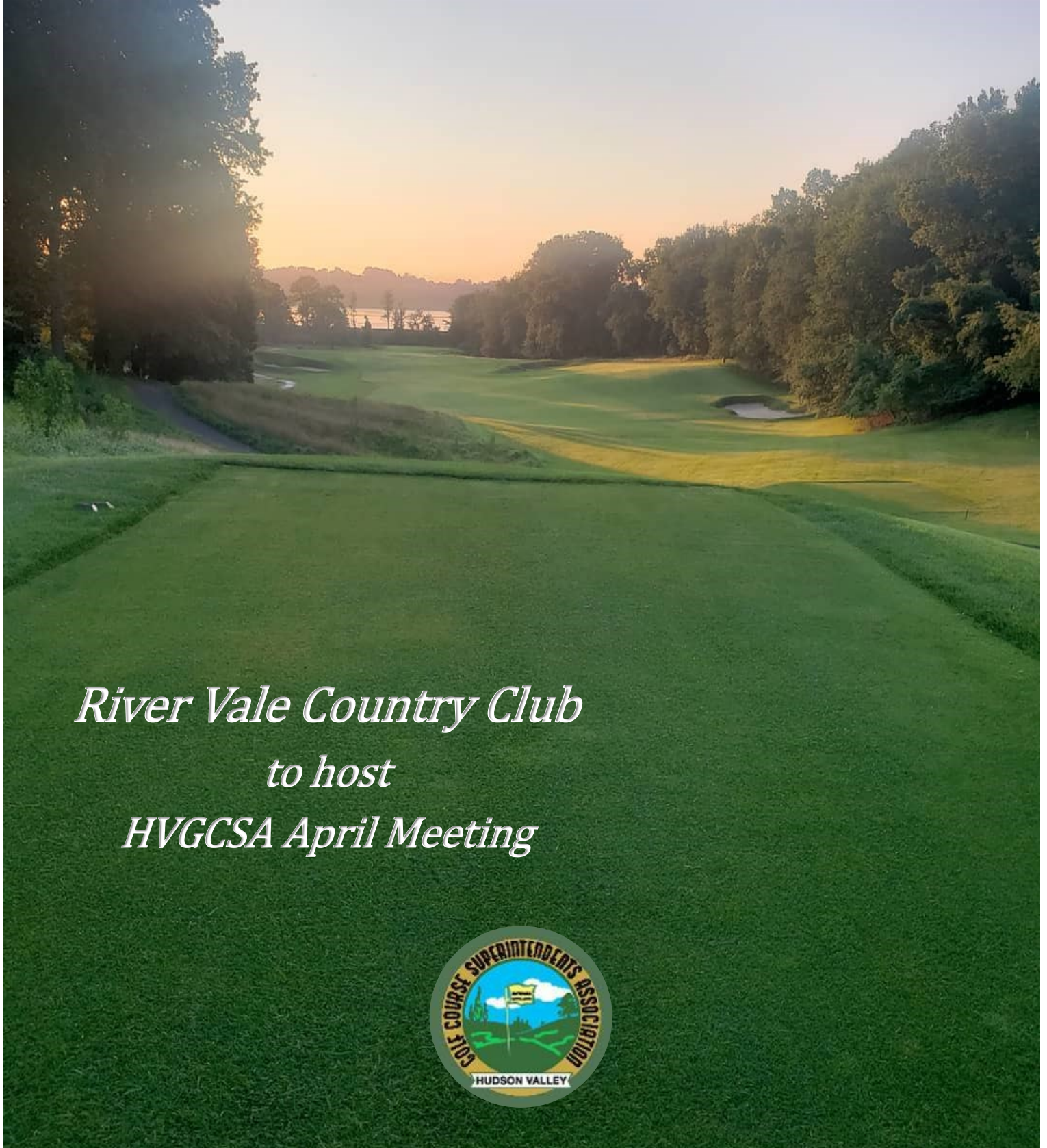


# FOREGROUND

VOL. 60 NO. 1 Published by Hudson Valley Golf Course Superintendents Association March 2023



*River Vale Country Club  
to host  
HVGCSA April Meeting*



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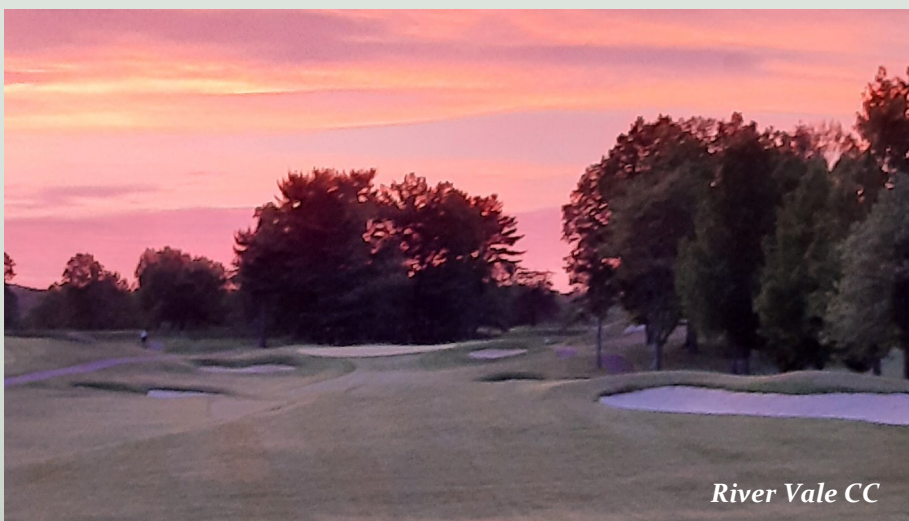
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*To promote interest and good will in the Association, encourage good relations between members and the clubs they represent.... And to keep up with the current developments in turf and related work.....*

*Bill Smart*

### HVGCSA Mission Statement

*The Hudson Valley Golf Course Superintendents Association exists to inform, educate and serve members within the Hudson Valley and surrounding areas.*



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# President's Message



It was great to see so many of you at our 1<sup>st</sup> Annual Winter Meeting and Seminar at Resorts World Monticello, but here we go again. Another season is underway for many of us even though it feels like we were up at Monticello or in Orlando just the other week. As I write this, it's sunny and 40's with 20-40 mph winds after a very warm day which was followed by severe thunderstorms, just a reminder that Mother Nature is always in control. Hopefully, everyone had a good winter, is rested, re-

charged, and coming out of winter clean. We have a great lineup for the new season and I am looking forward to seeing everyone out on the golf course!

First up we head over the Hudson River to River Vale Country Club April 12<sup>th</sup> and enjoy the day presented by Brian O'Malley. Followed by the Hudson Valley Cup May 22<sup>nd</sup> at Mahopac Golf Club, hopefully we can keep the balls on the green this time! June 19<sup>th</sup> we will head up to Wallkill Golf Club. Nine and Dine in July 19<sup>th</sup> we head over to PJ Rotella. August is to be announced as we join NYSTA for the annual NYSTA Challenge. September is also to be announced. The Worthington Cup will be at Leewood Golf Club October 3<sup>rd</sup> (we just finished our last bunkers). Met team qualifiers will be June and September. As you can see, it is a good lineup and all we can do is hope for the weather to cooperate.

The association has opened a Twitter account @HVGCSA, check it out for updates. The Education Committee is working on next years Winter Meeting and Seminar, it looks like we will be back at Resorts World Monticello with a great lineup of informational speakers. As soon as the date is locked in I encourage you to mark your calendar.

BMP's, I hope everyone is working on them...they are critical to our industry making a statement, especially when under attack by outside groups or the regulatory officials.

Have a great season and I look forward to seeing everyone again soon!

All the best,

Tim

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## River Vale Country Club to Host HVGCSA's April Meeting

*By: Kevin Collins*

Superintendent Brian O'Malley will host the HVGCSA's April meeting at River Vale CC on Wednesday, April 12<sup>th</sup>. River Vale is a storied venue and a solid golf course with telltale hints of Donald Ross in its history and design. This may be the first trip to River Vale in the HVGCSA's history.

### About Brian



Brian was born and raised in Denver, Colorado. Brian's dad Jake worked for United Airlines. "My dad grew up in Cleveland. He started working for United Airlines and eventually moved to Chicago to work for United at O'Hare Airport," Brian recalled, "Dad worked in food service and

later became a supervisor in the baggage department. My dad loved to ski. He had an opportunity to move to Denver with United and he took it. That's how he ended up in Colorado. It's also where he met my mom Lisa. She had moved to Denver from Oklahoma. They met on a blind date set up by a mutual acquaintance."

Brian was born in 1982. His brother Chris was born in 1983. They were joined at the hip and did everything together. They both shared a passion for golf. "In high school, I loved to play golf," Brian laughed, "I would play 12 hours a day. I caddied at Cherry Hill. I worked at a golf range. I worked at a pro shop. I did anything I could to be around it. Chris had that same love for the game."

Brian's first experiences on the maintenance side began at Murphy Creek Golf Course in Aurora, CO. "I worked on the course during the last part of the grow-in. The course opened when I was a senior in high school."

Brian was hooked. He enrolled at Colorado State University to pursue a turf degree. His first internship was at Kukio Golf & Beach Club on the Big Island of Hawaii. "It was a grow-in. I remember blasting lava rock. It was information overload but well worth it."

Internships followed at Nemacolin Woodlands Resort in Farmington, PA (one-time home of the PGA's 84 Lumber Classic), Pelican Hill in Newport Beach, CA, and a post graduate internship at Saucon Valley CC in Upper Saucon Township, PA. Now it was time for his first paid position.

"My brother Chris was working for Greg James (Dr. Love) at Plainfield, CC," Brian explained, "Greg was moving on to grow-in Liberty National and there were some opportunities there so I went. I loved Greg. It was a good time in my life. Financially it was tough. There was no free housing. I was at Liberty for four years."

The adventure continued at Coco Beach. Brian worked the Puerto Rican Open down there. But, he had a hankering to go back to the Cleveland area where his dad grew up. "I did the Cleveland tour for three years at Westwood CC," Brian laughed, "You couldn't make any money there. And there wasn't a lot of opportunities. My brother Chris was working for Mike Scott at Wykagyl CC and he persuaded me to head back east. I had a brief stay at Scarsdale CC and then moved back to NJ working at Edgewood CC, first for Bob Wolverton and then Mike Scott. I enjoyed my time there. Both Bob and Mike were very hands-off which created a good work environment."

*Continued...page 8*



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# WATERS OF THE UNITED STATES (WOTUS) CHANGES IN REGULATIONS

By Kevin Doyle, GCSAA Northeast Field Staff

I don't enjoy passing along difficult messages, not many do. This is especially true when it comes to regulatory issues. Alas, here we are facing an old foe yet again. Waters of The United States (WOTUS) is an item that GCSAA's Government Affairs team and our Waters Advocacy Coalition have worked hard to both clarify and protect our industry against. Below are a couple resources regarding the changes in regulations that became active on March 20, 2023.

The Government Affairs team dropped a blog update in December 2022 updating the membership on many details. The blog post can be found here: ["Waters of the United States" \(WOTUS\) rule represents missed opportunity to clarify federal water regulation \(gcsaa.org\)](https://www.gcsaa.org/blog/waters-of-the-united-states-wotus-rule-represents-missed-opportunity-to-clarify-federal-water-regulation).

The short version is that the EPA is reverting to the extremely robust regulatory version during the Obama administration. Issues that would create harm to the golf industry revolve around "operations that are on, over or near potential waters of federal jurisdiction", and "significant nexus." With Federal jurisdiction reaching all the way to ephemeral streams, it becomes more unclear what areas of golf courses *might* be under federal jurisdiction. Add to it, deciding whether tributaries, wetlands, and other waters are under federal jurisdiction are near impossible for superintendents. With a misstep possibly leading to fines and worse, the implications of unclear regulatory items are critical to push back against.

WOTUS may not be allowed to stand: the Supreme Court is currently deciding a case – Sackett v. EPA – that could potentially overturn this rule. GCSAA has argued that the EPA and Corps should wait until the Sackett decision before publishing this rule, i.e. "no WOTUS before SCOTUS." Until then, the rule is in place!

There is a very important question when dealing with surface water. Have you researched the watersheds at your golf facility? Yes, you may have been on property for a very long time, seen droughts and extremely wet

conditions. You may even be aware of those areas that are typically wet and impossible to mow or maintain during the early spring that dry out fairly quickly and are easily mowed during the season. Perhaps swales were designed to assist your golf course remove surface waters during peak rainfall. Well, the government may indeed classify those as waterways under the WOTUS rule.

Rather than dealing with the many frustrating issues within the WOTUS rule, I'm hoping you have utilized the mapping tool through the United States Geological Survey (USGS).

As described on their website, the USGS was created by an act of Congress in 1879, the USGS provides science for a changing world, which reflects and responds to society's continuously evolving needs. As the science arm of the Department of the Interior, the USGS brings an array of earth, water, biological, and mapping data and expertise to bear in support of decision-making on environmental, resource, and public safety issues.

So while you may think you know your property best, what the USGS says about the surface water on your property is the only thing that matters! It may show wetlands where you may not realize, ephemeral streams where only dry swales exist, or connectivity between surface waters that are not evident.

*Continued.....page 12*



## River Vale Country Club to Host HVGCSA's April Meeting...cont'd

Edgewood was purchased by a developer and Brian's continued employment there was looking a little sketchy so he moved on to Sleepy Hollow to work for Tom Leahy. They were starting a massive renovation and Brian was a part of that before he left for his first superintendent's position at Blue Hill GC in Rockland County, NY.

"My first super's job didn't last long, only six months. Blue Hill was run by a management company which can be good and bad. River Vale opened up and I went for it," Brian said, "They had had a lot of issues with their greens so it was a challenge. My mandate was to improve the playability of the course and grow grass. I've been there five years and it's a good gig."



Brian has been married for seven years. He met his wife Mary Beth on a blind date in Manhattan (sound familiar). They have two sons, Declan 7 and Logan 3 and reside in Warwick, NY.



greens complexes are difficult and the true defense on the course. They are elevated and well protected and tough to read once you're on the putting surface. The course itself has many elevation changes and good vistas. It's a cool layout and you'll never get tired of playing it."

Well, there you go. We'll see you on April 12<sup>th</sup>.

**Kevin Collins**

### River Vale

Architect Orrin Edward Smith designed and built River Vale. Orrin was a protégé of Donald Ross. He went to work for Donald Ross in 1919 and supervised the building of seven courses and assisted in the design and construction of several more.

In 1924, Smith branched out on his own designing and building golf courses. Smith designed and remodeled 40 courses during his career. He, like Ross, was a mentor for other upcoming architects in the business. Smith's protégés include William Mitchell and Albert Zakorus.

There is some evidence that Ross and Smith collaborated on River Vale's design or, at the very least, Ross gave Smith some advice in laying out the course. River Vale opened in 1931 to positive reviews.

Here is Brian O'Malley's description of the course. "River Vale is not long, about 6500 yards from the tips. The



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# KENNETH BENOIT JR., CGCS, EARNS EXCELLENCE IN GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS AWARD FROM GCSAA

by Jan 10, 2023 | Kelsey Underwood

**Lawrence, Kan. (Jan. 10, 2023)** – Kenneth Benoit Jr., CGCS, 28-year GCSAA member and past president of the Metropolitan GCSA, has earned the 2023 Excellence in Government Affairs Award from the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America (GCSAA). Benoit is being honored for his efforts in establishing the Best Management Practices (BMPs) for New York state golf courses, educating those outside the industry on BMPs and developing a strong working relationship with the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation



The Excellence in Government Affairs Award recognizes a chapter or superintendent or coalition for outstanding advocacy or compliance efforts in government affairs.

This award honors the cumulative efforts of Benoit's proactive approach in establishing BMPs at New York state golf courses, as well as his dedication to developing a positive and productive working relationship with the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation, the New York state agency tasked with regulating pesticide registrations, commercial applicators and other relevant issues

Read full article: <https://www.gcsaa.org/media/news-release/2023/01/10/kenneth-benoit-jr.-cgcs-earns-excellence-in-government-affairs-award-from-gcsaa>

## National Golf Day is back May 8-10, 2023

The 2023 National Golf Day Event will be held May 8-10 in Washington, D.C. National Golf Day celebrates the game's \$84.1 billion economy, nearly \$4 billion annual charitable impact and many environmental and fitness benefits. Registration for National Golf Day is now open through April 17.

### REGISTRATION

Learn more and register on the [American Golf Industry Coalition website](#).

For questions or more information, contact [Chava McKeel](#), director, government affairs, at 800-472-7878, ext. 3619.

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# Hudson Valley News of Interest:

By: Kevin Collins



Turfgrass industry veteran Greg Moran is styling at a recent family wedding. He had forgotten his tie so he borrowed one from his three-year-old nephew.



Guess which rock band these two Hudson Valley icons played for? Send your answers to KC at [kpc10512@yahoo.com](mailto:kpc10512@yahoo.com). The most creative answers will be in next month's HV News.



Rotella's Super Chris Dyroff's twin brother Finbar is seen blowing the pipes at the Saint Paddy's Day Parade in Haverstraw. Did you notice the bagpipes match the kilt??



Here is Southern Dutchess Super Jeff Newell's new home. His girlfriend bought it for him before she threw him out. All he needs to do is unwrap it before he moves in.



Toro's Guy Gurney lets it rip on the first tee at Villa Roma. The franks & beans luncheon he consumed prior to teeing off obviously didn't agree with him.



## WATERS OF THE UNITED STATES (WOTUS) CHANGES IN REGULATIONS....CONT'D

This is the link to the USGS mapping site:

[Water Resources of the United States—National Water Information System \(NWIS\) Mapper \(usgs.gov\)](https://www.usgs.gov/nwis/mapper)

It allows you to enter an address or site that will bring you to your facility. After putting in your address, click on “Map” then at the bottom of that window on the left, “Base Map.” For example, I chose a facility most of you would be aware of and a location that is hosting a HVGCSA event later this year, Wallkill Golf Club, and added the maps that populate below.



While you can see the pond on the property. When zooming in, it appears that pond is indeed separated, and if made for irrigation (I am unsure if that is the case), it would be exempt from the WOTUS rule if not connected to another water-body.

By scrolling down and selecting “USGS National Map” in the base map options, the surface waters recognized by the USGS are developed, see below.

Of note here, the pond appears to be independent. That would be good news! The potential issue lies in those small blue water-loving plants noted across the property. Those denote wetlands. If

these wetland areas are viewed to create a connection of the ponds pictured, this becomes a real problem as this map would show a “significant nexus” (remember that potentially hazardous phrase from above) across the Wallkill property, to Lake Henneside, all the way to Dwaar Kill downstream. So.....want to add cart path material to the “wetlands” that passes across that area, or manage invasive weed species in or near that same area, a federal permit may be needed. Change out a culvert pipe, federal permit. You see the issue for Wallkill? If the ponds and “wetland” area that connect them were deemed not to be WOTUS, then the facility would be dealing with the town, county, or state as needed. People with much greater knowledge of the property and understanding of the work to be done. No costly federal permit.



A few take-home messages for you.

Take the opportunity to check out the map of your facility. Learn what the USGS deems the surface water and wetlands to be at your facility. Understand how changes to WOTUS could affect the way you maintain your property, and advocate when given the chance!





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# HVGCSA April Meeting



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660 Rivervale Rd, River Vale, NJ

**Wednesday, April 12, 2023**

- Host:** Brian O'Malley
- 9:00** Registration (coffee & muffins)
- 10:00** **Golf:** Shotgun  
**\*\*Handicaps required when registering\*\***
- Lunch @ Snack House  
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# BOARD OF DIRECTORS CORNER

Hello Fellow Turf Industry Experts!



The winter is over, for the most part, and I'm sure everyone is gearing up their golf courses to open for the season. Some might be open already. Sales folk are routinely rerouting their weekly visits to see all of us grass growers and groomers to make their living. I could go

on and on about this topic like every year but I won't.

Instead, I would like to tell you about my very interesting offseason but a little backstory is necessary. Back in November of 2017, I found out that my left knee was arthritic and was basically bone on bone. I was also diagnosed with a disease called sarcoidosis. There are many forms of it and it can be in various body locations. Mine happens to be a very rare form unfortunately, which is located in my bones and joints. This can make movement very difficult, often painful, at times. There is no treatment for this auto-immune disease that I have, however steroids like prednisone do help but only provide temporary relief. It also doesn't help that I am allergic to steroids (go figure) and steroids also exacerbate Lyme disease, which I have been diagnosed with 5 times. I'm explaining this all because it does relate to my offseason.

Recently in October of 2022, I had a check up on my knee which at this point was diagnosed as "pretty bad" (5 years after finding out about how bad it was). It is believed that the sarcoidosis expedited my knee deteriorating. After several knee injections, and also having a brace designed specifically for my knee both failed to help, it was time for surgery. So on December 19<sup>th</sup> of 2022, I had a full left knee replacement at age 49.

As I write this article, I am still in the healing process. My knee still swells up and I am probably about 40% to 45% full strength, but I'm getting better week by

week. I will say that it was and still is a very grueling process. Physical Therapy has been a lifesaver and gamechanger. I had my last appointment at the end of March, and then I'm on my own to continue the rehab.

The most difficult part of all of this is that I have to get yearly checkups to see if the sarcoidosis is spreading, and if it is affecting any of my other joints like it did to my knee, because my shoulders, hips, knees, etc... are always in pain. Between the knee replacement, this auto-immune disease with no cure, a medicine that can help me but I can't take, gearing up for the golf season seems like a (slightly slower) walk in the park!

I know that this article is different then the usual article at this time, but I wanted to share my experience with all of you that read this.

I'm very fortunate to have a wonderful and loving family there to help out. At work, I have the best Assistant I could ask for, that's always there, and incredibly understanding. (Thank you, Matt.) I have an awesome core crew that has returned now for a couple years. I belong to a great industry with a kickass association that is laid back but also knows how to dress up when needed. All this being said, I want to thank all of you for being there for me and I look forward to winning the comeback golfer of the year!!!

Let's enjoy a season, and hope for more rain then last year, but certainly less then two years ago. See you all on the course soon!

Best Regards,

Jason Werbalowsky, GCS

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# ANNUAL MEETING/ELECTIONS & WINTER EDUCATION SEMINAR



HV Board (left to right) Chris Kemble, Ben Babbage, Reese Wasson, Kevin Collins, Evan Weymouth, Matt Kerens, Tim Walker , Will O'Brien  
Missing from the photo: Jason Werbalowsky



Speakers: James Gorman , Carl Schimenti, & Ken Benoit





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## 2023 Meeting Schedule

April 12<sup>th</sup>  
River Vale Country Club  
April Meeting

May 22<sup>nd</sup>  
Mahopac Golf Club  
Hudson Valley Cup

June 19<sup>th</sup>  
Town of Wallkill Golf Club  
June Meeting  
(Met Team Qualifier)

July 19<sup>th</sup>  
Philip Rotella Memorial GC  
Nine & Dine

October 3<sup>rd</sup>  
Leewood Golf Club  
Worthington Cup

## MEMBER NEWS

### WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

**Alfred Steppich, Class A**

*The Monster @ Resorts World Catskill*

**Tyler McGonigal, Class A**

*Putnam County Golf Course*

**Anthony Minniti, Class A**

*Inness*

### RETIRED MEMBER



Congratulations to **Lee Kozsey** on his recent retirement from Syngenta after 60 years in the Industry. He joined the HVGCSA in 2011 and was a great supporter of the association. We wish Lee and Lucille a long and healthy retirement. Lee, you are always welcome to stop by our meetings for a round of golf & lunch.

### 25 YEAR PIN RECIPIENT



Congratulations to **Steve Spontak** from Beekman Golf Club for 25 years of membership with this great association. Thank you Steve, for all you support over the years. We wish you many more years of enjoyment with the HVGCSA.

## 2023 Scholarships Applications

**DEADLINE: JULY 1, 2023**

Click [HERE](#) for applications or go to our website [HVGCSA.org](http://HVGCSA.org) (member's page)

Any questions contact Susan (914) 909-4843  
[sodowd@mgagolf.org](mailto:sodowd@mgagolf.org)



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