



PGA

Connecticut Section

News & Information

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

May 5, 2008

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SHENNECOSSETT GOLF COURSE NAMED RECIPIENT OF THE WALTER LOWELL DISTINGUISHED PUBLIC GOLF COURSE DISTINGUISHED SERVICE AWARD

Rocky Hill, Conn. – The Connecticut Section of The PGA of America announced today that Shennecossett Golf Course in Groton Conn., has been named the 2008 recipient of the Walter Lowell Public Golf Course Distinguished Service Award, as the model public golf course serving the game of golf in Connecticut and Western Massachusetts. The award was inaugurated in 2001 in honor of Canton Public golf Course for the standards it set towards a public course's responsibility to its community to provide playing opportunities for all those who want to play and learn the game.

Shennecossett is celebrating it's 110 year and it operated by The Town of Groton. It's storied history began in 1898 as a private course that was adjacent to the famous Griswold Hotel along the Thames River. The Town purchased the course in 1968, and since that time, it has had a strong commitment to providing accessibility to all golfers.

“Shennecossett is one of the most important and historic golf courses in our section,” announced Ron Dellostritto, President of the section. “We are honored to pay tribute to the Town of Groton for its outstanding golf operations and providing a wonderful golf experience for its patrons.”

Ten years ago, the Town and Pfizer agreed to a land swap whereby the latter built three new holes and renovated or restored five others on the Donald Ross original designed course. The course celebrated its reopening in 1998 by hosting the Connecticut Senior Open. This three-day tournament has been held annually in July ever since and brings senior amateurs and professionals from several surrounding states and as far away as California and Florida. Staging this event involves not only town and golf course staff, but also numerous volunteers from the community for the production of the event. Other course community involvement includes participation in Free Lesson Month each May, and the inaugural Patriot Day fundraiser last year to benefit fallen heroes from the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Shennecossett and the Town have made a commitment for inclusionary programs for parks and recreation activities. On June 20 of this year, and in partnership with the Gaylord Hospital and the Eastern Amputee Association, the course will host a training seminar to train golf professionals to give golf instruction to physically challenged golfers.

Shennecossett has also been an ardent supporter of junior golf, offering a very reasonable season pass for juniors. Each summer the staff has offered golf clinics in July and August, culminating with the Junior Championship. The course serves as host for the high school team and also supports collegiate golf, becoming the host course for the Mitchell College team practice, home competitions, and the conference invitational. In addition, for several years, the course was a distribution site for Connecticut PGA Junior Golf Association materials and hosted last year's Jack Kelly PGA Junior Tournament of Champions.

Director of Parks & Recreation John Silsby says the Town has stayed true to its mission to provide a quality golf course in a customer friendly manner to the golfing public. "Though our Donald Ross links has much tradition, we are proud that it serves the golfing public of Southeastern Connecticut in such a satisfactory way," said Silsby. "We've worked to make Shenny more accessible to all golfers and we're also proud to continue to host the annual Connecticut Senior Open."

Representatives from Shennecossett and the Town, including Town Manager Mark Oefinger, Silsby, PGA Professional Todd Goodhue, and CAGCS Superintendent Eric Morrison, will be honored on Tuesday, May 27, at Hartford Golf Club during the annual Walter Lowell PGA Tournament. PGA Professionals from the section will participate in the golf tournament and attend the awards ceremony that follows. Early that same day the section will hold its 75th Anniversary ceremony at Ann Howard at The Bond in Hartford.

All 124 public golf courses in the section are nominated for the award and requested to submit an application in order to be considered. Former recipients are Canton Public Golf Course, Lyman Orchards Golf Course, Raceway Golf Course, Skungamaug River Golf Course, Tallwood Country Club, Timberlin Golf Course, and Tunxis Plantation Country Club.

The Connecticut Section, PGA of America is a not-for-profit organization chartered by The PGA of America in 1933 to promote golf and enhance the livelihood of its members. The Section is comprised of more than 350 men and women PGA Professionals who are employed at over 170 golf facilities throughout Connecticut and Western Massachusetts and who are committed to growing the game of golf. More information about The Connecticut Section is available on the organization's web site, located at www.ctpga.com.

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