



THE NEWSLETTER

January - February 2024

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

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*A Message from the GCSANE President **Eric Richardson***



As I humbly step into the role of the 49th President of GCSANE, I am fully aware of the responsibility and honor of the position, especially as we celebrate our centennial year. This milestone reflects our association's longevity and is a testament to our current and past members' passion and dedication to the turfgrass industry. This role is not just a title but a pledge to each of you—a pledge to uphold our association's legacy, advocate

tirelessly for our profession, to shine a light on the exceptional work being done by you and all our members across New England, and to continue to advocate for avenues that make your job easier.

Before I ramble on, I want to take this opportunity to extend my gratitude to those whose dedication and hard work have impacted GCSANE during my time on the board. I promise future communications won't be this long-winded.

First, I want to acknowledge Brian Skinner, our now-past president. Brian, your relentless nature, innovative spirit, and unwavering commitment to our members' recognition and growth have left a mark on our association. From spearheading grassroots initiatives that inspire the next generation of Equipment Technicians to enhancing our educational offerings and orchestrating our association's first commercial, your contributions have made a long-lasting imprint on our association. We are grateful for your service. Thank you, Brian!

To our valued Friends, Affiliates, and Industry Partners, your support is the cornerstone of our success. Our mutually beneficial relationship is invaluable, and your contributions are integral to our mission. Your partnership, expertise, and support enable us to serve our members effectively and to advance our field. The GCSANE Board appreciates your commitment and looks forward to strengthening our bonds in the future.

To Don Hearn, our Executive Director – your lifetime dedication to GCSANE and GCSAA is a testament to your profound commitment to the turfgrass management community. Your leadership, wisdom, and unwavering support have been instrumental in our association's growth and success. My words are inadequate to fully express our gratitude for your contributions to Superintendents, the turfgrass industry, and the game of golf – Thank You for all you do and have done for us.

And to my fellow Board Members, your unwavering commitment and diligent work have and will continue to contribute to the success of the Golf Course Superintendents Association of New England. It is evident to anyone who has worked with you that your efforts, often carried out behind the scenes, play a pivotal and essential role in navigating the complexities of the turfgrass industry. Your guidance, passion, and dedication elevate our standing in the game of golf and turfgrass management worlds. Thank you for your

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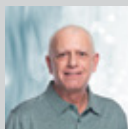
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hard work and dedication. In particular, I want to thank David Stowe, who is entering his 20th year of service to GCSANE. His selfless nature, hard work, and positive attitude are appreciated and revered by all who have been lucky enough to serve with him. Thank you, Dave!

To be fully transparent, I want to share my agenda with you. It responds to our current challenges and our commitment to growth, excellence, and service.

1. Celebrating a Century of Service to the Turfgrass Industry

Our centennial celebration is not just a milestone; it's a reflection and documentation of past successes. We aim to commemorate this with a formal and fun celebration and the publication of a history book that we can proudly associate with.

2. Expanding Our Reach

I aim to increase membership among Superintendents, Assistant Superintendents, and Equipment Managers. This will be achieved through some strategic advocacy and increased visibility in the broader golf community. We are not a labor union; we are a body committed to serving and advocating for our members, highlighting our crucial role in the world of golf and turfgrass management. While I appreciate the unsung hero title commonly utilized when describing our role by others, I would prefer the appreciation of our role to be more widely known and understood and not require an ad campaign for us to receive recognition.

3. Infusing and Blending New Perspectives with Experienced People

It's time to bring fresh voices into our Board and Committees and blend them with experienced Board/Committee members who can shorten the onboarding time for new contributors. We seek individuals who are eager to serve and contribute. Please email me or Don Hearn if you are interested in participating. The workload is very manageable, and you get more out of the experience than you put in.

4. Planning for the Future

Establishing a Long-Range Planning Committee is crucial for setting strategic and sustainable goals to ensure our association thrives today and in the coming decades. This committee will gather information and make recommendations to the board before the next annual meeting.

5. Enhancing Visibility and Recognition

We aim to continue our work of increasing the visibility of our members and their pivotal work to the general golfing public, highlighting our indispensable contribution to the sport and cementing our role as golf's MVPs.

6. Promoting BMPs

Promoting and implementing Facility BMPs (Best Management Practices) will remain a key focus, ensuring that our standards of operation reflect our commitment to the environment. We successfully manage our properties and inputs responsibly. We must

document our efforts or be forced to fight the same subjective and nonfactual conversations perpetually.

7. Listening and Adapting

Transparency and communication will be a primary focus. Your voices are vital. We commit to actively listening to you and others. We will adapt our priorities and initiatives to support your needs.

In closing, I ask you to share your opinions or questions. Your input and your engagement are necessary to ensure GCSANE is relevant and valued. My commitment to GCSANE and each of you goes beyond any title or role. This is my time to commit to serving an industry that has given me and my family a great deal. I look forward to listening and working with you for the betterment of all our members.

Sincerely,

Eric Richardson – GCSANE President
erichardson@essexcc.org



Divot Drift

WELCOME RETURNING MEMBERS

Robert Decker, Superintendent,
Berkshire Hills Country Club

Matt Santos, Superintendent,
Longmeadow Country Club, Longmeadow, MA

NEW MEMBERS

Harrison McPhee, Inc.,
Friend of the Association, Millis, MA

Ryan Vieira, Assistant Superintendent,
The Country Club

CONGRATULATIONS TO

Ben Bouchard,
now Superintendent at Blue Hill Country Club

Charlie Dickson,
now Superintendent at Belmont CC

Mike Rose on his retirement from Belmont Country Club

Back Issues!



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

The Online Pro Shop



We now have GCSA of New England clothing and merchandise for sale.

To view the catalog click [here](#).

The merchandise can also be viewed on the Home Page of the GCSA of New England's website at gcsane.org.

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For more information, please contact Don Hearn at 774-430-9040 or donhearn@gcsane.org



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January - February 2024



Thoughts From Your Executive Director *by Don Hearn*

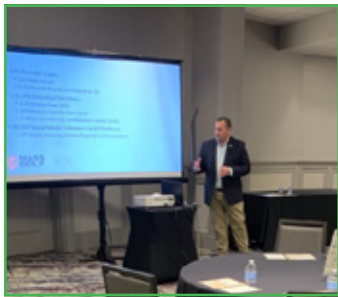
The Annual Meeting held at the Renaissance Hotel at Patriot Place in Foxborough, MA was a great day. 103 people registered and enjoyed a day of camaraderie, association business, and information provided by experts in their fields. Warren Lent from BCB Government Relations, our legislative agents that we work with closely to monitor issues that might impact us, brought us up to date on current issues and stressed the importance of meeting with our legislative representatives. Elliott Dowling, USGA Agronomist for the region, talked about what he had experienced in the area this past season. Jesse Menachem, Executive Director/CEO of Mass Golf, presented information from the recently completed Economic Impact Study that points out the value of golf in

Massachusetts. If you would like a copy of the report, contact me and I'll send it to you. My email is: donhearn@gcsane.org.

The Distinguished Service Award recipient is recognized at the Annual Meeting and this year's honoree is Dave Johnson, Director of Grounds at The Country Club. Please read more about this elsewhere in this issue.

In addition to the speakers and business meeting, Officers and Directors of the Association were elected for another year. One of these positions is new. Ryan Boudreau, Assistant Superintendent at Framingham Country Club was elected to the position of Director.

Ryan's mission, along with contributing to the business of the board, is to represent the interests of Assistant Superintendents. He is a person you can bring your concerns and ideas to with the intent to make available educational and networking opportunities for Assistant Superintendents. If you have any ideas you believe would be interesting for assistants to



Jesse Menachem



Warren Lent



Elliott Dowling

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Thoughts (continued)

participate in, or for the Association to facilitate, please contact Ryan at: ryboudreau@gmail.com.

This is also when the Past Presidents meet to discuss any issues they have, and to be brought up to date on the fiscal health of the Association, programs' status and for items to be brought to the board of directors for consideration. This year time was spent updating them on the status of the centennial celebration and the progress of the book commemorating our 100 years.

PAST PRESIDENTS



front row from left: Mark Gagne, Don Hearn, Eric Richardson (current president), Brian Skinner, Jim Fitzroy
standing from left: Kevin Osgood, Peter Rappoccio, Dave Johnson, Ed "Chip" Brearley, Mike Luccini, Dick Zepp



Vice President Bob Dembek presented 25-year pins to Bob Cullen, Mark Pendergast and Tim Hood (pictured from the left).

Our thanks to Brian Skinner who has now joined the ranks of Past Presidents. Brian's influence has had an impact on the operations of the Association and the opportunities available to members as well as opportunities for others in the golf profession and industry. Brian has "blue skied" many ideas and some were implemented. He has helped us progress and made our Association better. Thank you Brian!



Brian Skinner being presented the Past President's plaque by Eric Richardson



Gary Larrabee was in attendance and had the opportunity to meet some of the attendees. Gary is well known to many in the golf industry and has had a keen interest in superintendents in the North Shore area. He has authored 17 books. The history of the Golf Course Superintendents Association of New England will be his 18th.

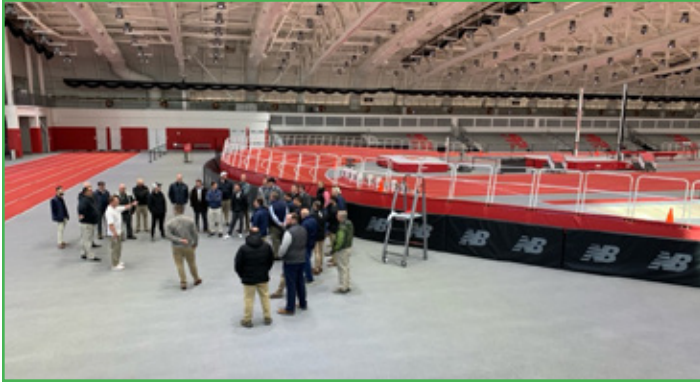
THE 2024 BOARD OF DIRECTORS



From left: Colin Smethurst, CGCS; Ryan Boudreau, Ryan Emerich, Peter Rappoccio, CGCS; Mike Murphy, Eric Richardson, Brian Skinner, CGCS; Bob Dembek, Greg Cormier, CGCS; Jonathan Wilber, Don Hearn, CGCS, Executive Director; David Stowe, CGCS



Thoughts *(continued)*



The December meeting included a tour of the New Balance facility known as the TRACK and lunch and meeting after at The Stockyard. Mark Casey and Brian Skinner helped arrange this special tour with Jay Rourke, General Manager of the facility. The TRACK is a unique indoor facility that can be set up for many different sports to be played in the building. Most of us were interested in how the changes from one sport or field to another are accomplished. Jay took us behind the scenes and explained and showed us the mechanics for setting up the building's surfaces for different sports and activities. It was a fascinating experience and a good time had by all.

The GCSAA Conference and Trade Show in Phoenix, Arizona was a big hit. Well attended, huge industry support, many attendees and great weather made the trip one of pleasant experiences. I've included photos of some of the friends I came across. There were many more, but for different reasons I couldn't take a photo.

There also was a recognition from GCSAA of our centennial year as the Golf Course Superintendents Association of New England.



from left: Keith Angilly, Pat Custy, Eric Kundahl, Mike Marino, Matt Ternullo



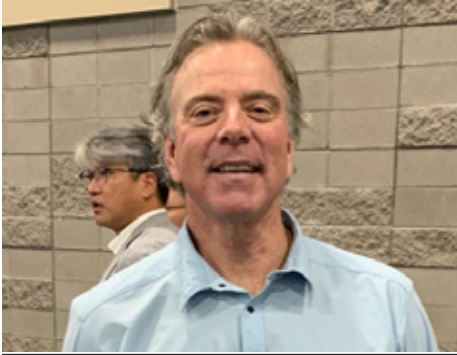
From left: Rhett Evans, Eric Richardson, Don Hearn, Kevin Breen

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Thoughts *(continued)*



Sean Hanley



Shannan Finch Hidey and Ray Finch



Don Hearn(left), and John Eggleston



Patrick Hennessy



Brian Skinner (left), David Stowe



Mike (left), and Paul Johnson

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Assistant Superintendent Spotlight: Brendan O'Neil- Lexington Golf Club

Interviewed by Daniel Peterson



Thank you for taking the time to participate in our ongoing Assistant Spotlight series. Tell me about your path to your current position, Assistant Superintendent at Lexington Golf Club?

My path began in the summer of 2017. I had just finished my freshman year at Southern New Hampshire University and was in need of work. My father had pitched the idea of working at Sagamore Springs in Lynnfield for access to free golf. I took full advantage, working each day then playing no less than twice a week. As I progressed through school I grew more fond of Sagamore. Each summer I was given more responsibility in terms of equipment and took great pride in my work. My third and fourth years at Sagamore included more personnel responsibility. Jerry Dunklee, the Superintendent, would give me the tasks he wanted done and I would take the crew of young guys to execute the plans. By the end of my time at Sagamore I felt quite competent in my role. This coincided with graduating college which left me with a decision; continue to pursue what I love, or find a new path to navigate life post college. Since my scope of the industry was limited to Sagamore I did not see opportunities and opted for a role as Assistant Manager of a Sherwin-Williams paint store. I tolerated it for about a year but it quickly became evident I needed to be outside working with

my hands. I knew what I wanted to do, but needed to find my path. A reddit post, and a few new contacts later led me to apply for a 2nd Assistant position at Lexington Golf Club. Throughout my first year I had discussions with my Superintendent, Bob Dembek, and the club about furthering my education in Turf Management. The opportunity arose for them to send me to UMass winter school while staying at LGC for the winter which furthered my growth. After completing the program at UMass, and acquiring my Applicator's License I was promoted to Assistant Superintendent where I am now entering my second year.

Who has had the biggest impact on your career thus far, and what lessons will you carry through on your journey to become a Superintendent?

Jerry Dunklee of Sagamore Springs was a huge influence early on growing my experience by constantly feeding me new challenges and responsibilities. I greatly benefited from taking a leadership role on the day to day tasks. Another impactful person for me has been Don Hearn, who was pivotal in my transition back into golf.

It was monumental for me when I met Don at Lexington in my first summer back, and he remembered me as "The Reddit guy". I was under the impression I was a stranger to Don, but for him to remember our interaction online was important because I began to realize people in this industry look out for one another. The most integral person on my journey has been my current Superintendent Bob Dembek. He has provided me with every resource I've needed to succeed. From sharing insight with on-course duties, to guiding my education at UMass and integrating me into the GCSANE. His patience and guidance allowed me to learn and grow more than I could have anticipated.

What have been the most challenging moments in your career, and can you give me an example of how you handled them?

The most challenging thing I encountered has been taking the steps to move from a full-time worker to a manager of daily operations. My outlook has had to be adjusted, as I could no longer just worry about my tasks. I needed to learn to be



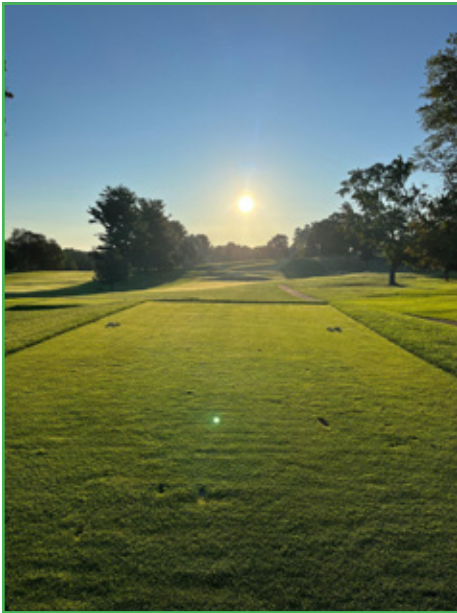
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Brendan O'Neil (continued)

aware of what everyone else around me was responsible for. Establishing and executing a weekly plan forced me to see the bigger picture and start asking the “why?” behind what we were doing. As a result I began understanding the inner workings of our operation and started to achieve more independence. It has been a rigorous process grasping all the different elements of our job, but I've learned to embrace my lapses in knowledge by identifying them and ruthlessly pursuing to fill them. I used to get discouraged when I couldn't provide answers or could not grasp a concept immediately. It is in these moments I've



grown the most as now when I encounter these issues I give myself patience realizing the best way to overcome them is through a pressure free approach which also has positively translated to my life as a whole.

Do you have upcoming, or have you recently completed, capital projects at Lexington? Is there a capital project you would most like to participate in?

We have some things in the works this year. We're planning on removing 13 Pine trees between our 3rd and 4th fairways and replacing them with 4 deciduous trees. We are getting outside help for the project so I will get to focus more on the new practice tee and hitting nets we are installing.

Projects as a whole are something I would like to expand my knowledge of further.

What is a task you enjoy doing at work? Do you have any tasks you no longer participate in that you would like to?

My personal favorite task is the daily set up first thing in the morning, where you see what nature has to offer. I love seeing the daily routines of wildlife and how they change throughout the seasons. Another task I love, which I don't do as much nowadays, is cutting fairways. Referring to my transition from full-time to management, I've gone from the operator to overseer meaning I assign and watch as opposed to doing. It's a task I get great satisfaction from and cherish on the occasion we're short handed and I need to fill in.

How do you work to maintain a work/life balance, given the specific strains Assistant Superintendents can be placed under?

Our crew makes it a point to play on Mondays after work which is valuable bonding time for the team. It's also something I share with my father and friends, so I always try to capitalize on opportunities to play. Outside of golf I love going on hikes with my girlfriend. I also value my physical health and use my free time after work to go to the gym, something that was much harder with my traditional 9-5. I did not realize how much value I put on that freedom until I had it back again.

How do you think we can attract more people to enter into the turf industry?

The things I love about the turf industry include interactions with nature, a work-life balance, and the opportunity to grow. The network of professionals is far more connected and accessible than ever before. It is important for clubs, Superintendents, and Assistants to commit to engaging in our organization because we are the recruiters for the next generation. It may not be the first thought when considering this role, but our interactions shape the



perceptions of this job which is why it's so important to love it. Our outlook is contagious whether it's positive or negative and can be the difference maker in someone on one of our crews from pursuing it as a career or not.

How has social media made an impact on your career?

Social media was crucial to my reentry to the golf world. The goal of my Reddit post on r/turfmanagement was simply to hear how other people left their job to get into turf. Coincidentally I came into contact with Adam Ikamas, the Executive Director of the Michigan chapter of the GCSAA. He selflessly provided his contact information to me, so I reached out. He gave me some basic framework of requirements and put me in contact with Don Hearn, Eric Richardson, and Jason Lanier. Surprised at the effort Adam put in for my dilemma as a complete stranger on the internet, I was equipped with the resources necessary to make the transition. Everything started moving after that post and it wasn't long before I was hired at Lexington, determined to learn and grow into an assistant. The club was paramount in supporting me through school after completing my first season. I was lucky to find support in every step of the process, but none of it would have happened without Adam Ikamas' selfless response on Reddit.

Specifically in terms of Assistant Superintendents, what changes would you like to see within our industry to help promote the position as well as the value they bring to golf course operations?

I would start by saying the position has come a long way in terms of compensation and benefits. It is important to note that as the offerings have improved for Assistants the cost of living has shifted simultaneously. Every industry is having to adapt to the increased costs of material and labor. As the squeeze occurs, it increases the importance of things like 401K plans, insurance, and compensation for the employee. Employees feel valued when you invest in them. Clubs stand to benefit from enhancing their staff's education. When you invest in education it is mutually beneficial; as their knowledge increases so does their value to the course's daily operations. If it's implemented at a large scale the result will be Assistants that earn more because they are capable of doing more. A rising tide raises all ships.

Besides Lexington, what are your favorite courses you have played? What courses have eluded you that you would like to play?

My three favorite courses to play are Far Corners, Captain's Golf Course, and Sagamore Springs, each for their own reasons. Locally, ones that have eluded me include Pinehills, Red Tail, and Crosswinds.

You have the opportunity to play any course, with any one alive or dead, what is the dream course and foursome?

I would love to go to Tara Iti in New Zealand. Joining me would be my father, uncle, and John Daly. It would be a round filled with laughter and hopefully some decent golf.



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Wellness Corner: The Top 5 Contributors to Visceral Fat

By Dr. Sean O'Mara The World's Leading Health and Performance Physician

Ultra-processed foods.

Ultra-processed foods are made from refined starch, sugar, salt, and fat, making them hyper-palatable and super easy to overconsume. Excess calories from ultra-processed foods contribute to visceral fat stores. Additionally, insulin resistance from eating a diet rich in ultra-processed foods increases fat deposits inside the abdomen.

Lack of quality sleep.

Not getting enough quality sleep increases the risk of overeating the next day, especially foods high in starch and sugar. A 2022 crossover study found that sleep-deprived individuals ate, on average, 300 more calories per day and gained more body fat than their well-rested counterparts (2).

But where the participants gained weight was most interesting. CT scans (i.e., the best way to measure visceral fat) revealed that visceral fat accounted for most of the weight gained. Sleep deprivation combined with overeating appears to alter the way we store fat and favors the accumulation of visceral fat.

High stress levels.

Psychological stress increases cortisol levels, which can negatively affect body fat distribution, causing it to be stored centrally around the organs. Many factors, such as lifestyle, genetics, sex, and age, affect our body's sensitivity to cortisol and can increase our susceptibility to gaining visceral fat.

Past podcast guest and professor of psychiatry at UCSF, Elissa Epel, examined this idea in her landmark study. Women who were prone to stress had higher visceral fat levels regardless of whether they were lean or overweight. And those with higher visceral fat levels were more sensitive to life stressors (3).

Drinking alcohol.

There is a dose-dependent relationship between alcohol consumption and visceral fat. Studies like this one in Japanese men show that the more someone drinks, the more visceral fat they accumulate. Dr. Sean O'Mara says this is due to the metabolic impact of alcohol. The more you drink, the more your metabolism is burdened, creating more stress, more cortisol, and more hormone disruption, which impairs fat metabolism and increases its deposit in and around the liver.

Being sedentary.

A sedentary lifestyle is bad for many reasons: it increases insulin resistance, the risk for sarcopenia (muscle loss), osteoporosis (weak bones), and falls and fractures and is associated with more visceral fat. Research shows that time spent being sedentary is directly correlated to visceral fat, highlighting the importance of getting in regular physical activity throughout the day (4).

Now that we know what contributes to visceral fat, here's what we can do to reduce it:

Eat a whole-food diet and feed your gut microbiome.

If you listen to my podcast, you know that eating a whole-food diet and minimizing ultra-processed food consumption is key for whole-body health. Focusing on this will pay massive dividends for shifting body composition, reducing visceral fat, and optimizing metabolic health.

What you might not know is that microbiome diversity from eating a variety of whole plant and fermented foods is linked to lower levels of visceral fat too.

In one study, visceral fat was more closely related to gut microbiome diversity than BMI or waist circumference (5). This means prioritizing dietary fiber and fermented foods and greatly reducing your intake of ultra-processed foods can aid in reducing visceral fat.

Prioritize sleep.

Never underestimate the power of sleep, especially when it comes to fat loss. Programming your circadian rhythm with morning and evening sunlight, addressing sleep disorders, trying mouth taping, taking a magnesium supplement, and setting a caffeine curfew can do wonders for your sleep.

Find healthy ways to manage stress.

This might be the most challenging visceral fat contributor to address because it is so personal. Find an activity or outlet that works best for you that allows you to reset, release, or channel your stress into something positive.

Exercise, meditation, lifting weights, walking, yoga, journaling, or even calling a friend can help lift the burden of stress. Additionally, if you can, working under the care of a licensed therapist can be extremely helpful.

Reduce or eliminate the consumption of alcohol.

If you're someone who drinks alcohol, no shame! I'm not here to judge, but I am here to inform you of the potential dangers that come with it.

Alcohol disrupts fat metabolism and increases visceral fat stores, especially around the gut and liver, which can lead to nonalcoholic fatty liver disease and metabolic dysfunction.

Regular alcohol consumption also increases the risk of cardiovascular and neurodegenerative disease, which Dr. O'Mara suggests could be due to the impact of visceral fat on the rest of our organs.

Exercise for at least 150 minutes per week. This is the minimal viable dose, according to experts, to reap the benefits of exercise. Try a combination of resistance training (2–3 days a week), HIIT workouts, and zone 2 cardio (e.g., brisk walking, biking, or jogging) to meet your weekly exercise goals.

For HIIT workouts, if you can, try incorporating some safe form of sprinting. Dr. O'Mara says he's found this to be an extra-special type of exercise for targeting and reducing visceral fat. If you've never done sprints before, Dr. O'Mara further explains its benefits here and how to work your way up to incorporating sprints in your exercise regime.

If that's not accessible to you at the moment, no worries! Engaging in some form of movement is better than none at all.

Final Thoughts:

The more I learn about visceral fat, the more excited I am for it to one day make its way into standard conventional medicine practice. My hope is that in the future anyone can walk into their doctor's office and have their visceral fat measured using MRI technology.

When matched with education, this can help the patient make changes to their diet and lifestyle early on before chronic disease develops. We're not there yet, but that's why it's so important to do what we can to help spread awareness on this topic.

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January - February 2024



Using DiSC to Strengthen Your Team

By Andrew Feder Assistant Superintendent The Haven Country Club

What does the seasonal agronomy team at your golf course have in common with a hockey team? A lot more than you might realize. I believe a team's purpose is to work with others to achieve a goal. Hockey teams pursue winning games, while the agronomy team is creating the best conditions for golfers. In either scenario, having the right team members will help promote efficiency and foster personal fulfillment which may in turn lead to greater results. Many aspects of teamwork prove why it is so useful when executed properly.

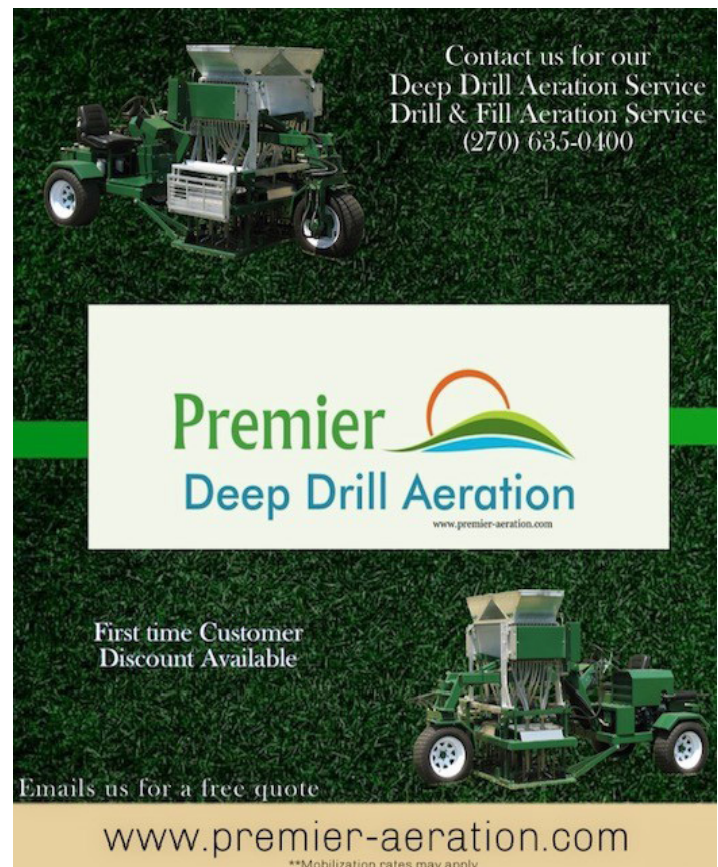
A major benefit of building a team is the collaboration of various characters that have unique abilities. Each member's unique ability helps create efficiency within the team. This is easily identified in examples such as hockey in the form of goalies, offense men and defense men. Each one of these positions brings a different, yet equally important, skill to the team. The same could be said for the agronomy team. There are employees that thrive in walk mowing, bunker raking, irrigation repair, and so on. Each brings an important set of skills that other team members might not have. When leaders capitalize on each individual's specialized ability to help the team succeed, they are giving their team the best chance at achieving its goal. Although a team member's performance during the workday is heavily considered when evaluating that person's impact on team success, their "behavior style" is equally as important.

Like the coaches of the team, superintendents and their assistants are responsible for ensuring that team members are in the best position to help the team succeed. This can be achieved when the "DiSC" model of behavioral analysis is implemented amongst the team. DiSC refers to a relationship building mechanism, founded by William Marston, that categorizes individuals into four different groups based on their behavioral traits. Each letter of DiSC corresponds to a group: Dominance, influence, Conscientiousness and Steadiness. Individuals tend to show traits of multiple groups, but the DiSC model tries to narrow it down to one key behavior to help identify how to effectively lead and communicate with them. For example, team members coming out of the Dominance corner are typically fast-paced workers who can be questioning and skeptical at times. A great way to lead these team members would be to make sure they have a task that keeps them busy while surrounded by individuals who are also highly efficient and motivated. They want to keep communication about the task clear, confident, and direct to help mitigate the chance for confusion or skepticism. Should some skepticism arise, reassure them and directly approach problems with certainty to help maintain their trust and confidence. Approaching a team member with the wrong leadership technique could create resentment or frustration, which can lead to insubordination and a decline in work performance.

Understanding the behavior of individuals on the team is important, however leaders need to have an idea of their own DiSC style, as well. Leaders who know their own style can identify strengths

in their traits and equally as important, their weaknesses. A leader who is primarily categorized as an "S", or Steadiness on the chart, can tend to be cautious when treading unknown waters while also being very friendly and talkative. If this leader was dealing with an individual who falls under the Dominance side of the chart, without self-awareness for the clashing behavioral styles at hand, a problem could arise. As mentioned before, individuals of the Dominance style tend to be more fast paced than the cautious members of the Steadiness style. Acknowledging their behavior style and then knowing how to approach and communicate with the opposite style puts the leader in a strong position to maintain control and balance of the team.

The success of a golf course operation relies on the execution of an entire team, just as winning a championship in hockey. For both cases, the leaders, whether it be a coaching staff or a superintendent and their assistants, become more successful when they are more in-tune with their team. Learning how to accurately allocate assignments and communicate with team members can help lead any team to their next victory. For more information about DiSC styles and application refer to: Discprofile.com - DiSC Profile



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THE GCSAA CONFERENCE AND TRADE SHOW SUCCESSFULLY RETURNED TO PHOENIX WITH A SOLD-OUT TRADE SHOW FLOOR

Attendees came from all 50 states and 66 countries



The GCSAA Conference and Trade Show returned to Phoenix for the first time since 1987 and was well received. Attendance rivaled that of Orlando 2023 with nearly 11,000 attendees and over 6,600 seminar seats filled, representing the highest total since 2008. In addition to education for superintendents, the event also included specialized education for assistant superintendents, equipment managers, students and more. The diverse educational offerings included traditional classroom settings as well as seven Interactive Facility Tours at golf courses in the Phoenix area.

The trade show floor, spanning 352,000 square feet of exhibit space at the Phoenix Convention Center was sold-out and featured 470 exhibits.

The week began with the GCSAA Golf Championships presented by Toro. 2024 was the 30th consecutive year of Toro's sponsorship. 638 golfers participated in the sold-out event, providing those in the industry an opportunity to have fun, meet new people, renew old friendships, and compete in various flighted competitions across six golf courses. Seth Strickland, director of agronomy at Miami Beach (Fla.)

Golf Club, was the winner of the 2024 National Championship, making him a six-time winner of the event. Joshua Troutman, golf course superintendent at Crestview Country Club Wichita, Kan., won the Golf Classic.

Among the highlights, the conference featured the launch of Golf's Sustainability Showcase, a collaboration of the GCBA, GCSAA, USGA and ASGCA. The Showcase featured interactive displays highlighting research, innovation, technology, and best practices, as well as storytellers bringing to life the sustainability efforts and progress made throughout the golf industry.

On Wednesday, the Sunrise Celebration, presented in partnership with Syngenta, saw Dottie Pepper receive GCSAA's Old Tom Morris Award and Tenia Workman, executive director of the Georgia Golf Course Superintendents Association, win the Outstanding Contribution Award, to begin the day.

Then, during the Trade Show Grand Opening event, attendees witnessed the announcement of a \$1 million gift from

Mike and Tami Hoffman to GCSAA First Green. The Hoffmans' donation will power GCSAA's STEAM Ahead initiative enabling First Green to integrate arts to its existing STEM curriculum to reach more students by offering STEAM education as part of its hands-on learning on golf courses. The donation will also serve to broaden the program's reach to high school students and add more GCSAA member First Green Liaisons. In addition, the donation will provide classroom grants, ensuring the infusion of STEAM curriculum into classrooms hosting a First Green event. Students from Arizona Jobs for America's Graduates (JAG) at Tonopah (Ariz.) Valley High School were invited to attend and were presented with the first classroom grant to use as part of their JAG STEAM education.

Later in the day, at the conclusion of the popular Ladies Leading Turf session, presented in partnership with Syngenta, it was announced that the program will be re-branded in 2025 to Leading Turf Together to emphasize togetherness while maintaining focus on diversity, equity, and inclusion. Wednesday also featured the 2024 GCSAA Turf Bowl, presented in partnership with John Deere. Purdue University Team 51 won the 2024 Turf Bowl, which was the 30th anniversary of the competition. The UMass team finished in 3rd place. The Turf Bowl competition included 63 teams from 28 universities.

Thursday saw the trade show continue and the conclusion of the overall event with the GCSAA Send-Off Celebration, presented in partnership with John Deere. The highlight of the Send-Off Celebration was the presentation of the GCSAA Col. John Morley Award to retired superintendent William "Bill" Murray along with the presentation of the Emerging Leader Award to Richie Kremer and the GCSAA President's Award for Environmental Stewardship to Wayne Mills. The event ended with a keynote speech by Brendan McDonough, who inspired the movie "Only the Brave" and survived the Yarnell Hill Wildfire that killed 19 of his fellow Granite Mountain Hotshots firefighters in 2013. McDonough

shared his story of perseverance and overcoming tragedy. McDonough also recognized how golf, through its charitable aspects and ability to bring communities together, plays a significant role in the healing process for millions who suffer from tragedy and acknowledged the audience's role in providing these healing opportunities through the courses they manage.

The GCSAA Conference and Trade Show is produced by the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America (GCSAA) along with its presenting partners the Golf Course Builders Association of America (GCBA), United States Golf Association (USGA) and the American Society of Golf Course Architects (ASGCA).

The 2025 GCSAA Conference and Trade Show will head to San Diego Feb. 3-6, 2025, at the San Diego Convention Center.

2025 GCSANE Superintendent Award Notice

The GCSANE Board adopted an initiative to create the "Superintendent of the Year Award." This award is designed to elevate the recognition of the Golf Course Superintendent within the general golfing community, affiliated associations, and their club's governing body.

The award is segmented into three categories: Municipal/Public Golf Course Superintendent, Nine-hole (or fewer) Golf Course Superintendent (including Practice Facility Superintendents), and Private/Semi-Private Golf Course Superintendent.

Nominees for the award must be GCSANE members in good standing, not current or outgoing Board members, employed as a Superintendent with a minimum of three years of experience, and have achieved a noteworthy career milestone.

A subcommittee is tasked with developing a fair and representative selection process. The nomination process will involve soliciting nominations from the membership, with the subcommittee and Membership Chairperson shortlisting candidates. The final winners will be determined through an anonymous voting system conducted by the GCSANE Board, with the Executive Director tallying the votes and the Membership Chairperson breaking any ties.

Winners of the award must provide a headshot and a summary of their career for publication in the GCSANE Newsletter, social media, and other affiliated publications that directly reach the golfing public. The announcement of the winners will take place before the 2025 New England Regional Turfgrass Conference, with the winners being highlighted at the GCSANE booth at the conference and receiving a commemorative plaque.

We need your help. Please submit a person to nominate, which can include yourself! Members interested in contributing to the selection process and refinement of the award are encouraged to reach out to me or Don Hearn via email.

This initiative reflects GCSANE's commitment to recognizing the excellence and dedication of our members. We look forward to shining a light on your essential role and hard work.

Best,
Mike Murphy – GCSANE Membership Chair.
mimurphy@brooklinema.gov



The 2023 Distinguished Service Award recipient was in attendance at our December meeting held at the Stockyard restaurant in Brighton. Sharon Brownell, formerly executive secretary of the Association was presented an engraved crystal bowl by Mike Murphy to recognize the accomplishment. Sharon preceded Don Hearn, our executive director, and held her position for 12 years before retiring to her life-long love of sailing. Since she and her husband, Tom, were in warmer climes during our 2023 Annual Meeting we had to coordinate dates when she would be "out of the water" and available for the presentation. Originally the presentation was scheduled for August, but the rain caused a change of plans. The next best time was our December meeting date. It was nice to see Sharon. Some in attendance had worked with Sharon in the past and remarked she still had the pleasant smile and easy manner they remembered.

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Bill Yanakakis is the superintendent at Rockport Golf Club Rockport, MA. The following article about bill and his relationship with Masons is an impressive accomplishment. This article appeared in the Ipswich LOCAL NEWS, January 15, 2024

IPSWICH MAN ELECTED TO SECOND HIGHEST OFFICE IN MASSACHUSETTS MASONS



BOSTON — William E. Yanakakis of Ipswich has been installed to the second-highest elected position in the Massachusetts Masons. He took the role of senior grand warden of the Grand Lodge of Massachusetts for 2024 in a ceremony performed at the fraternity's Boston headquarters. A grand lodge is the governing body of Freemasonry in its jurisdiction. The organization boasts 20,000 members belonging to 207 lodges throughout the jurisdiction. As senior grand warden, Yanakakis will assist George F. Hamilton, grand master and the presiding officer in the state, for the coming year.

He also serves as grand master pro-tempo in the absence of the grand master and

the deputy grand master. Yanakakis began his Masonic career when he was initiated in John T. Heard Lodge, Ipswich, on September 3, 2003. He served as worshipful master, or presiding officer, in 2010. He was also the master of Budleigh Lodge, Beverly, in 2014 and 2016. Masons use the original definition of "worshipful," meaning "honorable." English mayors and judges are still addressed as worshipful. As senior grand warden, he will be called "right worshipful." Yanakakis was installed as John T. Heard Lodge's secretary in 2011 and continues to hold the position today. He is also an honorary member of William Sutton Lodge in Saugus and the Converse Lodge in Wakefield and is a member of the Masters Lodge in Needham and the Winslow Lewis Lodge in Boston.

In 2011, Yanakakis received the Joseph Warren Medal for distinguished service. Named for the patriot killed during the Battle of Bunker Hill, Warren was the presiding grand master at the time of his death. The medal recognizes exceptional service at the lodge level. The grand master confers the award on the recommendation of the lodge master. Yanakakis was elected to the Grand Lodge board of directors in 2014 to fill the final year of a vacated three-year term. He subsequently served as director for consecutive three-year terms between 2017 and 2019 and 2020 and 2022.

Yanakakis grew up in Boxford and graduated from Masconomet Regional High School, Bentley College, and the University

of Massachusetts School of Agriculture in Stockbridge. He married his wife, Paula, in 1992, 10 years after they graduated high school together. They live in Ipswich and have three grown sons: Christopher, Benjamin, and Alexander. He has been in the golf industry for 40 years, currently serving as golf course superintendent at the Rockport Golf Club.

Freemasons belong to the world's oldest and largest fraternity. It brings together men of every country, religion, race, education, income, and opinion and helps develop the bonds of friendship between them. Through a large variety of North American Masonic philanthropies, approximately \$3 million is given to charity every day; 70% of which benefits the public. The Grand Lodge of Masons of Massachusetts is the oldest grand lodge in the western hemisphere and third oldest in the world. It was chartered in 1733, following the establishment of the Grand Lodge of England in 1717 and Ireland in 1725. The year 2023 marked the 290th anniversary of the Grand Lodge of Massachusetts.

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THE DONALD E HEARN, CGCS DISTINGUISHED SERVICE AWARD RECIPIENT FOR 2024

David Johnson, Director of Grounds
The Country Club, Brookline, MA

This year's recipient of the first Donald E Hearn, CGCS, Distinguished Service Award is David Johnson, the Director of Grounds at The Country Club in Brookline, Massachusetts. The change in the title of this award was prompted by action of the Association's Board of Directors who agreed with those who suggested the award be named in honor of a longtime member and our current executive director.

Dave Johnson grew up in Dudley, MA with his parents and 2 sisters, where he lived across the street from the Dudley Hill Golf Club overlooking the 3rd hole. He learned to play the game there and enjoyed being out on the course honing his skills all the while planting the seed for a career in golf course maintenance.

After high school he attended Westfield State for 2 years and transferred to pursue a Plant and Soil Science degree at UMass which he obtained in 1997.

After college Dave applied for an Assistant Superintendent position at Wachusett Country Club where he worked for the Marrone family. While at Wachusett he learned about the entire business from the maintenance and care of the golf course to knowing and understanding the operation of the Golf Shop and Clubhouse.

He worked there for 7 years and decided it was time to apply for the superintendent's position at Whitinsville Golf Club, a 9 hole gem designed by Donald Ross. Dave spent 10 years at Whitinsville where he met Gil Hanse and together they implemented and executed a masterplan for the property. The course and turf conditions improved, 14 acres of fairways were reclaimed and the golf course found itself back in GOLF Magazine's top 100 list where it remains today.

With the success at Whitinsville Dave's star had started to shine and soon an opportunity presented itself at The Wianno Club in the village of Osterville on Cape Cod, another Donald Ross design. He teamed up again with Gil Hanse to complete a masterplan. The changes were well received by the membership. Dave's professionalism and talent shined at Wianno and was noticed by many others.



*Mike Murphy (right) presents the DSA to
Dave Johnson*

Upon the retirement of Bill Spence in 2019, Dave applied for the Director of Grounds position at The Country Club in Brookline where preparation had already begun to host the 122nd US Open Championship. The course had received numerous updates by the time he arrived but there was still much to do. Numerous tees were constructed, bunkers were added, others were rebuilt and turf conditions were improved with new contours and mowing lines. At the end of the final round on Sunday, before the trophy presentation, the USGA presented Dave and his team with the EJ Marshall platter in recognition of the dedication and importance of the course staff and volunteers who prepared the course to add to the success of the championship under the leadership of Dave. The presentation shined a national spotlight on the profession and the talent of those who are responsible for the outstanding playing conditions the players encountered. The event was a total success and looking out over the course now you wouldn't even know that the US Open was

there a year ago.

Dave volunteered and was a board member of GCSANE for 11 years serving as Education chair, Secretary/Treasurer, Vice President and President along with being on several committees.

He is married to his wife of 23 years Maryann and they have 2 daughters, Valerie who is a junior and attends UConn and Samantha who is going to graduate from Sandwich High School this year.

David is very deserving of this recognition and as one nominator said, "He is a class act and represents the Association in a very professional way."



Tee-Up New England! 2024

This initiative will provide golfers with an opportunity to play some of their favorite courses while providing funding for turfgrass research. Interested golfers will participate in an online auction (April 15-22, 2024), linked to your website, to purchase a donated round of golf for 4 people w/carts. This is a great way to showcase your facility and to open your door to attract new players. All proceeds will go to the New England Regional Turfgrass Research Trust (NERTRT) or to the UMass Alumni Turf Group (ATG) to fund turf research here in New England. Research will help to insure that future turf conditions will be at the highest and most environmentally sensitive levels in the Turf Industry and of the Game of Golf!

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