

MID-ATLANTIC GOLF BUSINESS

A Message from Our President

March 2019

When you are at a gathering of folks you don't know, what do you talk about? The weather, of course. Well unfortunately that topic remains pervasive among golf course owners and operators. And save a couple of short-term exceptions, our weather could not be worse. Again we are way ahead on precipitation and we can't catch a break to capture much revenue. You would think that roulette ball would land on a black number after 10 straight red numbers!

Despite that, perhaps we are on the verge of seeing a few trends change. A year ago several New Kent area properties were either out or headed in that direction. Fast forward, and now four courses have new owners – Royal New Kent, Brickshire, The Brookwoods and Stonehouse. Don't get me wrong – price reductions helped move these properties – but now the future for all four is much brighter. And that's a good thing.

Not too far away, Kingsmill's LPGA tournament was in a challenging spot after last year's event. It was on the chopping block until capturing a new sponsor, Pure Silk. There is new life for the biggest pro event in Virginia.

Then over in Richmond, news came of major golf/entertainment investments. Drive Shack was first to announce its "super range" construction plans in the Short Pump area – construction is well underway, with opening expected by the summer. And on their heels is TopGolf, the highly successful sensation that is doing site work for an opening later in the fall. Maybe this will become a gateway to get younger people into the game.

And once again, there were some true superstars in our business, who triumph despite strong headwinds. These leaders are celebrated in our awards article. Kudos to Mid-Atlantic Golf Leader Dr. Bob Rotella, Private Golf Leader Anne Gail Jennings of the Federal Club, Public Golf Leader John Anderes of Queenstown Harbor and Sustainability Leader Carl Zangardi of Kiskiack GC.

Another superstar effort was turned in by the Maryland Coalition of Concerned Clubs, led by Brian Pizzamenti of Woodmont Country Club in Rockville. Teaming up with NCA's Brad Steele, the group fought off a very serious threat to property taxes by Delegate Moon, representing Montgomery County. Their successful defense against Moon earned them the NGCOA Champion Award at the national conference. Delegate Moon is back again this year, as is the Coalition to fight him – NGCOA Mid-Atlantic is part of the coalition.

And speaking of our national organization, the Golf Business Conference in San Diego was excellent. David Feherty was honored and spoke. There were great speakers and excellent education. And they announced a new alliance with the PGA of America – henceforth, our conference will be paired with the PGA Merchandise Show, the largest gathering in the industry. This has a lot of potential.

Looking ahead, the National Golf Day festivities take place on April 30 – May 1 on Capitol Hill. Our Government Relations man Ronnie Miles will lead the contingent – you are invited – [click here for details](#). This important event helps legislators better understand the golf industry and its importance to our economy, our environment and our health. A similar type celebration is currently being planned for Virginia by the VGCSA.

Inside our newsletter, you will find some information on some of the NGCOA member services, including Smart Buy and Women's Golf Day. If you aren't a member yet, [click here for our membership brochure](#).

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 EZ Links are our top two partners. Companies like Performance Food Group, Yamaha Golf Cars and Acumen Golf have been with us since Day One. Please visit our Partner listing in this newsletter 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!

Mike Bennett

NGCOA Mid-Atlantic President



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3rd Annual Community Service Project Set for April 30 Ahead of National Golf Day

Golf Course Superintendents, Industry Leaders Facilitate National Mall Enhancements

(ST. AUGUSTINE, Fla.) – [WE ARE GOLF](#) – a coalition of the game's leading associations and industry partners – will host the third annual Community Service Project on Tuesday, April 30 from 8 a.m. to 12 p.m. EST in advance of National Golf Day with activities focused on beautification and preservation between the Lincoln Memorial and Washington Monument.

"We are proud to continue the Community Service Project in celebration of National Golf Day, which saves the National Park Service nearly four months of labor costs," says Steve Mona, Executive Director of WE ARE GOLF. "The opportunity to enhance Washington, D.C. for the third consecutive year is one of the many examples of the golf industry's steadfast dedication to the environment."

In coordination with the National Park Service Grounds Management Staff, the areas of concentration will include the Washington Monument, Lincoln Memorial Reflecting Pool and Martin Luther King, Jr., Lincoln and Vietnam Veterans memorials. Services will include sodding, planting, aerating, seeding, mowing and mulching. All participants will be divided into teams, with each one assigned a team captain to oversee the tasks.



"Caring for the grounds in our nation's capital has become our favorite annual tradition," says Rhett Evans, CEO of the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America. "National Golf Day is a special opportunity to advocate for the game we all love."

The 12th annual National Golf Day will be held Wednesday, May 1 and celebrate the game's \$84.1 billion economy, \$4 billion annual charitable impact and many environmental and fitness benefits. Industry leaders will meet with Members of Congress, the Executive Branch and federal agencies to discuss golf's 15,000-plus diverse businesses, two million jobs impacted, tax revenue creation and tourism value.

To join the conversation, visit the WE ARE GOLF [social media hub](#). Use #NationalGolfDay and @wearegolf on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram to show your support for the golf industry.

For more information on the Community Service Project, click [here](#).

About WE ARE GOLF

WE ARE GOLF, created in 2010, is an industry coalition that communicates the economic, charitable and environmental impact of golf, as well the health and wellness benefits of the game and the affordability and accessibility of golf, to Members of Congress, the Executive Branch and regulatory agencies. The goal of WE ARE GOLF is to ensure that laws and regulations that impact the golf industry are fair and appropriate to an industry that generates \$84.1 billion in economic impact annually, impacts close to two million American jobs and generates nearly \$4 billion in charitable giving each year. For more information, please visit www.wearegolf.org.

NGCOA Members Now Get Significant Savings with NGCOA Insurance Services

Medical, Property & Casualty, and Flood Mitigation Services

NGCOA is pleased to announce [NGCOA Insurance Services](#), its newest member offering under a corporate partnership agreement with Holmes Murphy and Flood Risk America.

This partnership makes comprehensive insurance services affordable and available to golf courses of all sizes. NGCOA member golf courses and their employees will have access to best rates on:

- Medical & Pharmacy: (includes Dental, Vision, Life and Disability insurance). NGCOA members can save an average of 10% on their healthcare and pharmacy spend.
- Property & Casualty Insurance: NGCOA members eligible for captive solutions can earn an average 30% of premium, less for guaranteed cost plans.
- Flood Mitigation Services: NGCOA members receive a detailed flood risk assessment, 24/7 flood monitoring, and 24/7 flood mitigation and defense.

"The majority of our member courses are small and medium-sized businesses, which are often challenged to find comprehensive and well-priced benefits and insurance for their employees and their properties," said Jay Karen, Chief Executive Officer of NGCOA. "With the purchasing power of more than 3,500 member courses, our insurance partners are perfectly positioned to deliver great value for all our member courses - no matter the size." [Read the official announcement here.](#)



Annual Golf Business Conference to be Co-Located With PGA Merchandise Show Beginning in 2020

The National Golf Course Owners Association, the PGA of America and PGA Golf Exhibitions have announced a multi-year, strategic alliance to co-locate the annual Golf Business Conference with the PGA Merchandise Show in Orlando, beginning in 2020.

The Golf Business Conference, hosted by NGCOA for over thirty years, is the industry's largest meeting specifically for golf course owners and operators. The event typically has nearly forty classes and workshops on the most critical areas of golf course operations, a casual golf outing for attendees and sponsors to network, and an awards banquet to recognize some of the most significant contributors to the golf industry. With PGA Golf Exhibitions' operational assistance, the conference will be held at the Orange County Convention Center Monday through Wednesday, Jan. 20-22, 2020. Information about the Golf Business Conference can be found at golfbusinessconference.com.

"We are pleased to bring the Golf Business Conference to Orlando, a popular destination among golf course operators and vendor partners, during PGA Show Week, one of the biggest weeks of the year for the golf industry," said NGCOA Chief Executive Officer, Jay Karen, CAE. "NGCOA members will experience significant value in the new site and location for our event programming and we look forward to working with PGA Golf Exhibitions and the PGA of America to enhance the conference."

During the Golf Business Conference, the NGCOA will continue to offer a variety of sponsorship opportunities for vendors. For vendors exhibiting at the PGA Merchandise Show, the 2020 Golf Business Conference schedule will allow

course owners and operators ample time to explore the PGA Show Floor on Wednesday before the conference concludes, as well as all day Thursday and Friday. Vendors of all kinds will have many options to see course owners and operators.

"PGA Golf Exhibitions is pleased to work with the NGCOA on this valuable opportunity to further collaborate with owners and operators during PGA Show Week," said PGA Golf Exhibitions Event Vice President Marc Simon. "We look forward to the opportunity to welcome even more NGCOA members to connect face-to-face with leaders from all aspects of the industry to drive forward the business of golf and grow the sport."

"The PGA of America is excited that the new proximity of the NGCOA's Golf Business Conference--beginning with next year's PGA Merchandise Show--will create special collaboration opportunities for PGA Members to discover, learn and share best practices with golf course owners and operators," said PGA President Suzy Whaley, PGA/LPGA.

The NGCOA will remain a partner of the Golf Industry Show (GIS) along with the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America (GCSAA) GCBAA, ASGCA, NGF and USGA. NGCOA will continue to host its semi-annual gathering of the Top Agronomic Officers at the GIS. For more information and to register for the 2019 GIS, which takes place Feb. 2-7 in San Diego, please visit golfindustryshow.com. The NGCOA plans to continue hosting the Golf Business TechCon and other new concept events each fall in the central and western areas of the United States.

Women's Golf Day 2019 — REGISTER NOW!

Women's Golf Day 2018 hailed a huge success after thousands of women take part in WGD events around the globe

Since 2016 over **900 locations in 52 countries** have Engaged, Empowered & Supported women and girls playing golf around the globe by hosting a Women's Golf Day event. Think Global — Act Local. [Register your location to host a WGD event on JUNE 4, 2019](#). Here are some key advantages to being an official WGD location:

- Placement on our homepage interactive map for at least 12 months
- Unique and editable profile page on our website
- Digital marketing toolkit that includes social media materials, posters, graphics, and more
- Multimedia coverage including TV, magazine, newspaper, blogs & others
- Access to golf-industry offers and opportunities such as seminars, webcasts, etc
- Providing new customers in your area with a perfect way to get into golf
- Ability to be geo-located from anywhere in the world
- Other benefits including discounted merchandise and more

You will also be recognized as an official participant in a growing movement that inspires women and girls to learn the skills that last a lifetime and join their voices for a greater cause that affects people around the world. **#WGDinspires**

Events for Women's Golf Day have been held in over 50 countries and every time zone spanning the globe! We are one of the fast-growing grassroots movements in modern golf and want to work with you to help engage, empower, and support women around the world. [Contact us](#) to learn more about how we can work together and bring more women into golf in your area!



Elisa Gaudet, WGD Founder, talks to Lauren Thompson from Golf Channel's Morning Drive about how community has been at the heart of the success of Women's Golf Day and how easy it is for locations and women can get involved.

Chronogolf Publishes Free Social Media Planning Template

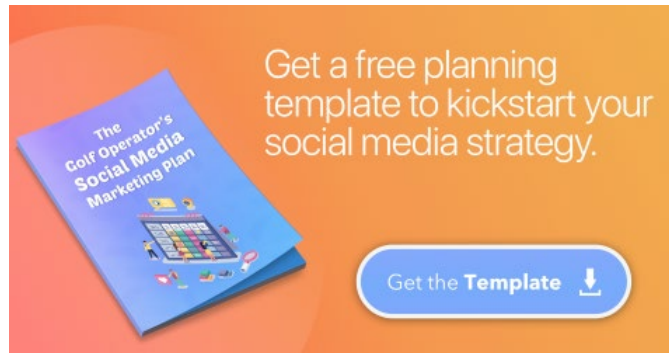
Chronogolf has published a free template package titled “The Golf Operator’s Social Media Marketing Plan.” The free planner is available for download on the company’s website.

The free templates are designed to help golf course operators simplify the planning of their social media marketing strategy. The practical guide walks users through setting up their Facebook, Instagram, Yelp, and Google My Business pages. The package also includes a posting calendar to help users organize their posting schedule.

The template also gives valuable insights into actionable strategies for each platform. Golf course managers will be able to analyze and benchmark their own marketing efforts and create an in-depth plan that’s tailored for their audience.

The planning template includes:

- Facebook and Instagram strategy overview,
- A guide to goal-setting for Facebook and Instagram
- SWOT analysis for each platform
- An action plan template to start and carry out your strategy
- Detailed guides for setting up Yelp and Google My Business profiles
- A Facebook and Instagram post calendar template



Of the new template package, Marketing Manager Arnaud Jolois said, “Traditional marketing channels are becoming outdated and give a poor return on investment, social media is a great way to build relationships with golfers at low cost, bringing in much higher profits.” He added, “Having a detailed and in-depth plan is essential when it comes to social media marketing. Without proper planning, golf course operators are taking a shot

in the dark, and risk wasting their time while damaging their brand image. The ability to navigate through social media platforms and make your posts stand out from the competition is so valuable to the modern golf course.”

The template can be found here: <https://hubs.ly/H0gFCfJ0>

About Chronogolf

Chronogolf provides innovative cloud-based software and marketing solutions to golf courses ranging from online booking, electronic tee-sheet, member management, tournaments management, customer loyalty and point of sale solutions for pro shops, snack bars and restaurants. Over 600 golf courses trust Chronogolf as their software provider across the world. Chronogolf’s headquarters are in Montreal, with offices in Vancouver, Lyon, Phoenix and Richmond.

Visit <https://pro.chronogolf.com/> for more information.



Each issue of Mid-Atlantic Golf Business will feature The Chronogolf Blog, bringing you the latest strategies and tactics to help you succeed at your course. This is the inaugural issue.

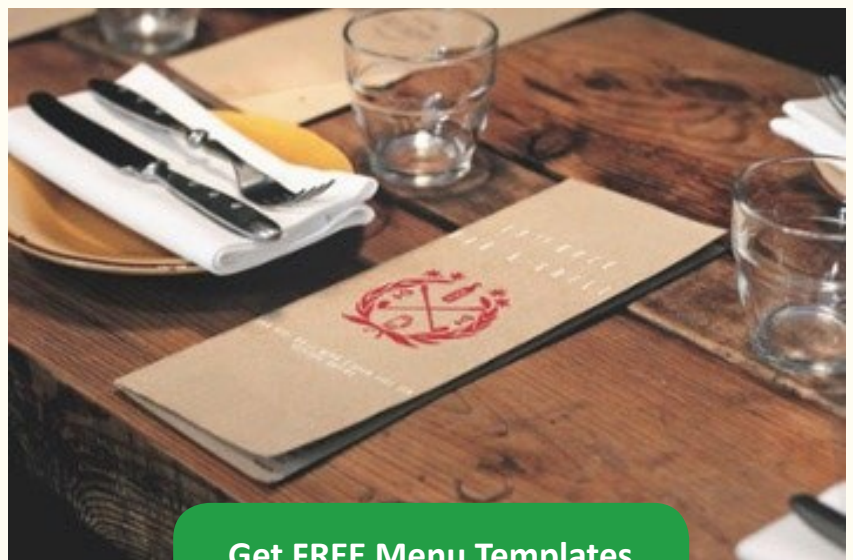
How to Craft the Perfect Menu for Your Golf Course Restaurant

Posted by [Alex Lavoie](#)

Are you worried that your clubhouse restaurant isn’t getting as many reservations as it could? You may be losing diners because your menu just isn’t up to par with the Applebee’s down the street.

The good news is that golf courses are blessed with consistent traffic and loyal customers, some of whom have been members for years, know your business and what you offer intimately. A quick refresh could quickly bring back customers and get people talking about the delicious food your kitchen serves.

Your menu is key to your restaurant’s success. You will need a well-balanced strategy for design and meal selection. Design usually takes a good eye [or the help of free templates](#). Meal selection can be aided by organizing offerings into a menu matrix.



Get FREE Menu Templates

[Click here to view the full article](#)

Golf Course Owners You May Be Eligible to Share in \$6B Class Action Settlement

If your golf course accepted credit cards anytime between Jan. 1, 2004 and Nov. 28, 2012 you may be eligible to share in the \$6 billion class action settlement against Visa U.S.A. Inc. ("Visa") and MasterCard International Incorporated ("MasterCard").

On Jan. 24, 2019, the U.S. District Court of New York granted preliminary approval to the settlement filed on Sept. 18, 2018 in the case "PAYMENT CARD INTERCHANGE FEE AND MERCHANT DISCOUNT ANTITRUST LITIGATION." The order is available [HERE](#). While this case has lingered in the courts since 2012, it finally appears to be coming to a close.

After an initial filing in 2009, on Nov. 27, 2012, the U.S. District Court, Eastern District of New York approved the [class action lawsuit](#) settlement finding that Visa and MasterCard, separately and together with banks, violated antitrust laws and caused merchants to pay excessive fees for accepting their credit and debit cards.

On Dec. 13, 2013, the U.S. District Court, Eastern District of New York, issued final approval of the settlement. However, this decision was appealed by many of the merchants, which felt that the lower court limited that settlement to only two classes of merchants.

Then on Sept. 28, 2015 the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit heard the arguments, and on [June 30, 2016 it reversed the approval of the settlement](#). It concluded, "Numerous objectors and opt out plaintiffs argue that this class action was improperly certified and that the settlement was unreasonable and inadequate. We conclude that the class plaintiffs were inadequately represented in violation of Rule 23(a) (4) and the Due Process Clause. Accordingly, we vacate the district court's certification of this class action and reverse the approval of the settlement."

The court found the companies violated antitrust laws by:

- Agreeing to set, apply and enforce rules about merchant fees (called default fees or interchange fees)
- Limiting what merchants could do to encourage customers to use other forms of payments, for example, charging customers an extra fee or offering discounts when using cash or checks, and
- Continuing this behavior even after Visa and MasterCard changed corporate structures.

Under the settlement, Visa, MasterCard and the banks agreed to make payments in two settlement funds:

- First is a "cash fund," a \$6.5 billion fund that will pay valid claims of merchants that accepted Visa or MasterCard credit or debit cards at any time between Jan. 1, 2004 and Nov. 28, 2012.
- The second is an "interchange fund," estimated to be approximately \$1.2 billion that will be paid based on a portion of the interchange fees attributable to certain merchants that accept Visa or MasterCard for an eight-month "interchange period."

So, where does this leave our members who did not file their claim? After reaching out to a number of you, it was apparent either they did not receive the public notice in 2014 or they just ignored it. We have reached out to the court-appointed managing agency for the settlement (Payment Card Settlement group) as well as the lead attorney representing the merchants (Berger & Montague PC) and learned our members may still be able to participate in the settlement.

The courts have again selected [Payment Card Settlement](#) group to manage the claim process. Their website will include the final approved application forms along with filing information.

If you are interested in participating, here is some of the information you will need to submit with your claim (this is based on previous settlement, subject to change pending final appeal):

- Amount of interchange fees paid from Jan. 1, 2004 - Nov. 28, 2012
- Merchant default interchange rate you were charged
- Sales volume interchange rate used (to extent known, broken down by network brand, credit card and debit card type)
- Merchant category codes used to process sales transactions

Your merchant processor may be able to assist you with pulling this information together. The NGCOA will continue to follow this lawsuit and ensure its members are afforded the opportunity to participate in this settlement process.

NGCOA members may recall in 2013, NGCOA [released an article](#) regarding this class action lawsuit and warned members of the many predators who were offering their assistance (for a fee) with collecting your share. While the offers vary, in essence they promise to intercede in any claims process in order to maximize the recovery golf courses will receive, in return for a significant portion of that recovery. NGCOA recommends owners review the free assistance offered by the court appointed Payment Card Interchange Settlement organization before paying a third-party collection agent.



JOHN DEERE

Sponsored by Yamaha



In each Golf Business Podcast episode, NGCOA will bring you, from the John Deere Studio, three segments of original, curated, informative content to help your golf course business thrive and grow:

- Inside Golf Business — leading golf course owners, operators and industry experts will discuss the latest issues facing the industry;
- Owner to Owner — top owners will discuss what's on everyone's radar; and
- House Chat — NGCOA CEO Jay Karen, the staff and other industry experts share current news from within the association.

This podcast is supported by Yamaha Golf Cars, the Official Golf Car Partner of NGCOA.

[Click here to access the Podcast library](#)

The NGCOA Announces Annual Awards Winners

Each year, the NGCOA recognizes the most outstanding members of the past year, and the individuals and organizations that 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,” said 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.”

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

- David Feherty

National Course of the Year Award: Recognizes a golf course that epitomizes exceptional course quality and management excellence, makes important contributions to its communities and the game, and is a model of operations to its peers. The following members were selected as the regional Course of the Year winners (from which the national Course of the Year is chosen):

- Great Horse (Hampden, MA) in the Northeast Region
- Meadowlands Golf Club (Calabash, NC) in the South Region
- Applewood Golf Course (Golden, CO) in the West Region
- The Heather at Boyne Highlands (Harbor Springs, MI) in the Midwest Region

From the regional winners, the **NGCOA Board of Directors** selected **The Heather at Boyne Highlands** as the **2019 National Course of the Year** recipient.

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 significant victory for our members.

- Maryland Coalition of Concerned Clubs (MCCC)

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

- Kathy Aznavorian - President, Fox Hills Golf & Banquet Center

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.

- Bandon Dunes (Bandon, OR)
- PGA of America for PGA Jr. League

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.

- East Lake Golf Club (Atlanta, GA)



NGCOA President Dick Stuntz (L) and CEO Jay Karen (R) flank honoree David Feherty



South Region Winner Sheila McLamb of Meadowlands GC in NC is congratulated by Dick Stuntz (L) and Jay Karen (R)



Woodmont CC GM Brian Pizzamenti accepts the Champion Award on behalf of the Maryland Coalition of Concerned Clubs from Jay Karen (L) and Dick Stuntz (R)

Bobby Friend Purchases The Brookwoods GC

By Michael Schwartz

On an unseasonably warm weekday afternoon this month, Bob Friend had reason to feel pretty good about his recent leap into golf course ownership.

It was sunny and 70 degrees, and the parking lot was packed at The Brookwoods Golf Club, the public course in New Kent County that he had purchased a week earlier.

Still, Friend, a journeyman golf course superintendent, knows enough about the business not to revel too much in the crowds that showed up to play the course and take advantage of the weather.

"Buying a golf course in the winter is a bad idea," said Friend, 62. "Sixty-two is not the right time to buy a golf course either."

He had just closed Jan. 28 on the \$1.2 million purchase of Brookwoods, the next chapter in a golf career that began with Friend aiming to be a PGA pro before getting into the agronomy side of the business more than 30 years ago.

He purchased the 178-acre course in Quinton from Gilbey and Brian Campbell, the married couple that had owned and run Brookwoods since 1995.

Friend had been superintendent at Brookwoods for six years when the Campbells approached him about handing it off to him last year. Having worked at 10 courses through the years — including Stonehenge, the Highlands, River's Bend, Mill Quarter and Hanover Country Club — he said every superintendent and golf pro daydreams about owning their own course.

"But I never considered it a reality. I don't have that kind of money," he said. "The Campbells helped me. They kind of put it in my lap."

"The first reaction was 'hell yeah.' Then it was, 'Can I make it work?'"

After going through the somewhat awkward position of negotiating with the Campbells, who were still technically his bosses at the time, the couple helped Friend finance the deal.

Brookwoods, which winds through the Five Lakes subdivision, is somewhat of an anomaly in the New Kent-area golf market. It opened in the mid-1970s, when there wasn't nearly as much competition, and has stayed afloat — and profitable, Gilbey Campbell said — while some of its nearby semiprivate competitors ran into hard times and changed ownership in the last year. The most recent example of that is Stonehouse Golf Club, which sold in December for \$800,000 after being shuttered for more than a year.

Campbell said she and her husband bought Brookwoods in 1995 after respective careers in investment banking and the automotive industry afforded them the ability to take the leap and shop around for a golf course.

"We spent three years looking up and down the East Coast for a golf course to buy," Campbell said. "We were avid lovers of the game and wanted to work for ourselves. And we wanted to be in an industry we loved."

They eventually landed on Brookwoods, which at the time was in rough shape.

"A cow pasture," Campbell said when asked to describe the course back then. "That's being nice. Anyone who ever played it in the 1990s would tell you it was horrible."

"But it's a fantastic layout. My husband has a good eye for what the bones are. It was in the worst shape but had the best bones."

They bought the course for an undisclosed price (county online records don't indicate what they paid), while commuting seven days a week from the city of Richmond.

They made incremental improvements to the course through the years, while not pricing out their regulars.

"We are a working man's golf course," Campbell said. "We approached it with the idea that no matter what we did to improve it, it needed to stay a good value for people."

As both were turning 65, the Campbells decided to seriously consider selling the business last summer.

Friend was the first potential suitor they approached.

"We had asked Bob way back, 'If the time came, would you be interested?'"

"You want to get a good price, but it mattered a lot — having spent 24 years — that we leave it in good hands. Bob had been with us six years. He's done a lot in the golf business."

As Friend worked through the deal, one of the first things he did was bring on Tim Cockrell, a longtime local course pro, who most recently had been at Brickshire, another New Kent course that changed ownership in the last year. The two had worked together back in the day.

"It was always kind of a dream that we would hook up again at some point," said Cockrell, who is rooting for his longtime acquaintance and new boss.

"You hear about all these courses owned by big companies and this is like a fellow living out his dream and wanting to make a go of it," he said of Friend.

Together, they'll manage the various sides of running a course, with Cockrell as the pro and helping manage clubhouse operations. Friend prefers to focus on the nature-related parts of golf.

"I don't like the office," Friend said. "I like my coveralls and like to be outside."

Lofty goal

Friend said Brookwoods in recent years has averaged 25,000-26,000 rounds annually, and his hope is to eventually bump that up a few thousand.

"30,000 rounds would be a dream year," he said.

They'll continue to keep the price at the lower end, at \$25-\$40 per round, and plan to drive new revenue in part with Cockrell's ability as the course's first-ever head pro to offer lessons and clinics.

They'll also look to make incremental changes to the course, mainly designed to increase the pace of a play, as the time it takes to play a round of golf has become an impediment.

Campbell said she and her husband are content with passing the torch to Friend after all these years.

"It's a lot of hours, a lot of hard work. And you don't get to play the course," she said. "But it's immensely satisfying that we were able to bring it up to a certain level and leave it in good hands."

She said Friend and Cockrell will have their work cut out for them in the competitive local golf scene, as she said there are twice as many courses in the Richmond area now as when they purchased Brookwoods.

"We provided a quality product at a reasonable price," she said. "Hopefully Tim and Bob will continue with that philosophy."

"Everybody has to find their own way. We found a way that worked for us. It's Bob's now."



Course pro Tim Cockrell (left) and new owner Bob Friend. (Photos by Michael Schwartz)

Regional News

Stonehouse GC sold for \$800,000

By Michael Schwartz



The Golf Club at Stonehouse in Toano has sold for \$800,000. (Photos by Michael Schwartz)

The last of a trio of once-troubled golf courses east of Richmond is in the hands of a new owner who's already fast at work on a seven-figure plan to revive the shuttered club.

Stonehouse Golf Club in Toano, which has been closed and left largely unkempt since fall 2017, sold last month for \$800,000.

The buyer was Joe Sanders, a resident of nearby West Point and former member of Stonehouse and its neighboring sister courses, Brickshire and Royal New Kent, which Traditional Golf Properties owned until last year.

Traditional Golf put the three clubs up for sale in 2017 in the face of financial troubles and let Stonehouse and Royal New Kent go dark. Brickshire and Royal New Kent since have found new owners, while Stonehouse was left dormant until Sanders swooped in.

"I watched the courses go down over the last few years and it was frustrating," Sanders said. "Stonehouse was one of my favorite courses."

Sanders, who closed on the purchase Dec. 11, said he was driven to the deal by both his lifelong love of golf and what he saw as a business risk worth taking.

"The more I did the math, the more I thought it was a good buy and a reasonable investment if the business is run correctly," he said. "I think any business can be profitable if you run it correctly."

Indeed, the \$800,000 price tag was a far cry from the \$5 million Traditional paid for Stonehouse in 2001 and the \$16.3 million a previous owner paid in 1997, a year after it opened.

Sanders said the deal also works because he can use crews and equipment from his general contracting company, J. Sanders Construction Co., to help overhaul the overgrown course and its aged infrastructure.

"I've got heavy equipment and I'm negotiating deals all the time," he said. "I've been in the construction business all my life, so estimating is my forte."

\$1.4 million estimated for fixes

He has several crews on site in the midst of what he estimates will be around \$1.4 million in upgrades to the course and its grounds, all with

the goal of reopening for play as a semiprivate club by July 1.

That work includes new pumps and controls for the irrigation system, drainage upgrades, removal of trees and – perhaps most noticeably – cutting the grass.

"When we started out there, the grass was three, four feet high," Sanders said, adding that his crews also helped with drainage fixes at Royal New Kent when South Carolina-based Wingfield Golf bought it last year.

Both Stonehouse and Royal New Kent were designed by the late Mike Strantz, a course architect who designed only seven or eight courses before his death at 50.

Sanders said he has two of the three main hires for Stonehouse already in place, with Helen Ware as general manager and Jeffrey Yarborough as course superintendent. Yarborough previously was in that role at King Carter Golf Club in

Irrington, Virginia.

He's still looking for a head golf pro and a restaurateur to run the clubhouse's food service. He's also working on a deal to buy a fleet of new carts.

He said he's had support and well wishes from the homeowners association of the surrounding



A shot of the overgrowth on hole 15 at Stonehouse.

subdivision. Its residents were worried about the course falling into the hands of someone who wanted to use the land for something other than golf.

While he said he's fully aware of the risk of getting into the golf business, Sanders said he's confident about moving forward.

"It's been fun doing it because I love the golf course," he said. "It's coming together."



A more recent shot of No. 15 after Sanders' crews went to work.

Regional News

Topgolf tees off construction on \$25M Westwood range

by Michael Schwartz

With heavy machinery already tearing up earth in the background, a fast-growing chain of golf entertainment complexes ceremoniously broke ground last fall on its first Richmond-area location.

Topgolf gathered representatives from Henrico County to celebrate the start of construction of its \$25.5 million, 48,000-square-foot facility that will rise at 2308 Westwood Ave.

It hopes to open for business this fall with 350 employees. Chicago-based general contractor Arco/Murray is leading construction on the project. Aria Group is the architect. Locally based Timmons Group has handled site engineering.

Topgolf paid \$5.7 million for the 14-acre parcel last month, purchasing it from a partnership between local developers Lynx Ventures and Rebkee Co.

That group paid \$6.5 million for the property in a September 2017 deal that also included the neighboring 220,000-square-foot Sears Outlet and distribution complex, and its surrounding 12 acres at 4100 Tomlynn St.

Among those in attendance at the ceremony were Henrico County Supervisors Frank Thornton and Harvey Hinson, deputy county managers Randy Silber and Tim Foster, and Gary McLaren, head of the county's Economic Development Authority.

"This is a really big week for golf in Henrico County," McLaren said, referring to both Topgolf and the Dominion Charity Classic PGA Tour Champions event at Country Club of Virginia's James River Course.

McLaren also highlighted the Westwood tract as being part of a surrounding 500-acre area the county is targeting for denser, mixed-use development designed to capture expected spillover from nearby Scott's Addition in the city.

The county calls the section the "Westwood area" and is looking at how to update existing zoning and infrastructure to capitalize on the primarily industrial corridor that extends from Westwood Avenue to Staples Mill Road.

McLaren hinted to those in attendance of further development coming to the area.

"I think you'll be hearing about other capital investments being made here in the not-too-distant future," he said.

Topgolf's construction begins as its New York-based competitor Drive Shack is well underway on its first location in the region just west of Short Pump in Goochland County.

With visibility from both 288 and Interstate 64, as well as proximity to Short Pump, the property was designated by the county's conceptual plan as

a "prime economic development," Hunter said.

Drive Shack representative Andy Condlin of law firm Roth Jackson represents Drive Shack. Drive Shack's first location is in Orlando, and the company owns dozens of golf courses nationwide.

Billy Casper Golf Selected to Manage Brickshire Golf Club

Billy Casper Golf (BCG) – the highly respected and innovative manager of nearly 150 golf courses, country clubs and resorts in 29 states – has been selected to operate Brickshire Golf Club in Providence Forge, Virginia, located 30 minutes east of Richmond.



For the daily-fee course, BCG will facilitate clubhouse operations, golf course maintenance, marketing and sales, staffing and training, merchandising, golf instruction and financial management. The facility will serve as a key asset for the Brickshire community, complementing its world-class amenities including a fitness center, tennis courts, owner's pool and more. BCG's leadership will provide the tools for Brickshire to thrive on and off the golf course.

"Billy Casper Golf's marketing prowess will not only grow Brickshire's golf community, but active community as well," says Jerry Assesor, president of Brickshire Home Owners Association. "Our mission is to provide our residents and the community exceptional golf and become a haven for outdoor enthusiasts in the region."

Opened in 2001, Brickshire Golf Club provides a strong test for all golfers with five sets of tees. The course ranges from 4,892 yards to a demanding 7,291 yards, testing every part of the game. With uphill and downhill shots, uneven lies, wetlands and water, architect Tom Clark made sure no two holes are remotely alike. However, four of the holes are emulations of world-renowned tests of golf at Augusta National, St. Andrews, Riviera and Pinehurst #2.

"With the help of Curtis Strange, architect Tom Clark was able to create the top rate golfing experience our community has come to enjoy," says Assesor. "We look forward to growing upon our esteemed reputation under the leadership of Billy Casper Golf."

In 2019, Billy Casper Golf will be celebrating their 30th anniversary and success in building and refining the strongest operating platform in golf. Brickshire becomes the 14th BCG-managed daily-fee course in Virginia to go along with other HOA community club, Magnolia Green Golf Club, Captain's Cove Golf & Yacht Club and Colonial Heritage Golf Club.

More information: <http://www.brickshiregolfclub.com/>, 804.966.7888



Crews had already carved up large swaths of the property three months ago.



An example of a Topgolf tee line and outfield in Centennial, CO.

Regional News

Kingsmill LPGA event lands title sponsor

by David Hall



After a lengthy and sometimes frustrating search that lasted several years, the Kingsmill Resort's [LPGA](#) event has finally landed a title sponsor.

The women's shaving brand Pure Silk will become the chief sponsor of the newly renamed Pure Silk Championship, Kingsmill and the LPGA announced Monday.

The company agreed to a three-year deal, from 2019-2021, to sponsor the tournament at the River Course. The 15th edition of the event will be played May 20-26 in Williamsburg for a \$1.3 million purse.

"We are excited to be in Williamsburg and serve as the title sponsor of the Pure Silk Championship and continue to sponsor an outstanding roster of [LPGA Tour](#) professionals," Tom Murray, CEO of Perio Inc., the parent company of Pure Silk, said in a statement.

The agreement ends a long, wide-ranging courtship that often ended in near-deals with national corporations. Resort officials expect that having a title sponsor will allow the tournament to put more money back into the community, they told The Daily Press during the 2018 tournament.

The new partnership allows the LPGA to continue to add to the list of winners at Kingsmill, which includes LPGA and World Golf Hall of Famers Annika Sorenstam, Se Ri Pak and Karrie Webb, along with LPGA veteran Cristie Kerr, who has won the event three times.

"Pure Silk brings to the table energy that we are sure will elevate the player and fan experience," Kingsmill Resort COO John Hilker said. "Their sincere commitment to service and quality goes hand-in-hand with our core values. It just makes sense."

The tournament, formerly known as the Kingsmill Championship, has provided memorable finishes – not to mention beginnings – in recent years.

In May, current world No. 1 Ariya Jutanugarn survived a three-way playoff to defeat Japanese teen sensation Nasa Hataoka and two-time major champion In Gee Chun. On the second playoff hole, Jutanugarn drilled a 15-footer for birdie to claim her first of three wins of the 2018 season and her second title in the past three seasons on the River Course.

In 2017, tour star Lexi Thompson famously skydived, in tandem with a Navy SEAL, into her pro-am and went on to set a tournament scoring record in capturing her eighth career win.

"The atmosphere of this tournament is something you can't really describe," Thompson said after her victory. "Just the town and the fans that come out, it's a very relaxing and supportive community for this event, and I think we all just really enjoy coming here."

LPGA Commissioner Michael Whan said the agreement with Pure Silk is "a great match."

"Pure Silk is not only an incredible title partner, but also a marketing partner, a sponsor of numerous LPGA athletes and, most importantly, a great friend," Whan said. "We're excited to build on the rich history the LPGA has at Kingsmill with the Pure Silk Championship."

According to Kingsmill's website, the tournament has made an economic impact of more than \$6 million to the region since it began as an LPGA event in 2003. It has contributed more than \$1.5 million to local charities.

The event was preceded by the Michelob Championship at Kingsmill, a [PGA Tour](#) tournament held at the course from 1981-2002.

Managing Club Real Estate Taxes

By Larry Hirsh, Golf Property Analysts

Having a realistic estimate of the property's value is key to the process as that determines the other elements. A knowledgeable review of your property tax bill can begin the evaluation of whether an appeal has a good chance for success.

The process for appealing a property tax assessment varies from state to state, however in most cases involves the filing of a formal appeal, a hearing before a politically appointed board of view and then, if necessary an appeal to local or state courts. While many appeals result in filings in court, few actually reach the trial stage, but we recommend always being prepared for the eventuality of trial. [Read More](#)

First Tee tees up changes to its Chesterfield golf course

A local golf nonprofit is eyeing another round of renovations at one of its venues and already has begun to line up funding for the project.

First Tee of Greater Richmond, a nonprofit that uses golf as a means for youth outreach, is planning to revamp parts of its 18-hole facility in Chesterfield.

The planned work on the drawing board includes upgrading the course's clubhouse by reshaping the interior of the building to make room for two golf simulators and after-school space for its participants.



First Tee of Greater Richmond plans to revamp parts of its Chesterfield facility.
(J. Elias O'Neal)

"It will be less golf-shoppy and more of a space where our patrons and participants can feel comfortable, hang out and a place we can meet to have classroom time," First Tee CEO Brent Schneider said of the project.

The clubhouse upgrades will be similar to those made earlier this year at First Tee's six-hole course in Richmond's Northside, where the simulators and the revamped short course have proven to be a driver for player traffic beyond the organization's base of students.

"We've had a really nice return on investment with the public being able to come out and use our facilities," Schneider said.

The project is expected to cost \$450,000, which will be paid for largely by donations. He said the nonprofit began showing the concept to some of its key donors in recent weeks and found enough interest to get the project moving.

"I've got a commitment that's substantial that's going to allow us to move forward with the project," Schneider said.

Interior design firm Flourish Spaces is handling design. First Tee has yet to hire a general contractor.

Schneider said he expects it to be an eight-week project once work

continued on next page

Magazine honors Billy Casper Golf's Hill

Peter Hill Named Sixth Most Powerful Person in Golf by Golf Inc.

Billy Casper Golf (BCG) – the highly respected and innovative management partner for golf courses, country clubs and resorts – announces Chairman and CEO Peter Hill has been ranked No. 6 on Golf Inc. magazine's recently-released "Most Powerful People in Golf" list.

Hill joins PGA Tour Commissioner Jay Monahan, Topgolf Executive Chairman Erik Anderson and professional golfer Tiger Woods on the prestigious list. This marks the 14th consecutive year he has finished in the top 10.

Golf Inc. states: "Billy Casper Golf is one of the nation's leading golf management companies, one that prides itself on innovation. That drive comes from having Hill at the top."

Next year, BCG will celebrate its 30th anniversary. Hill co-founded the company in 1989 with business partner Robert Morris and PGA Tour legend Billy Casper. Under Hill's leadership, the company has become one of the largest privately-owned golf course management companies in the U.S. with nearly 150 properties in 29 states.

2018 highlights include:

- Forming an alliance with Topgolf to install the company's Toptracer Range platform, branded as Launchbox Golf, at select BCG facilities.



BCG CEO Peter Hill

Best known for the revolutionary on-screen ball-tracking technology seen on PGA TOUR and major championship television broadcasts, Toptracer Range combines tech and fun to transform driving ranges into practice and entertainment destinations.

- Expanding BCG's partnership with GolfNow with a new focus on installations of the innovative cloud-based GolfNow One (G1) golf course management platform at BCG properties coast to coast.

- Raising \$345,000 for Fisher House Foundation – a national

organization providing a "home away from home" for families of patients receiving treatment at major military and VA medical centers – through the World's Largest Golf Outing (WLGO). A simultaneous charity outing managed by BCG and conceived by Hill, WLGO has raised more than \$4 million to support military charities since 2011.

"As a golf course owner and operator our vision is to be the best operator in the history of golf, by building the best operating platform in the history of golf," says Hill.

About Billy Casper Golf

Billy Casper Golf (BCG) 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 30 years of results-driven expertise.

First Tee *continued from previous page*

begins, and the hope is to be finished sometime in the first quarter of 2019.

Upon announcing the renovation plan, the organization also renamed the complex at 6736 Huntingcreek Drive as The Tattersall Youth Development Center at The First Tee Chesterfield Golf Course. That's in honor of Fred Tattersall, who helped establish the First Tee chapter in the region in 1998 and has been a major benefactor through the years.

"He was our board president for 17 years and one of our founders," Schneider said of Tattersall. "He was kind of the backbone of First Tee locally."

First Tee offers life-skills experience programs, with golf as a part of the curriculum, and also brings other nonprofits, such as the Boys and Girls Club, to its facilities.

And it's implanted golf as part of the physical education curriculum at dozens of elementary schools around the region.

The nonprofit operates with a \$2.5 million annual budget. About 25 percent of that is derived from revenue at its two courses.

Beyond the interior improvements at the Chesterfield clubhouse, Schneider said First Tee may eventually look to make upgrades to the Southside course similar to those it made in the city.

The organization made \$1.2 million in upgrades to the Northside course's turf and driving range, including installing Bermuda grass greens.

Some of that turf was hit hard by an uncooperative Mother Nature, forcing First Tee to replant the greens this summer. They've since grown back and the course is back to business as usual, Schneider said.



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