

March/April 2016
VOLUME 47 NUMBER 2

Tee To Green

Published by the Metropolitan Golf Course Superintendents Association

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TEE TO GREEN is published bimonthly by the Metropolitan Golf Course Superintendents Association

49 Knollwood Road, Elmsford, NY 10523-2819

914-347-4653, FAX: 914-347-3437, METGCSA.ORG

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Tee To Green



Cover: Country Club of Darien

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President's Message

Communication: A Life Skill Worth Learning

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Communication: The act or process of using words, sounds, signs, or behaviors to exchange information or express feelings to someone else.

Seems simple enough, doesn't it? And it is amazing what can happen when the most basic forms of communication are clearly expressed and are properly received by the person you are sharing information with. Take for instance, this issue of *Tee to Green*. Pandora, Terrie, and the entire Communications Committee work extremely hard to produce this publication. They acquire and disseminate information to the membership in a timely manner in both the printed and digital form. Current and timely articles, updated website content, and advertising from our affiliate members are communicated to our membership, allowing them to make better and more informed decisions at their clubs or businesses.

Though turf schools rarely emphasize the importance of effective communication, much less the intricacies of communicating with staff, colleagues, and green committee members, skilled communication is central to our jobs as golf course managers.

Think, for a moment, what happens when there is a breakdown in communication, and thoughts, feelings, or ideas don't reach their intended target? I probably don't have to tell you, things don't go very well.

Picture, for instance, deciding to aerify greens one day without alerting your membership or management team. Or what would happen if your club scheduled an outing without informing you and you were out applying a critical fairway spray. This failure to communicate would not only cause significant inconvenience, but also great embarrassment to all parties involved, and to think, these situations could easily be avoided if properly communicated.

Perhaps one of the biggest mistakes we make during the communication process is making assumptions. As the great playwright, George Bernard Shaw, once said, "The single biggest problem in communication is the illusion that it has taken place."



Glen Dube, CGCS
MetGCSA President

Whether it's communication with a crew member, an assistant superintendent, or with club members, making assumptions only leads to problems and inefficiencies within your organization. I learned from someone much smarter and wiser than me to resist the urge to assume that something will be done or communicated.

If you take for granted, for instance, that in your absence a staff member will know to watch for wilt or communicate a rain delay to the pro shop, invariably, the opposite of what you expect will happen, and you'll have a potential problem on your hands. As golf course managers, it's imperative we be proactive and inform those around us of all that is relevant both on and off the course.

Clear and thorough communication is a top priority for the MetGCSA board and paramount for the smooth operation of our association. And it's a top priority for me too—on both a professional and personal level. As my job as superintendent and my life as a husband and father to three children evolve, I realize more than ever the key role communication plays in our ability to succeed both personally and professionally—and conversely, the consequences of inadequate or faulty communication. A quote I remember hearing is all too true: "We should communicate not just to be understood, but moreover so as not to be *misunderstood*."

As I strive to improve my communication skills, I realize that it's no easy task. It takes consistent attention and effort, and a good amount of practice too. But the payoff of communicating effectively makes the struggle worthwhile, if just to make work life and home life flow a bit easier.

Glen Dube, CGCS
MetGCSA President

MetGCSA Welcomes Mike McCall as the New Executive Director

by Steven McGlone

O

n a cold, rainy morning in late February, I made my way to the MGA building in Elmsford, NY. I had scheduled a meeting with the MetGCSA's newly hired executive director, Mike McCall.

When I arrived, our executive secretary, Susan O'Dowd, escorted me down the hall to Mike's office on the first floor. Greeting Mike, with a "Welcome to the Met," he rose from a crouched position behind his desk where he had started to unpack his belongings. After waving me inside with a friendly, "Hey, come on in," our conversation began.

Having served on the MetGCSA's Executive Director Search Committee, I knew that Mike comes to us with a wealth of knowledge and experience acquired over the course of his varied and successful career. Many of you may already know Mike or have done business with him as he has been a superintendent, general manager, and for the past 15 years, managing member of McCall Management Group, LLC, a consultant and management firm focusing on organizational assessments, strategic planning, problem solving, project management, and recruiting for a broad range of industries, from hospitality to government.

Our discussion, which I am sharing here, will give you insight into not only Mike's goals and aspirations for the association and industry, but also a glimpse of who he is outside the world of golf. (You might also find it interesting to revisit the article "Naval Officer Turned Super Shares Valuable Lessons Learned in Leadership," which Mike wrote for our March/April 2004 issue of *Tee to Green*. You will find it archived on metgcsa.org.)

Please join the MetGCSA Board of Directors in welcoming Mike McCall as our association's new executive director.



“Everything that the Met stands for, I stand for—from professionalism and government advocacy to a passion for and commitment to enhancing the game of golf.”

TTG: *Why did you reach out and apply for the executive director position?*

MIKE: Although I left the golf course superintendent role, I still have a strong affiliation with the golf course industry. Everything that the Met stands for, I stand for—from professionalism and government advocacy to a passion for and commitment to enhancing the game of golf. The position is complementary to my company's mission of providing competent professional services with the utmost integrity to enhance organizations' financial, operational, customer service, and administrative processes. Combine this, with my background as a superintendent, and it seemed like a natural fit.

TTG: *What experience are you bringing with you to help the Met grow into the future?*

MIKE: I feel that my experience as a business owner, superintendent, general manager, naval officer, and school board president has provided me with a diverse set of skills that will help me meet the internal needs of the association—those of both the Met board and its members—and then expand the Met's circle of influence to what I'll call external customers: other industry organizations.

My whole life has been about continuous improvement, so in the end, I hope to leave the Met (not for some time, of course) in a better place than when I started. This is an amazing industry with tremendous individuals, and I am honored to have a role working with the Met.

TTG: *As the owner of McCall Management Group, what did you learn when you first started your business, and how have you kept it afloat?*

MIKE: Starting and maintaining a business sounds glamorous, but it's much tougher than many imagine. You can't rely on a consistent paycheck every week. You have to get out and hustle to make things happen. You always have to sell yourself and your services. Funny, though, because the truth is that we all have to sell ourselves, whether we're self-employed or an employee trying to maintain a position or secure a new job.

TTG: *What is one of your goals as the executive director?*

MIKE: In this business, especially in the Met area, virtually everybody can grow and maintain high-quality turf. As far as associations go, the Met is the cream of the crop. I do believe, however, that all of us in the Met—and the industry as a whole—would be well served by enhancing our business skills. By that, I mean our communication (both verbal and writing) and presentation skills; our financial and time management skills; our personnel management and leadership skills, as well as a whole host of other related nonagronomic expertise.

Our universities, seminars, and the Golf Industry Show all do a great job in preparing us with agronomy skills. But we don't get a lot of training in skill areas that are essential in communicating and building relationships with our green committees, boards, even town supervisors; we're left, instead, to seek them out on our own.

As executive director, I would like to see not just our association, but also the entire industry, focus on offering the necessary training in those nonagronomic areas early on in one's career. When I was in San Diego, I had a nice talk with Steve Mona, CEO of the World Golf Foundation, and discussed with him how the GCSAA has tried to initiate this in the past with only modest success. Absorbing these skills requires behavior modification that is never quick and easy. GCSAA members will need to see how acquiring these skills will benefit them and their careers.

How many times have we heard about someone losing their position not based on turf conditions, but due to a lack of communication, budget management, basic business savvy? I think we all would agree that the current role of the superintendent has evolved into much more than a turfgrass manager, so I am not sure why we are lagging behind in areas of nonagronomic professional development. This is certainly an area I feel committed to improving. The recent Assistant Superintendent Career-Building Seminar is a great example of the type of training I'm talking about.

TTG: *You were a successful superintendent for a number of years; it's still in your blood, I can tell. What do you miss most about being out there every day on the course?*

MIKE: It's funny because as both a naval officer and superintendent I enjoyed the early mornings. Not necessarily the waking up/alarm clock part, but the sunrises. I still am in the industry and driving into a golf course most days. To me, there is nothing better than being around the environment and landscape of a golf course. You know . . . the unique beauty of it, the result of man and nature working together. Then there's the immediate gratification of mowing, particularly on days when everything gets mowed. I also miss seeing the course spring to life in May/June—the result of all the hard work that started in late August.

TTG: *What word do you think best describes a successful superintendent?*

MIKE: Diligent.

TTG: *You have been a MetGCSA member for nearly 15 years. What do you see as one of our association's strong points?*

MIKE: Professionalism, which is the reason I joined in the first place.

TTG: *On the flipside, what do you think the MetGCSA needs to improve on?*

MIKE: Exclusivity, cliquishness among members. This is a problem common to virtually all organizations but one that we can easily overcome if we all just make an effort to move outside of our comfort zone and strike up a conversation or sit with someone new at each meeting. Believe me, I'm just as guilty as anyone on this one.

TTG: *Family life. What does Mike McCall enjoy doing after work and on the weekend?*

MIKE: Well, I've been married 25 years to my wonderful wife, LeeAnn. We have two daughters: Sarah, 16, and Madeleine, 15. I enjoy playing sports with my children . . . softball, tennis, basketball, and on occasion, recreational golf. I work out, run, lift

“I think of being a Met member like wearing a badge of honor. Once a Met member, always a Met member. It’s something that you will always carry with you. And knowing I’m now an ambassador of that badge makes me truly proud.”



weights, spend time doing yard work . . . [laughing] . . . although that’s going to end because I’m going to pay someone to do it this year. I enjoy reading, and as a family, we like to hit Broadway a couple times a year. Oh, and we just got a puppy, Daisy, a pug crossbreed who has added a whole new dimension to our lives.

TTG: *Where is home?*

MIKE: I live in Poughkeepsie now, and I’m originally from Pittsburgh.

TTG: *With all your travels in the Navy and, of course, as a superintendent, what is your favorite golf course among those you’ve played?*

MIKE: Favorite golf course I’ve ever played . . . that’s a tough one. I’d have to say San Francisco Golf Club. I was lucky enough to play Pebble Beach, San Francisco, and Cypress Point on a three-day trip in 1998. That was back when I was working in Ohio at NCR (National Cash Register) Country Club as superintendent on 18 of its 36 holes.

TTG: *While on the subject of golf, who would be on your bucket list foursome?*

MIKE: Definitely Bobby Jones . . . and then Arnold Palmer and Tom Watson.

TTG: *What is your biggest worry regarding the game of golf as it is today?*

MIKE: The biggest worry to me is the lack of etiquette and understanding of the game among young, new golfers. These days, kids aren’t taught on a small nine-hole by their parents . . . told how to repair a ball mark, replace a divot. They don’t understand that you don’t talk during someone’s swing; you don’t scream across the hole. There used to be a whole process to learning to play the game. You wouldn’t play a bigger course until you were ready, and that just seems to have disappeared. Now it’s just, “Let’s buy a Groupon and go to this 6,000-yard public golf course, and who cares who’s behind me.”

TTG: *Recently there has been an exodus of assistant superintendents in the area. Good, young talent is leaving the area or the industry as a whole in search of greener pastures. How do we keep them here?*

MIKE: They need to be patient. If they love the industry, it’s worth it. When I came out of school, there weren’t spray tech and irrigation tech positions; second assistant positions didn’t exist. You went right into being a first assistant, then two years later, a super.

I believe these guys should take advantage of these other options, get the experience, and in the long run, it will make them better superintendents. My bottom line is there is always room at the top for the good performers to get there.

TTG: *You were in San Diego recently for the Golf Industry Show. What’s the gossip there?*

MIKE: We have a long way to go until we reach the equilibrium of course closures. And that’s nobody’s fault. It’s just economics. The high-end private clubs should remain just fine; it’s the mid- to lower-end clubs that will continue to struggle in this environment. Those that adapt, think outside the box, will survive. Just like any business, these clubs have to adapt. But at the same time, I don’t think gimmicky things like foot golf are the answer. I’m a big believer in the way Apple conducts its business: no discounting. If you have a good product at a fair price, market it effectively, and provide excellent customer service, I believe you can attract customers. I’m cautiously optimistic about the industry, but we really need to get more players into the game. Skiing, tennis, and bowling have managed to adapt; now it’s our turn.

TTG: *You have been a part of the BMP project. I think people use the term environmental steward, but at the same time, they really don’t know what it means. Where do you stand on this?*

MIKE: Correct. I think the BMP project is critical. I think the MetGCSA is on the cutting edge of this initiative, and as one of the

premier associations in the business, we need to stay out front; we need to maintain our leadership position.

Environmental stewardship must be organic within the industry—forgive the pun. It can’t be just one little initiative on the far end of a course. Some of us have been doing this for a long time, but kudos to Dr. Frank Rossi for working with Craig Currier in furthering the initiative at Bethpage.

I currently work with the Westchester County courses, and we embrace the EIQ model, which is really another example of behavior modification. I firmly believe that in the future the highest paid superintendents are going to be the ones who can manage a golf course well with the least amount of pesticides and water. So why not learn to do it now before it’s mandated, because at some point it will be.

The more we can expose lawmakers to what we are trying to do—and actually doing—the better chance we will have in helping to define the laws and in helping our own cause and the environment.

TTG: *You were in the Navy for six years and moved up the ranks. Thank you, by the way, for your service. What sticks with you today from your days at sea?*

MIKE: First of all, it was an unbelievable time in my life. I knew in high school I wanted to be a naval officer, so I went through NROTC at Purdue University and then on to San Diego to the aircraft carrier USS Independence. I actually had to cancel my honeymoon when Iraq invaded Kuwait in 1990, and then I was out to sea for five months; we were the first aircraft carrier to enter the Persian Gulf in more than 20 years.

That was Desert Shield, getting ready for what turned out to be Desert Storm. No email, no phone calls while I was on the ship. I even had to use voice tapes to communicate with my wife. It’s amazing how much responsibility we give our young men and women of the military. I was fortunate to work for some great people on the USS Independence. And I learned a lot. Most of

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Upcoming Events

Mark Your Calendar With These Upcoming MetGCSA and Industry Events

Superintendent/Guest Tournament

Thursday, May 12
Paramount CC, New City, NY
Host: Brian Chapin

MetGCSA Invitational Tournament

Monday, June 6
CC of Darien, Darien, CT
Host: Tim O'Neill, CGCS

Summer Social

Monday, July 11
Orienta Beach Club, Mamaroneck, NY

Summer Picnic

Wednesday, July 20
Bedford Memorial Park, Bedford, NY

Scholarship & Parent/Child Tournament

Tuesday, August 2
Mosholu Golf Course, Bronx, NY
Host: Dave Moffett

Nine and Dine Event

September date TBA
Silvermine Golf Club, Norwalk, CT
Host: Larry Pakkala, CGCS

Met Area Team Championship

Monday, September 26
The CC of Scranton, Clarks Summit, PA
Host: Greg Boring

The Poa/MetGCSA Tournament

Monday, October 3
Metropolis CC, White Plains, NY
Host: Dave McCaffrey

Assistants Championship

Thursday, October 27
Upper Montclair Country Club, Clifton, NJ
Assistant Hosts: Kyle Zarnetski, Sean Blatz, Steve Benally

MetGCSA/ CAGCS Fall Seminar

Thursday, November 10
The Patterson Club, Fairfield, CT
Host: Jason Meersman
For further information, contact our Education Chair, Brett Chapin, at 203-938-9640.

MetGCSA Winter Seminar

Wednesday, January 18, 2017
Westchester Country Club, Rye, NY
Host: David Dudones
For further information, contact our Education Chair, Brett Chapin, at 203-938-9640.

Regional Events

The 12th Annual Joseph Troll Turf Classic

Monday, May 16
Pine Hills Golf Club
Plymouth, MA

Superintendent Joseph Felicetti will host this year's UMass Alumni Turf Group fundraiser in support of turf education and research at the University of Massachusetts.

Please plan to attend this worthy fundraiser, and watch for details. Entry forms and additional information will be available online at www.alumniturfgroup.com.

2016 University of Connecticut Turfgrass Field Day

Tuesday, July 19
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, August 2
Horticultural Farm II
New Brunswick, NJ

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

2016 GREEN EXPO Turf & Landscape Conference

Tuesday - Thursday, December 6 - 8
The Borgata Hotel & 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.

MetGCSA
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Grass Elected 2016 President of GCSAA

Members Elect New Board, Approve Revisions to Member Standards at Annual Meeting



*Peter J. Grass, CGCS
GCSAA President*

At the February 11 Annual Meeting held in conjunction with the Golf Industry Show in San Diego, Peter J. Grass, CGCS, golf course superintendent at Hilands Golf Club in Billings, MT, was elected to a one-year term as GCSAA president.

Grass, a 31-year member of GCSAA, has been a member of the association's board of directors since 2009 and is also a member and past president of the Peaks and Prairies Golf Course Superintendents Association, one of 98 GCSAA regional chapters.

A native of Mankato, MN, the 56-year-old Grass earned a bachelor's degree from Eastern Montana College in Billings and succeeds MetGCSA member and past president John O'Keefe, who served as GCSAA president for 2015. John will continue on the board as immediate past president.

"A lot of people have told me how cool they think it is that someone from a 9-hole facility can serve on the board of directors and become president of the association," Grass said. "But if I can convince others that they too can benefit from being a GCSAA

member, then I'll consider my year in office to be a success."

GCSAA Board of Directors at a Glance

President

Peter J. Grass, CGCS, golf course superintendent at Hilands Golf Club in Billings, MT

Vice President

Bill H. Maynard, CGCS, director of golf course maintenance operations at Country Club of St. Albans, MO

Secretary/Treasurer

Darren J. Davis, CGCS, superintendent at Olde Florida Golf Club, Naples, FL

Director

- Kevin P. Breen, CGCS, superintendent at La Rinconada Country Club, Los Gatos, CA
- Rafael Barajas, CGCS, director of golf course operations at Boca Grove Plantation and Country Club, Boca Raton, FL
- John Walker, director of golf course maintenance at Bentwater Yacht and Country Club, Montgomery, TX

- John R. Fulling Jr., CGCS, grounds and facilities manager at Kalamazoo (MI) Country Club
- Mark F. Jordan, CGCS, natural resources leader at Westfield Group Country Club in Westfield Center, OH

Immediate Past President

- John J. O'Keefe, CGCS, director of golf course management at Preakness Hills Country Club in Wayne, NJ
- Keith A. Ihms, CGCS, retires from the board after serving the last year as immediate past president.

Other News

During the Annual Meeting, delegates also voted to approve revisions to the Class A member standards and passed 11 changes to the bylaws, which included a new definition of Class A and renaming the Superintendent Member class to Class B.

San Diego Nor'easter Event: A Night to Remember

by John Garcia, Atlantic Golf & Turf

The MetGCSA, once again, took a lead role in hosting the Nor'easter Event at our national convention. Joining forces with 10 other chapters across the Northeast, this year's event was held at the Florent Restaurant & Lounge in San Diego's historic Gaslamp Quarter.

Sponsored by 26 manufacturers from the

golf industry, the event drew nearly 400 people and included an open bar, appetizers, food station, hand-rolled cigars, and a live band. Special thanks to John Deere/LaCorte for sponsoring a cigar roller for the event and to Aquatrols for helping to fund our live entertainment.

We have already begun planning for next

year's event in Orlando, so mark your calendars for Wednesday, February 8, 2017. MetGCSA board member Brett Chapin, Aquatrols' Kevin Collins, and I continue to run the committee responsible for organizing this event and welcome feedback, ideas, and additional sponsors. Feel free to reach out to any one of us!

Chapters Present

Connecticut AGCS
GCSA of Cape Cod
GCSA of New England
Hudson Valley GCSA
Long Island GCSA

Maine GCSA

MetGCSA
New Hampshire GCSA
Ontario GSA
Rhode Island GCSA
Vermont GCSA

Commercial Sponsors

Aquatrols Corp.
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Harrell's
Jacobsen
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Koch Industries

Macro-Sorb Tech.
Nufarm
Nutrite
Ocean Organics
Performance Nutrition
Plant Food Company
Playbooks for Golf
Precision Labs

Quali-Pro

Shaw's/Knox Fertilizer Co.
SiteOne Landscape Supply
SMS Additive Solutions
SubAir Systems
Syngenta
Toro
UPI
Winfield Solutions

MetGCSA Members Post Notable Wins in the GCSAA Golf Championships

by Doug Drugo

This year's GCSAA Golf Championships at the 2016 Golf Industry Show in San Diego, CA, were held at both Aviara Golf Club and the South Course at Torrey Pines. All told, more than 450 players competed in some aspect of the event, which spanned over the course of three days—February 6 – 8—and offered something for everyone, from the casual golfer to the intense competitor.

The MetGCSA was represented by more than a dozen members and made a few notable marks on this year's event.

The four competitions included:

- **The National Championship:** a two-day Individual Stroke Play
 - **The Four-Ball:** a Two-Person Best Ball
 - **The Golf Classic:** a two-day Individual Stableford Format
 - **The Shamble:** a Modified Scramble
- Here are the highlights:

In the Four-Ball

The team of Mike Brunelle of Upper Montclair and Tom Weinert of the Plant Food Company took home the big money, placing first in the Four-Ball II Net Division and second in the Gross Division.

In the Golf Classic

In the Senior II Division, Scott Niven from The Stanwich Club brought home 2nd Place. Rounding out the Senior II Flight, Les Kennedy of Blind Brook and Tim O'Neill of the Country Club of Darien placed 8th and 11th respectively in the Gross Division.

In the AFF Flight, Tom Weinert was at it again, taking 4th in the overall Net Division and 5th in the Gross Division.

In the National Championship

After years of close calls, Shawn Westacott finally has a GCSAA National Champion-

ship to call his own. The superintendent at Maridoe Golf Club in Carrollton, TX, withstood a full field of competitors and the rigors of both Aviara Golf Club and the South Course at Torrey Pines to win his GCSAA title after numerous runner-up finishes in previous events. Westacott's two-day total of 5-over-par 149 was four shots better than another Texan, defending champion Matt Cowan from the Fazio Canyons Course at Barton Creek in Austin.

But among the Championship Flight contenders, the legend of Due Process Stable's Tony Hooks lives on. Last year in San Antonio, TX, Tony aced the par 3, 4th hole to win a Toro MD Workman. And no one was able to take home the hole-in-one cart this year in San Diego!

See You Next Year!

We would like to send out a special thank you to the GCSAA staff for their efforts in putting this special event together and to all of the sponsors who make this event possible, especially the Toro Company for their generous partnership in being the title sponsor for the past 22 years.

Congratulations to all who participated in this year's golf championships. This annual preconference golf event offers a great opportunity to not only play some of the country's best courses, but also to network with superintendents from across the U.S. and around the world.

Next year, the GCSAA Golf Championships will be held in Orlando, FL. I hope to see you all there!

Doug Drugo, chair of the Tournament Committee, is superintendent at Wee Burn Country Club in Darien, CT.

Feature, continued from page 4

all, I learned to work hard (not much else to do in the middle of the ocean), take responsibility for my actions, and lead by example.

TTG: *Do you still keep in touch with any guys you served with?*

MIKE: As a matter of fact, when I was in San Diego for the conference, I went to watch the Super Bowl at my Main Propulsion Assistant's house, from the USS Independence. He taught me many lessons in how to manage people and introduced me to investing. He's a great guy and was a great mentor.

I can credit a number of people from my past for some of my skills and interests. I acquired my organizational and time-management skills from some great audio programs my father gave me when I was in college. And one of my high school teachers, who became one of my closest friends and mentors, inspired my interest in government and education. In the area of turfgrass, I owe a lot of my success to the late Dr. George W Hamilton, who ran the Penn State Turf Program when I was there in the '90s, and to Dr. Al Turgeon and Dr. Frank Rossi.

TTG: *What is your proudest career moment?*

MIKE: Wow, that's a tough one. There are several. When I was named Officer of the Deck on the carrier . . . when I graduated first in my class at Penn State . . . and last but not at all least, when I was selected for this job. It's a culmination of all that I've done in my career, and I am so looking forward to working with the board and members of this great organization.

I think of being a Met member like wearing a badge of honor. Once a Met member, always a Met member. It's something that you will always carry with you. And knowing I'm now an ambassador of that badge makes me truly proud.

As we enter into the 2016 season, know that there is a new guy in the MGA building who is working hard as the executive director of the MetGCSA Board of Directors to ensure that our association stands strong for a group of great superintendents.

Steven McGlone, a member of the Tee to Green Editorial Committee, is superintendent at Sivanoy Country Club in Bronxville, NY.

Whippoorwill Earns Top Honors as Environmental Leader in Golf

by Jim Pavonetti, CGCS

The MGA Foundation hosted its annual Green Chairman Education Series at Willow Ridge Country Club on March 10. Drawing area superintendents, professionals, green chairmen, and club officials, the meeting focused on a variety of industry topics and trends in golf course management. As always, one of the highlights of the event was the awards luncheon, which honors an MGA member club that has demonstrated environmental stewardship through golf course maintenance, construction, education, and outreach.

This year's winner of the Arthur P. Weber MGA Club Environmental Leaders in Golf Award was The Whippoorwill Club in Armonk, NY. One of 13 that applied for the award, Whippoorwill shared the limelight with four other area clubs selected as finalists: Willow Ridge Country Club, The

Stanwich Club, Old Westbury Golf & Country Club, and Newton Country Club.

About the Finalists

- With the guidance of Superintendent Bert Dickinson, Willow Ridge Country Club has not only instituted an excellent IPM program, but also quantified their reductions in fertilizer and pesticide use. Part of this was accomplished by creating specific agronomic programs for greens based on their construction type and turf type.
- The Stanwich Club's resource conservation efforts, spearheaded by Superintendent Scott Niven, include a new maintenance facility that is outfitted with rooftop solar panels. These panels generate electricity for the entire club saving Stanwich approximately \$50,000 per year.

- At Old Westbury Golf & Country Club, which is where the award's namesake, Arthur P. Weber, was a member, Superintendent Tom McAvoy has developed a water conservation program, using soil moisture meters and evapotranspiration data to reduce water use on tees and fairways by 50 percent.

- Newton Country Club, with the direction of Superintendent Les Carpenter, has turned 25 acres of manicured turf into native areas, creating corridors between holes to enhance wildlife habitat. Les also manages a forest that borders the golf course with preserving wildlife habitat in mind.

Congratulations to these four clubs on their excellent environmental programs.

The Makings of a True Environmental Leader in Golf

The Whippoorwill Club's dedication to preserving the environment and protecting the Kensico Reservoir Watershed put them on the top of the judging panel's list this year.

"At Whippoorwill, we have always followed sustainable practices that are in sync with the needs of the environment that we all live in," says Whippoorwill's grounds committee chairman, Raki Talwar. "We find it especially gratifying when our efforts are recognized by others."

Under the direction of Superintendent Paul Gonzalez, Whippoorwill has made great strides in engaging the local community and fostering a partnership with the Louis Calder Center, Fordham University's biological field station which borders the club. With the help of Fordham's Dr. J. Alan Clark, Paul developed a highly successful nesting box program that now boasts more than 50 nesting boxes. They attract everything from bluebirds, wood ducks, and purple martins to bats.

Through its work with the Louis Calder Center, Whippoorwill was also introduced to Rodney Olsen, a teacher at the Addison School in Vermont for students with special needs, specifically autism. As part of their treatment and educational programs, these students take part in an ornithology class,

MetGCSA Scholarship Applications Now Available

Application forms for the 2016 MetGCSA Scholarship Awards are available on the Met website, www.metgcsa.org, under the About Us tab, or through MetGCSA Executive Secretary Susan O'Dowd at sodowd@mgagolf.org or 914-909-4843.

Any Class A, Life A, SM, C, Life C, AF, or Life AF member of the MetGCSA or a dependent of a member is eligible to win. Applicants must be enrolled in a short course or in an associate's, bachelor's, master's, or Ph.D. program.

If you have any questions about the application process, please feel free to contact Scholarship Chairman David Dudones at Westchester Country Club. You can reach him by calling 914-798-5360 or by sending an email to ddudones@wccclub.org.

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 5. Emailed applications will not be accepted!**

Scholarships will be awarded at the Scholarship & Parent/Child Tournament held at Mosholu Golf Course on August 2.



Environmental Committee Co-Chair Jim Pavonetti presents Whippoorwill Superintendent Paul Gonzalez with the 2016 Arthur P. Weber MGA Club Environmental Leaders in Golf Award.

the membership's commitment to being stewards of the environment," says Paul.

Congratulations to Paul Gonzalez and the members of Whippoorwill for demonstrating what we should all strive to emulate: true environmental leadership in golf.

About the Award

For the uninitiated, the Arthur P. Weber Award is named in honor of past MGA President Arthur P. Weber, who passed away in 2008. Weber wrote an 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 Neshanic Valley Golf Course (2015), Manhattan Woods Golf Club (2014), 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 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 2017!

Jim Pavonetti, Tee to Green editor and co-chair of the Environmental Committee, is superintendent at Fairview Country Club in Greenwich, CT.

where they construct birdhouses that the club purchases to help fund their visits and learning.

"All the community outreach programs yield benefits that go far beyond turf," says Paul. "But our work with the Addison students has been one of the most rewarding."

As the single largest landowner in the Kensico Reservoir Watershed, Whippoorwill has also worked for nearly a decade with the New York State Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) in establishing a Water Resource Protection Plan. This plan includes buffer strips, filtered drainage systems, and restored wetlands, all done to protect the quality of the water that can enter the Kensico Reservoir from Whippoorwill's property.

"The relationship that has been forged between the DEP and the club is a testament to how private industry and public agencies can work together for the benefit of all," says Paul. "The Best Management Practices

(BMPs) that have been, or will soon be implemented, are a compilation of BMPs from throughout the country with some of the latest technologies."

In addition, Paul has introduced an Integrated Pest Management (IPM) program that focuses on improving the growing environment to give the turf the best chance of survival from pest attacks. Water management, nutrient management, and soil modifications are all part of his process to improve the existing growing conditions.

In 2015, Whippoorwill built a new, energy-efficient maintenance facility that includes a wash station and chemical load and mix station. The club also installed a new irrigation system that allows precision management of water output on the golf course. With city water being the prime source, the new-and-improved system offers financial benefits, as well as more prudent use of a precious resource, our water.

"The latest infrastructure upgrades show



Paramount Preps for Superintendent/ Guest Tournament

by Matt Ceplo

There are clubs that have been remodeled and then there are clubs that have been reborn. Paramount Country Club, the site of our May 12 Superintendent/Guest Tournament, is the latter. In fact, if you haven't played here within the past seven years, you probably won't recognize the place. The entire facility has been transformed—from the clubhouse and tennis courts to what will certainly peak our interest most, the golf course.

Nestled in the heart of the Hudson Valley in the town of New City, Paramount was once a playground for the rich and famous. In 1918, Paramount Pictures founder Adolph Zukor purchased 1,200 acres known as Mountain View Farm. It became a romantic Hollywood weekend getaway spot for stars and directors.

In 1920, Zukor hired famed golf course architect A.W. Tillinghast to build an 18-hole championship golf course, complete with a clubhouse, guesthouse, and of course, a movie theater. During the Great Depression, however, the movie industry suffered, and Zukor was unable to maintain his Mountain View Farm estate. He opened it for membership as a golf club.

Then in 1948, the property was sold, and part of this impressive estate became Dellwood Country Club. In the early 2000s, however, the economy began to suffer, and with it, funds for capital improvements dwindled and membership declined until the club was on the verge of collapse.

Paramount Is Born

Things changed rapidly in 2009, when the Mandelbaum family assumed the operation. They renamed the club Paramount Country Club in honor of its original owner and initiated a multi-million-dollar renovation project, which, under the direction of Golf Course Architect Jim Urbina, included a significant restoration of the golf course.

This new initiative just happened to coincide with the first season our meeting host, Brian Chapin, had taken over as the club's golf course superintendent. Brian had been working at the club since 2005 as the assistant to fellow Met member Joe Gardner, and

assumed the reigns when Joe left for Fresh Meadow Country Club in Long Island.

As superintendent, Brian hit the ground running, working closely with Jim Urbina to bring back the Tillinghast features and strategies that had been hidden by many years of growth and neglect. After several years of moving hundreds of yards of fill, rebuilding tees, bunkers, expanding greens, shifting fairways, and removing just a few trees (who's counting), the new Paramount was born.

One gem that was brought back to life was number 18, "The Reef" hole. In an article A.W. Tillinghast wrote for *The American Golfer* in December of 1926, he described a long par 3 as a fairway divided into two distinct sections, requiring the player to choose between four different avenues of play to navigate through the "reef."

At Paramount, the 18th hole plays 190 yards uphill across two large bunkers set at a diagonal line to play. The hole presents many different options making it a fantastic finish to the golf course.

"I'm most proud of the research and respect we paid to the history of the course," says Brian. "By interpreting what we saw on the ground, through the lens of Tillinghast's writing, we were able to really recapture the charm, scale, and quality of the golf course. We took some risks along the way, such as reusing our own sod to keep the 'old feel' and eliminating collars around the greens. Those details really made all the difference in the final product," adds Brian. "We never wanted anyone to be able to tell we had just renovated the course. It's an old club, and we think it should look that way. Credit goes to the owners for being brave enough to accept an unconventional methodology and approach to the restoration."

Pathway to Paramount

Brian's fascination with the game began when he was just 8 years old, playing golf with his father in his hometown of Cumberland, ME. Then in 1997, and every summer through high school, Brian experienced the other side of golf, working as a



Brian Chapin

crew member at the Woodland Club in Falmouth, ME. There, he learned that there was far more to the business than just cutting grass.

Hooked on golf course management, Brian pursued a summer internship in 2001 at Ridgewood Country Club in Paramus, NJ, then another at neighboring Arcola Country Club, also in Paramus. After a few months, he was offered the second assistant's position under then Superintendent Barney Misiura. During his tenure there, Brian completed his two-year turf certificate from Rutgers University and had the good fortune of meeting his wife of four years, Zoya. After a nearly nine-year courtship, they married in August 2012 and have a 2½-year-old daughter named Nika and, on April 18, another daughter who they've named Milena. Congratulations! In the mist of all this, Zoya is forging ahead with medical school.

While his family life keeps him more than busy, Brian still enjoys a good round of golf (he sports a 5.5 index), and when the snow flies, a trip to the mountains to go skiing.

Brian added recently to his professional to-do list: Joining the MetGCSA Board of Directors in 2015, he is currently the Membership Committee chairman.

Join Us!

Mark your calendars, cross the bridge, and plan to join Brian and your fellow Met members for a great day of golf at this year's Superintendent/Guest Tournament. I, for one, am really looking forward to it!

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

Country Club of Darien to Host Met's June Invitational

by Kevin Collins

On Monday, June 6, Superintendent Tim O'Neill and the Country Club of Darien will host the Met's annual Invitational Tournament. This event pits local clubs in a no-holds-barred competition to determine which club has the drive, moxie, and golf skills to score low and take home the title and bragging rights for the year. Teams are comprised of the superintendent, head pro, and two club officials.

As area veterans probably know, the Country Club of Darien has had a less-than-conventional evolution. It was built in 1957 on the grounds of the family estate of Edgar Auchincloss, who remained the club's sole proprietor for 29 years. Auchincloss hired Golf Course Architect Alfred Tull to transform the 140-acre former dairy farm into a first-class, 18-hole private course. And he was able to do it for what, even back then, was considered a song: a mere \$200,000.

The course underwent very little change until 1986, when Auchincloss sold the club to the membership. Under the club's new—and more conventional—regime, Tim got the go-ahead for some major capital improvements.

Wasting no time, he hired Golf Course Architect Brian Silva that very same year to develop a master plan for course renovations. They started with a major drainage project, extensive tee and bunker reconstruction, the redesign of #18 green, and the installation of an entirely new irrigation system.

In 2006, Tim continued the work laid out in the club's ambitious master plan with architect Michael Hurdzan. Since the initial work, this multi-million-dollar undertaking has included rebuilding every tee and bunker, a new driving range, the construction of six USGA-spec greens topped off with the original *Poa/bent* surface, rerouting the golf course (except for holes 1 and 10, the nines were reversed), a second update to the irrigation system, burying overhead power lines, a new pool, and an all-new

maintenance facility and staff quarters. Darien now plays 6,750 yards from the tips and is a par 71.

But we're not done yet. Tim notes, "We plan to rebuild more greens, and currently, the clubhouse is being renovated." No rest for the weary!

Career in the Making

Tim grew up in Pawtucket, RI, the second of eight children. Tim's dad, Vincent, was a funeral director. "The funeral home was on the first floor, and the living quarters were on the second," Tim remembers. (I'm sure no O'Neill family member wandered downstairs for a late night snack!)

By age 12, Tim had already gotten a taste of the golf business, working as a caddie at the nearby Pawtucket Country Club. "Les Kennedy Sr. was the head pro at the time, and had been for the past 40-plus years," says Tim. "He also had about three stints as the club's golf course superintendent and persuaded me to give golf course maintenance a try."

It was at Pawtucket that Tim met Les Kennedy Jr., now superintendent at The Blind Brook Club in Purchase, NY. Les Jr. worked as his father's assistant. Tim worked on the grounds crew summers while earning his B.S. in Turf Management at the University of Rhode Island. Spending countless hours together maintaining Pawtucket's par 69 layout, Tim and Les became fast friends.

"Out of college, my first and only assistant's job was at Greenwich Country Club," says Tim. "Les Jr. had asked me if I wanted to come back to Pawtucket. I told him that Greenwich had offered me \$4.10 an hour plus housing and meals. Les said I better take the job at Greenwich because Pawtucket couldn't afford me," says Tim, laughing.

Tim worked at Greenwich with Superintendent Paul Caswell for close to three years, picking up the experience he needed for his next career move.

That move was to his first and only superintendent's job at Country Club of



Tim O'Neill, CGCS

Darien. "I had to interview with Edgar Auchincloss," remembers Tim. "I felt the interview went well, and as the initial interview was ending, I mentioned to Mr. Auchincloss that I would really like to sit down with him in the near future to talk about growing turf. He said, 'Why not now?' and so the interview continued."

Despite the stiff competition, Tim assumed the reins as superintendent in 1981 at the age of 24. "Mr. Auchincloss asked me how much money I thought the job should pay. I asked for \$24,000 a year, and he said that wasn't enough. He started me at \$27,000."

Thirty-five years later, Tim still has the same passion and drive that he felt when he started at Darien. And he's gotten a few salary bumps along the way.

I asked Tim to explain his success and longevity at Darien. "First, you need to get along with people and surround yourself with a good staff. I am fortunate to have had numerous assistants who have come here and pushed me and the golf course to greater heights. Long-time MetGCSA member Glenn Moore is an important part of the full-time staff and uses his myriad tal-

ents to keep the irrigation system operating at a high level and is involved in countless special projects.

"I have had the opportunity to work with five general managers but only two golf professionals, Ed Nicholson and Cory Muller. We've all worked well together.

"When I was on the GCSAA board, I also learned a lot from Steve Mona," Tim continues. "The way he interacted with the board, the professionalism and respect he showed everyone was a winning formula."

Giving Back

Giving back to the industry has also been a winning formula that Tim has adhered to throughout his career. Tim served on the MetGCSA board from 1983 through 1994, culminating in his service as the Met's president in '92 and '93.

While still active in the Met, Tim assumed a leadership role in the Tri-State Turf Research Foundation, working with the group since its inception in 1990. He served as publications editor and progressed through the board's ranks to president, an office he held in 1999.

So thoroughly committed to promoting

the profession, Tim took his aspirations to yet another level: the national, campaigning for a seat on the GCSAA Board of Directors. Tim joined the GCSAA Board of Directors in 2000 and was reelected in 2001. In 2005, Tim assumed the post of GCSAA president.

Locally, he's been an environmental advocate, adding to his list of involvements his service on the Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection Task Group in 2001—which established Best Management Practices for water use on golf courses—and his long-time participation in the Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary Program, involving members and the community in his environmental efforts on the course.

Makes you scratch your head in wonder where Tim found the time. But he did, and I would say both Tim and the industry are better off due to his efforts.

Family Man

Though his professional life is clearly of high importance, Tim is—and always has been—equally committed to his family.

"I first laid eyes on Jennifer in 1985 at a bar in Greenwich," reminisces Tim about his first encounter with his wife. "We didn't

speaking but our eyes met and she made an impression on me. The next night I was at a place in Norwalk and I saw her; she was out with a date. She came over and told me that her boyfriend had lost his wallet. I told her I had found it but wasn't going to give it back to him. We both laughed and luckily she gave me her phone number," Tim adds with a smile. The rest is history!

Tim and Jennifer have been married 28 years and have two children: Justin, 27, graduated from Brown University and is a standards administrator for *The New York Times*, living in Brooklyn. Kristen, 24, graduated from Connecticut College and works in public relations for NARS Cosmetics; she lives in Manhattan.

Jennifer works as director of development at the Whitby School, an independent school in Greenwich, CT. Tim and Jennifer live in Fairfield, CT.

Be sure to join Tim on June 6 for this not-to-be-missed competition and course that has been all but reborn! Enjoy!

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



Country Club of Darien

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