

Chips & Putts

OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE
POCONO TURFGRASS ASSOCIATION

Spring 2018 Issue



www.ptga.org



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Pocono Turfgrass Association was founded in 1936.



President's Message.....

It's almost that time of year to get those covers off and get the course back into shape. That's if this winter ever ends! I hope that everyone fares well when the covers are removed. I have pulled some plugs from a few of my greens and they're alive and well. So far so good. If anyone has winter damage and needs advice or help, please give me a call, or send me an email. I would be happy to help in anyway.

The Board has worked on a schedule of events for this summer's upcoming meetings. There are some joint meetings with other chapters and other states in which I think it will be a great opportunity to network and share ideas with others in our industry. Those meetings will be in our shoulder seasons, so that weather would not play a role. We are also working on some other ideas for non golf meetings for the year. Some of the ideas were a family day, clay pigeon shoot or a superintendents round table meeting to discuss issues. Please let me know if you would be interested in something like this.

I am looking forward to a great 2018. Thank you.

Gino Marchetti

Editor's Notes.....

Welcome to a new year and an even newer edition of the PTGA newsletter. As I have asked of you in the past, I will be looking for and welcoming your inputs throughout the season in the form of industry articles, pictures, and/or whatever you deem beneficial to be shared with your fellow members. The newsletter will work best when we ALL contribute.

I am excited for the positive changes that are coming in 2018 to that of the joint golf meetings, golf schedule, group activities, and the newsletter. More to come on those awesome ideas, which our President has already eluded too...somewhat!

I am looking forward to a great year and wish every member and their family the best in 2018. Go Golf!

Les Lear



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CHIPS & PUTTS STAFF

EDITOR

Les Lear, Turf Equipment and Supply Co.
570-903-8412
leslear@turf-equipment.com

Managing Editor

Melinda Wisnosky
570-388-2167
mmel500@aol.com



PTGA Office

309 Terrace Avenue
Harding, PA 18643
Phone/Fax: 570-388-2167

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APRIL MEETING
Middletown Country Club
Host: James Morgan, GCS
Joint Meeting with the Philadelphia Chapter

Middletown Country Club's golf course has been a fixture in Bucks County for 102 years. The course was laid out by Scottish golf architect Alexander Findlay, with 9 holes completed in 1913 and the second nine opened in 1916. Throughout our history, the course has undergone renovations by noted golf course architects George Fazio and Stephen Kay. Today's golfers can stroll the same fairways and hit shots into the same greens that such greats as Hogan, Player, Fazio, and Miller have graced. Twelve of the original 18 holes play today as they did in 1913.

Middletown Country Club's golf course is living proof that a golf course does not have to be 7,500 yards in order to be challenging. The course presents today's golfer with a variety of uphill, downhill, and sidehill lies, as the course features rolling terrain within the Neshaminy Valley. The greens at Middletown are described as being small in nature with a good deal of undulation. The course plays to a yardage of 6,217 yards from the back tees, a more modest 5,746 yards from the middle tees, and 5,175 yards from the forward markers. Par is 69 from the middle and back tees and 73 from the forward tees.



MAY MEETING

Eagle Rock Resort

Host: Mike Darby, GCS

Eagle Rock Resort is a private, gated community located on over 7000 acres. Making it the largest subdivision in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. It features many amenities, including a ski hill, 2 lakes, a beach, 4 pools, indoor basketball court, tennis courts, equestrian center, practice range, and 27 holes of golf.

The 18 hole championship course measures 7,028 yards from the gold tees. Previous ownership built the original 9 holes; present day holes 5 through 13, were designed by Arnold Palmer. The Double Diamond Corporation purchased the resort in 1996 and completed construction of the 18 hole golf course shortly after. The 18 hole course features generously wide fairways and large undulating greens that challenge golfers of all abilities.

The 9 hole executive course opened in 2010 and measures 2,371 yards from the blue tees. Don't let the yardage fool you; this short course is a challenging layout with small sloping greens. It can be played in around an hour, which makes it great for a quick 9 after work.

Superintendent, Mike Darby, came to Eagle Rock in 2007 as the Assistant Superintendent and was promoted to Superintendent in the fall of 2009. Mike and current Assistant Superintendent, Matt Schifano, oversee a seasonal crew of 18 full and part-time employees.

During Mike's tenure as Superintendent he has completed numerous projects which include bunker renovation, extensive drainage work, construction of the 9 hole short course, and the construction of a new practice green with chipping areas.



JUNE MEETING
Jack Frost National Golf Club
Host: Bryan Nuss, GCS

Jack Frost National is located in Blakeslee, PA, in the heart of the Pocono Mountains. The course is situated on over 200 acres and was planned as the centerpiece of a housing development. The course was designed by Terry LaGree who has designed other courses as well, including Royal Oaks Golf Course in Florida, along with Pennbrooke Fairways, Diamond Players Club, and Citrus Hills, all located in Florida.

Jack Frost National Golf Club embraces the Pocono Mountains with all its magnificent vistas and elevation changes. Different than most mountain courses, Jack Frost National also provides wide fairways, easily identified target areas and few uneven lies. Designed with five sets of tees ranging from 5,129 yards all the way up to 7,256 yards for the daring. With all the elevation changes in the area, the course was designed with no blind shots, which takes a bit of doing considering the rocky terrain.

The course is managed by Billy Casper Golf which has a few courses in Pennsylvania in its portfolio. Bryan Nuss is the superintendent and has been there since the grow-in started in 2005. Bryan started at Pocono Farms C.C. as the assistant superintendent and then moved on to be the superintendent at Timber Trails. Bryan tackles this beast daily with his seasoned crew of 11 in the summer and a winter crew of 2. They are charged with caring for 3.5 acres of greens, 3 acres of tees, 30 acres of fairways and 65 acres of maintained rough. The course has low mow bluegrass fairways with tees and of course bentgrass greens seeded with A-4.

The course features a practice area of 10 acres including a putting green, chipping green with a sand bunker, a short game area, and a driving range including a sand bunker.



Pocono Turfgrass Association 2018 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, 2018**. 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, 2018**. 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.

Applications should be submitted to:

Chris Passenti
Lords Valley C.C.
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Hawley, PA 18428
570-775-6653
lvccsupr@ptd.net



GIS Numbers Take a Tumble

Posted By: John Reitman

Walkways at GIS 2018 in San Antonio (left) were noticeably narrower than they were at past shows, including 2016 in San Diego (right).

Perception is not always reality.

The aisles were more narrow than usual at this year's Golf Industry Show, often giving the illusion that the Henry B. Gonzalez Convention Center in San Antonio was



more crowded than ever. By the afternoon of the second day, even funneling traffic into a single-file walkway wouldn't have been able to mask the fact that a lot of people clean forgot the Alamo this year.

A total of 700 fewer people attended this year's Golf Industry Show compared with the last time the event was in San Antonio in 2015.

Attendance at this year's show was 11,700. That's 1,900 fewer attendees than last year's show in Orlando, 900 fewer than San Diego in 2016 1,189 below the five-year average attendance of 12,889. It's even down 700 from the last time the show ambled on into San Antonio in 2015.

The number of vendors exhibiting at the show has been hovering in the mid-500s for years, and this show, with 531 exhibitors, was no exception. That mark is down from last year's total of 569 in Orlando. It's down 19 from 2016 in San Diego and down an even 20 from the 2015 show in San Antonio.

After a brief rebound in 2016 and 2017, when vendors rented out 250,000 square feet of convention center real estate in back-to-back years, booth space rental also was down this year to 184,900 square feet. That's the least since 2015 (182,000) in San Antonio and well off the five-year average of 210,280 square feet.

None of this should be a shock. The game has been on a steady pace of losing players and rounds for more than a decade, and it's not unrealistic to expect the challenges associated with those losses to trickle down to the turf side of the business.

If there was a bright spot in a show marked by steady decline, it's that 5,600 education seats were filled this year, compared with 5,800 last year in Orlando.





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A special thank you to ALL the people who helped make the PGCSA Networking Event a success this year in San Antonio, TX.

Thank You for your continued support!

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Good Help Is Hard To Find

Posted By: John Reitman

Part 1 in an ongoing series about labor issues affecting the golf industry.

One step forward; two steps back.

Struggling to find good help is a common theme at private and public courses across the country. That's how Scott White feels every winter when it is time to hire on seasonal help at Urbana Country Club in Illinois.

Whether it's finding high school workers with some semblance of work ethic, or helping Hispanic workers successfully navigate the physical exam process, White spends a lot of time looking for temporary help. And he's not alone.

All over the country the story is the same: superintendents are struggling to find qualified seasonal help, interns and even assistants. White is trying to get creative in finding high school students to round out his seasonal staff that includes Hispanics and retirees.

"It used to be I'd hire just anyone," said White, who is in his third season at Urbana. "Now, I'm looking for kids who want to be here because it excites them. I want kids who want to be outdoors, not just kids who need a job. I'm trying to find kids who are a better fit. That's the culture I want to create here. It seems I'm working four or five times harder to find the right employees who even want to be here."

Three years ago, White began working with a local high school to recruit summer help. Rather than get kids excited about the prospect of working outdoors all summer, he was getting the exact opposite.

"I was getting kids who didn't even want to be outside," he said. "It was like they were being forced to do it. They were not what I needed, and they didn't want to be here anyway."

This year, White ventured out of town to Mahomet-Seymour High School about 15 miles northwest of Urbana. Located in a more rural area, Mahomet-Seymour has a horticulture program stocked with kids already leaning toward a career spent outdoors.

White is scheduled to speak there next week, but already has hired a player off the basketball team who reached out when he learned a local golf course superintendent was coming to talk about careers in golf.

He is replicating that recruiting tactic at Fisher High School 25 miles north of the Champaign-Urbana area.

"I think I can establish a nice pipeline to Mahomet and Fisher," White said. "Once I get started, through word of mouth I can get their brothers and friends and round out my crew."

Every time I placed an ad, about 30 people would respond; I would schedule interviews for about five and only one of them would show up. I was spending a lot of time for very little return."

Conrad Pannkuk, assistant superintendent at Wynstone Golf Club in North Barrington, Illinois, said he and superintendent Ben McGargill are having similar challenges finding help, especially since his employer, Century Golf, started using the e-Verify system.

This year, Pannkuk spoke to an FFA group at a recent Barrington High School job fair about the careers in turf, including golf course maintenance, sports field management and sod production.

"I spoke about what the job entails and the expected salary," Pannkuk said. "I want to show them what career options are available to them. If I'd known about this when I was in high school, I would have been all over it."

In the past, when he worked at the Biltmore Country Club in Illinois, Pannkuk relied on Web sites like Indeed or Craigslist to find temporary help. Results were sporadic at best.

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Finding new ways to attract talent, he said, is more important now than ever.

"We're working with local community colleges. You have to be creative to get your name out there in as many places as possible," he said.

Making his case to local high schoolers has been a good fit for Pankkuk, and much better than relying on generic help-wanted Web sites.

"Looking for help through Craigslist and Indeed was tedious and depressing," he said.

"Going out and speaking to high school groups is fun. It's like going out and teaching, and I enjoy teaching."



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POCONO ROUNDUP

Get Well Wishes

Wishing a speedy recovery to both
Brian Nuss and **David Schell**
after their recent surgeries.

Retiring

John Vojick, a longtime salesman at
Andre & Son, Inc., and a member of Pocono
Turfgrass for many years, has recently retired.
We wish him all the best in his new life as a retiree!

PTGA SCHEDULE

- April 25** Joint Meeting @ Middletown C.C.
(Philadelphia Association)
- May 23** PTGA Meeting @ Eagle Rock Resort
- June 21** PTGA Meeting @ Jack Frost
National G.C.
- July 9** PTGA Meeting @ Elkview C.C.
- Aug. 6** PTGA Annual Meeting and Clambake
@ Glenmaura National G.C.
- Sept. 25** PTGA Meeting and Championships
@ Shawnee G.C.
- Oct. 8** PTGA Meeting @ Allentown G.C.

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