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Tee to Green



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What's Your Survival Plan?

B

y the time you get this, we'll all be involved in fighting our own personal battles of getting through the stresses of summer. Right now, as I write, it's a crisp 59 degrees—temps we probably won't see again until mid-September.

How are you planning to survive?

I look at our active golf course maintenance schedule like a baseball season. It's long, it has its ups and downs, you need to come out fighting every day, and finally, no one is awarded the championship on July 4. Just ask the Red Sox.

Unfortunately, I don't have any great tricks for survival. Rather, I can only share my pitfalls and rambling thoughts:

1. Don't shoot yourself in the foot. Too often, I've pushed the turf over the edge (green speed, aggressive poa control, or overdrying the turf). Afterward, I wonder who I was trying to please.

2. Don't experiment. We frequently make the mistake of trying new products during the heat of the season. You don't always have to be the guinea pig on your block. We have terrific university research support in our area. Document your problems, and use reliable data, not anecdotal.

3. Don't let yourself get worn down. It's easy to feel defeated. Heavy play, weather conditions, disease, weeds, and insects can get overwhelming. The running joke in our family is that I have to go to work every day because nature doesn't take a day off. True.

Nature doesn't take a break, but we all should—a day, here or there, when the getting seems good and reasonably safe. That will give you just the charge you need for the everyday fight—and those extra-tough battles. I had some grass bunker faces die out last July. Maybe my judgment was skewed by my weariness, but I thought it best to wait until September to sod. Turns out, I was the only one. If there's a problem, tackle it right away—even if you have to go at it again later in the season.

I love when the grass faces burnout. It's like a highway billboard sign advertising "Dead Turf."



Dave Mahoney
MetGCSA President

4. Don't become an island. Get to meetings; visit your friends and colleagues. If you have a problem, more than likely someone else does too. Our education and social functions are great opportunities to compare notes and commiserate.

5. Don't hate your job. The worst thing that can happen is that you hate going to work. Our job is tough and stressful this time of year, but it's still pretty darn good work. Talk to your members or clients. You'd be surprised how supportive everyone is—and how many of the problems you see are hardly noticed by the masses. We overstress trying to please that last 5 percent.

And by all means, play golf and enjoy your product.

News About Association Friends

First, the sad news. We lost a good friend of golf this month in Michael Loper, manager of Willow Ridge. Most of you know Mike from his days at Fairview. I had the good fortune of setting up several golf meetings and social events with Mike. He always bent over backwards to help. Later, Mike was actively involved with the Club
continued on page 7

Feature

HAVE THE TIDES TURNED ON GOLF COURSE DRINKING WATER?



*Met Members Discuss
the Often Costly
Hoops They Jump
Through to Bring Safe
and Sanitary Drinking
Water to Their Course*

by Glenn Perry, CGCS



The summer of 2002 forever changed the way many golf clubs across the country think about drinking water on their courses.

It was that summer that more than 80 golfers suffered gastrointestinal ills at a golf course in Phoenix, AZ, after drinking the water supplied in 10-gallon coolers. Apparently, all tested positive for the flu-like Norwalk virus, and contaminated water jugs were determined to be the culprit.

Also connected, many believe, was the death of a 15-year-old boy who had golfed that day; though his actual cause of death was asphyxiation. He choked, examiners say, on his vomit. Despite inconclusive proof that the boy's illness was actually caused by the virus, his parents received a \$3 million settlement from the golf club.

A Call to Action

If the prospect of getting ill from water cooler supplies wasn't enough to spur clubs into action, then surely the fear of getting sued was. In Maricopa County, where the golf club was located, the environmental health department reacted by conducting an investigation of 157 golf courses in the county and found that 63 percent of the facilities were not handling drinking water correctly. The only courses that passed muster offered bottled water or had drinking water fountains. Health officials responded by enforcing requirements for the safe handling of drinking water. Golf courses must now thoroughly sanitize water containers and dispensers, provide bottled water, or install permanent ice and water dispensers on the course.

The fallout from the case and publicity surrounding it has been widespread with golf courses all over the United States and Canada assessing the way that they handle drinking water.

In May of last year, the Canadian-based National Golf Course Owners Association recommended that all of its members stop using water jugs, citing health and safety concerns. Their American counterparts recommended that its member courses follow local health department regulations specifying the safe handling of water coolers.

The Price We Pay for Water

With the golf season in full swing, now's the time to examine—if you haven't already—how your facility handles its drinking water. We've excerpted Maricopa County requirements (see article on page 5) for all of the facilities out there that are still using drinking water dispensers. Most of them are commonsense, but not necessarily common practice. Review

the list. If your department isn't responsible for handling your water dispensers, you might want to share the list with the department that does the deed.

At the same time, we also canvassed member supers to get an idea of how they're supplying water to golfing members and whether they've been affected by the water cooler hysteria.

In general, it seems our membership has been spared what most superintendents we spoke to seem to agree is an overreaction to an isolated event.

Nonetheless, every facility takes great care to provide a safe and plentiful water supply—whether it's the responsibility of Golf & Grounds or Food & Beverage.

"At Silver Spring," says Property Manager Peter Rappoccio, "we are extremely careful about how we deliver water to the golf course. We have four locked water cooler stations, each holding two, 10-gallon coolers. My department fills these coolers six days a week—not on Mondays. Each employee is instructed on filling procedures, which includes cleaning and rinsing the coolers and spouts before refilling, and that's done in the club kitchen, not through a garden hose. We used to have electric coolers in two locations, but they were always breaking and proved costly to repair. And two coolers weren't enough, anyway."

Rockrimmon's Tony Girardi is a proponent of bottled water. His course, however,



“A few years ago, we also installed a water and ice dispenser at the first tee for members. They can fill large cups with ice and water, put a lid on the drink, and take it with them. During long, hot stretches, the club also puts out bottled water in several locations to help ease the complaints.”

—Tim Moore, Knollwood CC



uses a combination of bottled water and coolers, which his department cleans and fills in the maintenance building. “I believe all clubs should mandate bottled water or powered water coolers on their courses,” says Tony. “For safety reasons, I’d like to see water coolers eliminated.”

Woodway Property Manager Larry Pakkala is of a different mind: “I think the water cooler issue is overblown,” says Larry. “More people get sick from heat exhaustion and dehydration than from bad water. The more important issue is having enough water. Woodway members are concerned more about the availability of drinking water than the safety of it.”

To keep everyone happy, Woodway has five electric coolers on the course, and seven newly installed Par Aide water cooler stations. On hot days, they also have water bottles available on some of the tees, which is the responsibility of the clubhouse staff. “We maintain the coolers,” says Larry, noting that they have a separate storage facility for ice, fresh well water, and a special sanitizing sink with plenty of hot water and disinfectants designed for these coolers. “All coolers get rotated and sanitized once a week, no exceptions,” he adds.

Knollwood’s Tim Moore faces a similar challenge with water. “When it’s hot,” says Tim, “we never seem to have enough water. But in my case, it’s the clubhouse staff’s responsibility. We’re a busy club, so this is quite a relief. They take care of filling, checking, and cleaning water coolers at seven stations around the course.

“A few years ago, we also installed a water and ice dispenser at the first tee for members. They can fill large cups with ice and water, put a lid on the drink, and take it with them. During long, hot stretches,” adds Tim, “the club also puts out bottled water in several locations to help ease the complaints.”

At Oak Hills Park Golf Course in Norwalk, CT, they’ve converted to six water fountains around the course. “We used to have 10-gallon coolers,” says Superintendent Glen Dube, “but they were too labor-intensive to maintain. The biggest effort with the fountains is that we have to put

them out and take them in every year. Otherwise, we just change the filters twice a season.”

Both Pat Sisk of Milwaukee Country Club and Jon Jennings of Chicago Golf Club use a combination of water fountains and cooler stations stocked with bottled water. Sounds ideal, but nothing, it seems, is without problems. According to Jon, the downside to bottled water is the trash. “You find the garbage cans overflowing in the afternoon,” laments Jon, “and the plastic rings from the bottles scattered across the course.”

At Rolling Hills, it’s not unusual for staff to pick up 50 or more stray bottles each day. It’s a water-bottle-only golf course, along with Ridgeway Country Club in White Plains, NY. In addition to battling the resulting trash, both Ridgeway and Rolling Hills agree that the other major drawback of bottled water is the cost.

“We spend at least \$10,000 a year on drinking water alone,” says Ridgeway Super Earl Millett. Rolling Hills’ costs are comparable, if not higher. From April 1 to June 1 this year, they’ve already spent \$5,000.

Of course, if you factor in the labor involved in maintaining water coolers on a course, you’re coming pretty close to that figure. According to Peter Rappoccio, it requires 12 to 14 labor hours per week over a 34-week season to maintain the water coolers. “At an average hourly rate of \$15,” says Peter, “it’s running about \$6,000 per season to maintain the coolers, and then add to that the cost of cups.”

Excluding the \$10,000-plus startup cost for the coolers, ice machine, etc., Larry Pakkala figures an operating cost similar to Peter’s, but his numbers include the bottled water supply as well.

For Those Wed to Water Coolers

It’s no surprise that with the water cooler mishap came a push for suppliers to develop new, more secure and sanitary water cooler options. Par Aide introduced Safe-Tee Water, a system for sanitary refilling of existing water coolers without disinfecting. Easy

Guidelines for the Safe Handling of Drinking Water, Ice, and Dispensers



to use, the operator reverse-fills an empty, one-use plastic liner with water. The system is completely sealed from any outside elements, including ice, until the water reaches the drinking cup.

Similar to the Par Aide system is Adrienne's Water Guardian, a sanitary sealed-liner system for water coolers. This is a "bladder" system that fills from the top and is then secured with a nylon tie. It was named after Adrienne Clor, who contracted bacterial lung disease in 2002, allegedly after coming in contact with contaminated water from a golf course cooler.

Last, but not least, a cooler cleaning—and security—system has also come onto the market. Called the Guardian Clean Cooler System, it consists of three separate kits:

- The Cooler Retrofit Kit includes everything needed to protect six coolers, including six spigot guards and six locking tethers to secure the lid.
- The Cooler Cleaning Kit is made up of everything needed to sanitize coolers, including a procedure booklet, poster, and four Water Warning labels.
- The Cooler Filling Kit has everything needed to safely fill coolers, including a 10-foot FDA approved hose, a special hand/valve assembly, and a filling stand that fits onto the cup holder.

In the End . . .

No one can answer with 100-percent confidence the question that has been lurking in the back of many of our minds: Are our water coolers safe? Most of us, however, are optimistic that with the new awareness of the hazards of contamination, golf course employees will be better equipped to keep drinking water supplies safe and sound.

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

If you're using drinking water dispensers on your course, you should follow these guidelines to minimize the transmission of communicable diseases. The guidelines were excerpted from the Maricopa County requirements for facilities that use drinking water dispensers.

Water and Ice

Water and ice must be from a public water distribution system or an approved water supply that is tested to ensure conformity with applicable regulations.

Water Dispensers

- The water dispenser should be constructed of food-grade materials that can be easily cleaned.
- The spigot should be of a gravity flow design to prevent contamination during use.
- The dispensers should be cleaned and sanitized at least once every 24 hours.
- Containers should not be stored on the floor at any time.
- Cleaning and sanitizing the dispenser nozzle prior to filling containers is required.

Filling of Dispensers

- The dispenser should be filled in an area free of environmental contaminants and should not be placed on the floor while filling.
- The water hose used to fill the dispenser must be food-grade (garden hoses are not approved) and never stored on the ground.
- Plumbing code must be met to protect the water supply. Cross-connections are not allowed, and backflow devices are required.
- Ice must be dispensed with an ice scoop (without coming in direct human contact). It's recommended that employees wear disposable gloves to prevent direct hand contact with ice.

Location of Dispensers

- The dispenser should be placed a minimum of three feet off the ground, locating it so it will not be subject to other sources of contamination, such as sprinkler water or misting systems. If the course uses effluent water for irrigation, the dispensers must be taken in each night.
- Dispensers must be placed in a tamper-proof setting to eliminate access to the ice or contents of the dispenser.
- Single-service cups must be provided and protected at the dispenser.

Personal Hygiene

- Employees must properly wash their hands prior to filling the containers.
- A separate hand sink for employees to wash their hands must be in the same area where containers are filled and the ice is added to the containers.
- Do not allow any sick person to fill or handle water containers.

Upcoming Events

Come One, Come All

Join Fellow Supers for the Joe Troll Research Center Benefit Outing

Don't miss this worthy event. . . . It's the fundraiser tournament for the Joseph Troll Turf Research Center. Scheduled for October 5 at the Hickory Ridge Country Club in Amherst, MA, this tourney is intended specifically to raise funds for the construction of a new, 3,000-square-foot building located at the UMass Amherst turf research center in South Deerfield.

Recently dedicated in honor of Joseph Troll, in recognition of his many years of service to the turfgrass industry, the center has been aptly named the Joseph Troll Turf Research Center. With everyone's help and generosity, the building is expected to be fully operational for the 2005 growing season and will include a dedicated laboratory, meeting room, office space, and maintenance area for equipment and storage.

"We wanted to have a tournament close to campus to help raise funds for the new turf building at Stockbridge and UMass," reports Bob Ruzsala, Hickory Ridge superintendent and chair of the planning committee. "Over the past year, we've raised nearly \$600,000 for the new building, and this tournament was planned to coincide with the groundbreaking in the fall. It's a chance for alumni and friends to get together, have some fun, recognize Dr. Troll for all he's done for us, and help finish off the campaign."

Bob is one of more than 1,500 turf management graduates from the Stockbridge School of Agriculture at UMass Amherst. He credits Stockbridge and the careful guidance and mentoring from legendary instructors like Dr. Troll as having given him his start in the business. "Graduates have stepped up to support the campaign because we see it as a chance to give something back to a program that has given us so much."

According to Steve Goodwin, associate dean of the College of Natural Resources and the Environment, the building marks a significant investment in the turf program. "Because of leadership/financial support from our graduates and the industry, the new building represents a real success story," he says. "Our turf faculty and staff will have the infrastructure they need to enhance their teaching and research efforts, and it will also be a central place to promote our interactions with industry."

All are welcome to participate in the October 5 golf tournament, but it will be limited to the first 144 golfers who register. The cost is \$150 per person with \$100 of the entrance fee going directly to the building fund. Your donation is tax deductible.

For more information on the tournament, call Bob Ruzsala at 413-256-8654. To register for the tournament by phone or e-mail, contact Ann Thompson, UMass Amherst Alumni Association, at 800-456-UMASS or at <aet@admin.umass.edu>.

Attention Met Members!

A raffle will also be held as part of this fundraiser. The Joe Troll Tournament Committee is hoping Met area superintendents will be willing to donate a round of golf for a foursome at their club, which can then be used as a raffle prize. The donated golf would be for the 2005 season. Anyone interested in supporting the project in this fashion should contact Jeff Wentworth directly at 914-738-2752.

Remember, this is a benefit that will ultimately benefit all of us—in a facility that can better support much-needed turfgrass research and education.



Keep Your Eye on the Calendar

More Dates Confirmed!

The 2004 Meeting/Social Calendar is nearly complete, with a few dates to confirm and sites to fill. To secure a golf meeting—for this year or next—don't delay in calling either of our Tournament Committee co-chairs: Tom Leahy, 914-941-8281, or Bob Nielsen, 914-234-3779.

Education Meeting

Thursday, July 15

Ridgeway Country Club, White Plains, NY
Host: Earl Millett

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 27

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

Superintendent/Green Chairman Tournament

Tuesday, October 19

Round Hill Club, Greenwich, CT
Host: Bill Gaydosch

Annual Assistants Championship

Thursday, October 14

Country Club of New Caanan
New Canaan, CT
Assistant Host: John Mills

Met Area Team Championship

Date & Site in Philadelphia area TBA

Annual Meeting

November

Date & Site OPEN

MetGCSA Christmas Party

Date & Site OPEN

Educational Events

University of Rhode Island Field Day

Wednesday, August 18

C. Richard Skogley Turfgrass Research Center
Kingston, RI

The field day offers four hours of vendor displays from 8 a.m. to 12 p.m.; demonstrations of verticutting, aeration, and topdressing equipment beginning at 11 a.m., and field tours starting at 1:15 p.m. On the field tour, you'll have a chance to view pre-emergent and post-emergent crabgrass trials, velocity trials across different turfgrasses and environments, poa management programs, velvet bentgrass developments (germplasm and management programs), disease control program trials, and nitrate losses and groundwater monitoring programs.

2004 Crystal Conference and Golf Classic

Wednesday – Friday, November 3 – 5

Crystal Springs Resort, Vernon, NJ

Mark your calendar now for this three-day conference and golf event. A conference package is available for \$250 and covers all educational seminars, access to vendor exhibits, entry to the golf tournament, and all meals (3 breakfasts, 3 lunches, and 2 dinners).

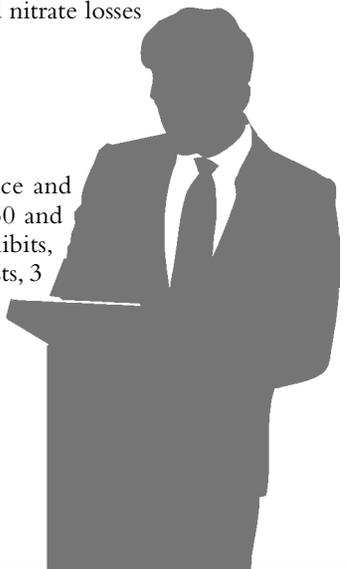
For further information, log onto GCSANJ.ORG or call Ineke Pierpoint at 914-347-4653.

MetGCSA Winter Seminar

Wednesday, January 12, 2005

Westchester Country Club, Rye, NY

Host: Joe Alonzi, CGCS



Member News

Members on the Move

Ed Kaufmann, formerly the assistant superintendent at Middle Bay Country Club in Oceanside, NY, is now the assistant superintendent at Scarsdale Country Club in Hartsdale, NY.

Pat Lucas, formerly the golf course superintendent at Innis Arden Golf Club in Old Greenwich, CT, has accepted a position as general manager of Richter Park Golf Club in Danbury, CT.

Eric O'Neill, formerly the assistant superintendent at Scarsdale Golf Club in Hartsdale, NY, is now the golf course superintendent at Towers Country Club in Floral Park, NY.

Well Wishes

Here's wishing **Bruce Pye** of E/T Equipment Company a speedy recovery from surgery on a punctured bicep.

In Sympathy

We'd like to offer our condolences to **Greg Moran** of Lesco, Inc. Greg's father passed away in May.

Our deepest sympathy, also, to **John Currie** of Currie Landscaping, Inc., whose mother passed away June 24.

President's Message continued from page 1

Managers Association. He was always running charitable or educational events—and setting up roundtable discussions to enhance superintendent/manager relations. As a matter of fact, the last time I saw Mike, he was working at a fundraiser for the Ferari Children's Hospital in Valhalla, NY.

On a much happier note, Scott Stark, a former Met area superintendent and friend to many, seems to be making great strides after a serious illness. He's started his own lawn care business with 14 accounts, and his wife, Kathy, is working at a local New Jersey Hospital.

Through contributions from the Met board and funds generated in our recent 50/50 raffle at Woodway and Fairview, we were able to help support Scott in his new venture. I want to thank the many Met members for the support they've offered Scott—both emotionally and financially. We wish him and his wife all the best in the future.

Thoughts on The Open

Finally, I'd be remiss if I didn't share my thoughts on The Open at Shinnecock. I had the good fortune of being out there on Friday. The golf course was playing as difficult as I thought it should. Still, the leaders were 6 under. How the USGA conducted the next two days was, in my opinion, way over the edge. I just don't understand why a golf course has to die to determine a champion. We're always told that par is relative. So let it be. If the best players in the world shoot 12 under, great.

I heard and read comments that it was nice to see the pros suffer like the average weekend duffer. That's ridiculous! Let's throw oil in turn three of a NASCAR race, raise the NBA rim to 15 feet, and give Derek Jeter a Wiffle ball bat. Then all the pros can play just like us.

I'll see you at the next meeting.

Dave Mahoney
President

A Meeting of the Minds

Earl Millett Brings MetGCSA's July Education Meeting to Ridgeway

by Greg Wojick, CGCS

July 15 marks the Met's third education meeting, which will be held this year at Ridgeway Country Club in White Plains, NY. Our meeting host, Earl Millett, has been Ridgeway's superintendent for the past 24 years. Though in that time the Pete Clark-designed course has undergone numerous enhancements, this meeting won't provide an opportunity to actually take in the sights. Instead, we'll be treated to an evening of education (see Schedule of Events below) in the Ridgeway clubhouse, which was built in 1952—exactly 30 years after the golf course. The course was originally built for the guests of a hotel—the Gedney Farm Hotel—which was located across the street on the grounds of Westchester Hills Country Club, then newly opened.

The Gedney Farm Hotel's course fell on hard times after a fire destroyed the hotel. It changed hands two times before local businessmen bought the course and formed the Ridgeway Country Club, named for the street on which it's located.

Building Experience

Anyone who's been around the Met area for any length of time knows Ridgeway, and more notably, Earl—if not for his cynical sense of humor, for his leading role in the MetGCSA. Affiliated with the association for nearly 30 years, Earl's served on countless committees and devoted 12 years on the board, which culminated in his presidency in '98 and '99.

"There's more to a superintendent's job than the club and course itself," notes Earl, who credits his "extracurricular" activities with accelerating his success both professionally and personally. "Involvement," says Earl, "offers a tremendous opportunity to swap information and share concerns—both personal and professional—with people who are in the same boat."

Add to Earl's list of industry credits his service on the board of the Tri-State Turf



Earl Millett and son, Ian Baker

Research Foundation and his involvement with NYSTA and you might get an inkling of his commitment to the golf industry—and the betterment of the turf we all play on.

But Earl's got his hand in a lot more than growing grass. He's quick to admit that one of the highlights of his affiliation with golf is actually getting out and playing. He's competed on just about every Metropolitan New York area course that would have him—not to mention many of the most prestigious courses around the country.

All this, Earl points out, is part of his commitment to ongoing education—an education that got its start long ago back in Turner Falls, MA. That's where he and his superintendent brother, Mark Millett of Old Oaks Country Club, just about grew up on a nine-hole golf course, the Thomas Memorial Golf and Country Club. "I started out there pushing a mower when I was about 12," remembers Earl.

But Earl's real turf lessons began when he was persuaded by his cousin Chuck Martineau, superintendent of Whippoorwill Club, to come down to Armonk and learn the ropes working as a laborer on his crew.

Earl worked with Chuck for three years—until 1978 when he accepted the assistant's position at Fenway Golf Club under then superintendent Al Tretera. Earl stayed there until 1980, completing his A.S. in Turfgrass Management from UMass along the way.

"I've always said that I learned how to run a crew from Chuck and how to grow grass from Al," says Earl of his years in training for his first—and present—superintendent's job at Ridgeway Country Club.

Personal Pursuits

Earl's savvy extends beyond golf. He knows and understands the importance of balancing his life by spending time with his wife, Donna, of 24 years, and his son, Ian Baker, now 12. Ian, like Dad, has a passion for both hockey and fishing. Ask Earl to tell you a fish story sometime. I'll guarantee it'll be a whopper!

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

Education Meeting Schedule of Events

- 4:30 Arrival
- 5:00 *Current Trends in Fungicide Resistance Management*
Speaker: Rich Hanrahan, North American Manager of Fungicide Development, Bayer Corporation
- 5:45 *Turf Problems of 2004: Are You Ready?*
Speaker: Dr. James Baird, USGA Green Section Agronomist, Northeast Region
- 6:15 Scholarship Presentations
- 6:30 Cocktail Hour
- 7:30 Dinner
- 9:15 Adjourn

The Return of the Summer Social

Mark Millett and Old Oaks Set the Stage for a Gala Event and a Mighty Fine Time

by Bill Perlee

The MetGCSA Summer Social returns this year in style when Old Oaks Country Club opens its doors to this special evening event on July 20. Though the golf course is the primary draw at Old Oaks, the other facilities are equally impressive. The clubhouse—once the mansion of investment banking executive William A. Reed—is truly magnificent, while the view from the pool area, behind the main building, is nothing short of awe-inspiring. Rebuilt in 1970, the pool was featured in the 1976 movie, *Goodbye Columbus*. A little bit of paradise right here in Westchester County.

Welcoming Met members is the long-tenured superintendent, Mark Millett, and his wife of 32 years, Mary Pat. As any veteran association member will tell you, there's a lot more to Mark than meets the eye. There's a spark behind that quiet, often serious exterior. In fact, both he and Mary Pat are well-known among veteran members for their great sense of fun and warm hospitality. Typical of their hospitality was the backyard barbecue they hosted a couple years ago to welcome superintendents who were new to the area. "We wanted to give them an opportunity to get to know some of their colleagues," says Mark.

The Golf Course You Won't See

On the 20th, you'll see more of Mark and Mary Pat than you will the golf course, which in Mark's 23-year tenure has undergone significant renovations. Working off a master plan with architect Ken Dye, Mark and his staff set out to revitalize the 79-year-old course, which has the mark of two architects: A.W. Tillinghast and Charles Alison.

"Over the course of two years, we rebuilt four greens and expanded or regraded four others," explains Mark. "We also rebuilt all the bunkers and several tee complexes, added drainage throughout the property, and developed 10 acres of rough areas."



Mark Millett

More impressive, still, was the massive practice facility they added. "It has an all-grass range that spans eight acres of turf," says Mark. "It's large enough to accommodate weekday play from one end and weekend play from the other. The newly constructed target areas and chipping and putting greens offer something for everyone," Mark adds.

The conditions of the 250-acre property—the golf course, planting areas, and clubhouse grounds—convey a feeling of perfection. But Mark is quick to point out that he couldn't do it alone. He credits his assistant, Rob Milar, and the rest of his staff of 28 with helping to keep the flowers and grounds in tiptop shape. Among his staff are two full-time masons for projects and repairs on the course, as well as two mechanics, four assistants, and five people to help with the planting areas. Clearly, Mark is the good-natured glue that holds this massive operation together.

Held in high regard by his crew, Mark's longtime mechanic Ernesto refers to him as "one of a kind" and "out of this world," while his assistant Rob Milar touts Mark as a great mentor. "He involves the staff in decisions," says Rob, "and reacts, as well as listens, to concerns from all members of the crew."

The Road to Old Oaks

Mark's interest in golf—and turfgrass management—began when he was in high school in Turner Falls, MA. He played on the golf team and worked summers on area golf courses, starting out—along with his superintendent brother Earl—on a nearby nine-hole golf course, the Thomas Memorial Golf and Country Club. The turning point for Mark was working on the crew of Northhampton Country Club, where his cousin, Chuck Martineau now of Whipoorwill, was then superintendent.

Convinced that he'd found his calling, Mark next moved to Fenway Golf Club, where he quickly ascended to first assistant under then Superintendent Al Tretera. After five years at Fenway, and an education from UMass at Stockbridge, Mark became the superintendent at Westchester Hills, where he honed his turf management skills, as well as his golf game. When prodded on his career best round, he vaguely recalled a 68 while he was at Westchester Hills, where he remained the superintendent until 1981, when he accepted the position at Old Oaks.

In the years between Westchester Hills and Old Oaks, Mark and Mary Pat managed to raise two children: Jeff, now 24, and Megan, 20. Jeff is studying architecture at the University of Florida and was on a recent university trip to Hong Kong. Megan is a student at Pace University and was recently at the beach in Florida. "Tough life," Mark says, tongue-in-cheek.

We'll see Mark—and enjoy what promises to be the perfect get-away-from-it-all social event of the year—on July 20. Knowing full well what the golf season brings, I think we're all looking forward to it.

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

Connecticut Golf Club Hosts Dual Event

by Sean Cain

This year's Poa Annual Tournament, scheduled for August 23, finds the MetGCSA at a brand-new venue: the newly renovated Connecticut Golf Club in Easton, CT.

In addition to golfing for a worthy cause, our association will play the first round of the Met Championship.

Our host for the day is certified Golf Course Superintendent Mark Fuller, who has been with Connecticut Golf Club since 1992.

Opened 38 years earlier, in 1966, the club was founded by Laurente Wiers as a businessman's golf club—not as a country club, not as a social club, but as a club devoted solely to playing golf. Membership began with 39 of Wiers' golfing buddies and was—and still is—by invitation only. “Today, the cap on membership has been raised to 190,” says Mark, “and play is reasonable at 10,000 rounds per year.”

A Work in Progress

Built by renowned Golf Course Architect Geoffrey Cornish, Connecticut Golf Club was selected in 1984 by the American Golf Course Architects Association as one of the 150 best-designed and most beautiful courses in America.

Over the past six years, Mark and his staff have been hard at work sprucing up the original Cornish design. In fact, they've nearly carried out the club's entire master renovation plan that kicked off in '98 with the installation of a new, high-density poly irrigation system and included rebuilding all the bunkers and tees and two entire green complexes. But of course, there's more. “With any renovation,” says Mark, “once you get into it, you find yourself fixing and adding everything from drainage to cart paths.”

Renovations or not, the course is dramatic. It plays 6,200 yards from the front, all the way to 6,900 from the back, rising and



Mark Fuller, CGCS

falling through corridors of trees and granite and around several ponds. The layout is tight, and the greens are large, undulating, and quick. It is a true test of golf. So get ready.

Many Degrees Later

Mark's affection for the business began long ago, when he worked summers at what was then a 9-hole course: Crestbrook in Watertown, CT, where he grew up. Mark didn't follow your typical path to golf course superintendentdom. Out of high school, rather than pursue a turf degree, he completed a B.S. in graphic arts and photography from the University of Bridgeport. “After graduating,” says Mark, “I worked 45 days in the field I'd studied and then realized it was crazy. I hated being inside.”

He jumped ship, accepting a position in 1974 on the crew at The Longshore Club in Westport, CT. Within a year, Mark was elevated to assistant superintendent, and then in 1976, he became Longshore's superintendent. “I was in the right place at the right time,” says Mark of his quick progres-

sion through the ranks.

He pursued formal training in turfgrass management at the UMass Winter School in 1977, remaining at Longshore until 1983. That's when he accepted the multi-faceted role of superintendent/property manager and general manager at the infamous Quechee Club in Vermont.

Covering all the bases, Mark pursued and completed an M.B.A. in 1989 from Northeastern University.

After nine years at Quechee, Mark took his schooling and experience back to Connecticut—and the Connecticut Golf Club, where he's remained—happily ever after—for the past 12 years.

Where He Calls Home

Mark lives in Newtown, CT, with his wife, Kim, and their 4-year-old Bearnese mountain dog, K.C. They have two daughters, Kelly and Katie. Kelly is continuing her studies at UMass as a graduate student, and Katie is starting college in the fall.

Mark finds the time to enjoy his passion for kayaking on as many lakes and rivers as he can find. When asked if he likes the thrill of maneuvering class five rapids, he said, “No. If I want excitement and danger, I lace up my skates and play a little hockey with the boys during the winter months.”

Finally, Rest for the Weary

After coddling the course through what's become nearly a complete facelift, Mark is finally starting to see the light at the end of the tunnel. “I'm very happy with the renovation,” says Mark, “and I'm looking forward to hosting this event and giving back to my peers and to the association that has always supported me and my family.”

Sean Cain, co-editor of the Tee to Green, is superintendent at Sunningdale Country Club in Scarsdale, NY.

Two-Ball Qualifiers at Elmwood

The MetGCSA kicked off its golf season in grand style on April 19 at Elmwood Country Club. Superintendent Dave Roule and his staff had the golf course in great shape—and everyone enjoyed fine-tuning their game under glorious skies.

Blake Halderman and Bob Nielsen have done a great job organizing the Two-Ball event. All those who qualified should be sure to play their matches by the dates posted below, and keep Blake and Bob informed of the results. You can check the

Met website—METGCSA.org—for the pairings for future events.

Some impressive scores were posted for the Two-Ball Qualifier and the event of the day. Here's a look at how the winning players fared:

Two-Ball Qualifier Results

Here's the lineup of Two-Ball Qualifiers, along with their first-round match assignments, which are well underway:

First Flight

- | | |
|---|----|
| 1) Tim Garceau/Ernie Steinhofer | 60 |
| <i>Tuxedo Club/Metro Turf Specialists</i> | |
| <i>vs.</i> | |
| 16) BYE | |
| 8) Brian Benedict/Bob Lippman Jr. | 70 |
| <i>Seawane Club/Westchester Turf</i> | |
| <i>vs.</i> | |
| 9) Jeff Wentworth/Ken Benoit | 72 |
| <i>Pelham CC/Glen Arbor GC</i> | |
| 5) Glen Dube/Blake Halderman | 69 |
| <i>Oak Hills Park/Trump National</i> | |
| <i>vs.</i> | |
| 12) John Currie/Tim Moore | 74 |
| <i>Currie Landscaping/Knollwood CC</i> | |
| 4) Bert Dickinson/Chip Lafferty | 68 |
| <i>Willow Ridge CC/Rye GC</i> | |
| <i>vs.</i> | |
| 13) David Fluery/Glenn Perry | 74 |
| <i>Roger Rulewich Group/Rolling Hills</i> | |
| 6) Sean Cain/Chuck Denny | 69 |
| <i>Sunningdale CC/Salem GC</i> | |
| <i>vs.</i> | |
| 11) Matt Lapinski/Stephen Rabideau | 73 |
| <i>Quaker Ridge/Wheatley Hills GC</i> | |
| 3) Mike Cook/Eric Greytok | 68 |
| <i>The Care of Trees/Winged Foot GC</i> | |
| <i>vs.</i> | |
| 14) Scott Niven/Tom Weinert | 75 |
| <i>The Stanwich Club/Plant Food Co.</i> | |
| 7) Tony Grasso/Scott Tretera | 69 |
| <i>Metropolis CC/Metro Turf Specialists</i> | |
| <i>vs.</i> | |
| 10) Dave Mahoney/Steve Renzetti | 73 |
| <i>Sivanoy CC/Quaker Ridge GC</i> | |
| 2) Earl Millett/John O'Keefe | 67 |
| <i>Ridgeway CC/Preakness Hills CC</i> | |
| <i>vs.</i> | |
| 15) Matt Ceplo/Jimmy Swiatowski | 80 |
| <i>Rockland CC/Montammy GC</i> | |

Second Flight

- | | |
|--|----|
| 1) Bob DeMarco/Gary Arlio | 63 |
| <i>The Powelton Club/North Jersey CC</i> | |
| <i>vs.</i> | |
| 16) BYE | |
| 8) Tom Leahy/Mark Millett | 68 |
| <i>Sleepy Hollow CC/Old Oaks CC</i> | |
| <i>vs.</i> | |
| 9) John Wickes/Jason Ziesmer | 68 |
| <i>Ira Wickes-Arborists/Minisceongo GC</i> | |
| 5) Mike Reeb/Greg Wojick | 66 |
| <i>CC of New Canaan/Greenwich CC</i> | |
| <i>vs.</i> | |
| 12) Bob Alonzi/Joel Alonzi | 68 |
| <i>Fenway GC/Westchester CC</i> | |
| 4) Chuck Martineau/Fred Scheyhing | 66 |
| <i>Whippoorwill Club/Mt. Kisco CC</i> | |
| <i>vs.</i> | |
| 13) Joe Kennedy/Peter Waterous | 70 |
| <i>Ira-Tech/Westchester Hills GC</i> | |
| 6) Kevin Quist/Dave Roule | 66 |
| <i>Lake Isle CC/Elmwood CC</i> | |
| <i>vs.</i> | |
| 11) Dennis Flynn/Peter Rappoccio | 68 |
| <i>Brae Burn CC/Silver Spring CC</i> | |
| 3) Scott Apgar/Bobby Steinman | 65 |
| <i>Metro Turf Specialists/Beekman CC</i> | |
| <i>vs.</i> | |
| 14) Bob Johnston/Matt Severino | 73 |
| <i>Lake Success GC/Oak Hills Park</i> | |
| 7) Bob Nielsen/Bill Perlee | 68 |
| <i>Bedford Golf & Tennis/The Apawamis Club</i> | |
| <i>vs.</i> | |
| 10) Paul Gonzalez/Lou Quick | 68 |
| <i>Canyon Club/Anglebrook GC</i> | |
| 2) Tony Girardi/Greg Moran | 65 |
| <i>Rockrimmon CC/Lesco, Inc.</i> | |
| <i>vs.</i> | |
| 15) Rich Browne/Glenn Gallion | 74 |
| <i>Garrison GC/Wilfred MacDonald</i> | |

Event of the Day Results

First Low Gross

Sean Cain/Chuck Denny 76
Sunningdale CC/Salem GC

Second Low Gross

Glen Dube/Blake Halderman 77
Oak Hills Park GC/Trump National GC
(won in a match of cards)

Third Low Gross

Brian Benedict/Bob Lippman Jr. 77
Seawane Club/Westchester Turf Supply

First Low Net

Tim Garceau/Ernie Steinhofer 60
The Tuxedo Club/Metro Turf Specialists

Second Low Net

Bob DeMarco/Gary Arlio 63
The Powelton Club/North Jersey CC

Third Low Net

John Apple/Will Heintz 64
Westchester Tractor/Centennial GC
(won in a match of cards)

Closest to the Pin

Greg Wojick, *Greenwich CC* #2/2'1"
Will Heintz, *Centennial GC* #16/9'5"

Longest Drive

Jason Ziesmer, *Minisceongo GC* #10

All matches should be completed by the following dates:
Match 1 – June 11
Match 2 – July 21
Match 3 – August 26
Final – September 27

– Tom Leahy/Bob Nielsen/Blake Halderman

Mosquito Update

What You Don't Know Can Hurt You



Mosquitoes, unfortunately, aren't going to go away. But, worse, is that the virus they carry also seems to be here to stay. According to Theodore Andreadis, chief medical entomologist at the Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station in New Haven, West Nile virus is firmly entrenched, not only in Connecticut, but in the entire United States. "It's not going to fade," says Andreadis.

Throughout the country last year, 9,862 people contracted the virus and 264 of them died, according to the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Due to the spring's abundant rain, Andreadis predicts a high number of mosquitoes again this season. The time to be especially vigilant is from early August through late September. This is the period when you're at greatest risk for contracting West Nile, which, worse case, can lead to encephalitis, a potentially deadly swelling of the brain. Young children and older citizens are most at risk.

Mosquito Myths

Be wary, too, of products on the market that claim to have mosquito control capabilities. According to the Connecticut DEP, these products have not been rigorously tested and do not perform as advertised.

Mechanical traps, such as ultraviolet "bug zappers" or devices that repel using ultrasonic sound waves do not meet advertisers' claims. In fact, bug zappers attract few mosquitoes and may actually kill beneficial insect predators, so they should not be used for mosquito reduction.

Natural products such as citronella plants, clove oil, peppermint, or diet supplements, such as garlic or vitamins, claim to repel mosquitoes, but there is no scientific evidence to support these claims.

Natural predators, such as bats and purple martins, eat mosquitoes, but studies have shown that mosquitoes make up less than 10 percent of a bat's or bird's diet.

Bats and purple martins can reduce the severity of an infestation but will not eliminate all of the mosquitoes in an area.

Your Best Defence

We know the importance of eliminating breeding sites, particularly around public buildings on the course. That means doing away with standing water—in gutters, barrels, or planters, rot holes in trees and stumps (fill these with sand), and ornamental pools and aquatic gardens that are stagnant. In these pools, you can control mosquitoes by installing an aerator or by stocking them with minnows, such as *Gambusia* or guppies, which will eat mosquito larvae. In large ponds, of course, stocking fish is prohibited.

Insecticides, such as Bti, can also be used to treat mosquito breeding sites. When activity is heavy, you may consider spraying shade trees, hedges, and shrubs adjacent to the foundation of structures.

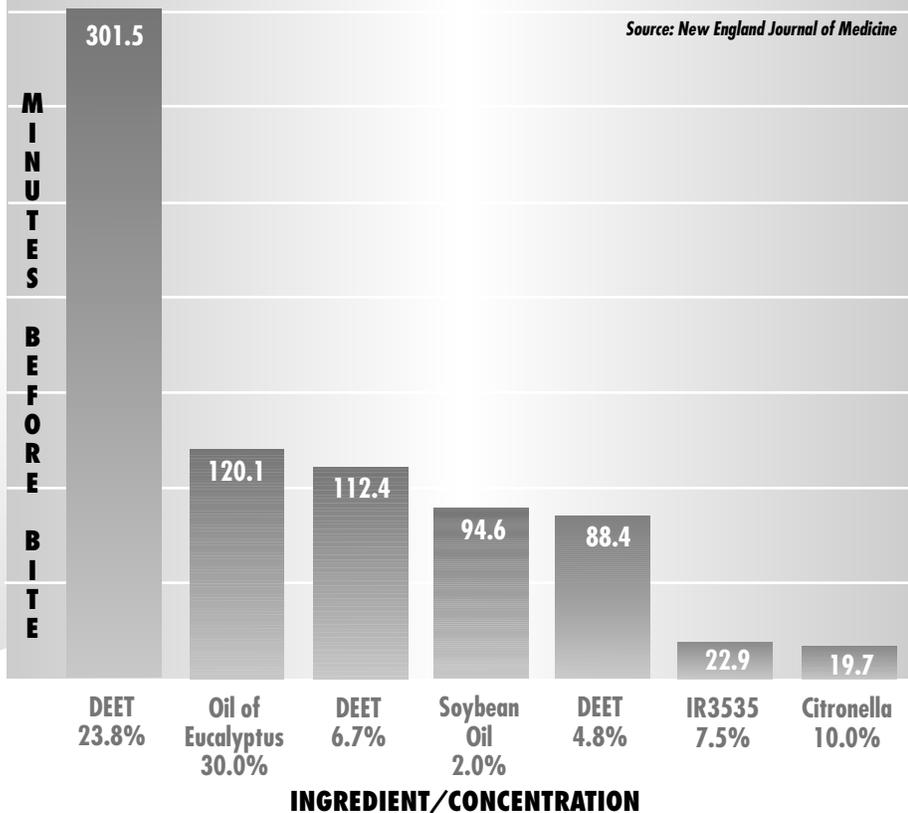
In the end, your best defense, particularly if your crew is working on the course in the early morning or at dusk, is to wear protective clothing, such as long sleeves, pants, and head cover. Light-colored, loose-fitting clothes are preferable since dark clothing radiates more heat and attracts more mosquitoes.

Another alternative, of course, is to spray your skin and clothing with an insect repellent containing DEET. There's also permethrin, which is a synthetic pyrethroid frequently used for repelling ticks. This, as you probably know, can be applied only to clothing but provides longer-lasting protection.

TIP: Higher concentrations of DEET are not necessarily more effective. Tests show products containing 30 to 40 percent DEET work as well as repellents with 75 percent DEET. Also note that cosmetic liquids and creams that claim some level of mosquito repellency *may* repel when mos-

Bug Off!

Here's a look at various ingredients and concentrations used in insect repellents and the average number of minutes before testers, who put their arm into a cage of mosquitoes, were bitten. The clear winner: DEET, which at up to a 30-percent concentration is safe for children more than 2 months old.



quito pressure is light, but they need to be reapplied frequently to be at all effective. (See chart above for a look at the effectiveness of various repellents on the market.)

Other Mosquito Facts and Figures

- Mosquitoes are a diverse group of insects that belong to the fly order Diptera.
- Not all mosquitoes bite humans. They have a specific feeding preference. Some bite only birds or amphibians, such as toads, while others bite mammals, including humans.
- Only the female mosquito bites since she requires a source of protein to produce her eggs.
- There are more than 3,000 species of mosquitoes that can be found on every continent except Antarctica. While North

America is home to about 150 species of mosquitoes, in Connecticut, there are 44 species, which can be found in a variety of habitats. Of this number, only 12 are considered pest species to humans and livestock. The species researchers will be keeping their eye on is *Culex pipiens*, because it spawns West Nile virus activity.

- The mosquito's development is similar to a butterfly's. It has a "complete metamorphosis" from egg to larva to pupa and then adult stages. The difference is that mosquitoes are aquatic, with most of their development occurring in or near water.
- Mosquitoes are most active around dawn and dusk; some, however, such as the common salt marsh mosquito, may be active throughout the day.

Giving MTBE Gas the Yank From Your Tank!

What You May Not Know About Your Golf Course Fuel Supply Conversion

If you're a golf course superintendent, chances are you know that gasoline with MTBE is quickly becoming a thing of the past. With intensified concern over our air quality, gas stations—and golf courses—are being mandated to convert from MTBE gasoline to gas with 10 percent ethanol.

The main concern with converting from a 100-percent hydrocarbon gasoline with MTBE to an ethanol-containing gasoline is that ethanol gas will absorb large amounts of water into the fuel, and in extreme cases, the water and the ethanol can separate from the fuel to cause two layers in the fuel tank.

As you know, fuel with large amounts of water can wreak havoc on an engine, causing stalling and hard starting. And if the ethanol-water separates into two distinct layers, your engines won't run at all.

Generally, your fuel company will handle everything involved with your gas conversion, but it never hurts to know precisely what's required in making a smooth transition.

With that in mind, here's a look at the protocol one fuel company—Sprague Energy Corp.—recommends when changing over a golf course's fuel supply:

1. Pump all water from the bottom of fuel tanks before introducing ethanol-containing gasoline.
2. Do not switch back and forth between ethanol and (wetter) non-ethanol gasoline.
3. Use ValvTect Gasoline additive, at a 1 gallon to 2000 gallons treat ratio, before and after the transition. Although ValvTect doesn't seem to have bacteria growth tendencies with ethanol blends, it pays to keep a watch on your tank during the season you convert to determine if a special BioGuard treatment program is necessary.
4. Change filters to ethanol-compatible hydro-absorb filters, 30 microns maximum.
5. Have additional filters on hand to make changes to dispenser, when necessary.
6. If tanks are older, they will need to be cleaned, since sediment tends to collect in the bottom of the tank. The bonus is that ethanol acts as a detergent and will clean the tank.

If you have any questions, be sure to contact your golf course's fuel company.