

2024 Bully Cup - East Prevails!

Led by captain and NTGCSA Vice President, Coby Morrow, the East prevailed at this year's 2024 Bully Cup held at Lantana Golf Club. Thank you to superintendent Michael Shelton for hosting us, and thank you to platinum sponsor Harrell's for sponsoring a great day! The East's victory brings the all-time results to East 14, West 13. There has been one tie in the 28 year history of the event.





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bryan.brown@lkpoa.org

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cody@ridgleacountryclub.com

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rmeier@pgahq.com

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brown@proturf.com

Mike Epps
mepps@turfandsoil.net

Chapter Executive

Shannon Phillips
ntgcsa@gmail.com 469-630-2571
2560 King Arthur Blvd., Suite 124-115
Lewisville, TX 75056

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Upcoming Events

Stephen Best Pro/Super Memorial Tournament
May 21, 2024
Cowboys Golf Club

Chapter Championship
June 3, 2024
The Nelson Golf and Sports Club

Family Social
July 21, 2024
Globe Life Field

September Education at Scottish Rite
September 26, 2024
Scottish Rite for Children

Shop Tour and EM Meeting
October 7, 2024
TPC Craig Ranch

Other Events and Dates to be announced soon!



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cainb@helenaagri.com

Brian Ashley
(469) 469-1869
ashleyb@helenaagri.com

President's Message

Spring has sprung. I would like to open by thanking all of you for your support of the new board of directors. We have some big shoes to fill but I feel that we are on the right path to make NTGCSA one of the finest local associations in the nation. The biggest item on the agenda is Rounds for Research. If you have not donated rounds, please do so. This not only funds research for GCSAA national projects, but for our local area as well. The monies raised during this project support many of our local needs and objectives.

The other item on everyone's plate is getting BMPs complete. GCSAA has taken the first step in setting these up for you, and is asking you to review and finalize your course BMP. We as a chapter have invested significantly toward this project and Lone Star has spent countless hours completing one of the best books out there, and has also produced a short video that is available to all of you to use in conversation with your boards and greens committees on the necessity of BMPs. It also aids us against the EPA and national government regulations. There was a time that all we had to do was keep 51% of the members happy; but now we have the local as well as national government, the home owner's associations, EPA, TDA, and then the members. What a racket.

The board is working on finalizing our meetings for the year and I think all should have a great time at each and every one of them. The family social will again be at a Texas Rangers game. It was a blast last year and all that attended had a great time. If any of you have ideas on meetings please do not hesitate to reach out and let us know.

As we look to the future, the Farmers Almanac, grand dad's bible, says we can look forward to a wetter than usual spring and summer. It is always fun to hope! All of you doing course renovations and projects will have something else to combat along with members, and normal delays in getting projects complete. Thanks again for your support and we look forward to seeing each of you and the next meeting. Be safe out there.

Mike Upchurch
Longview Country Club



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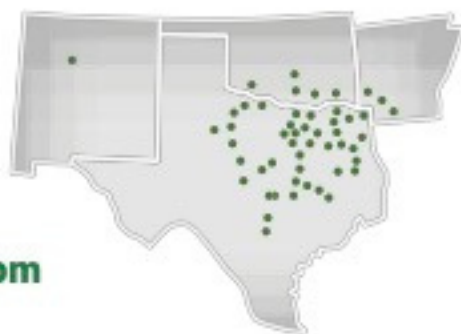


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Financial Health for Golf Course Superintendents - By David Morrow

David Morrow overcame crushing debt to begin to build a stronger financial future for his family. Here's what he learned. Editors Note: First appeared in the February 2024 edition of GCM.

https://www.gcmonline.com/voices/news/financial-health-for-golf-course-superintendents?utm_source=informz&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=general&_zs=HBswP1&_zl=7n7N7



Earlier is better when it comes to financial planning, as the author found out. After racking up crippling debt early in his career, David Morrow took a long look at his family's financial picture, swallowed his pride and ultimately put himself and his loved ones on secure footing. Photo by Adobe Stock

How many times have you thought about where you want to be in your career and how you want to get there? We all have and can lay it out in our heads easily. Now, how many times have you thought about what's next? What happens when the inevitable happens and your career starts to head down the backstretch? No one likes to talk about it, but we need to.

Probably like so many who are reading this, I come from a generation that was told to go to college after high school. That was the natural progression: Go to school, get your degree, do your few years as an assistant and progress into a superintendent position.

That was a nice fairy tale while it lasted. Unfortunately, we came into the business at a time when the golf industry contracted, and the economy took a downturn. Superintendent positions became fewer, and those that remained seemed to come and go, making achieving that goal seem unobtainable.

After 13 years as an assistant at five different courses with plenty of experience and even a year in sales, I still wasn't where I wanted to be. Continued on page 9.

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SCAN ME!

This story is all too familiar to so many of our generation. I don't regret my years or where they led me, but I wish I had done things differently — especially with my money.

Mainly with my finances, I spent most of my 20s like too many people do — young, dumb and feeling like I was invincible. While I took advantage of my club's 401(k), I was foolish enough to think that was all I had to do to secure my future. I didn't look forward, and now here I am in my 40s looking down the barrel of my career knowing I'm on the back end.

We joke with our peers that we will all work until we are dead, but do we really have to? The problem is that now I have a family to support. How do I begin to dig out of the hole I created?



A look down the fairway on hole No. 14 at Wolferts Roost Country Club in Albany, N.Y. Photos by David Morrow

Debilitating Debt

My first step was just acknowledging I had a problem. That problem was debt.

I had four credit cards that were all but maxed out, a car loan, insurance and a home loan, as well as other bills that always seemed to come. I was paying late, telling myself I was staying ahead. That was when I made the decision to fix our situation. We decided to move back to my wife's hometown. We sold our home, which, if I had been honest with myself in the beginning, we couldn't afford. We managed to make a good profit from the sale, so I took what we needed to purchase a new home and set that aside. With the rest, we reduced as much of our debt as we could.

This next step was one of the hardest: My pride had to take a back seat as we fixed our situation. We — me, my wife, my son and two dogs — moved in with my in-laws, into an 8-foot-by-10-foot bedroom. We did that for almost a full year, and I can't thank them enough for helping us during that time. We saved every penny — no eating out, coffee at home — and every cent went to paying off our debt. Continued on page 10.

Debt is crushing, and now that I am on the other side of it, I never will allow us to return. Every cost is measured and weighed.

This time, when we looked for a home, we were honest and only looked at what we could afford. We settled on a fixer-upper to stay within our budget. It took me three months of work every day after time at the course to get our house ready to move in.

There are still things to do, but I'm proud to say we made it our home without running ourselves into even more debt we couldn't afford.

During all this time, I had no significant raises or promotions. We acknowledged that if we wanted a secure future, we had to fix the root of the problems. I am no financial planner or coach; I simply want to help others who find themselves in a similar situation.

Lessons Learned

After hours of researching and planning and watching countless videos trying to better my financial understanding, here is what I have found:

Acknowledge your problem. Without seeing the whole picture, you cannot start to work on it. Stop borrowing. You know you can't afford another bill, so don't take one on. This means credit cards, loans, store cards, car loans — all of them.

Make a budget. It doesn't have to be fancy. Simply list all your expenses and record what you earn each month. This is scary; know that going in. See what expenses are necessary and what can be cut.

- Car loan: Do you need a new vehicle, or can you get out of that payment and drive something less expensive?
- Streaming services: Do you need them all?
- Gym and other memberships: Cancel them if you don't use them.
- Groceries: Try online ordering to eliminate compulsion buys at the store.

Eliminate extra expenses. Bring lunch, make coffee, check your insurance rates, check your cellphone bill.

Sell things you're not using. Toys, boats, bikes, ATVs ... we all accumulate them, and they all cost. Also look at old clothes, computers and things that still have value, just not to you.

Create a plan to pay off the debt. I suggest a debt-snowball approach because that worked for me. The basic idea is to start with your smallest debt and pay that off, then move to the next smallest, adding what you used to pay on the previous debt to the next, on and on until your debts are paid. The most efficient way is to pay off your highest-interest debts first and work your way down. The downside to this is it can take longer to pay off those debts because they also tend to be the largest. This can lead to a feeling of defeat and ultimately giving up. Don't give up.

Create an emergency fund. This is the one that everyone says to do, and it always seems impossible. Continued on Page 12.

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But without debt, you will be amazed at how fast it can grow. And once it does, you will be flabbergasted at how good it feels. You'll have no concerns about paying bills by autopay. Faced with a medical emergency? No big deal; you can pay that. It's the ultimate financial freedom from that anchor of debt.

Start really saving for retirement. Even though this is the main goal of the whole experience, it is also the last step. You will never really get to this point if you're struggling to pay your bills. This is when you can start putting the maximum you can afford into your retirement. Don't have a retirement plan? Start one, the sooner the better.



The author (center) with his wife, Bri, and son, Emmett. Photos by David Morrow

Research Retirement

This is where your research begins. I do not know all the advantages of each of these or what would work best for you and your family. Research each of these retirement strategies and take advantage of the tax breaks of those that are appropriate and decide how you want your future to look:

- Roth IRA
- 401(k)
- Regular IRA
- Certificate of deposit
- Stocks
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I can't stress this enough: Research.

Do what is best for you and your family. The key to retirement is saving and compound interest, and Continued on Page 14.

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the sooner you can begin, the sooner you will see gains. I still don't know if I will gain enough savings that I can ever truly retire, but I am taking every opportunity I can to make that happen.

At this point, I suggest another budget breakdown to decide what you need to survive and what can be saved. Every raise I get goes to savings. Every side job I do goes to it. Every dividend I get from my stocks goes right back to it. I no longer dip into savings for an extra expense. If there is something I want, I save for it and buy it outright.

I have only two credit cards now, and neither carries a balance at month's end — not because I don't use them, but because as soon as the bill comes, it is paid in full.

Once I was debt-free and had built my emergency fund, I switched all my bills over to my credit cards, and now I get rewards for all my expenses. That adds up to an extra few thousand dollars in rewards. I only suggest doing that once you are debt-free and know exactly what your monthly expenses are.

The path to financial freedom is never the same for everyone, but I hope some of this might help others who felt as trapped as I did. It is not easy, and hard choices have to be made. But the outcome is well worth it, and I hope that you all can find it. Remember to do what is best for you and yours. Small steps in the right direction are all that it takes to get you on the right track.

Best of luck.



Morrow and his dogs — Magik (left) and Wally.

David Morrow has been the GCSAA Class A superintendent at Wolferts Roost Country Club in Albany, N.Y., since 2020. He is a 16-year member of GCSAA

Dusty Daniel

806-787-2283

DustyDaniel@bwicompanies.com

Colby Johnson

972-207-2981

ColbyJohnson@bwicompanies.com

Philip Davis

940-447-6365

PhilipDavis@bwicompanies.com



GCSAA Update



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GCSAA Legacy Awards

The GCSAA Legacy Awards competition is sponsored by Grass Clippings and offers education aid to children and grandchildren of GCSAA members. Scholarships of \$1,500 are administered through the GCSAA Foundation. Apply on the GCSAA Web site by April 15.

A large advertisement for the Cushman ELITE Lithium golf cart. It shows a man driving a green and black golf cart on a golf course at sunset. The text "ELITE LITHIUM" is prominently displayed. Below it, the slogan "ONE INNOVATION. DOUBLE THE POTENTIAL." is shown. A paragraph describes the benefits of the Cushman Hauler 800 ELITE series. The website "Cushman.com" and the Cushman logo are at the bottom. A small copyright notice is in the bottom right corner.

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Member Spotlight - 2023 Superintendent of the Year

Bryan Brown, Lake Kiowa Country Club

1. How did you get into the business?

My grandfather introduced me to the game at a very young age. It was something that he and I could do together. After a few questionable career choices (including two years caddying on what was known then as the Nationwide Tour (now the Korn Ferry Tour)), I was back home in the Houston area having dinner with my mom. I told her that if I had it to do all over again, I would get a turf degree and become a golf course superintendent. She convinced me that it wasn't too late, and I should give it a shot. So, I applied to the Turf Program at Texas A&M. I earned a Masters of Agriculture degree with an emphasis in Agronomy.



2. Tell me about Lake Kiowa Country Club.

Lake Kiowa is a gated lake and golf community located about an hour north of the Dallas/Fort Worth metroplex that was founded in 1968. We have a recreational and fishing lake, an 18-hole Championship Golf Course, a full-service lodge and many other amenities. The members here love their golf. We do approximately 55,000-60,000 rounds a year. If the course is open, the tee sheet will be filled.

3. What has been the toughest obstacle to overcome in your career?

I got into this business later than most, so I felt some pressure to kind of “fast track” my career. Also, my wife and I were starting a family, and we committed to staying in the North Texas area limiting the number of superintendent opportunities. Thankfully, the job here at Kiowa opened up at a perfect time when my wife was pregnant with our third child. That was a tremendous blessing!

4. If you could play a round of golf with any PGA professional past or present, who would you want to play with?

I know it's cliché, but I would love to play a round of golf with Tiger Woods. But, I want peak Tiger Woods circa 2000-2001, not the broken down current version.

5. What is one thing readers don't know about you, that they might be interested to learn?

Not many people know that I caddied for two years on the Nationwide Tour. But, fewer people probably know that I was the Sports Director for the campus TV station at the University of Oklahoma in the Fall of 2000 and covered all 13 games of that National Championship season.

6. If you had an hour of free time, how would you spend it?

That's a loaded question! With all my kids and their activities, it's hard to find an hour of free time. I enjoy those quiet moments when my wife, Susan, and I can talk without being interrupted, but I'd be lying if I didn't say that I would probably play a little Candy Crush.

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Member Spotlight - 2023 Distinguished Service Award Winner

Merlin Tielkemeier, Grapevine Golf Course

1. How did you get in the business?

I started playing golf when I was 13 at a nine hole country course in southern Wisconsin called Windy Acres. Before my freshman year of college, I started working at Atwood Homestead Golf Course in Rockford IL. It was a public course that was part of the county forest preserve system. I worked there all four years of college in the summer.

2. Where did you grow up?

I'm from Davis Illinois. It's a small (Pop. 500) town in far northern Illinois, 5 miles from the Wisconsin border. It's corn fields and dairy cows for as far as you can see.

3. Tell me about Grapevine Golf Course.

It is a city owned, 27 hole course with TifEagle bermuda greens. It's a great public golf course, fun to play. We have good water and enough water so except for too much cart traffic, it's a great place to work.

4. What teams do you root for?

I grew up a fan of the Bears and Cubs, but I'm a diehard fan of the four local DFW teams now. Although, I was very happy when the Cubs won the World Series a few years back.

5. What is the toughest obstacle you've had to overcome in your career?

I have had a charmed career and life. I have had General Managers that were hard to get along with, but overall I have worked at courses that I loved and with great people. I have been blessed and fortunate.

6. If you could play with any PGA pro who would it be?

I should say Jack Nicklaus because he was my childhood hero, but I would play with Shelley Mayfield. Shelley played on tour in the Ben Hogan/Byron Nelson era and lived close to Denton Country Club when I worked there. We became friends and would have lunch at the club from time to time. He had a bad back and always promised me that we would play when he was able. Unfortunately he passed away before we got the chance.

7. What is one thing that readers don't know about you that might be interesting?

I have been a gardener since I was a kid. I have a garden now at home, tomatoes and peppers mainly but some other things. I started making a hot/sweet pepper relish when I was at Denton CC, where I grew hot peppers for my crew. I have won a Blue Ribbon at the Texas State Fair with it and have since won blue ribbons with a green tomato relish and a sweet corn relish.



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Member Spotlight - 2023 Assistant Superintendent of the Year

Jeremy Rhodes, Squaw Valley Golf Course

1. How did you get in the business?

My love for being outdoors and the game of golf is how I got into the business.

2. Where did you grow up?

I grew up in Cisco, Texas. I have a Bachelor of Science degree in Agronomy from Texas A&M. I have worked on nine different golf courses, from privately (individually) owned to County Clubs and from Laborer to Superintendent. I am currently the Assistant Superintended at Squaw Valley GC in Glen Rose, Texas.

3. Tell me about Squaw Valley Golf Course.

Squaw Valley is a 36 hole public golf course that is owned and operated by Somervell County, located in Glen Rose, Texas. The Apache Links Course has MiniVerde greens and 419 bermudagrass tees, fairways and rough, and the Comanche Lakes Course has TiffEagle greens with TiffSport tees, fairways and roughs.

4. What teams do you root for?

I grew up a Dallas Cowboys, Dallas Mavericks, Chicogo Bulls, Texas Rangers, Atlanta Braves and Texas A&M football and baseball fan.



5. What is the toughest obstacle you've had to overcome in your career?

The toughest obstacle to overcome in my career is myself. I have always found it challenging to balance my home family with my work family.

6. If you could play with any PGA pro who would it be?

Its too difficult to name just one. I would want to play a round of golf with Bobby Jones, Ben Hogan, Fred Couples and Tiger Woods.

6. What is one thing that readers don't know about you that might be interesting?

I have always loved building things, woodworking, turning projects (making pens, bowls, etc.), and I recently added a laser engraver to my work shop.

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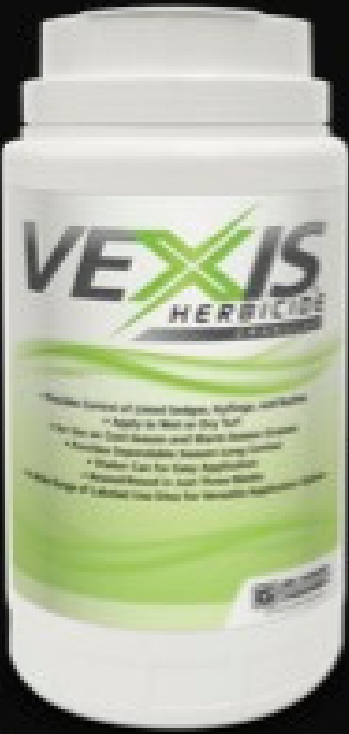
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Membership Renewals

NTGCSA Memberships run on the calendar year and expired on December 31, 2023 - regardless of when you signed up and paid your dues.

Thank you to all of you that have already renewed!

All memberships for 2024 can be renewed and paid for directly on our Web site at www.ntgcsa.com.

If you have trouble with your log-in, or prefer an invoice, be sure to contact Shannon at:

ntgcsa@gmail.com.

Paid Membership Options

Superintendent/Affiliate/EM Membership - \$120

Emerald or Bronze Membership - \$450

Emerald or Bronze members get all meetings (except for the scholarship tournament and annual banquet) paid for in advance. This is a discounted rate for paying your meetings up front.

Emerald Facility Membership \$1,600.00

To qualify for a Facility Emerald Membership, an applicant must be a golf course facility that has the equivalent of 4 Emerald Members at one facility. As an Emerald Facility member, you will get all meetings paid for in advance for 4 staff members. This is a discounted rate for paying your meetings up front, and a savings of \$200.



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Registration Open

Registration is now open for the Stephen Best Pro/Super Memorial Tournament, Chapter Championship and Family Social! Last year's Family Social SOLD OUT, be sure to register early so you don't miss out this year!

Please contact Shannon at ntgcsa@gmail.com with any questions or if you have trouble logging on and registering.

Volunteers Needed!

We need more volunteers to get involved with the NTGCSA! We have several committees for members to serve on. These include:

Annual Awards Banquet Committee
Annual Meeting Committee
Assistant Superintendent & EM Committee
Awards and Recognition Committee
Chapter Delegates Committee
Education Committee
Finance Committee
Golf & Event Outings Committee
Government Relations & Advocacy Committee
Lonestar GCSA Committee
Past President's Long Range Planning Committee
Scholarship Committee

We also need event hosts!

To volunteer to serve on one of our committees, or to host a meeting contact Shannon at ntgcsa@gmail.com.



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