



Metropolitan Golf Writers Association NEWSLETTER

MGWA Member Spotlight BRIAN CROWELL



Whether our work is found in print, on the radio, on the television screen or the lesson tee, we are all entertainers . . . and no sport offers as many "stages" as golf.

I was first introduced to golf when I was 13. My grandfather sunk a few coffee cans into his lawn, lowered the mower blades, and created a makeshift par-3 course. Yes, I broke a few windows, but I was quickly hooked on the sport. A few years later, my grandmother treated me to a junior membership at Osiris CC in Walden, NY, which ultimately led me to a future in the golf business.

The sport has been very kind to me, and has enabled me to teach, write, broadcast and (hopefully) motivate. I'm also fortunate to work at GlenArbor GC in Bedford Hills, NY, a club that appreciates my traditional duties as a PGA professional and also has allowed me to expand into other avenues of the business.

Some career highlights include:

- Member of the Met PGA Board of Directors Executive Committee
- Met PGA Section Horton Smith Award
- Chairman of the National PGA of America PR & Communications Committee
- Releasing my latest book, *Idiot's Guide: Golf*
- Hosting The Clubhouse golf radio show
- Co-hosting the Golf Digest Equipment Special for four years on network TV

AUGUST 2014

SEND IN YOUR NEWS AND NOTES

All members of the MGWA who may have items for our newsletter are urged to e-mail them to **Chuck Stogel** (chstogel@aol.com).

TEAM SHOOTOUT AT TAMARACK

Our annual MGWA Team Shootout is scheduled Monday, Aug. 25, at Tamarack CC in Greenwich, CT. The Shootout, which began in 1986, employs a unique format: Two best balls of four, with a Texas Scramble. The rules, which allow 50% of adjusted handicaps, call for each player to tee off and then select the best drive in the group, after which golfers play their own ball for the rest of the hole.

With a well-respected **Charles Banks**-designed course that opened in 1929, Tamarack recently undertook a Master Plan renovation. Architect **Brian Silva**, who oversaw course changes, will be with us on Aug. 25 to discuss the renovations, along with club president **Jeff Young**. Additionally, **Larry Crawford** of BirdieBox will speak at our morning meeting. The club is set to host a sectional qualifying round for the U.S. Senior Amateur on Aug. 27, two days after our visit. Tamarack is represented by On Course Strategies of Westport, CT (www.oncoursegolf-pr.com).

BECK HIRED TO LAUNCH MAGNUS GOLF

Albertus Magnus College in New Haven, CT, has hired former MGWA member **Jackie Beck** as its first men's and women's head golf coach. The newly established programs will begin as club sports during the 2014-15 academic year and subsequently compete as NCAA Division III programs.

A collegiate golfer at Illinois State, Beck currently runs Beck Communications, is a former teaching professional at Innisbrook Resort in Tampa, FL, former communications specialist at Spalding Sports Worldwide and is presently a coach for The First Tee of Connecticut at Alling Memorial GC in New Haven.

Beck (jackiebeck00@gmail.com) resides in Old Saybrook, CT, with her husband, **Ron** (the head pro at Fox Hopyard GC, E. Haddam, CT) and their three daughters.

NJ/PHILLY CAPTURES WRITER CUP

RDC Group, which manages several courses and clubs in the Metropolitan area, shifted its annual Writer Cup tournament from Forsgate to Shackamaxon CC in Scotch Plains, NJ, this year. Staged July 24, the event pits a team of 30-plus scribes from New York against a like number of players from New Jersey/Philadelphia, with the low 15 net scores on each side counting for a combined team score.

This year's Cup was won by NJ/Philly, which defeated defending champion NY, 1106 to 1121. A sizeable portion of attendees at Shackamaxon were MGWA members. Individually, the low NY net scores were recorded by **Paul Rogers** and **J.B. Braun**, at 68; low NY gross scores came from Rogers, with a 74, and **Mark Cannizzaro**, with 81. MGWA member **Rob Cowen** posted low gross and net for the Jersey team (76/68), while **Sean Fitzsimmons** had second low gross for NJ at 77.



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(Continued)

- Broadcasting at the U.S. Open, Ryder Cup, Presidents Cup
- Broadcasting at The Masters & PGA Championship
- Making a hole-in-one on the 7th hole at Sleepy Hollow CC (yes, that is my lone ace)

While I'm very blessed to be only one British Open away from the "Broadcasting Grand Slam," the true highlights in golf circle back to friends, family and community. No game is as benevolent. With charity outings, fundraisers, auctions, etc., golf provides an incredible vehicle to help our fellow humans. And no other sport creates such incredible camaraderie. So many great relationships are built and strengthened with the game of golf . . . and none more important than family.

The special moments? My wife, Wendy, and I climbing a tree to see Justin Leonard hole "the putt" during the 1999 Ryder Cup at The Country Club in Brookline, MA. Wendy and the kids joining me at Kiawah for the 2012 PGA Championship. The annual Crowell "Triple Generational" matches with my Dad and my son. Golf just brings people together.

I'm proud to be a member of the MGWA, and happy to continue entertaining. If we all spread the joy of golf and remain creative, the future of the game is very bright.

For more information about this multi-talented MGWA member, check out his website at: www.briancrowellgolf.com



NJ/PHILLY CAPTURES WRITER CUP

Close to going out of business in 2010, RDC has vastly remodeled the Shackamaxon clubhouse and upgraded numerous facilities since taking over. A resort style pool complex is being built, and all-new carts are on tap. The par 71 course, designed by **A.W. Tillinghast** and opened in 1916, also is undergoing renovation, supervised by architects and MGWA members **Stephen Kay** and **Doug Smith**. Because of adjacent new housing construction, and some invasive road building, a new par 3 13th hole --- in the Tillinghast style of a "reef" hole --- is being built, reducing the overall par by one. Well on its way to a full recovery, Shackamaxon has tripled its membership in the past four years. RDC communications is handled by MGWA member **Suzy Abrams Jones** (suzyajonespr@gmail.com).

MARATHON RECORD AT TRUMP HV

Most golfers play 18 holes in a day, and occasionally 36, but **Tony Balassone** went far beyond the norm when he played an amazing 451 holes for charity on June 23 at Trump National Hudson Valley GC in Hopewell Junction, NY. The co-owner of Calico Restaurant and Patisserie in Rhinebeck, NY, Balassone teed off at 6:25am and, 12 hours later, had successfully completed 451 holes resulting in 1,909 shots and 48 birdies. Each year, Balassone and his wife, **Leslie**, raise money for a different charity. Last year, Tony played more than 90 holes (on foot) at Trump HV, which donated use of its course, on behalf of Multiple Sclerosis. This year, he used a cart for his 451 holes, raising more than \$25,000 for the Eric Trump Foundation, which benefits St. Jude Children's Hospital.

Dan Scavino, an ETF board member (www.erictumpfoundation.com) and director of the Joe Torre Foundation, served as witness to Balassone's efforts, while promoting the incredible feat via social media and in conjunction with local radio station K104.

PEOPLE, PLACES, ETC

The Metro Golf Show, which airs Saturday mornings in-season from 8 to 8:30 am on WVOX radio 1460-AM, New Rochelle, NY, and via WVOX.com, commemorated its 250th broadcast on Aug. 2. The show is co-hosted by MGWA members **Bill Meth** and **Tom Mariam**, with occasional co-host **Dan Berger**, and showcases a weekly rapid fire lineup of national and local news, interviews and other features . . . On Course Strategies, based in Westport, CT, and Hunter Public Relations, based in Long Valley, NJ, were two of just 10 elite PR-specific consultancies cited in the Summer 2014 edition of *Golf Inc. Magazine*'s list of top PR/marketing firms in the country

(www.golfinmagazinemonthlydigital.com/golfinmagazinemonthly/summer_2014#pg18). Principles at On Course Strategies (www.oncoursegolf-pr.com) are MGWA members **Jane Dally** and **Pat Norton**; MGWA member **Karen Moraghan** heads HPR-East (www.hunter-pr.com) . . . The USGA has selected Quaker Ridge GC, Scarsdale, NY, as the site for the 2018 Curtis Cup women's amateur matches on June 8-10. This will be the second USGA championship at Quaker Ridge, following the men's 1997 Walker Cup, won by the USA. The club also hosted the 1936 Met Open, at which **Byron Nelson** registered his first professional victory. Home of the annual Hochster amateur event, the Quaker Ridge course is a challenging **A.W. Tillinghast** par-70 design located around the corner/across the street from famed Winged Foot. The rating/slope from the men's black tees is 74.8/140 and from the women's white tees 77.5/150 . . . The USGA recently ran a story about the revival of Marine Park GC in Brooklyn, NY. To see the story, go to:

www.usga.org/news/2014/June/Pace-of-Play-Case-Study--Marine-Park/ . . . New MGWA member **Kevin Casey** (and son **Conor**) of Galloping Hill and Somerset Hills, respectively, captured the 64th MGA Father & Son Championship on Aug. 12 at Brooklake CC, Florham Park, NJ. The Caseys won by one stroke after posting a Pinehurst format 3-under gross 69. MGWA Activities Committee member **Howie Munck** and son **Larry** finished T64 . . .



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PEOPLE, PLACES, ETC

Cameron Young of Scarborough, NY, son of Sleepy Hollow CC pro **David Young**, has been named to the U.S. Junior Ryder Cup team which will compete Sept. 22-23 in Perthshire, Scotland. A Fordham Prep senior who has committed to attend Wake Forest, Young qualified for the match play portion of the 2014 U.S. Amateur at Atlanta AC . . . New members or renewals since the 2014 MGWA Directory was printed: **Anthony Scoria**, Brightwaters, LI. (tel: 516-578-0108; ascoriaonpar@gmail.com). He is host of Scoria on Par at 8 am Saturday mornings on WGBB 1240-AM and via am1240wgbb.com . . . OBIT: **Rev. Dr. Michael Dana Prewitt**, 70, founder of Dana Communications and formerly of Hopewell, NJ, died July 12 at his home in Philadelphia, the result of a brain tumor. He is survived by his wife, **Maureen**, two sons, a brother and a large extended family. An avid golfer, he is credited with naming the holes on the Banks course at Forsgate CC, and handled the early pr for Cherry Valley CC, Skilman, NJ. Donations may be made to the Prewitt Memorial Fund, c/o Dana Communications, 2 E. Broad St., Hopewell, NJ 08525 See more at: www.michael-danaprewitt.com . . . OBIT notes from the Met PGA section: "The Met PGA lost one of its long-time staff members and a true connection to the past when **Tom Strafaci Jr.** lost his 10-year battle with a rare form of skin cancer recently at the age of 73. Tom was the son of legendary Dyker Beach golf professional **Tom Strafaci, Sr.** and he also was a PGA Member. Anyone who played in Met PGA events enjoyed the presence of Tom Jr. and his father-in-law, our incomparable scorekeeper and sign-maker **Frank Blumetti** who is still going strong. Our deepest sympathies to Tom's wife **Ann**, his sons **Paul** and **Frank**, and daughter **Beth** . . . We are also very saddened to report the passing of **Ron Nicol**, long-time head professional at Scarsdale GC and one of our most active and involved professionals, and an incredible entrepreneur. Ron was 82 when he passed away on July 13, a victim of Alzheimer's. Our sympathies to his wife **Beryl**. Ron's ashes will be spread in Scotland and there will be a memorial service in Florida in November."

BALTUSROL TESTS Q&T CLUB GOLFERS

More than 70 MGWA members, plus a few special guests --- one of our largest turnouts in a quite a while --- attended our July 28 gathering at Baltusrol GC in Springfield, NJ, where threatening weather never materialized and a fine, dry day was enjoyed by all. The outing included: a range session with **Jesse Ortiz** of Bobby Jones Golf equipment, who also spoke at our indoor meeting, along with Bobby Jones apparel marketer **Sonia Cozzi**; presentations by 2016 PGA Championship general chairman **Rick Jenkins**, course renovations architect **Steve Weisser** of Rees Jones Inc. and MGWA/Baltusrol member **Rick Wolfe**. A private club with two outstanding courses, Baltusrol proved a wonderful host all day long, with arrangements graciously handled by club manager **Judy Mann**.

In looking ahead to the 2016 PGA, Jenkins pointed out that, due to golf being played in the Olympics (Aug. 5-21) that summer, several adjustments are planned for tour schedules. The shifts include the British Open moving earlier than usual by one week in July, the PGA (July 28-31) being played in July for the first time since 1968, and both the FedExCup playoffs and Ryder Cup being played later than their usual slots. As part of preparations for hosting the PGA, Rees Jones & Co. have been renovating the Lower Course with new bunkers and tee boxes, and some enlarged greens. The par 72 Lower will play at 7,450 yards for the championship. On-site hospitality sales for the PGA launched this past June and registration to apply for tickets will be opened to the public next spring.

Meanwhile, the par 72 Upper Course, like the Lower an A.W. Tillinghast design, recently underwent two years of renovations by Rees Jones Inc. Weisser, with a video presentation displaying "before" and "after" scenarios, detailed the renovation of Upper bunkers and greens, construction of some new tee boxes, and restoration of approaches to various greens. "Fortunately for us, Tillie was very good at documenting his work, so that we had a lot of original plans and photographs to work with," said Weisser. "A primary goal of ours was to bring the (7,002-yard) Upper to a championship caliber equivalent to the Lower, and we feel we've achieved that."

In addition to showcasing Bobby Jones clubs on the range, Ortiz was quite candid in talking to our group with criticism about the frequency of new products shoved into the marketplace by major equipment companies and the retrenchment away from club-fitting by large retailers. "It bothers me that these big equipment companies come out with so many new products every year, products that really aren't better than what they have been selling," said Ortiz. And, pointing to the recent layoff of more than 500 PGA trained professionals by Dick's Sporting Goods: "The big box shops have destroyed club fitting. And club fitting is a key to getting golfers to play the proper equipment, which leads to more enjoyment for the game. What you'll end up with in these stores is young kids selling clubs that they are being told to push."

BALTUSROL TESTS Q&T CLUB GOLFERS

Our annual Quill & Tee GC Club Championship competition, played at scratch among MGWA members who also are part of our club-without-real estate, produced three winners: **Woody Lashen** in the men's Championship flight; **Gideon Cohen** in the A flight; **Kate Keller** in the Women's flight. The title was the third in the past four years for Lashen, who shot 76, having also won in 2011 and 2013. **John Napier** was runnerup at 81. Cohen won the A flight on a match of cards at 86 with Dave Donelson. The women's title was the first for Keller. For full Q&T results, and for a gallery of photos from Baltusrol, please go online to mgwa.golfgenius.com. Once again, our thanks to **Billy Condon** and Golf Genius for computerized scoring, which was displayed during post-golf festivities on a large TV screen.

--- www.metgolfwriters.org ---



Bill Vostinak, Courtney Tincher, Kate Keller and Billy Condon



Eric Berger, Jared Kelowitz, Dan Berger and Joe Ruggiero



MGWA Members assembled for the presentations



Jesse Ortiz addressing the MGWA members at Baltusrol



John Napier, Howie Munck, John Zanzarella and Nick Nicholas