

# The Green Sheet



# **Central Pennsylvania Golf Course Superintendents Association**

Volume 11 Issue 3

June 2003

# **June Meeting**

Wyncote Golf Club
June 17, 2003

10:15 AM - Speaker 11:00 AM - Lunch 12:00 PM - Shotgun

Hors d'oeuvres/Beverages following golf

There will be a CPGCSA Board of Directors Meeting at 8:30 AM.

# **Superintendent Profile**

Adam Bagwell is a Penn State graduate and native of Chester County. He is at home with fine golf course maintenance and specializes in working with unique Scottish conditions. Adam and his staff work tirelessly to keep Wyncote's award winning course looking spectacular on a daily basis.

## **Golf Course Profile**

Wyncote Golf Club is an award winning heathland (Links) style course with bentgrass from tee to green. Four sets of tees from 5,454 yards to 7,012 yards from the back tees. Excellent course conditions, rated #1 public course in Philadelphia area by Golfweek—4 star places to play, listed with highest score ranking in 2003 Zagat Golf Survey.

Wyncote Golf Club 50 Wyncote Drive Oxford, PA 19363 (610) 932-8900 www.wyncote.com

# Mid-Atlantic USGA Update

Changing Weather, Changes Priorities

By Keith Happ, Agronomist Updated 5-28-03

Early this spring there was a rush to get courses to midseason form. Now, however, there has been a cry to just "cut the grass." The recent change in the weather has brought an abundance of rain to most of the Mid-Atlantic Region. Increased precipitation is a blessing and also a curse. Ponds have been topped off and are even overflowing; topdressing has been worked into the turf canopy; and, most importantly, areas that were damaged last season from drought have healed well.

One of the main issues this spring is keeping up with turf growth. Part-time labor forces and student interns are finally returning to the work force. Maintenance staffs are reaching levels that allow for the use of more aggressive mowing programs. Grass in the rough that could only be mowed once every 7 to 10 days can now be cut twice a week, and even more when necessary.

As has been stated in many updates, be patient. As weather changes and staffing levels improve, a level of consistent course conditioning can be achieved. One of the worst possible strategies to implement early in the season is to cut the turf too low in an attempt to appease golfers that cannot negotiate thick/tall rough. Select a height of cut that allows the turf to perform as demanded during prime golfing conditions.

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# President's Message

What an interesting year so far! It's been great for growing grass, but poor for revenue. It is my hope that your respective clubs are faring well in these difficult times. As I sit here in my office and look outside at the steady rain...AGAIN, I think back to last year when a day like this would have been a dream. Now, it just seems to be a morale-killer for my crew! The one good thing about today is that the weather will allow me to get my newsletter in on time, right Wanda?

How many of you are going through the annual "Rough is too high! Did you raise the mowers?" controversy?! That question seems to pop up every spring, especially this year when we really can't keep up with the grass! I'm sure the phones for equipment sales and service people are ringing off the hook. I feel for you guys because I'm sure you can't get to everyone with their equipment problems!

We had a great turnout for our May meeting at Golden Oaks, especially considering how busy everyone has been. I'd like to thank Stu Hartman and his crew for providing a beautiful golf course, which is laid out very nice! We won't hold Stu accountable for the weather, which turned out to be a nice February afternoon. 40 MPH winds, 53 degrees, rain and drizzle. Needless to say, the knockdown shot was a good shot to know on this day!

That's all for now! We're looking for a great turnout at Wyncote so see you then!

Bill Brooks

## From the Editor

During mid May, I had the pleasure of playing golf in the Canadian Rockies at the Banff Springs Golf Club in Banff, Alberta.

We had a starting time of 8:30 on May 16th. However, due to the fresh inch of snow that fell overnight, our start was delayed until 11:00. Never again will I complain about geese, groundhogs, deer or skunks and the impact they can have on the playability of a golf course. On this course in one of Canada's National Parcs (pardon my freedom), Elk seem just as plentiful as squirrels do in the east! They (and various signs of them being there) are everywhere.

The greens were uncovered the day before our round, and while some of them had some winterkill, other had Elk kill, numerous circular patches 12-20 inches in diameter without a sign of life in it. Footprints were everywhere and are on your line and they don't rake bunkers. Spring cleanup was still underway when we reached the 16th hole. There was an employee with a tractor-mounted blower on the fairway. It looked as if he was blowing aeration cores off the fairways but I couldn't find any holes!

If you think our spring weather has been strange, in the four hours it took to play eighteen holes, we had sunshine, snow flurries, high winds, no wind, a high of 44 F, a temperature fluctuation of 20 degrees F and we saw an avalanche. (Sounded like thunder and thankfully was at a higher elevation).

So, bring on the spring rain and the nesting geese, things really arent' that bad!

Mark MacDonald

PRESIDENT WILLIAM E, BROOKS HANOVER COUNTRY CLUB (717) 259-8706 wbrooks547@aol.com

VICE PRESIDENT, SOCIAL PETE RAMSEY RANGE END GOLF CLUB (717) 432-3711 reec@pa.net

SECRETARY/TREASURER FARON STOOPS WAYNESBORO COUNTRY CLUB (717) 762-6370 fstoops@comcast.net

PAST PRESIDENT/SCHOLARSHIP DANIEL W. ACHENBACH FOXCHASE GOLF CLUB (717) 336-3847 foxgreens@dejazzd.com

NEWSLETTER EDITOR MARK MACDONALD REGENTS GLEN COUNTRY CLUB (717) 505-4664 rgmaint@earthlink.net

MEDIA/PUBLIC RELATIONS THOMAS MAHUTE AFFILIATE REPRESENTATIVE (717) 892-1455 fscmahutel@aol.com

BYLAWS/CHAPTER RELATIONS MARK DELSANTRO, CGCS AFFILIATE REPRESENTATIVE delsantro@aol.com

MEMBERSHIP JOHN COLO SPRINGWOOD GOLF CLUB (717) 747-9088 jc5288@aol.com

STEVE LUDWIG GETTYSBURG COUNTRY CLUB (717) 334-0441 sludwig@blazenet.net

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THEODORE S. ZABRENSKI

# **Membership News**

The following individuals have applied for membership into our association. If there are no written objections within the next seven days, they will be accepted into CPGCSA at the next meeting.

Chris Thomas, Sales Representative Watson Irrigation ...... Class AF

Ian H. Williams, Irrigation Specialist
Outside Unlimited, Inc. ...... Class AF

Jed A. Vail, Assistant Superintendent Heritage Hills Golf Resort......Class B

We would like to welcome the following individuals into our association.

Michael C. Bair, Assistant Superintendent Bent Creek Country Club......Class C

Fred Heinlen, Sales Representative Growing Solutions/Egypt Farms.... Class AF

If you know of anyone who is interested in membership into the association, please have them contact John Colo at Springwood Golf Course (717) 747-9088.

## Congratulations to Steve Ludwig, CGCS

Steve has been designated a Certified Golf Course Superintendent by the GCSAA.

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# **CPGCSA Guest Policy**

Guests will be limited to the following:

- One guest per member per meeting with the approval of the host superintendent. (As indicated on the reservation form)
- Sponsoring member is responsible for any costs to the host's club.
- A guest is limited to two (2) meetings per year with the exception of club officials or with Board approval.

# For Your Information

If you have any information that you would like included in the July newsletter, please fax information to Wanda at (717) 279-0368 or e-mail to cpgcsa@nbn.net by June 20, 2003.



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Please contact Wanda with any employment or address changes, so that we can keep our records up to date.

# USGA ......continued from page 1

root system and good density by not scalping it early in the season. This is particularly important in areas that were reseeded or sodded. Successful reestablishment programs hinge on how controlled fertilization is performed and how regular mowing is completed. Having a lot of grass early in the year is a good problem to have.

Recent turf visits provide evidence that anthracnose is active. In every case, the disease is attacking Poa annua. Also, height of cut adjustment (low mowing) and aggressive vertical mowing have been associated with an outbreak. Over-aggressive use of mechanical preparation techniques can severely predispose the turf. Golfers must exercise patience. As Poa annua stops flowering, playability will improve.

Additionally, the cool, damp weather has encouraged the development of soil-borne Pythium on bentgrass greens in the eastern part of the Mid-Atlantic Region. While we often think Pythium is a disease associated with hot, humid weather, it also can be active and destructive during periods of cool, damp weather when the soil stays wet for an extended period of time. If turf is yellowing in random patches when the grass should not be off-color and the root system is brown versus white, check for soil-borne Pythium. A good diagnostic lab can be your friend to help diagnose disease problems.

If we can be of assistance, contact Stan Zontek (szontek@usga.org) or Darin Bevard (dbevard@usga.org) at 610/696-4747 or Keith Happ (khapp@usga.org)

# Heather and Gorse By Mark V. DelSantro, CGCS

#### "There is nothing either good or bad, but thinking makes it so." William Shakespeare

During my recent travels, I met with a nice, young, recently hired superintendent who was frustrated because of his greens committee chairman's unrealistic expectations. The golf course was old and neglected for several decades. The greens committee chairman was ignorant to the requirements for producing his idea of turf quality. He brought in this young, book-educated, but relatively inexperienced superintendent to save money and "take the golf course to the next level." If only I had a dime for every time I've heard that statement! And yet every attempt this young superintendent made to communicate the resource requirements for producing his idea of turf quality seemed to fall on def ears. Has anyone out there heard this story before?

While initially this caused a rush of bad memories, more importantly this caused me to reflect on something that has professionally puzzled me for as long as I can remember. Our lives, our society, and our world... everything we do and everything we are revolves around quality. Quality of conditions, quality of thought, quality of process, quality of service, quality of construction, quality of food, quality of wine, quality of art, and in some cases, quality of quality itself. But the \$1.64 question is how does one truly define quality?

We all seem to know about quality. The dictionary defines quality as an essential characteristic, property, or attribute. In essence, it's a means of differentiation. Which would you rather have a Mercedes or a Yugo? Filet mignon or a hamburger... a 54" HDTV wide screen TV or a 13" black and white... Augusta National (during the week of the Masters) or any other golf course on the planet? I think y'all get my point? But when it comes to quality, having a sense for what it is and trying to define it are two very different things.

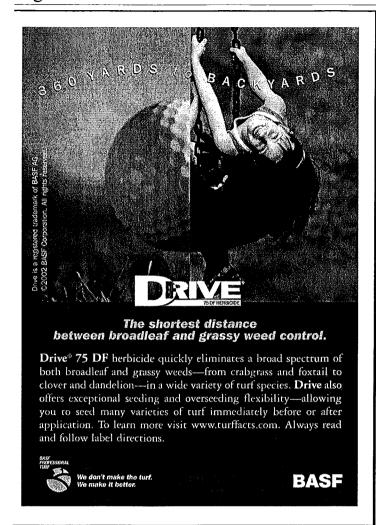
For instance, is quality subjective or objective? One could certainly argue either way. The quality of anything artistic is subjective to the appraiser... beauty is in the eyes of the beholder and all that jazz. Contrarily, the quality of science and technology is fairly objective. Twice times two equals four is a quality mathematical statement that leaves very little room for discussion. But when it comes to golf course conditions can quality be quantified?

I once had a greens committee chairman who was hell-bent on setting up a bonus system that was based on the quality of my performance as a superintendent. He thought long and hard over a way to quantify my performance, which he felt was directly related to the quality of the golf course conditions. I honestly felt bad for him... he actually lost sleep over this subject to a point where it adversely affected his performance at work. He was a sales manager for a small, successful pharmaceutical company. In his profession, he was schooled that everything was either black or white. His performance was measured strictly by whether his sales force made their numbers. If they met or exceeded their sales numbers then quality of performance was assumed and they were rewarded. While his enthusiasm on my behalf was admirable, his inability to come up with a "quality" quality measurement system stressed him out so much he resigned as committee chairman a short time later.

In an effort to further belabour this point; ponder, for a brief moment, the driving force behind quality? Does science and technology create quality or is it driven by artistic appreciation? Can the quality label be assigned where objectivity and subjectivity meet on the continuum of nature or is quality the actual driving force behind the continuum itself? It is my understanding that this topic has been debated, regurgitated, and debated again by some of the greatest philosophers in history. Yet while, for many of you, this subject probably seems insignificant, I would propose to you that understanding the definition of quality, especially in the eyes of your membership and/or greens committee chairman, will play a key role in keeping your job at some point of your career.

The fact of the matter is that while there are some aspects of golf course management that can easily be quantified (budget management, soil nutrition, etiological labor management, etc.), ultimately, the quality with which a golf course superintendent's perceived-value is measured falls on the subjective side of the debate.

One of the best definitions I've heard regarding subjective quality of is that its a materialistic reflection of a spiritual reality. My translation of this is that artistic quality can't truly be defined and as a result, it can't be measured. Thus, in a weird somewhat cosmic, metaphysical way, subjective quality can't logically exist. Now follow me on this... considering it can't logically exist, and yet, we all seem to have an understanding of what it is, it's only logical to state that the root of quality is illogical in nature. And now we're getting somewhere!



# **Golf Results**

The following are the tournament results from the May meeting at Golden Oaks Country Club.

Team	Net
1st Place 71	52
Deron Zeno	lt Bill Brooks
Terry Benn	ett Greg Borzok
2nd Place 71	55
John Chass	ard John Yorgey
Mark Fine	Mark Eichner
3rd Place 71	57
Dan Brickle	ey Stuart Hartman
John Colo	Ted Zabrenski

The tournament at Wyncote Golf Club in June will be 4 man team's, 2 ball betterball. If you have not requested playing partners on your reservation form, you will be assigned a team.

## **Heather and Gorse**

.....cont'd from page 5

Isn't it true that it's quality's illogical nature that makes for stressful days and sleepless nights in the life of a superintendent? All golf course superintendents have experienced this first hand to some extent. The sad part is that it doesn't seem to matter whether the golf course budget is unlimited or extremely limited. Superintendents are in many ways, mere subservient to the opinions of the golfers. They are both the hero and the goat all in one neatly wrapped package. It is this inconsistency and irrationality of the golfer's minds that so strongly influences the ebb and flow of the superintendent's life.

If the golfer putts well, it doesn't matter how good or bad the greens truly are... for that moment, for those four or five hours, for that day, the greens are of high quality... fabulous in the mind of that golfer and thus, the superintendent's is a hero. Contrarily, if the very next day, that very same golfer putt's poorly... for that moment, for those four or five hours, for that day, the greens are of poor quality... horrible in the mind of that golfer and thus, the superintendent has no more value than a piece of turtle dung. The superintendent's ability to handle the ups and downs of each golfer's irrationality is what determines their longevity in this business.

So, my friends, it's all about quality and your ability to define the indefinable, illogical thought processes behind its definition. Don't waste your time trying to understand it! But understand that it's there and it will play a role in your success or failure! This is why you have to play the game with the right combination of fear and arrogance! Some days you'll be a diamond and you'll be a stone. Whichever it may be on whichever day, accept it as is, politely say thank you, and keep doing what you know to be right! That's my quality, illogical, irrational, always cosmic and metaphysical view from the heather and gorse.

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# **Directions to Wyncote Golf Club**

#### From:

#### Harrisburg, PA

Take 283 East to 30 East. Follow 30 East to 896 South. Take 896 South to Route 10 South. Go right on route 10 approximately 2.5 miles on the right.

#### Lancaster, PA

Take Route 30 East to 896. Follow 896 South to Route 10. Go right on Route 10 approximately 2.5 miles on the right.

#### Reading, PA

Take the PA Turnpike to Downingtown Route 100 exit. Follow Route 100 South to Route 113. Take a right on 113 and follow to Route 30 West. Take Route 30 West to Route 10 South. Continue on Route 10, when blinking light at 896 is reached, Wyncote is 2.5 miles on the right.

#### Philadelphia, PA

Follow 95 South to 322 West. Take 322 West to Route 1 South. Follow Route 1 South to Route 10, Oxford exit. Take Route 10 North approx. 1/4 mile. Wyncote is on the left.

#### Valley Forge, PA

Take 202 South to Route 1 South. Follow Route 1 South to Route 10, Oxford exit. Take Route 10 North approx. 1/4 mile. Wyncote is on the left.

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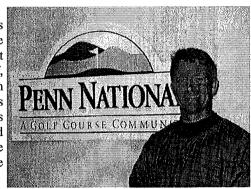
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# Member Spotlight on Matt Strader By Tom Valentine

For this months interview I decided to take a road trip just west of Gettysburg to Penn National Golf Club where I met up with Matt Strader. The first thing that strikes you about that area is the sheer beauty of the rolling green, and sometimes-rocky countryside. The Allegheny Mountains frame out a spectacular western scene speckled with yellow and blue wildflowers amid white dogwood trees just beginning to bloom. On the way out, I passed several whistle stop towns and stopped only once to sample the Civil War Pale Ale at The Pub in Gettysburg. I was imaging maybe even old Abe might have sat on the same stool in 1863 and downed one or two in celebration of the "Address" he'd just given.

Matt Strader was born in Danville, Illinois and spent several of his summers "hanging" around Danville Country Club. Eventually, he got a job working on the grounds crew for Jim Brandt. Jim, a former President of the GCSAA, and Matt formed a close student / mentor friendship. Although always interested in golf, Matt enrolled at Mississippi State University setting his sights on a degree in Parks & Recreation, with thoughts of being in the Forestry Service. When his counselor at Mississippi painted a grim picture of employment opportunities within his chosen major, he ran his dilemma past his friend Jim. "He encouraged me to combine my love of the outdoors and golf and suggested I pursue a degree in turf management." Matt was able to earned his Associates Degree from the local community college right in Danville while interning for Brandt.



When Brandt's son turned down a job offer near West Chester, Pa., Matt decided to throw his own hat into the ring and before he knew it, he was headed East to Pennsylvania and Edgemont Country Club.

After a season at Edgemont, he was hired as the Superintendent at Melrose Country Club. He was there from 1984 until 1991. After having what he describes as a "run-in" with a Green Chairman. (I'm sure many of you can relate to that.) He started looking to expand his turf management experiences. Hearing that Huntingdon Valley Country Club was looking for an assistant, he applied and was quickly welcomed aboard.

He has great memories of his time at HVCC and occasional still wanders back to the ole stomping grounds to see the changes. He stayed at Huntingdon Valley from 1991 until accepting the position at Penn National in 1997.

Matt has been married for nearly 20 years to Kimberley and their family includes no less than four boys, Christopher, Dave, Jeremy and Josh.

Tom: Do you ever imagine yourself taking a job back in the Danville area or are you firmly rooted in PA?

*Matt:* I guess I've always thought about it. I've still got a lot of family back there and I didn't know a soul when I moved to PA, but "Chambersburg" is definitely considered home to me now.

Tom: It must have been a little bit of a culture shock when you first moved out to the Gettysburg area?

*Matt:* It was, but it was also a nice one. My wife, Kimberley, who had been in restaurant management, had a tough time at first, but she's since earned a nursing degree. We had a pretty nice set up in the farmhouse next door to the maintenance area at Huntingdon Valley CC, that was tough to leave behind.

**Tom:** Well, no offense to any of the current or former members of that house, but since you left, I think it's safe to say. It is not looking as "homey" as it did when you lived there.

Tom: What is the history of Penn National?

Matt: Back in the early 60's a man named T K Nitterhouse and a group of investors formulated a master plan for a golf community and bought three farms. Incidentally, the original plan is still being implemented today which goes to show you what a visionary Nitterhouse was at the time. Ed Ault Sr. was the original architect of the Founders Course. In the mid-90s, Bill Love of Ault ,Clark & Associates designed the Forge Course, which moved us up to the present 36-hole facility.

.....continued on next page.....

# Member Spotlight ......continued

*Matt:* In the last 10 years, the area has really busted wide open. We get people from Montgomery County Maryland, Baltimore, D.C. and even a lot from Florida who move back up in the summer to be closer to their families. Even though it is booming, it's still very much a rural area. There are plenty of places to go fishing and camping in all directions.

**Tom:** I get the impression that the weather in this part of the state is dramatically different from that of your suburban Philadelphia counterparts. What were the adjustments you experienced turf management wise?

Matt: (Laughs) It's a lot easier to grow grass out here, but after this interview the cat's going to be out of the bag. In all seriousness, you still have to stick to your program, but in general, the disease pressure isn't nearly as bad and when things do turn purple, it's much easier to bring them back. Most of the time the wind is blowing too much for us to spray so that works out pretty well for us.

Tom: What about Anthracnose or Pythium?

*Matt:* We've seen Anthracnose here and there, but nowhere near on the scale that the Philly courses have had to endure. As far as Pythium is concerned, I haven't seen it in so long; I almost forget what she looks like!

*Tom*: What kind of pressure do you get from the golf committee as far as standards they expect?

Matt: Penn National is still privately owned and although T. K. passed away last year, his daughter and son-in-law still run the place. I report to them and the General Manager. The course is primarily set up for the golf package business, which means we have to set the course up differently everyday. If you are a resident of Penn National, you can buy a membership. In 1996, we put 43,000 rounds through here and last year we shot up to about 63,000.

*Tom:* Do you see that boom continuing?

*Matt:* We're right about where we need to be to maintain the conditions the way we like them, but there's always the possibility of another course. You have to consider that there are 1100 acres here and over 750 Homes with room for another 1000!

(Matt is a member of Central Penn as well as Philadelphia, our thanks to Tom Valentine for sharing this interview.)

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# **Attention:**

Class A and B Members

If you have not yet returned your 2003 CPGCSA survey, please complete and mail by the June 17th Meeting date.

# Turf and Agricultural Equipment Service Technician Certificate Program

For the past couple of years Penn State's Agricultural & Biological Engineering Department has talked about a Turfgrass & Agricultural Equipment (TAE) Service Technicians Certificate program. A class of ten students started this program in late October, 2002, and continued on through a spring session that ended in early March, 2003. These students will return in the fall of 2003 for an additional 16 weeks of classes that will prepare them for a career in servicing turf or agricultural equipment.

For the period from March to October, 2003, these students are interning in some aspect of the equipment service industry. Some are working as mechanics at golf courses, while others have returned to the family farm for the summer. Either way, a documented internship is part of the certificate pro-

gram.

Following this successful introduction of the program, we are asking the Pennsylvania chapters of the GCSAA help in ensuring the continuation of this program with another strong class to start in the fall of 2003. Currently, we have only four applications for the Fall, 2003 class. We need additional students if this effort is to continue.

How can your chapter help? Does your golf course have someone currently working summers that will benefit from a certificate program of this type? If so, let them know about this program! We will be pleased to send them additional information, and meet with them here at Penn State University Park if they would like to tour our facilities. Also, our first year students are willing to talk with prospective students.

Talk to guidance counselors at high schools in your area. As you know, most graduating high school students have never considered a career as a service technician or golf course equipment maintenance technician. Jobs exist, but students and guidance counselors have not been exposed to this career path. If you need Turf and Ag Equipment brochures to pass along to guidance counselors or students in your area, let us know and we will gladly send what you need.

If you would like additional information or brochures to pass along to prospective students or high schools, please contact Program Director Dr. Jim Hilton at 814-863-1817 or by email at jwh2@psu.edu. Visit our TAE webpage at abe.psu.edu/TAE for additional information and a listing of courses.

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# What PDI means for the Golf Course Superintendent

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The result: recognition and reward for your effective management of the golf course and the golf experience you provide for golfers.

Taking charge of your career

Attaining standards through professional development allows you to document your enhanced skills and knowledge levels. To employers, it means that these credentials are tangible and consistent within the profession. They can count on their superintendent to deliver on their expectations.

Consider these benefits you can receive by meeting the standards set by PDI:

• Increase your credibility.

- Take control of your career.
- Create demand for your expertise.
- Command higher compensation.
- Attain the respect of peers, employers and golfers.
- Feel self-respect and self-satisfaction.
- Manage personnel more effectively.
- Expand your ability to motivate and persuade.
- Build top-level technical skills.
- Position yourself as well rounded and proficient.
- Be considered for more responsibility.
- Enhance analytical skills and problem solving.
- Become more action oriented.
- Receive positive performance evaluations.

#### **Build on Your Strengths**

Although only Certified members are required to use the Professional Development Resource (PDR), this tool can provide tremendous support and validation of your continued development. The PDR is a tool that allows you to assess your own skill level, then compare that to your current and future job requirements, and Class A and Certified requirements. The tool eases your search for learning resources by linking to specific educational resources to help you attain the desired skill level.

A strong feature of PDI's competency-based education is the ability to take education from a variety of sources, beyond the education offered by GCSAA. This flexibility can help you obtain education when it is convenient to your schedule. A new structure of Service Points and Education Points offers you the broadest opportunity to accumulate points. In many cases, the rate that you currently take continuing education and participate in community and chapter activities will be adequate to meet your renewal points. For more information on Service and Education Points, see *PDI* at a Glance at www.gcsaa.org.

# Aer-Core, Inc. William Rahling, Bill Mast Bob Eichert, Dennis DeSanctis,

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#### BASF Ted Huhn

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#### Blue Ridge Peat Farm Eugene Evans

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# Egypt Farms Fred Heinlen

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#### United Horticultural Supply Tom Malehorn

981 Hacienda Court Westminster, MD 21157 (410) 867-7474

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## nondering information

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Lebanon, PA 17042 P.O. Box 1420 Wanda S. Fry - Executive Secretary D. Mark MacDonald - Editor

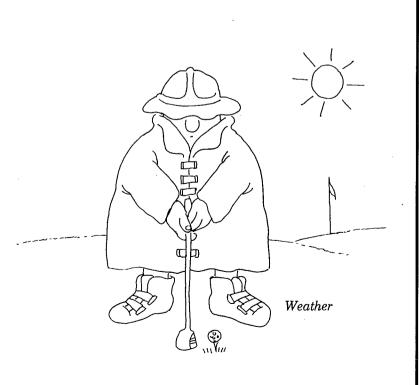
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# 2003 CPGCSA



**Meeting Dates** 

June 17 Wyncote Golf Club Adam Bagwell

Downingtown Country Club July 14 Jeff Broadbelt

Joint Meeting with PAGCS

August 19 Galen Hall Country Club **Bob Mogel** 

September 15 Lebanon Country Club

Jeffrey L. Fry, CGCS Dan Brickley

October 9 Springwood Golf Course

John Colo **Annual Meeting**