



Volume XII Number 6
September 2010

Ballston Spa Country Club

The Fox

President's Letter

I received an update from Laura this week on raffle ticket sales and I was disappointed in the number of tickets sold. That leads me to seek some feedback from you on why we have sold so few tickets. With only one week left for sales, we have sold approximately 225 tickets with twenty-five of those tickets purchased by non-members. Of the remaining 200 tickets, roughly 100 members purchased those 200 tickets. BSCC has a membership of approximately 335 members (adult playing members) so approximately two thirds of our membership did not purchase a greens cover raffle ticket. The feedback that we received from last year was that the tickets were too expensive (\$50) so we felt that \$20 would increase our sales. We also believed that after the membership saw the improvement the covers made in the condition of our greens this spring, the membership would be anxious to help us purchase more covers to improve more of our greens.



Rick Fumaro

If you did not purchase a raffle ticket, please give me a call, send me an email or stop me the next time you see me at the course. I'm genuinely interested in why our ticket sales are so low. With a dues structure as low as ours there is little money left for covers or equipment without sacrificing monies allocated for the maintenance of the golf course. We try to be creative in ways to improve our golf course instead of increasing our dues structure by a larger amount to pay for items like green covers.

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

From the Comptroller's Corner Al Squire

From time to time members ask how BSCC is doing. I am able to answer that considering the factors we cannot control, the economy, weather, and the changing public use of leisure time, we are doing better than many if not most golfing facilities.

Financial reports to date indicate BSCC will have adequate cash and income for the balance of this year and for operations next year until dues start to come in.

Many news articles have been published reporting a decrease in the number of golfers willing or able to afford to belong to private clubs or to play as often at public facilities. This is a continuing trend that started about fifteen to twenty years ago and is reflected in our records of membership. BSCC is no different than almost all golf clubs in no longer having a waiting list for membership and a decreasing number of members.

BSCC has three vital assets: a loyal and dedicated membership; a very fine golf course; and last but not least a staff who take pride in this organization. Recognition must also be given to the members who provide direction and who provide BSCC with their services and often donations of money.

Ballston Spa Country Club has survived fire, depressions, and wars and there is no reason to believe that it will not continue to not only survive, but with your continued support will thrive.

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Steve Solisky

Superintendent's Report

These past two months have been very tough for growing grass. The hot humid weather and sometimes dry periods have taken a toll on the turf throughout the course. Our small sized pushup greens are really showing signs of stress. Walkup areas, collars, and recently scalped out areas on the greens have thinned out tremendously.

Unfortunately, there is not one answer as to why the poa grass dies. When the first part of July hit, we watered the greens for 6-8 minutes every morning that it was forecasted to be hot. While irrigating frequently is good to keep the grass green, it is not good for root growth. The plant does not extend its roots if someone is keeping the tops of the grass cool when it is 95 degrees in the sun. Over time, the plant has only a few inches of roots and it only takes one hot sunny afternoon of not watering to kill a lot of turf. We water to keep the grass alive and green but this causes another problem. Think about it.

A green that is constantly being syringed in hot weather creates a perfect environment for black algae, fungus, and surface compaction. Newer USGA greens drain well because they are built with a sand base. They are also larger and have pure bent grass that sees sunlight all day long all year long. Ballston Spa's greens are very small clay based greens. Mowers, sprayers, and people all contribute to compaction. Our deep tine aerifier works great to alleviate this problem but is not recommended to use during hot stressful times.

Sometimes keeping the grass you have alive is more important than trying to get bent grass to germinate in the heat of summer. September is almost here and our cool season grasses love cool weather. Aerification and seeding will work best during this month of cool nights and low humidity days.

Some positive things that have been going on is the completion of connecting the two ponds together. Having a sufficient amount of water to irrigate with has always been a problem. Once the creek stops flowing, as it did earlier this summer, the irrigation pond (#17) does not fill back up. We purchased a large 4 inch pump to transfer water from the pond on #2 to the pond on #17. We never had a large pump to move water from one pond to another. This pump moves 380 gallons per minute, which is sufficient to replenish our irrigation pond because we only irrigate out at about 500 gallons per minute. A 4 inch PVC line was installed to connect the ponds. This makes it easy to hook up and pump, instead of trying to run flexible hose the 350ft.

We also spent a couple of afternoons working on the area around the bathrooms on #6. If you remember, we cleared this area last winter. Opening up the right side of the tee and adding sunlight to the skylights was accomplished. The rock wall will have a flower bed behind it and the rest of the area will be sodded. This area will be completed this fall.



August 2010

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From the Golf Shop

Todd Manderson

Merchandise Credit

All credit must be used by October 31st this season. Start using up what you have while there is still a large selection to choose from. We still have a great selection of Men's and Women's clothing and some fall items have arrived. Looking for ideas, then purchase something for Xmas. All merchandise credit is to be used on in-stock merchandise only. NO Special Orders for Merchandise Credits on the books.



Golf Tip



Ball position is a very important part of the golf swing and as I play with various members on the course, I notice most players are coming up short on the downhill lies. There are 2 important parts to playing this shot. The first is to get the ball position more off of the right foot (for a right handed player) and the second is to get all of your weight moving toward your target. That would be moving your weight toward your left foot. These 2 things are essential to playing the downhill lie shot on any golf course. If you have any questions about this, please ask me in the golf shop and I will be more than happy to show you exactly how to play the shot.

Stack and Tilt Golf Swing

We have had some students with much success on the Stack and Tilt method of swinging the club. Just a few notes to let everyone know how the season has gone with some of my students and the success they have had this year. Most players have gotten a bit intimidated by the method but have had some success throughout the season. The players that have committed to the process have had success during the season. Many players who change their golf swing must try to commit to the process and not worry about the results. If you try to commit to the process then the results will eventually come. It is basically a one plane swing and is much easier to repeat because you are using your big muscles to hit the ball. If anyone is interested in learning a simpler swing, sign up for some instruction today as the season is not over yet.



Email Listing

We have most of your email addresses and thank you for making them available to us. We'd like to put your email address on the website in the Members' phone listing so that our members can communicate freely with each other. If you have no problem with this, please send your permission to put your email address next to your phone number.

Please send this to Keith McNab kmcnab@nycap.rr.com with a short note expressing your willingness to include your email address in our phone listing. Thank you.

Green Committee Report



Sue Kahler

You wouldn't know the summer is winding down from the continued hot weather we're experiencing. Steve and his crew continue to work tirelessly, as they have done all summer, to maintain our excellent playing conditions. Most recently a new pump was purchased and pipe installed between the pond in front of #18 tee and the pond on #17. This has enabled us to transfer water to the pond on #17 and fully utilize our stored water supplies.

While it appears we have overly dry conditions on the surface, the high humidity levels have resulted in less dry conditions further down in the soil in places that get limited sun exposure. These situations have made watering a strategic decision making process.

The need to water frequently has stressed on our aged irrigation system. This past month there was a main line break at the bottom of #1. Steve worked around the clock one night to repair it. Stopping the flow of water to allow the repair proved very difficult but after several hours he was eventually able to repair the line. After the repair was made Steve stayed on the job and continued to work another full day on the course. This level of dedication is rare and we are extremely fortunate to have it from Steve and his crew. The hot weather isn't just something that we've experienced in the Capital District. The August 16 issue of Golf Week had an interesting article about this summer's extreme weather and the effects it has had on golf courses throughout the country. Below are a few excerpts from that article:

"...Leon Lucas, CGA agronomist and retired N.C. State professor, "I've worked around turfgrass for nearly 45 years," he said, "and this is the toughest summer on bent grass I've seen. We've had 'August weather' for three months this year."...

"....Greens in various parts of the United States are suffering – in some cases, dying – because of 2010's extreme weather. "I visit five to eight courses a week, and I haven't been to one this summer that hasn't had some stress-related problem," said Stan Zontek, director of the Mid-Atlantic region for the USGA Green Section. "We all like to feel like we can control our own destiny, but if it's hot enough, long enough, grass is going to die, and if it gets cold enough, long enough, grass is going to die. There are limits to what a living thing can endure."

Those limits are being seen at daily-fee courses and elite private clubs, from the Southeast to New England.....Huntingdon Valley CC outside Philadelphia closed 18 of its 27 holes. Quail Hollow in Charlotte is combating a bacterial problem in its greens. The putting surfaces at Winged Foot GC in Mamaroneck, NY, and the Course at Yale in New Haven, Conn., are severely stressed.

"There is a lot of grass dying, and there is a lot of disease," observed Dave Oatis, director of the Northeast region of the USGA Green Section. "This is certainly one of the toughest years in the last 30 years, and it could wind up being the worst. As our [greenkeeping] technology has increased, we have used it to grow healthier turf, but we've also used it to cut the grass lower to keep speeds faster. Consequently, I'm not sure if we have fewer problems than we did 30 years ago."

Superintendents are doing what they can to get their greens through a miserable summer – techniques including less mowing, raising the mower heights, fine-tuned watering, installing fans for improved air circulation – but the best defense can still fail against relentlessly difficult weather.

"Every now and then," admitted Golf Course Superintendents Association of America president Jim Fitzroy, "Mother Nature reminds us who is in charge."

So the bottom line is no one seems to be immune from the summer heat. Be thankful that Ballston remains in great shape and grateful we have such a dedicated staff to make it possible.



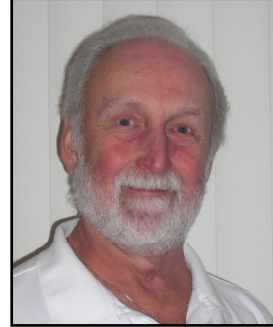
House/Restaurant Report



Dick Cody

When Tony Panza expressed an interest in running our restaurant he said at a golf club members come first. Your comments support Tony's understanding of the golf course restaurant business. Chef/Manager Jim Rhoads and staff work hard to take care of our members and it is not always as easy as one might think.

Staffing is always an issue. Scenarios this season include potential staff persons who are interviewed, accept a job offer and never show, another who works for three days and wants four days off, or calls in at the last minute sick or out of town or doesn't show up to open the restaurant and the shack on a weekend morning. When we have had a few instances of service delays, it has been attributed to one of the above. Fortunately we have a nucleus of excellent wait staff, Panza's does have their regular restaurant staff that may be available on short notice and we have the Panza experience.



Bob Miskamin

There was discussion last fall and winter about the club taking over operation of the restaurant. In retrospect, a few of us that interface regularly with Jim Rhoads, and the rest of the Panza crew thank our lucky stars that we received some sound advice from member Gary Brenenstuhel and others to contract out the operation of our restaurant.

There are still plenty of days left in our season. Read your emails and our website for Indian or Creole member dinner special in September or October. Please continue to give us or Rosanne Greenwood your comments regarding the menu, daily specials and service.

Are any guys and gals interested in NFL Sunday at the club during the fall and winter? It is an opportunity for us to get together in the off season. Ed Schwencke and others brought this up in the past. It can only work if we have enough folks interested. Maybe we can have our own version of Fantasy Football or another Sunday option. Panza's will offer food and beverage specials. If you are interested, please contact Dick Cody at jcody4@nycap.rr.com or call me at 944 4729

BSCC Women Dominate Capital District Participation in NYSGA Women's Senior Amateur

With a tie for fifth place, Sue Kahler of Ballston Spa was the top Capital Region performer in the New York State Golf Association Women's Senior Amateur at the Brookwoods Country Club in Ontario (Wayne County). Kahler finished with a 36-hole score of 159.

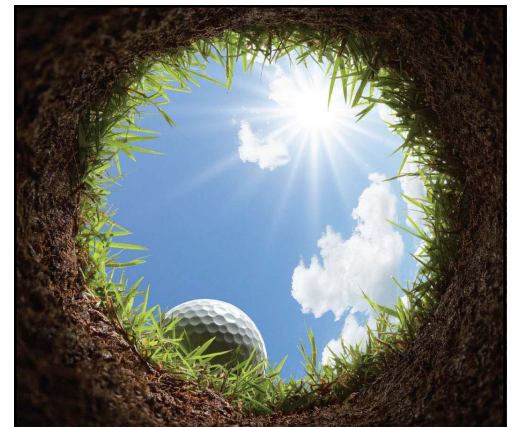
Of the 10 players from the Capital District playing in the tournament, 9 were from BSCC. Other participants were Sue Mansfield, Anne Jorgenson, Kate Oppedisano,, Mary Law powell, Mary Assey, Debbie Cottrell, Paulette Martin and Pat Joseph.

Congratulations for your strong showing ladies!

Is the BSCC Photo Contest Dead?

To date, we have had no submission for the 2010 BSCC Photo Contest. Is everyone waiting for the Fall Foliage?

Pack a small camera in your bag, or make a special effort to get out on the course in early morning or late afternoon, when the light is at its best for dramatic shots. Also, don't forget to snap a picture of your foursome having a good time - anything goes!



The Winners' Circle

Men's Club Championship

Championship Flight: 1st: Jeff Clark
2nd: Mark Thornhill
3rd: Matt Riggins

A Flight: 1st: Bob DeMarco
2nd: Pete Jorgenson
T-3rd: Rick Funaro, Tom Hudy

B Flight: 1st: Dan Desjardins
2nd: Ed Hall
T-3rd: Kevin Krogh, Carl Jahn

C Flight: 1st: Ron Symanski
2nd: Jaydeep Roy
3rd: Mike Radzevich

Junior: 1st: Dave Wellington Jr.
2nd: Colby Krogh

Women's Mini Guest

Gross
1st Place: Cindy Walkanowski
Peg Squazzo

Net
1st Place: Anne Jorgensen
Donna Richardson

2nd Place: MJ Crowley
Barbara Ward

3rd Place: Lauren Petraske
Martha Nabors

Closest to Pin #6: Cindy Walkanowski

Mixed Member/Guest

Gross
1st Place :Pete Jorgensen
Anne Jorgensen
Kim Lloyd
Rick Lloyd

2nd Place : Joan Taylor
Mark Holmes
Mary Assey
Jim Carroll

3rd Place : Sue Kahler
Gary Kahler
Heidi Harkins
EJ Harkins

Net
1st Place: Bob Charbonneau
Ginny Charbonneau
Tim Conley
Sandra Conley

2nd Place: Max Tucker
Bill Tucker
Beth Sciurba
Joe Moran

Tournament Committee Report

The tournament season is rapidly coming to an end and to date we are experiencing excellent participation. Thank you to everyone who has participated so far. The committee and I are looking forward to seeing great participation numbers for the rest of the season's events.

Regarding the recently concluded club championship – a special word of thanks should be extended to the grounds crew (Steve Solsky and team), and the pro-shop staff (Todd Manderson and team) for doing everything in their power to get the final round of the club championship in. As you know, Sunday was a great day for filling of the ponds and building of arks – other than that it was pretty much a washout. The folks mentioned above were out on the course squeegee-ing number 1, 2 and 11 greens as well as making sure everything in their power was done to get the final round in. Unfortunately, as weather goes, the course could only hold so much water and we had to shorten the second round to 9 holes.

As far as the Women's Club Championship goes – that has yet to be determined. The finals will be played Sunday September 5th. Good luck ladies.

Also one last note of thanks regarding this past weekend should go out to the entire restaurant staff – specifically Jim Rhoades. Once the washout was apparent – Jim was able to make the needed adjustments in order to accommodate the players coming in far sooner than originally planned. This was, in large part, due to the communication that Anne Jorgensen and Cindy Walkanowski provided on a day when they were not even playing. Thank you so much Anne and Cindy for taking care of this – you're the best!



David Fizer



Parring the 19th

As I write this, the rain is teeming down and the Saratoga Race Track giveaway is, ironically, an umbrella. It reminds me of my hatred of The Big Damp.

One of my Scottish cousins emailed me the other day. He mentioned that the weather had returned to normal, meaning it was raining every other day. Anyone who has been to Scotland during the rainy season, which runs from Christmas Day to Christmas Eve each year, knows my relative is understating the truth. The Scots suffer their weather in much the same way we suffer Congress, carrying on with the knowledge that it will never get any better, no matter what we do. Which means they play golf in the rain much more than the national average. "If thurr's nae rain, thurr's nae gowf," they like to say.

"Wanna bet?", I like to respond.



Despite being a golf addict born to a Scottish mother, I would rather undergo chain saw brain surgery than play golf in the rain.

Just recently I was convinced by the local weather wizard wannabes that the cold front and the rain wouldn't arrive until 6:00 PM, making my 8:30 AM tee time for the Two Man Better Ball Tournament look pretty dry and snuggy. At 10:30 AM, about halfway down the tenth fairway, it began to rain steadily and enthusiastically. I watched in envy as all the non-tournament players scurried off the course, knowing I had been trapped into two hours of unadulterated Stygian torture.

It's the constant management I can't deal with. The futility of attempting to keep everything dry - your feet, your hands, your grips, your body. Up with the umbrella; where to put the umbrella while I stand in the rain making my shot; what club to use now that there's no roll, but boy those greens sure are holding well; do I go with the glove, or is it useless; make sure the ball is clean after every shot; these greens are probably getting slower by the minute.

These are the thoughts going through my head when I ought to be thinking of whether I should throw an air press at Bernie on his next tee shot.

My fellow hackers always seem prepared for every eventuality. They open the trunks of their cars and reveal enough gear for an assault on Everest from the North Face. I, on the other hand, have a handkerchief-sized golf towel and maybe an umbrella. That's it. While they're donning Gortex anoraks, rain pants Dry Joy golf shoes and zipping up their bubble-boy cart enclosures, I'm wondering if maybe I should have worn long pants, and maybe my short-sleeved golf shirt won't be enough to ward off the monsoon after all.

It's my own fault, this inability to cope with water in the air while I golf. I'm convinced I cannot, for example, play golf in anything that restricts movement, or is even perceived to inhibit the full-blown-ugly that is my swing. This means a tank top under a golf shirt is as warm as I get. Also, the only hat I can wear is not a hat, it's a visor. Hat manufacturers have not made a product that fits my head size which, for the record, has been measured at Really Big. And just to top off this picture, I seldom wear long pants when I golf. So there I am, on a cold, blustery November day, rain slashing at my body, in what appears to be the same attire I wore for the July Fourth Mixed Scramble.



I believe there is only one answer to my problem, short of having my entire body surgically Scotch Guarded, and that is to meet the Moisture Gods on their own terms and beat them at their own damp game. In the future, if there is any sign of rain, I will immediately walk, fully garbed, into the locker room shower, make sure the water is sufficiently cold, and marinate myself for about ten minutes. Having been thoroughly soaked, I will not have to deal with the Dry Management System.

I may not play any better, but I will at least know how it feels to play golf in Scotland on a regular basis.



Tucker

Illustration by John Bowler



The Great Charbonneau Golf America Tour

Over the last twelve years, Ginny and Bob Charbonneau set out to play golf in all 50 states of the union. This is a brief description of their great adventure.

The Charbonneau 50-State Golf America Tour began with a business trip to Minnesota in May 1999. We had heard about a new course called The Wilds in Prior Lake. Up until that point, our golf experiences consisted mostly of public courses in the Capital District, and we were quite impressed by the conditions and amenities of this somewhat upscale golf course. To this day, we both remember the lushness and perfection of the grass in the fairways, and our comments that they were softer than any carpet we'd ever walked on. And with that realization, we were forever hooked on exploring new golf courses.

That trip also included golf in both South and North Dakota. Yes, Fargo has golf courses. So does Alaska, with about 15 courses, many of them on military bases. And in that Land of the Midnight Sun, we proved to ourselves that it is indeed possible to play golf up until midnight and beyond. We finished our round at Elmendorf Air Force Base in Anchorage at 11:15 PM, but there was plenty of light to keep on playing if one so desired.



We collected a logo ball from the courses we played in each of the 50 states, and also saved our score cards and bag tags. Those mementos are in a scrap book now, and the main purpose is to look back at our own (sometimes miserably high scores) when we see the pros on TV playing at one of "our" courses.

People often ask about our favorite course, and we struggle to answer, because there are just so many great courses. Here is a jumble of our recollections, in no particular order:

- *Torrey Pines* is just as cool in person as it is on TV. Navy jets, Marine helicopters, hang-gliders, nudists on the beach below (or so they claim...they aren't visible to golfers.)
- Northern New Hampshire (20 miles from the Canadian border) has moose and a lovely golf resort called *The Balsams*, situated in the town of Dixville Notch, population 75. The golf course at *California State Fullerton* pumps disco music over its driving range, so if your swing tempo is not quite right without blaring music...then good luck.
- One of the top courses in the world is smack dab in the middle of northeastern Nebraska. It's called *Sand Hills*. The grains of sand are actually shaped by Mother Nature to provide the exact, perfect amount of drainage for a pristine golf layout. The folks at Sand Hills spent only \$7000 on all 18 greens, because the land is carved out so perfectly by the natural elements.
- The *Greenbrier Resort* in West Virginia has good golf, and unbelievable Southern charm and amenities.
- Any golf course with a view of the Rockies Mountains is worth the trip, like *Teton Pines* in Wyoming. After golf, you can visit the Million Dollar Cowboy Saloon where the bar stools are capped with saddles.
- *Coeur D'Alene* in Idaho is famous for its floating/movable green, but don't expect that much excitement from the rest of the course.

The Golf America Tour was completed in July 2010 with a trip to Alaska and Oregon. The last official course we played – believe it or not – was the *Charbonneau Country Club* below Portland. No relation to us, of course. We expected that they would be just as excited to see us as we were to see them, but some guy from Canada also named Charbonneau got there first last year. So our visit was no big deal to them, in spite of all the money we dropped in the Pro Shop on Charbonneau-labeled golf items.



We estimate that our travels took us over 100,000 miles: 87,000 by air and 14,000 miles on the ground, and we played on 165 different courses during this time.

Planning the trips was as much fun as completing them. Friends often ask us about our next goal, or what are we going to do now. So far, we are just playing our favorite course of all, Ballston Spa Country Club, in our own back yard. Happy to be home, feeling very grateful for the opportunities that have been granted to us. And concentrating on driving the ball, not the car.

