



ASSOCIATION
OF GOLF COURSE
SUPERINTENDENTS

The Bonnie Greensward



Our 94th Year

2019 Spring Issue

First Green is Growing

PAGCS Embraces Team Model to Build Program

Taking a cue from the collaborative model that Philadelphia Cricket Club has used for the First Green field trips at its facility, the PAGCS has begun working with industry organizations like The First Tee, GAP, PGA, USGA, watersheds, arboretums, universities and more to grow this program in the region.

This spring, three PAGCS members hosted First Green events at their facility and the plans are to add more events each year.

First Green events are STEM education field trips that use golf and the golf course as the labs. Ages have ranged from 3rd grade to high school in the PAGCS region.

The typical field trip lasts about two hours and the curriculum is driven by



the ages of the students, the school districts/teachers, the host and facility and the collaborative team. **See pages 22, 25-26, 29-30 for more coverage of this amazing program.**

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:
klibsch@pagcs.org

2019 Calendar

--Member-Guest:
Monday, July 15,
Coatesville
Country Club

--September Outing:
Monday,
September 16,
Old York Road
Country Club

--Golf Championship:
Monday, October 7,
Lookaway
Golf Club

--Annual Meeting:
Monday,
November 4,
Radley Run
Country Club



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The PM

It took Mother Nature a few months to realize it was a new year, but the weather since the end of March seemed a promising start to 2019. After the season we all experienced last year, it is nice to finally be making progress on our respective courses.

Many of us are/were still recovering from the excessive rainfall throughout last summer and fall. Although we did not receive a tremendous amount of snow this winter, conditions were still saturated at times, which limited off season maintenance practices as we did want to create additional damage from our equipment. Even though we do not know how the rest of the year is going to be, hopefully weather conditions are on our side this season as we all deserve a break!

Finding enough quality labor continues to be a struggle for many of us this Spring as we try to create our teams to perform regular, early season maintenance and prepare for the season ahead. Various job searching sites have not been successful, so many of us have had to rely on full-time staff to fill in the voids as we started the season, along with making adjustments to our maintenance practices without sacrificing conditions on the course.

I have had success with an employee referral program over the past couple of seasons that allows my staff to bring in friends and family members to join our staff. Now, many students are finishing their school year, so hopefully they will look to join the labor force and want to experience working in the golf industry! Communicating with Club officials, not only about course conditions, but the labor struggle, is critical this time of year. Keeping everyone informed will hopefully answer why certain maintenance tasks are being performed differently than previous seasons or not at all.

We are very fortunate to have such a strong Association made up of so many dedicated industry professionals. The PAGCS continues to grow, year after year, thanks to each of our members' and allied vendors' support. The Association offers a wealth of resources and knowledge that is not only valuable to each of its members, but also to the future of the industry. Our first event of the 2019 season took place at Walnut Lane Golf Club, supporting The First Tee program as we continue to strive and grow the game of golf.

The events committee, chaired by Doug Rae, has put together an exciting schedule of events for this upcoming season featuring a number of golf courses from all over our region. I encourage each of you to take the time and participate in the events for this upcoming season. If you cannot attend, send an assistant or your mechanic so they can experience all that the PAGCS has to offer.

Please check out the Google calendar on our website for any specific information regarding our monthly events. The time spent networking and the camaraderie with your peers will be well worth your investment. This is also a time when we as members can show appreciation and support to all of our affiliated vendors who support our Association and each of us as PAGCS members.

Continued, see "PM," p. 4





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The PAGCS and our members have amped up our First Green initiatives. Three events highlight the Spring calendar: Alan Fitzgerald at LedgeRock hosted high school math students in April—future labor source maybe, Chris Walton at Coatesville hosted the entire 4th grade classes of Caln Elementary, and come June, Dan Meersman and Robb Moulds at Philadelphia Cricket Club will welcome the all the 3rd graders from Whitmarsh Elementary. See more on these events and The First Green program on pages throughout this newsletter.

On behalf of the entire PAGCS Board of Directors, I hope everyone has had a great start to the 2019 golf season. If you have any questions, comments or suggestions on how we

can improve your experience or the Association, please feel contact me or any PAGCS board member at any time. Thank you for your continued support!

—Derrick Wozniak, President



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The 'Father of American Golf' lived in Philadelphia

by R. John Burnes

No one can definitively say what signifies the start of the golf season in Philadelphia, but for some it's Masters week, and count me among them. I bunker up in the basement with our four-legged children, Hogan and Tilly, for the start of the tournament originally known as the Augusta National Invitation Tournament, and don't return to civilization until late Sunday once the prized



*"The Father of American golf" Alexander Findlay with the best golfer in the world at the time, Harry Vardon, in Florida.
(Photo courtesy of Richard Findlay)*

Cont. next page

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“Findlay,” continued

green jacket is awarded to the Masters champion.

The land Augusta National sits on today was the site of the former Fruitland nursery. Its founders, however – Bobby Jones, Clifford Roberts and Alister MacKenzie – believed it would make an ideal location for what has become the Sistine Chapel of American Golf architecture and its premier event, the Masters.

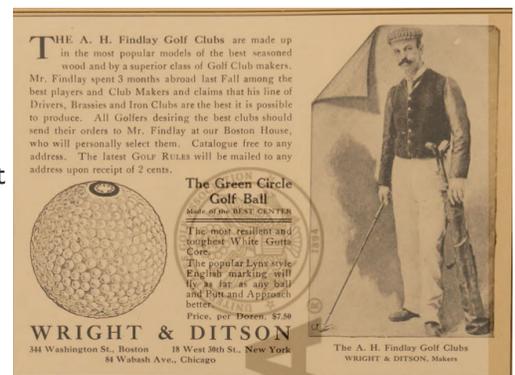
This simple idea and rudimentary beginnings have led to arguably the most watched and talked about event in the game. And when I think about who started this crazed game in America, and its humble beginnings, I think of Alexander Findlay.

“He clearly belongs as one of the rec-

ognized golf pioneers in America,” said world-renowned golf historian Sidney Matthew. “He was a prolific builder of golf courses, an excellent player and even an accomplished club maker. He did everything in the early days of the game in this country.”

If you attempted to write and submit a movie script on Findlay, you wouldn’t get away with it. It’s too hard to believe that a young boy, born at sea between Scotland and England in 1866 to an English officer and mother, would become what some historians credit to be the father of American golf.

As a child, Findlay would be given golf clubs by his mother in Scotland and



Alexander Findlay was a leader in designing golf equipment. (Photo courtesy of the U.S. Golf Association)

go on to break nearly every course record in and around his hometown, all while teaching his brothers and friends the game with which he instantly fell in love. He vowed to keep his promise to his mother to never

“Findlay” cont. next page





“Findlay,” cont.

drink or smoke, and when he she passed away early in his life, the young Findlay looked west for new land to traverse.

Around 1887, a neighborhood friend would invite him over to America, bragging in letters about the beauty, terrain and opportunity the Wild West promised. Findlay arrived in New York City, and when he asked where the nearest golf course was, the citizens of the Big Apple laughed. He headed West to the great plains of Nebraska to meet up with his friend as a rancher, and once again realized there weren't any golf courses. So, he built one.

The defenders of the Findlay legacy believe, that this month, 132 years ago, Alexander and his pal Edward Millar built a six-hole layout in what is now Fullerton, Nebraska. And therefore, it would pioneer the game in America as the first golf course ever in the United States.

“When Alex came to America, little to no one was playing golf. When he died, over five million people were playing. So I think he did a pretty good job,” said his grandson, Richard Findlay, in a recent interview.

A few years later, word spread of this game of chasing a small white ball around a field to a railroad baron by the name of Henry Flagler, who would hire Findlay to build golf courses near his rail line. Flagler needed a draw for folks up north to visit Florida and this new game of golf proved to be the right antidote.

Findlay would build courses in Florida – including its oldest, the Breakers at Palm Beach – as far west as Montana, down to Texas, throughout the mid-Atlantic region and up to New England. He would eventually settle in the Chestnut Hill area and build Llanerch Country Club in Havertown.

Wright and Ditson, the largest sporting goods company in the country, would hire Findlay to not only build courses, but craft his signature golf clubs as well. He would travel around the country on commercial tours, exhibiting the products to folks intrigued with the game and often setting new course records along the way. He enlisted his friend from the old country, Harry Vardon, who was the best player in the world, and they would have exhibition matches to stir further interest.



***The Findlay Family Memorial in Ivy Hill Cemetery.
(Photo by R. John Burnes)***

“Alex was literally known throughout the world,” Richard Findlay said. “He taught or played with every president from Grover Cleveland through Franklin Delano Roosevelt. He once had a meeting with the Pope trying to persuade him to take up the game, to which His Holiness quipped, ‘I don’t want Catholics playing on Sundays.’”

Findlay would work in the last chapter of his career, leading the sporting goods division of John Wanamakers department stores in Philadelphia. He died in 1942. The family plot is in Ivy Hill Cemetery on East Mt. Airy Avenue. He built more than 100 courses across America, and his last and perhaps most important, in Fairmount Park.

Walnut Lane Golf course in Roxborough, just over Walnut Lane Bridge from West Mt. Airy, is a tough and tight municipal course open to the public.

Home of The First Tee program administered by the World Golf Foundation, Walnut Lane provides a platform for the youth development organization, introducing the game of golf and its inherent values to kids and teens. Through after-school and in-school programs, it helps shape the lives of young people from all walks of life by reinforcing values like integrity, respect and perseverance through the game of golf.

I’m not sure if Findlay is in fact the father of American Golf, but I am sure that he would be proud of his legacy.

R. John Burnes can be reached at rjburnes@yahoo.com. This article is reprinted with permission from the author as well as the Chestnut Hill Local.



Student Voice

Class trip to study a golf hole at The Bucks Club —by Jarret Kramer

On March 18, Doc Linde took the Case Studies in Turf class to visit the Bucks Club in nearby Jamison, PA. The purpose of the trip was to study the problems with hole #4.

This was our fourth case study in the class. Doc split the class into two groups of three. One member in each group was assigned to be the project manager. Each group had to collect information, analyze it, and then present their findings to the class the next week. The presentation had to include possible solutions and then the one we recommend.

Upon arriving to the course that morning, we met superintendent Joe Agnew. Mr. Agnew welcomed us and we quickly got on to golf carts and rode out to hole #4. We had to stay on the cart paths because the course was really wet that day. Our first stop was at the tee boxes where Mr. Agnew gave us the history of the hole and the challenges he has with maintaining it over the years. From the tee, the hole is rather scenic since the green sits about 50 feet in elevation below the tees, there is a huge sycamore tree to the right of the green, and a stream to the left.

One challenge in maintaining the hole is that there are springs that are coming to the surface just up slope of the fairway and the green. Depending on the weather, this extra water may result in soggy turf, reduced

playability and sometimes turf death. At times, one spring surfaces at the edge of the green and the extra water flows across the green. We could see an area on the green that was likely sodded last season. Mr. Agnew said that was his typical problem spot each year.

Some of the other challenges of the green include being surrounded by a forest on the south and west sides which contributes to shade and reduced air movement, it sits low in elevation, it's a push-up green with no internal drainage, and is nearly 90 % annual bluegrass.

After visiting the tee boxes, we walked to the green to get the perspective of the golfer that walks when they play. Each group then thoroughly inspected the entire green

“Students” cont. next page

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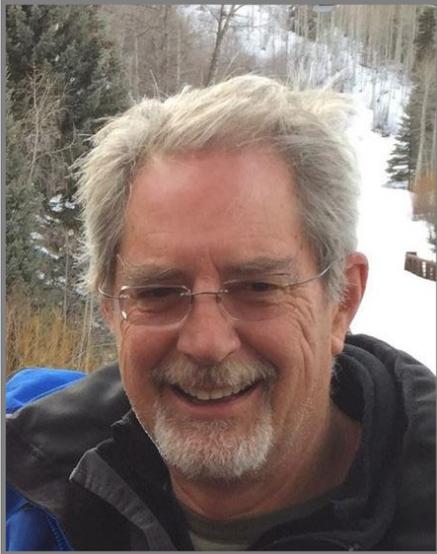
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Member News



PAGCS Member Mike Hutchison

Thomas Michael (Mike) Hutchison of Charleston, SC, formerly Clarksburg, MD, died on Thursday, May 30, 2019, after a short battle with cancer. Known to most as Mike, he was also known to many friends and colleagues as Hutch, to his college crowd as Goof, and to his beloved grandson as Geezer.

Where to send condolences

www.staufferfuneralhome.com

Where to send donations

Blue Ridge Adaptive Snow Sports
at www.brasski.org

Mike was born to Thomas Hutchison and Jane Hall Colesworthy Hutchison in West Chester Pennsylvania, July 28, 1952, the third of four sons. The Hutchison family moved quite a bit throughout his childhood giving rise to his lifelong ability to meet and make new friends easily. He graduated from Wake Forest University in 1974.

Mike's career was primarily in construction related sales, most recently as the owner/operator of Sports Aggregates LLC, a materials and equipment supplier to golf courses throughout the mid-Atlantic region.

In recent years, Mike became a certified ski instructor at Liberty Mountain Resort in Fairfield, PA, fulfilling a lifelong desire to be a ski bum. He was scheduled to begin teaching at Deer Valley Resort in Utah prior to his diagnosis in winter 2018.

Mike and Cathy retired in Charleston, SC in 2018. He is survived by his wife Cathy, children Matt (Dana) and Lindsey, brothers Bob, Don, and Doug, and grandson, Malcolm.

The family plans a celebration of Mike's life in September. In lieu of flowers, donations can be made to Blue Ridge Adaptive Snow Sports at www.brasski.org.

Arrangements are with Stauffer Funeral Home, Frederick. Expressions of sympathy may be shared with the family at www.staufferfuneralhome.com.

***Have news to share?
Please send it to the
PAGCS office.***

"Member News" cont. next page





Member News

Where are they now...

Whistle it up for Henry Wetzel

By Mike Fidanza, PhD



Henry 'Butch' Wetzel spent his career at St. David's Golf Club (Wayne, PA), but now he's the full time conductor and chief engineering of his own railroad.

The conductor hat was a gift many years ago from Bob Oechsle [Bob was a long time PAGCS member who passed recently]. The trains are the American Flyer "S" gauge.

Butch started his model train career at age 3 when he received his first American Flyer train set. He prefers the traditional steam powered locomotives. He now spends the majority of his time "working-on-the-railroad."

All aboard!

Henry Wetzel served on the PAGCS Board for 30 years, first as a Director and then 27 years as the Board Secretary, accumulating three decades of service to the PAGCS. He was awarded the PAGCS's highest honor, the Eb Steiniger Award, when he retired from the Board in 2012.



"Member News" cont. next page





Member News

Where are they now...

Wartman Family Sounds the Trumpet

Long Time PAGCS Member Bennett Wartman, also known for performing “Taps” at PAGCS annual meetings, is also the father of Mason Wartman. If you don’t know Mason, maybe you know about the famous Philly pizza shop, Rosa’s, that fed the homeless. Mason was the founder and owner until recently, and the shop was named after his mom, Rose.

Mason’s efforts caught the eye of Ellen Degeneres and he appeared on her show in 2016, and was

awarded a grant. Mason and company closed up shop recently due to rising costs. Recently, Bennett checked in with a family update.

“Mason since childhood, always took things in stride; as he is doing now,” stated Bennett.

Since beginning the transition from businessman in the turf industry to retirement, Bennett keeps busy, playing his music in churches and rehearsing with various bands, as well as performing in concerts and for charities around the region.

Keeping busy herself, Bennett’s wife Rose has taken up archery and bridge. “When I’m playing the trumpets, I joke about how nervous I become when I see a new bag of apples in the fridge. (I still remember a little of the William Tell Overture from high school.)”

Bennett concluded by saying, “I miss my old friends from the Association — it was such a big part of my life for such a long time. Say hello to the old timers for me, and I’ll try to get to meeting.”

Mason Wartman [right], now 32, was a Penn graduate working on Wall Street before heading back to Philly with a new vision. He opened Rosa’s Pizza on 11th St., near Market – an area frequented by many of the city’s homeless. The \$1-a-slice model paved the way for a growing pay-it-forward effort that helped many a homeless person eat as well as get back on their feet. Over the years, it is estimated that the shop gave away 250,000 to 350,000 slices.





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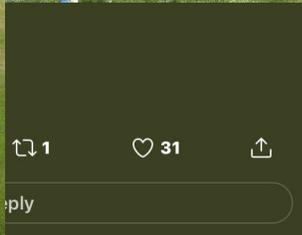
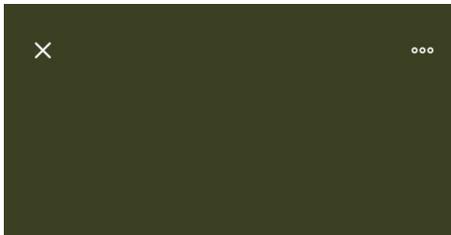
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Project Insider

The Scoop on Springhaven's Drainage Project



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- ☞ Replaced sod being tamped
- ☞ Green is playable immediately upon completion (these guys are that good)

We did two greens in spring of 2017. Members were so gung-ho about how good the greens were the day they were done, we got unexpected and random approval to do three more in



GCSAA Renames Program

TETCP is now the Equipment Management Certificate Program (EMCP) in order to better align with the program's objectives. While the name has changed, the content of the exams, study guides and the testing objective/competencies addressed remain the same.

Is Your Mechanic a Member?

Both GCSAA and PAGCS offer memberships under the Mechanic Class.

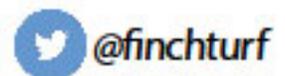
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For information on GCSAA, visit www.GCSAA.org

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GOLF COURSE SUPERINTENDENTS ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA

GIS Has New Partners, New Locations

—Headed to Phoenix in 2024

Longtime Golf Industry Show partners the **Golf Course Builders Association of America (GCBA)** and the **American Society of Golf Course Architects (ASGCA)** have both increased their commitment to the event and have been named presenting partners.

As presenting partners, GCBA's and ASGCA's engagement in GIS

will align more closely with the overall event offerings for golf course management professionals, including superintendents, architects, builders, course owners, equipment managers and more. This will include enhanced education and joint opportunities available to all attendees that will further the close links between the design, construction and management of golf courses.

The next Golf Industry Show will take place Jan. 25-30, 2020, in Orlando. Upcoming shows include **Las Vegas in 2021, San Diego in 2022 and Orlando in 2023.**

In addition, the GIS partners are pleased to announce that GIS will take place in Phoenix in 2024. The choice of Phoenix is the result of an updated GIS strategy that will

Continued, next page

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GCSAA, continued

rotate the show between Orlando, San Diego and a non-coastal, more central location.

Several years of post-GIS member surveys have indicated that GCSAA members want the event to be in a non-coastal city once every three years. The surveys also show that variety regarding the selection of non-coastal GIS sites is important. As a part of the updated GIS strategy, GIS will be rotated between five to six non-coastal sites, with no city hosting the show more than once every nine years.

During the 2019 Annual Meeting, held Feb. 7 at the Golf Industry Show in San Diego, the member-

ship approved bylaws changes to implement Facility Membership, Multi-Member Promotion, and Friend of the Golf Course Superintendent. The efforts aim to support GCSAA's mission of serving its members, advancing the golf course superintendent profession, and enhancing the enjoyment, growth and vitality of the game of golf.

"GCSAA has something to offer golf facilities of every size," says GCSAA CEO Rhett Evans. "With the new Facility Membership, smaller operations will have access to GCSAA resources for their whole team at a price point in line with their operation. With the Multi-Member Promotion, larger

facilities will save when they add a GCSAA member."

Facility Membership provides access to GCSAA's resources and services, particularly those that can help with training team members, expanding team members' knowledge, and creating efficiencies that will result in savings for the golf facility. To be eligible for Facility Membership, a facility must not have had a GCSAA member in the past three years, and the facility's green fee must be below the 50% median in its region (regions will be based on GCSAA's field staff regions). Dues are \$200 per year for the facility and its employees.

GCSAA, Cont. next page





GOLF COURSE SUPERINTENDENT ASSOCIATION

GCSAA, continued

Through the Multi-Member Promotion, everyone on a maintenance staff can benefit from the information and professional development opportunities that come with GCSAA membership, allowing them to improve the efficiency and profitability of the facility. Facilities can receive a 10% discount on membership dues (up to \$100 in savings per nine- or 18-hole equivalent).

Those who join GCSAA as a Friend of the Golf Course Superintendent will receive a newsletter and other items to identify them

as a Friend, and will get information about GCSAA programs such as [First Green](#), GCSAAPAC and more.

“We have seen an increased interest in GCSAA outside of golf course management professionals as we’ve raised our profile through golf advocacy efforts and our STEM education program, First Green,” says Evans. “The Friend of the Golf Course Superintendent membership gives those who love golf and appreciate the key role superintendents play in enjoyment of the game the opportunity to show their support.”

Friend of the Golf Course Superintendent memberships for individuals are at \$50, \$100 and \$200 levels of support. In addition, there is a \$400 membership for groups of up to 10 people, such as green committees and private club boards. Dues from this membership class will support advocacy, turfgrass research, environmental efforts and scholarships.

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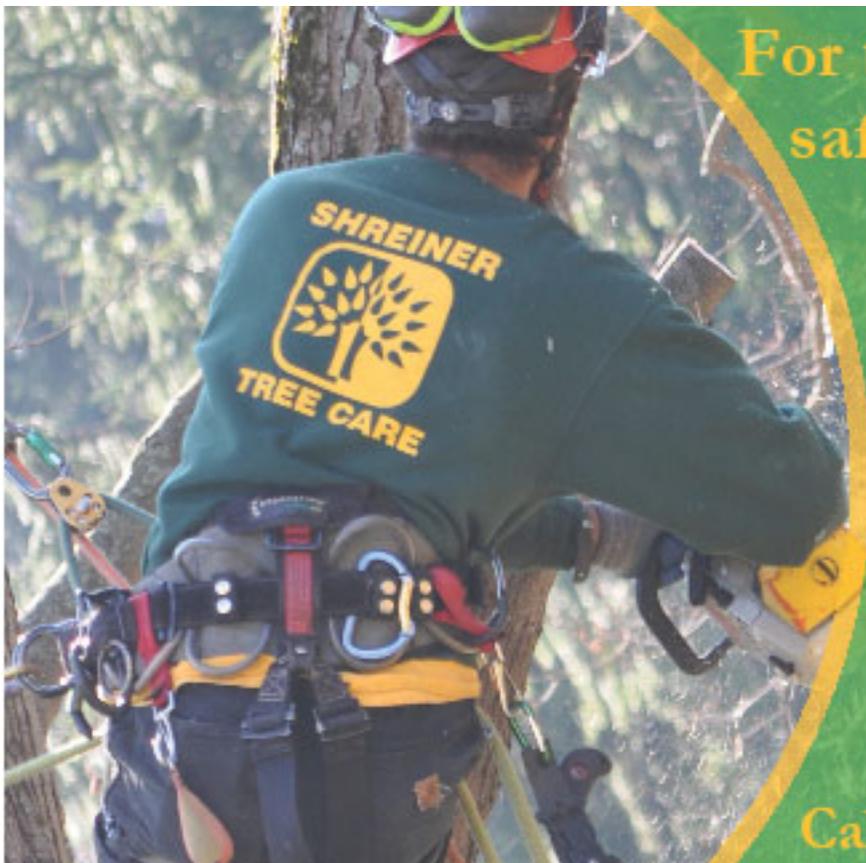


First Green Spring Highlights

Two First Green events happened in April and May of this year. First up, Alan Fitzgerald hosted a group of high school math students from Governor Mifflin School District on 4/23 at Ledgerrock. On May 7, Coatesville Country Club and Chris Walton hosted the entire 4th grade from Caln Elementary. Here are some highlights of these trips. Be sure to check the Summer issue of the newsletter for highlights from the June 5 event at Philadelphia Cricket Club.



See pg. 27 for more Highlights



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Green Program Nets PAGCS Profit

Local chapters of the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America are winning big with Cushman’s “Growing Greens” program. For every lease or purchase of a new Cushman Hauler utility vehicle, \$50 is donated to the local chapter of the purchasing course.

Textron Specialized Vehicles Inc., which manufactures and designs certain Cushman vehicles, is a Textron Inc. (NYSE:TXT) company. Through its Cushman brand, Textron Specialized Vehicles is a Silver Partner of GCSAA, and is proud to further support golf course superintendents with Growing Greens.

“Cushman’s support of the industry both locally and nationally are impres-

sive,” said J. Rhett Evans, CEO of the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America. “Its dedication to advancing the superintendent profession and growing the game of golf is continually demonstrated by various programs that support GCSAA. It’s a nice way to give back.”

Superintendents can customize their Hauler utility vehicles to fit their course’s specific needs. Cushman performed extensive customer research and listened to feedback, which led engineers to design a high-performing, customizable golf utility vehicle with a large bed, practical dash and a wide array of accessories that enhance the functionality of the vehicle.

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PAGCS members can schedule a demonstration of the new Hauler and get more information on participating in the Growing Greens program by contacting Jeff Haas or TJ Hart from Golf Cart Services, Inc. -- your Cushman sales representatives.



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First Green Spring Highlights Continued





Evolution of One First Green Program

The Seeds of Ledgerrock’s First Green is Helping Grow a Program

The first First Green Event happened by accident. Ledgerrock has a member who was involved with the school district and had sponsored an event at the club. The school wanted to tie it together and have the students build a mini golf course for the night. The member suggested the staff get involved and Andy Miller (Ledgerrock’s teaching pro who is huge in kids golf) asked me to go with him to the school to chat to the kids about golf and what makes a good green.

The teachers were very excited about the visit and asked about how else we could make it work. I mentioned the First Green and the teachers got together with the entire school district and we met about an event.

It went from nothing to a dual event with high school students in the morning and elementary in the afternoon. I had a lot of fantastic help, and the stations were a hit, as was the whole event. The biggest surprise was how much the turf people got from it and en-

joyed the day. The stations for the day were:

- ☞ Cool Tools for Golf Course Maintenance - basically it was a summary of what golf course management is
- ☞ Irrigation -
- ☞ Soil - both physical and chemical properties
- ☞ IPM - to show how golf courses are good for the environment

“Seeds,” Continued, p.29





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“Seeds,” continued

- ∞ Math - for the elementary kids it was measuring shapes etc, and for the older students Andy used his launch monitor to show how math is involved.
- ∞ Stream management - one of the teachers did this and was excited to have stream to teach in

∞ Golf appreciation - basically putting

It seemed like a really tough thing to organize but it was very easy once everything was set up on the day.

The plan was to follow up with another one in the spring but the school schedule getting near to the end of the year coupled with the weather meant a very short

window. Since it was too difficult too coordinate in the time frame, we changed the format to accommodate one math class. This allowed more time to be spent at fewer stations so the students had more time to learn. The big hit was the ride on the limo carts to a project site. The weather couldn't have been better.

The stations this time consisted of

“Seeds,” continued p.30





“Seeds,” continued

Andy’s math class with the launch monitor. We also had one on IPM and how math is used to calculate products, quantities for ordering, etc

The other station was at a new bunker project where students got to measure areas to calculate quantities for sod and sand, etc

The plan was to have the students bring information back to the classroom where they could work on problems, and for the teachers to be able to show real world uses of the math and how important it is in everyday life. One of the teachers told me of a math problem about fescue and bluegrass mixes they had prior and how the visit to the course was able to show the students how they need that in real life as they "hate word math problems,"

There is no set structure to what you can do, teach or how the day runs. Going in having a schedule for the stations etc and having a rough guideline for the stations is essential but beyond that it can be improvised as each group of kids can respond differently - the big thing is to try and get the same info across each time while keeping them interested.

The smaller kids love playing with stuff - they'll gladly aerate a green with a soil probe. The high schoolers are a little tougher but if they are forced into hands on stuff they actually respond well.

The plan going forward is to have another big event in the fall. The assistant school superintendent has come up with a rotation though the elementary, middle and high schools where each graduating class will have done the First Green at least once during their time in the school.

I also was very lucky to have fantastic help when I did it. I can't thank Mike Fianza, George Skawski (& Andy Donelson at Turf Equipment), Jake Straub, Tom Valentine, Chad Oxenreider, Kristen Liebsch, Chris Walton and his assistant Rory, for all their help at the events.



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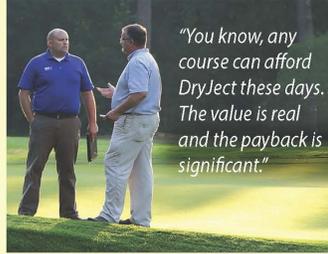
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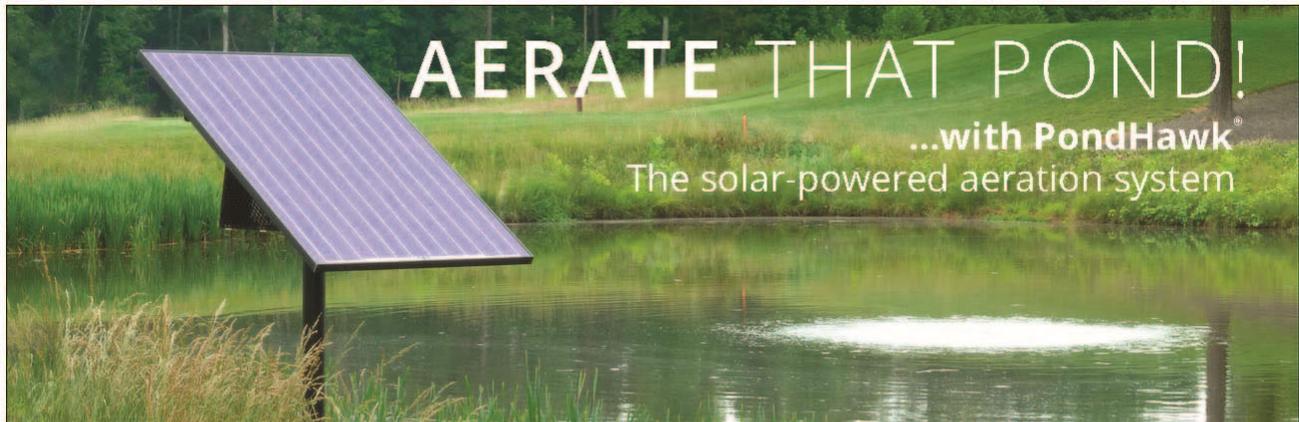


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“Students,” Cont. from p. 8



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complex including bunkers, drain caps and outlets, and the putting surface. Mr. Agnew mentioned that there was drainage installed years ago to divert the surfacing springs but it does not seem to be enough. Each group took lots of photos to help document what they saw and to use in their upcoming presentation.

On the way back to Mr. Agnew’s shop, he showed us another green complex that he has some challenges with as well. It’s was interesting to hear the things he recently did to prevent runoff from washing out the green walk-off area. Plus he explained the difficulty some adjacent homeowners give him when cutting trees that are near their properties.

The Bucks Club case study was one of my favorites because I got to see, smell, and touch the problem in person. It was a real world problem that is difficult to solve. In the week after the visit, my group met to discuss what we saw, define the problems, and determine possible solutions. Our group decided to install a more extensive drainage system to intercept the spring water before it gets onto the green and to do some grading around the bunkers and the surround to get rid of surface water more quickly. After both group presentations, Doc Linde assigned us part two of the case where we had to make a budget for solving the drainage problems and do a total rebuild of the green to USGA specs.

Jarrett Kramer majored in turf at Delaware Valley University and will be working full-time at Congressional CC.





Assistant's Corner

Aronimink Assistant Shares What It Was Like to Prep for the BMW

by Nick Sujkowski

For this addition of the Assistant's Corner, I sat down with a friend and fellow Assistant Superintendent, Nicholas Carothers.

Nick is an Assistant at Aronimink Golf Club, the host of the 2018 BMW Championship. The BMW Championship is the third leg of the FedEx Cup Playoffs and boasts an impressive field of players each year. Nick took time out of his busy schedule to talk all about his experience with the BMW and shared some insight into what it takes to host a big-time PGA Tour event such as this.

How many people were on staff to prepare for the tournament?

We had John (Superintendent), three Assistant Superintendents, an Assistant-in-Training, three interns, an Irrigation Technician, a Horticulturalist with her two assistants, our Mechanic, and usually a crew of about 15 people.

What kind of preparations went into getting the course ready for the tournament?

It all started with the Master Plan renovation. The Master Plan was created by Gil Hanse using aerial photos found in the Dallin Collec-

tion, which contains photos of many area courses from the 1920s and 1930s.

The scope of the work included expanding almost all the greens back to their original size and shape to reclaim lost area and pins. We expanded fairways and limited the amount of rough leading into fairway bunkers. The tees were reconfigured to their original free-form shapes as well as bringing them down to the grade of the rest of the playing surfaces to make the course flow more easily and make it very easy to walk (Aronimink is predominantly walking only).

We also added new tees to increase length and on top of all that we redid all bunkers and added about 100 more than there previously were. In addition to the Master Plan there was a lot of work required to clearly indicate all out of bounds areas throughout the entire course. This called for a lot of tree pruning to gain a line of sight between all out of bounds markers.

Other than that we stuck to our normal routines until just before the tournament. At this time we

started to add extra cuts and rolls to maintain speed and kept the course very well regulated to limit growth.

How did the tournament affect your agronomic programs?

We basically looked at the calendar and started with Sunday of the tournament and worked backwards. Sunday is obviously when you want the course to be at peak condition so we started there and tried to time PGR applications, fertilizers, cultural practices, etc. and worked our way back to the start of the season.

What challenges did your team face?

The biggest challenge for us was the weather. The summer of 2018 was not ideal for growing conditions in the Philadelphia Area and the week of the BMW was no exception.

The week started off with extreme heat to the point that caddies were being pulled out because of heat exhaustion. Then leading into the weekend we received heavy rains, and finally finished the tournament on Monday with golfers wearing gloves and

Cont. page 37





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Continued from Pg. 35

winter hats. The weather was extremely unpredictable but I think we did the best we could with what we were given.

Is there anything you would have changed or done differently in hindsight?

I don't believe so. I think we prepared and organized ourselves very well all year and when it came time to put on the tournament we were in a great position. You just can't predict the weather unfortunately.

What did you learn from hosting the BMW?

The renovations were a great experience to be a part of but also

just the day-to-day preparations for the course were huge. We do a ton of scouting and monitoring for different pests so that we can plan our next move and always stay on top of any issues that may arise. From a personnel perspective, it was exciting to be a part of the leadership team of such a big event and to manage so many moving parts was a very good learning experience.

Please share:

We want to hear from you!

- ☞ project you performed,
- ☞ budgeting tactics you implemented, etc.,
- ☞ please feel free to email me at nicksuj@gmail.com.

I look forward to connecting with all of you as we move forward in our careers.

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