



This is the story of a country club that's pulled itself up by its bootstraps, thanks to the visionaries and enlightened leadership who helped get it there!

For many years locals viewed Mission Viejo Country Club as a “low brow, low self-esteem” club suffering with an outdated clubhouse, a Trent Jones Sr.-designed golf course badly needing many improvements, stale membership sales and little or no money to pay for any improvements.

Now thanks to the stupendous efforts of successive presidents, careful planning, input from a studious membership and creative outside help, Mission Viejo Country Club is now a gem on the southern California landscape.

And for the first time, two of the club's presidents, Bruce Carson (2006 and 2007) and John Rydell (2010), jointly share the honor of being selected as *BoardRoom* magazine's *Distinguished Club Presidents* for 2010.

BoardRoom, for the third year, is recognizing 21 clubs as Private Club Presidents of the Year – 2010 for practicing what they preach – leadership for the betterment of their clubs. These are board presidents or chairs who have served as the volunteer leaders of their club.

“Kurt and I are very enthused about the Club President of the Year program that has been created and developed by BoardRoom magazine,” commented Richard Kopplin, a partner with

Mission Viejo's Bruce Carson and John Rydell Honored As BoardRoom's Distinguished Club Presidents. *By Dave White, editor*

# Distinguished Club Presidents

Kopplin & Kuebler LLC. The firm, with principals Richard Kopplin and Kurt Kuebler, for the third straight year is one of the major supporters of this BoardRoom endeavor.

“We have often honored club general managers and other employees in the private club world but this is the first effort to recognize club members who give so much of their time for the betterment of their clubs by serving as their club president. We say it’s about time that these volunteer club presidents, who give generously of their personal time, receive some accolades for the work that they do to benefit their fellow club members,” Kopplin added.

“In this era when clubs are expecting top performance from the GM/COO, it’s especially gratifying to come across a president who truly ‘gets it’, and ensures that in order to achieve that top performance, they have to provide strong support and

guidance, and make sure that roadblocks, real or perceived, are not obstacles to the GM/COO’s success,” Kuebler injected.

“This is an extremely exciting story in a private club world that’s been ravaged by a recession,” exclaimed BoardRoom publisher, John Fornaro. “Mission Viejo with these leaders and their out-of-the-box thinking have been undaunted in turning their club around. It’s a wonderful accomplishment.

“I admire this board...these people. One of major points is that they admitted what they don’t know, but they knew the issues and went out and found the best people to work with them to solve their problems. For many years I’ve said there are consultants who can help boards solve problems the clubs do know about, but then again they may not be aware of them.”

Nomination of the top 21 have been reviewed by BoardRoom’s industry

experts who have an understanding of the industry, the structure of the board of directors, and the role and responsibilities of the club’s board of directors, including the macromanagement of the club, which clearly defines the role and responsibilities of the club’s management as its chief executive.

The story begins with a seven-acre parcel of land used for the Mission Viejo’s overflow parking and water storage area, the club’s desire for improvements, and the City of Mission Viejo’s need, pushed by the State of California’s requirement, for more affordable housing. This has turned out to be a deal made for each other, and these two central issues have sparked the revitalization of the club.

“We’ve suffered from low esteem for a long time,” related Carson “Our golf course wasn’t something to be proud of, we faced many challenges and

**Page 20:** L-R Bruce Carson and John Rydell  
**Page 21:** Clockwise upper left Mission Viejo Country Club General Manager Brad Shupe; Hole No. 6; Hole No. 2



## COVER STORY

much of the time there was a lot of finger pointing...we were blaming each other. We had few successes but when this opportunity came along our club members banded together to make it happen.

"A real estate developer expressed an interest in buying the land and we began to investigate the options," Carson recalled recently. "It became quite clear the club had other options for parking and water storage. At the same time other developers expressed an interest in the property, in a super hot southern California real estate market."

Patience sometimes really is a virtue. It took the club two years to market the land, during which time the land value rose considerably.

"Initially, we felt the club might get \$7 million for the land," Carson explained, "but as the marketing progressed, more interested parties surfaced and ultimately the club sold the land for \$20 million.

"This had become a one-time opportunity and we wanted to make sure we did it right for our members, on time and on budget," exclaimed Carson.

Decisions were made 1) to build a new clubhouse and 2) put money into the golf course and 3) other facilities.

At the same time, the city in response to a state mandate, supported the club's efforts to sell the parcel by rezoning it residential to meet the its need for more affordable housing. The net effect? The club received maximum value for disposable land at a time when club improvements were critical.

Because of this rezoning, the club also was able to minimize the risk for the developer and did not have to wait for the end of the entitlement process to get its money...\$20 million.

"We banked the \$20 million and then got excited about all the possibilities," Carson enthused.

"Many questions arose," add Rydell. "How do we spend the money? What do we need? How do we make sure our members see this as a credible opportunity? How do we make sure we do this right?"

For starters, the club brought in professional help.

"We invested in a membership survey, evaluated the results, presented options to the membership, and finally laid out the entire investment back into the club," Carson explained.

"All presidents and boards during the three years were transparent and involved the membership through polls and surveys when additional input was required."

Carson, a member of Mission Viejo Country Club since 1985, served two terms as president (2006 and 2007) during the project's initial stages.

"What we have now is the result of the vision and hard work of a considerable number of people.

And that includes John O'Connor, president in 2008 and Mike Walsh whose term finished in 2009. "These presidents brought in their expertise and have been an absolutely critical part of this story."

John Rydell has been the club's leader in the critical final stages.

"With the process created, we worked with the members, we hired an architect and builder for the new clubhouse, and said, 'Give us what we want for \$13 million', and we hired project managers to protect us from ourselves," Rydell related.

"The club's theme: 'On time and on budget,'" Rydell added. "The objective, of course was to keep the process as transparent as possible so members would, in good faith, trust the process...so the leaders and the process would have credibility with our members."

The membership survey was done with a view to better understanding just what the members wanted...of course, there were dissenters, at least in the earlier stages.

"But we had lots of time for a buy-in by our members. We had the Club Development Committee (headed by past president Bruce Carson) help with the planning (the look and feel of what we wanted) and to communicate with the various factions within the club," Rydell added.





Mission Viejo Country Club Hole 3

“The committee also assisted with selection of the clubhouse architect,” explained Brad Shupe, the club’s general manager who took over the management reins part way through the whole development process.

“Within one day of the resignation of the former general manager, I met with the entire senior staff and the board of directors to determine our action plan,” added Rydell.

“Days later, Shupe was named our interim general manager while we began a four-month search for a new GM/COO.

“We were fortunate not to miss a beat with our development project because Brad had been involved with much of the work that was taking place so he was able to get up to speed quickly.

“We had a very committed ‘special projects’ committee that was leading a lot of the work, and our former general manager was contracted to help with the transition of a few key pieces of information that he had been leading,” Rydell explained.

And at the end of the four-month search, Shupe took over the GM-COO’s position permanently.

The governance for clubs in situations like this can really become an issue.

Mission Viejo during the transition period, made some moves to avoid difficulties, not only during the redevelopment process, but also for later on down the road.

“We made the decision to have future boards selected by a nominating committee,” Rydell added. “In fact, that’s how I became involved. If I’d followed the former process, it would’ve been a much longer time before I became involved on the board.

“Our past presidents are key to this nominating committee and have sought out people based on their professional abilities and certain skill sets that we know are of benefit to the club,” Rydell said.

This certainly has allowed for the continuity and intelligent use of the club’s institutional memory with this particular development concept and project.

The board of directors’ selection process allows only nominations for as many candidates as there are openings. This policy allows for write-ins, but minimizes the election of directors who might make difficult the need for continuity of concept.

Another change was identifying the club president’s successor three months before the transitioning to each year’s new board. This policy allowed the new president to shadow the outgoing president and improve continuity.

“It all started with developing a comprehensive plan that the membership truly believes reflected the needs and priorities of the club,” outlined Carson. “There was never a temptation to significantly waiver or change directions. Obviously not changing course was a significant factor in accomplishing our ‘no compromise goal of on time and on budget’.

“There were a couple of areas of contention,” Carson added. “Would we be able to hold to our budget and timeframe and secondly, what kind of club did we want in the future?”

Simply continuing as a mediocre golf course wasn’t and isn’t in the books.

“Our future is as a full service club, providing golf, clubhouse amenities, tennis and some fitness. And we market ourselves with families, and that’s what our members want.” Carson added.

“Skeptics wondered if we could really pull this off, and whether or not our members really wanted to spend the money and make changes. The minority quickly realized our members really wanted a full service club.”

Rydell added, “But the result did suggest we would have to prioritize our money.” With that, the members voted on how to spend \$20 million, with the assurance of ‘on time and on budget’.

“Once it got going, it snowballed,” related GM Shupe.

Communications with members have played a huge role at Mission Viejo and that’s fallen largely to Shupe. Members received constant communiqués during the whole process and once construction started, tours of the new clubhouse etc.

“Change is very difficult for members and staff. Weekly communication is key to minimize rumors and stimulate confidence,” Shupe explained.

“Pictures, videos, and words are all important and effective in today’s culture.

Keeping the members using their club during construction was difficult but extremely important. The club must remain a huge part of their social life.”

In fact, when the old clubhouse was demolished, members had to retreat to the patio for food and beverage service, and it was packed with members.

“The membership is excited and appreciative of the new facilities,” President Rydell emphasized. “Usage of the course, practice facility and clubhouse has exceeded all expectations. But we are not planning to stagnate.

“We’ve initiated a very aggressive strategic planning process to evaluate our future and continue to improve and grow. Significant opportunities remain, including improving golf course water quality, improving our fitness offering, and adding additional parking to satisfy the new level of activity.”

Sometimes an undercurrent surfaces, not only for projects like this, but in the daily management of clubs. And that’s the micro-management of club’s management by the club’s volunteer board of directors or committee members, especially if the board members’ roles and management’s role are not clearly defined.

Mission Viejo has had some third party help with role clarification, and it’s not been an issue for GM Brad Shupe. Carson as president has also faced the issue.

“I felt, as president, that I had to fight it many times in our board meetings and if you don’t prevent it, it’ll happen,” Carson related. If fighting micromanagement comes from a volunteer board president, that’s half the battle for the management and staff.

At the end of the day, the takeaway is the cooperation between and professionalism of the current and past board presidents working together to fix a long-term problem. This club addressed the issues and got together to solve the problems.

Kudos to our distinguished club presidents of the year: Bruce Carson, past president and John Rydell, president, and members of Mission Viejo Country Club, Mission Viejo, CA for such a marvelous success. **BR**

Along with the top club presidents for 2010, we also want to recognize our first recipient from 2008, Fernando Leal, president of Addison Reserve Country Club, Boca Raton, FL again for his continuing service.

“We are recognizing him because he continues to be on the board, and today still considered one of the top board presidents of the year,” explained BoardRoom publisher John Fornaro.

“Since he has already received this recognition and can’t qualify again, we are giving him a special recognition for what he continues to do for the club, the members and the support he gives his General Manager Michael McCarthy.”

Below is the list of recipient for 2010. Stories on each president will be published in BoardRoom throughout the year...four in each issue beginning in March/April.

### Distinguished Presidents

**John Rydell & Bruce Carson**

Mission Viejo Country Club, Mission Viejo, CA

**George Barton**

The River Club, Kansas City, MI

**W. O. (Bill) Brazil III**

Billmore Forest Country Club, Asheville, NC

**Andrew Clark**

Thornhill Golf & Country Club, Thornhill, ON

**Michael Cole**

Waverley Country Club, Portland, OR

**Kevin Connelly**

Bethesda Country Club, Bethesda, MD

**Romano Curti**

Beach Grove Golf & Country Club, Tecumseh, ON

**Michael H. DeGroot**

Port Carling Golf & Country Club, Port Carling, ON

**Bruce Foster**

Derrick Golf & Winter Club, Edmonton, AB

**Robert Heflin**

Mesa Verde Country Club, Costa Mesa, CA

**Harvey Krauser**

Boca West Country Club, Boca Raton, FL

**Jonathan Larsen**

Jonathan Club, Los Angeles, CA

**James LeBlanc**

Saw Grass Country Club, Ponte Vedra Beach, FL

**Commodore G. Duncan Lott III**

Royal Palm Yacht & Country Club, West Boca Raton, FL

**Doug Mackay**

Rosedale Golf Club, Toronto, ON

**Ron Mariello**

Ballantyne Country Club, Charlotte, NC

**David Schopp**

Knollwood Club, Lake Forest, IL

**Ivan Snyder**

Broken Sound, Boca Raton, FL

**Larry Stopol**

Middle Bay Country Club, Oceanside, NY

**Frank Tarling**

Bach Grove Golf Club, Tswassen, BC

**Vince Villani**

Amelia Island Club, Amelia Island, FL

**W.O. BRAZIL III (BILL) | PRESIDENT | BILTMORE FOREST COUNTRY CLUB | ASHEVILLE, NC**

"I'm glad the experts realize what a great job Bill has done for the club ... and have recognized him for it."

With that comment, Dr. David Cappiello, vice president, Biltmore Forest Country Club acknowledges the outstanding efforts of the club's president W.O. (Bill) Brazil III.

"His fellow board members and senior staff commend him for his leadership in guiding us successfully through two of the most difficult years in the history of the club," Cappiello enthused.

And these are the reasons why Bill Brazil is being recognized as one of *BoardRoom magazine's top private club presidents for 2010*.

Brazil guided the club through two very tumultuous years, particular 2010. Employee morale had sunk to a very low level and a cloud of legal and personnel issues had befallen on the club.

The club needed a new direction and change in leadership.

From February to June 2010, Brazil carried a full workload at his law practice, served as the town of Biltmore Forest's legal counsel and took on the management role of leader for Biltmore Forest Country Club until the process of hiring the new general manager/COO, Todd Cromie, could be completed.

These roles required the patience and understanding of his family who let their

'home' leader burn the midnight oil with long hours of meetings. His advice and counsel on the legal matters lead to a positive resolution and the club has seen a turnaround that has put it back on a solid foundation.

Without the diligent and passionate efforts of this president, the club would not have recovered so quickly. He's now sculpting and assisting the board in preparations for a possible renovation to the golf course infrastructure and clubhouse infrastructure. He is a catalyst for the project with his energy and enthusiasm.

"Bill Brazil can be summed up with four Cs: Curiosity, confidence, courage and constancy. The greatest is his confidence," intoned GM Todd M. Cromie.

"He implicitly and unquestionably believes the mission of 'club.' His passion for what is right, what is fair and what is just makes him an outstanding leader."

Brazil is a second-generation president whose father Dr. W.O. Brazil Jr. served from 1994-1997. He and his wife Leslie, daughter Molly and son Sam have been members since 1990. He is a founding partner in the law firm Cogburn & Brazil P.A. He has served the club in many capacities including the golf, green, and golf course restoration and clubhouse restoration committees, in addition to his time as a member of the board of directors. **BR**



**W.O. (Bill) Brazill III, president**



**Todd Cromie, general manager/COO**

**MICHAEL COLE | PRESIDENT | WAVERLEY COUNTRY CLUB | PORTLAND, OR**



**Michael Cole in Waverley's Green Jacket first awarded in 1930 to the winner of the Club's historic Blyth Tournament (est. in May 1897).**

Depending on your viewpoint, recent history has challenged the private club industry. It has brought about significant change, new structure and revitalized governance focus on strategic direction.

This has required a more complex approach to volunteer leadership because boards were not serving effectively when focused on tactics. The new model of club leadership has forced governance to reach consensus on strategy and to trust the club's operations team to manage structure and tactics.

Michael Cole, Waverley Country Club's 101st president since 1896, practiced the necessary traits to ensure success. He has understood the primary responsibilities of a

club president were to ensure the right leader is in place, to help the board establish strategic direction and to allow the operating team to manage.

During 2009-2010 Michael Cole led his governance team through a successful year characterized by clear strategic direction.

Vision, trust and unselfishness characterized his presidency. He understood that strategic leadership affects a wider range of members than does micromanagement. And that strategic decisions have wider ranging consequences than do decisions focused on daily tactics. His governance team was coached to focus on vision and to validate strategy.

He understood that different scenarios would be debated while never losing faith

Many clubs have faced trials and tribulations during the past few years, and it's no different for the Thornhill Golf and Country Club.

The difference has been in how the clubs have come through the other side, and under the guidance of president Andrew Clark, it's a success story for Thornhill Golf and Country Club.

The club has gone through significant change with major construction both on its course and in the clubhouse. Both capital projects have been finished on time, within budget and to the excitement and complete satisfaction of the club's membership and staff.

The club's first strategic plan was presented to the membership, and there have also been difficult, yet important decisions made to move the club away from a golf club-only model towards a family model, setting a clear vision for Thornhill's membership and future boards.

"As the new general manager in 2009, Andrew embraced the leadership transition and gave full support throughout his presidency. He trusted the management team running the operation and provided excellent guidance and insight with the board along the way. It has been a pleasure to work with the board of directors under Andrew's leadership for the past year and a half!" said Matthew Butko, Thornhill's general manager.



**Matthew Butko, general manager**

Despite a slowly recovering economy, and a late opening in 2010 because severe winter conditions damaged the golf course, the club achieved its operating budget and attracted a record 67 new members in 2010, under Clark's watch. That's well above the club's average of 43 new members a year.

Clark has demonstrated a strong ability to work effectively with members at large, board members, management and club employees.

"During his time as president, Andrew had a vision for our club that has seen us through changes in senior management, completion of a major project, and strategic planning that will shape the decisions that will govern how we go forward," observed the club's current president Ann Lalonde.



**Andrew Clark, president**

"Andrew's good humor, diplomacy, and perseverance have been on display on a daily basis. His commitment to the success of our club has been unconditional. He's given freely of hundreds of hours of his time and we are a better club for it," she added.

"His grasp of what needed to be done for the betterment of the club as a whole is evident and I have appreciated his support for all the work that has been accomplished on our course. This recognition is well deserved," commented the club's course superintendent Greg McFarlane.

Clark, the managing director at Merit Travel Group as well as CEO of East Neuk Equities, Inc., went to St. Andrew's University in Scotland and studied economics, international relations, and of course played the old course at least 50 times while he was a student.

Andrew completed his two-year tenure as club president in November 2010, with the support of his wife, Amanda. Andrew, 35 years old, has been a member since 1985 and is a third generation president. His dad David served as president in 1999 and his grandfather Allan in 1971.

Andrew's success can be attributed to a style that is inclusive and respectful to Andrew's genuine passion a care for the club. His approach is to ensure the club is protected for the future so his son, Malcolm and daughter Harriet can enjoy Thornhill GCC with their families with potentially a fourth generation president in waiting! **BR**

that "Waverley would make the right decision," because of an unselfish approach to strategic leadership on the part of everyone involved in governance and management, guaranteeing that valuable energy wasn't wasted on individual agendas.

During his tenure as Waverley President, while other clubs were struggling for members, lowering initiation fees and losing long-held traditions, Waverley ended the year with a full membership and a strong membership pipeline, without lowering the initiation fee. Cole also advanced investigation of a complete golf course restoration.

Waverley's president also dedicated necessary resources to ensure operating leaders have the opportunity for the neces-

sary education to manage new challenges.

During 2009-2010, general manager/COO Scott Julien reached Honor Society, the club's assistant manager achieved the Certified Club Manager (CCM) designation and two assistant golf professionals achieved the Class "A" PGA Professional designation.

Michael Cole has worked in the timber industry for 35 years presently managing a family tree farm. He has represented his industry through service on the Mount Hood Economic Alliance and the Clackamas County Economic Development Commission. He became a member of Waverley Country Club in 1992 serving on numerous committees before his election to the board in 2007, followed by his term as the club's president. **BR**

## KEVIN CONNELLY | PRESIDENT | BETHESDA COUNTRY CLUB | BETHESDA, MARYLAND



KEVIN CONNELLY, PRESIDENT



BRAD CANCE, GM

In early 2009, the Bethesda Country Club's (BCC) board of directors made the decision to evaluate all aspects of the club in order to better position it to achieve its mission statement – to be the "Premier Family Country Club" in the metropolitan DC area.

The club has undergone an interesting journey over the past two years and this transition is a direct result of the leadership provided by BCC's President Kevin Connelly.

"As president he has been leading the board through significant changes that ranged from personnel, to policy, to member communication, to transparency, to human resources, to finance and beyond," explained member Richard V. Quinn, Jr.

Under Kevin Connelly's leadership, BCC expanded its tennis program to include a French provisional style tennis house with a great room and all the comforts you would expect to find in a luxurious golf club house.

"We rebuilt the entire fitness center into a state of the art facility meeting the demands of today's highest fitness expectations, and our golf course is an absolute jewel in this area and with Kevin's direction, a golf maintenance facility was constructed in order to improve the efficiency and capability of the greens department," outlined general manager Brad Cance.

Some of these activities coincided with a search for a general manager and other top managers to lead the club in its thrust to remain one of the top clubs in the very competitive area.

The key element of all these changes, the club's culture, has remained relatively unchanged and the service (in particular food and beverage) has improved dramatically, and the members are showing their preference by patronizing their club.

"As a leader, to be ultimately successful, one has to gain the trust of all their constituents. Kevin earned the trust of his board, and the members of the club. Kevin accomplished this primarily through his ability to, not just listen, but hear what people were saying to him," added GM Cance.

"The changes have been comprehensive and have provided the underpinnings that allowed for the dramatic changes needed to propel our club to the next level," said Quinn, member since 1994.

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## ROMANO CURTI | PRESIDENT | BEACH GROVE GOLF & CC | TECUMSEH, ON, CANADA



ROMANO CURTI, PRESIDENT



GARY C. GEOFFREY, GM

Romano Curti is passionate about improving the Beach Grove Golf and Country Club through member satisfaction and management accountability. A member of Beach Grove since 1993, Romano Curti has served four consecutive one-year terms as president, a first in the club's history. Following his election to the board of directors in 2005, Curti participated on every club committee before being elected as president by fellow directors in 2007.

He addressed serious concerns with management by championing the replacement of key personnel. His ideas for offering incentives to potential new members resulted in large membership gains and the capital needed to invest in the club's future.

His support of management has allowed these team members

to do their job, resulting in improved member satisfaction and the retention of members while reducing operational costs.

Value for dues paid has been the primary focus.

Essex County is in one of the most depressed economic areas in Canada. Yet, over 200 new members have joined Beach Grove since 2007. Operations have produced an annual surplus, contributing capital for major projects such as adding a practice facility, clubhouse improvement and landscaping our water frontage.

A strategic plan has been developed with flexibility and member input, which will ensure long range viability for this 90 year-old club.

"Romano Curti recognizes the role of the board being governance," says general manager Gary C. Geoffrey. "Reporting relationships and trust have been established resulting in excellent operational performance. Goals are realistic and achievement of objectives has been rewarded. Educational funding is provided to ensure staff has every opportunity to advance their knowledge and careers."

His greatest achievement has been in putting together a management and Board team that have given Beach Grove members value every day on every service. "This without a dues increase in three years in a weak economy is amazing," Geoffrey commented.

It's drawn rave notices from members.

"I've watched him and his team on the board with admiration ... as they have artfully implemented their strategic vision. I have no doubt that Romano's leadership, passion and workhorse ethic

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**MICHAEL H. DEGROOTE | PRESIDENT | PORT CARLING GOLF & CC | PORT CARLING, ON, CANADA**



**MICHAEL H. DEGROOTE, PRESIDENT**



**WAYNE MIDDAUGH, GM/COO**

It's been a time of renewal for Port Carling Golf & Country Club, established in 1991. The club changed ownership in 2007, following years of a decline in service and conditions.

Now under president Michael DeGroot's leadership, Port Carling Golf and Country Club has undergone an incredible transformation, now with the ultimate goal of being Muskoka's premiere private facility, if not the best in all of Ontario and Canada.

First order of business in this renewal was the quality and condition of the golf course. Justin Heptinstall was hired as the new CGSA Superintendent was hired in 2007, and at the beginning

of the 2008 COO/GM Wayne Middaugh came aboard to rebuild all operations and the entire service team.

And CPGA head professional Doug Reid as well as executive chef John Tassoulis and food and beverage manager Vaso Tassoulis were all brought in as part of the new management team.

"With the ultimate goal of becoming a premiere private facility, and being surrounded by good private clubs, we agreed that to create our niche in the market we needed to improve the course to championship standards," explained GM Wayne Middaugh.

"We accomplished this by rebuilding all the greens, bunkers, tee decks, ponds, playability and becoming environmentally friendly, under the direction of the original course designer, Tom McBroom. Next we improved the service levels in golf operations as well as the quality and consistency of all food and beverage to five star standards.

"The management team has had one main goal: No matter what, treat all members equally. And the management team's philosophy for all employees – "exceed everyone's expectations everyday," has been inculcated in the renewal.

"Michael DeGroot has supported the management team 100 percent," added Middaugh. "Our mantra of treating all members equally has now made every member feel like they are apart of something special. They know that every time they come to the club they will be treated as if the only rea-

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**BRUCE FOSTER | PRESIDENT | DERRICK GOLF & WINTER CLUB | EDMONTON, AB, CANADA**



**BRUCE FOSTER, PRESIDENT**



**JAN NOVOTNY, GM**

Bruce Foster's leadership of the board resulted in several important achievements that will have a long-term positive effect on the Derrick Club.

"Bruce has an ability to inspire members and management alike," explained general manager Jan Novotny. "This has resulted in a positive momentum for the club including a better integration of volunteer and professional roles."

He led the review and changed club policies reinforcing the board's role in club's governance while strengthening management's role in operations. Foster also changed the structure and organization of board meetings to a business-driven model that has resulted in greatly enhanced decision-making effectiveness,

and reduced times for meetings. Other major changes under Foster's tenure as the Derrick Club's president included an annual agenda with specific board issues/decision points established for the year; improved committee reporting with all motions identified in advance of the meeting, and a formalizing of the chair's role.

"Bruce's obvious passion for the club is combined with humility and willingness to listen," Novotny added.

"As a president he has the ability to see the big picture and to respect the opinion and vision of the management team. He established an effective COO/GM working relationship that includes regular meetings and documented action items." It's the model that will be used in the future.

Foster also played key role in hiring Dr. Ray Ferreira to guide the board through a strategic planning process currently under way, and introduced a transparent communication process between the board and membership that has resulted in enhanced member satisfaction and involvement.

Bruce, vice-president of Carlson Construction, a large Edmonton based construction firm, grew up at the club where his parents were members. He joined as full shareholder in 1996 and has been on the board since 2006.

He previously chaired the recreation, building and golf committees, and served as secretary, treasurer and vice president before becoming president in April 2010.

His wife Laura and son Brandon are active in the club. **BR**

was rewired and we added an additional meter so that golf carts could be charged only during off peak hours. We utilized a Watt Miser system from Club Car.

The return on investment was less than a year to recover the costs for rewiring. At the same time our clubhouse engaged in lighting changes. Most all of the light bulbs and ballasts were changed out and the program was a huge success. Often there are rebates available from power companies for such upgrades.

So green is nothing new for golf course superintendents but there are a number of new techniques to accomplish environmental programs. As I have shared here, the greening of your golf course can also result in substantial savings for the golf club. In this difficult economy I'm sure that is something we are all looking for. **BR**

*Bruce R. Williams has served the golf course industry for over 40 years. He has managed several of the top golf courses in the USA including Bob O'Link Golf Club and The Los Angeles Country Club. Williams served as president of the GCSAA in 1996.*

*He is the principal in Executive Golf Search and Bruce Williams Golf Consulting. Services include matching qualified golf course superintendents for golf courses worldwide, speaking, writing, training, agronomic and business plan development and expert witness testimony. Bruce may be contacted at (310) 991-9176 or Bruce@WilliamsGolfConsulting.com*

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ment, working as the director of the McKay Events Center in Orem, Utah from 1997-2001, and director of operations at the Delta Center (home of the NBA's Utah Jazz) and Franklin Quest Field in Salt Lake City for the five years prior to that. **BR**

*Angela Nitz is the corporate communications manager for GCSAA, a leading golf organization that 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 19,000 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](http://www.gcsaa.org).*

## [ PRESIDENT CONNELLY ] - 58

A member at Bethesda Country Club since 1993, Kevin Connelly, a native Washingtonian has resided in Bethesda, MD most of the time. He began his career at Price Waterhouse in Washington DC, moved to Merrill Lynch in Washington DC, and is currently employed at Morgan Stanley Smith Barney in Bethesda MD, where he has been for the last 18 years.

The country clubs in the Bethesda Chevy Chase are very competitive; the top four clubs have not reduced their initiations during the economic turmoil of the past few years.

But with its first class amenities and service, Bethesda Country Club is indeed one of the four "Premier Family Clubs" in the area, and that's why Kevin Connelly is one of BoardRoom's top presidents for 2010. **BR**

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## [ PRESIDENT CURTI ] - 58

will take Beach Grove Golf and Country Club to the apex of private clubs in Canada," enthused member George Costaris.

"Beach Grove Golf and Country Club continues to be successful year after year because it adapts itself to the changing times and demography and meets the needs of everybody in its extended family. It is a reflection on its able governance. Romano's vision and dedication is no doubt a key to our clubs success," commented long-time member Roger Boivin.

"Romano's foresight and guidance is the biggest reason our membership levels have been maintained with little or no attrition," added Myron W. Shulgan Q.C., member since 1993.

To which Peter Guthrie added: "A tireless worker, Romano has been active in all aspects of the club's operation. His vision and strategies ... have been strongly endorsed by the board of directors and members alike."

All of which makes it quite clear why Romano Curti is one of BoardRoom's top presidents for 2010. **BR**

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## [ PRESIDENT DEGROOTE ] - 59

son we are open is to service them and their guests, putting pride in their hearts and smiles on their faces."

"Supported by president DeGroot, the focus has not changed and within three seasons we have seen a major increase in member satisfaction as well as use and support of the entire facility during very trying financial times."

Michael H. DeGroot did his research and hired quality, experienced club people, empowered them 100 percent and let them do their job and operate the club. And that's what makes him one of BoardRoom top 21 private club presidents for 2010.

DeGroot is president, Westbury International, a privately owned Canadian full service real estate development Company. He and his wife Carrie, have three children: Mikaela, Michael and Christopher. **BR**

## BOB HEFLIN | PRESIDENT | MESA VERDE COUNTRY CLUB | COSTA MESA, CA



**BOB HEFLIN, PRESIDENT**



**PAUL ANDERSON, GM/COO**

The purpose for Bob Heflin as president at Mesa Verde Country Club has been “to preserve all that is so great, but also to do my part to help Mesa Verde realize its full potential as a prestigious and exclusive country club.”

A traditionalist and conservative by inclination, at this critical point in Mesa Verde’s history, Heflin felt the club needed to look beyond the conventional ways of operating, and be open to the exploration of innovative solutions to the perennial issues of golf course maintenance, food and beverage services, and financial management.

“Bob’s two-year tenure as president was marked by leadership that resulted in a bold but necessary change in direction and culture for the club, and the end to the status quo as far as the management and operation of the club was concerned,” outlined Mesa Verde’s current president John Hayhoe.

“A cultural change can be difficult, but Bob and the boards that served with him recognized not only the benefit, but the necessity of acting at the proper time for the long term good of the club. The results

of Bob’s leadership are already evident throughout the operations, and the current board and club leadership are focused on extending the momentum created while Bob was president,” Hayhoe added.

“We had to resolve these issues to ensure Mesa Verde’s future viability as an exclusive private equity club,” Heflin explained.

He also proposed reaching out to peer clubs and to organizations such as the National Club Association, in an effort to identify ‘best practices’ that might be adopted to:

- Return the golf course to a consistently high level of playability
- Create high standards of service, quality and value in food and beverage operations, and to
- Guarantee fiscal responsibility and transparency.

“Our first priority should be our members and their access to and enjoyment of our golf course by them, their families and guests,” Heflin added.

“I agree that the golf course is our most valuable ‘physical’ asset. However, I believe that it is the membership that is the intangible asset upon which the true ‘value’ of a country club is based.”

Thus Heflin’s commitment to establishing and maintaining the highest expectations for the membership and their experiences at Mesa Verde.

“Mr. Heflin’s leadership while making courageous and visionary changes at Mesa Verde have insured the club’s long term continued success,” enthused Mesa Verde’s general manger/COO Paul Anderson.

“Bob Heflin knew these changes would be controversial. He stuck with his vision for the club and has refocused us (staff) on providing each member with a club experience that is memorable. This empowerment of the staff to operate the club on a daily basis has created an atmosphere of creativity and excellence.”

An active member of Mesa Verde Country Club since 1991, Heflin and his wife Marjorie and have been consistently involved in the golf activities and social life at Mesa Verde. Heflin also served regularly served on numerous committees. **BR**

## JAMES E. LEBLANC | PRESIDENT | SAWGRASS COUNTRY CLUB | PONTE VEDRA BEACH, FL



**JAMES E. LEBLANC, PRESIDENT**



**BARRY MCDONALD, GM/COO**

For Jim LeBlanc a major focus has been his role in the re-orientation of Sawgrass Country Club’s board of directors. And he has been the driving force behind the club’s strategic and long range planning efforts.

“Jim has been an inspirational leader for a decade at Sawgrass and has made innumerable contributions during his two terms on the Board, and three terms as President,” explained Jim Scielzo, the club’s current president. “We are very grateful for his visionary contributions, his systematic approach to bringing change to our organization, and his continued leadership as chair of our facilities master plan.”

LeBlanc, who served three terms as president between 2002 and 2011, pushed the creation and adoption of a new mission and vision

statement, a five-year strategic vision document, a facilities master plan, and mechanisms to maintain these documents and strategic orientation.

These are all practices aimed at developing an efficient and effective club governance program at Sawgrass.

“Most agree that to achieve and sustain a high level of performance, club leaders need to be committed to planning and implementation. Jim’s leadership and commitment for the past decade at Sawgrass will be evident for many years to come,” commented the club’s general manager and COO Barry McDonald.

“Jim has really set the bar high when it comes to being a productive board member. He is extremely knowledgeable when it comes to club challenges and has consistently been a mentor and coach for any problem resolution or project development during his terms as president.”

One of BoardRoom top private club presidents for 2011, LeBlanc and his wife Catherine reside in Ponte Vedra, FL. Formerly the chair of the board, president and CEO of Whirlpool Financial Corporation, LeBlanc has spent over 35 years in business management. Over the years, he has served business, community and educational ventures as a director, committee and faculty member.

LeBlanc is also a graduate of Providence College and the First Coast Technical Institute of Culinary Arts. **BR**

## JONATHAN J. LARSEN | PRESIDENT | THE JONATHAN CLUB | L.A. AND SANTA MONICA, CA



JONATHAN J. LARSEN, PRESIDENT



MATTHEW J. ALLNATT, GM

Jonathan Larsen has been perfectly suited to be president of the Jonathan Club, and for more reasons than just having the perfect name.

One of the most active and admired private clubs in Los Angeles has been well served by one of the city's most admired and active leaders. And Larsen's business and social life puts him at the center of a diverse community of industry influentials as well as the charitable community.

Jonathan Larsen, during his tenure as president of the Jonathan Club, helped set the club on a "path to success." He focused on increasing the club's visibility within the community and also positioning the club for the future.

This forward thinking during a time of economic hardship has propelled the club to the forefront of relevancy in the current market. The club is completing the largest capital/deferred maintenance project

at both the Town and Beach Club in its history.

"The club's usage and membership programs have been revitalized and directed towards future growth. The Town Only club memberships have seen a 200 percent gain in the last 18 months," explained the club's general manager Matthew J. Allnatt.

"Jonathan's clear minded and stated support of the general manager and his team has set the tone for success at the Jonathan Club.

"His message to all the committees, board of directors and members has been to stay at '30,000 feet and don't get into the weeds.' Let the professionals run our club and help institute a culture and brand for success!" Allnatt added.

A highly respected, 24-year veteran of the commercial real estate field, Larsen is consistently ranked among its top professionals in Los Angeles. He oversees the brokerage for Transwestern's West region, based in Los Angeles. Transwestern is the largest privately held commercial real estate and development company in the United States. Jonathan earned the 2006 Transwestern "Newcomer" award for his contributions to the company in his first year. Jonathan has ranked as one of the top one percent of producers at Transwestern for several years.

Jonathan and his wife Barbara have four children: Chandler, 20 years old (sophomore at USC), Corinne, 18 years old (freshman at Grossmont College), Jonathan, Jr., 14 years old (8th grade), and Kristi Larsen, 13 years old (7th grade). They reside in Calabasas, CA, and are also members of the Calabasas Country Club and the Citrus Country Club in La Quintas.

As a long-time member of 20 years, Larsen served on several committees before his tenure as the club's president. **BR**

## HARVEY KRAUSER | PRESIDENT | BOCA WEST COUNTRY CLUB | BOCA RATON, FL



HARVEY KRAUSER, PRESIDENT



JAY DIPIETRO, GM/COO

Harvey Krauser and his wife Maddy first became residents of Boca West in 1981 and in the intervening years, he has contributed much to the life of Boca West Country Club.

"We are in the member pleasing business' is more than our motto at Boca West Country Club, and Harvey Krauser uses that motto every day as chairman of our board of governors," enthuses the club general manager Jay DiPietro.

"He is always doing what's in the best interest of the members, and communication to the membership is key!

"He instituted a "From the Board Room" video that is aired after each board meeting giving the membership a synopsis of what transpired at the meeting. He truly cares about Boca West Country Club, our members and employees."

During Krauser's time as president, there have been many other notable accomplishments:

- Kept annual dues, fees and menu prices in all five restaurants to a minimum increase

- Implemented a succession plan in the event that something unforeseen happened to the general manager.

- Created a marketing program that included focus group meetings with new members who shared why they joined Boca West Country Club and what the club could do to help encourage their friends to also join.

- Created a "Stay and Play" program for which the club purchased a unit to have prospective buyers use and enjoy the "Boca West Experience."

- Established an enhanced full golf membership program, which has proven successful.

- Successfully started a Boca West Charitable Foundation. The inaugural event was a huge success providing holiday gifts and food to all of the Boys and Girls Club Families of Boca Raton

- Made it more appealing for offspring to join the club.

Krauser has a natural talent for connecting people and helping them foster their business relationships to get the most out of them. He works hard to make sure his members succeed.

He has also had a diverse career including: Owner and officer of multi-million dollar manufacturing and distribution corporations; CEO of Network Associates, a business development group, and earlier in his career as a disc jockey and television host, and recently worked with BankAtlantic to develop new business and act as liaison between client and the bank by utilizing networking skills to problem solve and maintain a high level of service.

Krauser has wide experience on various boards of directors as well as a supporter of many charities. He and his wife Maddy have three children and six grandchildren. **BR**

**G. DUNCAN LOTT, III | COMMODORE | ROYAL PALM YACHT & COUNTRY CLUB | BOCA RATON, FL**



**G. DUNCAN LOTT, III, PRESIDENT**



**DON EMERY, GM**

Despite declining revenues and difficult economic times, Duncan Lott continued to stand firm, improving the club's financial positioning without sacrificing club standards and member experience.

At the beginning of his tenure, Commodore Lott worked with the club's board of directors to develop seven broad reaching goals, which fit the club's vision and mission while staying true to its core values:

The board and general manager Don Emery developed a written brand positioning statement, which has been applied to various communications. A weekly e-newsletter has been developed to improve member communication with the objective of increasing even attendance.

The monthly newsletter has received a new format and all flyers promoting events are designed by a professional graphic artist to meet the club's branding criteria.

The club's fitness and tennis center has been reconfigured offering expanded retail space for tennis goods and to also feature products for members who use the fitness and marina areas of the club.

To further promote retail revenue, an on-line club store has been launched to allow members to purchase their favorite logo items from their northern homes during the off-season. Work is currently underway to provide gender specific spaces and mixed spaces at the golf clubhouse.

All of which emphasizes the club's family friendly lifestyle. Club rules have also been completely rewritten and approved by the board.

Throughout his leadership year, Commodore Lott assisted general manager Emery in the shared goal of refining the staff to find the right people with right qualifications for the right job.

This resulted in the hiring of a new head golf professional; director of tennis and director of food and beverage, and a valued employee with over 19 years of tenure was promoted to the position of social and catering director.

Commodore Lott encouraged the continuation of industry benchmarking trips and the executive chef visited Isleworth Country Club, and worked with celebrity chef Michelle Bernstein as part of the professional outreach and improvement program.

Royal Palm's club fees remain in the higher category in its local market. However, the club developed a creative dues program to attract new golf members that presented value for the new members without changing the club's market position, said general manager Emery.

Commodore Lott's predecessor, Bill T. Smith, one of Boardroom's Top Club Presidents in 2009 said, "It was an honor to serve with Duncan Lott as my Vice Commodore and I knew the club's governance was in good hands when he accepted the responsibility in 2010."

He has been a member since 1989, and served on various committees before becoming vice-commodore in 2009.

Commodore Lott and his wife Lott have two sons: George Duncan Lott, IV and James Lott. **BR**

**DOUG MACKAY | PRESIDENT | ROSEDALE GOLF CLUB | TORONTO, ON, CANADA**



**DOUG MACKAY, PRESIDENT**



**PETER OLDFIELD, GM**

Doug Mackay is a president who thinks long and hard before he speaks. He comes across as caring, intelligent and a team player and only wants what is best for the club. He has been so effective because of these traits, says general manager Peter Oldfield.

The members see him as credible and thoughtful, and he has created a team environment for the directors and management that have allowed them to focus on specific, productive and measureable goals.

He has been extremely successful, as even the vocal minority gives him credit for the way he has performed his duties and listened to their concerns. President Mackay has engaged all committees, developed specific objectives for each and created a goal and awareness to strive for a sustainable future for the club. This has had a great effect on motivating everyone to contribute.

"Rosedale is fortunate in that it does not need to have a marketing plan because of a long waiting list and thus we do not have a full strategic plan in place," explained general manager Peter Oldfield. "However, we do have a long-range plan in its stead. In the last three years we have developed a golf course master plan, a turf centre master plan and under President Mackay's leadership, have continued to undertake a club house replacement master plan."

Mackay, at his first board meeting as president and also at the directors' orientation meeting, informs the directors of their role, which is developing policies for the club. He also explains the role of management, which is to carry out their policies and run the operations of the club on a daily basis. This works very well with no governance issues.

A very low key person, Mackay is thoughtful and engaging. He often asks members who have concerns to sit down over lunch so that he can listen. This often dispels rumours or misconceptions.

He loves Rosedale and tries to build consensus by listening, informing the members and continually asking for feedback, creating engaged and informed members that are happy and proud of their club.

During board meetings he is the conductor who does much more listening than talking. He sits on all committees as an ex-officio member and understands his role and only offers his comments when he thinks they are needed.

Doug recently retired as a senior partner of KPMG LLP after a 32-year career with the firm. He operates his own financial advisory business. Married, three grown sons, Mackay has varied athletic interests, including golf, squash and most recently participated as an amateur triathlete for a good cause. **BR**

**RON MARIELLO | PRESIDENT | BALLANTYNE COUNTRY CLUB | CHARLOTTE, NC**



**RON MARIELLO, PRESIDENT**



**JILL PHILMON, GM/COO**

For many years Ballantyne Country Club was owned by a developer, but as change began to happen, Ron Mariello played an active role before the turnover, making sure that the members' interest were protected.

After the turnover to members, he became BCC's first elected president, as a member-owned equity club and has remained in this position.

Transitions are always a difficult time because of so many changes, but Mariello's ability to strategize and organize helped in the formation of creating both short-term and long-term goals for the club. Because of his leadership and vision the club has continued to be successful and profitable during an economic downturn.

Through his leadership the club dissolved a three-year contract with a management company and has been very successful running

the club under the GM/COO concept, whereby general manager/COO Jill Philmon reports directly to the board.

Recently Mariello played an instrumental role in helping the club to create a long-term master plan and was the driving force behind the board's first planning retreat. The club has just fulfilled its goal of creating a strategic and membership marketing plan.

Mariello's greatest accomplishment is his ability to keep the board moving forward and not getting bogged down in the 'way we've always done it' syndrome. His philosophy is a belief that 'change' can be good.

From the staff's perspective, president Mariello is very conscious and appreciative of the staff's role in the financial success of the club, and along with the board, makes sure that the team is recognized and their voice is heard.

"Staff members are always treated respectfully, which makes for great club morale. Mr. Mariello is someone not constrained by any negative thought processes. He's a 'big picture-about the future' president," explains GM Philmon.

"He is always open to new ideas and not afraid to take a chance. Because of his desire to be the best, along with a board that trusts his leadership, we are successful. I am given directives and then left alone to do my job, but president Mariello is always there to support me when I need it. He just gets it!"

"Ron provides the board, GM and staff the environment to be open-minded and creative. He's a great listener and welcomes all discussion and opinions. He somehow manages to make this fun!" added Heather Nagle, board member and house committee chair.

And for these reasons, Ron Mariello is one of BoardRoom's top presidents for 2010. **BR**

**ALAN PLATNER | PRESIDENT | BOCA WOODS COUNTRY CLUB | BOCA RATON, FL**



**ALAN PLATNER, PRESIDENT**



**SANDY MCGAUGHEY, GM**

When Alan Platner assumed his duties as president of Boca Woods Country Club and the Property Owners Association he acted quickly on his instincts in persuading members to hire a general manager that could lead the club back to respectability.

Platner, who joined the board of director in 2006, as president had inherited a club with poorly maintained facilities, a disgruntled membership and a floundering staff.

Following the hiring of general manager Sandy McGaughey, he set about to assemble a committed board of directors that would act in the club's best interests.

Boca Woods began to show signs of revitalization.

In the early months, president Platner championed the hiring of a marketing person who greatly improved the club's internal communications processes. Following a departmental assessment a new chef, golf professional, clubhouse manager and purchasing agent were in place with 10 months.

Senior staff received incentives to manage their budgets showing strong results, and department heads were encouraged to participate in continuing education and association activities.

Armed with an energetic and talented board, an activist general manager and new department heads dedicated to excellence, the members' confidence continued to rise. The membership, which previously had rejected a plan to renovate two badly worn golf courses, voted overwhelmingly in favor of the course renovations. The clubhouse has undergone a \$1 million renovation and there has been replacement of the Har-Tru tennis courts...all without member assessments.

"Platner's style is that of a leader and consensus builder. He instinctively keeps the big picture in mind, especially when it comes to new members," explained GM McGaughey. "He is a very good and patient listener to new ideas as well as thoughtful criticism."

After serving as Platner's vice president, Bob Roman has assumed the presidency of the club.

"In all my years of club service, I have never seen a person as devoted and hard working as Alan Platner," Roman commented. "His work ethic, and vision for Boca Woods has resulted in many projects that have caused our membership and home sales to increase substantially in a very difficult environment. He is truly a hard act to follow and I hope I can meet the high standard that he has set."

The membership is now enjoying unprecedented levels of member satisfaction, capital projects are being supported enthusiastically, dining counts are up and members are joining in greater numbers. As Alan Platner says, "the club is on the move."

Platner and his wife Norma joined the club in 200. Their family includes two sons – one a physician and the other an attorney, and six grandchildren. **BR**

## DAVID SCHOPP | PRESIDENT | KNOLLWOOD CLUB | LAKE FOREST, IL



DAVID SCHOPP, PRESIDENT



RANDY HARPER, GM

David Schopp's tenure as president of the Knollwood Club arose at a particularly challenging time.

While facing a difficult economy, the club also was going through a significant staff reorganization and work on major capital projects, including a complete golf course restoration project.

"David's leadership strengths included placing board members in positions where they would be most effective and could contribute the greatest, positive impact for the club," commented John Gregorio, chair of the greens and grounds committee.

"He was able to make the difficult decisions without losing sight of the long term goals and interests of the club. His progressive thinking kept us moving forward while other clubs remained stagnant."

His many accomplishments include hiring Randy Harper as general manager, after nationwide search, and reorganizing the

club to operated under the GM concept, providing continuity and budget control.

A compensation committee for salary and performance review was also established.

During his tenure, president Schopp delivered the renovation of the golf course on budget, on time, with high quality and established a by-law to protect the integrity of the golf course investment.

An additional 15 regular and nine social members were added to the club's roster resulting in cash balance for future capital projects and Schopp ensured a balanced budget for 2010 without member year-end assessments.

The Knollwood board also developed a balanced budget for 2011 and a rolling five-year capital plan.

"David Schopp was instrumental in hiring me as general manager and he has displayed a passion for the club and a desire to make Knollwood a better place," said general manager Harper. "Before my arrival we spent time together discussing the development of a strategic plan to continue Knollwood's path for success.

"Once on-board, he has allowed me the freedom to evaluate all aspects of the club while providing support and feedback as I became more familiar with the organization. He guided the board of governors through the process of solidifying the strategic plan, which acts as our blueprint for future planning," Harper explained.

As a member of Knollwood since 1985, president Schopp served six years on the club's board. He and his wife Lynda have three daughters, (Jessica, Lesley and Lauren), all of whom live in the Chicago area. **BR**

## IVAN SNYDER | PRESIDENT | BROKEN SOUND CLUB | BOCA RATON, FL



IVAN SNYDER, PRESIDENT



JOHN CREAN, GM

Ivan Snyder moved to Boca Raton, FL in 1992, joined Broken Sound Country Club as a golf member and immediately became involved in the club's governance.

Following his time as chair of the Old Course Committee, and working on the finance, and construction & design committee, Snyder served as the club's vice president for three years before assuming the role as the club's president.

"Ivan Snyder is a man of quiet humility but at the same time, someone who is deeply committed to enhancing Broken Sound's environmental and membership policies. He is a very strong and decisive leader when setting policy," said chief operating officer/general manager John Crean, in nominating Snyder, as one of BoardRoom top private club presidents.

And his achievements as Broken Sound's club president have been outstanding.

a) Led a \$10 million dollar renovation project, which was positively received by the membership and is on time and on budget.

b) Initiated a new strategic plan that allows the club to maintain member categories conducive with current trends and the foreseeable future.

c) Has worked with the general manager and green superintendent for certification from the Golf Environmental Organization (GEO). Broken Sound is only the fifth club nationwide and the first in Florida to obtain this recognition.

d) President Snyder has been instrumental in working with the City of Boca Raton to keep the Allianz Championship in Boca Raton, which results in over \$15 million revenue to the city and PGA donation to Boca Raton Regional Hospital.

e) Worked with the general manager on numerous environmental projects including the installation of Broken Sound's compost project, which takes food and landscape waste and used to provide plant nutrients, enhancing the soil structure and aiding water retention, which is of great benefit in Florida's drought conditions.

A certified public accountant, Snyder started his own distribution company in 1975, growing to a company employing over 500 people worldwide. A member of NY State Society of CPAs, American Society of CPAs, Snyder is also recognized in Who's Who in America and Who's Who in Business and Finance.

He is married with two children and 4 grandchildren. **BR**

## LARRY STOPOL | PRESIDENT | MIDDLE BAY COUNTRY CLUB | OCEANSIDE, NY



**LARRY STOPOL, PRESIDENT**



**FRANK BENZAKOUR, GM**

Larry Stopol is the first president to serve two terms at Middle Bay Country Club.

He initially served as Middle Bay's president in 2006 and 2007 and the club experienced such a positive metamorphosis that he was asked to come back and serve again as president for a two-year term in 2010 and 2011.

Larry's achievements go well beyond the regular operating results. Most club presidents with the help of their managers and other club officers can achieve the obvious results measured through budgetary numbers.

During these two terms, Middle Bay Country Club has successfully attracted an average of 45 new members annually, reduced the food and beverage deficit, added a day spa, built a brand new pool complex, enhanced the general look of the facility, reduced the dues, eliminated all operating assessments while improving member satisfaction and retention.

"I'm aware that the other presidents could have similar results. However the reason why I think that Larry Stopol is most deserving to be the President of the Year 2010 is because of this more intangible achievement," explained the club's general manager Frank Benzakour.

"One of the most difficult challenges for any club executive is the constant balancing act between the 'old guard membership' and the younger generation.

"In my opinion," he added, "Larry Stopol's most important achievement is the way he helped change the members' mentality and bridged that gap. It is through his style of open communication, decisive and no-nonsense management that he always keeps an eye on what is best for the club.

"His leadership skills and the way he anticipated other members' reactions are second to none. It seems that he is always 20 steps ahead of everyone else."

Middle Bay Country Club today is now a happy, trendy and a thriving diverse community on the south shore of Long Island. **BR**

## FRANK TARLING | PRESIDENT | BEACH GROVE GOLF CLUB | TSAWWASSEN, BC, CANADA



**FRANK TARLING, PRESIDENT**



**GORD SARKISSIAN, GM**

Frank Tarling has been quick to lead his board of directors to the 'directing' role rather than a 'doing' board, with the support of the club's general manager and the professional team of employees.

The club operated recently without a senior manager for a period of time, drawing the directors of the day into an operational role. Through diligent planning, led by President Tarling, and calling 'a spade a spade', the club now relies upon the board for policy guidance and oversight. Focusing on governance issues, the board has reinvented itself through the development and implementation of a fresh set of terms of reference for all committees. He has also introduced a new budgeting process emphasizing clear and unfettered transparency of all relevant financial strategies and plans. While introducing the process involved focus groups and town hall meetings, it has re-established a level of trust diminished through some difficult and trying times.

Members have welcomed this holistic approach and it has resulted in a stronger member community and a budget supported by all members.

Tarling was also successful in delivering the funding and membership approval for a controversial capital project – a new club staff maintenance facility – which members had been turned down twice.

By setting up information meetings and truly listening to the members, this divisive \$ 1 million dollar project received overwhelming membership approval, and was completed in early 2011.

One of Frank Tarling's strengths has been his ability to see the club as a whole, and moving to a gender-neutral club has not been without its challenges. He looks at the long-term picture as these challenges arise and has continually reached out to the various interest groups for input and ideas that make success much closer. His recognition of the need to communicate face-to-face with the various stakeholders has been a real advantage for him and club members.

His accomplishments also include:

- Introduction and implementation of a controversial dress code change
- As club president hosted The CN Junior Championship and the Pacific Northwest Golf Association Seniors Championship.

Tarling has been very supportive of the senior management's educational needs. General manager Gord Sarkissian, financially supported by the club,

graduated recently from Royal Roads University (Victoria, B.C.) executive coaching program.

"Frank's style as president, is welcoming and professional," enthused the club's GM Sarkissian, "After speaking with him you know that you have been heard and that he will act upon the ideas and concerns that you have shared with him.

"He also knows the value of sending a project or process back to the committee to refine and develop it as needed. He works as a coach and provides a good solid model to the board and the membership.

"It's been an easy task for our management team and the board to recommend Frank Tarling as one of BoardRoom's top presidents. We are proud of our accomplishments and of the leadership provided by our president," Sarkissian concluded. **BR**