

Spouses and Families

The Support Team

For Club General Managers



JOHN G. FORNARO
 PUBLISHER, BOARDROOM
 PRESIDENT & CEO, APCD

PRIVATE CLUB MANAGEMENT EXECUTIVES - MEN AND WOMEN - LIKE MANY OTHER EXECUTIVES ACROSS THE COUNTRY, ARE IN A DEMANDING BUSINESS.

They're in the people business – meeting the demands and requirements of club members, ensuring the club is a member's home away from home, juggling people and events, and working odd hours, weekends and holidays.

So what's this mean for a private club general manager's spouse – in this case, the wives of some general man-

Association,” related Cheri DiPietro. Her husband, Michael DiPietro, is COO and general manager, Aberdeen Golf and Country Club, Boynton Beach, FL.

“During this time, the demands of my husband's business, along with a lower income stream while he was growing within the club management hierarchy definitely had an impact on my way of life.

“Multitasking, both a career and the family was a must. Fortunately, my husband's growth within the club industry paralleled with the growth of our children's academic, sports and extracurricular demands and we were

Darcy Mellen-Sullivan has had her own career, “a different one in each of the states where we've lived.” Her husband, Jack is vice president and general manager, Hamilton Harbor Yacht Club, Naples, FL.

The family has relocated four times “and I've always looked for something good for me in each of the moves. I have had ‘veto’ power for a move and I used it when we

You can't let the demands of the business lead your life - you make adjustments and make the time you have together something special. For instance, in the early days, Michael was a chef, and Monday's was his day off, my oldest daughter was young – so Monday's became our day to spend as a family.

Irene McCarthy

agers? Is there anything unique in how wives approach their daily lives, juggling the demands of family life and their career?

“During the early years of my husband's career, while our children were younger, I had a fulltime career as the vice president of finance and administration for the Alzheimer's

able to make the prudent change with my career resignation to ensure that our children's development was not compromised.

“Although, initially challenging ... I am grateful that my husband's chosen career reasonably allows for us to be a single income,” Cheri explained.

were living in Madison, Wisconsin and I was pregnant with our son John,” Darcy related.

“It just wasn't the right time to move away from my support system, my family only five hours away in Iowa, and to leave my great job with wonderful benefits at the

SEE PUBLISHER'S PERSPECTIVE - PAGE 101

[PUB'S PERSPECTIVE] - 10

University of Wisconsin. It was the only time I remember saying 'No!' Jack may disagree."

For Darcy, the exciting and challenge part of moving has been "finding my niche. I've been a French

of the day. We feel it's important to spend time together as a family no matter what time of the day," Jennifer added.

The Banaszak's in eight years of marriage have relocated once...from southern to northern California, but that has drawbacks, including one

hard to travel distances to spend holidays with our families.

"We are however, able to visit with family just before or after the holidays and many times they choose to come spend specific holidays with us.

"As far as weekends are concerned there are positives and negatives to

CMAA is an organization which is not only extremely beneficial to our husbands but to us as spouses as well. The association gives us the opportunity to get to know other wives. Through CMAA I have met many wonderful friends with whom I can share experiences.

Jennifer Banaszak

teacher, on the academic staff at the University of Wisconsin. In Michigan I managed the Michigan chapter of the French-American Chamber of Commerce. I was known nationally and internationally with my last two jobs. It wasn't easy to leave that behind. On the other hand Naples, Florida is a wonderful place to live."

Life is a little different for Jennifer Banaszak, mother of four-year old twins, Charlotte and Harrison and a 10-month old baby, Hudson. Her husband, Ron is general manager, St. Francis Yacht Club in San Francisco, CA.

"Because of the demands of my husband's career I feel we do things a little differently than most families," Jennifer explained. "I do stay home with our three children.

"With Ron working so many hours, many of the demands of the home and children are my responsibility. If I was to work outside of the home there simply wouldn't be enough time for everything and we feel that our children would suffer because of it.

"And we do things a little differently in our daily life as well. For example, because my husband doesn't get home until after dinnertime, we make breakfast our family meal

not uncommon for club managers' families.

"Unfortunately we don't live close to either of our families, which seems to be fairly common for many GM families. Because the GM always works holidays it makes it

having a husband who works on Saturdays and Sundays. Of course special events always occur on weekends, birthday parties, festivals, etc. Unfortunately those are things I have

SEE **PUBLISHER'S PERSPECTIVE** - PAGE 102



JENNIFER BANASZAK WITH 10-MONTH OLD HUDSON, AND TWINS CHARLOTTE AND HARRISON

to attend on my own with the kids," Jennifer commented.

"On the other hand, having days off during the week has some advantages

rearrange his schedule to attend their activities."

Irene McCarthy with husband, Michael (CEO, Addison Reserve Country Club, Delray Beach, FL) have relocated three times in 10

have together and made it special," Irene related.

"Our focus as a family has always been on spending quality time on his time off. You can't let the fact that you may not be able to celebrate Christmas

The wife has an extremely important role and must be looked upon as an asset and that can be a very delicate balance...how she conducts herself during club functions...is crucial to how her husband is viewed as their general manager. There is a certain decorum that goes along with the role of the wife of the GM.

Sharon DiPietro

as well. Because activities are always less crowded on a Monday, from restaurants to amusement parks, our family time is more enjoyable. Another positive aspect to Ron's schedule is that it is somewhat flexible. For example, if the kids have morning swim lessons or soccer practice, he can

years...from New Jersey to Port St. Lucie, FL and in 2007 to West Palm Beach.

"From early on we both had strong work ethics, and we took our work very seriously, so although Michael's job as a private general manager is demanding, we always took the time that we did

Day together as a family a negative, we made some adjustments and we would celebrate the day after Christmas or the day after New Year's. It is always about being flexible and making the time you do have special - you can't think of it as losing out on things."

Being the wife of a general manager in the club industry, does have many challenges and demands, explained Cheri DiPietro... "yet many rewards and benefits.

"For example, many traditional industries allow their executive to reserve nights, weekends and holidays to spend quality time with their family and friends. Because of the multifaceted nature of the club business, a traditional family approach cannot successfully be incorporated into the equation.

"Although, challenges are omnipotent, it's important for the family of a club management professional to become innovative ... building a balance between their personal and professional dynamics of their lifestyle," Cheri added.

"My husband's family (Jay DiPietro and wife Sharon) consists of seven sons and spouses, 26 grandchildren and one great grandchild. As with any family, it's important to create an environment conducive to developing a family bond.



FROM LEFT, CHERI DIPIETRO, SHARON DIPIETRO AND IRENE MCCARTHY

“Spending quality time as a family is essential in achieving this goal, especially during the holidays. Instead of having a mindset that we cannot celebrate holidays, because our spouses are working, we channel and focus our energies to cel-

important to be viewed as a team and I am not only the other half of his team, but I am his biggest cheerleader!

“We, as a family, make out special family events and holiday celebrations on alternate days of the actual holiday.

“Yes, there is a wonderful network of spouses (should we call it wives?), there have been some great husbands in the network: Artie Donovan, former Baltimore Colt, “ explained Darcy Mellen-Sullivan.

Just because the club industry is untraditional and has challenges ... it does not mean that you cannot have quality time as a family. The club industry forces you to focus, so be supportive and realign your priorities focusing on quality time versus quantity time.

Cheri DiPietro

brating the holidays immediately before or after the traditional dates.

“We have found that this enables our family to stay connected and more importantly that family values are developed amongst the children of the family,” Cheri elaborated.

For Sharon DiPietro, being the wife of a general manager is “exciting...not demanding. It is challenging but that’s part of the excitement,” whose husband Jay is president and general manager of Boca West Country Club, Boca Raton, FL.

“The club industry is a totally unique opportunity for not only the GMs but also their families as it offers extended exposure and experiences to and in all aspects of the hospitality (and travel) industry.

“I keep my focus on the importance of impact that my husband makes not only within his peer group but also the impact he has on redefining and promoting growth within his industry... I love it when he pushes the envelope and I take great personal pride that he makes me part of his decisions,” Sharon enthused.

“I do have a career of my own – but I have the best of both worlds as I can adjust my work life to accommodate Jay’s demands I feel as his wife, it is extremely important to be viewed as his partner, not just his wife. I feel it’s

It’s never been a problem because we fell that our celebration is the day we determine, not the calendar. It actually works great.”

Support, even if there’s not a specific support network, among spouses of general managers is beneficial. To wit:

“We support each other very well. No matter where we go there’s someone we know. I’ve been very lucky to have the friends from the national (international) and local chapter level. I know my life is richer because of that.

SEE **PUBLISHER’S PERSPECTIVE** - PAGE 104

PREVENT PREMATURE EVACUATION.



DISCOVER HOW YOUR CLUB CAN PREVENT MEMBERS FROM RESIGNING BY PROVIDING THEM TRANSPARENT COMMUNICATIONS THROUGH YOUR STRATEGIC PLAN. UNLIKE THE FLY-IN FLY-OUT APPROACH, COLE AND SCOTT WILL BE YOUR PARTNERS ON THE GROUND UNTIL YOUR CLUB ACHIEVES A SUCCESSFUL OUTCOME.

NSCOTT@COLEANDSCOTT.COM  WWW.COLEANDSCOTT.COM

Many of our closest friends are managers, spouses, members of former clubs Jack has managed," she added.

"While my husband was a child to a private club general manager, there was definitely a void in this area," Cheri DiPietro suggested.

"Today, with so many young families entering the club industry change was necessary. The leadership of the Florida Chapter Club Managers Association of America developed programs where our husbands can participate in continued education while balancing quality time with their own and other club manager families. These programs have transcended into strong family networks and some of our best friends have become a direct result of the same."

It's a point Irene McCarthy stresses. "There is a great network in the Florida Chapter of the CMAA. They do an amazing job of including spouses and children in the CMAA events.

"The kids actually have a great network as well – a positive thing about the Florida Chapter - spouses and kids - they do a great job," Irene explained.

"Our daughters, Molly and Emma were just three and one years old when we moved to Florida and they have grown up with the other kids. It's great to the cycle that takes place. For example, just recently at an event in Amelia Island, our daughters, who were once babysat by older children, are now babysitting for some of the younger children.

"Another great thing about the Florida Chapter is the full family's involvement with all the charity work that they do as well, such as Toys for Tots, SOS Children's Village and Cystic

Fibrosis," Irene added.

"Each region of CMAA usually has a strength within and the wives are a part of that strength," commented Sharon DiPietro.

"Again, I am fortunate – the Seminole Region is a wonderful group of professionals that consider the group to be extended family and wonderful friends. We not only share time with one another at CMAA events, we choose to make time for our families to get together just to be together.

"If, at that time, someone wishes to talk about difficulties or share other things, someone is also there as support or to give advise – we do so as friends not as a 'support group.'"

And these spouses do have some advice for newcomers to the private club industry!

Irene McCarthy: You can't let the demands of the business lead your life - you make adjustments and make the time you have together something special. For instance, in the early days, Michael was a chef, and Monday's was his day off, my oldest daughter was young – so Monday's became our day to spend as a family.

Cheri DiPietro: Just because the club industry is untraditional and has challenges ... it does not mean that you cannot have quality time as a family. The club industry forces you to focus, so be supportive and realign your priorities focusing on quality time versus quantity time.

Jennifer Banaszak: CMAA is an organization which is not only extremely beneficial to our husbands but to us as spouses as well. The association gives us the opportunity to get to know other wives. Through CMAA I have met many wonderful friends with whom I can share experiences. I would strongly encourage all spouses to participate.

And be as supportive of your husband as possible. Being a GM is a demanding job and I think we as wives sometimes forget that our husbands are juggling just as much at work as we are at home!

Sharon DiPietro: Be excited! It is an opportunity to meet new friends. There is a feeling of family within the CMAA organization – no matter if it is the local chapter, region, or nationally.

I wish to address this comment to the role within the club itself... there is one code that I feel is very important for GM's wives to keep in mind... never think of yourself as an equal member to your husband's members but never make yourself less than that member as a person.

The wife has an extremely important role and must be looked upon as an asset and that can be a very delicate balance...how she conducts herself during club functions or as an invited guest to a club member's function is crucial to how her husband is viewed as their general manager. There is a certain decorum that goes along with the role of the wife of the GM.

On being a general manager's spouse: It is as one makes it. I have adopted my husband's philosophy. Never miss an opportunity to make an experience a learning experience, no matter what it is – big or small.



DARCY MELLEN-SULLIVAN

Darcy Mellen-Sullivan: I've always felt I'm responsible for my own happiness. That means being proactive when things aren't quite right. Make your own rules,

conversation, managed the club where my American Field Service host papa had been a golf member. I had done my exchange while in high school in a

Spouses are unselfish partners...this is what they do.

At the same time, we acknowledge the outstanding work of general man-

I've always felt I'm responsible for my own happiness. That means being proactive when things aren't quite right. Make your own rules, create your own holidays and traditions, don't be afraid to take the initiative to call on others, discover your own passions, become independent, it's your journey too.

Darcy Mellen-Sullivan

create your own holidays and traditions, don't be afraid to take the initiative to call on others, discover your own passions, become independent, it's your journey too. Also each time we have moved I have taken the attitude that I'm just a tourist, I'm on vacation and I have to discover now all that there is to offer in my new community. I usually become a member of the art museum first because I like art, and it's a great place to wander by myself. It's a great frame to have around the picture.

We have made friends everywhere! So many rich experiences! I have learned so much about wine and food and club service. Attending many CMAA National Conferences we have visited many wonderful locations and clubs, made friends around the world. We would schedule our vacation around CMAA conferences, adding extra days at great destinations. When Jack visited Australia as CMAA Immediate Past President, our son went with him and enjoyed shrimp on the "barbe," and they scuba dove the Great Barrier Reef together.

When I managed the French-American Chamber of Commerce, I could think of no better location to host our annual gala than at Jack's club, the Grosse Pointe Yacht Club. Nowhere else could compare to those facilities, food, level of service, it was a very successful annual event.

At the 2009 conference in New Orleans I met a Belgian club manager who we determined during our short

very small Flemish speaking community. The world is very small. It was CMAA that brought us together.

PUBLISHER'S FINAL THOUGHT

Yes, private club general managers and executives work long, hard hours, and at the same time are well compensated. But the point is... spouses are the support team and partner and we recognize their contributions to the success of their partners' careers and the success of their clubs and the private club industry.

agers – men and women – all over the country...and the sacrifices they make; for the wonderful memories they create for club members, and for their love of these clubs and their members, especially during the very difficult economic times we've been facing.

At least that's the way I see it! **BR**
John G. Fornaro, publisher

If you have comments on this article or suggestions for other topics, please contact John Fornaro at (949) 376-8889, ext. 4 or 105 or via email: johnf@apcd.com

Joe's
STONE CRAB
NIGHT

Introduce a scrumptious Florida tradition to your club members ...the Ultimate in Special Dining Events.
Inquiries: 1.800.260.CRAB

CLASSIC
smashing success