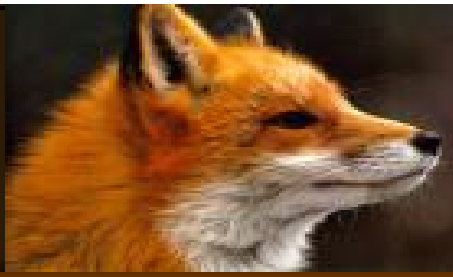


The



Fox

Volume VIII Number 8

Ballston Spa Country Club 1925

October, 2006

Superintendent's Report

Steve Solsky



This past month has been great. The weather has really helped the course recover from a stressful August. My crew and I aerated the greens after Labor Day. The process went well and I have since then top dressed the greens to fill the holes and have seeded the greens with bent grass.

It has only been two weeks and the greens have almost healed completely. The only greens that are slower to heal are those that have trees around them or near them (7,11,12,13). The 16th green has almost filled in completely but has started to show signs of struggling because of the lack of sunlight this time of year.

I managed to aerate the tees and approaches between rain storms this past week. I hope to begin aerating the fairways as soon as the weather shapes up. I will not close the course to do this work, but I will ask the membership please, do not drive on the plugs. Driving on the plugs makes cleaning them up harder for my crew and I.

I would also ask the membership to be patient with the work being done. I have a small crew this time of year and we can not mow everything and do all this aeration. Please understand that the aeration needs to be done to continue to have nice playing surfaces. I also wanted to answer one question that I got this past weekend. A member asked me why the fairways were not dragged for dew. My limited crew this time of year cannot drag the dew off the fairways on the weekends. I would ask that if there were some volunteers to drag fairways early on the weekend, that would be great. I only need two people early in the morning to get out there before everyone else.



If you Google Steve Solsky you'll get this picture of him and the crew that worked with Craig Currier on the grounds of Bethpage Black prior to the 2002 US Open.

Left to right: Ryan Daly, Andy Bobiak, Mary Gregg, Craig Currier, Bob Emmons, Steve Solsky, Not Identified, Tom Newkirk, and Pete Cash.

President's Letter

As we come to the end of another golf season, there are a couple of important items that I would like to discuss.



First, as some of you may be aware, we are advertising a **fall golf special (\$160 for a foursome)** as a means of making up some of our revenue shortfall. Our revenue started below expectations in June due to the weather and never recovered. As a result, we are approximately \$35,000 behind our budgeted revenue numbers. With increased public play, the Pro Shop has the responsibility

to monitor public play to minimize any impact to the membership. We have also lowered our guest fees from \$46 (including cart) to \$30. Take advantage of this special and bring those guests you have been putting off all year. On the expense side we are confident that we are in a good position.

I would also like to encourage everyone to fill out the membership survey that has been put together. It is very comprehensive and will provide the Board of Directors with valuable input on what you, the membership, think is important. Please don't miss this opportunity to let your voice be heard.

I certainly want to thank everyone who has made this a successful season. Todd, Matt and the entire Pro Shop staff have done another great job in taking care of us this season. I would like to extend a special thanks to Matt for all of his years of service to BSCC and wish him well in his future endeavors, wherever they may take him.

Steve and his entire staff have had another challenging year. In 2005, it was the heat and humidity of June. This year it was the record rainfall in June. Through it all, Steve and his entire staff have worked tirelessly to make the course as good as it could be. I think they deserve a great deal of credit for the job that they did this year and I thank them for all of their efforts.

I do not want to forget about the Business Office and the excellent job that Laura does. Many times she is our first contact with potential new members as they call with inquiries about BSCC.

I certainly need to thank my fellow board members. Every year brings new challenges and they have provided me with outstanding support and have been there for me and for each other during the entire season. The success we have had and will continue to have is a complete team effort and would not be possible without the efforts of each one of them.

If you have any comments, suggestions or complaints, please do not hesitate to contact me. My email address is tucats@nycap.rr.com or you may call me, (W) 395-6472 or (H) 371-1926.

Rick Funaro

Green Committee Report

GC@ballstonspacc.com

I continue to have many conversations with members about the golf course and receive many great questions and fine suggestions about our facilities.

To make this information exchange both easier and more effective, the Green Committee has established an e-mail address where you can send your questions, comments and suggestions.

At each meeting of the green committee, we will discuss all the submissions. Let's keep 'em coming.

Dave Runyon



Fall Special!
Remind Your Friends,
Family and Colleagues.
Only \$800 to play the
rest of the year and that
same amount will be
credited to the stock
purchase for 2007.

Call the Business Office
or Golf Shop for more
details



John Paolucci

Board Notes

Member's Satisfaction Survey:

As I had mentioned in last month's Fox edition, the BOD was creating a Member's Satisfaction Survey. I'm pleased to report that the survey is complete and it has been mailed to you from the Business Office. In addition, the survey is also available on the BSCC Member's home page. We encourage you to take advantage of this convenient option. Once you complete the survey and hit the submit button, your survey is automatically routed to my e-mail.

We also took the opportunity to distribute copies at the Men's League year end outing and some members have already provided some great feedback. As Rick's cover letter explains, the BOD encourages you to take the time to give us your thoughts and ideas.

We would appreciate receiving all survey responses by the end of October. Thanks!

Time for Some Recognition

I'm sure that many of you are not aware of who manages the BSCC Internet pages. I wanted to take this opportunity to express appreciation and thanks for the great work Keith McNabb does as our Internet Administrator. Keith volunteers a significant amount of time creating and maintaining our home pages. He just did a tremendous job converting the Member's Survey into a published format, which I know took a lot of effort. Having members such as Keith is what makes BSCC such a great place to play.

Thanks Keith!



Keith McNabb

From the Penthouse to the Outhouse

I know that Tucker and Doug get to have editorial fun each month, but I thought I would share a couple of my golf experiences that illustrate how fickle this game can be.

My day in the Penthouse:

Last month I had the rare pleasure of scoring my first and most likely last, double-eagle on the 8th hole. After hitting the fairway slot with my drive, which is a rare occasion for me in itself, I hit my trusty rescue club from the 206 sprinkler head marker. As my side-kick Ed Schwenke and I witnessed the ball flight, we knew it was going to be a good shot. Of course from that distance you can only see the pin. As we were walking up the fairway, I was thinking I may have a good chance at eagle, but I began to say a few choice words once I didn't see my ball on the green. I couldn't believe I hit it over the green! After searching over the green and in the bunkers to no avail, I decided to look in the cup. And *voila*, go directly to the Penthouse.

My Day in the Outhouse:

On a Tuesday Night Men's League round, I pulled a driver "deep, deep to left" on the 14th hole. After searching high and low, I found my ball past the men's/ladies room, left of the dirt cart path, next to the rough. I guess I thought I needed to make that hole more difficult, since it is such an easy hole, NOT!

Being obstructed by trees and having no shot at the green, I had to punch out in the opposite direction. OK, I've seen Tiger do this, so how hard can it be? Choke down on a 4 iron, play it off your back foot, aim at your target and swing through the shot.

Well I almost pulled it off except my ball went through the open door of the rest room, made a few clanging sounds and rested next to the toilet. Play the ball where it lies, Johnny. And *voila*, go directly to the Outhouse. (literally!)

Most of us spend more time in the Outhouse, but we keep coming back for that rare in the Penthouse moment.



This Club of Ours

We have a unique situation here at Ballston Spa Country Club. First of all, we're not really a country club at all. When the Club was named, back in the 1920's, it was probably more of a wish than a reality. After all, the idea of a country club in the first half of the 20th Century was one that elicited visions of weekend balls and cocktail parties, the family by the pool and tennis matches between couples followed by luncheon on the terrace.

But that's not who we are, and I for one am grateful we haven't lived up to the stereotype.

What Ballston Spa Country Club is, is a golf club. If you don't play golf, there's no need to apply. The applicants, and therefore the Members, are hard core golfers who appreciate what we have here: a wonderful track that challenges every golfer, no matter what his/her game is.

But do we all really appreciate what we have here?

People I know who live in places as disparate as Ottawa, Charlotte, small towns in Virginia and many other locations, not all of which are major urban centers, are envious of our situation and our Members dues rate when they experience the course.

They see our Golf Shop, our PGA Professional and his staff. These gentlemen have the professionalism and talents of a staff you would expect to see at a country club. But we're not a country club. We're a semi private golf club. They see the superior condition of the course, groomed by a Superintendent who never stops working, obsessed with making our course the best it can be. The kind of dedication you would expect from a highly paid grounds crew at a country club. Except, we have an average-paid crew and superintendent who just happen to love our semi private golf club.

So we have the perfect situation here at BSCC: low dues and great employees who perform above and beyond the semi-private golf club paradigm. Well, lucky us.

We may have it made, but not all of us know it. And therein lies the danger. I have served on the Board of Directors, I have served as Club President, and I have experienced the complacency, the lassitude of many Members. Members who will fight tooth and nail against the slightest increase in dues and in the next breath will complain because the rough wasn't cut to a height that suited them. The reason the rough wasn't mowed, of course, was because there was not enough money left in the course maintenance fund to allow the Superintendent the luxury of doing whatever the hell needed to be done, rather than having to set priorities.

These same individuals are seldom or never seen on Project Days, their thinking being that they paid their dues and damn it all, that's their only obligation. Well, that would probably be true if we were a country club. But we're not.

We're a middle class white and blue collar semi-private golf club. We could be a middle class white and blue collar private golf club with just a marginal increase in fees, as proposed at the February members meeting, but that would mean increasing the dues by one or two hundred dollars. I would love to see this happen, but if the Membership as a whole doesn't want it, so be it. That's democracy.

But we can still be a great golf club at no cost to anyone unwilling to shell out a few more dollars for course improvement. It costs nothing to volunteer to fill divots, tend gardens, participate in tournament/green/handicap/whatever committees, write for the Fox, think of fund raising projects, show up for Project Day, create your own Project Day, buy a poster. There are lots of ways to make BSCC a better place to play golf, but only 5% of us do anything about it, while a much higher percentage of us bitch and complain and whine.

You get what you pay for, whether the payment is in dollars or effort.

These are my views and do not necessarily reflect those of the Board of Directors . Tucker

"If a country can't save itself through the volunteer service of its own free people, then I say: Let the damn thing go down the drain" Robert Heinlein

Anyone willing to help with preparing the flower beds for winter, this will be done on October 14th at noon. Please e-mail or call Max Tucker. E-mail is kamerin@nycap.rr.com phone is 893-7646

Ballston Spa Country Club Women's Association

Fall Breakfast Meeting - Saturday October 14, 2006

- 9::00 Hearty Breakfast (frittatas – cost is \$10)
- 10:00 Meeting begins (if you do not want breakfast, please plan on arriving at 10:00 AM for the start of the meeting)



Contact Ginny Charbonneau to reserve a seat for breakfast – ginnycharb@aol.com, daytimes 268-6064, evenings 373-2056

All women members of Ballston Spa Country Club are automatically members of the Women's Association without any separate dues payment or other obligations. Please join us at our Fall meeting for election of new officers and to wrap up the year's events.

Ginny Charbonneau



Doug Young

Chopper's Corner

This is one of the first submissions I made to The Fox in 2004. Coming to the end of our 2006 golf season, I read it again, made slight modifications and submit it again for your eyes.

A business colleague of mine has a framed copy of the Three Stooges "Golfing with your friends" poster on the wall of his office. While it's a fun poster with some screwball individuals in the photo, I can't help thinking about how much this game is about having a good time with your friends.

A while back, after a Tuesday night of golf and dinner, I took a beverage to the bench on the 4th tee to watch the sunset and wait for my son, who was on the front nine with his buddies. It was a beautiful evening, and as the sun set behind the tree at the corner of number 4, (that same tree that has determined the fate of many of my tee shots), I could hear my son's group approaching the 8th tee. Between their muffled conversation and outbursts of laughter, I could clearly hear the swoosh of a club, the striking of the ball, and then, either whoops and hollers or more laughter, which I suspect reflected the quality of the shot just taken.

As they made their way up number 8, the same ritual kept playing out. Conversation, followed by silence during a golf swing, and then the ensuing sounds of admiration or wild laughter. They continued on and I could then both see and hear their progress through 8 and 9. It was clear to me that the quality of the golf being played, while important and respected, was not what was giving them the most pleasure. It was the thrill of hitting or watching a good shot, the busting of chops, and the camaraderie being experienced that made it memorable for all of them.

Three of my high school classmates and I go on a golf trip each fall to a resort in the Pocono Mountains, as it's central to where we all live now. In 2006, we marked the 17th year that we've been doing this. We play 90 holes of golf over three days and stay in cabins right behind the 18th green, so our cars get parked when we arrive and started when the weekend is over. Since we all are the same caliber of golfer, no strokes are exchanged between us and we play every match in a better ball of partners format, mixing up the partners every round. When it's all said and done, money gets passed around in circles, based on the results of the matches and we laugh about the higher and lower moments of the weekend.

As I reflect on the poster, my son and his friends and the recent trip to the Pocono resort, the true pleasure of golf begins to fill my mind. Obviously, golf is a game that is played by the distinct set of rules that gives us a common base. And, there are few other games in the world that let us play competitively into our later years. Finally, a golf course makes a great setting to compete, shot for shot for four hours. But, it's the camaraderie and friendships that are made on the golf course that are unlike no others, and to me, that is truly what the game is all about.

As we play golf on fewer and fewer days this fall, until we ultimately pull our clubs out of the trunk and store them for another winter, let's all take a few minutes to reflect on our 2006 season and be grateful for the time we've spent with our friends. It's truly been a pleasure and I'm already looking forward to next year.

The Winners' Circle

Women's Club Championship

1st Flight 1st: Sue Kahler
2nd: Sue Delanoy
3rd: Sue Mansfield

2nd Flight: 1st: Max Tucker
2nd: Anne Jorgenson
3rd: Mary Assey

3rd Flight: 1st: Cindy Walkanowski
2nd: Mimi Jakob
3rd: Rosanne Greenwood

4th Flight: 1st: Joyce Blau
2nd: Jan Federice
3rd: Pat Joseph

Men's Club Championship

1st Flight: 1st: Bob Cooper
2nd: Ryan Simpson
3rd: Ben Kelly
4th: Larry D'Alberto

2nd Flight: 1st: Paul James
2nd: Rick Funaro
3rd: Jim Breitingner

3rd Flight: 1st: Tom Hudy
2nd: Josh Cottrell

4th Flight: 1st: Paul Dunkelbarger
2nd: Ken Koran
3rd: Steve Bonacci
4th: Ed Hall

5th Flight: 1st: Mike Martin
2nd: Chuck Keens
3rd: Jim Stefanik
4th: Ed Schwenke

Men's Guest Day

1st Net: David Bell
Kurt Conroy
Terry Denny
Stan Tresick

2nd Net: Winston Wachtel
Steve Whitbeck
Mark Miller
Jim O'Grady

3rd Net: Chris Brady
Mike Fusco
Mike Reinoehl
Pete Kanches

1st Gross: John Donavan
Moe Mroczkowski
Bernie Murphy
Rick Dame

2nd Gross: Tom Hudy
Tim Bethel
Mike Courtney
David Malicki

From the Golf Shop

Thank You

I would like to thank Matt Riggings for all of his help the past four years and all of his expertise with his customer service skills and personal skills. He will be missed and very difficult to replace. I feel that I speak for the entire membership as Matt goes on to endure new adventures in his career.

Slow Play

Once again, we hear more and more issues on slow play during weekend play. The real issue that we come across is that players are not ready to play when it is their turn to do so. If we could all try to work together and pay attention to this matter

then I feel that it would be much better for all. I have a chart that shows where the players should be after each hole that they play and we can make copies of this chart and give it to each player if this will help players become more aware of it.

When a staff member from the golf shop or myself come out to ask a group to speed up or to get back into position, please don't take it personal as we are just doing our job to make everyone's golf experience as pleasurable as possible.

Golf Carts

We are doing everything that we can to try to replace the golf carts for next season. The Board of Directors is looking to see if financially we can make it work. We have had three different demos here this late summer and fall and I hope everyone has had a chance to ride on them. If you have any feedback on the carts please fill out the survey and get it to a board member or drop them off at the office so they will understand how important it is to you as a member to replace the carts or not to replace the carts.



Todd Manderson



Parring the 19th



Tucker

When golf ball companies offer multi-million dollar endorsement contracts to top players, you know it's not a commodity industry. Though golf balls return a better than average profit to manufacturers, they seem like a commodity to most of us, because they are an item necessary to the playing of the game and we go through so many of them each year.

Golf balls are expensive. With this in mind, we all make special efforts to use as few as possible during the season. The act of minimizing our golf ball consumption takes many forms. Once a ball gets too dirty or ratty, we assume it's ready for the shag bag. We may do this prematurely in some cases, as balls are keeping in round much longer than they used to, but we do it anyway, because there is no feeling quite like unsheathing a new sleeve of your favorite balls, watching the shiny white beauties tumble into your hand.

The major reason we buy balls though, is because they get lost. Notice the passive form of the verb. We don't lose them, they simply get lost. The rules offer us encouragement to find a stray ball, but the lost ball rule is probably ignored by more players than any other; they simply plop down another somewhere in the vicinity, and carry on, usually taking a one stroke penalty. No one wants to hit a provisional off the tee, this being an open and visible admission of ineptitude, not to mention pessimism. Once the ball can't be found, there is a similar resistance to returning to the tee or location of the last stroke.

So we look. Most of us look for the ball in places we would like to find it, rather than where the ball probably is. Others remind me of the old story of the drunk looking for his watch under the streetlamp. When asked if this is where he thought he lost it, he replies no, but the light is much better here. If it is difficult to get to where the ball most likely is, we go to more accessible portions of the jungle in the hope that we got a good bounce or, if looking for a playing partner's ball, we take the path through the woods, feigning interest in the search without risking poison ivy.



There is nothing more certain in a golfer's mind than the fact that an opponent's ball is so irretrievably lost that it is a complete waste of time looking for it. But we spend the obligatory five minutes. Some foursomes have set routines, fanning out in a sweep that covers the maximum area in the least time, declaring a ball lost if not discovered in the drive-by search.

The other extreme is the individual who only walks on the fairway when it is necessary to hit his ball. He spends all his non-hitting time scouring the rough, emerging at the green with burrs and the detritus of various flora attached to him. And usually a pocket of balls, often giving his playing partners an inventory, such as "Got 3 Titleists, 2 Top Flights and a Flying Lady!"

The ball retriever issue is another aspect that must be dealt with here. Real golfers who walk, hate to load their bag with any extra weight such as a retriever. They selfishly assume some one else in the foursome will have one they can use. If not, they take the hit on ball usage. This is a despicably selfish attitude, but I'm going to continue to do it anyway.

The absolute worst thing you can do, is play a ball that is obviously yours, and yours alone. Sure, you can mark your ball with a special dot somewhere for identification, but no one but you knows it's yours. A few years ago, I got a deal on a few dozen logo blackouts that were excellent balls, but they had this huge black circle on them, driving people crazy when I putted, and generally drawing a lot of mockery. The worst part though, was when people began returning a ball to me, knowing it had to be mine, and reveling in the act of describing the inappropriate part of the course where it had been found, sometimes erupting into an hilarious, spirited speculation as to what hole I might have been playing at the time.



The good part, is that I had found the ultimate means of finding my lost golf balls.

PS: I've been getting a lot of flack from bowlers lately. Seems they're getting the impression that I've been denigrating their winter pastime overly much in my writings. I'd just like to point out that this particular column doesn't even mention their so-called "sport." So, in the best interest of harmony and tolerance, I'd like to take this opportunity to apologize if I've offended anyone and hope that they enjoy rolling ball after ball down the same alley *ad nauseam* this winter.

Eastern New York Seniors Golf Association

Ballston Spa Golfers await lunch at Schulyer Meadows Golf Club recently prior to an outing of the Eastern New York Seniors Golf Association.

The Association is comprised of the 12 top private golf clubs from Columbia Golf Club in Claverack to the Glens Falls Golf club up north, with 12 senior golfers from each club competing in events 4 times per year.

We rotate clubs and play each club approximately once every 3 years. Lunch, dinner, and golf are included for each event for a very nominal fee. A different format for each event makes for varied competition and is handicapped.

Our roster of 12 Ballston Spa players is full at present but we are looking to establish a waiting list for the future. If you would like to be placed on the waiting list or have any questions please contact Bill Baker at 355-1134 or e-mail the-coach1@verizon.net It is a great group of senior golfers and everyone is very competitive.



Bill Baker

Far Left: Jimmy Bryant, Wyn Wachtel, Bob Palumbo, Jay Wayand, Bill Baker.

Left: Ron Roberts, Jan Holick, Rocky Roberts



Above: Todd Szwetkowski shows off his tee prize : Champagne, hors d'oeuvres and a crying towel reading "R.I.P. 2006"

Ryder Cup 2006

Men: 21 1/2

Women 18 1/2

Right: The Men's team make the Wheaties Box, celebrating their win prematurely as the 2006 winners.

It was a threepeat for the males as they claimed their third straight Ryder Cup. Like the previous two, it seemed like a walkaway after day one with the men having a 5 point lead, but, true to form, the women came back strong in the individual matches, almost getting even at one point.

This brings the battle of the sexes to a near-tie for the history of the event, with the women winning in '98, 99, 00, 02 and 03 and the men winning 01, 04, 05 and 06. Congratulations to all the participants for a hard fought tournament in less than ideal conditions.

