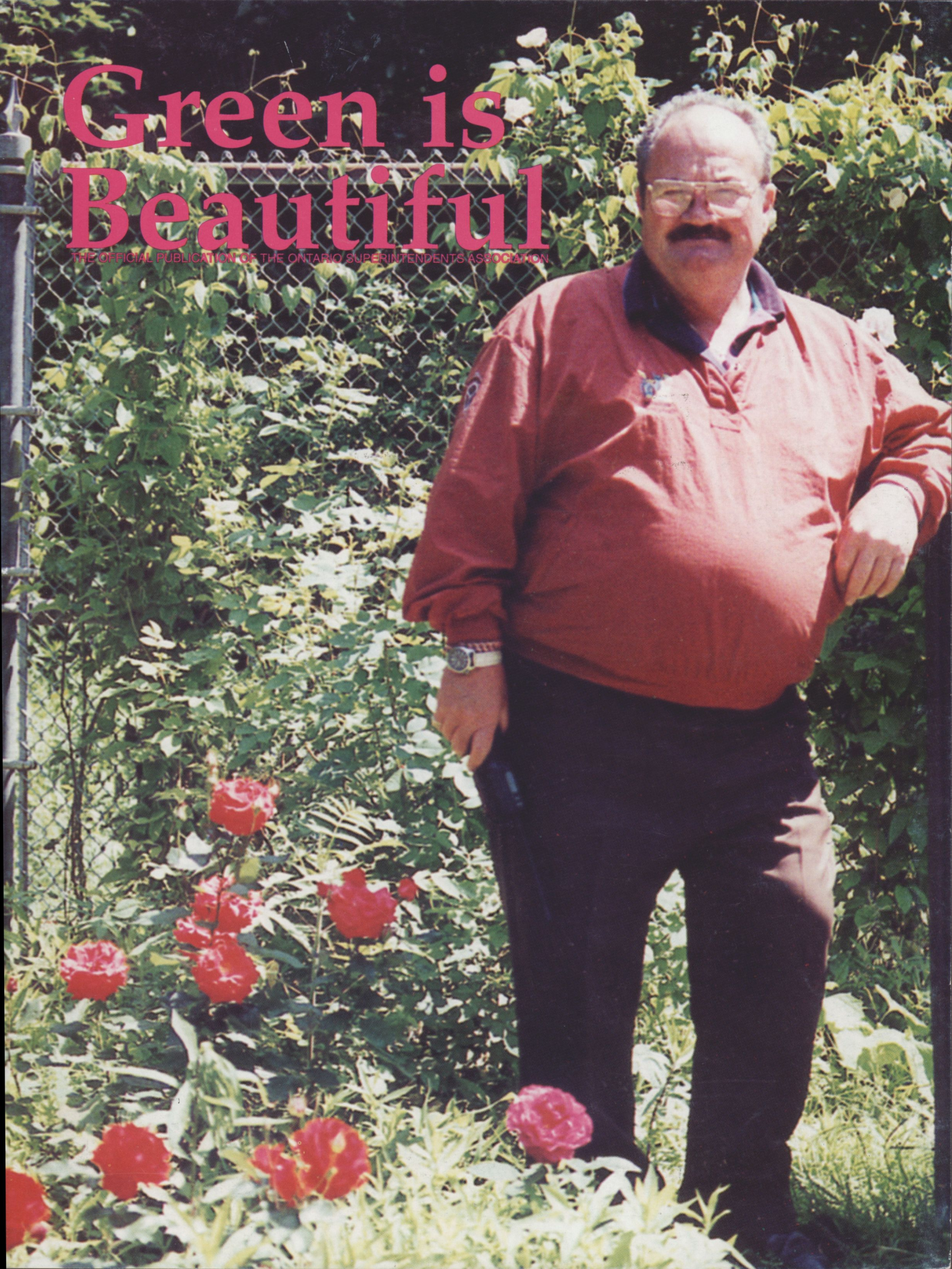


# Green is Beautiful

THE OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE ONTARIO SUPERINTENDENTS ASSOCIATION



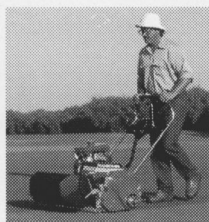


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Cindi Charters  
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328 Victoria Street South  
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Telephone: (519) 824-OGSA  
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Ninth green and swans in background at Heron Point

#### **Whats Inside:**

President's Message	Page 4
Hugh Kirkpatrick	Page 5
Golf and the Environment	Page 7
Golf Cars and Cart Paths	Page 8
Professor Vincent Covello	Page 10
Environmental Attitudes	Page 15
The GTI and the Web	Page 16
Brown Patch Disease	Page 17
NU GRO Appreciation Day	Page 18
Georgian Bay Superintendents	Page 18
Maintenance on a Shoestring	Page 19

#### **Advertisers Index:**

Solaris-Easout	Page 8
Solaris-Killex	Page 9
Century Rain Aid	Page 14
Solaris-Ferromec	Page 15
Solaris-Banner	Page 16
Green Horizons	Page 18
Braemar	Page 22

**Cover: Hugh Kirkpatrick, Superintendent Westmount G.C.**





## President Message...

By Alex La Belle CGCS

Can I take off my parka now!? Surely by the time you read this we will be covered with sun screen and looking for shade. It

has not been "the best of times" but hopefully it was "the worst of times". The almost new director of the GTI, Rob Witherspoon, just sent out a communique which indicates a deficit of 80 - 100 growing degree days below the seasonal average. Onward and upward. I am thoroughly impressed by the tenacity and optimism of the superintendents I have spoken to over the last few months. Eyes and ears keenly tuned to the weather stations, they have been ready to take advantage of any crumb that mother nature may toss their way. Watching and weaving like an Indy driver looking for an opening, ready to switch gears and zoom ahead whenever an opportunity presents itself is the mental image I get when I think of how they have been reacting to this year's up and down growing season. Ahhhh! What a life! In the fast lane... on the edge.

Speaking of optimism, I had a chance to go over to Westmount a few weeks ago to visit a neighbour, Hugh Kirkpatrick, who is an inspiring example of positive thinking. If success is measured by the number of friends we have and the number of people we have helped along the way, then Hugh is a very successful person. Hugh has been in the business for over 34 years building and maintaining golf courses from Truro to Calgary.

He has tutored no less than eight employees helping them on their way to Class A status in Canada and the USA. Hugh convinced Westmount to become one of the first Canadian courses to enlist in the Audubon Co-operative Sanctuary Program. He is an innovator and a helping hand at the drop of a grass blade. It is for these reasons, among others, that we have re-submitted Hugh's name to the Canadian Golf Superintendents' Association as the OGSA's candidate for Superintendent of the Year. If you recall, we submitted Hugh's name last year but we were unsuccessful in our attempt. We are very hopeful that the many letters of support from across the continent we have received and the revamped presentation will help put a very deserving gentleman over the top.

July has some great events in store such as the President/Green Chairperson/Superintendent/Guest Tournament. It is a great opportunity to invite a Director or your Club Manager to attend a fun event at a great new golf course; Angus Glen. Teri Yamada has agreed to grace us with an after dinner update on the Audubon Co-operative Sanctuary Program. Also on July 29th is the Ontario Turfgrass Research Foundation fundraising tournament at The National Golf Club. The OGSA has agreed to donate a cheque for \$1,500 to the OTRF for turfgrass research. Dinner follows at The Board of Trade of Metropolitan Toronto.

On the pesticide licensing front, I have been working with John Gravett (John has done most of the work) to come up with a seminar format that could be used in conjunction with the University of Guelph and Ridgetown College to assist technicians and exterminators to obtain their licenses. While correspondence courses have been talked about, it is often the case that some individuals perform better in a classroom atmosphere. The face to face interaction and question and answer format can be very reassuring. I will be seeking a meeting with Rob Witherspoon to get his opinion and guidance in this matter.

GTI and the GCSAA are both on the WEB now. You can get information on access to the WEB by contacting the GTI at 519-824-4120 ext. 2597#.

The OGSA Board of Directors are there to work for your behalf. Please let us know how we can help you; what you like and what you don't like.

Mark Piccolo would appreciate your help with the magazine. It is a very time consuming task and certainly, at this point in the year, time is a premium. The board has agreed to a promotion to assist Mark in his portfolio by offering OGSA apparel as a gift of appreciation to three authors of articles in excess of 1000 words or two pages (pictures can be included to take up space) published in the Green Is Beautiful. Mark and his selection committee will review all entries to determine the winners. If you choose to send pictures, please include captions and enclose the pictures in a folded piece of cardboard. It is a good idea if you know that you will be taking pictures of a curiosity or a project, to have an extra set of prints made so that you have spares. We will try to return any pictures that you request but let's not tempt Murphy's Law.

In closing please remember that its summer vacation and we all want to have fun and tell stories about our adventures so; go safely on the roads, on the water and in the air.



# Hugh Kirkpatrick of Westmount Golf Club

Hugh Kirkpatrick was born in Norwich, Ontario, which is just South of Woodstock, where he grew up with his two brothers Dick and Bev and his sister Marylin. Hugh's father Douglas, owned a small construction company in the 50's and decided to specialize in golf course construction.

In the early sixties Hugh managed to acquire two bulldozers and was able to operate on his own schedule, shaping greens, in conjunction with the family business. Dick had taken over the day to day of the company and golf courses were entering a period of growth. Hugh shaped the greens at Brampton, Golf Club, Tyandaga, Rideauview (Ottawa), and Bayview. Bayview was finished in the fall of 1960 and the next spring the company went on a streak, building Sarnia, Richmond Hill, Brampton and St. Catherine's by the fall of 1961. Hugh worked with C.E. Robinson until 1966 traveling the country to supervise the construction of various golf courses, among them; Calgary's Earl Grey G.C., John Bloomberg G.C. in Winnipeg, The Truro G.C. in Nova Scotia, Upper Canada G.C. nears Morrisburg, Ontario and right in his present back yard at Conestoga Golf Club. Hugh has also worked with such notable architects as Rene Muylaert and Thomas McBroom. Wanting to settle down, Hugh applied for the position of Superintendent at Conestoga and stayed there from 1967 until 1973 when he applied for the position at a new course called Dalewood. He stayed there until 1978.

In 1978 Westmount was looking for a new superintendent to spruce up the course for its upcoming 50th anniversary in 1981.

The Westmount Golf Club, began on the 17th of June, 1929, when a group of about twenty members of the Grand River Golf Club met to consider acquiring sufficient land for a good eighteen hole golf course. The architect of the course was Mr. Stanley Thompson. Sufficient work had been done



to allow members to try their skill in the summer of 1931. The park-like course would prove a good test of the ancient game having a shot for every club in the bag. A six-sheet Curling Rink was constructed in 1962 and additional locker facilities, dining and lounge rooms were added to take care of increased membership. In 1975 extensive renovations to the Club House took place. A new dining room was added next to the patio and below this a games room. In 1977 tennis was added to the Westmount facilities. Four courts of superb quality and a most enthusiastic group of members turned this new activity into a distinct success.

Over the years Hugh did more than simply spruce up the course. A tee construction project designed by Thomas McBroom added what amounts to one additional set of tees throughout the golf course, lengthening some holes and providing advanced blocking on others. Expansion of the parking lot required reconstruction of the practice facilities. The new 11 acre range and nursery contains five tee decks totalling 33,000 sq. ft. and 10 irrigated bentgrass target greens spaced from 70 yards to 250 yards. The edges of the range were mounded to contain shots and a large mound was created at 270 yards from the tee to separate the range and nursery.

The trees at Westmount are magnificent and





# Hugh Kirkpatrick of Westmount Golf Club *continued*

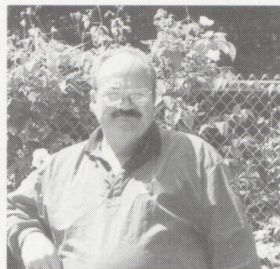


menacing both from a golfers point of view and a superintendent's perspective. While they demand accuracy and finesse from the golfer, they create nightmares in turf management. The shade and lack of wind movement in sheltered areas play havoc with disease, heat stress and ice damage. Hugh has taken a golf course that at one point was 85% forested and created some space to breathe. Each fall approximately 80 wagons, 40 yards each, of leaves are removed from the course. To handle the massive accumulation of leaves, Hugh has three large compost piles in various stages of decomposition. They are turned with a bulldozer at least once a year. The oldest compost is used in Westmount's flower beds. In addition to the on going tree management program Hugh has installed, at four green sites, fans to move air in some of the more sheltered areas. There are plans to install four more fans.

A n o t h e r technological advance is the practice, that has become popular on many golf courses, of using solid plastic green covers to protect greens and tees over winter. Westmount Golf Club has had a long history of wintering poorly. It is located in a snow belt area and the course is heavily treed. The shaded and northern exposed green sites would become layered with ice. During a discussion about ice damage with some fellow superintendents, Hugh head that some experimenting had been done with solid plastic on problem green sites. Hugh decided to carry out some experiments of his own at Westmount. The theory was to install the plastic so that all water would be kept from contacting the surface of the green. He had recommended using 6 ml. construction grade plastic sheeting, 30 ft. x 100 ft. On one green in particular, Hugh had to join two pieces together. The pieces separated in a wind

storm and turf at the separation was wiped out while the remainder was perfect. Hugh suggested to Dennis McCracken, at the time, that stronger plastic sheets should be bonded together to allow one piece to cover an entire green. The "Evergreen" people came up with a woven plastic material that was used for swimming pool covers. Hugh's method of installing these covers is to custom fit them for the entire green including any slopes where water might come in. They then pin them down with staples every 12 to 20 inches around the perimeter of the cover. In windy locations he advises to lay branches or boards over the covers to help anchor them as you don't want to put any staples or holes in the cover. They also install farm fence around the greens to keep the cross country skiers off the plastic covers. Hugh feels that the covers should be removed as soon as the threat of ice damage is over. When the covers are removed, there is the added bonus that the greens are dry, firm and free of sticks and debris.

On the pesticide regulation side, Hugh does not see an easing of recent legislation. He feels that we have been given an opportunity to have our eyes opened as to just how much "perfection" we can live with and still be responsible stewards of the environment. Golf courses continue to be the targets of misinformed, but for the most part, well meaning persons concerned for the environment. The fact remains that in urban and metropolitan areas, golf courses are the few sanctuaries left for flora and fauna. Westmount was one of the first members of the New York Audubon Co-operative Sanctuary. Each year 50 pheasants are released on the course. They, with the red-tailed hawks, add to the multitude of feathered creatures enhancing the Westmount forest. Positive actions such as these and Integrated Pest Management are practices which require the superintendent to be on top of their games when it comes to environmental care.



Hugh is on top of his game and on the top of our list as the OGSA nomination as the Score Awards Superintendent of the year.



---

# Golf And The Environment (Reprinted with permission of the GCSAA)

## *1. Well-managed golf courses provide substantial ecological and community benefits.*

Courses are:

Community greenspaces that provide recreational opportunities and also offer and enhance wildlife habitats.

"Air Conditioners" that produce vast amounts of oxygen while cleansing the air of pollution and cooling the atmosphere.

Water treatment systems: healthy turfgrass is an excellent filter that traps and holds pollutants in place; courses actually serve as catch basins for residential and industrial runoff; many courses are effective disposal sites for effluent wastewater.

Among the best ways to reclaim and restore environmentally damaged sites, such as landfills. Businesses that contribute substantially to communities through employment, taxes, property value improvement and enormous charitable support.

## *2. Science is on our side.*

Independent university research supports the fact that well-managed golf courses do not pose significant risks to environmental quality, wildlife or human health.

The modern pesticides and fertilizers used to maintain healthy golf course turf have been thoroughly tested and are considered safe when used according to label directions.

A pesticide product today has typically undergone more than 120 studies at a cost of \$50 million before it is registered.

## *3. Today's golf course superintendents are educated professionals who care about environmental quality.*

Most of today's superintendents have college degrees and substantial continuing education. Superintendents are the nation's leading practitioners of Integrated Pest Management, a philosophy that reduces the potential environmental risks of pesticide usage.

Virtually all golf courses employ at least one licensed pesticide applicator who is trained in

environmentally sound pesticide use.

## *4. Are golfers at risk?*

No. There is no scientific evidence that golfers face any chronic health risks from the pesticides used to maintain courses.

Once a liquid pesticide product is applied and the turf is dry or the product has been watered in, there is very little chance of exposure to golfers or others who enter the area.

Golfers with possible chemical allergies are always encouraged to contact superintendents to find out what products might be in use.

## *5. The entire golf community is committed to being a model environmental industry for the 21st Century.*

The United States Golf Association is pouring millions of dollars into independent research to study issues such as water quality and wildlife habitat.

The Golf Course Superintendents Association has made environmental education a major focus of their education and information programs.

The nation's golf course architects now design courses that reduce the need for pesticides, water and costly maintenance practices while preserving habitat and environmental quality.

The Allied Associations in Golf are currently finalizing a set of "Environmental Principles" that will offer guidance for responsible development, design, maintenance and facility operation for the future.

## *6. We are working to correct public misconceptions about golf.*

Much of the environmental criticism of golf courses seems to be linked to local opposition to community growth.

Local "anti-growth" sentiment has often led to unscientific claims about pesticide usage and other highly charged issues such as wetlands and wildlife habitat.

These isolated development disputes have led to public misperception.



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Golf cars are a convenience enjoyed by millions of players and a necessity for many golfers with disabilities. However, when they are driven improperly, they can cause serious damage to the course. More importantly, unsafe operation can lead to accidents and injuries. Here are some tips about responsible golf car operation:

### **Safety First**

Golf cars should only be operated from the driver's side.

Never drive with more than two occupants or allow riders on the back of the car.

Be sure your passenger is fully seated and check for obstructions before moving.

Keep your entire body -- particularly your feet -- inside the car when moving.

Drive slowly through turns and drive straight and slow up and down slopes.

Be certain to set the brake when coming to a complete stop.

Use extra care when operating a golf car in reverse, on hills, wet turf, loose surfaces or rough terrain.

Remove the key when the golf car is not in use.

Do not operate a golf car when impaired by alcohol or drugs.

Golf cars do not provide protection from lightning -- seek appropriate shelter if lightning is present.

### **Follow The Rules**

The wear and tear of golf car traffic can cause unsightly and expensive damage to the golf course. Tire ruts in soft, wet areas can take weeks to heal. Compaction caused by heavy traffic can also ruin the playing surface. You can help prevent damage by following the course's standard golf car policy and obeying temporary restrictions caused by weather, construction or other factors.

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## Golf Cars and Cart Paths

### General Tips:

Never drive a golf car through standing water in fairways or any turf areas that are obviously wet.

Never drive onto a green, collar or tee or any marked hazard.

Never drive into any area that has been recently seeded or sodded.

Avoid abrupt stops and sharp turns that cause "skidding."

Spread out wear and tear by avoiding compacted areas.

If golf cars are allowed in the fairway, follow the 90-degree rule: stay on the path until you come even with your ball, then make a 90-degree turn into the fairway and drive directly to your ball. After your shot, drive directly back to the path.

Watch for special signage or other markers that direct traffic.

Avoid driving over sprinkler heads and yardage markers.

Don't drive cars into out-of-play areas that may be environmentally sensitive (wildflower patches, native grass plantings, marshes, etc.).

Golfers with medically certified disabilities may need access to areas not normally open to golf car traffic. Their golf cars are generally marked with a flag to let others know they have special access.

Avoid pulling off the path near tees and greens.

Keep all four tires on the path whenever possible. Do not park with tires off the path.

### Drive Friendly

If you "drive friendly," your use of a golf car won't impede the play of others: Park your golf car behind or beside the green -- never in front -- to allow players behind you to hit sooner after you've finished the hole. (You should generally

always avoid driving a golf car into the "approach" area 20 - 30 years in front of the green.)

Stop your vehicle to avoid distracting a nearby player who is preparing to hit a shot.

Never drive into yards or neighboring properties.

### Interesting Facts:

The first golf car was invented in the late 1940s strictly for people with disabilities.

About two-thirds of all regulation 18-hole rounds are played with golf cars (NGF 1994).

Several states now allow golf cars to be registered for "street" usage.

Since the introduction of golf cars, caddie usage has dropped to only 1 percent of regulation rounds (NGF 1994). (Reprinted with permission of the GCSAA)

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# Professor Vincent T. Covello

## Center for Risk Communication

Dr. Vincent T. Covello is currently serving as Visiting Professor of Environmental Science and Medicine at the Lawrence Hall of Science, University of California at Berkeley. He has previously served as Professor of Environmental Sciences and Medicine and Professor of Communications and Psychology in the School of Public Health at Columbia University. Professor Covello is also Director of the Center for Risk Communication in New York City and teaches courses on risk assessment, management, and communication.

Prior to his joining the faculty at Columbia, Dr. Covello was Director of Risk Assessment Programs at the National Science Foundation and a senior scientist at the White House Council on Environmental Quality in Washington, D.C. He has also been a Study Director at the National Academy of Sciences and a Professor at Brown University.

Dr. Covello received his doctorates from Columbia University and his B.A. with honors and M.A. from Cambridge University in England. He is on the editorial board of several journals and is the Past President of the Society for Risk Analysis, a professional association with over 2,500 members. Dr. Covello also serves on over 10 national and international environmental health advisory boards and committees, including the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the World Health Organization.

Dr. Covello has authored or edited over 25 books and over 100 published articles on risk assessment, management, and communication. Among his most recent books are: *Effective Risk Communication*; *Evaluating Risk Communication Programs*; and *Risk Analysis: A Guide to Principles and Methods for Analyzing Health and Environmental Risks*.

Dr. Covello has chaired over 30 conferences on risk assessment and communication. In addition, he has directed workshops and seminars on risk assessment and risk communication for over 100 Fortune 500 companies and over 30 government agencies.

## Seven Cardinal Rules of Risk Communication

**T**here are no easy prescriptions for successful risk communication. However, those who have studied and participated in recent debates about risk generally agree on seven cardinal rules. These rules apply equally well to the public and private sectors.

Although many of the rules may seem obvious, they are continually and consistently violated in practice. Thus, a useful way to read these rules is to focus on why they are frequently not followed.

### 1 Accept and involve the public as a legitimate partner

A basic tenet of risk communication in a democracy is that people and communities have a right to participate in decisions that affect their lives, their property, and the things they value.

**Guidelines:** Demonstrate your respect for the public and underscore the sincerity of your effort by involving the community early, before important decisions are made. Involve all parties that have an interest or a stake in the issue under consideration. If you are a government employee, remember that you work for the public. If you do not work for the government, the public still holds you accountable.

#### **Point to Consider:**

The goal of risk communication in a democracy should be to produce an informed public that is involved, interested, reasonable, thoughtful, solution-oriented, and collaborative; it should not be to diffuse public concerns or replace action.

### 2 Plan carefully and evaluate your efforts

Risk communication will be successful only if carefully planned.

**Guidelines:** Begin with clear, explicit risk communication objectives --such as providing information to the public, motivating individuals to



---

## Seven Cardinal Rules...

act, stimulating response to emergencies, or contributing to the resolution of conflict. Evaluate the information you have about the risks and know its strengths and weaknesses. Classify and segment the various groups in your audience. Aim your communications at specific subgroups in your audience. Aim your communications at specific subgroups in your audience. Recruit spokespeople who are good at presentation and interaction. Train your staff (including technical staff) in communication skills; reward outstanding performance. Whenever possible, pretest your messages. Carefully evaluate your efforts and learn from your mistakes.

### Points to Consider:

There is no such entity as "the public"; instead, there are many publics, each with its own interests, needs, concerns, priorities, preferences, and organizations.

Different risk communication goals, audiences, and media require different risk communication strategies.

### 3 Listen to the public's specific concerns

If you do not listen to people, you cannot expect them to listen to you. Communication is a two-way activity.

**Guidelines:** Do not make assumptions about what people know, think, or want done about risks. Take the time to find out what people are thinking: use techniques such as interviews, focus groups, and surveys. Let all parties that have an interest or a stake in the issue be heard. Identify with your audience and try to put yourself in their place. Recognize people's emotions. Let people know that you understand what they said, addressing their concerns as well as yours. Recognize the "hidden agendas," symbolic meanings, and broader economic or political considerations that often underlie and complicate the task of risk communication.

### Point to Consider:

People in the community are often more concerned about such issues as trust, credibility, competence, control, voluntariness, fairness, caring, and compassion than about mortality statistics and the details of quantitative risk assessment.

### 4

#### Be honest, frank, and open

In communicating risk information, trust and credibility are your most precious assets.

**Guidelines:** State your credentials; but do not ask or expect to be trusted by the public. If you do not know an answer or are uncertain, say so. Get back to people with answers. Admit mistakes, disclose risk information as soon as possible (emphasizing any reservations about reliability). Do not minimize or exaggerate the level of risk. Speculate only with great caution. If in doubt, lean toward sharing more information, not less, or people may think you are hiding something. Discuss data uncertainties, strengths and weaknesses, including the ones identified by other credible sources. Identify worst-case estimates as such, and cite ranges of risk estimates when appropriate.

### Point to Consider:

Trust and credibility are difficult to obtain. Once lost they are almost impossible to regain completely.

### 5

#### Coordinate and collaborate with other creditable sources

Allies can be effective in helping you communicate risk information.

**Guidelines:** Take time to coordinate all inter-organizational and intra-organizational communications. Devote effort and resources to the slow, hard work of building bridges with other organizations. Use credible and authoritative intermediaries. Consult with others to determine who is best able to answer questions about risk. Try to issue communications jointly with other trustworthy sources (for example, credible university scientists, physicians, or trusted local officials).

### Point to Consider:

Few things make risk communication more difficult than conflicts or public disagreements with other credible sources.

### 6

#### Meet the needs of the media

The media are a prime transmitter of information on risks; they play a critical role in setting agendas and in determining



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### NEW BOOK RELEASE

**Gordon Witteveen** has just finished chapter ten of a twenty chapter book on the history of greens keeping which he is co-writing with Michael Bavier of the Inverness Club in Chicago. The book should max out at 300 pages with 50 photographs. Release is expected early next year.

### 1996 OGSA GOLF & MEETINGS

#### PRESIDENT/GREENS CHAIRMAN SUPERINTENDENT/DIRECTOR:

Monday July 22, 1996  
Angus Glen Golf Club  
Host: **Earnie Amsler**

#### GTI SUMMER FIELD DAY:

Monday August 19, 1996  
Galt Country Club  
Host: **Mark Piccolo**

### WOGSA GOLF & MEETINGS

August TBA  
Twenty Valley Golf Club  
Host: **John Taylor**

Sept 24, 1996  
Brantford Golf & Country Club  
Host: **Rick Piccolo**

### GEORGIAN BAY SUPERINTENDENT'S ASSOCIATION

July 23  
Marlwood Golf Club  
Host: **Don Campbell**

August 15  
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Host: **James Flett**



# BULLETIN

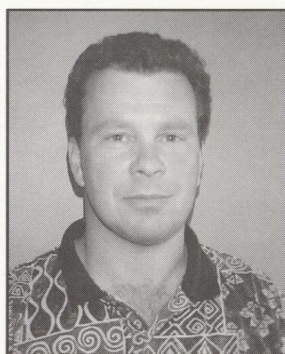
## OTTAWA VALLEY TURFGRASS ASSOCIATION

**EXECUTIVE DAY:** August 12  
Royal Ottawa Golf Club  
Host: **Stephen Verrall**

**FALL FIELD DAY:** October 4  
Hylands Golf Club  
Host: **Charles Guy**

Contact: France Lacelle  
Phone: (613) 443-0027  
Fax: (613) 443-0103

## NEWCOURT EXPANDS GOLF LEASE PROGRAM



Chris Rayner, Assistant Vice President, Newcourt Financial, is pleased to announce the appointment of Tom Fischer as Manager, Golf Program. Tom brings 8 years of golf experience to Newcourt. He has previous finance experience as well

which make him ideally suited to support the superintendents, says Rayner.

The trend to leasing in the Golf course equipment industry has really taken off in the last few years, adds Fischer. Superintendents are feeling increasing pressure to offer golfers better playing conditions with fewer dollars. Whether it is a single greenmower, an irrigation system, or an entire revamping of the equipment fleet. Newcourt can offer financial services that are customized to each superintendent's unique needs.



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## Seven Cardinal Rules...

outcomes.

**Guidelines:** Be open with and accessible to reporters. Respect their deadlines. Provide risk information tailored to the needs of each type of media (for example, graphics and other visual aids for television). Prepare in advance and provide background material on complex risk issues. Do not hesitate to follow up on stories with praise or criticism, as warranted. Try to establish long-term relationships of trust with specific editors and reporters.

### Point to Consider:

The media are frequently more interested in politics than in risk; more interested in simplicity than in complexity; more interested in danger than in safety.

## 7 Speak clearly and with compassion

Technical language and jargon are useful as professional shorthand. But they are barriers to successful communication with the public.

**Guidelines:** Use simple, non-technical language. Be sensitive to local norms, such as speech and dress. Use vivid, concrete images that communicate on a personal level. Use examples and anecdotes that

make technical risk data come alive. Avoid distant, abstract, unfeeling language about deaths, injuries, and illnesses. Acknowledge and respond (both in words and with actions) to emotions that people express—anxiety, fear, anger, outrage, helplessness. Acknowledge and respond to the distinctions that the public views as important in evaluating risks, e.g., voluntariness, controllability, familiarity, dread, origin (natural or man-made), benefits, fairness, and catastrophic potential. Use risk comparisons to help put risks in perspective; but avoid comparisons that ignore distinctions that people consider important. Always try to include a discussion of actions that are under way or can be taken. Tell people what you cannot do. Promise only what you can do, and be sure to do what you promise.

### Points to Consider:

Regardless of how well you communicate risk information, some people will not be satisfied. Never let your efforts to inform people about risks prevent you from acknowledging—and saying—that any illness, injury, or death is a tragedy. If people are sufficiently motivated, they are quite capable of understanding complex risk information, even if they may not agree with you.



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# STUDY SHOWS IMPROVEMENT IN GOLFER'S ENVIRONMENTAL ATTITUDES

from Newsline (a publication from the GCSAA)

The majority of U.S. golfers believe that golf course superintendents use fertilizers and pesticides responsibly, and their general concerns about the environmental impact of golf have decreased, according to a new independent study commissioned by GCSAA.

The study, which was conducted by the National Golf Foundation (NGF) at GCSAA's request, examined the attitudes of a demographically representative group of more than 1,000 golfers. The focus of the study was on three key areas; environment, course conditioning and the image of the superintendent. One section of the study replicated the NGF's 1994 survey of environmental issues among golfers.

More than 80% of golfers surveyed believe that superintendents are environmentally responsible and they use chemicals and water wisely. Nearly two-thirds of golfers now believe that golf courses are good for the environment - a figure up from just 55% less than two years ago.

"Golfers believe in the need to protect our environment. They are very confident about superintendents' abilities to manage courses in an environmentally responsible manner," says Bruce R. Williams, CGCS, GCSAA President. "This study indicates attitudes are improving, and although it's impossible to say for sure, we'd like to think that the educational efforts by GCSAA, the USGA and other golf associations have helped to change misperceptions among players."

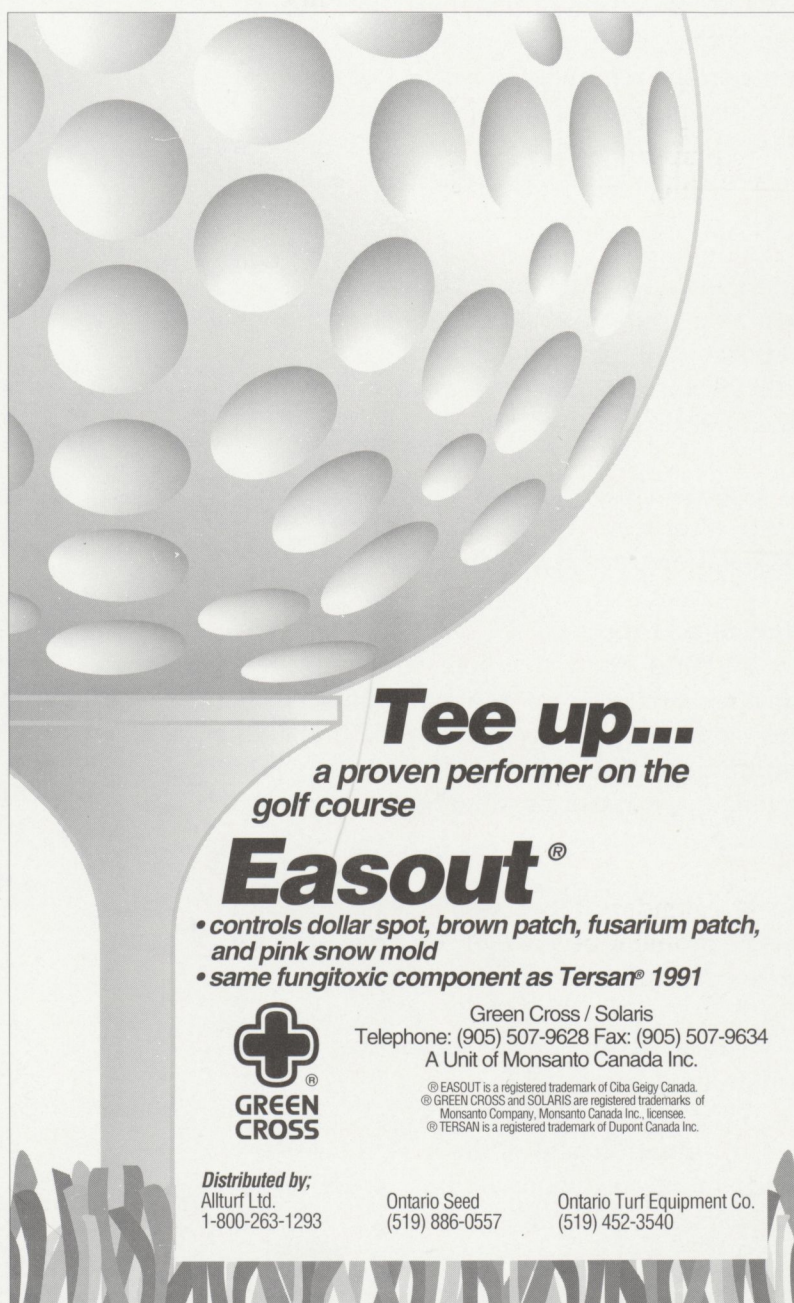
Golfers cited unrepaired ball marks as the most "bothersome" and "frequent" course conditioning problem.

"It was interesting that the thing bothering golfers most - unrepaired ball marks - is a problem they can and should fix themselves," Williams says. "The study confirms that there still are not enough golfers who routinely repair ball marks,

rake bunkers and replace and fill divots."

The results of the image section of the study will be used by GCSAA to guide its public relations programs and to create a baseline to measure the success of future golfer education efforts.


"We are making a substantial investment in educational programs, including our TV show, 'Par for the Course' which airs on ESPN," Williams says. "We want to be able to track the effectiveness of our efforts to ensure we're doing the right things to raise the visibility of our members and to enhance their image within golf."



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# The Guelph Turfgrass Institute on the World Wide Web

As of November 1995, the Guelph Turfgrass Institute has joined an ever-growing community of turfgrass and golf related sites on the World Wide Web. Our pages are designed to deliver timely and useful text and graphical information about turf management and the turf industry via the internet located at:

<http://www.oguelph.ca/GTI/gtiahom.htm>

Our pages cater to surfing turfgrass managers and researchers.

## *The site includes:*

Our collection of turfgrass links, that is, the URI's ( addresses ) of other turf-related sites on the internet. This is one of the most popular portions of our site. We do our best to keep up-to-date, and try to highlight new, interesting, and comprehensive sites as well.

The GTI annual research reports. As we are able to digitize them, previous annual reports will be added to the site. The current annual reports are available through the Ontario Turfgrass Research Foundation.

Contact information for GTI faculty and staff, other turf researchers, turf associations, and turf publications.

## *Turf factsheets.*

Bulletin boards, where turf managers and researchers can pin announcements, turf management questions & answers, equipment buy and sell notices, jobs available/wanted postings, or just general graffiti.

A calendar of turfgrass events (dormant at the moment because of the time required to keep it current )

Pages dealing with pesticides in the urban landscape.

Information about the GTI, its history and mandate. Connections with other University of Guelph web pages.

*Information about research, education and extension services offered through the GTI.*

Home pages for turf industry organizations at the G.M. Frost Research and Information Centre (including the Ontario Turfgrass Research Foundation, the Ontario Golf Superintendents Association, and the Sports Turf Association).

We are averaging ~1500 hits per week, with people from all around the world signing our guest book. Come and visit us - we welcome your comments and suggestions about how to improve the site.



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# BROWN PATCH DISEASE

BY TOM HSIANG, PATHOLOGIST, GUELPH TURFGRASS INSTITUTE

Brown Patch is a warm season disease and only occurs under hot humid conditions in southern Ontario. In the American southeast, it is an extremely important

disease and a great deal of fungicide is used there to control it. In this issue, we'll discuss ways of recognizing and dealing with Brown Patch which is also called Rhizoctonia Patch or Brown Spot.

**PATHOGEN:** Rhizoctonia solani (this organism is also known to cause black scurf of potatoes, damping-off and many other diseases on many different host plants)

**HOST PLANTS:** All northern turfgrasses, particularly bentgrass, annual bluegrass and perennial ryegrass.

**SEASON OF OCCURRENCE:** Mid to late summer, with warm wet weather.

## CONDITIONS FAVOURING DISEASE:

- Hot, humid weather with temperatures greater than 26C and extended periods of leaf wetness (similar to conditions favourable for Anthracnose and Pythium Blight conditions; but since Brown Patch is mainly a foliar blight, there is potentially better recovery compared to the other two diseases).
- Dense, highly fertilized stands.
- Prolonged dew or a film of moisture on the foliage or frequent watering.
- Poorly drained thatch.
- Acidic soils.

## SYMPTOMS:

- On higher cut turf, the symptoms may be less apparent, with just a circular pattern of thinned turf. The centre of the patch may recover giving a frog-eye appearance. There may also be lesions on the leaf blades similar to Dollar Spot lesions, but not as bleached. Lesion borders are not straight like Dollar Spot.
- On lower cut turf (less than 20mm height), diseased patches are initially purplish green, but then die out to a light brown.
- During warm humid weather, a purplish or greyish-brown margin called a "smoke ring" may be visible in the morning. It disappears before mid-day.
- Within the diseased areas, there may be some healthy grass due to recovery.

## LIFE CYCLE:

- The fungus overwinters in soil or thatch as

sclerotia or mycelium in diseased or dead tissue.

- The overwintering fungus begins to grow when air temperature reaches approximately 18C, but fungal growth halts at about 32C.
- Moisture must be present on the leaves for the fungus to attack healthy grass plants.
- The fungus enters leaf pores and wounds to infect leaves and sheaths.
- The infected tissues die and sclerotia are formed.

## CULTURAL CONTROL:

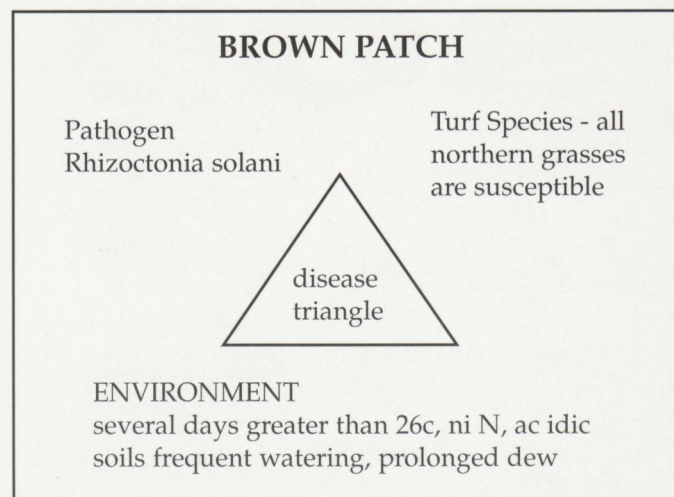
- Reduce shade and increase air circulation.
- Drag a hose or pole over turf to reduce leaf surface wetness.
- Reduce N fertilization during summer, and use light and frequent applications rather than single large applications.
- Minimize thatch.
- Maintain soil pH at 7 or slightly lower.
- Avoid night watering.

## CHEMICAL CONTROL

- The disease can spread rapidly, so fungicides should be applied promptly at first sign of the disease.
- Fungicides containing one or more of the following active ingredients are registered for control: chlorothalonil, iprodione, benomyl, anilazine, thiophanatemethyl, thiram, propiconazole and phenyl mercuric acetate. Consult provincial publications and product labels for registered uses and recommended rates.
- This disease can be dealt with curatively after symptoms are first seen.

## RESISTANT TURFGRASS:

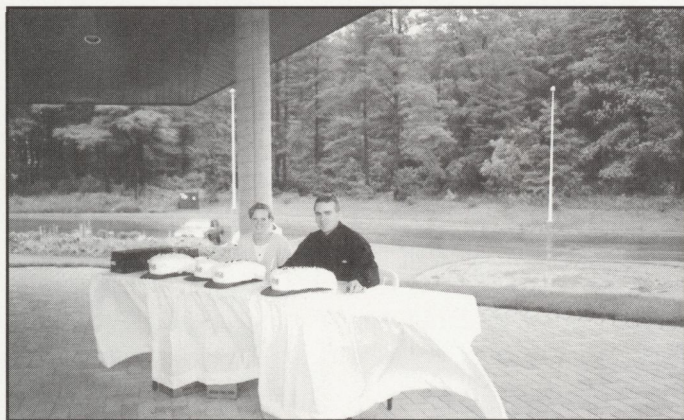
- None of the northern turfgrasses are resistant.





# Nu Gro's Annual Appreciation Day

by Rob Field



Nu Gro's 6th annual appreciation day was held June 24th at the Heron Point. Golf links. Unsettled morning weather did not hinder the enthusiasm as we enjoyed our fullest field to date. This years format was changed to a team scramble & proved to be a great success. We plan to continue this format for our 7th annual event 23rd/97 at Heron Point.

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Our guest speaker this year was Corrie Allmark of Brookside lubs. Corrie's presentation was well accepted and included insightful tips on understanding greens mix specifications. We would like to wish all who attended a successful growing season and look forward to having you back next year.

## Georgian Bay Superintendents' Association

The second event of the GBSA was hosted by Gary Gravett at Saugeen Golf Club on June 19th. In all there were 70 participants and an excellent trade show with an equipment demonstration. Dinner was followed by a 20 minute slide presentation of the new nine holes at Saugeen G.C. Tied at 75 were Chris Densmore, Tyler Smith and Pierre Deslodge, with Chris winning through retrogression. Pictured below are the happy guests the equipment and the putting green after aeration, verticutting, overseeding and rolling.

The interested onlookers are testing the speed of the green. The next event will be hosted by Don Campbell, at the Marlwood Golf Club on July 23. Please plan to attend and experience some northern hospitality. Everyone is welcome and the more the merrier.



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# Maintenance on a Shoestring

by Patrick M. O'Brien

Director, Southeastern Region, USGA Green Section

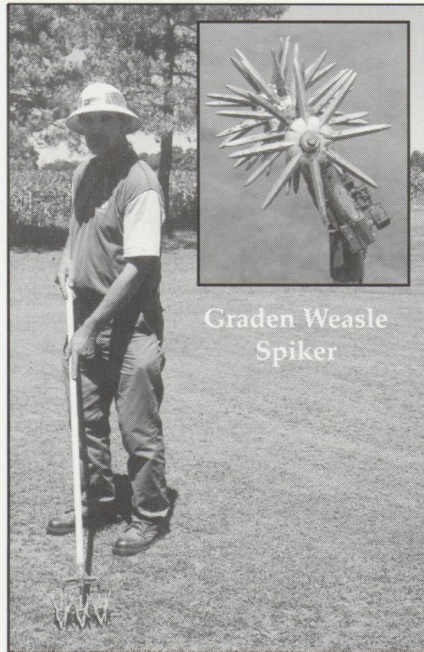
**"A man who says something can't be done, should get out of the way of the man doing it."**

**-- Chinese proverb**

Golf course maintenance costs are skyrocketing. Operational maintenance costs have been rising approximately 8% annually over the past 10 years, compared to an average inflation rate of approximately 4%.

Despite these numbers, many golf courses are being operated with budgets far below industry averages. These represent golf courses that can get by with what can be termed Maintenance on a Shoestring. At what level does Maintenance on a Shoestring begin today? According to a fall 1994 survey of 16 USGA Green Section agronomists, annual golf courses with maintenance budgets of \$300,000 U.S. or less could be considered in this category. A Maintenance on a Shoestring designation does not necessarily mean that a course is without resources or has an inferior maintenance program, but because of their chosen budget, they could be considered in this category. To make up for the smaller budget, it is essential to operate these facilities with superior management and expertise.

Golf was first played on sites that required very little maintenance. The first Scottish links courses were shaped at no cost by the wind, rain, and the burrowing activities of sheep. Golfers played on these sandy sites only where the grass grew best on its own, and sheep maintained the turfed areas. However, maintenance standards have come a long way since the days of sheep-kept grasses. Today's park-like surroundings require a reasonable budget and a labor force to keep them up to standard. If a course sets a budget of \$300,000 or less, certain priorities must be established to make best use of available dollars. Following are the most often expressed concerns of course owners, club officials, and golf course superintendents regarding budgeting priorities at golf facilities with operational budgets at or below \$300,000. Basic ideas on operational budget preparation, establishing priorities, and opportunities for



Graden Weasle  
Spiker

maintenance cost saving ideas will be shared.

## Hire a Knowledgeable Golf Superintendent

From the informal 1994 fall survey of the Green Section staff, every agronomist agreed that hiring an experienced golf superintendent is a key to success at low-budget facilities. Experience counts, because with it comes knowledge of short-cuts and how to spend available money. A good superintendent can optimize the agronomic program, including product purchases, staff training, and chemical applications. Savings accrued because of sound decisions will more than make up for the higher salary required for an experienced individual in this critical position.

This qualified superintendent doesn't necessarily need to have strong academic credentials, such as a B.S. Degree or certified golf course superintendent (CGCS) status, but a combination of education and experience is a plus. The person should be a well-trained and experienced individual who will prevent waste, spend funds wisely, and make good daily decisions.

## The Plan

The first step in predicting the maintenance costs of a golf course for the next fiscal year is to develop a plan. A meeting can be held between the golf course superintendent and the owner or green chairman, for example, to determine maintenance objectives, policies, and planned improvements for the next golfing season. Based on these priorities, the superintendent can estimate the funds needed for each line item of the operational budget. One public course that meets the criteria for Maintenance on a Shoestring is the Moccasin Bend Golf Course, Chattanooga, Tennessee. Owner Wesley G. Brown and golf superintendent Lee Roy Webb include these priorities in their plan:

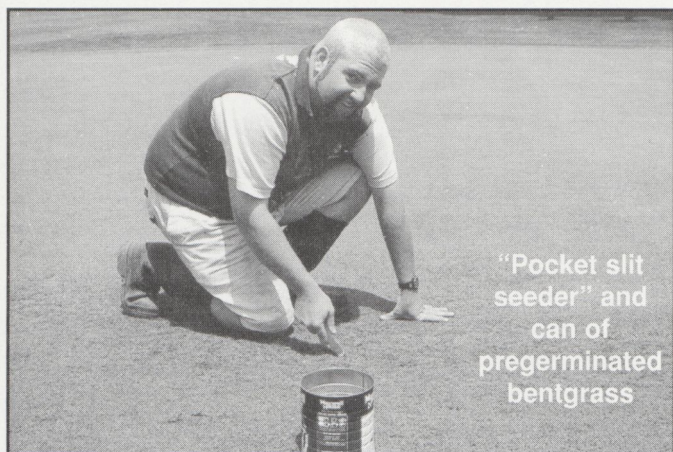
- Level and intensity of maintenance
- Predicted fertilizer and pesticide use
- Anticipated equipment and irrigation parts
- New bunker sand
- Tee leveling projects
- Gasoline and other power costs
- Meeting and travel expenses
- Miscellaneous



With a plan, it is now possible for the golf course superintendent to establish a budget.

### Establishing a Budget

The budget is the financial map for the golf course maintenance department. There are two types of budgets needed at a golf course: operational and capital. The operational budget details the anticipated expenses for the upcoming year. Most operational budgets are divided into two simple categories, termed payroll and operating expenses. Labor costs usually represent 50% to 65% of a budget. They generally include wages, payroll taxes, medical insurance, and other benefits. Operating costs make up the remainder of the budget, and can include a host of categories, such as fertilizers, chemicals, bunker sand, equipment and irrigation repairs, etc.



Capital budgets include expenditures for large equipment and items with a life expectancy of more than one year. Two categories, called capital improvements and capital expenses, may be included in this budget. Capital improvements improve the value of the golf course and could include a new irrigation system, bridges, tree plantings, new greens, maintenance facility, etc. Obviously, these items typically require large financial outlays. Long-range plans for five years or more are usually developed, setting priorities for these expenditures and establishing target dates for project completion, and are updated annually. Capital expenses usually refers to any new equipment purchase, but also can include office furniture, new computers, office lockers, and many other items. Buying a few new pieces of equipment annually, even if only a modest amount of money is available, helps to meet the long-range goals. It is better to stretch out equipment replacement by making a few key purchases every year, rather than getting hopelessly behind and eventually facing the need for significant expenditures.



### The Flexible Operational Budget

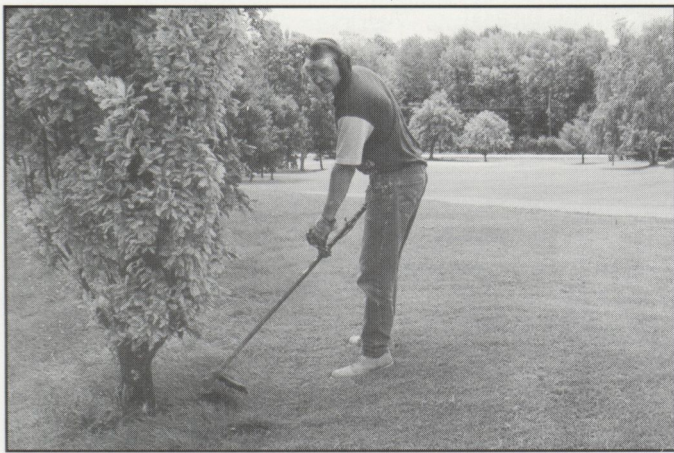
Most golf courses operate on a flexible, rather than a fixed budget, which once approved cannot be changed. Flexible means the budget is not exact and is subject to change as the year progresses. Golf course superintendents strive to budget conservatively and not exceed planned expenditures for the fiscal year. However, anyone who has been involved in the golf business knows it is wise to be flexible with a maintenance budget. Line item categories cannot always be predicted. Some years' budget priorities sometimes have to be changed. For example, all of the bermudagrass fairways and tees winterkilled at the Moccasin Bend Golf Course in 1994, causing an unexpected sprig and sod expenditure of more than \$30,000.

Usually, the budget runs from January through December, although the fiscal year can run for any convenient 12-month period. Budget recordkeeping can be done easily today on a computer. Off-the-shelf spreadsheet or data base software, or custom software written for golf course operations, such as TRIMS, SCMS, Par-plus, or GCS for Windows, are popular choices for this task. Expenditures should be allocated to a specific line item and coded correctly. If a category has been overspent one month, an explanation can be included in the narrative. Also, management should never set a rule that if a category is below budget for a month, those funds are lost. Some golf superintendents are forced to spend money at the end of the month just to avoid losing it. Additionally, include only line items that relate to golf course maintenance in the budget. Other line items, such as golf cart maintenance and repair, should be part of another budget.

### The High Cost of Mowing

"Mowing costs may be as high as 70 to 80% of the total budget at a low-budget course," according to Dr. Joseph DePaola of the Ciba-Geigy Corporation. "Labor, fuel, equipment depreciation, and equipment costs all contribute to the total cost





of mowing. This figure not only includes the actual mowing operation, but also the cleanup after mowing, which involves blowing or removing the excess clippings. This cleanup may involve just as much time as the actual mowing," says Dr. DiPaola. Applying a growth regulator, such as Primo, to reduce clippings and mowing frequency to primary play areas, such as green banks, fairways, tees, and secondary roughs, can save money. This "liquid labor" saves money by reducing the need for mowing, clipping cleanup, edging, and mower cleanup. With less time spent mowing, it may be possible to increase time spent on other activities of your choice.

Significant mowing costs also can be associated with maintenance of steep slopes, bunker edging, curbing, mulched areas, cart path edges, etc. Hand mowing, string trimming, and flymowing also significantly increase total mowing costs. At the Royal Lakes Golf & Country Club, near Gainesville, Georgia, golf course superintendent Frank Siple has measured the total golf course linear edging lengths. It came to a total of 12.2 miles of linear edging, but did not include trimming and edging around trees, which isn't done at this course. The use of non-selective herbicides, such as Roundup or Finale, or growth regulators to reduce trimming along these borders saves money. Other money-saving tips for reducing mowing costs include:

Allowing natural grassy areas to develop in out-of-play rough areas. However, give the golfers plenty of margin for error on fairways to keep play moving and most players happy. Reducing mowing acreage, such as around tees, pond banks, etc. Reducing frequently mowed fairway turf by contour mowing to reduce fairway area.

Eliminating ropes and stakes, which slow mowing efficiency. Use other, more efficient traffic-control measures, such as 4-foot-tall movable indicator posts, permanent curbing, movable barriers, etc.

Using rotary mowers to mulch leaves, twigs, and other debris.

Naturalizing tee surrounds and carry areas to the fairways.

Providing good drainage so that larger mowers can operate more effectively on fairways and roughs.

### **Judicious Use of Fertilizer Saves Money**

One very important cost-cutting strategy is the competitive bidding of seed, fertilizer, and pesticides. Don't buy all materials from just one company. Bid sheets with the quantities of these items needed should be prepared. Many companies offer significant discounts by pre-ordering materials in bulk and paying early in the spring season. However, bulk purchases only work if an adequate storage building is available.

If need be, develop an annual supply contract, with delivery as needed. That keeps just one or two applications of pesticides on hand.

Bulk spreading of fertilizers, lime and other services can save labor hours. Many low-budget courses contract all fairway and rough fertilization and spring pre-emerge herbicide applications.

Fertilize the turf grass only as needed, and base nutrient applications on annual soil test results. Concentrate on the major turfgrass nutrients, including nitrogen, phosphorus, and potassium, in the fertilization program. Avoid costly quick cure products for what ails the turf. Instead, stick with a few simple programs that will help the grass grow.

### **Maximize Labor, Equipment, and Irrigation**

Employee training is especially important at a low-budget course, since assistant superintendents usually aren't on staff to provide additional expertise and supervision. Invest in key staff employees by sending them to turf conferences, seminars, and turfgrass field days. Also, hire a qualified mechanic. Don't cut corners on this key staff position. Equip the maintenance staff with two-way radio communications to increase the efficiency of staff and equipment.

Purchase labor-saving equipment such as power bunker rakes, large gang units, and rotary mowers, triplex mowers, etc. To reduce wear and tear at some sites, lightweight five-gang mowers are preferred over large gang units. Regular yearly investment in new maintenance equipment is essential, even if only a modest amount.



Daily maintenance equipment repairs and record-keeping will save money in the long run. It is the key to avoiding breakdowns and costly repairs. An 8' x 10' sign at the maintenance facility at Summit Chase Country Club in Snellville, Georgia, reminds employees daily that "Preventive Maintenance Means Finer Performance."

A good, dependable irrigation system is a top priority. Monitor soil moisture to help establish irrigation schedules. Decrease electrical pump costs by irrigating between 11:00 p.m. and 6:00 a.m. Ask the power company about load management plans. These plans alert golf course superintendents about high power use days, and significant savings occur by irrigating at certain times specified by the power company. In most instances, only minor irrigation scheduling adjustments are required to participate. Investigate the use of effluent water, but don't buy water without sizable help from the sewage district. Be sure that processing standards are high and that the supply can be turned off when the sewage plant is not operating properly. Set up Irrigation Conservation Areas and native landscape areas for water conservation. Use new, low-water-use turfgrasses where possible.

#### **Reducing the Effects of Bunkers and Trees on the Course Saves Money**

It is desirable to have a few well-placed bunkers, especially around the greens rather than in the fairways. Bunkers are very expensive to maintain. They are costly to rake, mow around, keep filled with sand, and keep well drained. Remove bunkers that impede traffic flow to key areas, and reshape bunkers so that it's more convenient to mow. Sod any sand bunker faces that wash out after rains.

Trees affect turfgrass growth by causing shade, restricted air movement, and tree root competition. Maximize morning sunlight and provide for adequate air flow at greens and tees. Remove trees

and brush that interfere with grass growth, especially on the eastern side of tees and greens. To improve a poor turf-growing environment, remove low-branched tree limbs to increase mowing efficiency and air movement. Prune tree roots to prevent competition for moisture and nutrients.



The use of shredded hardwood bark or pine needles under trees will reduce mowing, speed play, cover tree roots, and improve soil conditions for the trees. Periodic chemical mowing with non-selective plus preemergent herbicides, such as Roundup will help reduce weeds at mulched sites.

#### **Conclusion**

There is no established standard for a golf course maintenance budget. Tremendous variability exists in how costs and expenditures are categorized. However, implementing as many of these tips as possible will help your course save money on a tight budget. Careful maintenance planning can make a big financial difference for any golf course that lives by the standard Maintenance on a Shoestring.

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Present Westmount Golf Club

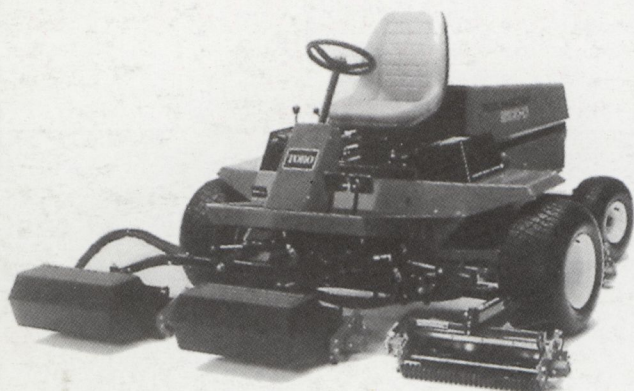




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