

# Green is Beautiful

October 2007

OCT 29 2007

The Official Publication of Ontario Golf Superintendents' Association

**GCSAA  
ARCHIVES**



## **GOOD THINGS HAPPENED AT TRAFALGAR**

**Inside this Issue...**

**Irrigation Management - Planning for Tomorrow**

**Men's Senior Championship at Kawartha G&CC**

**Kill the Roots and the Plant Will Die**

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# President's message

The summer of 2007 will always be remembered as one of the driest in history in certain areas of Ontario. There are many golf courses that had to deal with adversity and I would like to congratulate all the superintendents who persevered. As I sit here and write this message the temperatures are slowly getting cooler, the leaves are starting to turn, and our focus changes towards getting our golf courses ready for winter. The OGSA's focus also changes to providing affordable educational opportunities for our members.

By now, most of you should have received the brochure for the Ontario Golf Course Management Conference and Trade Show, being held at the Sheraton Centre in Toronto from January 16<sup>th</sup> - 18<sup>th</sup>. Randy Booker and his committee have put together an excellent educational program as well as a diverse trade show. Be sure to take advantage of the early bird special which expires on December 1<sup>st</sup>, 2007. We look forward to seeing you all at the conference.

The OGSA is pleased to offer our first webcast seminar on November 7<sup>th</sup>, 2007. The webcast will be set up at three different locations throughout the province. The webcast will be held simultaneously at the Guelph Turfgrass Institute in Guelph, the Innisbrook Golf Course in Barrie, and Lochness Links in Welland. The title of our first webcast seminar on green speeds and will be moderated by an OGSA representative. You will have received information via *Clippings*. I would like to extend a special thanks to Jeff Alexander and Randy Twyman for their hard work in setting up the webcast seminars.

As many of you may know, the province of Ontario is setting up committees in three regions of Ontario which will determine policy for the Source Water Protection Act. The new act could have many implications with respect to the management of golf courses and we should all be taking it very seriously. The OGSA is currently working in conjunction with the Allied Golf Association of Ontario, and the Royal Canadian Golf Association with nominating potential committee candidates. I would like to thank Doug Breen and Jarrod Barakett for keeping up to date and advising our board on the proceedings. We will be updating our membership on a regular basis as to any new developments.

In closing, we should all take the time to enjoy ourselves in the off season after what has proven to be a challenging summer. Be sure to spend quality time with friends, family, and those who are close to you. Take the time to educate yourself in preparation for another busy season ahead. Happy Thanksgiving and enjoy the fall months.



by Sean DeSilva,  
Coppinwood Golf Club



## ONTARIO GOLF SUPERINTENDENTS' ASSOCIATION

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# Green is Beautiful

The Official Publication of Ontario Golf Superintendents' Association



## COVER PICTURE

Trafalgar G&CC - 17th Excavation  
*photo by Mark Prieur, Superintendent*

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## Editorial message



by John Bladon  
Co-Editor

Well, the season finally appears to be winding down and the pressure, particularly from an irrigation perspective, seems to be subsiding. As the fall season approaches, the strategizing for a new season begins and one filled with education, networking and planning begins. With that in mind, conference brochures

have been mailed with this edition of *Green is Beautiful*.

As that very planning unfolds for next season, this issue contains some thought provoking pieces on some items that may be deserving of our attention. TJ Rule, of Burnside Golf Services, provides us with a submission on irrigation planning and after a very challenging season on that front for many in the field, this couldn't be more timely. After another season of diagnosing samples at the GTI, Katerina Jordan speaks to the lack of root tissue in many of the samples she has received from the field. This issue's Member profile is of long time OGSA member and OSC man "Schemmer" and Jennifer Pendrith reports in on the successful hosting of the Canadian Senior PGA at

Kawartha Golf & Country Club. For the record, the feedback from the professionals was that Jen had the course dialed! Last and certainly not least, our feature article is the second of two parts on green reconstruction done at Trafalgar Golf & Country Club, by Mark Prieur and his team. The first portion appeared in the August issue last year so you may wish to dig into your archives as a refresher on that first installment.

On an editorial front, the committee will be meeting in November to plan for next year and select both the photo and article of the year to be presented at the upcoming conference. On behalf of the board and Chris, I would like to welcome Andy Sandilands, from Black Diamond Golf Club in the Peterborough area, to the committee. Andy will replace Doug Davidson of Glencairn Golf Club who, this year, welcomed his first child into the world. Doug was a passionate contributor in his time with the committee and will be missed.

Finally, if you have an idea, something you would like to write about or think we should write about, even a photo to share, drop us a line. Your contribution would be welcomed!

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# What's new

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### EDUCATION POINTS:

GCSAA = 0.2 pts. CGSA = 1.5 pts. IPM = 2.0 pts.

### INCLUDES:

**On Demand Webcast "GREEN SPEED AND THE LAW  
OF DIMINISHING RETURNS"**

**Instructor: Tom Nikolai, Ph D.**

Common knowledge dictates that decreased mowing height and nitrogen fertility increases green speed on the putting surface. However, as the old cliché goes, "A little knowledge is a dangerous thing" and this session will shine light on why the cliché is true and the common knowledge may be false. The law of diminishing returns will be considered in regard to mowing height, fertility, and light - weight rolling programs and the effect each has on playability and agronomic health.

Our premise: Turfgrass health and playability can coexist - and the turf manager that communicates this to his clientele can benefit professionally and personally. *Original Presentation date: Apr. 18, 2006*

### AGENDA:

9:00 A.M. - 9:45 A.M.....Registration  
10:00 A.M. - 11:30 A.M.....Pre-Recorded Webcast  
11:30 A.M. - NOON.....Discussion

Register online at [www.golfsupers.on.ca](http://www.golfsupers.on.ca), or download registration form from website and either fax or mail to OGSA office.

WE MUST RECEIVE REGISTRATION FORM BY  
WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 31, 2007

## JOHN B. STEELE AWARD

Our hearty congratulations go to Paul Dermott, who was named the recipient of the CGSA John B. Steele Distinguished Service Award. The announcement was made at the CGSA Fall Field Day, recently held in Whistler, BC.

Paul, now a retired Certified Golf Course Superintendent, represents excellence in golf course management and professional leadership. He has a long track record of being a dedicated volunteer, investing into the future of our profession. His most notable accomplishments include: OGSA President 1975 and 1976, recipient of the Score Superintendent of the Year Award, founding Chairman of the Ontario Turf Symposium, founding member of the Ontario Turf Research Foundation and founding member of the Stanley Thompson Society. In addition, Paul's hard work and determination has led to the birth of the Guelph Turfgrass Institute, which has grown through the years and has recently celebrated its 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary.

The OGSA cannot think of anyone more deserving of this prestigious award; a fitting tribute to someone who has given so much to the industry. We extend our best wishes to you, Paul.

## OGSA CALL FOR NOMINATIONS

With our Past President, Bob Burrows leaving the board in January 2008, there will be one vacancy for a new director. This is your opportunity to put your candidate's name forward. Nomination forms can be downloaded from our website [www.golfsupers.on.ca](http://www.golfsupers.on.ca) > Member News Section. Deadline for completed nomination forms are to be into the OGSA office or to one of the Nomination Committee members by November 16<sup>th</sup>. If you do not have access to the website or are unable to print off a form, please call the office and we will either mail or fax a form to you.

## ONTARIO GOLF COURSE MANAGEMENT CONFERENCE AND TRADE SHOW

A brochure including registration form has been inserted with this issue of *Green is Beautiful*. You may have also received a brochure in August. If so, please pass this one along to your golf course owner, mechanic or horticulturist. There will be a one day program for golf course mechanics and horticulturists on Friday, January 18<sup>th</sup>, 2008.

## SOURCE WATER PROTECTION

by Doug Breen, OGSA Director

Government Relations

Many superintendents are aware of Source Water Protection (SWP) legislation, and have concerns about how it may affect their operations. Many have seen that Source Water Protection Committees are being formed throughout the province, and are wondering if the OGSA is involved.

The OGSA has joined with the RCGA, GAO, CPGA, and NGCOA, to form the Ontario Allied Golf Association. This organization has been involved with the Ontario Provincial Government's consultation process since the beginning, and is presently lobbying to have golf representation on as many SWP Committees as possible. We have asked various members of our industry to apply to their local committees, and will be furnishing them with letters of endorsement from the OAGA.

We hope to ensure that there will be strong, province wide representation of our industry on these committees. We will also be pressing to be present in sub-committees and working groups, especially in areas where we do not get a seat on the SWP Committee.

The OGSA is dedicated to promoting the message that golf courses are a net gain to the quality of drinking water in Ontario.

## NEW LISKEARD SUPERINTENDENT RENEWS PROFESSIONAL CERTIFICATION

Congratulations to Bob Burrows, GCSAA certified golf course superintendent at Frog's Breath Golf Club, who has completed the renewal process for maintaining his status as a Certified Golf Course Superintendent with the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America.

## GCSAA NEWS

PGA Tour Commissioner, Tim Finchem announced that Steve Mona, GCSAA's Chief Executive Officer has accepted the newly created CEO position of the World Golf Foundation. Steve has agreed to continue to serve up to another six months to assist in the succession of GCSAA's chief executive officer.

## GOLF ASSOCIATION OF ONTARIO

The GAO and Tee to Green Custom Signage have announced a partnership that will help ensure that a generation of young golfers keep their eye on the ball, and the game, well into the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The GAO, one of the world's largest amateur golf associations, will see up to 20 percent of individual granite yardage plate sales to GAO member courses go to junior development programs that instill a passion for the game and offer professional coaching for individuals working towards skills improvement.



**Welcome!**  
OGSA Welcomes  
our newest members

**Ralph Bauer** Class A  
Turkey Point Golf Club

**Nathan Clarke** Class Supt  
Ash Brook Golf Club

**Tammy Houle** Class F  
Humber Valley Golf Course

**Rafik Lang-Bismillah** Class S  
Senjan Golf Club

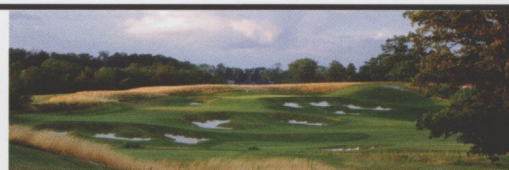
**John McLaren** Class F  
Ladies' Golf Club of Toronto

**Ashley Pierce** Class C  
The Oaks of St. George

**Will Stoner** Class C  
Devil's Pulpit Golf Assn

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## What's new continued...

### GUELPH TURFGRASS INSTITUTE 20<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY OPEN HOUSE

by Rob Witherspoon, Director



Trial Gardens at the GTI photos by Dorothy Hills



A public open house was held on August 16th at the Guelph Turfgrass Institute & Environmental Research Centre to celebrate the 20-year partnership between the Ontario turfgrass industry, Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs and the University of Guelph.

The open house featured lawn care demonstrations, flower-arranging workshops, turfgrass and environmental research presentations, and tours of the Guelph Trial Gardens, which showcases flowers and plants that best grow in southwestern Ontario.

The event concluded with turfgrass researcher Dr. Eric Lyon's famous pulled pork on a bun followed by a performance by GTI Director Rob Witherspoon's bluegrass band, the Speed River Valley Mountain Boys.

### TAKE ME OUT TO THE BALL GAME

by Jason Ireton, Plant Products

This past July 21<sup>st</sup>, 2007, Plant Products Company Ltd. held its annual slow pitch baseball tournament. This year's tournament, as they have all seemed to be, was held

on a beautiful sunny Saturday.

This very popular event was a great success with 39 golf clubs participating and each team playing two hard fought games before the round robin concluded. The opening pitch was tossed out at 9:00 am with 55 games played before the championship game between Deer Creek and King's Riding started at 7:30 pm.

For the third year in a row we have crowned a new champion. Congratulations to the 2007 Plant Product Slow Pitch Champion, King's Riding.



I would like to thank all the teams who participated and made this day a success. Also, this day would not have been possible without all of our key sponsors, which included Aquatrols, BASF, Bayer Environmental Science, Engage Agro/Syngenta, Lebanon Turf, Par Aide, Pickseed and Skyway Equipment.

### OTRF TOURNAMENT RAISES OVER \$30,000 FOR TURF RESEARCH

by Kyle MacFarlane, OTRF Marketing Chair

Photos by C. Emms Photography

The Ontario Turfgrass Research Foundation is proud to announce that over \$30,000 was raised for turf research as a result of the 2007 OTRF Fundraising Tournament on August 20<sup>th</sup>. The tournament has seen tremendous growth over the past few years with a full field of 144 teeing it up in 2007.

There were a number of highlights from the event including the tremendous host venue, the Georgian Bay Club in Collingwood. The course was in immaculate condition and provided all participants with challenging shots and unbelievable views all day long. Thom Charters from Bayview Golf, honorary member of the OTRF and chair of the GTI Advisory Board, emerged the champion but all participants were winners by being able to play such a wonderful course. Despite a cool wind early in the day the event ended beautifully not only with regards to

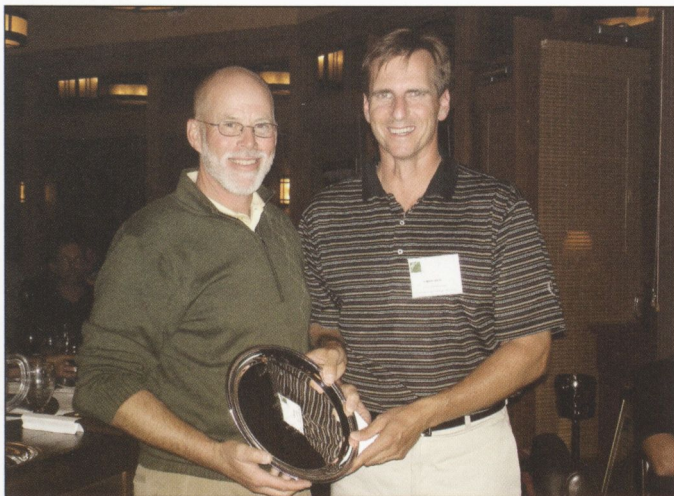




*John Watson, MSc Candidate, Turfgrass Science, UofG*

the weather on the course but also with the support received for the OTRF.

This year's event provided a number of industry partners the platform to make significant contributions to the OTRF. The title sponsor of the event, Syngenta, has been and continues to be a major supporter of turfgrass research in the province. Their support of not only this event but the OTRF overall goes a long way to ensure the continued success of turf research. The OTRF would like to thank Syngenta and all of this year's tournament sponsors for their continued support of a great cause.



*Thom Charters & Chris Dew*

Other significant donations to the OTRF were presented during the closing ceremonies of the event. The Georgian Bay Golf Superintendents Association generously donated \$1000 to the OTRF. The second presentation was made by Claus Zander on behalf of Zander Sod, who presented the OTRF with a cheque for \$5,000. Last but definitely not least, the Golf Association of Ontario was present for the second consecutive year

and presented their annual \$50,000 donation to the OTRF.

Following the success of the OTRF tournament, on Tuesday August 21<sup>st</sup> was the first annual Mac Frost Charity Golf Tournament at Vespra Hills Golf Club in memory of Mac. Hosted by Mac's daughter Cinder Warren, the event was a tremendous success in its inaugural year. As a result of this wonderful event Cinder and the Frost family were able to raise and generously donate an additional \$6,000 to the OTRF.

It was quite a week for the OTRF and turf research in this province. The OTRF would like to thank all those involved in both of these two great events. We look forward to seeing you all next year.

## **8<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL BILL GALBRAITH MEMORIAL GOLF TOURNAMENT**

*Tim Schaly, President*

*Eastern Ontario Golf Superintendents Association*

The Bill Galbraith Memorial Golf Tournament is held in memory of Bill, who was the superintendent and owner of Bayview Golf Center in Belleville and died from cancer nine years ago. This year's event included some special highlights and recognitions.

Peter Lucas received the "Member Recognition Award" for his contributions to the EOGSA over the years, while he was the superintendent at the Bay of Quinte Golf and Country Club. Peter, who was good friends with Bill Galbraith, initiated and organized the Bill Galbraith Memorial Golf Tournament. Peter received a beautiful print of Pebble Beach's seventh hole.

The winner of the complimentary two day OGSA conference & trade show pass was Chris Altoft, Superintendent at the Picton Golf & Country Club. Toro also sponsored a "Closest to the Pin" prize, a weekend getaway to Niagara Falls or Deerhurst Resort in Huntsville. Tom St. Denis, Superintendent and owner of Murray Hills Golf Club was the lucky winner.

The 50/50 draw to raise money for Camp Trillium, a camp on an island near Picton where children with cancer can come for a week to have fun with their loved ones, resulted in a total of \$120. When announced that it cost \$720 per week to send a child with cancer to the camp, something special happened. The two team winners from our skins game both donated their winnings of \$130/team to the Trillium Camp. An individual also donated \$15 to the camp. The association made an executive decision to top up the donations received to get us to the \$720 mark. Our association made me proud that day, to think that 60 guys that came together to play golf would be sending one extra child with cancer to camp next year. Bill Galbraith would be proud!

# From roots to shoots



by Pam Charbonneau  
OMAF Turfgrass Specialist

I am quite sure that everyone is relieved that we finally got some rain. It always truly amazes me how quickly dormant turf will rebound with just a few centimeters of rain. One thing is for sure, if your turf hasn't greened up by now, it isn't because of lack of moisture and there must be another reason. If the turf is dead, renovating as quickly as possible is a must. The ideal window for turf establishment in the fall is mid-August to mid-September.

There has been a lot happening this month where insects are concerned. One day last week there were ants swarming every where. I just happened to be out on the research green in the mid-afternoon when this was happening and it was quite exciting. There were so many of them that they were landing on me and getting caught in my hair, etc. On my walk home, I observed the same thing in the park areas that I passed and on private lawns. This phenomenon happens this time of year. Over the season some workers develop into winged males and winged females which become the kings and queens of the ant colony. These winged ants leave the nest and swarm. Females and males mate and the males die soon after. The mated female (queen) flies to an attractive nesting site, tears off her wings, and encloses herself in a small excavation in the soil, and lays eggs and a new colony is formed.

There have also been lots of adult sod webworms flying around. Generally, these insects are thought to be more of a problem on home lawns, but I have seen extensive damage in fescue mounds and on greens as well. The damage from this insect usually becomes evident in mid-late September. This includes wilting turf that can easily be pulled away at the thatch/grass crown interface. There are usually small dark green frass pellets in the thatch where sod webworms have been feeding. The soap flush

technique, which uses 4 litres of water and about 15 mls of dishwashing liquid works really well to monitor turf for sod webworms. Just pour the soapy solution on roughly 0.1m<sup>2</sup> of turf and wait a few minutes until the caterpillars emerge.

The adult European crane fly emergence has dropped off significantly in Guelph now. Some of the warmer areas such as Niagara may continue to see heavy adult flights over the next week and then they should taper off. On closely mowed turf, the pupal casings are visible in the early morning (just before the green is mowed). They poke out of the greens and look like little thin twigs. If you have time to hang around your greens in the early morning you may be able to witness the emergence of a crane fly adult out of its pupal casing. It is quite fascinating. I have had quite a few calls about the best time to treat for leatherjackets. The main period of damage is during the month of May. If damage is beginning to be noticed in early to mid-May, treat before the damage is extensive. This is consistent with the Sevin T&O label which states to treat the later instars. Based on some of the insecticide trial work that we have done, you can get good results if you treat in the spring.

European chafer and Japanese beetle grubs are feeding heavily now and growing quickly. As I mentioned earlier this year, the areas where Japanese beetles are occurring is growing and they are now in the Cambridge area and in some areas of Guelph. Damage will start to show up very quickly now over the next month. Many turf areas have few roots because of all the drought stress and this means that there is quite a potential to see grub damage this fall. For areas that were not treated with Merit, that have significant grub infestation, an application of Sevin T&O will still be effective in controlling grubs. Just be sure to follow the label instructions carefully and water the product in.

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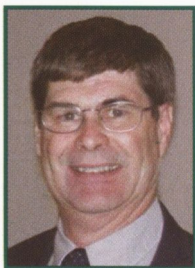
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## Health & safety



by Doug Johnson  
SAFETAID - Health and  
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Labour Day has just passed and most of your young workers have returned to school. Shortly you will start your planning for next year. In this planning you will be making some decisions on who to hire next summer. Who will be returning and who will not be coming back? As part of this planning process you may want to take

a few moments and gather together some information on hiring young people at your workplace.

Your roles and responsibilities under the Occupational Health and Safety Act are quite clear, but you should pay special attention to them when it comes to training and supervising young workers.

Most workers under the age of 25 come to you with little prior work experience. They have yet to discover their limits and capabilities and do not always act and react like a seasoned veteran, simply because they lack experience to make work-related decisions. The workplace can be a dangerous place to rely on trial and error to find answers. Besides your role as employer, you also need to take on the roles of teacher, guide and mentor. The payoff is big. Young workers can provide you with an energetic, enthusiastic workforce full of new ideas that can feed into your club. Training and preparing them properly will also result in workers who are less likely to be injured on the job than their peers in other workplaces.

Lots of information is available. One of the best places to start is the Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety (CCOHS). This Federal Government organization was established in 1978. CCOHS is world

renowned and one of our best kept secrets! The CCOHS mission is to be the Canadian Centre of Excellence for work-related injury and illness prevention initiatives and occupational health and safety information. The CCOHS was established to promote health and safety in the workplace and to facilitate, consultation and cooperation among federal, provincial and territorial jurisdictions between labour and management, to assist in the development and maintenance of policies and programs and to serve as a national centre for information relating to occupational health and safety.

CCOHS has developed a product called the Young Workers Zone - accessed by going to [www.ccohs.ca/youngworkers](http://www.ccohs.ca/youngworkers).

The site has a great number of resources and ideas that you can use to develop strategies when hiring young workers. Things like "Workplace Health & Safety an Overview for Young Workers", tips for young workers, job hazards for lawn care, tree planters and information that can be used for the clubhouse.

There are also links to other young worker sites to facilitate your hiring next year. I know it is early to be discussing this, however all good things take some planning. Now is the time to think of the things that went right and the things that went wrong in this year's hiring. Write them down and then use the information on these sites to assist you in making your choices and strategies for next year.

This is a great opportunity to enhance safety at your club and best of all its free information, there for the taking, with no obligation. Now that just sits right!

Have a wonderful autumn!

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Springview Farms ♦ Cobble Hills ♦ Cobble Hills ♦ Cobble Hills  
Innercity ♦ Innercity ♦ Innercity ♦ Innercity

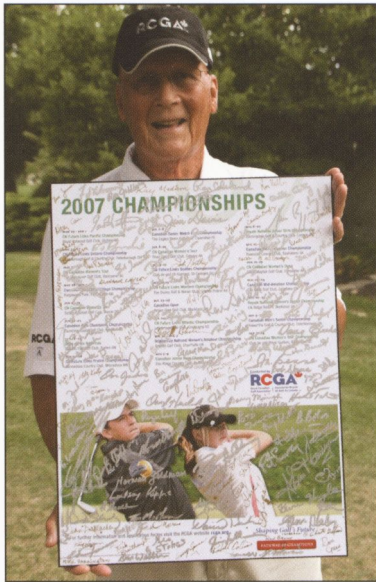
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# RCGA CANADIAN MEN'S SENIOR CHAMPIONSHIP COMES TO ONTARIO

by Jennifer Pendrith, Superintendent, Kawartha Golf & Country Club  
photos by George Granger, Capilano Golf & CC

2007 marks the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Kawartha Golf and Country Club. I couldn't have imagined a better way to celebrate than having the privilege of hosting a major Canadian event. From September 4<sup>th</sup> to 7<sup>th</sup>, Kawartha Golf and Country Club played host to the RCGA Canadian Men's Senior Championship. So 160 of the top senior golfers from across Canada and beyond gathered together in the city of Peterborough to vie for the title of top Canadian senior.



Kawartha member, Bob Lewis

Those who've had the opportunity to host such an important event can appreciate the associated challenges and excitement. To see the end result of months of planning and hard work come to fruition for those 4 days is a truly rewarding experience.

For me, the most gratifying aspect of the entire event was seeing the pride on the faces of our members who happily gave up their course to showcase it for these players. It was inspiring to witness how, as a club, we all came together to provide these men with what one player told me was the best experience he's had in the 12 years he's been participating in this event. Over 70 of our members volunteered their time in the last year to plan an experience that these players will not soon forget. It was also a pleasure working with the RCGA officials during the tournament. They did an outstanding job.



Hole #7

The players were challenged by our traditional Stanley Thompson course and many had the unwelcomed opportunity to play out of our newly restored bunkers. But from those I spoke with, the players' greatest struggle was reading our greens. They quickly realized that our greens can be deceiving. Even by the final round, many of the players still hadn't figured them out. Mother Nature threw a twist into the final round with 60 km/hour winds that lasted most of the day. Luckily, damage was limited to debris and a few fallen trees that were out of play.



Kawartha G&CC Clubhouse



Winning Provincial Team – Team Quebec

It was an exciting finish on the Friday afternoon as spectators gathered around the 18<sup>th</sup> green to witness David Lane, all the way from Berkshire, England, win the title with a 3-day score of +4. And Kawartha's own Roger Self made all of us proud by finishing in a 3 way tie for second with a total score of +7. Watching that final group walk off the course, I was disappointed about the week coming to an end. Despite all the hard work and long hours, it was one of the best experiences I've had at Kawartha. It was an honour to have met such a friendly and appreciative group of gentlemen and to be a part of such a successful event.



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# Member profile

## Interview with Dave Schmelefske, Ontario Seed Co.

by Justin Parsons, Assistant Superintendent  
Trafalgar Golf & Country Club

This issue's Member profile is unique in the sense that if we referred to the subject by his full name, some people might not know who he is. Indeed, Dave Schmelefske is better known as, "Schemmer". He began working on a golf course in the late 1970's at Merry Hill Golf Club, located between Kitchener and Guelph. After toying with the idea of becoming a golf professional, Schemmer insists that he "hung around long enough" to get hired on by the maintenance department. After just two years, he was promoted to the assistant's position in 1981. During this time Schemmer also completed the Horticulture Apprenticeship Program at Humber College. A few years later, he would go on to complete the Short Course at University of Guelph.

But Schemmer maintains that he learned as much working with Superintendent, Greg Aljoe at Merry Hill as he did anywhere else. The five years he spent as Aljoe's assistant more than prepared him for his next job in the industry. In 1986, he became the superintendent of Pike Lake Golf Club. He then moved back to Merry Hill where he served as superintendent for five years.

Most of us now associate Schemmer with the Ontario Seed Company. He has worked for OSC for the last 14 years, including nine as Turf Sales Manager. When asked which side of the industry he prefers, Schemmer simply says,

**"I just love the golf business."**

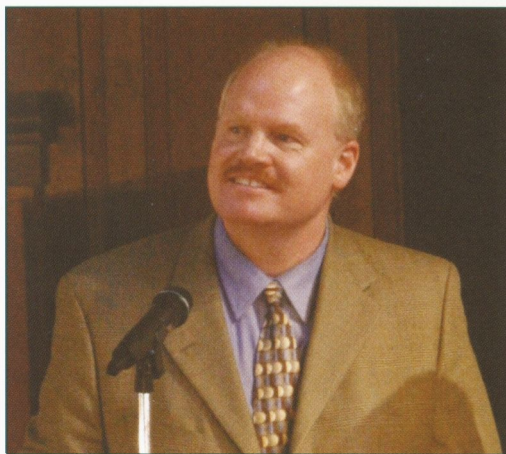
Though he will tell you that his favourite part of being a superintendent was taking pride in the golf course and the staff that make it all possible.

**"There's nothing like having your golf course in the best shape possible."** When asked how long he's been married, Schemmer says **"Long enough to have 3 kids and one grand kid."**

He's been an OGSA member now for the past 24 years, but the highlight of his career is as recent as it gets. He attended the Presidents Cup in Montreal this past September. In fact, this interview took place the morning he got back to the office. When asked what he thought of the event, Schemmer said,

**"I'm on cloud nine... I've never experienced anything like it."**

After more than a quarter century in the industry, it's very clear when speaking to Schemmer that his passion for golf is as strong as ever.



### "In the Hot Seat"

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| • Favourite architect:                                   | Robert Trent Jones   |
| • Favourite major:                                       | Masters  |
| • Best piece of turf equipment ever:                     | His lawnmower in the shed at home                              |
| • Ultimate foursome:                                     | Ty Webb, Al Czervik, Carl Spackler (From the movie Caddyshack) |
| • Lowest round ever and where:                           | Dune Valley GC - 65  |
| • Favourite meal:  | New York steak and potatoes                                    |
| • What's in your CD right now:                           | Van Morrison   |
| • What would you be if not a golf course superintendent: | Film Director  |

# Golf course highlight

## Donalda Club

12 Bushbury Drive  
 Toronto ON M3A 2Z7  
 Website: [www.donaldclub.ca](http://www.donaldclub.ca)  
 Golf Course Superintendent:  
**Scott White**  
 Email: [swhite@donaldclub.ca](mailto:swhite@donaldclub.ca)



View of 5th green with Grounds Dept. barns in the background  
 Photo by Paul Grotier, Assistant Superintendent

### COURSE PROFILE

What county is your club located in?  
 Metropolitan Toronto

Is your club private, semi private, public, resort or municipal?  
 Private

Size of membership?  
 700 members

Number of rounds?  
 30,000

Typical opening and closing date  
 April to November

Name of Superintendent  
 Scott White

How long have you been a superintendent?  
 2 years

List other accomplishments (Audubon, board Service, etc.)  
 Certified Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary

How long have you been an OGSA member?  
 7 years

How many year round staff?  
 7

How many seasonal staff?  
 23

How many mechanics and assistants?  
 Mechanic: Warren Wybenga  
 Assistant: Paul Grotier

How many gardening staff?  
 Head Gardener: Brenda Noble and her assistant

### COURSE STATISTICS

How many holes?  
 18

What is the yardage from back & forward tees?  
 6538 yards from the back tees and  
 5002 yards from the front tees

How many bunkers?  
 69

How many ponds, and/or how many times does water come into play?  
 1 irrigation pond comes into play on the 16<sup>th</sup> and the river comes into play on 16 holes

Who was the original architect?  
 Jimmie Johnstone

What was the year of original construction?  
 1960

By whom and when was the course remodelled?  
 Thom McBroom 1993-1997

What major tournaments have been held?  
 Toronto Star Ladies, Ontario Amateur and GAO Senior Better Ball

What type of irrigation system?  
 Network 8000, VP, Site Pro

What is the size of the greens, tees & fairways?  
 Greens: 3 acres  
 Tees: 3 acres  
 Fairways: 22 acres

What is your predominant grass?  
 Greens: Poa/Bent  
 Tees and Fairways: Bent

How many USGA greens and loam greens?  
 15 USGA greens and 5 push up greens

What is the predominant soil type?  
 Clay

What equipment do you have in inventory?  
 Toro Multi Pro 5600 spray rig  
 Yamaha Carry All golf carts  
 Toro Groundsmaster 3000-D  
 Toro Groundsmaster 3250-D  
 Toro Groundsmaster 3500-D  
 Toro Groundsmaster 325-D  
 Toro Flex 21  
 Toro Greensmaster 1600  
 Toro Greensmaster 500

Toro Workman 3300-D  
 Cushman turf-truckster  
 Toro Sandpro  
 Bush Bandit wood chipper  
 Kubota LA650A tractor loader  
 Kubota 5030 tractor  
 Kubota 4310 tractor  
 STIHL chainsaw  
 STIHL power pruner  
 STIHL cutsaw

### COURSE PROJECTS

What projects have you recently completed?  
 Don River stabilization and erosion control by removing gabion stone baskets and replacing with field stone and native plantings.  
 Survived 2005 season including a 'down burst' in July resulting in severe tree damage and tree loss changing the look of some holes. Then, a 200 year flood in August resulted in having to restore/improve most holes located in the valley, including resodding, adding fescue, expanding tees and renovating our bunkers adding Pro Angle sand.

### LONG RANGE PLANS

What long range plans for renovation do you have in the next five years?  
 Continue river stabilization and restoration initiative.  
 Rebuild the 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> greens, both being push up greens and adding a new tee complex on the 6<sup>th</sup> hole.

### CHALLENGES

Are there any particular challenges you face with your property?  
 All water related; course located in flood plain, river erosion, and irrigation water quality.

### SUCCESS STORIES

Do you have any success stories?  
 Survived 2005!

# Good Things Happened at Trafalgar - Part 2

by Mark Prieur, Superintendent  
Trafalgar Golf and Country Club

The second entry of a two part series on greens reconstruction.

The last paragraph in my first article prayed for a nice fall and a good spring...I could not have jinxed myself more. This article is intended to paint a picture of the last sixteen months here at Trafalgar Golf and CC.

## Berming



Dozers on 8th

Before the original eight greens were finished and opened in the spring of 2006, it was decided that a privacy berm was required to hide the sixth, seventh, and eighth holes from ever increasing traffic on the north side of the property. Derry Road was continuously getting busier as the town of Milton's population increased and the road became a visual scar on what is otherwise a beautiful piece of property. In March 2006, berm construction and greens construction were going to be done at the same time. The fill trucks started rolling in March 2006 and by the time they stopped in September, 60,000 truckloads of fill were dumped on the property. As the trucks rolled in and out; irrigation locates were found and haul roads were built and removed, while the directing of member traffic for safety and temporary tees was facilitated each and every day. It seemed that we were constantly running

out of survey stakes, caution tape and rope. The berms were finished with a combination of bluegrass sod and fescue hydroseeding.

## Fall greens construction



Excavation on 11<sup>th</sup>

Greens construction began September 25<sup>th</sup>, 2006, three full weeks earlier than in the fall of 2005. Ten greens on the west side of the property had to be redone in the same fashion as the original eight on the east side that were completed in 2005. Logistically, everything was now farther from the aggregate staging areas thus adding time to the entire process. Even though we had learned from any mistakes that were made the previous fall, completing the next ten greens posed additional challenges such as irrigation upgrades, tee construction and cart path relocation. Clearly, Trafalgar was getting the facelift it so desperately needed.





*Burning off frost on 15th*

The weather played havoc on the project from week one. In October, we lost 21 of 31 days to rain; a total of 120 mm fell that month alone. Five greens were brought to completion, including sod; given the circumstances it was an incredible feat and the remaining five had to wait for sod until the spring. On November 24<sup>th</sup> five greens were finally sodded, 61 days after fall construction started. By then there was frost everyday and the irrigation system had long been blown out. The sprayers were converted to water trucks and even in late November, there was a threat of sod drying out. A mild December continued to hamper drainage installation and greens mix installation. The course finally froze over in mid-January enabling the remaining greens to finally be excavated, drained and greens mix installed. My assistant, Justin Parsons, was hauling mix out the remaining greens in mid-February!



Final greens grading would have to wait until the spring. 17<sup>th</sup> after sodding

In addition to the greens reconstruction, the irrigation system on the west side of Trafalgar was partially hydraulic. Upgrades to electric, individual head control including perimeter heads were required in conjunction with the greens improvements. This was done in-house and required many hours of pre-planning as to ensure proper quantities of wire, pipe fittings and such.

### Arrival of spring

We were finally blessed with a warm, dry April. Final grading was done in just a few days, and like the previous spring, sod installation was done quickly and efficiently.



*Prepping 6<sup>th</sup> for sod*

The largest difference between 2006 and 2007 was the age of the L-93 bentgrass sod. This sod was much younger than the sod installed the previous spring. Diligent and constant hand watering was employed as the younger thinner sod tended to dry out quicker than in 2006.

Cart paths were also relocated on several holes for safety and playability purposes; this was incorporated into the spring construction. New tee decks were also constructed on the first and fourteenth holes to increase yardage and square footage for wear distribution. These decks were sand-based and seeded to bentgrass.



*18<sup>th</sup> green*

### Drought of 2007

The construction finally came to a close at the beginning of June. It seemed a little strange with the dozers, excavators and wagons absent from the course. Although, I am sure the members didn't mind. When Swartz Golf and Landscapes finally moved off property, a little bit over two years had passed. They had been at Trafalgar as long as I have! A total of 18 brand new greens had been built, 19 tee decks were constructed, 10 acres of berming were shaped to perfection and 5 holes of cart paths had been moved. It truly improved the look and feel of Trafalgar.

By then, the hot dry weather was upon us. Although many non-irrigated areas suffered, the greens, both new and old, held up perfectly. The silver lining in this story is that even though Mother Nature did not bless us with good weather, the greens turned out better than anyone could have ever imagined. Just in time for Trafalgar's 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2008!

# IRRIGATION MANAGEMENT – PLANNING FOR TOMORROW

by T.J. Rule, Project Manager  
Burnside Golf Services

The golf industry has definitely endured a tough year in 2007 due to the lack of rainfall in the province over the summer. This year, ranked as the driest summer in 50 years according to Environment Canada, saw a total of 112 mm of rainfall in the months of June, July and August in Toronto, with August producing only 22 mm, less than 1 inch! This represents half of the normal summer precipitation, and there were some pockets around Ontario that weren't even fortunate enough to receive that amount!

In such a trying year, golf course superintendents have had their work cut out for them. They have to ensure that the turf they are managing will survive, and that the quality of the golf course lives up to either their membership's, or the public's high expectations. This is the reason that superintendents must keep a close eye on their water budgets in relation to their available water resources to make sure they can survive a drier than average summer.

Given the restrictions being placed on water taking in the province through the Ministry of the Environment's (MOE) Permit To Take Water (PTTW) program, and the Ministry of Natural Resources' Low-Level Response Program, courses are moving more and more in the direction of building irrigation reservoirs to better manage their irrigation water supplies. However, existing courses often have difficulty finding ample acreage on the property to construct a reservoir that would alleviate any thought of running out of water. Many courses are still forced to develop multiple water sources to fill the reservoir, and must continue to use these, when available, to fill up the reservoir throughout the summer months.



*Ladies' irrigation pond*

Herein lies the difficulty that many superintendents face: how do I maintain my irrigation schedule while ensuring that my water source will last the entire summer? The answer is simple: always plan for the worst case scenario. In other words, if you are in a situation where your water source is limited, make sure you budget for an entire year without accounting for rainfall to bail you out. Be sure to understand the restrictions being placed on your water source, and make sure that you have a schedule prepared for the year that allows you to sufficiently water your golf course during a summer such as the one we have just experienced. More and more permits are subject to the MNR's low-level response program, which further restricts water taking during drought conditions. The program identifies levels of drought based on flows in watercourses, and although the first two levels ask for a voluntary reduction in taking, a Level 3 drought condition could mean a restriction of taking altogether.

On the other hand, even if you are lucky enough to have an irrigation reservoir on your property, you still have to budget the available water properly. Just because you have a large storage tank doesn't necessarily mean that you can irrigate on demand since that source still has limited capacity. Think of your irrigation reservoir as a bank account. If you know when your next paycheque is coming, you can use up some of your available funds, however if you don't know if you'll get paid again before the late fall/winter, make sure that you don't overdraw your account. Think of rainfall events as bonuses because as we have seen this summer, the cheques don't always come in on a regular basis.

In an ideal world, your golf course would have sufficient acreage, and funds, to build a reservoir that would allow the superintendent to irrigate as much as they want, and as often as they want. However, in reality, that is more the exception than the rule in today's heavily regulated industry. So don't be so hasty in your watering habits early in the year. Make sure you account for your water usage and have a plan in place to reduce your irrigation usage voluntarily earlier in the summer, before it becomes a necessity due to lack of water altogether later in the year.

## **DON'T OVERLOOK THE MONITORING**

What are most people's thoughts when they finally receive their Permit To Take Water? Many believe this is the end of the process, and that the only task left is to file

it away and not worry about it until it expires in five or 10 years. To some extent, the hard work is done, however, you have to be careful before dismissing the permit and stashing it away for safe keeping. Every PTTW has conditions attached to it, often fairly intense monitoring conditions, and it is a rare case when a permit holder isn't required to provide regular, even daily, readings on water levels, flows, etc. And keep in mind that as of March 2007, all permit holders are required to submit a report with their water taking records to the MOE on an annual basis.

If the water taking permit includes groundwater sources, the conditions will likely include recording water levels before, during and after pumping, and not only from the wells listed on the permit. The intent of the Permit To Take Water program is to protect water resources throughout the province, and as a result, any potential impacts on neighbouring wells must be detected and dealt with accordingly. This typically means the installation of automatic water level recorders, which can continually monitor water levels, and provide data that can be downloaded on a regular basis for submission to the MOE as dictated in the monitoring conditions.

Similarly, for surface water takings, certain data must be monitored and reported regularly. Typically this would involve recording water levels in the creek on a daily basis, and/or ensuring that the low flow threshold is adhered to,

meaning that no water is taken below the level that the MOE has deemed to be the minimum flow that must be maintained in the watercourse.

These represent typical conditions for both groundwater and surface water takings, but the monitoring conditions can sometimes be much more rigorous, depending on the sensitivity of the resources in the area. If you are in an area defined as being a "high water use" area, or if the well is located in a sensitive aquifer, it is likely that the conditions will be much more stringent.

As public awareness of our limited water sources within the province is magnified, it is becoming more and more common for an enforcement officer from the MOE to visit the site of a PTTW holder. So be sure to read over your permit carefully when it finally appears in your mailbox, and make sure you are in compliance with the conditions in your PTTW, and that your records are kept up to date and handy. Ensuring that you properly monitor the water taking as per the conditions on the PTTW will not only help you avoid any potential compliance issues, it will also lead to a much easier application process when it comes time to renew the permit. And as everyone who has gone through the PTTW application process knows, anything that helps the process is well worth the effort.



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by Katerina Jordan,  
Assistant Professor  
Department of Plant  
Agriculture, U of G  
kjordan@uoguelph.ca

## Kill the roots and the plant will die

In thinking of what to write for this month's issue, I thought back to the samples that I have seen in the diagnostic lab over the past two years. Diseases aside, I have to say I have been rather shocked at the lack of root tissue on so many of the samples that come into the lab. Now, in defense of many good superintendents, a number of these samples ended up being plagued by some sort of root disease, but I think that is often only half of the story. I saw layering in the soils, a thatch layer you wouldn't wish on a home lawn, and evidence of over-watering time and time again. When you combine some of these conditions with the presence of root pathogens, those poor plants didn't have a chance. What amazes me even more is how absolutely beautiful the turf often looks on the surface, especially when you look at what is going on below-ground – a testament to just how hard you all work day in and day out. But maybe, if more of you were to spend a little more time thinking about what is going on below the crown, your jobs might get just a little easier to keep the above-ground parts looking as great as they do. I'll start off by discussing a little bit about what the roots do and their importance in plant health. I won't get into too much detail because after all, I am a pathologist, not a root biologist – I leave that area of turfgrass science to my colleague, Dr. Eric Lyons. But I know enough to know the basics of root function in the plant and how management practices can help or hinder that function, as well as how poor root health can add to plant stress – especially where diseases are concerned.

The roots of any plant have three primary functions: acquiring and absorbing water for the plant, acquiring and absorbing nutrients for the plant, and physically anchoring the plant in the soil. Often roots are involved in other functions such as carbohydrate storage and hormone signaling, but for the purposes of this article, the three primary functions are enough to get the point across that they are essential to the survival of the plant. The first two functions (water and nutrient acquisition) are of obvious importance – as we know, plants cannot survive without the appropriate amount of water and mineral nutrients. We are able to circumvent the roots in turfgrass management through foliar nutrient application and syringing, but in the end, root absorption is still key to survival. The third function – acting as a physical anchor – is also critical, especially considering the level of maintenance and play on golf course greens. Roots are an essential part of the plant, and without them, the plant will not survive for very long. Often I am told that the crown is the critical part of the plant to protect – that because this is the growing point from which the leaf and root tissue originates, it is the primary part of the plant that needs to be saved. However, in order for the plant to survive periods of stress – especially drought – the root system must be healthy

or the plant cannot obtain the nutrients it needs to survive.

So, now that you know how important the root system is to the survival of the plant, what kind of management tools can you use to maintain or improve your root health? The first and "easiest" practice that you can employ is to raise your height of cut. It is a well-known fact that shoot length and root length are positively correlated. So, if we just go out and cut our greens at 5/32 of an inch (~4mm) all of our problems will be solved, right? Well, I put this practice in quotations because although in theory it is a simple practice, we have to remember that in the end, you are providing a service to a specific set of clients, and it is the demands of that clientele that have led to the reduction in mowing heights that we currently see. So, agronomically, it may be a simple practice, but politically, it could be suicide due to the resultant decrease in ball roll and apparent puffiness of the turf. But, you may have the option of increasing your height a small amount, while using other practices to keep your speeds up such as periodic rolling or use of groomers. Another practice that can help increase your root health is to monitor your watering practices. With some of the samples I see – wet soils, shallow roots, and sometimes even black layer – I can often tell that a superintendent has been giving their greens daily irrigation, especially in the summer when drought is present. When I discuss their irrigation regime with them, they tell me they have to water daily because the roots are so shallow. However, it is quite often because of this irrigation practice that the roots are the depth they are. Imagine that the root is seeking out water and nutrients at any given time. If you supply everything it needs in the top few centimeters of the soil, those roots have no reason to search any further. They are perfectly content to sit at 1 cm and absorb everything you have readily available for them. On the other hand, if you give that soil a deep drenching, the roots will have what they need for a day or so, and then as that soil starts to dry out in the top layer, the roots will be forced to grow more deeply in search of what they need. Therefore, deep and infrequent watering often promotes deeper root growth. Many of you will tell me that you are plagued with *Poa* greens and therefore you cannot get your roots to go any deeper than a few centimeters. But I have seen annual bluegrass roots down 7-10 cm in ideal conditions, and maintain about 5 cm in the heat of the summer. So, it is possible, it just takes a lot of preparation in the spring and fall, and good soil management.

That brings me to the next topic – thatch levels. Managing your thatch levels can often be one of the primary practices that encourages good root and plant health. Excess thatch (> 1/2 - 1 cm on a green, or 2 cm on a fairway) can lead to a number of issues for the plant and specifically for the roots. It can harbour damaging insects and pathogens, increasing the incidence of disease and pest damage; it can lead to scalping as the crown of the plant is raised and the surface becomes spongy; it can lead to localized dry spots as the organic material in the thatch layer often repels water once it dries out, meaning that much needed water cannot get to where it needs to go; and it can create a false root zone as a majority of the roots often grow in the thatch layer. This can lead to shallow rooting over time as the area beneath the thatch layer

becomes compacted, and more importantly, can lead to damaged roots as the thatch does not buffer them from extremes in cold, heat or drought the way that soil does. The earlier discussion on watering practices can sometimes be related to thatch development as shallow, frequent watering can lead to the development of excess thatch layers as most of the plant material is in the top layer of the soil. Excess nitrogen can also lead to a build-up of thatch, but in the end, cultivar characteristics are largely responsible for heavy thatch build-ups. Certain turfgrass species, such as creeping bentgrass and Kentucky bluegrass, are known to build up high thatch levels, and the faster growing cultivars of each are often heavy thatch producers. Therefore, in addition to preventing thatch build-up through fertility and irrigation practices, physical removal of the thatch is a good way to ensure your thatch levels are kept in check. Vertical mowing (deep vertical mowing – not just grooming), core aeration, and frequent topdressing are all good practices that help reduce thatch levels.

The next practice for ensuring good root health is keeping your soil healthy. Turfgrass grows well in sandy soils in part because the pore spaces are larger and allow for air and water movement, but also allow for physical growth of the roots. Especially in the case of push-up greens, soils often get quite compacted over time, and if frequent cultivation is not a common part of your maintenance regime, these soils get very compacted and those pore spaces get smaller and smaller. As a result, the roots are physically hindered from expanding, but they are also deprived of oxygen – primarily because water infiltration is reduced and those pore spaces fill with water. Roots deprived of oxygen are unable to respire and die as a result, rendering them unable to fulfill the plant's need for water and nutrients. Opening up those pore spaces through core cultivation followed by sand topdressing helps to increase pore spaces in the soil, improve water infiltration, and increase root depth. Other relatively simple practices that help ensure good root health include altering your entrance and exit areas on greens, skipping your clean-up cut, where we start to see the greatest amount of soil compaction and damage, and ensuring that all of your nutrients, not just

nitrogen, are well balanced and available to your plant.

All of the practices mentioned help to increase root depth and improve plant health all while having little detrimental effect on the playing surface. There is no doubt that core cultivation or vertical mowing followed by topdressing affects the quality of the green for a short period of time, but as turfgrass managers we must think about the long-term effects. Having a healthier root system helps you and your turf get through the stressful periods of the season much better and will lead to a better playing surface for the remainder of the season. A healthier root system, combined with an overall healthier plant also allows your turf to battle some of the more stress-related diseases we often see on golf greens, including anthracnose, summer patch, plant-parasitic nematodes, and *Pythium* root dysfunction. I have seen turf that appears to be loaded with root pathogens but where the above-ground turf is virtually asymptomatic, only because the root system was so healthy and redundant, the plant was able to survive in spite of the pathogen presence.

Many of you may read this article and think that most of what I have written here is common sense. But that does not explain why month after month, I receive samples in the lab that show obvious neglect of the below-ground plant system. I think too many of us often make the mistake of only concentrating on what we can see, when in reality, it is the invisible parts of the plant that often drive the rest. Don't be afraid to get out on your course with a soil probe and closely inspect your greens. Take a look at what is going on beyond the surface – note your soil moisture before you irrigate, observe your root depth and see if certain practices seem to help or hinder root growth, note the relative compaction of your soil by touch and keep track of problem areas that may need more attention. Use the spring and fall when your turf is actively growing and at its happiest to try different irrigation practices and see if you can get your roots to grow more deeply in the soil – yes, even with annual bluegrass. Hopefully with sound soil management combined with reducing the stress on your turf, your roots can help get you through some really tough times, such as what we saw this summer.



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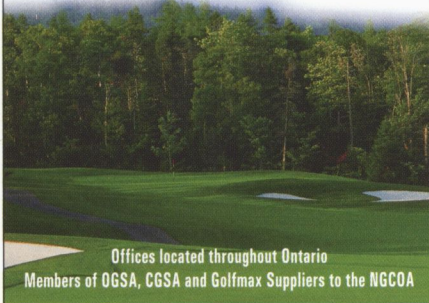


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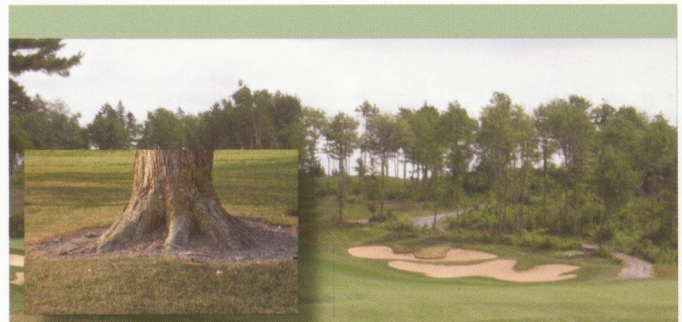
**Thursday, January 17<sup>th</sup>**  
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 USGA Year in Review (1 hr) = 1.2 CEC's  
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# The way we were

Can you identify the people in this picture? Answers on page 29



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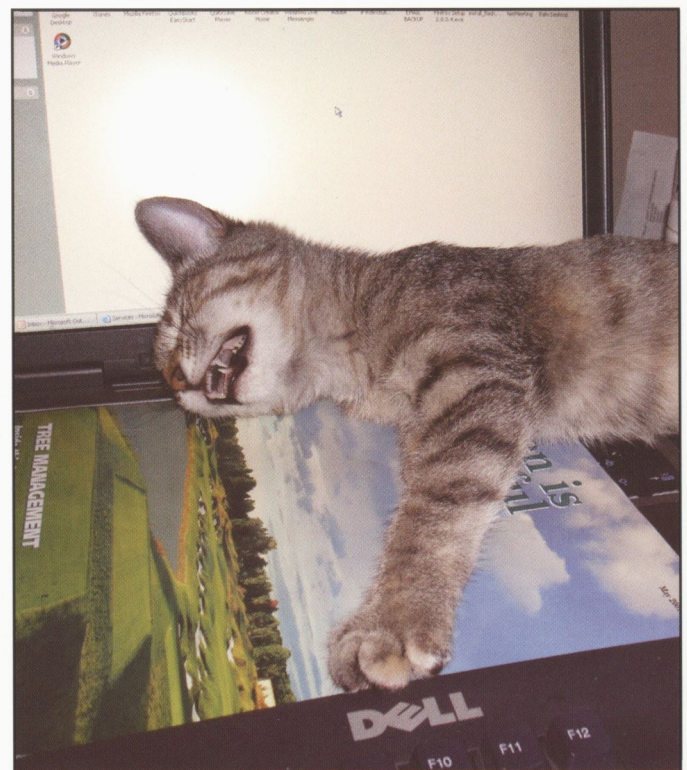


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One OGSA member who blacked out while reading *Green is Beautiful*.  
Photo by Brenda Nailor of her cat Isa



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## Off the fairway ...



by Daisy Moore

### Property Standards

It seems like the left hand doesn't know what the right hand is doing. I am referring to the incident that took place in August where the City of Toronto sent a crew to someone's property in NE Scarborough and cut everything down based on a neighbour's complaint. The garden happened to be filled not with weeds and noxious plants but with a rich assortment of native plants. Still and all,

the neighbour's complaint trumped everything leading to a cash strapped city to pay people to level it.

On the other hand, the City of Toronto is a fairly progressive city with rooms full of knowledgeable people and countless programs that attempt to make a positive impact on the local environment. There is a ban on cosmetic pesticide use as well as water restrictions in the City of Toronto which implies that a weed free, manicured front yard is no longer the standard and in fact, drought tolerant alternative

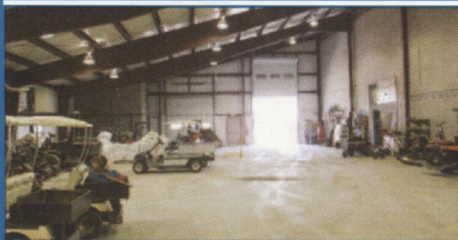
We are being asked to manage our private gardens differently than we did 20 years ago but have been left to our own devices to figure out how to do that. Water restrictions, no pesticide use, and so on all point to lawn alternatives...but if it doesn't look pretty or people complain, it's got to go. In this case they were a bit hasty.

There are miles between the two extremes of a manicured front lawn and a native plant garden, both in their look and the people that tend them. But there are more similarities than you would at first think with the main connecting point being aesthetics. In the public eye it has to look good. We are never compelled to weed when we are in the woods, at the cottage or in natural areas. They look and feel the way they should. It would be a rare case to be put off by a nice looking lawn. But no one likes the look of an untended garden that appears weedy no matter what is in it. A native plant garden shouldn't look weedy either.

It is a lot to expect the everyday person to understand and know what plants are good and what aren't—what's a weed and what's a wildflower and what on earth is a native plant? We do expect people to know what's pretty and what is repellent. Maybe the masses need an introductory course in botany, or taxonomy, and genetics might even come in handy. That isn't likely to happen any time soon so perhaps lessons in tolerance, communication techniques and good taste would be the most helpful. In the mean time, those of us that work in public spaces and in the public eye have to demonstrate that drought-tolerant, self-sustaining and beautiful gardens are possible in the urban environment. Ideas anyone?

*Daisy Moore is a horticulturist. She plans and plants landscapes and gardens throughout the GTA. She is the host of the radio program, "The Gardening Show" Saturdays 1-2:00 on am570.*

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# HAVE WE GONE TOO FAR? THE GRASS IS TALKING TO YOU. ARE YOU LISTENING?

by Stan Zontek

Why are so many golf courses having problems with moss? Why are putting greens slow to heal from pitch marks? Why is the grass on the green thin and shallow rooted? Why does a pitch shot to a green gouge out a chunk of grass versus leaving more of a bruise or a dent? While golf is not played on colour, why are greens off-colour and look, well, hungry? Why does *Poa annua* seem to encroach all too fast into new greens? While the answers to most of these questions are complex, there still may be a simple common denominator – specifically, a lack of fertilizer.

As someone who is old enough to remember the 'good old days,' it is easier for me to compare how golf courses were maintained years ago to how they are maintained today. One fact is clear. Except for the initial grow-in of new greens, golf courses generally are using less fertilizer today than in the past...a lot less.

Why do I say this? For a lot of reasons. Putting greens today are having problems with moss, algae, and pitch marks that are slow to heal, etc. It is true that there are many factors contributing to all of these problems, but most center around close mowing, low fertility, and too much water. Some of this water you can control; some you cannot (as witnessed by all the rainfall in the Eastern United States this year). Today's emphasis on green speeds doesn't allow much wiggle room with putting green mowing heights. With fertility there is much more room for change.

Today, few new golf courses have greens built to something other than sand-based rootzones. Also, essentially every older golf course has modified the top few inches of soil, creating a layer of dirty sand even though the base of the green may be soil with clay. With today's emphasis on green speed, the simplest way to achieve fast greens is to reduce mowing height, limit the use of fertilizer, apply growth regulators, topdress, and roll. Unfortunately, in gauging how much to fertilize greens, superintendents sometimes forget the obvious: That is, clipping removal removes nutrients that would otherwise be recycled. What is the bottom line?

❖ Count the pounds of nitrogen per 1,000 square feet applied to your greens. Subtract 25-60% of that total as the amount removed by removing clippings. You should also use the arbitrary amount of 2 pounds per year as the approximate amount of nitrogen removed by clipping removal. Subtracting either of these numbers

should provide you with an estimate of the effective amount of nitrogen applied to your greens per 1,000 square feet per year.

- ❖ Remember the old textbook ratios of nitrogen, phosphorous and potassium that suggest 3-1-2 or 4-1-2 or 4-1-4 ratios? How close are you coming? The grass's basic fertility needs seldom change.
- ❖ How do your greens look? Do they have a moss problem? Close mowing and a lack of fertility contribute to moss invasion. Higher mowing heights and more fertilizer contribute to moss reduction.
- ❖ Do your greens lack colour? Although golf is not played on colour, a nice colour indicates healthy grass versus more yellow-green chlorotic-looking grass that needs nitrogen.
- ❖ Are your greens slow to recover from traffic, pitch marks, or disease blemishes? This, too, may be a sign that fertility levels are too low, even allowing for the fact that many putting greens are treated with growth regulators.
- ❖ Do you have a problem with algae? Maintaining good turf density is an important IPM tool to combat algae.
- ❖ Plant health – current research continues to show a link between plant health and less disease.
- ❖ Do your greens look hungry? The grass is talking to you. Maybe it is time to work more fertilizer into your program.

In summary, our industry always seems to go in cycles. It was not all that many years ago in the middle to northern regions of the country that a basic fertility program on old greens was 1-2 pounds of nitrogen per 1,000 square feet per month. We now see golf courses, especially in the North, that fertilize with not a whole lot more fertilizer for an entire season! Obviously, I am not suggesting to return to the days when greens were cut at 1/4 inch and fertilized at 12-18 pounds of nitrogen per 1,000 square feet per year (in the North). What I am suggesting is that you look at your grass. Is it talking to you? It probably is. Be a good listener.

Stan Zontek is director of the Green Section's Mid-Atlantic Region. Reprinted courtesy of USGA Green Section Record, January/February 2004



# Above the hole

by Rafik Lang-Bismillah, Student & Intern  
Senjan Golf Club, Fergus

It's official, the summers in Ontario are too short. Or is it possible that I somehow manage to sleep through the months of July and August? All the hot dry weather we experienced and the long days on the course have all become blurred together. The long list of tasks I created at the outset of the season is one of the few reminders that I was awake and present for all those beautiful summer days. They say, 'time flies when you're having fun', and perhaps when it truly does it is the best barometer of a successful internship.

I'm back in class at the university after nearly five months off and it feels like I never left. My summer internship was a success. I learnt through experiences, both positive and negative. In that seemingly short time I was taught, and taught myself, more than I could have learnt in a year of classes. This is not to say that I have not taken a lot away from my classes at Guelph. On the contrary, rather what can be taught in a classroom setting differs immensely from that which is discovered first hand. Material dealt with in a classroom always appears to be so abstract, detached from the real world. It is especially true in a course of study like turf management. You need to get your hands dirty. Armed with the technical knowledge you can only properly learn in a classroom, you need to

work. Apply what you have learnt, witness that lecture on turf diseases come to life, as unfortunate as the consequences of that may be. It is moments when you see something and you understand it, that the value of schooling becomes clear.

There are however, also those skills which cannot be taught, but must be learnt. More than any other skill I had to acquire and hone this season was dealing with members. Until this season I was unaware that membership dues entitled members not just to golfing privileges, but also gave them the right to complain about a host of issues ranging from reasonable requests and criticism to the completely irrational and nonsensical. Listening and dealing with these problems is something I am glad to have experienced, something I could never have learnt in a classroom.

I have worked on a golf course for years, but the value of pairing study and co-op was only realized this year. Previously the golf course represented little more than a job. A job is a dirty word; it is something we must do, a means to an end. What a frightening thought; I want to do something I enjoy, something where the fruits of my labours can be realized. If I can achieve this, then time will continue to fly.



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For optimal results apply all products in 8-10L of water per 100m<sup>2</sup>.



# Looking back

## 20 YEARS AGO TO-DAY

by Barry Endicott

The Board of Directors of the OGSA in 1987 were as follows: **Robert Kennedy** (pres.), Garden City, **Thom Charters** (vice.), Islington, **Barry Endicott** (past pres.), Millcroft, **Rhod Trainor**, St. Thomas, **Neil Acton** (editor), Brooklea, **Ron Heesen**, Beachgrove, **Gordon Nimmo**, Sarnia, **Scott Dodson**, Chedoke, **Ed Farnsworth**, Deerhurst, **Mark Hagen**, Wyldewood, **Dave Gourlay (jr.)**, Toronto Ladies and **John Taylor**, Twenty Valley. The office secretary was **Cindi Charters**.

On the move: **Thom Charters** moved from Islington to Weston, **Jerry Richard** from Brooklea (assistant) to Toronto Golf Club (assistant), **Dave Gourlay**, Toronto Ladies to Beacon Hall, **Brian Guthro**, Tyandaga to Riverside, **Bernie Martin** (assistant), Ancaster to Tyandaga, **Ken Seims**, Mississauga (assistant) to Islington, **Charlie Terry**, Siddal to Cranberry Village, **John Anderson**, Owen Sound to IBM, **Nancy Pierce**, Univ. of Guelph to Toronto Golf Club, **Stewart Mills**, Ancaster to Essex, **Don McFaul**, Glen Abbey to Ancaster, **Steve Stasny** (assistant), Beach Grove to Owen Sound. **Gavin Kellogg** moved to Bowmanville Golf Club and **Jim Sutton** replaced him at Elliot Lake Golf Club. **Nigel Rennie** and **Al Schwemler** moved to the Board of Trade as assistants.

New members: **Bruce Clark**, Midland, **Mike Cote**, Buttonville (B), Islington, **Larry Brassard** (E), **Robert Michel** (F), Rosedale, **Pat Hebert** (B), Roseland and **Gord Thompson**, Meadowbrook.

The Georgian Bay Superintendents Association had another successful season with meetings at: Brooklea, **Neil Acton**; Circle Pine, **Ray Richards**; Horseshoe Valley, **John Hughes**; Blue Mountain, **Kim Hanley**; and Barrie, **Ed Doda**. The \$15.00 fee included golf, dinner and prizes.

The GCSAA International Conference and Trade Show was held in Phoenix. **Ron Heesen**, Beachgrove, **Bob Heron**,

Mississauga and **Gordon Witteveen**, Toronto Board of Trade, presented talks. **Dave Gourlay, Sr.** was the recipient of the Distinguished Service Award. **Craig Evans** and **Ted Ellis** received their Certified Status, CGCS.

The Ontario Turfgrass Symposium was held at the University of Guelph with over 200 in attendance. **Jerry Richard**, **Doug Hoskins**, **John Bennett** and **Tom McBroom** gave talks on construction projects they have been involved with.

The OTRF Fundraising Tournament was held at the National, **Ken Wright**, with the barbecue being held at the Toronto Board of Trade, **Gordon Witteveen**. The organizing committee, headed by **Doug Suter**, raised \$18,000.

An "Official Launch Reception" was held at the Credit Valley Golf Club to introduce the Guelph Turfgrass Institute Research and Information Centre. Hosted by the OTRF, guests included: **Clare Rennie**, OMAF; **Al Ruggles**, OGA and **Des Rice**, OTRF Director. **Annette Anderson** was introduced as the Turf Extension Specialist. The 6,345 square foot building will cost \$800,000 and should be open next year.

The 14<sup>th</sup> Annual President, Greenchairman Tournament was held at Oakdale, hosted by **Paul Dermott**. The top 3 winning teams were: First - The National 106, Second - Weston Golf Club 104 and Third - Bay of Quinte 102.

**Dean Morrison** was the president of the CGSA and **Barry Briton** was the vice president. **Ted Bishop** of Niagara Falls received the OGSA Scholarship upon graduating from the ODH course at the University of Guelph.

**Kimmo Salonen**, York Downs, hosted the Canadians Seniors Ladies Championship.

In memorium, **Mr. Loyde Reilly**, a life member of the OGSA, passed away on September 5<sup>th</sup>.

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**The way we were...** answer from page 23, In 1987 OGSA President **Bob Kennedy** (left) presents the OGSA Scholarship to **Ted Bishop** of Niagara Falls. **Ted** graduated from ODH course at the University of Guelph, attaining the best grades amongst the golf course students enrolled.

# Turf or consequences

by Doug Breen, Superintendent  
Golf North Properties

## Insurance

In the winter of 1908-1909, there was enough public outrage regarding the “maiming of our young men” by the sport of college football that it was on the verge of being banned. The President of the United States became involved, because like all Presidents, he was a big fan of war and all of its various metaphorical representations. He urged the universities to come together, form an association (which ultimately became the NCAA), and rework the rules in a way to prevent injury. For the 1909 season, they instituted the forward pass, banned mass formations like the flying wedge, and made it a ten yard penalty to throw a ball carrier over the line of scrimmage (hard to imagine how anyone got hurt doing that). They also discussed going to a wider field like the Canadians used, but since Rutgers had just built a new concrete stadium, their delegate talked everyone else out of it. In the following season, only thirty-three players were killed, which was considered quite a roaring success when compared to “the carnage of the 1908 season”.

Fast forward 100 seasons to 2007. My son’s football game was cancelled last weekend because the league’s insurance policy calls for an Emergency Medical Service person to be on site at all league games. There was a scheduling error, and the company only sent one ambulance attendant for two games. A doctor was found in the crowd, who offered her services, but since she didn’t have the “insurance company approved medical bag”, the game was cancelled for *liability reasons*.

There’s a park I read about, where there’s been a tire swing hanging from a tree since about six months after the invention of vulcanized rubber. There may have been a wooden wagon wheel hanging from the tree before that, I don’t know. Last summer it was removed for *liability reasons*. It seems that the local Parks and Recreation Department brought in an engineer to calculate the maximum potential load on the tire, and whether or not the tree branch would be able to support it. When it was realized that the only way to accurately calculate the strength of the branch would be to cut it off and analyze its cross section, the “catch 22” became apparent, and the tire swing was removed for the safety of the local children (who I’m sure are now playing in traffic instead).

My kids’ school board removed all of the playground equipment from every school in the county for *liability reasons*. Six weeks later, I got a flyer in the mail asking me to donate toward the fund to install new, “safe” playground equipment. I would, but by the time it’s installed, the safety standards will have changed again and it will be used as playground equipment for the rats at the dump. I know people who won’t drive other people’s kids in their cars, because their insurance company advises against it for *liability reasons*.

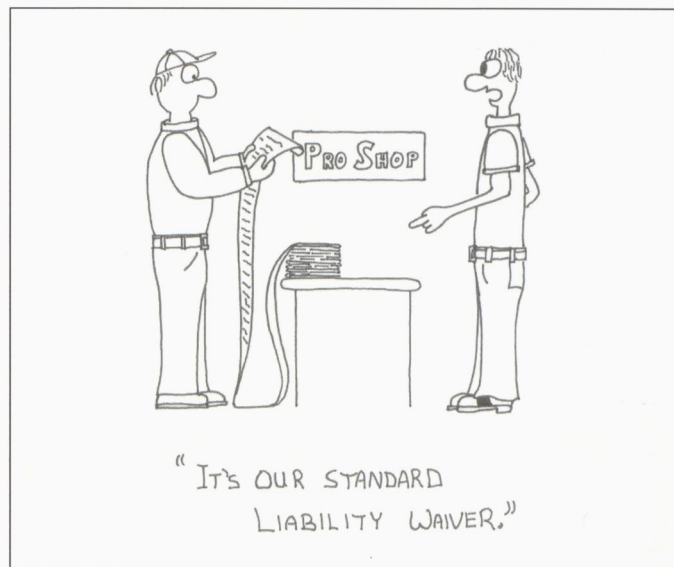
The insurance industry exists in its profitable state by



keeping us just terrified enough of lawsuits that we buy insurance, but not so terrified that we actually stop doing the insurable activity, and therefore cease to need the insurance. Or, they sell an absolutely massive policy to an organization, but then scare them into removing any structure or activity that could actually result in a payment out on that policy. It’s a great business model. It would be like convincing folks that they needed to buy a green fee seven days a week, but that it would be unwise to actually play the game.

We’ve all heard dozens of stories about lawsuits brought against golf courses because people slipped on wet turf, fell into bunkers, had an allergic reaction to grass clippings, or ran over themselves with a cart. All of this litigation, usually mounted by another insurance company that’s trying to avoid writing a cheque, leads to the golf course taking out more insurance, which in turn gives the course’s insurance company enough money to sue someone else. It’s the insurance circle of life. I also blame American television. You can’t get through a single set of commercials without somebody showing you a new way to sue someone. *Have you ever used a toaster? You may be eligible for a large cash reward! Call 1800 NOS CRPL to join our class action suit.*

I’m growing tired of the number of decisions that are made in our society, purely on the basis of liability. Now I’m not suggesting that we go back to the day where thirty-three dead college football players is seen as a “roaring success”, but there has to be a happy medium somewhere. I’m thinking of running in the next election as the leader of the Natural Selection Party. We’ll outlaw liability lawsuits, eliminate the need for insurance, and let the law of the jungle take its course.



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