

New York Chapter

GCSAA

Golf Course Superintendents Association of America

VOLUME 7, ISSUE 1

READING THE GREEN

SPRING 2023 EDITION

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GCI MAGAZINE**

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ON THE OTHER SIDE!
BY DOMINIC MORALES**

NY GOLF BMP- KEN BENOIT

KEVIN DOYLE- GCSAA UPDATE



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GCSA of NY

AT THE SKILLED TRADE
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SCHOOL



Adam Mis, Superintendent from Transit Valley CC and Jim Baldwin, from Andre & Son helped Suzanne, our Chapter Administrator speak to high school students about the opportunities available in the golf course maintenance industry



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MESSAGE FROM THE BOARD

**President- Steve Kurta,
Tuscarora Golf Club**



It's a rare superintendent that has enough time on their hands in May. Days don't seem long enough, the snowbirds are back honking their concerns and the summer crews are still in school. At times like this it's clearly evident that consolidation, and especially the addition of our Chapter Administrator, was the right decision.

Asking fellow Superintendents to run an association at this time of year was always a heavy lift. Whether you're starting a new job, in the middle of completing a major addition, bunker renovation, irrigation start-up woes or trying to keep up with bunker edging with minimal staff, spring brings a special type of stress.

With The PGA kicking off at Oak Hill in 10 days, The GCSANY board would like to wish Jeff Cochran and staff the best for their event.

As we become more firmly established in years to come we see ourselves working ahead of time to explore participation in the form of volunteer opportunities or simply informational representation for larger events like these. Planning for events this large occur years in advance and is something we look forward to exploring in the years to come. For now, we'll all be glued to the television, or watching in person if we can get away from the course.

Exciting opportunity for the GCSANY membership

The board of directors is offering current members the opportunity to send any member of their facility to the Great Lakes School of Turfgrass Science. This a great chance to build upon your, or your staffs current knowledge as a golfcourse manager.

The Great Lakes School of Turfgrass Science

<https://www.mgcsa.org/resources/Documents/web%20insertGLTS%20Flyer%202021%20Cool-Season%20Golf.pdf>

is a 12 week online program that will make any turf manager better at their job. Use this offer to improve your skillset and add value to your professional credentials as well as become a greater asset to your employer.

With the current labor market it's getting harder to find qualified individuals to fill the rolls available on our crews. Giving that dedicated employee a shot at an education in turfgrass science while being able to promote from within is good for everyone in your organization. Empowering our members and affiliates to be the best they can be is part of our mission at the GCSANY and we feel this opportunity is consistent with that goal.

The GCSANY has committed the monetary resources to send up to 10 individuals, current members, or a sponsored member to attend the program. First come will be first served with this offer. You'll receive a fantastic education from some of the brightest minds in the business and all from the comfort of your own home.

If you have any questions about this program please contact Suzanne Mis or any other board member with the GCSANY.

Board of Directors
GCSANY



New York Chapter

GCSAA

Golf Course Superintendents Association of America

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SHIFTING ROLES EXPERIENCED CREW MEMBERS WHO NO LONGER WANT TO BE THE APOGEE OF AGRONOMIC ACCOUNTABILITY ARE STRENGTHENING TEAMS FROM WITHIN.

**BY LEE CARR | MARCH 2023
GOLF COURSE INDUSTRY MAGAZINE**

With nearly 200 years of experience, the Transit Valley Country Club crew is most easily described as overqualified. Or incredible. Efficient. Industrious. Harmonious. Productive.

Transit Valley superintendent Adam Mis has strengthened the crew by hiring several former superintendents and assistants, all based near East Amherst, New York, a suburb of Buffalo. Rather than leave the industry, many people are taking a position that doesn't have the intense responsibilities that rest with the superintendent.

Bryan Culver is an example of an experienced worker who joined the Transit Valley crew. Mentored by Don Holmberg and working in the industry since he was 15, Culver has been a general manager and held the position of superintendent for more than 22 years. Culver will do any task requested of him. Nearing retirement, Culver was "weary of leading people and dealing with club officials and committees." He has known Mis for a long time. "You never lose the superintendent mindset," he says. "When I see some of the day-to-day challenges, I sometimes get that old stress feeling but I find that I am still learning. I enjoy being part of the team." Dialing back allows Culver to spend the off-season somewhere warmer and sunnier than New York.

"The staff are great and they work hard," Mis says. "I show them what we are doing and they say, 'OK.' A lot of these people have known each other for years and everyone gets along. I'm very fortunate."



It's a testament to his leadership that when Mis took the position at Transit Valley, people started calling him, wanting to be part of the team. With all that experience, it becomes even more attractive to join the crew.

While some superintendents might feel insecure about their position with so many qualified crew members, Mis knows that his career depends on his actions. Good communication keeps everyone on the same page. Everyone is respectful of each other and the work that needs to be accomplished. The support at the club indicates how well the team is performing.

The membership at Transit Valley is growing quickly and recently voted to invest in a new irrigation system. That's a large capital expenditure and disruptive to the course in the short term, but the vote passed by a wide margin. It's a vote of confidence for the grounds staff, who are constantly complimented by the members. "We hired architect Mark Mungeam to lay out a master plan and we have the right staff to move swiftly and competently through a host of renovations," Mis says.

Members are noticing. The abilities of the "overqualified" staff are parlaying into on-course improvements that are sowing dividends in membership and inspiring further investment.

"The membership and leadership at the board and greens committee level have been helpful," Mis adds. "People love to see the improvement and they are supporting everything we do. It has just been super exciting. I can't say enough about the people here."



The Ploetz family would agree with the value that qualified superintendents add to the staff, even if they are “officially retired.” Gail and Don Ploetz own Concord Crest Golf Course in East Concord, New York, a small town 35 miles from Buffalo. Don helped plan and develop the course and was its original superintendent, starting with nine holes. There are now 18 holes and 14 retired people on the staff during the peak season, balanced by up to five high school and college students. As the best fit for the job — and also being his son — Trevor Ploetz was Don’s natural successor. It’s a family business, with Trevor’s wife and daughter both working, and his brother-in-law and two of Trevor’s sisters involved in varying capacities.

“We have a tremendous support system and we all have the same goal in mind,” Trevor says. His parents remind him to “never ask an employee to do something you wouldn’t do yourself.” Trevor adds, “If the crew sees you working hard, and doing even the lousy jobs, everyone can tackle the day together.”

“I like to tell everyone that I am retired,” Don says, though it is not unheard of for him to take a few employees and go and dig a ditch. The land that became Concord Crest was originally part of his family’s farm. “This will be our 22nd year,” Don adds. “We are still a developing course and it’s always been a work in progress.”

Trevor handles the daily course maintenance and no one worries about titles. Having the former superintendent around expedites problem-solving through shared course knowledge. It also bolsters the leadership, because there are more people to look up to.

The retirees work well, they enjoy it and the free golf is a bonus. Another superintendent joined the crew last year. “It has been a tremendous experience to have another superintendent, from somewhere else, to learn from, and observe, and from whom to absorb all the information that I can,” Trevor says. “He came in with many, many stories.”

Former superintendents can contribute massively with helping the operation run smoothly, but they also help with training.

“You save so much time and money with an experienced staff,” Mis says. “We are stronger across the board. When there is a new employee on property, the staff are watching to see if the new person is struggling or has a question. If necessary, an experienced employee is there in a minute and the question is answered. It doesn’t have to be me or the assistant because we have skilled people working throughout the property. The efficiency is amazing. Do I pay more for that experience? Yes, and it’s worth every dollar. We get way more done.”

There are a variety of reasons people might take a role with fewer responsibilities — to reduce stress, work fewer hours, stay connected with the industry, retire comfortably or because they need a change. Embrace the possibilities. With strong leadership, keeping experienced turf workers in turf makes this a comfortable arrangement and will strengthen the crew, regardless if anyone is officially retired. Experience supersedes titles and the results can be amazing.



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Chapter Administrator Update

SUZANNE MIS

Hello Spring!

The association has been busy planning the many events we have scheduled for 2023. Our first event was a Walk and Talk at Yahnundasis. Dr. Frank Rossi and former superintendent Chris Cartini hosted the event. Even though we had an inch of snow on the course, it did not stop this group from peeking under the green covers to look at the green grass underneath. Thanks to everyone who came out, weathered the cold, and made this initial education event a good one.

If you missed this walk and talk, Dr. Rossi will be at East Aurora Country Club on May 22nd, Corning Country Club on July 11th, and Mohawk Golf Club on August 8th. GCSAA education points will be awarded for these events.

Also, we have added the option to play a round of golf for those who are interested in extending their day after the walk and lunch. We need you to sign up separately for this so we can give the pro shop an accurate count for the reserved tee times. I appreciate your cooperation.

Our annual Member-Guest tournament will take place on June 20th at Timber Banks and The POA will be on Tuesday August 29th at Turning Stone so save the date for these events. The member-guest event is open for registration and feel free to bring either a guest or another member of the association.

Thanks to Jeremy Batz, from Dryject, our golf league will be starting this month. If you are still interested in joining, please notify me right away so we can get your team signed up.

I am looking forward to seeing you at the upcoming events. I know this is a busy time for all of you, but please feel free to contact me if you have questions or comments. As always, our goal as an association is to provide value to all the members of the association. We hope we continue to fulfill this goal and to provide you with the tools to be successful.

It is an honor to be part of this association.

Walk and Talk

AT YAHNUNDASIS GOLF
CLUB

Thank you to Dr. Frank Rossi, Chris Cartini and the staff at Yahnundasis for the informative walk and talk.



2023

Walk and Talk events with Dr. Frank Rossi



**East Aurora Country Club-May
22nd**

Corning Country Club-July 11th

Mohawk Golf Club - Aug 8th

Tuscarora Golf Club-Sept/Oct

**Registration is open for the Walk
and Talk at East Aurora Country
Club on our website at
gcsaofny.org/events**

We have added the availability to golf after the walk
for a limited number of members.

This will have a separate cost and registration.

Visit our website for details.



Yes, the Grass is Greener on the Other Side!

By

Dominic Morales, NYSTA Board Member

Apprenticeship Program Update:

Good news! NYSTA is working closely with the Department of Labor/Workforce Development representatives to move forward our proposal.

- The DOL approved our SMALL GAS ENGINE & EQUIPMENT MECHANIC/TECHNICION Apprenticeship program. You can now begin sign up individuals to participate in this program at your facility. Please visit our website www.nysta.org and click on Careers.
- The DOL and the NYS Education Department (SED) will meet on May 9th to review and hopefully approve our Groundskeeper Apprenticeship. We will keep you posted.

Our Ambassador Program: Collaborating with NYS FFA Chapters:

A key objective is career awareness and outreach at the K-12 schools in New York State. We have partnered with the New York State FFA regional school FFA chapters, as well as Agriculture Educators and Counselors at each school district.

The goal is to match teachers/advisors with industry professionals as a resource for possible guest speakers, participate in career fairs, coordinate field trips to various facilities, and develop Co-op/internship opportunities where/when appropriate with various school districts.

Our hope is to develop a list of ambassadors (Turf professionals) for each of the nine FFA districts so they/you may be contacted by an ag educator or FFA advisor for the purpose of:

- A Work-Based Learning program at their facility or place of business in coordination with your school district
- A Guest speaker as it relates to career opportunities within the Green Industry at career days or various classes.
- Hosting a field trip to their facility or place of business

We believe strongly that this approach will expand awareness to young individuals about the tremendous opportunities available to them and at the same time begin to satisfy the employment shortage we are experiencing. It is our way of “paying it forward”.

2023 FFA Convention:

The annual statewide FFA Convention will be held in Buffalo (May 18-19th) at the Buffalo-Niagara Convention Center. Over 2,000 students, Ag. Educators and FFA Advisors will attend the convention. As in the past NYSTA will set up an informational booth with video and equipment demonstration provided by Grasslands Equipment. SUNY-Delhi will set up a companion booth emphasizing educational opportunities and as a Related Instruction partner for our Apprenticeship program. If you are interested in participating even for a few hours to engage with students and educators about career opportunities, please contact Sue at NYSTA (518-783-1229) Email-sue@nysta.org

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New York Golf BMP...here we go, again

by Ken Benoit, CGCS

Executive Director, New York Golf Course Foundation



Golf, among other issues, has a public image problem. Okay, you have probably heard that statement for so long now that it has become an eye roller. Fair enough. You might be exhausted listening to the same people blowing the same horn year after year. I get it. Dr Rossi has, for years, continuously drawn a connection between BMPs and scientific research proving you can have healthy turfgrass, protect water resources, and save money, all at the same time. And for the past several years, a group of your peers has been continuously imploring superintendents to formally adopt BMPs at their facility and set realistic goals for their implementation. These people keep proclaiming it will lead to benefits such as operational cost savings, improved turfgrass/playing conditions, improved relationships with local, state and federal lawmakers and your neighbors, improved relationships with university researchers, and a better understanding of how your club and our industry impacts water resources. I get why you might be exhausted. The messengers are probably exhausted too. We're all exhausted. What is puzzling is why this message has not connected with some superintendents. Afterall, when considering all the reasons listed above, the importance and benefits of adopting and implementing BMPs at the facility level cannot be argued. Adopting and implementing BMPs will not only be beneficial to you, your club, and the game of golf in the immediate future, it will have a lasting impact on golf's long-range future. By adopting BMPs you'll help put golf in a position to navigate the deep waters of social evolution. You should also consider that what you leave behind is all that will remain, so the decisions you make now will impact the many generations of superintendents who will follow. How often does a professional in any industry get the opportunity to leave a collective legacy? Superintendents have the rare opportunity to leave a long-lasting legacy in a profession with a rich and noble history.

Focusing on the political side of the BMP initiative, environmental matters are no longer the exclusive concern of one side of the isle in Albany and Washington DC. As society becomes more sophisticated about their understanding of how various factors impact the environment, all lawmakers are forced to steer toward more conservative environmental legislation. The line between blue and red is becoming a little more blurred. Lawmakers have, are and will decide the future of golf. The means by which superintendents can communicate to lawmakers that they are connected and engaged with their environmental responsibilities, are BMPs. And the best way for you to help facilitate that message is via the GCSAA on-line BMP tool. For the past few years, the New York Golf Course Foundation has been imploring superintendents around the state to use the tool to formally adopt BMPs at their facility.

Motivating superintendents to go to the tool and spend a couple hours to help our industry leaders when talking to lawmakers in Albany and Washington DC, was the primary goal when NYGCF decided to offer "BMP How To" workshops in all five GCSAA chapter regions. During the workshops, guys spent a few hours being shown how to navigate the tool and, in the process, learned just how easy it is to edit and publish your golf facility BMP document. The BMP workshops were well received in all five regions. In fact, the most common responses we heard were "I had no idea completing this document was so easy," and "Can we do more of these workshops?"

As part of the 2022/23 Turfgrass Environmental Stewardship Fund grant, the NYGCF also assisted five superintendents, one from each GCSAA chapter, complete their own facility BMP document. Matt Bednarski, superintendent at Oswego Country Club, was chosen for the GCSANY region. Matt recognizes the value of completing his facility BMP document and setting realistic goals for achieving a higher degree of water resource protection and improved turf health. When asked about why adopting BMPs at Oswego Country Club is important, Matt said “Though it may seem like upstate New York can be remote and what we do up here doesn’t impact anyone, the reality is that the decisions we make up here do impact communities beyond our own. We live upstream for most of the rest of the state and what we do up here matters as much or more than anywhere in New York. By using BMPs to help protect water resources in our own community, we are protecting water resources downstream. The GCSAA on-line tool makes it easy for superintendents to adopt BMPs and do the right thing for all.” As we move forward with this initiative, more and more superintendents in the GCSANY region have followed Matt’s lead by formally adopting BMPs via the GCSAA on-line tool.

Because many of your peers around New York and across the country have already started this process, the question of “Have you adopted BMPs via the GCSAA BMP tool,” has become “Why haven’t you adopted BMPs using the GCSAA BMP tool?” If you have any questions about how to get started with your facility BMP document, you should reach out to either the NYGCF or GCSAA.



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New York Chapter

GCSAA

Golf Course Superintendents Association of America

Website

GCSAOFNY.ORG

Our website includes Job listings, a place to list items you are looking to buy or sell and a message board to ask questions or discuss topics of interest with your fellow superintendents.

WE ALSO HAVE A MEMBERSHIP DIRECTORY, CORPORATE BY-LAWS, PAST NEWSLETTERS, SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATIONS AND ANNUAL MEETING MINUTES

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Kevin Doyle

GCSAA Field Staff

Northeast Region

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)).

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.

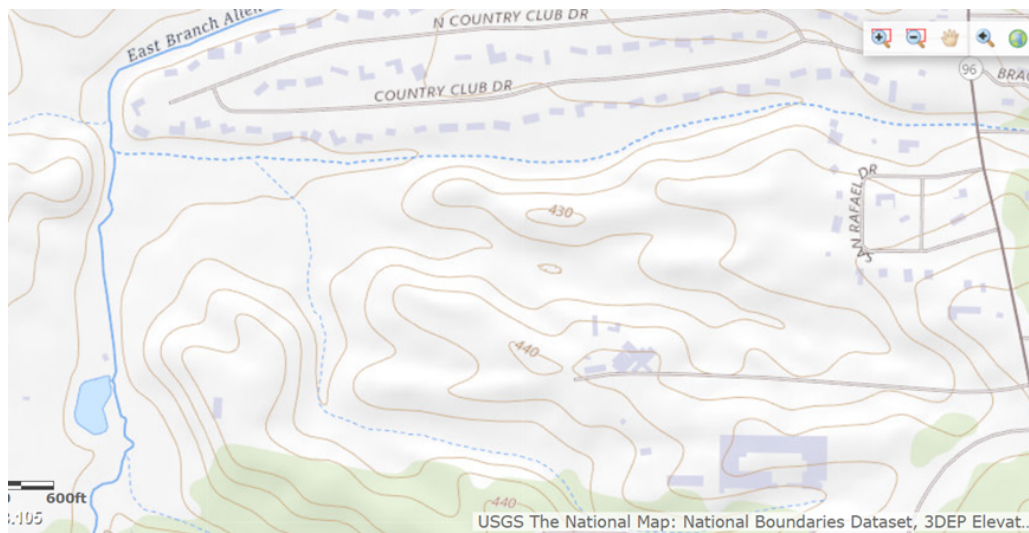
This is the link to the USGS mapping site:

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

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, Irondequoit Country Club, and added the maps that populate below.



While you can see the pond on the back nine of the property is connected to Allen Creek and when following downstream (not pictured) connect to the Erie Canal, clear connectivity. 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, we see the Allen Creek flow is as we expected and because of that, connectivity too. What I didn't expect to see are so many dotted blue lines, including clear across the golf course. These denote ephemeral streams. While only expected to hold water briefly, these are recognized by the WOTUS rule as being federal waters! So.....want to add material to cart paths within the "ephemeral stream" 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? If the low lying areas/culverts and mostly dry areas that connect them were deemed not to be WOTUS, then the facility would be dealing with the town, county, or state only as required. 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!

When I started this Field Staff position at the WNGCSA-FLAGCS education event in March of 2012, the mention of GCSAA often led to a phrase “all I get is a magazine.” My response generally was to ask if the magazine was really good, and to let them know that now they had a resource in me. I want to touch on my efforts to directly deliver GCSAA resources to you the members and do my best to highlight the many resources available to you and working for you daily. Because this is such a long list that includes member, local association, and national level benefits, this segment will include only member benefits. Future newsletters will cover additional opportunities!

All these resources and efforts are specifically designed to achieve the mission of your national association:

GCSAA Mission

GCSAA is dedicated to serving its members, advancing their profession and improving communities through the enjoyment, growth and vitality of the game of golf.

So here now entering year twelve, I now have nearly 1500 contacts in my phone, made hundreds of site visits, attended countless chapter events, written dozens of newsletter articles, volunteered at 16 events, and have advocated for our great industry in many of my regional states and will attend National Golf Day in D.C for the third time this May. If I haven’t been a resource to you yet, lets connect and fix that! Please reach out or see me at one of the many GCSA of NY events I will attend.

Resources for Members

- In 38 states GCSAA members have access to health insurance. NY only allows for their own state-run insurance programs, and/or have certain state limitations, do not allow outside parties to offer options within the state so the GCSAA opportunity is not available to you.
- GCSAA provides free life insurance and AD&D (accidental death & dismemberment) as a part of your membership. The coverage is provided by Metropolitan Life Insurance Company (MetLife) and administered by USI Affinity. Be sure you have designated a beneficiary (form [here](#) if needed). Eligibility and benefits can be found [here](#).
- GCSAA has partnered with trusted companies (listed to the right) to offer exclusive savings on a variety of personal and professional products. If you haven’t looked into these opportunities, you should! Specifics are located [here](#).
- Jump start your career advancement and discuss your individual situation and goals with career services’ Erin Wolfram, CPRW. Wolfram is a certified professional resume writer who specializes in the golf course maintenance industry. Services offered to GCSAA members are free to reduced fee including customized and successful resume services and career coaching resources to help you rise above the competition in the turf industry.
- Free webinars.
- Access to mountains of information, including Michigan State’s TGIF library database, BMP resources, operation reports and surveys (including compensation and benefit surveys), member forums to learn from your peers, and more.
- In 2006, in reaction to Hurricane Katrina, the association established the GCSAA Disaster Relief Fund to assist GCSAA members who suffered personal loss. The fund has continued to be a resource for members who face tragedy caused by natural disasters.



PGA of America

Complimentary grounds admission is extended to all Class AA, A, A-Retired, Class B, Class B-Retired, C and C-Retired members, and accompanying spouse/partner or guest (limit one). To gain access into these Championships, GCSAA members must show their current gold membership card and a photo ID at the Admission Sales & Will Call office located at the main spectator entrance. GCSAA members must park in public parking and take the complimentary shuttle to the Admission Gate.

- As a benefit of membership, GCSAA members enjoy complimentary admission to designated golf events. The tournament benefits linked [here](#) are to be used as a general guideline. If you'd like to enjoy the upcoming PGA Championship at Oak Hill or the Women's PGA Championship at Baltusrol, your GCSAA membership may allow that to happen!

So is GCSAA more than just a magazine....you tell me!

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](#)

WE NEED YOU



We are looking for volunteers to serve on the following committees:

Membership
Education
Meeting/Tournaments
Scholarship/Research
Government relations/Environment

If you are interested please contact Suzanne, Chapter Administrator at gcsaofny@gmail.com