



Volume XIV Number 8

December 2012

Ballston Spa Country Club

The Fox

President's Letter

William Tucker

Happy Holiday season to all of our Members. This is a special December Members' meeting edition to summarize everything we talked about at the December 2nd meeting for those of you who were unable to attend.

Our 2011 dues increase was 2%, followed by a 2012 hold on dues increase and then the 9% assessment we had to administer due to a continuing decline in membership numbers. We will need to increase dues for 2013 and the specifics can be seen in Bruce Kay's Treasurer's Report in the following pages.

The reports in this issue deal mainly with the Board's efforts to reduce overhead and increase our revenue from green fees, and outside tournaments. To begin with, we will be increasing our green fees by 20% to bring them in line with our competition as well as to reflect the quality of our golf course. Another change will be that for the first time in Club history, Board Members will be paying dues in the coming year. The new bylaws being prepared for your approval will stipulate that the Board will be assessed dues each year. This coming year, we will be paying 50% of our dues.

We are also making Member involvement a priority. Paul Steves will be heading up a Revenue Committee. Kathy Harkins will be chairing a Social Committee to enhance the social opportunities at the Club. Also, we have Members who have volunteered for the Audit Committee and the Bylaw Review Committee. These will be discussed by the respective chairs, Tom Hudy and Dave Runyon.

Once again, we will be offering installment payment of dues in 2013 and early payment options which will be rewarded with 4 guest passes for payment by 1/1/13 and 3 passes if paid by 1/31/13. These passes will not include cart.

It's also my pleasure to announce we have our third and final Lifetime Member. Thank you to Rick Funaro. It's a timely and helpful commitment and we appreciate it very much.

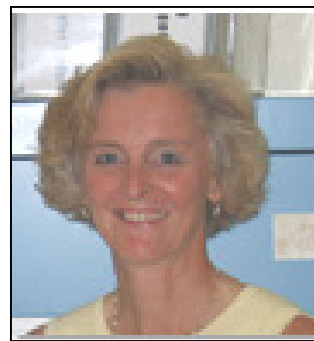
Please take time to read the following reports by your Board Members. This past year was an example of just how great a golf course we have, as Steve and his crew gave us the best conditions in the last 21 years I have been a Member. We're also fortunate to have one of the best PGA Professionals in the region running our Golf Shop and of course Laura McNeil continues to be a professional and effective Office Manager and we thank them both for their work which is often above and beyond duty.

This, and all future editions of The Fox will be disseminated exclusively via our web site. No hard copies will be mailed, but several black and white copies will be available in the Golf Shop and the Office.

It's my wish that you all have a great holiday season. I look forward to another early start to the season, although it will be hard to beat last year's St. Patrick's Day opening. Stay warm and safe.

Green Report

The golf course has been formally put to bed for the winter. Thanks to the 20 or so volunteers who showed up to help Steve and crew put out the green covers earlier this week. The cold overnight temperatures made the window of available hours much narrower so the extra manpower was a tremendous help.



Sue Kahler

I would also like to thank the 40+ members who participated in Project Day. We accomplished a lot and enjoyed lunch and a 9 hole scramble tournament afterward. Special thanks this year go out to Jimmy Bryant for all his dedication to improving our course and to Maxine Tucker for her tireless efforts in making the course more beautiful.

Overall, we had the best year yet in terms of golf course conditions. Steve and his crew continue to do outstanding work despite the constant pressures of a very limited budget. Because of the decline in membership this year's Turf & Fertilizer budget was only \$24,000 compared to \$68,000 for 2011.

At the close of 2011 we made a commitment to implement a top dressing program to improve our greens. That program, of regular applications of sand every 2-3 weeks, was strongly supported by the USGA. Unfortunately, the limited Turf & Fertilizer budget forced us to use a large portion of the Course Improvement Fund for top dressing materials including the new finer grade sand. I'm sure you will all agree that program proved very beneficial to improving the health and playability of the greens.

We were able to use the Course Improvement Fund for the new section of the #1 bridge, sod for the tees on #3, #4 and #7 and the new dry well and drainage installed on #12. In addition, that fund was used to purchase chemicals necessary to combat diseases that cropped up like dollar spot and fairy-ring. Those diseases may not have been a problem had we had the money upfront to prevent them.

This winter we will continue to work on the recommendations of the USGA and remove trees that impede the growth of healthy turf. Of course all work depends on the weather, snow fall and firmness of the ground.

Restaurant Report

Young

We have had a recent meeting with Tony Panza and he has ensured us that his desire is to be a part of the solution in finding more and better outside tournaments.

There have been new staff assignments for Panza's On the Green. Jim Rhoads will be replaced by Jose Arteché and Rich Miller will be the coordinator for all tournaments, both inside and out. Rich worked at Colonie Country Club and Pinehaven Country Club. His goal is to have several choices for tournament menus, with various price ranges available.

Jose Arteché will manage the restaurant. Jose has worked at Normanside, Albany Country Club, Saratoga National and has contacts at Edison Club. He is developing a new menu for the restaurant, which will be available for review soon. Jose has experience with small plate offerings and tapas menus, which could be a part of the offering at BSCC.

New beverage cart options are being investigated and I Doug Young and I are working with Harry Talmon to coordinate the effort. Please see Harry's article.

In Bob Miskinin's absence, this report was delivered by Doug



Bob Miskinin

Panza's

ON THE GREEN

Treasurer's Report



Bruce Kay

BSCC will finish 2012 showing a modest positive income. We may have a negative cash flow, but are prepared to handle it with our line of credit. This year we needed to have a 9% assessment to just break even. 2013 will necessitate a 10% increase in your dues. We have prepared a 2013 budget that does just that - break even.

These increases are necessary because of declining membership numbers. When there are fewer Members they need to pay more to balance the budget. This year we used increased public play to generate revenue. Public play saved all members \$200 off their dues/assessment. Our tournament revenue is half of what it was four years ago, and the board is making efforts to increase that. These are our two primary income sources to expand on. We have formed a Revenue Committee headed by Paul Steves to hopefully generate other ideas. Next year we are increasing the fees for public play, corporate memberships, and tournaments. The board has also agreed to pay half dues next year, raising an additional 9K.

On the expense side, we start each year with 700K in fixed costs in our 900K budget number. This limits what we can do to cut costs. The board works the costs in all budget categories to bring them down to the minimum. We shop credit card fees every year. This year we used our membership in the CDGGA to lower our office supply costs. We are also exploring using the CDGGA for lowering energy and chemical costs. We always shop energy costs.

One of our largest expenses each year is our mortgage. This year Al Squire and myself renegotiated the mortgage. We contacted our bank and two other lenders. We continued with BSNB at a substantial rate reduction, saving the club 30K over the term of the loan, \$5200 dollars a year. We continue to have a positive relationship with our bank. We continue to meet our mortgage covenant. My goal here is to move the club out of debt.

If you own a business or work locally for a business I would encourage you to promote a tournament and advertise by buying a tee sign or placemat ad. Our tee signs are \$900, and run for three years with guest passes each year. These give your business exposure to all players, tournaments, and Members.

I would encourage any Member who is not a shareholder to purchase a share of stock. Every year our stock redemptions are a drain on cash flow. We continue to honor all shares surrendered for redemption. Additionally, if you feel a strong commitment to the Club you may now purchase two more voting, non-interest bearing shares. The money goes directly into a dedicated account for stock only.

Communications Report

Revenue Committee:

Paul Steves has agreed to chair a committee which will explore new ways for the club to find operating revenue. Paul will be joined by Mike Farina, Gene Gass, Robert Barry and Gary Millard.

Website Redesign:

We are working with a local company to redesign our web site and have it up and ready before the season starts next year. We hope to improve the usability for members and have a public site that can attract new members and greens fee players more effectively.

Club Computer System:

Our current software which we use to operate the Restaurant, Proshop, and business office is not obsolete and we need to install a newer and more fully featured version. We are currently working on that and plan to have it completed before the season begins. One new feature that we hope to implement is one which will allow members to view their statements online throughout the year.



Dave Runyon

Insurance & Carts Report

Harry Talmon

The lease program for the cart rental expires in a few years from now and we are going to attempt to include a beverage cart rental in the new lease. For the time being Doug Young and I are working with Satch Sales on the lease of a newer beverage cart to replace our existing deteriorated 2002 model. We had considered the purchase of the existing beverage cart from Satch Sales but it was determined that the existing cart would not be worth keeping for any extended period of time. We have heard that newer used beverage carts are available but we do not know their condition. Doug Young and I will be looking into the possibility of a newer used model if Satch Sales or any other dealers have them at their locations.

We also considered the purchase of a new basic model beverage cart but the cost of such a vehicle would be in the range of \$13,000. Considering our current financial situation I did not feel that we should be expending this amount of money so we did not pursue this purchase.

Our insurance premium for the property and liability policy has been fairly stable. I met with representatives of the Spataro Insurance Agency and we performed a detailed review of the policy. The liability premium increased but due to the elimination of some policy forms that were not needed and a complete review of our equipment schedule our property policy premium was reduced. We did receive a \$1,179.00 dividend check from our Workers Compensation safety group so that was a welcome payment.

The health insurance premiums for our employees are going to increase in the range of 8% to 10%. We purchase our health insurance through the Saratoga Chamber of Commerce and that appears to be the best method of purchasing this particular type of policy. All of our employees contribute an equal percentage towards their respective policies.

We will continue to review and amend our policies on a yearly basis and changes will be made as needed. We can expect some increase in our property coverage since values are subject to change. Our existing Insurance Company has agreed to accept our current values that coincide with our current premium but future changes will be inevitable.



Mike Farina has once again done a service for the Club

Mike has fabricated new tee markers for all tees, out of maple wood and clear coated them with a marine variety of urethane for extended life.

Suzie Mansfield contributed the cost of materials.

More examples of BSCC Members getting involved. It's rare to see a club with such a great degree of volunteerism. For more thank yous, see Sue Kahler's article.

Tournaments/Golf Shop

Tournament Committee Members - Currently Todd Manderson, Cindy Walkanowski & Tom Hudy.

We are looking for members to join the committee.

The Tournament Chairs will have responsibilities that include:

Details with Restaurant (menu, price..)
Collaborate with Todd (Entry Fee, Prizes...)
Advertising



Tom Hudy

Placemats - Have three purposes for the membership

Revenue - to subsidize New Member Tournament and Trophies
Advertising – monthly updates to tournament schedule
Functionality for Restaurant

Advertising -

Website - Complete schedule on the Tournament tab. Upcoming events will be on the BSCC News Ticker.
Fox - Complete schedule is in the April publication. Upcoming Events will be in each subsequent publication.
Pro Shop - They will have a list of all tournaments and chairperson(s) with sign up sheets.
Flyer's - All chairpersons are responsible for creating and posting flyers. The flyers should contain all pertinent information or a way to get more information.
Place mats - They will have Upcoming Events and we will be taking off Tournaments that have already taken place to keep the place mats current.
Cart Card Holders - In the new carts a card holder is in the top middle of the windshield. In that holder all outside & member upcoming events will be displayed.
E-Mail - If both the chair & Todd think it is appropriate an email may be sent as a reminder to bolster participation.

Outside Tournaments – We are looking to fill our Monday Tournament Openings. We are going to reach out the local Not-For-Profit agencies with packet on the potential revenue for their organization. Todd will continue to place small outings during slow times.

Audit Committee Report

Committee Members - Currently Doug Young, Ed Lenart, Mark Yale & Tom Hudy.
Responsibilities of the audit committee typically include:

Overseeing the financial reporting and disclosure process.
Monitoring choice of accounting policies and principles.
Overseeing hiring, performance and independence of the external auditors.
Monitoring the internal control process.
Oversight of regulatory compliance, ethics, and whistleblower procedures.
Overseeing the performance of the internal audit function.
Discussing risk management policies and practices with management.
Board will approve the Scope & Procedures of the committee

ProShop Report

Tee Times – All members are asked to call before just showing as Todd will be trying to maximize our income with have the least amount of impact on the members as possible. If you give the staff the time to work on a solution prior to your arrival it will give everyone a better chance at being successful.

Advanced Tee Times – If a member would like an advanced tee time during non-lottery times just contact the ProShop. Todd and his staff will do their best to accommodate your requests.

Lottery Times – Will continue in the same manner as in past years.

House Report

Mike Zegarelli, Bob Miskamin, Doug Young

There have been many improvements made in this past year to the house. We have done our best to keep costs to a minimum while taking care of the basic needs of our clubhouse and associated grounds. Some of the more notable improvements are:

- The card room was set up in the men's locker room. A big thanks you to John Caputo for donating the brand new card table.
- A card table was placed in the women's locker area for their use.
- We had a "soup to nuts" energy audit done on all out buildings by NYSERTA.
- We secured a new deck awning after the windstorm this spring. Luckily, our insurance cover the replacement cost completely! (A \$5,000 expense)
- John Caputo installed a new furnace at an excellent bargain.
- New sewage grinder pumps were needed and installed. We had no options but to replace them, (cost \$5,000 to replace with new pumps, it was estimated to cost \$4,000 to repair the old ones).
- We had the parking lot recoated. (Once again, it hadn't been done in years and the cost to replace it is very expensive, (preventive maintenance)

-A logbook has been created which notes all the activities that occurred on 2012. It is available for any member to review. It is located in the business office.

-Dennis Crimi built two additional room dividers, for the cost of materials.

All of this work plus much more was done for the most part by the membership. A big thank you to all that helped including Don Gallagher, John Caputo Dennis Crimi to name a few of our hero's.

Any suggestions to improve the clubhouse would be appreciated.

Membership

Membership is the number one priority not only of the Board but also for all the members of Ballston Spa golf course. As stated many times this is a member owned, member run golf course. It is what we all make of it.

These next few years are critical to the well being of the course and a maximum effort is needed by all to secure as many new members as possible. A work plan has been created to retain as many of the new members from 2012 and another plan to recruit for the up coming year. An informal survey was done on all thirty of the new members, (that we had telephone numbers) and the responses were very positive.

Many of the new members will be rejoining and they are very happy with the overall experience. The two major points that I heard over and over are -the course is in great shape and the membership is a vital positive part of the golfing experience. Todd Manderson, the various league leaders and the general membership, made the new people feel very welcome. This is something that other golf courses in the area cannot equal and it is a great positive influence to attracting new members. Excellent work by all!

For 2013 we will be doing the following:

- No newspaper advertisements (very expensive almost \$3,000, and we could not prove that it was effective).
- A targeted mailing will occur this off-season with the help of John Naftzger, (a member and realtor).
- A reception will be set up to invite potential new members to see what we have to offer.
- New 2013 members will be integrated into the BSCC golfing community ASAP, including a round of golf with established members.
- We will try and establish relationships with the in door golf venues. Our seasons do not overlap and it is a source of possible new members.
- We will sell tee times from three on line web sites. This will bring in more revenue and expose the BSCC to new area golfers. In 2013, it is encouraged that the membership call the pro shop to secure tee times so that they will not be disappointed.
- We will work with the Chamber of Commerce, try and increase outside tournaments, to maximize cash flow.
- To this end, two new committees have been created, Tournaments and Marketing.
- For new members a 10% dues reduction will be available—20% if they join for a minimum of three years.
- Members should visit web sites that list BSCC and write a review. We can create reviews that will entice players to try us out. Some of the web sites are:www.golfink.com www.worldgolf.com www.golfnow.com www.golfdigest.com yahoo.com/ny/ballstonspa/recreation

There are other links where reviews can be written. Hit as many as possible.

New members are very important to keep our dues as low as possible and to improve the financial stability of our course. No question that more money will allow us to improve an already excellent facility. Any help or suggestion would be greatly appreciated.

Mike Zegarelli

Food For Thought

The following was submitted by Ed Lake. He isn't aware of the source of the article. If anyone would like to submit an article of interest, please forward it in a MS Word format to me: wtucker2@nycap.rr.com

Dear Younger Me :

I can't play golf anymore. I tried to swing the club the other day, but my body wouldn't cooperate. The best I can do now is sometimes take walks on the course, but my eyes aren't as good as they used to be so I don't see much. I have a lot of time to sit and think now, and I often think about the game.

It was my favorite game. I played most of my adult life. Thousands of rounds, thousands of hours practicing. As I look back, I guess I had a pretty good time at it. But now that I can't do it anymore, I wish I had done it differently.

It's funny, but with all the time I spent playing golf, I never thought I was a real golfer. I never felt good enough to really belong out there. It doesn't make much sense, since I scored better than average and a lot of people envied my game, but I always felt that if I was just a little better or a little more consistent, then I'd feel really good. I'd be satisfied with my game. But I never was. It was always "One of these days I'll get it" or "One day I'll get there" and now here I am. I can't play anymore, and I never got there.

I met a whole lot of different people out on the course. That was one of the best things about the game. But aside from my regular partners and a few others, I don't feel like I got to know many of those people very well. I know they didn't really get to know me. At times they probably didn't want to. I was pretty occupied with my own game most of the time and didn't have much time for anyone else, especially if I wasn't playing well.

So why am I writing you this letter anyway, just to complain? Not really. Like I said, my golfing experience wasn't that bad. But it could have been so much better, and I see that so clearly now. I want to tell you, so you can learn from it. I don't want you getting to my age and feeling the same regrets I'm feeling now.

I wish, I wish. Sad words, I suppose, but necessary. I wish I could have played the game with more joy, more freedom. I was always so concerned with "doing it right" that I never seemed to be able to enjoy just doing it at all. I was so hard on myself, never satisfied, always expecting more. Who was I trying to please? Certainly not myself, because I never did. If there were people whose opinions were important enough to justify all that self-criticism, I never met them.

I wish I could have been a better playing partner. I wasn't a bad person to be with, really, but I wish I had been friendlier and gotten to know people better. I wish I could have laughed and joked more and given people more encouragement. I probably would have gotten more from them, and I would have loved that. There were a few bad apples over the years, but most of the people I played with were friendly, polite, and sincere. They really just wanted to make friends and have a good time. I wish I could have made more friends and had a better time.

I'm inside a lot now and I miss the beauty of the outdoors. For years when I was golfing I walked through some of the most beautiful places on earth, and yet I don't feel I really saw them. Beautiful landscapes, trees, flowers, animals, the sky, and the ocean – how could I have missed so much? What was I thinking of that was so important – my grip, my back swing, my stance? Sure, I needed to think about those sometimes, but so often as to be oblivious to so much beauty? And all the green – the wonderful, deep, lush color of green! My eyes are starting to fail. I wish I had used them better so I would have more vivid memories now.

So what is it that I'm trying to say? I played the type of game that I thought I should play, to please the type of people that I thought I should please. But it didn't work. My game was mine to play, but I gave it away. It's a wonderful game. Please, don't lose yours. Play a game that you want to play. Play a game that gives you joy and satisfaction and makes you a better person to your family and friends. Play with enthusiasm, play with freedom. Appreciate the beauty of nature and the people around you. Realize how lucky you are to be able to do it. All too soon your time will be up, and you won't be able to play anymore. Play a game that enriches your life.

Best wishes . . . don't waste a minute of golf . . . someday it will be gone!

Signed,

Older Me



Parrying the 19th

You know how it goes. You're researching something important, like why does the hair on your arms grow slower than the hair on your head and somehow you get side tracked into some other obscure thread of discussion.

In my most recent incident of wayward Googling I got into a site called Wiki Answers and clicked on "golf" as a topic, just to see what people were asking. Apparently there's a lot of ignorance out there, because there were 23,800 questions listed. I probably would have moved on to another site immediately, but just giving the first page or so a glance I saw the question "Do they make left-handed golf bags?" and I was pretty much hooked.

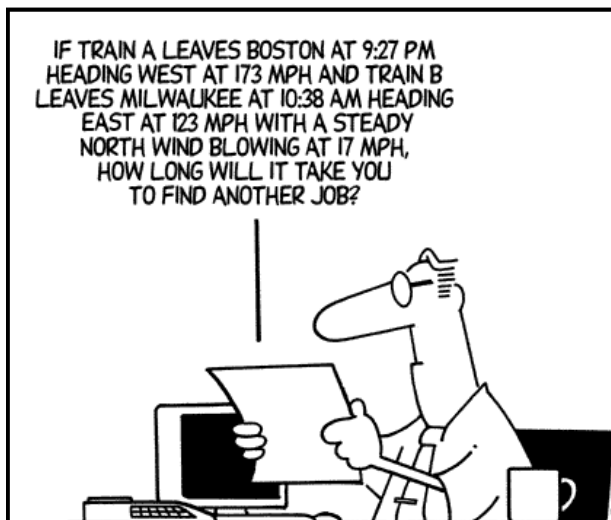
There were a lot of repeat questions and it was easy to skim through the pages pretty quickly, but I only made it through about 10% of the questions before I had enough material for this article.

Some questions are so basic it just made me scratch the rapidly growing hair on my head. Questions like, "What does a golf ball look like?", "What does 'putt' mean in golf?" and "How is a golf ball used in golf?" It makes you wonder if these whackos have heard of Wikipedia or thought of doing the online research themselves.

Some questions are so out there that the person responding with an answer just gets sarcastic, as in "How many golf tees are made each year?" Answer: "Approximately 4". To the question "Who invented golf?" someone responded with a long answer about a woman named Aja Ellie Hayworth Hathaway or something, who was walking with a stick in 1657 and stuck it into a fruit she found and then hit another round fruit with it and called the game Hit the Fruit With a Stick and it was changed to "Golf" in 1982.

Then it gets more bizarre. "How many golf balls fit in a suitcase?" Um... who gives a rat's ass and what size suitcase did you have in mind? The dumbbutt question "How many people are hit by a golf ball each year?" received the deserved answer "Fore." The philosophical question "How far is a Par?" was interesting, as was "Does marking your ball with a line make it go straighter?" I'm not making these up, I promise.

The longest question I came across was one I couldn't answer: "When you are playing off an 8 handicap how many single drops are you supposed to take or do you have to take 8 double drops before you can take single drops?" Oh gosh, you know...it depends - are you playing with a left-handed golf bag?



Equipment questions were popular. "Can a left- and right-handed golfer use the same clubs?" was right up there with "Does a right-handed golfer use right-handed clubs?" and "What is the minimum number of clubs you can have in your bag?" That's right, minimum. "Is a bowling ball harder to move than a golf ball?" made you want to be there when the question arose. I'm thinking somewhere in the jungles of Borneo after some heavy drinking.

Some questions seem OK until you really look at them, such as "How do they float those cars in the water at golf tournaments?" If they just hadn't used the verb "float" their query wouldn't have made this piece.

One of my favorites so far was "How do you wear your hair for golf practice?" The questioner didn't mention if it was head hair or arm hair, but I'm going to research that.



Tucker