization outside of the MGA in her charge. Her job description, however, quickly grew, and in her nearly 20-year tenure with the MGA, she was responsible, at one time or another, for at least six other clients. And for a period, she was juggling responsibility for all six at once: the Hudson Valley GCSA, the New Jersey GCSA, The Long Island Seniors Golf Association, the Metropolitan Club Managers Association, the Tri-State Turf Research Foundation, and of course us, the MetGCSA. Add to that helping with the Westchester

Seniors, Eastern Seniors, U.S. Seniors, and the Triangle Matches and you can see Ineke had a more-than-full plate.

To put things into even better perspective, at that point, Ineke was juggling more than 1,742 members. She collected dues, sent meeting notices for more than five or six monthly meetings, while tracking attendance at each of those meetings. She oversaw six different budgets, handled announcements both online and in print, and tracked all the organizations' paid advertisers, while integrating the ads into the various associations' newsletters and annual directories, which she compiled. The list, I'm sure, goes on. All you had to do was spend a few minutes in Ineke's office, and you'd realize just how much she did. The phone was constantly ringing.

And then there were those instances that Ineke would go above-and-beyond the call of duty. I remember one time in particular when I was president and I got a call I wish I could forget. Harrell's Joe Stahl rang me early on a Saturday morning to tell me that then Siwanoy Super Dave Mahoney had passed. In order to get the information out to the membership as quickly as possible, Ineke went into the office that Saturday and sent an email to



*Ineke and George Pierpoint*

# Meet Susan O'Dowd, the MetGCSA's New Executive Secretary



the entire membership. This was not the only time she extended herself for our association.

MGA Executive Director Jay Mottola was quick to point out the wonderful job Ineke did in working with our association, as well as a number of other important client groups that work out of the MGA's Golf Central headquarters. "Most notable," says Jay, "was Ineke's outstanding and dedicated work with the MetGCSA, while also working closely with associations like the Hudson Valley GCSA and the Tri-State Turf Research Foundation.

"Ineke's passion for the important role that golf course superintendents play in golf and at our clubs and courses came naturally for her, as her husband George is a retired superintendent and her two sons have continued the family tradition and are in the business as well. Ineke leaves a record of great service to the MGA and golf."

## Retired but Never Idle

Well, yes, Ineke plans on enjoying a little R&R in retirement, but a woman that on-the-go never completely grinds to a halt. Her Harley days, for one, aren't over. (Yes, Ineke and George own Harleys.) "I still plan on heading to Long Island this September with the motorcycle club and then to Stanton, Virginia, next year," notes Ineke. And then, of course, she and George look forward to spending more time with their grandchildren. "Now when we visit them," says Ineke, "I don't have to worry about being back to work on Monday!"

Ineke and George have moved up to Middletown, NY, where George was born and raised and where they first met—just in time to celebrate their 46th anniversary in October!

"We appreciate all that Ineke has done for the MetGCSA," says Blake, "and we will miss her. We wish her all the best in her retirement."

*Matt Ceplo, a member of the Tee to Green Editorial Committee and a MetGCSA past president, is superintendent at Rockland Country Club in Sparkill, NY.*

**W**e would like to give a warm welcome to Susan O'Dowd, the MetGCSA's new executive secretary. Susan is replacing Ineke Pierpoint, who has retired after nearly 20 years of service to the Met (see article, left).

An avid golfer and former board member of the local chapter of the Executive Women's Golf Association (EWGA), Susan brings a wealth of knowledge and experience to this position. She came to us from American Independent Paper in Tarrytown, NY, where she worked for 17 years as a full-charge bookkeeper/office manager in charge of maintaining all financial reports while overseeing payroll and human resources.

Born in Brooklyn, NY, Susan was raised and educated in Ireland. Moving back to New York after high school, she went to work for family at Intercity Cabinetry & Design in lower Manhattan. Interestingly, this is where singer/songwriter Mariah Carey recorded her first hit song, "Vision of Love," that caught the attention of Columbia Records. Mariah was just 17!

"My brother was kind enough to let her and her band use an empty room in the back of the woodshop, no charge, to do their music," explains Susan, who remembers Mariah rushing through the shop to her makeshift studio. "When she got her first big check from Columbia, she showed her gratitude by buying my brother a state-of-the-art coffeemaker."

## There's More to Susan Than Meets the Eye!

In 1988, Susan met her husband, Richard, who was president of Manhattan Electronics, a successful computer peripheral store lo-

cated in the heart of the electronic business district in midtown Manhattan.

They lived in the City until 1990, when their daughter, Stacey, was born. They traded the bustle of Manhattan for a home in Irvington, NY, where they resided for 19 years and then moved to Tarrytown in 2009.

It was in 2008 that Susan decided to steep herself in the game she loves. She joined the EWGA, becoming involved in all aspects of the association. Susan served on the board as Leadership Chair for two years, became a league captain, mentored new golfers, recruited new members, organized outings and tournaments, and went on to win the MVP Cup for two consecutive years!

"I'm happy to say," says Susan, "that I'm off to Arizona September 6 to compete in the EWGA finals." Yes, this is the largest women's amateur golf tournament in the world!

"Susan stood out from the rest of the applicants for this position," says MetGCSA Executive Director Ed Brockner, "and has already gotten off to a great start on behalf of the Met."

Susan does lament, however, that filling Ineke's footsteps won't be easy: "She has done an amazing job and will truly be missed by all, especially me! All the associations I'm assigned to work for—the MetGCSA, HVGCSA, LISGA, and the Tri-State Turf Research Foundation—have been very welcoming and patient with the whole transition process. I'm happy to work with such a great group of people."

Speaking for everyone in the Met... the feeling is mutual!

You can reach Susan at at 914-909-4843 or sodowd@mgagolf.org.

# The MetGCSA 2013 Summer Social...

## ...a Siwanoy Country Club SMASH!!!

Hosted by Steven McGlone



**Bob Wolverton & Party Hosts  
Margie & Steven McGlone**

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**Kevin Collins, Ken Benoit, Ken Genfile**

**Blake Halderman, Ed Brockner, Glen Dube**

**Jim Pavonetti & Scott Apgar**

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Chip & Clare Lafferty**

**Dana & Dave Dudones**

**Alexis Hewitt, Megan Baggott, Marie Marcella**

**Jesse & Alicia Shannon**

**Melodee & Ken Benoit, Carolyn Nielsen**



# Spook Rock to Host Triple-Header Event

by Kevin Collins

**O**n September 17, the MetGCSA will hold its annual Met Championship and Met Area Team Championship Qualifier at Spook Rock Golf Course in Suffern, NY, while teaming up with the Hudson Valley GCSA for NYSTA's annual fundraiser, the Poa Annual Tournament.

Spook Rock is a great venue for this triple-header event. Designed by Frank Duane, Spook Rock opened for play in 1969 and is known for its contoured fairways and scenic layout. The course averages 38,000 rounds of golf a year and has consistently been ranked in the top 100 public golf courses in the country.

The actual "Spook Rock" is located near the intersection of Airmont and Spook Rock Roads in Suffern. And according to legend, this rock marks the grave of an Indian princess who was slaughtered by local white settlers. When the moon is full, her ghost is said to walk the earth with the sole purpose of haunting the descendants of her murderers. Pretty scary stuff!

## Staying on Your Game

While you won't have to fear a visit from the Indian princess this trip, you will have to be concerned with staying on your game. There are a number of intricacies to playing this course well, so I asked our meeting host, Dan Madar, to give us a few pointers on two of his favorite holes on the course.

First was hole #1. "The first hole is a difficult par 4, about 420 yards in length," says Dan. "It doglegs left with bunkers right and left, narrowing the landing area. If you can hit a Glen Dube-like draw, you'll have a short iron approach. If not, hit a three-wood or long-iron to set up a mid-iron approach shot. Left is out of bounds for the entire length of the hole.

The second was hole #12. "This hole is a short, 325-yard par 4. You can't drive the green, but you may want to use your driver to get past all the trouble about 220 yards from the tee. The trouble includes water left and right, a fairway bunker left, and some mounding right. The green is bunkered right and left and has some severe contours. This is a nicely framed hole."

## Dan, Now and Then

Dan knows every intricacy of these, and every other hole on the course, all too well. A fixture in the Hudson Valley for the past 26 years, Dan's been the lead guy at Spook Rock since 1987. His love of golf and golf courses began in the '70s when he worked as a starter at a local municipal course in Livonia, MI.

Soon after, Dan enlisted in the Navy and spent four years serving our country. When he was discharged, he decided to pursue a career in the turfgrass industry and enrolled in Michigan State University. His first real exposure to golf course maintenance occurred at Winged Foot, where he interned for Sherwood Moore. With an associate's degree in hand, Dan landed his first assistant's job at the famed Piping Rock Club on Long Island, working for Mel Lucas. After six years at Piping Rock, Dan accepted his first and current superintendent's position at Spook Rock.

I first met Dan in the early '90s. Back then, Dan didn't have any grey hair. Now he has nothing but grey hair. During our phone conversation, the subject of aging came up. "I've turned into a grumpy old man," says Dan. (I'm older than Dan, so what does that make me?) We talked hip replacement and other maladies before turning the conversation to one of my earliest memories of Dan.

It was back in the 1990s, and we were standing on one of Spook Rock's fairways when a golfer approached us to complain about the unranked sand trap he just hit out of. Dan's eyes narrowed as he told the man, "I don't have the crew to rake bunkers every day. If the golfers practiced a little etiquette and raked the trap after they hit out of it, there wouldn't be a problem." The complaining golfer slinked away. I stole a quick look at Dan, and his nostrils were flared. I made a mental note never to antagonize Dan.

## Working Overtime

Always hard at work, Dan's been occupied with a number of projects at Spook Rock over the past decade. Dan reports, "We've been on a drill-and-fill and Dryject program for seven years, so the greens are draining better and the turf is much healthier. In 2008, we installed a new irrigation system,

*Dan Madar and Teddy*

and we've also cut down trees around the greens and tees, in-house, to increase airflow and sunlight. I'm pleased with the results."

In addition to Dan's responsibilities at Spook Rock, he is also the superintendent of nearby Germonds Cemetery, a job he thoroughly enjoys. "It's very peaceful over there, and the residents never complain," he says with a chuckle.

Dan has been generous with his time in giving back to the industry. He served as president of the HVGCSA and was a board member for many years. In addition, Dan donated 15 years of his time as chairman of the HVGCSA's Hudson Valley Cup tournament, which raises funds for scholarships and research. It is still the most popular event on the HVGCSA calendar every year.

## Dan, the Family Man

I can't help but think back to the days when I'd be in Dan's office and his young children would be running around. Well, of course, they're not so little anymore. Daughter Kristen, 27, graduated from Rochester Institute of Technology (RIT), is married, and is running her own Media and Advertising business. Son David, 24, is a professional musician (davemadar.com) currently touring and performing around the country. Son Eric, 22, graduated from RIT and is a professional photographer. This month's cover shot was courtesy of Eric! And finally, son Alex, 19, is a sophomore at RIT, majoring in the hotel and hospitality management program and swimming breast-stroke for the RIT Tigers swim team.

Last but not least, Dan and his lovely bride, Karen, will celebrate their 32nd wedding anniversary this coming October. Karen runs her own interior design business.

Dan looks forward to a big turnout on the 17th. Hope to see you all there!

*Kevin Collins, a member of the Tee to Green Editorial Committee, is Mid-Atlantic and Northeast territory manager for Aquatrols Corp. of America and the owner/president of Dryject Northeast/TurfPounders.*

## Superintendents and Green Chairs Are Sunningdale Bound

by Chip Lafferty

*F*inally . . . MetGCSA members will not only meet at Sunningdale Country Club, but also have the opportunity to play golf at the October 8 Superintendent/Green Chairman tourney. Though this will be the fifth meeting Superintendent Sean Cain has hosted in his 15-year tenure at the club, only one—the 1998 Invitational—offered members the opportunity to get out and enjoy the links.

Well, some things are worth waiting for. This trip, members will have the fortunate opportunity to play a course that has benefited from numerous enhancements over the past seven years.

### A Changed Course

In 2006, Sean began working with architect Mike DeVries to recapture the course's original 1917 Seth Raynor design. Thanks to Mike Moss, the club's historian and Sean's green chair at the time, Sunningdale was able to not only confirm that Raynor routed and built the course, but also understand the long chain of modifications that took place over the years to Raynor's original design.

"Some of the changes we were proposing weren't an easy sell," says Sean. "but after some tough meetings, we were able to convince the membership of the value of re-establishing lost vistas and the integrity of many of the holes."

Having a firm grasp on how architects from the early 1900s worked with the land and its topography, Mike DeVries was able to flawlessly recapture many of Raynor's design features. Sean cites the sixth hole as a prime example of DeVries' handiwork. "Mike reestablished the strategy of this Alps hole. He lengthened it by more than 70 yards and added some of his own brilliance to the green and tee complex," Sean explains.

Also notable was DeVries' work on holes 8 and 4. "On 8," says Sean, "Mike realigned the tee and removed a number of trees behind the green. Then using his bulldozer like a paintbrush, he tied the 4th green into

the 8th green with a shared chipping area, effectively making 4 and 8 the largest Biarritz green in the area!"

To date, the club has reworked holes 4, 5, 6, 7, and 8 and completed green and tee complex work on 11, 12, and 14. This fall, the club will forge ahead with plans to rework the 9th green complex and lengthen number 10. "This will involve tying the 9th green complex to the 10th tee and moving the 10th green back about 40 yards to its original location between the first and 11th tee," explains Sean, who is pleased not only with the fruits of their labor, but also with the membership's positive response to any and all improvements.

"Once the membership realized what we had here, they were behind our efforts 100 percent," says Sean. "And with Mike's help, we have been able to reveal what Sunningdale can be."

### Where Have the Years Gone?

It doesn't seem that long ago that Sean began his career in turfgrass management with Fred Montgomery on the grounds crew of Mohawk Country Club near Sean's home turf in Schenectady, NY . . . or that he completed his B.S. in Turfgrass Management at the University of Rhode Island . . . interned at The Stanwich Club with Scott Niven . . . and then, in 1991, with degree in hand, landed an assistant's position with Jeff Scott, then superintendent at The Apawamis Club.

Clearly, time flies when you're having fun.

After four years at Apawamis, Sean knew he had gained not only the training and experience he needed to take the next step, but also the confidence. "I learned a tremendous amount from Fred, Scott, and Jeff," he says. "I was ready when Sunningdale opened up."

In addition to leading a highly regarded golf course, Sean has, over the years, led a number of MetGCSA committees, serving on the Board of Directors for five years. He devoted most of that time to co-chairing the Tournament Committee, but also



Sean Cain, CGCS

chaired the Membership Committee, and even had a stint in 2003 as *Tee to Green's* co-editor with college buddy, Rolling Hill's Glenn Perry.

"It was important to me to try to give back to MetGCSA and our members. 'Try' is the key word here," says Sean. "I give a lot of credit to the board members who have gone the distance, fulfilled their commitments, and become president of our association."

### Beyond Industry Obligations

For Sean, there's no life without sports. He's an avid cyclist and an accomplished low-handicap golfer—a force to be reckoned with at Met golf events. Sean's also been known to frequent the gym, where one of his prime objectives is to prep himself for the ski season. A hard-core skier, Sean spends most weekends in the off-season at his "fortress of solitude," a home he owns near the slopes in Stowe, VT.

By the time the Superintendent/Green Chair tourney arrives, Sean will start thinking about giving his clubs a rest and heading north.

"I go up to Vermont every chance I get in the winter," says Sean. "It gives me a chance to recharge my batteries and get ready for another challenging season ahead."

Be sure to join Sean at Sunningdale for this season-ending event, and enjoy all that the newly renovated course has to offer!

*Chip Lafferty, a member of the Tee to Green Editorial Committee, is superintendent at Rye Golf Club in Rye, NY.*

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