

FOREGROUND

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**GROVER ALEXANDER
& HUDSON HILLS GOLF COURSE**

**TO HOST
SEPTEMBER MEETING & MET TEAM QUALIFIER**



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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



As the season winds down and the days get cooler, it reminds me how fast time goes by. In a few months, I will be finishing my 2-year term as President of the HVGCSA. I have to say it has been a rewarding experience and I am grateful to have had the opportunity to serve. As I look back over the 8 years I've been on the board, what I remember most is the first board

meeting I attended and how I felt like a fish out of water not knowing very much about the association or the members. After a few meetings, I soon settled in with the support and guidance of Chris Strehl who was President at the time and the other board members. I eventually moved up the ranks to President. As I step aside at the end of this year, we will have an opening on the board and I am reaching out to our superintendent members and future leaders to consider joining the board as I did all those years ago. Not only will it look good on your resume but also you will build some great friendships along the way. Anyone interested please reach out to Dan Wilber, Past President and Nominating Chairman or myself.

Meeting Sites: Our Site Committee is working on 2020 meetings sites. If you would like to host a meeting, please contact us as soon as possible as we would like to lock in dates by the end of this year. The earlier we book the more date options we'll have. We need hosts for our April, June, September & October meeting. The HV Cup will be hosted by Vinny Barnaba at The Powelton Club on May 28, 2020.

Our August Meeting with NYSTA: I would like to thank Beth Seme and her staff for the great work they do running this meeting/fundraiser and to Chris Strehl and The Links at Union Vale for hosting it.

Next meeting is at my place, Hudson Hills on September 25th. I hope to see you all there!

Regards

Grover

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Grover Alexander, GCS

to host

September Meeting

By: Kevin Collins

This year's September HVGCSA meeting will be held at Hudson Hills Golf Club on Wednesday, September 25th. It is also the qualifier for the Met Area Team Championship.

Our host Superintendent, HVGCSA President Grover Alexander, is excited to have the HVGCSA brotherhood play at his course and promises a fun day. The last meeting at Hudson Hills was held in May of 2016. Who could forget those great burgers with the perfect red centers and the endless supply of cold beer, and getting to hang out with Grover, who is the most laid back person you'll ever meet in this industry! Priceless! Let's see if we can get 60 attendees for this year's soiree. That's KC's target attendance. Don't let me down or you may end up in the Hudson Valley News of Interest. I'm not kidding!

The Golf Course

Hudson Hills is the flagship course of the Westchester County Parks Commission. It opened for play in 2004. Billy Casper Golf was brought in to run all club operations which at the time signaled a dramatic shift in how the county managed their six courses.

At the end of the 2018 golf season, Billy Casper was out and the Westchester County Parks Commission was back in. Grover had worked for Billy Casper for

over 16 years and for a nanosecond my man was jobless and in that "how am I going to pay the mortgage" horror funk (that's when your wife looks at you a little differently...like an old dog that she might need to put down) but the WCPC quickly stepped up and hired Grover to manage the course (I think that was their plan all along).

The course averages around 30,000 rounds a year. Hudson Hills is typical of many Westchester courses. It plays over 7000 yards from the tips and is hilly and tree lined and tight with little room for error. There's even a graveyard smack in the middle of the course (nice touch). It's a man-sized layout and your ball striking needs to be spot on to score well.

There's a 2.7 million capital project in the works including a bunker renovation and new cart paths. Grover has more of a budget working for the county and more labor which has made his job much easier.

Grover's World

Like many young guys (well, maybe not so young anymore) in the profession, Grover has had to pay some serious dues. His brother John, currently the

Continued.....page 8



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BOARD OF DIRECTORS CORNER

LABOR

CHALLENGES GOING FORWARD

By: Tim Walker, GCS, Leewood Golf Club



Here we are in September...what better to think about than labor and the challenges we face? For those lucky enough to have had high school or college students fill out your summer staff, they have left for the season and other staff

members are preparing to be laid off as the season winds down. In light of this, now is as good a time as any to reflect on the largest part of our operations - labor.

First, let's talk about how to manage the current labor issues and what to expect over the next few years.

One major concern is that the New York minimum wage will increase at a rate of \$1/hour every year until the year 2022, when it will top out at \$15/hour. **This is a fifty percent increase over five years.** This is a major hurdle for the golf business as golf participation and budgets are stable to declining. How do we accommodate this state mandated increase? Do we just increase the labor budget? I doubt anyone is doing that! Do we reduce our staff to accommodate the increased labor cost? What if you are already operating with a small staff?

This leads to the next question - what happens to the seasoned laborer currently making \$15/hour? This experienced staff member may be receiving \$.25/hour to \$.50/hour pay raises annually. Does he or she get \$1/hour wage increases annually until 2022 to keep pace with the annual rise in minimum wage? What happens when the new hire in spring of 2022 starts out at \$15/hour and the seasoned vet is at \$15.50/hour or \$16/hour? I personally have already been approached by staff who have second jobs at places such as restaurants seeking larger wage increases more in line with their other wage.

These are a few of the challenges we will be facing, and I

have already started a dialogue with my club's Board of Directors about the issues I anticipate in the future. At my club, we have a union that historically had \$.40/hour annual wage increases and the current contract calls for 2.75% wage increases annually. This contract expires in January 2020, so the next contract negotiation will be quite interesting!

There is no doubt a labor shortage in our industry as we are competing with landscaping companies, restaurants, and retail stores. In my area of lower Westchester County, students and retirees are few and far between and in six years, I have employed one of each - one retiree and one student. Overtime for landscaping companies means greater production and in turn, greater revenues. In contrast, our overtime costs do not generally result in increased revenue. However, if we cut hours Monday thru Friday, it will come at the cost of the quality of the golf course because it will result in less frequent mowing or detail work will suffer.

So, what is the solution? There is no magic wand to wave and no silver bullet. To accommodate the increasing minimum wage, some clubs will be forced to raise dues or green fees or will be forced to accept "less is more." However, these "solutions" both effect the end user - the golfer. Less staff equates to less production and "lower quality". Think about how far we have come in daily conditioning and what the standard has become - these are not possible if we are forced to cut labor. Perhaps fewer golf courses are going to have trimmed edges, perfect bunkers, daily cup changes or tee markers in a divot free area, or simply everything mowed in the morning.

Ideally, we can share ideas with each other to try to solve this dilemma and come up with a solution that is good for both the golf courses and the workers. Until then, here's to a great fall season and an early winter so we can all recharge our batteries and start the new season with some labor solutions that are a win-win for everyone!



Upcoming Webinars

Oct. 8 @ 10 a.m.

[Manage Insects More Effectively and Develop IPM Resources within Your Course's BMP Manual](#)

Adam Dale, Ph.D.

Oct. 10 @ 10 a.m.

[Redox Potential and the Black Layer](#)

Lee Berndt, Ph.D.

Oct. 15 @ 10 a.m.

[Annual Bluegrass Seedhead Suppression in Putting Greens](#)

presented by Intelligro

Matt Elmore, Ph.D., and Zane Raudenbush, Ph.D.

Oct. 30 @ 10 a.m.

[What About Wetting Agents?](#)

Doug Karcher, Ph.D.

Nov. 6 @ 9 a.m.

[Cómo construir un equipo más fuerte utilizando el golf como una estrategia](#)

Jorge Croda, CGCS

Nov. 19 @ 10 a.m.

[Water Management BMPs](#)

J. Bryan Unruh, Ph.D.

Read more: <https://www.gcsaa.org/education/my-learning-hub#ixzz5wh5P1Jlt>

GROVER ALEXANDER & HUDSON HILLS.....cont'd

superintendent at Armitage GC in Mechanicsburg PA, was working as an intern for Joe Alonzi at Westchester CC 25 years ago and enticed Grover to come up from Gainesville, Fl. to work on the crew that summer. Grover was hooked and decided to attend Lake City College in Florida to get his Turfgrass degree. During the next two years, he interned first for Scott Niven at The Stanwich Club followed by a second internship with Gregg Stanley at Hudson National.

Grover's first stint as an assistant was at Wykagyl with Steve Renzetti. After Steve moved on to Quaker Ridge, Grover continued on with Chip Lafferty the following year. It was during that second year at Wykagyl that Grover met his future wife, Jennifer. Jennifer, who hails from Manchester England, was interning at the club. They both lived in the staff quarters above the clubhouse and had adjoining rooms. The rest is history.

Jennifer accompanied Grover on his next career sojourn and assistant's position at Desert Mountain in Scottsdale, AZ. While working (and sweating) for Scott Emerson at the Lyle Anderson Resort, Grover remembers, "It was way too hot out in Arizona, so I called Gregg Stanley to get back to the Northeast." After gainful employment with Gregg for a few months, Grover took an assistant's position in Atlantic City at Twisted Dunes working for Steve Lane. Hudson Hills beckoned the following year. With a little more financial stability, Grover and Jennifer could finally afford to settle down. The



happy couple purchased a house eight years ago in Briarcliff, NY. On Valentine's Day in 2014, Grover and Jennifer had a son, Nathan, who is now a five-year old. Walker, another son, followed three years later.

Grover's reign as HVGCSA President will be over at the end of the year. Thank you, Grover!!

We will see you on the 25th!!

Kevin

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Hudson Valley News of Interest:

By: Kevin Collins



There is nothing on this planet that makes me more uneasy than a trip to the dentist. I hadn't been in a while. My hygienist, Deep Clean Carolyn (who cleans my teeth with a scalpel), had been bugging me to go, even took X-rays and sent them to my guy in Carmel. She went even further and called my dentist's office and had them call me to set up an appointment. I still resisted. Then I broke a tooth eating this hard ass Honey Bunches of Oats cereal (disguised as small rocks). Now I had to go. So, I show up thinking that he'd check my teeth, tell what needed to be done, and schedule a future appointment for the work. But no...he wanted to do the work now. All I could say is "Whaaaaaat"? He did two teeth including the broken one. I sat in his chair shaking and whimpering and got through it, barely. I had to run up to Quaker Hill for a board meeting immediately after and was dribbling water all over my shirt and slurring my words like Quasimodo 'cause I was so numb. Now the board thinks I have a substance abuse problem.

***Our favorite celebrity chef, Bayer's Dave Sylvester**, is on the shelf due to an arm injury sustained while building a patio at his house. Reports indicate that his right forearm was crushed by a large piece of bluestone. The rumor is that two day workers that Dave employed to do the patio grunt work intentionally dropped a large piece of bluestone on Dave due to a pay dispute. We wish Dave a speedy recovery.

***Dark Side Sales Lesson #2 for Guy Gurney**: What do you do when a superintendent's dog is either overly aggressive or overly friendly and is killing your concentration and screwing up your sales pitch? What I've done over the years is always have dog treats on hand to curry favor with the course dog or dogs. If that doesn't work I had a second treat that I would give them, Ambien wrapped in cheese. It's a game changer!!

***Here's a shout out** to our outgoing HVGCSA President Grover Alexander. Love you man.

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Last Meetingrecap

Our Last meeting was held at Chris Strehl's place, The Links at Union Vale Golf Club. Not an official Hudson Valley meeting, but it might as well be. This was the annual Steve Smith Memorial NYSTA Challenge, one of our association's biggest fundraisers to assist NYSTA in all their efforts on behalf of the green industry. This event has raised over \$195K since it's inception and the proceeds go to fund Lobby efforts, education and other programs to promote our industry. A 100+ players came out to support the cause. Boy, it was hot that day! So hot that I actually drank more water than beer. As always, Chris and staff had the place in great shape. Everyone had a good time despite the heat.

Golf Awards:

1st Place: Team Fisher and Son - Captain, Mike Weber

2nd Place: Team Metro Turf - Captain, Matt Topazio

Long Drive: Dominic Scarpariti

Longest Putt: Dave Peterson

Closest to Pin Honors goes to Steve Whipple and Chris Dyroff

Many thanks to the NYSTA crew, Beth Semi and Jill Cyr. Also, many thanks to Steve Whipple for his emcee duties, and Kevin Collins, George Wade and Matt Topazio for registration assistance. Thanks to the Pro Shop staff of Kevin Sullivan and all the food and beverage staff for their hard work and great food.

Thank you to all the sponsors whose continued support is vital to this tournament's success.

Next Stop! Grover's, Hudson Hills Golf Course.

Bill Luthin



Upcoming Meetings

Met Team Championship

Morris County Golf Club, NJ
October 8, 2019

October Meeting

Worthington Cup Tournament

Philip Rotella Golf Course
October 17, 2019

Tailgate at West Point

w/MetGCSA
November - TBD

Year End Social

Sloop Brewing
December 5, 2019

Member News



Sending our prayers and get well wishes to George Pierpoint, IV, Harbor Pines GC.

George suffered a serious fall on the job that resulted in many broken bones. I've been informed that his injuries are not life threatening, but he has a long recovery ahead of him. Get well soon!!

**If you hear of any member news
please let us know!**



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I SHOULD PLAY MORE GOLF!

By: Reese Wasson, Spook Rock Golf Club



As we get to the home stretch of another interesting summer, I recently had a conversation with an acquaintance and received a statement that many superintendents probably get when discussing their job.

“Your job sounds great, you must get to play golf all the time!” With a smile I had to inform him that while I certainly enjoy playing the game, I’ve only played my own course a couple times this year.

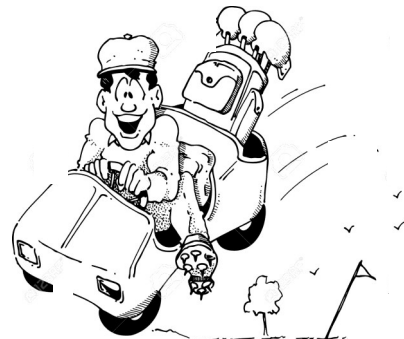
This exchange got me to thinking why I haven’t taken advantage of one of the great benefits of our profession as much as I could have. There are, of course, all the expected reasons, long work hours, family and personal obligations, and the need to take a breather and get away from the course when the opportunity arises.

Upon further thought, however, I realized I’m missing out on some of the very real benefits of making time to play your own course. Clearly the most obvious one is being able to examine the conditions and playability first hand. The ability to see the course from the perspective of a golfer can be very different than what we see on a daily basis as we walk or ride the course throughout the work day. Having to play out of a given bunker is much different than inspecting the rake job of the bunker crew. Having to navigate a two putt from wherever your approach shot may land is much different than simply rolling a few balls at a given pin location, and so on.

Playing alongside members or public golfers can

also provide some great benefits and perspectives. Besides developing relationships and having conversations in a more relaxed setting, you can always learn a thing or two. The ability to see some of their likes or dislikes firsthand out on the golf course provides a great insight as to what all golfers may face throughout their round. They may even be able to provide some information you weren’t fully aware of. Recently, in being paired up with one of our regular golfers at Spook Rock for a round of golf, he informed me that some of our drainage issues didn’t exist prior to a housing development being built adjacent to the golf course. Being fairly new to this golf course, this information was very helpful in explaining some of the challenges we’ve faced.

While it may not seem like we have the time, I will be making the effort to prioritize playing the golf course. My hopes are to continue to pick up on possible improvements big and small that can create a better golfing experience for all those playing the course. I encourage everyone to try and find the time as well, and hey, in any event, playing golf is still fun!



Kevin Doyle, Northeast GCSAA Rep



Naming seasons can be fun. James Taylor crooned, “winter, spring, summer or fall.” Many near me add “mud season” and “black fly season.” Down south, they have “hurricane season.” Many other geographic regions have named and recognized seasons relative

to their climate. In the Northeast golf industry, “golf season” and “off-season” are the well-used monikers. While golf education is typically found in the off-season for superintendents, universities work hard to provide research and results all year long. Recently, I was fortunate to see how it all begins.

Rutgers University weed scientist Matt Elmore, Ph.D., reached out to me in early June looking to connect with superintendents in USDA plant hardiness zones 5 or lower. These zones are in western Massachusetts, much of New York, Vermont, inland New Hampshire, and almost all of Maine. Elmore, having only joined Rutgers in the recent few years, did not have many contacts in these areas. Communications began regarding his needs and I offered to join him during the travel.

Elmore needed some superintendents who would be interested in donating sample of annual bluegrass from their golf course fairways and roughs. Of special interest was those who have used plant growth regulators (PGR) (e.g., Trimmit) or herbicide programs to manage the annual bluegrass over the years. The USDA grant research was to look for herbicide resistance. In addition, they would check for PGR efficacy, and develop an annual bluegrass seed bank for future use.

We traveled from Albany up the Northway, over to Burlington, Vt., across northern New Hampshire, into the Portland, Maine, area. Sixteen superintendents hosted us, albeit briefly, and donated nearly 50 samples of turf. Conversations covered poa control, winter kill, native area challenges, weed infestations, and many more.



Owl's Nest Resort & Golf Club's superintendent John Gabbett (left), and The Mountain Course at Spruce Peak's Kevin Komer, CGCS, (right) both graciously hosted Matt Elmore, Ph.D., and assisted with his annual bluegrass collection.

Fast forward three weeks at Rutgers Field Day, where graduate students explain to attendees the USDA project that is beginning. They explained that the annual bluegrass has recently been planted in the greenhouse, the general overview of the expectations of the research, and that they should have data come this time next year.

Turf specific universities play an important part in our industry. They provide critical research and give continuing education presentations that help superintendents do their jobs better. Many universities offer further educational opportunities in-season by opening their research plots to us so we can see the work in progress. Many nation-wide are assisting in developing Best Management Practices manuals that superintendents can use to advocate for our industry.

Researchers also rely on superintendents for sample do-

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nations (like Elmore's Northeast #TakeMyPoaTour), or real-world research areas on your golf courses. Both are critical to developing the cutting-edge research from which superintendents ultimately learn.

These important relationships are nothing new to our industry. Recently, GCSA of New England Life Member Jack Hassett reminisced visiting Ag researchers in the Ottawa area early in his career with turfgrass samples. The benefits he received from their expertise, while they enjoyed delving into a different plant species, were extremely valuable. For our universities to continue delivering industry-changing results, they need all the support that golf course superintendents can provide. By offering turf samples or data from your facility, supporting field days by attending, and providing your questions and feedback during educational seminars, this often-symbiotic learning process can continue to grow and prosper.

[GCSAA Resources and Deadlines](#)

[EPA, Army Corps announce repeal of WOTUS](#)

The EPA and the Army Corps of Engineers have announced the long-awaited repeal of the 2015 WOTUS rule on Sept. 12.

[Full story](#) linked here and in the GCSAA Advocacy Hub, on GCSAA.org

[EXCEL Leadership Program](#)

Funded by Nufarm

The EXCEL Leadership Program offers leadership training for personal, career, and community/industry stewardship for assistant superintendents; the future leaders in the golf course management industry. Applications for the 2020 program are open through Oct. 1.

[Apply now »](#)

The program

The EXCEL Leadership Program features two, two-day education and training sessions and a trip to the annual Golf Industry Show for assistant golf course superintendents. The education and travel for 2020 includes:

- Golf Industry Show, Jan. 25-30, in Orlando
- Spring Meeting, TBD, at GCSAA headquarters, Lawrence, Kan.

Fall Meeting, TBD

Eligibility

To be considered, a GCSAA Class C member must complete the application and respond to two pre-selected essay questions. Up to eight assistant superintendents will be selected for this opportunity to develop their leadership skills over a three-year period.

Applicants must be:

- Currently employed as an assistant golf course superintendent within the United States (including Alaska and Hawaii) or Canada.
- A Class C member of GCSAA
- Able to participate for three full years
- Not be working for current members of the GCSAA Board of Directors or EIFG Board of Trustees, children of GCSAA or Nufarm staff, or current employees of those organizations.

[GCSAA/Golf Digest Environmental Leaders in Golf Awards](#)

Presented by GCSAA and *Golf Digest* in partnership with Syngenta, the Environmental Leaders in Golf Awards recognize golf course superintendents and golf courses around the world for their commitment to environmental stewardship.

In 2018, the ELGAs were updated to recognize more superintendents in more focused areas of environmental sustainability. The ELGAs are based on the environmental [best management practices](#) that GCSAA recommends all courses utilize.

There are four ELGAs available:

- Natural Resource Conservation Award
- Healthy Land Stewardship Award
- Communications and Outreach Award
- Innovative Conservation Award

There will be one winner and two runners-up recognized for each award. GCSAA members may apply to one, two, three or all four awards in a single year. However, an individual can only win one award per year.

All applicants will be notified by December whether or not they have been selected as a winner. Winners will be recognized at the Golf Industry Show.

Again, if I can be of any assistance, please feel free to contact me.

Kevin Doyle

GCSAA Field Staff

kdoyle@gcsaa.org

Follow me on Twitter @GCSAA_NE

HVGCSA September Meeting & Met Team Qualifier



Hudson Hills Golf Course

400 Croton Dam Road, Ossining, NY

Wednesday, September 25, 2019

- Host:** Grover Alexander
- 10:30** Registration
- 11:00** Lunch
- 12:00** **Golf Shotgun:** Format - Stroke (Met Team Qualifier)
****Handicaps required when registering****
- 5:00** **Reception:** Buffet Dinner & Prizes
- Fee:** \$100 - Lunch, Golf & Dinner
\$ 40 - Dinner Only
- Dress Code:** Proper Golf Attire

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