



CHIPS & PUTTS

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POCONO TURFGRASS ASSOCIATION
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May 2013



May Meeting

Fox Hill CC

Host: Ron Garrison, GCS

Speaker Topic: H2B Workers

The month of May takes us to one of the PTGA's favorite stops in Fox Hill CC. Founded in 1920 as a 9 hole course, the Club quickly expanded to 18 holes in 1924 under the architectural design of one of the most famous classical architects, A.W. Tillinghast. This 6,555 yard par 71 course winds over the gently rolling terrain to present a challenging and memorable experience. The primarily bentgrass fairways and poa/bent greens are always in great shape, and I'm sure host Superintendent Ron Garrison will have them rolling smooth and fast for us.

Ron is a 1987 Penn State graduate who has been in this industry all his life. A Berwick native, Ron has been at Fox Hill since 1997. Before coming to Fox Hill, Ron gained

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President's Message.....

Well, it is quite a change from last year. Mid April and we are just getting to the first mowing in the upper Poconos. For most a shorter season already.

Our first Pocono Turfgrass meeting was well attended and a success thanks to Kelly and his staff - Great Job. Looking forward to May. You will notice this year that we have a late May meeting and an early June meeting within a couple of weeks of each other. We will have the July meeting later in the month. This was all in the planning.

The last two weeks of June and the first three weeks of July are "meetingless." Fellow turfgrass associations are doing away with the July meetings altogether. At such a critical time of year and with a major holiday, the Fourth of July, course maintenance and watering are more important than a meeting. We hope this eases the pressure you feel in the summer heat times. Enjoy your season.

John Downer

Editor's Notes.....

In our continuing series from Dr. Mike Fidanza, who will also be a speaker this year for one of our summer meetings, we will take a look at one of the few things I'm sure can survive a nuclear blast (along with twinkies and cockroaches), poa annua.

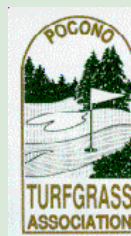
Thanks to Dr. Mike for the articles he has provided!!

Also, thanks to Pat Healey for bringing my attention to the article discussing the fact that all three U.S. major tournaments this year will be hosted by PSU grads!!

We had a great day for golf at Southmoore last month in what has been an unusually cool spring. I hope to see everyone at Fox Hill in May.

And keep those pictures coming.....

Brian Bachman



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Pocono Turfgrass Association 2013 Scholarships

The Patterson Scholarship for Turfgrass Related Studies

The Pocono Turfgrass Association is now accepting scholarship applications for the Patterson Scholarship. The deadline for application is June 30, 2013. The following is a list of guidelines for all individuals interested in applying for the scholarship:

1. Applicant must be in his or her final year of study or a recent graduate of a two- or four-year turf related program.
2. The applicant must be a member of the Pocono Turfgrass Association, employed by a member of PTGA, or an immediate family member of a member of PTGA.
3. The applicant must submit, in writing, why he or she would like to be considered for the scholarship. The essay should include what he or she feels their contribution to the turfgrass field will be.
4. Applicants must include a letter of endorsement from their PTGA relation with their application.

The Pocono Turfgrass Association Scholarship for Non-Turf Related Studies

The Pocono Turfgrass Association is now accepting applications for a non-turfgrass related field of study scholarship. The deadline for application is June 30, 2013. The following is a list of guidelines for all individuals interested in applying for the scholarship:

1. Applicant must be in his or her final year of study or a recent graduate of a two- or four-year non-turf related program.
2. The applicant must be a member of the Pocono Turfgrass Association, employed by a member of PTGA, or an immediate family member of a member of PTGA.
3. The applicant must submit, in writing, why he or she would like to be considered for the scholarship. The essay should include information pertaining to field of study, educational achievement, and future goals with respect to utilization of his or her education.
4. Applicants must include a letter of endorsement from their PTGA relation with their application.

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Talk to any Board Member for additional details.

April Meeting Wrap Up

Thanks to Kelly Kressler and his staff for a great first meeting of the year. I think we're all still feeling the windburn from the day!!

We would like to thank the new Turf Equipment Rep **Mike Longhore** for picking up our bar tab at this meeting. Also, thanks to all our lunch sponsors: Syngenta, BASF and Finch Services.

Members:

1st Place Kelly Kressler/Ron Garrison 69
2nd Place Brian Cross/Brent Wood 72

Closest to the Pin

#3 Frank Achenback 2 ft
#12 Mark Merrick

Long Drive

#8 T.J. Hart

Skins

#2 Opdyke
#3 Pat Healy/Frank Achenback
#17 Steve Chirip/Dave Schell





.....Continued from page 1

experience working as superintendent at Glen Oak CC. He was also the construction and grow-in superintendent at The Center Valley Club and served at two different TPC courses. In his 16 years at Fox Hill, Ron has seen a large contingent of former assistants move on to superintendent jobs in the area, as well.

Some of the recent projects at the Club include the construction of new tees and the installation of some grass bunkers. Ron is assisted by long time Assistant John Pollock and their crew of 3 full timers and 7 seasonal employees.

Be sure to make it out to enjoy our May meeting at this beautiful venue and knowing Ron, the odds are that he will make it a memorable event.



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Research to Reality:

The DNA of Poa

Our good friend, Dr. Karl Danneberger (THE Ohio State University) recently said that Penn State's Dr. David Huff produced the most significant piece of turf research in the past 10 to 20 years. *Poa annua* is an enigma in the plant kingdom, since no other plant demonstrates such extreme morphological* variability and at the same time also is extremely adaptable. *Poa annua* has been found on all seven continents ... yes, even in Antarctica! The *Poa annua* populations that persist in greens tend to behave as what we perceive to be a "perennial biotype". However, if we remove the lowing mowing stress, that plant can eventually revert back to its annual nature.

How can golf course turf professionals use this information? If you want *Poa annua* to revert back to its potentially weaker annual biotype, remove the stress on those *Poa* populations and raise the mowing height on your greens to tee or fairway or even rough height – but that's not practical, and it certainly can't become an annual overnight. As the late Stan Zontek would say, "you have to decide to either control *Poa*, or maintain it; you can't do both". Incidentally, Dr. Huff's research also confirmed the origin of *Poa annua*: conceived during the last ice age in Europe (the "father" being the annual-type *Poa infirma* of Northern & Western European heritage, and the "mother" being the perennial-type *Poa supina* of Southern & Central European heritage; ...having been to Italy many times, I am not surprised!).

Sources: •Danneberger, K. The evolution of *Poa annua*. Golf-dom 68(11):16.

•LaMantia, J.M. and D.R. Huff. 2011. Instability of the greens-type phenotype in *Poa annua* L. Crop Science 51:1784-1792.

•Mao, Q. and D.R. Huff. 2012. The evolutionary origin of *Poa annua* L. Crop Science 52:1910-1922.

*Morphology: plant form, structure and features.

Mike Fidanza, Ph.D., Professor of Plant and Soil Sciences, Pennsylvania State University, Berks Campus, Reading, PA; (email: fidanza@psu.edu; twitter: @MikeFidanza).

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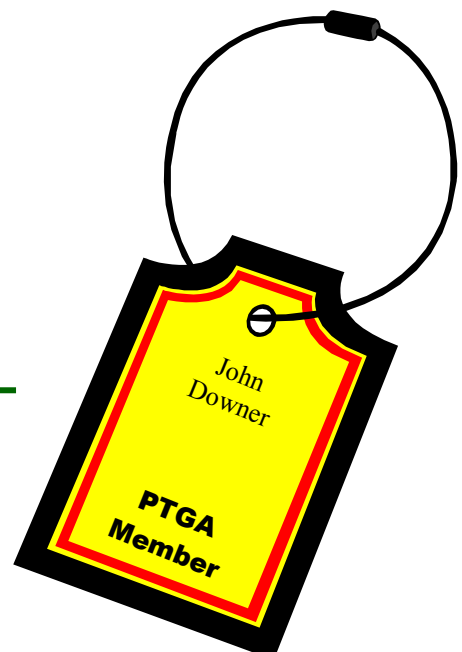
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Photo of the Month

We all see interesting things every day....wildlife (like bald eagles and bears), strange turf problems (like a lightning strike), an employee who stayed out too late the night before, etc. So if you have a great photo, send it to me (bbachman@genesisturfgrassinc.com) and share it for everyone to enjoy (or laugh at).

May Photo of the Month



This month's photo is from Corey Pries at Pocono Manor.

So you want to work at a golf course?? Sometimes superintendents get to do fun construction projects as well as maintain their courses. This is a new bridge, designed and built by Corey. He must have a lot of faith in his construction to park his own Jeep on it. Looks great!!!





Forks Join Bluegrass in Education of Masters Greenskeeper

Before Marsh Benson mastered the art of fairway grooming as superintendent of Augusta National Golf Club, he first had to learn how to set a table properly. That was part of his course work in Penn State University's turf science program, where students study everything from the proper height to mow Kentucky bluegrass to which forks and glasses are used for a formal place setting.



For the first time, the State College, Pennsylvania, school has produced all three superintendents for this year's U.S.-based major golf tournaments -- the Masters, which began this morning in Augusta, Georgia; the U.S. Open; and the PGA Championship. At Penn State, Benson was schooled by Joseph Duich, a man who stressed that proper comportment was part of the job and force students to take an etiquette course.

"Mrs. Franz; I can't believe I still remember her name," Darren Davis, a 1989 Penn State graduate, former Augusta National grounds crew employee and superintendent of Olde Florida Golf Club in Naples, Florida, said in a telephone interview. "It was such an aggravating class. Many students hated it and begged him to get rid of it, but he knew that how we presented ourselves was huge. If you can't talk to the CEO of Ford, you can't work at a place like Augusta. I still have my notes from that class."

Opening Shots

The 77th Masters began this morning under a cloudy sky with former champions Arnold Palmer, Jack Nicklaus and Gary Player hitting the ceremonial first tee shots.

Larry Mize, the 1987 Masters champion and an Augusta native, made the tournament's first birdie and is among a group of players tied for the early lead.

Top-ranked Tiger Woods, a four-time Masters champion and this year's pre-tournament favorite at 7-2 odds, is scheduled to start his first round at 10:45 a.m. local time. Three-time Masters champion Phil Mickelson has a 1:30 p.m. tee time, with Rory McIlroy of Northern Ireland following him in the next-to-last group.

Including this year's Masters, U.S. Open and PGA, 10 of 16 major championships dating back to the 2008 Masters will have been conducted with a Penn State-educated superintendent in charge of the course.

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The school's two-year Golf Course Turf Management Program, the oldest such curriculum of its kind, also produced Augusta National assistant superintendent Brad Owen, who did his Penn State internship at Augusta.

Benson and Owen declined to be interviewed, according to club spokesman Steve Ethun.

Penn State

Matt Shaffer, who oversees Merion Golf Club, site of this year's U.S. Open in Ardmore, Pennsylvania, and Jeff Corcoran, superintendent of PGA Championship host Oak Hill in Rochester, New York, also studied at Penn State, as did Curtis Tyrell at Medinah Country Club, host of last year's Ryder Cup matches outside Chicago.

"A lot of the students coming in, their end goal is to host the U.S. Open or become a superintendent at a top club," said John Kaminski, who has overseen the 56-year-old program since 2009. "We can say, 'Look, our alumni are there and if you work hard and put in your time, that could potentially be you.'"

Kaminski, 38, said Benson was among the students learning etiquette as well as turf science during his time at Penn State, which was chartered in 1855 (AL185) as the Farmers' High School.

Biggest Program

With about 150 students in Penn State's two- and four-year campus-based programs and "hundreds" of others taking courses online, Kaminski said the school has the largest turf science curriculum in the U.S. Mark Kuhns, who cares for the grounds at New Jersey's Baltusrol Golf Club and is a former president of the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America, is a 1977 graduate of Penn State's program.

Kuhns hosted the 1994 U.S. Open at Pennsylvania's Oakmont and 2005 PGA Championship at New Jersey's Baltusrol.

Course superintendents make, on average, \$82,573 a year, according to their industry group.

While Benson and Owen are among Penn State's most high-profile superintendent alums, the school isn't alone when it comes to producing marquee grass groomers.

New Jersey's Rutgers University educated Glenn Burton, who developed the Tifway 419 Bermuda Grass hybrids, known as Tif grasses. They cover more golf courses than any other types of grass in the southeastern U.S., including Augusta National.

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Rutgers Grass

During the Masters, Augusta National's Bermuda fairways, which remain dormant through the winter months and early spring, are covered by green rye grass developed at Rutgers. Every April, students from Rutgers, Penn State and other programs descend upon Augusta for hands-on learning.

The Augusta experience, Merion's Shaffer said, might be just as important as the time spent at Penn State.

In 1985, with 13 years of experience as a superintendent at a rural Pennsylvania course, Shaffer applied for a job at a new club in North Carolina. The Wade Hampton Golf Club, ranked No. 20 on Golf Digest (3319) magazine's U.S. course list, never interviewed him for the position.

"I thought 'Oh, they're going to hire me,'" Shaffer said. "I was totally crushed."

The job at the Tom Fazio-designed course went to Bill Knox, a former assistant superintendent at Augusta National. Shaffer, 51, realized that he needed to get that experience on his resume, so he moved to Georgia to work at the club. Shaffer said he needed to get a "Masters degree" to go with his Penn State education.

Country Clubbers

Beyond grass growing, programs such as Penn State's prepare enrollees for country-club life. Like Davis, Shaffer has not-so-fond memories of the etiquette course, which taught working-class students how to dress and write proper English.

"Most of the guys come from a humble background, but you're going to be working with bluebloods," Shaffer said. "The very first way to show your ignorance is to be uncomfortable in their presence."

Carl Spackler comes to mind, Penn State's Kaminski said, referencing actor Bill Murray's grass- and dirt-stained greenskeeper character in the 1980 movie "Caddyshack."

Spackler is fiction.

"It's a lot of science," Kaminski says of the modern-day superintendent's work. "But it's starting to morph into a lot of business management. In truth, 15 percent of what you're doing is related to agronomy and 85 percent is those other areas."

To contact the reporter on this story: Michael Buteau in Atlanta at mbuteau@bloomberg.net

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Congratulations!

Congratulations go out to **Jeff Lesoine** from Water Cap C.C., along with his wife, Olivia, on the birth of their first child, Niko Archer Lesoine. Niko was born on Thursday, April 18.



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- May 31 PTGA meeting @
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Speaker Topic: H2B workers
- June 11 PTGA meeting @
Pocono Manor GC
Speaker: Dr. Mike Fidanza
- July 29 PTGA meeting @
C.C. of Scranton
Speaker: Dr. Kaminski
Clam Bake
- Aug. 26 PTGA meeting @
Elmhurst C.C.
Speaker: Richard Buckley

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