



Green is Beautiful

Fall 2014

The Official Publication of Ontario Golf Superintendents' Association

Growing Pains: Common Mishandlings of Trees

ALSO INSIDE THIS ISSUE:
The Value of Membership
Ontario Golf Clubs Recover
Industry Insights on Sustainability

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



by Phil Scully
OGSA President

When we look back on most golf seasons they all tend to blend together. Drought, early openings, heavy rains or higher than normal disease pressure, are just some of the factors we are used to dealing with. When we look back at 2014, it is my hope that it is highlighted by the extraordinary efforts made by superintendents in Ontario. The widespread damage was unprecedented and that could have been all that 2014 was remembered for. Superintendents took this opportunity to showcase the multitude of talents they possess to not only the members at their respective clubs, but to the entire industry. It is my belief that the epic turf loss this spring has provided a stage on which we were able to elevate our position as the driving

force behind golf in Ontario.

As this year comes to an end, so too will my term as your president. I would be remiss if I didn't thank my fellow board members and Sally Ross for their support, from becoming a director, moving through the executive and taking on the role of president. This exceptional group has always been there to step in and share the load whenever necessary, which has been a huge contributing factor to my ability to serve, the association's ongoing successes, growth and focus; that focus being always looking forward to the future of our members and helping them be more successful and contribute to growing the game.

Looking forward, I know that the association will continue to be outstanding advocates for our profession, and its strength and reputation throughout the industry will continue to be a model for others to emulate.

I encourage all members to register and enjoy our upcoming conference in Niagara Falls and I hope to see everyone there.

In closing, I can't begin to express what a privilege it has been to serve as president

of the OGSA in 2014, our 90th year. To have my name mentioned along with the long list of distinguished past presidents, many of whom I look up to and call friends, is truly an honour.

Thank you everyone, for all you do and enjoy a much deserved off season with your family and friends and let's hope for a friendly winter and a much gentler spring. ■



Pandora Sphinx - Eumorpha pandorus moth.
Photo credit: Joe Adams, Flamborough Hills

Green is Beautiful

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Editor

Justin Parsons
justinparsons@engageagro.com

Publisher & Advertising Manager

Terry Davey
terry@blenheim.ca
Tel: 877-618-8696 ext. 102

Administration Manager

Diane Davey
diane@blenheim.ca
Tel: 877-618-8696 ext. 103

Production & Design

Jeanette Thompson
jeanettethompson@mac.com
Tel: 877-618-8696 ext. 101

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Ontario Golf Superintendents' Association

Sally Ross, Executive Manager
Guelph Turfgrass Institute
328 Victoria Road South
Guelph, ON N1L 0H2
Tel: 519-767-3341
Toll Free: 877-824-6472
Fax: 519-766-1704
Email: manager@ogsa.ca
www.ogsa.ca



Published by Blenheim INK Administration Office:

503-5340 Lakeshore Road
Burlington, ON L7L 7A8

Production Office:

1727 King Street East,
Cambridge, ON N3H 3R6
Toll Free: 1-877-618-8696
Fax: 519-340-0293
www.blenheim.ca



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Green is Beautiful
The Official Publication of Ontario Golf Superintendents' Association

ON THE COVER

**Oshawa Golf
and Curling Club**
*Photo courtesy:
Matt Booth*

GREEN IS BEAUTIFUL EDITORIAL COMMITTEE

Justin Parsons	Christian Kuhn
Alan Dolick	Reg Langen
Paul Grotier	Cam Shaw
Cory Janzen	Kevin Kobzan

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

GREEN IS BEAUTIFUL 2014

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by Justin Parsons,
Engage Agro Corp.

As this golf season draws to a close, it's once again time to sit back and reflect on the year that was. I think it's safe to say that the past six months have been anything but ordinary. Although, the more I think about it, I'm not even sure we can accurately characterize what ordinary is these days.

First of all, the golf season doesn't formally end anymore. At least as far as turf maintenance is concerned. Sure the golf course gets 'winterized' and daily maintenance stops, but the activity within the walls of the maintenance shop remains steady. Between continuing education, long range planning and navigating through the beauracracy of the job, turf managers don't experience the down time they once did.

During the growing season, expectation levels form another challenge that likely prevent most from settling in and enjoying the comforts that accompany the ordinary.

Take this summer for example. Although the weather we experienced in Ontario was relatively mild, this only meant that the expectation levels increased all the more.

The perception amongst the average player is, since the weather is not a stress factor, the golf course should be perfect all the time. Of course, we all know how unrealistic this is, especially on the heels of the devastating weather we experienced heading into the spring.

The reality is, expectation levels in terms of turf quality on a daily basis, continue to rise. This is of course fuelled by the unprecedented access to information that the average golfer now has. This can be a dangerous thing if you don't have the background knowledge to process the information and comprehend it within the framework of what is realistic and practical.

Hopefully, features like the one you will read in this issue by Robert Thompson help provide some context to the many passionate golfers who would appreciate understanding the issues in more detail. The key is to make sure they have the opportunity to read these types of articles. The more the word can be spread about the challenges faced when maintaining turf at the highest level, the better off golf course managers will be.

Perhaps if players are more informed, they too will realize that the ordinary days for a turf professional are long gone. ■



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WHAT'S NEW

by Sally Ross, OGSA Executive Manager

OGSA ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING & MEMBERSHIP MEETING

The OGSA Annual General Meeting is scheduled for 7 a.m., on Friday, January 30th, 2014 at the Scotiabank Convention Centre in Room 201. Annual reports will be provided to each delegate in their registration package and will not be read at the Annual Meeting due to time constraints. Items for discussion can be addressed at the membership meeting. Documentation will be available on our website at www.ogsa.ca under Association Reports.

A Membership Meeting will be held for all OGSA members, including suppliers, to review the new format for the conference in 2017. This is a significant meeting that we hope all participants can attend. It will take place on Thursday, January 29th, at 10:30 a.m., immediately following the last education session, and prior to the trade show opening. Both official meeting notices will be posted on our website at www.ogsa.ca.

GCSAA – BOARD OF DIRECTORS ELECTION

Secretary/Treasurer Mark Prieur represented the OGSA at the GCSAA Chapter Delegates session in Lawrence, Kansas in mid-October. If anyone wishes to express their opinion or has any input regarding the candidates that the OGSA will support in the GCSAA election, they must notify the OGSA Board prior to December 31st, 2014. The election will be held during

the Golf Industry Show and GCSAA Education Conference in San Antonio, Texas this coming February.

OGSA MEMBERSHIP DUES

Members can pay their 2014-2015 membership dues online. Invoices were sent out via email in late September, with a due date of October 1st, 2014. If you have not yet paid your membership dues, please do so as soon as possible to ensure no service interruption. We thank you for your cooperation.

EARLY BIRD REGISTRATION FOR OGCM & TRADE SHOW

Don't forget to register for the upcoming OGCM Conference and Trade Show at the Scotiabank Convention Centre and Marriott Gateway, in Niagara Falls from Wednesday, January 28, 2015 to Friday, January 30, 2015. Remember that to qualify for the OGSA member rate, you must have paid your 2014-2015 membership fees. Please visit www.ogsa.ca to view our conference pages, and to register online. Tickets to the opening night party at Planet Hollywood are limited, so please register early to avoid disappointment.

Our registration is a two-step process. Once you have registered online, you will receive an email with a link to a brief form. You will need to click on the emailed link and choose the events you are attending. This should take no more than a minute or two and it will enable us to give you all the event tickets you require. This step will complete your registration. We look forward to seeing everyone there! ■

Welcome to Our New Members

Craig Acton	Class C
St Andrew's East Golf Club	
Bradly Anderson	Class A
Oak Gables Golf Club	
Miles Curtis	Class C
Emerald Hills Golf Club	
Ben Daly	Class F
St. George's Golf & Country Club	
David Gowdy	Class F
Cutten Fields	
Jonathan Jacques	Class S
University of Guelph	
Peter Kemp	Class C
Osprey Valley Golf Course	
Duncan McIlhorne	Class C
Grey Silo Golf Course	
Zhe Ou	Class S
University of Guelph	
Paul Peterson	Class C
Legends on the Niagara	
Shane Tremblay	Class F
The Bridges at Tillsonburg	
Matthew Wentzell	Class C
Magna Golf Club	

Hugh Kirkpatrick Memorial Tourney

Once again Bill Searle, NGF Golf (Div. of Northgate Farms), hosted his bi-annual fundraiser at Otter Creek GC, in Otterville Ontario, to augment the OGSA's Hugh Kirkpatrick Bursary that supports the education of OGSA assistant superintendent members. Many thanks to Bill and host Superintendent Randy Booker and all those who attended the event. ■



The OGSA wishes to thank Bill Searle (left) from NGF Golf (Div. of Northgate Farms) who once again made a substantial contribution to support the Hugh Kirkpatrick Bursary, presenting a cheque from his fundraising tournament to OGSA Director Tim Muys (Piper's Heath Golf Club).



OGSA group at the Assistants Tournament (l-r): Scott White, Director, Phil Scully, President, David Kuypers Host Superintendent and Robert Thompson, Golf Analyst at Global News and Sr. Writer at SCOREGolf



Tournament organizer, Greg Brown (Essex G&CC), right, presents the host plaques to David Kuypers, Superintendent, center, and Jamie Laird, Assistant Superintendent from Cutten Fields, left.



The Winners

Assistants Tournament

The OGSA Assistants Tournament took place on Monday, September 22, 2014 at Cutten Fields in Guelph.

Hosts David Kuypers, Superintendent, and Jamie Laird, Assistant Superintendent, had the course in fine shape for the event and attendees had a great time despite strong winds and the distinct fall chill that was in the air.

Winners of the tournament were the group of Derek Brooker and Jason D'Andrea from GC Duke Equipment with John Adach and Andre Aymar from Islington Golf Club.

Direct Solutions was once again the Platinum Sponsor of the event and their cash donation funded many of the prizes on the prize table. They also supplied \$500 worth of gift certificates

which were put into a special draw.

Silver sponsors were AllTurf, Bayer, G.C. Duke Equipment, with Ontario Seed Company and Nutrite sharing a sponsorship.

The two longest drives, sponsored by Syngenta, were won by Mike Giblin from Heron Point Golf Links and Jessie Nicholls from Ladies Golf Club of Toronto. The closest to the pins, sponsored by Turf Prohit, were won by Dan Slihas from St. Catharines Golf & Country Club and Jasmine Steinke from Briars Golf Club. The straightest drive competition, sponsored by Turf Care, was won by Cam Shaw from Piper's Heath Golf Club who once again got to take home something red and shiny.

Various draws were held with

participants winning hundreds of dollars in Cutten Fields pro shop gift certificates, gift cards for the Keg and the LCBO kindly donated by Vanden Bussche Irrigation. Blue Jays tickets from Master's Turf Supply and accommodation for two nights at the Marriott Gateway in Niagara Falls, from the OGSA were also given out.

All in all a great day for the assistants was had once again thanks, in part, to the outstanding support from our associate members. Companies that donated to the draws and prize table were, Engage Agro, Enviro-Sol, G. C. Duke Equipment, Hutcheson Sand & Mixes, Lakeshore Sand Co., Master's Turf Supply, Nutrite, Ontario Seed Company, Ontario Turf Equipment, and Plant Products. Thank you everyone for your support. ■

Groups Play to Honour McClumpha Tradition

On Monday, October 6, 2014 a handful of groups gathered at St. Thomas Golf and Country Club to honour the spirit of the longstanding OGSA tradition, the McClumpha tournament.

The benefits of the maintenance teams tree removal efforts over the last few years were on full display as the greens looked and puttied beautifully. Even a late round downpour couldn't dampen the spirits of this determined group. A small

reception in the clubhouse was held after the tournament where OGSA President Phil Scully thanked Superintendent Wade Beaudoin and his crew. He noted Beaudoin's persistent efforts in helping the OGSA secure the venue and his teams hard work in preparing the golf course. Beaudoin also said a few words as he thanked his crew and all those who participated.

All in all, it was a great day at a great golf course. ■



St. Thomas Golf & Country Club
Credit: Ryan Beauchamp



2015 ONTARIO GOLF COURSE MANAGEMENT CONFERENCE & TRADE SHOW

Scotiabank Convention Centre & Marriott Gateway Hotel **NIAGARA FALLS, ON | JANUARY 28-30, 2015**

Education Sessions:

Dr. Thomas Nikolai, Ph. D.
Michigan State University

- RE-ESTABLISHMENT TECHNIQUES AND RESEARCH FOLLOWING THE POLAR VORTEX OF 2013/14

Adam Moeller
Agronomist, USGA

- IRRIGATE FOR TURF HEALTH AND PLAYABILITY, NOT COLOUR
- PUTTING GREEN ROOTZONE MANAGEMENT

Dr. Micah Woods, Ph. D.
Chief Scientist, Asian Turfgrass Center

- ESTIMATING TURFGRASS NUTRIENT USE
- SOIL MOISTURE AND IRRIGATION: THREE KEY POINTS FOR SUMMER

Mark Thompson
President & Chief Engagement Officer,
McKinley Solutions

- ATTRACT, ENGAGE, RETAIN A GREAT TEAM

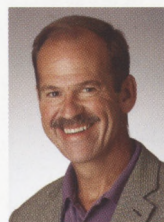
John Kaminski, Ph.D.
Associate Professor, Turfgrass Management/Director,
Golf Course Turfgrass Management Program

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- COMMUNICATION IN THE 21ST CENTURY

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Keynote Speaker:

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 28, 2015



Pat Jones

Publisher/Editorial Director
Golf Course Industry and Lawn &
Landscape Magazine

Gazing into my crystal ball:
How our business is changing and
what it means to you.

For three decades, Pat Jones has been known for his insights into the golf and turf business, his tell-it-like-it-is approach and his sometimes warped sense of humor. David Feherty of CBS Sports and Golf magazine once described him as "that odd bastard who keeps trying to fill my head with all sorts of turfy facts."

Opening Night Party: Aaron Garner Band

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The Value of Membership

by Sally Ross, OGSA Executive Manager

Associations talk a lot these days about delivering services to their members, both tangible and intangible, and how they can communicate the intangibles to their membership. They must consider how they can prove that paying dues and contributing and participating in the association is of value.

Promotion and advancement of the profession and advocating for the profession are two of the most important things that the OGSA does regularly, but the results are so hard to measure, and therefore difficult for our members to recognize.

We do know a few things thanks to online tools like Twitter statistics and Google Analytics. During the time period of the OGSA's Twitter talk about winterkill, Twitter followers increased by 20 per cent and these followers were mostly the golfing public and media. Website hits from first time visitors accounted for 40 per cent of the total hits over a one month period.

So what about the measurable programs and services that the OGSA delivers in any given year? More specifically, are you getting the best bang for your association buck?

With the average cost of an OGSA membership at \$160 per person, per year, here are a few easy to measure deliverables:

14 per cent of your membership dues go directly to turf research.

7.5 per cent goes towards scholarships, not administering them, just providing funds.

Approximately 5-6 per cent pays for staff time spent collecting from delinquent accounts.

In almost every business, salaries are the biggest line item on the budget, but at the OGSA, administering programs that bring additional revenue over and above your membership dues, fund approximately 40-50 per cent of the salary overhead.

Many of the member services we provide do not generate any revenue whatsoever and yet require administration by staff and the board; superintendent recognition programs, preparing layout and advertising in industry publications,

administering awards, compiling applications and judging scholarships, running member events on a break even budget, preparing and reviewing publications and communications, managing and updating our website, maintaining membership information, recording all financial transactions and performing all required government reporting, and, of course, lots more.

Board and meeting costs are kept to a minimum due to prudent fiscal awareness. The volunteer time contributed to the organization more than offsets the minimal spending. We are lucky to have so many dedicated volunteers.

So, in the end, what does it all boil down to?

While we may not be able to measure the results of activities related to advocacy efforts such as sending representation to Queen's Park, participating in the NAGA – Ontario, providing representation on the IPM Council, creating and maintaining relationships with bureaucrats and elected officials, we know that most of the legislation affecting our industry segment comes out of Queen's Park and we have to be there!

So we have to ask ourselves, "what would happen if we did not provide these services and what would have happened in the past had we not provided these services?"

This question is not just one for superintendents, but also for our associate member companies who also reap the benefits of the OGSA's involvement in these activities. Sometimes companies think that if their involvement in the association does not produce direct sales that contribute to their bottom line, then they are not getting "value". They question customer loyalty and the return on their membership investment, and yet association activities over the past years have directly contributed to their ability to do business.

We think the OGSA is delivering a great deal for your association dollar, and we pride ourselves on always being open to suggestions on how we can improve upon our efforts for you. The board makes decisions in a democratic fashion when it comes to new initiatives and new methods, always taking into consideration

their own varying points of view and those of the members; they utilize the skills and knowledge of everyone sitting around the table.

This has always been the approach throughout the history of the OGSA, and even in the 91st year of operation, this continues to be our approach. It is time tested and proven and it is just the right thing to do.

We are aware that getting the opportunity to network with your peers is an important part of being a member of the association, as well as acquiring your required CEC's to maintain your qualifications, but these opportunities are plentiful and can be gained elsewhere. We are often told that we should be providing these services at cost. We are informed that other organizations and suppliers can deliver education a lot cheaper, and we are asked why can't the OGSA?

Well, of course, the OGSA could do the same thing, but then what would happen to all the other things that the OGSA does to promote the industry and the profession that are often unrecognized, but directly affect every superintendent in Ontario, both member and non member? Who would pay the cost of providing those services?

The bottom line is, every superintendent in Ontario should be a member of the OGSA, and every golf club and owner should make sure of it. All superintendents should have the opportunity to attend our conference and participate in their professional association because it helps fund the association (and all its many activities) and keeps dues payments for all at a modest level. It helps drive the industry and contributes to its success.

The OGSA believes that every superintendent should have the ability to earn a decent wage, one that can support a family and a home, every superintendent should be recognized by both their employer as crucial to their business, and by every golfer as a consummate professional, because that is what they are.

After all, that is a major part of our mandate and our mission. It always has been and it remains the primary focus when our board directs the operations of the association. ■

Scott Heron

Golf Course and Property Manager, The Toronto Hunt

by Justin Parsons, Engage Agro

Not too many OGSA members can say they have played a round of golf with Clint Eastwood and James Woods and perhaps just as few can say they began their turf career at the age of two. When you spend time with Scott Heron, Superintendent at the The Toronto Hunt, you realize, there isn't much about his career that has been average.

Heron grew up in Brampton, where he remembers being taken to Markland Wood Golf Club at a very young age. His father, Robert Heron, is certainly no stranger to the Canadian superintendent fraternity, and he was managing the maintenance department of the Etobicoke golf club at the time.

"That's probably my earliest memory of being at a golf course," says Heron. "The chef there would make me hamburgers for breakfast because I didn't like eggs at the time." The early days at Markland Wood must have been enjoyable because Heron would go on to work for his dad until he was ten years old. "I loved being outside and riding on the carts...the three-wheel Cushman comes to mind."

In 1982, Heron would follow his dad to Mississauga Golf and Country Club just down the road. He recalls making 50 cents an hour as a greenskeeper his first



Scott Heron, The Toronto Hunt

year there, but he must have been doing a good job because the assistant superintendent went to bat for him in the wage department. He went above his Dad's head to the GM and managed to procure Heron a raise to \$2 an hour. "In relative terms, that was pretty much the biggest increase of my life," Heron jokes.

Those years at Mississauga were eerily similar to what Heron would experience later on in his career at The Toronto Hunt. "I remember there was devastation every spring at that club. There would be sticks and debris and silt all over the place when the river finally receded." The mark he left

during his tenure there wasn't necessarily turf related. "I remember one spring catching a Coho salmon with a Koho hockey stick," says Heron with a laugh.

He would then move on to work for another well-known superintendent in Blake McMaster at Brampton Golf and Country Club in 1986. He spent most of his high school summers and weekends at this club, and as he approached his postsecondary school years, he knew this was the profession he wanted to pursue.

Heron enrolled in the turf program at Seneca College in the fall of 1988 and when he wasn't at school he worked at Beacon Hall Golf Club in Aurora. To make ends meet, he also had a part-time job as a pizza delivery guy where he developed a ploy to keep his appetite satisfied on the cheap. "Before the end of my shift on weekends I would make up a party-sized pizza and then I would come back to the store and say the customer refused it, so I got to keep it and bring it home to eat for me and my buddies."

For his internship at Seneca College, Heron decided to shake things up. His dad's former assistant, Ken Siems, landed a job as the superintendent at East Sussex National in Sussex, England and he was happy to bring Heron aboard. Oddly enough, Heron would go from one Bob Cupp designed property to another, but

IN THE HOT SEAT

Q – Favourite Major?

A – The Masters

Q – Favourite piece of turf equipment?

A – Buffalo Blower

Q – Favourite golf course?

A – A tie between Cypress Point and Barnbougle in Tasmania (Check out: www.barnbougle.com.au)

Q – Best Golf Experience?

A – Coeur d'Alene in Idaho

Q – Ultimate foursome?

A – Michelle Wie, Natalie Gulbis, Paula Creamer

Q – Lowest round and where?

A – 78 at Bigwin Island Golf Club (Played with and beat three billionaires that day!)

Q – Favorite meal?

A – Pizza (hot peppers, green olives, pepperoni and mushrooms)

Q – What's on your iPod right now?

A – Don't own one, or a CD player for that matter

Q – If you weren't a Superintendent what would you be?

A – A Rock Star

the one in England was deemed the first North American style course in the U.K.

By the spring of 1990, Heron was looking for a new challenge as he prepared to graduate from turf school. He heard that Ken Wright was in the process of growing in two golf courses in Caledon so he decided this would be a good place to further his experience.

By the time most turf professionals are just learning to cut greens, Heron had already spent nearly two decades on golf course properties with some of the most notable superintendents of the era. For this

reason, Heron felt like he was ready to tackle two of the biggest challenges of his career, Penn State University and an internship at the famed Pebble Beach Golf Links.

Heron says the experience of working at one of the most recognized golf courses in the world was 'awesome'. "I lived on 17-Mile Drive in the Equestrian Centre and I could ride my bike into work every day." As luck would have it, he was there during 1992, one of the years the club hosted the US Open. Heron must have left a good impression on the superintendent, Brad Hines, because he was given a fair bit of responsibility for an intern. Pebble Beach is known for not having the best practice facilities, so it was up to Heron to stage a temporary solution. "I was in charge of turning the eight acre polo field into the driving range for the Pro's for the week." Heron was given a small crew and they began to strip the 14th fairway at Spyglass Hill nearby and used that sod for the tee deck.

He also managed to leave his mark on the eighteenth hole, in a less temporary way. They were having a hard time keeping turf in one area up by the green due to salt damage from the ocean. Heron's solution was to build a pot bunker, something he was very familiar with from his time at Beacon Hall and the Devils Pulpit and Paintbrush. Hines liked the idea and gave Heron the task of constructing the trap. Not bad for an intern.

Of course this is where Heron would go on to play rounds with both Clint Eastwood and James Woods on separate occasions. Heron says his good fortune is mostly due to the fact that tee times are in high demand at Pebble Beach, so everyone, including celebrities, is subject to playing with strangers if they do not have a foursome.

By the spring of 1993, Heron had finished his second turf degree and was looking for his first full-time golf course maintenance position. He decided to stay on the west coast and work for Dennis Pellrene at Capilano Golf and Country Club in West Vancouver. Heron ended up rooming with the Superintendent at Furry Creek Golf Course, Terry McNeilly, and it was during this time that the movie Happy Gilmore

By the time most turf professionals are just learning to cut greens, Heron had already spent nearly two decades on golf course properties with some of the most notable superintendents of the era.

was shot at the club.

It seems that excitement always follows Heron around, and after a couple of years, it followed him back to Ontario where Heron landed his first assistant superintendent job at Westmount Golf and Country Club working for Hugh Kirkpatrick. Yet another renowned superintendent and another renowned golf club to add to the resume. Heron characterizes this experience as very "hands on", which is likely why he felt he was ready to apply for his first superintendent's position in the Fall of 1998.

The club was being designed by Doug Carrick in the Lake of Bays area of Ontario and they were looking for someone to see them through the consulting stage. The first superintendent of Bigwin Island Golf Club was indeed Scott Heron. "When I first started going up there it was nothing but trees and rocks." And now it is one of the most recognized golf courses in Ontario.

Heron would spend more than a dozen years there as Superintendent and he says the biggest challenge was trying to build a championship golf course on an island. Logistically, this can be a nightmare because everything has to be brought over by boat. Agronomically speaking, growing in the greens on straight sand was no picnic either. "In the end, it was worth it though because those greens are mint now and they will be mint 20 years from now."

After many years on the island, Heron was ready for a new challenge. So in the spring of 2012 he landed the superintendent's job at The Toronto Hunt. He was eager to apply what he had learned over the years at a new golf club. "When you're at a club for 13 years, you don't realize how much you've learned, until you have a chance to go somewhere new and solve

problems that weren't problems at the old club."

Heron and his crew are now in the process of undertaking major renovations at the club. They are building an entirely new green site on the eighth hole, along with tee renovations on the ninth and a total upgrade of the irrigation system.

When this work is complete, there won't be much that Heron hasn't done in

his 30 plus years in the business. From grow-ins to rebuilds, from Pebble Beach to Bigwin Island, you would be hard pressed to find a more diverse and

remarkable resume in our business. When you spend time with Heron, you realize all his experience has given him a very honest and refreshing perspective on our industry. "You're never going to please everyone, so you just have to do what's best for the golf course and just get it done." I think it's safe to say, Heron has been getting it done for quite some time now. ■

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Golf Course Superintendent:
Steve Gruhl

*Hole #1
Photo credit: Steve Gruhl*

COURSE PROFILE

About the Course

A championship 18 hole and 160 unit cottage resort course, designed to showcase stunning views of Rice Lake on every hole.

Established: 2007

Original Architect: Jack Lally

Type of Club: Resort

Number of Holes: 18

Number of Rounds Annually: 12,000

Practice Facility: Putting and chipping area

Biggest Maintenance Challenge

An abundance of thatch accumulation as well as fairly hydrophobic soils have been a big challenge to manage. The 2013-14 winter also left many areas in need of much attention.

A CLOSER LOOK

What You Need to Know

Predominant Grass Type:

Fairways and Tees: Dwarf bluegrass. Greens: L93 bentgrass.

Predominant Soil Type: Sand and clay with some buried rock.

Type of Greens: USGA

Course Length: 6,700 yards

Size of Property: 140 acres

Size of Greens: 3.1 acres

Size of Tees: 1.6 acres

Size of Fairways: 26 acres



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Growing Pains:

Common Mishandlings of Trees

Story and photos by Oliver K. Reichl

Trees are an integral component of many golf courses. Their benefits are numerous and include protection screening, wildlife habitat, wind and noise barriers, beauty and strategy to the landscape, as well as erosion control. Though the presence of particular trees can sometimes conflict with course infrastructure or the goals that have been set for turf establishment, the benefits of trees can outweigh the cons in some areas.

Fortunately I live in Southern Ontario where a multitude of both coniferous and deciduous tree species grace the landscape. But that happenstance brings its own tree-related frustrations because, as an urban forester and consulting arborist, I see mishandlings of trees every day. I would like to share some of the most relevant of these mishandlings with you, and hope that an awareness of these common misguided arboricultural practices will reduce the frequency of their occurrence.



Topping

Long recognized as a poor horticultural practice, topping still occurs with regularity. Topping a tree is radical height reduction, where all branches/limbs are cut as though they were fruit trees. The result is a tree with many unsightly and unhealthy stubs and a crown that is seriously out of proportion with its root system. In an effort to re-establish some balance, the tree sends out many new shoots. These fast-growing shoots are weak-wooded and, in time, become more prone to breaking and crowding,

Topped trees, like these silver maples, pictured left, are a recipe for future problems.

ultimately creating an unhealthy and even hazardous tree. The reductions in height gained by topping are typically lost within 5-7 years, and correcting that usually means re-topping or a lot of time on an arborist's part judiciously pruning out lots of long thin stems. Basically, non-ethical arborists love topping, since it is both paying work and virtually guarantees repeat business. Of course, sometimes it's the property owner who wants their tree pruned that way, and that would be an example where the customer is not always right. A knowledgeable, professional arborist will know the best pruning procedures that can achieve height reduction with less of a negative impact on the tree. Often, it's an attempt at meeting height-reduction objectives while respecting a given specimen's natural form and branching habit.

Grade Changes

We know surprisingly little about the root systems of trees. Roots don't usually get any attention until they're interfering with a construction project, a drainage or septic system, an underground garage, or a foundation wall. There are some things, mostly from trial and error, that we do know:

- Each species and genus has its unique rooting characteristics, with some being more fibrous than others.
- The tree tap root is largely a myth; some trees have one, most do not.
- Roots can't function effectively without the symbiotic benefits of mycorrhizae.
- The majority of a tree's feeder roots are located within the first 15 cm of soil.
- A root system extends far beyond the outer limits of the crown's spread.
- Roots like to grow horizontally and, to a lesser degree, down (not up).
- Feeder roots are very sensitive to grade changes of even a few centimetres.



- 1) A relatively recent trend, "volcanoes" of piled soil or mulch may look neat and tidy, but are ultimately deleterious to the tree.
- 2) My confidence in the survivability of this Norway maple is low. It has lost almost 50% of its roots, and there is no arborist on site to prune the frayed ends of the remaining exposed roots.
- 3) Collision damage, likely from a lawn mower.

People assume that trees, because they're plants, like lots of soil. Trees planted too deep or too shallow are more prone to developing health and stability issues later on. Adding soil to a maturing root zone is akin to planting the tree too deep in the first place. Water and air must now percolate that much further to reach the roots and energy must now be expended to grow new feeder roots upward, contrary to their natural inclination. Soil piled around the main stem, burying the root collar, will absorb moisture like a sponge and that moisture will sit against the trunk where it increases the risk of rot where the tree can least afford to develop it. The moral of this story: don't change the grade under a tree's canopy because it will stress the tree or cause it to decline. If you have a declining tree and the base does not show any root flare, chances are a grade change has taken place at some point in the not-too-distant past.

Planting Too Dense

We live in a culture where notions of instant gratification are rampant. Who has time to wait for things to grow? We want our properties lush and green now! Landscaping companies and nurseries are more than happy to oblige. After all, you're paying them typically hundreds of dollars per plant. To achieve that insta-lush look, lots of young shrubs and small trees are planted so close together that, within 3-5 years, half of them will need to be removed because they are either physically crowding each other, or beginning to show signs of succumbing to their own version of Darwinism as they compete for moisture, nutrients, and sunlight. A good planting plan takes into account the growth habits and eventual sizes of the plant materials desired. Planting young trees too close to one another may give you instant lushness, but it also guarantees that some of those trees will be either stunted, unbalanced in form, or even dead.

Lawn Care Equipment

Simply put, a tree's bark is like a skin: it is an organic protective barrier that is a vital part of the living whole. Like skin, bark needs to breathe, it can "bleed", it scars, and it heals. Also like skin, a wound that isn't intrinsically life-threatening can still be an entry point for fungal, viral, insectine, or bacterial pathogens. And that is one of the two dangers posed by weed snippers and lawn mowers when they are used in such proximity to a tree that they scrape, tear, cut, or otherwise collide with the bark. The other danger, guaranteed to be fatal, is that repeated contact by lawn care equipment can sever or ruin the entire circumference of bark. The area immediately under the bark is crucial for a tree's circulation and, like a tourniquet left on too long, a full ring of severed bark will essentially girdle the tree and effectively kill it. Plastic barriers at the bases of young trees are certainly helpful, but

older larger trees are just as susceptible to this type of wounding. One of the best ways to prevent girdling and wounding by lawn care equipment is to maintain a layer of mulch around the base of the tree. Mulch, among other things, retards or prevents the growth of competing vegetation, so there's simply nothing in that area of the tree that requires mowing or snipping.

Introduced Species

Given the tenacity with which Agriculture Canada keeps us from importing plant or animal material from abroad, it almost seems strange that introduced species are so prevalent. Now it is true that gypsy moth, zebra mussels, lampreys, raccoon rabies, purple loosestrife, and the emerald ash borer are all non-native to this part of the world, but the same can be said for many of the plant materials we deploy in our landscapes. With plants, however, the introductions are usually not accidental, and trees like Norway maple, Norway spruce, Austrian pine, Scots pine, and weeping willows have become common features in suburbia and elsewhere. There are numerous problems with non-native or "alien" species. Often they have no natural controls in terms of predators or pathogens and quickly overrun and devastate ecosystems. Introduced tree species are often under stress from simply trying to exist in our harsh continental climate, with its sweltering summers and bitterly cold winters. Like any organism under physiological strain, a stressed tree is less able to resist attacks by a host of vermin, including insects, fungi, bacteria, viruses, and parasitic plants, as well as environmental factors like drought, frost, radiant heat, nutrient deficiencies, and pollution. They are more susceptible to infection, and their reduced vigour means recovery is slow or questionable.

Continued on page 16...



Accidents happen, but multiple instances can retard healing or, worse, girdle and kill the tree.

4 & 5) If you're going to wrap something around a trunk or branch, it's important not to forget about it. Collars must be removed within 1-3 years.

6) A typical "tree coffin" and the typical result.

7) This tree will continue to grow into the fence and will become difficult and dangerous to remove.



Like your typical lawn, which is predominantly composed of alien bluegrasses, non-native trees are simply more labour-intensive and costly to maintain, and their survivability is always suspect. This is not to say that our own Carolinian and boreal species are immune to infections and attacks, but they are generally more resistant and able to cope. For these reasons, when I am asked for advice on what species to plant, the first rule is always to invest in native species propagated from locally-sourced seed or cuttings. Your property may not look as exotic, but you will have made a choice that is simply cheaper and more ecologically friendly. You will have reduced the chance of having to pay for costly future life support services like pesticide and fertilizer applications, let alone the cost of prognosis, or removing and replacing the tree when all the technology at our disposal still can't keep it alive.

Tying / Girdling

While the method differs somewhat from lawn care equipment damage, the girdling aspect is basically the same. Anything tied around a branch or the trunk will girdle and kill all parts beyond the point of contact if that wrap is left on too long. When is too long? When you can see bark starting to bulge around either end of that contact point. The most common culprits of this sort of thing include:

- Collars (attached by wiring to T-bars or stakes) put on a newly-planted tree to help stabilize it, but not removed within 2-3 years.
- Unprofessional cabling jobs, where static cable or chain is wrapped around a stem rather than attached to an eye-bolt.
- Forgotten recreational equipment, like tire swings, hammocks, and boats.
- Dog chains, clothes lines, floodlight wires.

Do-it-yourself Pruning

I get called upon frequently to investigate a tree health concern at a customer's property, only to conclude that the likely cause of the problem is a poor cultural practice initiated by the owner or the owner's gardener or landscape contractor. The most common of these is making improper pruning cuts where, rather than a clean cut at the branch bark ridge, there is a stub of some length sticking out of the side of the tree. Sure the offending branch has been removed, but stubs do not heal effectively, and thus become an attractive entry point for rot, insects, or disease. It follows that a proper pruning cut can also be that entry point, but the situation isn't nearly as serious because the bark will re-seal that wound as quickly as possible. Pruning is essentially a form of surgery, not that different from operating on a pet, person, or car: if you don't really know what you're doing, you will likely do more harm than good. Like the doctor, veterinarian, and mechanic, a trained arborist is

a specialist who knows the proper and best way of doing things within their area of expertise. The only caveat about that statement is that, unlike with mechanics, doctors and vets, the arboriculture profession is not regulated, meaning pretty much anyone can call themselves an arborist. For property owners concerned about the proper care of their trees and who choose to engage the services of a tree care company, it's another situation of "buyer beware", but at least they've taken the first positive step and decided to leave the surgery to the surgeons.

Tree Coffins

Tree coffins are a familiar sight at a familiar site: the mall parking lot. But you'll also find them on sidewalks and public parks. On a golf course, your parking lot or clubhouse vicinity may have some of these sorts of plantings. The "tree coffin" refers to those little concrete islands or stone planters where balled-and-burlapped maples, lindens, oaks, and honey-locusts are planted. This type of planting is not the most practical because the compacted nutrient-poor construction fill that often comprises the growth medium in these settings makes it difficult for the tree to thrive, as does the lack of water and radiant heat that reflects from the adjacent pavement. There is money wasted on planting a tree in a coffin and on having to remove the tree later when it dies, not to mention that the patiently cultivated tree itself may have had a long life had it been planted in a less-hostile growing environment.

Fences

This one is pretty straightforward. Simply put, trees and fences don't mix. The tree will grow into the fence because it doesn't know any better, and it will become both difficult and dangerous to remove. Ultimately, both the tree and fence will be ruined. So don't plant trees near fences, and don't plant fences near trees. Check your fence lines annually and snip out wild-sown saplings as soon as possible.

Keeping trees healthy is often simply a matter of common sense. Don't worsen existing stresses, and try not to create new ones. Minimize or eliminate injurious activities. Care for them as you would care for a beloved pet and, like a well-treated dog or cat, they will reward you with many years of faithful longevity.

Oliver K. Reichl is a consulting arborist and forest ecologist. He has a degree in Environmental Studies, as well as diplomas in forestry, parks, and arboriculture. He lives in the Thousands Islands area of eastern Ontario.

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Ontario Golf Clubs Recover

by Robert Thompson

Keith Bartlett thought there was a day in the future that he'd have to deal with the problems plaguing his course's greens. He just didn't know how quickly that day would come.

Bartlett, Superintendent at St. George's Golf and Country Club in Toronto, recognized his club's problem in the late winter. Core samples of grass from the club's greens didn't come to life when grown indoors, and there was a decidedly nasty odor from the grass. It turns out a combination of factors – a lengthy and unseasonably long cold snap, ice and other circumstances – put undue pressure on the short grass that serves as a putting service for thousands of golfers each year. That grass was dead, leading Bartlett and other superintendents from across Ontario to seek out a way to deal with one of the biggest catastrophes to hit golf clubs in the province in decades.

"It was a real mess," says Bartlett, sitting in a golf cart near the clubhouse at St. George's in Toronto's west end. "But it helped us move forward with something I'm not sure we'd ever have gotten done otherwise."

In the case of St. George's, the prestigious private club elected to make a bold move, rebuilding all 18 holes on its Stanley Thompson-designed course. But it was only one of numerous clubs in Ontario that faced tough decisions as courses came out of the cold to find their *Poa annua* greens – annual bluegrass in colloquial terms – dead and brown. Usually there's some winterkill, but no one in the industry recalls such a widespread issue in the last 50 years.

The problem captured attention from across Ontario's media, with print and television broadcasters putting the spotlight on courses with dead grass. The cold didn't discriminate based on a course's rating or the fees it charged players. If a course had *Poa annua* greens – common at most older facilities – it faced some degree of damage from the winter, often with swaths of dead grass. Newer facilities typically have more resilient bentgrass greens, a more modern grass that isn't nearly as easily damaged by ice and cold and is more environmentally sustainable, which explains why in some areas of the province one course would have extensively damaged putting surfaces,

while a nearby club didn't have any problems.

At its worst, some of the country's most venerable clubs like St. George's or Hamilton Golf and Country Club in Ancaster, Ontario, or London Hunt and Country Club, which hosted this year's CP Women's Open, lost a majority of their putting surfaces.

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Owen Russell, Superintendent at Markland Wood, a private club in Toronto, was one of the first to recognize his club's issue.

"The toughest thing was to admit they were dead," he says. "You sort of had to come clean, recognize the situation and move ahead with a plan."

In his situation, 14 of 19 greens (the club has an extra hole) were damaged beyond repair. With the Toronto Star Amateur on the schedule, the club had to react quickly. He was able to find bentgrass sod that was left over from another golf course project and put it down on his greens on April 25. Unlike some other clubs, Markland Wood had the proper soil to support bentgrass. Other clubs weren't as lucky and had to spend millions stripping the soil from their greens and entirely rebuilding them.

The new greens grew in rapidly and club members were anxious to get out and play. But Russell held them off until he knew the greens could withstand traffic. He opened them on June 6. The club used the change to bentgrass to sell new memberships based on the fact it shouldn't lose playing days to dead grass in the future, Russell says.

"We turned what could have been a real mess into a

positive for the club," he says.

However, dead grass on golf greens wasn't limited to private clubs. Ontario's nasty winter wasn't discerning when it came to killing Poa. Public golf courses from Mississauga's famed Lakeview Golf Club to Victoria Park East in Guelph had similar issues without the ability to prop up their finances with annual dues from members.

David DeCorso's course, Victoria Park East in Guelph, opened with three complete temporary putting surfaces and nine greens with significant issues. Due to a colder than usual spring, it took until July for the greens to start to return, though DeCorso says they never fully recovered. And the lackluster conditions meant the club couldn't charge golfers full fare for much of the year, hitting

the club's bottom line as well.

"A lot of golfers didn't start playing until June anyway because the spring was lousy," DeCorso says. "And when the greens did come back they were fine, but the worst spots are weak and there are certainly some concerns going into the spring."

That's Rhod Trainor's concern as well. The longtime Superintendent at Hamilton Golf and Country Club, Trainor's club didn't open any of its greens until July.

"The toughest thing was to admit they were dead. You sort of had to come clean, recognize the situation and move ahead with a plan."

— Owen Russell, Superintendent, Markland Woods



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Hamilton, which has 27 holes covered with Poa, remained shut until July as Trainor attempted to bring the greens back to life through a process of aerating and slit-seeding with bentgrass.

Trainor wasn't alone. Most Ontario superintendents turned to overseeding with bentgrass to repair the damaged greens. The bentgrass rapidly filled in the dead areas, but didn't do well in areas where sunlight and airflow is limited by trees. That means most Ontario superintendents are promoting a plan of judicious tree removal, something that's been very misunderstood despite an educational push by many clubs and the United States Golf Association, one of the sport's governing bodies.

Trainor, who plans to remove hundreds of trees around the club's greens to create a better growing environment, says it is something he should have done years ago.

"I'm part of the problem because I didn't tackle the issue a long time ago," he says.

Though he recognizes tree removal is a sore spot for many people, Trainor says trees have a place on courses – it is just away from areas where they shade greens.

Trainor says golfers who, at one time, couldn't understand why greens wouldn't grow under the canopy of trees, now have a much better sense of the issues facing courses.

"I think the education of members, by people like the [United States Golf Association] has really broadened," he says. "And I think people have seen the success courses have had following tree removal."

Bartlett's overhaul took 58 days. In that time the club rebuilt and seeded all of the new greens. He credits the club's support for the project to the educational tours he did of the course starting in 2013. During those tours he tried to explain to members the struggles the grass had because of the trees, and the need to move forward with bentgrass. He also articulated the fact that bentgrass needed a sandy, well-drained base, which meant the greens would have to be completely rebuilt.

"The success of the project was based on the fact I'd been educating the members for some time," he says.

For those who see the overhaul as an unnecessary extravagance, Bartlett says there are huge environmental and financial benefits to using the new grass. Bentgrass takes less water – a key issue facing all clubs – is more disease resistant and requires less fertilizer and pesticides than Poa, he adds.

"Even our operating budget will come down slightly," he says. "And the experience will be better for every member."

What about the naysayers who claim Poa will soon take over the club's new greens? Bartlett scoffs, saying the club has created an appropriate growing environment for bentgrass to flourish.

"I'll be long gone and retired before anyone has to deal with this again," Bartlett, 48, says. "We've set the club up to be more sustainable. I think in time almost every club will follow."

A bestselling author of five books, and golf columnist for Global News and Global Golf Post, Robert Thompson has chased a little white ball all over the world. He was commissioned to write this feature for the Ontario Golf Superintendents Association. For more information contact Phil Scully, President of the OGSA, at pscully@granitegolfclub.ca.

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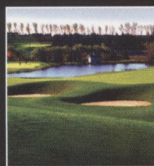
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Industry Insights on Sustainability

Sustainability of the game of golf is a complex subject and the most important aspect of sustainability is creating a good golfing experience with fewer inputs of pesticides, fertilizers and water. Sustainability has many definitions, but one definition is that we need to act in such a way that it would not prevent future generations from deciding to act similarly. This definition is loaded with many consequences and that is why sometimes it is easiest to focus on the three pillars of sustainability: social, economic and environmental. Often it is necessary to refer to these aspects when discussing sustainability. When we speak about the sustainability of a business, the two most immediate items that come to mind are economic and social sustainability and these tend to be the focus of discussion. Environmental sustainability is harder to measure and often the consequences of our actions are not immediate. Therefore, acting in an environmentally sustainable way is more difficult.

Recently a panel forum was hosted in conjunction with the Golf Industry EXPO and the PGA of Ontario. The day featured discussion on the sustainability of the golf industry by a panel consisting of myself and many other members of the industry including professionals, club managers, superintendents, educators and golfers.

The day consisted of lively discussion and varying opinions and much of it focused on the limitations on growing the game of golf. In addition, lively discussion was had regarding the standards of the golf course and the cost of maintenance of those standards. While the focus was on operational costs of maintenance and the need to better communicate why maintenance budgets are what they are, long-term environmental costs were acknowledged. The issue with discussing environmental sustainability is that until a financial cost is associated with an action, either through a fine or increased regulation, it is difficult to quantify the need for environmental sustainability. Often environmental sustainability is only viewed as how it can save the operation money, through fewer inputs. One of the interesting subjects discussed was how environmental sustainability can mitigate risks and therefore insurance costs. In addition, it was noted that the golf industry is missing a market by not directing products at the customer who is environmentally aware and would choose a more sustainable option. Another interesting point that was made was while the industry needs more entry level facilities to grow the game, the cost of land and servicing the debt for the land acquisition makes this very difficult near urban centers.

Many programs that grow the game of golf were discussed. In addition, the desire to make the game more family friendly as well as more friendly to recent immigrants and people new to the

game was a topic of discussion. One topic that was brought up repeatedly and had varying viewpoints was the status of the game and the number of rounds played. It brought into question what the goals of the industry are and what group should be stationed with setting the goals and trying to achieve those goals as an industry. The independent operator and standalone club was

challenged as a model that can produce an integrated plan with measurable goals surrounding the growth for the industry adding to the economic and social sustainability of the industry.

One thing that the golf industry can improve on is how it and golf courses serve the urban landscape to make our cities more sustainable. Golf courses add to the robustness of the urban ecosystem by providing areas of diversity. They act as a place for outlets during floods and help with storm water management. Often they take waste products from food production and use them as fertilizers. It was also discussed how a properly designed golf course can provide a number of services to the urban community, even going as far as helping to act as a final filter for our waste water treatment plants. This helps with the energy costs of treatment and protects our surface water from pollution. Golf courses not only need to get better at adding to the sustainability of our cities, but they also need to get better at accomplishing this without putting added strain on taxpayers.

Sustainability is a complex issue facing our society today and while we tend to look at most businesses with respect to economic and social sustainability, the environmental sustainability of golf courses is also very

important. It is also imperative that we realize that urban green spaces such as golf courses provide environmental services to our cities in a very cost effective manner. Golf has a public perception problem when it comes to how they fit into our urban ecosystems and it will take a joint effort of the entire industry to overcome the negative perception of golf. The golf course superintendent is in a unique situation. With their knowledge of golf course maintenance, as well as their agronomic and environmental knowledge, they can help overcome this challenge to the sustainability of golf. ■

Panelists

ASHLEY CHINNER, VP
Signature Insurance

ROB ROXBOROUGH, COO
Hamilton Golf and Country Club

GREG SEEMAN, General Manager /
Managing Partner, Wooden Sticks Golf Club

JASON HONEYBALL, Environmental
Manager, Oslerbrook Golf Club

BRENT MILLER, Executive Director,
Golf Operations & Member Services

GLENN PHILIPS, Regional Director of
Hospitality, The Country Club

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*Eric M. Lyons Ph.D.,
Associate Professor of Turfgrass Science,
University of Guelph
Guelph, Ontario
elyons@uoguelph.ca*

Lessons Learned

An important yet sometimes overlooked aspect of professional development is taking the time to reflect on and learn from past experiences. Unfortunately, the speed at which we live our lives nowadays can make this a challenging endeavor. Nonetheless, I believe it to be a worthwhile exercise to perform. What is the point of moving forward if we don't take the time to digest what one has experienced and hopefully learned from? As I now self-reflect four years into my role as a sales representative, I want to share some of the lessons I have learned, either through personal experience or from you, the superintendent, the assistant superintendent or industry colleague:

It's All About the Greens

I realize that this may seem like a statement from "Captain Obvious", but on more than one occasion I have had clients admit that trying to save the club money when it comes to maintaining their greens was a mistake. I realize these are tougher economic times, but cost savings are more easily achieved on tees, fairways and roughs. It's not entirely fair that a superintendent's worth is usually judged solely on an area of their golf course that comprises less than 10% of all maintained turf. It's an unfortunate reality, but sometimes it's just wiser to spend the money.

Don't Doubt Yourself

Not too long ago, I asked a superintendent at a grow-in golf course, about the key lessons he had learned, growing in the course. His answer was simple, yet to me, profound, "don't doubt yourself." I'm sure we all have moments when doubt creeps into our minds, as it did for me when I took a job in sales over four years ago. It's important to realize that your ability is what has carried you thus far in your career and if you need help or have a question, do not perceive reaching out to others as a sign of weakness, but as a sign of strength.

It's All About Perspective

It can be so easy to always approach situations or react to situations in the same manner. Try to take a step back from time to time and get a different perspective on things and don't be afraid to get a colleagues perspective as it might help uncover a different point of view. As an example, and speaking as a previous assistant

**Learn from yesterday,
live for today,
hope for tomorrow
~ Albert Einstein**

superintendent, I can understand the frustration regarding the current lack of available superintendent jobs for aspiring assistants. However, looking at it from a different perspective, if you are an assistant superintendent at a progressive club, are fairly well compensated and given opportunities to learn, maybe there is no reason to be in a rush to take the next step.

Learn What's Important to Your Manager

A client recently shared his past struggles with a previous owner who was giving him a hard time at work. It took a couple years of evaluating his operation, but he discovered what was important to his owner and from that point on, his job got a lot easier and his owner stopped micromanaging. Something as easy as hiring older and more mature staff over young, inexperienced staff is all it took. The faster we can all discover what makes those who we report to happy, the easier our jobs get.

Learn to Manage Change

From a universal perspective, change is the only constant. It is manifesting everyday whether we like it or not, and change is most certainly abound in our industry. Change can be difficult, or in some cases, it can be welcome. The key is to embrace it and use it to your advantage. Whether in the workplace or in some other aspect of your life, change can lead to new, unforeseen opportunities. ■



*Paul Grotier
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Every End Brings a New Beginning

This time of year always brings an old adage to mind, "an end is just a new beginning". In the world of horticulture, these words are very true. When fall comes it gives us an opportunity to re-evaluate everything we have done over the previous six months. This is the time of year when we celebrate our successes and lick our wounds caused by failures.

As I prepare to pull annuals, cut down perennials and prepare the beds to go into winter, my mind is already on next season. I look at what was a great success and why? What wasn't and why? Membership feedback is analyzed with greater depth at this time of year. Were the comments about the property generally good, great, amazing or bad? Also, were there specific comments made about specific areas? What I just mentioned should be the first steps taken when prioritizing your new beginning for next season.

The fall is a great time to do some of the projects you ran out of time for in the spring. Depending on your zone and how quickly winter comes for your area, early fall is always better to allow newly transplanted plant material time to establish root growth. Throughout the season you would have noticed underperforming perennials and grasses or you may have



Geraniums can be stored indoors overwinter and they will go into a semi-dormant state.

noticed overgrown and out of control perennials in your beds. Some perennials develop what I call the 'halo' effect when they reach a certain age. Examples of plants that develop this are some Shasta daisy species, yarrow and some bee balm species. The halo effect is when the center of the plant stops producing growth at ground level. The plants themselves are for the most part healthy, but this is a sign that they need to be split, lifted and replanted. The fall is a great time to perform this practice and when doing so take the opportunity to amend the soil with compost when replanting. Ornamental grasses develop this over time as well. With Karl Foerster in particular, when it gets old the center dies back and the entire plant itself stops performing well and becomes sparse. Splitting, lifting, dividing and replanting helps remove dead material and helps rejuvenate the root system of the plant and forces new root growth.

Perennials and shrubs are dying back and looking drab in the later portion of fall so fertilizing may be the last thing on your mind. What you don't see is what's happening in the soil. Perennials and shrubs are putting their energy into root development as they prepare for winter dormancy. Fertilizing with high phosphorous and little to no nitrogen in October will give your plant material a solid, deeper root mass to help survive the stresses

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of winter and give them a boost in the spring for that new beginning.

Tender bulbs such as Dahlia's, Canna lily, and Tuberous begonia all need to be prepared for winter storage at the end of the season. These species can handle a pretty hard frost. The vegetative growth may get destroyed by frost, but the bulbs themselves below ground can tolerate it. Leaving them in too late may put them at risk of freezing, which can cause the bulbs or tubers to split. When storing bulbs, be sure to discard any that may be damaged from garden removal or any that are rotted. Storing damaged or rotted bulbs may cause the spread of rot to others while in storage. Clean the bulbs by washing all excess soil off. Be sure to handle the bulbs with care during this process to avoid breaking the skin. Once washed, place them somewhere indoors to allow them to dry. Store in cardboard boxes with the bulbs covered in a DRY soilless mix. Any moisture inside the boxes during winter storage will cause rotting or will promote vegetative growth. Be sure to store in a cool, dry place for the winter. Tender bulbs multiply pretty rapidly, which make them a great choice for the gardener on a budget. Extra bulbs can be traded for other plant material with local garden centers or any other garden enthusiast or local horticulture society or group.

Tulip bulbs are planted in the fall and can be pretty exciting as there are some amazing cultivars ranging in colour, height and flowering times that make the design process very interesting. With flowering in the early spring, a solid tulip display is a great way to begin a new season.

Another task at the end of the growing season that leads to a new beginning is the collection of seeds from your favourite annuals and perennials. Similar to storing bulbs, you want to dry the seeds and any inert material that comes along with them and store them in a location where they remain dry.

I learned a few years ago that geraniums can be stored indoors overwinter and they will go into a semi-dormant state. Remove geraniums in the fall before the risk of frost damage. Pull the plants and shake all of the soil from the roots, then find a cool dry place and hang them upside down. Eventually the leaves will go brown and the plants will look like they are dead. Mist the roots with water occasionally by use of a spray bottle. If possible, store them where they can get some form of light, whether its natural or artificial, it doesn't have to be direct or a lot. Eventually you'll notice a little bit of new growth starting to form. When spring comes, replant in a pot, give them as much light and proper growing conditions as possible. If you have the capacity, start taking cuttings and propagate your own plants from your overwintered geraniums. This can be quite cost effective and rewarding on a personal level.

Every end is just a new beginning. A saying I hold close to heart. As winter approaches and my work physically with the gardens comes to an end, I look forward to a new beginning of professional development and education by attending courses and seminars hosted by Landscape Ontario. This is something I recommend to all who work in the horticulture, landscape design and property management industry. ■



Chris Cumming CLP, Horticulturist
Muskoka Lakes Golf and Country Club
Port Carling, Ontario
Email: chriscumming@live.ca
Tel: 705-765-3165
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That Coveted Sanity

My week to week schedule these days doesn't offer a whole lot of free time. As I was driving back to Guelph from Muskoka late this evening, I couldn't help but think about all I had on my plate heading into the upcoming weeks. We all know what time of year it is on our golf courses and the real work has just begun. I know I'm no special case here, but it has become a bit overwhelming when all of these midterms and assignments are piling up and I have filled up the empty space on my plate with working back home on weekends. It's easy to have these things pile up over a short period of time and unfortunately our personal lives end up suffering because of them. Taking some time to yourself is critical if you want to maintain your sanity during the more hectic times in life and there are many ways to ensure this happens.

For those who are already well rooted in the industry, this can sometimes be quite difficult. We don't often have very long golfing seasons, but the truth is that our working season can be very long and taxing on us. I think for those of us in Canada, learning to love winter is crucial since this is the only time we really get any significant time off. It's easy enough to flee to the warm confines of the equator, which always sits well with most of us, but finding a way to make the most of the little time we have off during those cold winters will certainly aid in winding down after that long season.

For university students such as myself, the options are endless. Sports, turf club, and even simply getting out for some beverages

with your classmates are all easy ways to let your brain relax for a short while. The issue I've always had is convincing myself that I have time for these things, but the fact is that it's starting to catch up with me now, and every so often it would be nice to kick back. With events such as the OGSA Conference and Trade Show in Niagara Falls and the GCSAA Golf Industry Show in San Antonio, I'm hoping that I can slow things down maybe just a little bit and enjoy getting out of the area for a while to meet some future colleagues in a familiar setting. Everyone has their own way of relaxing, and I believe this is just perfect for me. If anyone else in the Guelph area shares my opinion, don't forget to check out our first year diploma students annual turf symposium later this fall at Cutten Fields.

Contributing to *Green is Beautiful* over the past year has been a great experience. Thanks again to the entire staff at the OGSA for giving me this opportunity. I'll see everyone in Niagara Falls! ■



Chris Copeman, 2nd Assistant Superintendent, ADTM Student at UofG Deerhurst Resort, Huntsville, Ontario
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Twenty Years Ago Today

The 1994 board of directors of the OGSA were **Bruce Burger** (president), Lakeview GC, **John Taylor** (vice president), Twenty Valley G&CC, **David Gourlay** (past president), Summerlea G&CC, **Simon George** (secretary), Oakville GC, **Alex La Belle** (treasurer), Merry-Hill GC, **Doug Suter** (editor), Credit Valley G&CC, **Rick Serrao**, Glendale G&CC, **Ken Nelson**, Sutton Creek GC, **Ian Bowen**, Oshawa G&CC, **Paul Dodson**, Aurora Highlands GC, **Jerry Richard**, Craigowan G&CC and **Mark Schneider**, Owen Sound G&CC.

ON THE MOVE: **Alex La Belle** moved from the Carleton G&YC to Merry-Hill GC near Kitchener. **Warren Vout** left Cedar Brae G&CC and went to Brampton GC where **Blake McMaster** had become general manager after years of being the superintendent. **Steve Hallard** took over at Cedar Brae G&CC. **Ken Graham** was the new superintendent at Huntington G&CC and **Alex McLeod** went from Hockley Valley Resort to Spring Lakes GC. **Jim Molenhuis** left Lionhead G&CC to work at the new Club Link course, The Lake Joseph Club. **Jimmy Sera** left Trafalgar G&CC and took on the same position at Carlisle G&CC.

Dave Schmelefske left Merry-Hill GC and joined Ontario Seed Company and **Everett Nieuwkoop** joined McCracken Golf Supplies. Turf Care Products announced **Rob Davis** and **Butch Middleton** as new sales representatives. Yamaha announced the appointment of Ontario Turf Equipment Company as a distributor of Yamaha golf carts.

Dr. Jack Eggens retired from the University of Guelph and **Sam DiPinto** retired from Beverley G&CC.

EVENTS: **Charles Terry**, Castlemore G&CC, received his GCSAA Certification and **Paul Dermott**, Oakdale G&CC, announced his intention of running as a director in the upcoming elections of the GCSAA.

TOURNAMENTS: The OGSA Annual Border Cities Golf Day was held in April at Pointe West GC hosted by **Lamont Anderson**. The Canadian team of **David Schmelefske**, **Kelly Barnett**, **Dan**

Legross and **Rob Davis** won the CAN-AM Challenge Cup.

The Spring Field Day was held at the Cutten Club on May 30th hosted by **Richard Creed**. **Thom Charters** and **Bruce Burger** were tied for low gross with a 73 and **John Taylor** was low net. **Pam Charbonneau** gave a tour of the Guelph Turfgrass Institute facilities.

The Superintendent Pro Tournament was held at Victoria Park GC on Sept 6th hosted by **David Decorso**. The Scotch Ball format was used with the winning team of **Jim Burlington** and **Jonathan Gee** from Bay of Quinte G&CC taking first place and the team of **Dan Lavis** and **John Davis** from Ingersoll GC taking second place. All proceeds were donated to the Canadian Diabetics Society, in memory of **Bill Bowen**.

The annual President/Greens Chairman/Superintendent Day was held at the Brantford G&CC hosted by **Rick Piccolo**. The winners were from Park Country Club of Buffalo, **Scot Dodson**, the team from London Highlands, **Graham Shouldice**, were second and and the third team winners were from Markland Wood GC, **Rob Ackerman**.

The OTRF Golf Tournament was held at Cherry Downs G&CC, hosted by **David Cherry**. There were 82 golfers who participated with **Ernie Hauser** winning low gross with a 69 and **John Cherry** coming in second with a 71. **Thom Charters** was low net with a 69 and **Bob Heron** second low net with a 71. **Andrew Keffer** and **Doug Cherry** were the best ball team winners.

IN MEMORY: **Bill Bowen**, Superintendent at Dalewood GC, passed away at the age of 61. ■



*Barry Endicott
Retired Golf Course Superintendent
Brampton, Ontario
Tel: 905-846-1440
Email: barry.endicott@gmail.com*

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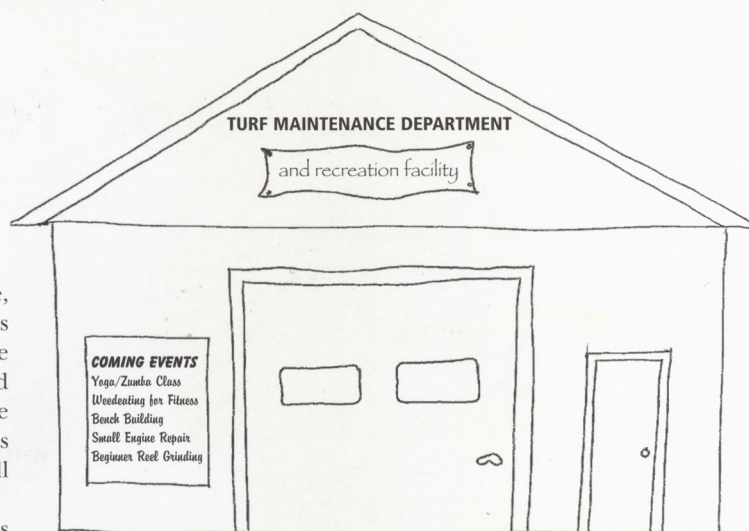
by Doug Breen, Superintendent
GolfNorth Properties

I've been trying to find new revenue streams for the golf course, and it occurred to me the other day, that there are long periods of time where there's really nothing going on in the maintenance shop. This is particularly true in the winter, evenings, and overnight. Generally, the Turf Department is seen as a place where money is only spent, so I've been working on some ideas to turn it into an income centre. It's what industry experts call non-golf revenue.

My first thought was to put the equipment outside under tarps all winter, turn off the heat, flood the shop floor, and have my own privately run hockey rink. With the increasing popularity of ball hockey, we could likely turn the arena into a year 'round enterprise. Admittedly, the mowing equipment would depreciate at a shocking rate, due to it being outside twelve months of the year, but think of the revenue! We build wedding sites that get used a lot less often than that hockey rink would.

And speaking of weddings, why not use the shop for a unique wedding/reception venue? Sure, the smell of diesel fuel and hydraulic fluid is offensive to some – perhaps even a fire hazard – but what groom wouldn't want to celebrate his nuptials in the midst of tools, mowers, pesticides and grinders? I'm willing to accept that some brides will be less than thrilled with the idea; and that the grass juices and year-old grease could potentially do a number on a wedding dress – but as long as we weren't grinding reels during the actual ceremony, I think it's saleable. Everybody wants to get married on a golf course, but how many can say that they got married on the part of the golf course that really matters? At this point, no one.

My brother and his wife, were recently telling me about their experience at a bed and breakfast. Let me begin by saying that I will never understand the attraction of going to a stranger's house, sharing a bathroom with them and/or other guests, and paying them cash to have uncomfortable conversations with you – but I'm told that they're very popular with a large portion of the population, and by that I mean women. According to my brother, the worst part of the B&B experience, is that everything is covered



with potpourri and needle point. That and you're afraid to touch anything. And the stranger bathroom sharing. Actually, he hated everything about it, but how much more fun would it be to sleep in the shop, where there's not a stitch of needlepoint or a scented candle to be found? You could drift off to sleep to the sound of raccoons fighting on the tin roof, or field mice gnawing through a plastic seed bag – only to be gently awakened from a fitful rest by the soft refrain of a half dozen mower engines starting up, and the smooth aroma of exhaust. Breakfast might be a little sparse, but there's a microwave on the counter, and some hot pockets in the fridge.

It's very trendy to make restaurants and night spots look like industrial buildings. We could eliminate several steps, and the expense of hiring an interior decorator, by using our actual industrial building as a bar/restaurant. There's a place in Florida, where they spent a lot of money to make the restaurant patrons feel like they're in the maintenance shop from Caddyshack. With no expense at all, we could make patrons feel like they're in an actual maintenance shop – because they will be. Imagine a romantic dinner with a sprinkling of grinding dust.

But my favorite idea is, The Superintendent Fantasy Camp. How many times has someone said to you, that working on a golf course, is their dream job? Well, for a couple grand a week, we could give them the chance to live out their fantasy, by having an authentic golf course labourer experience. Just like those baseball fantasy camps, except that they'd be doing actual labour, as opposed to playing baseball. I actually think that this is the best idea I've ever had. If I could get a "camper" to pay \$2000 per week, then I could use that money to pay four people slightly more than minimum wage to work with him. He'd be living the dream, and so would I.

The opportunities are endless. We have an asset at our disposal, and we simply need to find a way to generate revenue with it. And whether that's golf cart racing, greens mower demolition derby, market gardening, or raising pigeons, I'm open to anything that helps the bottom line. ■

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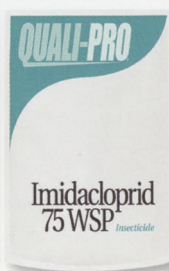


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