



George Ley [center] with current PAGCS president to his left, flanked by PAGCS past presidents

ASSOCIATION AWARDS TOP HONOR FOR FIRST TIME IN FOUR YEARS:

GEORGE LEY RECEIVES EB STEINIGER AWARD

This year's Annual Meeting of the PAGCS featured a very special presentation. On Monday, November 4, 2019, the Association bestowed its highest honor, the Eb Steiniger Award, on long time member George E. Ley.

This award is presented to an individual in the turfgrass profession who exemplifies the spirit of Eberhard Steiniger, CGCS. Eb Steiniger, who passed away in 2002, served as PAGCS president in 1966 and 1967. He dedicated his life to the game

of golf by advancing the profession of golf course superintendent. His innovative research, mentoring of future superintendents, and professional involvement locally and nationally have made him a legend in the profession.

This year, former recipient Frank T. Shuman nominated George Ley saying, in part, "George supports the PAGCS, PA Turfgrass Council, The First Tee of Philadelphia and any worthy industry cause. George is there when you need him."

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>>EVENTS

PAGCS TOY DRIVE AND CHRISTMAS PARTY

Thursday, December 19,
Duffers Pub, Route 1
Concordville; 1-4 p.m.

Please bring an unwrapped toy/gift to benefit Toys for CHOP through the Matthew Renk Foundation

EASTERN PA TURF CONFERENCE AND TRADE SHOW;

Friday, Jan. 24,
Shady Maple Conference
Center, East Earl, PA;
7 a.m. to 3 p.m.

[Click for Event Details](#)

GOLF INDUSTRY SHOW

January 25-30, 2020,
Orange County Convention
Center, Orlando, FL;

Equipment Managers [p. 26]
Assistants [pg 27]

Education and networking events all week long, including the annual PA Hospitality Suite – check your inboxes for more information to come

HIGHLIGHT

New website rolls out before the first of the year



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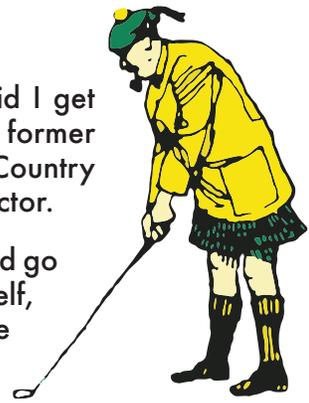
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>>THE PM

As I begin to write this, I say to myself, well, how did I get here? In my case, it turns out the "Talking Head" was former PAGCS President Don Brown from White Manor Country Club. He called back in 2004, asking me to be a Director.

But, really, I guess it all started when I would see my dad go to work every day in a suit and tie, and I said to myself, that's not what I want to do. My father loved the game of golf and he joined Coatesville C.C., where I got to play as much as I wanted. I never learned to be great at golf, but always enjoyed playing with my dad and my brothers – that and the fact that my dad had an account for food so I found myself getting hotdogs and sodas all the time.



But why a Golf Course Superintendent? Raising a family of four children, my dad had us kids working early in life. I was already a paperboy and also started caddying at the age of 13 at Whitford C.C. I made a name for myself as the little redhead kid that grew like a weed.

Amazingly, I caddied for Paul Brandon from Finch and Jim Carville from Lawn and Golf on the regular, and had no idea they worked in this industry. I liked caddying, but always had an interest in what the guys did on the grounds crew. I decided to pursue a four-year degree from Penn State in Turfgrass Science.

I began my career at Hershey's Mill Golf Club in 1993 and then moved on to Downingtown C.C. in 1995 to do my internship and work on the renovation with Jeff Broadbelt and Gil Hanse. At this point in my career, I really learned the dedication and work-ethic it takes to become a Golf Course Superintendent. Jeff Broadbelt, a mentor of mine, was also working on his own project of designing French Creek Golf Club, where I got my chance to be the Grow-in Superintendent. This was another turning point in my career: building a golf course from scratch with the Gil Hanse design team and the George E. Ley Company. I learned a lot and also learned the politics that go along with being a Golf Course Superintendent.

I left that job to take on a job in sales. This experience gave me a better perspective on what it's like to be on the other side of the table of a sales call, and I gained more respect for our Affiliate members and what they do. In my mind, I knew I still wanted to be a Golf Course Superintendent, so I landed a job at Broad Run G.C. This got me back into doing what I loved and within a few months another opportunity come along: to finish and open Applecross C.C. in 2010.

I look back over my 27 years in this business and say to myself: WHY? One thing I know is that I do not have to wear a suit and tie every day. But why continue – we work most weekends and miss times with family and friends, I think it's something in the blood of someone who works in the golf course industry. I feel like I learn something new every day and love to deal with what Mother Nature dishes out.

Speaking of HER, it's late fall and we are starting to get a few snow flurries as I write this. It seems to be the ongoing trend with the weather forecast these days, just plain weird. I believe we started the morning out today in the high 50's and its already 34 degrees outside. It's like a scene out of the show *Stranger Things*, where we enter the "Upside Down" – a parallel shadowy version of the world we know and inhabit.

Continued on next page

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I am humbled to be your President for the next two years. The Board will have our next meeting before the Annual Toy Drive and Christmas Party at Duffers Pub on December 19. Please come celebrate with us from 1-4 p.m.. Hopefully we get a good turnout this year, as it is great fun and a great cause. Please remember to bring a gift!

I would like to thank our outgoing Board members: directors Brendan Byrne and Jim Lynagh, as well as outgoing Golf Chaiman Jon Urbanski for all their hard work and great ideas that they brought to Board. We welcome new Board members Darren Farrar from Old York Road CC as Vice President, and directors Pat Michener from Bidermann Golf Club, Tim Edwards from Rivercrest C.C., and Greg Eisner from Fieldstone. Staying on board is Director Mike Mulhare from White Manor C.C., along with Treasurer Greg D'Antonio of Concord CC, and Board Secretary Mark Rubbo.

I look forward to bringing the new Board members up to speed with all that we having been working on the last few years. It will be good to get their fresh views and ideas on how we can improve the Association. Some of the big things we have planned is the rollout of a new logo and website for 2020.

We had some great events in 2019. One you may not know about is the Vendor Appreciation event held at Concord C.C. – it was a great success and we look forward to doing it again. Also, if you missed it, *Winning Golf* filmed its second episode with the PAGCS this season as part of our public outreach efforts – be sure to check our social media channels for coverage of this. We look forward to working with the *Winning Golf* team again in 2020.

Moving forward, the Board plans to have events other than golf outings in the coming year – keep an eye on the calendar, website, your inbox and more. The First Green has also been a hit the last few years [see pg. 33 and 34], and I encourage everyone to get involved. If you are uncertain about it or have questions, give Kristen a call. Don't forgot about the First Tee at Walnut Lane. We get plenty of media exposure and we are out there getting kids involved in the game – that's a Win-Win. [See pg. 35 for coverage of this year's Volunteer Day.]

As I said at the annual meeting, it is not about ME being President, it's about WE, and what WE can do as a board members to make our Association better. We received lots of good feedback from our Affiliate members last year as they met to discuss how we can better serve them and our industry. We plan to continue to grow the Association and better serve the sponsors that give back so much to us. Thank you. On behalf of the PAGCS, I would like to wish everyone a happy and safe Holiday season and a prosperous 2020. If anyone has comments or suggestions on how we can make your membership better, please do not hesitate to contact me or any other board member.

Thank you,



—Doug Rae

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VALENTINE EAST GOLF "COURSE" GETS IRRIGATION UPGRADE

"Lion's Paw" is a 404 yard, par 4 golf hole, and is actually the only hole at Buona Verde Golf Course, located at Penn State's Berks Campus. Our own "Dr Mike" Fidanza's vision for a golf hole at Valentine East become a reality thanks to architect Jim Nagle of Forse Design, and it was built/shaped by Gary and Greg Nolan.

The green has a native silt loam rootzone and seeded to 'Penncross' creeping bentgrass, the fairway is seeded to 'PennTrio' creeping bentgrass with a tall fescue perimeter, and tee boxes are creeping bentgrass, perennial ryegrass. Next year, bermudagrass and zoysiagrass will be added.

On September 24, 2019, Turf Equipment and Supply Company and George E. Ley Company led the effort to conduct a field day event to demonstrate the installation of the irrigation using HDPE piping. Many in attendance learned-by-doing and actually got involved with trenching and digging, fusing the HDPE pipe together, installing the sprinkler heads (which were repurposed from St. David's Golf Club), and wiring. Dr. Mike provided lunch with his now famous food truck.



Irrigation Field Day participants get down and dirty learning and helping to install piping to the "Lion's Paw" green at Valentine East

"This will be a great learning opportunity for our students to maintain an actual golf hole, as well as a great place for the industry to visit and conduct research and demonstrations," said Dr. Mike. ♦

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GROWING GRASS ON MARS

by Nick Sujkowski, PAGCS Assistant Representative to the Board



For this edition of the Assistant's Corner I had the pleasure of interviewing Jacob Norquest, Assistant Superintendent at Wolf Creek Golf Club. Wolf Creek is an 18-hole facility designed by Dennis Rider and opened in 2000. This bucket list golfing paradise is often ranked as one of the top public courses in the country by major golf publications. You may recognize it from numerous golfing video games or from its picturesque qualities where the emerald green fairways arise from spectacular desert hills.

Located in Mesquite, Nevada, about an hour outside of Las Vegas, Wolf Creek offers some unique challenges for producing high quality conditions. In my recent interview with Jake, we delved into the details of just how the Wolf Creek course maintenance team achieves that goal every day.

Where are you originally from?

I grew up in Garden City, Kansas, located in the southwest part of the state, where agriculture and farming are the main drivers of our economy.

Where did you attend college and what made you chose turf?

I attended school at Kansas State University in Manhattan, Kansas. I was the third generation to graduate from the College of Ag. My entire family is in the agricultural industry so I've always had a soft spot for it. With my mom having a Ph.D. in Plant Genetics, there were a lot of conversations about all sorts of horticultural and agronomic principles that piqued my interest as kid. However, I didn't originally choose turf. My first year and a half of college I was pre-nursing. But no matter how hard I tried to focus on other careers, the golf course is where I kept finding myself. A summer job at the local country club is what introduced me to turf. I used to joke with the Assistant Superintendent that no one needs a degree to grow grass, it's not hard. Here I am eight years later in the industry eating those words every day and doing what I love.

Where did you work during school and after?

In high school, I worked at Southwind Country Club in Garden City. Once in college, I did some work for the Soybean Research facility as well as worked part-time in the pro shop at a local course. My real course maintenance experience began with some fantastic internships starting with Flint Hills National near Wichita, Kansas. Here I played an important role in the 2017 US Junior Am. During the tournament, I connected with the assistant at Wolf Creek, Tanner Schoenfelder. We stayed in touch and the following year I did an eight month internship at Wolf Creek which changed the path of my career completely. I decided to finish school online through K-State and Penn State. During that time I was an assistant at Northland Country Club. Northland is an amazing property located on the shores of Lake Superior in Duluth, Minnesota. After a year, I left to take the assistant position at Wolf Creek.

What made you decide to leave Minnesota and move back to the desert?

Minnesota is a unique and beautiful place. I loved it there, however, my past experiences came from working in Kansas and Nevada, so it was a difficult transition to make. In one year, I went from managing grass in 115 degrees to wind chills of -64 and what seemed like endless feet of snow. I missed seeing grass and actually playing golf. I wasn't actively looking to leave, but when Tanner (now Superintendent) offered me the assistant position at Wolf Creek, I couldn't pass it up. It was too good of an opportunity to be able to work with a close friend and young industry leader.

What grass types do you manage on the course?

In a calendar year, we are managing two different golf courses, theoretically. May through August we have 419 Bermudagrass on tees, fairways, and rough. October through March we are Ryegrass wall to wall. April and September are our transition periods. April is usually when we spray out the Rye, and September is when we shut down our Bermuda and prep for overseeding. Our greens are T1 Bentgrass all year.

HERE I AM EIGHT YEARS
LATER IN THE INDUSTRY
EATING THOSE WORDS
EVERY DAY AND DOING
WHAT I LOVE.

What are some of the biggest challenges the Wolf Creek team faces that are unique to your area/climate?

Temperature extremes are one of our biggest challenges. For a month straight we get highs around 110 with a low of about 90 overnight. It not only wears down on the Bentgrass but on our team as well. The most unique challenge for Wolf Creek is our terrain. What you see in video games is not an exaggeration. We have 30 foot cliffs just feet away from greens and 100+ feet of elevation changes from tee to green on some holes. We constantly have equipment damaged. Overseeding can be tricky because of the undulation. Getting seed to stick and water to actually hit it is something we battle all winter until we spray the Ryegrass out. Other than tough growing conditions, we are currently struggling with our water quality. We get water straight out of the

Virgin River. We are the first course in town that gets the water feed. Being first in line for water we have silt and heavy clay that is constantly piling up. We have replaced multiple pumps due to clogging and over-working, and have even blown motors before. This has led to multiple main line breaks and irrigation issues.

Being that Wolf Creek is a major public golfing destination, how is your team able to get disruptive practices such as aeration, sprays, topdressing, etc. done without disrupting play?

The goal here at Wolf Creek is to provide "The ultimate golfing experience." Our maintenance practices are all scheduled and planned the year in advance. The golf course only closes for Thanksgiving, Christmas, and 18 days for overseeding. We have to find practices that will not interfere with golf. Once a month we try to do a small needle tine on our greens followed by a light topdressing. We will double roll after to have the greens playable before golf gets there. We save our big aerations for when we close to overseed. That gives the greens time to heal before we reopen. We also DryJect every other year and in order to do so we work through the night to finish all the greens. To counter our aerified greens or fairways, the pro staff helps us by offering discounts and reduced fees. In order to accomplish daily tasks we start work two hours before the first tee time all year. That means 4 AM start in summer and 6 AM in winter. The goal for us is to get our staff off the course before the heat hits. This also allows the golfers to enjoy their round. Luckily for us, our crew is full of guys who have worked at Wolf Creek for multiple seasons so things run like a well-oiled machine.

What is the story behind the staging of mowers at certain points around the course?

Our second tee box is located about 130 feet above the fairway, with the back tees being closer to 215 feet. Built on top of a desert cliff, there is no path to get a mower up there. It is just stairs all the way to the top. We have huts that we will leave walk mowers in at the top of the tee year round. Unless we notice a bad cut, they will only be brought down once a year because it takes 3 people to get these mowers up and down. To counteract these challenges we raise the height of cut to .500". These tees will only get mowed once a week and oftentimes will be left alone. We do our best to spray up there but the attachable hose and nozzle can only reach so far. It's only fitting that that back tee is where we shoot the most commercials from. If you see any Cleveland golf commercials, generally that's the tee box they use because of the view it offers.

Continued on next page

WE ALSO DRYJECT EVERY OTHER YEAR AND IN ORDER TO DO SO WE WORK THROUGH THE NIGHT TO FINISH ALL THE GREENS.

What are the most positive experiences you have gained from working at Wolf Creek?

The most positive impact Wolf Creek has had on my career is the experience of growing both warm and cool

season turf all in one year. The challenges with weather and varying turf species make us have to adjust our practices and change agronomic plans constantly. Also working with a young Superintendent has helped me learn tremendously. As Tanner learns new facets of the job and makes improvements I get that experience as well. Finally, the fact that Wolf Creek is known as a top destination golf course helps me get my name out there and network with a lot of people. Being able to say that I have been an important factor in the success of commercial campaign ads, video game shoots, and magazine ads is something I will always be grateful for here at Wolf Creek. ♦



NUTRIENT MANAGEMENT PLANS COULD BE COMING TO PA

by Chase Rogan, MidAtlantic Regional Representative, GCSAA

For years, the Chesapeake Bay watershed has been undergoing a major cleanup initiative. As part of this initiative, golf has been engaged on varying levels from state to state. In Virginia, the VGCSA worked with the Virginia Department of Conservation to create a model that would require every golf course to have a nutrient management plan written by a certified nutrient management planner. In Maryland, the state enacted a nutrient applicator certification, not dissimilar from a pesticide applicator's license, which requires continuing education to keep the license current.

However, in Pennsylvania, the state has been slow to mandate any type of specific program, as they have relied more heavily on voluntary programs to achieve the same goal – reducing nutrients that enter the bay through runoff, erosion, and leaching. What type of programs? Mostly education,

funding for programs such as stream bank restoration, and programs centering on Best Management Practices.

But that could change soon. Recently, state legislation was proposed in PA that would require some type of combination for a nutrient applicator certification and/or written nutrient management plans. We don't have specifics of the legislation yet, but sources say that without certification or a written plan, the applicator would be subject to restricted application rates. But again, we don't yet have those details.

Regardless, it doesn't sound like this legislation should be too overbearing for golf course superintendents. Maybe there is even a chance that golf would be exempt from this bill. But one thing is for sure, this certainly further emphasizes our need to update our BMP manual and publish it on the GCSAA website so that we

can begin facility adoption. BMPs are by far the best advocacy tool we can use to show the state legislator that we are being responsible with our nutrient application.

We are moving much closer to publication of our BMPs and will even have a separate website similar to Delaware (delawaregolfbmp.org), that will be very useful for sharing and promoting our responsible practices with the greater community, including our state legislator.

As we learn more about this matter, I will keep you updated. For now, continue to use your nutrients responsibly and look to adopt a facility BMP as soon as our state model is published, hopefully no later than early 2020. And as always, continue to promote our responsible environmental stewardship to the local and greater community at large! ♦

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INSIDE THE SHOP



BOOTH # 4800

The 2020 Golf Industry Show will again feature a replica maintenance shop, designed to help superintendents make attainable improvements to their own shop, regardless of budgetary or space constraints. The 2020 shop will feature educational opportunities, networking, contests, and hands-on demonstrations that will equip your golf course maintenance team with tips, tricks, and new ideas on how to enhance existing shop practices.

The more than 9,000-square foot maintenance shop and storage yard will showcase creative, innovative, and affordable solutions for superintendents and their teams to apply to their every-day roles and responsibilities.

Hector Velazquez returns for 2020 to be your resource for everything Inside the Shop! The content delivered within this area will focus on creating a more efficient, safe, and cost-effective work environment for equipment shops of all shapes and sizes. We hope that you will join us Inside the Shop at the Golf Industry Show.

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IS REGEN A FOUR LETTER WORD?

by Terry Appel

The sun is cresting over the tops of the trees in the distance. It is 6:45 a.m. and the birds have been singing their song for an hour now, their backup band being the low hum of the equipment in the distance. Tees and approaches are looking phenomenal, greens are tight with that slick look to them. On the way to check fairway mowers, you start to think: we have plenty of time before the 8:30 a.m. shotgun...Day two of Member-Guest is going to be fantastic.

"Shop, copy, shop," comes across the radio.

"Go for shop."

"Hey, mower 103 on 6 fairway is throwing a code thing. It's slow as a turtle and there is a stop sign flashing."

"Roger, en route," I reply on the radio. "**&%##^%*@^*," I say to myself.

The dreaded Regen Stop Code. Tier IV has had a stigma of being this crazed animal that was going to make techs and mechanics pull their hair out. Realistically, it has not been that bad.

Navigating the on-board diagnostic computer and using it as the tool it is meant to be has aided in making the above radio calls nearly nonexistent.

Early on with this Tier IV equipment, we also noticed an issue with fuel filter sensitivity and fuel pressure codes being thrown. 'Dirty' fuel was making it into the system and our regen codes seemed to be more prevalent. After some research into micron ratings of factory filters and the filter at the pump, we made a discovery. A higher micron rating at the pump and a lower rating on



the machine meant more debris was getting to the machine, clogging filters and allowing dirtier fuel to get into the system. Coincidence that the regen times were closer together? Maybe, maybe not. After changing filters at the pump to a micron rating lower than that of the machine, we have had minimal fuel filter issues and a longer interval between maintenance regens.

Maintenance regen you ask? That's what we call it. After every use, as part of our program, we dive into the tech control, checking for codes, looking to see if the machine is ready for a regen.

This icon lets us know that we can perform a regen once our post cut check is complete. Usually 20-30 minutes long, we can perform this regen post cut, when the machine is not needed. No down time. No stress of the machine going into a stop code parked regen.

Has this removed all regen worries? Absolutely not. Turning off the machine during a passive regen will still add to the number of times the code is thrown. The counter starts again, particulate filter accumulates more. But it has helped relieve some stress.

I'm not saying everyone has to go research micron ratings, change pump filters or even add a maintenance regen to their arsenal of preventative maintenance. I can say that it has aided us tremendously in our pursuit of perfection. After all, an equipment manager's life is all dull reels and down equipment. ♦

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Host Dave Renk [second from left] with the rest of his foursome: event sponsor Mike Linkewich [left], Mitch Baldwin, last year's Golf Championship Host [center right], and Dave Schell, another PAGCS sponsor [right].

OUR OCTOBER HOST: Dave Renk, GCS at Lookaway Golf Club

HAILS FROM: Buckingham, PA

EDUCATION: Rutgers University, Class of 1993 with a degree in Golf Turf Management

ABOUT: Professionally, Dave was a Director of Commercial Accounts for Tru Green Corporation from 1986 through 1992. In 1993 he was hired as First Assistant Superintendent at Pine Valley Golf Club.

In 1997, Dave was hired as Golf Course Superintendent at Lookaway and has remained highly regarded for his knowledge of the course and the excellent level of conditions provided.

In his spare time, he enjoys cross fit training and is an avid Eagle's fan. Dave is involved with various charitable organizations, most notably as President of the Matthew Renk Foundation, a foundation he and his wife built to honor the memory of their late son. One of the foundations efforts is the annual Toys for CHOP - you can help by donating a toy at the Annual PAGCS Toy Drive and Christmas Party on December 19 at Duffers Pub. In addition to the Matthew Renk Foundation, Dave donates time to the Founders Society of Children's Hospital of Philadelphia.

FAMILY: wife Jackie, and sons, Tommy and Andrew



Winners include Brad Helcoski, [left] and Tom Currie.

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:

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ANNUAL MEETING

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Host Derrick Wozniak [right], with his foursome: [L to R] Pepper DeTuro, Tom DeFino, and Mark Merrick—event and PAGCS sponsors.



OUR NOVEMBER HOST: PAGCS Outgoing President, Derrick Wozniak

HAILS FROM: Buckingham, PA

EDUCATION: Rutgers Professional Turfgrass Management School 2004

CAREER: Hershey’s Mill Golf Club (1998-2003)

Aronimink Golf Club (2004-2005) Assistant in Training

Bidermann Golf Club (2005-2008) First Assistant Superintendent

Rock Manor Golf Course (2008-2012) Superintendent

Radley Run Country Club (2012-Present) Director of Grounds

HIS WHY: I started working in this business as a summer job and grew to love the gratification of the work. Over the years, I have been very fortunate to work for and with some great people who have guided and mentored me on a path to become a successful superintendent while also having a work/ life balance. This certainly is not an easy profession to be a part of, but even during the most stressful periods, I try to take the time and realize I have an opportunity to be a part of a profession that is outdoors on a beautiful piece of historic property which provides enjoyment to people on a daily basis which is why I truly enjoy being a golf course superintendent.

FAMILY: Wife-Meredith and Children-Natalie 9, Nora 7, Mason 5, Owen 5

ANYTHING ELSE YOU WANT TO SHARE: With four children, my life outside of work is hectic, but when I do get a chance to go, I love to salt water fish and go hiking with my family. Cheers!





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AS ONE PHILADELPHIA COURSE FALLS, ANOTHER PREPARES FOR A MAJOR LIFT

by Tim Gavrich - Golfadvisor.com, October 29, 2019

It's usually hard to find silver linings to the closure of a golf course - especially one that dates some 80 years - but in Philadelphia, one course's end looks like it will be followed by another course's rebirth.

Franklin D. Roosevelt Golf Course, located in a park of the same name, will close later this week. In truth, the 6,000-yard par-69 layout has barely hung on for the last several years, with its mediocre layout and poor siting finally catching up to it. Philadelphia's Parks and Recreation Department cited "frequent flooding and unprofitable operations" as main motivators for the closure.

In the end, FDR was just not right as a golf course, even though it operated for the better part of a century. The low-lying corridors were often more quagmire than fairway, and the doomed course has one of the lowest ratings of any on Golf Advisor: a woeful 1.8 out of 5. "I had low expectations going into the round," wrote recent reviewer JDNJTX, "and the course failed to meet even a low bar."

Another review from this spring by user Zebra16 said, "Every year when I think the course conditions can not get any worse, I am proven wrong."

Luckily, the city is not simply going to let the husk of FDR Golf Course turn into an eyesore in an otherwise happening part of town; it is near Philly's three major sports stadiums, the redeveloping Navy Yard district and the meetings of the Schuylkill and Delaware Rivers, as well as Philadelphia International Airport. A Master Plan calls for major upgrades to the golf course land and surrounding park as useful green space for South Philadelphians and visitors. Near-term steps include fixing existing park roads, as well as turning over 40 acres of the park into wetlands. Other components of the \$200 million plan include the construction of several new athletic fields, storm water redirection and the establishment of several park employee positions.

Golf might still be part of the future of FDR Park. The First Tee of Greater Philadelphia has had a 4,000-square-foot facility at the course, and the juniors who benefit from the program are about to lose a main place to play. The Parks & Recreation department's page about the park renovation says they are "working with First Tee of Greater Philadelphia to find an appropriate way for it to continue its youth golf programs at FDR Park" and that "[t]he Master Plan also includes an option for a public golf driving range." Whether the city adopts that option remains to be seen.

ADDITION BY SUBTRACTION?

Meanwhile, a couple miles northwest, a committed group of advocates is making progress in their years-long crusade to see Philadelphia's most historic muni reborn.

Cobb's Creek Golf Course has one of the more storied histories of any city course. A municipal facility from inception in 1916, its layout was crafted by Hugh Wilson, who is credited as the main architect of Merion Golf Club's famed East Course; and William Flynn, whose work at Shinnecock Hills in New York and several famous Philadelphia-area courses makes him one of the greatest American course architects.



Cobb's Creek Golf Course has world-class potential among municipal layouts. (Photo courtesy of Tim Gavrich)

Decades of benign neglect have Cobb's Creek in only somewhat better shape than FDR - its Golf Advisor rating is a paltry 2.5 at present - but there is no denying the quality of its bones. The routing runs along the eponymous body of water on the front nine before turning uphill onto some of the city's best terrain. Area golf historians Mike Cirba and Dr. Joe Bausch have played and advocated for the course potential for years, and their Friends of Cobb's Creek organization has morphed into the Cobb's Creek Restoration & Community Foundation. Led by Chris Lange, Chris Maguire, and John Burnes, the group seeks not only to see the course restored to its proper glory by Philadelphia-area native Gil Hanse, but also to use the facility to enhance the education of area youth through various programs.

In July, the formation of the new organization coincided with the announcement that it had signed a long-term lease with the City of Philadelphia for the purpose of undertaking the proposed course renovation. If current

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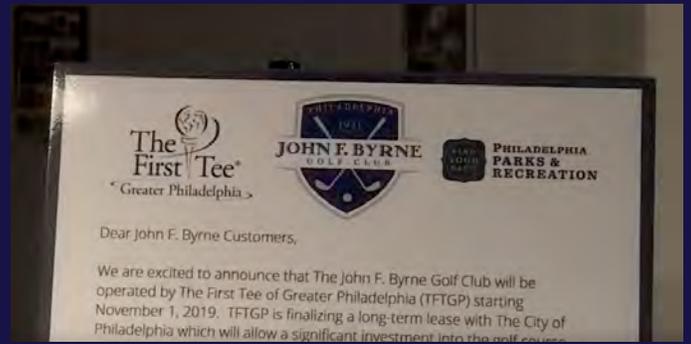
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fundraising targets through 2019 and 2020 are met, the course will, according to Cirba, “undergo construction and seeding during 2021 with a planned reopening during the May or June 2022 time frame.”

The \$20 million project is ambitious, but if it succeeds, it will raise the profile of Philadelphia community golf considerably. And if the more holistic efforts at FDR come off, it will mean more to admire outdoors in the City of Brotherly Love. ♦



A map of Gil Hanse & Jim Wagner's proposed restoration/renovation plan for Cobb's Creek (Image courtesy of Cobbs Creek Restoration & Community Foundation)



John F Byrne in the Hands of the First Tee
Watch more [here](#)



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Continued from front cover

George E. Ley exemplifies the exact spirit of the award. In his over 40 years in the turf industry, he has been dedicated to advancing the careers of industry professionals and supporting the future of the industry with an unwavering passion.

Three decades ago, George pioneered the region's first turf

student scholarship program, paving the way for many industry professionals to succeed in the turf management profession. The George Ley Scholarship Program has provided tens of thousands of dollars to nearly 100 students over the decades and continues to thrive today, thanks to George's support and leadership.

George is the owner of George Ley Company and Eastern Irrigation and Pump Company, where he has developed many working relationships with golf course superintendents, as well as numerous other individuals in the industry. He enjoys giving back to the community in many ways.



George with his son, Brian

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Mr. Stanley J. Zontek -1997
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Mr. Frank I. Shuman -2000
Mr. Joseph H. Way -2001
Dr. Thomas L. Watschke -2004
Mr. Michael R. Smith, CGCS -2005
Mr. Edward Roynan -2006
Mr. Henry Wetzel -2012
Mr. Frank T. Shuman -2015

GEORGE LEY INTRO SPEECH

by Tom Grimac

Today I have been given the honor (and it IS an honor) of introducing the recipient of the Eb Steineger Award, which was last awarded 4 years ago. ...

The recipient is the owner of George E. Ley Company and Eastern Irrigation & Pump Company, which were started in 1968 by George Ley Jr., a former golf course superintendent at Lulu Country Club. In 1999, George III took over the business and has been at the helm since that time. GELCO, as we refer to it, has been servicing the golf course and sports turf industry around Philadelphia, and much further, for 51 years now...and counting!

Some of George's credentials are as follows:

- Member of the Irrigation Association of America
- Member of the Irrigation Association of NJ
- Member of the Golf Course Builders Association of America, which has certified him as a Golf Course Renovation Builder, and Irrigation Contractor.

George has developed working relationships with golf course superintendents and many, many other people in the industry. Anyone who really knows George knows how much he enjoys giving back to the community in so many ways. One example with which most of you are familiar is "The George E. Ley Scholarship Fund" which has helped almost 100 turf students to date. I encourage all of you to support this worthy cause by attending the Annual Scholarship Outing and Benefit which is a monthly meeting, every year, of the PAGCS. George flaunts one of his other skills at this event by supplying dinner via a pig roast masterfully prepared by George and family. All this brings me to the very important part of George that few people get to see...his family and his faith.

George married his wonderful wife, Jean, in 1982, and they have been blessed with 4 children (2 boys and 2 girls), and now 4 grandchildren. I'm going to go out on a limb here and say that this is where George's # 1 priority lies.

For the 40+ years I've known George, his faith has been obvious. He is a church elder, and he has taught Sunday School. I am also aware that he has passed along his deep faith to his children.

George has an innate love of farming, and can still on many occasions be found operating some monstrous piece of farm equipment in one of his fields on the farm. He has been very active in the 4-H Club, which should come as no surprise...just one more place to help young people.

Before we bring the man of the hour up here, I'd like to share with you how I have described George for many years now...George is a man of unquestioned integrity ...

2019 HERB GRAFFIS BUSINESSPERSON OF THE YEAR: ALAN FITZGERALD

by Seth Jones and Hal Phillips - September 23, 2019

The Herb Graffis Businessperson of the Year Award is named in honor of *Golfdom's* founder, World Golf Hall of Fame member Herb Graffis. Graffis was one of the first people to think of golf as a business when he and his brother Joe founded *Golfdom* in 1927. With his foresight, Graffis helped advance the game in numerous ways, from founding the National Golf Foundation and the Club Managers Association of America to his work advocating on behalf of superintendents and elevating their profile.

The award includes a *Golfdom* cover story celebrating the honoree's accomplishments, as well as expenses-paid trips to the *Golfdom Summit* and the [Golf Industry Show](#). It is with all due respect that we present this award in Mr. Graffis' honor.

Back in the early 1980s, a fellow named Victor Kiam made himself famous by going on television to sell Remington electric shavers. Like a car dealer, Kiam starred in his own commercials. In fact, his signature pitch line made him a minor celebrity: "I liked the shaver so much, I bought the company."

Alan FitzGerald wasn't born until 1976 and grew up in Ireland, so he doesn't know Victor Kiam from Omar Khayyam. What's more, he didn't buy [Blinder Bunker International](#). But after some 15 years of research, test bunkers and cost-benefit analyses, he believes he's found the best bunker liner system out there. And he liked the product so much, he signed up



Alan FitzGerald (Photo courtesy of Alan FitzGerald)

to import Blinder Bunker in North America — a unique arrangement, considering that once he'd made that commitment, he stayed on as head superintendent at [LedgeRock Golf Club](#), the property he's looked after since 2004.

Alan FitzGerald was really impressed with Blinder's heavy, porous, seamless and flexible design. (Photo: Fernando Gaglianese)

While that arrangement is unique, the fact that he's also gone into the venture 50-50 with LedgeRock Golf Club itself is even more unusual. It's FitzGerald's desire to keep LedgeRock looking pristine while also striving to make Blinder a success in the American market that has earned him the 2019 Herb Graffis Businessperson of the Year Award, awarded annually for eight years by *Golfdom*.

Jake Straub, who first met FitzGerald at Penn State "the day he walked off the airplane" from Ireland, says that the reason FitzGerald has been so successful is because he is always asking, "Why?"

"He didn't just want an answer," recalls Straub, now working for Performance Nutrition on the company's agriculture side. "He's outside the box. He still asks 'Why?' and as he's gotten older, he also asks 'Why not?' And that's a great thing."

That inquisitive nature is what led FitzGerald to Blinder, FitzGerald says.

"I emailed (Blinder) out of the blue. That's what I did with most of these companies selling the liner technologies," FitzGerald recalls. "In that sense, the interaction was just the

Continued on next page

HAVE NEWS TO SHARE?

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Continued from previous page

same: 'Can you send me a sample? How do I get it here? What does it cost to get a crew over here?' As it happened, it wasn't cost prohibitive, and once I saw the product perform – honestly, the flexibility of the liner struck me as genius – I could see this was a real technological advance. So, I came back to them: 'What if I imported it for you and you taught me how to do it? Would that work?'"

Blinder's short answer was "Yes." But leaving it there would gloss over and considerably shorten a pretty good, thoroughly trans-Atlantic story.

WHEN IRISH EYES ARE SMILING

Wherever FitzGerald has found himself, he's shown a remarkable ability to find work (and high-caliber professional training) at the finest, most ambitious golf facilities around. This naturally builds up the old résumé. It also tends to build up the diverse, real-world experience that sets elite golf course superintendents apart.

FitzGerald grew up in Castlecomer, in the southeast of Ireland. He was around the game all his life but never considered a career in golf until he took a summer job at Mount Juliet, the Jack Nicklaus-designed resort a half-hour from his home. There, he encountered Aidan O'Hara, CGCS, who had learned his trade, in part, at Muirfield Village in the other Dublin (Ohio), and whom FitzGerald and others credit for first bringing U.S. agronomic standards to Ireland.

"It was a magnificent place to work. Mt. Juliet was really one of the first two big resort developments in all of Ireland," FitzGerald says, noting that The K Club is the other. "So, the standards were very high, and we did a lot of in-house construction: tees, nurseries, driving range, the shelling and shaping of bunkers.

In a matter of two to three years, it felt like we'd built pretty much every feature of a golf course. We built an entire putting course at Mt. Juliet, 18 miniature USGA spec greens – with gravity-powered water features! It was not a formal education, but it was extensive.

LedgeRock was designed by Rees Jones and captures the essence of a classic old style course with scenic beauty and original landscapes. (Photo: Larry Lambrecht)

"Eventually, Aidan said that if I was serious about getting into the profession, I should get a basic greenkeeping education, then attend university in the States. That's how I ended up at Penn State."

HE'S PERSONABLE, AND A HARD WORKER – THAT'S WHY HE IS WHERE HE IS TODAY.

He was 20 years old when he arrived in State College, his first trip to the United States. Eventually, he would earn a two-year turfgrass science degree under the watchful eye of George Hamilton, Ph.D. – and meet his Pocono-bred future wife, Jamie. After an internship at Loch Lomond in Scotland that first summer, "the stars aligned," and he accepted an assistant-in-training position at Pine Valley Golf Club in Clementon, N.J., only the consensus No. 1 track on the planet.

"I think the world of Alan, he did a wonderful job here," says longtime Pine Valley GC Superintendent Rick Christian. "He's personable, and a hard worker – that's why he is where he is today. He wanted to make it to the top and make himself better at



Alan Fitzgerald was really impressed with Blinder's heavy, porous, seamless and flexible design. (Photo courtesy of Fernando Gaglianese)

the same time. He is always willing to learn and is always doing his research."

The young Irishman, newly married, would eventually spend six years at Pine Valley. Then LedgeRock, a private Rees Jones signature design just breaking ground south of Reading, Pa., called.

LIFE ON THE LEDGE

FitzGerald arrived at LedgeRock during the tree-clearing process, and despite his in-house construction credentials, was not expecting to be involved in building LedgeRock.

During the Great Recession, LedgeRock focused on a regional strategy to help broaden its membership base, though the course didn't stabilize until 2011. (Photo: Larry Lambrecht)

"I wasn't hired as any sort of construction superintendent. I was hired to be the golf course superintendent, to grow the course in," he said. "I was researching irrigation systems and setting up the

Continued from previous page

shop when Rees calls me out to No. 6 one day and asks me, 'Will you be able to mow that bank? How will that work for you?' We had that kind of relationship. It was great to be so involved."

While Jones doesn't recall that exact moment from 15 years ago, he does remember how easy it was – and still is – to work with the Irishman.

"Alan really knows how to relate to people," Jones says. "That's so important in today's world. People have forgotten how to talk to people! That is as important today as growing grass."

Jones notes FitzGerald's pedigree, but adds that having Pine Valley on one's résumé doesn't do any good unless that superintendent can deliver. "Coming from a place like Pine Valley, there's an expectation ... and he's fulfilled those expectations, because LedgeRock is as good as Pine Valley. He's been (at LedgeRock) since the beginning ... and they're glad they hired him there."

FitzGerald calls the workload back in those early days "completely nuts," as the project manager left for a different project, and the weather refused to cooperate.

"I think we had 23 inches of rain that first July. We had a 100-year storm, then a 300-year storm – (a) pattern that seemed to repeat all summer. This is a very dramatic site topographically. We'd fix everything after a storm – and everything would just wash out again," FitzGerald says with a shrug. "The tenacity of the founders was really amazing. They stayed with it, so that's what we did as well."

LedgeRock GC opened for play in June 2007. The Great Recession hit the following autumn, and private clubs started dropping like flies all over Pennsylvania and across the

nation. But here again, LedgeRock's founders showed great tenacity.

Where local private clubs fell away, LedgeRock embarked on a regional strategy that broadened its membership base.

Indeed, things didn't stabilize for FitzGerald and LedgeRock until about 2011. With those seven years of relative chaos behind them, the superintendent knew it was time to address two issues of primary importance: the club's perennially contaminated bunkers and his pending dual citizenship.

"I'm going through the U.S. citizenship process right now," FitzGerald says with a wry smile. "I wouldn't say I've procrastinated on it, but I could've done it sooner ... It was a handy excuse to get out of jury duty."



LedgeRock was designed by Rees Jones and captures the essence of a classic old style course with scenic beauty and original landscapes.

(Photo courtesy of Larry Lambrecht)

A FAITH IN BLINDER

The bunkers at LedgeRock couldn't wait that long.

"The bunkers here regularly washed from the time the sand went into them. For the first few years, the maintenance staff did a great job removing the contaminants, but eventually it got to the point where the

sand needed replacing," FitzGerald says. "My standing joke has been, 'The members here have never played in brand-new bunkers.'"

In 2005, when FitzGerald first pondered how to address the continuing washout issue, bunker-liner technology was still in its infancy.

"During construction here at LedgeRock, fabric liners were the only things on the market, really. We priced them out and looked into it seriously. But the benefits versus the costs didn't make it worthwhile, in my opinion," FitzGerald says. "The cost/benefit analysis I made back then is really the same analysis every superintendent must make today – even 15 years later, with the development of so many additional technologies: fabric liners on their own, polymer-sprayed gravel, porous asphalt, concrete or Blinder's flexible crumb-rubber/polymer mix. It's a big investment no matter what product you choose, so it's got to last."

"Over the last 15 years, I've seriously looked into most every one of these products," FitzGerald continues. "Each one has their strong and weak points. Cost is a massive issue. It's also hard to come by the aggregates you need in some cases."

In general, FitzGerald believes the bunker liner product universe can be broken into two broad categories: soft (fabric liners) and hard (aggregate liners). That's ultimately why he was drawn to the Blinder product, which, in his opinion, creates an all-new third category with its heavy, porous, seamless and flexible design.

"Essentially, the base is compactable road stone, a solid, consistent surface that water runs along and does not penetrate," he says. "The rubber is mixed with a polymer and hand-laid into place to ensure it closely follows the contours of the bunker. Water

Continued on next page

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flows right through that layer. It's seamless, and being rubber, it's just more flexible than anything else. You could roll it up like a carpet if you had a big enough lift."

Blinder has been operating in Europe for a decade, where, unlike in North America, it's one of the most recognizable names in bunker liners. According to FitzGerald, in 10 years and more than 1,000 bunkers, there have been zero failures.

"Our biggest issue is cost: We've done a lot to bring it down, but on a straight square-foot price, our product is 30 percent more expensive than most of our competitors. That's due to the cost of the raw materials – and that we install it. And we pretty much refuse to compromise on quality, which justifies the long-term investment prospect, in our view. These bunkers just do not fail," FitzGerald says.

It's perhaps no surprise that FitzGerald believes in the Blinder product; on some level, every entrepreneurial venture requires that belief.

More surprising, perhaps, is his full-time employer's belief in the venture.

LedgeRock General Manager Gerry Heller, a 25-year golf hospitality veteran, recognizes that the arrangement with FitzGerald and Blinder is unique. But he sees it as eminently sensible, as well.

"Alan was totally upfront with us about this, and we frankly viewed it as an opportunity – for him as a valued employee and for us as a club," Heller says. "We haven't made any real money on this venture yet. But we haven't lost any either. Alan has showed that he can do this outside work and keep the conditions here at LedgeRock pretty close to perfect – and effectively manage the maintenance staff here; and direct the renovation we're currently doing with Rees Jones; and conduct a bunker study with the USGA; and serve on the board of his superintendents association ...

"More to the point, the Blinder bunkers we've installed here have been done at cost. That's what the club gets out of it, and we see that as a pretty good deal."

Most recently, Blinder outfitted all the bunkers at Skippack GC in Eastern Pennsylvania, but FitzGerald is clear-

eyed about the challenges ahead. "We have to do a lot more volume in order to make any real money. But we're getting there."

And he remains philosophical about how this outside business project plays into his natural ability to multitask – a trait most superintendents develop early in their careers.

"As it is," he says, "I'd say 97 percent of my day is still centered on LedgeRock and day-to-day maintenance operations and the renovation we have going here. The Blinder business accounts for the other 3 percent, but because it's all above board, fielding a Blinder call in the middle of the day is seamless and unremarkable, to be honest.

"I don't see a reason why other superintendents couldn't swing the same sort of arrangement, if the right opportunity comes up. The big thing, obviously, is to be sure the club is on board. There has to be something in it for them. The secondary thing is, if the club said, 'No way,' you have to be prepared for that and have a Plan B. If you don't, it would get real awkward, real fast." ♦

IN CASE YOU MISSED IT: ROGAN FAMILY GROWS AGAIN

Chase Rogan, MidAtlantic Regional Representative for GCSAA, welcomed a third child this year. Baby boy Moby was born on May 31, joining his big brother, Fitz, and big sister, Palmer. He arrived tipping the scales at 8 lbs and 2 oz. He's already dawning the blue and white as you can see in the picture. Join the PAGCS in congratulating Chase and family!



TWO PAGCS MEMBERS ATTEND GREEN START ACADEMY

Nicholas Sujkowski, Assistant Superintendent, Concord Country Club, and Kyle Basehore, Assistant Superintendent, Blue Bell Country Club, were selected to attend the 2019 Green Start Academy, held Oct. 23-25. A total of 52 assistants from all over the country attended this prestigious event.

"We are so pleased to be able to bring together this group of driven, like-minded individuals as they set the stage for aspiring leaders in golf course management," said Mike Hirvela, Customer Marketing Manager for Golf, Bayer. "From learning key insights from industry professionals and leaders to creating a strong network of peers and mentors, we hope Green Start Academy can be an important defining moment for young professionals in their careers."

Since 2006, the goal for this program has been to help assistant superintendents build a strong foundation for their careers, as well as to support the future of golf courses and the entire industry. Green Start Academy has invited prestigious assistants to the Bayer Development and Training Center in Clayton, N.C., the John Deere Turf Care factory in nearby Fuquay-Varina, N.C., and the John Deere headquarters in Cary, N.C. With topics from career development to budgeting to labor management, the Green Start Academy provides attendees with the education, networking and career insights they need to excel as superintendents and lead our industry into the next decade and beyond.

Nick summed up his experience at this year's event: it was great being able to learn from the successes of industry leaders as well as make connections with some of the great assistants around the country. ♦



The 2019 Green Start Academy Leaders

IT WAS GREAT BEING ABLE TO LEARN FROM THE SUCCESSES OF INDUSTRY LEADERS AS WELL AS MAKE CONNECTIONS WITH SOME OF THE GREAT ASSISTANTS AROUND THE COUNTRY.

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GOLF INDUSTRY SHOW, ORANGE COUNTY CONVENTION CENTER, ORLANDO, FL;
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GOLF INDUSTRY SHOW, ORANGE COUNTY CONVENTION CENTER, ORLANDO, FL; MONDAY, JANUARY 27 THROUGH THURSDAY, JANUARY 30, 2020



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ORLANDO 2020



GCSAA has developed education specifically for Assistant Superintendents! As an assistant superintendent, you will develop new skills to advance your career with this exciting content.

MONDAY, JAN. 27

*Decision Maker:
Stepping into a Leadership Role*
8:00 am–Noon

NEW *So, You Want to Be a Golf Course Superintendent, but Where?*
FREE 1:00–3:00 pm

TUESDAY, JAN. 28

NEW *The Successful Assistant: Thoughts on Making the Most of Your Position*
FREE 11:00 am–Noon

FREE *Lightning Round Learning!*
1:30–3:00 pm

WEDNESDAY, JAN. 29

NEW *Noteworthy Tips for Assistants to Win the Job Interview and Succeed as a New Superintendent*
1:00–2:30 pm

THURSDAY, JAN. 30

Assistant Superintendent Certificate Series On-site Exams
9:00 am–2 pm
Room: N311/312 – North Concourse



Check out the Assistant Superintendent Education Track for more offerings!



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PAGCS ANNUAL TOY DRIVE AND CHRISTMAS PARTY THURSDAY, DECEMBER 19, 1-4 P.M.

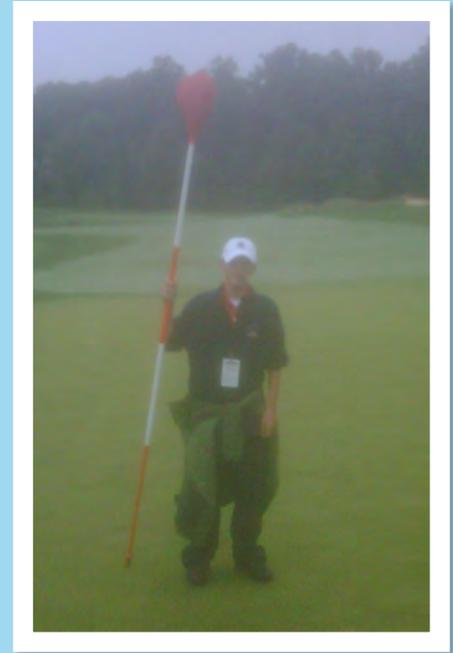
WE'RE GOING BACK TO DUFFERS PUB, CONCORDVILLE

PAGCS Toy Drive to Benefit Toys for CHOP Through Matt Renk Foundation

See You at Duffers Pub on Thurs., Dec. 19, 1-4 p.m.

For years, the PAGCS has supported Toys for CHOP through Dave Renk, superintendent at Lookaway Golf Club and president of the Matthew Renk Foundation. The Foundation, in honor of Dave's son, Matt, who lost his battle with brain cancer in 2010, collects toys to brighten the lives of patients at Children's Hospital of Philadelphia who cannot make it home for the holidays due to their battles.

The PAGCS began using the annual Christmas gathering as the way to collect donations some years ago, with great success. Please join us on December 19 and support the cause!



*Matt Renk
at Merion Golf Club*





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CUSHMAN'S SUPPORT IS GROWING GREENS FOR THE PAGCS EVERY YEAR



Derrick Wozniak, PAGCS President, receives a check from sponsor Jeff Haas and Golf Cart Services as part of the "Growing Greens" program. Derrick's course is one of the contributing courses to the program.

At the Annual Meeting of the PAGCS, Jeff Haas of Golf Cart Services, presented yet another check to the PAGCS on behalf of Cushman's "Growing Greens." The program supports the PAGCS by donating \$50 for each Cushman Hauler utility vehicle purchased by a member back to the Association.

The new Cushman hauler has many exciting features, including a

versatile glove box that makes room for larger items, optional outlets for smartphone and tablet charging, premium tires designed to maximize traction without damaging greens, and much more.

To schedule a demo, contact Jeff Haas or TJ Hart.



Check presentation ref pg. 45 of last issue



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WALNUT LANE GOLF COURSE, HOME OF THE FIRST TEE OF GREATER PHILADELPHIA, HOSTED INAUGURAL FIRST GREEN EVENT, THURSDAY, OCTOBER 24, 2019

(Philadelphia) – Walnut Lane Golf Course, in partnership with TFTGP and the PAGCS, hosted an innovative environmental education outreach program that uses golf courses as environmental learning labs. Golf Course Superintendent Ben Davies welcomed 9th grade students from Parkway Northeast High School for a First Green event, Thursday, October 24, 2019.

First Green focuses on STEM (science, technology, engineering and math) principles, where students get hands on learning opportunities in a real-life setting. First Green curriculum has been benefitting students in the Delaware Valley from 3rd grade through high school by helping them apply their classroom knowledge in an outdoor setting.

Students participated in the follow stations:

SOIL LAB: Mike Cavanaugh, Executive V.P./Co-Owner, Floratine Products Group: Students pulled and analyzed samples, as well as manipulated technology and tools used to retrieve sensitive data. Some even witnessed the anatomy of a yellow jacket and its stinger!

MATH LAB: Chase Rogan, Mid-Atlantic Regional Director, Golf Course Superintendents Association of America [GCSAA]: Using the land and bunker features of the golf course, students worked through equations to determine solutions

GOLF STATIONS: representatives of TFTGP, along with PGA and GAP: Students were introduced to the mechanics of the golf swing and other features of the game.

TREE LAB: Mike Kachurak and Gene McMillan, Shreiner Tree Care: Students learned the significant roles and relationships of trees, insects, turf, wildlife, and the environment while experiencing hands on training in the care of trees.

IRRIGATION LAB: Brad Helcoski and Tim Riismandel, Ewing Irrigation: Students saw the technology and inner workings of water use for Best Management Practices [BMP].

WATER CONSERVATION LAB: Lindsay Blanton and Alex Cupo, Wissahickon Valley Watershed Association: Students learned about the wildlife that inhabits our region's waterways and surroundings, including the endangered species and the roles students can play as stewards of the environment.



TECHNOLOGY AND MECHANICAL ENGINEERING STATION:

Jon Moraglia, The Drone Life: Students were treated to a drone display and learned the impacts of technology, engineering and the mechanics on golf courses.

To learn more about First Green visit www.TheFirstGreen.org

First Green is a program of the Environmental Institute of Golf (EIFG), the philanthropic organization of the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America (GCSAA), which is the top professional association for the men and women who manage golf courses in the United States and worldwide. The association provides education, information and representation to more than 18,000 members in more than 78 countries. Learn more at www.GCSAA.org. ♦



LEDGEROCK CLOSES OUT EVENTFUL YEAR OF FIRST GREEN FIELD TRIPS

On October 1, Alan Fitzgerald and Ledgerrock Golf Club hosted its final First Green event of the year, catering to 100 4th graders from Governor Mifflin School District. The volunteers and staff of Ledgerrock once again made an impact on the students, teachers, chaperones, and the First Green program itself.

Thank you to volunteers Jack Higgins, Earthworks; George Skawski, Turf Equipment & Supply; Gary Nolan, PSU; Eric Shilling, Harrells; and numerous representative of the PGA and GAP, as well as the Ledgerrock staff, including Alan Fitzgerald, Cody Frederick and Andy Miller.

Thank you to generosity of Ledgerrock, the PAGCS, and GCSAA, the students were gifted daypacks complete with First Green activity books, baseball caps, and other goodies. ♦



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Despite Mother Nature's unending need to thwart industry events and efforts, the PAGCS Volunteer Day at Walnut Lane to benefit The First Tee of Greater Philadelphia proved that many hands make light work. Using the rain date of Friday, November 15, a team of volunteers and sponsors armed with equipment got the job done.

Highlights of the day included laying sod on numerous greens, taking down countless trees in various locations, and other chores that will improve playability for Walnut Lane and First Tee participants.

Volunteers were rewarded with a Daleessandro's Cheesesteak lunch, Service CEU's from GCSAA, and - thanks to the generosity of Frank T. Shuman - a \$25 Wawa Gift Card!

The First Tee program benefits over 20,000 children in our region. The impact that the PAGCS and efforts like Volunteer Day have on the Walnut Lane facility over the years is enduring. ♦



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DELVAL TRIPS TO SAUCON VALLEY AND ARONIMINK

by Brandt Burkhardt, Sophomore turf management major - Delaware Valley University

Just four weeks into my first semester as a Delaware Valley University turf student I got to see two high-end golf courses within one day. Although I love playing golf and I'm majoring in turf management, this was the first time I got a behind-the-scenes look at how these courses are maintained.

On September 19th, Dr. Linde took 15 DelVal students who are all majoring in turf management to Saucon Valley Country Club. Nine of the students were in their first semester, including me. We left DelVal at 4:30 p.m. and on the ride talked about what to expect including the size of the staff, the number of courses at the club, and the itinerary of the trip.

At 5:30, our van arrived at Saucon's Weyhill course and we waited for the rest of the students to arrive. Doc Linde introduced us to Director of Grounds Jim Roney, who oversees the facility's three courses; The Old Course, Weyhill Course, and Grace Course. Mr. Roney introduced himself and some of his staff, including DelVal graduates Frank Perrone, Alex Haberern, and Jesse Riddington. Mr. Roney is also a graduate of DelVal.



in the middle are Brandt Burkhardt (blue sneakers), Professor Doug Linde, PhD (green shirt), with Jim Rooney surrounded by the field trip participants

Then we hopped into golf carts and drove across the courses to the Saucon shop which supplies the Old and Grace courses. Along the way, we saw the beautiful clubhouse – a large colonial brick building with white pillars in front. We drove through the courses to experience the style of golf course and how they were managed. The property was spacious and kept in pristine condition—something that any golfer would love.

After arriving to the Saucon shop, Mr. Roney showed us the equipment and explained why it was so valuable and how it was used. The shop was spotless. Each machine was in a designated row

staged for work in the morning. Mr. Roney showed us some photos of the mechanic's shop before he had taken over as Director of Grounds. It was messy with little organization. Now it is very professional looking and a much safer place to work.

After the shop tour, we traveled to hole #16 on The Old Course and Mr. Roney explained some of the things they were doing to the course to prepare for the 2022 USGA Senior Men's Open. I was amazed to hear the amount of work they were putting into the course with the tournament still three years away. The USGA had already given a standard for greens and fairway hardness. Also, the USGA and Saucon Valley had agreed upon which holes would be in play, where grandstands would be placed and what was expected on the course. Our group then went back to the Weyhill shop to be greeted with a full BBQ dinner they had prepared for us. We enjoyed hot dogs and burgers while talking about the course and what equipment we saw. Mr. Roney and his staff gave us some advice on internships and careers in the golf industry. Around 8 p.m. we headed back to DelVal.

The next morning, nine students in the Intro to Turf Management class left DelVal at 6 a.m. and Doc Linde drove us to Aronimink Golf

Continued on next page



Saucon Head of Grounds Jim Rooney, also a Del Val grad, explains the inner workings and significance of the equipment used to maintain the courses

Continued from previous page

Club. Doc introduced us to John Gosselin, head superintendent, who then took us on a tour of the maintenance shop.

Aronimink's shop is separated into four sections: fertilizers and chemicals, mowers and equipment, mechanic's area, and offices. Mr. Gosselin talked about some pesticides and fertilizers they commonly used on the course and the precision to which they apply them. He shared a story how years ago a math error led to applying too much pesticide which severely injured the putting greens.

Next, we looked at lots of equipment. Wow! I was amazed how clean and organized it was. You could barely find a blade of grass on the floor. Mr. Gosselin explained that the condition of the shop reflects how he is maintaining the course and wants to show that he is being a good steward of the club's investment.

Next, we were introduced to Hamo Krkbesevic, the head mechanic, who displayed his reel grinding machine. That machine is critical to every golf course to keep the mowers cutting properly at the desired cutting height. Each mower is inspected by Hamo and his assistant after it's finished mowing each day to ensure it's working properly for the next use.

Next, we hopped into golf carts and traveled out onto the course to see the staff preparing it for play that day. We watched a green being mowed with a triplex. I was surprised to see that they were not striping greens but rather each pass was in the same direction.

Then lead assistant Greg Marsala took over the tour and led us to a nearby hole to watch one of the staff change a cup including the painting of the soil above the plastic cup. At the next green, assistant Nick Carothers showed us how he uses a moisture meter and a hose to water the green.

We then returned to the shop and got a tour of the offices, locker room and the dormitory. I was impressed how clean the living area was, which also reflects the cleanliness and organization of the shop and the course. Just before leaving, Greg discussed what it's like to be an intern and encouraged us to contact him if interested.

Seeing two high-end golf courses within 24 hours was an invaluable experience for me. The people I met appeared to love their careers and were eager to share advice with me. Both courses seem like great places to work and I will be considering them for my work experience next summer. ♦



Greg Marsala and an Aronimink staff member give a lesson in cup cutting technique



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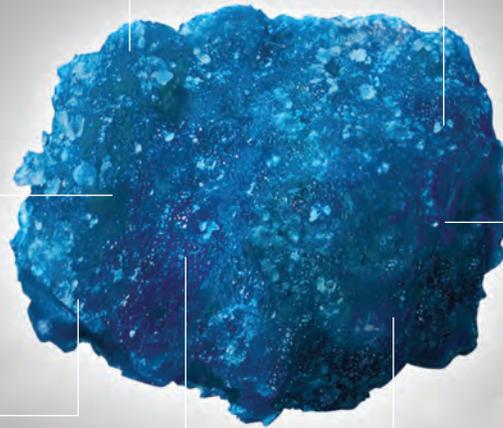
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