



Trans-Miss Transcript

Serving Golf for More than 100 Years

www.trans-miss.com



Penn State's Bendzak wins Vickers Award

**Bendzak, 27, is among 16 students earning
2010-11 scholarships from the TMGA**

Cont'd on page 3

To Trans-Miss Members and Supporters,



Congratulations to all of our 2010-11 Trans-Miss scholars lead by Ernie Bendzak, the inaugural Vickers Award winner! Our scholarship committee chairman tells me that the task of ranking the 59 students who submitted an application was extremely difficult. But it did point out the high caliber of students that are pursuing a turfgrass management degree. From that perspective the future of our game is in good hands!

This issue of the Transcript reports on an outstanding group of students training to be tomorrow's best golf course superintendents. With awards totaling \$63,000 plus other tangible gifts presented to our scholars, I have to thank our member clubs, players and donors for the support of this program. For over 60 years almost 900 students have received financial assistance from the Trans-Miss. You might have a Trans-Miss scholar working at your own club!

2011 promises to be a great year for the Trans-Miss!

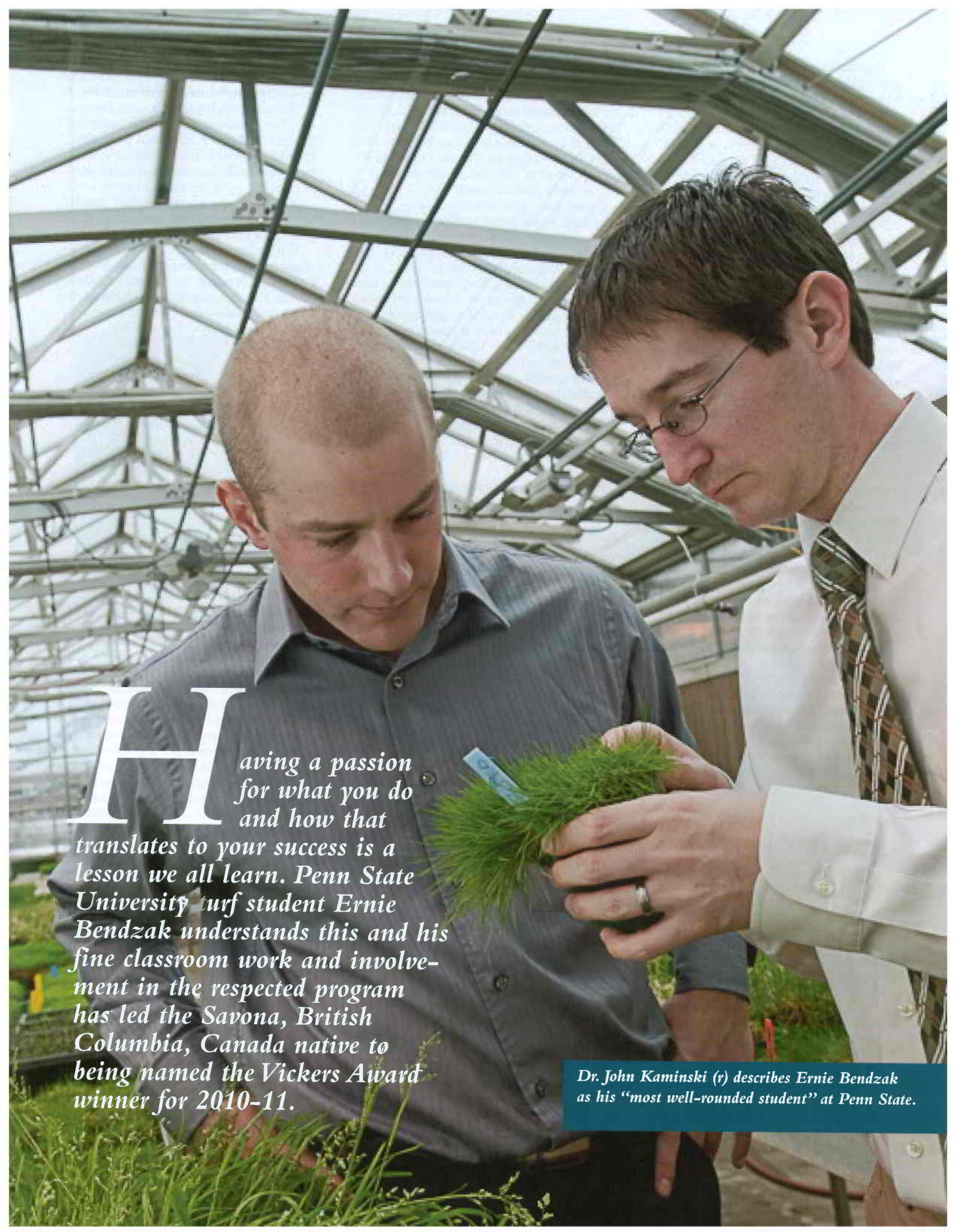


We kick it off in May with the inaugural Trans-Mississippi Senior Championship to be contested at one of our favorite venues – Brook Hollow Golf Club in Dallas, Texas. 120 of the nation's best

senior golfers (including some super seniors and “legends”!) will qualify for a match play bracket and then battle it out to crown a champion. It's a lot of golf, but guys, we are letting you use a cart! We aspire to make this the most prestigious senior amateur championship in the nation (except perhaps the US Senior Amateur!) and with the line-up of venues we have secured or planned, we expect that to happen.



The 108th Trans-Mississippi Championship will be played at the historic Kansas City Country Club (boyhood and current home course of Tom Watson) in July. It will be the eighth time our championship has been hosted there. With our return to the “open age” format last year we expect to see another quality field of collegians with a national reputation along with a number of national and regional top-ranked mid-amateurs. The big enhancement for this year will be the expansion from a 54-hole stroke play event to a grueling 72-hole championship where the final 36 holes will be played on the final day (after a cut to the low 60 and ties). Isn't that the way they used to do the U.S. Open?



*H*aving a passion for what you do and how that translates to your success is a lesson we all learn. Penn State University turf student Ernie Bendzak understands this and his fine classroom work and involvement in the respected program has led the Savona, British Columbia, Canada native to being named the Vickers Award winner for 2010-11.

Dr. John Kaminski (r) describes Ernie Bendzak as his "most well-rounded student" at Penn State.

Bendzak was selected from 59 applicants for this year's Trans-Mississippi Golf Association scholarships. He currently carries a 3.99 grade point average and is one of the top-ranked students in Penn State's turf program.

"I always thought I was a bit of a good student, but I never really found anything that piqued my interest until I started in this industry," Bendzak recently said from the home of the Nittany Lions. "You can try as hard as you want and try to succeed, but it's so much easier if it's something you really enjoy. I think that's why I've been as successful as I have in terms of my grades and my performance in class. I think a lot of that is just having a love for what you do.

"And that transfers directly over into a superintendent position. If you actually enjoy what you do it makes it really, really easy to put in that time and that effort, make everything perfect, do a good job and really care about the results."

Bendzak, 27, is among 16 students earning 2010-11 scholarships from the TMGA and will receive an \$8,000 grant to further his education in the Turf Management Program at Penn State. He also receives a sculpture of Old Tom Morris – the original golf course superintendent, a TMGA logo-ed laptop briefcase, TMGA pen, golf hat, tie and a framed certificate.

"I was really excited for the honor...to be included as a Vickers scholar and to be recognized for my hard work," said Bendzak. "Just immediately thinking of what that meant and how it was going to help me make it through my schooling and just having that on my resume...to have that on there is a feather in my cap. It's definitely a huge honor."

Lion at heart

After a few years working at Tobiano Golf Course in British Columbia, Bendzak said he made the decision to go away to school and pursue a turf management degree. That proved to be a wise one as he's thrived since arriving in Happy Valley.

"It was huge, getting away from home, getting out of my comfort zone and just throwing myself into the fire I guess," he now admits. "I've made a lot of great connections here... and in addition to that we have a lot of great instructors here and they're always willing to put in the time with you if there is something you are having trouble with.

I think I really lucked out."

Bendzak is involved with the Penn State Turf Club and was the only underclassman to participate with Penn State seniors in GCSAA Turf Bowl Preparation classes as he prepares for a career in the turf management industry. His classroom work and overall performance has impressed administration.

"Ernie is my most well-rounded and outstanding student within the golf course turf industry at Penn State," says John Kaminski, Ph. D., and director of the PSU turf program. "He excels in his classroom activities and is ranked second only behind a more senior student who carries a 4.0."

Bendzak, who grew up with avid golfing grandfathers and a great-grandfather who was a professional, says he played a lot of baseball as a youth and came back to golf around age 20.

"I sort of rediscovered it," he admits.

As plans for the long-awaited



Tobiano course finally came to fruition, Bendzak joined the maintenance crew. He says that was just days before "the first blades of grass began to sprout" and adds "the following months marked some of the most challenging and rewarding times of my life."

"It was really extreme conditions. We were trying to grow in cool-season grass in temperatures over 90 to near 100 degrees," Bendzak recalls. "So the first little bit was a lot of learning, a lot of scrambling. But I learned a lot about what turfgrass needs to survive...and a little about irrigation. So I got to see the entire process literally from before a blade of grass had even germinated. It was all-around exposure to all aspects of turf management."

The course won numerous awards including Golf Digest's "Best New Canadian Course" and Bendzak's on-course work performance gave

Tobiano superintendent Terry Smith an early indication the young man had a bright future in the business.

"Ernie's work ethic during his employment was second to none," Smith wrote in a letter supporting Bendzak for the Trans scholarship. "I believe that if Ernie sets his sights on becoming a successful and respected superintendent, all that stands between him and his goal is the time it takes to achieve it."

When Bendzak had to make a choice on where to serve his golf course internship, he wanted a place "with a rich history, high expectations and a location that was out of my comfort zone." Legendary Winged Foot Golf Club in Mamaroneck, N.Y., fit the bill perfectly.

"That was an amazing experience...obviously in the northeast it was a really tough summer," Bendzak says. "I think it was one of the more valuable times to be an intern. You got to see some of the tactics for keeping your turf alive under those conditions...keeping the playability where we wanted it and where the members expected it to be. To work at a club with two top 100 courses on the same property was pretty amazing."

It is obvious Bendzak is aware how important education has become for those pursuing careers in turf management and how the process will have to continue even after he begins to cash a paycheck.

"(Education) is huge and it's ongoing," said Bendzak. "Once you've graduated with your formal education you still have to continue to move on and become even further educated. I think if you stop, once you become stagnant, things sort of pass you by. Not only is it important for us as students but as we move the superintendent profession into the future."

Bendzak, who credits much of his success to parents Ron and Missy Bendzak of Savona, says he hopes his future includes a spot at a high-caliber private course, possibly in the United States.

"Ultimately, I think I'd like to work my way back towards the Pacific Northwest," he says. "That's where I'm from...and inevitably where I'd like to be. I wouldn't mind getting some warm-season grass experience. As for my next move out of school, I'm open to go anywhere."

Five earn \$5,000 grants

Five students were selected for

\$5,000 Trans scholarships, including Adam Schilpp, University of Maryland; Danny Vandecoevering, Oregon State University; Alex Dowdle, North Dakota State University; Justin Bicek, Rutgers University; and Jamie Borowski, Clark State Community College.

**Adam Schilpp,
University of Maryland
W.D. McBee, Jr. Scholarship**

Manassas, Va.'s Schilpp, who owns a sports management degree from James Madison University and has



interned at ESPN Radio, says it didn't take him long to find out working in the cubicle all day just wasn't for him.

"When working at the radio station, I never really developed the same relationships with my co-workers," says Schilpp, 25. "And, surprisingly, I found it even more tiring sitting in front of a computer screen than working long hours in the hot sun. I soon realized that what I would really like to do is to continue to work in the golf course environment..."

That led Schilpp, who as a 15-year-old had joined the staff at the Robert Trent Jones Golf Club in Gainesville, Va. before he could even legally work a 40-hour week, back to school. After discussions with his parents and the RTJ superintendent and assistant superintendent, he chose to attend the University of Maryland Institute of Applied Agriculture and pursue a turf degree. He carries a 3.9 GPA in Golf Course Management at the school.

"It's opened my eyes...there is a lot more to this industry than I ever realized," admits Schilpp, who also earned Shields Memorial, RTJ Golf Club and Mid-Atlantic GSCA scholarships. "Going to a school like Maryland is a great experience. I consider it the best two-year pro-

gram in the country. The professors were great, very accessible. I probably learned almost as much outside of the classroom talking to them in the office as I did in the classroom. It was an all-around experience for me."

Schilpp has taken that knowledge back to the Robert Trent Jones course, a high-end facility where top-quality course conditions are expected.

"(That experience) has really given me a sense of what it takes to maintain a high-end golf course, from the little detail work to the grand scheme of things," he says. "The course is kept very difficult, the rough is very thick, the greens typically stimp during the summer at between 12 and 13. ... (golfers) expect perfection all the time. I'm used to working long hours and making sure everything is perfect. That's kind of my work mentality now."

**Danny Vandecoevering,
Oregon State University
Ron Moore Scholarship**

Through playing golf, visiting courses as an intern during his time as a student in the Oregon State turf program or working out on the



course, Vandecoevering of Woodburn, Ore., says giving back to the game of golf and all the organizations that have helped him along the way will remain important.

"One of the things I was just blown away by being in school was how much the industry helps you out...there are a lot of scholarships available to students like us, that's something that I've always been so grateful for," says Vandecoevering, 21. "It's really important to me, that when I get done with school I give back to those organizations. I grew up playing golf. I love golf...anything I can do to enhance the expe-

rience for other people playing is really important to me because it is so much more than a game."

Vandecoevering, who maintains a 3.47 GPA in Horticulture with Turf Management option at OSU, has enjoyed success as a student in Corvallis. He was the department's Student of the Year in 2010.

"For me that was just an incredible honor, just to know that they picked me over some of my classmates, not just the other turf students, but they take all the Horticulture students and I know there are a lot of hard-working students there," says Vandecoevering. "It was really a surprise to me but it was awesome to know that they understood the work I was putting into being a part of the turf club, focusing on my studies and helping out in the department as much as I could."

Vandecoevering, a 2009 and 2010 Oregon GCSA scholarship recipient, has interned at Cornerstone Golf Club in Montrose, Colo., and at Illahee Hills Country Club in Salem, Ore. He also spent a week-long USGA internship, trailing Northwest Region Green Section Agronomist Larry Gilhuly.

"We went to low-end private clubs to high-end, just to see all the different options for those (courses) to improve," says Vandecoevering. "That basically covered every situation I might ever be in as a superintendent."

**Alex Dowdle,
North Dakota State University
Francis Whittaker Scholarship**



Dowdle of Kennedy, Minn., comes from an agricultural background. His family farms spring wheat, sugar beets, soybeans, corn and sunflowers on 4,000 acres in northwestern Minnesota. But the 21-year-old says taking over the family farm is not in his plans.

"I love everything about the farm,

but farming is not my passion and not something I could see myself doing for the rest of my life," says Dowdle.

But the experience has given him the "value of self-reliance, money management and a respect for the land" and that should translate to success in his projected career in golf course management.

"Growing up on the farm I've learned a lot about cultural maintenance and just the land itself, learning about soil properties and stuff like that," Dowdle says. "I really enjoy myself out on the farm, but it just wasn't something I saw myself doing in the future. But it's agriculturally based and so is turfgrass management. I wanted to do something with agriculture like my dad. I love golf and being at the golf course, so I thought what better career than turfgrass management. Everything I've learned at the farm helps me."

Dowdle, who has a 3.753 GPA in Sports and Urban Turf Management at North Dakota State, has been given supervisory responsibilities as a summer intern at three different golf courses during his tenure at NDSU, including impressing the staff at Spring Hill Golf Club in Wayzata, Minn.

"Alex has a work ethic that we would all like to have in our employees. He is a self-starter and a quick learner...Alex will also succeed in this business because of the ease he treats his fellow workers," Spring Hill superintendent Tim Johnson wrote of Dowdle in support of his scholarship application. Dowdle says that experience impacted him a couple ways.

"My boss at Spring Hill was very professional and I learned a lot," he says. "The main two points, I learned a lot about spraying and spraying practices...and from the business aspect of things I learned a lot from Tim on how to treat employees, how I want to treat employees when I'm a superintendent some day."

Justin Bicek, Rutgers University Tom Crow Scholarship

Bicek of West St. Paul, Minn., has not only enjoyed success in the classroom -- he carries a 3.93 GPA in Turf Management at Rutgers after doing his undergraduate work at South Dakota State University -- but he's earned a spot as assistant superintendent at North Oaks (Minn.) Golf Club.

After earning his degree in Landscape Architecture, Bicek went

to work with Duininck Brothers Golf, a course construction company in Minnesota. He says he gained valuable experience with the company traveling to projects in South



Dakota, Iowa and Florida.

"For almost a year I worked on five different courses, all of which were in different phases," Bicek says. Later, after returning to Minnesota and working for a landscape design firm, Bicek went to work for Jack Mackenzie, CGCS at North Oaks as a member of the turf maintenance staff. Two months later and having worked during the private course's Tom Lehman Design-led renovation, he was promoted to assistant superintendent.

"My experience at North Oaks has been tremendous...I have a great mentor in Jack Mackenzie," says Bicek, 26. "Each day we discuss the plan for the day and then try to follow that out as close as we can. I truly love what I do. I wouldn't trade my job for anything."

Mackenzie also insisted Bicek further his education in turf management so the young assistant applied to the respected Rutgers program and soon he was back in the classroom.

"Rutgers has truly opened a whole new set of doors for me in regards to relationships that I have made. The list of contacts I've made on the East Coast is tremendous and I know Rutgers will always be there to support me," Bicek says. "The education was great. The 20 weeks that you are there you are just pounded with information and everything that you do there is 100 percent golf based...you go there and get exactly what you need and when you are done there you're off and running."

Bicek and his wife Meghan have a house in West St. Paul.

Jamie Borowski, Clark State Community College Jackie Lee Scholarship

Borowski of Galloway, Ohio, is a student with his eyes on the future. Two of the most important things he's been involved with will have a major impact on the game of golf and our world: The First Tee pro-



gram and environmental stewardship on the course. And he's been able to experience both as second assistant superintendent at New Albany (Ohio) Country Club.

"The New Albany Country Club is not only dedicated to preserving the environment, but it's also dedicated to education and to The First Tee," says Borowski, 29. "Not only do I get to work at an amazing club, that will allow me the opportunity to take classes and work on my degree, but I can also volunteer on my off weekends to expose underprivileged youth to the game of golf to help them learn The First Tee core values: honesty, integrity, sportsmanship, respect, confidence, responsibility, perseverance, courtesy and judgment."

Borowski was pursuing a teaching degree as a student at Bowling Green University before landing at Clark where he maintains a 3.609 GPA in Agriculture/Golf Course Operations. He was working at Thornapple Country Club in Galloway, Ohio, and decided that was where he wanted to be.

"I was working at a golf course and literally fell in love with it, every aspect of it...watching it become the bloom of the spring and then kind of putting it to bed in the fall," Borowski says. "All the work that went into it really made me appreciate the game of golf even more." Borowski, who's looked into Big 10 turf programs at Ohio State, Penn State and Michigan State to further

his turf education, says his interest in golf course management and the environment blossomed when he interned at Nantucket Golf Club.

“Trying to find ways to use safer chemicals, to use less chemicals...in Massachusetts that was the law,” he says. “Moving back to Ohio, where we have the option to use a wider variety of chemicals I wanted to put it to us, ‘Let’s challenge ourselves here. Let’s try to use safer chemicals...let’s truly put forward a pro-environmental stewardship attitude.’”

Ten students were selected for \$3,000 Trans scholarships including:

James Seisun, Penn State
(Jack Nicklaus Scholarship)

Travis Martin, Rutgers
(Hale Irwin Scholarship)

Nick Dunlap, Iowa State;
Reagan Hejl, Texas A&M
(Curtis Ford Scholarship)

Kevin Shipley, Rutgers
Charles Kerr, Penn State
Colby Lisenby, Texas A&M
Daniel Rude, University
of Minnesota

Ryan Coburn, Rutgers
Jeremy Galvin, Oregon State.

The Trans-Mississippi Golf Association is one of the oldest and most prestigious golf organizations in the United States.

Established in 1901, the Trans is composed of more than 200 member clubs located throughout the country.

The Association is governed by a board of independent directors and is headquartered in Lawrence, Kan. Since the

Trans-Miss Scholarship Fund granted a \$600 scholarship in 1953 to Colorado State University (then Colorado A&M), the Trans-Mississippi Golf Association has become a national leader in assisting young men and women pursuing careers in turf management.

For more information on the Trans Scholarship Program go to www.trans-miss.com/scholarships/.



Our ever popular Trans-Miss Four-Ball Championship heads to Arizona in September (a great time of year in the Valley of the Sun). Desert Mountain Golf Club in Carefree is the site and the competition will be held on its Geronimo and Chochise courses. Bring your wife and let her enjoy the attractions of the area while you play golf all day!

Entry forms for all three championships are available to print from our website (www.trans-miss.com) and then mailed to the Lawrence office. Please note that each event has a deadline for entries!

Have a great 2011 golf season and we hope to see you at one or all of our championships this year!

Warmest regards,

Richard Coon
TMGA President



Officers & Directors

Information

Officers and Directors for 2010

Officers

President, Richard Coon, Amarillo CC, Amarillo, TX
Vice President, Steve Hatchett, Flint Hills National GC, Wichita, KS
Ex. Vice President, James Vickers, Eldorado CC, Indian Wells, CA
Treasurer, John Pigg, Spanish Oaks GC, Austin, TX
Secretary, Dorsey Lynch, Desert Forest GC, Paradise Valley, AZ
Ex. Secretary, Kim Richey, LeCompton, KS
Ex. Officio, Hank Wilkinson, The Minikahda Club, Edina, MN

Directors

Tim Andersen, Hazeltine National GC, Chaska, MN
Steve Bell, Denver CC, Denver, CO
Patrick Brooks, Mission Hills CC, Mission Hills, KS
Roger Brown, Flint Hills National GC, Arkansas City, KS
Brooks Carey, Pine Valley GC, Charlotte, NC
John "Kip" Colwell, Jr., The Minikahda Club, Edina, MN
Steve W. Creekmore, Jr., Hardscrabble CC, Fort Smith, AR
Steve W. Creekmore III, Hardscrabble CC, Fort Smith, AR
D. Patrick Curran, The Kansas City CC, Mission Hills, KS
Tom Devlin, Flint Hills National GC, Wichita, KS
Jerry O. Ellis, Oklahoma City G&CC, Oklahoma City, OK
Tom Garrett, Somerset CC, St. Paul, MN
John Goode, Spanish Oaks GC, Killeen, TX
Robert Ireland, The Olympic Club, Kentfield, CA
Gary Jarmon, Oak Tree GC, Tulsa, OK
Kevin Kobalter, The Meadow Club, San Rafael, CA
Chris Maletis, Langdon Farms GC, Portland, OR
Richard McClintock, Cherry Hills CC, Denver, CO
Michael McCoy, Glen Oaks CC, West Des Moines, IA
Hunter Nelson, Houston CC, Houston, TX
Phil Patterson, Oklahoma G&CC, Oklahoma City, OK
Gary Potter, Denver CC, Denver, CO
S.I. Russell, Belleview CC, Belleair, FL
Stan Smazal, Cherry Hills CC, Denver, CO
Stephen Summers, Brook Hollow GC, Dallas, TX
Gregg Tryhus, Whisper Rock GC, Paradise Valley, AZ
Chuck Weil, Monterey Peninsula CC, Pebble Beach, CA
Phil White, Preston Trail GC, Dallas, TX
Hank Wilkinson, The Minikahda Club, Edina, MN

Trans-Miss Transcript is a publication of the Trans-Mississippi Golf Association. Founded in 1901, TMGA is one of the oldest and most prestigious golf organizations in the United States. Through its Turf Scholarship Program, the association perpetuates the training of qualified young people to become responsible for any golf facility's greatest physical asset - the course itself.

Editor:

Kim Richey
1201 Wakarusa, Suite B5, Lawrence, KS 66049
785-842-0155 www.trans-miss.com

Trans-Miss Transcript is designed by Bob Neace Graphic Design, Inc. - bngd@cox.net

Save the Date!

2011 Trans-Mississippi Senior Championship,
Brook Hollow Golf Club, Dallas, Texas
May 23-27

2011 Trans-Mississippi Championship
Kansas City Country Club
July 10-13

2011 Trans-Mississippi Four-Ball
Desert Mountain Golf Club
September 12-15