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# Tee To Green

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**MetGCSA**  
est 1959

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# Tee To Green



Cover: Sunningdale Country Club.

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# President's Message

## The Times They Are a Changin'



# W

hen mums are planted, bulbs ordered, and our club entrances are adorned with pumpkins and cornstalks, we know budget season has begun. Clubs large and small, vendors, professors and researchers . . . we all have to deliver on a budget. Sure, the specifics of the budget plans at our clubs vary depending on the size of the club and its individual needs and expectations. But no matter what the profession or department within a facility, the process is very much the same: a kind of balancing act between needs and upcoming expenses.

### When Budget Planning Goes Well

Our favorite part of the budget discussion is, of course, when our COO, GM, or Green Committee asks, "Do you have all the tools you need to get the job done?"

Agronomic plans, club committee expectations and goals will ultimately drive the budget, but it's always a good feeling when the club values your department enough to consult with you on what you may need now and in the future—whether it's staffing or resources—to aptly tend to their number one asset: the golf course.

While seasoned superintendents, equipment managers, and assistants, when pressed, are capable of delivering a good product with only a little "bubble gum and duct tape," knowing a club feels your efforts are worth fully supporting—and then actually allocating the funds to do it—goes a long way in boosting department morale and in providing a motivating and employee-friendly environment.

Constant reinvestment, big or small, in area golf courses has not been seen to my knowledge since the late 1990s. Yes, over-spent capital, dwindling membership enrollment, and the overall downturn in golf has had a significant impact on the financial health of local clubs, which has been terrible to see in our once-bulletproof market.

But fortunately, right now it seems, as Bob Dylan sang, "The times they are a changin'." This is evident in the number of renovations that are planned, have occurred recently, or are currently taking place at clubs in our area.



*David Dudones  
MetGCSA President*

We only hope that this upturn won't be adversely affected by the ever-increasing cost of labor and employee benefits.

### Budget Challenges Looming

Keeping our budgets at a 2- to 3-percent increase has admittedly been challenging with the perpetually rising cost of expenses such as workman's comp and health insurance, union-mandated benefits, pension or 401k contributions, and payroll and property taxes.

Now, next year it seems we'll be faced with yet another budget challenge: Minimum wage is scheduled to increase to \$11/hour in 2018 and progress to \$15/hour by 2022.

Along with stretching our labor budgets, this wage increase could ruffle the feathers of the nonunion and union workers whose mandated cost-of-living increases have been at a modest 3 percent. That means employees who started in 2010 at \$.25 above the state minimum wage of \$7.25 would, under normal circumstances, be making only \$10.69 in 2022.

Instead, these veteran employees will be receiving the minimum wage increase of \$15/hour in 2022. While, at first, this might *continued on page 8*

# Bob Nielsen Honored With Met's Coveted Sherwood A. Moore Award

*by Scott Apgar*





ongratulations to Robert J. Nielsen, CGCS, of Bedford Golf & Tennis Club for being selected as this year's recipient of the Sherwood A. Moore (SAM) Award. The SAM Award is the most prestigious honor presented to a superintendent of the MetGCSA. The honor began with the award's namesake, Sherwood A. Moore, in 1987 and has carried on, recognizing those who have "advanced the image, status, and reputation of the golf course superintendent." Bob is only the 18th superintendent to receive such accolades.

Fittingly, he was nominated by our last winner, 2015 recipient Matt Ceplo of Rockland Country Club. "Bob's commitment to the industry on behalf of all of us makes him exceedingly qualified for the Sherwood A. Moore Award," says Matt, who has had the fortunate opportunity to see, firsthand, Bob's many contributions to the board and numerous committee initiatives.

"Whether it was the time he committed to board services, finances, environmental issues, government relations, or even family picnics, Bob has given 110 percent to every endeavor. It has truly been a privilege working with such a superior golf course superintendent."

When notified of his selection for the award, Bob couldn't have been more honored to become a part of the fine group of past SAM Award recipients and to have his name associated in any way with the late Sherwood Moore.

"The SAM Award is the most prestigious award I will ever receive," says Bob with his typical humility. "No one can truly appreciate just how special an honor this is for me—to receive an award named after a man I've long held in the highest regard."

Sherwood first made an impression on Bob back in the early '80s when he was just a 20-something-year-old assistant superintendent at Bedford Golf & Tennis. "One summer morning," recalls Bob, "Sherwood and Metro Milorganite cofounder, John Wistrand, asked my boss, Terry Boles, if they could take me up to the University of Rhode Island for the Turfgrass Field Day. Though I knew John and his then business partner, Tony Grasso Sr., somewhat well, all I

knew of Sherwood was that he was the head of grounds maintenance at the highly acclaimed Winged Foot Golf Club.

"So, here I am," continues Bob, "a virtual unknown in the golf industry, spending quality time with perhaps the most influential and powerful man in our profession. He didn't know me from Adam, but he treated me like an equal, not the underling that I was. That's the kind of guy he was."

Bob's day with Sherwood didn't end with the field day. Once they returned (back then field days were really field half-days), Sherwood asked Bob if he would like to spend the afternoon touring the golf courses at Winged Foot. And of course Bob did.

"Sherwood and I spent from 3 in the afternoon until dark driving around the property in his station wagon—no one had SUVs back then—loaded with all sorts of turf tools and soil sample implements. This man was the exponential leader of the turfgrass profession, and I was profoundly impressed," remembers Bob.

### Where It All Began

Not turf-minded to start, Bob's interest in the industry was piqued after working on the Bedford Golf & Tennis crew while pursuing an accounting degree. "I didn't have any intention of getting into the golf business," says Bob. "While still working at Bedford Golf & Tennis, I took a part-time job with a tax accountant, fully expecting to make that my career. Then one warm, sunny March day, after sneaking outside for numerous breaks, it hit me that I wasn't cut out for an office job," says Bob.

Bob continued his work at Bedford Golf & Tennis, was promoted to assistant superintendent, and abandoned the idea of becoming a full-time accountant. Instead, he went on to complete yet another degree: his certificate in turfgrass management from the UMass Winter School.

At that point, though fully committed to the daily routine of the job, Bob had a young family and little interest in doing more. "I was an assistant superintendent who did not play golf or attend many MetGCSA events," admits Bob.

At age 32, after paying his dues for eight years as an assistant, Terry retired and Bob was promoted to golf course superintendent. "I still didn't play much golf," says Bob, "but I did make sure to attend many of the Met's social events: the family picnic with my first wife, Jane, and sons Bobby and Matt; the summer social aboard the Klondike out of New Rochelle harbor; and Christmas parties at area clubs. I also made sure to attend the Winter Seminar and Summer Field Day, which were both held at Westchester Country Club," he recalls.

Still wholly job-focused, something happened that inspired a significant change in Bob's professional journey.

### The Game Changer

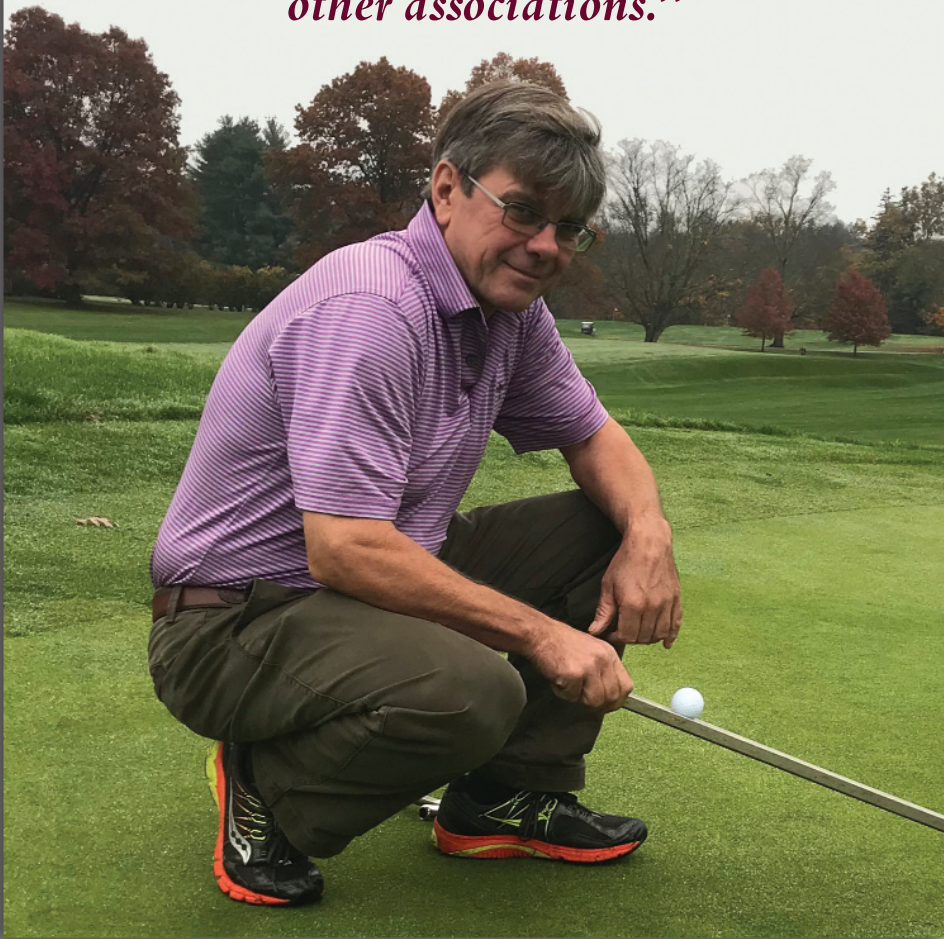
It was 15 years ago when, one summer day in 2002, Bob was approached by Westchester Country Club's then head of grounds maintenance, Joe Alonzi. A highly regarded SAM Award winner himself, Joe was in the prime of a very illustrious career and had targeted Bob as a great candidate for the Met Board of Directors.

"I had just come off a three-year construction project at Bedford Golf & Tennis, and I was also going through a divorce. With such a full plate, the last thing on my mind was getting involved with the MetGCSA," remembers Bob. "But I felt if Joe Alonzi had asked me to join the board, then I couldn't refuse. And in the end, becoming a board member turned out to be one of the best moves of my professional career."

Once elected, Bob hit the ground running, starting as Tournament Committee Chair and eventually navigating his way through the board chairs as treasurer, vice president, and then president from 2011 to 2012. His 12-year term on the board culminated in 2014 after two final years as past president.

Still actively contributing to the Met as a member of numerous committees, Bob holds the distinction of having served on or chaired every one of the MetGCSA committees with the exception of Advertising and everyone's favorite, the Communica-

*“In my opinion it is the true fraternity that separates the MetGCSA from many other associations.”*



tions Committee, better known as the *Tee To Green*.

“As my penance, for not serving on the *Tee To Green* Committee, I am now one of six Pandora Wojick has enlisted to proof the newsletter for proper grammar, errors, and accuracy before it goes to print,” laments Bob with a smile.

When reflecting on his start on the board as Tournament Committee Chair, Bob couldn’t help but mention his predecessor, the late Dave Mahoney. “Dave was not only one of the most witty, engaging speakers I’d ever heard, he also ran the committee like a true professional. I had some tough shoes to fill, which forced me to work that much harder,” admits Bob.

And hard he has worked. Three years after Bob’s entrée onto the MetGCSA board, he became a chapter delegate, serving as the mouthpiece for the Met at the Chapter Delegates meetings taking place annually at GCSAA headquarters. Bob assumed this role for eight years, from 2005 to 2013.

“When I was chapter delegate,” he says, “I always told the individuals running for na-

tional office that I controlled only 106 of the 7,000 total national votes. But then numerous high-profile superintendents from around the country explained to me that the votes I controlled were sought out by every one of the candidates because of the Met’s stature and influence in the industry.

“To have the opportunity to serve an organization that’s held in such high regard is a humbling experience but, at the same time, exhilarating. It was a statement maker in my career,” adds Bob.

During his lengthy term as delegate, Bob was recognized by more than one of his peers for going above and beyond his duty of representing the Met’s vote in the national elections.

Somers Pointe Superintendent Steve Turchick was one who noted Bob’s willingness to extend himself for others. “It was my first trip out to Kansas as a chapter delegate,” recounts Steve. “I was there representing the Hudson Valley, and serving at the national level was a very new experience for me. Clearly sensing that I could use someone to show me the ropes, Bob took me under his

wing. That went a long way in helping me to feel at ease focusing on the task at hand.

“I had the pleasure of meeting Sherwood Moore early in my career,” adds Steve, “and I can tell you, Bob Nielsen is the modern-day Sherwood. I’m not the only one he’s reached out to. He’s helped many of his peers become better professionals and better people!”

### **An Industry Advocate and Leader**

Bob’s encounter with GCSAA did not end with his lengthy stretch as chapter delegate. While serving as a delegate, in fact, he was also instrumental in selecting candidates for our national association’s Board of Directors as a member of the GCSAA Nominating Committee. From there he sought appointments to the Superintendent Research Panel, Government Affairs Committee, Research Proposal Committee, BMP Grants Task Group, and the Grassroots Ambassadors and Environmental Awards Committees.

A true advocate for the industry among the country’s legislators and those close to home in New York State, Bob has committed a significant portion of his free time working to promote our industry’s environmental efforts and responsibility among legislators, keeping his ear to the ground for any proposed legislation that might unjustly restrict our ability to do our jobs.

As chair and now member of the Met’s Government Relations Committee, he’s represented our industry’s positive initiatives at the annual Turfgrass Advocacy Day held every March in Albany, NY, and most notably was instrumental in the initiation of the Best Management Practices (BMPs) for New York State Golf Courses, bringing the BMP project to the attention of New York State superintendents at the 2012 Golf Industry Show in Las Vegas, NV.

“As greater scrutiny was being paid to how golf courses are managed, I could see that it was in our best interest to take this proactive approach to educating those outside our industry,” explains Bob.

Once the idea gained momentum among New York State turf professionals, the MetGCSA’s Environmental Committee Chair Ken Benoit stepped forward to take

## *“Bob Nielsen is the modern-day Sherwood... he’s helped many of his peers become better professionals and better people!”*

—Steve Turchick

the lead in bringing the project to fruition, forming the New York State BMP Committee.

“While Ken led the charge, Blake Halderman forwarded its progress, making for a huge success,” says Bob, who not only serves on the BMP Committee, but also is a member of NYSTA’s Board of Directors.

Recognizing the BMP Committee’s initiative and foresight in developing this comprehensive resource, NYSTA presented Bob, Ken, and Blake, as well as BMP Executive Committee members Dr. Frank Rossi and project manager Stacy Kingsbury with the organization’s prestigious Friend of the Green Industry Award.

In further recognition of the Met’s efforts in initiating the BMPs, Bob notes, “Florida was required to do them, Virginia was forced to do them, but we took it on without political pressures forcing it on us. I was honored to work with Ken, Blake, and the other committee members in forging this critical initiative.”

Apparently, Ken is equally honored to have Bob in his professional circle. “I first met Bob in 2001 after being hired as the superintendent at GlenArbor Golf Club,” recalls Ken. “I don’t remember the details of our meeting, I was probably asking to borrow something, but I do remember how welcome he made me feel, not only as a new neighbor, but as a newly minted superintendent.

“Flash forward some 16-plus years and Bob remains the same generous and welcoming person I met so many years ago. Observing Bob work so tirelessly, both locally and nationally, to advance the image of the golf course superintendent has been truly inspirational, both personally and professionally. I can think of no person more deserving of our most prestigious superintendent award,” Ken notes.

### **Involvement Breeds Success**

The old saying, “If you need something done, give it to a busy person,” undoubtedly applies to Bob Nielsen. He has managed to balance a full personal life with a demanding career and a long list of industry endeavors.

“Looking back, particularly to when my first two kids were young, I’m not sure how I juggled my time, but when Bobby played football, I made it to every game, and when Matt wrestled, I made it to every match,” says Bob.

Even today, when Bob’s youngest sons, John and Sam, perform in a play, Bob’s there for every production. “Some people feel it’s not possible, but never in my life have I felt so energized,” admits Bob. “And my most productive and satisfying years were during my board involvement with the MetGCSA.

Never in my career had I felt such a connection to not only my fellow superintendents, but also my family and friends.”

Behind the scenes, in his Bedford, NY, home, Bob receives tremendous support from his wonderful wife, Carolyn. Together, with their two aspiring actor sons, John and Sam, they share their energy and enthusiasm with the many industry friends they entertain on a regular basis.

Oldest son, Bobby, resides in California where he owns and runs a successful restaurant. Matthew is a construction manager for a high-end commercial real estate and construction company. All in all, everyone in the Nielsen clan is doing well, proof that involvement breeds success.

Bob’s only regret is not becoming involved with the MetGCSA board earlier in

his career. In his words, it is not just about the professionalism, but more importantly the close-knit association with our peers.

“In my opinion it is the true fraternity that separates the MetGCSA from many other associations,” says Bob. “If I were in jeopardy of losing my job tomorrow, I could call at least 30 superintendents in the MetGCSA who would come to my aid. Fifteen of them might apply for the job if I were to lose it, but all 30 would be giving it their all to help me,” chuckles Bob.

The fraternity Bob refers to stems back to the namesake of the award, Sherwood A. Moore, and continues with our newest recipient, Robert J. Nielsen.

“From my early contact with Sherwood, I could see why he became the namesake of this outstanding award,” says Bob. “This man made a huge impact on me as a person and a professional. His love of the industry and willingness to teach and spend time with those coming up through the ranks behind him is what made him such a great mentor, wonderful human being, and instrumental influence for many of us.

“I accept this award with the utmost modesty,” says Bob, “for there will never be another Sherwood A. Moore.”

*Scott Apgar, former member of the Tee to Green Editorial Committee, is owner of Metro Turf Specialists in Brookfield, CT.*



*Bob Nielsen outside the Goodspeed Opera House with his budding actor sons, (left to right) Sam and John, and his wife, Carolyn.*

# Keeping New Turf Talent Happily Engaged

*How Soft Skills Can Improve Grounds Team Efficiency and Motivation*

by Kevin Doyle



This time of year, you're hopefully seeing the end of the summer stress line and looking forward to a stretch where you can enjoy a lighter workload. The nature of this profession requires that we build a seasonal quality of life that often leads to an imbalance: peaks and valleys; long, exhausting work hours followed by lulls in the action that allow us to resume some semblance of a normal schedule.

How did we, as new superintendents, acclimate to the demands of the profession? If you were like me when I was new to the industry, you worked hard for a very long time to adjust, and those closest to you, friends and family, needed to adjust with you to strike that balance.

It was far from easy. The only saving grace, then and now, is that superintendents and other industry workers do eventually develop a support network and a system of routines to cope with the nature of the job.

But what about your *new* employees? Who is assisting *them* in finding a balance?

While training and proper compensation are tools commonly used to attract—and help acclimate—new employees, the steps

taken to ensure a work-life balance are proving far more important in ensuring a successful work experience for today's incoming turf professionals.

Determining your best course of action, may well lie in your ability and willingness to understand how these younger employees view the world and then using that knowledge to motivate them in ways that work.

What follows are a few thoughts to get you started in creating the kind of environment where promising young turf talent will not only thrive, but also develop that passion that drives us all.

### Putting a Premium on Time and Flexibility

I continue to hear of younger, talented professionals moving out of the industry to different careers. While lack of upward job mobility may well be a factor, given what we know, it's hard to overlook the difficulty of work-life balance. Those entering the workforce today generally have significantly different expectations for their job

and career than we did as eager, young professionals who were willing to work 24/7 to prove our mettle.

Time and flexibility are now the priority for those entering our industry. Sure, they are still interested in performing the job well; they're just not interested in taking all day, everyday to do it. As much as we value our personal time, the younger generations entering the workforce feel they *have* to have it.

So what do you do? In short, think outside the box. And why not start with scheduling. Given the value younger employees seem to place on personal time, you could assume, for instance, that they would be likely to respond to such offers as paid time off.

There's a leading retail organization that has recognized this new way of thinking with its Working Hard Card: When managers catch an employee rising to a challenge or giving the job 110 percent, they can hand the employee a Working Hard Card on the spot. Each card is worth a set amount of paid time off. It's a simple strategy that rewards employees in the currency they value most: their time.

While this precise method may not be suitable for your operation, you get the idea. Time is money to our new generation of employee.

GlenArbor Superintendent Ken Benoit is one who respects his employees' need for personal time. "I'm sensitive to my employees' family obligations. I allow them to take time off for sick children, the first day of school, parent-teacher meetings. . . but scheduling significant time off otherwise during the season, I'll admit, is difficult," he says.

To help his assistants maintain some semblance of balance, Ken makes sure they have every other weekend free during the season. "The time they do get off, I know, is miniscule compared to the amount of hours they're expected to put in," says Ken. "So I try to make up for it during the off-season by rewarding them with three-day weekends that don't count toward their vacation or sick time."



*“There’s no doubt in my mind that leisure time during high-stress periods is essential to preserving mental health—and satisfaction with the job.”*

—Scott Niven, CGCS

Fairview Superintendent Jim Pavonetti is another one who recognizes the need for time away from work. He too gives his assistants every other weekend off throughout the season. “Giving them time to enjoy the summer and family and friends, allows them to recharge and approach the job with renewed energy,” says Jim.

Sharing the same philosophy, Stanwich Club Property Manager Scott Niven, goes out of his way to ensure a reasonable work schedule for his assistants. “I never thought it made sense to work my assistants beyond the normal eight-hour day unless it was absolutely necessary,” says Scott, who’s a proponent of hiring additional staff rather than spreading his employees too thin.

Scott also gives his assistants every third weekend off in the summer, and when they are on weekend duty, he encourages them to work only the early morning shift when syringing isn’t necessary.

“Being a person who always had plenty of things I liked to do after work,” says Scott, “I’m sensitive to employees’ need for work-life balance. I also like to give my assistants the option of saving two vacation days and then using them to take a couple of long weekends during the busy season.

“There’s no doubt in my mind,” adds Scott, that leisure time during high-stress periods is essential to preserving mental health—and satisfaction with the job.”

### **A Little Respect Goes a Long Way**

Newcomers to the industry are looking for not only time away from work, but also more face time with the boss. They want a leader who is approachable, caring, and aware. A boss who will advocate for them. A boss they can respect. There’s no doubt that employees, new and veteran alike, are more apt to stick it out in a job they’re not in love with, if they “love” and respect their boss.

We all know superintendents who have earned the loyalty of their employees, even well beyond the time they still worked together. So how did they do it?

For starters, these superintendents have taken a different approach to leadership. They don’t just hire the right people, give

them cursory training, and then send them off with a to-do list. They take a sincere interest in what makes these people tick, what motivates them. They encourage their employees to be creative, empowering them to utilize their talents and respecting them as important members of the team.

Jim Pavonetti has done just that, by taking a creative approach to managing his staff that has not only alleviated stress among his assistants, but also enhanced the morale and motivation of his crew members.

How did he do it? For starters, he shifted some of the workload from his assistants to his grounds staff by training several crew members to hand-water greens and fairways.

“Though my assistants were always prepared to jump in and help when things got too crazy, with the shift in duties, they were able to assume more of a supervisory role during long afternoons of wilt-watching,” says Jim.

This proved to be a win-win. According to Jim, the labor shift has not only made it possible for his assistants to get through the summer more happily, but it has also been

motivating to his grounds crew, who are pleased to make the extra money. “What’s more,” says Jim, “it’s resulted in an improvement in course conditioning—another win!”

There are a million different ways to operate, lead, and interact with those around us, but my guess is that the managers who had the most positive impact on their employees were the ones who created the most positive work environment—the type of environment that inspires employees to go above-and-beyond to help out the “team” and, more important, the boss.

### **Three Power-packed Words**

One supervisor who made a tremendous impression on me during my (many) college years used a simple, but powerful tool to make a not-so-great job almost worth doing. His secret? He made it a priority to use three simple words: “please” and “thank you”—and so much so that you had to notice. Working third shift cleaning university buildings was nearly as thankless as it got, except the supervisor made it a point to



***“I try to make a point of meeting my teammates outside the shop as they roll in from a more-than-full day with a standing ovation and a handshake.”***

**– Ken Benoit, CGCS**



recognize the efforts of the staff at every turn.

Recognizing your staff with the simple, respectful use of “please” and “thank you” can go a long way. We are always striving to improve our facilities, and our staff plays a significant part in achieving those improvements.

Asking staff to be mindful of trash, use caution while turning equipment due to environmental conditions, and requesting they stay longer to complete tasks that will enhance an aspect of the course are often inherent requests in our daily duties. They may even know the communication is coming. If it comes following the word “please” and, then when the task is completed, it’s recognized with a “thank you,” then you’ve created a win-win with one simple verbal effort.

Did you appreciate that your staff member completed the task? Will that employee be glad that the job he or she did was recognized? If the answer is yes, then your words made a significant difference.

Ken Benoit makes it a point to show just how much he appreciates employees’ contributions after a long stretch out on the course. “I try to make a point of meeting my team members outside the shop as they roll in from a more-than-full day with a stand-

ing ovation and a handshake,” says Ken. “Seeing me there clapping hard and saying thank you has never failed to bring a smile to their faces.”

While pizza, swag, and time off are often viewed as thoughtful recognition of a job well done, don’t lose sight of the power of those three simple words of genuine recognition and appreciation.

### **In the End**

It is no secret that the role of superintendents has changed over time. Gone are the days spent simply maintaining turf; now the priority is maintaining people. Knowing—and addressing—what your team members value most could be the one thing that creates success for a new hire, as well as a long-time staff member.

While personal time might be the hardest item to provide, it may just end up being the most critical to your people. In addition, being polite builds respect, and recognition is a driver of employee motivation. The grounds team is the key to your success. Help them to be content and successful and the whole facility, members included, will be rewarded.

*Kevin Doyle is a GCSAA field staff representative for the Northeast Region.*

*President’s Message continued from page 1*

seem like a good thing, the \$15/hour they receive will be the very same rate of pay that someone coming in off the street, with no training or experience, will be entitled to.

General managers and club committees will, no doubt, be discussing how to deal with the rising minimum wage, while ensuring that our long-term staff members feel valued beyond those incoming “greenhorns,” as new crewmates are referred to in the show *Deadliest Catch*.

For superintendents, finding additional funds will take some creativity. It’s not a bad idea to start brainstorming ways to accommodate the added labor expense starting in 2018. There are always ways to “rob Peter to pay Paul” so added expenses in one area won’t deprive your entire department of what it needs to continue operating in top form.

### **On a High Note**

I am very pleased to announce that my good friend and colleague, Bob Nielsen, will be accepting the Sherwood A. Moore Award this January at our Winter Seminar here at Westchester. Bob has always given back far more than he has taken from our association, industry, and community. He has worked his way through the chairs to president of the MetGCSA, continued to serve on numerous committees, served as our chapter delegate at the national, and actively worked to protect our industry’s interests in government legislation. In addition, Bob has been a wonderful resource to fellow turf professionals, old and new, always willing to lend a helping hand.

If you see Bob at our Christmas gathering on December 15, please be sure to congratulate him on this well-deserved high honor and career achievement.

**David Dudones**  
*MetGCSA President*

# MetGCSA's Annual Christmas Gathering

**WHEN?** Friday, December 15, 3 – 6 p.m.

**WHERE?** Bull and Barrel Brew Pub  
Brewster, NY

Come one, come all to our annual Christmas celebration. Employees, friends, and family are welcome to join the festivities and cocktail party atmosphere that will include great appetizers, an open bar, and the opportunity to ring in the holiday season with fellow members old and new. Mark your calendars and gather your guest list. The more the merrier!



## Post-Season Educational Opportunities

### 2017 GREEN EXPO Turf & Landscape Conference

Tuesday – Thursday, December 5 – 7  
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](http://www.njturfgrass.org).

### Long Island Regional Conference

Thursday, December 7  
Radisson Hotel Hauppauge-Long Island  
Hauppauge, NY

The Long Island Regional Conference offers a variety of educational sessions with leading turfgrass educators and industry professionals.

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

### CAGCS January Seminar

Tuesday, January 9, 2018  
Mystic Marriott, Groton, CT

### MetGCSA Winter Seminar

Wednesday, January 10, 2018  
Westchester Country Club, Rye, NY  
Host: David Dudones

### New Members

Please join us in welcoming the following new MetGCSA members:

- **Ryan Avery**, Class AF, Grass Roots Turf Products, Randolph, NJ
- **Brian Conlon**, Class C, Burning Tree Country Club, Greenwich, CT
- **John Gallagher**, Class C, Metropolis Country Club, White Plains, NY
- **John Hagen**, Class C, Round Hill Club, Greenwich, CT
- **Kyle Ott**, Class C, Wee Burn Country Club, Darien, CT
- **John P. Schroeder**, Class C, Pelham Bay/Split Rock Golf Course, Bronx, NY
- **Steve Whipple**, Class A, West Point Golf Course, West Point, NY

### Births

Congratulations and best wishes to two MetGCSA members who have just had twins!

- Upper Montclair Country Club Superintendent **Mike Brunelle** and his wife, Jennifer, had twin daughters, Emmalyn Rae and Norah Margaret, born 6 lbs. 9 ozs. and 6 lbs. 1 oz. on October 19.
- Westchester Country Club Assistant Director of Golf and Grounds **Joe Gikis** and his wife, Amber, had twin sons, Lincoln and Griffin, born 4 lbs. 1 oz. and 4 lbs. 2 ozs. on October 30.



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– Mike Dachowski, Superintendent



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– Keith Wood, Superintendent



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## Scorecard

# Nine and Diners Enjoy Beautiful Day at Birchwood

by Steve Loughran



This year's Nine and Dine event was held September 21, ushering in the first day of fall at an all-new venue, Birchwood Country Club in Westport, CT. With temps still warm, there couldn't have been a better day to come out for nine and then dine on Birchwood's picturesque outdoor patio overlooking the challenging ninth hole.

Our host superintendent, Justin Gabrenas, had the course in tip-top condition for the full field of 48 golfers who came out to compete in the Two-Man Best Ball format.

Here's who came out on top at the end of their nine-hole round:

### Gross Winners

- 1st Ian Blackmar, *The Stanwich Club*  
Brandon Okurowski, *The Stanwich Club*
- 2nd Peter Grace, *H. Smith Richardson GC*  
John Callahan, *The Cardinals*

### Net Winners

- 1st Les Kennedy, *Blind Brook Club*  
Tim O'Neill, *CC of Darien*
- 2nd Justin Gabrenas, *Birchwood CC*  
Jeff Houde, *Tom Irwin*

### Closest to Pin

- #4 Peter Grace, *H. Smith Richardson GC*
- #7 Chris Body, *The Stanwich Club*

### Longest Drive

Steve Loughran, *Rock Ridge CC*

*Steve Loughran, chair of the Tournament Committee, is superintendent at Rock Ridge Country Club in Newtown, CT.*

# Sunningdale Shines at Season-Ending Event

by Steve Loughran

On October 3, Sunningdale Country Club drew 96 golfers to our triple-header event: the Poa Annual Tournament and fundraiser, the Met Team Championship Qualifier, and the MetGCSA Championship. Showcasing the club's recent course renovation and reconstruction project, host Superintendent Sean Cain and his staff provided superb conditions, fitting for our association's championship event.

Through the sale of 32 tee signs and golfer contributions, the Poa Annual Event was able to contribute \$6,200 this year to help support the New York State Turfgrass Foundation. We thank you all for your generosity.

Special thanks, also, to the entire Sunningdale staff for their contributions in making this and our other golf events of the day possible.

Now, the highlights of the day's three events...

## The Met Championship

Sean Cain was able to defend his turf and earn, for the third time, the Met Championship with a smooth 76, which included a 1-under back nine. A close second was the always steady Quaker super, Tom Ashfield, with a 79.

In the Net Division, Brae Burn's Blake Halderman edged out Leewood's Tim Walker by one shot to win First Net for a second time with a 72, adding to his previous three Gross championships.

## The Poa Annual

### Gross Winners

- 71 Sean Cain, *Sunningdale CC*  
Chip Lafferty, *Rye GC*
- 72 Dave Lippman, *Westchester Turf Supply*  
Steve Whipple, *West Point GC*

### Net Winners

- 61 Bill Cygan, *Silver Spring CC*  
Jon Heywood, *Morris County GC*
- 62 Steve Loughran, *Rock Ridge CC*  
Kevin Doyle, *GCSAA Field Staff, NE Region*

### **Closest to the Pin**

#8 Dick Neufeld, *Plant Food Co.*

#17 Bruce Peterson, *JP McHale*

### **Longest Drive**

Dave Peterson, *Brae Burn CC*

### **Met Area Team Championship Qualifier**

Representing the MetGCSA at the October 16 championship were:

#### **Gross Team**

Sean Cain, *Sunningdale CC*

Tom Ashfield, *Quaker Ridge GC*

Steve Loughran, *Rock Ridge CC*

Chip Lafferty, *Rye GC*

#### **Net Team**

Blake Halderman, *Brae Burn CC*

Ryan Batz, *Nutrite*

Doug Drugo, *Wee Burn CC*

Jim Swiatlowski, *Montammy CC*

### **As One Season Ends, Another Begins**

With this event marking the end of the MetGCSA's tournament season, I would like to thank our sponsors for their valuable support and our meeting hosts and their clubs for opening their doors to our events this year. I would also like to extend a special thank you to our Tournament Committee for their help in making this a great golfing and tournament season.

To keep the momentum going, we have already begun looking into host sites for next year. If you are interested in hosting an event, please feel free to email me at [sloughran17@yahoo.com](mailto:sloughran17@yahoo.com) or call me on my cell at 917-270-2925.

*Steve Loughran, chair of the Tournament Committee, is superintendent at Rock Ridge Country Club in Newtown, CT.*



# GCSANJ Assistants Take First Place in Battle of the Bridges Tournament

by Dave Peterson



New Jersey Assistants claim first place in the Battle of the Bridges at Paramount. From left to right: Joe Scioscia of Somerset Hills CC, Mike Grillo of Mendham Golf & Tennis Club, Freddy Carmona of Stanton Ridge Golf & CC, Josh DeSalvia of Glen Ridge CC, Tim Pleskach of Wild Turkey CC, Amando Aparicio of Stanton Ridge Golf & CC, Patrick O'Brien and Adam Nunez of Arcola CC.

The second annual Battle of the Bridges Assistants Championship, played at Paramount Country Club on October 23, proved that it's not quantity but rather quality that prevails. Last year's tournament at Upper Montclair concluded with a decisive win by MetGCSA assistants, so of course, confidence was high that they'd have a repeat performance at Paramount this year. But in a strange twist of fate, the heavily outnumbered New Jersey squad had three members tie for low gross, claiming the tournament win.

Freddy Carmona of Stanton Ridge Golf & Country Club, Josh DeSalvia of Glen Ridge Country Club, and Charles Day of Edgewood Country Club all posted impressive scores of 78, catapulting the GCSANJ to their first Battle of the Bridges win. John Hagen of the Round Hill Club shot a Met best 79.

Here's a look at the final scores, along with the top wins of the day:

## Battle of the Bridges Final Score (Top 5 Net and Gross scores combined)

GCSANJ ~ 765  
MetGCSA ~ 786

## Contest Winners

### Longest Drive

Kelly Barrell, Quaker Ridge GC

### Closest to the Pin

#9 Charles Day, Edgewood CC 7' 1"  
#18 Patrick O'Brien, Arcola CC 12' 7"

### Low Net

67 Kyle Ott, Wee Burn CC

### Low Gross

78 Josh DeSalvia, Glen Ridge CC

## High Praise for Paramount

Conditions at Paramount couldn't have been better. Assistants Matt Kerens and Anthony Heath had the greens rolling pure and lightning fast. Trouble was easy to find as firm and fast conditions coupled with subtle undulations sent many competitors' balls rolling into collection areas.

Spectacular views of South Mountain and bright fall colors highlighted the course's fantastic A.W. Tillinghast layout. Great food and drink before, during, and after golf helped ease the pain for those who haven't played enough golf this season. Clearly, a good time was had by all.

Many thanks to host Brian Chapin, Golf Pro Steve Scott, GM Doug Graubard, and all of the Paramount staff who helped provide a great day of golf and camaraderie for Met and New Jersey assistants. We hope to see friends, old and new, at next year's event!

Dave Peterson is an assistant superintendent at Brae Burn Country Club in Purchase, NY.



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