

## Executive Director's Report

With a blink of an eye, 2016 has come and gone and we find ourselves preparing for another golf season. As 2017 commences, little of the recent strain on golf clubs has lifted. Interestingly however, places like Top Golf and Drive Shack are thriving and growing, and Las Vegas hotels are adding golf experiences to their repertoire of VIP offerings. This certainly doesn't mean that traditional golf clubs of the Met Section should put neon targets on their ranges, but since the consumers patronizing those experiential places are potential customers we had better at least pay attention. The challenges are great, but the talented members of the Met PGA must continue to honor the past while remaining the authority on changes in our game and ways to innovate.

There is no doubt that almost everyone reading this has had to do more with less in the recent past. Club's that have been forced to trim golf budgets and reduce costs generally haven't lowered their expectations in terms of service. Add to that the rise in popularity of indoor facilities and teaching centers, and professionals are busier than ever with less available budgets for staff. These are challenges to our businesses for sure, but they also provide us the opportunity to adapt and develop new ways to deliver a custom experience that suits our customer's lives. In the process of adapting to customer demands, a primary concept has to be FUN. There are simply too many barriers to entry for non-golfers that our job is to reduce or eliminate. If we are simply continuing to do what we've always done without analysis, we are going to be passed by. New golfers look and behave differently than established ones. We can either embrace things like cell phone usage or allow our rules to hold us back. In fact, utilizing technology presents an opportunity to make golf more FUN for young people. It might even make the club collections process easier as younger member accounts are more likely to keep current with the convenience of app based payment. As the USGA has recently made relatively radical steps in attempt to make the rules less intimidating, golf clubs should be mirroring that effort to modernize the overall club experience. Hopefully most clubs have already altered their metrics for club usage to include driving range, short game, and putting green practice time. Sure rounds of golf are easiest to track and have been an industry standard, but when it comes to club activity and justification of your worth; statistics on overall usage would be an invaluable tool. In the same vein, catering to the variety of members who use the facility in different ways is so critical. Whatever they do to have FUN at the facility **is golf to them** and we need to be the provider of that experience, however it looks. In fact, it is our challenge to continually identify new ways to deliver these experiences in ways that fit into people's lives as they are currently living them.

Our staff is completely dedicated to providing services to PGA members and the local golf community. Kelli Clayton's fingerprints continue to cover almost everything the staff works on. Dan Frankel continues his leadership of all things junior golf, especially the Met PGA Junior Tour. Dan Kiley is coming off of his first year running our robust Tournament Program, already with plans for tweaks and improvements. Paul Giordano's efforts have boosted our communications and bolstered our presence on social media. Under Kaitlin Sabbagh's watch, PGA Junior League has grown along with a number of other Player Development initiatives and Special Projects. We also have a group of PGA Members and Field Staff who run extremely hard during the summer months to ensure the success of our events and programs. Jonathan Gold is our PGA of America Career Consultant, and fortunately he considers the Met Section home. He has worked closely Met PGA leadership and a number of clubs to help continue our legacy of dedication to member employment. Like you, our staff has challenges, but we are motivated to succeed and we any success we've enjoyed to the support we've received from the membership.

To close, I'd like make an appeal for all members to get themselves involved with the association as much as you can. Similar to changing the Rules of Golf or adapting club policies, the idea of getting involved has to be less overwhelming. I totally understand that for members, participation in the association is time added to the already consuming commitments to families and jobs. Hopefully there are some non-traditional methods of involvement that require less commitment, but still positively impact the association. Give a call to a Tournament Committee Member to tell them why you can't or don't participate in Pro Ams, volunteer for a Met PGA HOPE program, or let us know how you are best able to fundraise at your club so we can share your ideas with others. At minimum, it would be a dramatic boost if all members knew who our Partners and Sponsors were and found a way to share your appreciation with them. Ideally, being a Met PGA Partner would earn companies a competitive advantage when doing business with you. Outside of that, letters, phone calls, or even social media mentions help to at least substantiate an increased awareness of their desire to be connected to you. Your involvement in the association is more important than you might think and all members of the Met PGA are important to the process by which the association operates.

We are excited about 2017 and wish you all the best in the upcoming season.