# A publication of the **National Golf Course** Owners Association. Mid-Atlantic Chapter

### A Message from Our President

The holiday season is wrapping up, and golf course owners and operators in the Mid-Atlantic preparing for the new season, which will be here before we know it. So, what will the New Year hold? Is the supply and demand going to level out some, with the recent closing of a number of courses in the Mid-Atlantic? Will we find new ways to create revenue at our courses?

The NGCOA Conference is coming up in San Antonio on February 6-8, and a great program is planned. The program looks great — hope you can make it! There is a lot of momentum, following a successful TechCon event in Las Vegas in September. Second-year CEO Jay Karen is now building strong industry relationships and bringing new faces to the conference. Click here to view the program for the NGCOA Conference.

Say, did you see the Nov./Dec. issue of *Golf Business* magazine? The cover features "The Four Horsemen," the four new minority owners of Marlton Golf Club in the Washington, DC area. They plan to expose the minority community to both golf and business. Great reading!

We had a really great annual meeting a few weeks ago at 1757 Club in Dulles, a Billy Casper Golf facility. Peter Hill, CEO of Billy Casper Golf, shared his insights on the industry and where it is headed. We had a national update from NGCOA CEO Jay Karen, and a Government Relations report from the GCSAA's man on the Hill, Bob Helland. Then it was time for the awards, and we honored some real all-stars — Wayne Nooe of Kingsmill Resort, 1757 Golf Club, Farmington Country Club and Belle Haven Country Club (read more inside!) We also bid a fond farewell to everyone's friend, Don Ryder of The Omni Homestead, who retired from our board.

We have plans to defend our industry this year through advocacy. NGCOA Mid-Atlantic will be monitoring issues in Virginia, Maryland and DC, along with allied associations through legislative visits and on-the-ground representation at state and local events. Coming up this spring is another rendition of National Golf Day in Washington, DC and NGCOA MA will be there visiting Congressmen and Senators in our region. The event features over 100 meetings with Congressional leaders. Last year our own board member Keith Miller, PGA of the Montgomery County Revenue Authority, was on the case on Capitol Hill alongside the top industry officials.

In addition, we continue to look for ways to collaborate with our allied associations. NGCOA Mid-Atlantic is a member of the Mid-Atlantic Golf Council, comprised of VA and MD organizations serving golf. The group includes us plus the state golf associations, the PGA chapter, the CMAA chapters, the GCSAA chapters. We are pleased to announce our inaugural **Mid-Atlantic Regional Golf Conference** at Belle Haven Country Club on March 6, 2018. We are expecting well over 200 attendees to hear industry updates from the leaders of national organizations (see article inside). Bring your top club leaders and don't miss it!

In other news, our friends with the Mid-Atlantic Association of Golf Course Superintendents have now completed a *Best Management Practices* project designed to set standards and to showcase the environmental stewardship of the golf industry. The turf professors at the University of Maryland stepped up to write the BMPs, along with the region's top superintendents.

Now a word about our Corporate Partners. We now have 25 companies supporting our organization, and their support allows us to serve you better. Up to Par Management and Textron Golf have stepped up in a major way to support our Annual Meeting with award sponsorships. Companies like Performance Food Group, Yamaha Golf Cars and Acumen Golf have been with us since Day One. ETS is a big partner, and we welcome PowerFilm Soloar as a new partner. Please visit our Partner listing and support the companies that support you!

I am honored to serve as your President, and I am pleased to serve on a board with some of the sharpest minds in the region (check them out on our board page). They are here to grow the game and serve our member clubs, and they do it pro bono! So please join us as a member, and help us grow the game and share operating successes for the betterment of our industry in the region!

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### NGCOA Mid-Atlantic Annual Events a Success

### 1757 Golf Club & Trump National, Washington, D.C. Co-host Annual Meeting & VIP Reception

On October 17th, Trump National, Washington D.C. hosted the pre-con VIP reception in the majestic clubhouse that overlooks the championship golf course. Attendees gathered for an evening of networking, cocktails and hors d'oeuvres. It was a fun event that included a raffle for a Bag Boy travel golf bag with one lucky winner, Kody Key of Textron Golf.

The NGCOA Mid-Atlantic Annual Meeting was held the following day at 1757 Golf Club in Dulles, VA.

NGCOA MA President Mike Bennett emceed the event and kicked off the meeting with a special thank you to all of the meeting sponsors and year-long partners, followed by attendee introductions. The keynote speaker was Peter Hill, CEO of Billy Casper Golf. Pete was recently named the #6 Most Important Person in Golf by *Golf, Inc.* magazine and he also serves as a Chairman of the National Golf Foundation and as a Board Member of NGCOA. Pete gave a riveting presentation on factors affecting the golf industry right now.

Following the Pete's presentation was the annual meeting. The nominating committee recommended a slate of Directors for the 2017-2018 board which was voted on in the affirmative. Mr. Don Ryder of the Omni Homestead submitted his retirement from the board, leaving the position to be filled by board action, according to the Bylaws. Bennett recognized Ryder for his outstanding contributions.

Jay Karen, NGCOA CEO, gave an update from the national office covering the recent technology conference (TechCon) held in Las Vegas, NV, the state of the game and how allied associations are working together to make strides in the industry. A government relations update was provided by GCSAA Director of Congressional/Federal Affairs Bob Helland, and PGA Employment Consultant Greg Stenzel gave an update on the PGA's Employment Service platform and its benefits.

A special part of the event is the presentation of the annual awards (see articles on each award in this newsletter). Winning the NGCOA MA

Public Golf Leader was 1757 Golf Club. The award is given in recognition of programs executed by a public facility to promote golf in the Mid-Atlantic. Director of Golf, Dave Ahart accepted the award on behalf of 1757 Golf Club.

Farmington Country Club in Charlottesville, VA was recognized as the *Private Golf Leader* for 2017 by NGCOA Mid-Atlantic. The club earned the award by its leadership through thoughtful capital planning and programming. General Manager Joe Krenn was on-site to accept the award.

The NGCOA Mid-Atlantic's Sustainability Award, which is sponsored by Textron and was presented by Regional Director of Sales, Matt Miller, recognizes the ability to incorporate sustainability and environmental stewardship into operating practices. Belle Haven Country Club in Alexandria, VA is the 2017 winner. Accepting the award was Golf Course Superintendent, Mike Augustin.

The final award presented was the *NGCOA Mid-Atlantic Golf Leader Award*, in recognition of leadership and long-term service to the golf industry. Up to Par Management sponsored the award, and it was presented by CEO and founding partner, Sean Taylor. Wayne Nooe of Kingsmill resort was this year's recipient. His tenure at Kingsmill Resort has spanned 16 years under four ownership groups to include oversight for 14 PGA and LPGA Tour events.

After the meeting and awards came the golf! Teams of four competed in a combined best ball net plus best ball gross event. 1757 Golf Club was in excellent condition and the weather was perfect, making for an enjoyable afternoon. The team with the winning score was comprised of NGCOA MA board member John Anderes of Queenstown Harbor, Tim Crumrine of Peebles Golf Cars, Steve Troutman of International Club Suppliers (Entegra) and Tyler Eastham, NGCOA MA staff. Performance Food Group sponsored the awards reception, and as always, the spread was delicious!



Award Winners Wayne Nooe, Mike Augustin, Dave Ahart, Joe Krenn



Winning Team Tyler Eastham, John Anderes, Steve Troutman, Tim Crumrine



Kody Key receives the VIP Reception door prize from Mike Bennett



Wayne Nooe and Jon Guhl enjoy the annual meeting



Speakes Jay Karen, Peter Hill, Mike Bennett

### Public Golf Leader Award — 1757 Golf

1757 Golf Club in Dulles, Va., has been named the 2017 "Public Golf Leader" by NGCOA Mid-Atlantic. This award was presented to Dave Ahart, Director of Golf at 1757, in recognition of the programs executed by this public facility to promote golf in the region. 1757 is owned and operated by Billy Casper Golf (BCG), a full-service golf course management company.

BCG has assisted 1757 with specific segments of the golf business including course and property maintenance, staffing and training, career growth, clubhouse operations, food and beverage, merchandising, golf instruction, marketing and public relations, special events and financial management.

While the golf industry remains flat for many, 1757 is bucking the trend and growing the game through innovative marketing and savvy operations. 1757's Game Improvement Team has played an important role in fostering growth within the area. The comprehensive golf academy, private and group instruction, junior programming, and club-fitting studio provide an unparalleled experience for men, women, juniors and seniors in private, group and team settings.

The highly experienced Game Improvement Team is led by Lead Instructor Tiffany Faucette, who is ranked among the "50 Best LPGA Teachers" by *Women's Golf Journal*. Tim Brogan, Director of Instruction, leads a team of seven nationally recognized club fitters and instructors. Mike Gertzberg, PGA Instructor, handles junior camps for over 1,000 kids per year, and Scott Holmes, Youth Coordinator, runs the PGA Junior League program. The entire team collaborates with Regional Director of Instruction Steve Loesher to remain industry leaders and continue adding new programs throughout the year.

In addition to being known for its first-class golf team and facility, 1757 is also a popular wedding venue. The beautiful, multi-faceted property consistently earns "Couples' Choice" awards from the *Wedding Wire* and *The Knot*. Kelsey Baron, Director of Sales, leads the team responsible for delivering an unforgettable experience for all guests, and Rob Fleming, Executive Chef (1757's longest-tenured employee), designs seasonal menus featuring the finest American cuisine made from fresh ingredients. The 2018 menu will highlight "local favorites".

"Refining our approach and making our public golf experience better is



Dave Ahart (R) of 1757 Golf Club receives the Public Golf Leader Award from Mike Bennett



a never-ending mission," says Aaron Czajka, BCG Regional Director of Operations for the Mid-Atlantic. "Our team works hard to create a more entertaining atmosphere as our competition changes or new competitors enter the market. We're really excited about what the future holds for 1757."

A key industry-wide challenge is making the golf experience more appealing without losing tradition. As a public golf leader, it is evident that 1757 has captured the marketplace and grown the local game through programming. The facility covers a broad spectrum of service offerings and provides guests with entertainment that reaches both the golf and social audience. Leveraging BCG's platform, 1757 has been armed with the knowledge needed to make informed data-driven programming and marketing decisions.

BCG and 1757 are excellent at capturing data. *ACE*<sup>TM</sup>, a BCG-exclusive employee training and coaching program, emphasizes the importance of data collection. This information is used to study player behavior. The 1757 and BCG team meets regularly to analyze prior-week data and discuss strategies for upcoming weeks. Pricing, tee-sheet utilization and programming are key areas of focus, among others.

As 1757 is owned and operated by BCG, it is often used to beta test new tools and technology prior to rolling out innovative cutting-edge solutions that ultimately enhance the experience for golfers at a local and national level. This summer, BCG and 1757 began using a new invitation-based-marketing platform called Waddle.

"If people are invited to play golf, they will play more," says Peter Hill, BCG Chairman and CEO. "Create the events and invitations and they will play."

Waddle allows for seamless email communication and website integration to provide a professional, streamlined approach to managing events at scale. This is just one of many ways that BCG continues proactively helping golf facilities such as 1757 evolve and increase revenue.

When asked about the "Public Golf Leader" award, Czajka replied, "Our team works tirelessly to provide our guests with the best experience in the area. It's humbling to receive positive recognition from our peers, and a great honor for every team member."

### **About 1757 Golf Club**

1757 Golf Club's par-70, 6,600-yard layout is a shot-maker's dream. Routed through gently rolling terrain with elevation change up to 30 feet, 1757 features dramatic views of Broad Run and the majestic Virginia landscape, along with strategically placed bunkers, streams and lakes.

#### **About Billy Casper Golf**

Billy Casper Golf is one of the largest privately-owned golf course management companies in the U.S., with nearly 150 properties in 29 states. Headquartered in Reston, Va. — with regional offices across America — BCG has more than 25 years of results-driven expertise. The company recently launched its newest management solution, *Billy Casper Signature*, as a boutique division focused on country club, resort and private club management.

### <u>Private Golf Leader Award – Farmington Country Club</u>

Farmington Country Club in Charlottesville has been recognized as the *Private Golf Leader* for 2017 by NGCOA Mid-Atlantic. The club earned the award by its leadership in member service, opening impressive new facilities and offering outstanding programming to its members.

In 2017, Farmington renovated its "East Nine" course into an amazing practice facility with a high-tech indoor teaching center, a new range, numerous short game and putting areas and a transformed golf course, now *ten* holes offering a variety of shot values. Meanwhile, the club did a spectacular renovation of its pub and grill and showed a huge increase in traffic. There were many other new enhancements and programming.

But let's not get ahead of ourselves. This all started five years prior, when the club embarked on a process and master plan, also looking at trends in the club world. The plan was labeled "Farmington 2027," indicating the year of the club's upcoming 100th birthday. "Many industry publications and experts report golf and private clubs are dying," said GM Joe Krenn, CCM, CCE, "but in reality people are just playing golf and using their clubs differently now."

One key point of recognition in the plan was that people *like* and *need* practice. The club wanted to see some of the best teaching facilities in the country, so they visited numerous places, such as Robert Trent Jones, Caves Valley and David Toms' facility in Louisiana — they already had first-hand experience at Baltimore CC, Atlanta Athletic Club and Cherokee T&CC in Atlanta. When they saw these facilities, they simply knew they needed to improve. At the time, their range was one-dimensional and woefully inadequate.

Early on, they were fortunate to catch the eye of noted golf course architect Bill Coore. They hoped he could plan the renovation. "I'll do the project but you can't tell me how many holes," said Coore, "The land has to tell me what works." That certainly was a novel approach. They hoped their finished product would offer every condition on the golf course to practice (including bunkers, varied lies, rough) and it would be a two hours or less golf experience. It also needed to be fun for three generations (grandparents, parents, and grandchildren) to all enjoy all for different reasons. They got it. The course opened this summer and their play has doubled!

Then they opened their indoor practice facility featuring five hitting bays, which includes one dedicated teaching bay, featuring TrackMan and other high tech teaching tools. There is also a SAM PuttLab, where analytics help correct errors in a player's stroke.

The combination of all the new facilities has created a new social gathering area, and gone are most of the lonely rounds of singles. "They are meeting different people at the club, and we made it fun again," said Krenn. "There is less of an intimidation factor with our membership."

While the golf enhancements of the club are highly popular, other "Farmington 2027" goals have been realized. They renovated the pub and casual grill restaurant, enhanced pool lockers, tripled size of children's place (sitting service), built two massage rooms, enhanced the spinning room, and opened up a brand new terrace overlooking Blue Ridge Mountains, featuring an adult Blue Ridge Bar area with a fire pit. All of these changes contributed to the club's fiscal performance as well, with revenues rising over 40% in just five years.

The *Private Golf Leader Award* also recognizes excellence in membership recruiting. Krenn notes that new programming and facilities certainly create an attraction, but he cites his team of Tom Zimmermann and Adam Brooker for their good work. They emphasize a "friends of friends" approach to engage with prospective members. They want their members to bring guests to the club, and if they are a prospect, the club will credit the guest charges back to the member's account. It doesn't take long to realize the true *value* 

of a Farmington membership – they are now 99% full.

Some other innovative services include their own club-branded food truck, which is wildly successful for club events and also available for catering member events off-site. The club offers a shuttle



service, to not only service out-of-town members but also taking members to off-site events, such as winery tours and concerts. And get this, Farmington even has its own private-branded craft beer, labeled "1927."

Krenn credits a strong team of department heads who excel in what they do. Their chef is Michael Matarazzo, CEC (formerly of The Greenbrier) and he was the captain of the first US Regional Culinary Olympic team to win the world Championship at the 2008 Culinary Olympics in Erfurt, Germany. He completely transformed the food program at the club, now with great offerings for all members and self-proclaimed "foodies."

Krenn knows golf course superintendent Scott Kinnan is an integral team member. He noted that 50-60% of the work on the East Course was directed by Kinnan and his team, while running maintenance of the championship course at the same time. "He is genuine, down to earth and a smart hands-on leader," said Krenn. He recently got his MBA from VCU and is highly respected by the entire family at Farmington.

And what can you say about head golf professional Rob McNamara, PGA, a 24 year veteran at the club. "He is the spirit of our golf program, and he has such a great track record of mentoring — he is always getting assistant pros stolen from him," said Krenn.

Krenn knows that targeted programming can make or break a club. For youth programs, Farmington created a new position three years ago. Some unique offerings include laser tag, a campout, movie night, after-school tutoring, arts and crafts, golf and tennis camps, parent-child events and more.

Some restaurant promotions include \$5 burger night, Cinco de Mayo, oyster roasts and themes on what is going on around town.

Through it all, Farmington still holds true to its traditional role as a leader for amateur golf. It still runs the long-standing Kenridge Invitational, but the event has been rejuvenated as the field was aging. Accomplished college players were invited, and older players now are testing their abilities with some of the best in the region.

And it isn't just NGCOA Mid-Atlantic making note of Farmington's tradition



Joe Krenn (L) of Farmington CC receives the Private Golf Leader Award from Damon DeVito

of excellence. The club has been a *Club Leaders Forum* Platinum Club regularly, and they reside in the Top 40 in the U.S.

Krenn reacted to the news of the award, "It's humbling, having your peers recognize our club for the efforts of our team. Clubs don't go out to get recognition; rather, they focus on enhancing the member experience. This award is much appreciated."

Farmington Country Club is a traditional, family-oriented private club with a proud history, rich traditions and commitment to the customs of southern hospitality and gracious living. As the premier, full-service private Club in Central Virginia, Farmington seeks to provide excellent facilities, programs and services to serve the social, athletic and recreational needs of its members, their families and their guests.

## Sustainability Leader *presented by Textron Golf* — Belle Haven Country Club

The NGCOA Mid-Atlantic's newest award is the *Sustainability Award*, recognizing the ability to incorporate sustainability and environmental stewardship into operating practices. Belle Haven Country Club in Alexandria, VA is the 2017 honoree, in recognition of their environmental stewardship associated with superior maintenance practices alongside the Potomac River, and their unique on-site farming for the Club's kitchen. Golf Course Superintendent Mike Augustin accepted the award.

When your club sits in a flood plain on the Potomac River, with an adjacent highway carrying thousands of eyeballs daily, that's the definition of "pressure" for a Golf Course Superintendent. Make one wrong move, and environmental watchdogs are on you right away. But Belle Haven's Mike Augustin counters, "From day one, we had a mindset to be environmentally sensitive. You simply MUST do the right thing."

Marrying a commitment to environmental stewardship with the demand for superior golf course conditioning is not a task for the faint of heart. Programs such as buffering ponds, tree removal and tree addition all contribute to ensure aesthetics, playability and responsible golf course management.

"Our goal is for water to leave our property cleaner than it entered," notes Augustin. He has a Storm Water Management Plan to capture runoff in buffers before entering the flood plain of the Potomac. Combine that with the natural filtering characteristics of turfgrass which absorbs nutrients, and you can achieve this goal. And of course inputs are expensive, so applications are set conservatively.

In 2002, Belle Haven undertook a major golf course renovation. This included pond improvements which incorporated "Best Management Practices" standards. All water drains into the ponds first, where they can treat and allow sediment to settle and then the nutrients to be absorbed. Pond aerators keep fish healthy and deter surface algae. Quarterly water samples are a key tool in maintaining pond health. In fact, the Club agreed to keep extensive records as part of their water permit.

The Club added a new pond at the clubhouse entrance off Fort Hunt Road as another environmental area. The Club's Horticulturist created floating wetlands, featuring irises and other wetland plants with roots extending into the pond's base. These floating wetlands help remove nutrients from the water which in turn helps mitigate unwanted nutrient release into nearby streams.

As a golf course with many water features and adjacent to the Potomac River, Belle Haven was prone to problems with Canadian geese. The Club's commitment to protecting wildlife often clashed with maintenance standards. Their humane solution was a combination of Border collies and a laser light system that does not harm geese.

The Club is actually a haven for wildlife. American bald eagles built a large nest on the 16th hole adjacent to the Potomac. Recently the nest was taken over by ospreys, who hatched chicks there the past two years. On any given day, you might see blue herons, eastern bluebirds, mallards, wood ducks, Asian ducks, red tail hawks, turkeys, deer, red fox, coyotes and more. Fish species include bass, bluegill, eels, carp and sunfish. Members may fish "catch and release" during non-golf times.

Augustin noted that the club has a special tree masterplan. During the course renovation, the Course Architect collaborated with an arborist.

Some species you will see at Belle Haven include willow oak, bald cypress, loblolly pine, tulip poplar, black gum, eastern red cedar, holly, diadora cedars and various fruit trees.

Staff training at Belle Haven is constant. Attention to detail is required to maintain high standards in environmental stewardship. It requires constant monitoring to make sure everyone is aware of their surroundings. Practices such as disposal of gas and oil are always done in the proper manner.

With Belle Haven's location on the Potomac River, pumping water sometimes becomes necessary, and they have to ensure it is clean water. "No one wants to be on the wrong side of their neighbors and community," said Augustin. "Our members expect our staff to be good stewards." Pesticides are not applied when there is a risk of runoff.

One truly unique feature of sustainability is the set of six beehives on the property. A local company is hired to tend to the hives, which produce honey used by the Club Chef and offered for sale in the Golf Pro Shop. They started with just one hive five years ago, and the program grew. Augustin described the supplemental feeding of bees with a simple syrup concoction. He notes the Club's commitment to pollinator protection.

The Club also has vegetable and herb gardens under Augustin's responsibility. The herb garden is near the clubhouse, so the Chef can easily access it. Their produce includes squash, zucchini, eggplant, okra, hot peppers, green peppers, and in the fall, beets, radishes, leafy lettuce and acorn squash. Something new are blackberry and raspberry bushes. The Chef loves offering an organic menu. And just like a home garden, it's a lot of work keeping the weeds out.

Augustin was excited to see Belle Haven honored with this award. "It's great to get recognized for doing the right thing," remarked Augustin. "It shows peers that small things can create win-win situations, with benefits to the environment, the Club and the community."

Mike Augustin is a 20-year veteran at Belle Haven CC. He has also worked at Bethesda CC and he got his start at Indian Springs CC. His degree is in Turf Urban Agronomy from the University of Maryland.



Mike Augustin (L) of Belle Haven CC receives the Sustainability Award from Matt Miller

### <u>Mid-Atlantic Golf Leader Award – Wayne Nooe</u>

In recognition of leadership and long term service to both the professional and resort side of golf, Wayne Nooe, PGA of Kingsmill Resort in Williamsburg, VA has been named the 2017 Mid-Atlantic Golf Leader by NGCOA Mid-Atlantic.

Nooe started his illustrious career at Pinehurst Resort and Country Club in 1984 in golf operations before obtaining the position of Director of Pinehurst's Golf Advantage School. His career moved on to lead golf operations at Roanoke Country Club and The Homestead Resort before accepting his current role as Vice President of Golf & Sports at Kingsmill Resort.

Among Nooe's many accomplishments, the NGCOA Award Committee cited his key role in keeping professional golf in Virginia. His tenure at Kingsmill Resort has spanned 16 years under four ownership groups to include oversight for 14 PGA and LPGA Tour events.

Kingsmill's original owner, Anheuser-Busch, hosted the PGA Tour for 22 years. In 2001, the PGA Tour was pressing Anheuser-Busch to make a substantial increase in the purse, but AB questioned whether they "wanted to double their investment in the PGA Tour in such a small market?" Rather than make such an investment, Nooe was tasked with assessing a Senior PGA Tour or an LPGA Tour event as an alternative. After evaluation of the events and what was best for Kingsmill, it was determined that the timing and branding for an LPGA event was a better match. The decision led to nine LPGA events with Anheuser-Busch as the title sponsor.

Change started in 2009 when Anheuser-Busch/InBev began divesting their resort and amusement park business which terminated their relationship with the LPGA — there were no events in 2010 or 2011. Under Kingsmill Resort's new owner, Xanterra, Nooe expressed how important having a leadership position in golf was to Kingsmill and the entire Hampton Roads region.

With support from the new owners, Nooe was instrumental in negotiating a new agreement with the LPGA Tour positioning Kingsmill Resort as the title sponsor through the 2017 event.

When Kingsmill changed hands to Escalante Golf in March 2017 many speculated that without a title sponsor the long run of professional golf at Kingsmill would come to an end. But Escalante, a golf-based company that plays host to PGA Tour, Senior PGA Tour and Web.com Tour events were intrigued by the thought of also hosting an LPGA Tour event. Once again, Nooe's input was sought out which resulted in the LPGA and Kingsmill agreeing to a new contract which will keep the LPGA Tour in Virginia for the next three years.

"The LPGA event means a lot to our members, residents, staff and community, which provides over 1,100 volunteers," said Nooe. "The goal as we move forward is to grow our event and create more charity dollars to give back to our community." Over the years, professional golf at Kingsmill has raised over \$6.5 million to support local community charities.

Of course Nooe's day-to-day focus is to serve the members of The Club at Kingsmill and guests of the resort with enjoyable programming. Kingsmill stages over 100 events for men and women members. For youth, they are active participants in the PGA Junior League. Nooe's team runs junior clinics and grooms youngsters who aspire to play in high school and college. Escalante is very supportive of junior golf and junior programming is available for all levels. Kingsmill hosts a myriad of junior and college events. and they are home to the William and Mary golf team.



**Wayne Nooe** 

Nooe is very active in the promotion of golf to women and members of Kingsmill. The Kingsmill ladies group has an 18-hole and a 9-hole division. There are weekly events for ladies and Kingsmill supports the local Tidewater ladies associations by hosting tournaments. They also offer an excellent instructional program for ladies and men. A popular new program is an unlimited lesson series, which members sign up for on a monthly basis. Their weekday "Putting for Fivers" has turned out to be a fun social event where anyone can compete. Players show up to the practice green at 5:30 pm on Thursdays, and for \$5 they compete in a progressive contest that continues until a winner is determined.

Nooe has been an advocate for the promotion of golf and tourism in Virginia having worked closely with Virginia Tourism in the past as well as serving as chairman of the Sports Marketing Committee for the Williamsburg Tourism

Alliance. The committee assists in the generation of room nights and tourism revenues, throughout the region, from sports related programs including youth soccer, volleyball, triathlons, bike races, football camps, marathons and more.

During his 16-year tenure at Kingsmill, Nooe has overseen several property renovations. In 2003, Kingsmill Resort sustained damage from Hurricane Isabelle shutting down all resort operations and all three golf courses. With significant repairs needed to all guest rooms, condos and golf courses, in a short amount of time, Nooe and his team displayed incredible leadership and teamwork to re-establish operations and play within six months.

In 2005 the River Course was completely renovated. Pete Dye was brought in to achieve two primary goals: (1) make the golf course more playable for higher handicap players, and (2) transform a 1970's "look" into a modern one that is timeless and natural. Several forced carries were eliminated which create a more enjoyable round of golf for the majority of play.

In 2015 and 2016 Wayne was appointed as acting General Manager for Kingsmill. In this role, he was responsible for working with designers and architects to oversee a \$6 million dollar renovation to Kingsmill's 400 guest rooms and condos which allowed the resort to remain competitive in the marketplace.

Over the years, Wayne is one of a few people who have worked for every owner at Kingsmill. Ownership changes normally bring about wholesale staff changes, but Nooe has survived and prospered. His approach is to make people feel proud about what they are doing, and proud of their product. During transitions, Nooe has tried to openly share whatever he knows, to be as friendly and cordial as he can, and to share what was done and why. Being up front and making sure new ownership understands the operation and reasons "why" created a sense of confidence for new owners...

So how did Nooe get into the golf business upon graduating from NC State in the early 80s? His first job was for minimum wage (\$3.50/hour) at as a shop clerk at Pinehurst Resort and Country Club, which allowed him to get his foot in the door at a great golf facility. Wayne then entered the PGA apprentice program, and eventually was promoted to head pro at Pinehurst Number 6 course and Pinehurst's instructional programs.

Pinehurst was owned by Club Corp, and in 1993 they purchased Virginia's iconic resort, The Homestead. Almost immediately Wayne declared his

### Wayne Nooe cont.

interest in the Director of Golf position. Wayne was selected for the job and was there for 6½ years. During his tenure, he oversaw numerous renovations on the golf courses and the property in general. He brought new life to the place known as "Virginia's Grande Dame." During his time there he successfully secured and hosted many VSGA Championships, Merrill Lynch Senior Tour Shoot-Out Finals, NCAA Men's Championship, USGA Women's Amateur, and the USGA Mid- Amateur Championship.

But it was the opportunity at Kingsmill that that he could pull together all of his experiences and take on a new role overseeing golf, tennis, spa, marina, membership and other amenities. It was a perfect fit, and with his experience at The Homestead, he was quickly hired. The Homestead had given him a perspective that people visit resorts for a lot of different things and not just golf.

Nooe credits Don Padgett, as the most influential person in his career. Padgett was in charge of all golf at Pinehurst and a former President of the PGA of America. "It was almost a daily occurrence at Pinehurst that 'Padge' and I spent time in his office and just talked" said Nooe. "The wealth of knowledge I learned from him was invaluable and I still use it on a daily basis."

Nooe also enjoyed the company of Pat Corso, President of Pinehurst. "I just liked watching him — he had a very creative way about him — he was a big thinker. He used to say 'I want something torn up at Pinehurst 365 days a year' meaning constant change and improvement was needed to remain relevant."

While at The Homestead, resort President Gary Rosenberg allowed Nooe to see parts of the business outside of golf. It was there he gained an understanding of food & beverage, rooms, and other resort amenities. This background and knowledge has been very instrumental during his time at Kingsmill.

He also had great respect for Homestead Cascades pro Don Ryder, a former winner of the same award. "Don is the ultimate gentleman and really knows how to treat people. I always enjoyed watching him interact with people and the way he genuinely cared for people."

Nooe was humbled to be recognized with this award. "Anytime someone



Wayne Nooe (R) receives the Mid-Atlantic Golf Leader Award from Sean Taylor

thinks you are a leader that is a compliment in itself. But to be recognized by your peers, people who know what you go through and who know how hard it can be, is very special." Finally, he quipped, "It could also mean you're getting old!"



### Clubs in VA/DC/MD — Join NGCOA Mid-Atlantic Today!

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### Legislative Victory for Golf Course Owners!

### Conservation Easement Tax Incentive Eligibility Change!

The We Are Golf (WAG) coalition, of which the NGCOA is a founding member, scored a significant victory recently when it successfully reversed an effort within the Senate Finance Committee to specifically exclude golf courses from conservation easement tax incentive eligibility.

The NGCOA encouraged members in key states to act on behalf of this change. Forbes-Tate, We Are Golf's Washington, D.C.-based advocacy firm, led an effort that was supported by several WAG member organizations, including the NGCOA, to convince key members of the Senate Finance Committee to include golf courses among land uses eligible for conservation easement tax incentives. WAG will continue to

### WEAREGOLF

remain vigilant with both the Senate Finance Committee and the House Ways and Means Committee to ensure that golf courses remain eligible for conservation easement tax incentives.

While WAG was successful in this instance, much work remains to ensure that golf courses retain their conservation easement tax incentive eligibility.

### **Mid-Atlantic Regional Golf Conference**

### Belle Haven Country Club Alexandria, VA Tuesday, March 6, 2018

### "Viewpoints on the Future of the Golf Industry"

### **Presented by**



#### **Overview**

This unique event features some of the best minds in golf coming together to discuss the state of the game and what the future might hold. The one-of-a-kind event includes CEOs and top executives from some of the major golf organizations in the United States. **You will not want to miss this one!** 

### **Featured Speakers**



Rhett Evans CEO GCSAA



Jay Karen CEO NGCOA



Pete Bevacqua CEO PGA



Craig Annis Head of Communications USGA



Steve Mona CEO World Golf Foundation

**Who Should Attend:** Golf course superintendents, PGA professionals, course owners and operators, club managers, other club staff, administrators, club board members, and other interested parties.

### For More Information and to Register Visit: http://www.maagcs.org/event-2733554

**Host Hotel:** Hampton Inn, 5821 Richmond Hwy, Alexandria, VA 22303. **Rate \$149** | To make your reservations call (703) 392-1400. The room block is available through Feb. 3, 2018.

### **Date/Location**

**Tuesday, March 6, 2018** 8:00 am - 3:00 pm

Belle Haven Country Club 6023 Fort Hunt Rd Alexandria, VA 22307

**Cost:** \$75

Preferred Attire: Business Casual

### **Schedule**

**8:00 am** Registration & Networking Breakfast

> 9:00 am - 12:00 pm Featured Speakers Session

**12:00 pm - 1:00 pm**Networking Lunch

**1:00 pm - 3:00 pm**Panel Discussion

















### NGCOA Announces Annual Award Winners

### Peter Hill of Billy Casper Golf Honored

The National Golf Course Owners Association (NGCOA) has announced the winners of the association's annual awards. Each year the NGCOA honors the most outstanding members of the past year. These individuals and organizations have helped preserve the tradition of the game while embracing the challenges and opportunities of the golf business.

"This year we are honoring some golf industry giants," says Jay Karen, NGCOA's Chief Executive Officer. "In addition, we are excited to recognize some unsung people who have done giant things for golf. The awards ceremony is always NGCOA's finest hour of the year."

**National Course of the Year Award** — Recognizes a golf course that epitomizes exceptional course quality and management excellence, while making important contributions to their communities and the game.

Atlantic Dunes by Davis Love III (Hilton Head, SC)

### **Course of the Year Regional Finalists**

Northeast — Manchester Country Club (Bedford, NH)
South — Atlantic Dunes by Davis Love III (Hilton Head, SC)
Midwest — Swan Lake Resort (Plymouth, IN)
West — Resort at Eagle Point Golf Club (Eagle Point, OR)

**Player Development Award** — Bestowed upon a course, entity or individual, which has implemented true and tested player development programs, providing effective return-on-investment and an overall welcoming atmosphere for new golfers of all ages.

Cantigny Golf (Wheaton, IL)
Troon & Troon-Managed Facilities

**Jemsek Award for Golf Course Excellence** — Honors the world's top golf courses, which are widely known for superior quality, having hosted major amateur and professional tournaments and for being venues to which golfers travel from far and wide.

Erin Hills (Hartford, WI)

**Don Rossi Award** — Given for significant and long-lasting contribution to the NGCOA.

**Peter Hill** – CEO and Chairman of Billy Casper Golf, NGCOA Board of Directors since 2011

Award of Merit — Designated for long-term and significant contributions to the game of golf.

Ladies Professional Golf Association (LPGA)

Paul Porter Award — Established to recognize an NGCOA member who left an enduring mark on a national or international affiliate through the highest level of commitment, service and leadership.

Mark Seabrook (Founding President of NGCOA Canada) and Jeff Calderwood (Executive Director of NGCOA Canada since its inception) — NGCOA Canada is celebrating its 25th Anniversary.

**Champion Award** - Bestowed upon individuals or entities which have succeeded in working on behalf of a group of owners — locally, regionally, nationally or internationally — and have garnered through a significant victory for our members.

Indiana Golf Course Owners Association Elisa Gaudet — Women's Golf Day Founder

Award winners will be recognized at the Celebration and Awards Dinner on Thursday, February 8, the final event of the Golf Business Conference at San Antonio's Marriott Rivercenter.

The annual Golf Business Conference provides attendees the opportunity to connect and network with fellow course owners and operators, learn about new solutions and technologies, and leave with tools and strategies to grow their business. Golf Business Conference information and registration can be found at golfbusinessconference.com.



Peter Hill

### Obama Joins Columbia Country Club By Andrew Metcalt

Former President Barack Obama has accepted an invitation to join Columbia Country Club in Chevy Chase.

The letter, which was obtained by Bethesda Beat, said the club's Board of Governors voted to extend an "Honorary Membership" to Obama. The memberships are provided to presidents, vice presidents "and such other distinguished persons as it may deem proper in recognition and out of respect for their service to our country," the letter says. *Washingtonian* first reported about the letter.

"We have received official word from Mr. Obama of his acceptance to our invitation," the letter says. "Since we opened our doors in 1898, we have welcomed as members, sitting Vice Presidents, former Presidents of the United States, leaders of Congress, and members of the executive branch, the military and Washington's diplomatic corps. The addition of President Obama will continue that tradition."

Obama previously golfed at the club in 2015, when he was president.

After leaving office, Obama and his family settled into a home in the Kalorama neighborhood in Washington, D.C. Obama is an avid golfer who played at Air Force Andrews Base and at Woodmont Country Club in Rockville, among other courses, during his presidency.



Former President Barack Obama golfing at the White House with former Vice President Joe Biden (PETE SOUZA - OFFICIAL WHITE HOUSE PHOTO)

### Hunt Valley Golf Course Renovation Earns National Award

### Revitalized Design near Baltimore Honored by American Society of Golf Course Architects

Hunt Valley Country Club, an Arcis Golf property in the scenic Maryland countryside, just 22 minutes from downtown Baltimore, has earned the 2017 Design Excellence Recognition from the American Society of Golf Course Architects for its golf course renovation, completed this past spring.

The course renovation was part of a complete transformation of Hunt Valley Country Club, which has undergone a \$2.5-million revitalization since Arcis Golf assumed ownership in 2014.

The Hunt Valley project, led by architect Jason Straka of Fry/Straka Global Golf Course Design, created more enhanced shot values while improving the playability of the routings. The strategic removal of select trees opened vistas on numerous holes, while bunkers were refashioned, made deeper, and given high, white-sand faces.

Part of a family-centric community that was once known for historic horse farms, Hunt Valley Country Club remains the region's premier golf experience. The club's redesigned 18-hole layout — The Valley — meanders through rolling hills and picturesque valleys. Thick stands of mature trees frame bentgrass fairways and generous greens, along with numerous streams and other water features add to the golf course's scenic beauty.

Along with a redesign of the course, which was originally laid out in the late 1960s, a new two-tier practice range was created with hitting surfaces of both grass and artificial turf.

Another part of the transformation of Hunt Valley CC is an innovative, three-in-one golf course called The Ridge 9, which offers nine holes of golf, along with 18 holes of two other games designed to be played on a traditional golf course: Disc golf and Footgolf. Together, the three-in-one Ridge 9 offers a family-friendly environment unique to the region. The club has created several unique "non-traditional" membership opportunities to showcase the family aspect of the Ridge 9.



The 2017 nominations were reviewed by a panel of golf industry leaders, including representatives of the Club Managers Association of America, Golf Course Builders Association of America, and Golf Course Superintendents Association of America.

"It is an honor for our golf course to be recognized by the American Society of Golf Course Architects," said Rob Larkin, Senior Vice President, Private Clubs, for Arcis Golf. "The award represents the level of commitment Arcis Golf has made to the complete transformation of Hunt Valley Country Club, from the course to the clubhouse, which will be enjoyed by the members and community for many years to come."

The Hunt Valley clubhouse interior was recreated with an open, flowing floorplan that feeds onto an expansive new deck, which offers casual seating areas, tables and chairs surrounding several fire pits — all designed to maximize the views of the surrounding golf course and countryside scenery.

The new member grill — "Canter Kitchen + Cocktails" — is a combination gastropub and sports lounge, with a striking granite-top bar and festive indoor dining area that capitalizes on wrap-around views of the golf course and the magnificent valley below. These recent enhancements are part of Arcis Golf's commitment to allocate millions of dollars in major capital improvements to its portfolio of nearly 60 public and private facilities nationwide, an indication of the dynamic direction the Dallas-based company is taking in the club industry.

Hunt Valley Country Club is one of 11 courses honored by the sixth annual American Society of Golf Course Architects Design Excellence Recognition Program. Since its creation, the Design Excellence Recognition Program has highlighted the innovation and problem-solving skills required of today's golf course designs, from new 18-hole layouts to practice facilities and renovations of various sizes.



### Maryland's golf course superintendents are proud to announce the publication of Best Management Practices for Maryland Golf Courses and the companion website.

Maryland's BMPs, developed in partnership with University of Maryland turf scientists, are research-based, voluntary guidelines specifically formulated for turf management in Maryland. In addition to the state's nutrient and pesticide regulations, they not only protect our natural resources, they also afford the opportunity for superintendents to be recognized by club members, the community at large, and state officials as environmental stewards.

We encourage you to download the publication or review the website. In addition to serving as valuable guidance for your turf management efforts, the adoption of BMPs by facilities throughout the state will demonstrate to regulators and legislators your commitment to BMP implementation.



### **MAPGA Update**

### **Zylstra Named Omega Open Player of the Year**

With the conclusion of the Rocky Gap Players Cup, the Middle Atlantic PGA season has come to a close and the 2017 OMEGA Player of the year standings are complete.

In his first year as an apprentice, Ryan Zylstra is the 2017 OMEGA Open Player of the Year with 1,420 points earned over six events.

It was an eventful season for the Federal Club apprentice with five first-place finishes in POY eligible events. Zylstra's State Open of Virginia victory at Ballyhack by three strokes rewarded him with 403 points, the most of any tournament.

"After I won the State Open, I knew I had a chance," Zylstra said. "I had a really good year this season, by far the best year I've had as a professional."

Zylstra placed first in four other tournaments, the Southern Chapter Championship, National Car Rental Spring Pro-Scratch, National Car Rental Assistant Championship and the Rocky Gap Players Cup.

"It's very exciting because winning Player of the Year was one of my goals at the beginning of the season," Zylstra said. "As an apprentice, I can't play in the Section Championship so I knew I had to play well in my other events."

Heading into the final points eligible tournament of the season at Rocky Gap, Zylstra trailed leader John O'Leary by 26 points. Zylstra won the



Ryan Zylstra

event by four strokes, securing enough points to surpass O'Leary by 178.

"I'm very thankful of Tim Dale and the ownership at Federal Club to allow me to play a lot of tournament golf and represent our club," Zylstra said.

"It was a great season and I hope to continue my success into next year."

**OMEGA Open POY Standings** 



### **MSGA Update**

### Maryland Wins the Four State Senior Team Challenge



The Maryland entry, led by Dave Nocar, Jr., from Chartwell Country Club, compiled a score of 446 and won the 23rd Four State Senior Challenge at Baltimore CC, October 12. The competition among teams from New Jersey, Pennsylvania, and Delaware, in addition to Maryland, featured eight-man squads with the low six scores to count.

In play over the par-70 East Course on a rainy afternoon, the winners were followed by the Golf Association of Philadelphia, 449, and the Delaware and New Jersey state associations, tied for third at 453. Bill Charpek, from New Jersey, returned the day's best score, a 70, a tour that included three birdies, three bogeys. Teammate Tom Wood followed with a 71.

Nocar, in his first year of eligibility after turning 55, and the current Senior champion of the host entry, the Maryland State Golf Association, was followed by teammates Tom Grem, Hunt Valley GC, 73; Lee Femister, University of Maryland GC, 74; Skip Tendall, Congressional CC, 74; Craig Ostrom Hobbit's Gen GC, 76, and Joe Lefavor, U.S. Naval Academy GC, 77, plus George Murphy, Hillendale CC, and Marc Coburn, Hunt Valley GC.

The event was founded in 1989, with Washington as the fourth team instead of Maryland, but the MSGA was invited to participate in 1995



**MSGA Team** 

after Washington dropped out. Since that time, Philadelphia has won 10 times — and has the lowest team score, 433 — and the victory by Maryland enabled it to move into a first-place tie, snapping a two-year winning streak by Philadelphia.

### Virginia Golf Hall of Fame Announces Four-Member 2018 Class

By Chris Lang

A major champion, a senior major winner, a renowned *RULES of GOLF* official and one of the most accomplished women in VSGA championship history will comprise the third class of the Virginia Golf Hall of Fame, which will be inducted May 15, 2018 at Hermitage Country Club in Manakin-Sabot.

The Virginia Golf Hall of Fame selection committee convened earlier this fall to make the selections. The members of the 2018 class are Dr. Lew Blakey, Robbye Unger, Bobby Wadkins and Lew Worsham.

The 2018 class joins the previous two induction classes in the Virginia Golf Hall of Fame. In 2017, Donna Andrews, Keith Decker, Wallace McDowell and J.C. Snead were inducted. The inaugural class, inducted in 2016, featured Vinny Giles, Chandler Harper, Clyde Luther, Sam Snead, Curtis Strange and Lanny Wadkins.



Dr. Lew Blakev

Blakey joins another *RULES of GOLF* aficionado — Luther — in the Virginia Golf Hall of Fame.
Blakey, 80, who lives in Alexandria, has worked as a Rules official for all four professional majors, including 14 U.S. Opens and eight Masters, along with numerous USGA sectional qualifiers and national championships, as well as two Walker Cups.

Blakey is a past president of the Middle Atlantic Golf Association. In 2001, he became an instructor at PGA/USGA *RULES of GOLF* Workshops and has helped conduct more than two dozen such workshops over the past decade.

A longtime player, Blakey attended his first *RULES of GOLF* workshop in 1993. At the time, he taught graduate-level mathematics and engineering courses as an adjunct professor at several universities, including Northwestern, North Carolina State and George Washington. According to the USGA, he scored a 92 on a Rules test after attending his first workshop, giving him all the motivation he needed to improve.

He logged a perfect 100 score on the Rules test the next year, and soon Blakey joined the ranks of USGA volunteers. He served on the Senior Amateur Championship Committee from 1992-2011. In December 1999, Blakey began serving on the USGA RULES of GOLF committee as a consulting member.

Blakey joined the USGA Executive Committee in 2001 and served for the next six years, as well as being a full member of the *RULES of GOLF* Committee. He was one of the USGA representatives who worked with the R&A at the quadrennial Joint Rules Conference in 2003, which approved changes to the Rules and Decisions for 2004.



**Robbye Unger** 

Unger — who is in the VSGA record books as Robbye King Youel — is one of the most decorated female competitors in VSGA history, having won six VSGA Women's Amateur championships while appearing in four other title matches. Only Lily Harper Martin has won more Women's Amateurs, taking home seven titles between 1934-41.

Unger, 74, won her first VSGA Women's Amateur Championship in 1963 and won five more between 1966-72. Forty years after her first VSGA championship, she claimed her final one, winning the 2003 VSGA Senior Women's Stroke Play title.

Unger graduated from Wake Forest University before earning her Master's degree at the University of Virginia. Outside of VSGA competitions, she had an illustrious amateur career. She was semifinalist at the 1963 U.S. Women's Amateur and was an alternate for the 1964 and 1965 Curtis Cup squads. In 1964, she won the VSGA Women's Amateur along with claiming titles in the Maryland, District of Columbia and Middle Atlantic Women's Amateurs.

Unger was inducted into the Virginia Sports Hall of Fame in 1997. In addition to her on-course play, Unger served the VSGA as president of the association's Women's Division from 1974-75.



**Bobby Wadkins** 

Wadkins, 66, gives the Virginia Golf Hall of Fame its first set of brothers, as he joins Lanny, a member of the inaugural class, in the Hall. A four-time winner on the PGA Tour Champions and a four-time VSGA champion, Wadkins' career highlight came in 2006 when he finished a stroke clear of Jim Thorpe to win the Ford Senior Players Championship.

Born in Richmond, Wadkins and his brother dominated the Richmond junior golf scene. At one point, one of the brothers won the Richmond city junior title six years in a row. Bobby attended the University of Houston for one year before transferring to East Tennessee State, where he earned All-American honors in 1972-73.

Bobby turned professional in 1973, competed in 715 PGA Tour events and racked up six runner-up finishes. He won on the European Tour and Japan Golf Tour before joining the PGA Tour Champions. During his career, Wadkins made five starts at the Masters, highlighted by a 21st-place finish in 1987. He also qualified for five U.S. Opens and

Continued on next page



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### Hall of Fame cont.

competed in 15 PGA Championships.

His best finish in a major, a tie for fourth, came at the 1987 U.S. Open. He also tied for seventh at the PGA Championship that year. In addition to his Senior Players victory, Wadkins had three other top-five finishes in senior majors.

Wadkins won the 1971 VSGA Amateur and collected three titles at the Virginia PGA Open.



**Lew Worsham** 

Worsham, who died in 1990 two weeks after turning 73, was the first Virginian to win the U.S. Open. He defeated fellow Virginia Golf Hall of Famer Sam Snead in a playoff at St. Louis Country Club to claim the title. Worsham seemed to like the spotlight. That U.S. Open was the first to be televised locally. Six years later, he won the first golf tournament to broadcast nationally when he holed out for eagle from 104 yards out

on 18 to defeat Chandler Harper, another Virginia Golf Hall of Famer, at the Tam O'Shanter World Championship of Golf.

Worsham was born in Altavista and began his career in golf as a caddy at Bannockburn Golf Club in Glen Echo, Md., just outside of Washington, D.C., in 1929. He turned professional in 1938 when he took a job at Chevy Chase Club and moved to Burning Tree Club in 1939. Worsham served in the Navy in World War II.

Worsham won six times on the PGA Tour, with his first victory coming in 1946 at the Atlanta Invitational. He won the U.S. Open and Denver Open in 1947; the Phoenix Open in 1951; and the Jacksonville Open and World Championship of Golf in 1953. He competed 16 times in the Masters and recorded three top-10 finishes, including a T3 finish in 1951. He also had three top-10 finishes at the U.S. Open, including his victory in 1947.

During his professional playing career, Worsham was also the head professional at both Oakmont Country Club outside of Pittsburgh and Coral Ridge Country Club in Florida. Worsham was a member of the 1947 Ryder Cup team, where he went 2-0. Worsham is a member of several Halls of Fame, including the Middle Atlantic PGA, the PGA of America, and the Virginia Sports Hall of Fame.

The virtual Virginia Golf Hall of Fame website can be found at www.VirginiaGolfHallofFame.com.





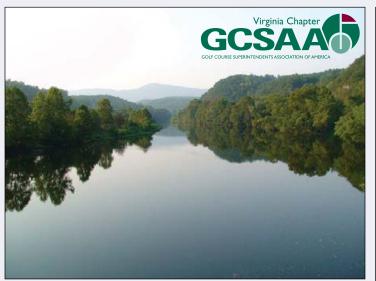




### VGCSA Spotlight: Water Quality Monitoring

October 2017 • Erik Ervin, Ph.D.; Chantel Wilson, Ph.D.; Stacey Kingsbury, M.S.; and Stephen Schoenholtz, Ph.D.

A three-year study monitoring water quality of streams flowing through nine golf courses within a sub-watershed of the Chesapeake Bay showed the course did not contribute to water degradation of the Bay. The research in this article was funded in part by GCSAA through its philanthropic organization, the Environmental Institute for Golf.



The James River in Virginia flows from the Appalachian Mountains to Chesapeake Bay. The golf courses in this study are located within the James River watershed, a sub-watershed of Chesapeake Bay. Photo by Thea Ganoe/Wikimedia Commons

Seventy percent of Virginia's 330 golf courses are located within the Chesapeake Bay watershed. After many of the bay's waters were classified as impaired, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency established, in 2010, Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) requirements aimed at reducing nitrogen, phosphorus and sediment losses. This action prompted the Commonwealth of Virginia to develop watershed implementation plans that identified areas of managed lands for potential reductions (4). At this time, the Virginia Golf Course Superintendent's Association, in conjunction with scientists at Virginia Tech, organized and published "Environmental Best Management Practices for Virginia's Golf Courses" (5). The Virginia GCSA and associated authors stated that the widespread adoption of the best management practices (BMPs) recommended in the book would result in lower nutrient loading to waterways and help achieve TMDL goals as established by the EPA for protection of bay water quality.

To ground-truth this statement, the Virginia GCSA, with matching funding from GCSAA's Environmental Institute for Golf, supported a three-year golf course water-quality monitoring research project conducted by Chantel Wilson for her Ph.D. under Erik Ervin, Ph.D., and Stephen Schoenholtz, Ph.D., at Virginia Tech. Few studies have been conducted anywhere in the United States to quantify the effects of golf courses' standard management practices on surface water quality, and of those few, none has been conducted in Virginia. This study therefore monitored water quality of streams flowing in and out of nine Virginia golf courses situated within the Chesapeake Bay watershed. Finally, a survey of 70 Virginia golf courses located around Chesapeake Bay was taken in 2014 to determine adoption rates of recommended BMPs aimed at water quality protection.

#### **Materials and Methods**

For the three years of this study, researchers monitored streams flowing through nine golf courses located within the James River watershed (a sub-watershed of Chesapeake Bay), representing urban to suburban areas of Charlottesville through the Richmond corridor. All subject courses are private membership, have robust maintenance budgets, and in general must meet higher membership expectations for course conditioning.

Stream sampling locations were identified at each golf course, with water collected at upstream locations where streams enter the course (inflows), and at downstream locations where streams exit the course (outflows) (**Figure 1**, *below*). Upstream water sample collection sites served as baseline reference conditions for comparison with sites downstream of the areas influenced by golf course management practices. Water quality samples and measurements were collected four to six times per year.

In-stream physical indicators of water quality that were measured included temperature, pH and dissolved oxygen. These were measured with a calibrated multi-parameter probe (Hydrolab Quanta; Loveland, Colo.) at inflow and outflow sites at each course. The maximum temperature for non-impaired, non-tidal Virginia Piedmont waters is 90 F. Healthy dissolved-oxygen levels are listed as > 4.0 mg/liter for non-tidal waters in the coastal and Piedmont zones. Water pH for healthy streams ranges from 6.0 to 9.0 (6).

Samples for chemical indicators of water quality were taken consistently at the same locations and within 6 inches (15.24 cm) of the surface in areas of predominate flow. They were analyzed using a SEAL AutoAnalyzer III and standard methods: G-109-94 (nitrate-nitrogen),

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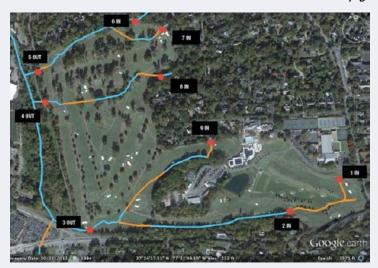


Figure 1. Stream sampling locations were identified at each golf course, with water collected at upstream locations where streams enter the course (inflows), and at downstream locations where streams exit the course (outflows). Course 5 is shown.

### Water Quality Monitoring cont.

G-102-93 (ammonium-nitrogen) and G-103-93 (phosphate-phosphorus) (1). Mean concentrations of nitrate-nitrogen, ammonium-nitrogen and phosphate-phosphorus were calculated from each of the sample sites separately. Differences between the upstream and downstream locations were calculated by subtracting mean downstream nutrient concentrations from mean upstream nutrient concentrations for each stream. Differences were used to decrease the effect of autocorrelation within repeated measures so that the samples could be treated as independent statistical units (E.P. Smith, Virginia Tech Department of Statistics, personal communication). In cases where an outflow was connected to multiple inflows, data were analyzed by averaging the means of the multiple inflow streams. To test for significance, the calculated differences between inflow and outflow locations were compared with zero.

Virginia golf course superintendents were surveyed online to assess management levels and adoption of BMPs on their golf courses. Seventy golf courses — representing 42 Virginia counties within the bay watershed — returned completed surveys.

#### **Results**

#### **Physical Indicators**

The temperature criterion was not exceeded for the non-tidal Piedmont waters except for one instance (92° F) at the outflow location of Course 1 during the summer of 2011. Water pH of the streams was rarely outside the acceptable range of 6.0 to 9.0. Exceptions were seasonal but temporary, with pH readings of 5.0 to 6.0 or 9.0 to 10.0 in less than 10% of the measurements across three years of monitoring.

Dissolved-oxygen levels were occasionally below established criteria for healthy aquatic life (4.0 mg/liter), but low levels were mostly associated with low baseflow (low-water flow) of these small streams in summer or early fall (see **Figure 2**, *below*, for an example of seasonal variation on Course 6). With sufficient rainfall or with runoff in cooler seasons, dissolved-oxygen concentrations were adequate for healthy aquatic life and did not differ significantly between inflow and outflow locations.

If any of these physical parameters had remained consistently worse at outflow locations relative to inflow locations, they would have served as indicators that golf course management practices were contributing to sediment or nutrient pollution. Our data indicate that this was not the case.

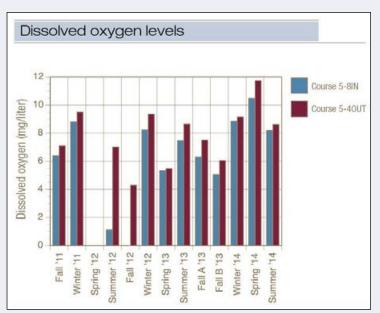


Figure 2. Seasonal dissolved-oxygen levels (mg/liter) on Course 5 at stream inlet and outlet points over four years.

#### Chemical indicators

**Nitrate-nitrogen.** Nitrate-nitrogen concentrations were generally low or below detection limits at all golf course sites (**Figure 3**). Statistical analysis generally did not reveal significant differences between inflow and outflow locations. For example, three years of sampling revealed no inflow to outflow nitrate-nitrogen concentration differences on courses 1, 2, 3, 4, 7 and 9.

One of the exceptions in nitrate-nitrogen concentrations was stream B on Course 5, which had greater nitrate-nitrogen leaving the course (4 mg/liter) than entering (1 mg/liter). This stream flowed through an

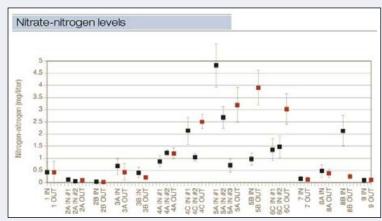


Figure 3. Three-year averages of nitrate-nitrogen levels at nine Chesapeake Bay golf courses at stream inlets and outlets. Bars indicate 95% confidence intervals.

underground pipe on the course, and we had no way to determine the cause of elevated nitrate. Interestingly, phosphate-phosphorus levels were not elevated in the outflow of this underground stream (**Figure 4**). Course 6 nitrate-nitrogen levels were also higher at outflow (3 mg/liter) than at inflow (1.5 mg/liter). Finally, stream B on Course 8 had higher inflow nitrate-nitrogen (2 mg/liter) relative to the outflow concentration (0.2 mg/liter).

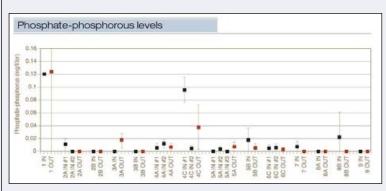


Figure 4. Three-year averages of phosphate-phosphorus levels at nine Chesapeake Bay golf courses at stream inlets and outlets. Bars indicate 95% confidence intervals.

No official guidelines exist for defining acceptable freshwater stream nitrate-nitrogen levels in Virginia, although scientists in Kansas suggest that < 1 mg/liter is considered "good," and 1 to 10 mg/liter is considered "fair" water quality (2). The EPA guideline for safe drinking water is < 10 mg/liter nitrate-nitrogen (3). Based on these guidelines, we can conclude that our three years of nitrate-nitrogen sampling revealed almost no

### Water Quality Monitoring cont.

improvement or degradation of water quality caused by the streams flowing through these golf courses.

**Phosphate-phosphorus.** Phosphate-phosphorus concentrations were generally low or below detection limits at all nine golf courses (**Figure 4**). There were no significant differences in phosphate-phosphorus concentrations between inflow and outflow locations, except at Course 4, stream C, where a small decrease was measured between inflow No. 1 and the outflow (Figure 4). Outflow concentrations of phosphate-phosphorus were always below EPA recommendations for streams not discharging into lakes (0.05 mg/liter), with the exception of Course 1, which was previously a dairy farm and therefore had very high soil test phosphorus levels. The overall phosphate-phosphorus results provide further support for our previous statement that there was no apparent risk of water quality degradation to Chesapeake Bay from the streams flowing through these golf courses.

#### **Conclusions**

Results of the online survey completed by 70 Virginia golf courses located in the Chesapeake Bay area revealed that many of the BMPs recommended in the 2012 Virginia GCSA guidelines (5) were in use (**Figure 5**). For example, water-quality protection BMPs with a greater

than 50% adoption rate included:

- Use of slow-release nitrogen fertilizers near water sources
- Greens drained to grassed or wooded areas
- Vegetative buffer strips used around most irrigation ponds
- Fill stations situated away from drains to surface water
- Control of stream bank erosion
- Vegetative buffer strips used around most flowing surface waters
- Use of detention or retention ponds or basins
- Use of native plants in ponds or buffer zones
- Grass clippings removed from equipment before washing
- Wash pad discharges kept out of surface waters

These survey results, and the stream water quality data reported herein, indicate that Virginia golf course superintendents are committed to environmental stewardship and are voluntarily taking action to protect water quality.

### **Funding**

This study was financially supported by the Virginia GCSA, GCSAA's Environmental Institute for Golf, the Virginia Agriculture Council and the Virginia Agricultural Experiment Station.

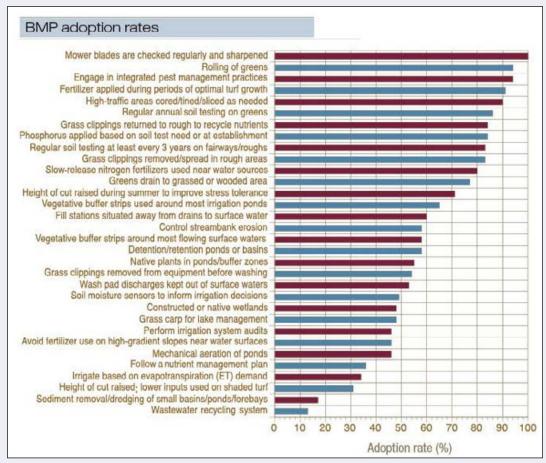


Figure 5. Percent adoption rate, self-reported by 70 Virginia golf course superintendents, of recommended BMPs for water quality protection.

#### **Acknowledgments**

The authors would like to thank all the participating golf courses and their associated personnel. This article is a summary of Chantel Wilson's Ph.D. dissertation at Virginia Tech Erik Ervin was a professor in the Department of Crop and Soil Environmental Sciences, Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, Va. (now at the University of Delaware); Chantel Wilson is the urban nutrient management director at the Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation, Richmond, Va.; Stacey Kingsbury is president of Kingsbury Consulting, Floyd, Va.; and Stephen Schoenholtz is a professor in the Department of Forest Resources and Environmental Conservation and director of the Virginia Water Resources Research Center at Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, Va.

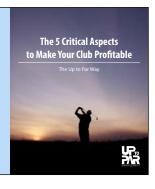


"At Up to Par, our team of experts takes an indepth look at operations to find out why a club is not profitable. From labor models and agronomy plans to banquet sales and demographic studies, our team has seen and conquered the toughest situations to ensure a club's survival," says Sean Taylor, founder and CEO. "From consulting to interim management and all-encompassing operations, Up to Par's expertise is finding a path to profitability and implementing plans to achieve that goal." Case studies listed on the website offer proof of our achievements

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Learn how we do things the Up to Par Way by requesting and downloading our white paper.





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### Club Boosts Play, Creates Buzz Via Deals By Gary Van Sickle

Thinking Outside the Tee Box: One in an occasional series about innovators who are making golf more attractive.

FREEPORT, Pa. — Travis Lindsay made me buy a golf membership this year. I was recovering from stem-cell injections in my left knee in January and wasn't sure I was going to play golf before the middle of summer, if at all. But I bought a Spring Membership, anyway, for all the golf I could play until May 21 at Birdsfoot Golf Club, a daily-fee course about 35 miles northeast of Pittsburgh. Why? It was too good of a deal to pass up.

That was exactly what Lindsay wanted. He handles marketing for Birdsfoot, a course that his family built in the middle of nowhere 15 years ago — no offense to nearby Freeport, population 1,780, which is Birdsfoot's mailing address. Despite a lack of a large local audience from which to draw, Birdsfoot did 33,000 rounds in 2016 and through September was more than 500 rounds ahead of last year's pace. Credit Lindsay's innovative marketing ideas for that, plus the fact that Birdsfoot is a course that golfers like. It's a sprawling, rolling layout in a rural location with well-maintained greens.

One of Lindsay's main methods is to pre-sell discounted rounds during the winter. He estimates Birdsfoot sold the equivalent of 4,000 rounds in January and February, when the course wasn't open — about 12 percent of the course's annual play.

"During winter, people like to think about golf and the idea of golfing," he said. "Once people buy packages in the offseason, they're committed to playing the course, and they bring other golfers with them. It creates a customer loyalty that's awesome. And when their package of rounds runs out, a lot of them keep coming back."

Check out my Spring Membership. For \$149, I got golf (cart included) at Birdsfoot for March, April and most of May and practice-range use. My package came with a \$50 gift card that could be used for green fees, golf balls, shirts, beer, hot dogs or anything else. So essentially, I paid \$99 for the membership. Plus, I got passes for four rounds at Birdsfoot (cart included) that wouldn't expire. So even if I didn't play before my temporary membership expired, I had four rounds for \$99, a good deal given the regular green fee of \$59.

This is how you entice people to play golf. The golf landscape has changed, and Lindsay has made sure that Birdsfoot adapted.

"It's a very dynamic business now," Lindsay said. "Some courses want to charge everybody one rate and figure if enough players come in at that rate, they make their expenses. That's not how it works anymore. They key is, you put packages together where the customer can't lose."

Birdsfoot's success stems from a failed attempt to build an online booking system in 2010. It cost \$3,500 to install and generated only \$700 worth of tee times. "It flopped," Lindsay said. "I was like, *Oh, geez, now what do we do?*"

He tried pre-selling discounted rounds as an experiment that winter. "We sold 144 rounds the first week of January in 2011," he said. "Right out of the chute, it was, Wow!"

He was initially nervous that a big pre-sell would hurt in-season sales, but he quickly learned it was just the opposite. "That first year, it was like seeding the tee sheet," he said. "It grew into a full tee sheet, which gave us dependable play."

That was just the start of his thinking outside the tee box. His wife, Virginia, suggested raffles. She has a sewing business and has written books on the subject (one is Sewing to Sell: The Beginner's Guide to Starting a Craft Business) and told her husband that fabric giveaways are extremely effective in her world.

So, Lindsay gave away a driver via an off-season raffle. Customers got one raffle chance for each \$20 Birdsfoot gift card (good for green fees or Birdsfoot food or merchandise) that they purchased.

"The response was off the hook," Lindsay said.

The raffles grew and became more creative. He raffled off a set of irons. He raffled off packages for multiple rounds of golf and memberships. This year, he raffled a Myrtle Beach golf getaway that was a big hit. It's all done via email lists.

"The idea is to create excitement, and while that's happening, customers see our name and it gets them talking about us," Lindsay said. "It all makes people feel like they're part of something. Instead of putting money into TV marketing, we're creating word-of-mouth buzz. We pay for the prizes, but that's just a marketing expense."

Lindsay offers some other unique membership options. All of the packages come with four additional rounds that never expire.

The Anniversary Membership, \$89. Buyers get unlimited golf Monday through Friday but have to pay a cart fee: \$20. For a higher fee, they can get sevenday-a-week access. Lindsay says the average purchaser plays seven rounds.

The Day of the Week Membership, \$189. The customer picks the one day each week that he wants to play for the year — say, Wednesday.

The Once a Month Membership, \$200; Twice a Month, \$229.

The King for a Day package allows a foursome to play all day for \$200. It comes with a \$100 credit that can be used for food or drinks or future rounds.

Lindsay said he tried a Once a Week Membership, but it didn't sell. "The golfer has to say, *How much can I actually play?*" he said. "One thing we found is that people don't want something that expires. Even the monthly passes, I had to include four free rounds to get people to purchase them."

The off-season raffles and unusual membership plans are fun for customers and generate sales, but it's not about that, really. "It's the sense of excitement," Lindsay said. "It's all about getting players to the course. It's been a game-changer for us."



If you know someone doing innovative things in golf, contact the writer at gvansick@aol.com. Gary Van Sickle has covered golf since 1980 for Sports Illustrated and Golf.com, Golf World and The Milwaukee Journal. Email:gvansick@aol.com; Twitter: @GaryVanSickle

### Partner Spotlight

### Up to Par Management Sponsors the NGCOA Mid-Atlantic Golf Leader Award

Up to Par Management stepped up to sponsor the National Golf Course Owners Association (NGCOA) Mid-Atlantic Golf Leader Award. The annual award is given in recognition of leadershipin recognition of the leadership in the golf industry in the Mid-Atlantic, as evidenced by long-term service. The 2017 award was presented to Wayne Nooe of Kingsmill Resort at the Annual Meeting (see article, pp 7-8).

"We are elated to be sponsoring and presenting this award," said Sean Taylor, founder and CEO of Up to Par Management. "This award represents the lasting impression golf can make over multiple lifetimes."

Prior recipients are Allen Wronowski, PGA (former national President of the PGA of America), Don Ryder (longtime Director of Golf at the Omni Homestead), Bill Smith (Maryland State Golf Association Executive Director) and Bill Goodwin (CCA, owner of several large golf properties including Keswick Hall, Sea Pines, Kiawah, and others).

The purpose of the NGCOA is to be a resource of information and inspiration on how to operate their facilities as efficiently and profitably as possible - a perfect match to Up to Par's commitment to delivering positive financial results and exceptional experiences for all partner clubs and courses. Up To Par exists to create success for its clients and customers through a philosophy of continuous improvement, operational excellence and flawless execution achieved through a culture of financial discipline, safety, and community and environmental stewardship. Up to Par develops and delivers innovative solutions while providing a dynamic and challenging environment for its associates.

"At Up to Par, our team of experts (uptoparmanagement.com/company/ our-team) takes an in-depth look at operations to find out why a club is not profitable. From labor models and agronomy plans to banquet sales and demographic studies, our team has seen and conquered the toughest situations to ensure a club's survival," continued Taylor. From consulting to interim management and all-encompassing operations, Up to Par's expertise is finding a path to profitability and implementing plans to achieve that goal. Case studies listed on the homepage of their website offer proof of their achievements (uptoparmanagement.com/).



Up to Par's goal is to help as many clubs as possible be profitable. They are so confident about their success that they offer clubs and courses a FREE phone consultation to help owners and investors assess the health of the property.

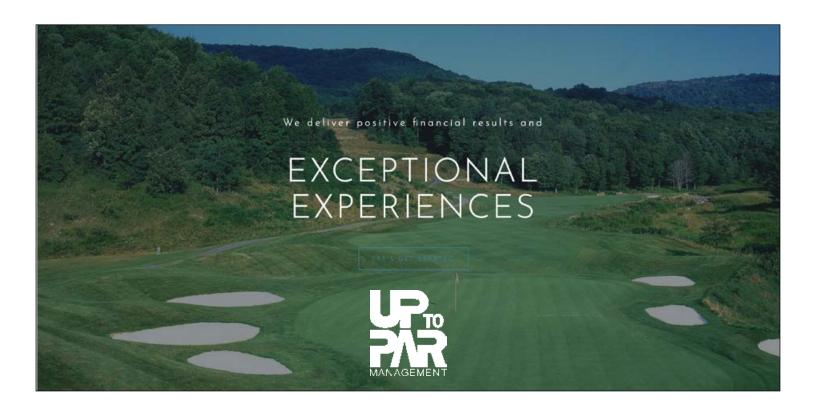
#### Contact:

You can schedule your call with Sean by phone or email: 540-464-4653 / sean.taylor@uptoparmanagement.com.

#### For more information:

More information about Up to Par Management can be found at www.uptoparmanagement.com.

More information about the NGCOA and the Mid-Atlantic Golf Leader Award can be found at www.ngcoa.org.



### Partner Spotlight

### **NGCOA Names ADP as Smart Buy Partner**

The National Golf Course Owners Association (NGCOA) has named ADP as a Smart Buy Partner.

ADP is the world's largest Human Capital Management provider, specializing in services ranging from HR & payroll to workers compensation insurance, pay cards, tax credit screening, retirement services and recruitment & hiring solutions. ADP's Franchise and Alliance team will now offer NGCOA members special discounted rates on ADP products and solutions.

To better serve our members, the NGCOA develops relationships with the industry's leading suppliers of products and services for golf operators through the Smart Buy program. Our Smart Buy partners offer a significant NGCOA members-only benefit and in turn receive marketing, promotion and brand awareness through NGCOA channels. NGCOA members receive cost savings benefits on golf cars, turf & irrigation, food & related services, human resources, insurance, legal services, energy management, television programming, etc.

"Based upon my past experience working in the golf industry, I have a keen understanding of the challenges that golf course operators face on a daily basis. Behind the calm and tranquility that golfers expect during a typical round of golf, there are a lot of moving parts that need to be managed properly", says Jared Roberts, District Manager for ADP's Franchise & Alliance Team. "ADP can help ease that operational burden

so that owners/operators can focus on building the best possible experience for their players, members and guests. I look forward to partnering with NGCOA members to offer streamlined, cost-effective solutions that are aimed at driving profits and saving time."



### **About ADP**

ADP is the world's largest Human Capital Management provider, specializing in services ranging from HR & payroll to workers compensation insurance, pay cards, tax credit screening, retirement services and recruitment & hiring solutions. ADP continuously focuses on the development and introduction of products and services that work together seamlessly. In 2017, ADP celebrated 68 years in business, served more than 650,000 clients in more than 110 countries, and counted 18 years of serving clients with cloud-based software. The relationship between the NGCOA and ADP is managed through ADP's Franchise & Alliance Team, located in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.

#### Contact:

Jared Roberts, ADP Franchise Relations Specialist 412-420-6073 ● jared.roberts@adp.com

### **NGCOA** Announces Partnership with **ORCA**

Data. The word tends to elicit one of two responses out of small business owners. One is: "Give me more! Can't get enough of it!" The other: "Who's got time for that?"

On most days in the golf industry, it feels like the latter faction has the majority. And I get it—owners and operators are busy people, taking care of customers, tending to employees, watching the cash flow closely, and trying to make sure the product is as good as it can be. It's hard to imagine time in the day to look at data on rounds, revenue, capacity, RevPATT and how your numbers may compare to a competitive set or your market.

But here's the thing—we need to. The primary comparison operators tend to make now is when looking at what competitors are charging for tee times online. Unfortunately, that tends to be an exercise that results in a downward pressure, economically speaking. The pull and temptation is to consider lowering your prices to get customers when you see that your competitor's pricing is lower than yours. This can no longer be the only exercise we do in comparative analysis.

Instead, imagine if the dominant conversation around data in our industry and at the operator level was about facility performance. I believe the result would be an upward pressure, economically speaking. Instead of feeling the effect of price pressures, operators might feel the effect of keeping up with the Joneses. If the conversation centered on revenue per available tee time and seeing competitors performing better than you, the question would be, "How do I achieve that?" That's a better conversation than, "Shoot. They lowered their rates. How do I keep up with that?"

The hotel industry has its monthly STAR report, which allows hoteliers to see how they perform against the competition and market. Revenue,

occupancy and revenue per available room data points are shared. This data drives behavior in a good way. It stokes the competitive fires among hotels to raise their performance metrics. Many general managers and sales executives are compensated on performance as a result. Golf could benefit from this consumption of data.

And that's why we're pleased to announce a partnership between NGCOA and ORCA, which offers course operators the opportunity to share in and benefit from robust data. In addition to the revenue, rounds and occupancy data, ORCA also offers unique insights into channel data for course operators, so you know where your revenue is coming from—including the opportunity cost of bartered rounds. We highly encourage all owners and operators to check this out and begin sharing data. There's no downside. Your information will be protected.

There are days when this pursuit seems Sisyphean. But we all have to get over that and just do it. My hope is one day we will be able to automatically retrieve the data from our software friends in the industry.

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