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# Tee to Green Staff

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# Tee to Green



Cover: Elmwood Country Club.  
Photo by Wreck Pond Partners.

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# President's Message

## Spring Is Stalled, but Met's in Full Swing



● S. Eliot said, "April is the cruellest month." Well, he must have been talking about the April we've experienced this season in the Northeast. I know, now, what it must have been like to be Bill Murray trapped in "Groundhog Day." Every day from March through mid-April was 40 degrees with a chance of rain. Getting out to get work done was difficult. Finishing projects was next to impossible.

Worse than that, though, is that the wet weather and cold temps have stalled our courses' recovery from any winter damage. And there *have* been reports of winter damage to greens throughout the Met area. As you all hustle to get your turf to recover, please understand that everyone has a degree of damage. Sometimes we work so hard at our own facility that we think we're the only ones with problems. It's important to communicate not only with our golfers, but also with our peers. More problems are created with misinformation than with the actual turf issue.

### Off to a Good Start

Despite the rocky start for our turf, we had a great start to our golf season with our annual Two-Ball Championship qualifier April 19 at Elmwood Country Club. The weather cooperated, and Dave Roule and his staff provided a great course to play.

I'd like to thank all our AF members who purchased a tee sign for the meeting. We value your continued support.

I also want to thank Tom Leahy, Bob Nielsen, and Blake Halderman for their efforts in planning—and ultimately, improving—our Two-Ball Championship. Thanks to their creativity, more teams are now able to compete, and that means more people can get to know each other in the association. I know over the years I've made good friends by competing with people I had never played golf with before.



Dave Mahoney  
MetGCSA President

### Worthy Efforts

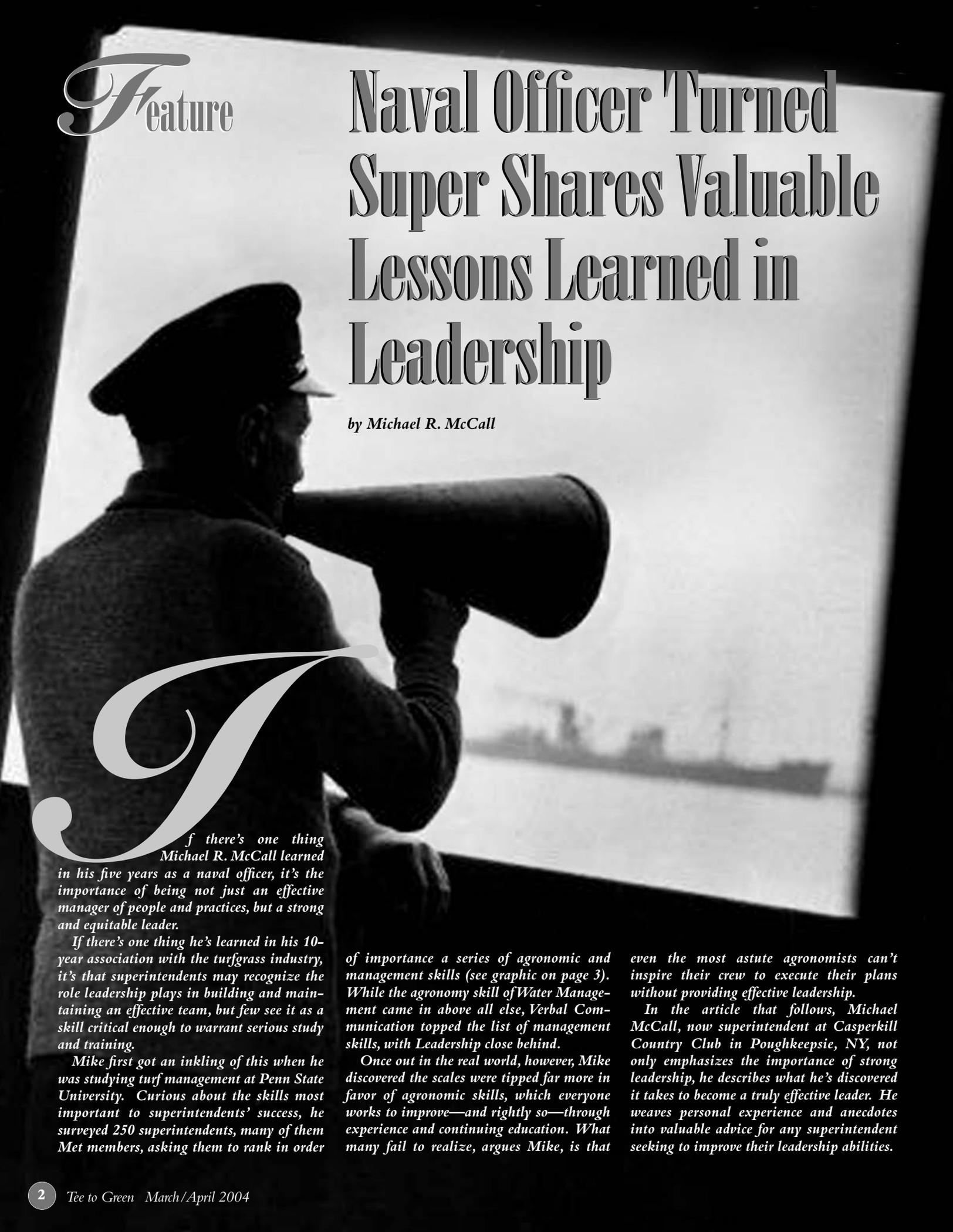
Often, it's those little nuisance jobs that pay the big dividends. Take filling out surveys, for instance. You need to spend a little time gathering information, but then you get valuable facts and figures in return.

The Met Budget and Salary Survey is a perfect example. Sixty-one members took the time to respond, so all 61 receive the results and have the benefit of knowing how their operation measures up to their peers'. Depending on where you fall in the budget/salary scale, you can use this information to lobby for improved funds—for yourself and your entire operation. No muss, no fuss. It's all right there at your fingertips.

Thank you Matt Ceplo for streamlining the survey report. I'd be interested in hearing what all of you think about the new format. Feel free to give me a call.

There's another survey, which you should have received by now. It's from the New York State Agricultural Statistics Service. The results are intended to illustrate the economic impact of turfgrass and sports turf. This is important, because with your results in hand, legislators and decision makers in Albany will be able to see the potentially adverse economic impact proposed changes in legislation—whether pesticide or water related—could have on our business. Please be sure to take time out of your day to respond—and protect the future of our industry!

*continued on page 7*



Feature

# Naval Officer Turned Super Shares Valuable Lessons Learned in Leadership

by Michael R. McCall

*If there's one thing Michael R. McCall learned in his five years as a naval officer, it's the importance of being not just an effective manager of people and practices, but a strong and equitable leader.*

*If there's one thing he's learned in his 10-year association with the turfgrass industry, it's that superintendents may recognize the role leadership plays in building and maintaining an effective team, but few see it as a skill critical enough to warrant serious study and training.*

*Mike first got an inkling of this when he was studying turf management at Penn State University. Curious about the skills most important to superintendents' success, he surveyed 250 superintendents, many of them Met members, asking them to rank in order*

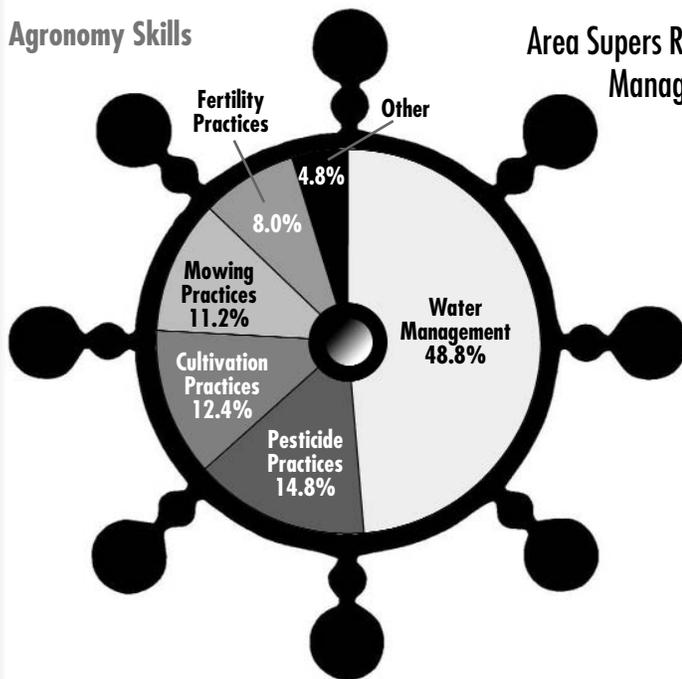
*of importance a series of agronomic and management skills (see graphic on page 3). While the agronomy skill of Water Management came in above all else, Verbal Communication topped the list of management skills, with Leadership close behind.*

*Once out in the real world, however, Mike discovered the scales were tipped far more in favor of agronomic skills, which everyone works to improve—and rightly so—through experience and continuing education. What many fail to realize, argues Mike, is that*

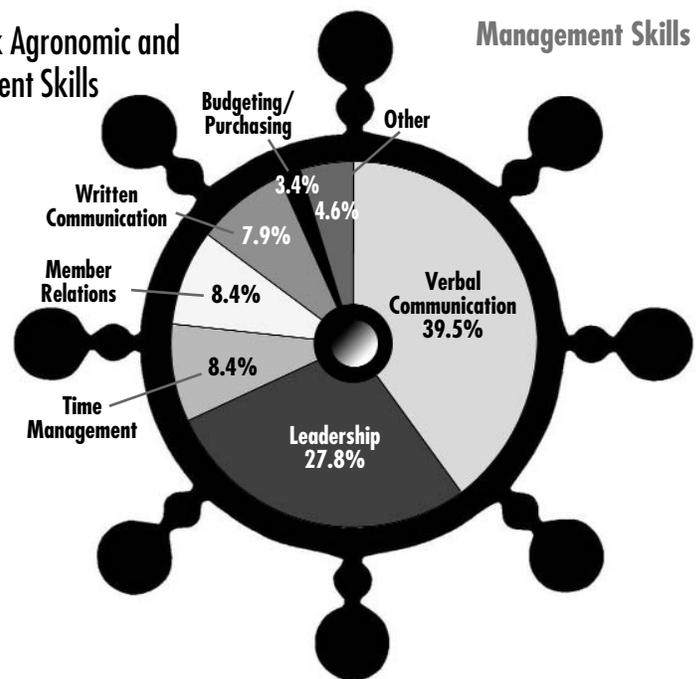
*even the most astute agronomists can't inspire their crew to execute their plans without providing effective leadership.*

*In the article that follows, Michael McCall, now superintendent at Casperkill Country Club in Poughkeepsie, NY, not only emphasizes the importance of strong leadership, he describes what he's discovered it takes to become a truly effective leader. He weaves personal experience and anecdotes into valuable advice for any superintendent seeking to improve their leadership abilities.*

## Agronomy Skills



## Area Supers Rank Agronomic and Management Skills



It was during my three-year tour in the Navy as officer of the deck aboard the USS Independence that I first observed true leaders in action and began to gain experience as a leader. It never ceases to amaze me just how much responsibility is entrusted to young military personnel. (I was only 25 at the time.)

Since then, I've observed and read many philosophies and strategies about becoming an effective leader. I have personally implemented many suggestions from the experts. There is no shortage of material on leadership, much of it in excruciating detail. (See "Good Reads on Great Leadership," page 5.)

But when all is said and done, I believe the very foundation of leadership—and any truly successful person—is integrity. Unfortunately, it seems this single word has diminished in value in recent years. When people describe a successful person, integrity is rarely on the list of necessary attributes.

Golf is a game that holds integrity as its keystone. Yet how many times do you see golfers violating the rules of golf and proper etiquette on the course?

As golf course superintendents, we can ensure our success by maintaining a high level of integrity in our dealings with colleagues, members, vendors, and, probably most important, in how we lead our people.

How do we lead with integrity? Here's what I've learned firsthand:

### 1. Be Honest

We can begin by being honest to our staff and to our colleagues. It's an act of respect that will go a long way toward creating a motivated and cohesive team—and overall work environment.

### 2. Take Responsibility

"You are the problem; you are the solution." In the Navy, the captain of the ship is ultimately responsible for any mishap under his command. The same applies to our industry. All problems come back to the superintendent. If your pesticide applicator makes a mistake, the blame falls on your shoulders. It could be that you didn't train the person adequately or double check his or her calculations. Maybe the sprayer wasn't calibrated properly. There are myriad things that can go wrong on a golf course, but it's up to you to take responsibility and move on. Your employees will respect you if you take this approach rather than assign blame to them when talking to your superiors.

A few years ago in September, we were aerifying tees. I went to play golf in a superintendent outing. After nine holes, I could tell that it was a very drying day. I came home to black and blue tees. Yes, my assistant should have stopped aerifying to begin watering, but I took full responsibility. I could have provided better guidance, after all, by putting a limit on the number of tees to be aerified or by calling in after my first nine holes.

### 3. Lead by Example

How can you ask your employees to keep their carts and break room clean if your cart and office are not clean and organized?

How can you ask your employees to be on time in the morning if you can't be there on time? If you are going to be late—whether it's because you had a late meeting the night before or you'll be staying late that day—make sure your staff knows.

The same principle applies to your appearance, attitude, and enthusiasm. How you

look and behave sets the standard.

One of my pet peeves is trash on the golf course. I have a standing order that if there's not a fire or a major irrigation leak that no one—including me—should drive by a piece of trash without picking it up.

While our administrative duties have increased over the years, we must still get out of the office and spend time with the troops. You can't provide good leadership if you're not there to lead.

### 4. Hire the Right People

No other investment of time will go as far as hiring the right people. There will always be times when people you hire don't work out—no matter how hard you try to train or motivate them. If they are unwilling or unable to perform their job, it's your responsibility to prevent disruptions in your ability to achieve your overall goal.

I started my first job as superintendent during the month of May. My first assistant and the general manager warned me about the personality of the second assistant, but I've always been one to give an employee the benefit of the doubt. In this case, however, it didn't take me long to realize that this person was not going to mesh with the team I wanted to build. He did not have the necessary technical or managerial skills when given the position, and worse, the entire grounds crew disliked him.

He was not a bad person. In fact, he had had his church prepare meals for my wife and me when our first daughter was born in June. Nevertheless, I knew I had to terminate him. It was one of the hardest things I've ever had to do. It also meant going through my first summer on the job without a second assistant. I survived, and I have no regrets. He's much happier, now, in his new

career as a carpenter.

Part of having integrity—and good leadership ability—is having the courage to do what you know is right, no matter how difficult or unpleasant.

## 5. Take Care of Your Employees

I believe in supporting my staff both personally and professionally. Whether an employee is struggling with a health issue, a death in the family, an income tax problem, or a personality conflict on the job, I believe in standing by and doing what I can to guide that person through any trouble spots. That's not to say you should have to fight *all* your employees' battles, but there are some situations that clearly warrant—and could genuinely profit from—your involvement. Even if you lose the battle, your people will respect you for your concern and efforts.

My first chief engineer on the USS Independence was a screamer. I learned this firsthand when someone had made a fuel transfer within the ship without his authorization, and I, as a junior officer, had to deliver the bad news. I had never—and to this day still haven't—been so verbally abused in all my life . . . and for someone else's mistake.

Despite this character flaw, the engineering officers admired this man, partly because he never stayed angry for long, but more because he went to bat for us—for liberty, promotions, awards, and anything else we needed.

At Casperkill, we have an Employee of the Quarter award. Before my arrival, only one ground's staff member had won it in the past four years. When I got here, I lobbied for my staff. As a result, someone on my crew has won the award four out of the past six quarters. One of the crew members even went on to win Employee of the Year.

Do you think that paid dividends to our department? You bet it did!

## 6. Love What You Do

This may sound trite, but it has far-reaching effects—beyond your personal job satisfaction. Take my third chief engineer aboard the Independence. He was the most passionate leader I'd ever seen. He loved his job. He would spend many hours in his stateroom discussing how we were going to become the best engineering department in the Navy. I could not help but feel the energy radiating from him. Had he not liked his career, that would have been infectious too, no doubt affecting the morale and performance of everyone beneath him.

It's much the same in our profession—and especially during the height of the golf season. The long hours and daily pressures of our work are sure to deflate the spirits and motivation of a crew whose superintendent is deflated himself. If you don't like being a golf course superintendent, you have two options: Change your career, or learn to love it.

After managing turfgrass for four years, I went to work with some members from my country club in the financial services industry. It didn't take long for me to discover that I did not like this field. I took a hard look at what I could do to change my perspective about being a superintendent. I realized that before entering the financial services industry I had been focusing only on the downside of being a golf course superintendent. I had forgotten the reasons I entered the profession in the first place. I was good at being a superintendent, and that brought me a sense of accomplishment.

From my experience, increasing your professional knowledge and experience does breed confidence, and that, in turn, ignites a passion for the job.

## 7. Be Humble

Most great leaders, but certainly not all, have a humble side to them. *Good to Great* by Jim Collins is the story of 11 companies that managed to make the leap from mediocrity to excellence, evidenced by stock price performance. One of the key components of these companies is that they had what Collins refers to as Level 5 leaders. A Level 5 leader is one who “builds enduring greatness through a paradoxical blend of personal humility and professional will.”

Humility is a great virtue and probably one of the most challenging to master. Benjamin Franklin tells in his autobiography about his attempt to master many virtues. Humility was not among them—until a friend of Ben Franklin's told him how annoying it was that he was bragging about mastering his virtues.

Arrogance has no place in our industry. From the number-one ranked golf course to the mom-and-pop, nine-hole golf course, we are only providing a playing surface for people to enjoy. It is a noble profession but not one that warrants an inflated ego.

## In the End

Integrity is the common thread running through each and every one of these leadership qualities. It is the key to becoming a fair and effective leader—and a success on the job. A leader who is honest and fair can't help but provide the kind of work environment that inspires staff to meet—and even exceed—expectations. And in the golf course industry, that means providing the kind of quality playing surface and surroundings that golfing members can be proud of and enjoy.

*Michael McCall is superintendent at Casperkill Country Club in Poughkeepsie, NY.*



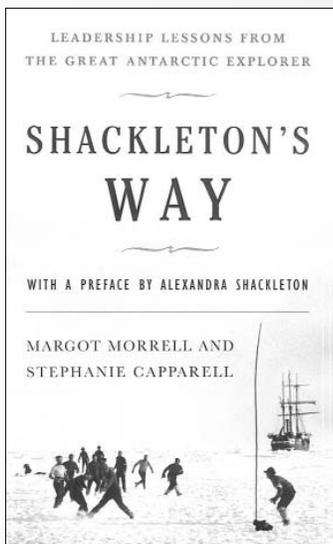
*You can't provide good leadership if you're not there to lead.*

# Good Reads on Great Leadership

by Mike McCall



If the many books out there on the subject of leadership, the ones I've found most interesting—and insightful—were not the prescriptive how-to books (though these, too, are useful), but the biographies of proven leaders. These books allow you to view effective leaders in action and discover, for yourself, precisely how and why they become influential.



One of my favorite books, *Shackleton's Way: Leadership Lessons From the Great Antarctic Explorer*, offers the best of both worlds, combining the how-to approach with the biographical. Written by Margot Morrell and Stephanie Capparell, this book tells the tale of British explorer Ernest Shackleton and his attempt to reach the South Pole. During his voyage, his ship, the *Endurance*, was wrecked, and Shackleton and his men battled two years of arctic climate before they were able to return home to England. All 27 of the men on the ship survived the ordeal thanks to Shackleton's great leadership and masterful crisis management.

Using the story as the centerpiece of their book, the authors have woven in their interpretation of Shackleton's success using interviews with modern-day leaders, such as Apollo 13 Commander James Lovel and Jaguar's former chief of North American

operations Mike Dale, and by offering useful advice at the end of each chapter.

This book holds lessons worth learning on how to lead with authority, integrity, humor, and compassion.

In the following two excerpts from the book, you can see Shackleton's leadership abilities at work.

Shackleton leads by example:

*"His unflinching cheeriness means a lot to a band of disappointed explorers like ourselves," Orde-Lees wrote. "He is one of the greatest optimists I have ever known. He is not content with saying, 'It will all come right in the end.' It is always otherwise with him. He merely says that this is but a little setback not altogether unforeseen and he immediately commences to modify his program to accord with it, even working his future plans out to given dates and to meet various possible contingencies."*

Shackleton hires the right people:

*Shackleton raised some eyebrows when he hired fifty-year-old T.W. Edgeworth David, a geology professor at Sydney University, for the Nimrod. He was twice the age of many on the crew. The Boss correctly predicted that the scientist's calm would be "a great influence for good amongst the younger men." He also knew he needed someone with exceptional experience to coordinate the various scientific projects that were being done, which the professor did very well and Shackleton didn't have the expertise to handle.*

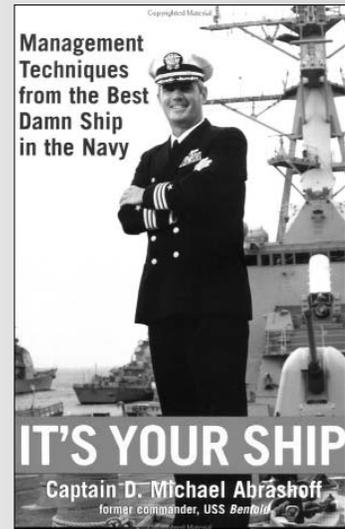
## Other Worthy Reads . . .

***It's Your Ship: Management Techniques From the Best Damn Ship in the Navy***

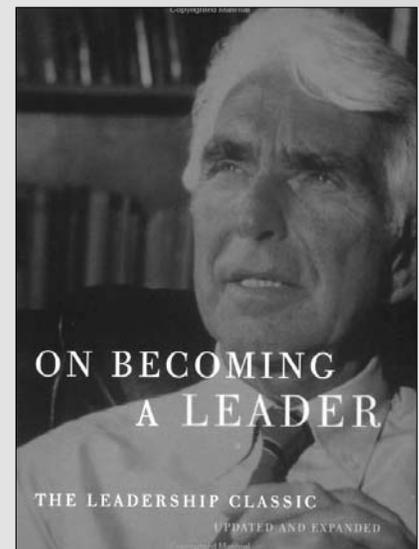
by Captain D. Michael Abrashoff

"The most important thing a captain can do is to see the ship from the eyes of the crew." This belief has successfully guided D. Michael Abrashoff, the captain of one of the U.S. Navy's most modern and lethal warships. Abrashoff has revolutionized how to handle such challenging problems as excessive costs, low morale, sexual harassment, and constant turnover.

Business managers will benefit from



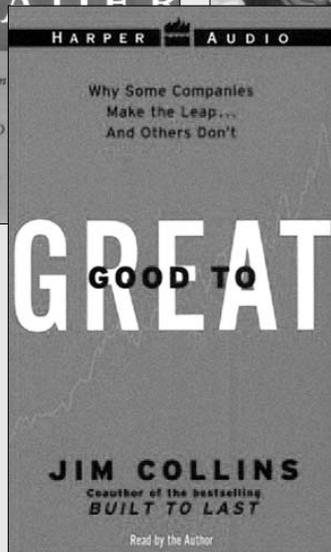
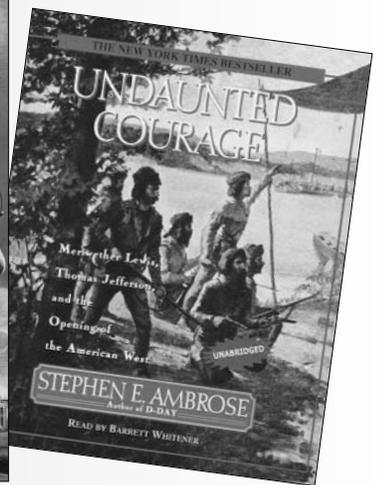
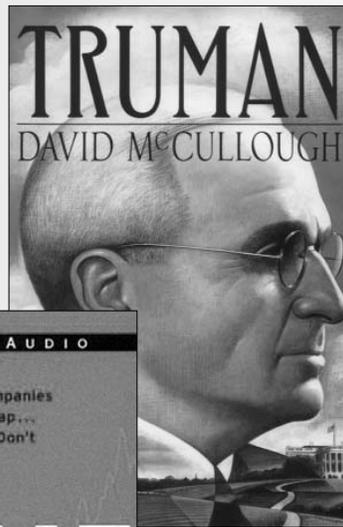
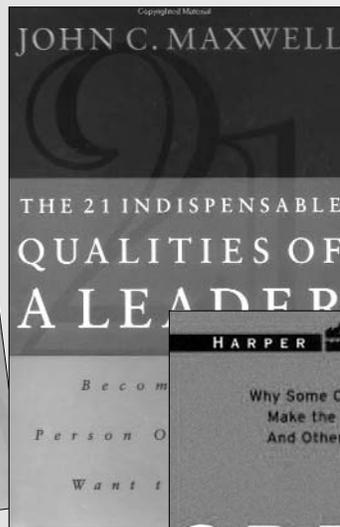
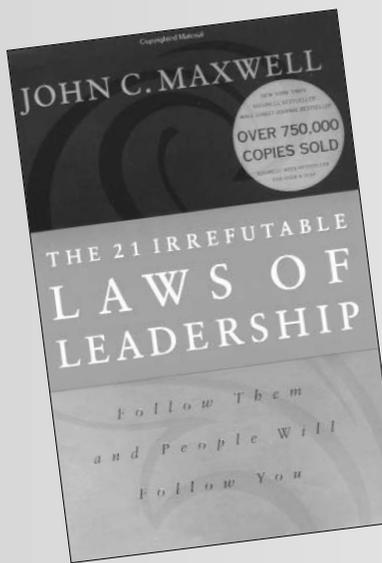
Abrashoff's guiding belief that your focus should be on empowering your people rather than on the chain of command. By shifting organizing principles from obedience to performance, managers will be rewarded with remarkable productivity. As Abrashoff explains, the more people enjoy the process, the better the results. Good leaders listen to the people under their command—and use their ideas to improve operating procedures.



***On Becoming a Leader: The Leadership Classic***

by Warren Bennis

This book is a classic that has been updated to capture the challenges and opportunities facing leaders today. It delves into the qualities that define leadership, the people who exemplify it, and strategies anyone can apply to become an effective leader. The big payoff comes in the final chapter; this is where Bennis pulls everything together, offering a clear path forward to enhancing your leadership abilities.



**The 21 Irrefutable Laws of Leadership**  
by John C. Maxwell

Maxwell offers lively stories about the foibles and successes of Lee Iacocca, Abraham Lincoln, Princess Diana, and Elizabeth Dole in *The 21 Irrefutable Laws of Leadership*. Drawing from his 30-plus years of leadership experience, he offers a well-crafted discussion that emphasizes the core attitudes and visions of leadership. To Maxwell, job titles don't have much value when it comes to leading. "True leadership cannot be awarded, appointed, or assigned," he notes. "It comes only from *influence*, and that can't be mandated." Even after Princess Diana was stripped of her title, Maxwell says she was still able to lead a global effort toward banning land mines because of her sophisticated ability to influence others.

There are no specific tips on what readers can do during the next workday to help them become stronger leaders. On the other hand, Maxwell's background as a pastor gives him an inspirational voice and a spiritual context to leadership that many business leaders appreciate.

**The 21 Indispensable Qualities of a Leader: Becoming the Person Others Will Want to Follow**

by John C. Maxwell

Why do some people consistently inspire others to follow their lead? According to Maxwell, it's the "character qualities" they possess. In *The 21 Indispensable Qualities of a Leader*, Maxwell identifies these quality traits. He devotes a separate chapter to each trait, offering interesting anecdotes and examples to demonstrate these leadership qualities at work. To be sure readers walk away with more than just a lot of theory, Maxwell even goes so far as to provide

exercises for improvement to help readers actually integrate and apply the essential qualities of leadership in their day-to-day dealings with others.

**Good to Great: Why Some Companies Make the Leap . . . and Others Don't**  
by Jim Collins

This book is about more than transforming average companies into great ones; it is about the key role leadership plays in a company's success. *Good to Great* is a well-researched book that offers insight into what it takes to be a true corporate—or as Collins terms it, a Level 5—leader.

Level 5 leaders, he notes, are humble, fanatically driven, capable of understanding the need to produce sustained results and of setting their successors for even greater success in the future. These leaders also understand the need to get the right people in their organization before figuring out where to drive it. As Collins puts it, "First who, then what."

Collins writes in an easy-to-read, conversational tone, offering, at the end of each chapter, "key points" and "unexpected findings" about the various companies' transformations.

This is a worthwhile read for anyone interested in not only building their leadership skills, but also in building a better operation.

**Truman**  
by David McCullough

Cracker-barrel plain in speech and looks, this seemingly ordinary man turned out to be one of our most dynamic presidents. Harry S. Truman was a compromise candidate for vice president, almost an accidental president after Roosevelt's death 12 weeks into his second term. Truman's stunning come-from-behind victory in the 1948 election showed how his personal qualities of integrity and straightforwardness were appreciated by ordinary Americans.

Truman was the epitome of a thoughtful and courageous leader as he maneuvered through enormously controversial issues: He dropped the atomic bomb on Japan, established anti-Communism as the bedrock of American foreign policy, and sent U.S. troops into the Korean War.

This is, no surprise, a Pulitzer Prize-winning read.

**Undaunted Courage: Meriwether Lewis, Thomas Jefferson, and the Opening of the American West**

by Stephen Ambrose

Yet another tale of great leadership. Here, Stephen Ambrose takes on half of the two-headed hero of American exploration: Meriwether Lewis. Though this book relies heavily on the journals of both Lewis and Clark, it is also backed up by the author's personal travels along Lewis and Clark's route to the Pacific.

Ambrose is not content to simply chronicle the often heart-stopping events of the "Corps of Discovery," as the explorers called their ventures. He often pauses to assess the military leadership of Lewis and Clark, how they negotiated with various native peoples, and what they reported to Thomas Jefferson, who spurred their search for a water route to the Pacific. Though the expedition failed to find the waterway, it fired interest among fur traders and other Americans, changing the face of the West forever.

## Upcoming Events

# Plan Ahead for These Upcoming Events!

The 2004 Meeting/Social Calendar still has a few dates to confirm and sites to fill, so please think about hosting an event! To secure a golf meeting, don't delay in calling either of our Tournament Committee co-chairs: Tom Leahy, 914-941-8281, or Bob Nielsen, 914-234-3779.

### **Superintendent/Manager Tournament**

*Monday, May 17*

Woodway Country Club, Darien, CT  
Host: Larry Pakkala, CGCS

### **Invitational Tournament**

*Thursday, June 17*

Fairview Country Club, Greenwich, CT  
Host: Mike Mongon

### **Education Meeting**

*July*

Date & Site OPEN

### **Summer Social**

*Tuesday, July 20*

Old Oaks Country Club, Purchase, NY  
Host: Mark Millett

### **Family Picnic**

*Monday, August 2*

Woodway Beach Club, Stamford, CT  
Host: Larry Pakkala, CGCS

### **Poa Annual Tournament/First Round Met Championship**

*Monday, August 23*

Connecticut Golf Club, Easton, CT  
Host: Mark Fuller, CGCS

### **Golf Meeting/Second Round Met Championship**

*Monday, September 20*

Seawane Golf Club, Hewlett Harbor, NY  
Host: Brian Benedict

### **Joe Troll Research Center Benefit Outing**

*Tuesday, October 5*

Hickory Ridge Country Club  
Amherst, MA  
Watch for details.

### **Superintendent/Green Chairman Tournament**

*Tuesday, October 19*

Round Hill Club, Greenwich, CT  
Host: Bill Gaydosh

### **Annual Assistants Championship**

Date & Site OPEN

### **Met Area Team Championship**

Date & Site in Philadelphia area TBA

### **Annual Meeting**

*November*

Date & Site OPEN

### **MetGCSA Christmas Party**

Date & Site OPEN

*President's Message continued from page 1*

If you have any questions regarding the survey, you can visit the website at [www.nass.usda.gov/ny](http://www.nass.usda.gov/ny).

Another very worthy endeavor is the Tri-State Turfgrass Research Foundation. You've probably received their request for 2004 donations. I have to say I never miss an opportunity to contribute to this cause. This organization continues to fund research that targets turf problems common to our area. And the findings have been turf-saving to so many of us.

Please make an effort to get this paid. I'd like to be able to say the MetGCSA is the best represented of all the associations involved. And there's no reason we shouldn't be.

If you're interested in reading about the most recent activities of the Tri-State, please visit our own website at [www.met-gcsa.org](http://www.met-gcsa.org). Our site gets to be more and more valuable as a resource everyday. Research reports, job listings, turfgrass links, meeting information and directions are just several of the website's offerings. Soon to come: a posting of the pairings for each golf meeting.

## Get Ready, Get Set, Mark Your Calendars!

Despite the cold spring, the battles of the season will quickly be upon us. Disease, wilt, and Hyperodes will no doubt be our focus. We'll long for the cold, short days of winter.

While it's still a little slow, mark your calendars with Met meetings, golf dates, and even some personal time (a summer vacation, perhaps). If you commit now, it will happen. If you wait for a slow time during the season, it never will.

I'll see you at the next meeting.

Dave Mahoney  
**President**

## Member News

### **New Members**

Please join us in welcoming the following new members:

**Christopher S. Dumser**, Class C, Salem Golf Club, North Salem, NY

**Richard D. Kraus**, Class AS, Three Ponds Farm, Water Mill, NY

### **Members on the Move**

**Mark Griff**, formerly the assistant at Rock Spring Club in West Orange, NJ, has accepted the superintendent's position at Richmond County Country Club in Staten Island, NY. Congratulations, and good luck in your new position!

### **Just Married**

Congratulations to Bedford Golf & Tennis Club Superintendent **Bob Nielsen** and his new wife, Carolyn Testa. They were married March 20 and will live happily ever after in their home in Bedford, NY.

# Conference and Show Notables

## Looking Back and Into the Future

by Tim O'Neill, CGCS

This year's GCSAA International Golf Course Conference and Show held February 8 – 14 in San Diego, CA, received high marks from all who attended. Everyone agreed that San Diego was a great host city for this event. The weather was beautiful, and the hotels and convention center were right up there with the best.

As always, the conference offered great speakers, quality educational seminars, and plenty of networking opportunities.

The conference officially began with our Opening Session, where sportscaster and keynote speaker Jim Nantz entertained the more than 2,000 attendees with golf stories and experiences.

During the session, Nantz vowed to do more to promote the work of the golf course superintendent. It didn't take him long to make good on his promise. As it happened, CBS was covering the regular PGA Tour event that week at the nearby Torrey Pines Golf Club. During the weekend telecast, Nantz frequently mentioned the work of superintendents and our valuable contributions to the game of golf. He also made sure a CBS television crew covered the association's Annual Presidents Banquet, which featured architect Rees Jones receiving the Old Tom Morris Award.

The educational seminars were as well attended as ever. Nearly 7,000 seminar seats were filled during the conference, which featured a wide range of scientific and professional development offerings. A number of the sessions dealt with the increasingly important topic of water use and conservation on golf courses. This is one issue that the Environmental Institute of Golf will be focusing on as part of its commitment to enhancing golf's compatibility with the environment.

### Change in the Making

Next year's conference and show in Orlando, FL, will be billed as the Golf Industry Show (GIS) and will mark the beginning of a new partnership with the National Golf Course Owners Association (NGCOA).

The NGCOA has traditionally held its



GCSAA Vice President Tim O'Neill, CGCS

own annual conference and show with as many as 1,000 attendees and approximately 20,000 square feet of trade show space. By joining forces, we can bring more value to our show, while establishing a close relationship with an important segment of the golf industry. What's more, the addition of NGCOA brings more qualified buyers to our show and allows us to introduce education and development programs and activities to individuals who directly affect superintendents—that is, the golf course owners.

While a number of members have expressed concern that GCSAA may lose some of its identity with this new partnership, rest assured that this will not happen; the association will *always* remain the primary decision maker.

Talks are ongoing with other industry groups interested in joining the GIS. Associations for golf course architects, builders, and club managers have all had serious discussions with GCSAA about the possibility of becoming part of the Golf Industry Show. I would expect that over time more associations will join the GIS.

The other potential change is the location of the GCSAA Headquarters. After a year of study and research, the Headquarters Location Resource Group will be

making recommendations to the Board of Directors this summer. The group's primary mission is to determine whether location has an impact on GCSAA's ability to achieve its mission and goals. MetGCSA member Bob Alonzi has been serving on this resource group.

### Board News

At this year's Annual Meeting, I was, as most of you know, elected vice president. Of course, I have many to thank for my success: the MetGCSA Board of Directors; chapter delegates John Carlone, Sean Cain, and Bob Alonzi; and the entire membership for your support and encouragement. If all goes well, I should be elected GCSAA president at next year's annual meeting in Orlando. It would be great to see a strong contingent of MetGCSA members in attendance!

Here's a look at the other election results:

#### Officers

**President:** Mark J. Woodward, CGCS, Dobson Ranch & Riverview Golf Courses, Mesa, AZ

**Vice President:** Timothy T. O'Neill, CGCS, Country Club of Darien, Darien, CT

**Secretary/Treasurer:** Sean A. Hoolehan, CGCS, Wildhorse Resort Golf Course, Pendleton, OR

#### Directors (elected to two-year terms)

David S. Downing II, CGCS, Avestra, Myrtle Beach, SC

Gary Carls, CGCS, Sunnyvale/Sunken Gardens Golf Courses, Sunnyvale, CA

Robert Maibusch, CGCS, MG, of Hinsdale Golf Club in Clarendon Hills, IL; Ricky D. Heine, CGCS, of The Golf Club Star Ranch in Austin, TX; and Mark D. Kuhns, CGCS, of Baltusrol Golf Club in Springfield, NJ, will serve the second year of their two-year director terms.

Jon D. Maddern, CGCS, of Elk Ridge Golf Club in Atlanta, MI, will serve on the

## Statistically Speaking . . .

### About GCSAA and the Conference and Show

Here are a few noteworthy stats about GCSAA and the annual conference and show:

- Total registration this year was 19,314 compared to 18,146 last year in Atlanta.
- Total seminar seats sold were 6,772 compared to 6,284 in Atlanta.
- Exhibit space sold at this year's show was 240,000 square feet, down slightly from the 242,700 square feet sold in 2003.
- GCSAA's total membership is 20,790. Of those members, 15,669 are Class A, Superintendents (Class SM), or Assistants (Class C).
- Total number of members registered on the web is 14,959 or 72 percent of the membership. Nearly 9,000 of the registrants are superintendents.

Board of Directors as immediate past president. Mike Wallace, CGCS, of Simsbury Farms Golf Club in West Simsbury, CT, is now retired from the Board of Directors after serving the past year as immediate past president.

### Many Balls to Juggle

As GCSAA vice president, I will continue to represent our national association at numerous industry events.

Most recently, I attended the Canadian Golf Superintendents Association's Annual Conference and Show in Nova Scotia, where I met with the group's Board of Directors and attended their trade show and many of their educational sessions. I also represented GCSAA at The Masters in Augusta, GA, where, in addition to viewing some great golf, I attended a USGA reception, a Textron gathering, and the PGA of America reception.

Another part of my responsibilities as an officer is to attend four board meetings a year. I just came back from our Spring Board Meeting, where we discussed the strategic direction of the association. Among other things, this involved reviewing the measurable targets we've set for GCSAA. With the help of an outside management consulting firm, we established indicators to help us measure growth in nearly every aspect of association business, from membership to superintendent job satisfaction.

During this meeting, we also discussed other big-picture items, not the least of

which was the possibility of changing the association's name—to something that might better reflect what our jobs, as golf course superintendents, actually entail.

Beyond our board meetings, I am involved in committee work. I'm currently chairing the Environmental Programs Committee and have held our first meeting. Under this committee's umbrella are three subgroups—Environmental Stewardship, Research, and Government Relations. Each group is led not by a board member, but by a chapter superintendent. Stanwich's Scott Niven, for instance, is leading the Research task group. All told, there are 30 members on the Environmental Programs Committee, including people outside GCSAA, from such organizations as Audubon International, the USGA, and the World Wildlife Fund. It makes for some lively and thought-provoking discussion.

Also in my bailiwick is heading up the Chapter Relations Committee—my responsibilities have been elevated from vice chair—and the Industry Advisory Council. Then, too, I am maintaining my seat on the Board of Trustees of the Environmental Institute for Golf.

It will be a busy, but rewarding year as I prepare to accept responsibility for directing our national association. As always, I'll be keeping you posted on any noteworthy happenings.

*Tim O'Neill, GCSAA's new vice president, is superintendent at Country Club of Darien in Darien, CT.*

## San Diego Rocked— as the Site of This Year's GCSAA Golf Championship

If there's one place outside the Met area that I'd rather grow grass, it would have to be San Diego, CA. You get to manage your water, play on the ocean, catch a glimpse of the nearby mountains and the tons of beautiful people—particularly down in Gaslight Lamp section of town (hee, hee). Oh . . . and did I mention that they have some great golf courses too?

This year's GCSAA Golf Championship couldn't have been better. The weather was fantastic, and the five golf courses hosting the tournament were challenging, yet enjoyable to play. Our peers in the San Diego area should be commended for a job well done.

For the 10th consecutive year, The Toro Company joined forces with GCSAA to bring members a premium golfing experience. Special thanks to Toro, and congratulations to Tommy Robinson from Illinois, our 2004 National Champion, who posted scores of 78 and 68.

Despite the good weather and great courses, our chapter results and individual achievements weren't as notable as they've been in the past:

- **Blake Halderman** of Trump National Golf Club had the best finish, taking 5th place in the First Flight.
- **Matt Severino** from Scarsdale Golf Club landed in the top 15 of the Second Flight.
- **Tim O'Neill**, our own GCSAA vice president, placed in the top 20 of the Third Flight.

In the Championship Flight, our two best finishers were:

- **Earl Millett** of Ridgeway Country Club with a 166
- **Scott Niven** of The Stanwich Club with a 168

Thanks to all who attended, and congratulations to our winning competitors.

—Sean Cain

## David Roule Rules at Elmwood

*New Met Member Hosts Season's First Golf Meeting*

by Greg Wojick, CGCS

April 19 marked the Met's first golf meeting of the year. David Roule, a newcomer to the MetGCSA, welcomed association members to Elmwood Country Club in White Plains, NY, where they teed it up to qualify for the Met's annual Two-ball Championship.

Dave became Elmwood's superintendent in 1999, producing a long list of improvements in a short period of time. He's converted the greens and fairways to predominantly bentgrass and has rebuilt all the fairway bunkers.

Dave has also managed the installation of a new irrigation system and the construction of a new maintenance building. All the cart paths have been resurfaced and finished with a block edging. And if that's not enough, Dave has managed the installation of more than 3,000 feet of drainage on fairways and approaches, planted more than 400 trees, and rebuilt the range and practice facility.

No rest for the weary, Dave is currently in the process of redoing all of his greenside bunkers.

### The Evolution of Elmwood

As anyone who golfed that day well knows, Elmwood Country Club offers a fun—and challenging—round of golf.

The first hole is one of the prettiest openers in the Met area. It climbs uphill, with a 240-yard drive necessary to bring the green into view. Then, the fairway drops sharply downhill and to the left, to a green that falls away over the left half of the fairway about 75 yards from home, blocking any approach from that side.

The 14th is a tantalizing, short par five that even the mid-handicapper can reach with two solid shots.

Opened in 1925, the A.W. Tillinghast-designed course has the imprint of yet another renowned architect: Alfred Tull. In 1954, Tull was hired to soften steep hills on the property, including two holes that



David Roule

ascended the present third fairway and another that played up the range.

One of the newer additions to the club's grounds is the lovely Japanese garden, crossed by a stone bridge and located behind the 8th green and 9th tee. It was built in 1989 to honor the memory of Dr. E. Raymond Topol, green chairman for nearly half a century and the man who helped shape the landscape at Elmwood.

### A Veteran in the Business

Although many in the Met area may not know Dave Roule, he's no stranger to the Northeast. Dave has more than 30 years' experience in golf course maintenance and construction at several prominent golf courses. He's originally from the Hartford, CT, area and has completed two college programs in the Northeast. Dave holds an associate's in agronomy from UMass and an associate's in Business Administration from Holyoke Community College in Holyoke, MA.

He got his feet wet in the business as an

assistant at the Country Club of Farmington in Farmington, CT. After a short time there, he quickly ascended to the super's position at the Clinton Country Club in Clinton, CT. From there, Dave moved to the largest private country club in the state: Hartford Golf Club.

For 12 years, Dave "rode herd" over Hartford's 27 holes, big budget, and high demands. He initiated and oversaw many improvements, including the renovation of the greens, tees, and fairways.

Dellwood Country Club, located in New City, NY, was where Dave landed next, exerting his maintenance mastery on this private, 18-hole course. It was here that Dave enjoyed renovating the greens, tees, and fairways to their original A.W. Tillinghast design.

### Extracurriculars

Dave's professional association involvement has been as a long-time member of the Connecticut Association of Golf Course Superintendents. But more recently, he's been an active member of the Hudson Valley Superintendent's Association. A six-handicapper, Dave admits, "I'm happy to get involved with the MetGCSA. It's great seeing old friends."

Dave mixed it up with Met members at our first-ever Met Area Team Championship at Spook Rock Golf Club in Suffern, NY. Playing for the Connecticut team, Dave claimed the low score of the day.

But Dave isn't all golf and golf courses. He's a family man too. Dave has three daughters—Tara, 20; Katherine, 23; and Nancy, 35—and a stepson, David, who's 36. And he keeps more than busy with his five granddaughters.

Dave lives with his wife, Diane, in Monroe, NY, a 60-minute drive from the course.

*Greg Wojick, a Tee to Green committee member, is superintendent at Greenwich Country Club in Greenwich, CT.*

## Met Members View Woodway From the Inside Out

by Glenn Perry, CGCS

The last time Larry Pakkala invited the MetGCSA to Woodway, it was for our 2003 Christmas party, which offered members not only a wonderfully good time, but also an “inside” look at Woodway—and its beautiful, brand-new clubhouse.

Now, on May 17, Larry is, once again, opening club doors—and, this time, the golf course—to members for the annual Superintendent/Manager Tournament.

Among Larry’s list of association credits—Met past president, 2003 Sherwood A. Moore Award winner (see profile in the November/December 2003 issue), active committee member or chair—is that he’s generously offered to host numerous Met events over the years. The Met Family Picnics at Woodway’s Beach Club in Stamford, CT, have no doubt been some of the most memorable. And guess what? Larry’s bringing us back to the beach again this year. So be sure to save the date! It’s August 2.

### Eighty-eight Years Ago . . .

Property Manager of Woodway Country Club since 1983, Larry has made a 21-year dent in the club’s long history.

It all began 88 years ago . . . Named after a dairy farm in Darien, CT, Woodway Country Club was founded in 1916 by a group of members from various area clubs who shared a common vision of what a club should be.

Their primary goals, as stated in the club’s original articles of incorporation, were “to establish a country club for the encouragement, development, and enjoyment of golf-playing and other outdoor games and amateur sports, and for the promotion of social intercourse among those to whom the membership privileges shall be accorded.”

In keeping with their vision, nearly a decade after Woodway opened, the membership took advantage of an opportunity to expand the club’s offerings. A steamboat



Larry Pakkala, CGCS

company was selling five acres of prime waterfront property in Stamford’s prestigious Shippan Point, so the club snapped it up for \$15,000—a steal by today’s standards. Shortly after, the Woodway Beach Club was formed.

Both club locations offer their own fine facility for “social intercourse,” and together, they afford members the opportunity to participate in just about every “amateur sport” you can imagine, including, of course, golf and tennis, bowling, swimming, paddle tennis, and until 2000, trap shooting.

It’s safe to say the founding fathers achieved their goal: There is something for every member at Woodway.

### First Things First: The Golf Course

Step number one was to build a golf course. The club’s first board of governors began by hiring a highly qualified architect, Willie Park Jr., to design the course and supervise the construction. Park Jr. set out to create a championship course, and when it opened in 1918, it was not only the longest in Connecticut—playing 6,430 yards—but also one of the finest. Forward thinking, the

original plan allowed for the course to expand to 6,600 yards. But today, it’s going even a bit beyond that. “With our new tee expansions,” says Larry, “we’re up around 6,800.”

Woodway’s 196-acre course is characterized by rolling terrain and tightly bunkered greens, many of which are located on natural plateaus. Water is another prominent feature. The Noroton River flows through the property, forming a natural hazard on many of the holes. All told, water affects 17 holes on the course.

### There’s ‘Moore’ to Woodway

Any discussion of Woodway Country Club is not complete without mention of the legendary Sherwood A. Moore. He receives high praise in Woodway’s 75th Anniversary edition of the club’s history. Published in 1991, the book touts Sherwood’s 14 years at the club as “probably the most important years in the development of the golf course since its creation by Willie Park in 1916.”

Resigning in 1980 for the opportunity to host the 1984 U.S. Open at Winged Foot, Sherwood definitely left a legacy behind at Woodway. Tough shoes to fill, Woodway was again looking for a superintendent two years later. That’s when the “Pakkala years” officially began.

### Larry Makes His Mark

Since arriving at Woodway in 1983, Larry has worked tirelessly at improving the course’s conditioning and overall layout. The projects he has undertaken are numerous and impressive—many of them with the help of his talented in-house staff and all in the name of maintaining Woodway’s high ranking as one of the top golf courses in the State of Connecticut.

Larry made his first mark on club history not long after he joined Woodway. Carrying out the master plan established by Architect Geoffrey Cornish during Sherwood’s era, Larry began by rebuilding

what was then the eighth hole (now the first). At the same time, he started a very specific tree planting program that has resulted in more than 600 trees and shrubs being planted on the property. “Now,” says Larry, “we’re in the process of cutting down a lot of those trees we planted 20 years ago. Trends change.”

Speaking of trends, Larry was one of the first in the area to renovate bunkers. “Bunker renovation just wasn’t the thing to do during the mid-80s,” says Larry, who again, was working according to Cornish’s master plan, which he completed in 1987 while also overseeing the renovation of Woodway Beach Club.

As extensive a plan as this was, it turned out to be just a trial run for the renovation work to come. Fifteen years later, Larry was back at it again. “Things really began to happen when the membership decided to upgrade the clubhouse,” says Larry. “The project grew from the renovation of an existing building to moving the clubhouse to a completely different site. That snowballed into a number of other changes for the club and golf course.”

The old Annual Gun Club had to be sacrificed, since it was chosen as the site for the new clubhouse. But on the upside, the plan offered the opportunity to give the golf course returning nines and a modern practice facility with all the amenities for golf and clubhouse functions.

It was September of 2000 that Woodway

hired the Roger Rulewich group to oversee the planned improvements and A. John Harvey to complete the concept drawings and field design.

The first phase of the project was building a new ninth hole—a Par 3 with the green situated on the irrigation pond’s back edge. “You can view this hole from the clubhouse,” says Larry, adding, “The pond was expanded to generate the fill needed for the project.” With all said and done, the hole provides playing distances from 90 to 195 yards.

Phase two of the project was the construction of the driving range facility, which is, by far, one of the nicest in the area with its elaborate drainage system and target greens, complete with bunkers and extensive screening to protect the parking lot. But the range has another feature that few, if any, in the area can lay claim to: Located at the far end of the range is a small graveyard where several of the region’s founding families—the Tallmadges, the Harveys, and the Weeds—are laid to rest.

“It was unusual enough that there was a graveyard where we wanted to put our range,” says Larry, “but even stranger was that when I first walked the site with Roger Rulewich and John Harvey, we realized that there was not only a Harvey family buried there, but also a husband and wife, John and Carolyn Harvey. Carolyn is actually John Harvey’s wife’s name!” Guess that meant John really had a stake in the project!

Last but not least in the plan was reconstructing the old eighth hole, with its two greens: the original and the one built in 1986. This now plays as the first hole, and the old seventh green was transformed into a practice green at the first tee. Confused? Well you’ll just have to see it all for yourself on May 17.

By the way, while all of this work was going on, Larry was riding herd over the new clubhouse construction and old clubhouse demolition as project manager. All this, of course, while being expected to maintain Woodway in its usual, impeccable condition.

## No Time to Take a Breather

After all this work, you’d think it would be a good time to come up for air—but not for Woodway and Larry. Right now, Larry is in the midst of expanding tees, and using old mapping as his guide, he’s working hard and fast to return the greens to their original Willie Park shape.

The words “Master Plan” have crept out of Larry’s mouth as well. Sounds like we all need to enjoy Woodway on the 17th, because it looks like it’s guaranteed to change by the time the Met returns to play!

*Glenn Perry, co-editor of the Tee to Green, is superintendent at Rolling Hills Country Club in Wilton, CT.*



Woodway Country Club

## Mike Mongon Brings Invitational to Fairview

by Bill Perlee

This year's MetGCSA Invitational Tournament is fortunate enough to be invited to one of the Met area's finest clubs: Fairview Country Club in Greenwich, CT.

Hosting the event June 17 is Fairview's property manager, Mike Mongon, who, now in his fifth year, will be helping the club usher in its 100th.

### Learning the Trade

With Fairview since 1999, Mike learned the trade at Woodway Country Club, where he proudly served nearly five years as the first assistant Larry Pakkala hired when he arrived at Woodway in 1983.

"It was a lucky day when Scott Niven called me," says Mike. "I was working as a credit analyst then in NYC and wasn't at all happy in a desk job. Scott, who I got to know through my late sister-in-law, had told me on a ski trip we'd taken together how great his career was and, then some-time later, called to tell me about the position with Larry. Scott thought Larry would be just the person to guide my career. And how right he was."

While at Woodway, Mike added a two-year Rutgers turf degree to his associate's in finance from East Stroudsburg University/Pace University.

Then in 1987, Mike moved on to his first superintendent's position at Arcola Country Club in New Jersey, where he spent 13 years before accepting his current position at Fairview.

While at Arcola, Mike oversaw a complete golf course restoration project, which included new pond development, an all-new irrigation system, and a brand-spanking-new maintenance facility.

### Fairview Past and Present

Clearly on a roll, Mike continued his facility improvement mode at Fairview, tackling a tree assessment and improvement plan, constructing new tees and a practice putting green, and completing a total bunker renovation.

Not one to let grass grow under his feet,



Mike Mongon

Mike has plans to add a practice area, implement a network of cart paths, tackle a pond restoration project, and renovate the maintenance facility. Mike's current challenge is to find an effective way to use effluent water for irrigation. "We just completed the installation of an acid injection system. It's designed to reduce the water pH, which was up over 8," explains Mike.

Built in 1904, Fairview is among the most impressive Robert Trent Jones Sr. designs. Nonetheless, the membership, according to Mike, has been very supportive of the work going on to improve the course, which has been according to a plan established by A. John Harvey, a protégé of Roger Rulewich and Robert Trent Jones Sr.

If you were to ask Mike to name his favorite hole, it would be number 12. "Hole 12 is awesome since we rebuilt the stone wall behind the green," says Mike.

Dr. Bill Quirn, in the well-known *Golf Clubs of the MGA*, offers a fine preview for first-time golfers of the Fairview course:

"Fairview's two nines," he writes, "offer a marked contrast. To score well on the relatively short front nine, one must avoid water, which is very much in play on five of the first seven holes, then rely on length and accuracy on the longer back nine. The second is a scenic par five cut through the woods. Two bunkers flank the fairway to the left at the top of a sharp fall-off into the woods. Few players go for the green in two

because a large pond dominates the final 100 yards, with just a narrow landing area to the right. The green is elevated beyond the water, but falls off steeply toward a pond on the left. The short par five features a divided fairway. A large pond on the left side of the fairway leaves a relatively narrow landing area to the right approaching the green."

### Pride and Passion

Besides the pride that Mike takes in preparing his golf course for the membership at Fairview, he is just as quick to point out the accomplishments of his three children, Ryan, a Penn State freshman; Katrina, a high school sophomore; and Timothy, a fifth grader, who, of the three, would be voted most likely to become a golf course superintendent. They are all excellent athletes whose exploits Mike will expound on at the slightest urging.

One of Mike's personal passions is going to the Masters. Having made the trek to Augusta numerous times, he counts among his fondest memories the time he's spent at the event with the likes of John O'Keefe, Earl Millet, Wayne Remo, Ken Krausz, and others. "But bar none, the best experience I've had," says Mike, "was meeting my father there one year and walking the Masters with him."

Several weeks after this year's Masters and Phil Mickelson's triumph, Mike was still charged up and talking about the feat. Now, he's looking forward to bringing a tournament to his own course—the Met's June 17 Invitational, of course.

"Being Fairview's centennial, it's a big year in club history," says Mike, who also wanted to be sure longtime Met members knew that Fairview's longtime GM Drew Campbell was retiring at the season's end, following a long and brilliant career at Fairview.

Best of luck to you, Drew, and good luck to all you lucky Invitational contestants.

*Bill Perlee, a Tee to Green Committee member, is superintendent at The Apawamis Club in Rye, NY.*