

South Africa's Arthur Coy Honored As BoardRoom magazine's Distinguished Club President

By Dave White, editor

Private Club Presidents of the Year major sponsor: Kopplin & Kuebler

Reinvigorating: 'To give new life or energy to...or put vitality or vigor back into (something or someone).'"

For the 106 year-old Country Club of Johannesburg, "reinvigorating" is much more than a dictionary meaning, and there's a breath of fresh air sweeping through the club, which historically has been adverse to change.

Any form of concern or complaint fell on deaf ears as the autocratic, non-inclusive style of management, continued relentlessly as the committee and chair micromanaged every aspect of the club's operations.

"The old style of being neither accessible nor approachable has finally left the building," commented one wag.

And the big push behind all the change is Arthur Coy, chairman of the CCJ's main committee, and *BoardRoom magazine's Distinguished Private Club President for 2011*.

BoardRoom, for the fourth year, is recognizing 20 club presidents as the top Private Club Presidents of the Year – 2011, for practicing what they preach – leadership for the betterment of their clubs...board presidents, commodores or chairs who have served as the volunteer leaders of their club.

John Fornaro, publisher of BoardRoom, and CEO of the Association of Private Clubs and Directors, said Coy is being recognized as the *Distinguished Club President*, and one of the top 20 Private Club Presidents from the worldwide nominations.

"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 Kopplin & Kuebler LLC. The firm, with principals Richard Kopplin and Kurt Kuebler, for the fourth 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 our travels around the country and with visits to over 175 clubs each year, Dick and I get to see 'the good, the bad and the highly dysfunctional' of club governance," explained Kuebler.

"While we're primarily in the executive search business, and therefore talking about paid executive staff most times, we recognize that no matter how good the top club executive is, they cannot be successful without similarly strong, focused, consistent and objectives-driven (versus agenda-driven) leadership from the volunteer club president, commodore or chairperson.

"We're thrilled to see that there is a direct correlation with those types of characteristics being present in the vast majority of those folks in volunteer leadership roles at the highest performing clubs we visit...and that many of them are represented in your selections for Club President of Year," he added.

"Congratulations again for recognizing those club leaders who do the right things on behalf of their clubs," Kuebler concluded.

"This is an extremely exciting story in the private club industry," enthused Fornaro. "This recognition program has continued to grow and this year there were nominations from countries all over the world. It's very important that BoardRoom do its part in supporting club presidents.

"It's a great achievement for Arthur Coy," Fornaro opined. "It's the first time a South African president is being recognized as the Distinguished President for his contributions to his club, and making the club a better place for its members.

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Distinguished President



Standing; Ann Robbie, CEO, the Country Club of Johannesburg
Seated; Arthur Coy, president, the Country Club of Johannesburg

“Boards have a very definitive role in the life of a private club, and it’s important this role clarification be passed on down the line to incoming presidents,” Fornaro added.

Nominations of the candidates 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 for Coy really begins in July 2010 with his selection as chairman of the CCJ’s Main Committee (the term CCJ uses for board of directors), and two major issues (of course, there were other issues) he faced.

“The club needed reinvigoration...renewal,” Coy explained. The CCJ, with its 7,000 plus members, remained stuck in a time warp.

“The previous manager has been with us for a long while and did not introduce any new ideas of concepts toward the end of his term...something fairly normal for people moving into retirement.

“We needed to replace our manager and at the same time, I had a view that the future of our club lay in getting new younger members, so the new manager would need to play a major role in making the club attractive to the younger set,” Coy exclaimed.

Enter Ann Robbie...CEO, the Country Club of Johannesburg, and Coy’s selection to help drive the club into the future.

“The club is 106 years old and exists to a large degree on tradition and this is reflected in the age and nature of the members,” Coy added.

“The future of the club is through the younger members as they will eventually become the backbone of the club. A strong base of membership is vital ... and

Ann has been encouraged to make the club more of a destination for younger members. It is still early days but we are moving in this direction.

“Clubs, worldwide, are struggling to remain relevant to their membership. The way people use their spare time has changed substantially. Our vision would be to try and influence the decisions our members make so that the club becomes an important part of their way of life,” Coy stressed.

“We have just implemented what we believe is the best possible solution for the future and communicated as best as possible. I think all clubs have professional ‘niggers’ (petty complainers), but we have not had any real opposition to what we are doing,” Coy emphasized.

So change has been the thrust for the club’s CEO Ann Robbie.

“Arthur has a friendly, open manner and invites all members to air their views and concerns,” Robbie outlined in her nomination of Coy as a top president. “He believes strongly that the main committee sets club policy and guidelines and that the management must manage the club. A number of changes have been implemented in order that CCJ could successfully embark on this style of management.

“He’s always available to listen and to guide, is a popular member and enthusiastic. He doesn’t impose his will, but listens to all opinions and reaches consensus with the committee. And he supports the development of key managers.

“Members of the main committee have openly supported Arthur and committed themselves not to micro-manage or undermine management...but rather support and guide when necessary,” Robbie explained.

The result is, there is no longer any space within the committee for the pursuit of individual personal goals, often the reason why club members become committee members.



**BOARDROOM MAGAZINE 2010 DISTINGUISHED CLUB PRESIDENT WINNERS
JOHN RYDELL AND BRUCE CARSON RECEIVING THEIR AWARD.**

Pictured L-R: Dick Kopplin, Kopplin & Kuebler; John Rydell, president, Mission Viejo Country Club; Brad Shupe, GM Mission Viejo Country Club; Bruce Carson, president, Mission Viejo Country Club; Adrian Johnson, CEO Elan General Contracting

“Arthur’s transparency and clear leadership has also resulted in committee meetings being constructive, positive events where committee members voice their often divergent opinions but where there are no personal attacks,” CEO Robbie commented.

“Difficult issues are often discussed between committee members before meetings so that there is a greater understanding at the meetings. There is a high level of trust between committee members themselves and the executive management.

“Everyone is pulling in the same direction – to be the best in each and every way together,” she emphasized.

“I was appointed the new chief executive officer with a clear mandate to ensure that the club be managed professionally as a business. Member satisfaction and value is a key long term requirement.

“Service excellence and the quality of all offerings are to reflect the club’s stature and member belief that CCJ is the best club in Africa, if not the world!”

The chairman and committee also broke with tradition in appointing a woman to this position – one of the very few such appointments in South Africa.

Coy clearly supports the development of key managers. CEO Robbie is the chair of the Club Management Association of South Africa, and is supported in attending international and local conferences.

“This policy of continued development and learning is core to the executive team and all staff. CCJ has implemented and completed three years of a four-year training program for food and beverage staff funded entirely by the club for the development of our human capital,” Robbie explained.

“Arthur Coy has supported the drive to include younger members (the future of the club). To this end a Sundowner evening is hosted by the club each month where only members and their guests between the ages of 23 and 35 are invited,” Robbi explained.

SEE COVER STORY - PAGE 135

The Country Club Johannesburg

In more than a century since The Country Club was opened in 1906 by the town’s then mayor, William Kidger Tucker, it has enhanced its reputation as an institution admired worldwide for its social, recreational and sporting amenities.

The CCJ facilities are unsurpassed anywhere in the country –with two venues: Auckland Park and Woodmead, about 20km apart. The club is lauded for its unique garden settings, magnificent banqueting venues, quality restaurants and lounge, luxury accommodation and childrens’ playgrounds.

There are two championship golf courses, fully equipped gymnasiums, squash courts, tennis courts, a cricket field, bowling greens, croquet lawns as well as magnificent clubhouses (including extensive banqueting facilities), children’s play areas and grounds. In addition, there is accommodation for members and guests at Auckland Park (18 rooms).

The use of these noble landmarks is enjoyed by members throughout the year, and the tall imposing oak trees stand as monuments to an establishment rooted in the heritage of Johannesburg.

The club strives to provide the highest level of quality, personal service and recognition with a commitment to continual improvement through empowered, well trained personnel.

Club membership details

Juniors aged 16-25 years	322
Full members aged 26-30 years.	310
Full members aged 31-63 years.	2190
Spouse/partner members.	922
Senior members (over 63 years old)	1044
Life members	531
Out of town members.	1630
Under 16 golfers.	93
Total	7042

A prominent local DJ hosts the event, and a Facebook page, dedicated to this event, has been developed where these members and their friends can display and tag photographs, comment and become supporters. Each Sundowner event has attracted over 200 people who are excited about their club supporting them.

“They are proud to host their friends who are rapidly applying for membership. It is the cool place to be and be seen,” Robbie added.

Historically the executive management was incentivised by the cost savings made, specifically in the maintenance area. This has had disastrous results.

“Arthur successfully encouraged the committee to ensure that this type of incentive ceased. A new holistic scheme is being introduced based not only on the financial returns but also on member and staff satisfaction, positive brand development, social responsibility project implementation and membership growth,” Robbie outlined.

Another key issue in South Africa is the acceptance and integration of previously disadvantaged individuals because of the past regime apartheid laws, an exceptionally difficult area to manage because of the sensitivities experienced by all parties.

“CCJ is proud of the mix of members, although there remains much work to be done in this area. The club strives to ensure that the club remains aspirational, progressive and a place where members meet, have fun and feel special,” Coy explained.

“I have found when talking to other club managers from the USA and Europe is the assumption that if a club has 7,000-plus members, it cannot be an exclusive club with aspirations. CCJ is really aspirational and exclusive not only because of the pricing, but because of the strict membership process,” Robbie explained.

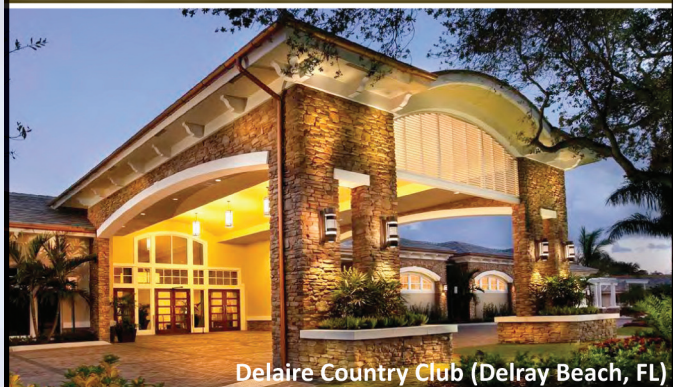
“We all look to the future, not the past. We all acknowledge the importance of traditions, but believe that the club must become more contemporary and remain relevant to stakeholders going forward,” Coy expounded.

“Country Club Johannesburg has a growing membership during this time of uncertainty, and there has been no relaxation of entrance fees, and the annual subscriptions/dues are expensive.

“The club has an extremely strong balance sheet, positive earnings before interest, depreciation and taxation and there is an air of excitement and enthusiasm amongst members. Long may this continue!” he concluded. **BR**

**TOP PRIVATE CLUB PRESIDENTS 2011
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2011 Top 20 Private Club Presidents of the Year

BoardRoom magazine, for the fourth year, is recognizing 20 club presidents and chairs as Private Club Presidents of the Year – 2011 for practicing what they preach – leadership for the betterment of their clubs.

“This kind of recognition for volunteers who give so much to the club has been long overdue, and since the first awards there’s been a steady growth in the nominations by club general managers and others in the private club industry,” exclaimed BoardRoom publisher John Fornaro.

Nominations have come from seven countries for the *Private Club President of the Year* recognition, and this year, club presidents from South Africa, Canada and various U.S. states are among the private club’s top presidents. Private club board presidents play a huge role in the professional operations of their club as a volunteer working diligently with their board of directors and general managers, striving for well informed, but not emotional decisions. These outstanding presidents exemplify the focus on the leadership responsibilities, the accountability and the manage-

ment of the board, providing a healthy respect for the club’s macro-management. They understand the importance of working, effectively and efficiently, with their volunteer boards and the dedication that’s required from everyone with whom they work. Systems along do not insure a good board. Key elements include commitment, competence, diversity, collective decision making, openness, transparency, effective communication with management and the membership, fiscal responsibility, development and establishment of the club’s mission, vision and policy direction, especially through establishment of a strategic plan.

A successful board president draws upon the expertise of other board members, the club’s institutional memory and stewardship of the club’s resources. As well, the board president provides new board members and future president with information they need to perform effectively as board members.

Congratulations to these outstanding private club board presidents. BR

Arthur Coy	The Country Club of Johannesburg	South Africa	
Brett Shane Bernstein	Lakewood Country Club	USA	
Jack Berry	Willow Oaks Country Club	USA	
Copeland G. Bertsche	Montclair Golf Club	USA	
Carl Dill	Mediterra	USA	
Garth Elliott	Randpark Club	South Africa	
Jon C. Flora	The Country Club at DC Ranch	USA	
Mark Gercenstein	Bend Golf and Country Club	USA	
J. Littleton “Litt” Glover	Wade Hampton	USA	
Joseph S. Haas	Chicago Yacht Club	USA	
Mark Hill	Kirtland Country Club	USA	
Stephen Karpf	The Country Club at Mirasol	USA	
Patrick Kelly	Avondale Golf Club	USA	
Chet Kronenberg	Mulholland Tennis Club	USA	
Robert W. Kummer, Jr.	Birnam Wood Golf Club	USA	
Arthur M. Scully, III	Fox Chapel Golf Club	USA	
Paul G. Stevens	Belfair	USA	
Algot Thorell, Jr.	Philadelphia Cricket Club	USA	
John Tomsy	Rockrimmon Country Club	USA	
Gilles Vézina	Ottawa RA Centre	Canada	

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BRETT SHANE BERNSTEIN, PRESIDENT | LAKEWOOD COUNTRY CLUB | ROCKVILLE, MD



BRETT BERNSTEIN, PRESIDENT



ERIC J. DIETZ, GM

Brett Bernstein has championed the club's strategic plan and vision, the first such plan approved by the board and adopted by the membership in the 52-year history of Lakewood Country Club.

He has consistently demonstrated the abilities to build board consensus, focused on policy making and has clearly and concisely developed a communications plan in conjunction with the CEO Eric J. Dietz. This has fostered a sense of transparency, and most importantly trust within the membership.

An early supporter of the strategic plan and vision, Bernstein took it under his wing and lobbied within the board to secure the necessary funds to develop the plan, and worked diligently to communicate the steps necessary to the membership to achieve the final result.

President Bernstein highlighted the results in the various communi-

cations portals to ensure transparency and full disclosure...not just the good, but the bad as well. Bernstein worked within the framework of the club's governance structure and clearly educated the board and its committees on the values associated with operating a private club. He utilized the road map developed by the membership and the management team, stressing the results that could be achieved if the plan was adopted, and most critically if the club adhered to the plan.

As they say, the proof is in the pudding. The results, accomplished by Bernstein and the board, have been nothing short of remarkable in these uncertain times. For the first time in recent history, the club has a membership waiting list; and financial results have consistently narrowed the deficit and will take the club to a zero bottom line in 18 months.

The average membership age is the envy of our local club community and most importantly has given the management team the tools it needs to guide the club to success for years to come.

A consummate professional, at the club and in his professional and personal life, Bernstein, a managing partner and co-founding partner of the XML Financial Group, is a tireless advocate of local charities. He somehow found the time with all of the heavy lifting going on at the club to chair a major local charitable fundraiser and to contribute positively to his family – wife Jen and their two beautiful daughters.

"It has been a pleasure to work with president Bernstein this year and in my opinion any private club general manager/CEO would be fortunate to have the backing and support, and the refreshing non-micro-managing style that Brett Shane Bernstein has brought to our club," said Eric J. Dietz, CCM / PGA, the club's general manager and CEO. **BR**

JACK BERRY, PRESIDENT | WILLOW OAKS COUNTRY CLUB | RICHMOND, VA



JACK BERRY, PRESIDENT



CHRIS WELLES, GM

Jack Berry and his family have been members of Willow Oaks Country Club since 1986, active club-wide users who enjoy tennis, golf and the clubhouse. During his term, he has been an exemplary president demonstrating strong and quiet leadership skills. His involvement in all areas is witness to his dedication to the club, but especially in his efforts in increasing communication and promoting the transparency of the board of directors.

"Jack is remarkable in his ability to communicate with the membership through both written communications and the town hall format," says the club's general manager Chris Welles. "He has provided transparency in issues facing both the golf course and tennis that is very much appreciated by WOCC."

In August, Willow Oaks experienced a crisis when the golf course, through natural circumstances, contracted pythium root rot, resulting in the decision to close the course. He guided Willow Oaks through this crisis with great success. His leadership – talking with mem-

bers, providing regular updates to the membership, holding member forums to gauge member responses to the situation and directing the board's plan for management of the crisis – set him apart as a leader. President Berry has also used his community building skills to involve a larger segment of the WOCC membership in the club's committee structure. "By bringing in younger members and using the talent of our membership, he has expanded the feeling of member ownership and pride in Willow Oaks," GM Welles stressed.

In spring of 2011, the club administered a comprehensive satisfaction survey, starting with a series of focus groups.

Berry's support throughout the process provided Willow Oaks with valuable empirical information, not just 'hearsay' or one group of members, to guide the future direction of the club. In addition, he used data collected from the tennis users to guide the decision making on a complex issue within the tennis facility. He regularly attends committee meetings in order to show board support and to stay informed on every aspect of club business. The committee chairs and members feel supported by Jack's attendance and level of his involvement.

"His ability to set aside personal agendas and make decisions objectively has improved the confidence of the board and generated a spirit of cohesiveness during a difficult year," added GM Welles.

Berry is executive director of Venture Richmond, a public-private partnership whose mission is to enhance the vitality of the Richmond community. He is married to Katherine and is the father of two boys, John, age 25, and Brooks, who died in 2006 at age 17.

He is a volunteer with the Potomac Appalachian Trail Club and maintains an historic cabin in the Shenandoah National Park and is involved in many other community endeavors.

It is these many attributes that set Jack Berry apart as a leader, and make him one of BoardRoom top presidents for 2011. **BR**

COPELAND G. "CO" BERTSCHE, PRESIDENT | MONTCLAIR GOLF CLUB | WEST ORANGE, NJ



**COPELAND "CO" G. BERTSCHE, PRESIDENT (RIGHT)
DANIEL SOMOGYI, GM (LEFT)**

The story of Co Bertsche's leadership during these incredibly challenging times is noteworthy.

Founded in 1893, the Montclair Golf Club is one of the oldest clubs in the United States, and also one of the very few featuring four separate nines, all finishing at the

clubhouse. It has a proud membership of more than 700 in all categories.

A member since 1974, Copeland G. "Co" Bertsche, a trustee since 2005, has served on committees and the club's President in 2010 and 2011.

Under Co's leadership, the Montclair Golf Club tackled the challenge of the country's worst recessionary environment in decades by steadily maintaining and ultimately increasing the club's membership, while keeping its character and culture.

Under Co's leadership, the club voted to invest \$14 million in a master plan designed to renovate the clubhouse, upgrade its infrastructure and do significant work on all four nines, focusing on bunkers, tee boxes and greens.

While aggressively facing these two issues, Montclair underwent significant management changes hiring general manager and chief operating officer Daniel Somogyi in March 2011.

It is a tribute to Co's leadership that membership has increased over the past two years, the club has enthusiastically endorsed its master plan, and that members and staff alike have welcomed a new, enthusiastic and professional management team.

Co and the club continue to be enthusiastic supporters of Club Managers Association of America and committed to the concept of Certified Club Manager status for key employees. During his tenure the club's education budget for staff has been increased.

He enjoys a strong, positive relationship with GM Daniel Somogyi and his staff, not only because of his personal management style, but because of a sincere concern for the well-being of those who work at the Montclair Golf Club to make it such a special place. He has approved new employee incentives for the workers and supports Daniel in all of the actions he has taken to make the club's many long-time employees know just how much they are appreciated.

"President Bertsche believes in the chief operating officer concept," explained Somogyi. "He allows me and my staff to make the tough decisions, and supports our effort to do whatever is needed to keep the Montclair Golf Club as the 'home away from home' for its many members."

SEE PRESIDENT BERTSCHE - PAGE 71

CARL DILL, PRESIDENT | CLUB AT MEDITERRA | NAPLES, FLORIDA



CARL DILL, PRESIDENT



TOM WALLACE, CEO

Carl Dill, as the Club at Mediterra's very first member, has witnessed many changes, especially during the past two years as the club has transitioned from being a developer-owned club to that of a member-owned club.

As president for the Club at Mediterra, a Platinum Club in Naples, Florida, Dill has articulated a vision for being a truly premier club, which has included hiring new, top tier CEO, Tom Wallace, building a strong management team and engaging members deeply in the vision.

The vision calls for Mediterra to be one of the top active lifestyle communities in the country, supported by extraordinary experiences for members in golf, tennis and fitness as well as dual excellence in casual and fine dining at the main clubhouse, as well as the Mediterra Beach Club.

It also painted a picture of the club being governed under a chief executive officer versus general manager model, with board com-

mittees mainly advisory groups to the CEO and meeting primarily as strategic partners not involved directly in club operations.

Members have been actively engaged in the vision-casting at the annual meeting, in the search processes for management, in benchmarking against other top-tier clubs and through the on-going president's reports.

Today Mediterra is in a strong financial position with large cash reserves, a healthy balance sheet and significant membership growth providing initiation fee income used solely for capital needs.

Mediterra has filled out its plan, three years ahead of projections, to move from around 390 golf members at turnover to a target cap of 450 for the 36-hole Tom Fazio facility. Leveraging an innovative member referral program, publicity around its new management team and partnership with realtors to fuel home sales have been the anchors for this success.

During the past year Mediterra has made other significant strides toward its vision.

A newly opened covered indoor/outdoor bar and grill area called 'The Tavern on 18' has drawn large numbers of casual diners. The unique and very popular beach club facility on the Gulf of Mexico has been remodeled and themed around casual seaside dining.

Bocce courts have been added with over 500 members signing up for league play. Service level improvements are noticeable in both dining and golf operations. A new stadium tennis court has been added and the tennis program has seen solid growth.

Member participation and satisfaction are growing significantly. Club governance has transitioned smoothly to the new CEO model, with committees taking a much lighter, more strategic role.

SEE PRESIDENT DILL - PAGE 71

[PRESIDENT BERTSCHE] - 59

Co is quick to give credit to his fellow board members and, most importantly, Daniel and the club's staff.

"Our staff is the reason we enjoy the great club that we have," Co explained. "They create and maintain the environment that

keeps us coming back. The Montclair Golf Club would not be what it is without them."

Because of his tireless and innovative leadership, and his support for the precepts of the CMAA and commitment to the COO style of club governance, President Bertsche is being recognized as one of BoardRoom tops president for 2011. **BR**

[PRESIDENT DILL] - 59

A long-range facilities Master Plan has been prepared and five-year capital plans are in progress, focused on golf course and facility needs to meet growing member demand.

In the year ahead an overall strategic plan will be completed and priorities for additional steps against the vision established.

In two short years since developer turnover, Mediterra has clearly established itself as one of the top lifestyle communities in Florida and gained significant momentum

toward its vision. Carl Dill's vision as current president is a strong part of that success. The taking of a "new" club and turning it into one of the best in such a short period of time is a compelling argument for his inclusion on the list of BoardRoom's top presidents for 2011. **BR**

[EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE] - 61

- If performance is less than satisfactory, develop a written performance improvement plan, and schedule more frequent feedback meetings. Remind the employee of the consequences connected with continued poor performance

- The supervisor and employee discuss employee feedback and constructive suggestions for the supervisor and the department

- Discuss anything else the supervisor or employee would like to discuss, hopefully, maintaining the positive and constructive environment established thus far, during the meeting

- Mutually sign the performance development tool to indicate the discussion has taken place

- End the meeting in a positive and supportive manner. The supervisor expresses confidence that the employee can accomplish the plan and that the supervisor is available for support and assistance

- Set a time-frame for formal follow up, generally quarterly.

FOLLOWING THE PERFORMANCE DEVELOPMENT PROCESS MEETING

- If a performance improvement plan was necessary, follow up at the designated times.

- Follow up with performance feedback and discussions regularly throughout the quarter. (An employee should never be surprised about the content of feedback at the performance development meeting.)

- The supervisor needs to keep commitments relative to the agreed upon development plan, including time needed away from the job, payment for courses, agreed upon work assignments and so on

- The supervisor needs to act upon the feedback from departmental members and let staff members know what has changed, based upon their feedback

- Forward appropriate documentation to the human resources office and retain a copy of the plan for easy access and referral.

At the same time, you need to take a look at underperforming staff. Ask whether an individual is in the wrong job. Determine whether you have provided specific and clear requirements so the

individual knows what you expect from them. Make sure you have provided feedback against goals and objectives so the person knows they are not meeting expectations.


Decide if a performance improvement plan will help the individual contribute within your organization. If you have done your part to create an environment in which an individual can succeed - and the person is not succeeding - let the person go.

Your club/organization will be better off for their absence and the individual will have the opportunity to locate a job in which they can perform. **BR**

Donna Coyne is CEO/Placement Specialist, Professional Club Placement Service www.pcps4u.com

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GARTH ELLIOTT, PRESIDENT | RANDPARK CLUB | JOHANNESBURG, SOUTH AFRICA



GARTH ELLIOTT, PRESIDENT



DOUG BAIN, CEO

Randpark Club in Johannesburg, South Africa is a club that has implemented many changes in recent years, has been described by Dale Hayes as the most efficiently run club in SA and some of the credit goes to the club's president Garth Elliott – one of BoardRoom's top 20 presidents for 2011. Randpark is the busiest golf club in SA in terms of the number of rounds played. It is a two-course facility (one of only three member owned 36-hole facilities in SA and host to 1995 and 2000 SA Open), one of which has recently received a R2.5m (\$319,830 USD) renovation and upgrade. This is happening at a time when many SA clubs are struggling and sends out a strong message to the Johannesburg golfing community.

The club formerly known as the Windsor Park Club, situated in the township of Windsor, was founded during wartime with the formation of a committee late in 1940 and the recruitment of 123 members – 71 men and 52 ladies. In 2011 club president, Garth Elliott, motivated the adoption of a general committee (GC) manual that encompasses a code of conduct, code of ethics, roles, responsibilities and powers of the general committee and segregation of duties.

This made it very clear that the GC's role is not to micromanage

the club but rather to set policy for the management to follow and to lend strategic direction to the club.

In 2007 with Elliott as vice-president, Randpark's general committee drafted a strategic plan for the club that encompassed a vision, mission and set of goals. This was revisited in 2009 under Elliott's stewardship, when it was agreed that the club's formulated strategic direction, vision and mission statement remained highly relevant.

President Elliott establishes with the CEO (with approval of the GC) a set of performance standards (KPIs & KPIs) for each financial year. These are reviewed mid-year and at the end of the year for the purpose of determining annual bonus and monthly salary review. This was put in place for the CEO (who in turn does this for all senior managers), under Elliott's presidency. Supported by President Elliott, the club's CEO, Doug Bain, attained his CCM qualification in 2010, and the club's golf director Derek Lloyd attained his CCM qualification in Feb 2012.

"Normally the president only serves a two year term but his fellow general committee and club members have voted to have him serve another two year term, such is the respect that he commands," commented CEO Doug Bain.

Elliott is also currently leading a process "to review the current GC structure to meet the demands of the changing club environment in which we all operate."

"Elliott's warm, friendly, fair but firm and objective nature has been instrumental in his successful leadership of the club," Bain enthused.

"He is not one for the limelight and never likes to take credit for anything. His modesty and approachable manner earns him much respect, especially amongst the staff."

"He is by far the best chairman that I have worked under in my 15 years in the industry. Even when his personal business has endured tough times, his support of the club and time given to the club has not wavered – a club man in the truest form," Bain concluded. All good reasons why Elliott is one of BoardRoom's top presidents for 2011. **BR**

JON FLORA, PRESIDENT | THE COUNTRY CLUB AT DC RANCH | SCOTTSDALE, AZ



JON FLORA, PRESIDENT



PAUL SKELTON, GM

Jon Flora exemplifies the ideal club president in that he is a visionary, pursues excellence, understands the cost/value reward for risk and, just as importantly, makes for a great leader.

Visionary? Leadership? Value of risk? Here's a great example.

"Jon encouraged the board of directors to adopt a market-based pricing membership model that, without question, has proven to be an innovative approach to membership marketing and a phenomenal success for The Country Club at DC Ranch," emphasized general manager Paul Skelton.

"In less than 12 months we basically eliminated a resignation list with 131 names on it, sold over 80 golf memberships and generat-

ed just shy of \$1 million of 'Other Income' for the club."

"With president Flora, we might never be able to define what 'best' is or means, but we are committed to taking advantage of every opportunity to 'take it to the next level,'" Skelton added.

Flora has supported investment in the club's physical assets, as well as investment in top quality human resources. "Oh yes, Jon's mantra when it comes to club governance and leadership is hire the best people, step back and let them lead the way," Skelton stressed, in reference to that dastardly governance pest called micromanagement.

Flora joined Dillon Companies (a division of the Kroger Co.) in 1971 as clerk and, has spent 41 years with the company.

He joined Fry's in 2007. As president, he's responsible for 121 stores, 19,000 associates and three million customers the company serves each week. In addition to his role as president, he also oversees our charitable giving program that benefits the communities in which the company serves.

Jon and his wife, Christy Taylor have two grown children – Byron and Jessica.

"I had the opportunity to introduce my president as keynote speaker at the recent K2 Summit, and my initial comment when making the introduction was: "You can only wish that you're club president might be like mine!"

High words of praise and a reason by Jon Flora is one of BoardRoom's top presidents for 2011. **BR**

MARK GERCENSTEIN, PRESIDENT | RIVER BEND GOLF AND COUNTRY CLUB | GREAT FALLS, VA



MARK GERCENSTEIN, PRESIDENT



HUSAM ATARI, COO/GM

River Bend Golf and Country Club, while going through major changes with its membership, facilities and philosophy, marked its 50th anniversary in 2011. And Mark Gercenstein with his strong leadership abilities put into motion plans to face the club's challenges.

As he was taking over the presidency, the golf course master plan project was getting underway and he faced many issues needing resolution before the course reopening in July 2011.

Mark is not a believer in the status quo or thinking small. The club adopted the chief operating officer concept several years ago, and the full transition was achieved as the board took on the big picture issues leaving day-to-day operations to the COO/general manager Husam Atari. The memberships' reciprocity arrangement requests was a major obstacle the club faced during the closure. Mark pushed for the club to have an online system written into the website to facilitate the requests and responses to the membership for scheduled tee times with other clubs.

Members booked over 10,000 reservations, and were extremely satisfied with the system and reciprocity process.

The first impression of the members and guests visiting the club also became a major theme during Gercenstein's presidency. This took on many forms including the club's image, service, projects, membership levels and privileges.

During the course closure and construction, a record number of new members were accepted based on Mark's recommendation to change the initiation fee payment structure during closure. This presented new concerns about the appropriate membership level and the impact on each member's experience.

This resulted in a review of the club's bylaws, and changes were proposed and ratified by the membership clarifying issues relating to membership classes and privileges. Additionally, the board set and reached its self-imposed cap and held firm by starting a waiting list for new member acceptance.

The club established a new expectation of the club experience based on this new membership demographic and the course renovation. Additional amenities were planned and approved, along with upgrades to the existing facilities. This all culminated with the golf course reopening July 2011, amid a grand 50th anniversary gala.

A new standard and procedure manual for operations has been developed and implemented to ensure the staff is trained to provide a standard service to the membership commensurate with the club's new image.

Mark's leadership has been key in moving the club forward during this time of uncertainty. His efforts have elevated River Bend to a premier club with outstanding facilities and service with a vision toward the next 50 years.

President Gercenstein and his family have been active River Bend members since 1994. Currently a senior executive with CSC Corporation, Gercenstein's professional experience includes leading publicly traded corporations and private startup companies. **BR**

J. LITTLETON GLOVER, PRESIDENT | WADE HAMPTON GOLF CLUB | CASHIERS, NC



J. LITTLETON GLOVER, PRESIDENT



JEFF HEILBRUN, GM/COO

Golf has been an integral part of Litt's life and "he just had a good, solid, calm, focused way about him that I felt was very effective in leading his board during difficult decisions and economic times," said Kurt Kuebler, of Kopplin Kuebler, who nominated Litt Glover for recognition as one of BoardRoom's top 20 presidents.

"Wade Hampton is a top 100 golf course and beautiful residential community that had never had economic issues in the past," Kuebler said, "so it took an 'E.F. Hutton-type' personality to lead it...he's that kind of president.

"There's lots of respect for and from him while observing him interacting with Wade Hampton club members."

Litt has practiced law with the firm of Glover & Davis, PA for 45 years and served as president of the State Bar of Georgia. However, in the last 20 years he has been more engaged in business as an executive officer of Batson-Cook Company (construction) and Batson-Cook Development Company. Glover also has been active in banking and currently is a member of the board of directors of BB&T Corporation.

Litt is married to Cynthia Butterfield Glover, also an avid golfer. They have five children and ten grandchildren.

Golf was the catalyst for his meeting wife Cindy, and generally has been the focus of their vacations. They have traveled and played throughout the world and have come to appreciate the intangible impact of golf on people around the world.

In addition to beautiful venues, they have observed that people of different nations individually focused on the same objective in a game of golf seem to have a friendship born immediately. From South Africa to Europe and even to Fiji, they have observed that golfers with the commonality of the love of golf seem to just naturally overcome national differences of opinion more easily.

Litt joined Wade Hampton Golf Club in 1998 and served as its president from 2008 -11. Glover also is a member of Frederica Golf Club, Ocean Forest Golf Club, Sea Island Golf Clubs, Newnan Country Club and the Canongate group of golf clubs. **BR**

JOSEPH S. HAAS, COMMODORE | CHICAGO YACHT CLUB | CHICAGO, IL



JOSEPH S. HAAS, COMMODORE



JIM CLARK, GM

From gracefully handling two fatalities during a club-sponsored event, to directing staff and volunteers through a successful regatta season during trying economic times, Chicago Yacht Club Commodore Joe Haas has proven to be an excellent leader.

The last several years have been challenging for Chicago Yacht Club. During the past year, Commodore Haas has focused on a number of important governance issues. Board member duties are now better defined, the club's strategic plan is clearly mapped out, and the club's brand is more defined than ever.

With a 20-member board of directors, the club (like most yacht clubs) has five flag officers: Commodore, vice commodore, rear commodore, secretary and treasurer. They also serve as the club's executive committee.

Under Joe's direction, staff and voluntary leadership has worked together to deliver added value to the club's membership. The club's financial position remains strong while at the same time, services have been added to better serve the membership.

The Chicago Yacht Club hosts about 100 regattas from the time the ice leaves Lake Michigan in March until it returns in December.

These activities need to be balanced with other activities that serve the club's cruising sailors and power fleet. That's no easy task.

The Chicago Yacht Club Race to Mackinac Island, the club's signature event and the longest-running fresh water regatta in the world, covers 333-statue miles from Chicago up into Lake Huron and to the magical Mackinac Island.

In 2011, with 364 boats on the start line ranging from in size from 30 to 70 feet, the 103rd running proved tragic.

The 'Mac' always offers a variety of weather conditions as the sailors go south to north, and in 2011, a violent weather cell hit the fleet in upper Lake Michigan.

Two sailors died. Other competing sailors went to the aid of "WingNuts" and six of the eight-member crew were rescued.

"Sociable," the first boat on scene and rescuer of the crew, directed about 12 other racing yachts and coordinated efforts along with the US Coast Guard.

For Sociable's efforts the crew won a life-saving honor, The Hanson Award, from US Sailing (the governing organization for sail racing).

During this difficult time, Commodore Haas showed excellent leadership and a remarkable sense of understanding and responsibility to the sport of sailing. Immediately after the accident, he requested a U.S. Sailing investigation into how the club as an organizing authority might be able to mitigate loss of life and injury in races to come. A report of recommendations is available for viewing on the U.S. Sailing Web site at www.ussailing.org.

Joseph S. Haas, president and CEO of Holden Industries is a cruising sailor and owns the 63' Hanse 630e "Infinite Diversion."

Commodore Haas has done a great job leading the Chicago Yacht Club through a challenging time in addition to his outstanding leadership in club governance. For these reasons, Joseph Haas is one of BoardRoom's 20 top private club presidents. **BR**

PATRICK KELLY, PRESIDENT | AVONDALE GOLF CLUB | PALM DESERT, CA



PATRICK KELLY, PRESIDENT

Over the last couple of years the economy hasn't been kind to many private clubs in this country...and during that time Palm Desert's Avondale Golf Club under president Patrick Kelly, went into rescue mode.

As reported in the Desert Sun at the time, "one of the first private clubs in Palm Desert completed a \$1.5 million, 10-year member loan program to pay off an out-

standing bank loan, fund a capital asset replacement reserve and provide working capital for the club."

Leading up to these developments, Avondale suffered an extended period of natural attrition and the lack of membership sales created a bleak financial future cluttered with ramifications and tough decisions. Membership had fallen from the club's cap of 300 to 183.

But Kelly and his fellow board members have made the tough decisions that have dramatically improved the club's future; the mem-

ber loan program has been such a success that a number of other Coachella Valley clubs have contacted Avondale seeking advice about the member loan program.

As one of the longest running private clubs in the valley, The Avondale desperately needed upgrades and enhancements and the infusion of funds allowed for the improvements the members now enjoy.

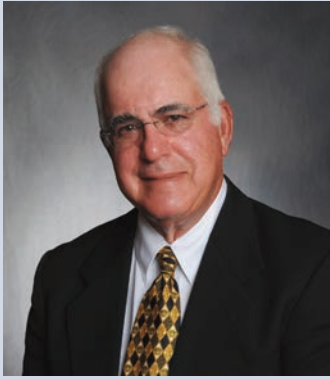
Kelly also spearheaded the hiring of San Diego-based JC Resorts to oversee the club's management. With the firm's experience, Avondale sold 41 memberships in 2011 and enjoyed its most successful fiscal year in the last six.

Under Kelly's direction, Avondale has refined its brand by dramatically improving the aesthetics of the clubhouse, added desirable amenities, including a fitness center, dedicated funds for marketing the club, improved its profitability and sold more memberships than any clubs in the Coachella Valley in 2011. The club celebrated its 40th anniversary in 2009 and now looks to be poised for another 40 years of continued success.

"Without Patrick Kelly's leadership during these tough economic times, I doubt Avondale could have survived as a private equity golf club," enthused John Coonce, the club's treasurer, and Vice-President of Finance, Hilton Hotels and Resorts (retired).

For these many reasons, Patrick Kelly is one of BoardRoom's top presidents for 2011. **BR**

STEPHEN KARPF, PRESIDENT | THE COUNTRY CLUB AT MIRASOL | PALM BEACH GARDENS, FL



STEPHEN KARPF, PRESIDENT



MATT LAMBERT, GM

It's been a very different year for Stephen Karpf, president, The Country Club at Mirasol, Palm Beach Gardens, Florida.

When elected president by the board of directors in April 2010, Karpf faced a monumental challenge - the turnover of the club's operations from the developer to the members. President Karpf lead the negotiations with one goal in mind: Completing a successful transition from developer-owned to member-owned club without incurring heavy unnecessary legal expenses or ill will between the parties.

He used his professional experience as a retired partner and chief operating officer of Ernst & Young, and his logical, calm demeanor to spearhead a negotiating committee that successfully worked together with the developer to resolve the many complex financial, legal, and operational components involved in the transition. The club has a \$22 million operating budget and 1,170 memberships.

During negotiations, the board of directors under Steve's direction revised the bylaws to include the elimination of all operating committees except for the finance, grievance, membership, and audit committees.

His trust and confidence in the GM/COO governance concept allows the club to operate with a membership satisfaction rating of 97 percent. This has solidified the foundation for a most effective club governance model.

Karpf's expectations of the club's operations are clearly defined to the membership and the management team and he is committed to keeping the board focused on setting policies and the development of a strategic plan as opposed to micromanagement.

With Karpf's guidance, the board is implementing a strategic plan that, when completed, will provide the membership with a transparent roadmap for Mirasol's future.

The club's first capital project - a renovation of the existing casual dining Grille Room, was completed in October, 2011 on time and within five percent of the original \$1.5 million budget. This success has continued to enhance the membership's confidence in the club's leadership.

A consensus builder among the board and the club members, Karpf has shown his commitment to transparency by hosting monthly luncheons and periodic town hall meetings with members that encourage constant communication.

One of the best aspects of his leadership style is his ability to separate the emotions from an issue and focus on the facts, which ensures a stable, professional work environment for the club's 300-plus employees.

He supports general manager Matt Lambert's efforts as a director with the Florida chapter of the Club Managers Association of America, and supports educational opportunities for department heads.

Karpf and his wife, Janet moved to Palm Beach Gardens from Long Island, N.Y. in 2005. They have two children and two grandchildren who live nearby.

Previously Karpf was a Member of Nissequogue Golf Club (St. James, N.Y.) from 1983 to 1996; and Mill River Club (Brookville, N.Y.) from 1996 to 2006. **BR**

MARK M. HILL, PRESIDENT | THE KIRTLAND COUNTRY CLUB | WILLOUGHBY, OH



MARK HILL, PRESIDENT



RICHARD L. LARocca, GM

As Kirtland Country Club's President, Mark Hill has maintained strength through an economically tough time and as a result, the club has continued to flourish.

Hill instituted the club's strategic planning and has played a key role in memorializing the club's mission, vision and core values. He also established a long-range plan to help strengthen the club's capital base for future long-term projects.

A member of Kirtland Country Club since 1989, Mark Hill has been on the board since 2004. He previously has been the membership chair, and vice president before assuming the presidency in 2010.

"Mark Hill is the Kirtland Country Club's biggest advocate; ask anyone in the Cleveland area," commented the club's general manager Richard L. LaRocca. "His energy and enthusiasm for the club

extend beyond its facilities and encompass the entire membership and staff communities.

"His driving skill is his ability to build consensus and move the club forward, which is no easy task in the private club environment. He welcomes all opinions and considers them equally during the decision-making process. He has focused the club on the importance of following through on its overall mission. When we look back in 10 years, the success of Kirtland Country Club will be directly related to the foundation Mark strengthened during his presidency," LaRocca added.

"Mark has the ability to objectively listen to varied feedback on any number of issues from members. His ability to compile this information and make subsequent informed and sensible decisions has been a valuable skill and part of his success as president," added the club's vice president Brian C. Zollar.

"Mark Hill is the consummate representative of Kirtland," said director Rex G. Mason, in commenting on Hill's selection as one of BoardRoom's top 20 top presidents.

"He makes himself available to anyone in the club, easily considers new ideas, and engages with members, management, and all of the Kirtland employees. He brings an energy and willingness to confront issues that has set the club on new paths. And he does it all with a great sense of humor and good will that everyone at Kirtland appreciates."

A graduate of Gilmour Academy and Denison University, Hill is married with four children, and an avid golfer, tennis and paddle tennis player. Mark, vice president with the family-owned national firm, Gilbane Building Company, has been in the construction industry for 30. He is involved with numerous Cleveland area charities, including Cleveland Food Bank, Boys Hope, GoodWill, and ASPEA. **BR**

MARK M. HILL, PRESIDENT | THE KIRTLAND COUNTRY CLUB | WILLOUGHBY, OH*



MARK HILL, PRESIDENT



RICHARD L. LARocca, GM*

* Our apologies to Mr. Richard L. LaRocca for running the wrong photo in the July/August 2012 issue of BoardRoom magazine. This bio is a reprint from last issue with the updated photo.

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CHET KRONENBERG, PRESIDENT | MULHOLLAND TENNIS CLUB | LOS ANGELES, CA



CHET KRONENBERG, PRESIDENT

"Chet has served as president for two years and has done an exemplary job," said David Geha, a Mulholland club member in nominating Kronenberg as one of BoardRoom magazine's top private club presidents.

Under Chet's leadership, the club has grown significantly, is in excellent financial shape and has benefitted from Kronenberg's ability as a consensus builder.

These have included a review by Reid Consulting Group of the club's operations, resulting in

the board implementing recommended changes. Kronenberg enacted personnel changes, without significant outcry from the membership, allowing the board to focus on policy and guidelines, leaving the day-to-day operations to professional management.

Mulholland Tennis Club has embarked on a number of capital improvements, including renovation of the tennis courts, pool, gym, locker rooms and parking lot...improvements that have been made without incurring debt, while maintaining adequate reserves.

Programming, particularly for children, also expanded under Chet's watch, including a swim team program, established for the first time. And the club has been working with the United States Tennis Association to ensure the club's tennis pros are up to date on the USTA's new 10 and under tennis program.

"Chet has been a strong proponent of transparency," Geha added. "We now hold two general meetings a year rather than one and have open meetings to present new capital improvement projects." Kronenberg is also a proponent of "enacting written rules, so there can be no claim of arbitrary decision making."

To this end, the club implemented a procedure whereby MTC's rules are reviewed, amended as appropriate and circulated to the membership every six months.

President Kronenberg has worked to increase the club's profile both regionally and nationally, is chair of the legal committee of the Southern California Tennis Association and periodically writes articles for BoardRoom magazine.

"Chet's been a successful board president because he loves MTC," Geha added. "He's been accessible to members and always acts in the best interest of the club. His initiatives will serve the club well into the next decade." And for these reasons, Chet Kronenberg is one of BoardRoom top private club presidents for 2011. **BR**

ROBERT W. KUMMER, JR., PRESIDENT | BIRNAM WOOD GOLF CLUB | MONTECITO, CA



ROBERT W. KUMMER, JR., PRESIDENT



MICHAEL GARDNER, GM

Robert Kummer's service as president arose because of a unique situation in late 2010. Within 60 days of the end of the fiscal year, the President-Elect removed himself from taking the reins of the presidency.

Birnam Wood Golf Club, which constitutes a 142 home enclave in Montecito, California featuring a Robert Trent Jones golf course, cottages, tennis courts, croquet facilities and an historical society-designated clubhouse, had to consider alternatives.

Requesting Kummer's return to the presidency became the best possible answer. He served as president in 2000-2002. With what was essentially a cold start in the midst of a crisis of leadership, President Kummer delivered the best year of governance, fiscal performance and leadership the club has experienced in years.

His hallmark accomplishments included a new member initiative with more than 50 new members joining the club, and an actual versus budget fiscal performance improvement of \$420,000. Initiation fees for the year reached \$1,900,000.

Kummer spearheaded the member survey and subsequent development of the clubhouse renovation project that was completed within 60 days of his becoming president. His success in establishing member confidence in his vision was evidenced with bond offerings oversubscribed twofold.

Kummer will not do the job of the management team. When approached by a member who is asking him to make an operational decision, his reply is: "No, that's the job of management."

At the outset of his term, he established board consensus setting clear and realistic goals for the GM/COO. All goals were reviewed mid-year and at the conclusion of the fiscal year for the first time in the GM's tenure. In addition to club goals, Kummer assured board support of the GM/COO's personal goals.

Member satisfaction has been the driving force President Kummer. This is a club president whose leadership style insists on transparency, a style very effective at Birnam Wood because the membership is a unique group of distinctly successful leaders; they know good leadership and will support any endeavor or organization that has a good leader.

Making decisions based wholly on member satisfaction, allowing a group of professionals to manage the operations of the club, setting the foundation for continued expansion of the membership rolls and leaving office with rock-solid cash reserves and operating plans are all reasons why Robert Kummer is one of BoardRoom's top private club presidents. **BR**

ARTHUR M. SCULLY, III, PRESIDENT | FOX CHAPEL GOLF CLUB | PITTSBURGH, PA



ARTHUR M. SCULLY, III, PRESIDENT



LAWRENCE 'SKIP' AVERY, GM/COO

After 11 years on the board of directors of Fox Chapel Golf Club, and Arthur Scully's term of service expiring in December 2009, the club received word that the newly elected president was to be relocated.

Without hesitation, Scully, a Fox Chapel member since 1988, agreed to extend his term and serve as president.

He assessed the club's challenges and opportunities and put together a list of priorities that he thought the board and club leadership needed to address to stay relevant in its Pittsburgh market.

First, Scully felt the board should enhance communications with the membership. He recognized the club's significant competition from other area clubs, and the need for retention of existing members and attraction of new members who had different perceptions about the place a club has or does not have in their lives.

Early in his tenure, President Scully appointed a four person-board working group to comprehensively assess all aspects of membership, resulting in changes that have significantly enhanced retention

of existing members, attraction of new members and updated membership categories and admissions processes.

He also focused on some of the club's other challenges: 1. Engaging the full board in a dialogue regarding the club's mission. 2. Identifying key strategic priorities, and 3. Taking the "journey" to achieve consensus regarding the GM/COO management model, now in place.

The board's call to action is described as "What...Not How", the board develops strategies and management and staff professionals determine how to implement the strategies and objectives.

Scully is also a strong believer of getting the 'right people on the bus' and wants to make sure that they have the tools to get the club done. He believes in professional development and ongoing training.

"I've been in the club industry management for nearly 31 years, have worked at nine clubs and currently serve as president of the CMAA," said general manager/COO Lawrence 'Skip' Avery. "I've seen many different types of presidents with very different skill sets, and believe that Mr. Scully is the one of the best president's I have ever worked with."

President Scully has been able to lead the club based on his passion of making the Fox Chapel Golf Club the best it can be while upholding the club's value and mission. He has also built the confidence in the membership.

He leads the board by building a consensus. However, he never lets the debate and discussion take over the process; he is focused on the result. He also believes in educating the board, making sure that the board has the tools to lead.

While this is not an easy or fast process for a club founded in 1923, President Scully thinks all the right pieces are in place, all of which should lead Fox Chapel to become a more relevant club with an exciting future. **BR**

PAUL G. STEVENS, PRESIDENT | BELFAIR | BLUFFTON, SC



PAUL G. STEVENS, PRESIDENT



DAVID PORTER, GM/COO

Why is Paul Stevens one of BoardRoom's top private club board presidents for 2011?

In short, he significantly moved the board's 'cultural' pendulum perception from "Them" to "Us", a seemingly tough challenge.

Belfair, an 1,100 acre member-owned private golf community located in Bluffton, South Carolina, has 770 members.

But systems alone do not insure a good board or a good community. Key elements also include commitment, competence, diversity, collective decision making, openness, transparency, effective communication with the management and the membership, fiscal responsibility, development and establishment of the clubs' mission, vision, and policy direction, especially through establishment of a strategic plan.

As he took the reins in 2011, President Stevens faced a monumental task of restoring 'community' at a club, which was divided emotionally, creating a volatile atmosphere.

Members in the fall of 2010 turned down a major clubhouse renovation. Mr. Stevens set the course in 2011 with the firm objective to create harmony and continue to move Belfair forward. He did

what he said with increased communications on all important issues and a summary letter to the members following board meetings.

He made it clear to members that he was always available to listen to their ideas and implement those that were possible.

Belfair has a true general manager/chief operating officer governance structure with all operations being the full responsibility of the GM/COO. Even further, the committees are advisory to the COO. This has been a structure in place since 2007 and each year it has wavered based on the influence of the members.

Stevens has been able to move Belfair much closer to this governance concept by empowering the board members to work with the committee chairs to understand it is not about power. It is about Belfair and being accountable and responsible for the community.

The progress has been evident in the satisfaction members have experienced in 2011. Stevens had the foresight and courage to bring the clubhouse renovation project back to the table after eight months of healing, with a commitment to solve a glaring need for Belfair – a critical improvement necessary to keep a competitive edge in a condensed market place.

He developed a program to introduce the new plan to the members where member feedback was paramount and they became part of the process from the point of concept to fruition.

His guidance to the COO David Porter and the strategic planning committee led to the completion of a new strategic plan for Belfair and the launch of a long-term master plan with a 10-year outlook.

His communicative skills were not only evident in the boardroom, but Stevens has been a great ambassador for Belfair.

Paul Stevens, with his infectious, humble and caring personality, has demonstrated leadership at the highest level and gained immense respect of all members and staff alike. Stevens exemplifies all these fundamentals and has positioned Belfair as a strong and enduring private community. **BR**

AL THORELL, PRESIDENT | PHILADELPHIA CRICKET CLUB | PHILADELPHIA, PA



AL THORELL, PRESIDENT



TIM MUESSLE, GM/COO

He wasn't the heir apparent for the job. Though a long time and well-respected member, Al Thorell was well engaged and content in working hard in his role as The Philadelphia Cricket Club's Treasurer.

But circumstances required a change, and a leader of his caliber, so when the board asked, Al Thorell accepted. The club was in somewhat of a fractured state after a comprehensive master plan had been presented to the membership, and a vote on an assess-

ment to fund it narrowly lost. A club divided is a club in discontent, and the atmosphere can become toxic.

"was needed to bring the club back into harmony," said Tim Muessle, the club's general manager and chief operating officer, "and Al Thorell went at it tirelessly.

He put into motion changes in management and governance. His moves were bold, and yet at the same time very measured. As chairman of a bank, he has the executive experience and know-how to be on top of the details, while also letting the professionals do their job. And his years of service to the club as a board and committee member, and his high participation level in all club activities gives him tremendous insight into the direction the club needs to go in.

passed with a resounding 67 percent approval. A fractured club had become united under Al Thorell's leadership.

The club is now embarking on a series of facilities improvements that will assure its prominence for many years to come.

Thorell, founder and chairman of Valley Green Bank in Philadelphia, has been a club member since 1988. He and his wife Mary, have three sons (all of whom are members) and a daughter and many grandchildren. He is active playing golf, squash, and tennis. **BR**

JOHN TOMSKY, PRESIDENT | ROCKRIMMON COUNTRY CLUB | STAMFORD, CT



JOHN TOMSKY, PRESIDENT



FRANK BENZAKOUR, GM

John Tomsy, at the start of his term in 2008 right around the time of the Wall Street meltdown, 'took the bull by the horns.' He hired the right professionals for key positions and let them manage the club.

His dedication, passion and knowledge of club governance are second to none and his presence in the boardroom is truly felt by all and his ability to get things done is absolutely admirable.

Fiscal prudence and financial responsibility are high on his list, and bylaw changes and capital projects are now supported enthusiastically by the membership, without controversy.

As a trial lawyer, president Tomsy is used to quickly thinking of all possible options before he says something, but when he speaks, you know it is accurate and to the point. He always comes across as a person who cares and has covered the angles. He gives a sense of security with a 'no nonsense' approach.

Under his administration, the club has not had any dues increased in the last three years while members satisfaction is at an all time high. Attrition is at its lowest, while other clubs may be struggling to attract new members.

"John is a master at keeping the big picture in mind when making decisions," said club's general manager Frank Benzakour. "The way he thinks, speaks and conducts himself is absolutely enviable by many.

"He is very deserving of this award. As a president, he has poured his heart and soul into the betterment of Rockrimmon. He has been completely dedicated to the club working diligently in improving every aspect of it. As a friend, he has been a great mentor to me. Well done John!!" enthused Benzakour.

John Tomsy, who has worked tirelessly for the benefit of the club, also serves with many local charities. He's been a man with a mission, and that's the reason why he's is one of BoardRoom top presidents for 2011. **BR**

GILLES VEZINA, PRESIDENT | RA CENTRE | OTTAWA, ONT. CANADA



GILLES VEZINA, PRESIDENT



RICK BAKER, GM/COO

The RA Centre (Recreation Association of the Public Service of Canada) in Ottawa Ontario celebrated its 70th anniversary in 2011 as one of the largest private members sport, recreation, fitness and hospitality clubs in Canada.

With over 22,000 members the leadership of President Gilles Vezina has been outstanding.

A retired comptroller general of the federal government's finance department, Vezina in his spare time has provided outstanding leadership to the 16-member board of directors and management team.

"The close working relationship I have had with Gilles is unparalleled and it has been so rewarding, working with an individual who is so talented, always accessible and exudes the confidence and leadership abilities to make our club such a great place at which to work," said Rick Baker, RA Centre's CEO and general manager.

Gilles, president for the past two years, was chosen by his peers on the board to serve this role because of his caring personality,

thoughtfulness and his ability to engage people in the RA Centre and for his innate ability to get things done. He has been a board member for 10 years.

Vezina has been the driving force behind the club's recently completed strategic plan, which articulates a new vision, mission and five-year plan for the future of the RA. He advocated for and guided the discipline protocol committee, charged with the development and writing of a members' policy dealing with harassment, discrimination, violence and breach of the RA Code of Ethics.

Gilles has also been the governance committee's leading proponent, leading to the adoption of a new management framework identifying, redefining and implementing the roles and responsibilities for all board members and the management team.

"He has the pulse of the membership and when situations arise, takes the time to listen, and he has a fair and courteous manner when making decisions for the betterment of the club," added CEO Baker.

He has attended a number of club management functions outside of the club and illustrates superb networking skills to ensure the industry can meet the challenges all clubs are facing today, including staying viable and meeting the ever-growing needs of our members.

Being a president of such a large club requires the passion, skills, support systems and a membership that believes that it is the "Place To Be." Gilles Vezina has exemplified all of these traits.

As a long time member, he has also maintained his hobby and passion in photography and serving on a number of community social service boards.

It is for these many reasons that Gilles Vezina is one of BoardRoom top presidents for 2011. **BR**