



## 2008 Excellence in Club Management Awards

**M**cMahon Group, Inc., the St. Louis-based consulting firm, and *Club & Resort Business* have announced the 2008 recipients of the Excellence in Club Management Awards program, established in 1997 by McMahon Group and co-sponsored since 2005 by *C&RB*. In addition to ceremonies at their individual clubs, the winners, along with those from previous years, will be recognized at an Awards Dinner to be held at New Orleans Country Club during the 2009 Golf Industry Show.

In-depth articles detailing the achievements that led to the selection of the 2008 winners will appear in upcoming issues of *Club & Resort Business*.

The annual awards are selected through nominations submitted on behalf of qualified candidates by other parties. Award recipients are selected solely on the basis of their achievements at the club they currently manage; lifetime achievements are not considered.

A Selection Committee comprised of a peer group of club managers conducts judging: the McMahon Group and *Club & Resort Business* are not involved in the selection of the award winners.

### WINNER

Country/Golf Clubs with 600 or More Full-Privilege Members



John's Island Club



**Brian Kroh, CCM**  
General Manager  
John's Island Club,  
Vero Beach, Fla.

Kroh came to John's Island Club, a private, member-owned club for a community with almost 1,400 homes and condominiums, in 1996, after five years as General Manager of Belle Meade CC and stints as Clubhouse Manager at The Los Angeles Country Club and The Houston Club. During his 12 years at John's Island, he has overseen redesigns of all three of the club's championship golf courses, recovery from two hurricanes that caused \$8 million in damage to club facilities in 2004, and most recently, the largest single project in club history—building the new, \$30 million, 42,000-sq. ft. Beach Club that opened in late October. John's Island has also earned and retained Platinum Club of America ranking under Kroh's stewardship.

"There was so much more to [the Beach Club] project than just a new building," reports club President Thomas Slater. "The old Beach Club, a major center of activity, had to be torn down, and the club had to go through a whole season without a key source of enjoyment and major source of revenue. To deal with this, Brian and his team developed and executed plans that included building temporary facilities at the beach; converting major rooms at the Golf clubhouse for a new casual dining room with a new menu; erecting a storm-proof, air-conditioned Pavilion for large meetings and other club activities; and setting up various outdoor dining areas. There was widespread appreciation from the membership for the efforts made during the year of construction."

### WINNER

Country/Golf Clubs with Fewer than 600 Full-Privilege Members



**Charles Scupham**  
General Manager  
Skokie Country Club  
Glencoe, Ill.

In his five years as GM at Skokie CC, reports the club's President, John Phillips, Charles (Chuck) Scupham has become known for two aspects of leadership.

"First, Chuck answers virtually every member's question with one word: 'Yes,'" Phillips says. "Whether it be a novel idea for a party, a special dining request, or practically anything else, Chuck believes—and has imbued his management team and entire staff with the same attitude—that there is always a way to fulfill a member's need."

"Second, Chuck has been outstanding in balancing his role as a steward of Skokie's traditions on one hand, and his willingness and desire to innovate on the other," Phillips adds. Innovations implemented under Scupham's direction include "Camp Skokie," a family cookout/campout that drew 175 campers last year; an outdoor dining program that split two large terraces with elevated views of the golf course into upper (full-menu) and lower (casual bar menu) options; and a "Bistro 500" casual, kid-friendly format in the clubhouse's downstairs dining space on Friday and Saturday nights.

Overall, Skokie CC's dining program has seen a 20% increase in *a la carte* meals since 2004 and now averages 24,000 member dinners per year. Perhaps most impressively, the gains to date have been made without the benefit of a main kitchen renovation, which is set to commence in January and be completed in May 2010. A main dining room renovation is also planned as a future phase.

## WINNER

City, Athletic or Specialty  
(Non-Golf) Club

## North Hills Club



**C. W. Cook**  
General Manager/COO  
North Hills Club  
Raleigh, N.C.

As highlighted in *C&RB's* collection of "Revival Stories" in its December 2007 issue ("North Hills Club Gets Back in the Game"), C. W. Cook didn't exactly walk into a thriving situation when he came to North Hills Club in 2005.

After his wife was transferred to Raleigh by IBM, Cook, who had been GM/COO at River Hills CC in Florida and Balcones CC in Texas, had to resume his career with whatever opportunities might be available in that area. That led him to North Hills, a club that was founded in 1961 but 40 years later was still operating with its original 12,000-sq. ft. clubhouse and a 225-sq. ft. kitchen.

Upon his arrival, North Hills was embarking on phase two of an improvement project that had led 110 members to resign because of assessments. But Cook plunged into the challenge—and three years later, North Hills is now at full capacity with 800 members and a waitlist of 100 more, is bustling with a variety of activity in its new, 25,000-sq. ft. clubhouse, and has zoomed past \$1 million in F&B revenues, thanks to a tripling of dining sales and a nearly 500% increase in the banquet department.

"[North Hills] now has an in-demand event venue that is overwhelmingly used by members vs. non-members," says the club's President, Bob Brooks. "C.W. has guided our club to its best financial position in 47 years of existence, and clearly has the club emerging as one of the finest athletic/racquet clubs in the country."

## WINNER

2008 Rising Star  
Award



**Craig Cutler**  
Assistant Manager  
Detroit Athletic Club

In the five years since arriving as Restaurant Manager at Detroit Athletic Club (DAC), Craig Cutler has fast-tracked through that position and the post of Director of Banquet Services to his current position of Assistant Manager. This would be impressive at any

property, but is especially so at the 4,000-member DAC, which has long held a reputation as one of the most exemplary full-service city athletic clubs and is well-recognized for its \$7.3 million food and beverage operation ("The Cadillac of Club Cuisine," *C&RB*, February 2008).

Perhaps the best testament of all to Cutler's abilities and continuing potential, though, comes from the statement by DAC Executive Manager Ted Gillary, a 33-year industry veteran and '99 Excellence in Club Management Award recipient. "There is no doubt in my mind that [if needed, Craig Cutler] could immediately step in and assume the role of DAC Executive Manager," Gillary says. "He is truly a second-in-command and has general oversight responsibilities for all operations. [He] serves a pivotal role in our Performance Excellence Process, and has become an expert on quality management.

"In his five years here," Gillary adds, "Craig has grown as a manager-leader; developed young staff to excel; inspired seasoned veterans to new levels of performance; put his mark on the bricks and mortar of the clubhouse; streamlined processes, and helped to raise quality and performance throughout. He is a high-integrity and moral leader who exemplifies the best in the club industry."

### Golf Course Openings Continue to Decline

U.S. golf course developers are on track to post the lowest number of openings in two decades, according to a new report from the National Golf Foundation (NGF). Measured in 18-hole equivalents, 65 courses have opened so far this year and NGF estimates that, based on the number of courses currently under construction, another 10 to 20 will open by December 31. That would bring total 2008 openings to between 75 and 85 18-hole equivalents, the lowest number in over 20 years.

"This is the second time this year we have lowered our forecast of golf course openings," says Joe Beditz, NGF President and Chief Executive Officer. "The economic situation, and

in particular the continued decline in the housing market, has and will continue to suppress golf course development activity in the U.S."

While openings continue to fall, so do course closures. So far this year there have been 74 verified course closures, and NGF currently forecasts the number of closures to be less than 100 by year's end. There were 146 closures in 2006 and 122 in 2007. Therefore, it appears that 2008 will be the third year in a row with zero to slightly negative net growth in overall industry supply (with openings and closures canceling each other out).

### Alcohol-on-Course Ban Lifted in Massachusetts

Until recently, Massachusetts had

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[ JANUARY 2009 ]

2009 PGA Merchandise Show  
January 29-31, 2009  
Orlando, Fla.  
[www.pgashow.com](http://www.pgashow.com)

[ FEBRUARY ]

Golf Industry Show  
February 5-7  
New Orleans, La.  
[www.golfindustryshow.com](http://www.golfindustryshow.com)

*C&RB's* "Chef to Chef" Conference  
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