



# Commonwealth Crier

News from the Virginia Golf Course Superintendents Association

Fall 2019

## President's Message



I think when I titled this article as “VGCSA newsletter Fall 2019” to save to the hard drive, it was the first time I took a moment and realized that fall may actually happen this year. After what felt like August the 63rd for many around the state, a couple of weeks of cooler temperatures, changing leaves, and yes, even some much needed rain, has been good for the soul and our golf courses. While I am excited to park the spray rig and hang up the hoses, this is a time to reflect on the year past, while the scars and mistakes are still fresh, and make some plans and lists for next year.

Back in August we went to Boonsboro Country Club for the Joe Saylor Memorial. The weather was great and the venue was even better, and honoring Dick Fisher was the best! Thanks to Steve Vessels and the entire staff at the club for an outstanding event. Also on the tournament trail, we just completed the second VGCSA Match Play Championship. The finalists were Chris Roberts (First Tee) and Paul Van Buren (Kanawha Club) pitted against Brent Graham and Garrison Fowler of Two Rivers Country Club. Syngenta and Harrells sponsored the event, with the finals at Kinloch – read inside to find out who won!

The Virgina Cup was held on October 28th and 29th at The Dormie Club in the Pinehurst area, and results were not available at press time. This year's team featured Matt Boyce, Scott Cornwell, Garrison Fowler, Brent Graham, Jeff Snyder, Jeff Whitmire, Cameron Yancey and Matt Zarnstorff. The Captains were Mark Cote and Jeff Holliday.

With the season winding down, now is the time to start thinking about continuing education. On October 30th the Assistants Forum was held at Spring Creek. The presentation from Christopher Jones on leadership was outstanding and the superintendents round table led to lively discussion. Coming up on December 2nd and 3rd on the grounds of the UVA Darden School, is the 6th annual VGCSA Educational Conference. This is an outstanding event, where all the planned events are within walking distance of your lodging. Check inside for registration information, for what is sure to be a great networking and educational opportunity. Believe it or not, it is time to start thinking about GCSAA national conference in Orlando during the last week of January. Information about the conference and the VGCSA room block is inside and in our Through the Green eLetter.

The fall season also brings with it the time for scholarship applications and award nominations. We have scholarships available for children of superintendents plus employees of VGCSA member clubs – we urge you to apply. Also, please take time to nominate a worthy individual for one of our top awards, to be presented during the Annual Meeting in December.

The upcoming state legislation session is just around the corner. This year, we again secured the services of Robb Bohannon of Hunton Andrews Kurth to lobby and keep us abreast of any legislative issues. Though the session is months away, we are already working behind the scenes to serve our members by meeting with delegates on issues that relate directly to our day to day operations.

All of the events mentioned in the previous paragraphs would not be possible without the generous support from our sponsors. When making decisions about upcoming purchases for your course, please consider supporting those who support you and your association.



*Bill Keene*  
VGCSA President



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# Feister Named to Green Start Academy Class of 2019

*One of 52 elite members selected to attend the premier educational and networking event for assistant golf course superintendents.*



Jeremy Feister

John Deere Golf and Environmental Science, a business unit of Bayer Crop Science, have announced the Green

Start Academy class of 2019, including Jeremy Feister, Assistant Superintendent, Magnolia Green Golf Club.

“We are so pleased to be able to bring together this group of driven, like-minded individuals as they set the stage for aspiring leaders in golf course management,” said Mike Hirvela, Customer Marketing Manager for Golf, Bayer. “From learning key insights from industry professionals and leaders to creating a strong network of peers



and mentors, we hope Green Start Academy can be an important defining moment for young professionals in their careers.”

Since 2006, the goal for this program has been to help assistant superintendents build a strong foundation for their careers, as well as to support the future of golf courses and the entire industry. Green Start Academy has invited prestigious assistants to the Bayer Development and Training

Center in Clayton, N.C., the John Deere Turf Care factory in nearby Fuquay-Varina, N.C., and the John Deere headquarters in Cary, N.C. With topics from career development to budgeting to labor management, the Green Start Academy provides attendees with the education, networking and career insights they need to excel as superintendents and lead our industry into the next decade and beyond.

## Scholarships Available – Deadline November 9

The Old Dominion Golf Course Superintendents Association and Smith Turf & Irrigation are proud to offer scholarships to students that are working at a club with a Virginia Golf Course Superintendents Association member. The Scholarship program was established in 2016 as a means to support the employees of golf courses that are actively enrolled in an institution of higher learning.

The Buy Sod VGCSA Scholarship Program was established in 2012 by Buy Sod as a means to support the children of

qualified golf course superintendents, who plan to attend an institution of higher learning, following graduation from high school.

High School Seniors who are the children of Class A or B members in good standing of the VGCSA are eligible for the program.

Applications are available online and in the TTG eLetter – the deadline is November 9th for Buy Sod and November 15th for ODGCSA.



# Virginia GCSA commended for Chesapeake Bay watershed cleanup efforts

*The Virginia golf industry's example offers other states a guide for getting out ahead of water quality concerns.*

*by Chase Rogan and Chava McKeel, GCSAA*

For years, the Chesapeake Bay watershed has been undergoing a major cleanup initiative, and the Virginia GCSA has been a highly engaged participant through the chapter's publication of Environmental Best Management Practices for Virginia's Golf Courses and the state's golf course superintendents' commitment to nutrient management planning, the VGCSA has been a model of environmental stewardship for the Commonwealth of Virginia.

Virginia Gov. Ralph Northam recently recognized the state's golf industry for its years of work to ensure the protection of the Chesapeake Bay watershed. The governor's most recent report on the Chesapeake Bay watershed states:

"DCR (Department of Conservation and Recreation) would like to acknowledge the initiative taken by members of the golf turf

industry to meet the highest environmental protection standards. In addition to the certified planners, superintendents and golf course managers, DCR also recognizes the supporting efforts of Virginia Tech, Virginia Cooperative Extension, the Virginia Golf Course Superintendents Association, the Virginia Turfgrass Council, Virginia Agribusiness Council and the national Golf Course Superintendents Association of America. Success was made possible by all parties involved demonstrating their commitment to protect the environment through sound nutrient management practices."

The Chesapeake Bay is the largest estuary in the United States and the third largest in the world. The Chesapeake Bay watershed covers about 64,000 square miles and encompasses parts of six states (Delaware,

Maryland, New York, Pennsylvania, Virginia and West Virginia) and Washington, D.C. The Chesapeake Bay supports more than 3,600 species of plant and animal life and produces more than 500 million pounds of seafood harvest each year. It's no wonder, then, that preserving the health of this ecosystem is a high priority, both for the sake of the environment and for the 18 million people who live, work and play within its bounds.

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*Chase Rogan is the GCSAA field staff representative for the Mid-Atlantic region, and Chava McKeel is GCSAA's director of government affairs.*



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# Sandor Joining Virginia Tech Turf Team



Dr. Daniel Sandor

Dr. Daniel (Dan) Sandor is joining the Virginia Tech (VT) turfgrass science faculty as a collegiate assistant professor of Turfgrass Science beginning December 2019. Dr. Sandor arrives in Blacksburg after spending the

past 18 months as a postdoctoral associate in the turfgrass science program at the University of Minnesota, where he developed and provided outreach-education programming and also conducted field research. Dr. Sandor earned his PhD in Plant Science in 2018 at the University of Arkansas under Dr. Doug Karcher, where his dissertation research focused on best management practices for water conservation in residential and commercial lawn turf. He earned his

Bachelor's (2011) and Masters of Science (2013) under Dr. Paul Woosley at Western Kentucky, where he evaluated chemical and cultural methods for bermudagrass suppression in tall fescue. Overall, Dr. Sandor's applied research background and future research interests revolve around further refining and improving upon best management practices for lawns in urban environments and also better understanding public beliefs, behaviors, and barriers regarding turfgrass systems. He also has a growing research interest in lawn tennis court establishment and maintenance.

During his years of graduate research, Dr. Sandor took advantage of multiple opportunities to teach undergraduate courses, and those opportunities have helped him earn this position at VT, where his primary responsibility will be to enhance curricula, developing an outstanding turf teaching program, and

expanding visibility of VT's turfgrass science program. He will establish additional courses and learning initiatives and will also develop online educational coursework in collaboration with other faculty and staff. Additionally, Dr. Sandor will coordinate turfgrass internships and undergraduate research programs, and will serve as a faculty advisor to turfgrass science undergraduate students. Dr. Sandor will continue to foster cooperative relationships with stakeholders in developing experiential learning opportunities and will also be responsible for developing an active student recruitment program.

Dr. Sandor is very excited to join the great team of faculty and staff already present at VT and he is looking forward to working with the VGCSA to help enhance the VT turfgrass science undergraduate program and to further serve the needs of the VGCSA members.

## VGCSA Award Nominations Open Deadline November 9th

Nominations are now open for the 2019 VGCSA awards, which will be presented at the VGCSA Annual Meeting on December 2, 2019 in Charlottesville, as part of the Annual Conference. Any VGCSA member may submit a nomination to our committee. Here are the award descriptions:



2018 Jeff Berg

**VGCSA Distinguished Service Award** "Presented to a member who has given his time unselfishly in promoting golf course management and unification of the Virginia Golf Course Superintendents".



2018 Mike Augustin

**VGCSA Environmental Stewardship Award** "Presented to recognize distinguished and meritorious service in the environmental stewardship of Virginia golf courses."



2018 Sterling Caudle

### VGCSA Presidents Award For Lifetime Service

"To honor those superintendent pioneers who were instrumental in state and local affairs but who may no longer be actively involved in the VGCSA.

Qualifications include twenty years or more of service to the turfgrass industry, ten of which were as a superintendent". This award is chosen by the VGCSA President.

The Awards Committee is chaired by David Walter, and we request nominations be submitted by November 9, 2019. Visit the website or the TTG eLetter for a Nomination form.

### VGCSA Distinguished Service Award Past Recipients

2018 Jeff Berg	2008 Bob Ruff, CGCS
2017 Rob Wilmans	2007 Steve Burnette
2016 Fred Biggers, CGCS	2006 Steve Snare, CGCS
2015 Ken Giedd, CGCS	2005 Jeff Snyder
2014 Christian Sain	2004 Thomas Dougherty
2013 Phil Bailey, CGCS	2003 Peter McDonough
2012 Stanley J. Zontek	2002 H.T. Page
2011 Mark Vaughn	2001 Jerome Dodson
2010 Eric D. Spurlock	2000 Dick Fisher, CGCS
2009 Cutler Robinson, CGCS	

### VGCSA Environmental Stewardship Award Past Recipients

2018 Mike Augustin	2013 Cutler Robinson, CGCS
2017 Brent Graham, CGCS	2012 Donna Pugh Johnson
2016 Mike King	2011 Peter McDonough
2015 Dan Taylor, CGCS	
2014 Jeff Berg	

### VGCSA Presidents Award For Lifetime Service Past Recipients

2018 Sterling Caudle	2008 Mike Burkholder
2017 H.T. Page	2007 A. Tildon Hankley
2016 Steve Snare, CGCS	2006 Walter Montross, CGCS
2015 Rick Viancour	2005 Jack McClenahan
2014 Dudley Eames	2004 Eugene Sours
2013 Bobby Jenkins	2003 Frank Flannagan
2012 David Harmon	2002 Dave Geiger, CGCS
2011 Fred Reese	2001 Peter McDonough
2010 Lee Dieter, CGCS	2000 Dick Fisher, CGCS
2009 Tony Montgomery	

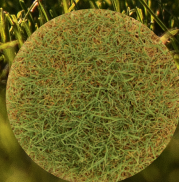
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# Government Relations Round-UP

## Legislative Outlook

*By Robb Bohannon, VGCSA Government Relations*



Robb Bohannon

On November 5th, all 140 seats in the Virginia General Assembly will be on the ballot. Control of both the House of Delegates and Senate is up for grabs – Republicans hold slim two seat

majorities in each chamber – 51-49 in the House and 21-19 in the Senate. The loss of just one seat in the Senate would place the chamber under Democratic control, as Lieutenant Governor Justin Fairfax (D) would break ties in the event of a 20-20 vote. Money is pouring into both sides in most races, as Virginia does not place limits on campaign contributions, and allows corporate contributions. There are a number of House and Senate races that are expected to be incredibly close.

If Democrats take control of both chambers, there will likely be movement on issues that have stalled in recent years under Republican control, such as increasing the minimum wage and efforts by organized labor to better protect workers. More specifically for golf course superintendents, there may be attempts to place restrictions on certain pesticides. In 2019, VGCSA worked with other affected



State Senator Glen Sturtevant (C) speaks with Robb Bohannon (R) and Jay Wade (L)

stakeholders to defeat House Bill 2580 by Delegate Kaye Kory (D-Fairfax) that would have prohibited the manufacture, distribution, sale, offer for sale, use, or offer for use of any pesticide containing chlorpyrifos. We suspect this legislation may return in 2020, and have heard there may be additional attempts to legislate a prohibition on the use of glyphosate and neonicotinoids. We also remain vigilant against efforts to allow localities to place limits on these products or other fertilizers.

2019 was a quiet year with regards to

water-related legislation. VGCSA continues to work to educate lawmakers about the responsible environmental stewardship efforts by golf course superintendents, and the work they undertake to conserve water. We will monitor all legislation affecting water supply to ensure golf courses are not singled out and to prevent onerous, unnecessary restrictions.

Pre-filing of legislation for 2020 begins on November 18th, shortly after the elections. Legislators have the ability to file legislation up through mid-January.

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## VGCSA Turns 20 This Year!



2019 marks the 20th anniversary of the founding of the VGCSA. In 1999, the meeting to form the VGCSA took place at The Keswick Club. Someone snapped a Polaroid – how many founders can you name?

*See page 15 for the answers.*



# 2019 Event Previews

## VGCSA Conference Returns to Charlottesville

**Great Networking, Education & Fun  
on December 2-3**

Presented by



The VGCSA Conference continues to grow in its sixth year, and the event returns to the UVA Darden Inn in Charlottesville on December 2-3, 2019. A good deal of education credit will be available to VGCSA members, as the Old Dominion's

Education Segment will again be held on the first day, running 1-4 pm, then followed by the Association's Annual Meeting and Awards Presentations. Dr. Paul Giordano of Bayer will talk about tackling turf diseases and then there will be a superintendent panel featuring Scott Kinnan of Farmington CC, Chris Harriman of Hermitage CC and Jeff Yarborough of Stonehouse GC.



Dr. Paul Giordano



Josh Coates, VSGA

Immediately following the meeting, there will be a FREE Partner Appreciation Reception hosted by Larry Feller of Syngenta, featuring your favorite beverages and hors d'oeuvres, and plenty of networking time with your friends. The evening will cap off with a Monday Night Football Party hosted by Ian Grove of Target Specialty Products.



Robb Bohannon,  
Hunton Andrews Kurth

Then on Tuesday, a Networking Breakfast will run 7:30-8:30 a.m., followed by more education, featuring outstanding speakers, all designed to make your jobs just a little easier and a little better. Confirmed speakers include VGCSA lobbyist, Robb Bohannon of



Kinnan



Harriman



Yarborough



Goatley



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Hunton Andrews Kurth, Elliott Dowling, USGA Agronomist, Josh Coates, VSGA Director of Rules, Dr. Rob Golembiewski of Bayer, in addition to the Virginia Tech Panel featuring Mike Goatley, Shawn Askew, David McCall and Jordan Booth. There will also be some fast paced presentations from VGCSA partners in our new IGNITE Sessions segment.

Thanks to the excellent support of sponsors like Revels Tractor and Finch Services (the John Deere distributors) and other excellent companies, the conference will be at a reasonable price, and a single guest room will be just \$99 plus tax. The VGCSA is committed to providing value and service to its members.



# 2019 Joe Saylor Memorial Tournament a hit at Boonsboro Country Club

It was the fifteenth year of the VGCSA's staple event, the Joe Saylor Memorial, in honor of Joe Saylor, a Superintendent in the Hampton Roads area for nearly 40 years, and founder of the ODGCSA and charter member. Joe passed in 2005.

Boonsboro Country Club played host and Steve Vessells and his staff had the golf course in exceptional condition, on this tricky, hilly course, one of Virginia's most interesting and fun tests of golf. And as always this event was in partnership with the US Marines and the Toys for Tots program. US Marines were on site to collect over 100 toys donated from attendees, all of which go to under privileged children during the holiday season.



Honoree Dick Fisher with US Marines.

The two-man captain's choice produced some great scores with Bobby Friend and Matt Pair coming in with a 63 to claim the overall Low Gross honors. In the Member-Member Division, host superintendent Steve Vessells and Sean Baskette of Hidden Valley CC shot 60.1 net to best Chip Bass of Falling River and Jeff Scott of Scott Turf, who shot 61.7. In the Member Guest/Open Division, John Fralick of Harco and Matt Pound of STI posted a 59 net to win first place over the 62.3 posted by Defending Gross Champs Billy Sayre and Ed Eagle, representing Ingleside Resort. In the Member-Pro Division, Sterling Caudle and Donnie Nelson of The Golden Eagle won with a 66 net.



Matt Pair and Bobby Friend of Brookwoods GC are the Champs!



Time for Golf – Dave Chalmers and Mark Vaughn are ready to go.

A new feature of this year's event was to honor a member who has tirelessly supported our association for many years. This year's honoree was Dick Fisher of Lake Chesdin Golf Club. Participants signed a framed caricature for Dick, and a semi-roast followed, with many friends recalling fun memories with Dick.

## Contest Winners

### Closest-to-Pin

Eric Snelsire, Bayer;  
Ed Eagle, Ingleside;  
Mark Cote, Pete Dye River Course;  
Sean Baskette, Hidden Valley;  
Donnie Nelson, The Golden Eagle.

### Longest Putt:

Kyle White, Luck Ecosystems

### Long Drive

Matt Sobotka, STI



Participants signed a framed caricature of Dick Fisher, this year's honoree.

## VGCSA Social Media & Digital Outlets



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# Roberts & Van Buren Claim 2019 Match Play

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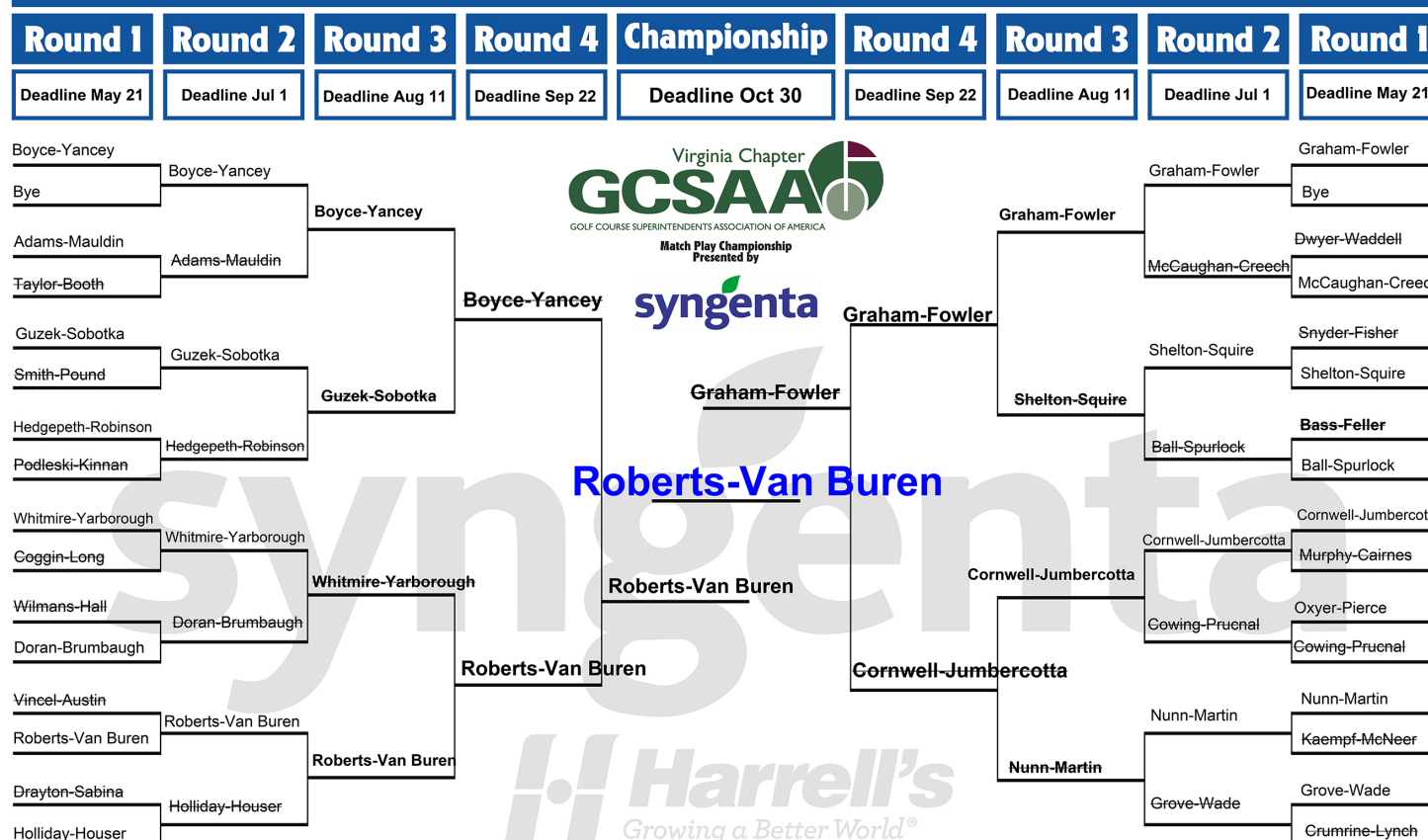
The second season-long VGCSA Match Play Championship was a big hit, with 60 players participating in two man teams, culminating in the championship match this fall at Kinloch Golf Club. Paul Van Buren of Kanawha Club and Chris Roberts of the First Tee of Richmond claimed the title in the net four-ball event with a 3&2 victory over Brent Graham and Garrison Fowler of Two Rivers Country Club. The winners each received trophies and a \$400 gift card. Syngenta sponsored the event.

There were 30 teams representing all regions, with players playing in a local bracket before advancing to the semifinals. Other semifinalists were Defending Champions Cameron Yancey of Nottoway River CC and Matt Boyce of Princess Anne CC along with Scott Cornwell of River Creek and Bo Jumbercotta of Landscape Supply. There was great feedback from the event.



Paul Van Buren and Chris Roberts, 2019 VGCSA Match Play Champions

## VGCSA Match Play Championship



# News from Local Associations

## ODGCSA News

Even though there were a couple of members that claimed Summer 2019 was over at the beginning of August, it looks like it has finally ended. There were some courses in the Richmond suburbs that got their first frost of the year last weekend. The extended drought that the area has been in has finally come to an end as well!

Our Fall Wintergreen event was a great success. Cutler Robinson was there to help

educate us on how we can all become better stewards of the environment. After education, everyone headed out onto the golf course. The course was in fantastic shape! Thanks to Fred, Wallace and the entire team at Wintergreen for another great event!

The Club at Viniterra will be hosting our annual meeting on December 10 at 10:00 am. Depending on weather, golf will be

available after. We will have more details as we get closer to that event. I hope everyone gets to enjoy a little downtime this winter. See you on the course!



Jay Wade  
ODGCSA  
External VP

## TTA News

Fall time in the Tidewater puts a smile on many superintendents' faces. The heat of the summer is behind us and now it's time for golf course projects and shorter days. Now you can hear the hum of mulching blades on rough mowers and frost delays in the golf shop- but I don't think too many of us will complain about that change of pace.

This is also the time that the local and state associations begin to prepare for off

season events. We recently held the Bert Walton Memorial at Broad Bay Country Club. The participation and venue were both great and we were happy to have such a fun day to remember our friend Bert. The VGCSA Annual Conference in Charlottesville will be a great way for Tidewater folks to connect with others from across the state.

However you spend this shoulder season

- enjoy it and recharge the batteries. If you're reading this - I'll bet you deserve it!



Tim Doran  
TTA External VP

## News from the GWGCSA

What a crazy year it has been. We went from a high of 99 degrees to our first frost in 17 days. No matter whom you talked to this year we all seemed to have the same complaints, weather, weeds, and staff. There is no question 2019 tested us all.

Staffing issues have become a topic of conversation with everyone I talk to. It's a real struggle and it's not just the golf industry. Building value into our open

positions is more important than ever. We have to look at how we run our operations. Doing the same thing and expecting a different result never ends well.

Our end of the year meeting and celebration will be at Evergreen Country Club on Tuesday November 12th, registration starts at 9:00a.m. I hope to see everyone there for some buttery goodness!



David Walter  
GWGCSA  
External VP

## SVTA News

The SVTA held its fundraiser for the Virginia Turfgrass Foundation on October 17th at Blue Ridge Shadows Golf Club. The event was well-attended in spite of heavy winds. Thanks to David Lewallen

and the course staff for hosting the event. The course was in great shape and everyone had a great time. I hope to see you at the state conference in Charlottesville in December.



Ed Eagle  
SVTA External VP

# News from Local Associations

## VTA News

Well, I guess fall is finally here. Like everyone else in the state, we have been eagerly anticipating some rain and some cooler temperatures. Many areas in the Southwest part of the state had gone with less than an inch of rain since the beginning of August. Good news is the trees are starting to change, frost calls are quickly upon us and one or two rain events has eased the stress of summer 2019.

We tried a few new things this year with our meeting schedule. First, we moved our fundraiser from May to June and we believe it was met with great success. May tends to be a busy month, not only on the course, but all the other statewide fundraising events. We also implemented our “9 and

Whine” series of golf events. Ironically, the first one in July got rained out, but our August event at Ballyhack in August was a great. Nine holes of golf, a few beverages and some appetizers, and still home at a decent hour.

We wrapped up our meeting schedule with the annual meeting at The Water’s Edge in early October. The day started a bit chilly and looked a bit sketchy with some rain around, but the weather held off for most of the day and lead to a great event.

Since we moved our annual meeting up on the calendar, we made a decision to delay awarding our scholarship until November 1st, so be looking in our next article on who was the winner.

Now we turn to the page to winter planning, state and national educational events, time with the family over the holidays and hopefully (fingers crossed) everyone has a chance to relax, take some time off and get ready for the next year.



Sean K. Baskette  
Hidden Valley  
Country Club  
VTA President

## SAVE THE DATE!

### GIS Orlando - Hotel Reservations Now Available

The DoubleTree by Hilton Orlando at SeaWorld will be our host hotel and venue for our annual social event at the Golf Industry Show. The rate for each room is \$176 and the **deadline to book is December 10, 2019.**

#### Instructions

Connections Housing offers reservation assistance Mon - Fri 6am - 5pm PST at 702-586-0542, or use this link (<https://book.passkey.com/event/49914648/owner/14227/home>) to access the housing website, with Access Code: GISGCS0120648FJJ

Once you enter the website using the access code, please enter your arrival/departure dates in the top right-hand corner and only the DoubleTree by Hilton Orlando at SeaWorld will appear to book a reservation.



**Our social event joint with MAAGCS and ESAGCS  
will be on Wednesday, January 29th  
from 7:00 pm - 10:00 pm, so SAVE THE DATE!**



# 2019 - 20 VGCSA Schedule

November 5	GWGCSA Annual Meeting/Elections/End of Year Classic – Evergreen Country Club
November 14	VGCSA Board Meeting – Hermitage Country Club
December 2-3	VGCSA Annual Conference – UVA Darden Conference Center, Charlottesville

## 2020

January 27-31	GCSAA Conference and Golf Industry Show – Orlando
January 29	GIS Social Event – Orlando
May 18	Virginia Tech Turfgrass Research Classic, Independence Golf Club
October 5	Joe Saylor Memorial, Hermitage Country Club

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### Annual Conference

Geoponics  
Trinity Turf

### Nonprofit

ESAGCS  
Keep Virginia Beautiful  
MAAGCS  
MAPGA  
USGA Green Section  
Virginia AgriBusiness Council

**The answer to the "Name the Founders" quiz is:** L-R: Barry Graham, VP, Jeff Whitmire, TTA, Peter McDonough, President, Mike Oates, SVTA, Bob Wrenn, GWGCSA, Vince Hankley, ODGCSA. Not pictured: Jeff Snyder, VTA, Jeff Webster, Treasurer.

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