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Tee To Green

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The Environment: How Our Members Are Doing Their Part

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W

ith the season in full swing, our never-ending winter is getting closer to a distant memory. I'm sure we all will be pining for those cool nights in another month or so! Ahhh, the vicious cycle of the life of a golf course superintendent!

Along with the start of the golf season, spring also marks the beginning of a new fiscal year for our association's advertising. I would like to take this opportunity to, once again, thank all of the vendors who supported the MetGCSA's long list of endeavors this past year. Thanks to their generosity, we've been able to support necessary research, scholarships, and environmental awareness efforts, including the BMP initiative. We have reached out to victims of Hurricane Sandy and to members who have suffered an illness or other hardship. Our vendors also helped subsidize our holiday party and a number of other major events, as well as initiatives like The First Tee and the Wee One. The list goes on.

So on behalf of the MetGCSA, we thank all of the vendors for their support, and I encourage all of our members to show these vendors the same kind of support they've shown us throughout the year. For a full list of sponsors, please visit the website and keep a lookout for their advertisements in the *Tee to Green*, the Membership Directory, and at our events throughout the season. A special thank you to those new and returning sponsors for 2014-2015!

Across the Radio Waves

For those of you who didn't know to tune in to AM 1490 WGCH on April 24, I wanted to let you know that GlenArbor's Ken Benoit made a guest appearance on "The Clubhouse," alongside host Brian Crowell, head golf professional at GlenArbor Golf Club. In addition to discussing the world of sports and some helpful home lawn tips, Ken was able to publicize the work superintendents are doing every day to promote "environmental sustainability," while at the same time, stressing the importance of the



*Blake Halderman, CGCS
MetGCSA President*

"open green space" we provide and care for on a daily basis. Ken even had an opportunity to discuss the New York State BMP initiative that he, along with other Met members and superintendents statewide, have worked so hard to bring to fruition.

I want to thank Ken for taking the time to spread the good word about our profession and our work. I would encourage anyone and everyone to do their part in communicating to the people in their communities about the important role golf courses play in preserving and enhancing our environment.

Advocacy Pays Dividends

With that being said, it is nice to see that the time and effort we (Met members, NYSTA members, lobbyists, and other volunteers) are putting into communicating what we do to lawmakers and politicians in Albany is actually paying dividends. For the second consecutive year, after a five-year drought in funding, we were able to secure a significant appropriation to the Turfgrass Environmental Stewardship Fund. This fund supports research that is essential in providing turf management solutions that are key in preserving and protecting environmental quality.

In addition to the fund, we also discussed the current costly and arduous Pesticide Reporting Law, as well as the definition of IPM to include the use of pesticides if necessary. We are hopeful that, in the future, we can reduce the burden for applicators statewide.

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What Area Clubs Are Doing to Enhance Environmental Quality on Their Courses

by Ed Brockner, MetGCSA Executive Director



The Arthur P. Weber Environmental Leaders in Golf Award is presented each spring at the MGA/USGA Green Chairman Seminar and recognizes an MGA member club that has demonstrated environmental stewardship through improvements in wildlife habitat, IPM, water quantity and quality management, education and outreach, and resource conservation.

This year, Manhattan Woods Golf Club, site of the 2014 MetGCSA Invitational (see profile, page 11, on Jesse Shannon in this issue), took home the top honors in March. There were several other finalists among Met members who have also been doing their part to protect the environment at their respective clubs and promote these efforts in their surrounding communities.

With environmental concerns attracting an increasing amount of interest and attention, we wanted to highlight some of the specific programs being implemented by those MetGCSA members who received recognition as finalists for this year's Arthur P. Weber Award. You will find their initiatives described below under the five main award criteria. Our hope is that these stories will offer more than just a good read, but also a bit of inspiration for furthering the environmental efforts on your course.

Wildlife/Habitat Preservation

Describe how area wildlife is both protected and enhanced at and around the facility, including preservation of native habitats.

Manhattan Woods has been recognized as a Certified Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary, a major part of which includes the constant effort to preserve wildlife and their habitats. Specific work under Jesse's direction in this area has included the construction of brush piles, wildlife corridors, and the installation of 30 additional bird, bat, and butterfly boxes. The boxes are monitored on a monthly basis to track success, but also to help eliminate predators, such as house sparrows and wasps. By designing and landscaping gardens on the course with native plant vegetation and by protecting the course's existing wetland areas, great opportunities



Students convene at Whippoorwill for an ornithology class and birdhouse building.

A natural area on Whippoorwill's 17th hole.

have been created for local and migratory wildlife to find food and shelter on the property.

Through what the club refers to as a "low intensity" maintenance approach, the amount of managed turfgrass has been reduced, with 62 acres of natural land now protected from disturbance. Along with "environmentally sensitive" zones flagged throughout the course, wildlife and native plants have a chance to thrive. With the club's habitat and biodiversity conservation, Manhattan Woods has been able to preserve the rich biological diversity present in the region.



Manhattan Woods' Assistant Super Brian Lenik presents the club's wildlife and preservation efforts to membership and guests.

Education/Outreach

Describe any of your efforts to educate your staff, golfers, and the general public on environmental issues related to golf courses. Include specific outreach activities you have been involved with in the past year.

Paul Gonzalez of The Whippoorwill Club in Armonk, NY, another Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary, has made great strides in engaging the local community and fostering a partnership with the Louis Calder Center, Fordham University's biological field station that borders the club. In 2008, Dr. Alan Clark of the Center worked with Whippoorwill to establish a nesting box program that has been extremely successful. In addition, the club set up a Resource Advisory Committee that includes not only members and staff, but also Dr. Clark and Steven Coleman, the environmental coordinator for the town of New Castle. As the single largest landowner in the Kenisco Reservoir Watershed, Whippoorwill has also worked for nearly a decade with the New York State DEP in establishing a Water Resource Protection Plan.

Through its work with the Louis Calder

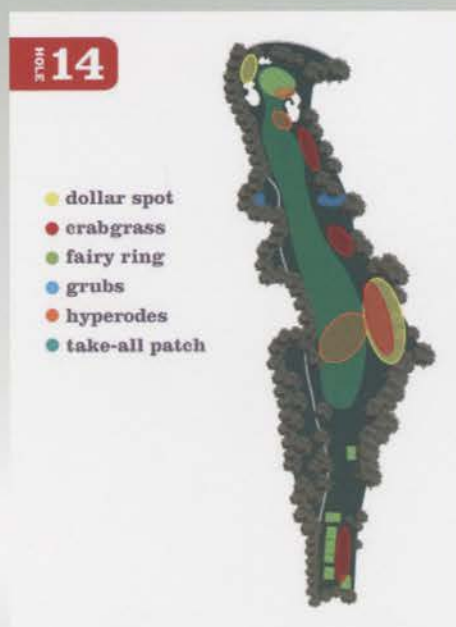
Center, the club was also introduced to Rodney Olsen, who works with special needs students, particularly those with autism. As part of their treatment and educational program, these individuals take part in an ornithology class where students construct birdhouses that the club purchases to help fund their visits and learning. All of the community outreach that the club has initiated yields benefits that go far beyond turf, having a tangible impact on those in the community.

Integrated Pest Management

Please outline and describe the facility's IPM program. This should include all steps taken to manage pests from site alteration and physical exclusion to monitoring and population-based pest management. In addition, please list all nonchemical or reduced-risk pest management practices implemented over the past season.

Integrated pest management is practiced intensively at Brae Burn Country Club in Purchase, NY, under the leadership of MetGCSA President Blake Halderman. Growing-degree days are tracked yearly to help predict insect migration and development, disease emergence, weed germination, and annual bluegrass seed-head production. All of this data is compiled and reviewed to help better time chemical applications. Properly timed applications help reduce the need for secondary applications, which waste time, money, and could potentially harm the environment.

In addition to the rigorous growing-degree day charting, hot spots are mapped to help pinpoint where turf pests are most likely to cause damage beyond acceptable thresholds. Maps of these susceptible areas have been generated from years of daily scouting and recording of damage beyond those thresholds. By utilizing hot-spot maps to make pest applications, Blake is able to limit stress to the environment by treating only the areas that need to be treated and is better able to ensure that every application made is effective.



Playbooks for Golf assisted Brae Burn in mapping problem areas on the golf course.

Blake has found that one of the best ways to test the effectiveness of applications is to cover a small area with plywood prior to application so the area can remain untreated. This allows the treated and untreated areas to be compared side-by-side to evaluate the effectiveness of the application. Notes are made and reviewed in an attempt to further increase the effectiveness of future applications. Through this attention to detail and constant monitoring and evaluation, the best techniques are identified to prevent an excess of input while maintaining turfgrass of the highest quality.

Water Quantity and Quality Management

Explain the facility's water use practices and efforts to conserve water. Please give a description of the irrigation system and how much of the total golf course acreage is watered and maintained. In addition to water conservation, it is essential that the applicant

outlines and describes in some detail measures implemented to preserve and protect water quality from fertilizer and pesticide contamination.

Over the past year, Willow Ridge's Bert Dickinson was able to successfully reduce the club's water use through vigilant monitoring and the elimination of low-priority sprinkler heads in the rough. About 40 of the club's 121 acres are irrigated using a computerized, central irrigation system to water all greens, tees, and fairways.

With permanent in-ground soil moisture sensors and handheld moisture meters, irrigation schedules were fine-tuned and localized dry spots pinpointed and then hand-watered to reduce water consumption. As a side benefit, firmer conditions were also achieved, improving playability while saving water and money.

Through cultivation practices such as aeration and spiking coupled with the proper application of nutrients, Bert also created conditions that encouraged healthy turf with extensive root systems that were more drought-resistant.

As a result of these measures, in August 2013, the course's water use was down 15 percent from the previous year, with the two periods having similar temperature and rainfall readings.

Bert has also protected the course's water features from contamination with a number of strategies. Ponds and streams are surrounded by vegetative buffers of natural water plants that are able to utilize nutrients before they enter the water. Playing areas adjacent to these water features are treated with fertilizer and chemicals only when runoff potential is low. And pond banks are spot treated to further reduce the potential for runoff. In addition, vegetative buffers are cut back each season and the organic matter removed, eliminating unnecessary nutrients from entering the ponds and streams. And Triploid Grass Carp are stocked in the ponds to help control aquatic plants naturally.

By decreasing irrigation use throughout the course and protecting the course's water

features from chemicals, Willow Ridge has adhered to environmental best practices and achieved excellent results.

Resource Conservation

Describe, in detail, the conservation efforts for all resources at your facility (excluding water covered previously), specifically addressing energy use, recycling, reducing and recovering processes.

It is fitting that another one of the finalists for the Arthur P. Weber Environmental Award was Old Westbury on Long Island, the home club of the namesake of this honor. (See page 6 for more information on Mr. Weber and his contributions to the game.) Thomas McAvoy and his team have continued the great tradition of conservation at the club in a number of ways. Putting a new twist on a large-scale composting project that had been employed in the past, Thomas collects leaves and branches from the property and recycles them to make wood chips, mulch, and soil, which are stored and dis-

persed as needed throughout the property.

In addition, Thomas and his staff have worked to reduce labor and fuel costs on the property. One practice they've employed with success is to map out specific areas on the course that require work and then, instead of dispersing employees individually, send them out in groups to those areas. This simple measure cuts down on the number of carts and equipment needed to complete a job, which in turn reduces not only fuel costs, but also wear-and-tear on equipment.

Other efficiencies include the use of growth regulators on fine turf areas to reduce required mowing and also replacing many of the annual garden plantings throughout the course with native perennials. This investment helps reduce the hidden cost of fuel used to ship annuals each year, as well as the labor and materials (fertilizer, soil, water) required in yearly planting.

Off the course, the clubhouse has committed to recycling the large number of cardboard and plastic items generated, and in an all-out effort to cut energy costs, electrically timed lights have been installed in all the club's facilities.

Making Others Aware of Our Environmental Efforts

Each of the finalists for the Arthur P. Weber Award perform a variety of excellent practices at their clubs to protect the environment, but just as important, they took their efforts a step further by applying for the award and telling their story. By sharing the work that they are doing from the perspective of preservation, education and conservation, the professionalism of all golf course superintendents is also reflected in this effort. With the increasing attention to the environmental impact of golf courses, each of these finalists now has another tool to help them prove their environmental stewardship to club members and the community. It is up to all of us, as part of the MetGCSA, to help promote this message and to share all of the wonderful work that is being done at clubs in our area in harmony with nature.

One of many environmentally protected areas at Manhattan Woods Golf Club.



2014 Green Chairman Series Takes Environmental Twist

The MGA Foundation hosted this year's Green Chairman Education Series at North Hills Country Club in Manhasset, NY. Drawing a full house that included superintendents, professionals, green chairmen, and club officials, the meeting focused on current trends in environmental stewardship and golf course management.

Among the impressive panel of industry professionals were four speakers from the USGA Green Section. Northeast Region Director David Oatis shared the USGA's plans and goals for continued sustainability for golf courses; Senior Agronomist Jim Skorulski discussed how to build, and make the most of, natural areas on your course; Director of Special Projects Hunki Yun, discussed the USGA's research on slow play and its efforts to speed up the game; and Northeast Region Agronomist Adam Moeller offered practical solutions to a number of the challenges facing today's golf courses.

As the MetGCSA's Environmental Committee Chair, Ken Benoit shared news on the New York State Best Management Practices program, explaining its focus on promoting golf course management practices that protect and enhance our natural resources.

Bob Farren, director of golf course and grounds management at Pinehurst Resort, offered interesting insight into what he has done on the course to make it more sustainable in preparation for the women's and men's U.S. Open. And last, but not least, Rockland Country Club Super and Tri-State Turf Research Foundation President Matt Ceplo provided an update on recent Tri-State-funded research projects and activities.

Met Member Earns Top Honor for Environmental Efforts

One of the highlights of the meeting was the presentation of the 2014 Arthur P. Weber MGA Club Environmental Leaders in Golf Award to Manhattan Woods Golf Club in West Nyack, NY. Congratulations to Class A Met member Jesse Shannon, who is at the helm of this prestigious Gary Player-designed golf course. Presenting the award was GlenArbor Superintendent and MetGCSA Environmental Chair Ken Benoit, who also recognized five other courses—four of them Met members—that received honorable mentions for their environmental programs. Congratulations to Brae Burn Country Club in Purchase, NY; Old Westbury Golf & Country Club in Old Westbury, NY; Whippoorwill Golf Club in Armonk, NY; Willow Ridge Country Club in Harrison, NY; and Newton Country Club in Newton, NJ. (Read about their environmental efforts starting on page 3.)

For the uninitiated, the Arthur P. Weber Award was established to recognize an MGA member club that has demonstrated environmental stewardship through golf course maintenance, construction, education, and research. It is named in honor of past MGA President Arthur P. Weber, who passed away in 2008. Weber wrote an



Accepting the 2014 Arthur P. Weber MGA Club Environmental Leaders in Golf Award for Manhattan Woods Golf Club was (L to R) Assistant Superintendent Brian Lenik, Club President John Koh, Superintendent Jesse Shannon, and General Manager Dick Smith.

Environmental Code of Conduct for golf course maintenance at his home club, Old Westbury on Long Island, nearly two decades ago that many Met Area clubs still use as a model. Weber was a longtime member of the USGA Green Section and helped found the MGA Green Committee and the Tri-State Turf Research Foundation.

Past recipients of the award include Wee Burn Country Club (2013), Rockland Country Club (2012), the Round Hill Club (2011), GlenArbor Golf Club (2010), Westchester Country Club (2009), Sebonack Golf Club (2008), and Trump National Golf Club ~ Bedminster (2007).

If you missed this year's seminar, be sure to schedule in time to attend next year. There's always an outstanding lineup of speakers and, we can't forget, the opportunity to showcase your course's environmental efforts with an application for the Arthur P. Weber Environmental Leaders in Golf Award.

We hope to see you in 2015!



Calendar Update

MetGCSA Invitational Tournament

Tuesday, June 17
Manhattan Woods Golf Club
West Nyack, NY
Host: Jesse Shannon

Summer Social

Monday, July 14
Orienta Beach Club
Mamaroneck, NY

Family Picnic

July, DATE TBA
Bedford Village Memorial Park
Bedford, NY

Scholarship & Parent/Child Tournament

August, DATE TBA
Mosholu Golf Course
Bronx, NY
Host: Dave Moffett

Met Championship and Met Area Team Championship Qualifier PLUS

The Poa Annual Tournament
Monday, September 22
Rockland Country Club
Sparkill, NY
Host: Matt Ceplo, CGCS

Met Area Team Championship

Monday, September 29
Philadelphia Country Club
Gladwyne, PA
Host: Mike McNulty

Nine and Dine Event

Wednesday, October 15
Silvermine Golf Club
Norwalk, CT
Host: Larry Pakkala, CGCS

Educational Events

2014 University of Connecticut Turfgrass Field Day

Tuesday, July 15
UConn Plant Science Research and Education Facility
Storrs, CT

The field day will offer guided tours of a variety of research projects underway at the university followed by a delicious lunch and an opportunity to connect with fellow turf professionals. Exhibitors from across the region will also be present with product and service information for the turfgrass industry.

Watch the website for further details as the date approaches: www.turf.uconn.edu.

Rutgers Turfgrass Research Field Day (Golf & Fine Turf)

Tuesday, July 29
Horticultural Farm II
New Brunswick, NJ

Save the date, and watch for details. Call 973-812-6467 or visit www.njturfgrass.org for further information.

Turf & Grounds Exposition

Wednesday-Friday, 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.

39th Annual New Jersey Green Expo Turf and Landscape Conference

Tuesday - Thursday, December 9 - 11
Trump Taj Mahal Resort Casino
Atlantic City, NY

The New Jersey Green Exp 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.



Green Industry Professionals Debate Legislative Issues at Turfgrass Advocacy Day

by Michael Maffei, CGCS

The 15th Annual New York State Turfgrass Advocacy Day was held March 12 at the Empire State Plaza in Albany, NY, with 45 superintendents and industry professionals eager to discuss this year's issues: Support for the Turfgrass Environmental Stewardship Fund, the Adoption of a State Definition of IPM, Amending the Pesticide Reporting Law, and 3A, 3B Pesticide Applicator Fees.

Advocacy Day-goers made 70 legislative visits to drive home the impact these legislative issues have on their ability to do their jobs. Joining me in representing the MetGCSA were Ed Brockner, Blake Halderman, Bob Nielsen, Ken Benoit, Glen Dube, Matt Ceplo, John Carlone, Brian Benedict, Brian Bontemps, Ernie Steinhofner, and Todd Apgar.

The Event Kick-off

The event kicked off with an association breakfast and welcoming remarks by Steve Griffen, past president of NYSTA and co-chair of the NYSTA Government Relations Committee. NYSTA Executive Director Beth Seme followed, offering thanks to our Advocacy Day sponsors and noting just how important it is for all groups to work together in fostering strong relationships. Beth also encouraged attendees to take advantage of the e-Lobby sites offered by the New York Farm Bureau and Planet to share our views on key issues with legislators.

Rick Zimmerman, an associate of The Vandervort Group and lobbyist for the New York Alliance for Environmental Concerns (NYAFEC), assumed the podium next with an update on budget issues and the legislative climate in Albany. For Rick, timing is everything: "The 2014 Lobby Day," he says, "was perfectly timed to maximize our impact on state budget issues in addition to fortifying our relationships with state legislators. We can't underestimate the importance of making the trek to Albany and being part of the advocacy efforts."

He went on to offer advocacy strategies for making the most of every legislative visit, starting with identifying the legislators



The authors and committee representatives for the Best Management Practices for New York State Golf Courses (L to R): Dr. Marty Petrovic and Dr. Jennifer Grant of Cornell University; MetGCSA President Blake Halderman, CGCS; Dr. Frank Rossi and Bob Portmess of Cornell University; NYSTA President Rick Holfoth, CGCS; Bob Nielsen, CGCS, of the MetGCSA; Tim Hahn of the Finger Lakes AGCS; Ken Benoit, CGCS, of the MetGCSA; John Carlone, CGCS, of the Long Island GCSA.

carrying our bills and the chairpersons of key committees, such as Environmental Conservation and Agriculture.

Senator Mark Grisanti, chair of the Senate Environmental Conservation Committee, spoke to the group also emphasizing the importance of our presence in Albany. He expressed support for such issues as the IPM Definition Bill, the Turfgrass Environmental Stewardship Fund, and Amending the Pesticide Reporting Law. He announced that the IPM Definition bill had moved out of his committee for a floor vote.

Issues of the Day

Prior to the legislative visits, participants had the opportunity to hear what industry leaders had to say about each of the following issues.

Winning Support for the Turfgrass Environmental Stewardship Fund

Greg Chorvas, past president of the New York State Turfgrass Association

Greg spoke about the status and importance of the Turfgrass Environmental Stewardship Fund and reported that it was our Number One issue for the day. The 2013-2014 New York State Budget included a \$150,000 appropriation to support research that provides improved turf management solutions.

Continuing research is essential in providing turf management solutions that are key in preserving and protecting environmental quality. With this in mind, NYSTA recommended that legislators **continue to fund the \$150,000 line item** in the 2014-2015 budget.

Update: The approved state budget does include this appropriation.

Adopting a State Definition of IPM

Michael Maffei, CGCS, co-chair of NYSTA Government Relations Committee

I reviewed the Adoption of a State Definition of IPM, stating that NYSTA believes New York State would be best served by adopting the IPM terminology recognized by the Food Quality Protection Act, the National Integrated Pest Management Network, and the Empire State Council of Agricultural Organizations. Several legislative proposals define IPM as using pesticides as a last resort. As we all know, pesticides are used as a tool in an IPM program.

NYSTA supports bills S2203 (sponsored by Senator Young) and A1172 (sponsored by Assemblywoman Gunther), which define integrated pest management as a "systematic approach to managing pests that utilizes a diversity of management options to minimize health, environmental, and economic risks and impacts. These options may include biological, cultural, physical, and chemical tools to prevent pest infestations or reduce them to acceptable levels."

Senator Young's bill was recently unanimously passed by the Senate and is awaiting action in the Assembly.

Amending the Pesticide Reporting Law

Larry Wilson, chairman of the New York Alliance for Environmental Concerns

Larry explained that Part H of the governor's budget streamlines pesticide-reporting requirements to allow certified commercial pesticide applicators to make applications

without reporting each one to the Department of Environmental Conservation. Reporting would be required only at the point of sale. This proposal would not only lift the costly reporting burden from applicators, but also save New York State about \$3 million annually. For these reasons, NYSTA supports bills S6357/A8857, Part H.

Update: Unfortunately, the Senate and Assembly were not able to come to agreement on the amendments, and the law was not changed.

Modifying 3A, 3B Certified Applicator Fees

Rick Zimmerman, lobbyist for the New York Alliance for Environmental Concerns (NYAFEC)

Rick explained that, currently, New York State law mandates a fee of \$200 per year for 3A and 3B classifications of certified commercial pesticide applicators. (Included in this group are golf course superintendents.) In contrast, all other classifications are required to pay \$450 for a three-year period, which amounts to only \$150 per year. NYSTA is requesting parity within the certified commercial system by **lowering the annual 3A and 3B fees to \$150 per year.**

Update: Legislature did not take any action on this issue.

Best Management Practices for New York State Golf Courses Unveiled

At this point in the program, Glen Arbor Superintendent Ken Benoit, who chairs the

MetGCSA's Environmental Committee, announced the completion of the Best Management Practices (BMPs) for New York State Golf Courses. A collaborative effort among New York State golf course superintendent organizations, NYSTA, Cornell University, and the DEC, this project was initiated with one primary goal in mind: to provide golf course managers with the methods and techniques found to be most effective in preventing or minimizing the effects of golf course management practices on surface and groundwater to ensure and enhance public health and environmental quality.

"The golf industry could not continue to be perceived as fighting environmental legislation," says Ken. "Explaining the positive impact that golf has on the environment and providing a transparent resource with science-based information sends an extremely powerful message while demonstrating our willingness to recognize the importance of our role as environmental stewards."

Executive summaries of the BMPs were provided to all attendees and visiting legislators. In addition to focusing their discussions on the issues of the day, attendees were encouraged to introduce legislators to the new BMPs during each of their visits.

The Grand Finale: Legislative Visits

With the various presentations complete, attendees had the opportunity to meet with legislators and share their views and concerns on upcoming legislation. While they



made important headway on the issues at hand, attendees also felt that they received an overwhelmingly positive response from legislators on the BMP initiative.

"I was impressed with the level of professionalism shown by our Advocacy Day attendees this year," says NYSTA's Government Relations Committee Co-Chair Steve Griffen. Our group was very articulate in expressing how legislation can have a direct effect—positive or negative—on both their personal and professional success. It was also nice to see that legislators and their aides came away with a better understanding of the issues that concern our group. I believe that is the direct result of our continued efforts in advocacy and education."

A Little Involvement Goes a Long Way

More information on NYSTA's Turfgrass Advocacy Day is available on the NYSTA website, <http://www.nysta.org>. Though you may not have been able to attend, consider visiting your Assembly member or Senator in their district offices or writing them to discuss these issues. Either way, get involved and work toward protecting our industry—and your livelihood!

Please give serious consideration to attending Advocacy Day in 2015. Laws and regulations affect everyone, and your input is important.

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

Special Thanks to Our Sponsors

We would like to acknowledge the following sponsors who helped make this successful event possible: the MetGCSA, the Long Island GCSA, Scotts Miracle-Gro, the New York Lawn & Arbor Care Applicators Council, the Northeastern GCSA, RISE (Responsible Industry for a Sound Environment), the Sullivan County Challenge, the Hudson Valley GCSA, Syngenta, the Central New York GCSA, Helena, the Nassau Suffolk Landscape Gardeners Association, and Dow AgroSciences.

Member News

Due Date for Scholarship Award Applications Is Fast-Approaching!

Application forms for the 2014 MetGCSA Scholarship Awards are available on the Met website, www.metgcsa.org under the Education tab, or through MetGCSA Executive Secretary Susan O'Dowd at sodowd@mgagolf.org or 914-909-4843.

Any Class A, Life A, Life A/AF, SM, C, Life C, AF, or Life AF member of the MetGCSA or a dependent of a member is eligible to win.

If you have any questions about the application process, please feel free to contact Scholarship Chairman Glen Dube at Centennial Golf Club. You can reach him by calling 845-803-1020 or by sending an email to glendube1@gmail.com.

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

MUST be RECEIVED by end of business day on Friday, June 6. Emailed applications will not be accepted!

Scholarships will be awarded at an upcoming event. Watch our calendar of events in the *Tee to Green* or on our association website for the precise date and site of the event.



New Member

Please join us in welcoming new MetGCSA member **Rex Hufnagel**, Class C, Shorehaven Golf Club, East Norwalk, CT.

Members on the Move

- **Matt Topazio** is the new general manager at New York Country Club in New Hempstead, NY. Previous position: Superintendent at New York Country Club.
- **Trapper Van Dunk** is the new superintendent at New York Country Club in New Hempstead, NY. Previous position: Superintendent at Leewood Golf Club in Eastchester, NY.
- **Scott Wiiki** is the new superintendent at Mill Creek Golf Club in Rochester, NY. Previous position: Assistant superintendent at Fairview Country Club in Greenwich, CT.

Birth

Congratulations to **Brian Bontemps** of Seeton Turf Warehouse and his wife, Karen, on the birth of their daughter, Cassidy Jane, on April 14. She weighed 7 lbs. 2 ozs.

Environmental Award-Winning Manhattan Woods to Host MetGCSA Invitational

by Matt Ceplo, CGCS

Manhattan Woods Golf Club in West Nyack, NY, is not only an all-new venue for this year's MetGCSA Invitational Tournament, but also a first-time winner of the annual Arthur P. Weber MGA Club Environmental Leaders in Golf Award. The award was presented at the 2014 MGA/USGA Green Chairman Education Series & Arthur P. Weber MGA Club Environmental Leaders in Golf Award Luncheon held March 20 at North Hills Country Club in Manhasset, NY.

Congratulations to Manhattan Woods and our meeting host, Superintendent Jesse Shannon, who has been directing the club's environmental efforts for the past five years.

Environmental Stewardship: A Way of Life

I had the pleasure of experiencing, firsthand, what Jesse and Manhattan Woods are doing to enhance our industry's reputation when I arrived at the course to conduct the site visit required in maintaining certification status with Audubon International.

The first thing I noticed was a large-screen TV in the entrance foyer of the clubhouse, displaying pictures of the course and its wildlife and native areas. As I left the Pro Shop, a large Audubon Certification sign was there to greet the golfers. There was no doubt that Manhattan Woods takes environmental stewardship seriously.

I then toured the course and maintenance facility. Conducting the site visit with me was Harriet Cornell, Rockland County legislator; Susan Barclay, director of special projects for the town of Orangetown; Joann Peterson of the County Parks system; and Mr. Raymond Cywinski, manager of water and environmental resources at United Water New Jersey. The tour clearly opened this elite group's eyes to all that a golf course can mean to the preservation and enhancement of our environment.

"Manhattan Woods is an exceptionally beautiful golf course where the natural environment is integrated into the whole

experience," Harriet Cornell commented, as we completed the visit. "The management team should be commended for its stewardship and appreciation for environmental protection."

Equally impressed with Manhattan Woods' efforts, Ray Cywinski added, "The owner has gone above and beyond in preserving and expanding natural areas within the grounds of the golf course. These include no-mow zones, increased environmentally sensitive wetland areas and buffers, selective natural plantings, and naturalized wildflowers."

What better way to demonstrate to non-golfers and county representatives just how wonderful an asset a golf course can be to the local community.

Jesse is extremely proud of Manhattan Woods' commitment to its environmental programs. "Since the club's inception in 1998," says Jesse, "Manhattan Woods has been dedicated to creating a culture of core values based on fellowship, harmony, beauty, and tranquility, which focuses on minimizing our footprint on the environment and its inhabitants.

"By identifying wildlife species and their respective core habitats," he continues, "we are able to maintain the golf course in a way that doesn't disturb, but rather preserves their habitats while enhancing the beauty of the golf course. We create an environment that both wildlife and human life can appreciate and enjoy."

From the time it earned its distinction as an Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary in 2007, the club has continued to review and improve its environmental stewardship efforts, including its wildlife and habitat preservation programs, native planting projects, integrated pest management programs, water quantity and quality management efforts, education and outreach programs, and resource conservation.



Jesse Shannon

"Over the years," says Jesse, "we have maintained our resolve to ensure everyone understands the importance of our commitment to the environment and what it means to our club, our members, our industry, and our community. Environmental stewardship is a significant part of the club's culture."

Winding Road to Manhattan Woods

So how did this upstate New York native find himself managing one of the premier courses in the state? (Manhattan Woods is ranked #21 in the state by *Golf Digest*.) Well, it turns out Jesse has golf course management in his blood. His father, John Shannon, is the superintendent at McConnellsville Golf Club in McConnellsville, NY, which is located just northeast of Syracuse, near Oneida Lake. Jesse's father began working on the golf course at the age of 15 and assumed the superintendent's position at the age of 21; he is still working there today. His mother, Jan Shannon, managed the clubhouse kitchen for 23 years. Jesse along with his brother, Josh, and his sister, Jenny, grew up working at the club, and Jenny has since taken over the club's kitchen manager's position.

As you might expect, Jesse started working on the course during the summers when he was just 14. Though he played on

the golf team, his real passion, he'll tell you, was snowboarding and downhill mountain biking. Around the time he turned 18, the course installed an irrigation system, and the company that did the work was from Colorado—prime snowboard country! So no surprise, Jesse packed up his snowboard and bike and headed out to Colorado, accepting a position with the company installing irrigation systems throughout Colorado and Wyoming, including the United States Air force Academy football fields in Colorado Springs.

Two years later, at the prime age of 20, another opportunity presented itself, which Jesse couldn't refuse: a move to Naples, Italy. He made a living with a moving company, teaching English, and working as a snowboard instructor in the Alps.

But after four years abroad, he decided to return to McConnellsville and accepted a position as his father's assistant on the golf course where it all began. It was at that point he decided to attend the Rutgers turf program. He credits Echo Lake Country Club Superintendent Chris Carson and Dr. Richard Buckley of Rutgers University for giving him the inspiration to become a suc-

cessful top-level superintendent. Jesse completed his two-year certificate at Rutgers in 2007, while working as an assistant-in-training at Winged Foot Golf Club under then Superintendent Eric Greytok. He stayed on at Winged Foot for four years, having the fortunate opportunity to help prep the course for the 2006 U.S. Open.

In 2008, the assistant's position opened up at Manhattan Woods under then Superintendent Jason Ziesmer. In 2009, Jesse made the transition from assistant to superintendent, and the rest is history.

Jesse lives on the property with his wife of four years, Alicia, and their two children: Isla Marie, 2 1/2, and Bodhi Patrick, who is 5 months old. Jesse's dedication and passion for the golf course is something he can't help but pass on to his children.

Mark your calendars now for the June 17 Invitational, and line up your pro and club officials for this not-to-be-missed event! The course is outstanding, and Jesse and his staff promise a good day for all.

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

President's Message continued from page 1

For further detail on these and other legislative issues facing New York State, see the Advocacy Day article on page 8. If you have not taken the time to get involved in advocating for the legislation that can affect your livelihood, I encourage you to do so. Attend the Advocacy Day in Albany, where you can make your sentiments heard. It is one of the most important things you will do all year and is of paramount importance to the future of golf.

Met Initiatives Underway

The Met board has two initiatives in progress. One is to launch a new-and-improved website; the other is to put the finishing touches on a new, three-part membership survey.

We have been working to create an exciting new website design that is more user-friendly and created with all the necessary tabs and links to make this the perfect home page for our members. You'll find links spanning the top of the opening page for GCSAA, TurfNet, the weather, a growing-degree day calculator, Google, and even CNN and ESPN.

This will allow you to start at our site and quickly navigate to any other site you may want or need! Not to mention you can easily highlight any of our vendor logos for easy access to their websites and product information. Other new features will include access to radar, relevant industry tweets, and current association and industry information, all on our website's home page so you can stay informed and up-to-date at any time of the day or night.

Speaking of staying informed, while issues of *Tee to Green* will continue to be mailed and available on the website, we will also begin sending them directly to you in a digital format—all in the interest of staying more easily informed!

Watch for additional information on these advances in communication as we get closer to launching our new website!

In the meantime, please keep your eyes open for our upcoming meeting and social events as we continue to update them here and on the website.

Blake Halderman, CGCS
President

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