



The Green Sheet

Central Pennsylvania Golf Course Superintendents Association

Volume 28 Issue 3

Founded ~ April 11, 1939

June 2021

June Meeting

Lebanon Country Club

3375 West Oak Street
Lebanon, PA 17402

Host - Dan Brickley

Wednesday, June 9, 2021

Registration - 10:00 AM

Speaker - 10:30 AM

Lunch - 11:15 AM

Golf - 12:30 PM Shotgun

Hors d'oeuvres/Cash Bar - Following Golf

Tim Higgins, Senior Hydrologist for David Miller and Associates, Inc. will be speaking to our group about what to expect during the SRBC docket renewal process.

The Golf Tournament Format will be a Shamble, 2 Best Balls of 4

Superintendent Profile

Dan Brickley began his career at Lebanon Country Club in 1995. He was trained and mentored by some of Central Penn's royalty: Jeff Fry, Jim Loke, Dave Spak, and George Hamilton. Dan became Superintendent in 2002. He has been fortunate to work with some great Assistants over the years: Deron Zendt, Jeff Green and for the last 11 years Dan Ebersole. Dan served as CPGCSA President in 2008.

Host Course Profile

Lebanon Country Club was built in 1920 by Alexander Findlay. Lebanon CC achieved it's Audubon certification in 2007. In 2015 a major golf course renovation took place. Using the expertise of Jim Nagle and Doug Mottin; bunkers, mounding, trees, several tees and greens were renovated. The course is currently focused on the "Tee it Forward" initiative. New family tees and 5 new senior tees were built this past winter.

Golf Course Superintendents are Struggling with Maintenance Labor Shortage

By Linda Parker

Posted on April 1, 2021

Ask golf course superintendents across the U.S. to name their biggest challenges, and consistently you will hear one response that makes almost everyone's list: lack of a course maintenance labor pool. Nationwide, golf course management in most areas struggles to find or keep hourly workers for their crews.



While a workforce shortage is a problem that won't be resolved overnight, there are organizations working to change the underlying dynamics in the big picture that contribute to this issue. And there are a few viable tactics golf course superintendents can deploy in the meantime either to improve or offset the pain of being understaffed at key positions.

EFFECTING CHANGE FOR THE LONG HAUL

Golf for Change is part of the Nehemiah E-Community's Urban Impact initiative. Established more than two decades ago, the Nehemiah Project and E-Community is a non-profit global outreach committed to changing lives through entrepreneurship training and job and business development. A faith-based program, the Nehemiah E-Community provides training, coaching, scholarship opportunities, business capital, community and in select areas, business incubators.



Within the organization, the Golf for Change program was launched by Charles G. Kearse, Director of Nehemiah Urban Impact. Charles recognizes that taking pride in a job well done, respecting the environment, and being motivated to get up early or stay late because it is your responsibility isn't a value that children develop instinctively. In households where these standards are not demonstrated by parents, kids may not understand them.

For the past 20 years, Charles has been mentoring and coaching youth primarily from the inner city or underserved communities. "I've personally worked with roughly 100 urban

.....Continued on Page 5.....

President's Message

Twenty percent give or take

Lately I've been thinking of where we will land from the turmoil of the last year. Revenue in 2021 seems to have picked up where we left off last season. Unfortunately this season includes a labor crisis. Apparently there are other ways to change the monetary standard of the working class. Most of us could almost accept it if revenue was there to support it. Golf certainly isn't operating like the lumber industry. Who would of thought construction of your kids playhouse would require a home equity loan.

Golf revenue in 2020 was up as much as 20% and continued this year but I believe the erosion of that increase has started. As life returns to normal, the distractions and commitments are going to lighten up our tee sheets. That sounds insensitive and greedy. Honestly I'm relieved to see kids back on athletic fields, families going out to eat and friends getting together. I'm grateful for those that sought refuge in our sport and am confident our industry will be ok. There is bound to be a small percentage that took up golf in the last year and are now hooked. If someone told you in 2019 your business would increase by 5-10% over the next three years you would be hopeful. For so long golf was stagnant or even struggling to hold on. Just about everything from the weather, the economy, fuel prices and regulation can negatively impact golf. Fortunately one of the worst things to ever happen somehow didn't.

The last year has definitely calibrated my perspective which may have been off a couple of ounces per thousand. Abraham Lincoln said: We can complain because rose bushes have thorns, or rejoice because thorn bushes have roses.

Pete Ramsey,
Central Penn President

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- Have easy access to membership documents and other information in the Resources section.



ChAPpter Challenge

Help your GCSAA-affiliated chapter win \$500 by downloading the GCSAA Now Mobile App. There are two ways for a chapter to win:

- Most chapter member who have downloaded the GCSAA app
- Highest percentage of the chapter membership who have downloaded the GCSAA app

The contest runs May 4-July 31, 2021. You must be a member of the GCSAA-affiliated chapter for your download to count in the contest. Once you download the app, share this page or the QR code with your fellow chapter members to increase your chance of winning.

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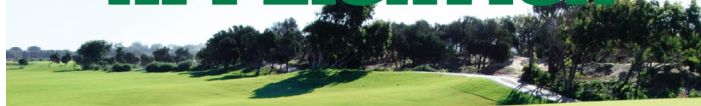
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Membership News

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

Geoff KazeeClass AF
Irrigation Territory Manager, Turf Equipment and Supply Company

If you know of anyone who is interested in membership into the association, please have them contact Wanda at 717-279-0368 or cpgcsa@hotmail.com.

There are a few outstanding 2021 Membership Dues, please contact Wanda if you have any questions about your dues.

Please see a list of our Association Sponsors on Page 16. Please Support Them as they Support Us!

Membership information is also available on the Central Penn website at:

www.cpgcsa.org



Thanks to Doug Hall and his staff at Bon Air Country Club for hosting our meeting on May 18th. The course was awesome, the weather was amazing, and we had a great turnout!



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Golf Course Superintendents are Struggling ...continued from Page 1

children or teens, using the game of golf as a tool for engagement. Golf is a great way to share life skills and leadership and [plant seeds](#) of entrepreneurial development in young people. Everything about golf offers the opportunity for exposing kids to a social path of building positive relationships, values and life skills.”

Through partnerships with [First Tee](#) of Massachusetts, Central Florida, and Charlotte, North Carolina, Charles has helped over 500 teens achieve goals including college graduation, career establishment, business ownership, and community development.

“From [maintenance](#) work to tournament prep to all the responsibilities in the clubhouse and pro shop, kids can’t get interested in these jobs if they don’t realize that the job even exists or that it is an option for them,” said Charles. “They have to be exposed to the rewards of working as part of a team, doing a job well, and taking pride in their work.”

Golf for Change is currently working in partnership with TopGolf and other business and golf industry leaders, including a partnership with NASCAR for high-visibility exposure linked with the many events leading up to the Presidents Cup, which in 2022 will be hosted in NASCAR’s hometown of Charlotte.

The First Green is a program many golf course superintendents already know and support. It is a STEM program of the EIFG, the philanthropic organization of GCSAA. Superintendents recognize GCSAA as the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America, and they may also know EIFG as the Environmental Institute for Golf. The EIFG is a philanthropic organization of GCSAA, dedicated to fostering sustainability through research, awareness, education, programs, and scholarships for the benefit of golf course management [professionals](#), facilities, and the game.

STEM programs refer to science, technology, engineering, and mathematics learning opportunities facilitated in partnership with public schools. By turning golf courses into classrooms, First Green is expanding exposure to the beneficial opportunities and impact of golf courses on communities and on the environment. Recognized as the only program of its kind in the world, First Green has impacted more than 15,000 school children and teens since its founding in 1997.

The First Green provides structured opportunities for golf course superintendents and turf managers to host field trips for students from their local middle or high schools. Superintendents who register to host through First Green receive a supplies list (much of which they will already have on hand) and full lesson instructions for conducting each lab activity they choose to offer. As the Introduction to First Green explains, “Every square inch of fairway, rough and greens offer many lessons in golf course habitat.”

The innovative programs of the First Green provide a failsafe plan for exposing students to the math, science, ecology and life lessons of a golf course. Every step of an outing, starting with how-to reach out to school administrations, is supported with resources to make the experience fun and exciting for students and painless for superintendents.



GCSAA Chapters hosts workshops to introduce members to First Green and will facilitate workshops with volunteers from the local chapter. Hosting and volunteering on First Green Field Trips allows GCSAA members to earn service points toward their Class A or CGCS goals.

DO LESS WITH LESS

The First Green and Golf for Change provide experiences and exposure to golf courses as places to play and work and enhance the environment. These programs position students from varied economic backgrounds to see firsthand that golf courses have opportunities for them, whether their goal is a reliable job in a great work environment or a golf industry career that includes higher education.

However, inspiring the next generation of workers doesn’t resolve the immediate workforce problem. The [USGA](#), aware that a labor shortage challenges superintendents across the country, has a few quick-fix recommendations. Paul Jacobs, USGA Agronomist, in his article, “Labor Suggestions for Solutions” gives five practical tips:

- Reduce maintenance in nonessential areas
- Make the work shift hours you offer more flexible to accommodate workers in school or with additional jobs
- Rake bunkers Aussie-style, raking on the bunker bottom on a regular basis, leaving the face smooth
- Reduce the frequency for re-grassing by investing in higher performance turf and simplify bunker design or even eliminate some bunkers
- Upgrade technology to more automated or more efficient options

Other suggestions include outsourcing select activities to independent contractors and, of course, keeping wages competitive. Some superintendents have been successful in filling staff positions by enticing golfers, especially teens or retirees, with pay plus plenty of free or deeply-discounted playing or range time. Cross training existing employees from the pro shop and other roles to

handle specific tasks can also help reduce the need for additional hires.

THINKING OUTSIDE THE TEE BOX

Jim Pavonetti CGCS, golf course superintendent at [Fairview Country Club](#) in Connecticut, has a twofold approach to sustaining his staffing needs. ([See: Black Water and Environmentally Green Results, February 2020](#)).

The Fairview property includes acreage that previously belonged to a hospital. Jim has been able to incorporate on-site housing for much of his [maintenance](#) crew into his job offers because the course property features dormitory-style accommodations once used to house nursing staff.

The potential to include housing in a hiring package is a huge windfall for attracting seasonal workers from all parts of the country. Superintendents who struggle to find staff might consider starting a conversation with club members to see if anyone has rental properties to offer at a reduced rate or in return for desirable concessions. Other options include developing affordable deals for seasonally underutilized college campus housing, camp retreats and other outside-the-box venues.

The second strategy Jim uses in securing his staffers year after year is one of relationship building. By creating strong connections within his seasonal crew, he finds that they continually replenish their own ranks by referring friends or family members when openings become available. “Because they have created their own network,” said Jim, “I start the process and incoming referrals are already prepped by their peers when they start working.”

BIGGER THAN GOLF

The labor crisis in the golf industry is part of a pervasive problem in America in which both manual and skilled labor workers are in short supply. An economic recession would offset the situation, but that’s a high price to pay for a temporary reprieve.

For golf course superintendents who must compete with hundreds of other employers for the same manual labor pool, relief will likely come only through a combination of increased automation and continually creative hiring strategies.

Linda Parker has been writing professionally since the 1980s. With clients in finance, sports, technology, change enablement, resorts and nonprofit global initiatives, Linda helps organizations communicate their stories in meaningful ways to the people they most want to reach. She has authored, ghostwritten or contributed to more than a dozen nonfiction books. Linda is a member of the Authors Guild and the Golf Writers Association of America. You can connect with her at linda@glindacreative.com

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Verdure: It's not easy being green

Mike Fidanza, Ph.D., explores matters of color in turfgrass, from stand uniformity to the evolution of visual evaluation methods (complete with the musical stylings of a famous frog).

March 2021 | Mike Fidanza, Ph.D.

In Kermit the Frog's signature ballad, "It's Not Easy Being Green," Kermit struggles with his green nature, but eventually accepts his greenness and is actually quite pleased about it.

Turfgrass is green, of course, but it's those vast shades of green that spark debate as to what's the preferred green color for turf. Some prefer the darkest green, while others prefer lighter hues similar to emeralds, a Granny Smith apple or a lime.

There is no best or worst shade of green, as long as the turfgrass is healthy. Turfgrass color through the seasons can be used to indicate overall plant health and also possible nutrient deficiencies; damage or injury caused by disease, insect pests or environmental stresses; mechanical or equipment-imposed stresses; or even phytotoxicity from a product application.

Turf playability and performance are not influenced by genetic color of a species or cultivar; however, color can make a difference with the aesthetic appeal of a stand. For example, on creeping bentgrass putting greens, visual uniformity may be important when blending two or more cultivars. Creeping bentgrasses tend to segregate over time, particularly seen in late fall and winter, so a darker green cultivar blended with lighter green cultivars results in a patchy or mottled surface. This may be an acceptable putting surface to some but not others. In those situations, the yellow-green color of annual bluegrass makes it stand out more among the darker green creeping bentgrasses.

As another example, for athletic fields, where three or four cultivars of Kentucky bluegrass are blended together, it's important that the shades of green among those cultivars are compatible and pleasing to the eye versus one dark green cultivar appearing as polka dots against a canvas of light green.

In research plots, scientists have traditionally measured and interpreted turf color on a visual basis. The first documented use of

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visual color to evaluate turf research plots was back in 1934, in a report from the Rhode Island Agricultural Experimental Station. Since then, there have been several studies on ways to improve visual evaluation techniques of turf color and other parameters. In the early 1980s, the National Turfgrass Evaluation Program formalized the visual 1-to-9 scale, where 9 = darkest green color, and 1 = straw brown. Why not a 1-to-10 scale? The story goes that at the time, the computer program only allowed for one single-digit entry, thus the 1-to-9 subjective-qualitative scale used today.

In the early 2000s, along with the advent of digital photography replacing 35 mm film cameras, Doug Karcher, Ph.D., and Mike Richardson, Ph.D., at the University of Arkansas developed a method using digital image analysis to quantify turfgrass color, resulting in an objective dark green color index (DGCI), which has become the standard practice for turf research. A digital camera is mounted onto a lightbox (a metal box with lightbulbs inside) with an opening for the lens to peer through. The box is placed over the plot and an image captured. The image is then analyzed by a computer program to calculate the DGCI number.

Recently, a study was conducted on bermudagrass to evaluate the analysis of those digital images with the color-distance modeling algorithm commonly used in color science. The model was used to determine whether a color difference from a turfgrass image would likely be perceptible to the human eye. This is important, because slight differences in DGCI values might go completely unnoticed and skew research results. With bermudagrass color evaluations, this method further validated the accuracy of the DGCI.

But still, there's something about our human eye that can draw upon many years of experience to integrate our visual perception of turf color, density, uniformity, stand and surface characteristics, and overall plant health — elements that a digital image and computer program can't quite capture yet. So, like the song says, "It's not easy being green." And if you like Kermit's song, [Ray Charles' version](#) is great too.

Source: Berndt, W.L., D.E. Karcher and M.D. Richardson. 2020. Color-distance modeling improves differentiation of colors in digital images of hybrid bermudagrass. *Crop Science* 60(4):2138-2148 (<https://doi.org/10.1002/csc2.20158>).

[Mike Fidanza](#) is a professor of plant and soil science in the Division of Science at the Penn State University Berks Campus in Reading, Pa. He is a 19-year member of GCSAA.

Verdure: It's not easy being green - GCMOnline.com

Announcing the latest Master Greenkeepers

4 JUNE 2021

BIGGA is incredibly proud to reveal the identities of the latest members to achieve the Master Greenkeeper Certificate.

Joining some of the leading names within the turf management industry from across the globe are five outstanding BIGGA members who have achieved what is widely perceived to be the highest recognition in greenkeeping.

BIGGA CEO Jim Croxton said: “Congratulations to our latest batch of Master Greenkeepers, who join a prestigious list of some of the brightest and best names the industry has ever seen. Achieving the Master Greenkeeper Certificate is no mean feat and for a number of these candidates, the process has been long and has not been without setbacks. For those candidates, the courage and conviction to deal with the knock back and then return and achieve their goals is testament to the commitment and passion they’ve shown the profession throughout their careers and I’m delighted to welcome all five to the ranks of those we are proud to call Master Greenkeepers.”



Alan FitzGerald has achieved Master Greenkeeper status

For the first time since 2019, BIGGA is delighted to reveal the names of those who will be added to the roster of Master Greenkeepers, which began in 1991. They are:

81. Gregory Jones MG CGCS, 40, Golf Course Superintendent, Champions Run, Nebraska

“When I saw a phone call from the UK on my cell phone, I almost didn’t want to answer it. After failing the written exam before, I wasn’t prepared for another let down, but I gathered up the courage and answered it anyway. Receiving the news that I had passed was a feeling like none other! I was in the middle of spraying greens and I think I scared a couple of folks having coffee on their decks when I did a couple of fist pumps!”

82. Anthony Williams MG CGCS, 57, Director of Golf Course Operations, TPC Four Seasons Las Colinas, Texas

“To become a Master Greenkeeper is the grandest of achievements for a greenkeeper. I thought, how can I say I have served my club at the highest level and not be a Master Greenkeeper? Being Master Greenkeeper number 82 is a dream come true and I will work hard to be worth it each and every day.”

83. Matthew Aplin MG, 40, Course Manager, Goring & Streatley Golf Club, Berkshire

“It means the world to me to become a Master Greenkeeper. Once I attended the Master Greenkeeper workshop at BTME three years ago, I realised how much I wanted to challenge myself and my team, to see how far we could go. To pass the course assessment at Goring & Streatley was great and a reflection of what a great team I have the privilege to work with.”

84. Alan FitzGerald MG, 45, Golf Course Superintendent, LedgeRock Golf Club, Pennsylvania

“I cannot remember the last time that I was as excited as I was when I got word that I had become Master Greenkeeper number 84. The standards to become one are extremely high, which is shown by how few have gained the distinction over the last 30 years. Becoming a Master Greenkeeper is the accumulation of everything I have done over my career, which is why I am extremely excited and honoured to be a member of this select club.”

85. Greg Fitzmaurice MG, 42, Course Manager, Hunley Hotel & Golf Club, North Yorkshire

“I have always looked at ways to improve, in order to be the best that I can be. Attaining the Master Greenkeeper Certificate has been another way of doing this and the process has been very challenging, motivating, rewarding and enjoyable. I have not only been able to improve my own attributes, but also improve the facilities at Hunley along the way.”

The Master Greenkeeper Certificate is awarded to those members of BIGGA who have reached the highest standards of greenkeeping and golf course management. Examination is rigorous and candidates must pass three stages to achieve the certificate, including an assessment of golf course operation and a case study and technical examination, on top of 10 years’ experience as a greenkeeper with at least three years spent in a course manager, head greenkeeper or superintendent position.

To find out more about the Master Greenkeeper Certificate and to get involved, head to the [BIGGA website](#).

[Announcing the latest Master Greenkeepers | BIGGA](#)

CONGRATULATIONS ALAN!!

Did You Know?

- In the 1400's a law was set forth in England that a man was allowed to beat his wife with a stick no thicker than his thumb. Hence we have 'the rule of thumb'
- Many years ago in Scotland, a new game was invented. It was ruled 'Gentlemen Only...Ladies Forbidden'...and thus, the word GOLF entered into the English language.
- The first couple to be shown in bed together on prime time TV was Fred and Wilma Flintstone.
- Every day more money is printed for Monopoly than the U.S. Treasury.
- Men can read smaller print than women can; women can hear better.
- The cost of raising a medium-size dog to the age of eleven: \$16,400
- The average number of people airborne over the U.S. In any given hour: 61,000
- The San Francisco Cable cars are the only mobile National Monuments.
- Each king in a deck of playing cards represents a great king from history: Spades - King David, Hearts – Charlemagne, Clubs – Alexander the Great, Diamonds - Julius Caesar
- $111,111,111 \times 111,111,111 = 12,345,678,987,654,321$
- If a statue in the park of a person on a horse has both front legs in the air, the person died in battle. If the horse has one front leg in the air, the person died because of wounds received in battle. If the horse has all four legs on the ground, the person died of natural causes.
- Only two people signed the Declaration of Independence on July 4, John Hancock and Charles Thomson. Most of the rest signed on August 2, but the last signature wasn't added until 5 years later.
- Coca-Cola was originally green.
- It is impossible to lick your elbow.
- The State with the highest percentage of people who walk to work: Alaska
- The percentage of Africa that is wilderness: 28% (now get this...) The percentage of North America that is wilderness: 38%
- Intelligent people have more zinc and copper in their hair.
- The first novel ever written on a typewriter, Tom Sawyer.



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October 27
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TENTATIVE DATE: AUGUST 5, 2021



Everything's Becoming a Subscription, and the Pandemic is Partly to Blame

Heather Long, Andrew Van Dam, The Washington Post

Six restaurants in Washington, D.C., joined together earlier this year to sell a subscription supper club. They offered home delivery of a gourmet meal from a different chef each week for six weeks for \$360. It sold out in six days. ©

Subscriptions boomed during the coronavirus pandemic as Americans largely stuck in shutdown mode flocked to digital entertainment and signed up for regular home delivery of boxes of items such as clothes and chocolate. But what really set the past year apart was the increase in subscriptions in the hard-hit services sector. Owners of restaurants, hotels, home-repair companies and others upended their traditional business models to try subscriptions and often found more interest — and revenue — than they anticipated.

“This was really about flipping the business model for restaurants: paying before eating instead of eating before paying,” said Vinay Gupta, a winemaker who spearheaded the Summerlong Supper Club in Washington and New York City.

[iTrapped: All the things Apple won't let you do with your iPhone](#)

The subscription economy was on the rise before the pandemic, but its wider and deeper reach in nearly every industry is expected to last, even after the pandemic subsides in the United States. The UBS financial services firm predicts that this “subscription economy” will grow to \$1.5 trillion by 2025, more than double the \$650 billion it's estimated to be worth now.

Subscriptions bring in upfront revenue, strengthen relationships with customers and give companies much deeper data on what sells. Even hotels and car washes have begun offering an enhanced and more exclusive experience — for a monthly or annual fee.

However, the rapid growth of subscriptions has created a host of challenges for the economy, far outpacing the government's ability to scrutinize aggressive marketing practices and ensure that consumers are being treated fairly, consumer advocates say.

[What are Americans making for dinner? Reservations.](#)

Even so, subscriptions remain wildly popular. The growth reflects a transition in the economy from spending heavily on goods back to services, as Americans feel more comfortable with traveling and being in crowds. Although e-commerce and entertainment subscriptions to sites such as Netflix, Hulu and Disney Plus made headlines during the pandemic for soaring growth, analysts expect that more service-sector companies will now see skyrocketing interest.

[These subscriptions are a fun way to treat yourself](#)

The typical U.S. consumer now has two to three subscriptions, according to user data from budget app Mint and research by Tien Tzuo, author of “Subscribed” and chief executive of subscriptions platform Zuora.

There's a growing trend of “power subscribers” with 10 or more recurring payments, according to budgeting app Truebill. The app's users average 17 subscriptions and typically spend \$145 a month, according to an analysis Truebill did for The Washington Post. Last spring during the shutdowns, Truebill users averaged 21 subscriptions, as people tried different entertainment, home workout and delivery services.

“It might feel a little odd right now because it's new. But when cable TV first came out and we went from four to 150 channels, we didn't know what to do with 150 channels. Then there was 1,000 channels. I think people will want more,” said Tzuo, former chief strategy officer at Salesforce and founder of Zuora.

Already, companies Apple, Peloton and NBCUniversal's Peacock video-streaming platform are reporting that subscriptions have been key drivers of revenue growth. For example, Peloton's subscription revenue grew 144 percent in the first three months of this year compared with a year ago, and subscribers to Apple's various services for fitness, games, music and podcasts have increased by 145 million in the past year.

Travel website Tripadvisor is starting a \$99 annual Tripadvisor Plus product that offers exclusive deals and dedicated customer service lines, which could influence an industry wrecked by pandemic shutdowns.

[As air travel rebounds, TSA warns of longer waits at start of busy summer season](#)

“Post-covid, we think the regular traveler is ready to embrace the subscription product,” Tripadvisor chief executive Stephen Kaufer said on a recent earnings call. “Subscription products in general have been doing quite well. ... Many others have educated consumers on the notion of signing up for something on an annual basis.”

Businesses say subscriptions also give them even more data on what customers like and how best to cater to them.

“We are shifting from a transactional economy to a relationship-driven one,” said Adam Levinter, author of “The Subscription Boom.” “A subscription is a recurring touch point with the customer. It's that constant reminder that people have a relationship with the brand.”

Subscriptions are not a new concept. The idea of paying a recurring fee for a farm share or a wine-of-the-month club has been around for decades, but analysts say the rise of smartphones and rapid home delivery in the past decade have made customers increasingly willing to try new products and shop in different ways.

The trend appears likely to endure. Truebill has seen little decline in spending on food-delivery subscriptions and home-workout services, such as Peloton, even as spending on gym memberships has ramped up in recent weeks.

Indeed, that's part of the reason Federal Trade Commission regulators are looking at ways to make it harder for companies to trap consumers into monthly subscriptions that drain their bank accounts, attempting to respond to a proliferation of abuses by some companies over the past few years.

Even customers who understand what they signed up for sometimes say that they are shocked to realize how much they are spending each month and that they are ready to pare back.

"Subscription services are a sneaky wallet drain," said Angela Myers, 29, of Pittsburgh. "You keep signing up for things and they make it really hard to cancel."

Myers said she signed up for a monthly clothing delivery from Stitch Fix and meal kits from Blue Apron at the start of the pandemic shutdowns last year. She's paying \$120 most months on top of subscriptions to Netflix and cable, and she's ready to prune.

The media industry, in particular, illustrates that there can be saturation points for subscription-laden sectors. Although overall subscriptions soared during the pandemic, [Netflix](#), Disney Plus and HBO Max have all had [slowing subscriber growth](#) this year.

However, forecasts remain strong for industries just starting to open up to the subscriber model, especially in the service sector.

In the restaurant industry, subscriptions have become a lifeline during the pandemic, especially for smaller establishments that were forced to close their dining rooms for months. These boutique restaurants never aspired to get into the mass-delivery business, but they found a sizable share of customers willing to pay upfront for an experience.

Restaurants often include wine or cocktails, notes explaining the backstory of the meal and sometimes even suggested music, smells or decor to complement the cuisine.

"Our meal packages come with music playlists for the night. If it's French cuisine, we might include a French lavender candle and a French song play list," said Aaron Silverman, chef and owner of Rose's Luxury, one of the six restaurants that participated in the D.C. supper club subscription and also [offers its own subscription](#). "This is not an alternative to takeout. This is an alternative to going out. It's an experience at home."

Table 22 is a new platform to help smaller restaurants manage subscriptions and delivery. It started in May 2020 with Saba San's in Austin and now has 200 restaurants in 60 cities, including Rose's Luxury, which has continued to grow its subscription business.

"Our average subscriber is spending \$75 to \$80 a month," said Sam Bernstein, founder and chief executive of Table 22. "Subscribers are often people who come in the most to restaurants. They are people finding new ways of experiencing these brands."

There's some concern that as Americans flood back into restaurants, they might pare back subscriptions, but specialty restaurants appear to be retaining subscribers.

Robert Haddad has also become a proponent of the subscription model. His family owns several car washes in the D.C. area. They opened a second location — Fusion Carwash in Frederick, Md., — this year designed around subscriptions. Every tier of wash, from the quick soap to the fancy ceramic coating and interior detailing — has a monthly subscription option for about 1½ times the price of a single wash.

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Haddad was a pioneer of the subscription model. He started it about a decade ago at his family's Love My Carwash in Germantown, Md., after the Great Recession. Subscriptions now make up 30 to 40 percent of his business.

"When you have a large base of subscriptions, you know how much revenue you have coming in on a recurring basis, that helps you with budgeting, that helps you with labor scheduling and cost," Haddad said, adding that the word of mouth generated by loyal customers more than makes up for the occasional super-active customer who takes advantage of the subscription to get daily or hourly washes.

But there are also concerns that the subscription boom is another iteration of the two-tiered economy. New subscription services across many industries are creating an entirely different experience for people willing to pay.

"These subscription services do reinforce the divides between haves and have-nots," said Liping Cai, a professor and director of Purdue University's Tourism and Hospitality Research Center.

Several prominent hotels and resorts began piloting subscriptions last year hoping to take advantage of the "digital nomad" crowd that could work anywhere and might want a change of scenery from their apartments. Some hotels told The Post that they were surprised to find interest from college students and retirees as well.

CitizenM, a Netherlands-based boutique hotel chain, began a subscription program last year that offers 29 nights at any of its properties around the world for \$1,500 a month. CitizenM said more than 230 have been purchased.

Freehand Hotels, a boutique chain based in the United States, has a \$2,999 subscription for travelers to stay at any Freehand property for up to a month. The company received 200 inquiries in the first month and several dozen people have signed up, said chief commercial officer Edward Pinchard. Subscribers like that they can stay in New York during the week and fly to Freehand's Miami location for the weekend, he said.

Another drawback to this new luxury hotel subscription model is that discounts and services such as daily room cleaning that had long been standard in hotels before the pandemic could easily evolve into subscriber-only perks, said Wayne Smith, professor of hospitality and tourism management at Ryerson University in Canada.

"What was normal before covid, does that now become the enhanced service for a fee?" he said.



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Selina, a boutique hotel chain whose investors include WeWork co-founder Adam Neumann, began a subscription last year called CoLive at its properties in Europe, Latin America and the United States. Prices range from about \$350 a month for a hostel-style bed to \$5,000 a month for a luxury suite in Tulum, Mexico. CoLive comes with a free welcome drink and complimentary yoga and wellness classes, as well as discounts for food and other services.

Mark Biery, Selina's global head of subscriptions, said he expects subscribers to eventually account for half of the chain's business. The company plans to offer an annual subscription soon that would allow people to visit Selina's different properties throughout the year.

Souhila Hamiham signed up for the hostel-sized-bed CoLive subscription in October. Her marketing job suddenly allowed her to work from anywhere and she decided to head to Mexico. She had initially stayed at an Airbnb but found it boring to be alone. She discovered Selina and immediately loved that the properties offered co-working spaces, wellness classes and a community of other digital nomads. She ended up living at CoLive properties for eight months with stints in Mexico, Costa Rica, Colombia and Brazil.

"I met a lot of people doing this. We started planning our travel together. It was really cool," said Hamiham, 22, who normally calls Toronto home. "Now that I've tasted this, there's no way I'm going back to [the] office. If I have to go back to the office, I would look for another job that offers me the chance to travel and work remotely."

Yeganeh Torbati contributed to this report.

https://www.msn.com/en-us/news/us/everythings-becoming-a-subscription-and-the-pandemic-is-party-to-blame/ar-AAKBwj9?ocid=NL_ENUS_A1_20210606_2_2&bep_ref=1&bep_cid=29385

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PA COVID-19 Update

The Wolf Administration is reminding Pennsylvanians that all businesses, events and venues can return to 100 percent capacity with the lifting of COVID-19 mitigation orders starting Monday, May 31 at 12:01 a.m.

The current order requiring masks for unvaccinated and partially vaccinated individuals will remain in place until June 28 or when 70 percent of Pennsylvanians age 18 and older get their second dose of Pfizer or Moderna vaccine, or the single-dose Johnson & Johnson vaccine, whichever comes first.

The Department of Health recommends that Pennsylvanians refer to [CDC guidance and recommendations](#) regarding on-going COVID-19 safety measures and procedures. Municipalities, businesses and school districts may continue implementing stricter mitigation efforts.

Once the statewide masking order is lifted, Pennsylvania will continue to follow the CDC guidance for wearing a mask where required by law, rule, and regulations, including local business and workplace guidance. The CDC requires individuals to wear a mask on planes, buses, trains, and other forms of public transportation traveling into, within, or out of the United States, and in U.S. transportation hubs, such as airports and stations. In addition, all individuals should still follow guidance at workplaces, local businesses, long-term care facilities, hospitals, prisons and homeless shelters.

What Are Your Ball Marks Telling You?

May 21, 2021

John Daniels, Agronomist, Northeast Region

Very few things are more frustrating for golf course superintendents than greens littered with ball mark damage. It's easy to focus on the fact that many golfers still do not know how to [properly repair a ball mark](#), or choose to ignore the importance of doing so. However, it might be more productive to focus on individual ball mark characteristics and what they are telling you. The shape, depth and quantity of ball marks can give clues on how the greens are performing and where management practices might need to be adjusted.



The prevalence of deep, pitted ball marks could indicate the need for more sand topdressing.

If you are frequently seeing deep craters that are difficult to repair, it is likely a sign that the greens are overly soft. Perhaps the concentration of organic matter is too much and they could benefit from additional sand topdressing? Or maybe the turf canopy is thin and in need of additional fertilizer? Is it possible that watering practices need to be scaled back or supplemental drainage is needed to accelerate drying following a rain?

Of course, there are many factors that can influence the frequency and severity of ball marks on a particular green that are not easily corrected with agronomic changes. One would expect to see more damage on greens that receive shots from an elevated position, on greens that slope back to front, and as rounds increase. Ball mark damage also becomes a hot topic during times of year where prolonged periods of wet weather are common.

Although there's little that can be done by superintendents to change putting green architecture, and there's no stopping Mother Nature, there might be other maintenance practices that could be improved upon to address ball mark issues and improve overall playing conditions. At the very least, documenting excessive ball mark damage could help to explain why practices like topdressing are important and provide golfers with a friendly reminder that you're doing everything you can to minimize ball marks but you need their help too.

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[What Are Your Ball Marks Telling You? \(usga.org\)](#)

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