Message from the Director

Celebrating Fifty Years of Academic Achievement

For those of you who may not know, the Rutgers Professional Golf Turf Management School grew out of the visions and dreams of Dr. Ralph Engel, a professor here within the Department of Soils and Crops when I arrived on campus in 1978. Ralph started his career at Rutgers in turf research and quickly recognized the need to expand what, up to that time, had been a series of short seminars for golf turf professionals into something more meaningful. When Ralph had a big idea, he really had a good one and today his vision of a 20-week certificate program to educate future golf turf leaders throughout New Jersey, the United States and around the world continues to grow and flourish here at Rutgers.

As we celebrate 50 years of Ralph Engel’s educational vision for turf managers, it seems fitting to review several of our half-century achievements. Since 1961 nearly 2,100 “turf students” have graduated from our Professional Golf Turf Management School and of that number, we have identified 680 current superintendents throughout the United States and in ten foreign nations. In addition, another known 525 of our graduates are currently serving as assistant superintendents across the nation and world. A number of our alumni are serving in various other positions including irrigation and equipment sales and seed and pesticide sales. Many of our alumni are currently working in positions in sports turf management managing world renowned professional baseball facilities, while others are directors of public and private parks nationwide. A great number of our early alumni are leading successful careers in the landscape and lawn maintenance industries throughout the country. What many of you may not know is that when I arrived in 1978, your 20-week program accommodated both golf turf professionals and landscape professionals all in one room, and first and second year students met together. In light of your own memories of the program, try to figure out how that might have worked and consider some of the crazy challenges I faced in administering the program in those “early” days. Through it all what I remember most fondly is Dr. Engel’s unrelenting support of the program both day and night. Ralph would always be seen at the “turf men’s” basketball games as late as midnight and was a loyal supporter of our current students and alumni long after he retired from his faculty position at Rutgers. But on with the statistics. We currently have 310 alumni golf turf professionals here in New Jersey, 185 in Pennsylvania and 130 in New York State followed by numbers of between 40 and 50 in California, Ohio and Maryland. Our alumni superintendents currently serve in every state except four - can anyone guess what four states they might be? (See page 12)

The best part of my job, however, is not keeping statistics, but receiving a consistent flow of emails, letters and acknowledgement notes from recent and ancient graduates, all of whom remember fondly their experiences in one or more of the courses they encountered in pursuit of their golf turf certificate. Through the efforts of our dedicated faculty, instructors and administrators, we truly do provide life-changing experiences here at Rutgers University.

Ralph Engel would be proud of our current instructors but he would be most proud of our alumni. Young men and women have come to Rutgers seeking answers to their dreams of running or owning a golf course, and today we literally have helped thousands of our

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To find environment-friendly or aesthetically pleasing grasses, researchers with the Rutgers Center for Turfgrass Science travel the world to find strains worthy of cultivation at home.

In the heart of Inner Mongolia, a world away from Rutgers, a Jeep is winding its way through the steppes and meadowlands of Genghis Khan country. Livestock is everywhere: sheep, horses, cattle. Now and then, atop a hillside or alongside a dirt road, a lone herdsman appears. Professor William Meyer gazes out the Jeep’s window: he is looking for grass.

Here in the former Mongol Empire, Meyer, a professor of plant biology and pathology and one of the world’s leading experts in turfgrass breeding, is on a mission. He wants to unearth a wild variety of one of America’s most beloved grasses, bluegrass, to help him and other scientists develop what he likes to call “the perfect bluegrass.” When he spots a promising patch of terrain, the Jeep comes to a dusty halt, and Meyer and two colleagues, professor James White and a postdoc from a Chinese agricultural university, step outside with their tools (pocket knives, shovels), and then walk amongst a craggy hillside or a sweeping meadow, examining the wild grasses. If a patch is worthy of their attention—if, that is, it looks like it’s got the genetic goods to make it to an actual lawn or golf course one day—then they place it in a cooler for safekeeping. With 40 years of experience with turfgrass, Meyer knows how to examine a thousand-year-old pasture, even one with grazing goats or startled herdsmen, to determine whether its grass is worth collecting for further study. “I can look at it, and I can see those areas that have a lot of genetic resources,” says Meyer, director of the Turfgrass Breeding Project at the Center for Turfgrass Science, which was created in 1991 and is part of the New Jersey Agricultural Experiment Station.

If you’ve ever felt the soft, barefooted tickle of an American lawn, you’ve walked on grasses developed at Rutgers. Varieties of Rutgers grass seed are everywhere, sold at Lowe’s and Home Depot and neighborhood hardware stores. They’re in our lawns, in our parks and athletic fields, and even at the White House and in Yankee Stadium. The Rutgers turfgrass center has the world’s largest collection of genetic resources for the development of turfgrass. Working with about 25 seed companies, the turfgrass breeding program “coinvents” much of the top-quality grass seed sold to everyone from homeowners to commercial landscapers. And as farfetched as it may seem, the types of grass from this trip to Inner Mongolia—or, perhaps, from ventures in Turkey, Italy, Uzbekistan, and points beyond—may end up in your lawn one day.

But it’s a long journey from Inner Mongolia to your lawn. The development of turfgrass is an arduous endeavor, often taking five years (or longer) as varieties are tested and crossbred. For Meyer and his colleagues, like Stacy Bonos, a Rutgers assistant professor and turfgrass breeder, the work requires an astonishing mix of global sleuthing, genetic expertise, and down-and-dirty farming. It demands brainpower, patience, and a willingness to wield a shovel. Turfgrass breeders write scientific papers with titles like “Breeding for Disease Resistance in the Major Cool-Season Turfgrasses” for the Annual Review of Phytopathology (coauthored by Meyer, Bonos, and Bruce B. Clarke, director of the Center for Turfgrass Science and an extension specialist in the Department of Plant Biology and Pathology at the School of Environmental and Biological Sciences), but they also need to sink their hands into the mud and muck.

“We’re farmers,” Meyer says. “It’s dirty. It’s dusty. It’s cold.”

But why travel so far to gather grass? Don’t we have grass in the United States? In New Jersey? Right there on the George H. Cook Campus, where Meyer works out of a three-story brick building overlooking fields of sod and barns? Well, yes and no.

The grasses now common in the United States are not native to the continent. What native grasses existed here when European settlers arrived were considered unsuitable for grazing.

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“Many colonists commented on the inferiority of New England and Virginia grasses in comparison with pastures in England, and one New England settler wrote in disgust that ‘it is so devoid of nutritive virtue, that our beasts grow lousy with feeding on it, and are much out of heart and liking.’” Virginia Scott Jenkins writes in The Lawn: A History of an American Obsession (Smithsonian, 1994). Unsatisfied with the continent’s grasses, Europeans shipped grass seed to the colonies, and those grasses spread across the country.

Even now, hundreds of years later, you can find evidence of the grasses brought here by the settlers. Go to Polish neighborhoods in Boston, says Meyer, and you’ll find bluegrass from Poland. Go to an Irish neighborhood there, and you’ll see fine fescue from Ireland. With this bit of natural history in mind, Meyer’s predecessor, C. Reed Funk GSNB’62, now a professor emeritus, collected grasses from the earliest areas planted by the settlers. By tapping into the genetic makeup of “old” grasses, breeders would be able to improve upon the qualities in commercially sold grass seed.

But you could only go so far by looking for the random patches of grass remaining from the days of the Mayflower and Myles Standish. Meyer took Funk’s ideas one step further. Rather than just digging up old turf from Warinanco Park in Elizabeth, or Sheep Meadow in Central Park, how about going back to the regions where these species of grass developed? How about searching for wild grasses in Europe and Asia, where they have been growing, largely undisturbed, for hundreds of years? That’s just what Meyer and his colleagues have done, engaging in a globe-trotting scientific journey to seek environment-friendly grasses. Since 1996, they have collected grasses from a broad swath of Europe, Asia, and Africa. They have traveled throughout Europe and parts of Asia, gathering samples from ancient pastures and meadows. “It’s going back to the grass roots,” Meyer says.

Scientists, researchers, and industry experts regard the Rutgers program as a center of leadership and innovation. “It’s really the preeminent turf breeding program in the country,” says Eric Watkins GSNB’04, a professor at the University of Minnesota who received his Ph.D. in plant biology from Rutgers and traveled to Norway to collect grasses. The Rutgers researchers have garnered widespread accolades for their work: Funk is a member of the Rutgers Hall of Distinguished Alumni; Meyer received the New Jersey Turfgrass Association Hall of Fame Award; Bonos received the inaugural Early Career Excellence in Plant Breeding Award from a broad-based group of plant breeders. The turfgrass breeding program is a royalty producer for the university, and Rutgers varieties of turfgrasses, typically developed with partners in the industry—namely, seed companies—consistently rank at the top in government tests. “We’re at the leading edge,” says Meyer, “and we’re trying to stay there.”

Their work is taking on a particular urgency, given concerns about global warming, the use of pesticides, and water quality. By looking in far-off lands for genetic variations of the grasses now popular in the United States, Rutgers’ turfgrass breeding program is producing environment-friendly grasses requiring less water, pesticides and fertilizer, and maintenance. These trips bring the researchers to what Bonos calls the “centers of diversity” of popular turfgrass varieties, like bluegrass and fine fescue. (Settlers brought only a small amount of seed here, and so there is much less diversity in the United States.) By tapping into that genetic diversity, researchers are more likely to find plants with desirable characteristics, such as drought tolerance and resistance to disease. Add drought tolerance to a popular grass, and water usage can decrease dramatically. Find a gene with resistance to a particular disease or insect, and less fertilizer or pesticides will be needed. Bring these qualities together in one grass, and you can dramatically decrease the inputs (water, fertilizer, pesticides, gasoline) needed to maintain a golf course or a front lawn.

Yet Rutgers researchers don’t go looking to dig up just any patch of grass growing in Norway or Turkey. They want old grass. Very old. They want grass that’s been growing in a meadow or pasture for something like 500 or 1,000 years. They want grass that’s made it through the elements, the seed falling to the ground and the superior plants growing above the weaker ones. “We look for big patches of surviving grass,” says Meyer. “We’re looking for clones that have been there for 500 years, that have taken over all their weak sister plants.”

In trips from Spain to Sweden, and beyond, they have searched for areas where, hundreds of years ago, trees were chopped down and sheep and other livestock were put out to pasture. No effort was really made to grow the grass. It just grew. And grew and grew—until, years later, researchers like Bonos and Meyer appeared with their knives, intent on collecting the hardy and intrepid surviving plants. “Over those couple hundred years you can find genotypes that are strong,” Bonos says. “You use natural selection as part of your criteria.”

And, being experts in grass, they can look at a New Jersey lawn—or a Pyrenees mountainside—and tell one grass from another. Consider this: the Rutgers program now includes more than 2,000 varieties of bluegrass. “They’re genetically diverse,” says Meyer, “and when you look at 1,000

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Noteworthy News

William Meyer, Professor and Director of the Rutgers Turfgrass Breeding Project, was presented the 2009 New Jersey Turfgrass Association Hall of Fame Award on December 9 in recognition of an outstanding career that has included more than 20 years as a corporate president and head of the world’s largest private turfgrass breeding program in Oregon. For the past 15 years, Meyer has led the Rutgers turfgrass breeding program, releasing more than 300 turfgrass cultivars that are grown world-wide.

Visiting from Alaska, Turf Alum Matt Gudger and his girlfriend, Jen, went to the top of the Empire State Building where Matt proposed!!!

Congratulations to Bob Lively, Superintendent of Flossmoor Country Club, in Chicago, Illinois! Flossmoor was awarded “Renovation of the Year” by Golf Magazine in 2009. Michigan-based architect, Raymond Hearn, worked with Bob to restore signature elements of the historic golf course. The financial commitment, dedication to hard work and enormous amount of expended energy has certainly paid off!

In Memoriam

Keith Bunnell, Class of 1989
John E. Farrell, Class of 1984
Gary Galecki, Class of 1983
Frederick Law, Class of 1988
Stan W. Weeks, Class of 1993
Gerard T. Whittle, Jr., Class of 1995

Christopher Holt, Class of 2007, was recently promoted to Superintendent at Joe Louis “The Champ” Golf Course in Riverdale, IL, just south of Chicago. He, and his wife, Jamie also just gave birth to another baby boy last August, named Jacob Christopher. Congratulations, Christopher!

Rutgers Field Day

Rutgers Field Day will be held on July 27, 2010 at the turf farm adjacent to the Geiger Center. Are you planning to attend? If so, please respond if you’d be open to attending an alumni function to allow fellow graduates from the Rutgers Professional Golf Turf Management School a chance to network and catch up with old friends and maybe make new ones. Please email me at koppell@rci.rutgers.edu if this idea is of interest to you.
Dickison, 1962 Alumni, Recognized by Golf Course Superintendents Association of America for Distinguished Service to Profession

Excerpt from GCSAA

Golf Course Superintendents Association of America (GCSAA) Class A members Robert A. Dickison, CGCS, James C. Husting, CGCS, and Douglas W. Petersan have been selected as recipients of the 2010 GCSAA Col. John Morley Distinguished Service Awards.

They will be acknowledged at the 2010 GCSAA Education Conference during Celebrate GCSAA! presented in partnership with Syngenta, Feb. 9. Formerly the Opening Session and Welcoming Reception, Celebrate GCSAA! is hosted by GCSAA President Mark D. Kuhns, CGCS. The conference (Feb. 8-12) will be held in conjunction with the Golf Industry Show (Feb. 10-11) at the San Diego Convention Center.

“Bob, Jim and Doug are most deserving of the Col. John Morley Distinguished Service Award,” Kuhns said. “They have made outstanding and significant contributions to the advancement of the golf course superintendent profession as well as to the game of golf. Their service to our profession has been invaluable.”

Dickison is in his 50th year at Upper Montclair Country Club in Clifton, N.J. He started there in 1960, became head superintendent in 1971. He transitioned into a project manager role this year, overseeing irrigation, drainage and bunker improvement programs. A 38-year GCSAA member, Dickison has been a GCSAA certified golf course superintendent since 1977. He is a past president of both the GCSA of New Jersey and the New Jersey Turfgrass Association.

Dickison has hosted numerous professional tour events at Upper Montclair over the years, including the PGA Tour’s Thunderbird Classic in the 1960s, the LPGA's Coca-Cola Classic and Chrysler Plymouth Classic in the early ‘80s, and the 2007, 2008 LPGA/Sybase Classic. A regular speaker at national, regional and state conferences, Dickison’s presentations include tournament preparation, tree care and water usage among other topics. He earned the 1988 GCSANJ Distinguished Service Award, the 1990 Rutgers Turfgrass Alumni Achievement Award, the 1993 New Jersey Turfgrass Hall of Fame Award and the 2003 Rutgers Professional Golf Turf Management Award for Professional Excellence.

The GCSAA Board of Directors selects the winners from nominations submitted by affiliated chapters and/or association members. The award is given to individuals who have made an outstanding, substantive and enduring contribution to the advancement of the golf course superintendent profession. The award is named after Col. Morley, GCSAA’s founder and first president, who was the first to earn the award in 1932, and received it again in 1940.

GCSAA is a leading golf organization and has as its focus golf course management. Since 1926, GCSAA has been the top professional association for the men and women who manage golf courses in the United States and worldwide. From its headquarters in Lawrence, Kan., the association provides education, information and representation to more than 20,000 members in more than 72 countries. GCSAA’s mission is to serve its members, advance their profession and enhance the enjoyment, growth and vitality of the game of golf. The association’s philanthropic organization, The Environmental Institute for Golf, works to strengthen the compatibility of golf with the natural environment through research grants, support for education programs and outreach efforts. Visit GCSAA at www.gcsaa.org.

Alumni Continues to Send Employees to Rutgers

Steve Stephens, 1997 Alumni

Paxon Hollow Golf Course in Media, PA has been called the “best bang for the municipal buck” and others have said, “This may be the best golf course that I have ever played on. Its beautiful landscape and lush forests make this a golf course anyone can enjoy.” Much of this and other praise is testimony to the hard work of Superintendent and Rutgers Golf Course Turf Management Alum, Steve Stephens.

A former drywall contractor for 15 years during the 1980s, Stephens was doing a drywall job at Pickering Valley golf course in Pennsylvania and knew that he wanted to be part of that environment. So Stephens did the obvious and got hired as a member of the groundscrew at Pickering Valley. “I didn’t want to spend the rest of my life hammering,” said Stephens. Stephens quickly moved up to doing more advanced aerifying and seeding work but he knew that he wanted to become a superintendent and that he needed a degree to do it. Steve Stephens enrolled in the Rutgers Professional Golf Turf School in the spring of 1996 and graduated just 2 years later. As is the good fortune of many Rutgers students, Stephens was offered a promotion to the assistant superintendent position at Paxon Hollow Golf Course during his first and second years of the Rutgers program. Two years later Paxon Hollow’s Superintendent moved on and Steve took over the position.

During his tenure at Paxon Hollow, Stephens has sent four of his employees to Rutgers: Brian Cross, David Stockmal, Barry Reese and Doug Bitler. As in his own case, Stephens believes that if they are serious about this business they have to get a degree.
Growing New Careers at Rutgers

Meet Three People Who Made the Switch to Golf Turf Management and Never Looked Back

Revised from original by Margaret McHugh

Working in the fast-paced world of high finance was exciting for Rutgers University graduate Arnold Kim, but he always knew he wanted something more. So when the banking industry tanked in late 2008, Kim decided the time was right to pursue his real passion – golf.

“I love golf and working every day on a golf course sounded pretty good,” said Kim, 28, who began playing the sport while still in grade school.

Kim shifted gears in a big way in early 2009 by taking an entry-level position at the Bedens Brook Club in Skillman, NJ. A 2004 Rutgers graduate with a double major in finance and economics, Kim understood risk-return analysis but knew nothing of soil-plant relationships. He needed to quickly master technical skills – from designing drainage to installing irrigation systems – and develop front-line management insights to advance in the business of golf. His bosses encouraged him to enroll in the Two-year Professional Golf Turf Management Program offered by the Rutgers Office of Continuing Professional Education.

Now in its 50th year, the intensive two-year certificate program involves two, full-time 10-week classroom sessions during the off-season, sandwiched around a 9-month paid golf course internship, minimizing the time students are away from home and a paycheck. The program is no-nonsense, teaching students all the essentials, including weeds, trees, grass, soils, irrigation and golf course construction said Fran Koppell, senior program coordinator. It also introduces students to the fundamental leadership skills, like management, budgeting and effective speaking, needed to help students rise through the ranks.

Between 60 and 80 students graduate from the program each year. Rutgers uses its network to help them land jobs and continues to assist them throughout their professional lives. The program draws students from just about every state and around the world. “For those already working in turf management, our program gives them a real boost. For newcomers, we give them a career,” Koppell said.

One such newcomer to the male-dominated industry was Jennifer Torres. A passion for the great outdoors brought her to Rutgers. Having grown up on a dairy farm in Corning, NY, Torres could not imagine working behind a desk. “I’m an outdoor person. I couldn’t be trapped indoors,” the 36-year-old said.

She joined the Army right out of high school in 1992, and during her four-year tour she married and became a mother. The family relocated to Fort Dix in New Jersey in 2000 when her husband got a job in the state.

By then a mother of three, Torres opened a daycare facility, providing services to other families on the base, but she always longed to spend her days outside. One neighbor was the assistant superintendent of the base’s Fountain Green Golf Course. Hearing about his work intrigued Torres so much that she got a job operating a tractor on the course and never looked back. Like Kim, however, Torres lacked the skills and knowledge needed to advance in the profession.

In 2004, she used her G.I. bill to enroll in the Rutgers turf program – the only woman in that year’s class. She also received two scholarships: one from the New Jersey Turfgrass Association and the other from the Officer and Wives Club at Fort Dix, she said.

Upon graduating, Torres became assistant superintendent at the Indian Springs Country Club, an 18-hole public course in Marlton, NJ.

“Had I not gone to Rutgers, I would not be living up to the potential I have,” said Torres, who makes her home in Brown Mills, NJ. “It definitely opened doors.”

Torres needn’t worry; passion for the game of golf is not a prerequisite for students who attend the Rutgers Professional Golf Turf Management School. Yes, most graduates of the Rutgers program end up on a path towards golf

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course superintendent positions, but many others have landed jobs in grass seed sales, landscape management, corporate grounds maintenance and related industries, Koppell said.

For example, one Rutgers graduate maintains the grounds inside NASCAR raceways and another is director of grounds for Pfizer Global Research and Development, Koppell said. But for golf fanatics who set their sights high, Rutgers alumni have blazed the trail. One such graduate is John Zimmers, who went on to become the superintendent of Oakmont Country Club in Pennsylvania, eight-time host of the U.S. Open.

A career in professional sports – football specifically – seemed a certainty for Tim Christ, co-captain of the 1991 Scarlet Knights football team. But when he was cut from the Philadelphia Eagles training camp a few months after graduating from Rutgers with a degree in sports management, he didn’t know what to do with his life.

Christ liked the outdoors, so when a mentor suggested he look into Rutgers’ turf management program, he contacted Ned Lipman, the program director. Christ took Lipman’s advice and interviewed several golf course superintendents to learn about the job. He landed a position at the Merion Golf Club outside Philadelphia.

By his own admission, Christ wasn’t an academically motivated undergraduate, but he took the turf management course seriously. “I really buckled down and I wanted to learn everything I could possibly learn,” Christ said. “I became the nerd I had never been.”

Christ, now 40, graduated from the program in 1995 and went on to be Assistant Superintendent at Pine Valley and Merion and then became the superintendent of Metedeconk National and was the Director of Grounds at Sand Barrens. He briefly left the business to start a large-scale landscaping company, but returned and is now the Director of Golf Operations for Essex County.

“The Rutgers program teaches you what it takes to be successful in this field,” said Christ, who lives in Boonton Township, NJ with his wife and four children.

For those curious about the profession but not quite ready to make the commitment required of the two-year program, Rutgers’ three-week turf management course is often the first step: it gives participants a flavor for what is needed on the job. Not everyone is cut out for the career, which can require waking before dawn and doing very physical work for long hours, Koppell said. But for those like Christ, Torres and Kim, who love golf and being outdoors, the Rutgers program can turn a passion into a lifetime calling.

Kim finished his first 10 weeks of turf school in December and is currently interning at Bedens Brook until fall 2010, when he will return to Rutgers to complete his second year.

“The fast-paced nature of the program is highly efficient and direct, which I appreciate,” said Kim.

Perhaps more importantly, getting the Rutgers certificate in his professional arsenal will help Kim stand out among his peers. As Kim said, Rutgers is providing him “knowledge and credentials in an increasingly competitive industry.”

Rutgers Professional Golf Turf Management School
Two-Year Certificate Program

Fall Session - October 6 to December 17, 2010
Winter Session - January 5 to March 18, 2011

As an alumnus of The Rutgers Professional Golf Turf Management School, we look to you to recommend qualified applicants who can help build the reputation of our Rutgers program. If you have an employee, a co-worker or an associate who may be interested in and qualified for our program, please have them contact Fran Koppell via e-mail at koppell@rci.rutgers.edu. Visit our website at www.golfturf.rutgers.edu for an online application!
Greens
The Newsletter for Rutgers Turf Alumni

2009 Golf Turf Banquet

Thom Ritchie and Joe Bianco

John Meteer showing off his home state

Standing Ovation at the 2009 Golf Turf School Banquet

Jason Fleming, recipient of the Trans-Mississippi Golf Association Award, with Ned Lipman

Undergraduate, Kate Venner, accepting her Syngenta Award
Professional Golf Turf Management School Banquet Attendees from the Class of 2009

Ken Kubik accepting the Rutgers Turfgrass Alumni Association Achievement Award with Joe Bianco and Tom Ritchie

Dr. Rich Hurley with Pine Valley Scholarship Winners

Keynote Speaker - Don Sauvigne

2009 Golf Turf School Banquet

http://golfturf.rutgers.edu
2009 Golf Turf Banquet

Professional Golf Turf Management School Alumni Award for Professional Excellence
Don Sauvigne

Rutgers Turfgrass Alumni Association Achievement Award
Ken Kubik

2009 Scholarship Recipients

Paul DesChamps Memorial Scholarships
Thomas Dillon  Christopher Goeben  John Kafader  Brady Klein

Duke Polidor Memorial Scholarship
Pending Academic Achievement in current class

New Jersey Turfgrass Foundation
Stephania Alea (Hall of Fame)  Patrick Burgess (Challenge)

Norman Leising Memorial Scholarship NEW!
William Reardon

New Jersey Landscape Contractors Association Scholarships
Gregory Bohus  William Reardon

Allen and Scott Off NEW!
Michael Morvay

Pine Valley Scholarship NEW!
Stephanie Alea  Kevin Rundstrom

Golf Course Superintendents Association of New Jersey Scholarships
Gregory Bohus  Ryan Petitti

New Jersey State Golf Association and Ralph Engel Caddie Scholarships
Gregory Bohus  Robert Mathias

Sports Field Managers Association of New Jersey Scholarship
William Reardon

Golf Course Builders Association Scholarship
Robert Pyne

Henry Indyk Graduate Fellowship
Joseph Roberts

Syngenta Turfgrass Scholarship
Katelyn Venner

Trans-Mississippi Golf Association Scholarship NEW!
Joseph Adkinson  Jason Fleming

Motivational Incentive Program
This year we implemented an incentive program for second year turf students. Financial awards were given to the second year sessions for Highest Combined Grade Point Average of the two sessions - Turf I and Turf II and for Most Improved Grade Point Average from Turf I to Turf II. Awards were based on grade point averages alone. The students eagerly participated in this challenge which helped keep them focused academically until the end of their second session. Congratulations to this year's winners!

Fall 2009
Sean Crawford (Highest GPA)  Tomas Reyes (2nd Highest GPA)
Shawn Bergey (Most Improved GPA)  Kevin Simmons (2nd Most Improved GPA)

Winter 2010
Joseph Adkinson (Highest GPA)  Brady Klein (2nd Highest GPA)
Cody Trexler (Most Improved GPA)  Peter Strahan (2nd Most Improved GPA)
Peter S. Loft Memorial Scholarships
Karen Ambrose Michael Mary Provance-Bowley Lisa Beirn Matthew Koch Sergio Sosa
James Hemphling David Jespersen Matthew Koch Katelyn Venner Yan Xu
Priti Saxena Charles Schmid
Ralph Geiger Scholarships
Karen Ambrose Michael Harrison Beal Lisa Beirn Gregory Bohus Patrick Burgess
Laura Cortese Jonathan Dean Patrick Doran James Hemphling David Jespersen
Matthew Koch William Reardon Priti Saxena Sergio Sosa Ryan Petitti
Nicholas Puskarich Derrit Woods Yan Xu
Ralph Engel Scholarships
Jason Devoe James Duarte Iain Hardaker Nicholas Jensen
Rutgers Turfgrass Alumni Association Scholarship
William Reardon
Dr. Paul Sartoretto Memorial Scholarship
Tomas Reyes, Ill

What’s Next?
Keynote Address, November 2009

Don Sauvigne, graduate of the Professional Golf Turf program addressed the annual awards ceremony on November 7, 2009. After completing the 1980 Rutgers Professional Golf Turf program, Don’s career led him from the Superintendent position at Forsgate CC to senior facilities management roles in Columbia and Brown Universities. He now holds the position as Eastern North American Regional Director on the Pfizer account for the Facilities Management firm, Jones Lang Lasalle. His career route from Rutgers was certainly “the road less traveled” from many graduates of the program. He shared his insights into management and leadership during his career.

His talk, “What’s Next?” focused on how successful leaders approach challenges, lead people and anticipate answers before problems arise. Graduates of the program, who are practitioners in the turfgrass industry, are particularly well suited to forward thinking; demonstrating a bias toward “action,” anticipating solutions before the problems arise, and building and growing strong teams; all traits that are differentiators for successful leaders in business.

In addition to the strong technical foundation provided by his Rutgers education, Don stressed that a set of personal behaviors are practiced by successful leaders. Strong personal communications, being a champion for the success of others, and welcoming the constant change that businesses undergo are behaviors that distinguish those who experience both personal and professional success.

Don shared a story that illustrated how he overcame a personal difficulty in his role as a golf course superintendent (he is red-green colorblind). By entrusting every new employee with the shared responsibility of seeing and addressing anything that looked amiss or under stress on the grounds, he was able to build strong teams, and encourage others to reach their own potential. While he may have not have been able to “see” potential trouble spots, the team was empowered to be responsible, and was therefore, ultimately, successful. His lesson from this story, and advice to graduates was simple:

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Denis Bergey, transition
Shawn Bergey, Asst Superintendent
Lulu Country Club, PA
Brian Burkard, Asst Superintendent
Riverwood Golf Club, FL
Jamison Bushman, Asst Superintendent
PineTop Country Club, AZ
Daniel Carrizales, Asst Superintendent
Sylvania Country Club, OH
Sean M. Crawford
Butler National Golf Club, IL
Joseph D’Annibale
Shearon Environmental Design Co, NJ
Michael A. Deal, Asst Superintendent
Pine Valley Golf Club, NJ
Jonathan Dean
Rose City Golf Course, OR
Matthew Dierdorff
York Revolution, PA
Richard F. Evans, Asst Superintendent
Quek Brook Golf Course, NJ
Chad Fetter, Asst Superintendent
Country Club Of St. Albans MO
Jason Fleming, Asst Superintendent
Castle Pines Golf Club, CO
Aaron J. Franklin, Asst Superintendent
Blue Ridge Trail Golf Course, PA
Adam Freeman, Asst Superintendent
Lake Arrowhead Golf Club, WI
Timothy Friel
Oakmont Country Club, PA
Aaron Gagnon
Fiarbanks Ranch Country Club, CA
Ryan Godman, Asst Superintendent
Catta Verdera Country Club, CA
John Guffey
The Landings Club, GA
Charles D. Hamer
Kachemak Bay Lynx Par 3 Golf, AK
Robert M. Hayes
Broadmoor Golf Club, CO
Matthew Hilgendorn, 2nd Asst Superintendent
Bayonne Golf Club, NJ
Ryan Hubley
Truro Golf Club, NOVA SCOTIA
Tracy A. Hubrig, Asst Superintendent
Minot Country Club, ND
Michael Katz
Hyatt Hills Golf Complex, NJ
Michael Kerns
Llanerch Country Club, PA
Mathew J. Kidd, Asst Superintendent
Sun City Hilton Head, SC
Kenton R. King, Asst Superintendent
Moccasin Run Golf Club, PA
Keith Kirsch, Asst Superintendent
Southern Hills Golf Club, OK
Lukas T. Kline
Chena Bend Golf Course, AK
Jonathan D. Kylar
Scott Franchise, TX
Rusty W. Lambert
Shoal Creek Golf Club, MO
Scott J. Landstrom, Asst Superintendent
Sleepy Hollow Country Club, NY
Christina Linz O’Brien
Silver Spruce Golf Course, CO
Anthony Lipovsky, Asst Superintendent
Flanders Valley Golf Course, NJ
James R. Lord
Mountain Valley Golf Course, PA
Patrick J. Maher
Merion Golf Club, PA
Charles Main, Asst Superintendent
Bretton Woods Country Club, MD
Alex Matos, Asst Superintendent
The Blind Brook Club, NY
Kyle A. Mayerhofer, Asst Superintendent
Eagle Lake Golf Club, MO
John P. Meteer, Asst Superintendent
Seneca Hickory Stick Golf Club, NY
John Patrick Miller
Crooked Stick Golf Club, IN
Koji T. Mitchell
Augusta National Golf Club, GA
Chris Mogen, Asst Superintendent
Raspberry Falls Golf And Hunt Club, VA
Victor M. Morales-Rios, Asst Superintendent
Oakland Hills Country Club, MI
Brian Neufeld, Asst Superintendent
Castle Pines Golf Club, CO
Nicholas Nicolosi, Asst Superintendent
Hollywood Golf Club, NJ
Jose J. Oceguera, Asst Superintendent
The Golf Club Of Purchase, NY
Neil Packard
dallas Country Club, TX
Michael P. Percudani, Superintendent
Cherry Valley Golf Course, PA
Michael J. Peters, Asst Superintendent
Farm Neck Golf Club, MA
Joshua Potter, Asst Superintendent
Quincy Country Club, IL
Harold Pyett, Asst Superintendent
Forsgate Country Club, NJ
Eli N. Rahz
Saucon Valley Country Club, PA
Justin Ren
TPC Snoqualmie, WA
Tomas Reyes III, Asst Superintendent
Century Country Club, NY
James Cedric Rockwell, Superintendent
Richmond Country Club, RI
Matthew D. Rubin, Asst Superintendent
Beaver Creek, CO
Nicholas P. Schlipperoot, Asst Superintendent
Sharon Heights Golf & Country Club, CA
John Schroeder, Asst Superintendent
Brooklyn East River State Park, NY
Christopher Schultz, Asst Superintendent
Squires Golf Course, PA
Kevin Simmons, Asst Superintendent
River Bend Golf & Country Club, VA
Adam C. Stotlemeyer, Asst Superintendent
Musket Ridge Golf Club, MD
Brett Swain
The Rim Golf Club, AZ
Josh Truan, Asst Superintendent
Wing Point Golf & Country Club, WA
Tavis Tucker, Asst Superintendent
Pine Valley Golf Club, NJ
Cory T. Von Tungeln, Asst Superintendent
Rich Harvest Links, IL
James O. Wallace III
Whisper Rock Golf Club, AZ
Jonathan M. White, Asst Superintendent
Golf De Joyenval, France
Scott Wiiki, Asst Superintendent
Fairview Country Club, CT
Tylor P. Winograsky, Asst Superintendent
Catamount Ranch And Club, CO
Todd R. Work, Asst Superintendent
Trump National Golf Club, NJ
Bradley K. Wyatt, Asst Superintendent
Lincoln Hills Golf Course, CA
Kyle Zarnetski, Asst Superintendent
Upper Montclair Country Club, NJ
Kale M. Zimmerman, Asst Superintendent
Blackwolf Run, WI

Win A Free Shirt!
Think you know which are the only four states we do not have alumi superintendents in? Email your guess to turfalumni@gmail.com. First correct response wins a Professional Golf Turf Management shirt. Good luck!
of these next to one another, you can see there’s every color and shape under the sun.”

On a typical trip, they may travel from 1,000 to 1,500 kilometers over nine days, stopping at 130 locations. One meadow might yield 50 samples and another one just two or three. But that’s just the beginning, because the grass collected in these far-off locations has a long way to go before it’s turned into seed sold commercially. Packed in coolers, the grass will be transported to Holland, where the Dutch botanist and farmer Peter den Haan will cultivate the plants on his farm for a year to produce seed for the Rutgers program. Back at Rutgers, Meyer, Bonos, and a variety of graduate students and staff members will plant the seeds and grow them in Rutgers greenhouses and at two farms, one in Adelphia and the other in North Brunswick. The farms typically have upwards of 50,000 grass plots allocated for turfgrass breeding. The plants are evaluated and studied. If it’s a grass that has a quality worth pursuing—resistance to a troubling disease or even possessing a striking color—it will be crossbred with existing varieties. Eventually, a new variety may be developed and sold commercially.

But this description elides the realities of the work. The years of farming. The days spent analyzing data. The dirt and the dust. The pollen. Glamorous trips abroad? Not quite, because the days can stretch from eight in the morning until 10 at night, much of the time spent in a cramped vehicle. “I imagined I’d be walking along the countryside,” says Jonathan Bokmeyer GSNB’09, who traveled to Hungary (“an amazing trip”) and is now a research scientist with the Monsanto Company. “What you really do is drive in a car for hours at a time. We started in old parks in Budapest and drove into the countryside. You’re looking for any area that’s been undisturbed for hundreds of years. We covered the entire country in the car.”

Yet Meyer clearly loves what he does, even when describing the disappointments, like a great-looking bluegrass from Lithuania decimated by disease when it was planted here in New Jersey. “It just broke my heart,” he says. “We didn’t give up on it.” Meaning, well, it may still have something to offer, genetically speaking, in the quest for that perfect bluegrass.
Journey to the 2010 U.S. Open
William Hausch, Assistant Superintendent, Pebble Beach Golf Links

Little did I know that 10 years ago as a spectator at the 2000 US Open at Pebble Beach, 10 years later I would be an integral part of the team that would be preparing Pebble Beach for the 2010 US Open.

My career in golf began in 1998 at Quail Lodge Resort and Golf Club in Carmel Valley, CA. I had recently taken up the game of golf and needed a second job to support my newfound golf habit. I applied for a cart attendant position at Quail Lodge and was hired on that winter. I quickly became friendly with the Superintendent Denis Kerr and the Assistant Superintendent Thor Larson. Six months later a position on the greens crew opened up. I inquired and Denis hired me on.

My very first day on the job, I knew that golf course maintenance was my calling. I remember saying to myself, “I can’t believe they are going to pay me to do this.” The next four years at Quail Lodge laid the foundation for the rest of my career. Once Denis realized he had this new guy that was eager to learn about managing a golf course, he threw everything but the kitchen sink at me: irrigation, spraying, aerifying, renovating bunkers and tees, etc. Denis and Thor taught me all they could in the time I was there, and for that I am eternally grateful to both of them. They provided me with knowledge necessary to move on to the next stage of my career: the Rutgers Professional Golf Turf Management Program. Rutgers was the perfect fit - I needed an education to become a Superintendent, but I could not afford to quit working for an extended period of time. So the two three month semesters fit in perfectly.

So on to Rutgers I went. It was the fall of 2001. Being a native New Yorker, born and raised on Long Island, I was looking forward to getting back to the east coast. Four days after leaving California, I crossed the Verrazano Bridge into Queens for the first time in five years. I was embarking on an important chapter in my life and fortunately I was able to come home to do it. Going back to school would prove to be the catalyst for launching my career as a professional turf manager.

My first day at Rutgers was an eye opening experience for me. I had never in my four years in the industry been around 40 other people who enjoyed turf like me. I loved it! I thought to myself, “What a great place this is. Nothing but Turf. All the time.” My two years at Rutgers were memorable for many reasons. First, I was able to get to know many students from all walks of life, all with unique experiences from their respective golf courses. Second, I had the opportunity to spend time with the faculty. The faculty is comprised of a truly special group of professionals that spend each fall and winter ensuring that the students at Rutgers receive a first rate education. Without Buckely’s IPM class or Kristoff’s tree identification tests, walking through the Cook College campus looking at trees with nothing but buds to help identify them (really! NO LEAVES!!), or any of the other essential topics covered at Rutgers, I wouldn’t be the well rounded Assistant Superintendent I am today.

After graduating from Rutgers, I spent the next two summers at Brookville Country Club on the North Shore of Long Island. I had the pleasure of working with another Rutgers alum, the Superintendent at the time, AJ Congero. AJ and I spent the next two years constantly trying to improve that golf course. The first spring we were faced with a plethora of irrigation issues that were unresolved from the fall, for example, heads that wouldn’t turn on from the clock and wet spots from cracked pipes. I systematically evaluated each issue and prioritized, deciding to address the most obvious problems first, like a wet spot in a fairway, then worried about the broken head in the native area later. Meanwhile, this whole time we faced the poa invasion of our seven year old bentgrass greens and ryegrass fairways. Let me tell you, this is always a fun topic with the greens chairman! With limited resources, it took creative thinking and planning to achieve our goals (i.e.: NO Poa!). As this was my first assistant job, I had an opportunity to use much of my new found knowledge that I had acquired at Rutgers. I knew more about chemicals and their modes of action, growth regulators, and turf types, and I got to see and use so much of it at Brookville. With the different turf types on greens and fairways and the high humidity that caused all kinds of diseases, I had all of these things I learned about right in front of me. It was AWESOME!! This was exactly the type of job I needed leaving school, a hands on position which forced me to learn what I hadn’t learned in my previous job as a greenkeeper in California. That meant getting involved with all of the ins and outs of managing a golf course from top to bottom, from deciding when to fertilize, water or mow to monitoring a budget, to setting cutting heights. I relished every bit of the responsibility. “Bring it on,” I would say to myself, never sure if I could conquer the next challenge, but always wanting to try. AJ’s guidance through those two years was invaluable and I will always be indebted to him. He believed in me and gave me a chance as an Assistant.

(continued on page 15)
You know how everyone always says, “Don't burn bridges,” and, “Networking is the key to success.” Well... they’re right! My next opportunity came through an old colleague, Thor Larson from Quail Lodge. He was the new Superintendent at the Pebble Beach Company-owned Del Monte Golf Course in Monterey, CA. We hadn’t spoken in a while and I called to let him know that I would be in town visiting for the holidays. He informed me that he was the new Superintendent at Del Monte and he was looking for an Assistant. It was a no brainer. I accepted the job and made the long drive cross country back to the Monterey Peninsula. I was now a manager in the same company as Pebble Beach Golf Links.

I spent three wonderful, yet challenging, years at Del Monte. When I arrived, the course was a bit run down and in need of capital improvements. Pebble Beach Company decided to make those improvements when Del Monte received the honor of co-hosting the Senior PGA Tour’s Walmart First Tee Open with Pebble Beach Golf Links. This meant some new tees, bunker renovations and best of all, a new irrigation system to replace the antiquated block system that was ten years overdue for replacement. The system was installed in two phases over two summers. It was a tremendous learning experience. For those of you reading this that have done an irrigation installation, you know what a challenge it can be to stay on time, on budget and still maintain a playable golf course. But the reward was worth all of the blood and sweat. Del Monte, which was built in 1897, was ushered into its second century of operation with a much needed facelift. No longer the stepchild of the Pebble Beach Company, Del Monte was now a course the company could be proud to have as the co-host of the First Tee Open.

THE CALL! It was a morning like any other at Del Monte except for a call I received while changing the cup on the 11th hole. I looked to see who was calling and was confused to see it was the Superintendent at Pebble Beach, Chris Dalhamer. He told me that his assistant, Andrew Morgan, had given his notice and would be moving on to become superintendent at Palo Alto Country Club. He said that he and Jack Holt (20 year Assistant Superintendent at Pebble Beach) would like to know if I would be interested in joining their team at Pebble Beach. I remember that moment like it was yesterday, thinking, “Did he really just ask me that?” It was one of those moments when you realize all of the hard work you have put into your career is about to culminate with the opportunity of a lifetime. I remember thinking, “Pebble Beach is three years from the US Open. THE US OPEN!!!!” My response as you might guess was a resounding, “Yes!” followed by, “How soon can I start?”

That was three years ago, and the US Open seemed a lifetime away. The preparations to the course had already begun. When I arrived, we were about to embark on a complete rebuild of the first green and bunkers. The project went smoothly and the finished product was a new sandbased green with original pa sod reinstalled and a new bunker stretching the length of the green along its left side. Next was the installation of a bunker liner and new sand to every bunker on the course. It has been three years of similar projects and planning to get us where we are today, managing one of the world’s greatest golf courses at the time it is about to host the US Open.

The excitement amongst the crew has been rising as well. There are 36 men and women who put their heart and souls into the care and maintenance of Pebble Beach every day. They have exceeded Chris’, Jack’s and my expectations in every way, stepping up to every challenge that has been presented to them. They deserve much of the credit for the superb conditions we have achieved at Pebble Beach. I could give a hundred examples: the shaved bunker edges along fairways that get trimmed to 1/2 inch with string trimmers, the carefully executed clean up passes around greens, tees and fairways, the expertly mowed step cut around each hole. Many of the smallest details will go unnoticed by some, but the pride taken in the job is there none the less. For a few of our staff, this will be their fourth US Open at Pebble Beach, which is incredible! For some, it will be their second or third, which is also admirable. For many of us, including myself, it will be our first. Rutgers is well represented here at Pebble, as four of us (PJ Spellman, Doug Burdick, Adam Freeman and myself) are Rutgers alumni, and Bubba Wright will be heading back to Rutgers for his second year this fall. I feel a great sense of pride when I think about the fine work done by our crew. Their dedication to perfection ensures that Pebble Beach lives up to its legacy as one of the greatest US Open venues of all time.

So here I sit in my office writing this piece at this beautiful place I get spend each breathtaking day. One hundred yards from the crystal blue water and white sand of Carmel Beach. Thirty days from the first practice round of the 2010 US Open. Ten years removed from my experience here as a spectator. Reflecting on my career in golf and all of the wonderful places I have worked with people I have met over the years. Thinking of each and every person with whom I have crossed paths with and their hand in helping me to become a successful Assistant Superintendent. For all of these things I am incredibly grateful, all of which have led me to Pebble Beach and a chance to host our national championship, the 2010 US Open.

Rutgers Professional Golf Turf Management School

Three-Week Golf Turf Preparatory Short Course
January 10 through January 28, 2011

Perfect for aspiring or current turf professionals looking to increase their professional value at an affordable price. Our compact course curriculum delivers essential academic turf knowledge and the practical applied training needed for success in the golf turf industry. The Three-Week Short Course provides high quality instruction by utilizing some of the best instructors found in our Two-Year Professional Golf Turf Management Program. The program’s pace and varied subject matter is most valued by applicants with at least one year of golf turf experience, or an equivalent. For additional information, please contact David Breeding via email at breeding@njaes.rutgers.edu.

http://golfturf.rutgers.edu
Instructor Highlight

You’re going to work in Turfgrass

Rich Buckley, Instructor

When Rich Buckley came to Rutgers to earn his masters degree in plant pathology in 1988 his boss told him, “You’re going to work in turfgrass.” Dr. Phil Halisky was referring to turfgrass science and today Buckley is the highly respected director of Rutgers University’s Soil Testing and Plant Diagnostic Services (STPDS).

The STPDS are outreach services of the New Jersey Agricultural Experiment Station that provide disease and insect pest diagnosis of plant samples, as well as chemical and physical analysis of soil. Turfgrass and ornamental plants are the primary focus of the disease diagnostic component of the STPDS. Buckley is the principle diagnostician and has looked at over 30,000 samples of dead and dying plant material in his career. He is also a prolific public speaker and an instructor in the Rutgers Professional Golf Course Turf Management Two-Year program. In the Two-Year program he teaches classes such as Turfgrass Diseases, Turfgrass Insect Pests, Diseases and Insect Pests of Ornamental Plants, and Integrated Pest Management Techniques.

Buckley's lab is a testimony to his mission: computers hooked up to microscopes surround the room, leaf and soil samples are everywhere and a sense of hospital-like urgency fills the air. In fact, Buckley said, “We are the emergency room for dying plants.” Many of Buckley's former students in the Professional Turf School remember him and are oftentimes the biggest source of patients to the lab. The first time Gray Leaf Spot was diagnosed in the laboratory the sample came from a former student. “It's a fungal disease that kills a lot of grass very quickly. It came to us in 1993 from the assistant (a former student) at Philadelphia Country Club. The disease subsequently turned into a real epidemic and killed a lot of grass on golf courses and sports fields in our region.”

In class Buckley has two missions: one is to prepare students to work with golf turf. “Golf course putting greens are artificial by nature. Managing grass to optimize the game of golf is often in conflict with the health needs of the grass. The conflict makes the grass susceptible to diseases and insects. In class, I teach how to recognize and manage the problems that pop up.” Buckley’s other mission is to get students to think about what they are doing. “Managing plant health entails a lot more than following a four-step program.” In the end, “We try to teach the love of learning and turn average folks into life long students of science.”

After nearly 20 years in the New Jersey turf arena, Rich Buckley thinks that the turfgrass industry is filled with job opportunities. “Many of our turf school students have gone on to very successful careers in the turf industry.” “Dr. Halisky was a prophet in my life. Turfgrass science has given me a great career and I am truly grateful for that,” said Buckley.

Alumni Success Stories

Cultivating the American Dream

John Keegan, 2007 Alumni

John Keegan of Wilmington, Vermont is only 24 years old but he already knows that he wants to live out the American dream. Keegan is a nationally certified former ski and snowboarding instructor who taught for seven years. He got interested in golf course turf management because of a background in farming and a love of the game. He’s been working at a low budget course for the past four years, sharing the role of assistant with another guy. He was recommended to the Rutgers Turf Management program by his superintendent, a Rutgers alumnus. The Rutgers program impressed Keegan because it’s not just about grass. “We learn surveying, construction, trees, diseases and so much more,” said Keegan. “I could have gone to [another turf management school] right down the road but this [Rutgers program] fit right into my schedule. Plus the cost is right.”

Since completing his first year in the program Keegan has already been promoted at work. He was given more money, more responsibility and he has noticed that his superintendent has taken him under his wing more. Speaking about his farming background Keegan said, “I love watching things grow.” Earning a certificate from the Rutgers turf program has already helped John Keegan grow in the turf management industry.
Falling Into the Perfect Career
James Dall, 2003 Alumni

After working several different jobs in the resort town of Steamboat Springs, Colorado, James Dall learned two things about himself: he likes management, and he enjoys working outdoors. Dall graduated from Colorado State University with an English degree in 1994 and immediately set to work, managing a car wash and a restaurant and working as a ski lift operator in the winter months. It was during a period of downtime between ski seasons that a friend recommended he get a job at a golf course. Dall played golf "very poorly," he jokes, but the chance to be outside and play free rounds was all the incentive he needed to become a golf course maintenance crew member. Now, 12 years later, Dall has worked his way up to golf course superintendent at Cobblestone Golf Course in Kendallville, Indiana.

As soon as he began work on the course, Dall knew that it was for him. "I fell in love with it," he says. "I wanted to figure out how best to change from just mowing grass to growing grass." Seeing his enthusiasm for the work, Dall's manager showed him a brochure for Rutgers University's Two-Year Golf Course Turf Management Certificate Program, offered by the NJAES Office of Continuing Professional Education. The ten-week schedule fit perfectly with the ebb and flow of work in a resort town, and Dall was able to earn his turf management certificate without missing out on work opportunities.

Dall was not disappointed in his Rutgers experience. "Going to class every day was like opening a new present on Christmas morning," he says. "The course was amazing." From the accommodating administrators to the knowledgeable instructors, everyone at OCPE worked hard to help Dall and his classmates get the most out of the program. With support from his classmates, Dall became the president of his class, which gave him the leadership skills required for a turf management job, and he was elected to his local association's board of directors in February 2009.

The well-rounded education Dall received at Rutgers prepared him for more than what he could have learned on the job in Steamboat Springs. The disease and insect identification lessons proved to be especially useful when he and his family relocated to Indiana, where turf is plagued by different difficulties than in Colorado. Perhaps the most valuable part of the course for Dall, however, was the class on networking and professional development. Moving to a new state at the beginning of his career meant starting from scratch, but with the lessons he learned at Rutgers, Dall made himself known to his new colleagues, and the contacts he made eventually helped him land a golf course superintendent position.

Dall's education has stayed with him since he received his Rutgers turf management certification. "I use the course regularly," he says, adding that, after the course, "I just wanted to go out and mentor guys who were interested in it, just as I am, and send them to Rutgers." Dall understands how the economy can make finding work difficult, and he recommends the two-year course as a way to get ahead. "The three-week course is a good primer," he explains, but "the Rutgers name and the two-year certificate certainly hold their weight in the industry." In fact, all kinds of turf professionals can benefit from a turf management education. "There are certainly many opportunities other than golf course superintendent," explains Dall, describing how a friend who also attended the Rutgers program now owns his own lawn care business. The challenges and diversity involved with turf management are, ultimately, what Dall loves so much about it. The education he received from Rutgers gave him the skills he needed to turn a job he liked into a career he loves. "The program, with the Rutgers name behind it, was my way of converting a four-year degree into a turf education, and a good one at that."

From Ski Instructor to Golf Course Assistant Superintendent
Keith Carper, 2004 Alumni

Keith Carper was a 24 year old US Army Cavalry Veteran who was working as Assistant Ski School Director of Alpine Mountain in the Poconos, PA. His boss at Alpine Mountain, Scott Matthews, was also the Head Golf Pro at Hideaway Hills Golf Club in Kresgville, PA. Matthews asked him what he did during the summer when the Mountain shut down. Since he wasn't working, Carper was glad to try out the golf industry and when he did, he found that he liked it.

Not only did Keith Carper like Golf Turf but he knew that it could provide him and his family a good life. So he began working at a small nine-hole golf course but shortly after he found a better position as a Tractor Operator at Picatinny Arsenal, which he knew would provide more opportunities for career growth.

In fact, it was soon after being hired at Picatinny that Carper saw an announcement for Rutgers Two Day Golf Course Turf Management Course. "Picatinny sent me to that. I went and saw all the different subjects and everything that was involved in Turf Management and soon thereafter was invited to the Three-Week Turf Management Short Course," said Carper.

"In the Three Week Course they pretty much gave you a little taste of everything a Golf Course Turf Manager needs to know. I remember thinking: 'wow, there's a heck of a lot more to maintaining a golf course than cutting grass. There are a lot of extra things that people take for granted. The Three-Week Course really opens your eyes to all that is necessary to move up the turf management ladder," said Carper.

"Upon completing the Three Week Turf Short Course, Picatinny created a job that never existed there, which was a Foreman's position because now I had a little bit of education in the field, "said Carper. Shortly after that, at the age of 28, he got an invitation to the Rutgers Two Year Turf Management Program and got approval to attend.

"Picatinny actually sent me through the Two-Day, Three-Week and Two-Year process and upon completion of the Two-Year Course, they promoted me to Assistant Superintendent. And the education I got at Rutgers and the experience I obtained while at Picatinny was instrumental in landing my current position as the Assistant Superintendent of Sterling Farms Golf Course in Stamford."
Look What They Are Doing Now!

RANDY BAHR, 1994, Superstition Mountain Golf & Country Club, AZ
DANIEL A. BLUE, 1988, Royal Lawns of Monmouth, Inc., NJ
NEIL ROBBINS, 1998, Muirfield Village Golf Club, SCOTLAND
STEPHEN RUGGIERO, 2000 Monmouth University, Director for Turf Mgmt and Landscaping, NJ
CARL SAMUELSON, 1995, New Town Park and Recreation Center, CT
JAMES T. SIDEY, 1987, NYC Parks Department, retired, NY
JONATHAN M. WHITE, 2009, Golf De Joyenval, France
JEFF WYANT, 1990, Shark River Country Club, NJ

alumni turn dreams into realities. You have become real life success stories throughout the United States, Canada and the world. We are so proud of your accomplishments and your many contributions to the golf turf community and related industries. In this year's edition of Greens, we hope you will enjoy the good news stories about the successful lives of our alumni and faculty.

One story of which I am especially proud honors our 2009 Distinguished Alumni Award winner, Don Sauvigne, President of the Class of 1980, who is currently employed as the Site Director by Jones Lang Lasalle, managing Pfizer Global Research and Development’s portfolio of properties and operations in the eastern region of North America (that’s a mouthful). Don’s remarks at our 2009 graduation banquet were touching and spoke to the gifts we all have and the remarkable outcomes which can occur when we seek out others with different gifts to help us achieve our dreams and missions.

Each of you in your own way has every reason to celebrate with those of us at Rutgers today in commemorating 50 years of service to a truly great industry throughout the United States and beyond. If you’d like to send your good wishes to your fellow alums or share how the Rutgers Professional Golf Turf Management School has benefitted you, please visit our website at www.golfturf.rutgers.edu and click on the alumni link.

The Rutgers Turfgrass Alumni Association is an affiliate of the New Jersey Turfgrass Association and supporter of Turfgrass Research at Rutgers. Help us touch base with someone from the Have You Seen list and receive a Rutgers Turf hat. For more information or questions, please contact Rosemary Mahony at 732-932-9271 or email turfalumni@gmail.com.

The Rutgers Turfgrass Alumni Association

2009 was a successful year for our alumni association as it was the first time we enrolled over 100 members. Thanks to your generous support we continue to offer scholarships to turfgrass students who have worked hard and excelled in their studies, helping them on the road to success. This was the first year we offered our membership application and payment of dues online. It was a great success with 30% of alums paying their dues online through the secured services of PayPal. We also offered something for sale online this year - our Rutgers Professional Golf Turf Management hat, with profit proceeds benefiting the scholarship fund. We have more hats available so please visit our website at www.golfturf.rutgers.edu and click on the alumni link to purchase. Also on the website are photos from this year’s banquet where Ken Kubik was the recipient of the Rutgers Turfgrass Alumni Achievement Award. While you are visiting our website, please take the time to offer your wishes and stories in honor of the 50th anniversary of the Professional Golf Turf Management School. Curriculum and instructors may have changed over the years, but one thing has never waivered, and that is our alumni’s commitment to the future of golf turf management. Joe Bianco, Treasurer of the Alumni Association, is a 1962 graduate and Thom Ritchie, Executive Director of the Alumni Association is a 1976 graduate. We are proud that our alumni feel this special lifelong dedication to our program, and hope that your dedication to our future alumni continues each year. Thank you sincerely for your support, and best wishes for a successful season.

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