



25

Moments in Time

*As The Met Golfer celebrates its 25th year of publication,
we look back at the moments that have shaped the MGA
over the last quarter century*

BY THE EDITORS

2006 U.S. Open returns to Winged Foot

After the 1974 "Massacre" and the '84 traffic jams, there was speculation about whether the U.S. Open would – or should – ever come back to Winged Foot. Sure, it hosted the 1997 PGA Championship, but that was a comparatively small event by today's U.S. Open standards. The highly successful week emphatically answered any lingering questions about Winged Foot's viability as a U.S. Open site. As in past Opens at the storied MGA club Winged Foot, the golf course won, as five-over was the lowest total score.



GETTY IMAGES



2006 Michelle Wie plays in the U.S. Open Sectional Qualifying Round

The MGA has long had the privilege of conducting local and sectional U.S. Open qualifying. But never in its history has there been the type of spectacle that occurred on June 5, as 16-year-old Michelle Wie attempted to become the first female to play in a U.S. Open. An astounding 5,000 people and 250 members of the media came out to Canoe Brook to watch – so many that MGA officials were forced to close the gates by 11 a.m. Wie excited the crowds with a morning round of 68 but faded in the afternoon, missing a spot in the Open by five strokes. However, the day remains one of the biggest competitive events in MGA history.



2004 MGA reaches milestone of 500 member clubs

When the MGA was founded in 1897 with 26 clubs, no one could have predicted the tremendous growth of the game throughout the second half of the 20th century. As a new millennium dawned, dozens of new courses were being built throughout the Met Area, and the MGA welcomed those and several "clubs without real estate" as members to the association. In 2004, the MGA surpassed 500 member clubs, more than double the number it had just 21 years earlier.



2003 Former Ike champion Jeff Thomas dies at age 44

Standout New Jersey amateur Jeff Thomas was one of the most talented golfers to ever emerge from the Met Area, and also one of the most troubled. He was found dead on July 30 in a Florida motel room, and his loss was a blow to the MGA and amateur golf. Thomas won the 1996 Ike Championship, a record eight New Jersey state amateur titles, and gained national prominence with his win at the 1993 U.S. Mid-Amateur. As MGA Executive Director wrote after Thomas's death, "For every brilliant shot there was a bad personal decision, and for every historic victory a shortcut taken or a promise broken...no one understood the demons that plagued his personal life."



2003 MGA launches inaugural Carter Cup

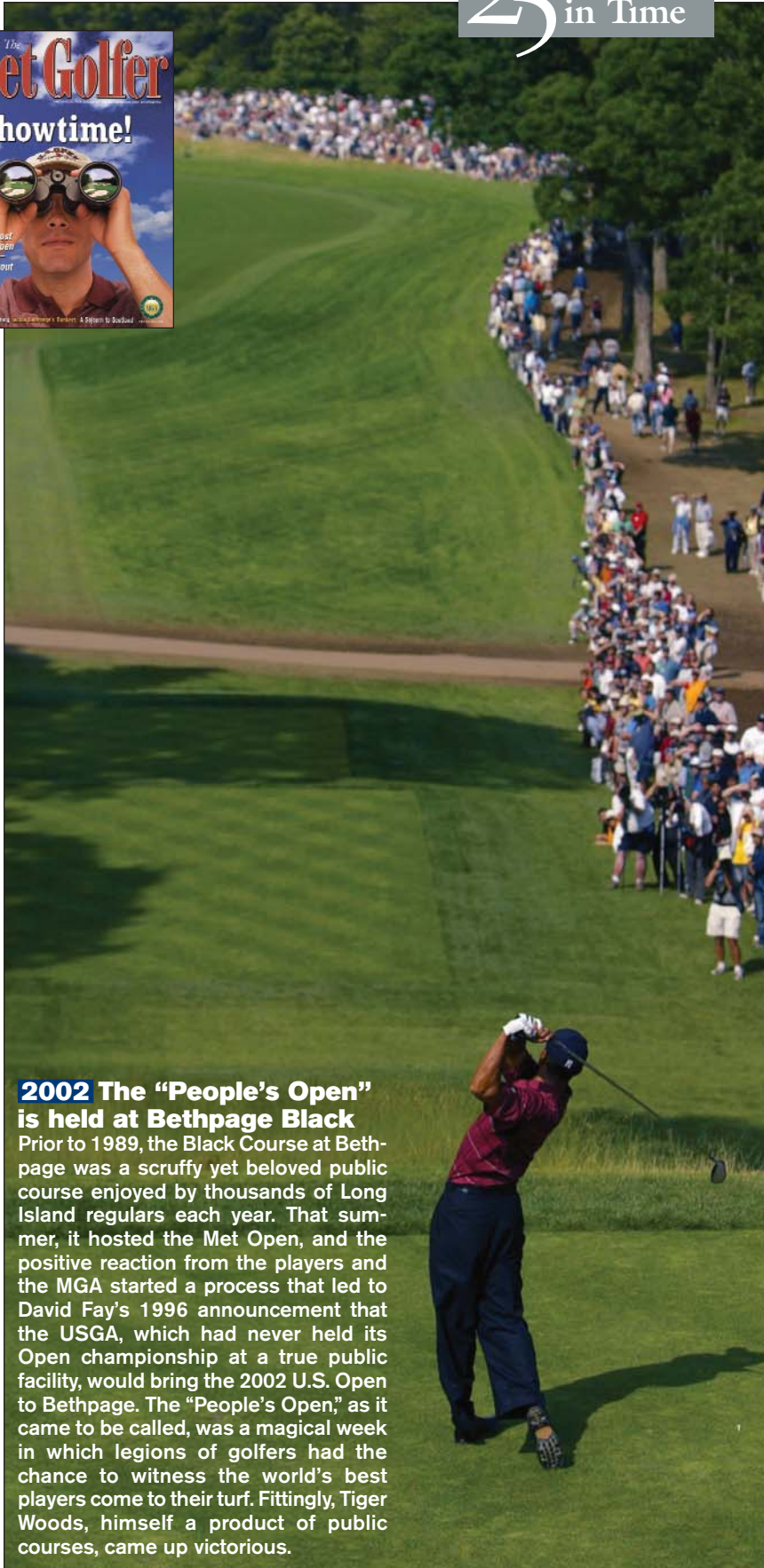
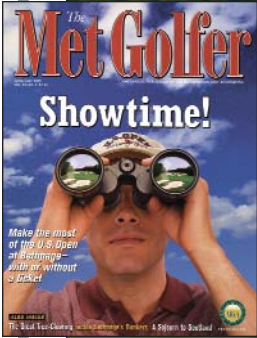
After 18-year-old Michael Carter, a junior club champion at Baltusrol and Winged Foot, died in a car accident in 2002, his parents, J. Michael (a member of the MGA Executive Committee, who passed away in 2005) and Mary Lou, worked with the MGA and Baltusrol to establish a tournament in his honor. Played annually over the Upper and Lower courses at Baltusrol, the Carter Cup attracts a stellar field of junior golfers in a 36-hole stroke play championship. The spirit of competition and the talent of the young players stand as a fitting tribute to the Carter family and their impact on junior golf in the Met Area.



2002 U.S. Mid-Amateur comes to The Stanwich Club

Take a national championship played on a respected MGA course, two Met Area finalists, and a well-played final televised on ESPN, and the result is one of the most meaningful championships in local history. Deepdale's George Zahringer (*below*) defeated Shorehaven's Jerry Courville Jr. (*left*) to become the oldest U.S. Mid-Amateur champion at age 49. Zahringer also became the fourth MGA player to win the U.S. Mid-Amateur in a span of nine years (joining Jeff Thomas in '93, Courville in '95 and Ken Bakst in '97). Earlier in the event, Courville set his own record, becoming the winningest player in U.S. Mid-Am history.





2002 The "People's Open" is held at Bethpage Black

Prior to 1989, the Black Course at Bethpage was a scruffy yet beloved public course enjoyed by thousands of Long Island regulars each year. That summer, it hosted the Met Open, and the positive reaction from the players and the MGA started a process that led to David Fay's 1996 announcement that the USGA, which had never held its Open championship at a true public facility, would bring the 2002 U.S. Open to Bethpage. The "People's Open," as it came to be called, was a magical week in which legions of golfers had the chance to witness the world's best players come to their turf. Fittingly, Tiger Woods, himself a product of public courses, came up victorious.



2002 Johnson Wagner completes first-ever "Met Slam"

Met Area transplant Johnson Wagner burst onto the local golf scene in 2001, when he won the Met Amateur and then the Met Open (while still an amateur). That was impressive, but it was only a prelude to his record-shattering summer of 2002, when he became the first player to capture all three MGA "majors" – the Ike, Met Amateur, and the Met Open – in the same season. Wagner turned pro between the Met Amateur and Met Open, making the latter his first victory as a professional (he is now a rookie on the PGA Tour). His five consecutive major wins over two years is a record that is sure to stand for some time.



2002 100th playing of the Met Amateur Championship

The MGA's championship lineage was celebrated in August 2002 with the 100th playing of the Met Amateur, at Piping Rock. The first Met Amateur (won by H.M. Harriman, above) was held in 1899, meaning only the British, U.S. and Canadian Amateur Championships are older. Except for two years each during World Wars I and II, the Met Amateur has been contested every summer. The event's list of winners includes some of the biggest names in amateur golf history, such as Walter Travis, Jess Sweetser, Willie Turnesa, Dick Siderowf, George Zahringer and Johnson Wagner, who won the landmark 100th Met Amateur.

2002 Grand opening of The First Tee facility at Mosholu

The MGA and Met PGA were the driving forces behind the creation of The First Tee of Metropolitan New York, which gives kids from under-served communities a chance to learn golf and the life lessons the game teaches. On June 5, a ceremony was held at Mosholu Golf Course in the Bronx to mark the official opening of the first facility in the Met Area dedicated to The First Tee. Kids from across the region participated in the ceremonies, as this was "their" home course now. Since that day, The First Tee has opened facilities on Long Island; in Bridgeport, Connecticut; in Newark, New Jersey; and in Manhattan, helping introduce thousands of kids to golf. CBS Sports commentator Jim Nantz addressed the crowd at the opening ceremony (*below*).

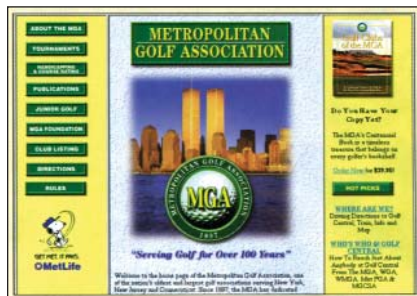


2001 MGA member clubs remember those lost on September 11th

On the day that changed everything, the MGA golf community was especially hard-hit. The attacks claimed the lives of hundreds of MGA club members, and the clubs' reaction to the tragedies spoke volumes about the spirit and camaraderie that exists among golfers. Memorial dedications became regular events in the months following September 11th, and many clubs hosted golf tournaments to raise money for victims' families and honor the memories of those who perished.

1998 Launch of www.mgagolf.org

The debut of the MGA's official website brought with it a new era in terms of the way the association communicates with its members. The website paved the way for online tournament registration and score posting, up-to-the minute news, and real-time tournament scoring, allowing members greater access to information and ushering in new standards of convenience. As mgagolf.org nears its 10th anniversary, it is difficult to imagine how the association could ever have lived without it.



1997 Quaker Ridge hosts the Walker Cup

The best players in amateur golf converged on Quaker Ridge for a week of competition, and the U.S. team emerged victorious over Great Britain & Ireland. The U.S. squad included future PGA Tour star Jason Gore (*top row, far right*) and former U.S. Amateur champion John Harris (*bottom row, left*), along with MGA standout Jerry Courville Jr (*bottom row, right*). Almost as impressive as the golf was the gracious hosting of the event by Quaker Ridge, and the dedication of hundreds of club, USGA and MGA volunteers. In addition, thousands of spectators got a chance to walk the grounds and witness a resounding victory by the "home" team.

1997 MGA celebrates its centennial

The MGA was formed on April 14, 1897, and 100 years later a gala was held at the Waldorf-Astoria Hotel to commemorate the occasion. More than 1,000 people attended the black-tie event, and legendary journalist Jack Whitaker gave the keynote address. The centennial was also honored in print, with the publication of *Golf Clubs of the MGA*, a beautiful and informative book detailing the histories of the MGA and its member clubs.

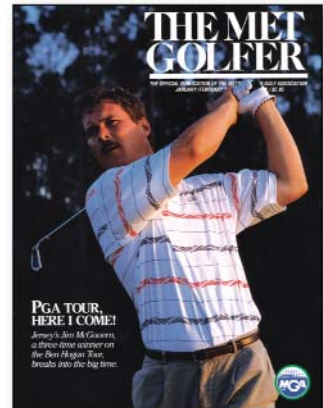


1996 Purse for Met Open reaches a new record

Though the MGA is at its heart an amateur organization, it was at the forefront in rewarding its professional competitors for their on-course performance. In reaching a then-record \$90,000 total purse, large by any standards of the day, the MGA showed its commitment to the tradition of the Met Open, which was in the early 20th century one of the most prestigious professional events in the country. Bruce Zabriski, then a teaching pro at Westchester Country Club, took home the winner's check of \$18,000 at the 1996 Met Open, held at Stanwich.

1994 Opening of Golf Central

It was a somewhat radical idea at the time: The MGA would build a new headquarters and invite other local golf associations to share the office space, thereby consolidating golf-related organizations under one roof. Called "Golf Central," the building adjacent to Knollwood Country Club in Elmsford, N.Y. offered greater efficiency for the MGA, WMGA, Met PGA, and Westchester Golf Association, among others. The arrangement has fostered greater cooperation between the associations and a more service-oriented approach for area clubs and golfers.



1993 Hackensack GC member Jim McGovern wins on the PGA Tour

Hackensack Golf Club member Jim McGovern won the 1987 Met Open and the 1988 Met Amateur, establishing himself as a rising star. He later turned pro and enjoyed early success, winning three times on the 1990 Ben Hogan Tour. Despite the lure of warmer climates, he kept his home in New Jersey and was always seen as a "favorite son" of the Met Area. McGovern made it to the PGA Tour in 1991, and two years later, he broke through to win the Houston Open, the first local player to win on Tour since Bill Britton in 1989.

1992 MGA creates charitable Foundation to grow the game

As golf's popularity grew, the MGA became aware that the future of the game would depend on reaching further into communities to expose the game to a broader and more diverse audience. The MGA would need a vehicle to fund and support these new programs and services, and thus was born the MGA Foundation. Its flagship program, GOLFWORKS, along with The First Tee sites, caddie academies, junior championships and educational programs, are just some of the Foundation's successful initiatives. Through the Foundation, the MGA has helped cement its role as a leader in giving back to the game.



1990 MGA launches international competitions

In the spirit of Samuel Ryder and Herbert Walker, whose names grace international matches at the highest levels of pro and amateur golf, the MGA embarked on what would become biennial matches against a team from the Golfing Union of Ireland. The inaugural match, played at Metedeconk National Golf Club, featured an Irish team including future pros Pádraig Harrington (*fourth from left*) and Paul McGinley (*third from right*). The MGA pulled through with a thrilling victory, and a friendly rivalry was born. Since renamed the Carey Cup, these international matches were joined later in 1990 by the French-American Challenge Matches, pitting a team of MGA amateurs against counterparts at the Ligue de Paris.



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1988 Metedeconk National Golf Club ushers in a golden age of golf construction

The opening of Metedeconk National Golf Club in Jackson, New Jersey started a wave of new golf course construction across the Met Area that continues to this day. Rees Jones followed closely with Atlantic Golf Club, opened in 1990 and, also during the 1990s, the era of the upscale daily-fee facility brought into the MGA courses such as Ballyowen, Centennial, Long Island National and Pine Barrens. In recent years, the pendulum has swung back to private facilities, with the openings of clubs such as The Bridge, East Hampton Golf Club, Friar's Head, Trump National-Bedminster, Bayonne, Liberty National and Sebonack. All are creative designs that indicate the health of golf in the Met Area.

1986 The U.S. Open returns to Shinnecock Hills

A U.S. Open had not been held at Shinnecock Hills – a founding member of both the MGA and the USGA – since 1896, the second year the championship was ever played. So when golf's biggest major made its triumphant return 90 years later, it was a special week. Thousands of fans, many of whom had never seen the course, traveled by train out to the idyllic Southampton club, and millions more got their first glimpses of the course on television.





1986 MGA takes ownership of the Ike Championship

Many people forget that the Ike Championship – begun by the Daily News, Dana Mozley and former MGA President George Sands – had had fallen on hard times 30 years ago. There were not enough funds to stage the event in 1979, '80 and '85, and it was in danger of extinction. The MGA, coincidentally interested in creating a stroke play event of its own, stepped in and acquired the rights to the Ike. It debuted under the MGA banner in 1986 at Tuxedo, and has since become one of the most anticipated championships on the local golf calendar.

Dr. George Sands, '86 champ John Baldwin and Dana Mozley (l. to r.)

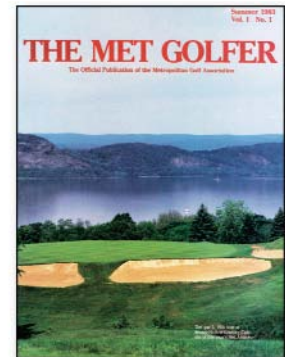
1985 George Zahringer wins Met Amateur and Met Open in the same year

Despite the demands of a growing family and Wall Street career, 32-year-old Zahringer became the first player in history to win the Met Amateur and Met Open in the same year. Both events were held at prestigious New Jersey clubs – the Amateur at Ridgewood and the Open at Mountain Ridge. Zahringer defeated Clement Miner Jr., 2 & 1, in a tense match in the Amateur final. The title was his second of four consecutive wins in the event (1984-'87). He capped his historic season with a two-stroke Open victory, thereby adding a new chapter to his already large presence in the MGA record books.



1986 MGA introduces Slope Handicapping for its member clubs

When the USGA wanted to test a new system for calculating handicaps, it turned to the MGA as a trusted partner. The MGA took to this leadership role with fervor, assigning each member club a "Slope Rating," which measures each course's difficulty for players of varying abilities. The result was a more accurate system of determining a player's Handicap Index, which converts to a Course Handicap depending on the Slope Rating of the course being played.



1983 The first issue of The Met Golfer is published

To inform its growing membership of the stories, people and issues affecting Met Area golf, the MGA decided to do away with its previous eight-page newsletter and publish a full-size magazine. In the inaugural issue, then-MGA President W. Sydnor Settle explains how some of the nation's finest writers will contribute to the magazine and write about Met Area golf. Names like Dave Anderson, George Peper, and the late Red Hoffman became staples in the pages of *The Met Golfer*. Today, as *The Met Golfer* enters its 25th year of existence, the magazine continues to be a vibrant source of local golf stories, and reaches an audience of 105,000 MGA members.

The Leaders

The list of MGA Presidents from the last 25 years is an impressive collection of names and accomplishments.

1983-1984

W. Sydnor Settle

Syd Settle's experience as MGA Legal Council before becoming an officer was invaluable in helping the MGA through the negotiations in structuring the agreement for the GHIN system with the USGA. Today, GHIN serves more than 60 golf associations and two million golfers nationwide. He also helped set up a ground-breaking Property and Casualty Insurance program for member clubs.



1985-1986

James M. Stotter

Jim Stotter was committed to the need for long-range thinking and planning. During his presidency, the MGA began a search for a permanent headquarters, and it was during his reign that the Ike Championship became the MGA's new Amateur Stroke Play championship.



1987-1988

Arthur P. Weber

A brilliant scientist and researcher, Arthur Weber was the first President to bring environmental issues to the foreground. He helped expand the role of the MGA Green Committee and worked on the creation of the Tri-State Turf Research Foundation. A man of great humor and talent, he also played a mean harmonica at MGA functions.



1989-1990

John F. Kelsey Jr.

Jack Kelsey held the reins at a time when the MGA pushed to keep pace with golf's exploding popularity, and also during a time when club membership policies and procedures were being scrutinized. Through his calm, thoughtful leadership, Kelsey was able to help clubs position themselves for a new age while holding onto their traditions.



1991-1992

James M. Cotter

One of the MGA's most influential leaders, James Cotter was at the forefront of virtually every major issue



facing the Association over the last 25 years. From negotiating contracts with MetLife and Canon to the creation of the MGA Foundation, Jim Cotter played a key role. On tough legal topics such as discrimination, the environment and new golf course development, Jim ensured that the MGA was a careful advisor and leader in providing information to its member clubs.

1993-1994

John C. Baldwin

One of only a handful of highly accomplished players (a two-time Met Amateur champion and 1990 MGA Player of the Year) who held the title of President, Baldwin believed strongly in the mission of the MGA Foundation to make golf more accessible and affordable. He remained active in the Foundation long after his tenure was completed and co-chaired the Foundation's Capital Campaign, "Golf Grows Here."



1995-1996

James D. Patton

The congenial Jim Patton saw the creation of Golf Central as a way to forge stronger bonds with all the area's golf associations. He worked tirelessly throughout his administration to strengthen the MGA's relationships with nearby state and regional golf associations. It was during Patton's administration that work began on the upcoming MGA Centennial, and with it, the book *Golf Clubs of the MGA*.



1997-1998

Martin J. Connelly

No one was better suited to lead the MGA during its Centennial Year than Marty Connelly. His enthusiasm for the history of the game and his longtime involvement with area golf made him the perfect host for all of the year's special events. An avid golfer who owned his own business, he keenly understood the day-to-day operations of the MGA and used this expertise to help make it a better, more efficient organization.



1999-2000

Joseph C. Cantwell

The consummate volunteer, Joe Cantwell was one of the MGA's most active and involved leaders. Joe's financial background, invaluable in the building and financing of the MGA headquarters, once again proved to be



critically important as the MGA Foundation prepared to launch its first major Capital Campaign. As Y2K approached, Joe made sure the MGA was on solid financial ground and in position to weather any changes in the economy.

2001-2002

Cornelius E. DeLoca

A gentle leader whose passion for young people helped spur tremendous growth in the Foundation's youth programs, "Connie" DeLoca's reign will sadly always be marked by the tragedy of September 11, 2001. The ever-compassionate Connie was quick to point out that MGA clubs are like extended families, and could provide comfort and consolation to all those touched by this tragedy.



2003-2004

Paul R. Dillon

Few leaders have enjoyed their role as President as much as Paul Dillon, who relished every opportunity to meet the players, club officials and those affiliated with golf in the Met Area. An accomplished portrait artist, Dillon kept the MGA focused on people, and encouraged the aggressive expansion of the MGA Foundation's First Tee and GOLFWORKS programs.



2005-2006

Donald J. Hendler

A successful player and businessman with a long history of involvement in golf, particularly on Long Island, Don Hendler oversaw the affairs of the MGA and its charitable Foundation during two of their most successful years. His leadership, and the fact that virtually every important MGA and Foundation program or service flourished during his administration, helped raise the awareness of the Association among area clubs and golfers.



2007

Leslie A. Schupak

As he assumes his role as the 58th MGA President, Les Schupak's background in public relations and marketing have already greatly benefited *The Met Golfer*, which has recently made great strides with a new publishing partner. Les is uniquely qualified to lead the MGA during this age of rapidly expanding communications options and capabilities.

