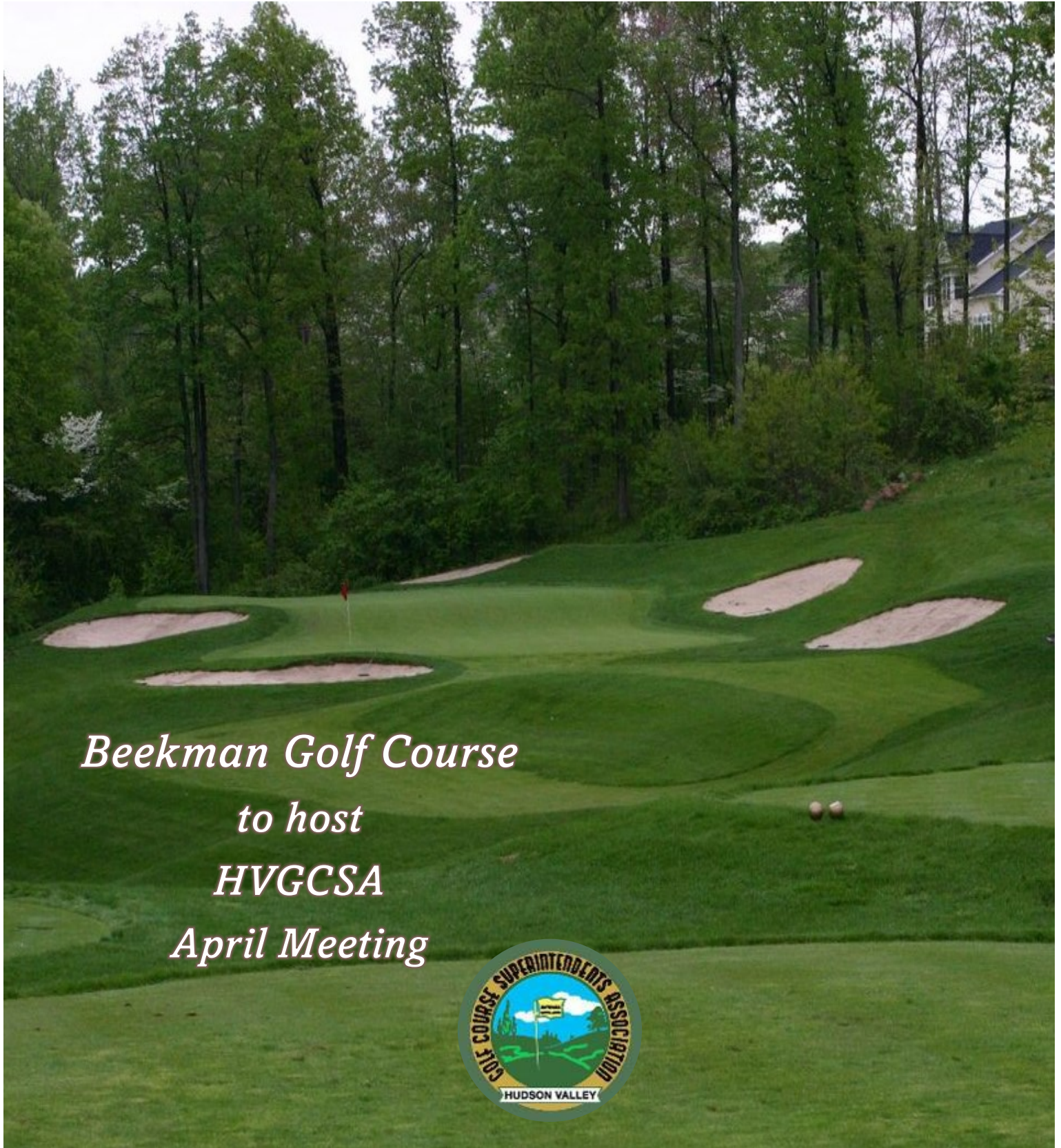


FOREGROUND

VOL. 61 NO. 1 Published by Hudson Valley Golf Course Superintendents Association March 2024



*Beekman Golf Course
to host
HVGCSA
April Meeting*



Board of Directors

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Association Motto

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



Another season is upon us and I'm sure everyone is gearing up now that spring is finally here. I'm pleased to fill the role of HVGCSA President to serve our association. I'd like to thank Tim Walker for his time and effort the past two years serving as our president. I know Tim's dedication and leadership has been greatly appreciated. Additionally, thank you to Chris Kemble who is leaving the

board after his time as past president, and we'd also like to welcome Steve Bartro from Winding Hills Golf Club as our newest member to the Board of Directors.

It was great to see everyone at our winter seminar held at Catskills Resorts World Casino in January. We had an excellent slate of informative speakers, and the event went very well. Another big thank you goes out to all our seminar and association sponsors who make these events possible. The board has worked to plan out our 2024 meeting sites so keep an eye out for association newsletter and emails. This year we will be having a couple more 9 and Dine formats as the turnout and feedback has been very positive for these events. I do hope to see many of you out there beginning with our first meeting hosted by Steve Spontak at Beekman Golf Course on April 15th.

While we all get very busy throughout the season, I do encourage everyone to attend our meetings. Besides getting the chance to eat, play golf, and meet up with our fellow superintendents, member involvement is what keeps our association strong and moving forward. It's always great to see everyone out there supporting our fellow members and enjoying a day of camaraderie. We are also always looking for feedback or ways to help improve any of our events.

I'd like to wish everyone the best of luck with the upcoming season and with any luck Mother Nature will be kind to us.

Reese Wasson

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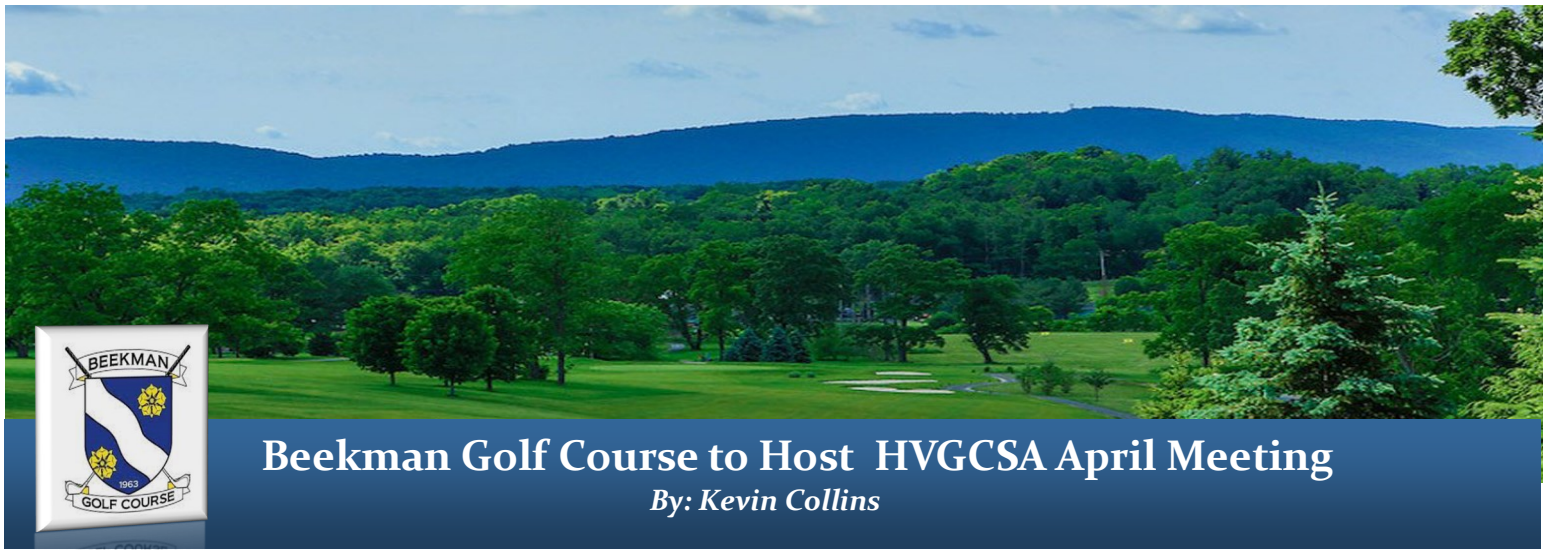
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Beekman Golf Course to Host HVGCSA April Meeting

By: Kevin Collins

On Monday, April 15th, Beekman CC in Hopewell Junction, NY will host the HVGCSA for its first golf meeting of 2024. This will be a “Nine & Dine”. Our host superintendent is Steve “Spoons” Spontak.

The Course and Other Stuff:

Beekman CC was the brainchild of Phil Shatz. Phil grew up on a farm in Carmel, NY during the Great Depression. As a naturalist, farming was close to his heart. He kept bees, goats and sheep, tapped maple trees, and brought back into production a 100-year-old apple orchard in La-Grange. Phil was many things in his long professional and personal career. He was a farmer, philanthropist, lawyer, banker, insurance broker, rock and ice climber, skier, and family man.

Phil acquired a bean farm in the late 1950's. It was there where he designed and built Beekman CC. One of his favorite stories was riding a bulldozer while telling his partner where to make the holes. Beekman CC opened in 1964 and eventually evolved into a 27-hole public golf property. The three 9-hole tracts are named the “Valley”, the “Highland”, and the “Taconic”. Phil owned and operated the Beekman CC for 52 years.

In 2016, Beekman CC was sold to the Gresalfi family who own the 5th largest auto parts business in the United States. The family has long standing ties to the area. Grandmother Gertrude Gresalfi is a direct descendant of Henry Beekman, a Kingston native, who fought in the Revolutionary War and was a major land owner in Dutchess County.

In 2023, Beekman did an amazing 70,000 rounds. The

clubhouse and restaurant have been renovated and the food and beverage service is now run in-house. The food is excellent and the bar and restaurant is always packed. Steve says that a delicious dinner and much alcohol will be waiting for us after golf.

Beekman is known as a venue that caters to all levels of play which explains its great success as a golf destination over the years.



Spoon Man:

Steve was born in East Hempstead, NY but was raised in Mahopac. His first foray in the golf business was working on the summer crew at Mahopac CC. “I had a construction job that didn't work out,” Steve recalled, “I was friends with Bob Steinman and he hired me to work for him on the crew at Putnam CC in the late eighties.” In no time at all, Spoons was the crew foreman. When Bobby became the GM at the club, Steve followed him over to the clubhouse and became the facilities manager. In 1995, Spoons accompanied Bob to Beekman CC. He was the crew foreman for one year before becoming an assistant superintendent. In 2006, when Bob resigned his position, Spoons took over the reins of superintendent.

Continued....page 7



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BEEKMAN TO HOST APRIL MEETING...CONT'D

"It was rough starting out but once I got my dog Clover everyone seemed to like me", Steve smiled. Besides maintaining the huge Beekman campus, there continue to be many in-house projects on the schedule. "We are still in the process of rebuilding bunkers, a task that has been going on forever," Steve laughed.

Normally Steve maintains a crew of 18-21 workers during the season but that can vary. The labor market for golf courses can get a little dicey with the improving economy.

In addition to his responsibilities to the club, Steve's family is where he finds his greatest happiness, that is, if he can stay awake long enough to enjoy his family after a tough day at the course. Married for 28 years to his wife Betsy, the Spontak brood includes son Steve Jr. age 26, and twin daughters Katherine and Rachel, age 23.

Steve looks forward to seeing all his HVGCSA brothers at the April meeting. Be sure to bring your sticks and your appetite!

See you on the 15th!

Kevin Collins

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Kevin Doyle, GCSAA Northeast Field Staff

I usually enjoy the Conference and Trade Show wrap-up as it gives me the opportunity to highlight the members who were recognized in so many ways. Phoenix was a little different, actually a LOT different! The Northeast region dominated many of the headlines! In case you missed it, here are those who caught fire in Phoenix!

Col. John Morley:



William "Bill" Murray, retired superintendent and 27-year member of the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America (GCSAA), has been named the recipient of the association's 2024 Col. John Morley Award.

Murray spent the final 26 years of his career in the seven-course Monmouth County (N.J.) Park System before retiring in 2022. Prior to that the Lee, Mass. native spent time at courses in Connecticut, Massachusetts, New York and New Jersey.

"Bill is a prime example of what Col. John Morley stood for and what the Morley Award is all about," said GCSAA CEO Rhett Evans. "Throughout his long and successful career, he has given back so much to the profession through his service to his fellow GCSAA members on both the local and national level. He is truly worthy of the award, and we congratulate him."

Environmental Leaders in Golf

Innovative Conservation Award



Jim Pavonetti, CGCS-Fairview Country Club-Greenwich, Conn.

Jim Pavonetti, CGCS is a 28-year GCSAA member and has served as the golf course superintendent at Fairview Country Club in Greenwich, Conn. since 2008.

One of Pavonetti's environmental innovations involves the property's ponds.

His use of barley straw and dye to create clean ponds has reduced herbicide usage by 90 percent. His team uses a combination of air diffusers, black pond dye and the barley straw to reduce algae blooms. The limiting of inputs saved the club an average of \$9,000 per year and has reduced aquatic applications by more than 90 percent.

Leo Feser Award

A 28-year member of GCSAA, Pavonetti authored the story "Gold standards" that was published in the November 2022 issue of *GCM* <https://www.gcmonline.com/profession/operations/news/gold-standards-best-maintenance-practices>. The story was originally published in the July 2022 edition

of *Tee to Green*, the chapter publication for the Metropolitan GCSA, and was reprinted with permission in *GCM*. Pavonetti's story examined the practice of establishing formal maintenance standards for golf courses, how he went about doing that at his facility, and the lessons he learned throughout the process.

The Emerging Leader Award



Kremer completed his fourth season as the superintendent at Hop Meadow Country Club in Simsbury, Conn. in November after spending six years in two different stints as an assistant at the course. He graduated from the University of Connecticut in 2010.

The 37-year-old Kremer began his golf course maintenance career as an intern at Hop Meadow, while still a student at UConn. After two years as an assistant superintendent, Kremer left to be part of a landscaping company for four years. He then returned to Hop Meadow in 2016 and was promoted to superintendent in 2020.

Kremer has been very active at the chapter level where he presently serves as a board member of the Connecticut Association of Golf Course Superintendents (CAGCS). In addition to organizing winter seminars, he has helped grow the game by being the CAGCS representative to Connecticut's First Tee program.

The Melrose Leadership Academy supports the professional development of GCSAA superintendent members while the Melrose Equipment Management Experience provides professional development for GCSAA equipment managers. Both programs are administered through the GCSAA Foundation, the philanthropic organization of GCSAA.

The Northeast member of the 2024 Melrose Leadership Academy was:

- Bill Abbe, East Hartford Golf Club, East Hartford, Conn.

The Northeast member of the 2024 Melrose Equipment Management Experience was:

- Christopher Hyman, Cobblestone Creek, Victor, N.Y.

Envu Superintendent Grant Program

As part of the selection process, all applications were

Continued on page 13

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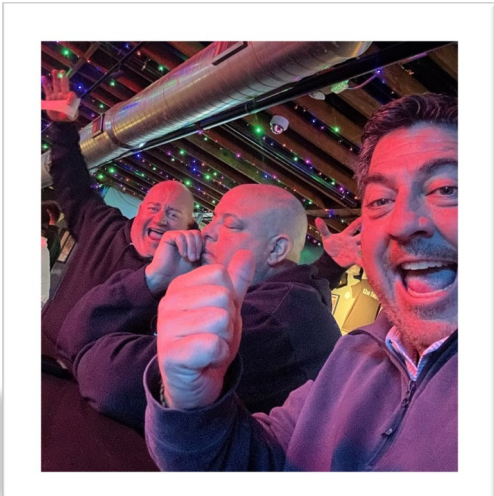
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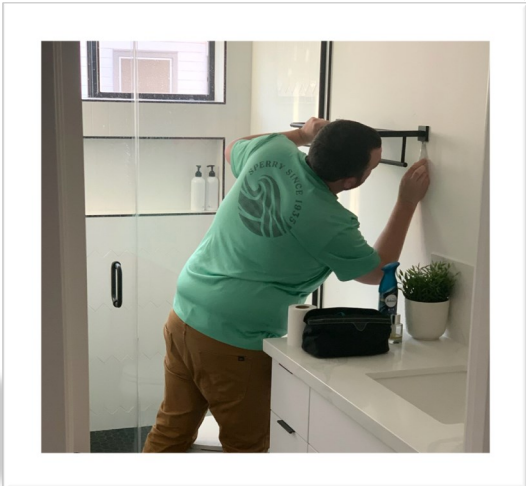
By: Kevin Collins



Metro's Matt "The Big Sexy" Topazio enjoyed a family reunion with his twin sister Pinky last week. Well, it wasn't really a planned reunion. Pinky was pinched for shoplifting at a CVS in Hartford and Matt had to bail her out. The reunion didn't last long as the police picked Pinky up the next morning for outstanding warrants and bail jumping. Their next reunion is planned for after Pinky serves her debt to society. Matt said he'd pick her up at Danbury Correctional when she completes her sentence.



Here's Matt again. He was the life of the party at this Phoenix saloon until he fell asleep at the bar. It's nice to have friends who wouldn't dare to embarrass you by sharing an incident like this via text or on social media. Thank you, Rob & Gil, for the picture.



Patriot Super Evan Weymouth had to reattach a towel bar at the Airbnb he rented in Phoenix. Evan ripped it off the wall trying to stay upright after a tough night on the town. It's not the first time it's happened. It's a good thing Evan always keeps a drill, screwdrivers, and gorilla glue in his shaving kit for any eventuality.



Leewood Super Tim Walker had a slight mishap recently at the club. The mechanic's Rottweiler chewed off Tim's left hand trying to grab a bite of Tim's breakfast sandwich. Luckily a surgeon at Bronxville Hospital was able to reattach the hand and Tim should regain full use of it in about a month. Tim's wedding ring was found the next day after the Rottweiler relieved himself. All's well that ends well.



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Kevin Doyle, GCSAA Northeast Field Staff...continued

judged anonymously by a panel of golf industry professionals, who evaluated applicants on their professional career development experiences, ability to motivate and mentor, innovation, self-expression, unique capabilities, talent and drive to excel as a superintendent.

The 2024 Envu Superintendent Grant Program winner from the Northeast region was:

- Chris Knapp of Amherst (N.H.) Country Club

2024 Turf Bowl results

Purdue's Team #51 took first place in GCSAA's Collegiate Turf Bowl Competition, presented in partnership with John Deere Golf. The winning team includes Broden Piel, Jacob Winger, Hayden Flick, Eli Ziliak and advisor Cale Bigelow, Ph.D.

Rounding out the top 10:

Penn State University - Team 1

University of Massachusetts - Amherst - Team 8

Penn State University - Team 2

Penn State University - Team 3

University of Nebraska - Team 35

Iowa State University - Team 22

Colorado State University - Team 40

Cal Poly Pomona - Team 62

SUNY Delhi - Team 15

GCSAA Elections

Jeff L. White, CGCS the superintendent at Indian Hills Country Club in Mission Hills, Kan., was elected to a one-year term as president. White is the 87th president in the association's history and served as vice president of the association in 2023 and has been a member of the association's board of directors since 2018. A 33-year member of GCSAA, White is also a past president of the Heart of America GCSA.

In addition to White, chapter delegates elected T.A. Barker, CGCS, superintendent at Fore Lakes Golf Course in Taylorsville, Utah, as vice president, and Paul L. Carter, CGCS, superintendent at The Bear Trace at Harrison Bay in Harrison, Tenn., as secretary/treasurer.

Board members Douglas D. Dykstra, CGCS, superintendent at White Mountain Country Club in Pinetop, Ariz., and Marc E. Weston, CGCS, superintendent at Indian Hill Country Club in Newington, Conn., were re-elected to serve on the board, while Gregory B. Jones, CGCS, MG, director of agronomy at Champions Run in Omaha, Neb., was newly elected to join the board as a director.

100 Years of Service to the Industry

Two Northeast region affiliated associations were recognized for achieving 100 year of dedicated service to the industry in 2024. Pictured below are current board members and Executive Director of the GCSA of New England, and Executive Manager and board members of the Ontario Golf Superintendents Association. GCSAA board and CEO Rhett Evans were also on hand to congratulate the groups.





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MEMBER NEWS

Welcome New Members

Shawn Westridge (Class B)
Inness

Keith Smith (Class C)
The Monster @ Resorts World Catskill

William Creed (Class C)
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Andy Eick (Class AF)
First Turf & Ornamental

Michael Yannetta (Class AF)
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Greg Bennett (Class AF)
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Members on the Move

Jeff Newell (Class A) now at Putnam Golf Course
was at Southern Dutchess Golf Club

Tyler McGonigal (Class A) now at Blue Ridge Golf Club
was at Putnam Golf Course

Anthony Minniti (Class A) now at Windham NY Mountain Club
was at Inness

Chad Mathieu (Class AF) now at Nutrien was at SiteOne

Brian Goudey (Class AF) now at Atlantic Golf & Turf
was at Syngenta

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BOARD OF DIRECTORS CORNER

The Changing Seasons



As I sit here at my desk working on my water withdrawal report I think to myself, oh damn I have to write my newsletter article. What the heck am I gonna write about. Hmmm. Well, I will make it simple this year.

It's early March and there is no snow on the ground and the push has begun to open my course for play. We've already had play, walking only because it's still very wet, but eventually the fleet of carts will be on the move and all over the course.

This time of year is and has always been my least favorite time of year. It signifies the end of winter or as I call it the battery recharge time. It starts the process of all the growing and the return of staff, both new hires and recurring of last year. I have done a dozen or so interviews this spring and it's slim pickings to find help.

Some people like the spring with the smell of fresh new growth and flowers blooming and all that comes with it. I think of the rain and mud conditions it creates and the moaning and groaning and complaints from the Proshop and golfers as to why it's cart path only today.....ugh.

Some people can't stand summer time dealing with the heat and dry spots on greens, etc. I used to hate summer too, but as I get older I don't mind it as much. Summer

stress sucks but we've all kinda choose this line of work so I guess we should be used to it by now and to deal with it.

Now Fall/Autumn is by far my favorite time of year. Leaves changing color, crisp clean air, frost on the pumpkins and of course FOOTBALL.....need I say more!!! I think of it as the last hoorah before the snow falls and winter starts up again and we come full circle to that battery recharge time.

What's your favorite season? Let me know at the next meeting.

I wish everyone a prosperous season. Good luck in 2024!!!

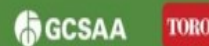
Jay Werbs
Wallkill Golf Club

*Seasons change and so can I
Hold on now there's no time to cry
Untie these strings
I'm climbing down
I won't let them push me away.....*

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ANNUAL MEETING/ELECTIONS/SEMINAR AT RESORT WORLD CATSKILLS



HVGCSA Board: Stephen Bartro, Ryan Avery, Will O'Brien, Tim Walker, Evan Weymouth, Reese Wasson, Matt Kerens, Jay Werbalowsky & Ben Babbage

On January 17th the HVGCSA held their Annual Meeting & Elections at the Resorts World Catskills. This was also the 2nd Educational Seminar. Thank you to all that came out to support the Association. We had a good turnout with a strong showing of superintendents. Tim Walker, CGCS the outgoing President passed the baton to Reese Wasson from Osiris Golf Club and welcomed two new additions to the board, Stephen Bartro (Director) from Winding Hills and Class AF representative from Grass Roots, Ryan Avery.

2024 HVGCSA Board of Directors

President: Reese Wasson

Vice President: Ben Babbage

Treasurer: Evan Weymouth

Secretary: Matt Kerens

Past President: Tim Walker, CGCS

Directors: Stephen Bartro, Will O'Brien & Jay Werbalowsky

Class AF Rep: Ryan Avery



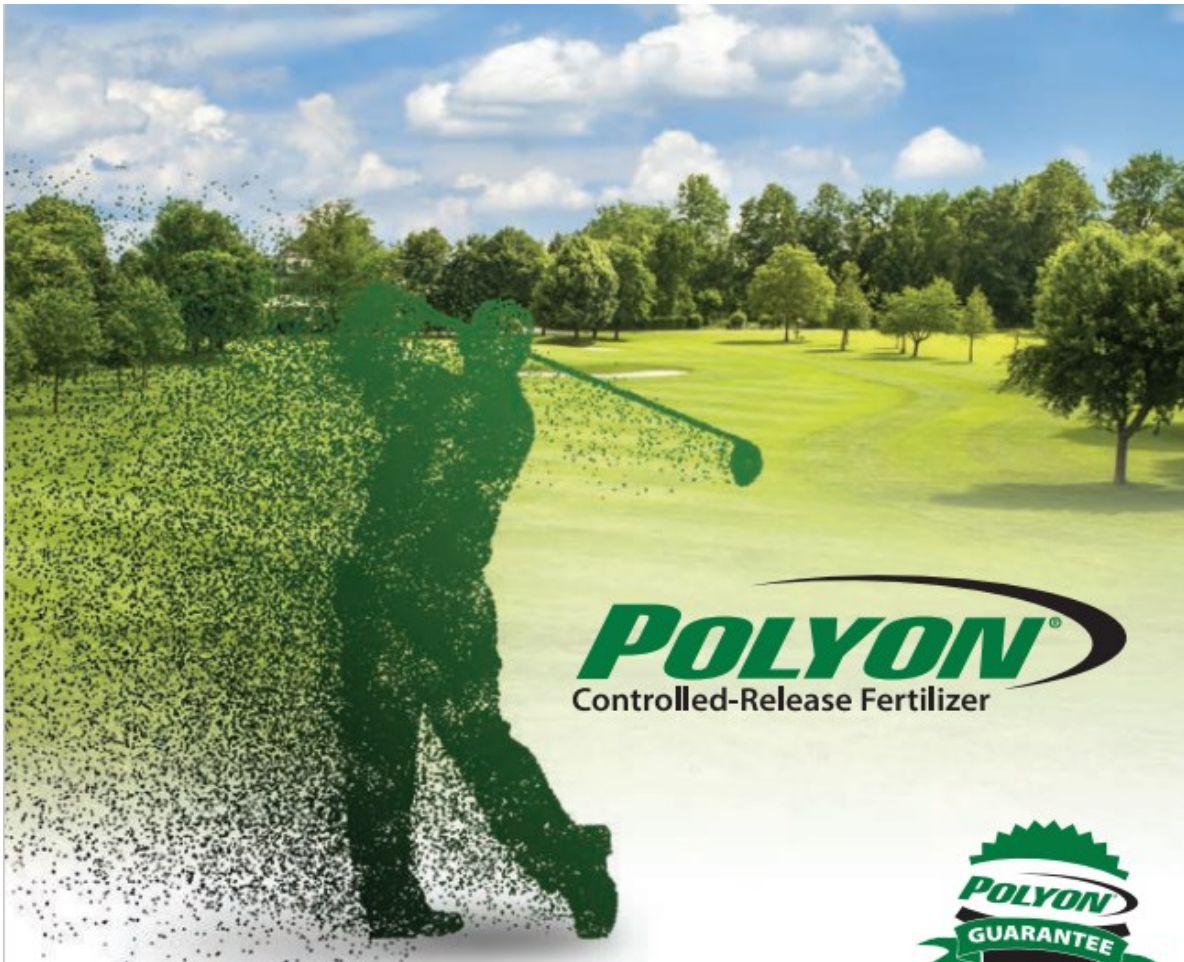
2024 Scholarships Applications

Application Forms for the Ernest Steinhof & Bill Smart are now available

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

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ANNUAL MEETING/ELECTIONS/SEMINAR @ THE RESORTS WORLD CATSKILLS



HVGCSA April Meeting

Nine & Dine



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Beekman Golf Course

11 Country Club Rd, Hopewell Junction, NY

Monday, April 15, 2024

Host: **Steve Spontak**

1:00 Registration

2:00 Golf: Shotgun - Format TBD

4:30 Open Bar, Food & Prizes

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2024

Meeting Schedule

April 15th

Beekman Golf Course

May 8th

HV Cup

Bedford Golf & Tennis

July 15th

Winding Hills Golf Club

Sept 16th

Worthington Cup

Centennial Golf Club

Oct - TBD

Warwick Valley CC