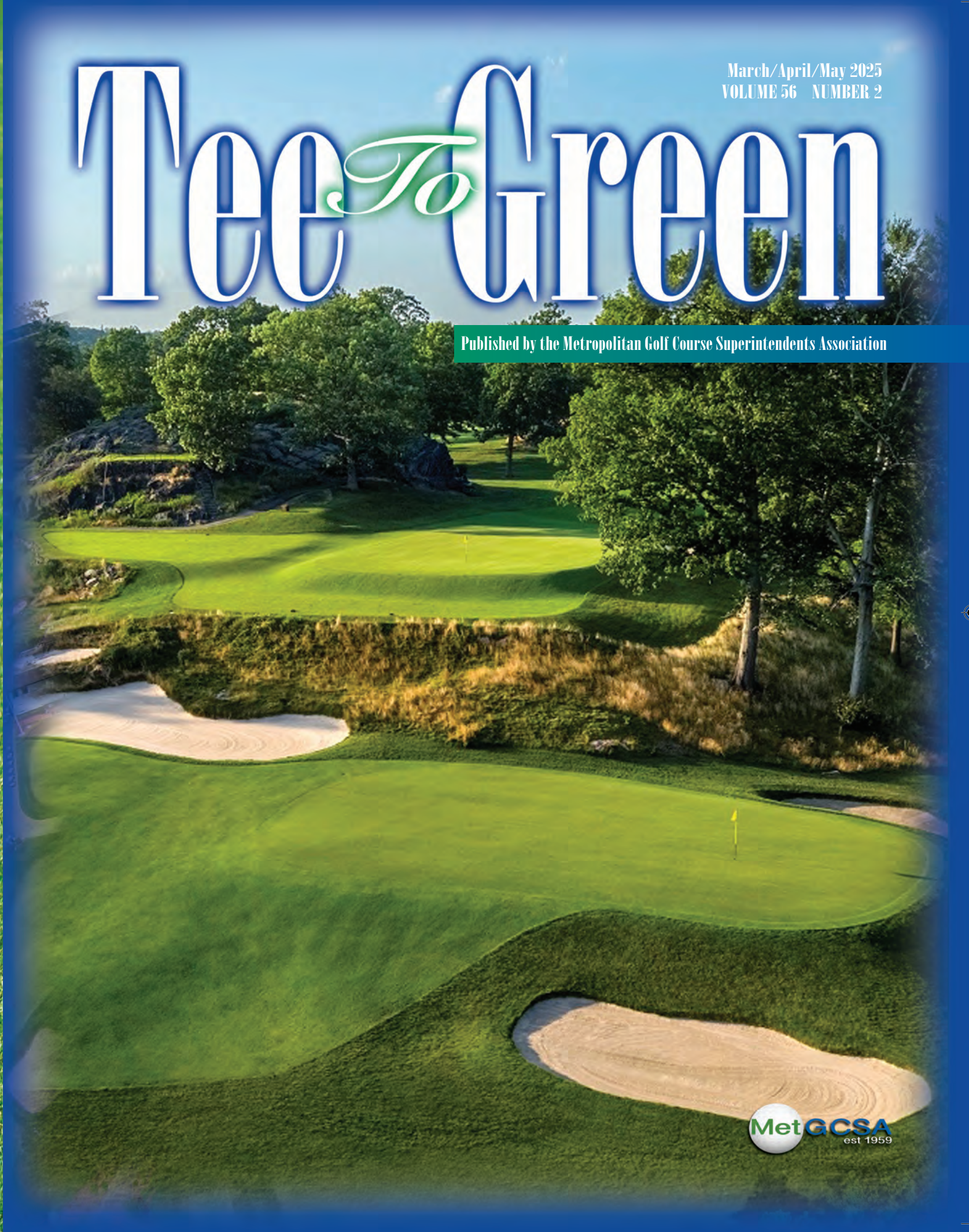


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Tee To Green

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Tee To Green



Cover: Pelham Country Club

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Off to a Strong Start

As we picked up where we left off last fall, dry conditions once again took center stage. It's been a cool, windy, and unusually dry spring, that had many of us running irrigation systems well before May. Fortunately, May rainfall has brought much-needed relief. With the scent of freshly cut grass in the air, there's a renewed energy as we gear up for what promises to be another exciting golf season.

A Great Start to the Season

Our tournament calendar began on a high note with the season-opening Dave Mahoney Two-Ball Qualifier at Richter Park Golf Course. Unlike years past when the weather was unpredictable, we were treated to perfect conditions—sunny skies and a course in outstanding shape. Kudos to Nick Mortara and his team for presenting such a topnotch venue. Our foursome shared plenty of laughs (and a few wayward shots), but no one could complain about the day. It was a fantastic kickoff to what we hope will be a great season.

Foursomes 4 the Foundation

A heartfelt thank-you goes out to all the clubs across the metropolitan area that donated rounds of golf to support the MetGCSA Foundation. Your generosity helps fund critical turfgrass research, educational programs, scholarships, and advocacy efforts. These contributions make a meaningful impact. Thank you for continuing to support our mission.

Scholarship Deadline Approaching

Don't wait—MetGCSA is now accepting applications for its annual scholarship awards. The deadline for submissions is June 6, and late applications will not be accepted. Application forms are available on our website at www.metgcsa.org or by contacting Executive Secretary Susan O'Dowd at sodowd@mgagolf.org or 914-909-4843.



*Michael J. Brunelle, CGCS
MetGCSA President*

Better Communication Ahead

Following last year's strategic planning meeting, the board has begun rolling out Microsoft Teams as a new communication and collaboration tool. Teams will allow board and committee members to stay organized and up to date, with improved file sharing, meeting coordination, and project tracking. This platform is already helping streamline our operations and improve communication behind the scenes.

We Want to Hear From You

The Education Committee recently sent out a survey asking for your input on topics and speakers for upcoming educational events. If there's a subject you'd like covered or a speaker you think would benefit our membership, we'd love to hear your suggestions. Our goal is to bring relevant, engaging, and valuable education to all members, and your feedback is essential to that mission.

As we look forward to the rest of the 2025 season, I want to thank Mike McCall, Susan O'Dowd, the board of directors, and all our committee members for their hard work and dedication so far this year. Lastly, none of this is possible without the partnership and support we have with all our sponsors. Thank you all for making this the strongest association in the country.

Here's to a smooth, successful season!

Mike Brunelle
President



Are Your Golf Course Communication Strategies Par for the Course?

Tyler Bloom, Founder of Bloom Golf Partners, Shares Expert Insights From His Experience as a Former Golf Course Superintendent





Effective communication is at the heart of successful golf course maintenance. From managing daily conditions to ensuring that members and stakeholders are on the same page, communication strategies are essential for building relationships, aligning expectations, and fostering a supportive environment. In this article, we'll explore how to enhance communication with club members and key stakeholders, incorporating insights and strategies from highly accomplished superintendents.

The Importance of Communication: A Personal Reflection

I had just pulled into the driveway of my in-laws on Mother's Day 2015 when I received an email notification from a board member. Given the progress our team had made in less than a year on the job and a recent joint Golf/Green Committee meeting, I suspected it was a vote of confidence. But within two sentences, a few off-hand comments, and a few exclamation points, I got my first scathing email from a board member. The email centered around golf course conditions: I had done too good a job growing the rough to U.S. Open conditions, the greens and bunkers were too firm, and pin positions felt like it was Masters Sunday.

In that moment, I realized how critical effective communication could be in avoiding misunderstandings. Despite the strides we had made in course maintenance, there were still gaps in how we communicated our efforts and the challenges we faced. This prompted me to reflect on how our communication strategies could be improved, and how they could better align with member expectations.

The Power of Communication Channels: Insights From Industry Experts

While we had set up several communication channels—like a Twitter account, a golf course maintenance blog, and email blasts—our efforts were only as effective as our ability to engage the membership.

As Jim Pavonetti of Fairview Country Club shares, "Our monthly newsletter is now a weekly email that outlines all the upcoming club events to sign up for. This has been a great way to insert some original course care etiquette articles, project progress reports, and lightning safety." Email became a critical tool to inform members in real time, offering them a window into the daily maintenance activities and the overall health of the course.

However, as Jim notes, it's essential to understand whether your audience is actually engaging with the content. He had tried a blog but found that a weekly course report via email, featuring data, project news, and colorful images, garnered far more attention and engagement. The visuals were key to keeping members engaged, with the color photography helping to draw them in and personalize the communication.

Bob Nielsen of Bedford Golf & Tennis Club also finds that incorporating visual content like photos and short videos can be a powerful tool. Bob highlights how he engages his members with color photography in his emails, providing visuals that keep the membership informed and supportive of ongoing projects. "I highlight all the course projects with color photography and descriptions to keep the members up to date."

Leveraging Visibility: Communication Beyond Digital

All the technology and communication channels available do not replace the need for personal visibility. Whether being at the first tee, knowing the tee sheet, or riding around the course with a general manager, being present during the golfing season is still one of the most important communication tactics.

As Glen Dube of Centennial Golf Club suggests, "Being visible up and around the clubhouse and first tee area when a lot of regular players are present plays a very important role in keeping in continuous contact with the members and guests."

In addition, Scott Olson of Knollwood Country Club emphasizes how in-person

communication with the staff has become increasingly important: "I had a digital job board for four years before switching to Task Tracker, which has made it easier to communicate job-specific information to the staff. I've also started asking our bilingual clubhouse manager to attend monthly staff meetings and act as a translator. It's been a great help in ensuring staff understands the assignments." By actively engaging with staff on a personal level, Scott ensures that his communication efforts are clear, consistent, and approachable.

Effective Feedback Loops: Listening to Your Audience

Obtaining feedback is crucial for improving communication and course maintenance. Jim Pavonetti takes a proactive approach by seeking feedback from multiple sources: "Aside from committee and member feedback, the golf pro, caddies, locker room managers, and bartenders can be a great resource for getting player feedback on course conditions."

These informal touchpoints are often the best way to gauge how the membership is feeling about the course conditions and to make adjustments if necessary.

Similarly, Vincent Taylor of Connecticut Golf Club emphasizes the importance of direct communication: "I often stand with our director of golf on the first tee, on weekend mornings when the first groups are going off. For members, you always need to be present or seen. I also drive around the golf course and stop to talk with groups to see how they like the conditions of the golf course and listen to feedback." This level of visibility and engagement helps to ensure that any issues are quickly identified and addressed.

Internal Communication: Building a Unified Front

Effective communication doesn't just happen with members; it must also be established internally among staff and department heads. According to Jim Pavonetti,

a streamlined communication method with department heads ensures that everyone is on the same page: “Every day, every department head receives a text message from me stating the status of the golf course, cart rules, tennis complex, and anything else they should know.”

This helps ensure that all staff members—from the golf professional to the chef—can provide accurate and timely responses to members’ questions.

Vincent Taylor echoes this sentiment by prioritizing communication with his coworkers, green chairman, and club president, as well as his staff:

“I am constantly talking with my green chairman and club president. I’ve found that sending them pictures of any special projects or just beautiful pictures of the course is one of the best approaches to keeping them informed.”

Just as important to Vincent is communicating course particulars to his crew. “I’ve always felt it’s important to explain not just what my crew members have to do, but also why these practices are important.”

Twice a year, Vincent brings his crew to a green and shows them what he’s looking for when he walks the course in the morning. “I’ll show them the soil structure or stress,” he says, “and explain why it’s happening. I’ll also review how to properly rake a bunker or discuss proper mowing procedures, like using turning boards and turning. I find when people understand the importance of what they’re doing, they are more apt to invest themselves in doing it right.”

There’s No Such Thing as Overcommunication

Effective communication is more than just sending out emails or posting on social

media. It’s about creating a consistent presence, both online and in-person, and building relationships through active listening and feedback. By leveraging a variety of communication methods—ranging from email newsletters and in-person engagement to visual content and staff collaboration—you can enhance your golf course maintenance strategies and create a more informed, engaged, and supportive membership. Ultimately, the goal is to align member expectations with your course management practices, ensuring that everyone enjoys a great golfing experience.

Tyler Bloom, a former golf course superintendent, is the founder of Bloom Golf Partners.

Communication Strategies at a Glance

- **Establish consistent communication with the Golf Shop:** Leverage the golf shop as a conduit of information.
- **Open Houses:** Show members firsthand the conditions and needs of your maintenance facility. This can foster understanding and support for necessary upgrades and better working conditions.
- **Member Surveys:** Use surveys to understand member preferences and align your practices accordingly.
- **Collaborate with marketing specialists:** Many clubs now have marketing or communication specialists. Leverage their skills to enhance your communications, whether through polished brochures or engaging videos created using tools like Canva.

MetGCSA Delivers Solid Performance at GCSAA Golf Championships

by Scott Niven, CGCS

San Diego, known for its picture-perfect weather and pristine golf courses, played host to the GCSAA's National Championship event that saw 650 players from all over the country converging in the Pacific coast region for a few days of stiff competition. The event was played over six golf courses, including Torrey Pines, Omni La Costa, Aviara, and Del Mar golf clubs.

This year's champion was Mike Giannopoulos of Kent Country Club in Grand Rapids, MI. Mike shot six over par, besting last year's winner Seth Strickland of Miami Beach Golf Club, Miami Shores, FL, by only one shot. He was awarded his first championship trophy, a longtime goal for this 16-year GCSAA member.

Except for the final day of play when the fog rolled in off the Pacific, the Southern California sun and temperatures were just right for golfing. From rookies to seasoned veterans, each participant brought their unique flair to the competition, adding to the event's lively atmosphere where friendships were forged and memories made that will last a lifetime.

The MetGCSA was well represented this year with roughly 20 participants. Here's how they fared in the three main events:

In the National Championship

Though none of our players took home the National Championship Trophy, three members made their mark. Jason Meersman of The Patterson Club finished 41st. And in the Seniors league, Sunningdale's Sean Cain came in 11th and Quaker Ridge's Tom Ashfield came in 14th.

In the Four-Ball

In the Four-Ball, a number of Met teams emerged with noteworthy scores. In Flight I, Meadow Brook's John Carlone and GCSAA life member Mark Warren finished 12th Place Gross, while Allied Nutrients'

Andy Drohen and Quaker Ridge's Tom Ashfield came in 27th Place Gross. Century's Kevin Seibel and New Growth Turf's Jeff Burgess finished 19th Place Net.

In Flight II, four gross teams placed well: Sunningdale's Sean Cain and Winged Foot's Stephen Rabideau finished 7th Place Gross; The Patterson Club's Jason Meersman and Cerbat Cliffs' Mike Meersman came in 9th Place Gross; Plant Food's Tom Weinert and Upper Montclair's Mike Brunelle finished 16th Place Gross; and finally, Tony Hooks of Due Process Golf & Stable and Pelham's Jeff Wentworth came in 26th Place Gross. Finishing 18th Place Net were Westchester Country Club's David Dudones and Class LA contestant Jim Swaitlowski.

In Flight III, two gross teams made their mark with Brae Burn's Blake Halderman and St. Andrew's Rob Milar finishing 2nd Place Gross and GlenArbor's Joe Gikis and Ryan Avery of Grass Roots Turf Products coming in 12th Place Gross. The Net team of Fenway's Rob Alonzi and Bedford Golf and Tennis' Bob Nielsen came in at 23rd place Net while Redding's Brett Chapin and Indian Hill Country Club's Marc Weston finished 31st Place Net.

In the Golf Classic

There are 13 Golf Classic contestants who finished with scores worth noting. For a second year running, Plant Food's Tom Weinert came in at an impressive 1st Place Gross.

In Flight I, Century's Kevin Seibel finished 18th Place Net, while Flight II had two net winners: Coming in 9th Place Net was Winged Foot's Stephen Rabideau, while Brae Burn's Blake Halderman finished 17th Place Net.

In Flight III, GlenArbor's Joe Gikis came in 19th Place Gross. Upper Montclair's Mike Brunelle finished 18th Place Net, while Pelham's Jeff Wentworth came in 27th Place Net.

Flight IV net wins were Bedford Golf & Tennis' Bob Nielsen with 3rd Place Net and

Fenway's Rob Alonzi with 4th Place Net. Gross winners were St. Andrew's Rob Milar who came in 24th Place Gross and Redding's Brett Chapin who finished 25th Place Gross. Playing as an SR II Senior, Meadow Brook's John Carlone finished 1st Place Gross, while Super Senior Class AF member Jim Swiatlowski came in 6th Place Gross.

Thanks to Toro

The success of this event wouldn't have been possible without the generous support of The Toro Company, a longstanding sponsor whose commitment to the sport and GCSAA has been unwavering. Their dedication to fostering amateur golf and providing opportunities for golf industry enthusiasts to come together and compete is truly commendable. Their popular Par 3 Shootout, which offers a Toro Workman GTX to the winner, was highly attended as always.

To open up the contest, the first qualifier to take his shot at the tiny target was the MetGCSA's Scott Niven of The Stanwich Club, who hit it to 8'4" and held off the field for nearly an hour until being bested by the winning shot, which was just over 4 feet. For 31 years, The Toro Company has been an integral part of the event, and their continued sponsorship has helped elevate it to new heights.

As the tournament concluded, both participants and organizers were left with fond memories and anticipation for the next edition of this enjoyable event.

Next year, the GCSAA Golf Championships will be held in Orlando, FL. Don't miss this great opportunity to network with other industry professionals from across the country and abroad.

Scott Niven, a member of the Tee to Green Editorial Committee, is property manager at The Stanwich Club in Greenwich, CT.

Redding Country Club Recognized With MGA's Environmental Leaders in Golf Award

by Scott Olson

The MGA's annual Green Chairman Education Series brought together golf course superintendents and green committee members for a day of professional development and industry insight at Bethpage State Park in Farmingdale, NY. The program featured an impressive lineup of presentations focused on sustainability, strategic planning, and major event preparation.

- **Capital Planning & Strategic Funding.** Ken Butler, Mid-Atlantic executive director at Club Benchmarking, opened the event with a presentation on capital planning and funding strategies for golf clubs in the tri-state area. Butler highlighted growing concerns around pest management and water conservation, offering practical solutions and answering questions about the current state of clubs in the area.

- **Planning for Success: Fireside Chat.** Elliot L. Dowling, regional director of the USGA Green Section East Region, sat down with MetGCSA VP Bill Cygan, superintendent at Silver Spring Country Club, for a discussion on golf course maintenance planning. Drawing from his experience across several Met-area clubs, Bill shared key takeaways on successfully leading renovation and sustainability initiatives.

- **Inside the Ryder Cup: Operations Panel.** The afternoon panel featured Bryan Karns, director of the 2025 Ryder Cup, and Andrew Wilson, director of agronomy at Bethpage State Park. Moderated by Brian Crowell, general manager of Bally's Ferry Point and CBS Sports broadcaster, the discussion gave attendees a behind-the-scenes look at the extensive preparation required to host one of golf's premier events.

Environmental Leadership Recognition

The highlight of this year's MGA Green Chairman Education Series was the presentation of the 2025 Arthur P. Weber Environmental Leaders in Golf Award. This prestigious award is presented annually to an



Redding Country Club super Brett Chapin accepts the MGA's Arthur P. Weber Environmental Leaders in Golf Award, which recognizes a club annually for its superior environmental stewardship. From left to right: Redding Green Chair Dana Taylor, Brett Chapin, Education Committee member and Knollwood super Scott Olson, and the MGA's Kevin Kline.

MGA member club that has demonstrated exceptional environmental stewardship by meeting a rigorous set of criteria in five areas: Water Quality and Conservation, Wildlife and Habitat, Outreach and Education, IPM, and Resource Conservation. This year's worthy recipient was Redding Country Club and Superintendent Brett Chapin.

His initiatives span all areas of golf course management, including:

- **Wildlife & Habitat:** Brett has installed and monitored bluebird boxes and bat houses, managed wooded areas to create habitat for a variety of woodland animals, improved lake water quality to such an extent that aquatic wildlife is now thriving, and he even created a bear alert system so that golfers can safely coexist with local wildlife.

- **Integrated Pest Management (IPM):** Brett has used disease models to reduce pesticide use—cutting treatments for dollar spot by 50%—and he's converted 15 acres of managed turf to natural habitat, further reducing the need for chemicals and fertilizers.

- **Outreach & Education:** The highlight of the environmental work being done at Redding

is the amount of outreach that is happening at a club, community, and national level. Brett has hosted facility tours for members, held a First Green STEAM learning event for local elementary school students, encouraged staff to donate time to community trail rehabilitation projects, and actively shared his environmental knowledge through writing and lectures on a local and national level.

Through these efforts, Brett has not only elevated course sustainability, but also fostered community engagement and environmental awareness.

Congratulations, Brett, on your award-worthy commitment to supporting our environment!

To close the program, Elliot Dowling returned to the stage for a fast-paced Q&A session, tackling questions on day-to-day course management and environmental best practices.

For more information about the Green Chairman Education Series or to stay informed about future events, please contact Kevin Kline at kkline@mgagolf.org.

Scott Olson, a member of the Education Committee, is superintendent at Knollwood Country Club in Elmsford, NY.

Advocating for Turfgrass: Highlights From NYSTA's 2025 Advocacy Day

by Bob Nielsen, CGCS

The annual New York State Turfgrass Advocacy Day was held on March 3 at the Empire State Plaza in Albany, NY, where 43 superintendents and green industry professionals gathered to present and discuss the most pressing issues facing the turfgrass industry. The event aimed to build legislative support around topics critical to environmental stewardship, workforce development, and the operational sustainability of turfgrass management.

A Strong Start to the Day

The day began with a breakfast hosted by the New York State Turfgrass Association (NYSTA), followed by opening remarks from NYSTA Government Relations Co-Chair Tom Kaplun. He outlined the day's schedule and strategic goals. Todd Vandervoort of The Vandervoort Group then briefed attendees on the current legislative climate and gave a concise overview of the year's priority issues.

Key Legislative Issues and NYSTA Positions

1. Turfgrass Environmental Stewardship Fund (TESF)

Senator Michelle Hinchey, Chair of the Senate Agriculture Committee, addressed attendees and emphasized the importance of securing dedicated funding for the Turfgrass Environmental Stewardship Fund—a line item that has not been included in the Governor's budget.

NYSTA is advocating for \$250,000 in funding for 2025–2026, up from last year's \$200,000. This funding supports:

- Outreach by the New York Greengrass Association
- Green industry educational webinars
- Research and professional promotion
- Environmental stewardship education
- Facility adoption of Best Management Practices (BMPs) for golf courses
- Workforce development through the New York State Apprenticeship Program, in partnership with SUNY Delhi



Scenes from the post Advocacy Day Farm Bureau reception.

2. Pesticide Regulation via the DEC

NYSTA strongly supports maintaining pesticide regulation under the authority of the Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) and opposes any legislative efforts to transfer that power to municipalities or to ban specific pesticides.

Currently, a bill from Assemblyman Chris Burdick would allow local regulation of pesticide use, and Senator Serrano has introduced legislation banning pesticides in all state parks. Also of concern is the impending legislative ban on imidacloprid, set to take effect in January 2027.

3. Transition to Renewable-Energy Equipment

While NYSTA supports the Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act and its emission reduction goals, it advocates for a measured transition to renewable-energy-powered landscaping equipment.

Electric equipment must become more cost-effective and infrastructure-ready before large-scale adoption can occur. NYSTA voiced its opposition to legislation banning the use or sale of gas- or diesel-powered equipment before the technology is ready to support such mandates.

4. Temperature Extreme Mitigation Act (TEMP)

The proposed Temperature Extreme Mitigation Act (TEMP) would mandate employer protections for outdoor workers at temperatures below 60°F and above 80°F. NYSTA opposes this bill, arguing that it is impractical and poorly designed, especially given the fluctuating nature of temperatures during a typical workday. Superintendents already take precautions to ensure worker safety during extreme weather conditions.

Productive Legislative Visits

Throughout the day, NYSTA members held productive meetings with legislators. Many lawmakers who were previously unfamiliar with NYSTA's work expressed appreciation for the information shared. Incumbents responded positively, finding NYSTA's positions both reasonable and well-supported.

The day concluded with a key meeting with Kevin King from Governor Hochul's office, who offered valuable insight into legislative priorities and timelines. NYSTA used the opportunity to preview the forthcoming "Environmental and Economic *continued on page 16*

MetGCSA Winter Seminar Highlights: Education, Networking, and Celebration

by Luke Pittman

The annual MetGCSA Winter Seminar took place once again at the historic Westchester Country Club, drawing nearly 200 members on January 15 for a day of valuable education, networking, and camaraderie. Organized by the Education Committee, the event featured a dynamic lineup of guest speakers covering topics such as recruitment, drone spraying, summer stress tolerance, disease management, and golf course restoration.

Honoring Excellence: MetGCSA's Award Winners

A highlight of the seminar was the presentation of two prestigious awards. Jim Pavonetti, superintendent at Fairview Country Club, received the Distinguished Member Award in recognition of his outstanding commitment to the MetGCSA and its members.

Pete Bevacqua, athletic director at the University of Notre Dame and a long-time supporter of the association, was presented with the John Reid Lifetime Achievement Award. Pete's dedication to growing the game of golf and supporting those in the industry was celebrated, with the award presented by Bedford Golf & Tennis Superintendent Bob Nielsen—who also happens to be Pete's brother-in-law!

Congratulations to both Jim and Pete for their well-deserved recognition!

Sherwood A. Moore Legacy Video Unveiling

A poignant moment of the seminar was the unveiling of a new video profiling the life and legacy of Sherwood A. Moore, a renowned superintendent and MetGCSA member who passed away in 2019. The video, narrated by sports broadcasting legend Jim Nantz, offers a tribute to Sherwood's distinguished career, from his service in World War II to his tenure as superintendent at Hollywood Golf Club, Woodway Country Club, and Winged Foot Golf Club—where he hosted two U.S. Opens and one U.S. Senior Open.

The Sherwood A. Moore Award, named in his honor, is given to a superintendent who

has made significant contributions to the profession. There are plans to show the video annually before future SAM award presentations.

Educational Sessions: Insights From Industry Leaders

The educational portion of the seminar featured expert presentations on critical topics for golf course superintendents.

Tyler Bloom, Bloom Golf Partners: Attracting and Retaining Top Talent

Tyler kicked off the seminar with a session on workforce development. He shared strategies for attracting, hiring, and retaining skilled turf staff, stressing the importance of intentional recruitment and ongoing employee development.

Key Takeaway: Building a reliable crew requires a structured hiring process and continuous investment in staff growth.

For further information, you can reach Tyler Bloom at 610-844-3009 or tyler@bloomgolfpartners.com.

Tim Reinagel, HawkEye Spray Drone Applications: Revolutionizing Turf Maintenance with Drones

Tim introduced attendees to the growing role of spray drones in turf management. He discussed how drones improve application accuracy, reduce labor, and minimize environmental impact.

Key Takeaway: Drones are transforming turf management, offering precise, efficient, and sustainable solutions for superintendents.

For further information, you can reach Tim Reinagel at 908-528-1993 or hawkeyespraydrone@gmail.com.

Rick Fletcher, Nufarm: Advancing Take-All Patch Management

Rick, a turf & ornamentals technical service manager, covered the latest approaches to managing Take-All Patch, focusing on integrated strategies combining fungicides and cultural practices. His presentation was supported by recent field data and product innovations.



Awards Chair Brett Chapin (left) present's Fairview's Jim Pavonetti with the Met's Distinguished Member Award.

Key Takeaway: Early detection and a layered management strategy are essential for controlling Take-All Patch.

For further information, you can reach Rick Fletcher at 856-296-0422 or rick.fletcher@nufarm.com.

Brett Scales, Ryan Whitaker, & Greg Patti, Hudson National Golf Club: Restoration of Hudson National Golf Club

The team from Hudson National Golf Club shared insights into their major restoration project, discussing the vision behind the renovation, construction logistics, and the successful balance between historic preservation and modern upgrades.

Key Takeaway: Successful course restoration requires strong collaboration, careful planning, and staying true to the course's identity.

For further information, you can reach Brett at 914-271-1468 or bscales@hudsonnational.org.

Dr. Michelle DaCosta, University of Massachusetts: Enhancing Summer Stress Tolerance in Turf

Dr. DaCosta presented groundbreaking research on turfgrass physiology and how understanding stress-tolerant varieties and adjusting cultural practices can help turf endure heat and drought.

Key Takeaway: Knowledge of turf physiology can significantly improve turf performance during summer stress.

For further information, you can reach Dr. DaCosta at 213-545-2547 or mdacosta@umass.edu.

A Grateful Acknowledgment

A special thank you to David Dudones and the staff at Westchester Country Club for hosting another successful Winter Seminar. We look forward to seeing everyone next year!

Luke Pittman, the Met's Class C representative and a member of the Tee to Green Editorial Committee, is an assistant superintendent at GlenArbor Golf Club in Bedford Hills, NY.

Special Thanks to Our 2025 Winter Seminar Exhibitors

We'd like to thank all the vendors who participated in this year's Winter Seminar. As a show of appreciation, we're listing the exhibitors here, along with their areas of specialty and contact information.

When the opportunity arises, we hope you'll show these contractors and suppliers the same support they've shown us during our Winter Seminar—and throughout the year.

Advanced Turf Solutions

Greg Moran
845-901-1358
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All Pro/SiteOne

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Westchester Turf Supply

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Scholarship Raffle: A Worthy Gamble

The Annual Bill Caputi Scholarship Raffle, held at the January 15 MetGCSA Winter Seminar at Westchester Country Club, raised an admirable sum for the Met's Scholarship Fund and awarded \$3,150 in cash prizes to five lucky ticket holders.

The raffle is the prime source of the scholarship awards we distribute to deserving Met member dependents each year.

Many thanks to all who contributed and also to those who sold tickets for this worthwhile fundraiser. A very special thank you to **Morgan Gregory**, our \$500 ticket winner, who donated his winning ticket back to our Scholarship Fund.

Here is a complete list of the lucky ticket holders:

\$1,500 First Place Winner

Steve Renzetti of Pinnacle Turf who bought his ticket from Century Country Club's Kevin Seibel.

\$750 Second Place Winner

Lenny Sander, whose ticket was purchased from Class LAF member Mike Cook.

\$500 Third Place Winner

Morgan Gregory, whose ticket was sold by GlenArbor's Joe Gikis.

\$250 Fourth Place Winner

Jim Pavonetti of Fairview Country Club who bought his ticket from Burning Tree's Steve Wickstrom.

\$150 Fifth Place Winner

Rick Gordon of AJ Enterprise, whose ticket was sold by Redding's Brett Chapin.

2025 MetGCSA Class C Professional Development Seminar

by Luke Pittman

The 2025 MetGCSA Class C Professional Development Seminar took place on February 11 at GlenArbor Golf Club in Bedford Hills, NY. The event drew 43 assistant superintendents from area golf clubs, who gathered for a day of educational sessions and networking opportunities.

Keynote speakers Tyler Bloom of Bloom Golf Partners and Bill Bartels of Tanto Irrigation delivered insightful presentations on career advancement strategies, future planning, and the significance of cultivating a robust personal and professional network. The seminar concluded with a panel discussion featuring local superintendents Joe Gikis of GlenArbor Golf Club, Rob Alonzi of Fenway Golf Club, and Vincent Taylor of Connecticut Golf Club.

Here are the highlights of the educational sessions:

Tyler Bloom, Bloom Golf Partners *The Product Is You: Advancing Your Career and Life*

Tyler Bloom of Bloom Golf Partners kicked off the morning with a presentation on personal and professional development, underlining the idea that *you* are your most important product.

Tyler emphasized the importance of building a positive culture, surrounding yourself with people who support your growth, and taking ownership of your personal and career journey. A large part of the presentation was dedicated to the hiring and interview process, including:

- What hiring committees *do* and *don't* look for
- How to become a stronger team player
- The “3 Mindset Keys to Success”
- Understanding your self-image vs. your ideal self
- Goal-setting and personal accountability
- Ensuring that your current position does not limit your long-term growth

Tyler's presentation was both practical and inspiring. We were especially excited

to welcome him in person for the first time, and we look forward to having him back for future educational events!

For further information, you can reach Tyler at 610-844-3009 or tyler@bloomgolffpartners.com.

Bill Bartels, co-owner & president of Tanto Irrigation

From Passion to Precision: Culture Building and Modern Irrigation Practices

Bill Bartels delivered a two-part presentation at the seminar. In the first half, he focused on culture building and personal development, urging attendees to reflect on three core elements:

- What they're deeply passionate about
- Their greatest potential strength
- What drives their economic engine

He emphasized the value of understanding the business side of the industry, recommending key books that are required reading for his management team. Among the titles are such classics as *What They Don't Teach You in Harvard Business School* by Mark McCormack; *Built to Last: Successful Habits of Visionary Companies* by James Collins and Jerry Porras; *Good to Great: Why Some Companies Make the Leap...And Others Don't* by Jim Collins; and *Great by Choice: Uncertainty, Chaos, and Luck—Why Some Thrive Despite Them All* by Jim Collins and Morten Hansen.

Bill also highlighted the benefits of aptitude testing to better understand individual talents and team dynamics.

The second part of his presentation shifted to irrigation system design and installation, covering the full process from bidding and permitting to final implementation. He shared insights into the tools and methods Tanto Irrigation uses to meet client expectations, using their current project at Westchester Country Club as a real-world example.

For further information, you can reach Bill at 914-447-8872 or wbartels@tantoirrigation.com.

Panel Discussion

The seminar wrapped up with a lively panel discussion featuring MetGCSA superintendents Joe Gikis, Rob Alonzi, and Vincent Taylor, joined by our prior guest speakers

Class C Rep and GlenArbor assistant Luke Pittman welcomes Tanto Irrigation's Bill Bartels to the podium.



Bill Bartels and Tyler Bloom. The group explored topics such as mentorship, lessons learned, favorite memories, and how assistant superintendents can grow both personally and professionally. With each superintendent at a different stage in their career, the panel offered a rich variety of perspectives.

Vinny Taylor delivered the quote of the day while recalling his first day as superintendent at Connecticut Golf Club. Sitting at his new desk, he texted Winged Foot's Stephen Rabideau a photo of the empty workspace with the caption, “Ok I'm here, what do I do now?” Steve's reply? A simple shrug emoji—a feeling many in the room could relate to. The conversation sparked a steady flow of thoughtful questions from attendees, wrapping up the day on a high note.

Thank You One and All

On behalf of the MetGCSA, we extend our thanks to GlenArbor Golf Club for once again going above and beyond in hosting our annual Class C Professional Development Seminar. A big thank you as well to Tyler Bloom and Bill Bartels for sharing their time and expertise, and to Joe Gikis, Rob Alonzi, and Vincent Taylor for their insights during the panel.

Last, thank you to all the assistant superintendents who joined us. We look forward to seeing you at our next event!

Luke Pittman, the Met's Class C representative and a member of the Tee to Green Editorial Committee, is an assistant superintendent at GlenArbor Golf Club in Bedford Hills, NY.

Members on the Move

- **Rob Dorsch** is the new director of grounds at Back O'Beyond, Brewster, NY. Previous position: superintendent at Richter Park Golf Course in Danbury, CT
- **George Corgan** is a new sales rep at Nutrien Solutions in Loveland, CO. Previous position: sales rep at Finch Turf in New Milford, CT.
- **Nick Mortara** is the new superintendent at Richter Park Golf Course in Danbury, CT. Previous position: assistant superintendent at Fairview Country Club.



Birth

Congratulations to **Anthony Minniti** of Windham New York Golf Club and his wife, Rebecca, on the birth of their baby boy, Anthony John. He was born March 8 at 5 lbs. 5 oz., 19" long.

New Members

Please join us in welcoming the following new MetGCSA members:

- **Matt Bennett**, Class EM, West Point Golf Course, West Point, NY
- **Juan Berisso**, Class EM, Hudson Hills Golf Course, Ossining, NY
- **Michael Boles**, Class EM, Greenwich Country Club, Greenwich, CT
- **Otto Cifuentes**, Class EM, Bonnie Briar Country Club, Larchmont, NY
- **Jared Colbert**, Class EM, Haworth Country Club, Haworth, NJ
- **Jon Deierlein**, Class EM, Fairview Country Club, Greenwich, CT
- **Nick Groetsema**, Class EM, The Tuxedo Club, Tuxedo Park, NY

Jose Hernandez, Class EM, Winged Foot Golf Club, Mamaroneck, NY

Anthony Hoffman, Class EM, The Tuxedo Club, Tuxedo Park, NY

Eduardo Inocente, Class EM, Leewood Golf Club, Eastchester, NY

Jim Kilgallon, Class EM, The Stanwich Club, Greenwich, CT

Robert Martyszczyk, Class EM, TPC River Highlands, Cromwell, CT

Joe Miele, Class EM, Redding Country Club, Redding, CT

Chris Morra, Class EM, Harrison Meadows Country Club, Harrison, NY

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Frank Molina, Class AFS, Davey Tree Expert Co., Elmsford, NY

Richard Apgar, Class AF, Metro Turf Specialists, Brookfield, CT

Ryan Gallagher, Class C, Upper Montclair Country Club, Clifton, NJ

Justin Warren, Class C, Pelham Country Club, Pelham Manor, NY

Condolences

It is with great sadness that we announce that our good friend and longtime member **Peter D. Grace** passed away on March 16. Peter joined the MetGCSA in 1994 and was the superintendent at H. Smith Richardson Golf Course in Fairfield for the past 24 years. He graduated from Southern Connecticut State University and went on to earn his Turf Management degree from UMass. He then went on to work at the Hartford Golf Club, Wykagyl Country Club, and Brooklawn Country Club before becoming the superintendent of H. Smith Richardson. Peter was known for his strong work ethic and his great sense of humor and will be missed by all who knew him. Our sincere condolences to Peter's family and friends.

Retired

Please join us in congratulating three longtime members who are stepping away from successful careers in the turf industry and into well-earned retirements:

Our friend and turf industry icon **Dave Sylvester** has officially retired, closing out a remarkable 50-year career dedicated to the advancement of turf management. Dave's journey began on March 6, 1975, and concluded on March 7, 2025—a milestone few ever reach.

While Dave has never sought the spotlight, his contributions speak volumes. A passionate advocate for using science to enhance the customer experience, Dave began his career in sales after earning an Associate's degree in Turfgrass Management from UMass Stockbridge. His love for turf and golf led him not onto fairways as a superintendent, but into a career of service and innovation in the green industry.

Starting with the Upjohn Company, Dave served as a T&O and Agriculture Specialist covering all of New England, New York, and northern New Jersey. As the industry evolved—through acquisitions by Nor-Am Chemical, AgrEvo USA, Bayer, and most recently ENVU—Dave remained a steady and respected presence, spending 23 years with Bayer alone.

Reflecting on his career, Dave says, "I loved the work. It was a pleasure and a privilege working for such great customers and colleagues. The older I got, the more I loved and appreciated it—making my customer's experience better through science."

Steve Turchick, a valued MetGCSA member since 1992, retired this past December from his long-held position as superintendent at Somers Pointe Golf Club.

Steve's career began as assistant superintendent under the late Todd Pollidor at Heritage Hills, where he spent 18 years. He later took the helm at Putnam County Golf Club, followed by roles at the Canyon Club and Branton Woods Golf Club, working *continued on page 14*

Mahoney Two-Ball Qualifier: More Than Just a Walk in the Park

by Chip Lafferty

Welcome back to another season of MetGCSA golf! We kicked things off with one of our most popular events, the Dave Mahoney Two-Ball Qualifier, on Monday, April 29. This year's opener was held at the scenic Richter Park Golf Course in Danbury, CT—a venue well known across the Connecticut section for its playability and natural beauty.

Though our host, Nick Mortara, is Richter Park's newly appointed golf course superintendent, he's no stranger to the property. He returned to Richter after spending three years working with our very own Jimmy Pavonetti at Fairview Country Club.

Nick's journey into turf management is one many in the industry can relate to. After his freshman year at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, where he was studying computer science, he took a summer job at Richter Park to help make ends meet. "Richter was supposed to be just a summer job," says Nick, "but I never left—I was hooked."

With guidance from longtime superintendent Rob Dorsch, Nick dove into the world of golf course maintenance. His passion grew so strong that a break from RPI led him to enroll at the University of Connecticut, pursuing a B.S. degree in Turfgrass and Soil Science and a career in turf.

Along the way, he gained valuable experience from a number of respected superintendents, including Mike Roe at Country Club of New Canaan, Patrick Hagan at Waccabuc Country Club, and ultimately, Jimmy Pavonetti at Fairview.

"Without Jimmy's help, I wouldn't be where I am today," says Nick. "He's always open to new ideas and puts people first. His willingness to pause, offer guidance, and answer questions without hesitation is inspiring. I couldn't have asked for a better mentor."

Now, back at Richter Park, Nick is leading the charge with fresh energy and vision, already initiating a number of course improvement projects.



Nick Mortara

A Public Course Beyond Compare

Spanning over 180 acres, you have to agree, Richter Park is a gem of a public course, featuring a scenic, undulating layout designed by Edward Ryder. With 49 well-placed bunkers and water coming into play on 14 of the 18 holes, the course offered Two-Ball contestants of all levels a healthy challenge. And with four sets of tees, there's a perfect fit for every game.

Though public, Richter Park rivals many private clubs in conditioning and amenities. It has earned numerous accolades over the years, including the 2015 Walter Lowell Distinguished Public Course Service Award, a spot among the top 10 courses in Connecticut, and recognition as the second-best public golf experience in the metropolitan area. Its accolades extended even farther when it was ranked among the top 10 places to play in New England.

New Super, New Projects

Since taking the reins this season, Nick and his team wasted no time in getting to work. Key areas of focus included clearing overgrown areas near tees and greens, soil modification through aeration and topdressing, and improving water flow through dredging and drainage additions.

But Nick hasn't just invested in the course—he's invested in himself. At the urging of Rob Dorsch, Nick enrolled in the Excel Leadership Program, which he says helped sharpen both his professional skills and his network of industry contacts. "It

continued on page 14



Two-Ball contestants enjoy a post-competition dinner at Richter Park.

Mahoney Two-Ball Treats Contestants to A Day of Competition and Camaraderie

by Stephen Wickstrom

The MetGCSA's annual Dave Mahoney Two-Ball Qualifier held at Richter Park Golf Course was a spectacular success, showcasing both skill and camaraderie among our members. The tournament attracted 40 teams vying for 30 open spots, with the previous year's champions earning an automatic qualification—a testament to the event's growing competitiveness.

Contestants enjoyed excellent early season conditioning, a reflection of the dedicated efforts of first-year superintendent Nick Mortara and staff. The tournament featured a net scoring format, while also recognizing exceptional gross scores in the qualifier.

The highlight of the day was the closely contested Gross score competition, where

Stanwich Club's Scott Niven and Allied Nutrients' Andy Drohen claimed first place, edging out Westchester Turf Supply's Dave Lippman and West Point's Steve Whipple through a card match after both teams posted an impressive gross score of 70.

In the Net scoring category, Redding's Brett Chapin and Rolling Hill's Glenn Perry took home top honors with a score of 63, narrowly defeating Leewood Golf Club's Tim Walker and LAAF member Bert Dickinson, who finished with a net 64. For detailed results, including brackets for the First and Second Flights, be sure to visit the MetGCSA website.

Proximity Wins

During the event, several golfers showcased their skills in the Closest to the Pin chal-

lenge, with notable performances from Noah McCahill of Bally's Golf links at Ferry Point, Westchester Turf Supply's Dave Lippman, Plant Food's Dick Neufeld, West Point's Steve Whipple, and Paramount's Ken Anson. Additionally, Metropolis's Dave McCaffrey stood out by winning the Long Drive challenge on the second hole, showcasing his impressive driving abilities.

Overall, the tournament was a successful homage to Dave Mahoney, blending a competitive spirit with a renewed sense of community and support among industry peers, all while enjoying a pleasant evening filled with food and fellowship.

Stephen Wickstrom, a member of the MetGCSA Tournament Committee, is superintendent at Burning Tree Country Club in Greenwich, CT.



Richter Park Super Nick Mortara addresses Two-Ball tournament goers after their hard-fought but friendly match.

Spotlight continued from page 12

reminded me just how strong and close-knit our turfgrass community is, even across states and countries.”

Nick also gives major credit to assistant superintendent Tom Soderstrom. “Tom has been Richter’s secret to success,” says Nick. “His irrigation system work is unmatched, and his dedication to this property is second to none. He’s taught me that in this business, everything is ‘figureoutable.’ Tommy has the ability to make work feel a little lighter and a lot more meaningful.”

Fur-tuitous Friendships

Of course, no superintendent story is complete without a few loyal companions. Nick is frequently joined on the course by his two Australian Shepherds, Gemma and Suki. Gemma was adopted seven years ago and traveled with Nick ever since. Suki joined the pack last February, hoping Gemma would pass on some of her mannerisms. “They bonded immediately,” says Nick. “They’re always by my side—unless they’re wrestling in a bunker or swimming in the muddiest creek they can find.”

And the Aussie adventures didn’t stop there. When Nick met his girlfriend Lisa, he discovered she also had an Australian Shepherd. “What are the chances?” laughs Nick. Now the couple manages a three-dog pack, which he says requires “a lot of food, Frisbees, and belly rubs.” He’s currently trying to talk Lisa into getting a fourth. (Good luck with that one, Nick!)

Dreams Fulfilled

Nick also fondly recalls a serendipitous meeting back in 2018, when he crossed paths with Jonathan Pinto, Richter’s assistant golf professional, on the 18th fairway. “We talked about our dream of one day managing a golf course together,” says Nick. “Now here we are—both in the roles we always hoped for, at the very course we love most.”

With a strong team, big goals, and deep roots at Richter Park, Nick is ready to take the course to new heights.

Chip Lafferty, co-chair of the Tee to Green Editorial Committee, is superintendent at Rye Golf Club in Rye, NY.

Member News continued from page 7

alongside industry leaders like Paul Gonzalez and Doug Hedderick.

Steve eventually returned full circle to Heritage Hills—renamed Somers Pointe—taking on the superintendent role his mentor once held. Although he’s stepped away from golf course management, Steve remains active in the industry, now working as a turf agronomist with Jason Gordon at Total Turf.

We look forward to seeing him at future MetGCSA gatherings.

Tim Garceau, a member of the MetGCSA since 1992, officially retired on March 15 after 15 years as superintendent at Haworth Country Club. Tim began his career at Orange County Golf Club the same year he joined the association, later moving on to the Tuxedo Club, where he hosted numerous MetGCSA events, along with the 1999 MGA Met Open.

Tim took the reins at Haworth in 2010 and remained there until his retirement. As he and his wife prepare to relocate to Colorado this June, Tim shared a sentiment that resonates across the industry: “It’s all about the people you meet and the friends you make in this business. That is definitely what I will miss most.”

We wish Tim nothing but the best as he embarks on this new chapter in the Rockies.



Noble Turf’s Matt Lapinski, St. Andrew’s Rob Milar, Pelham’s Jeff Wentworth, and Tony Hooks of Due Process Golf & Stable having a great time, as always.

Pelham Hosts Annual Member/ Guest Event

by Kevin Collins

Superintendent Jeff Wentworth and the Pelham Country Club in Pelham Manor, NY, were proud to have hosted this year's Member/Guest meeting on May 19, showcasing the many course improvements completed under Jeff's leadership. "It's nice to come to work every day and see all you've done—and, of course, you hope others enjoy putting it to the test just as much," Jeff remarked. By all accounts, the May 19 Member/Guest was a great success.

Pelham Before Jeff

Pelham Country Club has come a long way since its founding 117 years ago as a small tennis club with a five-hole golf course. The club expanded in 1921 when golf course architect Devereux Emmet was hired to design an 18-hole layout. Two years later, it made history by hosting one of the most dramatic PGA Championships ever—where Gene "The Squire" Sarazen defeated Walter Hagan in a playoff with a birdie on the second hole of sudden death.

One of the enduring legends from that championship involves Sarazen hitting a wayward shot that reportedly landed in the backyard of a nearby Italian neighbor. Hagan thought the ball was out of bounds—until Sarazen marched over, located the ball, and pointed to it lying in play, supposedly with tomato sauce splattered on it.

"Look," Hagan is said to have joked, "it's got spaghetti sauce on it!"

Sarazen not only played the shot, but made birdie to win the hole—and the PGA Championship—in a playoff.

In the mid-1950s, the course underwent another transformation to accommodate construction of the New England Thruway, which was routed directly through the property. Architect Alfred Tull, a Devereux assistant, was hired to redesign the course and, by necessity, changed all but six holes.

Paving the Way to Pelham

Jeff's career in turfgrass management began in 1988 as a student intern at Myopia Hunt Club in Hamilton, MA. After stints at

Ridgewood Country Club (NJ) and Columbia Country Club (MD), he completed the two-year turf program at Stockbridge in 1989 and earned a B.S. in Urban Forestry from UMass in 1991. With degrees in hand, Jeff made his way to New York as an assistant at Westchester Country Club.

"When I came to Westchester, Patty Knaggs, the superintendent then, hired me," Jeff recalls. "There were a lot of applicants with more than half my class sending resumes. I was happy that Patty saw something in me and gave me a shot."

Westchester became a special place for Jeff—not just professionally, but also personally. It's where he met his wife, Mimi.

Pedaling Fast at Pelham

Jeff began his first and current superintendent role at Pelham in 1994. Over his three-decade tenure, he's barely had time to catch his breath. He's led major fairway and bunker renovations, built new tees, overseen full irrigation system installs, constructed an 11,000-square-foot maintenance facility, and spearheaded hardscape projects like the club's newly renovated entrance.

In 2019, the club embarked on another major five-hole renovation that rerouted parts of the course and added a dewatering station and new irrigation pond.

Jeff describes it as a real "grow-in project," with 17 acres of open ground, five new greens, brand-new irrigation, and hydro-seeding throughout. Half the course closed on August 6 and reopened by June 6—right in the middle of the pandemic.

Jeff credits his team's "all-star" effort for meeting the ambitious opening date. "It wouldn't have happened without their dedication during a really difficult time," says Jeff, who enjoys working with a loyal team—many of whom have been with him for over 20 years.

Architect Mike DeVries led the renovation, helping create a course that's more playable, more fun, and just a little easier to maintain—though DeVries calls it the hardest property he's ever worked on!



Jeff Wentworth

Off the Course

When not at Pelham, Jeff loves traveling with his "first love," Mimi, his wife of 29 years. Together, they've visited more than 75 countries. Their most recent trip was to Grenada (yes, the same Grenada that was invaded during the Reagan administration). Jeff still loves to tee it up when he can, even if—as he jokes—"the handicap is moving in the wrong direction."

He's also an avid skier, though he admits, "I only ski on really nice days. I'm not as fast as I used to be. It's kind of like my golf handicap: it's been changing with time."

Asked to name a favorite travel destination, Jeff says it's impossible to choose just one, though New York City remains tough to beat for everything it offers.

Whether Jeff is improving fairways or traveling the globe, he brings a deep appreciation for the journey—on and off the course.

Kevin Collins, a member of the Tee to Green Editorial Committee, is NE/Mid-Atlantic Territory Manager for Ocean Organics.

Upcoming Events

Check Out Our Future Events!

Regional News continued from page 7

Impact of New York State Golf Courses report, scheduled for release during the 2025 Ryder Cup at Bethpage Black. King expressed interest in attending the event and pledged continued engagement with NYSTA leadership.

Looking Ahead

As NYSTA continues its advocacy and outreach efforts, ongoing communication with the governor's office and legislative leaders remains a top priority. The release of the impact report represents a significant milestone for the industry—and one that NYSTA hopes will garner meaningful policy support and public recognition.

Stay tuned for further updates from the front lines of turfgrass advocacy.

Bob Nielsen, a member of the Tee to Green Editorial Committee, is superintendent at Bedford Golf & Tennis Club in Bedford, NY.

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Met Events

Nine & Dine

Thursday, June 19

Rye Golf Club

Rye, NY

Host: Chip Lafferty

Summer Social

Monday, July 14

Oriente Beach Club

Mamaroneck, NY

Parent-Child Tournament/Scholarship Awards

Tuesday, August 5

Silvermine Golf Club

Norwalk, CT

Host: Dave Peterson

MetGCSA Invitational Tournament

Monday, August 18

Upper Montclair Country Club

Clifton, NJ

Host: Mike Brunelle

Industry Events

Rutgers Turfgrass Research Field Day: Golf & Fine Turf

Wednesday, July 30

Rutgers Horticultural Farm II

New Brunswick, NJ

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

The Poa/Met Championship/Met Team Qualifier

Tuesday, October 14

Meadow Brook Club

Jericho, NY

Host: John Carlone, CGCS

The 19th Annual Dr. Joseph Troll Turf Classic

Monday, September 22

Worcester Country Club

Worcester, MA

Honoring: Dr. Scott Ebdon, professor emeritus, Agronomy-Turfgrass Science

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