

RHODE ISLAND SURE 'n' TURF

GOLF COURSE SUPERINTENDENTS ASSOCIATION



Getting to Know William Coulter, CGCS By Michelle Maltais



For William 'Bill' Coulter CGCS of Swansea CC in Swansea MA, the end of 2017 brings with it a close of more than a decade of service to the RIGCSA. In January of 2018, Bill, who has worn all the hats of office and currently serves as the immediate past president, will step down and hang up his final hat making way for the next wave of superintendents to take office. "Endings are always bittersweet, it's the end of an era for me," said Bill, "I'm excited to see some new faces take office and help guide the RIGCSA in the right direction for future generations."

The future generation of superintendents has always been at the forefront of Bill's daily commitment to the profession. He has helped many of his assistants go on to become superintendents themselves, guiding them and teaching them along the way. "I had great predecessors who stepped up to the plate and took me under their wing when I was new in the industry, I just want to pay it forward and pass

on what I've experienced with some of the younger guys entering the turf profession," said Bill.

There's no doubt in my mind that the next generation of superintendents lost one of its future members of turf professionals prematurely on November 24th of 2007. Bill's son, Patrick William Coulter, died at the age of 14 due to complications from a heart condition while attending a Providence Bruins Hockey Game in Providence RI. I remember meeting Patrick while on sales calls at Swansea CC and I fondly remember Patrick on the course helping his dad. He would get the flag ready while Bill changed pin placements. He would blow leaves off the greens with a leaf blower. He would zip around and move tee markers as only a teenager could. Not far away, Bill looked on and gave his two cents on Patrick's placement for the day. Bill told him that the placement of tee markers was just as important as the placement of the pin because it could speed-up or back-up play for the day. Patrick didn't even realize it yet but he was most likely on his way to following his dad's footsteps and becoming a superintendent. Spending full days as his father's sidekick, learning to condition the course and prepping it for play, being exposed to daily tidbits of our trade, are all examples of how most guys in our industry got their start.

Patrick who was a 9th grader at Coventry High School was a great kid who was very outgoing and had many friends. He loved sports, especially baseball, and he played on a local youth team.

He was also a huge Red Sox fan and Bill recalls the many memories made when they attended a Red Sox game together. After Patrick's death in 2007, Bill and his wife Melissa of 28 years established a scholarship fund honoring Patrick's memory. Through yearly golf tournaments, contributions, and donations, they were able to endow scholarships to many deserving students. They continued the scholarship until this year, making a final donation this week of \$10,000 to Hasbro Children's Hospital in Providence RI, the very same hospital that fought to save Patrick's life 10 years ago. The lives that have been touched and that will continue to benefit from all the good they have done in Patrick's name is a testament to the love they had for their son.

Bill, who grew up in Exeter RI, has an older sister and a younger sister as well as a younger brother. He attended North Kingston High School and started playing golf at the age of 15. Bill started working in the industry in the early 1980's, first at Exeter CC then later at North Kingston GC. Although he loved the profession he never realized that he could make a career out of it until he was talking to some fellow students at URI who were in the turf program. He eventually switched his major from animal science to turf and graduated URI with a BS in Turf Management in 1988. After graduation, under the keen supervision of Don Silven, he worked for the next eight years as the assistant superintendent at Warwick CC in Warwick RI.

(continued on page 5)

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President's Message



Early in my golf course maintenance career, I was lucky to have the opportunity to work on the volunteer crew at The Masters Tournament. This afforded me the chance to return to Augusta in May and play the course. I worked for a great super at the time and he gave a day off! It happened to be my 29th birthday and I splurged on a one-day round trip to play Augusta National. When I arrived at Bush Field Airport in Augusta, my golf clubs never came through the baggage claim; they were left in Atlanta during a layover!! A business man heard my plight at the claim desk and gave me his golf clubs to use for the day! "If I never get to play Augusta, at least my clubs will," he said. I was now running late for a 10:00 AM tee time at Augusta National. I ran to get a car and headed for the course. On the ride I was slowed by a truck taking up both lanes on the highway moving a house!

When I finally got to the course and ran to the first tee, I was greeted by two members in green jackets who informed me that my group was on the first green. I had the choice to wait for another "no show" or get a ride out to the second tee and play with my group. I had to catch a plane home that afternoon, so I took a 4 on #1 and started with my group on #2 tee. As we waited for play on #3 tee, one of my playing partners asked why I was wearing sneakers. I told him my golf shoes were in my bag in Atlanta and he asked my shoe size. I told him my size and he gave me an extra pair of shoes he had in his golf bag!! The rest of the day was an ordinary round of golf at Augusta National. I shot a 92 with a paper 4 on #1 with a stranger's clubs and a borrowed pair of shoes!!

I relate this story as an example of the camaraderie of the game which is amplified if you work in the industry as a Golf Course Superintendent. In my time on the Board of Directors, I have grown as a professional and a leader, formed great friendships and expanded my network of the great people who work in this industry. I am hard pressed to think of another profession where your competitor will take the time to help you because they appreciate the struggle.

Make it a point at some stage of your career to get involved in your association. It is a time commitment but you will gain more from it than it takes from you.

I am fortunate to have worked with and learned from past presidents John LeClair, Jerry Noons, Mike Whitehead, and Bill Coulter. I am confident in the stewardship of our association by Chris Coen and the incoming board of directors.

Thanks to Richard and John Lombardi for a fun November Meeting at Midville Golf Club. It was a little cold but we were able to get in a round at one Rhode Island's finest 9-hole courses. The December meeting was held by Dean Chase at Carnegie Abbey and as usual, the venue was fantastic.

I look forward to seeing everyone on January 18th at Lake of Isles for our annual meeting and scholarship presentations.

Sincerely,
Drew Cummins
RIGCSA President

December Meeting - The Carnegie Abbey Club



2017 MET Area Team Championships

Westchester CC Par 72 October 16th, 2017

Team Scores Par 288

		Score
1 st	Connecticut AGCS	298
2 nd	Long Island GCSA – low gross tiebreaker score 76	299
3 rd	GCSA of New Jersey – low gross tiebreaker score 77	299
4 th	Hudson Valley GCSA	300
5 th	Central New York GCSA	301
6 th	METGCSA	307
7 th	Philadelphia AGCS	308
8 th	GCSA of Cape Cod	311
9 th	Pocono Turfgrass Association	314
10 th	Northeastern GCSA	323
11 th	Eastern Shore AGCS	327
12 th	Rhode Island GCSA	328
13 th	GCSA of New England	335

Skill Events

Closest to the pin hole #5, sponsored by Ocean Organics	Tim Walker 4'-7" – Hudson Valley GCSA
Closest to the pin hole #7, sponsored by The Care of Trees	Blake Halderman 11'-10" – METGCSA
Closest to the pin hole #10, sponsored by Koch T&O	Mike Turner 8'-1" – Toro
Closest to the pin hole #15, sponsored by BASF	Steve Wall 3'-5" – Central NY GCSA

Long Drive

Net Division sponsored by Syngenta	Matt Beckman – Long Island GCSA
Gross Division sponsored by Toro	Andrew Hannah – Connecticut AGCS
Sponsors Division, sponsored by Bayer	Kevin Seibel – Century CC

Low Gross Team

Steve Whipple & Tim Walker from Hudson Valley GCSA	Score of 75
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Sponsorship Team Winner

Jim Staszowski & Mike Turner from Toro	Score of 69
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Two Man Team High Score

Gross John Lombardi & Dean Chase – Rhode Island GCSA	Score of 89
Net Rich Sweeney & Jon Urbanski – Philadelphia AGCS	Score of 84

Happy New Year Planning!

By Gary Sykes, Executive Director, NERTF

As we approach the beginning of a new year the tendency is to reflect on plans for the future. As each year cycles to a close, we also might look back at our accomplishments to review how we did with our plans over the last year. In my case, on my list, there were two things around the house in 2017 I hoped to be able to do. One was to install a raised bed vegetable garden and the other was to resurface our driveway, which is overdue. I did get to phase one of the garden done and enjoyed our harvest with an overabundance of zucchini, tomatoes and cucumbers, but stopped short of getting the driveway installed due to other complications. Worse things have happened. So, for now I am putting together the plan for 2018 with hope to check off the driveway this year among other plans.

As you look at plans for your facilities for the upcoming year, it is important to always be moving forward. Whether it is to save money on fertilizer, rebuild a green or improve the irrigation coverage of your system. Planning will help improve your chances for success and during the winter is a great time to get the ball rolling by thinking it through and putting plans together. As a good man once told me—Proper Planning Prevents Poor Performance. I am not sure if I have heard a wiser statement....Whether you have done something a hundred times or you're putting into action a new idea for the first time, without a doubt, "proper planning" will always increase your chances of success.

In the northeast, we are lucky to have some down time to do just that. As Winter weather comes marching in, this gives us a chance to break from the weekly routines and to focus on the upcoming season. I have always enjoyed how our schedule sets up in New England with the start of winter and then the possibility of attending the GCSAA show in February and then the first week of March we have the opportunity to come to Providence to finalize or to start to put into action our plans for the next season. There is nothing more enjoyable as you take a plan from off the drawing board to completion in our business. Whether it makes your job easier, members happier or your course better, the time spent planning will be time well spent. I hope you all will get some planning time this winter to do just that. In the meantime, I hope you will plan to come to Providence in March!

The 2018 New England Regional Turfgrass Conference and Show will be March 5-8, 2018 at the Rhode Island Convention Center. The show's brochure should be out in early January. Until then you can go to our website at www.NERTF.org for more information on speakers and the schedule. Online registration is open at this time! Here are a few highlights for the 2018 show:

- 13-2 & 4hr seminars are scheduled March 5 & 6
- Keynote speaker is Matt Light, former Patriot Offensive Lineman
- 13 Trade show hours to speak to company representatives
- 74 total education hours during the 3 full days of the show.
- Pesticide credits for N.E., NY and NJ; GCSAA & STMA credits too!

See You in Providence March 5-8, 2018!

In January of 1997 Bill accepted the Superintendent's position at Swansea CC. He has led the club through many renovations and construction projects in the past 21 years, most notably the addition of a 9 hole Par 3 executive course and most recently an outdoor bocce court facility. When I asked Bill what the biggest change was that he saw over the years he said without hesitating that it was the technology. "Our industry has gone from simple inputs and outputs to cutting edge. From the advancement of the mowers to the science that is applied in the agronomics, the way we do our job has become sophisticated over the years."

Like most superintendents, Bill's favorite part of the profession is being able to experience that pre-dawn golden hour when you enjoy the quiet of the morning. "The morning is very peaceful and magical, the sun rises and nature comes alive—it's my favorite time of day," says Bill.

These days Bill is busy keeping his two-year-old Brittany Spaniel Dog "Jax" in line. "He's a squirrel chaser extraordinaire," Bill chuckles. Jax accompanies Bill to work everyday and has done a remarkable job with the geese. He's very playful and has won over the hearts of many regulars on the course who always have a pocket full of treats for him. Bill and Melissa enjoy traveling somewhere warm when the winter rolls around. "One of our favorite trips has been to Maui in Hawaii, it was amazing. Green is my favorite color and everything there is tropical, lush and green, Hawaii was beautiful." I asked Bill what his idea of the perfect meal would be, he said, "An Italian veal with an ice cold Miller Lite and some carrot cake for dessert."

On behalf of the RIGCSA Board of Directors, we would like to thank Bill for all his years of service.



Here we are heading into the winter season. Black Friday and Cyber Monday have come and gone. For me, I used to look forward to my children bolting for the tree on Christmas morning holding out hope that Santa had delivered the goods. Now they are older and wiser (for lack of a better term), and we simply hope they get off their phones long enough to say “hi” to the visiting friends and family. As for items under the tree for me? I always enjoy the gifts that keep on giving. In the world of giving, you might be overlooking an opportunity to enjoy a gift of continuing information.

You could learn the immediate impact of tree removal from a superintendent in British Columbia, Canada. Want to incorporate duties utilized at Shinnecock or Hazeltine National? Updates from turf researchers as it happens? Are you on Twitter?

That's right, all this and more are right there on Twitter. Yes, there is also political banter, items (good and bad) that go viral, but if you target your audience correctly, the learning opportunities and resources are endless.

With the sun at its lowest angle of the year, it is the absolute best time to show decision makers the impact of shade on your golf courses. Recently, a tree removal video posted by @march_meadows showed the immediate impact of a conifer removal. One tree removed, full sun on the green. Perfect communication tool.

Do you lose sand from some flashed bunkers during the winter? Winds during the off season can create problems with exposed sand. So, when @Greensideup17 (Andy Wilson of Bethpage State Park) posted a picture of pallets placed inside bunkers by @jonjennings to alter the wind effect on the sand at Shinnecock, folks took notice. One of which was @ct_turf (Chris Tritabaugh of Hazeltine National), who also uses a similar technique.

Again, you don't have to set the Twitter world on fire, post every little thing you do or follow so many people that you can never catch up. You can follow those who can impact your ability to do your job, post golf-related items that may affect others, or even grow your world by interacting with people you find interesting. Or, you don't have to post at all. You can follow @GCSAA for resources and ways to take advantage of your membership opportunities.

Perhaps you are already a part of the Twittersphere, if so I hope you are enjoying it. If not, I urge you to dip your toe a bit or jump in. You may find a gift of information that can benefit you more than you think.

I want to wish you all a happy new year. I enjoy serving you all as your field staff representative.

As a reminder, off-season tasks often include tree work. I have used the Newsletter to highlight safety resources available through UMass, allied organizations, and manufacturers in the past. I urge you to revisit those and share with your staff often ([The Newsletter, October 2013](#)).

GCSAA Resources and Deadlines you Get Cool Stuff from your Association Already

GCSAA welcomes Bayer Environmental Science as presenting sponsor for Can Am Cup golf event

Bayer Environmental Science will be the presenting sponsor of the Can Am Cup, the upcoming Canada versus United States golf competition between golf course superintendents. The point-quota competition will be held in New Jersey, Oct. 22-24, at two championship golf clubs: Baltusrol Golf Club in Springfield and Canoe Brook Country Club in Summit. Registration will open online at 1 p.m. (Eastern), June 20, for members of the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America (GCSAA) and the Canadian Golf Superintendents Association (CGSA). Look for more information at www.thecanamcup.com. Space is limited and will be capped at 240 players. The participants, who will be paired according to USGA or Golf Canada official handicaps, will enjoy two rounds of golf and have the opportunity to earn education points.

GCSAA Investigating Political Action Committee

GCSAA is exploring the launch of a political action committee in the fall of 2017. During 2016, government affairs staff presented the concept of a GCSAA PAC to the Government Affairs Committee, GCSAA Board of Directors and chapter delegates, and are now seeking feedback from the general membership on a GCSAA PAC. More information, and to view videos follow this link. **BE SURE TO PROVIDE YOUR FEEDBACK!**

GCSAA partners with Columbia Sportswear for member discounts

GCSAA and Columbia Sportswear Company, an industry leader for outdoor apparel and products, have joined in a partnership to bring savings to association members and their facilities. Columbia is offering a 50 percent discount to GCSAA members on outdoor wear purchases. [Read more](#)

2018 Dog Days of Golf Calendar

Submissions for the 2018 Dog Days of Golf Calendar will be accepted through Aug. 1, 2017. From the submissions, 14 dogs will be selected. Owners of the selected dogs will be notified in September, and the calendar will be distributed with the November issue of GCM magazine.

Plan now to stop by the LebanonTurf booth at the Golf Industry Show in February to place your vote for the 2018 Dog of the Year. The winner's owner will receive a \$500 prize and \$3,000 for his or her GCSAA-affiliated chapter. A \$2,000 charitable donation will also be made by GCSAA and LebanonTurf in honor of the winner. <http://www.gcsaa.org/dog-calendar/submit-dog-calendar-photo>

Upcoming FREE webcasts:

Jan. 24: An Inside Look at GCSAA's Best Management Practices Resource for Facility BMP Plans
J. Bryan Unruh, Ph.D.

Jan. 31: Creating Habitats for Monarch Butterflies & Pollinators on Golf Courses
Chip Taylor, Ph.D.

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



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GCSAA Chapter Delegates Meeting Update

By Rick Lawlor, CGCS

It was an honor to represent the Rhode Island Chapter of the GCSAA this past November at the annual Delegates Meeting. Highlighting the reports from:

CEO Rhett Evans:

- EIFG has \$150,000 in disaster relief and benevolence. Always looking for donations to replenish the fund.
- Members help promote GCSAA brand (recognition = value, credibility, trust and opportunity)
- 10 states have BMP completed. Free seminars to be held at GIS 2018.

Government Affairs Director, Chava McKeel:

- Golf BMP was well received at federal level.
- Political Action Committee (PAC) formed to enhance GCSAA Grassroots Initiative.
- National Golf Day 2018 features volunteerism, Congressional Reception and Rally.

Other Highlights:

- New Certificate Program starting for Assistant Superintendents
- Bylaw/Code of Ethics will be updated for legal housekeeping.
- Election of Directors will be done for individual openings and not as a group.
- Monetary Donations area appreciated at GCSAA online links for **EIFG** and Advocacy **PAC**.

It is noteworthy, I believe, to mention that one of our own (U Mass) is in charge of the overhaul of the lawn areas at the National Mall. Mike Stachowicz joined the National Park Service in 2012, after twenty years in the golf course maintenance business, as the first turf specialist staff position. He is looking for us to join him at National Golf Day 2018 and get dirty working on the Community Service Project tackling the next phase of this huge renovation. It's great to do some catching up and promote the game through volunteerism.

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Tues., March 6 • 1-4:30pm *USGA Session and Featured Speaker Matt Light*
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Golf, Sports Turf, Landscape/Lawn Care & Equipment Techs.
 Thurs., March 8 • 8-10am
Golf, Landscape/Lawn Care

Pre Conference Seminars

Mon., March 5 • 1-5pm
 Tues., March 6 • 8am-12pm
 Call (401) 841-5490 Visit website for details

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RIGCSA Member News

Member News

Wishing **Wayne Zoppo** a speedy recovery from his recent hand surgery.

Slate of Officers for 2018 as proposed by Nominating Committee

President – **Christopher Coen**

Vice President – **James Ritorto**

Treasurer – **Dean Chase**

Secretary – **Scott Gabrielson**, CGCS

Director – **Patrick Hogan** (2 years)

Director – **John Lombardi** (1 year)

Past President- **Andrew Cummins**

RIGCSA Membership dues renewal statements will be going out after the annual meeting on January 16th per the bylaws. We will just be emailing the statements this year from the website which will allow members to pay their dues online and update their membership information. Instructions on how to do this will be sent with the membership dues renewal email. You can still mail in checks to pay your dues. If you do not have an email on file with us, your dues statement will get mailed.

Congratulations to **Tom Hoffer** and **Matt Klida** who were the 2017 team champions for the RIGCSA Centennial Cup. Fifty percent of the entry fee was allocated for our centennial anniversary celebration while allowing our members to enjoy a fun new tournament. Information for the 2018 tournament will be sent out in March.

December meeting update:

At the RIGCSA December meeting, we had **Michael Asciola** from the RI Department of Labor and Training speak to our members about the variety of services they provide including hiring incentives and tax credits. Below are links to the different programs along with Michael's contact information if you should have any questions about these programs. These links will also be available on our website at www.rigcsa.org under the "Contact" tab and then click on the "Links" page.

- Work Immersion (hiring incentive – allowed 10 per year)
<http://gwb.ri.gov/find-talent>
- Work Opportunity Tax Credit (WOTC)
<http://www.dlt.ri.gov/bwc/taxcredits.htm>
- Incumbent Worker Training Grant (\$50,000 in matching funds to train your existing workforce)
<https://gwb.ri.gov/train-talent#1498054777351-07878233-75db>

**Michael Asciola, RI Dept. of Labor & Training
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