



THE NEWSLETTER

January 2018

of the **Golf Course Superintendents Association of New England, Inc.**

Sponsors and administrators of the Troll-Dickinson Scholarship Fund – Awarded yearly to deserving Turf Management Students.

The GCSA of New England Announces the Recipient of the 2018 Distinguished Service Award



The 2018 Distinguished Service Award has been awarded to David Comee. This honor is being granted posthumously to a person who was one of the Association's most fervent supporters. Dave died suddenly at the age of 60 while bicycling up Wachusett Mountain in Princeton, MA. His death was a shock to all who knew him.

Dave served as a member of the Association's board of directors where he was the golf chairman and a long serving Trustee of the Scholarship and Benevolence Fund.

He was a regular at Association meetings and events. He traveled with friends Bob



Healey, Mike Hermanson and Jim Fitzroy to attend the GCSAA Conference and Golf Tournament annually. He loved to play the game and enjoyed the time he spent on and off the course with his friends. Over time, he made many friendships at the Winchendon School Golf Course where he served as superintendent for 32 years.

His friends at Winchendon held a yearly golf tournament to honor his memory. The funds generated from this event were donated to the GCSA of New England's Scholarship and Benevolence Fund.

In recognition of what Dave meant to the Association, and particularly his work with the Scholarship and Benevolence Fund, the board of directors in 2012 created the

David Comee Memorial Award in his honor. The "Comee Award" is coveted by applicants for its increased monetary value.

Dave left behind his wife Kathy, son Tavis and his wife Kerriane, and daughter Megan and her husband Todd Constantine. All have been active supporting the fundraiser held at Winchendon and have donated their time and finances to help support the Scholarship and Benevolence Fund.

GCSANE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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David W. Johnson
The Country Club
191 Clyde Street, Chestnut Hill, MA 02467
617-456-3972
Email: Djohnson.wgc@gmail.com

VICE PRESIDENT

Jeffrey Urquhart
Milton Hoosic Club
70 Green Lodge Street, Canton, MA 02021
781-828-2953 Fax 781-828-3220
Email: jmartin101@gmail.com

SECRETARY/TREASURER

Donald D'Errico
508-530-2113
Email: svderrico@icloud.com

DIRECTOR, SCHOLARSHIP & BENEVOLENCE

David Stowe, CGCS
Newton Commonwealth Golf Club
212 Kenrick Street, Newton, MA 02458
617-789-4631
Email: Newtonmaint@aol.com

DIRECTOR

Peter J. Rappoccio, CGCS
Concord Country Club
246 ORNAC, Concord, MA 01742
978-371-1089 Fax: 978-369-7231
Email: gcs@concordcc.org

DIRECTOR, AFFILIATE

Keith Tortorella
Country Club Enterprises
2D Express Drive, Wareham, MA 02571
508-982-4820
Email: ktortorella@ccegolf cars.com

DIRECTOR

Bob Dembek
Lexington Golf Club
55 Hill Street, Lexington, MA 02420
978-870-8669
Email: lexgc@rcn.com

DIRECTOR

Brian F. Skinner, CGCS
Bellevue Golf Club
PO Box 760661, Melrose, MA 02176
781-248-0216
Email: brianskinner@bellevuegolfclub.com

PAST PRESIDENT

Michael Luccini, CGCS
Franklin Country Club
672 E. Central Street, Franklin, MA 02038
508-528-6110 Fax: 508-528-1885
Email: Mluccini@franklincc.com

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Donald E. Hearn, CGCS
300 Arnold Palmer Blvd., Norton, MA 02766
774-430-9040
Email: donhearn@gcsane.org

GCSANE Headquarters

300 Arnold Palmer Blvd., Norton, MA 02766
Tel: (774) 430-9040
Web Site: www.gcsane.org

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Thoughts From Your Executive Director by Don Hearn



From left: Todd Constantine, Megan (Comee) Contsantine, Tavis Comee, Dave Johnson, Kathy Comee

One of the highlights of the Annual Meeting, which took place January 11, 2018 at the Renaissance Boston Patriot Place Hotel, in Foxborough, was the presentation of the Distinguished Service Award. This year's recipient was **Dave Comee**, who was awarded this honor posthumously. Elsewhere in this issue you will find more about Dave and his contributions to our Association and the Scholarship and Benevolence Fund. Dave's friend, **Jim Fitzroy**, spoke about Dave and what he meant to our Association. Jim's tribute was a fond story of friendship, days spent together on the golf course and social connections going back many years. We were fortunate to have Dave's family in attendance. His wife, Kathy, spoke eloquently about her life together with Dave and told us how wonderful a person he was. Her poignant words and touching delivery brought tears to many in the room. Those who knew Dave are lucky to have met such a wonderful person.

This year's business meeting included the election of officers and directors.

The list of those on this year's board are:

President	Dave Johnson
Vice President	Jeff Urquhart
Secretary/Treasurer	Don D'Errico
Director	Keith Tortorella
Director	Bob Dembek
Director	Peter Rappoccio, CGCS
Director	Brian Skinner, CGCS
Director	David Stowe, CGCS
Past President	Michael Luccini, CGCS

The Past Presidents who attended the Annual Meeting and their years in office:

Brian Cowan	1982-1983
Pat Daly	2009-2010
Jim Fitzroy	2002-2003
Don Hearn	1984-1985
Russ Heller	2007-2008
Mike Hermanson	2004-2005
Mike Luccini	2015-2016
Dick Zepp	1988-1989

As is the custom, the Past Presidents had their annual meeting preceding the business meeting. This is where we hear from those who have experience with Association matters. They serve as our barometer and we value their input and advice.

Thoughts From Your Executive Director *by Don Hearn*



We were fortunate to have representatives from our allied associations in attendance. Peter Costello, Secretary of Mass Golf; **Kevin Doyle**, Northeast Field Staff Representative of GCSAA; **Jesse Menachem**, Executive Director of Mass Golf; **Harry McCracken**, Executive Secretary of the New England Golf Association; **Jim Skorulski**, Senior Agronomist of the USGA and **Gary Sykes**, Executive Director of the New England Regional Turfgrass Foundation. Some of our guest spoke for a few minutes about their respective association's role in the golf community and how it relates to us as golf course superintendents. We were fortunate that they were able to take time away to spend a large part of the day with us.



Our speaker at the Annual Meeting was well known comedian, **Steve Sweeney**. Steve is a golfer and he was able to weave a few golf tales into his presentation. He also randomly chose a few in the audience to serve as foils while pointing out the comic side of each club's perceived reputation. It was a light hearted presentation and created some hearty laughs.

At the Annual Meeting there comes the sad time when the names of our Members who died since the last Annual Meeting are read. This year the names were:

John Sperandio, Life Member,
joined 1953 died March 27, 2017

Max Mierzwa, Life Member,
joined 1963 died May 21, 2017

Ralph Roberts, Life Member,
joined 1953 died June 25, 2017

Charlie Zeh, Life Member,
joined 1982 died November 10, 2017

Don Marrone, Jr, Life Member,
joined 1982 died November 21, 2017

Twenty-Five Year Pins were awarded to:

Michael Cassidy

Ron Dobosz

Joe Lazaro

David D'Andrea

J.C. Girouard,

Our sincere thanks and appreciation to the members who hosted our events this year. It's because of members like these that we can have our meetings at superb venues during the golf season:

Scott Lagana, Oak Hill Country Club,
hosted the S&B Tournament in July

Ken Crimmings, Marlborough Country Club,
hosted the Championship in August

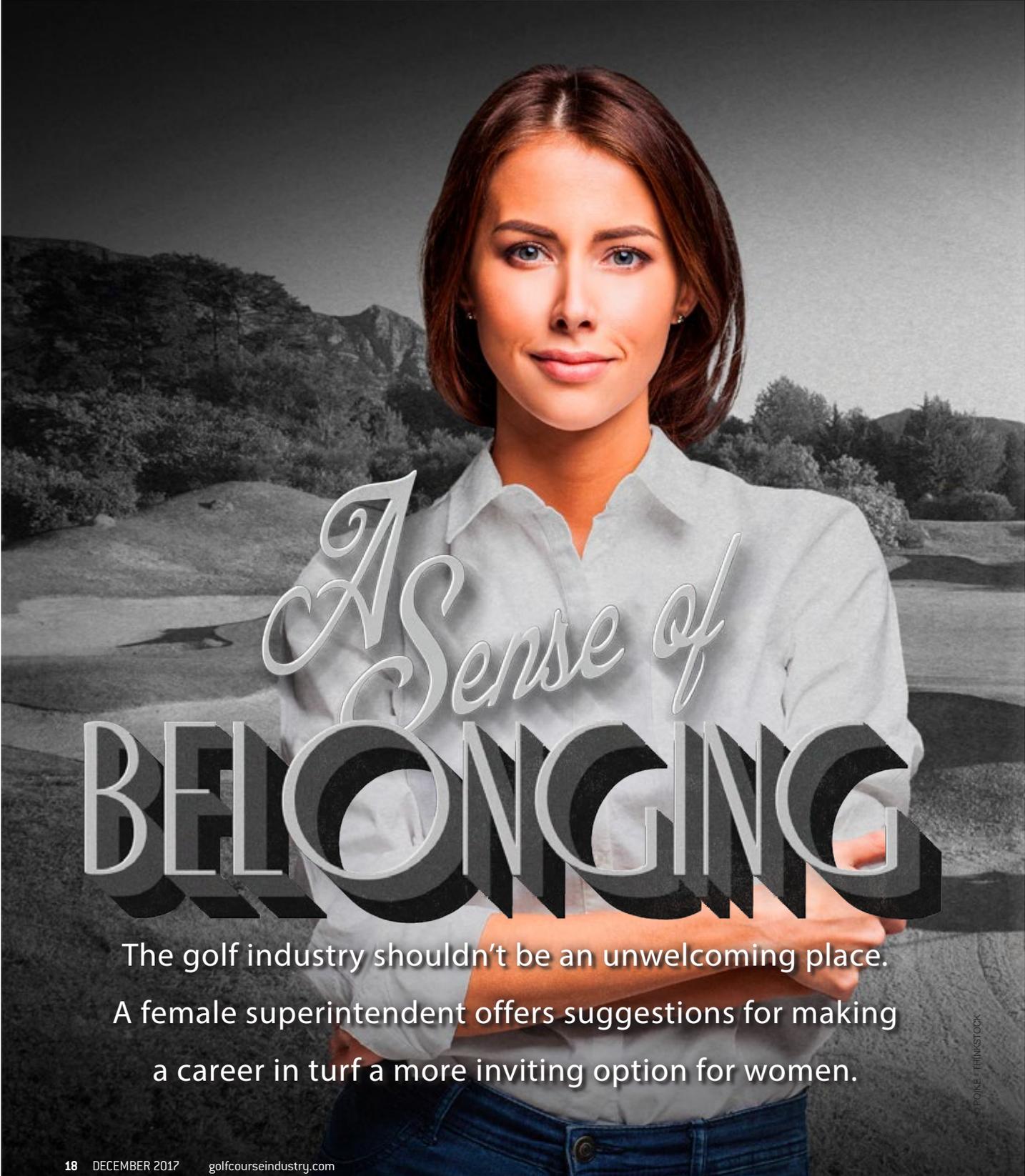
Dave Johnson, Wianno Club,
hosted the Member-Guest in September

Kevin Whalley, Walpole Country Club,
hosted the Member-Member in October

Mike Luccini, Franklin Country Club,
hosted the Assistants Meeting in October

Bob Dembek, Lexington Golf Club,
hosted the nine-hole meeting in November

Thank you to all our Members and supporters for your continuing belief in our Association.



A Sense of
BELONGING

The golf industry shouldn't be an unwelcoming place. A female superintendent offers suggestions for making a career in turf a more inviting option for women.

© POKE - THINKSTOCK

The issue of diversity within the golf industry is a complex topic. Why is there a lack of women in golf? Why aren't there more women in leadership roles in golf? And, finally, how do we give women the opportunity to excel in this industry?

This fall, I attended an event for Women in Golf at the Toronto Ladies Club hosted by Bayer. As I was chatting with these successful, driven women, I started thinking that maybe diversity within golf was fine, maybe I was being a bit dramatic. All these women were excelling in their careers. But then we started talking about women they knew who had left the industry or the hurdles they had been forced to overcome. The reality is those women at that table are the ones who persevered despite obstacles they encountered in their career path. They are the women who were fortunate to have a mentor genuinely interested in their success. On the other hand, they are the women who don't want to rock the boat. They got to where they are, and they want to stay there. If there wasn't an issue with lack of diversity, then we wouldn't have a lack of diversity. It's pretty simple. This gave me the inspiration to try and rock that boat. This article is the first step.

This is not about taking a job at the well-educated, hard-

working men who hold most of the jobs in this industry. It's not about making a switch to 50 percent women as employees and managers. It's about how do we get the women with talent – and with turf as their passion – the opportunities to excel and make turf their lifelong career aspiration. How do we break down the barriers and make the golf business a place that attracts the best of the best? Some would say a woman needs to be feisty, she needs to be persistent, put her career before everything, work harder than any man and prove herself. But isn't that the problem? She may immediately put herself in a place where everybody, including herself, thinks she needs to prove that she is as good as any man out there by being overly assertive and dominant. This may cause her to be perceived as difficult to work with or pushy, whereas many men with these attributes are considered hard working and driven.

"Working in a male-dominated field does have its challenges," says Marie

Thorne, senior turf specialist at Syngenta Canada. "Women that know their stuff, exude self-confidence (not aggressiveness), earn trust from their male counterparts and get involved in the industry are very likely to succeed. At times you do need thick skin, and I've been very blessed to have mentors throughout my career to provide guidance."

LOOK WITHIN

There's also the issue of general managers concerned that employees within their establishment won't be able to "accept" or "handle" having a women leader. They may be concerned about having to deal with any potential sexual harassment or power struggle issues, therefore they may choose to avoid these issues rather than taking them head on. If we want this industry to not only survive but thrive, it is imperative not to shy away from these subjects. If there is concern about a crew not accepting a woman, it's time to delve into the present dynamic of your work force and ascertain why this may be. If there's a concern about sexual harassment, ask yourself why you're worried and go from there. The fear of sexual harassment should never be a factor in whether



Leasha Schwab is the superintendent at Pheasant Run Golf Course in Sharon, Ontario.

anybody is passed over for a position.

We as women need to not compromise our leadership role while at the same time being strong and unwilling to waiver in our morals. Dealing with harassment is something I've

known all too well in this industry and part of me is ashamed to say that after 15 years last year was the first time I stood up for myself. Even then, my biggest fear was that my peers would view me as somebody who can't "hang with the guys" or that they need to watch what they say around me. I am very fortunate to have great mentors who believed in me and helped me overcome these fears. I have a deep concern for women new to the industry without mentors – or ones that feel secluded – and I wonder how they would persevere. Any man who messages a woman superintendent to let her know how "hot" she looks in her profile picture (yes, this happens), asks if she's single, attends a trade show and asks whose wife she is, and thinks twice about hiring a woman as a manager because you're worried about the men is 100 percent part of the problem.

Many in the golf industry can agree that sometimes we can all get caught up in our jobs. When we were younger

and new to this industry, it was driven into us that you should be working at least 12-hour days and, if not, it meant you didn't have the passion for the business. I believe that sometimes men can see long working hours as a challenge, whereas women wonder how they can sustain this work ethic, especially if there is any thought of starting a family. So, instead, they bow out. Women are still more likely to be the stay at home parent, so where does being a golf course superintendent fit in? Some would say it seems impossible, and I used to think that. But it's not. It's about planning, acceptance and working together. It's about general managers trusting the person they hired to do what's right for the golf course when that time comes. It is completely possible to do both. You don't need to work 12-hour days every day to be a driven, motivated superintendent.

"With my husband and I both being in the industry, we knew having a family would be challenging," says Jasmine Halk, assistant superintendent at the Briars Golf Course and wife of The Donalda Golf Club superintendent Paul Halk. "With the support of our employers, colleagues and family, we were able to adjust our schedules to accommodate for daycare and strike a good work-life balance."

In my opinion, a lot of these issues, including moving forward in this industry, come down to the same couple of questions. What are your goals in the turf industry? How do you want to change this industry in a positive and progressive



Superintendent Leasha Schwab has created a welcoming environment for her team at Pheasant Run Golf Course.

way? Many of us got to where we are by working hard and sometimes it's difficult to step away from that and peer into the future. My goal is to hire and encourage people who have a passion for this industry, irrespective of gender. In doing so, you will attract and retain women because the "right person" has no gender bias. That could come in many forms. Maybe I don't have many women on my crew because I don't get resumes from women, but what can I do to attract women into the turf industry? Perhaps I could go to high schools and talk about the profession to young women as motivation for them to pursue higher education in a turf related field. As with anything in life, it comes down to the people within an industry to make it what they want. So, once again as a turf professional, how do you want to see our industry evolve?

OFFER SUPPORT

I can attest that the most important thing when I was starting into my career was support, support, support. I had a few really good mentors who made me feel like I could do anything. I had a group of superintendents who took me under their wing and went out of their way to wave me over at a trade show to sit with them. They made me feel like part of the team, were always happy to answer my questions (and still are) and didn't make me feel like they were just being nice because I was the token female. These men are leaders and I can't thank them enough. I was 19 years old and absolutely terrified when I got my first assistant superintendent job. I went to my first conference and no matter how you split it, being the only women in a room full of men is intimidating. Support and mentorship gives

you the strength to overcome when a guy that's worked at your golf course walks out the day you take over, somebody writes a letter to the owners saying they won't work for you, somebody makes a pass at you at your first trade show or insinuates that you haven't become successful "authentically." Do I need to spell this out? To anybody thinking, "I can't make a difference with diversity in this huge industry," yes, you absolutely can.

We each have the ability to encourage women in this industry and to show them that it can be a viable and rewarding career path. Don't pigeonhole them by immediately placing them on garden duty because that's perceived to be more of a woman's role. It's quite conceivable that she could be interested in much more than that, given the opportunity. If there is a young woman at a turf educational conference or leading a course close to you, reach out and give her your support. Introduce yourself and encourage her to network and become involved in industry events. You may find the role of mentor as one of the most rewarding roles in your life. When I was unsure about a situation on my own golf course, I often asked my peers what they would do, and they are generally very happy and supportive to share their thoughts and experiences in similar situations. That gave me the courage to continue to ask questions and learn. You could be the difference between a young woman feeling very isolated in a male-dominated industry or feeling like she 100 percent belongs there. GCI

Am I worrying about things that don't matter much?

By Don Hearn

Sometimes we worry or concern ourselves with situations that really don't matter. Take a look at these and ask yourself, "Have I been worrying myself with these inconsequential items?"

What doesn't matter much is where you went to college and what degrees you have.

If you got as far as you wanted to, that's great. If your education got you into a career or into a job you like, then great. That's mostly what it's good for, in my view. But our degrees and education don't affect who we are as people and what we experience and how much we like ourselves...unless we judge ourselves by our accomplishments.

Being rich doesn't matter.

If you have enough money, enough for your needs plus some more for things and experiences you want, you don't need much more to be happy. Contrary to this, I read a long time that money isn't everything, but it's way ahead of whatever is in second place.

The type of work you do.

All that matters is that you do what appeals to you, what brings you satisfaction and fulfillment. That could be delivering port-a-potty's or anything else.

How far you get on your career path.

If you're doing something you enjoy your title is of little consequence. I've found those who want it known they are the CEO or Executive Vice President or some other similar title of a company, are usually pretentious, self-centered, bone heads who might have succeeded in spite of themselves.

How you look and what you weigh.

Unless you're facing health issues for your weight or you're intentionally not taking care of yourself because you want to drive yourself to an early grave, you look good enough to be out in the world and meeting people. My weight (195 pounds, which means I have a more rounded stomach than I'd like) and your weight is fine. We're too hung up on appearances for our own good, both our own and others. Let's let it go and start to enjoy and appreciate ourselves and others even more.

Celebrities' lives.

I mean, who cares?? If we do, that suggests to me that we're not feeling fulfilled in our own lives. Of course, celebrities sell magazines, help as guests on television and support causes that attract support from others. These activities don't hurt anyone. And, from reactions of some I've experienced, there is a need to be associated with well-known people. Would I like to be associated with well know people? Sure, I would. But it doesn't bother me that I don't have a separate page in my contacts for "special people"? Not in the least.

How old you are.

We've all heard that age is just a number, and it's true. While aging does bring physical limitations, we don't have to make it a limitation. Let's stay engaged in life! Let's keep going, trying new things, looking for new relationships, learning new things, continuing to work if we want, etc. As long as we're living, let's make the most of it!



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The Newsletter

INTRODUCING THE NEW MASS GOLF



MASS GOLF

NORTON, Mass – As the New Year rang in, a historic moment for Bay State golf took place.

On January 1, 2018 the merger between the Massachusetts Golf Association and Women's Golf Association of Massachusetts became official. The two organizations, which represent a combined 200 years of history, were united as one and will now be known as "Mass Golf".

ONLINE: Interactive Brand Story

Over the past year, the leadership groups from both organizations have worked closely to re-imagine its combined purpose, brand and identity in order to contemporize its values, services and benefits to engage membership and grow the game throughout Massachusetts.

"In other words we want to do everything we can to position ourselves to better provide services to our Members Clubs and offer more opportunities to golfers so that everyone has a chance to enjoy this great game," said Jesse Menachem, Mass Golf's executive director. "By merging the two organizations, we felt that we were at an important point in golf history where we can join forces to streamline operations and make a real difference."

The result is the introduction of a new logo, a new name and a completely new interactive and responsive communication platform highlighted by a web site at MassGolf.org. The organization also launched a revamped mobile app and new social sites on Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, YouTube and LinkedIn.

"The change in our name, logo and messaging is a clear signal that we are in this together and dedicated to making a difference," said Sue Curtin, a member of the Mass Golf Board of Directors who also serves as chairperson of the Marketing & Communications Committee responsible for the Mass Golf rebranding effort. "This is a model that we want other golf associations to adopt so that we can universally create better and more equitable opportunities for everyone. From the underprivileged youth who take part in our junior programs to the most senior competitors, we will create a pathway."

Mass Golf, a 501(c)3 organization, works directly with 360 member clubs which are primarily green-grass facilities with nearly 70 percent offering public play. In addition, the organization provides direct services to more than 87,000 golfers through the world's largest handicap computation service (GHIN) as well as a wide ranging golfer benefits program that includes elite championship

competition, fun individual and team tournaments, a quarterly magazine, news feeds, personal online portals for all members, mobile app, and much more.

It has also been – since 2003 – part of The First Tee national network which brings affordable junior golf programs to youth and communities that did not have them. The First Tee of Massachusetts annually reaches more than 30,000 Bay State youth through programming offered on golf courses, in elementary schools and through other youth-serving organizations.

"We have made it our priority to give back more to golfers," said Menachem. "Through on-course experiences for golfers of all abilities and ages to online and immediate access to their golf information, we are committed to making the game more accessible and fun."

Golf has proven to be a big and important business in Massachusetts. The local golf industry is a \$1.7 billion dollar industry that supports more than 25,000 jobs in the Bay State.

300 Arnold Palmer Blvd. | Norton, MA 02766 | 774.430.9100 | MassGolf.org | [@PlayMassGolf](https://twitter.com/PlayMassGolf)

Tom Irwin

The work you do

plays a vital role in the health and well-being of people and the environment in which we live. We bring you a network of professionals and innovative solutions dedicated to your success in these efforts.

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- The Country Club Superintendent Strengthens Business Skills with Colleagues Across U.S.
- The Country Club superintendent participates in ninth annual Syngenta Business Institute
- Competitive three-day educational program provides superintendents with key tools for business management

GREENSBORO, N.C., Dec. 20, 2017- Andrew Updegrove, golf course superintendent at The Country Club in Chestnut Hill, Massachusetts was one of 26 superintendents across the country to graduate from the Syngenta Business InstituteSM (SBI). SBI is an exclusive professional development program for golf course superintendents hosted by Syngenta and the Wake Forest University School of Business in Winston-Salem, North Carolina.

While agronomic expertise is critical to superintendent success, Syngenta also recognizes the need to provide superintendents with business management skills.

“We offer this program to 26 superintendents as a commitment to our customers and their development in the industry,” says Stephanie Schwenke, turf market manager, Syngenta. “At the Syngenta Business Institute, we focus on the business aspect of superintendents’ responsibilities, and really aim to build on their skills of leadership and employee management, which is just as important as managing turf quality.”

During the three-day educational program, participants gained knowledge in financial and employee management, negotiation skills, effective communications techniques, managing generational differences and more. Classes were led by professors from the

School of Business at Wake Forest University, who provided ideas and tools to assist superintendents in their daily management and long-term planning.

Updegrove was selected from a talented pool of superintendents across the country based on an application process that reviewed their educational background, professional achievements and an essay that demonstrates why they should be selected for the program.

To learn more about Syngenta Business Institute, please visit GreenCastOnline.com/SBI.

About Wake Forest University School of Business

Founded in 1834, Wake Forest is a private, coeducational collegiate university based in Winston-Salem, North Carolina. One of the leading institutions of its kind, Wake Forest blends the intimacy of a liberal arts college with the academic vitality of a research university. Guided by our motto Pro Humanitate (For Humanity), Wake Forest is dedicated to an ethically informed education in a climate that values personal growth, community interaction and individual honor. At the School of Business, the mission is to shape the whole person. They help businesses create a better world through developing passionate, ethical business leaders who get results with integrity, and thought leadership that is visible and positively impacts the practice of business.

About Syngenta

Syngenta is a leading agriculture company helping to improve global food security by enabling millions of farmers to make better use of available resources. Through world class science and innovative crop solutions, our 28,000 people in over 90 countries are working to transform how crops are grown. We are committed to rescuing land from degradation, enhancing biodiversity and revitalizing rural communities. To learn more visit www.syngenta.com and www.goodgrowthplan.com. Follow us on Twitter at [www.twitter.com/SyngentaUS](https://twitter.com/SyngentaUS) and [www.twitter.com/SyngentaUS](https://twitter.com/SyngentaUS).

Media Contacts:

Mark LaFleur
(336) 632-6138
mark.lafleur@syngenta.com

Kelsea Mullane
(919) 870-5718
kmullane@gscommunications.com

Web Resources:

GreenCastOnline.com

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Robert Fitzgerald,
Assistant Superintendent,
Myopia Hunt Club

Welcome Back:

Ryan Boudreau,
Assistant Superintendent, Framingham Country Club

Congratulations and good luck to **Todd Sauer** who recently retired from The Haven Country Club.

Back Issues!



Past issues of the NEWSLETTER are available using this link: <http://bit.ly/GCSANEnewsletters>.

As in the past, *The Newsletter* continues to invite Affiliate members to submit a press release about new personnel, new products or a company bio. We will print each and every release **free of charge**. This is a great way to advertise for free. Who said nothing in this world is free? Free advertising to better your company, wow what an offer.

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