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Volume 44, No. 1

THE OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE HEART OF AMERICA GCSA

March 2012

## **JOINT MEETING**



**Lawrence Country Club**

## **Joint Meeting With KGCSA April 30, 2012**

- The Grass Isn't Always Greener
- Member Profile
- Committee Reports

Heart of America Chapter  
**GCSAA**  
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*President's Message*



Whether you see the lack of precipitation last fall and this winter as good or bad for the turfgrass, I'm sure we can all agree that the mild winter has helped "jump-start" 2012. In fact, it seems like a bonus that so many golfers are taking advantage of the unseasonably warm winter days when typically we are holed up in our buildings waiting for the snow to melt.

As for Association business, your Board of Directors has been working diligently in your favor since taking office in November. Tournaments and speakers are already being set up, the conference and show is being evaluated and many other tasks are being accomplished. I suppose you could say that the majority of the "big decisions" are made over the winter, thus setting the stage for successful events throughout the year.

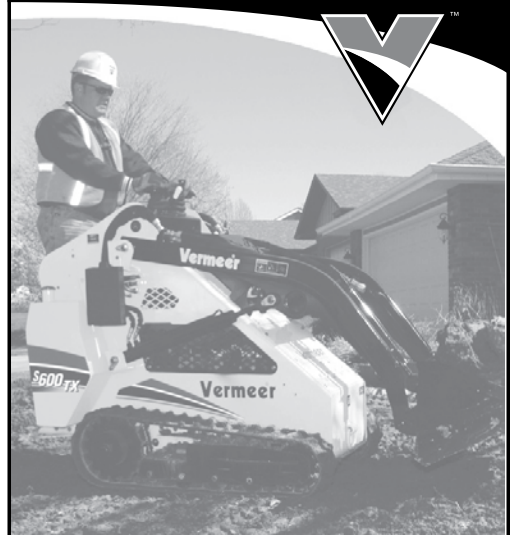
Of note, the bowling event was scheduled a little later in 2012 due to scheduling conflicts with the GCSAA National Championship Golf Tournament and Golf Industry Show. As for the Joint Meeting with the KGCSA, it will be held in late April at Lawrence Country Club. Later in the spring will be the May Classic. Once known as the Past President's event, our past presidents will once again be rewarded for their service and be given complimentary registration. Though these events are known for their networking opportunities and golf competition there will also be education provided.

Finally, please take advantage of the numerous personal and professional enrichment opportunities the HAGCSA presents to you throughout the year. Whether it is the networking, education, politicking, socializing, or golfing that you are after, the HAGCSA is here to impact our profession in as many positive ways as possible. The Association only grows stronger when we all participate.

**Tim Neilsen,**  
HAGCSA President

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## Education Committee Report

By Scott Johnson, CGCS, Director

The 2011 Common Ground Conference has been wrapped up and put to bed. In summary, the conference had an education track that provided a nice mix of topics that stimulated participation and challenged “conventional wisdom.” Last year’s conference saw a \$5 reduction in registration fees, and 10 less registrants than the last six years’ average. Operational expenses continue to inch higher which resulted in a slight loss to the HAGCSA annual budget. In the end, I believe the membership had a great educational opportunity and experience. As with most endeavors, a lot of effort is necessary to achieve success. Paul Davids, CGCS, and Kim Weitzel, along with the SWA team, put in countless hours to ensure a good time was had by all. Thank you Paul and Kim for your guidance and tireless efforts for our benefit! Also, a big thank you is due our conference partner Mid-America Green Industry Council, chaired by Adam Cain. MAGIC’s multi-year partnership with HAGCSA has allowed the common goal of providing quality education to its members become a reality!

The Education Committee has started collecting thoughts and ideas for the 2012 Common Ground Conference. With each conference, the three primary areas of concern are the education track, registration costs, and expenses. For 2012, the committee is comprised of Loren Breedlove, Paul Davids, Dave Fearis, Bill Irving, Scott Johnson, and Kim Weitzel. Our Common Ground Conference is planned for the second week of December. The committee needs your help with education topics ideas. For those individuals that were able to attend the GIS in Las Vegas, did you take part in any educational opportunities that would be beneficial for our membership to experience? If so, I encourage you to share your ideas with one of the committee members. Thanks in advance! The 2012 Common Ground Conference is only 10 months away!

## Partner Recognition Program Recap

By Todd Bohn, Vice President

On behalf of all the members of the Heart of America Golf Course Superintendents Association and the Board of Directors we would like to express our sincere thanks to all of our contributing vendors that are participating in the PRP program for 2012. Over the last three years the PRP program has been a huge success in helping supply the Heart with strong financial assistance which has allowed us to continue to supply our members with incredible opportunities and value to grow their careers all the while being a financially strong association. Without your commitment our Association would not be able to function as one of the leading GCSAA chapters. Thank you again for your commitment and we are all looking forward to another successful year in 2012.



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## HAGCSA VS KGCSA JOINT EVENT

**Superintendent Profile:** Bill Irving has served as the Golf Course Superintendent at Lawrence Country Club for the past four years. Prior to Lawrence CC he served four years as the superintendent at Kearney Country Club in Kearney, NE. Bill earned his degree in Agriculture Sciences from the University of Nebraska. He has been a member of the GCSAA for 13 years and a member of the Heart of America GCSA for four where he also served two years on the board. Bill is married to Billy Jo and has a daughter, Caylee 13 and son, Cameron, 11.



**Assistant Superintendent Profile:** Graham Edelman has been at Lawrence Country Club for the past five years. He earned his certificate in Horticulture from Longview Community College.

**Equipment Manager Profile:** Ward (J.J.) Shull is the Equipment Manager at Lawrence Country Club. Ward has served with three Certified Class A Superintendents at Lawrence Country Club. He has also been an Assistant Superintendent at LCC 16 of his 35 years of dedicated service.

**Course History:** Established in 1914, Lawrence Country Club has evolved and matured since through design modifications, irrigation improvement, and maintenance practices. In 2006, it was redesigned by Todd Clark, course architect, to create a magnificent and challenging course for all levels of golfers. The improvements include four individual tees per hole, creating a variety of ways to play the course. The square tees will maintain the overall distance with the blue tees at 6,500 yards and par will be 70 for all four tees. *A registration form is on the next page*

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# JOINT MEETING with KGCSA

**DATE:** Monday, April 30, 2012

**LOCATION:** Lawrence Country Club  
400 Country Club Terrace  
Lawrence, KS 66049  
785-842-0592

**HOST SUPERINTENDENT:** Bill Irving

**SCHEDULE:** 10:00am - Registration  
10:30am - Lunch  
11:15am - Meeting/Program  
12:30pm - Shotgun  
5:30pm - Awards

**COST:** \$55 per person

**SPEAKER/TOPIC:** Richard Konzem, COO, GCSAA, will speak on the goals & direction of GCSAA. (CEUs have been applied for)

**DRESS CODE:** Country Club Attire (Collared Shirts, No Jeans or Cargo Pants). Please clean your soft spikes.

**FORMAT:** 2 man scramble; Two/HAGCSA vs Two/KGCSA

**RESERVATIONS:** Mail, Fax or Email Reservation no later than Wednesday April 25.

**DIRECTIONS:** From I-435W Merge onto KS-10 W via EXIT 1B toward Lawrence & Turn slight RIGHT onto S IOWA ST/US-59, Turn LEFT onto W 67<sup>th</sup> ST/US-40. Turn RIGHT onto ROCKLEDGE Rd. Turn LEFT onto Country Club Ter. End at 400 Country Club Ter., Lawrence, KS 66049.



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**Yes, I/we plan to attend the Joint Meeting with KGCSA!**

Player(s): \_\_\_\_\_ Company: \_\_\_\_\_ Handicap: \_\_\_\_\_  
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Complete Form and Mail, Fax or Email no later than **Wednesday, April 25** to:  
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**Refund Policy:** Full refund with a 72 *business hour* notice; 50% refund with a 48 *business hour* notice; no refund within 24 hours of event start time. "No Shows" will be billed.

**Cancellation Policy:** The Heart of America GCSA reserves the right to cancel any event not meeting the minimum requirements.

# Public Relations Report

By Brad Gray, Director


Another year is here to stay and the busy season is fast approaching. Based on the current winter weather pattern the season might be here sooner than anticipated. However, the season for the Public Relations Committee never stops. Last year's committee thanks everyone for your support and interest during 2011. I have had the good fortune of being appointed by President Nielsen to serve again as the 2012 Public Relations Committee Chairman. The duties of the PR committee include marketing the association and promoting the golf course turf management profession. This includes promoting all members of the HAGCSA, which are paramount to the success of the local association. Success is defined by the time and energy each of us contributes to the cause. The most beneficial is perhaps within each of our respective facilities. It is not an attempt at arrogance but rather to educate individuals that Superintendents and Assistant Superintendents are an integral part to the success of their respective facility.

The HAGCSA decided to renew a partnership with Midwest Sports Management which provides the opportunity to be a sponsor during the Midwest Golf Talk Radio Hour on 810 Sports. The radio show is hosted by Brian Wright and will air each Sunday morning from April 8 through August 19. Additionally, the partnership enables the HAGCSA to provide a guest on the show to talk about the golf course superintendent profession. If you have any interest in being a guest please let me know. It is a wonderful chance to showcase the profession as well as attain great media experience.

## 2012 Public Relations Events

Items on the agenda for the remainder of 2012 include: securing hosts for the Midwest Golf Talk Radio Hour on 810 Sports; assisting Gary Sailer, CGCS, Nicklaus Golf Club at Lionsgate, with the PGA Nationwide Tour Midwest Classic, Aug. 16 - 19; and a potential collaboration with the Kansas City Golf Association for the promotion of golf course turf management and other marketing items.

In addition, I would like to thank the following members for volunteering to serve on the 2012 Public Relations Committee: Tony Bertels, Bill Irving, John Johnson, Jamie Schmitt, Brent Stephenson and Aaron Willing. Good luck with the upcoming season and if you have any suggestions please let me know.



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Mike McMillin  
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[mmcmillin@reinders.com](mailto:mmcmillin@reinders.com)

## Developing Relationships

By Brian Rutledge, Director

When I graduated from college several years ago the opportunities in golf course maintenance seemed endless. Now as many of us know the golf course industry has considerably slowed down. For us assistants out there it seems to get tougher by the minute to take the next step up the ladder. Several factors play into this situation; tough economy, large number of qualified assistants looking to move up and laid off superintendents looking for new jobs.

There are a lot of different things we can do to boost our résumés, and I think it all starts with your local association. If you have the itch to become a superintendent you are going to have to do some things to distinguish yourself from the rest of the crowd, like getting involved with your local Board of Directors. It was easy for me to say yes when I was asked to run for Membership Director, because I knew it could differentiate myself from other assistants. A lot of golf courses like seeing involvement locally and nationally because it shows dedication towards the advancement of your career. Staying involved can develop relationships and build camaraderie with your peers which can really pay off in the long run. You never know when that one relationship could push you up the final rung of the ladder.

Something else I didn't prepare myself for is the fact that I may have to relocate my family to take the next step forward. I would like to stay in the Kansas City area but I realize that there are only so many opportunities and staying local could limit the advancement of my career. New jobs show up all the time if you are willing to move somewhere else, whether it is nationally or even internationally. This is why many of us will have to rely on connections to help find a job. Even though the Heart is a smaller chapter, there are three past presidents running for the GCSAA Board of Directors. Using connections like this can help you find jobs in other markets where you may have otherwise been looked over.

So, if you find yourself in my shoes all I can say is be patient. Those of us who stay positive and whether the

storm will be successful when this mess clears up. Start looking at new and different ideas to boost your résumé as well as prepare yourself for the interview process. Stay involved with your local association as well as your peers at other golf courses. Also, don't limit your possibilities by focusing on one market. There are golf courses all over the country and the world and maybe the right job is somewhere you may never have considered. Most importantly, use every connection you have to help get your foot in the door, whether it is a superintendent, general manager or even a member. Developing these relationships can have tremendous benefits when trying to separate yourself from the rest of the crowd.

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# Membership Committee Report

*By Brian Rutledge, Director*

Final dues notices were mailed February 6 and as a reminder, March 31 is the absolute final day in which dues payments can be received so please submit your application as soon as possible. Also to all current members we could use your help in recruiting anyone that you may know that is currently not a member. The new updated roster will be mailed later this spring.

Next I would like to introduce the 2012 Membership Committee:

- Brent Stephenson, Superintendent Deer Creek Golf Club
- Andy Klein, Superintendent Falcon Lakes Golf Club
- Mitch Bradbury, Assistant Superintendent Overland Park Golf Course

I would also like to welcome the newest members for 2012. Your contributions are greatly appreciated and will help make 2012 a successful year.

- Andrew Huffman, Tomahawk Hills
- Mike Maas, Agrium Advanced Technology
- Kurt Nielsen, Drumm Farm Golf Club



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# Tournaments Committee Report

By Matt Hemphill, Director

As we are coming out of this unseasonably warm winter it is time to start gearing up and getting ready for this year's Heart of America GCS events. I would like to introduce our 2012 Tournaments Committee:

- Matt Hemphill, Drumm Farm Golf Club
- Todd Bohn, Wolf Creek Golf Club
- Andrew Jones, Swope Memorial Golf Course
- Chad Gilkerson, Creekmoor Golf Club

We are starting off the year with the annual Bowling event on March 8. We pushed the Bowling event into March because our other events have been pushed back as well. The first golf event of the year will be the Joint Meeting with KGCSA at Lawrence Country Club on April 30. We are hoping that be having this event at a later date will enable more or you to make it to the Joint event. The deadline for registration for the Joint event is Wednesday, April 25th. Our next event, the May Classic, will be scheduled for late May. We are still in the planning stage for this tournament so please watch our website for more details. The S&R Tournament will be held on June 25 at Nicklaus Golf Club. Then our last tournament of the year will be the MO Cup Challenge in October. Lastly, we will be holding the vendor appreciation event sometime in September or October. We plan to have all events scheduled and details finalized here in the next few weeks.

Please feel free to contact me at [mhemphill@drummfarmgolfclub.com](mailto:mhemphill@drummfarmgolfclub.com) with any questions. I hope to see you all at our events this upcoming season.

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## S&R COMMITTEE REPORT

By James Kennedy, Chairman


This winter we seemed to have dodged a few bullets with regards to the weather. It has been an outstanding start to 2012 - having the ability to get an early jump on projects and prepping for the season. The S&R Committee has finalized the date and location for the 2012 event. Mark your calendars for June 25 and get your team together to play at Nicklaus Golf Club. Gary Sailer, CGCS, and his staff will play host to this important annual event.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank 2011's chairman, Jeff White, CGCS, and his committee for their valuable commitment to the success of last year's event. The event raised \$22,425 which was about a 10 percent increase over the prior year. This past year the Board of Directors approved the donation of \$19,769 to scholarship and research opportunities. The fund allocation was as follows:


**Research:**

GCSAA (President's Club).....	\$5,000
First Tee Program (20 youth sponsorships)...	\$2,400
University of Missouri.....	\$2,500 (Bluegrass Research)
University of Missouri.....	\$3,000 (Pythium Root Disfunction)





*Continued on next page*



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**S&R COMMITTEE REPORT - Cont.**

**2011 Scholarships**

Chester Mendenhall - Grant Suderman, K-State.....	\$2,500
Dave Fearis - Chad Cook, University of Mo.....	\$1,500
HAGCSA - Dustin Huber, K-State.....	\$500
HAGCSA - Bryan Adelhardt, K-State.....	\$500

**2011 Employee Awards - ..... \$1,869**

I would like to introduce the 2012 S&R Committee. The only change to this year's committee is the addition of Andy Klein of Falcon Lakes. I appreciate everyone's commitment to another year of serving the S&R and the HAGCSA and I look forward to working with them this year. The committee is as follows:

**Scholarship & Research Committee**

**Chairman: James Kennedy, Ironhorse GC - 913-897-8181**

- Todd Bohn - Wolf Creek Golf Links
- Loren Breedlove - Kansas City Country Club
- Gary Breshears - Kansas City Turf Supply
- Russell Cole - RMI Golf Carts
- Jon Francis - WinField Solutions
- Brad Gray - Mission Hills Country Club
- Scott Johnson, CGCS - Shadow Glen, The Golf Club
- Greg King - Kansas City Turf Supply
- Bill Maynard, CGCS - Milburn Country Club
- Doug Melchior - Overland Park Golf Course
- Woody Moriarty - Blue Hills Country Club
- Jim Naudet - Leawood South Country Club
- Tim Nielsen - Creekmoor Golf Club
- Duane Sander, CGCS - Shoal Creek Golf Course
- Andy Klein - Falcon Lakes

## An Iron will at Ironhorse

By Tony Bertels, Editor

*“The secret of success is making your vocation a vacation.”* – Mark Twain

Some guys are just lucky. They find their niche in life early, discover their passion and then roll with it. For some, cutting cups as a weekend job for the local country club while attending high school can someday turn into being a Director of Agronomy for a national management company. Of course, not without some blood, sweat and tears mingled in between!



#1 Green @ Ironhorse Golf Club

“I’ve never actually held a job outside the turf management field,” confides James Kennedy, GC Superintendent at Ironhorse Golf Club in Leawood, KS and 2nd year Director for the HAGCSA. “It’s all I’ve ever known!”

Growing up in Clinton, MO, the son of a school teacher and a KCP&L lineman, James learned early the importance of education, the value of hard work, dedication and how a bit of elbow grease can go a long ways. He also got to enjoy a childhood in Clinton. “As a kid I spent most of my time on the golf course and at the lake.” Those weekends spent working at the local course would lead Kennedy to pursue and receive a BS in Horticulture from Missouri State University in 1999. He soon found himself beginning his professional career in earnest as an Assistant at Deer Lake GC in Springfield, MO.

“I later accepted a position at Branson Creek GC, a property managed by Troon Golf, LLC.” It would be a move that James would never regret. Honing his skills and acquiring the needed experience, he would spend the next 5 years in Branson. He would also meet and work with a young Iowa State graduate who was also an Assistant there.

“I met my wife, Rhonda at Branson Creek. We were both Assistants. Our friendship began as a lot of *shop talk* but we soon discovered our relationship was much more than sod projects and fertilizer applications.” In 2005, Kennedy was offered a transfer to Chandler, AZ as Assistant at Whirlwind GC, a new, 36 hole facility which he accepted sight unseen. “It would be the single-most important and rewarding career choice I have ever made. I had never even been to Arizona, but I found an apartment on-line, sold my house and found myself living in Phoenix 3 weeks later!”

Kennedy was not ready to abandon the relationship he had begun with Rhonda. Troon Golf helped make the separation short-lived. Rhonda was offered a position at Moon Valley CC and they reunited again in Arizona. They would marry in September of 2006.



Rhonda and James Kennedy, GC Supts. 2007

2007 would be a watershed year for the newly forged Kennedy household. Rhonda was named

**Continued on next page**

*Member Profile - cont.*

Superintendent at Moon Valley CC (which used to host a LPGA tour event) while James accepted the position of Director of Agronomy at Talking Stick Golf Club in Scottsdale. For the next 2 years, James and Rhonda would work and live in one of the biggest golfing meccas in the world as a Superintendent odd couple tandem unheard of in most golfing circles!

James considered their situation fortunate, yet Arizona was a long way from their roots and happy newlyweds soon begin to plan for eventual additions! “We advanced both our careers and relationship while in Arizona, but we felt that the Midwest was our home and where we wanted to start our own family there together.”

On December 24th of 2009, Kennedy would get the Christmas present that both he and Rhonda wished in the form of a job offer at Ironhorse GC, the newly signed property with Troon LLC. “I accepted it with great excitement and began working one week later on New Years Eve.” Rhonda would resign her position at Moon Valley and join James in Kansas just in time to give birth to their daughter, Ashlyn in April 2010.

Rhonda is now a stay-at-home mom having just welcomed Julia, the Kennedy’s second daughter into the world in January. “She misses life on the golf course,” admits James, “however staying at home with the children suits her very well.” Kennedy also recognizes how lucky he is to be married to a previous Superintendent. “She understands the demands of this career and never holds the long hours against me.” He also realizes that having another Superintendent at home to bounce ideas and brainstorm with isn’t so bad either, especially with a few challenges at the new gig!

“The first challenge was to improve the turf quality on the greens at Ironhorse.” The current design offers limited air movement around several greens complexes, and even with the renovation, turf quality on several greens still suffered. “We began thinning and removing timber

areas to allow for better circulation. We also installed oscillating fans around greens that were suffering most.” In addition, James was able to add new irrigation loops to all greens complexes to improve head spacing and efficiency. Admitting that improvements to the irrigation system will be ongoing, 2012 will see new controllers as well as a software update.

Kennedy won’t rest on recent laurels. His staff will also be working diligently to improve conditions of the fairways, tees and rough by implementing sound cultural practices. “My first two seasons here have not only been challenging but very rewarding. Ironhorse Golf Club was recently honored as Troon Golf’s “Most Improved Facility” in 2011.

Even with all of the work involved getting Ironhorse up to snuff, James still found time to serve his newly adopted local chapter. Past-President Scott Johnson wasted little time in recruiting Kennedy to the cause. He admits, “It has been a great experience. I was very surprised to be asked so soon after my arrival to Ironhorse, but I enjoy the camaraderie and networking with fellow Superintendents and representatives in the industry.” Kennedy has quickly established himself as a likable, trusted peer whose willingness to become involved should be an example for those hesitant souls who have yet to do so.

James has seen a dramatic change in the industry since his arrival in the late 1990’s. “I would say the downturn in the number of people playing golf has been the biggest change. The effects of 9/11 and the dwindling economy have resulted in less people playing the game. We all need to promote the game and find ways to bring new players to golf.”

He also realizes the evolution in maintenance. “There have been many improvements in equipment for cultural practices. I am most impressed with new options for

**Continued on next page**



Member Profile - cont.

tines, tine setups and aerification equipment to quickly clean up debris. Irrigation systems have also made great strides with technological improvements from irrigation heads to the computer operating systems that can be controlled from your cell phone!”

When asked what words of advice he would give to those who are just starting out in the business, James had this to say; “Be patient! Hard work and patience are essential traits everyone should possess before deciding to get into this business. With courses closing and struggling, and widespread budget cuts being imposed, it has become much more competitive to find a good job. Seek out opportunities, forge your own path and learn from as many different people as you can. From my experience, don’t be afraid to travel and learn the many different arts of maintaining turfgrass. I have learned so much from growing different grasses in different climates throughout my career. I also encourage students to volunteer for tournaments and serve with local chapters to network with other professionals and learn as much as you can!”



Rhonda, Ashlyn, James and Julia Kennedy

Kennedy enjoys a simple, enjoyable life outside of golf. “Spending time with Rhonda and my two daughters is at the top of my list. I also enjoy hunting and fishing during the fall and spring.” Life growing up near the lake has also made for a love affair for boating, wake boarding and of course, the peripheral gatherings and friendships that such activities entail. Catching up with

good friends around the pool, drinking cold beverages and telling stories around the fire pit are just a few of the pleasures James lists.

Like the quote by Mark Twain at the beginning of this article, Kennedy strives to master his craft and has seemed to turn his vocation into something much more than mere toil. The passion apparent in his words tells a similar tale of work destined to be savored and enjoyed like so many saved up days.

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# **THREE HEART OF AMERICA GCSA PAST PRESIDENTS ELECTED TO GCSAA BOARD**

**Queen elected GCSAA president**

Sandy G. Queen, CGCS, manager of golf operations for the Kansas City suburb of Overland Park, Kan., was elected president of the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America (GCSAA) at the association's annual meeting March 2 in Las Vegas.

The annual meeting was held in conjunction with the GCSAA Education Conference (Feb. 27-March 2) and Golf Industry Show (Feb. 29-March 1).

Queen has been the manager of golf operations for the city of Overland Park (Kan.) since 1984. Previously, he served as superintendent for the city of Overland Park. A GCSAA member for 34 years, Queen is a member and past president of the Heart of America GCSA, a member of the Kansas Turfgrass Association and The First Tee of Greater Kansas City. He also oversees operations for the award-winning Deanna Rose Children's Farmstead and the Overland Park Soccer Complex, regarded as one of the top facilities of its kind in the nation.



**Sandy G. Queen, CGCS**

Patrick R. Finlen, CGCS, director of golf course maintenance operations at The Olympic Club in San Francisco (former HAGCSA Past President), was elected vice president. Finlen will be the host of the 2012 U.S. Open in June. Keith A. Ihms, CGCS at Country Club of Little Rock (Ark.) was elected secretary/treasurer.

Rafael Barajas, CGCS at Hacienda Golf Club in La Habra Heights, Calif., and William H. Maynard, CGCS at Milburn Golf and Country Club in Overland Park, Kan., were elected as directors. Darren J. Davis, GCSAA Class A member at Olde Florida Golf Club in Naples, Fla., was appointed to the GCSAA Board of Directors, filling the remaining year of Ihms' term, created by his election to secretary/treasurer.

John J. O'Keefe, CGCS, director of golf course management at Preakness Hills Country Club in Wayne, N.J., and Peter J. Grass, CGCS at Hilands Golf Club in Billings, Mont., remain on the board with one year remaining on their two-year director terms.

Robert M. Randquist, CGCS at Boca Rio Golf Club in Boca Raton, Fla., will serve on the board for one year as immediate past president. James R. Fitzroy, CGCS, director/superintendent at Wollaston Recreational Facility/Presidents Golf Club in North Quincy, Mass., retires from the board after serving the last year as immediate past president.

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## MO CUP CHALLENGE

*By John Sheehe, Special Director*

It's time to start thinking about the MO CUP CHALLENGE! It's only 7 months away. Not much has changed with this fun event that takes place every year at Lake Valley GC and The Club of Kinderhook in Camdenton, Mo. (Lake of the Ozarks).

This year the tournament will start on Monday, Oct. 1 at Lake Valley G.C. Registration will begin at 11 a.m. followed by a shotgun start at noon. Dinner and a reception will take place at 5:30 p.m. Following this we in the process of organizing a "team shootout." Each team that wants to enter (this will be done at registration that morning) will play a certain number of holes to be designated. Low score will win prizes at the pro shop.

On Tuesday we will be at The Club at Old Kinderhook. Registration will begin at 8 a.m. with a shotgun start at 9 a.m. Rooms (cabins) will again be available at Old Kinderhook. To reserve these, call 573-346-4444 ext. 3.

We anticipate another fun event this year. You can help enhance this event by getting sponsors for it. All the money raised goes back into prizes for you.

More information will be following in future newsletters.



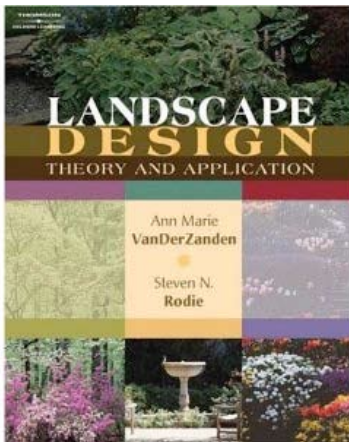
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### **LANDSCAPE DESIGN & MAINTENANCE (AGBS 106)** Mar. 19-May 16, Mon./Wed. 5:45--8:30 p.m.

The practical emphasis is on information relevant to our region, including site assessment and scale drawing of plans using a blend of regionally appropriate ornamental, edibles, and native landscaping. Many handouts supplement our great book (*Landscape Design: Theory and Application* by Ann Marie VanDer Zanden, IA. St. U.) & Steven Rodie (U. of NE.). Instructor: Leah Berg

**PEST MANAGEMENT (AGBS 109)** Mar. 20- May 17, Tues./Thurs. 6:00--8:50 p.m. Students study Integrated Pest Management practices and organic control methods appropriate for ornamental horticulture and turfgrass management. The Missouri State exam for Certified Pesticide Applicators License is given the final day of class. Instructor: Rusty Denes.

**DECIDUOUS TREES AND SHRUBS (AGBS 106)** June 6–July 27, Mon./Wed. 5:45--8:30 p.m. Local field trips enhance studying the value & identification of regional native and ornamental plants. Instructor: Leah Berg

**SPECIAL TOPICS IN HORTICULTURE (AGBS 151)** June 7 –July 28, Tues./Thurs. 5:45--8:30 p.m. This special elective taught by Mary Roduner of the Kansas City Community Gardens offers an introduction to horticulture with field trips and projects tailored to needs and interests of students, ranging from annuals and perennials, native plants, edibles in the landscape to beneficial insects.

**THE FALL SEMESTER of 2012 will include our key 8 week classes on:**

**IRRIGATION & INSTALLATION (AGBS 145) Instructor: John Barrera**

**TURFGRASS MANAGEMENT (AGBS 135) Instructor: Dave Kriegh**

**LANDSCAPE DESIGN & MAINTENANCE (AGBS 106) Instructor: Leah Berg**

**ADVANCED LANDSCAPE DESIGN (AGBS 206) Instructor: Leah Berg**

**\*OCCUPATIONAL INTERNSHIPS (AGBS 200) must be arranged in advance (any semester)**

\*Above classes are 3 credit hours and fees apply based on residency. Financial aid may be available. Classes on irrigation, turf management, soil fertility and fertilizers are also available.



Photos courtesy advisory board member Steve Wilson, Meadowbrook Golf and Country Club Superintendent

For more information, contact Leah Berg

Agribusiness Coordinator / Instructor  
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## The Grass Isn't Always Greener

By Ryan Varns, Director

I'm sure many of you have heard this line growing up, and have probably caught yourself using it from time to time. I can honestly say I experienced this and truer words have never been spoken especially in the green industry.

My name is Ryan Varns and for those of you who don't know me or my background I'll give you a brief review. I began my golf course career in college at Deer Trace Golf Course and after graduating I went into the corporate world. After three months of being cooped up inside and wondering how people lived their lives like this, I interviewed with Tony Bertels at The Club of the Country in Louisburg for a full-time maintenance position. From there I advanced to superintendent and held that position through February of 2010. I have been the superintendent at Paola Country Club since June of 2011. Now you know my golf history and as you may have noticed there is a blank space in my timeline and this is where that saying came into my life.

In February of 2011 I went to work for a residential lawn care company in the KC metro area. I learned of this company from an old assistant, and a former employee of mine who was working there. They were telling me about the money to be made, the benefit package that was not comparable in our industry and most important to me, weekends and holidays off. Besides how hard could it be to fertilize lawns all day and not have to mow or syringe...

This was an ideal situation I thought to myself. No more worry about budgets, no members complaining if bunkers hadn't been raked, no employees calling in sick on club championship weekend and again a turf job with weekends and holidays off. I interviewed with the company and was immediately impressed with their professionalism, the benefits and compensation package and the amount of equipment they had. However, I learned there was a set amount of weekend hours to be worked, but you still had every holiday off and some weekend hours wouldn't be that bad. Besides how hard could it be to fertilize lawns all day?

My route was in a very nice part of town, and the first round of pre-emergent was already going down, so I started pushing fertilizer right away. I quickly learned that pushing a spreader all day on 3 to 5" fescue was a hell of a lot harder than pushing a spreader once a month on .10" bent grass. Thankfully I was saved after a week of solid pushing with a snow shower that kept us off the lawns for a week.

Turns out that a week off in the middle of a round of

applications is a bad thing in the residential lawn care world where every application is on a tight schedule. This meant that in order to get done with my route and to get back on schedule I would be working later into the evenings and on Saturdays. That's alright I told myself, I still have Sundays and holidays off, plus the lawns were all looking good, and how nice has it been not dealing with members and employees.

The first round of applications were now done and we were all gearing up for the second round, which was a broadleaf spray and second pre-emergent. This round was all sprayable and I was saved from the spreader, my legs were thanking me for the break. All was going well and I was meeting customers and picking up new ones and we had plenty of moisture and cool weather that spring so the grass really was greener on this side of the fence. Then the first phone call came, not from the office, but from a customer.

Turns out that when Columbine is just coming up and not in bloom it looks a lot like clover, and when a homeowner has it planted around a lot of pine trees and you think you're doing them a favor by spraying it out...you're not. After replanting 20 plants in a bed of pine roots and clay I made sure to know what I was spraying from then on, lesson learned. Weather was still cooperating though so the lawns were looking great and I was right it was easier to grow home lawns, again the grass was greener.

Anyone who is in golf remembers the summer of 2011 and let me tell you it was just as hard on the lawn care side. All of a sudden our downpours were followed by 90 and 100 degree heat and diseases were tearing through Johnson County like wild fire. Most of my green lawns were now turning brown and disease ridden. This, of course, brought daily phone calls from customers including calls on Sundays and the 4th of July, so much for weekends and holidays off. After explaining that fungicides were an additional treatment and they only worked for up to 4 weeks. I learned several new adjectives for not only myself but the lawns that were the month before, "the best ever." I wrapped up the 2011 season by seeding a lot of lawns, and not with my trusty tractor and three-point mounted seeder, no I got very familiar with a verti-cutter and walk-behind aerator.

The next year had fired up almost as quickly as the previous had ended and my legs were still wondering when they were going to get a break. I now had 465 customers who, unlike members, all had my cell phone and could call me at

**Continued on next page**

*The Grass Isn't Always Greener - cont.*

anytime they saw fit to tell me I did not know what I was doing. The best example of this came as I was celebrating my brothers 40th birthday with him and my dad on the golf course. I had just recorded my first hole-in-one when my phone rang, not with well wishers or congrats, but rather a customer telling me he was cancelling because he felt he could do better himself. Needless to say this was the tipping point. I did not know what I was going to do but all of a sudden the grass wasn't greener. I was now working weekends and holidays, had people calling me and complaining at work and at home and I was at the mercy of someone else making a budget and telling me what to apply to turf and when to apply it.

Not long after this realization I was offered the position as superintendent at Paola Country Club which I accepted and I am glad to be back in the golf industry. My experi-

ence in the residential turf field did show me that the grass is greenest where you make it that way. It reminded me that the weekends working on the course mean you get to bring your kids out to help change pins and to teach them the game. Members are not only there to complain they also complement you and most of them usually have the best interest of the course at heart. Employees are just human and sometimes they may actually be sick when they call in, and really it's nice to decide where the money is being spent even if there isn't as much there as there was last year. So even though I enjoyed the company I worked for and they took great care of me, one thing is for certain, "The grass isn't always greener on the other side."

**Tony's Teasers**



Do you want to be "one of the four" big winners of a \$250 gift card (right before Christmas)!? Simply participate in the 2012 Tony's Teasers trivia game. Each answer will pertain to something related to our industry, terminology we would recognise, a golf course, or even a local member (or a play on their name). The answer can be a person, place or thing.

Every month I will supply a clue. You must then come up with the correct response and submit your answer via the website only ([www.hagcsa.org](http://www.hagcsa.org)) prior to the answer being supplied in the next edition. Correct responses will entitle an entry (one entry per correct response) into the drawing. If you solve each month's riddle, your name gets put in the hat that many times; increasing your odds at this fabulous shopping spree. You must be

present at the Holiday Party to win; so everyone better get in the spirit of the season! All members in good standing are eligible to enter.

**March Teaser: Fowl Tidings**

**Answer:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Hint: Better watch that putt ... and no cussing!**



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# Meetings and Programs Report

*By Ryan Varns, Director*

I will start this month's report with some introductions. My name is Ryan Varns and I am the Director of Meetings and Programs for 2012. For those of you who don't know me I am superintendent at Paola Country Club in Paola, Kan. The committee I have put together to assist me with this are as follows:

- Andrew Jones, Superintendent at Swope Memorial
- Tom Storey, Superintendent at Metcalf Ridge
- Ethan Shamet, Superintendent at Deer Trace
- Matt Delventhal, Superintendent at Minor Park
- Ken Harding, John Deere/Lesco

We are currently working on a speaker for the joint meeting, which will be held on April 30 at Lawrence Country Club. As of this time the speaker has not been finalized.

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David Fearis: 913-424-3626 [dfearis@agriumat.com](mailto:dfearis@agriumat.com)

## ***Employee Tournament and Assistant Program Report***

*By Mitch Bradbury, Special Director*

I would first like to congratulate Andy Klein on his new position as the Superintendent at The Golf Club at Falcon Lakes. Andy has been a leader and central part in growing the Assistant Program and running the Employee Tourney for the last two years. This move has made room for me to undertake this position as Brain Rutledge steps up to the Membership Committee. Also, I would like to thank the following members for volunteering on this committee:

- Dan Cutler
- Ryan Hesseltine
- Marc Szablewski
- Nick Kray
- Chris Benich
- Andy Klein
- Brain Rutledge

Our committee will be meeting soon to establish dates and agendas for the Assistant Program and Employee Tournament. I hope you are enjoying the off season, please feel free to contact me for any suggestions or questions.



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## Criticism Sucks

By Robert Evans Wilson

“Let me drive the boat.”

It was the one statement from the Creative Director that I'd come to dread. It usually came within moments of his reading over my shoulder as I wrote advertising copy on my computer.

It meant, “Get out of your seat; I'm going to start changing your work.”

The changes were seldom significant; he never modified the meaning or the motivation of my message. He never altered my concept or idea, but his little edits still sent a powerful message: my work was not good enough to leave alone.

Gradually, over the months I worked for his advertising agency, the constant criticism undercut my confidence. Sometimes it was overt verbal criticism, but most of the time I would simply find that my work had been revised without anyone consulting me. A coworker suggested that he was simply behaving like a dog, who, had to mark his territory; she said he did the same thing to the graphic designers. I couldn't see it that way - to me - it felt like an attack on my ability.

Before I worked for him full time, I had worked for him freelance. During those days, he praised my work, and constantly asked me to work for him full time. I liked being a freelancer, and was reluctant to take a regular job. Then one day, he made the proverbial offer I couldn't refuse. After that the praise stopped and the criticism began.

Before I took that job, I had won advertising awards, I had been invited by colleges to teach advertising, and I had successfully created ads that significantly increased the revenues of my clients. I was at the top of my game, an authority on advertising, but the almost daily criticism in my new job took its toll.

Sometimes I would try to write copy in his style just to see if it would prevent him from changing it. He still changed it. By the time I left that job 18 months later, my confidence was gone. I no longer felt like an authority in advertising. I felt like a failure.

A couple of weeks later, I completed and turned in a new freelance job to a new client. I cringed as he read it - expecting criticism to come at any minute. When he finished, he looked up and said, “This is great! I can't wait to run it.”

Relief flooded my body. I hadn't heard those words in so long - they were immediately fortifying - and I felt my confidence returning.

Critics think they are doing us a service; they think they are helping us improve our work, but what they frequently do is destroy our motivation by demoralizing us.”

Unbridled criticism given without praise will also destroy relationships. It not only kills self-assurance; it kills love. Whether the recipient is family, friend or lover, the message is clear: “You are not good enough.” Some victims of criticism will try to win approbation by changing for the critic, but over time if it is not forthcoming, they will give up.

This funny observation by radio personality Jay Trachman puts relationship criticism in perspective, “Never criticize your spouse's faults; if it weren't for them, your mate might have found someone better than you.”

There is a place, of course, for criticism; it is part of teaching. So, if you must criticize, be sure to lace it heavily with praise before and after you give it. In order to motivate someone to become better, remember this formula: Praise - Critique - Praise.

Newspaper editor, Frank Atherton Clark, got it right with this wisdom, “Criticism, like rain, should be gentle enough to nourish a man's growth without destroying his roots.”

*Robert Evans Wilson, Jr. is a motivational speaker and humorist. He works with companies that want to be more competitive and with people who want to think like innovators. For more information on Robert's programs please visit <http://www.jumpstartyourmeeting.com>*



# MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

~ If you are applying for membership as a Superintendent, you **must** also be a member of the national association, Golf Course Superintendents Association of America.  
Download an application at: [www.gcsaa.org](http://www.gcsaa.org) ~

Name \_\_\_\_\_ GCSAA Membership #: \_\_\_\_\_

Club or Company \_\_\_\_\_

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City, State, Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Fax \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

Home Address \_\_\_\_\_

City, State, Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Spouse \_\_\_\_\_

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### JOB INFORMATION: LIST CURRENT EMPLOYMENT FIRST

DATES EMPLOYED	EMPLOYER NAME AND ADDRESS	TITLE
From _____ To _____	_____	_____
From _____ To _____	_____	_____
From _____ To _____	_____	_____
From _____ To _____	_____	_____

I hereby make application for membership in the Heart of America Golf Course Superintendents Association and attach herewith my dues for the current year. If accepted, I agree to uphold the by-laws of this Association and subscribe to the following code of ethics. To the end that confidence and respect may be enjoyed by members of our Association, the code of ethics is promulgated and observation of its provisions required.

- Every member shall take pride in his/her work and regard it as a profession in which all members strive to maintain its good name.
- Realizing that the best asset that a member can have is thorough knowledge of his/her business, he/she shall constantly try to improve his/her knowledge and effectiveness by freely exchanging experiences and ideas with fellow members and take advantage of all opportunities for improvement.
- He/she shall endeavor to maintain courteous relations with his/her employer and his/her associates and endeavor to have his/her employees take pride in doing their work well.
- In accomplishing his/her own and the Association's best interest, observance of the following suggestions are recommended.
  - **Seeking Employment:** 1. Seek counsel of local associations when applying for a position in a new district; 2. Recommend only qualified GCSAA members; 3. Ascertain the wage scale in the district in which you are seeking employment, then uphold that talk with the person who last held or now holds the position of Golf Course Superintendent.
  - **Visiting:** 1. Present your HAGCSA or GCSAA membership card when visiting; 2. Always contact the Superintendent of the course you are visiting; 3. Honor requests for technical help from golf courses only when channeled through the Superintendent of the course making the request.

**Communication Consent:** I agree to receive notices, advertisements, announcements, brochures, and other information from Heart of America Golf Course Superintendents of America via facsimile, telephone or e-mail. I further agree that my express permission to fax, telephone or e-mail me such notices and other information will continue and have no date of expiration, unless a written request is received indicating a change in permission.

**ATTESTED:** The applicant must be attested by three peers and/or colleagues.

Print Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Print Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Print Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

**Please include Annual Membership Dues with Application (Term: January to December):**

- Superintendents - \$130
- Assistant Superintendents - \$70
- Suppliers - \$130
- Golf Course Employees - \$70
- Students - \$25

**Heart of America Golf Course Superintendents Association**

P.O. Box 419264 . Kansas City . MO . 64141-6264 . 816-561-5323 . Fax/816-561-1991 . [www.hagcsa.org](http://www.hagcsa.org)

## Editor's Column



Lately, I have heard a lot of differing views on how to fix the current state of golf. I even listened to a GCSAA leader telling me that we need to partner up with the PGA on certain initiatives. All well and good, as long as we steer clear of any misguided idea concerning growing the game utilizing tee time solution partners vs. enhancing each golf facility's ability to manage their own tee sheet. The PGA BOD just reversed a near tragic decision to begin a business endorsement with what many of us consider a drain on an already taxed and thin revenue stream by partnering with a large on-line tee time seller. It would be like the GCSAA deciding to endorse just one equipment manufacturer then reaping the rewards of the created monopoly whether it's good for the game or not. Thankfully, they saw fit to reverse a very bad decision.

Now, I'm not going to name names. Let's just say that 3rd party companies that pimp facility tee times in the name of profitability and growth for all is just a blatant line of crap! These guys simply barter and resell a facility's available tee times...at a deep discounted rate thus reducing the revenue stream, killing rack rates and ultimately restricting our maintenance budgets. That's not a tee time solution, Partner! That's just bad business and not a sustainable model in today's market.

Here is how this scam works: *Johnnie has a golf course with available times in the dead of the afternoon. Third Party Goliath tells Small Operator Johnnie he will market these times on his website for the small fee of 4 time slots per day to do with what he will. "Great!" thinks Johnnie. "I won't have to lift a finger and poor old Goliath can fill up my tee sheet for me. What's 4 measly tee times if they don't cost me anything?"* Well rest assured that Goliath is going to steadfastly market those bartered times first and at a rate that he can be certain to move! *\$KA-CHING\$* Golfers soon learn how the system works and the regular rack rates are no longer being sold. That just cost Johnnie plenty!

By 2011, 3rd Party companies had over 3,500 golf course relationships, siphoning over \$75 million in owner's revenue into their own coffers. By 2013 that number is projected to climb to over \$125 million being sucked from regional golf markets, all in the name of marketing available tee times. They will do this without ever owning anything except customer loyalty for cheap golf and fleecing they give to local operators. In a down economy, owners and operators absolutely must squeeze every dollar they can in order to attain sustainability and eke out a marginal profit. It should be apparent to the industry that 3rd party barter/resellers do not create tee times or more customers; they simply redistribute existing inventories all-the-while employing harmful discount tactics.

So how in the hell did we get here? To me, it's like water or cattle or lambs to the slaughter. The path of least resistance dictates that it is far easier and safer for the operator to allow someone else to solve a perceived, difficult problem. Technology is a hard thing to master. Websites and whatnot are somebody else's domain! The industry as a whole has allowed this to transpire and according to Rob West of 1-2-1 Marketing, "the situation has helped create a strong presence of unwanted 3rd Party companies we *think* we need to rely on but really don't. Ask the hotel industry what they think of 3rd party peddlers!

There is currently a grass roots effort underway by several local pros and operators bent on re-seizing control of their tee time inventories in order to stem eroding green fee rates. They have concluded that past business practices don't equate to good business practices. How refreshing! Savvy owners/operators are learning the hard way that a round of golf must be monetized. They realize that what is most important is *the product*. The course and its condition is what ultimately provides golfers an enjoyable experience and brings them back for more. This requires that Superintendents be given a workable budget to produce the best product possible within the parameters of today's economy. If a golf facility can't even learn to glean and retain 100 percent of their own tee time revenues, then expenses must continue to be trimmed. We all know where those cuts normally occur.

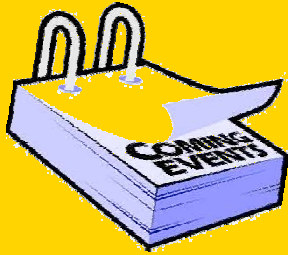
As the key facility manager, I implore each of you to have this conversation with your GM or owner. You are already expected to do more with less. Don't let apathy and ignorance by others allow the practice of barter-for-resale by Third Party Goliath be allowed to raid your already depleted war chest!

**Tony Bertels, Editor**



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# FUNCTION FORECAST

## DATE

April 30  
May 30  
June 25  
August  
September  
October 1 & 2  
November  
December 11 & 12  
January 4, 2013

## EVENT

Joint Meeting with KGCSA @ Lawrence CC  
May Classic @ Dub's Dread GC  
S&R Tournament @ Nicklaus Golf Club  
Employee Tournament  
Vendor Appreciation  
MO Cup Challenge @ Old Kinderhook  
Annual Meeting  
Common Ground Conference & Trade Show  
New Year Party

**HEARTBEAT • Tony Bertels, Editor**

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