



# The BONNIE GREENSWARD

OUR 94<sup>TH</sup> YEAR

2019 VOL. II



## WINNING GOLF TV

On Tuesday, 9/24, the PAGCS, courtesy of a grant from GCSAA [see pg. 20/GCSAA], participated in the filming of another episode of *Winning Golf TV*.

This exciting day was hosted by Doug Rae, PAGCS Vice President, at his home course—Applecross Country Club—and was sponsored by our four Platinum sponsors; Turf Equipment & Supply Company, Pocono Turf Supply, Noble Turf and Arader!

The weather was beautiful, the course conditions perfect, the camaraderie was amazing and the *Winning Golf* highlights are plentiful! If you missed who hit the pressure shots and took home the *Winning Golf* trophy for this event, which aired multiple times

recently on NBC Sports Philadelphia and Washington, you can watch it on [YouTube here](#).



Doug Hendricks, “Winning Golf” show host and producer [L], and Doug Rae, GCS of Applecross Country Club and event host: Thank you to both for all you do for the PAGCS and the industry.

## >> 2019 CALENDAR

### GOLF CHAMPIONSHIP

Monday, October 7,  
Lookaway Golf Club

### CPGCSA INVITATIONAL

Monday, October 21,  
Moselem Springs Golf Club

### FIRST GREEN

Thursday, October 24,  
Walnut Lane Golf Club

### ANNUAL MEETING

Monday, November 4,  
Radley Run Country Club

### ESAGCS

November 5-7,  
Dewey Beach, DE

### PAGCS VOLUNTEER DAY

Tuesday, November 12,  
Walnut Lane Golf Club

### TOY DRIVE & CHRISTMAS PARTY

Thursday, December 19, 1-4  
Duffer’s Pub

### GOLF INDUSTRY SHOW (GIS)

January 25-30,  
Orlando

## # HIGHLIGHT

PAGCS Annual Meeting Means Business: the Association will vote on new officers and board members for the Association. Please contact the PAGCS office if you wish to be a part of the Association leadership.

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## >>THE PM

As 2019 and the '19 season enter their final weeks and months, the same goes for my term as your president. Over these two years, the PAGCS, the industry and the region have faced challenges and change. Some things, like Mother Nature, are out of our control. Others present challenges that offer choices and opportunity for change.

This time last year, I wrote the following: **"As the roller coaster of challenges this year continues to affront us even now, it is important to remind ourselves why we chose this career path."** Once again, it has been another difficult growing season, starting out extremely wet and warm, then settling in to a pattern of extremely hot and dry, with turbulent storms for many. With so much lack of control, we choose to stay, adapt, change, and then repeat it all.

The challenges we face in the golf industry and the golf turf industry, from course closures and management restructurings to outbreaks of invasive insects and diseases, are never ending and always changing. The PAGCS is not immune to the forces that challenge the industry and the changes afoot in our modern world. In an effort to control what we can, the PAGCS has begun implementing some dramatic changes to help us all adapt and succeed.

Some of these changes are the direct result of the Vendor Input event held in June. This event, moderated by a vendor peer, gave our affiliate members—the lifeblood of the Association—an opportunity to anonymously voice their concerns, provide input on the industry and the Association, and suggest improvements.

In further efforts to thank, appreciate, and improve our relationships with these vital members, we added two events to the PAGCS calendar: the filming of another episode of the PAGCS on "Winning Golf," featuring our Platinum sponsors and their guests, as well as a Vendor Appreciation Day at Concord Country Club. [read more about the GCSAA grant that helped fund the "Winning Golf" project on page 20]

Some of the changes for the Association are already taking effect, others will roll out over the coming weeks and months, and we look forward to your feedback and hope you find value in these exciting efforts.

Please join us for the final events of 2019: Lookaway will host the PAGCS Golf Championship and this is a great opportunity to play a course we have not played in well over a decade. Join us Monday, October 7, for a 10 a.m. shotgun and a very special day.

My course will host the Annual Meeting on Monday, Nov. 4, and we will have another jam packed event, including elections, presentations and awards. Also save the date for our Christmas Party and Toy Drive on Thursday, December 19—we are going to head back to the scene of the first one at Duffer's Pub! You don't want to miss this fun!

Also note that the growing First Green program hosted by PAGCS members will include at least two Fall events: one at Walnut Lane Golf Club on October 24, and another at Ledgerock on October 2. Please join us for a First Green event to support this amazing program that grows the game and the industry by providing important experiences to students of many ages.

Thank you all for trusting me with our Association and I look forward to the weeks and months ahead. Best wishes for the transition to Fall.

**—Derrick Wozniak, President**



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## LIKE WHAT YOU SEE?

More to come in the weeks ahead as the PAGCS unveils a new logo and additional changes.



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## >>ISSUE GUIDE

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# SHAPED BY PHENOMENAL PHILADELPHIA EXPERIENCES

by Guy Cipriano - GCM [Golf Course Management], August 6, 2019

Billy Covert is living a phenomenal Philadelphia turf existence.

A native of West Chester, a suburb featuring serene, rolling land 35 miles from the city center, Covert begins his junior year at Penn State this fall following an internship at Pine Valley Golf Club.

Yes, that Pine Valley. The sand-infused private golf puncher rests on the New Jersey side of Philadelphia, less than 50 miles from Covert's home.

The Pine Valley experience follows a 2018 internship at Aronimink Golf Club. Yes, that Aronimink. The delightful Donald Ross course is 12 miles from Covert's home.

Throw in a pair of weeks of volunteering at the 2019 PGA Championship and 2018 BWM Championship, and Covert possesses a dazzling resume, especially considering he doesn't turn 21 until next year. The ambition and solid academic record led to Covert receiving the 2019 Stanley Zontek Memorial Scholarship presented by Golf Course Industry.

The scholarship, an unrestricted \$2,500 grant, supports a turf student with a passion for the game and honors Stanley J. Zontek, the former director of the USGA Green Section's Mid-Atlantic Region. Zontek died after suffering a heart attack at age 63 in 2012.



Billy Covert is the 2019 Stanley Zontek Memorial Scholarship recipient. (Photo courtesy of Billy Covert)

Covert, a turfgrass science major with a 3.73 GPA, spent the bulk of his first two academic years completing core courses. He's stoked about delving into the turfgrass science portion of the Penn State curriculum, which will include visits to the University Park research plots.

Watching neighbors mow their respective yards sparked Covert's interest in turf. By the time he turned 9, he was helping his father mow the family yard. By the time he turned 11, Covert was helping rake community baseball fields and playing Chester County's fine collection of golf courses. Soon after discovering golf, he realized turfgrass maintenance careers existed and his state's giant university supports a renowned program in the subject. "Ever since I can remember, it's been Penn State, Penn State, Penn State," he says. "Once I got into Penn State, I knew I was going to Penn State."

Major rewards, in practicality and prestige, are associated with Covert's early career decisions.

At Aronimink, he worked under longtime superintendent John Gosselin and obtained hands-on guidance from then-lead assistant Tim Kelly, now the head superintendent at Exmoor (Ill.) Country Club. In a letter of recommendation for the Zontek Scholarship, Kelly wrote, "Billy is honest, hard-working, dependable, and takes a great deal of pride in his trade. He asks the right questions at the right times and not only heeds advice well but implements thoroughly."

Continued on next page

## PENN STATE JUNIOR BILLY COVERT NAMED 2019 STANLEY ZONTEK MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENT.

Covert has already walked some of the same land as Zontek. A Penn State graduate, Zontek was based in suburban Philadelphia at the time of his death. Zontek worked diligently with superintendents to improve playing conditions in the golf-rich Philadelphia region, which extends into southern New Jersey and northern Delaware. Zontek's Philadelphia and Penn State ties intrigued Covert as he composed his scholarship essay.

"I learned he's very hard-working and he loved his craft. He prepped for major tournaments and worked with the research behind everything," Covert says. "I'm going to try to work at the research, learning more of the science behind what we're doing."

Continued from previous page

Covert left Penn State for a week last September to help the Aronimink team host the BMW Championship, the third leg of the 2018 PGA Tour FedEx Cup Playoffs. Heavy rain pushed the tournament's conclusion to Monday. "I learned a lot about overcoming challenges," he says. "By Sunday, all the volunteers had left, so for the Monday finish we only had our crew prepping for that final day. You saw what it was like overcoming a huge obstacle to get a course in tip-top shape with only a certain amount of people."

At Pine Valley, Covert works under longtime superintendent Rick Christian and receives hands-on training from assistant William Rocco. Covert averages 60 hours per week at the course and his bosses incorporate interns into a variety of assignments and projects, including spraying, mowing, irrigating, fertilization and sod work.

"I have been very fortunate with my internships," he says. "It has been awesome to work for John Gosselin and Rick Christian. You learn a lot with them, especially from their assistants who are very helpful with guiding you."

The past two summers have reaffirmed the reasons Covert pursued a turf career at a young age. And when he peers into his long-term future, he already sees a geographic fit. "I want to end up in the Philly area," he says. ♦



**Stan Zontek, who passed away in August of 2012 at the age of 63, was one of the most well known and beloved turf professionals in the PAGCS, the region, and the country.**

**At the time of his passing, Stan was the longest tenured employee of the USGA. He earned the PAGCS's highest honor, the Eb Steiniger Award, in 1997, and throughout his career, amassed an impressive list of awards and accomplishments.**

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# MUNICIPAL GOLF ON THE UPSWING

by Howard Richman - GCM, August 2019

Statistics indicate that municipal golf courses are trendy. Woodland Hills Golf Course in Fort Scott, Kan., oozes chic in the heartland.

"When I got here eight years ago, only eight greens were open for play. The rest of them were dirt," says 23-year GCSAA superintendent Jon Kindlesparger, who revealed a name he once heard to describe municipal golfers (more on that later). Issues had persisted at Woodland Hills long before Kindlesparger arrived. It was a country club in those dark days in the 1990s when the bank came calling on the note. Find another owner or the place would be shuttered, is what Fort Scott native Mitch Quick recollects. "We were putting on crabgrass greens," Quick says.

A new owner emerged, but old problems remained in Fort Scott, which has a population of roughly 7,800 and is about 90 miles south of Kansas City. Ultimately, the city purchased Woodland Hills, and the results have

been promising. The deficit has decreased as revenues continue to increase. "Give credit to the city and to Jon," Quick says. "A dilapidated golf course now is a playable golf course."

There are others of Woodland Hills' kind in municipalities across America. The nationwide municipal golf course count reached a record high of 2,515 in 2018, according to the National Golf Foundation. The NGF adds that approximately 75% of all U.S. courses are open to all players, matching the highest public-to-private ratio in history. The increase, according to NGF, can be attributed to some public agencies acquiring formerly privately owned properties to control land use and/or to offer as an amenity to local residents.

Does that mean municipal courses have recovered from the crush of new course openings 20 some years ago that created more competition for them? If anything, they exhibit persistence.

*Continued on next page*

## >>LOCAL MUNICIPAL COURSES

### SOUTH

Rock Manor  
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Continued from previous page

"If you look at the model, generally, they (municipal golf courses) have great staying power, tend to not come and go, and, for the most part, are pretty stable," says Steve Mona, executive director of We Are Golf. "If you live in a community with a golf course, you know it's probably going to be around there for a long time."

While some thrive, others fight to stay relevant – or stay open. Palmer Park Golf Course in Detroit, where legendary heavyweight boxer Joe Louis played, recently closed. On the flip side, city-owned Braemar Golf Course in Edina, Minn., was rebuilt and reopened May 18, 2018. "It poured, but we still had 150 people come out," Braemar general manager Joe Abood says of the opening. "We don't have open tee times right now. There's a resurgence. The course has been a staple of the community."

Municipal golf courses are etched in the game's roots. They serve as community cornerstones, incubators for learning the game – which has also seen a boost in play. The NGF reports that in 2018, for the first time in 14 years, the number of golfers in the U.S. age 6 and older who played at least one round increased – to 24.2 million, up from 23.8 million in 2017. The report also noted that the number of beginning golfers, 2.6 million, is near a historic high.

"Our first goal is, we're growing the game to enable you to go to the country club if you want to. But we hope you stay here," says GCSAA Class A superintendent Darin Pearson, park operations manager at Eagle Bend Golf Course & Learning Center in Lawrence, Kan., and a 25-year association member.

Major golf champion Fred Couples developed his game at municipal Jefferson Park Golf Course in Seattle. Municipal courses also host majors, such as in 2020, when the PGA



*Before and after shots of what is currently No. 15 at Rockwood Golf Club. Architects John Colligan and Trey Kemp oversaw the renovations at Rockwood. How does Colligan view his work at Rockwood or anywhere else? "Golf should be enjoyed, not endured," he says. "If we can create challenges for the better players and fun for the not-so-good player, we've accomplished what we wanted to do."*

*Photos courtesy of Trey Kemp*

Championship will go to TPC Harding Park in San Francisco. Golf Channel personality Matt Ginella touts municipal courses. "Municipal golf ... this, to me, is the most interesting conversation in the world of golf right now," says Ginella, who adores his nine-hole course in Winter Park, Fla. "If I can get two hours to play the local muni, something I can count on, isn't that what it's all about?"

## (FORT) WORTH THE WAIT

Henry Cagigal has taken countless looks at the fairways and greens of Fort Worth's Rockwood Park over four decades. For him – and so many others – the dramatic comeback there, with its views of the downtown skyline, is a sight for sore eyes.

"It's a complete new facility," says Cagigal, 57, assistant golf professional at Rockwood.

Rockwood's is a story of revival and survival. Rounds played are up more than 50% from 2015, and net profits have overtaken net losses despite an increase in operating costs.

The process to facilitate this moment was launched 10 years ago. That's when Fort Worth officials completed the blueprint, endorsed by the park board, to renovate Rockwood. "Overhaul" is more like it. Rockwood,

built in 1938, had never received any sufficient improvements.

"We didn't have all the funds in place at that time (2009), but the master plan was in place for when the time presented itself," says Nancy Bunton, interim assistant director of parks. The combination of a city bond package and \$1.7 million in gas royalties for a total of approximately \$5 million set the makeover in motion, with a 2017 course reopening.

"Municipal golf was going down and down. City leaders, from the top down, took a stand and believed in the golf division," says Shawn Watson, Rockwood's head golf professional.

Heritage Links in Houston handled the construction, and architect John Colligan, his associate Trey Kemp, and GCSAA Class A superintendent Bill Sturm authored the rest.

The rebuild featured massive modernizations: a new irrigation system, drainage, cart paths, greens (TifEagle bermudagrass), tees, fairways, Better Billy Bunkers and an additional 15 acres of native areas on the course, which was stretched from 6,300 yards to more than 7,000.

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# ONE DOOR CLOSES

by Dave Oatis

The “agronomic season” for 2019 is over even though there is plenty of golf yet to be played. Agronomic programs in the Northeast will now be shifting some of their focus to set the turf up for a successful season in 2020. Many courses have already performed their late summer or early fall cultivation work, and it is vitally important not to shortchange these important programs. For most golfers there is no good time to aerate, but cultivation is essential to produce healthy turf and topnotch playing conditions. 2019 brought tremendous agronomic challenges and the turf at many courses in the Northeast is showing the effects. Now is the season for healing and setting the turf up for next year.



Recently, anthracnose has been the most commonly observed malady. However, anthracnose can be your friend or foe depending on what grass species you’re promoting. For courses with plenty of bentgrass, anthracnose can be used as a biological control of *Poa annua*. For courses where *Poa annua* is the desired species, controlling the disease is imperative. Just realize that despite our extensive understanding of the disease, recent outbreaks are a reminder that even the best disease control programs are not always successful.

Section comes to a close, I’d like to thank the hundreds of golf course superintendents, course officials and golf association officials that I’ve had the privilege to work with for the last 32 seasons. What I’ve learned from you would fill volumes, and I thank you sincerely for your friendship and support. Most of all, thank you for sharing and trusting me with your problems, concerns, challenges and successes. We learn more from the mistakes and the challenges but sharing and celebrating the successes has given me tremendous satisfaction and kept me motivated. I wish I could

Occam’s razor pertains directly to turfgrass management! The science of golf course turfgrass management is complicated, and successful superintendents have a special blend of experience, knowledge, touch and feel. However, it is easy to overcomplicate things. Don’t fall into the trap of looking for a complicated solution when the simplest answer is more often the right one.

The environments we grow turf in, both above and below ground, have more of an impact on turf performance than anything else. It is imperative to control what you can control. Focus efforts on improving the above- and below-ground growing environments and you will be more successful, guaranteed. Boring, but true!

Lastly, I’d like to thank my colleagues and the volunteers at the USGA, both past and present. I have appreciated your friendship and valued your support more than you’ll ever know. As this door in my life closes, I’m heading to the next phase with a smile, knowing that it’s been a great ride. ♦

## ANTHRACNOSE INFECTING POA ANNUA IN A PREDOMINANTLY BENTGRASS TURF IS FREE POA CONTROL!

It has been a rollercoaster of a season for golf course superintendents this year and also for many of us at the USGA. As my time with the Green

pass on everything I’ve learned, but time will not permit. So, I’ll leave you with a couple of important thoughts:

*Additional USGA feature on page 16*

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**OUR JUNE HOST:** Brendan Byrne [second from left], GCS at Llanerch Country Club

**HAILS FROM:** Springfield, PA

**EDUCATION:** North Carolina State University BS, Agronomy

**HIS WHY:** I have been greenkeeping in for 33 seasons. I have been fortunate to have been employed at many great courses. They include The Country Club, Merion, Aronimink and Llanerch, where I have served as the superintendent for the last 19 years.

**FAMILY:** The proud father of my wonderful 6-year-old daughter named Anika.



Winners include [LtoR]: Brad Helcoski, Tim Riismandel, Jeff Haas, John Verbugge, Darren Farrar, Rob Johnson, Doug Rider, Steve McDonald. Special thanks to host Brendan Byrne pictured center bottom.

## # HEADING TO 100

Founded in September 1925, the PAGCS is one of the oldest and most respected associations.

Please share your memories, thoughts, photos for our #100, an archive to celebrate:

[KLiebsch@PAGCS.org](mailto:KLiebsch@PAGCS.org)

# MEMBER-GUEST 2019

[Click here to view full event photos on Facebook](#)

**MONDAY, JULY 15  
COATESVILLE  
COUNTRY CLUB**

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Chris Walton, July host, pictured here [left] with his mentor, Dave Visocan, third from left.

**OUR JULY HOST:** Chris Walton, Golf Course Superintendent at Coatesville Country Club since 2012; General Manager since 2019

**HAILS FROM:** I was born and raised in Coatesville, PA. I still live in Coatesville with my wife and three children. I also coach the Coatesville HS wrestling team and have been involved in coaching youth sports in Coatesville for almost 12 years.

**EDUCATION:** I attended Penn State University (Turfgrass Management). I spent my summers during school working at Chester Valley, where I eventually spent six years as an Assistant before taking the job at Coatesville. I owe much of my success to Dave Visocan, who taught me how to approach different aspects of the job and how to be a professional.

**HIS WHY:** "I was not cut out for a "desk" job. Although the demands for the job can be crazy at times, I love that there are always new problems to solve and each day comes with its own challenges."



Congratulations to all of the winners!  
Special thank you to host Chris Walton pictured on the far right.

## STABLEFORD TOURNAMENT 2019

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**WEDNESDAY,  
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## RESULTS

### **EAGLES FLIGHT**

1st: Chet Walsh  
2nd: Matt Foust



### **SIXERS FLIGHT**

1st: Christian Scheller  
2nd: Lance Ernst



### **FLYERS FLIGHT**

1st: Tom Currie  
2nd: Jeremy Hreben



### **PHILLIES FLIGHT**

1st: Chris Friel  
2nd: Jake Shughart



### **SKILLS:**

### **CLOSEST TO PIN #3: BOB BURD**

#14: Doug Rae

### **LONGEST DRIVE**

#6: Nick Caruthers  
#15 Darren Farrar [event host, FYI]



**OUR SEPTEMBER HOST:** Darren Farrar, GCS since 2018 at Old York Road Country Club (second from left)

**HAILS FROM:** North Carolina

**EDUCATION:** BS, Agronomy, NC State

**HIS WHY:** "my first job was working on a golf course when I was 15...I got started in the industry, as a cart boy. I would wash/clean carts and play at least 36 holes of golf a day during the summer. Then I started helping the Superintendent...knew I wanted to be a Superintendent since I was a teenager."

**PAST COURSES:** Wade Hampton in NC; Olde Stone in KY

**THE ROAD TO PHILLY:** Darren followed his heart north (wife Brooke is from Hershey, PA). She went to UNC and was living in NC when they met.



## NEXT UP:

### **GOLF CHAMPIONSHIP**

Monday, October 7,  
Lookaway Golf Club

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# REMEMBERING THE PAST AND PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE

USGA, September 20, 2019

Anyone who works in the golf industry knows that change is a part of our business. As the USGA Green Section prepares to celebrate 100 years of helping golf facilities in 2020, we are also preparing to see members of the Green Section family that have worked with us for decades retire from the USGA in the autumn of 2019. These people have played key roles in making the Green Section what it is today, and their impact on the game has been tremendous. We know that many of you have worked closely with the staff leaving the USGA and join us in wishing them all the best in their next chapters.

Departing staff will not be the only change on the horizon for the Green Section. A new agronomist will be hired in our West region along with a research position in the coming months as we continue our long tradition of supporting turfgrass and environmental research for the golf industry. These new staff members certainly have big shoes to fill, but we know they will be up for the challenge. The Green Section will also merge with the USGA's Research, Science and Innovation Group, led by Dr. Matthew Pringle. He has spearheaded the RSI group since its formation in 2016 and has played a key role in the USGA's pace of play and resource management tool efforts. Since starting with the USGA in 2000, Matt has been, and will continue to be an advocate for science and committed to the role that science plays in pushing the game forward. We know he will be a great leader and advocate for the Green Section's work into the future.

While a lot of change is occurring in a short period of time, there are some things that are definitely not changing. The Green Section remains committed to providing science-based information and recommendations to golf facilities and golfers. The Green



Section staff are here to help solve problems at individual facilities – both the challenges of today and those on the horizon. While the agronomists working with some of you may be changing, you will still receive the same high level of expertise and the same commitment to understanding the issues at your facility and developing solutions that fit your specific needs. The Green Section research program and education and outreach efforts will also continue playing their key roles.

As we look to the future, with a new team and some exciting new projects on the horizon, we also want to reflect on the careers of those who will retire and thank them once again for all they've done for the Green Section, for the USGA, and for golf.

## NORTHEAST REGION

David Oatis, director of the Northeast Region, who joined the staff in 1989, will depart this fall. Jim Skorulski, the agronomist who worked with golf facilities across New England and Canada departed the staff in June. Dave and Jim helped facilities

in Northeast solve problems related to everything from trees, to traffic, to promoting stronger turf types. Golf facilities in the Northeast Region will be ably served with expert advice from Agronomists Elliott Dowling and Paul Jacobs. In addition, Adam Moeller, who directs the Green Section education and outreach program, will continue to dedicate a portion of his time to course consulting.

## SOUTHEAST REGION

The longest-tenured member of the USGA staff and a Green Section agronomist since 1979, Patrick O'Brien ends his USGA career in September. Patrick's agronomic knowledge provided critical information to the Southeast Region as he combined sound agronomic recommendations with practical best management practices for golf courses across the economic spectrum. Shelly Foy, a familiar, helpful voice to all who called the Southeast Region office since 1988 retired in April. The Southeast Region pushes forward with excellent support from Agronomists Dr. Steve Kammerer and Addison Barden. Chris

*Continued on next page*

Continued from previous page

Hartwiger will continue consulting with Southeast Region golf facilities while serving in his current role as director of the USGA Course Consulting Service.



## WEST REGION

Pat Gross, director of the West Region, departs in October. Pat joined the West Region staff in 1991 and was named director of the region in 1998. His leadership helped guide the critical discussion on golf's use of water, particularly in the southwestern United States. Larry Gilhuly leaves the Green Section at the end of September after a versatile 36-year USGA career that began in 1983. Denise Covell, a veteran business coordinator in the Southern California office, departed in April. The West Region will continue to benefit from the expertise of Agronomist Brian Whitlark. Soon he will be joined by a new agronomist who will be based in Southern California or the Pacific Northwest.

## CENTRAL REGION

The Central Region has long benefitted from the agronomic knowledge of Bob Vavrek. He joined the staff in 1990 and was named director of the region in 2015. Both he and Karen White, business coordinator for the region since 2002, depart this fall. Agronomists Zach Nicoludis and John Daniels will continue to provide course consulting services to golf facilities across the Central Region.

## TURFGRASS AND ENVIRONMENTAL RESEARCH PROGRAM

Dr. Mike Kenna, who has expertly led the USGA Turfgrass and Environmental Research Program since 1990, will depart in October. Working with universities across North America, his broad research knowledge and long-range vision guided the research program through the development of many new grasses and best management practices for the industry. His replacement is in the process of being determined. The program will continue to be assisted through the efforts of Assistant Research Director Dr. Cole Thompson.

## MANAGING DIRECTOR

Dr. Kimberly Erusha, Managing Director of the Green Section, leaves the USGA at the end of September. She started with the Green Section in 1990, and has led the team to great success, and through many challenges, since becoming managing director in 2010. She has had a tremendous impact on the golf industry in her time with the Green Section.

## THE GREEN SECTION CONTINUES ON

Building on our 99-year history, the golf industry will continue to be well served by the dedicated efforts of the USGA Green Section staff. The mission is alive and well to develop and disseminate sustainable management practices that produce better playing conditions for better golf. The synergy of the Green Section and RSI teams provides new opportunities and even greater support for golf facilities as we develop products and services that help them remain enjoyable to play, environmentally responsible and economically viable. ♦

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## PAGCS MEMBER JARED VIARENGO SHARES HIS PATH FROM PSYCH TO SUPER

by Jeff Bollig - Club Resort Business, March 12, 2019

After starting a career in psychology, Jared Viarengo let the tug of a lifelong love of golf course work redirect him on a path that led to dual responsibilities as GM/Director of Grounds at Applebrook GC.

It was love at first sight. Encouraged by a friend, Jared Viarengo, CGCS, decided to apply for a job at his local golf course to get some spending money while in high school. He was enamored with the setting from the start. In fact, while pursuing a psychology degree at Northeastern University in Boston, he would return home to Sherman, Conn., to work at Candlewood Valley Country Club in New Milford.

"I really liked the field of psychology, but working on the golf course gave me a chance to earn some money," Viarengo says. "Plus, I enjoyed being on the golf course. It provided a break from the studying and coursework."

**FEELING THE TUG OF THE GOLF COURSE, VIARENGO DECIDED TO CHART A NEW PATH AND PURSUE A TURFGRASS DEGREE AT THE STOCKBRIDGE SCHOOL OF AGRICULTURE AT UNIVERSITY OF MASSACHUSETTS.**

Upon graduation, Viarengo began his career as an outreach counselor, focusing on de-institutionalizing people who were committed to mental-health facilities. The goal was to re-introduce these individuals



Applebrook Golf Club and Jared Viarengo, CGCS

to mainstream society with ongoing treatment and therapy. But after two years, he found himself at a crossroads. To advance in the field, he would need a graduate degree.

"I loved my work in psychology," he says. "But it was so stressful. It wasn't unusual to work with people who were threatening suicide. It was a challenge, but it was gratifying to help people. However, I needed to make a decision about going to graduate school."

"Everyone was supportive of me returning to school to get a turf degree, including my parents and my wife to be," he says. "They knew how much I liked being on the golf course. Of course, I had to pay for it. But I was prepared to go through with it."

Viarengo's ascent in the golf industry was buoyed by a highly regarded education and exposure to some of the greatest minds in golf. As a student intern and later as an assistant superintendent at Winged Foot Golf Club in Mamaroneck, N.Y., he was tutored by legendary turf gurus Bob Alonzi and Paul Latshaw.

And when members of several prominent Philadelphia-area clubs, including Pine Valley, Aronimink and Merion, had the vision of building a new golf club 30 miles west of Philadelphia, Viarengo was more than ready for the challenge—one that eventually grew to his also becoming General Manager, in addition to Director of Grounds for Applebrook Golf Club in Malvern, Pa.

[Read more here.](#)

**HAVE NEWS TO SHARE?**

Please send it to the PAGCS office. [klibsch@pagcs.org](mailto:klibsch@pagcs.org)

## PAGCS MEMBER EARNS U.S. CITIZENSHIP

IN LATE AUGUST, ALAN FITZGERALD, GCS OF LEDGEROCK GOLF CLUB, TRADED HIS GREEN CARD FOR FULL CITIZENSHIP OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA. MANY CONGRATULATIONS, ALAN. HERE IS THE PRESS RELEASE FROM LEDGEROCK CELEBRATING ALAN'S NEW STATUS.

LedgeRock's Golf Course Superintendent, Alan FitzGerald now is a United States of America citizen!

In 2006, Alan came to the states to attend school at Penn State. On graduation Alan obtained a work visa for one year; he took this opportunity and secured a job at Pine Valley. After working there, he knew he wanted to stay in the U.S. For the last ten years Alan has had temporary status to work in the states.

On August 26th, 2019, instead of renewing his green card, Alan gained his American citizenship at a ceremony in Philadelphia. Alan said, "as a kid, living in America has always been a dream, but it never seemed like it was something that could happen." He said that life made this dream fall into place; "it is great to know that I am now a part of this great country."

If you see Alan around, please give him a congratulations on this wonderful milestone. ♦



*New and green as a US citizen, Alan Fitzgerald is no stranger to all things green and appears here in his element as a host of a First Green event on his golf course.*

## CONDOLENCES TO JEFF LACOUR AND FAMILY



Paul Daniel Lacour "Frenchie" of Dover passed away, Saturday, August 3, 2019 at Kent General Hospital. He was 88.

Mr. Lacour was born March 2, 1931 in Providence, Rhode Island to the late Paul D. Lacour, Sr. and Ann Rebecca Johnson Lacour.

He Proudly served in the United States Air Force for 22 years as a Maintenance Supervisor and Flight Engineer. Mr. Lacour had been selected for the command crew at Westover AFB, Offutt AFB and Hickam AFB and served as crew chief for General Joseph J. Nazzaro who was the 8th Air Force commander, commander in chief of the Pacific Air Forces and commander in chief, Strategic Air Command. After his military career, he worked for 18 years at the Blood Bank of Delaware as a phlebotomist and drove and maintained the first bloodmobile in the state of Delaware. Mr. Lacour was recently elected President of the Delaware Veterans Home Resident Council. He enjoyed friends and family, his dog Beau, music, fishing, making others laugh telling stories and jokes. He always had a smile for everyone. Mr. Lacour will be remembered by his loved ones for his favorite quote, "God's gift to me is my wonderful family and friends".

In addition to his parents he was preceded in death by his sisters, Helen Hughes and Catherine Blouin and grandson, Ryan Suchko.

He is survived by his wife of 64 years, Hilma Lacour of Dover; son, Jeff Lacour and his wife Mary Anne of West Grove, PA; daughters, Hope Gorlich and her husband John of Rehoboth and Elaine Mayer and her husband Tom of Glenmoore, PA; sister, Barbara Knox of Warwick, RI; grandchildren, Faith Davis and husband Brian, Tom Mayer Jr., Matthew Mayer, Sarah Lacour, Paul Lacour, Jason Gorlich and wife Marykatherine, Andy Gorlich and wife Suzanna; and five great grandchildren. ♦

### >>WHERE TO SEND DONATIONS

Chapter 850 Vietnam Veterans of America, PO Box 1718. Dover Delaware 19903, Brandywine Valley SPCA Dover, and Delaware Veterans Home Milford

## PAGCS AWARDED GCSAA CHAPTER OUTREACH GRANT



Once again, the GCSAA has recognized the PAGCS for its efforts to promote the industry. In late May, the Association was awarded its third outreach grant from GCSAA.

“On behalf of the GCSAA Communications Outreach Task Group, I applaud the Philadelphia Association of GCS on its efforts to strengthen its ties to the local community and promote the profession,” said Mark Jordan, CGCS, chairman of the selection committee. The outreach grant program saw a large number of applicants this year, and the committee faced the challenge of distributing the

funds in a fair and equitable manner, which speaks to the popularity of the program.

As you read on the first page of this issue, the PAGCS once again participated in **Comcast Sportsnet’s** [[www.comcastsportsnet.com](http://www.comcastsportsnet.com)] “Winning Golf” program [<https://winninggolftv.com/>] with Doug Hendricks. The grant money from GCSAA will be used to help defray the costs of this exciting endeavor.

The show aired the week of September 22. ♦



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- electrical systems
- engine technology
- hydraulic systems
- metalworking and fabrication
- spray systems
- fundamentals of turfgrass operations

[Read more here](#)



Level two moves on to topics like ...

- Administrative Management
- Best Management Practices
- Cutting Units
- Drivetrains
- Electrical Systems
- Engine Technology
- Hydraulic Systems
- Metalworking

- Spray Systems
- Turfgrass Operations

[Read more here](#)



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**2019 ESAGCS Fall Turfgrass Conference**  
November 5-7, 2019  
Hyatt Place Dewey Beach  
1301 Coastal Highway, Dewey Beach, DE



Eastern Shore Chapter  
**GCSAA**  
Golf Course Superintendents Association of America

Dear Association Member and Industry Affiliate,

Now that the busy (and hot!!) period of the 2019 season is behind most of us, it is time to relax by the shore and learn from some of the best minds in the industry. Please join us at our new venue, the beautiful Hyatt Place in Dewey Beach, Delaware for the thirteenth annual ESAGCS Golf Turfgrass Conference. The Board of the ESAGCS has carefully selected speakers to give relevant and up-to-date education on topics of importance to Mid Atlantic superintendents, staff and industry affiliates. We are pleased to share that for the third straight year, we have been able to keep the conference rates the same. We did however need to raise our rates for golf. With that, you are getting to play one of Delaware's premier golf courses and we will also be providing transportation to and from the golf course.

The Board wants you to know we listened to your comments by seeking the best speakers in the industry featuring a variety of topics for the conference. There is something for everyone. GCSAA CEU credits have been applied for, as have Maryland, Delaware, Pennsylvania, New Jersey and Virginia pesticide and nutrient management recertification credit as well. So, plan now to join over 100 of your peers for golf, food, fun and some education down at the ocean!

Thanks,

The Board and Conference Committee of the ESAGCS



## 2019 ESAGCS Fall Turfgrass Conference

November 5 - 7, 2019  
Hyatt Place Dewey Beach  
1301 Coastal Highway, Dewey Beach, DE



### ESAGCS Conference Schedule

#### Tuesday, November 5<sup>th</sup>

**6:00 – 8:00 PM** Happy Hour Reception at the Starboard, 2009 Coastal Highway (Bay Side)  
(Bus provided)

#### Wednesday, November 6<sup>th</sup>

**6:30 – 7:30 AM** Breakfast

**7:30 – 7:45 AM** Welcome and opening remarks from the Conference Committee, ESAGCS Annual Meeting and Report from the Board

**7:45 – 8:30 AM** Maryland and Delaware Pesticide Regulation Update

**8:30 – 9:45 AM** Jim Nedin, Jim Nedin Consulting Services, “Sprayer Calibration and GPS Technology”

**9:45 – 10:00 AM** Break

**10:00 AM – 11:00 AM** Doug Linde, Ph.D., Delaware Valley University, “How to attract employees!”

**11:00 AM – 11:30 AM** Doug Linde, Ph.D., Delaware Valley University, “Monitoring and managing organic matter in putting greens”

**11:30 AM** Box lunch and bus to golf course

**12:30 PM** Golf Shotgun at Rehoboth Beach Country Club, alternative recreational activities will be available

**6:00 – 8:00 PM** Evening Welcome Reception, Lighthouse Cove Event Center, 1301 Coastal Highway - Awards, recognitions and musical guest

#### Thursday, November 7<sup>th</sup>

**7:00 – 8:00 AM** Breakfast

**8:00 – 10:00 AM** Carol Rau, PHR, Career Advantage LLC, “Stand Out and Advance Your Career”

**10:00 – 10:15 AM** Break

**10:15 AM – 11:15 PM** Ben McGraw, Ph.D., Penn State University, “Turfgrass entomology year in review: Managing insects and other critters in a warmer and wetter world”

**11:15 AM – 12:15 PM** Ben McGraw, Ph.D., Penn State University, “Annual bluegrass weevil in 2019: Are we making any progress?”

**12:15 – 1:15 PM** Lunch

**1:15 – 3:15 PM** Rich Buckley, Rutgers University, “2019 Golf Turf Seasonal Review: The View from Rutgers Plant Diagnostic Laboratory”

**3:15 - 3:30 PM** Credits and Closing comments

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**CONTRIBUTOR:** Brendan Byrne, Golf Course Superintendent and C.O.O. External for Llanerch

This photo of double rainbow over #18 was taken in July of 2019, but, to date, neither ark has not been located.

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## 2019 CONFERENCE REGISTRATION FORM

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 Address \_\_\_\_\_ City/State/Zip \_\_\_\_\_  
 Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Email Address \_\_\_\_\_

### Package Options:

**\*\*3 or more registrations from same club/vendor=10% off total\*\***

### Hotel Stay Packages:

	Single Occ.	*Double Occ.
___ Full Conference Package (Includes all conference meals/meetings with 2 nights hotel stay)	\$370	\$290
___ Single Night Package (Includes all conference meals/meetings with 1 night hotel stay)	\$285	\$250
___ Rehoboth Beach Country Club Outing per person (Includes bus transportation to and from golf)	\$70	
___ Happy Hour at The Starboard on November 5, 2019 – Transportation Provided (Please check if you plan to attend - Included with any Conference Package)		

### Non-Hotel Packages:

___ Conference Package (Includes all conference meals/meetings)	\$190
___ Rehoboth Beach Country Club Outing per person (Includes bus transportation to and from golf)	\$70
___ Happy Hour at The Starboard on November 5, 2019 – Transportation Provided (Please check if you plan to attend - Included with any Conference Package)	

**Total amount to be charged:** \_\_\_\_\_

**\*Double occupancy packages, please note Roommate's Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

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# SPOTTED LANTERNFLY INVASION

A LOCAL TEEN'S SPOTTED LANTERNFLY TRAP LANDS HER A SPOT AT NATIONAL SCIENCE COMPETITION

[Read more about her trap here.](#)



(Image Credit: AP)



After wins at the county level and at Drexel's Del Val Science Fair, Rachel Bergey is one of just 30 students from across the country who will present at the Broadcom MASTERS Competition in Washington, D.C. next month. (Photo courtesy of Jim Melwert/KYW Newsradio)



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# PAGCS MEMBER STEPHEN KAY IS FEATURED ARCHITECT

by Jay Flemma - Golf Course Trades, June 26, 2019



Is it golf course architecture or golf course archaeology? When discussing the wild success owner-developer-magnate Chris Schiavone and golf architect Stephen Kay have enjoyed resurrecting Golden Age golf courses and restoring/renovating them to their former glory it's a worthy question. First, they spellbound the entire golf world with their work at Charles Banks's Forsgate Country Club. In

earliest designs, northern New Jersey's Shackamaxon Golf Club, which he designed in 1916. And once again, a distressed Golden Age masterpiece that even many experts had overlooked or forgotten is now the toast of golfers everywhere. The club just celebrated its 100th anniversary in 2016, and its full ascension back into prominence still continues at a speedy pace.

**"TILLIE HAD ONE OF THE BROADEST PALETTES OF ANY GOLF COURSE ARCHITECT IN THE GAME'S HISTORY. HIS CAREER SPANNED NEARLY 30 YEARS, 400 COURSES, AND NUMEROUS CRISS-CROSSES OF THE COUNTRY."**

particular, they rebuilt one of the most celebrated greens in American golf to its full specifications, the 84-yard long Biarritz at 17 with its six-foot deep, 25-foot wide swale. To golf design fans, that was the golf equivalent of Heinrich Schliemann discovering Troy.

Now, for an encore, they've rejuvenated one of A.W. Tillinghast's

"We're not completely sure how early Shackamaxon is in Tillinghast's career - it's either his third or his fourth course - but it's definitely one of the first 18 hole designs Tillie ever did," explained Kay, once again easing into his other supreme talent: teaching about golf design. Remember: he's the Professor at Rutgers University everybody wants to take when they're trying to

learn the golf design business. His former students are now head superintendents at places like Oakmont, Baltusrol, and Forsgate.

"Tillie had one of the broadest palettes of any golf course architect in the game's history. His career spanned nearly 30 years, 400 courses, and numerous criss-crosses of the country. Here at Shackamaxon you get to see some of his first forays into ideas he'd later build at many of his great courses: things like diagonal bunkering and the flashed-faced sand bunkers he employed at San Francisco Golf Club, which he designed roughly around the same time," Kay continued energetically. "Tillinghast courses are all different because he designed by being on the property and fitting the holes to the land as he found it, unlike Ross who used to design some courses through correspondence and drawings from time to time."

[Read more here.](#)

## WADE HAMPTON ASSISTENT SHARES ABOUT THE COURSE RENOVATION



For this edition of the Assistant's Corner, I sat down with a good friend and fellow assistant superintendent, Colby Major. Colby is a graduate of the four-year turfgrass science program at Penn State University and is now assistant superintendent at Wade Hampton Golf Club in Cashiers, North Carolina.

Wade Hampton is a 1987 Tom Fazio design located in the Great Smoky Mountains of North Carolina. This hidden gem has been consistently ranked among the top courses in the country by many golf publications since its inception. I have not had the pleasure of visiting Wade Hampton yet, but it is regarded as a "must see" by many who have.

Colby and the rest of the Wade Hampton staff underwent a major renovation project from July of 2017 to June of 2018, and he was kind enough to take some time to tell us about it here on the Assistant's Corner...

### **How long have you been working at Wade Hampton?**

*This is my 4th season here.*

### **What was the scope of the work done during the renovation?**

*The Greens were all shelled out and rebuilt from the subgrade up and approaches were fumigated and reseeded. All greenside bunkers were reconstructed as well. We also leveled and reseeded all tees in addition to adding a few new ones. All 40 acres*

*of rough were killed and reseeded, all cart paths got resurfaced, we added a lot of fairway drainage and added a jockey pump as well as a 1.5 million gallon irrigation pond.*

### **What were the reasons for the renovations?**

*The greens had reached their 30 year life span and primarily consisted of Poa annua. Not only did the membership want a pure Bentgrass putting surface, but, over time, the greens lost their original shape and undulation due to topdressing. After three decades of topdressing, some of the low areas on the greens had accumulated so much sand that they now had a 20 inch rootzone.*

*This was especially problematic on the front of greens as it raised up the "roll-off" areas and made it easier to hold the green on your approach. The bunkers were also aged and needed to be reconstructed, so we used that as an opportunity to add a new liner. The green complexes were the main focus of the project, but since we would be closed for 11 months, we decided that this would be a good time to complete other projects that were planned for the future.*

### **How much was Tom Fazio involved with the renovations and reclaiming of green complexes?**

*Mr. Fazio and his associate Tom Marzolf worked together on restoring the greens to their original shapes and contours. Mr. Marzolf was on*

*site weekly and over saw day-to-day projects and shaping of the golf course.*

### **What mix was used for the greens and why?**

*We used an 80-15-5 mix which contained 5% Profile Porous Ceramic material to add to the moisture distribution and nutrient retention of the rootzone.*

### **What grass types were used?**

*Greens- Pure Distinction Bentgrass*

*Approaches- Pure Distinction Bentgrass*

*Tees- Crystal Blue Bentgrass*

*Fairways- Interseeded Crystal Blue Bentgrass*

*Rough- Tall Fescue*

### **What about the cultivars drove you to use them for the different surfaces?**

*We went with Pure Distinction on the greens because of its disease resistance and traffic tolerance. We've found that it's an extremely resilient cultivar and will bounce back fairly quickly after a lot of stress. The Crystal Blue has similar properties and adds a nice contrast with its darker more blue-green appearance. Turf-type Tall Fescue is proven to be an excellent turf for use in the rough.*

### **What issues did you encounter going with seed rather than sod?**

*We used seed blankets on greens that helped speed up the germination*

*Continued on next page*

Continued from previous page

process. Although, there were a couple greens we had to reseed in spots due to heavy rain. We got 130 inches of rain during the renovation, which made things difficult at times, but we made it through and opened on time June 1, 2018.

### **What liner was used in the reconstruction of the bunkers?**

Capillary Concrete

### **Were there any challenges involved in the installation of the Capillary Concrete?**

The installation process of the Capillary Concrete was fairly simple. The most important thing was just making sure the depth of the material was consistent.

### **How have the bunkers been performing since the addition of Capillary Concrete?**

They are performing very well. We didn't do our fairway bunkers and they'll wash out with a heavy rain. For the most part, all of the new bunkers won't wash with the exception of some with very steep faces.

### **What went into the irrigation renovations?**

We installed a new pump station and jockey pump to increase the longevity of the system. We also added an extra irrigation pond, as previously mentioned, that can hold up to 1.5 million gallons. Obviously that amount of water will not get us far, so it is only for backup use in the case of a severe drought.

### **How has the additional drainage benefitted the course?**

The new drainage has been a huge help to not only the playability of the course but also the workability of it. 2018 was, of course, a very wet year for just about everyone on the East Coast, and that drainage work saved us a lot of wear and tear from mechanic damage and cart traffic.

### **What was your involvement like in these projects?**

We were very involved in the day-to-day operations of the renovations. McDonald and Sons handled most of the major earth moving, but a lot of the work was done in-house. We did all the tees with our crew, which included removing the upper 4 inches of mix, adding new sand, leveling and regrassing them. In addition, we handled all seeding and grow-in of greens, approaches and rough as well as sod work around bunkers, greens complexes and tee surrounds.

### **How has the renovation helped you for your future career?**

The renovation projects were a huge learning experience for me moving forward. In 11 months, I was able to be a part of more projects than some people do in an entire career. Seeing all this work has given me piece of mind when it comes to small issues on the course because I have worked through much greater and I now have the confidence to handle whatever is thrown at me. This renovation has also taught me when to be patient and when things need to be pushed.

### **What was your favorite part of all the projects?**

I wouldn't say that there was one particular part that was my favorite but being able to look back at all the hard work that was done and see what it has become is very gratifying. ♦



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# WORKING TOGETHER

[TFTOGP Facebook Page on 7/2/19]

When two important Philadelphia non-profits work together, everyone wins. Meet Andre and Andy. Both interned this summer at Walnut Lane Golf Club, home of The First Tee of Greater Philadelphia. Both are part of the [Project HOME John and Sheila Connors Youth Employment Program](#).

The John and Sheila Connors Youth Employment Program at the Honickman Learning Center and Comcast Technology Labs provides the opportunity for high school and college students enrolled in the College Access Program to complete a summer internship where they are paid for up to 120 hours over a six week period.

The internship program is successful in a variety of ways. It provides an income for students during the summer, develops professional skills, and broadens networking opportunities all while serving as a constructive way for students to remain engaged over the summer.

"We are thankful to have Andre and Andy interning for us for the next 5 weeks! ... They are doing a great job!! Thanks to [Project HOME](#) for sending them to us." ♦

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Andre Dean, right, and Andy Tieu, doing bunker work for Walnut Lane Golf Club this summer as part of their internship



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# MAPPING FAIRWAY SOIL MOISTURE FOR IMPROVED IRRIGATION DECISIONS AT YOUR GOLF COURSE

by Chase Straw and Jack MacKenzie - University of Minnesota, August 29, 2019

Golf course superintendents often irrigate fairways based on feel. Despite sometimes adjusting percent run-times of individual heads to account for perceived dry and wet areas, “blanket” applications are typical. Using objective data to create soil moisture maps of a golf course’s fairways, as well as taking advantage of valve-in-head control (if applicable), could significantly reduce water consumption by programming an irrigation system to match soil moisture variability. This would involve assigning each irrigation head to a soil moisture class, as a result of their surrounding soil moisture values, and then creating a program for each class to irrigate together. “Dry” classes would get irrigated more frequently, “wet” classes would get irrigated less frequently, and an entire fairway would almost never get completely irrigated during one irrigation session. This process fits under the concept of “site-specific irrigation” or “precision irrigation.”

detailed protocol that outlines step-by-step instructions to collect georeferenced soil moisture data with a GPS-equipped soil moisture meter (FieldScout TDR 350), which can then be used to create fairway soil moisture maps and irrigation management zones with free mapping software (Figure 1). The protocol is estimated to take one person 2 to 3 days to complete an entire 18-hole golf course. Superintendents, staff members, interns, local high school golfers, etc. would all be capable of completing the protocol.

Additionally, MGCSA is establishing an incentive program for members who complete the soil moisture mapping protocol. The program would give a person a \$125 Visa gift card per nine holes completed (i.e. when final maps and irrigation management zones have been created). A system is also being put in place where those who do not have access to a GPS-equipped soil moisture meter can borrow a MGCSA- or fellow

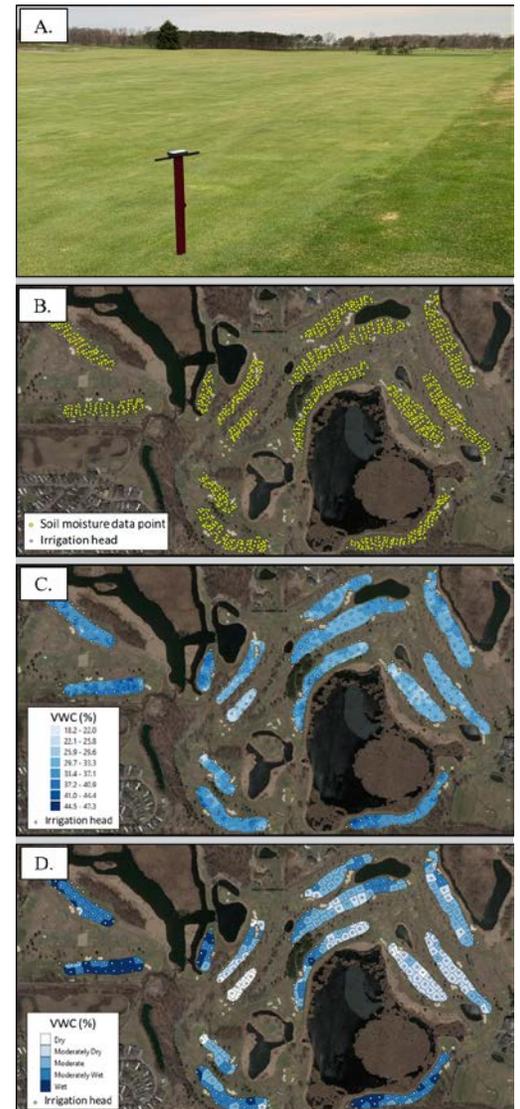


Figure 1. Data collection and soil moisture map creation process: A) a soil moisture meter (FieldScout TDR 350) collecting and georeferencing (i.e. recording latitude and longitude location) soil moisture data from a fairway; B) soil moisture data points and irrigation head locations; C) soil moisture (% volumetric water content) map illustrating variability within and between fairways; and D) irrigation classes assigned to individual heads based on surrounding soil moisture values.

## FREE SOIL MOISTURE MAPPING PROTOCOL THAT CAN BE UTILIZED BY GOLF COURSE SUPERINTENDENTS TO ASSIST THEM WITH FAIRWAY IRRIGATION DECISIONS

In an effort to entice the utilization of soil moisture maps for improved irrigation decisions, and to allow for hands-on experience with mapping technologies, the University of Minnesota and the Minnesota Golf Course Superintendents Association (MGCSA) have collaborated to create a practical strategy for golf courses to map fairway soil moisture themselves. The University has prepared a

member-owned device. MGCSA anticipates positive outcomes from this initiative, such as water conservation, legislative appreciation, state agency acknowledgement with potential long-term impact on water priorities, and added membership value.

The protocol is available to everyone and is applicable at any golf course. It can be downloaded for free [HERE](#). ♦

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# SILENT STRUGGLES

by Ron Whitten - Golf Digest, October 2019

By any measure, Dave Wilber is an expert in turfgrass. He started working on golf courses when he was 15. At 21, he became a superintendent in Denver. At 24, he took a job in Northern California and instituted one of the first fully organic golf-course maintenance programs in the country at Lake Wildwood Country Club, a quiet second-home community at the base of Donner Pass. That was in 1990, half a decade before sustainable golf became an industry trend. ➤ As a leader of the movement, Wilber began advising other superintendents, and in 1993 he left Lake Wildwood to work full time as a turfgrass consultant. He was quickly in demand and became an early presence on the Internet, first as a blogger, later as a columnist, most recently with podcasts.

Big, bulky and bearded, Wilber, now 53, is passionate about his profession. He calls himself the Turfgrass Zealot and has a stock speech about his successes.

"As an independent consultant," he says, "I've built golf courses on six continents, I've played golf on seven continents, I've worked in over 80 countries, I worked on more than 45 of the world's top-100 golf courses in some advisory capacity." Those courses include Friar's Head in New York, Kingsbarns in Scotland and Barnboulge Dunes in Australia.

Wilber is the last person you would think would try to take his life. Yet behind his gregarious façade was self-loathing. He feared not failure, but success—as more clubs beckoned him to solve their problems, the more time he'd be away from home, slapping on his master showman smile each day, retreating each evening to the isolation of a crummy motel room. He was convinced that he wasn't worthy of anything—not acclaim, not friendship, not love.

So in 2015, Wilber picked up a 90-day prescription, a beta-blocker for his heart rate, opened the bottle and swallowed its contents.

"I was thinking it would shut off my heart," Wilber says. "All it did was make me super sick. I dozed off, then woke up vomiting it all up. I'm thinking, God, I'm such a f—up I can't even off myself. I can't even get that job done."

Wilber drove himself to a local emergency room, seeking help. It wasn't the first time he'd made such a drive.

Wilber is not the only one in the turfgrass business dealing with such an issue. Maintaining a golf course is a high-risk occupation and can put one's physical well-being, personal relationships and mental health at risk. But revealing struggles with anxiety, depression or something worse is still considered taboo in this occupation, just as it is in many other lines of work.

Wilber admits his candor about his suicide attempt, which he revealed two years ago on the website Turfnet, might cost him his career. But he no longer cares. He believes it's essential to bring these issues to the forefront, because it might save someone.

"When I started writing about my struggles on Turfnet," he says, "I got an inbox full of responses from golf-course superintendents—like 60 emails—mostly supportive. One said, 'Don't tell anybody, but I've dealt with depression, too.' Another told me, 'I wanted to kill myself, too.' It was mind-numbing.

"We need to get this out in the open. Real people have real struggles, and they shouldn't have to beat themselves to death for what they are or aren't at work."

A worst-case scenario in the industry has long been, Lose Your Greens, Lose

Your Job. The concern of Wilber, as well as others going public with their mental illness, is a far more horrifying possibility: Lose Your Greens, Take Your Life.



Kasey Kauff, the superintendent at Trinity Forest in Dallas, has a tattoo that includes a semicolon, which symbolizes solidarity against suicide.

## SOBERING NUMBERS

The American Foundation for Suicide Prevention estimates that suicide is the 10th leading cause of death in the United States. In 2017, the estimates 47,173 Americans died by suicide, and there were 1.4 million attempts, though the numbers might well be under-reported.

In the past decade, there have been reports of superintendents ending their lives, most of them unconfirmed because loved ones wished to keep the information private. Perhaps the most prominent name associated with that fate is Stan George, the highly regarded, even beloved, superintendent of Prairie Dunes Country Club in Hutchinson, Kan. In his 30 years at Prairie Dunes, George had prepared the course for many prominent tournaments, including the 2002 U.S. Women's Open and the 2006 U.S. Senior Open.

At George's funeral in 2013, friends and acquaintances quietly but openly discussed the generally accepted conclusion that his death was a suicide, the official record being sealed. No one saw it coming. One friend thought George had found bliss

Continued on next page

in a cabin he had built about 20 miles from the golf course, a place where he could get away from the job. But that's where his body was found.

## HEADY HIGHS TO INCREDIBLE LOWS

At 31, Kasey Kauff was head superintendent of the Highlands Course at Atlanta Athletic Club and prepared its state-of-the-art turf grasses for the Championship. The course was so flawless that Golf Digest proclaimed it the standard by which tournament golf in the Deep South would be judged.

After a short stint in Orlando, in 2014 Kauff moved to Dallas, where he grew in the turf at the new Trinity Forest Golf Club, then prepared it for the PGA Tour's AT&T Byron Nelson the

past two years. There, four players faced a new strain of zoysia grass named for the club, which Kauff had tightly shaved everywhere to be firm, dry and springy. For his efforts, Golf Digest awarded the club its annual Green Star environmental award in 2018.

But Kauff considered himself a failure at his personal life. He bounced from incredible highs to days where he refused to leave the house, or even get out of bed. His inability to cope with his depression and anxiety led to a failed marriage and then a failed relationship. He refused to seek counseling at first, then was reluctant to confront his problems in counseling. His depression became so deep that he began thinking about how he

might kill himself. The idea became so realistic, and so frightening, that Kauff took his shotgun, which he used for duck hunting, and put it in a storage locker, then stored the shotgun shells at another location.

Do not keep them together, he remembers thinking. It's too enticing.

## DEALING WITH STRESS

Jason Haines, 34, the superintendent at Sunshine Coast Golf & Country Club northwest of Vancouver, British Columbia, has felt the stress and anxiety of his profession long as he has been in the business. For him, it's a particularly seasonal phenomenon. For six months of the year, the weather is cool and rainy, and stress is low. But every July and August, when the temperature and humidity rise to critical levels, placing his greens in jeopardy, his anxiety also rises.

"It's something I've always battled," Haines says. "The more difficult the conditions are on the golf course, the harder you have to work, and more often than not, the worse the course looks. There's no positive feedback. You're grinding away, and the course looks like crap."

The pressure of the job came to a head one weekend a decade ago, when he was superintendent at nearby Pender Harbor Golf Course. Haines was on a backhoe, digging a trench to fix an irrigation break in the middle of a fairway about 100 yards off a tee box. He'd just let one group of golfers play through when another golfer appeared on the tee and hit a ball over him and into the group ahead. Then a second golfer teed off, and the ball hit the backhoe, just inches from Haines' head. Haines screamed at the golfer, jumped off the machine and charged at him. He ran the golfer off the course and into the parking lot, cursing at him to never come back. He actually made the guy cry.

[Read More Here](#)

## SEPTEMBER IS SUICIDE AWARENESS AND PREVENTION MONTH HOW TO GET HELP, AND WARNING SIGNS WHEN SOMEONE IS AT RISK

The toll-free number for the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline, **1-800-273-8255**, provides free, confidential support in distress and is monitored 24/7. The number automatically transfers callers to a trained crisis worker in their area code. The organization's website, [suicidepreventionlifeline.org](http://suicidepreventionlifeline.org), offers additional assistance, including these warning signs to help determine if someone is at risk:

- Talking of wanting to die.
- Talking of wanting to kill themselves.
- Looking for a way to kill themselves, like searching online or purchasing a weapon.
- Talking about feeling hopeless.
- Talking about having no reason to live.
- Talking about being a burden to others.
- An increase in the use of alcohol or drugs.
- Anxious or agitated behavior.
- Acting recklessly.
- Sleeping excessively.
- Getting too little sleep.
- Withdrawing or isolating themselves.
- Showing rage.
- Talking about seeking revenge.
- Extreme mood swings.

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# THE SEASON OF NEW LOGOS

## GAPstract Spring Ford's water pump

By Dan Scofield

**W**HEN YOU come off the No. 9 green, it will be there waiting for you. Although now incapable of quenching thirst, it's become an icon of sorts, representing all the life being pumped into Spring Ford Country Club.

"The pump itself has become a staple for our club, and it's done wonders for us in a few different ways. We've become completely associated with it, and that was the plan all along," said Spring Ford's pro emeritus Tony DeGisi, the mastermind behind the pump.

It's not the first time a GAP Member Club has found a unique identity unrelated to golf itself. There's White Manor Country Club and its metal milk jugs; Squires Golf Club's top hat and even Stonewall's cows. But when you think "water pump," Spring Ford springs to mind.

"I'm sure many people don't know the background or significance of it, but when you get a look at the water pump itself, or of our logo, you immediately think of Spring Ford. It symbolizes us," said golf professional Rich Steinmetz, 47, of Gilbertsville, Pa.

Spring Ford was established in 1924 as a local social gathering spot. As one would assume, water bottles and fountains were not

abundant in the early days of the club. In the 1950s, a water pump, nestled in a grove near the middle of the course, was installed to provide drinking water to players.

"Still to this day, I can remember picking up the tin cup attached, giving a few pumps and taking sips," said DeGisi, the club's head pro from 1973-2009. "It was a lifesaver for many golfers out there, especially on hot summer days."

In 1984, the pump was removed from the course and stowed away as an afterthought. The club's 75th anniversary ultimately resurrected its liquid past.

During a renovation period in 1998, DeGisi was sitting alongside famed course architect Gil Hanse and former Merion Golf Club professional Bill Kittleman when he came up with the idea to modernize Spring Ford's look. The club's previous logo displayed a basic tree

with a stream running through it and needed "something fresh that would pop out." It was a no-brainer: Spring Ford turned to its recognizable piece of metal.

"Gil and Bill both asked if our club had something unique, something to represent Spring Ford. I knew right away that it had to be the pump, and after that day, the rest is history," said DeGisi, 73, of Royersford, Pa.

Nowadays, the refined structure sits adjacent to the No. 9 green and No. 10 tee, surrounded by a bed of colorful flowers, carefully picked and placed. At the base, text containing its origin reads: "Columbia Pump Co., Columbiana, Ohio."

"It's found a suitable home for good," said DeGisi.

Over the years, additional water pumps were added to the club's arsenal, this time in the form of antique tee markers on the first tee.

"One of our members found those and everyone instantly loved them. If anyone could find, say another 17 sets, we'd love to add more to the collection," said Steinmetz.

Its working days are long gone, but as long as the resurrected figure serves as the club's face, Spring Ford will continue to pump out a phenomenal country club experience. ○

GAPstract investigates and unearths Member Club antiques and items throughout the region. If your club has a unique relic, we want to hear about it. Send all recommendations to [dscfield@gapgolf.org](mailto:dscfield@gapgolf.org).

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