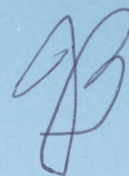


Winter 2012



Green is Beautiful

The Official Publication of Ontario Golf Superintendents' Association



Holding the IPM Public Meeting A Superintendent's Perspective

ALSO INSIDE THIS ISSUE:
More Than 'Just a Golf Club'
Turf Tips... and Bermuda Grass?
Tier 4 Emissions Standards

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



by Doug Breen,
GolfNorth Properties

I love winter. Not only is it the change of pace that we all need to recharge our minds and bodies for the year ahead, but it's the season where we get to re-introduce ourselves to our families. For me, that means driving all over Ontario to hockey arenas – I know lots of you are doing the same. I run into more of you this time of year than I do in the summer. For those of you still athletic enough to play in the annual Superintendent's tournament in Niagara, there was lots of fun, fellowship, and sore muscles. There hasn't been much snow on the ground, but the ski resorts have been able to make snow, so if that's your winter sport of choice, it's been a great season for you too. Whatever your passion, from winter sports to woodworking, I hope that you've spent the season having a much deserved break from the pace that is soon to come.

Our conference in Niagara was a thundering success. Over 500 delegates and 250 exhibitors, representing over 100 different companies made it one of our best attended conferences yet. The facilities were second to none, sessions were outstanding, and the social events were terrific. Kudos to Rob Gatto, Conference Chair, for a job well done. The Canadian and American shows had great lineups too, not to mention the programs that our industry partners run, so there were lots of opportunities for professional development this off season. I hope that you were able to take advantage.

On top of normal duties, there are lots of issues on the horizon. Our mandatory public meetings under the Provincial IPM program begin this year. If you haven't been to our website to see the IPM Toolkit that we've put together, along with the video that outlines the net gain to the environment that golf gives to us all, I strongly encourage you to do so. Keep an eye on *Clippings* for updates. Source Water Protection Committees are beginning to roll out their Risk Management Strategies. Please let us know if (and how) their decisions affect your operations. The Ministry of Labour will be doing more golf course inspections, so be sure to have your Health and Safety requirements up to date. On top of all of this, we still need to find time to grow some grass in there.

Here's hoping that your courses all winter well (in spite of the lack of snow cover) and that we get an inch of rain, every Wednesday night, fifteen minutes after dark, all summer long. ■

2012/2013 Writing Contest

Once again we would like to offer all turfgrass student interns the opportunity to write a regular column for our magazine. The column "Above the Hole" authored by University of Guelph Turfgrass intern Cam Shaw is open to a new intern as of April 2012.

You must be a first year Turfgrass Management student at the U of G, have a desire to excel in the golf course management industry and have an aptitude for writing.

HOW TO APPLY

Submission Deadline:
March 31, 2012

Submit a 350 word article based on your growth and experiences as a student/intern. Articles to be emailed to ogsa@gti.uoguelph.ca

In addition to the writing opportunity for the next four issues of *Green is Beautiful*, you will also win a one year paid OGSA student membership from the association.

Green is Beautiful

The Official Publication of Ontario Golf Superintendents' Association

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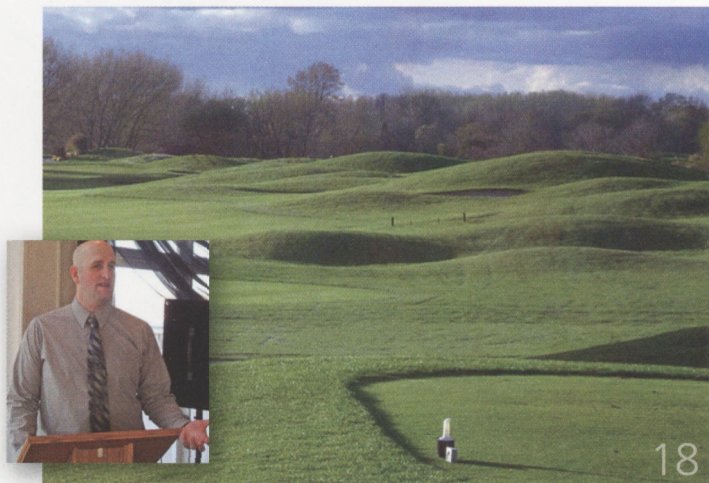


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Green is Beautiful

The Official Publication of Ontario Golf Superintendents' Association

ON THE COVER

Club Name
Photo credit: Kevin Kobzan
Hole #2, Granite Golf Club

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OGSA is committed to serving its members, advancing their profession, and enriching the quality of golf and its environment.

GREEN IS BEAUTIFUL 2012

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by Justin Parsons,
Engage Agro Corp.

Almost a decade ago, I decided to pursue a career in turf maintenance, rather than journalism. I did so for one reason. Well, there were several reasons, but one big reason. If you will indulge me for a few paragraphs, I promise to relate this back to our current issue of *Green is Beautiful*.

During my summer breaks from journalism school, I spent my time working on a golf course. Like all of you, I enjoyed the outdoors. I loved being a part of a team and I found the challenge of helping to manage an ever-changing environment to be extremely rewarding.

But there was one reason in particular I decided to change career paths and I remember the night that I made this decision like it was yesterday. I was on my internship at *The Score* television network in Toronto and I made a mistake while writing copy for the nightly highlights. As soon as I realized my error, I apologized to my supervisor for my oversight. He looked at me coldly and said, "Don't ever apologize. It's a sign of weakness."

I realized then and there, that the journalism world was not for me. The underlying message of his advice was that the individual is more important than the team. Indeed, it's

a cutthroat business with few opportunities to advance. So naturally, you must do whatever it takes to stand out, even if that includes concealing mistakes and being dishonest.

I could never see myself being happy in this kind of environment, so I started to wonder about the only other industry I knew anything about: turf maintenance. I quickly realized that there is a real camaraderie among golf course maintenance professionals. Members of this fraternity are always more than willing to share ideas in the name of helping someone else better their operation. Even though our business is just as competitive as the field of journalism, it never stops one from lending a hand where possible. In fact, this very publication is made possible by the volunteer efforts of numerous industry personnel who care enough to share their time and efforts with others.

As the 2012 conference and trade show season draws to a close, it is quite clear that the most prominent topic of discussion is the now mandatory public meeting component of the IPM process. This initiative has caused some anxiety and concern among superintendents. Jamie Downton, former superintendent of Sawmill Creek Golf Resort and Spa and now general manager of Heritage Heights Golf and Curling Club, has kindly recounted his experience of hosting a public meeting in this issue. His generosity in doing so once again proves what a great business we are all in. ■

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WHAT'S NEW

by Sally Ross, OGSA Executive Manager

OGSA 2012 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

At the recent OGSA Annual General Meeting which took place at the Scotiabank Centre in Niagara Falls, Doug Breen was elected President of the OGSA for 2012. Rob Gatto was elected Vice President and Phil Scully was elected Secretary Treasurer. Chris Andrejicka remains on the board as past president, and remaining directors are Mark Prieur, John McLinden, Chad Vibert, Scott White and Rod Speake.

ANDREW HARDY & PHEASANT RUN GC NAMED 'Environmental Leader in Golf'

Recently, Andrew Hardy and Pheasant Run Golf Course were recognized by GCSAA/Golf Digest in the 2011 Environmental Leaders in Golf Awards. Together, Hardy and Pheasant Run GC were selected as the International Chapter Winner and were one of 22 chapter and merit winners selected from GCSAA's 100 affiliated chapters. This award recognizes golf course superintendents and their courses for overall course management excellence

Two new directors were elected to the board, David Kuypers from Cutten Fields and Cory Janzen from Westmount G & CC. Jeff Alexander was thanked for the many years he has served on the Board.

2012/2013 MEMBERSHIP ROSTER

We will soon be working on the new membership roster. Please ensure any changes are e-mailed to Pat Thomas, ogsa2@gti.uoguelph.ca to keep our records up to date. ■

in the areas of resource conservation, water quality management, integrated pest management, wildlife/habitat management, and education/outreach. In addition, these categories are judged on sustainability, criticality, originality, and technology implementation/use. An independent panel of judges representing national environmental groups, turfgrass experts, university research, and members of the golf community conducted the award selection. ■

MARK YOUR CALENDAR UPCOMING 2012 OGSA Tournament & Events

CAN/AM Challenge

TPC Michigan (Dearborn)
April 30, 2012

Pro/Super Challenge

The Georgian Bay Club
May 23, 2012

Presidents' Day

Granite Golf Club
July 16, 2012

Summer Scramble

Springfield Golf & CC
Date TBA

Assistants Tournament

Location and date TBA

Alex McClumpha

Scarboro Golf & CC
Oct. 1, 2012

OGSA:
Welcome
to Our
New
Members



John Adach	Class C
Islington Golf Club	
Ernie Bendzak	Class F
Mississauga Golf & CC	
Will Bergen	Class C
Otter Creek Golf Club	
Jesse Booker	Class C
Devil's Pulpit Golf Assn	
Norley Calder	Class A
Sagebrush Golf & Sporting Club	
Barry Cleary	Class A
Burlington Springs G & CC	
Jason Edwards	Class F
OslerBrook G & CC	
Stephen Fierheller	Class F
The Toronto Golf Club	
Steve Fluter	Class C
St Thomas Golf & CC	
Stephen Hicks	Class C
Bayview Golf & CC	
Mark Hraynyk	Class D
Port Hope Golf & CC	
Mike Janssen	Class C
Beverly Golf & CC	

James Kemp	Class C
Grey Silo Golf Course	
Andrew Krek	Class S
Olds College	
Ryan Marangoni	Class F
The Toronto Golf Club	
Michael McGimpsey	Class C
CedarBrae Golf & CC	
Adam Mullen	Class C
Copper Creek Golf Club	
Matthew Nixon	Class F
Credit Valley G & CC	
Tyler Plant	Class F
West Haven Golf & CC	
Alois Polt	Class A
Peach Trees Golf	
Marc Ryan	Class F
OslerBrook G & CC	
Patrick Sinclair	Class F
Lochness Links GC	
Travis Sisson	Class F
OslerBrook G & CC	
Mike Styles	Class Supt
Golf Club at Lora Bay	

Mark Tschirhart	Class F
Devil's Pulpit Golf Assn	
Steve Van Bakel	Class C
Westview Golf Club	
Chris Vollett	Class A
eQuinelle Golf Club	
Gerrit Woods	Class Supt
Nicklaus North	
Advanced Equip't Sales	Class E
John Janmaat	
Albion Golf Cars	Class E
Bruce MacDonald	
Bluewave Energy	Class E
Bart Iskra	
The Chimera Group	Class E
John Bladon	
Elite Surfacing	Class E
Marco Lehmann	
NMP Golf Construction	Class E
Yves Brousseau	
Speare Seeds	Class E
Scott Bowman	
Torkos Brothers Inc.	Class E
Chris Torkos	

Spring to do's:

- ✓ Finish sharpening triplex reels.
- ✓ Complete budget report for Green Committee.
- ✓ Interview new summer staff.
- ✓ Remove greens covers on holes # 1-15.
- ✓ Apply Rovral Green GT and Aliette Signature to prevent fusarium, leaf spot and pythium root dysfunction.
- ✓ Enjoy compliments from the members on the great spring conditions!

Winter is here, but you are already thinking about spring and how to start your course off on the right path for the upcoming season. Let Rovral Green GT, Aliette Signature and Compass 50WG be your products of choice so you can give your members what they have waited all winter for – Perfection. Tried and tested, choose the products that are Backed By Bayer.

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2012 ONTARIO GOLF COURSE MANAGEMENT CONFERENCE & TRADE SHOW

OPENING CEREMONIES

The 2012 OGCM Conference and Trade Show kicked off on Wednesday, January 18, 2012 at the Scotiabank Convention Centre in Niagara Falls. The conference commenced with Chair Rob Gatto welcoming everyone and introducing the Mayor of Niagara Falls, Jim Diodati, who brought greetings on behalf of the city and wished delegates a great three days of education and good luck in the neighboring casinos. The annual awards were presented at the opening breakfast, where delegates were able to enjoy a nice meal as they watched fellow colleagues honoured for their achievements over the past year. Keynote speaker James Westrick from Rockhurst University followed with some inspirational words on leadership, which really set the tone for a positive week.

Westrick would return later in the day, along with Dr. Joe Vargas and Dr. Thomas Nikolai from Michigan State University to round out a day of excellent educational seminars. Attendees would later gather for the Presidents' Reception at the Table Rock by the edge of the falls to enjoy an evening of refreshments

and camaraderie.

Day two began with an enlightening seminar on managing poa annua and mixed poa/bentgrass from Dr. Eric Lyons and Dr. Katerina Serlemitsos Jordan from the University of Guelph. Dr. Frank Rossi from Cornell University finished the educational component of the day with an informative talk on pesticide reduction. The afternoon was devoted solely to the trade show and 'Turf Talks' which were carried out on the trade show floor.

After a social hour, delegates went their separate ways for the night.

Friday morning started early, with the OGSA Annual General Meeting. Directors presented the reports to the membership on the activities of the association over the past year. Doug Breen was elected President for 2012, with Rob Gatto as Vice President and Phil Scully as Secretary/Treasurer. Chris Andrejicka remains on the board as past president along with Mark Prieur, John McLinden, Chad Vibert, Scott White and Rod Speake. Two new directors were elected, Cory Janzen from Westmount Golf & Country Club and David Kuypers from Cutten Fields. Jeff Alexander

was thanked for his dedication for the many years of service.

The hot topic for the week was of course IPM, so, following the AGM, the balance of the morning was dedicated to updating and informing members on the latest news surrounding Bill 63. Mark Prieur from Trafalgar Golf and Country Club presented an IPM 'Toolkit' on behalf of the OGSA. The toolkit is designed to help members prepare for and successfully execute their mandated public meetings which begin in 2012. It includes a presentation that each superintendent can customize to his or her specific property which will cover the environmental and socioeconomic benefits of golf courses, information on the IPM accreditation process and information about pesticide regulations in Canada. Included in the toolkit is a written, step by step "guide to holding your public meeting", prepared by the OGSA specifically for their membership. Mark Prieur presented an annual report and map to demonstrate to the superintendents how the report could be presented to comply with the legislation.



PRESIDENTS' RECEPTION

Wednesday, January 18, 2012

The Presidents Reception was held at Elements at Table Rock. Over 350 delegates attended and enjoyed the lighting of the falls in Agrium and OGSA conference green, as well as the celebrity sports stars who mixed and mingled with the crowd. On hand were Becky Kellar, Team Canada Women's Hockey Team (Four-time World Champions and three-time Olympic Gold Medalist); Ric Nattress, NHL Player, Calgary Flames, 1989 Stanley Cup Winners; Paul Masotti, CFL Player, Toronto Argonauts, three Grey Cup wins, Outstanding Canadian Player; Mike Bullard, NHL Player, 50 goals for the Pittsburgh Penguins and Jim McKenny, past Toronto Maple Leaf and *City TV* sports anchorman.

Violet Van Wassenauer from the Ministry of Environment also took to the podium to answer questions anyone had in preparation for their public meeting. All of this information can be found on the OGSA website. The week concluded with a performance by The Canadian Improv Showcase. This interactive session was designed to help alleviate some of the concerns with public speaking and arm superintendents with skills to handle any situation that may arise during their public meeting. This lighthearted, yet informative session was a great way to end the week.

The beautiful new facility, educational seminars and busy night life made for a great week in Niagara Falls.

TRADE SHOW

The trade show component of the conference was extremely successful, with 102 booths, and over 250 exhibitors. The ability to move in easily at the Scotiabank Convention Centre was apparent and the exhibitors were happy with the new one-day trade show format. The OGSA shared a large booth space with affiliate organizations – the “association corner”. Participants were the NCGOA, the OTRF, OMAFRA, the GAO and the CGSA. It was a welcoming “drop in and chat” type atmosphere, supporting the philosophy of networking and cooperation between all industry groups. The association area was complete with comfy seating, cruiser tables and stools.

The new OGSA Benefit Plan announcement was made from the trade show floor by Director John McLinden and a cheque presentation was made to the Ontario Turf Research Foundation's President Cedar Nisbet by Chris Andrejicka on behalf of the OGSA membership, to support turfgrass research.

Delegates were treated to a sumptuous lunch, prepared by the Executive Chef, who has adopted the theory, “if it grows together it goes together!” Meaning, if it is in season at the same time it's likely to taste wonderful when put together in a pot or recipe. This is the famous lesson uttered daily by the Scotiabank Centre's endorsing celebrity Chef Anna Olson, *Food Network Canada* TV personality and author. ■



2012 OGSA AWARDS

AWARDS BREAKFAST

Thanks to all who joined us at the Awards Breakfast to honour and recognize those who have achieved special awards during the previous year, as noted below.

CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR 25-YEAR MEMBERS

Art Oswald, Grandview Golf and Country Club
Jerry Richard, Oxford Golf and Country Club
(Craigowan)

SCHOLARSHIP AWARDS

Hugh Kirkpatrick Bursary

The OGSA, in conjunction with the Kirkpatrick family has developed this bursary program to recognize the leadership, commitment and accomplishments of assistant superintendent members of the OGSA. This bursary is named after Hugh Kirkpatrick, who was very active in our association and was OGSA president in 1985.

The 2011 Hugh Kirkpatrick Bursary is awarded to Alan Dolick, Assistant Superintendent at Dundas Valley Golf & Curling Club. As part of Alan's application for this scholarship, he wrote an essay on leading and motivating your staff which you can read on page 24 of the magazine under the heading "Second to One".

Turf Managers Short Course Education Award

An annual award is given to the golf course related student, who upon completion of the Turf Managers Short Course, taken at the Guelph Turfgrass Institute during the month of February, achieves the highest overall mark (from Ontario) in the course. This year's award winner is Douglas Kennedy who achieved an overall average of 89 percent.

Turfgrass Education Award

The OGSA has developed the Turfgrass Diploma or Degree scholarship to recognize scholastic accomplishments and potential leadership in the field of turfgrass management. This scholarship is open to students who have completed their first year in a diploma or degree course and

are attending a recognized Ontario university or college in a turfgrass study course. This year's scholarship is awarded to Cam Shaw of the University of Guelph. Shaw is in his final year of Turfgrass Management.

Heritage Scholarship

The OGSA developed the Heritage scholarship program to recognize the scholastic accomplishments of students who are the children or grandchildren of members of the OGSA and are studying a curriculum unrelated to Turfgrass Management.

This year's award winner is Kendra Bishop, who is attending the University of Tampa on a golf scholarship. Kendra is the daughter of OGSA member Ted Bishop, Superintendent at Rolling Meadows Golf and Country Club.

GREEN IS BEAUTIFUL AWARDS

Barry Endicott Article of the Year Award 2011

The criteria for awarding the Barry Endicott Article of the Year Award is based on originality, relevance, clarity, depth, style, illustrations, and readability. The articles are judged and voted on by the Editorial Advisory Committee.

This year's recipient is Bill Green, Assistant Property Manager from Toronto Golf Club for his article "What's New Still Feels Old" in which Green recounts the club's massive renovation project during the 2009 season. Green's article appeared in the Winter 2011 issue of *Green is Beautiful*.



Chris Andrejicka presenting to Alan Dolick



Chris Andrejicka presents to Cam Shaw



Ted Bishop accepts Kendra Bishops scholarship award



Scott White presenting to Bill Green

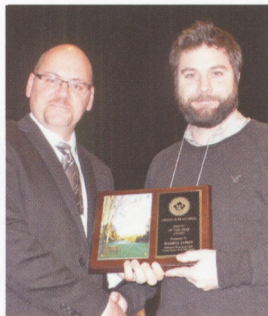
THANK YOU TO OUR SPONSORS



Photo of the Year Award 2011

The criteria for awarding the best photo is divided into five categories: golf course, projects, landscaping, wildlife, and finally, best overall. The photos are judged and voted on by the Editorial Advisory Committee. The recipient this year is Darryl James, of ArborTurf Solutions for his

photo of the 16th hole of Markland Woods Golf Club. The picture was taken for a feature article he wrote on the Emerald Ash Borer in the Fall 2011 of *Green is Beautiful*.



Scott White presenting to Darryl James

BEST BOOTH AWARD

The Best Booth Award was presented by Chris Andrejicka to Plant Products. Jason Ireton accepted the plaque for the Best Booth on behalf of Plant Products. The award was



The team at Plant Products was awarded the Best Booth Award

presented to the booth that our judges felt was the most creative and eye catching. Congratulations to the entire Plant Products team.

FUNDRAISING FOR CHARITY

For the second year in a row, we included a charity component at our conference. We chose the Boys and Girls Club of Niagara and raised funds through raffle ticket sales. Thanks to all those who purchased tickets. In lieu of speaker gifts, the OGSA contributed \$25.00 per speaker to the charity. In total, a \$1,000.00 donation was made. ■



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Much Ado About Winter

It is difficult to write an article this winter without talking about the weather we have had so far. January 2012 in Ontario has been the fifth warmest on record. That isn't so remarkable, but February 2012 began with virtually no snow cover and the thermometer hovering at temperatures around 0°C. This is important because winter weather has an impact on turf survival and on the survival of insects that feed on your turf.

Let's begin with the possible impact of mild winter weather on turf. I know one thing, the turf in the Guelph and surrounding area was green until mid-January. There were no signs of winter dormancy until the end of that month. Has the turf hardened off? For turfgrass plants to maintain maximum winter hardiness they need to be exposed to freezing temperatures in the late fall. The amount of rain also impacts winter hardiness. Plants that are a bit drought stressed going into the winter have more winter hardiness than plants that have received too much moisture. In Fall 2011 and Winter 2012 in Ontario, there were few hard frosts and lots of rain. So, the weather to date is not helping to contribute to maximum winter hardiness of turfgrass plants. If the weather stays mild through the duration of the winter, then the turf should come

through just fine. However, if we do get a deep cold snap there is a possibility there could be some turf loss. One thing we know for certain is the chances of turf surviving in the winter is much greater if you have an abundance of creeping bentgrass and minimal annual bluegrass.

Research has shown that a rise in temperature to 8°C for 48 hours is sufficient to deharden annual bluegrass. So even if the turf has hardened off, the high temperatures reached at the beginning of February would have started to deharden the annual bluegrass making it very susceptible to winter injury if cold temperatures follow later this winter. The best case scenario would be to get a nice thick layer of insulating snow prior to any potential cold temperatures.

What about all the rain?

As long as you have good surface drainage and good internal drainage on greens there should be a minimum amount of standing water on your golf course. If this is the case, there is very little chance of ice forming on your golf course should the temperatures drop suddenly. Anoxia due to ice encasement will kill annual bluegrass turf in roughly 45 days. With less than 40 days of winter left, let's hope this is not a possibility at this stage of the game.

What about those covered greens?

Do you have covered greens? Are you monitoring the temperatures under your covers? What happens under there when we get a day time high of 7-9°C? There was a disastrous year in Quebec in the winter of 1997-1998 when many of the greens that were covered in the traditional method (permeable cover, straw topped with an impermeable cover) were all dead in the spring. The overall winter temperatures that year were much milder than usual. When the covers were removed, they had the smell of death. This was attributed to the mild temperatures under the covers and the low levels of oxygen resulting in anoxia with the final result of turf death.

If you only have a permeable cover on your greens, chances are the temperatures will be elevated on those warm days. The warm temperatures under the permeable covers could possibly deharden the grass plants and make it more susceptible to low temperature injury.

What about the ice?

Some superintendents in eastern Ontario had torrential rain, followed by freezing rain in mid-January. In many areas, in spite of the recent warm temperatures, there is a thick coat of ice over many parts of the golf courses. Many superintendents are remembering the winter of 2010 and scratching their heads (maybe pulling their hair out) wondering what to do. This is especially true for those that have mainly annual bluegrass

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greens. Should they attempt to break up the ice with some sand or milorganite to try and create some honeycombing or channels for gas exchange? If they do this and the ice melts, and there is no snow to follow are the greens going to be more susceptible to desiccation? In most cases here in Ontario we are more likely to see annual bluegrass damage from ice encasement and anoxia then from desiccation. In addition, if you are using sand to break up the ice, you are left with a sand layer that will help protect the crown of the plant from desiccation.

What about desiccation?

Injury from desiccation occurs when water loss from turf plants exceeds uptake and transport from the roots. Desiccation can only occur in the absence of snow cover. It can be a result of soil drought or atmospheric drought. One good thing at the moment is that even though there is no snow cover, there is very little frost in the ground so the turf can still replenish moisture to the plants through the roots as long as the soils aren't frozen. So all this means that the chances of desiccation are minimal. If soils do freeze solid however, and we don't get any snow coupled with high winds and low relative humidity, there will be a chance of desiccation especially on high ground.

What about insects?

For insects that overwinter as adults (black turfgrass ateneus

and annual bluegrass weevil) the milder the winter, the better they survive. They also survive well when there is a thick snow layer to insulate them against harsh temperatures. Insects that overwinter in the larval stage such as grubs, generally go deep into the soil to overwinter. Because of the mild temperatures to date, you can dig down a couple of centimeters and find grubs. This is okay when the temperatures are mild, but if there is a sudden dip in temperatures will the grubs be able to get deep in the soil quick enough to survive? If they don't, that would be a good thing. It is also quite possible they will be back up to the soil/thatch interface early in the spring. Making them tasty morsels for the skunks, raccoons and starlings early in the year.

The bottom line is that winter is far from over, so predicting the results of it are very difficult at this early stage. A lot depends on what happens from here on in. Let's keep our fingers crossed that the weather remains moderate without a significant cold snap. ■



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Time to Reflect on Your Rules

Yes, it is that time of year when we look forward to another prosperous and safe new year.

This is a great time to take a moment to evaluate your safety program and your safety protocols. A time to reflect on what went well and what didn't go so well over the last few years. This is the time to take a moment to look at the programs and rules that you have in place as you develop plans for the coming season. Make safety part of those plans. Think about the list of issues you will need to discuss with your staff as you hire the new crop for the coming season. Think about the changes you believe are necessary to make this the safest year yet for your course.

And write them down.

There is no better way to reflect on issues that have concerned you in the past than by writing them down. This gives you a starting point to make changes. Once the issues are written they can then be dealt with by you and others at the club. Written issues are easier to communicate and to categorize. By writing safety issues down you will be one step closer to developing a strategy to deal with them.

One of the most important steps you need to take as a manager is to ensure you have documentation, in writing, that clearly identifies the safety issues in your area of responsibility. Once you have the issues in writing, it is easier to communicate concerns and clarify your plans and rules for dealing with the work.

As a manager it is your responsibility to identify safety concerns and communicate those concerns to all workers.

Your responsibility does not stop with communication. You must also ensure that workers have understood your instructions. You are also responsible for ensuring that the instructions are followed by everyone.

This is not an easy job. This is why it is important to ensure that the concerns and rules are written down

as this is the only way that you will be able to show that everyone has received the same information in a fair and equitable manner.

Think about the many different jobs that need to be accomplished during the golfing season. Think about the many different personalities that you will be dealing with over this time. Then think about the different strategies that you will need to use to ensure that every worker works in a safe manner by following all the rules that you believe are necessary. When you write all this down it is done. You don't need to write it twice. You may need to tweak it a bit but once it is written you have the basic information available for discussion and review.

You probably have a number of rules already in place. Review them and ask yourself the hard question – did they work? Was there something we could have done better? What kind of feedback did we get last year about the rules and procedures? Do our rules meet or exceed the law? All of this can assist you in your efforts to improve safety for the coming year.

One of the other great benefits of writing it down is that you now have the documentation to show that you are doing your part to make the workplace safe. No one can deny this. You can be ahead of the pack. There is a darn good chance that you will be out in front of the other departments at your club and all it takes is a few minutes to write it down.

If you need some help, give me a call.

Have a great spring! ■



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Phil Scully

by Kevin Kobzan, Foreman
Granite Golf Club

"It's a lifestyle, it's a mindset and it needs to be a part of your DNA," says Phil Scully, Granite Golf Club Superintendent and Secretary Treasurer of the OGSA Board of Directors.

In an industry where a nine to five job is as common as a hole in one, Scully has thrived and found a passion for not only golf, but all the intricate complexities that surround being a golf course superintendent. Enjoying life as a turf manager comes with sacrifice, dedication and a love for what you do, all of which Scully possesses. Since 1995, golf has been ingrained in Scully, as he has committed himself to the business and followed the path his hard work paved.

After studying at Queens University from 1994 to 1997, Scully enrolled in Seneca College's Golf Course

Technician Program, graduating in 1999. Prior to gaining an agronomic background, Scully began to take an interest in turf management under the tutelage of Peter Barnett, Superintendent of Richmond Hill Golf Club. "I can still remember the day I told Pete I was interested in the business. He looked at me as if I was crazy," laughed Scully. "However, I realized that it was not only a good job, but it could be used as a career."

Following his tenure at Richmond Hill Golf Club, Scully accepted a foreman position at Granite Golf Club in 2001, during the inaugural opening of the full golf facility. Although Granite Golf Club opened its doors in 2000, only nine holes were ready that season for play. By the fall of 2002, Scully graduated to assistant superintendent, a position he held until 2006 where he was promoted to superintendent.

Celebrating his tenth year with



the organization in 2011, Scully has overseen numerous projects including the construction of the clubhouse, landscaping and paving of the parking area and a major bunker renovation. Future plans involve a dedicated short game facility and a complete irrigation upgrade. "One of the great things about Granite Golf Club is they're never happy with status quo, which I love. I don't like the idea of good is good enough," says Scully. "Every day we are constantly pushing ourselves to make the operation better, and that's why I love being here so much."

Although he appreciates his accomplishments on the golf course, he credits his success to Barnett, Jarrod Barakett, Walter Cheung and his nine years under the guidance of John Gravett, all of whom played an instrumental role in his career to this point. Scully worked under Barakett in 2001 and Gravett from 2001 to 2010, while presently working with Cheung. "Working for Jarrod was a huge inspiration for me," says Scully. "Gravett was the one who shaped me into the professional I am today, on and off the golf course."

IN THE HOT SEAT

Q – Favourite major

A – The Masters

Q – Favourite piece of
turf equipment

A – Toro 648

Q – Favourite golf designer

A – Pete Dye

Q – Ultimate foursome

A – Bill Murray, Jack Lemon, Jack
Scully (son)

Q – Lowest round and where

A – 73 at Granite Golf Club

Q – Favourite movie

A – Fight Club

Q – Favourite meal

A – Shrimp Po'boy from Bourbon
Street New Orleans

Q – What's in your CD player
right now?

A – Absolutely nothing

Q – Rate your home lawn on a scale
of one to ten (1 worst, 10 best)

A – 11. "It's the envy of the street."

...continued on page 16

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...continued from page 15

Even though Scully believes the industry is constantly learning through associations such as the OGSA, as well as conferences and trade shows, he feels the role of the superintendent is constantly changing. "We are now communication specialists. The umbrella of expectations is getting bigger and unless you keep up with the new standard and expectations you are going to go the way of the dinosaur," says Scully.

Additionally, he thinks golf clubs need to evolve and start thinking outside the box. Similar to the way golf course management has changed over the years in respects to technology and environmental issues, Scully feels golf clubs need to start offering more than just golf. "Time right now is what's valuable, the driving factor is how do I get the best bang for my buck," says Scully. "Golf is a sport that takes up a lot of time, so you need to be able to incorporate the young families."

Also, throughout the growing season many obstacles can arise on any given golf course, but one of the biggest challenges in the eyes of Scully is the high demands in regards to conditions and playability. "What is important to a two handicapper may be

different from a 25 handicapper, and in some cases you can have 500 opinions, and that is a very difficult balancing act," says Scully. Secondly, the new generation of employees also poses a challenge for superintendents. Scully feels motivating the youth is different nowadays, and new innovative ideas need to be incorporated to get the most out of these employees. "When I was coming up I used to have wrenches thrown at me and garbage cans kicked over," says Scully. "My generation was motivated by money and the need to have a job, because we were pushed by our parents to work and work hard. This generation isn't motivated the same way."

As the golf business progresses, Scully is looking forward to the future from both an individual and industry perspective. As the host club for the 2012 President's Day and with some exciting future plans in mind for the Granite Golf Club, Scully is devoted and enthused to continue his hard work. However, considering the time allocated to his career and all his work accolades he is still very much a family man. With a loving wife, Mandy and three children, Olivia, Isabelle and Jack, he still knows how to keep things in perspective. ■

"We are now communication specialists. The umbrella of expectations is getting bigger and unless you keep up with the new standard and expectations you are going to go the way of the dinosaur."

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Assistant Superintendent:
Douglas Kennedy

Equipment Manager:
Andy Goral

Hole #13
Photo credit: Steve Hatch

COURSE PROFILE

About the Course

Seven Lakes Championship Golf & Estates was built in 2002. There is an original nine hole short course that was built in 1970 with a redesign in 2008.

Established: 1970 and 2002

Original Architect: Bruce Matthews III of Michigan

Type of Club: Public daily fee

Number of Holes: 27

Number of Rounds Annually: 30-35,000

Practice Facility: Full range and practice facility

Biggest Maintenance Challenge

Dealing with 105 large, high-faced bunkers. The 2011 season was extremely difficult due to the large amount of rain and heavy thunderstorms.

A CLOSER LOOK

What You Need to Know

Predominant Grass Type:

L93 (greens, tees and fairways), Poa/Bent (short course)

Predominant Soil Type: Sand greens to heavy clay fairways

Type of Greens: 18 USGA greens, 10 Push-up

Recent or upcoming construction:

Rehabilitation of numerous bunker drainage areas due to high contamination and the removal of trees and thinning of brush areas around greens complexes.

Course Length: 4,762-6,800 yards

Size of Property: 200 acres

Size of Greens: 2.5 acres

Size of Tees: 2.5 acres

Size of Fairways: 31 acres

Holding the IPM Public Meeting

*Written by Jamie Downton, General Manager
Heritage Heights Golf and Curling Club*

SAWMILL CREEK GOLF RESORT AND SPA CAMLACHIE, ONTARIO:

Since the introduction of the IPM Accreditation program by the Province of Ontario, there has been one main complaint and that is the public meeting component. It seems as though there has been a great deal of anger, fear, and just an overall worrisome attitude about this public meeting among the inner circles of the turf maintenance business. These worries are fueled, in part, by the threat of having some environmentalists make us superintendents a target for their endless crusades to save the world. Maybe these fears are warranted to some degree as I am sure most of you reading this have at some point in your career been approached by a “concerned citizen”, who feels as though the only tool available in our arsenal are pest control products. Well, I would like to fill you in on what we went through at Sawmill Creek Golf Resort and Spa in hosting our public meeting.

THE PLAN: After returning home from the OGCM Conference and Trade Show in Niagara Falls, I made the determination that I was going to get this public meeting done and out of the way, so I could put all of my energy into the 2012 golf season. I returned to our club, informed my General Manager of the latest amendments to the IPM program, and told him that we would be having our public meeting during the first couple of weeks in February.

The first item on my preparation list was to obtain clarification from the Ministry of the Environment on the public notification clause. The issue I had with the public notification was simply the manner in which we must notify those within 100 meters of the property. Sawmill Creek has approximately 40 dwellings within our golf community, and approximately 30 of which are not a part of our development. Of course, when you are looking at notifying 70 homes about this meeting, you are surely going to run into at least one home, where the owners are on vacation for the winter (this does not take into account the difficulty in finding some contact information as well). My question for the Ministry was simple, at what point is it enough to have proved that we made every reasonable effort to make contact with the landowners of this property?

“I strongly believe we need to be transparent through this process.”

– Jamie Downton

I contacted the representative of the MOE, who had made a presentation at the OGCM show, and asked her this very question. She suggested to me that because I did have more than 50 homes to notify, that I may apply for an exemption to this requirement, with written details as to how I plan to inform these landowners. With my meeting date scheduled to occur within the next three weeks, I inquired as to the chances of receiving a response in time for our meeting. I was assured that I would.

I made a written request to the Director of the MOE to instruct them of my plans and to ask for permission to insert the public notice into the mailboxes of any homeowners who we could not make direct contact with or to those for whom we did not have contact information. Since the residents of Sawmill Creek had provided us with their email addresses over the course of the past few years, we were able to reach out to these 40 residents with relative ease. However, it was

the external 30 which posed the problem.

I did receive an email back from the representative of the MOE within five days, stating the director would consider my request and respond to us as soon as possible.

I suppose three weeks is not a lot time, however, since this is the first request for such an important legal requirement that they have placed on us, I guess I had expected a more prompt response. At the time of publishing, I had yet to receive a response. (Note: It will take up to six weeks for a response from the MOE on any request for alternate notification.)

As the meeting date approached and with no response from the MOE, I made the decision to go door-to-door and attempt to make personal contact with these external residents that were within 100 meters of the golf course. What I can say from this experience was that the responses varied from those who simply didn't care about the notice, to those who invited me in for coffee and wanted to discuss all of the reasons and processes involved in the application of pesticides. In the end, I did personally speak to about 20 of the 30 homes that were on our list. However, even after four attempts (all at different times and both weekday and weekends), I simply could not contact 10 of these homes. To ensure that we were following our requirement to notify these people, we decided to send registered letters to those homes, at a cost of nearly \$10 a house. This was done approximately four days prior to the meeting.

THE MEETING: We scheduled our meeting for a Thursday morning at 9 am. The public notices had been delivered to all of our neighbours at least three days in advance, as was the newspaper notice. We did request that anyone who wanted to attend to RSVP prior to the event. We received about 20 reservations for the meeting (fortunately 18 were involved in the golf industry). On the morning of the meeting, we set up the banquet hall, the projector, and the PowerPoint presentation. We also had a sign-in sheet, which documented the contact information of everyone who attended the meeting. I decided to start the meeting by giving some background information on the history of the IPM accreditation program and the process of registering pest control products. I followed by a very quick lesson on LD50 values, using comparisons of everyday (household) products to the pest control products which we used regularly on the golf course.

Once I quickly made my way through this little introduction, I dove right into the annual report. I had my assistant Bryan Hunter pull up all of the maps associated with the annual report, and display them on the screen while I went through each product used, the active ingredients and the reasons for its use in 2011. I would periodically stop, and while using a laser pointer, show exactly on the map where these products were applied. Essentially, I read the annual report word for word, including the final section as to why I felt the IPM program will help reduce pesticide use. Although, I also made sure to include why I felt it wouldn't help in some circumstances as well.

The final portion of our presentation was an open question period. We are all well aware by now that the Ministry of Environment is not requiring us to respond to any questions of any nature at this meeting. There have been talks about some superintendents perhaps using a question drop-box, and responding to these questions via email at a later date, so as to perhaps avoid some emotionally charged situations. However, I strongly believe we need to be transparent through this process. The correct way to handle this meeting was to be open and honest about the practices taking place at Sawmill Creek. All along this IPM accreditation battle we have endured with the province, we have proclaimed to be stewards of the environment, and have preached that we are using these products in a safe and effective manner. Well, if we want to practice what we preach, shouldn't we open ourselves up to these questions so there are no ill feelings, or any conspiracies about how we use these products responsibly?

So, as I stated, we did open up the floor to questions. To my surprise, we did not have a single question from the audience. Nothing. Granted, we had 20 superintendents and only four neighbours in attendance, but nonetheless, no questions. Our presentation time was 19 minutes.

Now, to be fair, once the meeting was finished, and while I was shaking hands with some of my colleagues, Bryan did field some questions from one neighbour in particular regarding the duck population, and whether we felt as though pesticide use was causing the duck population to decline. Bryan handled this situation very admirably and she seemed content after a few minutes of conversation.

THE RESULT: Now that this process is over, I am very happy with the results of the meeting. It was quick, simple, and painless. It was especially comforting knowing the majority of the audience were golf industry professionals, but there is nothing stopping any of you from doing the same. By going door-to-door, I feel like most of the questions that neighbours would have had were answered in a much more personal manner. Perhaps due to the fact that the Township of Plympton-Wyoming is primarily a rural, farming community, there may have been less of an interest in a golf course that used a total of 67 kilograms of active ingredient in 2011. Or perhaps there was not a lot of interest simply because the vast majority of the general public does not know anything about the IPM program. Or, by performing this meeting during business hours, we may have eliminated a chunk of those who may have otherwise attended. No matter what the circumstance was surrounding our public meeting, it was an overwhelming success, and I wouldn't change a thing about the way we approached it. ■

This was the final act that I made as an employee of Sawmill Creek Golf Resort and Spa, as I am set to take over as the General Manager of Heritage Heights Golf and Curling Club on Monday February 13, 2012.

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More Than 'Just a Golf Club'

by Kevin Kobzan,
Foreman at Granite Golf Club

With approximately seven months in a golf season, many would assume golf courses close their doors during the winter months. This is not the case for Granite Golf Club. Located in Stouffville, the club is operational 12 months of the year, providing unique opportunities for members of both the golf course and the prestigious Granite Club.

For the past three years, Granite Golf Club has remained open throughout the winter, offering families the chance to experience and enjoy events during the off-season. The winter activities that have been introduced include the increasingly popular family winter carnival. This one day event provides members and families a winter wonderland for all ages to enjoy. "Our mission is to be a premier family oriented golf club," says Granite Golf Club's General Manager Walter Cheung. "As a private members club, anything more you can offer the members is always a good thing. From an operational standpoint, the objective is to offer the winter activities to keep the club top of mind with our members."

Families who attend the annual family winter carnival can participate in a plethora of activities including tobogganing, dogsledding, horse drawn sleigh and pony rides or indulge in warm beverages and tasty treats. An appearance by Bon Homme is always a popular attraction for children, however some terrified toddlers do object. Also, a lunch buffet is prepared by Chef Anthony Nuth's kitchen team, providing those who reserve a spot a great dining experience. The event has proved very popular with upwards of 400 people attending.

Furthermore, trails are carved throughout the 275 acre property allowing cross country skiers and snowshoers a pleasurable journey in and around the scenic golf course. Skating on the pond is another attraction incorporated in the

carnival, offering a shuttle service to and from the pond for those interested in going for a leisurely skate.

Even though the event is not revenue driven, it is still a benefit to the club as it provides additional value to the membership.

Ski trails are groomed regularly and remain open in conjunction with the skating rinks through the duration of winter. Five large size rinks are created, setting the stage for three-on-three hockey tournaments in February. During the first winter, a series of trails were included allowing members access to the golf course. The following year, tobogganing and skating were introduced, where the idea of a pond hockey tournament was conceptualized and made a reality.

The inaugural tournament sold out in 24 hours. "We knew it was going to sell out but we had no idea it was going to sell out so quickly," says Cheung. "After the success of the first year we are looking for opportunities to expand."

Other activities were added to an already busy schedule, giving families options to how they wanted to spend the day. A hockey shootout and a turkey bowl, which gave people an opportunity to win a turkey or donate it to a local food bank, was added along with utilizing wheels on the dogsleds allowing the fun-filled day to move forward. "As a team we rely on creativity, being adaptive is what makes us great," says Cheung.

Granite Golf Club employs approximately 17 full-time staff, ensuring a consistently high level of service. "Our membership here is very supportive of our staffing model. Other clubs are who they are because of their members, so I can only say we are who we are because of our members," says Cheung. "It's all about our members."

Awarded club of the year by The Canadian Society of Club Managers, Granite Golf Club was recognized as the first club in Canada to implement the Canadian Junior Golf Association Family Tee program. Also it's the home course and new training centre of the GAO's team Ontario juniors, something the club is very proud of. Accompanied with the winter activities these ideas were submitted to the Club Managers Association of America and shared with clubs around North America, South Africa, Europe and Asia.

With all the amenities and events Granite Golf Club offers, it truly is more than just a golf course. With this in mind however, Cheung and his team have not lost sight of what is most important; "We haven't lost focus and that is golf, it's all about golf here, but it's the little things we do along the way". ■



Coming Out of the Winter That Wasn't

Superintendents here in Ontario are no strangers to long, cold winters. Although not as extreme as what is experienced in other parts of the country, winters here result in snow molds, ice sheets, thaw-refreeze events and extended snow cover. Each year seems to be a guessing game as to how the turf will fare come spring. In my six years here in Ontario, there are two things I have learned about winter injury. One, there will always be a huge range of damage occurring through the province from little or no damage to greens being wiped out. The second thing I have learned is that winter preparation is just as much about feel and experience as it is about science. All that said, this is the oddest winter I have experienced since moving to Canada. In a year like this one, I have no idea how the greens will look once the season begins and we really don't know what Mother Nature has in store for us. The focus of this article is to discuss possible outcomes of a mild winter and to try and predict what might happen, but more importantly, what you can do to mitigate any damage that does occur on your greens this year.

Ice damage

Each year, a number of superintendents ask me whether or not they should tarp their greens. In areas where the weather is somewhat predictable and less variable, it is a much easier question. In the Prairie provinces where snow cover is short-lived and winds are often howling across the turf, the use of permeable covers makes sense to prevent winter damage from cold temperatures and desiccation. In areas of Quebec



Figure 1. Pink snow mold (*Microdochium nivale*) on a mixed creeping bentgrass/annual bluegrass collar (Photo courtesy Sean Jordan)

where it gets very cold and where ice formation is quite common, often a hybrid type of tarp that has elements of permeability, insulation and impermeability is used. But here in Ontario, it's a really tough call. Snow does a wonderful job of insulating turf, but we never really know for how long sufficient snow cover will remain. More often than not, we are plagued with prolonged ice sheet formation as we experience extended periods above freezing followed by deep freeze periods where ice forms. In winters such as these, the use of impermeable covers can certainly prevent some damage, as long as they are applied properly, allowing for air exchange while preventing water flow onto the green. For the most part, however, the use of covers in Ontario is not a necessity and while they can be helpful, they may not always be worth the cost and potential risk of de-hardening the plant tissue.

Snow mold prevention

With the new IPM regulations in place, golf courses are showing a reduction in preventative pesticide applications, but one place where



Figure 2. Damage likely resulting from crown injury in late winter (Photo courtesy John Bladon)

nobody wants to take chances is where snow molds are concerned. We may not always have the ideal conditions for gray snow mold (*Typhula incarnata*, *T. ishikariensis*) but we quite often have the ideal weather for *Microdochium* patch (aka Fusarium patch/Pink Snow Mold) (*Microdochium nivale*) (Fig 1.). Either way, applying a preventative fungicide for these diseases is critical in Ontario as either disease can wipe out a green if left unchecked over the winter. The most commonly used fungicide for these diseases, quintozone, is no longer available and this has led to some difficult management decisions. There are several other products on the market, but there are some trade-offs regarding relative efficacy for each of the potential diseases. In addition, timing is a bit more critical as many of the products need to be taken up by the plant for maximum effectiveness. It becomes difficult to predict when the plant is still able to absorb the product while being close enough to hardening off to ensure that the fungicide will not be metabolized too early. This particular winter, it is difficult to predict whether

or not snow mold applications will last through the season. Most of them have been tested in various conditions and manufacturers have tried to ensure that their persistence is quite high, regardless of the weather. However, when we have a stretch of days nearing 8°C followed by freezing temperatures and back again, it is logical to think that some of the material will indeed be metabolized or potentially move from its original location. When snow cover is intermittent and short-lived, we are likely not at risk from gray snow mold but *Microdochium* patch is certainly a potential threat as the cool, wet conditions have been ideal. In addition, who knows what March will bring, a typically unpredictable month. For those of you who did use covers, it is important to remember that snow acts as an insulator, keeping temperatures under the snow relatively stable, regardless of the air temperature. Impermeable covers, especially those with insulating layers, act in much the same way, so it is possible that disease activity can be occurring under those covers even if the ideal conditions may not exist on exposed greens.

Dealing with the potential damage

As is the case in any year in Ontario, it is difficult to predict what kind of damage, if any, will be waiting for you come spring. Based on the extreme thaw-refreeze events we have had, there is always the chance for crown damage if these events continue late into the winter (Fig. 2). This is especially the case on greens that are primarily annual bluegrass as this species comes out of dormancy at a slightly lower temperature than creeping bentgrass, making it more susceptible to de-hardening and subsequent freezing. Whatever damage occurs on your site, however, it is all about fixing it as soon as possible to prevent reduced

playability. If you find evidence of *Microdochium* patch, be sure to monitor the weather conditions to ensure the disease will not continue into the season. If conducive conditions for the pathogen persist (cool and wet), be sure to apply a fungicide. If the weather warms up quickly, ensure you have enough nitrogen to allow the turf to outgrow the damage. If your turf suffers from crown injury due to prolonged ice coverage or refreeze events, recovery is key. While the turf may sometimes appear beyond recovery, often enough tillers are still alive for the stand to recover if sufficient moisture is provided. Determining the viability of your plants can be as simple as taking cores from the greens in the early spring and setting them to grow on a window sill. If the turf does not improve, take action by overseeding with creeping bentgrass and eliminating stress from the turf until it starts growing actively to fill in any bare areas.

Depending on when you read this article, it may be too late to prevent the issues discussed here, but hopefully you can use this information for subsequent winters. For now, it is important that you consider the possibility that a great deal of turf may be lost this year and, as such, you should prepare your members or clientele for that possibility. Timely communication is key and may also allow you more opportunities to work on recovery efforts, such as core aeration and overseeding, sooner rather than later. Above all else, keep in mind that this is an industry that works at the whim of Mother Nature and sometimes even the best planner cannot prepare for every possibility. ■



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C'mon Man!

by Alan Dolick, Assistant Superintendent
Dundas Valley Golf & Curling Club

There are those moments during the season that leave you so bewildered you can only shake your head and drive away, all the while thinking to yourself, "how did they get themselves into that mess?!" I like to call these "c'mon man!" moments. I got this motto from watching Monday Night Football. For those of you who have no idea what I am talking about, every week before kick-off the panel of analysts have a segment called "C'mon Man!" highlighting the bone-headed moments of the week in the NFL.

I think that we all realize that our staff, particularly our students, almost never care as much about performing a quality job or how their actions may affect course conditions as much as we do. Students generally take the job less seriously than our more 'mature' staff and, in many ways, are much less motivated.

You can explain the importance of a task to them until

you are blue in the face and they still won't take any more care. It is important to not only realize that fact, but accept it. Recognizing this innate complacency will do wonders for your mental health and you can actually use this to your advantage.

Leadership is about finding common ground with your staff. If you can learn what makes these people tick, you will be better able to motivate them in their own little way. With the twenty-somethings, I have realized that coercion and a heavy hand do not work in the slightest. I have found what drives this age group is peer motivation. If you can infiltrate the group and have some of these students in your corner you will get better results from the group as a whole. I gain trust by doing nothing more than joking around with my staff.

The key is finding the right times to do this, and personally, I like to have lunch with them as often as possible.

Eating is a natural relaxant and creates a low key setting where everyone is more comfortable. If you can laugh and joke, allowing them to poke fun at you while returning with some friendly jabs, you create a bond that you can use to motivate. Males in their early 20's love to make fun of one another, which is where the "c'mon man!" comes into play. By having a chance to gently raz your staff, you are able to communicate to them, and to the others in the room, that the work was unsatisfactory without alienating the individual or make them feel useless.

Of course, this is not a one-size-fits-all approach, but then again being a good leader isn't about managing everyone the same way. But by using laughter at the right times creates a positive and relaxed work environment. Having your staff feel comfortable and by keeping the lines of communication open, you will start to get better work out of your staff and your work-life will be that much easier. ■

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One Giant Leap for Turf Club

“Did you see that Turf Club booth over in the corner?” asked one patron of the OGSA show to another. I had just got up from our booth to grab a cup of coffee when I heard the two gentlemen conversing and a twinkle of accomplishment rippled throughout my body as I sauntered passed them.



Left to right: Anthony Schirru, Brent McDougall, Jordan Barber, Kevin Moores

As a student, it is a little awkward showing up at conventions such as this. None of us are well known, we don't belong to a particular golf course, and the speakers are proving all of our schooling wrong. In some regard we lack a professional identity and this year we wanted to change all that. The University of Guelph Turf Club set out to make our mark and leave an impression on those who passed by our booth. We showed pictures of our various trips, handed out our annual newsletter, and more importantly, greeted those who walked by and answered questions for anyone interested in what we were all about. Although we are only about 50 students strong, we have done more, seen more, and travelled more than most of the largest student clubs at our University. We “turfies” are proud of our traditions, development and personal growth and we wanted to announce to our alumnus, potential employers, and future members that we're keeping it real.

The purpose was to create a buzz. We wanted people to notice us, talk about us and walk away thinking about our group. When I overheard the two gentlemen talking, I knew immediately that we had succeeded.

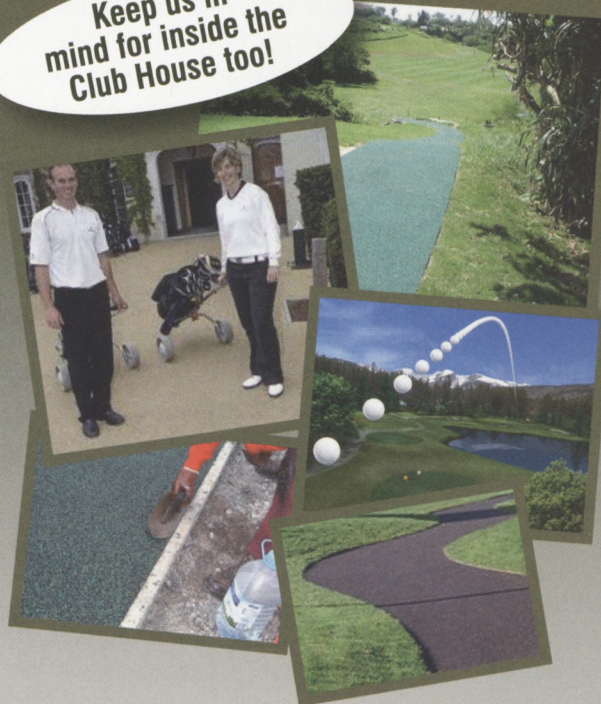
Thank you to everyone who stopped into our booth to say hi, show your support and leave your contact information. We had a wonderful time at the conference and hope to be a part of it again in the coming years. ■



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Turf Tips... and Bermuda Grass?

Without a doubt, one of the perks of being a sales representative is the opportunity to meet with superintendents and discuss all things related to our industry. More often than not, every visit results in a learning opportunity and if I'm fortunate, a little "turf tip" is divulged. In hindsight, I wish I had known some of these tips when I was still an assistant superintendent but as they say, there's no point crying over spilt milk. So, here are some interesting tips I have come across throughout the past year that I would like to pass on and hopefully, one of these tips might help you on your property someday. Interestingly, most of these tips involve alternative uses of wetting agents.

Wettings Agents:

This past November, I was fortunate to attend the Penn State Golf Turf Conference where Mark Kuhns, Director of Grounds at Baltusrol Golf Club, gave a presentation titled *Detailing Your Course for a Fine Look*. In his presentation, he divulged that he incorporates wetting agents into his

bunker maintenance program to promote consistent playing conditions from bunker to bunker. He also preceded that information with a lament on the current trend of spending as much or more time maintaining bunkers than greens. While most golf courses won't have the budget to go to similar ends as Baltusrol Golf Club, it might come in handy to help maintain the odd bunker that is the first to dry or maybe even help in stabilizing sand on steep bunker faces.

When speaking to Aaron Weinberg, Assistant Superintendent at Oakville Golf Club, he mentioned his usage of wetting agents to reduce dew formation on his greens prior to aerification. It's safe to assume that we have all noticed the absence of dew formation following a wetting agent application. Well, Aaron has used this to his advantage and times a wetting agent application prior to hollow tine aerification events. This not only helps to speed up core removal due to drier cores, but the final product is a cleaner putting surface as the absence of dew facilitates the removal of excess sand. Similarly, this strategy could be



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used to help speed up heavy verticutting initiatives or even reduce drying time of sand post topdressing. Anything to help avoid the complaint of sand sticking to a golf ball.

I have also spoken to superintendents who use wetting agents as a disease management tool. For the reasons mentioned above, an application of a wetting agent not only means less dew but it also inherently results in a reduced leaf wetness period. For this reason, they are being used on fairways to help manage dollar spot. An application might help delay or possibly prevent a fungicide treatment as a drier plant might help contain the spread of the disease. Also, they are sometimes tank mixed with fungicides for similar reasons to help bridge the gap while waiting for the fungicidal properties to take effect within the turfgrass plant. Lastly, they have also been tank mixed with xylem mobile systemic fungicides to help the fungicide infiltrate the rootzone increasing root uptake, thus protecting more plant tissue.

Sprinkler Head Marking:

One morning, when touring Eagles Nest Golf Club with Superintendent Brent Rogers and his Assistant Jason Crawford, I noticed an aerosol type can in Jason's cart. Upon inspection, it turned out to be shaving cream. I jokingly asked Jason if the work days were running long at Eagles Nest and his reply was not what I was expecting. It turns out that Eagles Nest uses shaving cream to mark sprinkler head locations prior to fairway aerification. Apparently, a small white dab of shaving cream is enough to be visible to the aerifier operator. The best part is that there are no marking flags to get caught in machinery, no flags to collect prior to or after clean up and no flags laying around in the tool room.

Ball Mark Repair:

At the conclusion of my tour at Eagles Nest, I happened to notice an assembly of ball mark repair tools atop the reception desk. While velvet bentgrass (the predominant grass on the greens at Eagles Nest) does have its share of positive characteristics, one of the lesser known downsides is how long it takes for ball marks to heal. Therefore, daily ball mark repair is an essential component to the



Interesting to Note:

While at Eagles Nest, Brent Rogers pointed out an off coloured patch of grass that was growing on his 6th fairway. Incredibly, a patch of bermudagrass has established itself in a high traffic area of the fairway. He noticed the patch of bermuda on one of his morning tours as the patch stood out from the surrounding bents and fescues. It seems that the bermuda is tolerating the traffic stress, so much so that Brent has been experimenting with plugging it into other high traffic areas. Never would I have thought that we would see bermuda grass surviving our winters. Is this an indication of milder winter temperatures? While in Toronto, at a recent OGSA conference, Dr. Leah Brilman from Pickseed visited Eagles Nest and confirmed that it was indeed bermudagrass. Could this be the first confirmed sighting of bermudagrass in Canada? Samples have been sent to the labs at Pickseed to for further review.

greens management program and crews are sent out daily to fix ball marks. One can only imagine the amount of ball mark repair tools that could potentially be lost by staff and the tireless effort of daily delegation to complete the task. Thus, the following solution was found. A ball mark repair tool is simply inserted into a wooden handle and a greens route is printed on the handle to inform staff which greens they are responsible for. The longer handle also makes holding the tool more comfortable and ball marks are easier and faster to repair.

I hope one of these tips might one day be of use to you. I am thankful to all who shared this information with me. ■



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Team Collaboration: Using the Power of Google

Communicating the vision goes a long way towards teamwork on a golf course. The golf course team consisting of the superintendent, assistant(s), equipment manager(s), tech(s) and staff, rely heavily on the exchange of up-to-date information that is subject to adjustment based on weather and the unexpected. All too often the plans get altered due to unforeseeable change in conditions. The schedule has to be juggled, and events in paper calendars have to be crossed out or reprinted to keep everyone on the same page.

Thanks to computer technology, printed calendars and notebooks can now be a thing of the past with clubs utilizing available software programs. Microsoft Outlook is a valuable tool from a stand alone perspective, but many clubs can't afford the expensive exchange server costs necessary to add sharing capabilities across the team in addition to annual subscriptions and user fees.

Not surprisingly, Google has come to the rescue by creating the Google Calendar application. It's been out for a little while, but has now become more refined with the newer platform. Once you have signed in using a free Gmail account, it enables your entire team to share events and schedules easily and at no cost to your club. Each staff member can share this information online from any computer or handheld device connected to the internet.

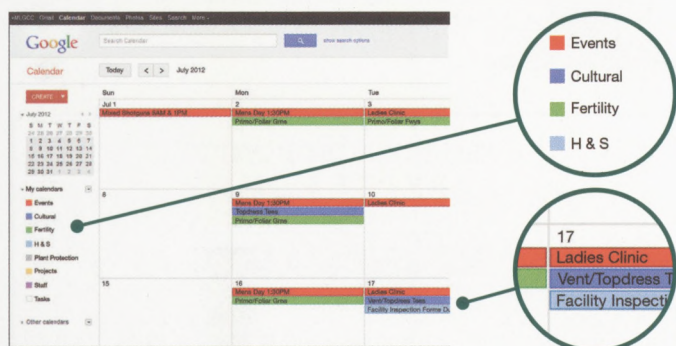
The amount of events, practices, applications involved in running a golf course can be overwhelming if it's all placed on one calendar. To reduce the confusion, it's helpful if you create multiple calendars to display only the information you currently want to focus on. Separate the various categories of work into multiple colour-coded calendars that can be used to distinguish between golf events, fertility, plant protection products, projects and cultural practices. These

are only suggestions of calendar titles, you can customize the categories to suit your course needs.

Weekly, biweekly or monthly events, practices and applications are quickly and easily added using the repeat function in the calendar event detail. Your "Golf Events" calendar will be created in no time assuming you have several reoccurring events on certain days through the summer. You can view events by the month, week, four-day, or by the day depending on the range of time you want to view on your screen.

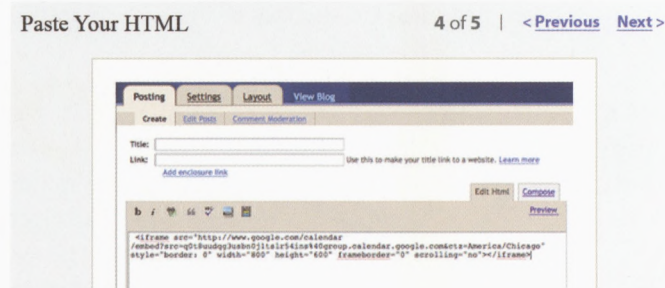
Since the Google Calendar application is available online, you may want to make certain calendars available to your members as well. For example, if you have a regular blog, your department's "cultural" calendar could be embedded into your blog's sidebar if you are using the Blogger application, which is another Google platform. For instance, your golfers could then see topdressing and aerating activities that are currently scheduled. Search the Google 'help' menu if you need tips on how to export the html code from Google Calendars, which you will need to do to implement this feature into your blog. Basically, you will be copying html code from the calendar application and pasting it into the Blogger application's sidebar html area (see figure below). This is easy to do if you follow the step-by-step instructions.

If you haven't already, take the next step in team communication and try Google Calendar. It will help ensure your maintenance crew is on the same page and sees the big picture in this ever-changing environment. ■



Close-up of multi-calendar view with individual calendar legend down left sidebar. You can turn on or off individual calendars by clicking on the squares.

Create colour-coded categories to help organize types of calendar events.



Google Calendars allows the user to export html code to other applications.



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Transient Geese Staying Put

What a winter! It seems for many of us in Ontario, it was one of little snow and only a week or two of cold temperatures. As I write this, it is February and 10°C outside. And yes, I am in Ontario, Canada.

This diversity of weather in our regions is very unique, with late but heavy snows in some regions, and virtually no snow and average temperatures above 0°C in others.

The fall had us counting exceptionally larger numbers of Canada geese in southern Ontario. Up to ten times the seasonal average on some sites. This was very consistent along the shorelines of Lake Ontario, where we usually see a short 'burst' of large numbers of transient geese in the fall that taper off as December approaches. Not this year. It seems southern Ontario is no longer a stop over but a destination.

With the increasing number of geese staying put over winter what does this do to our work load in the spring? One goose will consume about 4 lbs of turf a day, and give back 2 lbs in droppings. Let's see, if there are 800 wintering geese on your No. 3 fairway, that's 3200 lbs of grass seed to replant

and 1600 lbs of droppings to deal with. And that's per day!

As we monitor these increasing populations, one might wonder how many of these geese will stick around on our turf managed sites throughout spring and summer? Already we are seeing pairing of couples, which means we will see early nesting and goslings sooner rather than later.

Geese also attract natural predation, such as the increasing coyote and wolf populations in urban areas. They too respond to an abundance of food and habitat in areas where it is available as well.

That's the dynamic environment which mother nature surrounds us with. ■



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The EPA's New Tier 4 Emission Standards and What It Means to You

Now that you've all glazed over, perhaps I should have chosen a title with more of a hook like "Save Money Now! Ask Me How!" but that is reminiscent of a cheesy, "make money from home" poster commonly found plastered inside a bus shelter. Let's face it, the United States' Environmental Protection Agency's new Tier 4 Emission Standards is simply a title to some legislation. Enacted by our neighbour to the south, it's a legislation most of us haven't even heard of yet and, on the surface, sounds like a good idea. After all, who is opposed to cleaner air? Now to be honest, while I was aware of the impending regulations, I had given precious little consideration to the ramifications for us here in Ontario until just recently. During a conversation with Barry Cochrane, General Sales Manager Canada for The Toro Company, he enlightened me to the lack of awareness that exists within our industry and to the sticker shock an unprepared superintendent could be in for when the new standards come into effect in January of 2013.

The USA's EPA has adopted a comprehensive national program to reduce emissions from future non-road diesel engines by integrating engine and fuel controls as a system to gain the greatest emission reductions. To meet these emission standards, engine manufacturers will have to produce new engines with advanced emission control technologies similar to those already in place for highway trucks and buses. Harmful exhaust emissions from these engines will decrease by more than 90 percent and because the emission-control devices can be damaged by sulfur, they have also mandated a decrease in the allowable level of sulfur in non-road diesel fuel by more than 99 percent.

These reductions in NOx (nitrogen oxides) and PM (particulate matter) emissions from non-road diesel engines will provide enormous public health benefits. The EPA estimates that by 2030, controlling these emissions would annually prevent 12,000 premature deaths, 8,900 hospitalizations, and one million lost work days. Approximately 50 companies manufacture non-road diesel engines worldwide. Many companies involved in the non-road diesel industry are not "vertically integrated" – that is, they do not produce both engines and the equipment the engines are used in. The implementation of the Tier 4

standards reflects this reality, which will ensure both engine manufacturers and equipment manufacturers are able to provide new, clean non-road machines to end-users on schedule.

The Tier 4 specification was first applied to industries with large on-road vehicles such as semi trailers and other diesel powered trucks and followed shortly thereafter by large off-road equipment categories such as agricultural and construction equipment. In each case, vehicles or equipment with diesel engines greater than 75 horsepower were required to comply by specified dates. In the turf industry, most of the commercially available diesel powered products are in the 25 to 74 hp range and the Tier 4 mandate requires compliance for any products produced in this horsepower category by January 1, 2013.

In the turf industry, most of the commercially available diesel powered products are in the 25 to 74 hp range and the Tier 4 mandate requires compliance for any products produced in this horsepower category by January 1, 2013.

What are our turf equipment manufacturers doing to comply with the new regulations? Firstly, Tier 4 Standards are not new and they have all been working on compliance ready solutions for years now. Some companies, John Deere for example, already manufacture equipment in their agriculture and construction divisions which have been subject to similar emission requirements and have the advantage of being able to learn

from engineering efforts that have already occurred. Rest easy though, each manufacturer has had their design brain trusts working on this and I have been assured they will all be ready with Tier 4 compliant offerings for you come 2013. According to Mike Koppen, Manager of Golf Equipment Product Marketing for John Deere's Agriculture and Turf Division in Raleigh, North Carolina, one solution is to utilize a Selective Catalytic Reduction (SCR) system. To summarize, the SCR system raises the combustion temperature in the engine resulting in a cleaner and more efficient burn thus creating less particulate matter; however, this also results in the creation of more oxides of nitrogen which still need to be removed. This is accomplished by the introduction of a catalyst (in this case urea) into the exhaust stream. The combination of the exhaust gasses and the urea breaks down these oxides of nitrogen into nitrogen gas and water vapor which is expelled through the exhaust pipe. The obvious caveat to this system is the need for the operator to add the catalyst at regular intervals to the system. In my view it's a

small thing, comparable to learning to operate and maintain any new machine but to some it might be the deciding factor when making a purchasing decision.

Deere has chosen to go with a solution which involves the use of a cooled Exhaust Gas Recirculation (EGR) system with the addition of an exhaust filter. The cooled EGR works by mixing cooled, measured amounts of exhaust gas with incoming fresh air to lower the engine's peak combustion temperature, which in turn reduces the oxides of nitrogen to an acceptable level. However, these lower combustion temperatures result in an increase in particulate matter which is brought back down to within acceptable levels by routing the exhaust gases through an exhaust particulate filter containing a permanent diesel oxidation catalyst – no adding required. The particulate matter is trapped in the filter and is then converted into nitrogen gas and carbon dioxide which is expelled through the exhaust pipe.

No matter which manufacturer's heavily engineered solution you choose, the actual hardware (engines and exhaust systems) need to be physically larger than today's power plants and for the most part, they simply will not fit into the platforms that currently exist. Ultimately this means a complete rework for most models and undoubtedly will result in a higher purchase price for the consumer. However, it may mean an opportunity for the introduction of other non-emission related features and technology that would otherwise not have been added to these machines.

It is your choice as to how you deal with this increase in cost. Your options aren't too complicated though, you could elect to embrace the change and start purchasing the "greenest" equipment you can buy now or wait until your equipment has reached the end of its normal life and pay the market price of the day for its replacement. You could resist the change

by buying used for as long as possible but count on increased maintenance and repair costs. Another option is to pre-purchase your machinery now. Equipment manufactured prior to the Tier 4 implementation date in January 2013 will remain compliant to the date of manufacture, but keep in mind that some affected product lines may not even be running again this year, though I doubt it. The truth is, every manufacturer will need time to retool assembly lines and run the new Tier 4 units in time to stock their dealership warehouses, so it's really anybody's guess as to just how long any of these pre-Tier 4 machines will even be available. In any case, a serious look at your upcoming capitol equipment budgeting is definitely in order.

Now it's time to do your homework. Of course, there is a bunch of information on the internet regarding Tier 4 and, as always, some sites are better than others. I recommend that you talk to your friendly neighbourhood manufacturer's representative and ask them what their company is doing to become Tier 4 compliant and to discuss how they can help you make the right equipment purchasing decisions for your operation. ■

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Patience with Impatiens

If you were left wondering what in the world happened to your impatiens last summer, you were not the only one. Last year, when some of my impatiens were looking rather poor in mid-summer, at first I thought it was just a few bad apples. As they continued to die, I blamed poor watering. Then I blamed the summer sports camp kids who ran through my gardens without a care in the world. Then colleagues and members starting asking me why their impatiens were dying too. That's when I thought there must be more to this story. So I contacted my grower and asked them. By this point I had removed all of the affected plants so I couldn't send in a sample for diagnosis, but Wayne Brown, Greenhouse Floriculture Specialist at OMAFRA, responded with some possibilities of what the problem might be. Then, when I opened my October issue of *Horticulture Review* and found an article discussing this very problem, I knew it was even more widespread. I also learned there's not one simple answer, and in many respects, the demise of the 2011 impatiens is still a bit of a mystery. Why were some beds devastated while neighbouring beds thrived? So I have compiled a list from a variety of sources of the potential causes and also some solutions for this problem.

CAUSES

Weather – This is believed to be a huge factor, with the constant rain in early spring increasing fungus in the soil, such as *Rhizoctonia*. This was followed by extreme heat and drought, increasing stress on the plants.

Rhizoctonia – This is a fungus causing crown rot. Basal stems become blackened and damping off occurs. This pathogen does not usually cause defoliation. It can be found in the soil or potting medium and spreads very quickly. Moisture and close plantings increase spread.

Pythium – This fungus causes root rot and is spread through the air and by rain and splashing water. The roots die off, causing the whole plant to wilt and die back. Seedlings are most susceptible. It is more easily controlled in the greenhouse than in the field because it's spread by water.

Alternaria Leaf Spot – This fungus usually defoliates plants and causes them to become weaker. It is becoming an increasingly widespread problem. Although it does not usually start showing up until mid-August, the slow start to the 2011 season and recurrent rainfall in June gave this pathogen ideal conditions to spread more rapidly. It is spread by rain and splashing water and also through the air. Wayne Brown believes the disease starts in the greenhouse, and whether it shows up earlier or later in the season depends on climatic conditions in the field. To identify, look for small brown necrotic spots with a black halo on the leaves. When there is a considerable amount of affected area, the leaves turn yellow and will usually fall.

Downy Mildew – This is a fungus caused by *Plasmopara obducens*. It is rare on impatiens but is becoming more

common and has been a big problem in the UK. I even found an article describing problems they were having with it in Hungary last summer. It can be spread through cuttings and possibly by seed. There is a good chance it is Downy Mildew if you find a white mass of mycelium and spores on the lower leaf surface. In severe cases it causes defoliation and plants end up with bare stems and only a small clump of yellowed leaves and buds at the tip.

Impatiens Necrotic Ring Spot Virus (INSV) – This virus is caused by Western Flower Thrips and has a variety of symptoms (veinal necrosis, black ring spots, black foliar lesions, distortion and plant wilt). Plants won't necessarily die but will deteriorate. Control of thrips is very important for the control of this disease.

For a specific diagnosis, future plant samples can be sent to the University of Guelph Pest Diagnostic Clinic, contact 519-767-6299 or www.guelphlabservices.com.

SOLUTIONS

Plant Something Else – Even with annuals, it is important to have some variety, not just for aesthetic value, but also for the cultural value of decreasing overwintering inoculum. I had about five different areas that had impatiens in them last year and the two that performed the worst were the ones that are usually planted with impatiens. Fuschia, spider plant, Swedish ivy and tuberous begonia are other options that should do well in your shady locations. Affected areas should be left impatiens free for at least one year.

Watering – It is best to water early in the day to allow leaves to dry off. To combat *Pythium*, it is best to water lightly and frequently, which is opposite to the normal recommendation to water deeply and infrequently.

Cultural Control – Good garden hygiene is always important in maintaining plant health. Keep beds free of weeds, remove infected plants and leaves, and improve air circulation by not planting too closely. The Royal Horticultural Society is not confident commercial composting will kill spores of Downy Mildew; they recommend burning or burying affected material 50 cm deep. Sterilization of trays and tools is important in the greenhouse. These practices are crucial in the case of INSV.

Remove Soil – Removing the top 1/4" of soil and soil surrounding the infected plants may help to reduce overwintering inoculum. ■



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Twenty-five Years Ago Today

The 1987 Board of Directors of the OGSA 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 Jr.**, 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**, University of Guelph to Toronto Golf Club, **Stewart Mills**, Ancaster to Essex, **Don McFaul**, Glen Abbey to Ancaster, **Steve Stasnya** (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.

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 Show was held in Phoenix with **Ron Heesen**, Beachgrove, **Bob Heron**, Mississauga and **Gordon Witteveen**, Toronto Board of Trade presenting talks. **Dave Gourlay Sr.** was the recipient of the *Distinguished Service Award*. **Craig Evans** and **Ted Ellis** received their *Certified Status* (CGSA).

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, **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 14th Annual President, Green Chairman Tournament was held at Oakdale hosted by **Paul Dermott**. The top three winning teams were: The National, Weston Golf Club and Bay of Quinte.

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. ■



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Safety at What Cost?

by Doug Breen, Superintendent
Golf/North Properties

I found out the other day, that my daughter – my 12 year old delicate flower, who incidentally leads the Lower Lakes Female Hockey League in penalty minutes – spends most of her gym classes sitting on the stage, because her teacher has decided that she's unsafe. Now, she's not going to some private girls' school, where a broken nail could lead to a police escort to the manicurist. She's in a standard, Ontario, co-ed, grade seven public school gym class. But she's so much tougher than anyone else in her class, including the boys, that in the name of safety, she's been ostracized. The very skills that have made her excel in box lacrosse, hockey, and riding horses – aggression, tenacity, and toughness (the same traits that will ultimately make her succeed in life) – have become utterly unacceptable in school sports.

Elementary schools will pay lip service to the importance of physical activity, but ultimately, if you play any sport hard enough to break a sweat, it's bound to land you in trouble. Teachers love to see that level of tenacity when it comes to conjugating French verbs or gluing pictures printed off the internet on to a piece of bristol board, but bring it to the playground and they'll have you assessed for ADHD and put you in an anti-bullying program. And what's wrong with these boys? When I was 12, you'd have had to pull my arm off and beat me unconscious with it before I'd cry in front of my friends. These guys will cry if their mother forgets to cut the crusts off their sandwich and then draw a picture of their feelings in their journal.

Garney Henley was 5'11" and weighed 175 pounds. He played running back, receiver, and defensive back for the Hamilton Tiger-Cats for 16 seasons (1960-1976), most games playing both ways. In the 1962 Grey Cup, he never actually left the field. Add to that, he returned punts in an era when no blocking was allowed on punt returns. Despite his diminutive size, he not only survived, but set scores of league records and won the league MVP on both defence and offence. Once, they took him to a hospital to have his head X-rayed after being knocked unconscious and the doctor asked him about the five pellets in his head which showed up on his X-ray. Turns out, when he was in grade seven, somebody accidentally shot him in the face with a shotgun while duck hunting. He'd forgotten about it. Now that's tough. Imagine the pages one of my daughter's classmates would have to add to his 'feelings journal'.

There were certainly lots of people like that when I was in school – the kind that wanted every game to end in a tie, and didn't believe in MVP awards – but they were the minority, and we'd openly mock their collection of 'participant ribbons' at recess. But somehow, those people



CHUCK NORRIS:

He can't play golf. Every time he picks up a club, eighteen balls throw themselves into holes for fear of being struck.

have gotten control of the world. They stand there wringing their hands, wearing their bike helmets and fanny packs full of sunscreen and antiseptic wipes, hoping – no, demanding – that no one ever get hurt again. But it's not just in school anymore, the 'safety at any cost' crowd have started to affect the real world. Our world.

Don't get me wrong, I'm not crazy – I'm not pining for the days of Garney Henley being shot in the head without going to the hospital, or missing the days when we were operating reel mowers without any guards, or mixing mercury with topdressing sand on the shop floor. Twelve-year-old caddies smoking DuMauriers while carrying your bag and ten-year olds working in the kitchen wasn't very smart either. I'm just saying that when the Occupational Health and Safety Act puts a golf course in the same category as a metal stamping plant, perhaps the pendulum has swung a bit too far. That act was designed to protect workers in uranium mines and now they're trying to figure out how to apply it to the pro shop staff.

I don't blame government for this, or water regulations, or pesticide bans, or anything else. The present 'nanny state' exists because it's what the majority of 21st century voters want. Our society has decided they want no risk, which by very definition is impossible. The problem, is that demanding the absolute, eliminates the possibility of the relative. In other words, most folks aren't willing to accept the reality of acceptable risk. Yoda taught us that it's dangerous to deal in absolutes – how come a Muppet can see it, but the PTA can't?

I suppose it might be a generational thing. That when we reach middle age, we think the generation ahead of us were reckless and foolish, while the one coming behind us is unacceptably soft. I'm sure my father laments the fact that I never got shot to toughen me up.

As for me, I'm going to continue to instill the qualities of tenacity, aggression, and toughness in my kids and accept the risk that they may actually get injured as a result. I'm also willing to accept that many others won't accept the risk of their kid being unintentionally injured by mine – so she may continue to sit on the stage in gym class. That's OK, because in the end, those traits will make her successful in the real world, and if the Road Warrior days ever come, Darwin will favour the Rugby team. ■

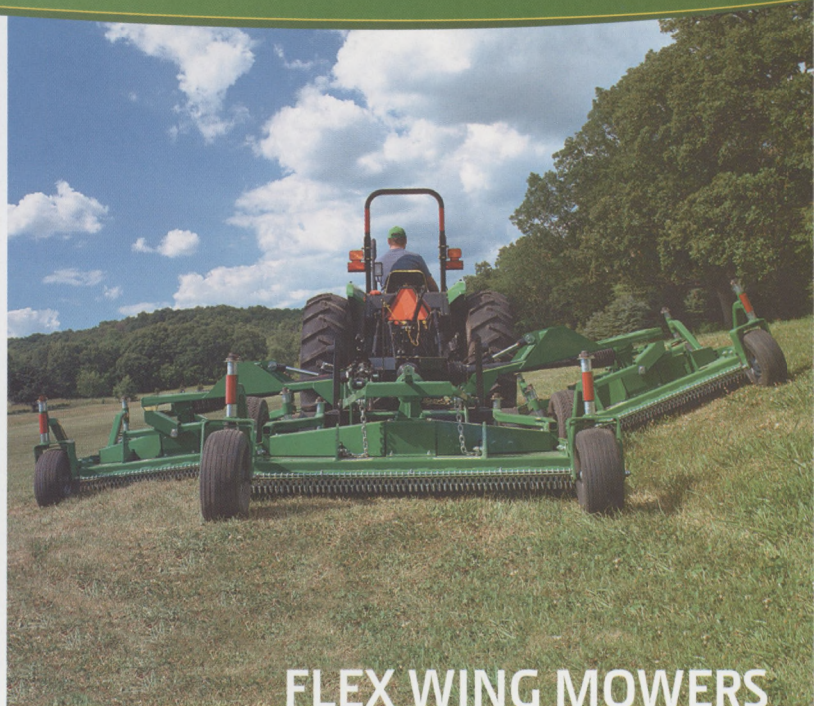


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