

# TurfgrassMatters

Spring 2016

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# President's Report – Chris Harriman

Spring is here and with it comes our “busy” season. While I am not sure we ever slow down, somehow we find another gear in April and May and productivity maxes out as we take advantage of the nice weather. As far as the MAAGCS goes, our hard work over the winter is starting to pay off as we work our way through different events this spring.

Our Winter Education Event was sold out and very well received once again. Galen Evans put together a great lineup of speakers and we heard some interesting points about reducing pesticide use to better the environment. Galen is already hard at work planning for the 2017 event.

The Superintendent/Assistant at TopGolf in March was another great event. This new venue helped us gain perspective of how people who actually make money in this business are building revenue and attracting nongolfers. TopGolf was a ton of fun and it was easy to see why, since we didn't have to putt, didn't have to move from hole to hole, there were TV's everywhere and the food and drink was on point. This was a fun event for everyone and will work well as we plan to rotate it with clay pigeon shooting every other year.

Chase Rogan gave a meaningful talk at TopGolf that centered around being an advocate for our industry. Over the past few years grumblings have increased about the difficulty in finding qualified staff as well as the supply of interns in our area. This may come as a shock, but we all could do a better job promoting our own industry in order to attract more people. I have spoken with the GCSAA on this topic and it will become a new initiative for our association. Simply put, we need to be more visible in middle schools and high schools and start utilizing the First Green Program. The First Green helps draw up an outline to get kids on the Golf Course and show them how science, math and technology is used out here every day. In addition, we want to look at educational opportunities for our Spanish speaking contingent and make sure they are encouraged to engage and move up in our industry. We will be asking for your help on these initiatives and unless we start following through, staffing for our courses will continue to be a challenge.

Sponsorship of the association this year has been outstanding. We now have eight Platinum partners which is incredible! Big thanks goes out to Turf Equipment and Supply, Helena Chemical, Syngenta, Genesis Turfgrass, Landscape Supply, Fisher and Son, Jacobsen and Aquatrols for their outstanding commitment to our association. These Platinum partners along with our Gold, Silver and Bronze partners enable us to build quality, affordable events and also allow us to be unhindered in taking on important initiatives like the BMP project and supporting university research. Please look to our partners as you supply your facility for the 2016 growing season.

Stacey Kingsbury, Dr. Joseph Roberts and Dr. Tom Turner continue to plug away on our Best Management Practices development. As I work deeper into communicating about what we do to benefit the environment to my members, I continue to be amazed how little they know or understand. As our BMP website takes form, I am excited to be able to present them something that their club is buying in to and to have a firm foundation from which we all can reference when asking questions about what direction our environment is heading in.

Finally we are excited to see the draw for the new season long Match Play event that Joe Haskins and Sam Camuso have cooked up. This event is filled up with 64 people and should be a great way to get to know new people and see some new venues. Keep reading our weekly emails for updates on the tournament and good luck!



**Chris Harriman**  
Cattail Creek Country Club  
@Harrimanscash  
Chris@cattailcreekcc.com





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## Advocacy Efforts Heat Up

As winter weather breaks and spring heats up, as do advocacy efforts around the Mid-Atlantic. From involvement in government affairs, or supporting programs that grow the game, each initiative has a purpose. So as you choose initiatives to be a part, I encourage you to align your efforts with your purpose. As you can see, there is no shortage in opportunities to engage.

Pennsylvania is planning its second consecutive PA Golf Day set for June 22. Last year was the inaugural venture, as allied industry members from across the state coalesced in Harrisburg to represent the game at Pennsylvania's capital. National Golf Day serves as the model for state golf days across the country, and we will look to build on last year's success by making the event even better this time around. This year's event is on May 18.

Also in the Government Affairs arena, Virginia GCSA continues to build relationships with the state's Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) as they work on implementing certified nutrient management plans at all golf courses in the state by July 2017. The Virginia GCSA worked with the DEQ in establishing this nutrient management model, which will help the state stay within Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) recommendations for the Chesapeake Bay Watershed. Similarly, the Mid-Atlantic and Eastern Shore Associations are working on their respective BMP models, which help position golf course superintendents as responsible environmental stewards.

On the 'growing the game' side of advocacy, interest in First Green is increasing around the area. First Green is an innovative environmental and STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Math) education outreach program using golf courses as environmental learning labs. Golf course superintendents host students on field trips where they test water quality, collect soil samples, identify plants, and much more. If you are interested in learning more, please contact me! This is a great program that allows us to promote the game within the context of education.

Rounds 4 Research is now complete and over \$2,000 was raised in Maryland (see sidebar). Not only does this program allow us to showcase our golf courses to auction bidders, but it also helps us advocate our research and development efforts to the golfing public. Not only do research efforts help us within the game, but it also help establish baseline scientific facts that can be leveraged in government affairs.

No matter your chosen area to advocate, I challenge you to be involved somewhere, in some capacity. Many of us love the game for reasons beyond the weekly paycheck it provides, and those reasons alone merit our involvement in advocacy efforts. So go ahead, and pick your purpose.



**Chase Rogan**  
GCSAA Field Staff  
Mid-Atlantic Representative  
800-472-7878, ext. 3609

### Rounds 4 Research raises over \$2,000 in Maryland

The 2016 Rounds 4 Research fundraising program to support turfgrass studies, managed by the Environmental Institute for Golf (EIFG), raised over \$2,000 in Maryland. The EIFG is the philanthropic organization of the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America (GCSAA).

The MAAGCS would like to thank bidders and these courses for donation of rounds to auction:

- Compass Pointe Golf Courses
- Falls Road Golf Course
- Hampshire Greens Golf Course
- Laytonsville Golf Course
- Little Bennett Golf Course
- Musket Ridge Golf Club
- Needwood Golf Course
- Northwest Golf Course
- Old South Country Club
- Piney Branch Golf Club
- Poolesville Golf Course
- Rattlewood Golf Course
- Red Gate Golf Course
- Sligo Creek Golf Course
- TPC Potomac at Avenel Farm
- Westminster National Golf Course

The national campaign is supported by a \$50,000 donation from The Toro Co. The program has raised more than \$565,000 since launching in 2012.





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## Top Speakers Highlight the Education Seminar

The Annual Education Seminar held at Ten Oaks Ballroom in Clarksville, Maryland on February 24th was a huge success. In total, we had 200 registrants with pesticide credits available for Delaware, West Virginia, Pennsylvania, Maryland, Virginia and Washington DC. Our title sponsor, Turf Equipment and Supply Company, along with our ice cream sponsor and break sponsors, BASF, Mid-Atlantic DryJect & Turf, Davisson Golf and Floratine put together a great program for all.

The list of speakers provided a variety of different topics and ideas from across the Mid-Atlantic and Northeast regions. Dr. Ben McGraw from Penn State University kicked off the meeting with helpful tips regarding the annual bluegrass weevil, which continues to be a growing pest and topic in the Mid-Atlantic region.

Reducing risk for disease control was presented by Dr. Paul Koch. Dr. Karl Guillard, University of Connecticut, followed with testing procedures for turfgrass nitrogen fertilization. As you all know, our local governments are creating stricter laws relating to fertilizer usage.

Dr. Frank Rossi provided a two-part discussion on practical solutions to our challenges maintaining a golf course. Dr. Rossi is a favorite speaker for many regional conferences and is a normal presenter on Turfnet. He touched on many topics related to water management, pesticide and fertilizer use, and strategies to effectively communicate and address the growing list of challenges that makeup our daily lives.

One of the more unique presentations came from Ron Danise of Ironwood Farms. Ron's background in soil biology and improving microbial activity brought a fresh look into management schemes for your golf course.

Finally, our very own Dr. Joe Roberts gave an update relating to his Anthracnose research at the University of Maryland.

The success of the education seminar is largely in due part to the distinguished speaker list, and the MAAGCS Board of Directors is already working towards 2017!



Dr. Ben McGraw of Penn State



Dr. Frank Rossi of Cornell



Over 200 turf professionals attended the 2016 MAAGCS Education Seminar



Ron Danise of Ironwood Farms





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# Superintendent/Assistant Event a Hit at TopGolf

The MAAGCS Superintendent/Assistant Challenge at TopGolf was a sold out event! Over 60 participants got an introduction to the latest craze in the industry, the high-tech interactive experience of TopGolf, a suped up range facility with target greens and scoring utilizing a microchip in each golf ball!

The program began with Chase Rogan of GCSAA giving an exceptional presentation on GCSAA focus and initiatives. Chase is providing excellent support to MAAGCS. The BBQ lunch was fantastic and the competition was thriving. Teams of six players were formed to square off in the aggregate score competition. TopGolf's basic game features a scoring system based on a player's shot falling into the target area – the further the target, the higher the points. A chip in each ball automatically records the score on the flat panel display.

Eight teams competed in the TopGolf Challenge to see who would prevail as the best on the range that day. There was also a two-man Superintendent/Assistant competition, won by Bryan McFerren and Ray Midkiff of Algonkian and Brambleton golf courses respectively.

## Superintendent/Assistant Competition

**1st:** Bryan McFerren & Ray Midkiff

**2nd:** Chris Harriman & Drew Chevaux

## Team Challenge

**Game 1 Winners:** Jay Newcomb, John Newcomb, Bryan McFerren, Ray Midkiff, Paul Hecky

**Game 2 Winners:** Chris Harriman, Greg Colombo, Drew Chevaux, Christopher Fauble, Matt Harvey, Mike Janzer



Chase Rogan gives an update on GCSAA activities.



Players Compete at TopGolf



Game 1 Winning Team



Attendees Network at TopGolf



Game 2 Winning Team



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# Getting to Know Eric David



**Eric David**

edavid@bcc1898.com

## **MAAGCS Board of Directors**

### **West Course Superintendent**

### **Baltimore Country Club**

September 2013 – Present

### **Penn State University**

Master's degree, Turf and Turfgrass Management

## **How did you get into your current position at BCC?**

I started as an intern and was invited back as the spray technician in 2007. After working on each course as an assistant, I became the East Course Superintendent in January.

## **What excites you most about the MAAGCS in 2016?**

I am excited to see how the members react to the new ideas that have come from the board. New ideas keep the chapter moving forward.

## **What are your goals in your new role within the MAAGCS?**

I want to keep the membership informed about government issues that could affect our industry, and once the government sessions are finished, assist the board wherever I can to improve strategies and programs.

## **What new products or technology excites you in 2016?**

I am most excited to see the development and use of the robotic technology in turf. Although it is still a few years away from becoming mainstream, the courses that are using the technology are starting to see the benefit after a few years in use.

## **Where do you see yourself in 5 years?**

I see myself becoming a head superintendent, hopefully at a place that will embrace new technology in turf.

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# Government Relations – Neonicotinoid Bill Update

This is an update on Senate Bill 198 and the House of Representatives Bill 211 which pertains to the use of neonicotinoids in the State of Maryland. Early indications were that the neonicotinoid bill would be defeated because the House subcommittee had killed the bill. The politics swung the other direction after the Senate passed the bill on March 9 with a 32-14 approval and the House was asked by the Senate to reconsider a much more watered down version of the original bill, which they passed on March 19 with a 96-39 approval.

The neonicotinoid bill will only affect retail sale of the pesticide to *consumers*; that restriction will begin in 2018. Certified applicators, farmers, and those under the supervision of a certified applicator are not affected by the restrictions, so our industry will not have any issues using neonicotinoids for pest control (other than the new federal label requirements). Part of both the House and Senate bills were that nursery stock and seed treated with neonicotinoids had to be labeled. This labeling would alert consumers of treated products, but that portion was removed allowing the bill to pass. Overall, the bill will only affect retail sale to individuals that do not have a certified applicator license. Overall, the bill will only affect retail sale of neonicotinoids by businesses that do not also sell restricted use pesticides and the use of neonicotinoids by those who are not a certified applicator, one working under the supervision of a certified applicator, or a farmer.

The bills have not formally been passed into law because the House version and the Senate version differ slightly and the conference committee will have to agree on the exact version of the bill before it can go to Governor Hogan. If the governor signs the bill and it becomes law, Maryland would be among the first states to restrict or prohibit use of neonicotinoids in response to the Pollinator Protection Act.



Pollinator protection is a key issue.

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# GCSAA Social Event Draws Over 200 in San Diego

The Horton Grand Hotel in San Diego was the site of this year's Joint Social Event at the GCSAA Conference, featuring members of the Mid-Atlantic, Eastern Shore and Virginia Chapters. Well over 200 members gathered for a night of networking, fun, and good food and drink!

The event is sponsored by many companies that support all three associations, which allowed members to attend free of charge. The New Orleans style hotel featured an open air courtyard with live trees and comfortable seating. Several national representatives of GCSAA were in attendance, including perennial favorites Chava McKeel of Government Relations and Leann Cooper of Chapter Relations.

"We love getting together with our colleagues in Virginia and on the Eastern Shore," said Chris Harriman, MAAGCS President. "It is a time of year to renew friendships and make new ones."

In the 50-50 raffle the grand prize went to a Graden USA sales rep, and MAAGCS member and crowd favorite Ed Gasper of Whiskey Creek GC won second place.



Chris Sandels and Corey Haney



Ted Huhn and Lance Seeton



Three Presidents: Jeff Holliday of Virginia GCSA, Tom Tipton of Eastern Shore GCSA, and Chris Harriman of MAAGCS

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Chava McKeel and Leann Cooper





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## Communication is Key

As the season starts, we find ourselves needing to freshen up our communication skills with a number of people. This may include club managers, golfers, staff, and especially new hires that will require a little extra attention. Communication comes natural to some and to others it requires constant practice. Even so, everyone can work on improving this crucial skill.

When retracing the steps of a successful operation, the common denominator always comes down to seamless communication. Likewise, when an operation breaks down, the root of the problem often times comes from some setbacks in communication along the way. This attribute is what defines and separates an organization. Look at it as the grease that keeps all the moving parts running smoothly.

With technology these days, there are many options to help improve communication. The management team that I am apart of has found a great deal of success by using Google docs. This application has allowed us to communicate on many different levels. We have started to use it for a number of scenarios from golf course priorities, to a “to-do” list for our equipment manager, or even to record golf course conditions with an easy to read chart. Also, our team has weekly focus meetings scheduled on Mondays. This allows the management staff to sit down and discuss the priorities for the golf course for the week and to set-up a daily agenda to make sure all goals will be reached. This also gives us an opportunity to weigh the week’s golf schedule against the course’s needs to come up with a happy compromise. Most importantly, by having all key members of management personnel in attendance, we’re all on the same page.

This spring we had an assistant’s meeting at Riverbend Golf and Country Club hosted by Rain Bird. Those who attended had the pleasure to hear great talks from both Mr. Steve McDonald and Mr. Tom Lipscomb. This spring we will be having two more meetings. The first being at Baltimore Country Club on May 18 and the other will be at the Washington Nationals game hosted by Finch Services (date to be announced).



**Chris Sandels**  
Chevy Chase Club  
@Sandels22  
chriiss@chevychaseclub.org

## Thank a Golf Course Superintendent Campaign

Last year we saw the first commercial installment of “*Thank a Golf Course Superintendent*” campaign. The commercial asks golfers to take action. “If you love golf like I do, thank a golf course superintendent” is the tagline and it featured some of the top names in golf including Jack Nicklaus, Ricky Fowler, Rory McIlroy, Jordan Speith, Nick Faldo and Michelle Wie to name a few.

This year the GCSAA has gone a step further and included some high profile sports and celebrity figures including Justin Timberlake, Charles Barkley, John Elway, Brandi Chastain, Jim McMahon and Larry the Cable Guy. The new commercial began running during The

Masters as part of “Live from the Masters” replay on Golf Channel. In addition, celebrities and top golfers also lend their voices to radio the “Katrek and Maginnes on Tap” golf show on the Sirius/XM PGA Tour Radio Network, which features a superintendent interview each Wednesday at 6 p.m.

GCSAA has announced a sweepstakes that will be take place from May 1-31. Golfers can enter at [www.gcsaa.org/thankasuper](http://www.gcsaa.org/thankasuper) or tweet their message thanking a superintendent using the hashtag #thankasuper or #contestentry. The winner will receive a trip to the 2016 American Century Celebrity Golf Championship, July 21-24 at Edgewood Tahoe

Golf Course in South Lake Tahoe, California. The superintendent thanked will be entered to win a special prize too! Please help MAAGCS promote the program.



**Justin Timberlake**



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## OSHA Serves an Important Role at Your Course

The dust is coming off the raingear, walking shoes and TDR 300, but I am ready to get back into the swing of things. The golf season is here, and we're amped up for a fun and exciting season at Sparrows Point Country Club and the MAAGCS season. I have all my notes from GIS, regional seminars and a winter's worth of networking events to apply to our facility this season. Before I get too far into the discussion of ABW's and aeration programs, I wanted to share a story I dealt with this winter that needs to be the backbone of your operation — safety.

During the morning hours of a dreary January morning, I was unexpectedly paid an intervention visit from the Maryland OSHA. As many of you could imagine, my surprise was only met by pure anxiousness that I could be in some trouble. To be honest, it was one of the most beneficial meetings for our facility to date. The unexpectedness of OSHA knocking at your facility can initially be a cause for concern. However, I believe their "old school" methods are now being transitioned into an educational and learning forum for businesses. Golf course maintenance facilities will benefit by taking small steps towards compliance and utilizing your state's OSHA consultation service to improve employee morale and workplace conditions.

A great response has been the accountability throughout our team to ensure our facility is accounted for on every level — cleanliness, inventory, hazard communication, safety tips and continued training. There are a variety of programs that could benefit your facility that are free including an online video catalogue provided by OSHA. Our team has created an OSHA safety wall with a variety of literature pertaining to hazard communication, ladder training, PPE use, injury prevention, equipment safety standards and more.

You can set up periodic consultation visits at no cost to your facility, and give your Assistants an administrative opportunity to take ownership with follow up reports. Even better, encourage your staff to develop a safety committee to ensure performance and practices are consistently being met. Your Equipment Manager should be introducing safety standards on all equipment such as daily service standards, PPE requirements and other accountability measurements.

It is easy to get caught in the daily grind of golf course activities, but it is no substitute for safety training and creating a culture that encourages best practices. Don't wait for OSHA enforcement to come knocking at your door. It is only a matter of time *when* they come, not *if* they come. Work safely out there.



**Tyler Bloom**  
Sparrows Point Country Club  
@tbloom\_SPCC  
tbloom@sparrowspointcc.org



## 2016 Schedule of Events

**April-September:** Mid-Atlantic Match Play Championship

**Wednesday, May 18:** National Golf Day, US Capital, Washington DC

**Wednesday, May 18:** Assistants Meeting, Baltimore Country Club, Baltimore, MD

**Tuesday, May 31:** Chesapeake Challenge, Queenstown Harbor Golf Course, Queenstown, MD

**Wednesday, July 13:** Craig Swiney Memorial Tournament, Musket Ridge Golf Club, Myersville, MD

**Tuesday, September 6:** Superintendent/Pro Tournament, Bethesda Country Club, Bethesda, MD

**Wednesday, October 11:** Stewards of The Chesapeake, River Bend Golf & Country Club, Great Falls, VA

**Monday, November 7:** MAAGCS Annual Championship, Cattail Creek Country Club, Glenwood, MD

**December TBA:** MAAGCS Annual Meeting, Location TBA

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