



The BONNIE GREENSWARD

OUR 95TH YEAR

2021 VOL. V



HEADING TO 100

The countdown to 2025 is on! If you would like to be part of the planning committee or have history to share, please let the office know.

Pictured here is the February 14, 1927 meeting of the PAGCS, held at Toro Company's Philadelphia location.

HEY, SUPERINTENDENTS:

Don't forget that the First Tee needs our help. Consider making a donation from your facility [rounds, lessons, etc.] for the upcoming auction. Deadline is **Jan. 21**. Contact Bill Corcoran at Bill.Corcoran@ventrac.com.

see more on page 38

>>EVENTS

ANNOUNCING THE TENTATIVE 2021 MEETING SCHEDULE

These are the dates and locations we know as of mid-January and are subject to change

WAR AT THE SHORE

Tuesday, April 20
Atlantic City CC

MEMBER-MEMBER

Monday, May 17
Blue Bell CC

SCHOLARSHIP

Monday, June 7
Sandy Run CC

GOLF CHAMPS

Monday, October 4
Lancaster CC

ANNUAL MEETING

Monday, November 1
Paxon Hollow Golf Club

MEMBER-GUEST

TBD
Gulph Mills

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>>THE PM

The off-season finally arrived in the Delaware Valley, winter is upon us and we had one good snowfall so far to ease the golfing down a bit. I hope that everyone got to spend some time with family members...wait, they are probably the only people you saw this holiday season.

For me, no going to see Grandma and Grandpa, but I was glad to see that they made it through a two-and-half-hour Zoom call/happy hour for a gift exchange. Year 2020 definitely limited us in terms of spending time with family and friends, but it is a New Year, and I am looking forward to putting 2020 in the trash can and starting fresh for 2021.

As you all know, we are not out of the woods yet: we had some COVID-19 restrictions over the holidays with the closing of indoor dining and gyms. We all have taken it on the chin in the food and beverage and banquet industry, and for some courses, the fitness industry. Looks like some of the restrictions are being rolled back, and we can start with some lower dining room capacities and opening of gym facilities. The good thing is more and more of the front line workers are getting their vaccinations. I think it will be a long year for the vaccination distribution, but hopefully, by the end of summer, we will all be getting our vaccinations.

Hats off to all the courses who held PAGCS events this last season: it was touch and go at some of the events, but we managed to pull through. Amazingly, we only had to cancel two events this year: the highly anticipated War at the Shore joint meeting in April and the Phillies Game Night.

We did have to postpone the scheduled events for May and June, so we moved the Scholarship outing at Rock Manor from May to August, which we greatly appreciated, especially considering the horrific storms that damaged portions of the course less than 72 hours before our event. Huntingdon Valley CC jumped through some hoops and worked with us to move the June Member-Guest to July and provided us with a wonderful and safe day. Both of these courses had impeccable conditions and were a joy to play.

The rest of the events were held on their respective dates with the once-in-a-lifetime chance to play the highly private Squires GC for the Member-Member, which was a really fun event. Rolling Green Golf Club provided a great PAGCS Golf Championship, with an excellent course setup and a clubhouse leadership that jumped through tremendous hoops to provide us with food and beverage despite being shut down by COVID. We finished the year at Whitmarsh Valley CC for the Annual Meeting, which also was interesting to play after all of the tree removal they just completed. Again, hats off to all the courses and their teams for making these events happen in 2020.



Continued on next page

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I would also like to thank our Executive Director Kristen Liebsch and the Board of Directors for all their help this past year. Everyone worked together to disseminate COVID-19 info and regulations, then teamed up to deal with PA Fertilizer Bill and Philadelphia Chem Ban. Our Board members also helped finalize and launch the new Pennsylvania BMP. If you have interest in serving on the Board of Directors please contact Kristen or one of the Board members. We will be in need of new Board members at the end of this year.

We are currently planning out the events for 2021 and have posted the tentative calendar on the cover. If you have any interest in hosting the Association, please contact Kristen, Darren Farrar, or Jeff Haas.

I would like to give special thanks to all our sponsors for their support in getting us all through 2020! We could not have done it without you. If you have any questions or comments about your experience with the Association, please feel free to contact myself or any other PAGCS board member. Enjoy the winter, and remember, "By failing to prepare, you are preparing to fail."-(Benjamin Franklin) Hopefully we all get a break to sit down and plan this coming season and make it a great year! ♦

Thank you,



Doug Rae

>>ISSUE GUIDE

MEMBER & INDUSTRY NEWS.....	4-5
GENERAL NEWS.....	6
ASSISTANT'S CORNER.....	8-10
SCHOLARSHIP WINNERS.....	13
MEETINGS AND EVENTS	14
GCSAA.....	15-16
LLANARCH	17-18
GENERAL INDUSTRY NEWS.....	21
SEEN ON THE WEB.....	22
PSU NEWS.....	23
ALLIED PARTNERS	24
TOYS FOR CHILDREN	26
PETS OF THE PAGCS	27
FACILITY FOCUS	29
FIRST TEE	31



INDUSTRY ESTABLISHES EDUCATION FUNDS TO SUPPORT DR. WATSCHKE'S FAMILY

Dr. Tom Watschke served the Penn State University's agronomy program for 35 years, retiring in 2005. His passing in November 2020 at the age of 76 sent shockwaves through the golf turf industry.

The 2004 recipient of the PAGCS' top honor, the Eb Steiniger Award, was known for his booming voice and kind hearted leadership. He is survived by not only a grown son but twin daughters who turn 14 this weekend. The goal of this effort is to help Dr. Watschke's widow and family provide for the girls' education.

My name is Dr. John Kaminski, and I am a former student of Dr. Tom Watschke and currently a Professor of Turfgrass Science & Director of the Golf Course Turfgrass Management Program at Penn State. My wife, Erin, and I are writing to encourage your participation in the establishment of college funds (529) for Katelyn and Madison Watschke.

We have set a goal to collectively raise a minimum of \$60,000 to establish the two funds (\$30,000 each). The funds can be used for tuition, room and board, textbooks, and other educational expenses.

We continue to reach out to Tom's former students and colleagues, encouraging their participation; to give back to an educator who impacted all of our professional lives. In addition, we are sending this letter to some family and friends of the Watschke's who have inquired over the past month or so about how they can help.



Thomas Watschke and his Daughters

We created a 529 for both Katelyn and Madison, and the instructions to submit contributions is below.

Thank you for considering this request and for recognizing the importance of Tom Watschke and his family in

your life. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact the financial advisor on the account, Adam Duff, at 814-808-8042.

*Sincerely,
John Kaminski & Erin Tench ♦*

American Funds Service Company
P.O. Box 2280
Norfolk, VA 23501-2280

Dear American Funds:
Check Payable to: College America
RE: FBO: Katelyn M. Watschke acct # 4002569172
FBO: Madison L. Watschke acct # 4002569152

Dear American Funds:
Enclosed is a check for \$_____ payable to College America. Please deposit split evenly into the above listed 529 college education accounts for Katelyn and Madison Watschke. The deposit should be contributed to the investment allocation fund on file.

Any questions or concerns, please contact the financial advisor on the account Adam Duff at 814-808-8042.

JOHN A. "JACK" MONTECALVO

Montecalvo, John A. "Jack", - 93, of Hammonton, NJ. On January 8, 2021, Jack passed away peacefully. He is lovingly survived by his wife of 72 1/2 years, Rose Montecalvo (nee Mercanto); his children Linda (Ernie) Phillips, Jackie (Dan) Molinowski, and Michele (Doug) Coffman. Jack was predeceased by his daughter, Adele Montecalvo in 2004.

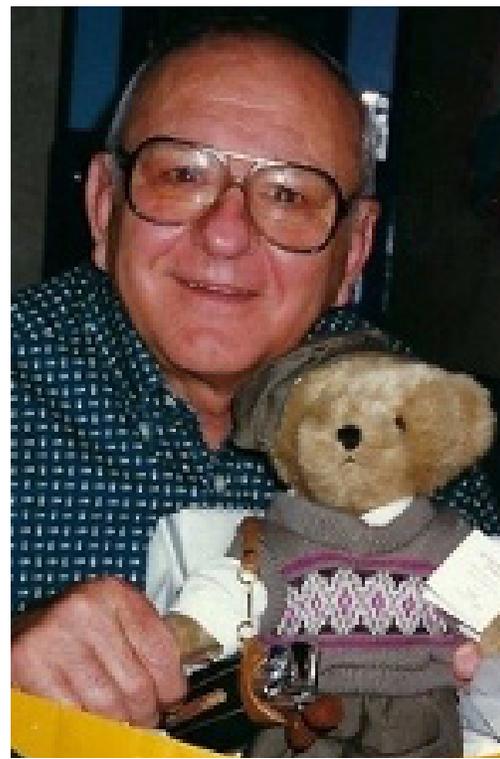
Jack is also survived by 5 grandchildren and 2 step-grandchildren; Geoffrey (Eve), Stephanie, E.J. (Ken), Kelly (James), Casey (Matt), Megan, and Mark (Jess) Molinowski. Great grandfather to Gabriel (Michaela), Noah and step-great grandfather to Logan and Harper, and Uncle to many nieces and nephews. Jack was also predeceased by his parents John Montecalvo and Rose O'Connell, his sister Roseanne and brother Alfred Curcio.

Jack graduated from Hammonton High in 1945 where he was a star athlete. He later continued his education at Rutgers Turf Management School. Jack worked as a golf course superintendent for many years in New Jersey, Maryland, and Virginia. He was one of three superintendents selected to represent the USA at the International Turf Symposium in England, where he and fellow superintendents competed in golf against Germany.

He later started his own business, "Jersey Turf," and traveled up and down the east coast with his machinery in tow, providing deep-tine aeration to many golf courses, sports fields, and college campus fields. Later he sold his business and retired.

Jack was a sports aficionado and was a diehard Philadelphia sports team fan, especially the E-A-G-L-E-S. He loved to golf and did so often until he was physically unable. Jack and Rose would host an annual "Birthday Dinner" in January for all his golf buddies which consisted of all homemade Italian specialties made by Rosie and served by his daughters. As time passed the "Birthday Dinner" turned into the "Spaghetti Open," where golf course superintendents would compete playing golf in nicer weather and then have a Spaghetti dinner at a nearby Italian restaurant, Jack and Rosie would still provide the meatballs and sausage for the dinner.

Rose and family would like to thank the caring professionals of The Samaritan Center at Voorhees for their compassionate and excellent care of Jack during his brief stay. Visitation will be held on Saturday, January 16, 2021 from 10:00am to 12:00pm at the LeRoy P. Wooster Funeral Home and Crematory, 441 White Horse Pike, Atco, NJ, where a memorial service will begin at 12:00pm. The visitation



John A. "Jack" Montecalvo

and service will be live streamed and will be available to be viewed by going to www.lpwoosterfuneralhome.com, click on the obituary, click on tribute wall and click on the live stream.

In lieu of flowers, donations to [St. Jude Children's Research Hospital](http://St.Jude Children's Research Hospital), Memorial Giving, 501 St. Jude Place, Memphis, TN 38105 or visit www.stjude.org/memorial

To plant trees in memory, please visit our [Sympathy Store](#).

Published by The Press of Atlantic City on Jan. 11, 2021. ♦

HAVE NEWS TO SHARE?

Please send it to the PAGCS office. klibsch@pagcs.org

PAGCS VIRTUAL TOY DRIVE IN PARTNERSHIP WITH THE MATTHEW RENK FOUNDATION RAISES NEARLY \$700 FOR CHOP TOY INITIATIVE

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>>ASSISTANT'S CORNER

A PIVOT TO DIVOTS—A LONG, STRANGE JOURNEY TO A CHAMPIONSHIP

COLLIN HARLEY IS A 2013 GEORGE E. LEY SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENT

by Nick Sujkowski, PAGCS Assistant Representative to the Board

For this edition of the "Assistant's Corner," I sat down with Aronimink Golf Club's Lead Assistant Collin Harley. We discussed how he discovered his love for turf maintenance, his career succession, and hosting the KPMG Women's PGA Championship amidst a pandemic.



Collin Harley

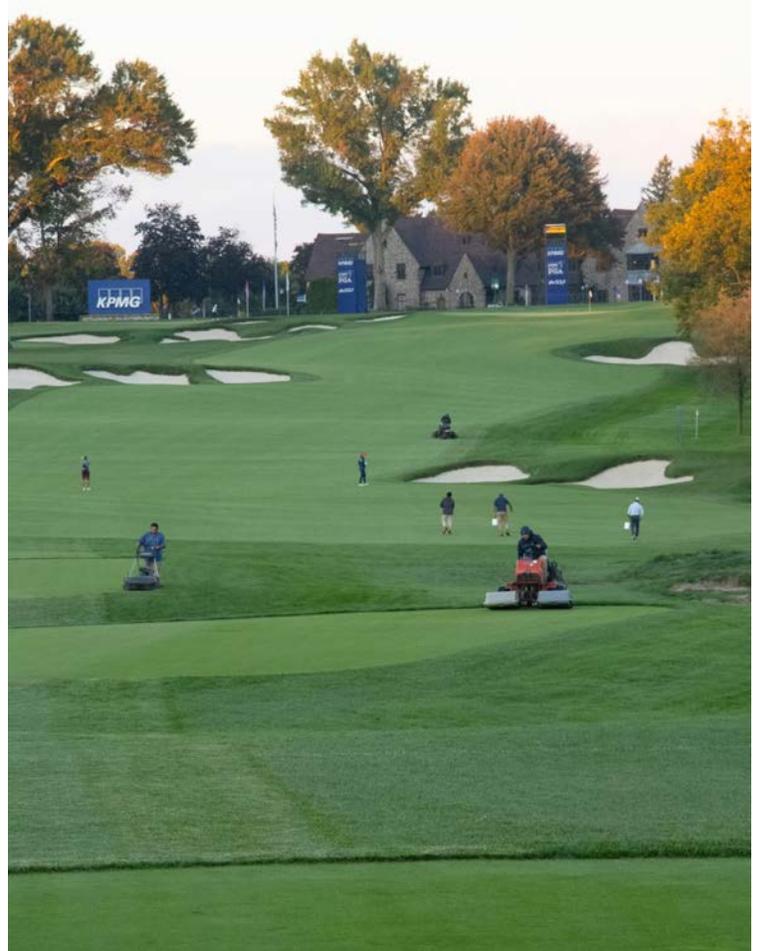
Tell our readers a little bit about you and how you came into the turf maintenance industry.

I grew up about 45 minutes northwest of Philadelphia in a small town called Gilbertsville, PA. I grew up playing golf with my dad and brother and really took a liking to it, so much so that I joined the high school golf team. I worked at a number of golf courses starting at the age of 14. I was usually either picking the driving range or washing carts for the golf professional staff. When I was 17, one of the managers asked me to join the golf course maintenance staff because they were short-handed for the season. I really enjoyed the work that I was doing on the golf course. When I graduated high school, I went to Bloomsburg University to become a teacher but changed my major to Earth and Space Science during my junior year. I continued to work on the golf course throughout my summer and winter breaks. During the summer going into my senior year, my boss asked what my plans were after graduating...and I didn't have an answer. I was unsure what I wanted to do with my major, and at that time I would most likely have had to relocate to an area where I did not want to live in order to get a job. My boss mentioned the two-year Golf Course Turfgrass Management program at Penn State and suggested that I enroll. I knew I had a passion for golf and was always happy to return to the golf course for work. So I did. I attended the program immediately after Bloomsburg and

never looked back (graduating class of '14).

Please describe your career path that has led you to your current position at Aronimink.

It all started picking the driving range at Hickory Valley Golf Club. My family was friends with the golf professional there and he offered me a part-time job. After HVGC, I went to Linfield National Golf Club and this is where I joined the golf course maintenance team. I worked there throughout high school and college during my summer and winter breaks. While attending the PSU Turf Program, I chose to do my student internship at Aronimink Golf Club. When I finished school, John [Gosselin] offered me a post-graduate position with a job share opportunity. That season, I worked at Aronimink through October and then joined the team at The Los Angeles Country Club for a winter internship. Afterwards, I joined the team at Gulph Mills Golf Club with newly appointed Golf Course



Aronimink Golf Club

Continued from previous page

Superintendent Matt Rogers. Matt and I became good friends at Aronimink, and I thought this would be a great opportunity to see what it is like for a lead assistant to transition in to a superintendent role. I worked with Matt for five years and then returned to the AGC team in January 2020. I could not pass up the opportunity to assist in hosting the 2020 KPMG Women's PGA Championship.

How was the adjustment period coming to an organization that was gearing up to host a Women's major just five months after you started?

Luckily, having worked at Aronimink before, the transition was rather smooth. I was familiar with the property and was able to pick right up with staff members that were still there from years past. However, now I was coming back to Aronimink playing a much different role on the team, which was exciting, yet nerve racking at the same time. Fortunately, this was not John's first rodeo. His guidance, planning, and record keeping from past tournaments really gave me all the tools I needed to help get myself organized and mentally prepared for the event. Assistant Superintendent Nick Carothers was also a huge help, having just hosted the 2018 BMW Championship.

to limit the amount of time spent near one another. We split into teams with different starting times, lunch breaks, equipment, tools and the list goes on. Like everyone else, we were unsure as to how long this would continue.



Joe Kopania - Assistant Superintendent



Collin Harley

What challenges did you and the Aronimink agronomy team face in preparing for this event during the pandemic?

Losing staff members was certainly a setback. February through the beginning of March had brought some rather mild weather and we were off to a great start on the golf course. Then we lost about half of our team. At this time, we were seeing other tournaments being postponed but we were not given any confirmation regarding the Women's PGA Championship. So our team buckled down and continued to prepare, anticipating an event at the end of June. Thankfully, a couple of individuals from the golf professional staff were able to join us and were a huge help in our operation. The overall change in routine and uncertainty was challenging. Scheduling became more thoughtful as we separated our staff into two teams to try

Please elaborate on the date change for the event and the challenges that posed.

When the PGA of America released the change of date, I think we all felt a range of emotions. Disappointment, relief, excitement just to name a few. Disappointed because we had worked so hard preparing for a June event and the golf course was fantastic at that time. Also, now we knew that we had to get through July, August and September, which, historically, can be challenging months in the Philadelphia area. Fortunately, August and September were great to us this year. With a dramatic increase in the number of rounds being played, divots became a hot topic of conversation. The competitors were going to be teeing it up from many of our primary tee locations used for our members. This was especially challenging on the par 3s. Thankfully the membership at AGC is extremely supportive and was cooperative with our diverse tee set up and using artificial turf mats on select tee boxes and landing areas. Aside from the golf course, we now had to think about our volunteers. There was so much uncertainty and no information to share, other than the new date. With minimal time left, we had to finalize our volunteer list and gather all necessary criteria for credentials. Perhaps one of the biggest challenges with the new October date was lack of visibility. With the shorter days and 7:10 am tee times off of numbers 1 and 10, we performed almost all of our morning and evening assignments in complete darkness. With many volunteers unfamiliar with the property, all the TV cables, a course full of ropes and stakes and a headlamp as your source of light, safety quickly became the top priority.

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What are some lessons you have learned from this experience at Aronimink and how have the challenges of this year helped prepare you for your future career?

I knew that coming back to Aronimink and preparing for the Women's PGA Championship was the right career move, but I didn't realize how much it was going to influence me. Working with John and hosting the event this season has drastically improved my leadership, communication and organizational skills. I feel this event has helped me overcome stress and think more clearly while making real-time decisions. Without a doubt, I have gained a valuable set of tools this season that will certainly be displayed in any of my future career endeavors.

I would like to thank our staff and the phenomenal group of volunteers that we had. We certainly could not have pulled it off without their commitment. I would also like to recognize the AGC Leadership Team:

John Gosselin - Golf Course Superintendent

Nick Carothers - Assistant Superintendent

Joe Kopania - Assistant Superintendent [pictured on a roller during the tournament prep: Joe is also a PAGCS scholarship recipient, the 2016 and 2017 Frank I. Shuman Award]

Rich Reimers - Irrigation Technician

Muhamed (Hamo) Krkbesevic - Equipment Manager

Collin Domblesky - Post Graduate Intern

Wyatt Yashura - Student Intern

Zach Zelman - Student Intern

I want to thank Collin for taking the time to speak with me for this edition of the Assistant's Corner and congratulate him and the Aronimink agronomy team on a job well done. I was fortunate enough to volunteer for the tournament and the course was fantastic despite the challenging year: a true testament to the talent and dedication of everyone at Aronimink Golf Club. ♦

-Nick Sujkowski
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ASSISTANT'S CORNER

Anyone who would like to be featured in the next edition of the Assistant's Corner, please contact Nick at nicksuj@gmail.com

NICK SUJKOWSKI

A little bit about Nick Sujkowski, Assistant Superintendent Representative to the Board and a regular contributor to *The Bonnie*

From: the small town of Dalton, Pennsylvania located 10 miles north of Scranton.

Education: Penn State University, B.S., Turfgrass Science.

Career:

Internships—Cassique Golf Course in Kiawah Island, South Carolina; Eagle Point Golf Club in Wilmington, North Carolina.

Positions—Assistant Superintendent, Concord Country Club, September 2016 to the present; Assistant Representative to the PAGCS board of directors since December 2018.

Nick's "Why": In college, when it came time to decide on a major, I was all over the place. I gave Turfgrass Science a shot because I played golf in high school and love the outdoors. I liked the idea of doing something different every day and not being stuck inside. I fell into turf by happenstance but as soon as I started my major classes and had my first internship I was hooked. ♦





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MEET THE RECIPIENTS

The PAGCS proudly awarded both the Frank I. Shuman and George E. Ley Scholarships in 2020. Due to the constraints of the pandemic, the presentations will take place in 2021.

2020 FRANK I. SHUMAN SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENT—MICHAEL SHEEHAN

Golf Turf Career: Mike is a student member of the PAGCS, working on the crew at Radley Run Country Club, and attending Penn State's Golf Course Turfgrass Management two-year certificate program—expected graduation May 2022.

Quotable: "As a superintendent I hope to bring more kids into the industry and get them excited about it just as my mentors have done for me." Michael Sheehan

Notable: Mike is a trained firefighter working for the FAME Firefighter Company and a pilot in training.



Mike Sheehan in action at his "other job" as a first responder

2020 GEORGE E. LEY SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENT—ZACHARY ZELMAN

Golf Turf Career: Zach is a student intern at Aronimink Golf Club, majoring in turf management at Delaware Valley University—expected graduation is May 2022

Quotable: "Zach was instrumental in a very unusual year in terms of weather and the COVID pandemic ... He lived on site and quickly became the go-to person for all after hour emergencies and became the lead person in our dormitory area ... and that is a true sign of leadership." John Gosselin, GCS, Aronimink Golf Club

Notable: Zach also holds an Associate's Degree in Business Administration and is a member of DelVal's NCAA DIII Golf Team. Captain of his high school golf team, Zach was also awarded the school's golf scholarship in 2016.



Zach Zelman on course at Bent Tree in TX where he is working during the winter break



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>>MEETINGS AND EVENTS/ASSISTANTS

PHILADELPHIA ASSOCIATION OF GOLF COURSE SUPERINTENDENTS – ASSISTANT SERIES MEETING

[Click Here to Register](#)

Title: Get the Job You Want

Carol D. Rau, PHR, Golf Career Expert & Speaker

1-hour presentation

Wednesday, January 27, 2021

3:30-4:30 p.m.

This Presentation is offered free of charge, courtesy of Genesis Turfgrass.

Session description:

Assistant Superintendents will learn winning marketing strategies and tools to set them apart, and advance in their careers. Emphasis on approaching job searches with an intentional strategy to convey unique strengths and proven results. Topics include job search documents, interviewing, and overall career advancement.

- Primary and over-arching theme of differentiating themselves in all aspects of career advancement
- Discuss the qualities that prospective employers are seeking and strategies to convey related skills
- Best tips for resumes, cover letters, references, and interviewing in the golf industry

Learning objectives:

At the end of this presentation, participants will be able to:

- Research target audiences and customize career documents and message to fit audience priorities
- Professionally convey their experience, skills, education, and leadership qualities
- Identify and articulate professional work examples to substantiate performance and results

Carol D. Rau, PHR – full bio

Carol D. Rau, PHR is a Certified Professional in Human Resources and high energy speaker with expertise in career consulting for golf and turf professionals worldwide. She has been a Career Consultant and Speaker with GCSAA since 2005 and draws from 20+ years of experience in recruiting, career coaching, resume building, and job search strategies. She authors a Career Column in GCM Magazine and is a frequent speaker at national, regional, and local golf industry conferences.

Carol earned her Bachelor's Degree in Business Communications from the University of Kansas where she was a member of the Women's Golf Team. She enjoys golfing, distance running, and cheering for the Jayhawks with her husband and two sons.



Carol D. Rau, PHR



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By GCM staff – www.gcmonline.com, Nov. 11, 2020

From sea to shining sea, golf courses can look to the state-specific resources for making environmentally sound decisions and demonstrating stewardship. View all the guides here.

Three years after launching the initiative to establish golf course best management practices (BMPs) for all 50 states by the end of 2020, GCSAA has announced the project's successful completion. As of Dec. 31, 2020, each state has published its own BMP guide that outlines golf course maintenance practices that protect and enhance the environment and are tailored to the state's unique geographic conditions and regulatory climate.

"Our goal to develop BMP manuals across the nation in such a short time frame was ambitious, but we knew these documents were a must as we work proactively with legislators, regulators and communities to demonstrate how superintendents are dedicated environmental stewards," says GCSAA CEO Rhett Evans. "This is truly a watershed moment for our members, the game of golf, and the people and wildlife who benefit from the agronomic and environmental practices superintendents engage in every day."

While the steering committees that led each state's efforts were made up primarily of GCSAA members, the groups worked closely with others in the golf industry, university faculty and officials from various state agencies to author the BMPs.

To aid the efforts, GCSAA created the [BMP Planning Guide and Template](#) to offer a blueprint for the state documents, which address topics such as water conservation and



management, nutrient management, waste disposal, integrated pest management, and pollinator protection. The USGA provided funding for the BMP Planning Guide and Template.

GCSAA further assisted the state BMP projects via grants, which were funded in part by the PGA Tour through GCSAA's philanthropic organization, the Environmental Institute for Golf. The PGA of America, Jack Harrell Jr., and Herbert V. Kohler Jr. also contributed financial support for the creation of the state BMP manuals.

"We are extremely proud of the GCSAA members who gave of their time and talents to spearhead the effort, but it's a testament to the collaborative nature of the golf industry and the widespread understanding that the benefits of our environmental practices go well beyond the golf course that so many individuals and organizations were involved," Evans says. "We thank the many volunteers and supporters who helped make this vision a reality."

Prior to the launch of the initiative in 2017, seven states—Florida, Michigan, New York, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Virginia and Washington — had already developed comprehensive golf course BMPs. These states updated their documents using GCSAA's new resources.

With the establishment of state BMPs, the initiative will now move on to its next phase: facility BMP manuals. Using the BMP Planning Guide and Template and their state guide, individual golf facilities can create a course-specific BMP manual to direct and document agronomic and environmental practices. Such handbooks also provide an easy, detailed reference to help golfers, lawmakers and community members better understand the operations behind the maintenance of one of their local green spaces.

U.S. Sen. Angus King of Maine, who contributed the forward to the [Maine BMP manual](#), sees the value of such guides for state residents.

"Maine's golf courses are gaining wide recognition as a valued recreational resource," King says. "At the same time, our communities want to know that golf courses are correctly managing their water resources, including protecting valuable wetlands and employing good IPM and nutrient management methods. This manual provides extensive guidance."

Learn more about [GCSAA's golf course best management practices initiative](#). ♦

PA BMP—FACILITY BMPs NEXT!

Has your facility checked out the easy-to-use online kit for every golf course in the state to create its own Facility BMP [[click here](#)]. This adds another tool that superintendents and industry leaders can use for advocacy.

The state website to house and promote the PA Best Management Practices is in its final stages and will be rolled out shortly.

A “GENUINE” WORK IN PROGRESS

*by Kevin Doyle, GCSAA Northeast Regional Field Staff,
and currently interim for the Mid-Atlantic Region; kdoyle@gcsaa.org*

Having the opportunity to hear so many great speakers at events and meetings through the winter season is exciting. It also feeds the mind during down time between meetings and engagements. One particular presentation, that by Henry DeLozier at the 2018 GCSA of New England Annual Meeting, sent me back to my days as a superintendent, trying my best to lead using what DeLozier referred to as servant leadership. We have all had the opportunities to work with and or lead individuals. Occasionally, one stands out for positive or negative reasons. For me, it was an employee I will call “Eddie,” and I’d like to share his story.

Eddie showed up at the golf course in early spring looking for a job during the very beginning of clean-up. At that point, the course was not open, and staff numbers were kept very low. He was asked to return later in the spring. Two weeks later, Eddie showed up again, filled out an application, and an interview was scheduled. Eddie’s platform was simple; he needed work, will show up on time, and will work all the hours I could give him. I hired him.

**IT WAS AGAIN DETERMINED
THAT THE TRAILER THAT DID
NOT FIT ACROSS THE BRIDGE
ON 17, STILL DID NOT FIT
ACROSS THE BRIDGE ON 17**

It became clear early on that Eddie would be a project. Eddie, in his own words, was “not the brightest bulb on the tree.” Learning course routing was more of a work in progress than usual. Every training took longer than with most. Straight lines were optional, holidays were a given, and it was again determined that the trailer that did not fit across the bridge on 17, still did not fit across the bridge on 17. Among all this daily chore chaos, there was

an employee who showed up early, worked hard, had a great attitude, and was proud of the need to put another notch in his belt because he had lost weight.

He knew his work was indeed a work in progress, but as he made progress, everyone on the staff gave Eddie his due! Mowing directions fell into place, lines straightened, no more skips, and subtle changes to the norm were taken in stride. By the middle of the season, Eddie was doing good work, a key individual for an in-house project, and spending some time outside of work with some of the staff. Eddie’s positive attitude was infectious, he was extremely proud to be a member of our team and thrilled to need a new belt.

As a facility with a small crew, I had to let Eddie go early in the fall. I reached out to a colleague and got Eddie a spot for the remaining part of the late-season. It didn’t work out.

Late December of that year, I ran into Eddie at the local market bagging groceries. He was smiling wide, talking to all the customers, doing what Eddie does. He was incredibly thankful for the opportunity to work at the golf course and for giving him the chance to fill a spot at another course. I expressed to Eddie my thanks for all the effort he put in and for the positive impact he had on each member of the staff. I told Eddie I would never forget him, and despite the fact that we lost touch, I haven’t.

Not every staff member learns at the same rate, brings the same attitude to the job, or works out quite as we may have envisioned. I will never forget Eddie or the joy he brought to me as I watched him (slowly) succeed in his work with a smile on his face and genuine concern for assisting others. If you have had an “Eddie” in your career, please let me know your story and the impact that employee made on you. With the hardships shrinking labor pools bring to us these days, it is refreshing to reminisce about the positive impact others have had on our past! ♦

BRIAN SCHNEIDER COMPLETES RENOVATION OF LLANERCH CC

By Richard Humphreys – www.golfcoursearchitecture.net, Dec. 21, 2020

Brian Schneider of Renaissance Golf Design has completed renovation work, including redesigned green complexes, bunkers and ground features, at Llanerch Country Club in Havertown, Pennsylvania.

“Llanerch’s bunkers had reached the end of the life cycle and the membership felt that if we are going to re-do all of the bunkers, we should look at the greens and see if we could find more pinnable locations, as they are 100 years old and had shrunk over time,” said Brendan Byrne, golf course superintendent at Llanerch. “Also, we had a number of trees, which had been planted over the years, that were affecting turf quality. We realised we needed a plan on what trees to remove and, if we remove trees, how we keep the course interesting to play.”

Schneider was appointed in 2019.

“There is some legitimate history at Llanerch, with golf being played on the site late in the nineteenth century,” said Schneider. “The club also hosted the 1958 PGA Championship, so it’s a strong layout over very nice ground with a great mix of short and long holes, many of the half-par variety. However, the bunkers were worn out, the greens were a fraction of their original size and the course had lost both its polish and its identity... it was time for a facelift, and I was honoured that they reached out for our help.

“Philadelphia is one of the great golf cities in America and our goal was to give Llanerch a new, old-fashioned aesthetic that might distinguish the course from its neighbours,” said Schneider. “To that end, we wanted to do something different with the hazards, both in placement

and in style, utilising contour and above-ground features over an abundance of sand. The bunkers we did build are deep, steep and best avoided. While leaving most of the existing putting surfaces intact, we also expanded all of the greens, some considerably, to reclaim lost space and in some cases added completely new hole locations. Combined with tree removal and fairway expansions and adjustments, these new hazards and hole locations should create a wide variety of shots and strategies on every hole.”



The new tenth green at Llanerch CC, where Brian Schneider has completed renovation work

By approaching the project in two phases, the club was able to keep nine holes open at all times. The course is bisected by a road and the first phase of renovation work, which began in autumn 2019, addressed the nine holes on the clubhouse side of the road.

“On the clubhouse side, the eighth green needed to be completely rebuilt, so we started there and worked around to the other holes,” said Byrne. “In the early weeks of the project we could give Brian and his fellow designer, Blake Conant, time to work in the dirt and find the visual aesthetic they wanted for the course. It turned out better than we hoped, especially when you look at the work between the eighth and tenth green sites. Brian and Blake saw how they could expand the tenth green and tie in a quarry wall, which makes the land feel more connected.”

“Expanding the greens back to the edges of their fill pads along with improving the placement of greenside bunkers were key focuses,” said Schneider. “We were also aware of the budget and bunkers can often be the most expensive



The fifteenth hole features a long mound, inspired by the wall on the thirteenth at North Berwick



On the second, Schneider added mounding where trees were removed

part of the project, so we decided to use more above-ground features to add interest to some of the flatter parts of the property. Last fall the most dramatic change was on the second hole, adding mounding down the right where trees were removed. The mounds are meant to give the player a different type of challenge when they hit a shot off line. They can still advance the ball, but it's not going to be a simple shot when they are out of position."

The second phase was completed in autumn 2020.

"This fall we continued work on the other side of Steel Road," said Schneider. "The 300-yard fifteenth hole might be the biggest change where we removed the fairway bunkers and installed a mound that runs from the green diagonally through the fairway into the sixth hole. This feature helps connect the holes and tie the property

together. The inspiration was the wall on the thirteenth hole at North Berwick. Also, we are creating a forward tee so that even players who don't hit the ball as far can play forward and get to try to drive the ball up by the greenside mound.

"This has been a wonderful project and I sincerely appreciate the opportunity and the trust that we were given to create something unique for Llanerch. I hope that the process of discovery, getting to know the subtle nuances of their new course, is a long and enjoyable one for the members and I am confident that they'll find a collection of holes and shots that they can't experience anywhere else in the area."

The renovated course will open for play in spring 2021. ♦



The new tenth green at Llanrech CC, where Brian Schneider has completed renovation work

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GOLF MAGAZINE'S "BEST PENNSYLVANIA GOLF COURSES" RECENT RATINGS FEATURE PAGCS MEMBER COURSES

At Number Two on the list [after Oakmont]: Merion. Under the leadership of the esteemed Paul Latshaw Jr., this is no surprise.

Golf Magazine: "What makes Merion so distinctive is its remarkable variety. Some par-4s are short, others are monsters. One par-3 is tiny, at 115 yards; the others measure 236, 246 and 256 yards. The famous par-4 11th, where Bobby Jones clinched the 1930 Grand Slam, is slashed by a creek, while the par-4 16th demands a shot over an abandoned stone quarry. In short, Merion has everything, including newly installed sub-air and irrigation systems that lend more control over the firmness and speed of the playing surfaces. The recently expanded greens have created a plethora of new hole locations around the greens' perimeters, and the player's chess match with the clever design is more intense than ever."

Up next at Number Three is Aronimink, under the care of John Gosselin

Golf Magazine: 'Donald Ross always thought Aronimink would be his masterpiece. Over the years, a who's who of great architects gently tweaked this suburban Philly classic, and while the course never lost its greatness, bits of Ross's genius were slowly chipped away. Almost 20 years of patient restoration – most recently led by Gil Hanse – have brought Ross's original vision back to life. Today, the famous Tudor clubhouse overlooks a course with larger greens and more treacherous bunkers that is once again the 'supreme test' Ross intended."

Number Four goes to Philadelphia Cricket – Wissahickon Course. The team at PCC is led by Dan Meersman and Robb Moulds, who have hosted not only the PAGCS, but many First Green events.

Lancaster earned top Six honors—Josh Saunders leads the charge there and has graciously agreed to host the PAGCS for the first time since 2010. Join us for the Golf Champs at LCC in October 2021.



Merion East in Ardmore, Pa.
[photo credit: Golf Magazine]

Huntingdon Valley, ever a local favorite, hosting the PAGCS in 2015 and 2020, takes Number Seven. Led by the long-tenured Scott Anderson, a visit to the Valley is always special.

Rolling Green, host of the PAGCS 2020 Golf Champs, is the lovely Number Nine. Leadership includes Brian Chapin and newly named Superintendent Steven Bigelow.

Lucky Numbers 11, 14, 20 for Saucon Valley – Weyhill Course, Old Course, Grace Course respectively. Jim Roney, proud DelVal grad and long-time industry leader, and his esteemed team made this possible.

Lehigh deserves the limelight at Number 16. Long time industry leader John Chassard, along with Ryan Fogel get credit for this one.

And now we honor Gulph Mills [#17], home of the 2021 PAGCS Member-Guest—thank you, Matt Rogers, and team for hosting us this year!

Hello, Stonewall – Old Course: Host of the 2018 PAGCS Annual Meeting, Dan Dale and his team earned the right to be in the top 20 for sure

Click here to see the full listing of the top 20 by Golf Magazine: <https://golf.com/travel/best-golf-courses-pennsylvania-2020-2021-ranking/> ♦

>>SEEN ON THE WEB

LET'S TALK TURF AND LIFE

By Matt Shaffer, former PAGCS long-serving Board member and retired superintendent

Last week on Twitter, I mentioned that I hoped there would be a shift in funding for golf course budgets in 2021, after clubs saw how much can be made on golf alone. There was some justified skepticism about the likelihood this would happen.

It seems only fair, because at lots of clubs, the increases haven't kept pace with expectations! That is a recipe for disaster and guess who the fallout guy or gal is?

It is a difficult problem for GMs: members pay dues, so they want a steak that would cost \$50 downtown, at the club they want it for \$30 and they want heavy poured drinks; they don't want to make reservations and they want wait staff to know their names. That is some serious overhead right there.

But if we are going to run clubs like a business, these are the difficult conversations GMs have to have with at their facilities or the economics don't work.

Superintendents need to write about the cost of golf and quantitate the cost of raking bunkers more, tighter turf, firmer and faster greens.

It takes a team effort to let golfers know the real cost to run their club! Then they need to make some tough decisions. All sounds so simple but it takes a dynamic team to pull this off but it works.

Keep on pushing! ♦



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HOW THIS U.S. WOMEN'S OPEN GROUNDSKEEPER SILENCED THE SKEPTICS AND BLAZED HER OWN TRAIL

by Rachel Bleier, www.golf.com, December 13, 2020

HOUSTON — Every year, the [U.S. Women's Open](#) gives the world an unfettered glimpse at just how good the women's game can be and presents an unparalleled opportunity to celebrate it.

This year, at a U.S. Open unlike any other, it's only fitting that women be represented in a part of the golf industry where there are few females: golf course maintenance.

Out of 70 members of the expanded grounds crew at Champions Golf Club, there's only one woman: A.J. Hill.

Hill, who is on loan from her course in Florida, has a designated task for the week: cutting the holes on the front nine of the Cypress Creek course. It's a job she's been preparing for her whole life.

"My dad has always worked at a golf course, so he'd bring me in when I was in kindergarten before school, and I'd cut cups with him," Hill said. "He'd put it down in the ground and give me the little rubber mallet and let me beat it down in the ground."

From there, her love for course maintenance blossomed and her dream job seemed well within reach. But achieving your dream is rarely easy.

"They insisted that instead of working on the golf course, I work in the kitchen. It was a little heartbreaking..."

A.J. HILL

Hill had young children and needed to find a way to provide for them, so she applied for a grounds crew position at a course in Georgia.

"They insisted that instead of working on the golf course, I work in the kitchen," Hill said. "It was a little heartbreaking, and I had in my mind that I couldn't get a job working on a golf course because it's not [for women]," Hill recalled.

Her luck changed in Florida, during a ride in her dad's pickup truck. After a quick stop for lunch, they pulled into the parking lot of Highland Florida Golf Club, about an hour east of Tampa, where he was meeting with the course's manager. She didn't know it yet, but this was her shot.

"I decided I'm gonna put my Burger King down, get out of the truck and go shake this man's hand, and tell him: 'I'm gonna work on your golf course.'"

And she did. When he responded about needing more "pro shop girls," Hill stood her ground.

"No, sir, I'm gonna help you mow greens and fairways and all of it," she told him.

That one encounter led to a superintendent position at one of the oldest courses in the state, and proved to Hill that her dream was worth chasing.

In what turned out to be another blessing in disguise, Highland Florida GC was sold and shuttered just two years after Hill had taken over as superintendent. But thanks to her tenacity and a mutual friend, Hill's dream course came calling, Mountain Lake GC, in Lake Wales, Fla.

"Growing up as a kid in the same town, my dad and I would drive past [Mountain Lake] and he'd say, 'Back there is the best golf course



A.J. Hill is the only woman on the grounds crew at the U.S. Women's Open.

in the area.' And I would just pray for a chance to see it," Hill says. "To be able to work there is just phenomenal."

For Hill, what started as something she enjoyed doing with her dad turned into an experience at the U.S. Women's Open beyond her wildest dreams.

"Cutting cups is my absolute favorite thing to do," Hill said of her work on Cypress Creek. "I feel so at peace."

Not only has she cut holes at a championship course, but she's also gained valuable experience that will set her apart when she applies to Penn State's agronomy program for the summer semester. She did it all while proving to her two kids that "hard work will get you anywhere you want to go in life."

But for now, Hill is just proud to have the world's best players [pouring putts](#) into cups she cut. ♦

DOES YOUR CLUB HAVE A UNIQUE RELIC ON PROPERTY?

Something out of the ordinary? An antique of sorts that stands out? GAP Magazine wants to learn more about it. Submit your suggestions to Dan Scofield, Assistant Communications Director, at dscofield@gapgolf.org.

The J. Wood Platt Caddie Scholarship Trust continues to rely on the spirit of giving. Consider making a donation. The Trust, created in 1958, aims to financially aid deserving caddies in their pursuit of higher education. Visit www.gapgolf.org and click on the "Platt" tab to learn more.

Winter brings snow – and perhaps a small flurry of change at your club. Make sure to update your club contacts with

GAP. Two simple ways to do so. Contact Jason Funderburg, GAP Tournament Operations Assistant, at jfunderburg@gapgolf.org. Or be on the lookout for a GAP email form in January 2021. ♦

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94-YEAR-OLD FAYETTE COUNTY MAN MAKES 300 WOODEN TOYS FOR CHILDREN

by KDKA-TV News Staff, December 13, 2020

A 94-year-old Fayette County man who has been making Christmas toys for children since the 80s is still at it.

State police say they picked up 300 wooden toys from Ed Higinbotham on Thursday.

State police take the toys to distribute them to kids for Christmas.

"At 94 he still has the drive and determination to see children smile this time of year. WAY TO GO ED!" state police tweeted.

KDKA's Ross Guidotti talked Higinbotham last year. He's been making toy trucks, tractors and much more since the 1980s.

"What goes through your heart when you think there might be a kid somewhere playing with one of your toys?" Ross asked him.



(Photo Credit: KDKA)

Higinbotham replied, "I could almost cry, to be honest with you."

He estimated that he's given away at least 3,000 toys. ♦

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PETS OF THE PAGCS

FACILITY: Saucon Valley Country Club

MEMBER: Frank Perrone

Laci will be featured as Miss August in GCSAA's "Dog Days of Golf" 2021 Calendar.

Laci is a 4-year-old Austrian shepherd who loves going to work every morning at Saucon Valley Country Club in Bethlehem, Pa., with her superintendent, Frank. Laci's ideal job is chasing geese and squirrels, and she began her career at 4 months old at Manasquan River Golf Course, where she mastered being the best shotgun rider. Laci likes to spend her weekends off relaxing in the air conditioning or jumping off the diving board. If Laci could spend all day in the water, she would.

Frank Perrone, a nine-year member of GCSAA, is in his third year as the superintendent of the Weyhill Course at Saucon Valley Country Club. Frank graduated from Delaware Valley University in 2014 and still supports his fellow Aggies. When away from the course, Frank enjoys spending time with his family and venturing to new places with his fiancée, Alexa, and Laci by his side.

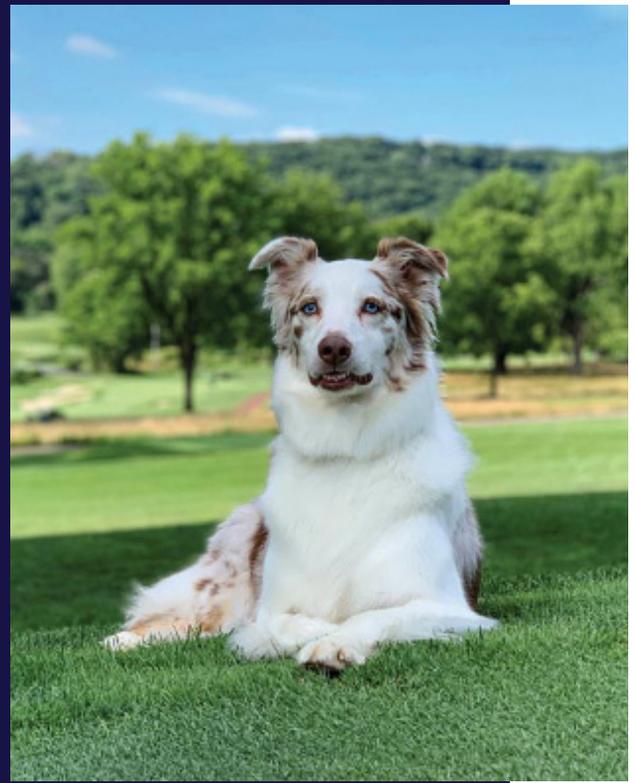


Photo by Francis Perrone

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FACILITY FOCUS

COURSE: The Springhaven Club

SUPERINTENDENT: Charlie Miller, CGCS

TENURE: Three Decades! Charlie joined the Springhaven team as an assistant in 1990, after attending PSU, and took over as the superintendent in 1996.

CHARLIE ON THE COURSE: The golf course has changed so much in all these years. MANY trees are gone, and still many to go. I often look at old pictures and at times it takes some time to figure out what hole I'm looking at. We are slowly but surely picking away at the Golf Course Improvement Plan from Jim Nagle of Forse Design.

Almost all greens now have internal drainage. In conjunction with removing trees around greens—GAME CHANGER. Four of five of my par 3 tee complexes have been redone with bermudagrass—also a game changer. Total re-do of 16th hole is on the horizon as well as a bunch of bunker rebuilds and possibly a green expansion or two. Numerous tees have been rebuilt/enlarged by Mottin Golf over the last several years. We are also in the planning stages of range/short game area renovation—probably will include paddle courts.

Despite Covid, the club followed through with a renovation of the pool, construction of a new pool building, athletic facility, simulator rooms, and outdoor cabana bar. Club is healthy and membership is growing.

Springhaven and the Wallingford area has been a good place to raise a family. I came here in 1990 as a young, snout nosed, probably a little cocky college grad, and now I have four successful adult kids who like hanging with their dad....when they are in town. Hope to ride it out here till retirement.....unless I win the Powerball or Megamillion.....then I'm OUT!



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7th Hole
Aronimink Golf Club
Master Plan Restoration Completed May 2018
Hanse Golf Design



CHEERS TO A NEW YEAR AND THE 2021 SEASON TO COME

The PAGCS Membership Renewal Process will roll out over the next two weeks. Keep an eye on your inboxes and the website for details, including an exciting new member benefit.





THANK YOU FOR OVER 10 DECADES OF SUPPORT

Dear Members of the PAGCS,

On behalf of the board of The First Tee of Greater Philadelphia, our staff & all of our students, I want to say thank you to the PAGCS for your continued support to TFTGP!

While 2020 was a year that we will never forget; despite the inherent challenges, amazingly, we found many silver linings. As you are aware, rounds throughout our area were up significantly. Both Walnut Lane GC & John Byrne GC had record years, with each course having over 30,000 rounds played. Amazingly, John F. Byrne GC was up from only 10,000 rounds played the year prior, when we did not manage [the course]. Our goal continues with investing to improve both municipal golf courses, to provide great conditions for our students, as well as the Philadelphia area public golfer.

Even though we were not able to continue the traditional PAGCS Volunteer Day this past fall, we still received support from many members of the PAGCS directly and indirectly. The board of TFTGP has three PAGCS members, and our Greens Committee has an additional three members involved. This past year we received two very generous equipment donations from John Canavan, of The Ace Club, and Pat Michener, of Bidermann Golf Club. We also had Greg D'Antonio, of Concord CC, Dan Meersman, of Philadelphia Cricket Club, Jay Parisien, of Bala GC, and Steve McDonald, of Turfgrass Disease Solutions always available for consultation. From the Vendor side, Mike Cavanaugh (TFTGP Board Member) of Floratine, Brad Helcoski & Tim Riismandel, of Ewing Irrigation, George & Brian Ley from the George E. Ley Company, Mike Janzer from Plant Food, Kevin Monaco, Lance Ernst, and Brent Mounts from Turf Equipment & Supply Company, Sumner Cross & Ken Jeinnings from Lawn & Golf, Charlie Koennecker from Finch Services, Pat Hartman from Arader Tree Service and Steve Shreiner, from Shreiner Tree Care, Bill Corcoran from Ventrac, all were incredibly generous with their time and support!

We are very excited about where the TFTGP program and golf operations are heading! Even with all the challenges, we have been able to grow the number of students in our programs, our two facilities are now self-sufficient and we added financially to our organization rather than becoming a burden. Without the support of the PAGCS, which dates back over 10 years, we would not be in the position we are today! Thank you to your collective body for making possible all that we do.

William Hyndman V

Executive Director | The First Tee of Greater Philadelphia

Phone: (267) 626-6218 www.firstteephiladelphia.org



HEY, SUPERINTENDENTS:

Don't forget that the First Tee needs our help. Consider making a donation from your facility [rounds, lessons, etc.] for the upcoming auction. Deadline is **Jan. 21**. Contact Bill Corcoran at Bill.Corcoran@ventrac.com.