

Green is Beautiful

Winter 2014

The Official Publication of Ontario Golf Superintendents' Association



Years and Counting

OGSA Celebrates a Milestone

ALSO INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

Are Root Diseases on the Rise in Ontario?
The Roller Coaster Ride of Winter 2014
Gardens with Punch on a Budget Crunch



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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



by Phil Scully
OGSA President

I can't begin to describe what a privilege it is to be President of the OGS during our 90th year. To follow in the footsteps of past leaders and distinguished gentlemen who have done so much to elevate our profession is truly a humbling honour. Before I go any further, I would like to thank Past President Doug Breen who stepped off the Board in January at the AGM. Doug has passionately devoted countless hours of his time during his 12 years on the Board to ensure the association remains one of the largest and most successful superintendent-run organizations in North America. The OGS grows stronger each year and the current Board of Directors is committed to not only maintaining our position

in the golf industry, but clearly focused on enhancing and protecting our interests both at a grassroots and a provincial level.

The 2014 OGCM Conference and Trade Show in Toronto at the Westin Harbour Castle was a huge success. The conference committee and Sally Ross flawlessly executed one of the best shows in recent memory. A great line up of speakers ensured that delegates were able to obtain all necessary IPM CECs and a well thought out trade show floor provided a fantastic venue for networking. I would like to take this opportunity to thank all of our sponsors for their support, both of our show and of our association year after year.

As I write this letter, most of Ontario is buried under a heavy blanket of snow and an inconceivable layer of ice. It has been a winter like no other and we still have a long way to go before spring. Try and enjoy some well-deserved time with family and friends and if you haven't already, join the conversation on Twitter by following us @OntarioGSA. I wish everyone a healthy, happy and prosperous 2014 and, last, but definitely not least, happy anniversary OGS! ■



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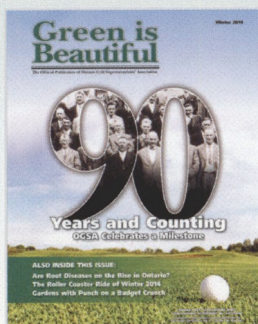
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Green is Beautiful

The Official Publication of Ontario Golf Superintendents' Association

ON THE COVER

OGSA 90th Anniversary
'90' Cropped Photo credit:
Courtesy OGSA

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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 2014

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EDITORIAL MESSAGE



by Justin Parsons,
Engage Agro Corp.

Super Bowl winning coach of the Pittsburgh Steelers Mike Tomlin once said, "It's not what you're capable of, it's about what you're willing to do". He is of course referring to what it takes to achieve

success, and as we are all poised to tackle another golf season, I find this remark of interest. I suppose it's natural to reflect this time of year and wonder how we can make improvements. After all, if we aren't actively trying to get better, then what is the point?

I have a lot of admiration for those who never stop trying to improve themselves and the team that they are a part of. It may seem like the natural thing to do, but planning on doing something and actually executing are two totally different things. It's easy to start out with the right intentions and then get derailed by details and unforeseen issues. The individuals who can find a way to steer through the obstacles and stay the course are the ones who inevitably rise to the top.

The truth is anyone can be 'good' at something. I mean, people can roll out of bed, put no preparation in and be naturally good at something. But to be great at what it is you do takes a concerted effort to constantly improve. It takes dedication, commitment, an ongoing honest evaluation and then recalibration.

I have had the pleasure of speaking with many turf managers at the various conferences that were held this winter and most individuals were in the recalibration stage. They were looking for ways to do things more efficiently and take their departments to the next level. Hopefully, the education and networking that took place will yield results on numerous golf course properties in Ontario in 2014.

It is also our hope that this publication, in some small way, lends a hand in that department as well. In this issue, readers should find Pam Charbonneau's "From Roots to Shoots" column on winter injury of particular interest, as well as Reg Langen's recap of the last 90 years of our association. As always, we welcome any input advice or information our readership is willing to share with us. After all, it is our goal at *Green Is Beautiful* to constantly improve as well. ■

MARK YOUR CALENDAR UPCOMING 2014 OGSA Tournament & Events

Can Am Challenge

Indianwood Golf & Country Club
Lake Orion, Michigan, USA
Monday, May 12, 2014

Pro/Super Challenge

Cobble Beach Golf Links
Kemble, Ontario
Tuesday, June 3, 2014

Presidents' Day

Westmount Golf & Country Club
Kitchener, Ontario
Monday, July 28, 2014

Welcome to Our New Members

Michael Ainsworth Class C
Shelter Valley Pines Golf Club

Mike Hammond Class D
Chedoke Golf Course

Soung Jchin Oh Class C
Deerfield Golf Club

Tim Fletcher Class A
Heather Glen Golf Club

Jean-Luc Brousseau Class Supt
Lee Golf Club

Andrew Butler Class F
Weston Golf and Country Club

Drew Robson Class C
Club at North Halton

Michael Allen Class S
Devil's Pulpit Golf Association

Chris Copeman Class S
Deerhurst Highlands Golf Course

Sean McGuire Class F
Wyldeewood Golf and Country Club

Mathew Hamilton Class C
Muskoka Lakes Golf and Country Club

Doug Zweep Class C
Summit Golf and Country Club

Stephen Spencer Class F
Chesley Lake Camp Golf Course

Jason Bindi Class A
Nobleton Lakes Golf Club

Brad Meyers Class C
Nobleton Lakes Golf Club

Ian McDonald Class F
Mill Run Golf and Country Club

Shawn Page Class F
Donalda Club

Michael Giblin Class C
Heron Point Golf Links

Evan Coakwell Class Supt
Tyandaga Municipal Golf Course

Matthew Wood Class F
Jordan Barber Class C

Beacon Hall Golf Club

Sean Coughlin Class S
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Chris Schuurmans Class C
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Ian Hunter Class C
Highland Gate Golf Club

Ontario Golf Course Management Conference and Trade Show

2014 Conference Wrap Up

The Ontario Golf Course Management Conference and Trade Show kicked off on Wednesday, January 22, with the opening breakfast where Conference Chairman Phil Scully welcomed delegates to a very "frigid" city of Toronto. All delegates attending the conference had special ribbons which displayed their years of involvement in the association. After a great breakfast, Phil Scully introduced keynote speaker James Duthie from TSN Sports. Phil also acknowledged the keynote sponsor, NGF Golf.

James engaged the audience with his interesting sports stories, garnered through his career working for TSN.

The first education session kicked off at 10 a.m. with Dave Smith, who kindly presented in lieu of Adam Moeller who was unable to get to Toronto due to severe weather in the eastern United States.

Awards Luncheon

Jim Flett, Ontario Director on the CGSA Board, presented a plaque to OGSA President Rob Gatto to commemorate the OGSA's 90th Anniversary, following which, Rob Gatto presented the awards to all the scholarship winners.

Marc Brooks, from Stonetree Golf and Fitness and Legacy Ridge Golf Course, accepted the Heritage Award on behalf of his son, Wendel, while Dan McAllister (Donalda Club), Reg Langen (Richmond Hill GC) and Jasmine Stienke (The Briars) were there to accept their plaques for the Hugh Kirkpatrick Bursary.

Sean Van Beurden from the University of Guelph was

presented with the Turfgrass Education Award for his outstanding academics and his dedication and commitment to the industry.

Green is Beautiful award winners were as follows:

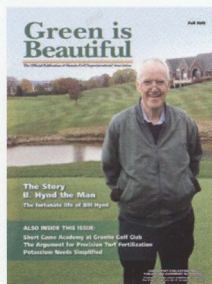
Barry Endicott Article of the Year: Cam Shaw (Burlington G&CC), for his article, "The Story B. Hynd the Man."

Photo of the Year: Mark Prieur (Trafalgar G&CC), for his picture that accompanied the article, "The RBC Canadian Open, Forget Snedeker and Mahan, Where is Luke List?"

One of the luncheon highlights was the presentation of the OGSA's William Sansom Distinguished Service Award, which was presented to Ron Craig of Turf Care. In his acceptance speech, Ron explained how honoured he was by the award and



L-R: 25 Year members, Phil Brown, Michael Dermott, Corrie Almack, Distinguished Service Award Recipient; Ron Craig from Turf Care, David DeCorso, Michael Creed, Gord Wendover, Paula Sheppard, Dave Smith.



The Barry Endicott Article of the Year was awarded to Cam Shaw (Burlington G&CC) for the Fall 2013 cover story "The Story B. Hynd the Man". Photo of the Year, pictured above right, was awarded to Mark Prieur (Trafalgar G&CC).



Scholarship winners from left to right: Jasmine Stienke, Dan McAllister, Sean Van Beurden and Reg Langen.



50 year members, John Arends, left, and Bill Hynd, right with OGSA President Rob Gatto, center.



by being in such great company as the past five recipients. He also thanked Paul Dermott who nominated him.

Conference Chairman Phil Scully then presented the 25 year members with their plaques. Those in attendance were, David De Corso from Victoria Park East GC, Michael Dermott from Oakdale G&CC, Michael Creed, from Wyldewood G&CC and Phil Brown, formerly of Summit GC.



OGSA Staff with Kevin Doyle from the GCSAA, who was wearing his Hockey Canada Shirt to make good on a lost wager.

Associate members in attendance to accept their 25 year plaques were, Corrie Almack from Almack Agronomic Services, Gord Wendover from Wendover Construction Ltd., Paula Sheppard from Allturf, and Dave Smith, from DCS Agronomic Services.

Other members who could not be present, but achieved the 25 year milestone were, Robert Cresswell from Pleasant Valley G&CC, Mark McClure from Crosswinds G&CC, John Pickard from Maple City CC, Robert Burrows from Banff Springs GC and Aart Van Veld.

Two 50 year members also attended, Bill Hynd and John Arends. They were each presented with a gold watch to commemorate their longevity as association members.

The final presentation at the annual awards luncheon was made to Rob Ackermann, who was given a plaqued image of the initial formation meeting of the OGSA which was held in 1924 at Weston Golf & Country Club.

Education Session and Trade Show

An afternoon of education followed with Dr. Michael Agnew from Syngenta and Larry Spain from The Toro Company. The Wednesday education program was sponsored by Syngenta, and both R. Marie Thorne and Scott Knox introduced speakers. The Toro Company was also thanked



OGSA Board Members with GCSAA Representatives

for bringing in Larry Spain and Bill Martel was on hand to introduce Larry. OGSA Secretary/Treasurer, John McLinden performed the formalities of thanking our sponsors for the day's education program.

The OGSA membership meeting took place late in the day with a group of around 35 members chatting informally about anything related to the OGSA. Past President, Doug Breen, encouraged the members to participate in discussion. All members, associates, assistants, technicians as well as superintendents were given letters of invitation in their packages. It is hoped that participation will increase next year, once all members realize that this is their opportunity to not only meet the Board of Directors, but to have input into the association's initiatives, understand more about the association in general, and participate and give opinion in a relaxed and informal atmosphere.

On Thursday, January 23rd, Stephen Keating from the Toro Company presented 360 Leadership, following which, Dave Smith and Dr. Luke Baker presented their session on Product Input along with Dr. Larry Stowell who participated online from San Diego.

The trade show kicked off at 11 a.m. with busy traffic most of the afternoon due to lunch on the trade show floor and the social that began at 4 p.m. The trade show social was sponsored by Direct Solutions.

...continued on page 8





“ Great job on the whole presentation. I like that one price gets you everything you need. ”

Continued from page 7...

The OGSA's 90th Anniversary Dinner and Show took place that evening, with many retired past presidents, honorary and even some 50 year members in attendance. The OGSA would like to thank Platinum Sponsor, Turf Care, for their generosity in supporting the OGSA by covering entertainment, décor and AV costs for the evening. The cocktail reception area was where a lot of reuniting of old friends took place. Special thanks go to GT Golf and Turf and Podolinsky Equipment Ltd., for sponsoring the drink tickets. Food stations were themed after restaurants in the 1920's and provided all the diners with a huge variety of choice. Thanks also go to our food station sponsors, Vanden Bussche Irrigation and G.C. Duke Equipment.

J. Rhett Evans from The GCSAA made a special presentation to the OGSA to commemorate the associations 90th Anniversary and thanked the OGSA for their involvement in the GCSAA.

OGSA Annual General Meeting

The OGSA Annual General Meeting took place on Friday morning with an early 7:30 a.m. start, where the business of the association was taken care of expediently, followed by a fond farewell to Doug Breen, who had spent 12 years on the OGSA Board.

The new board was elected with the addition of a new Director, Tim Muys, Superintendent from Piper's Heath Golf Club.

Immediate Past President is of course, Rob Gatto (Kings Forest/Chedoke), and Directors, Chad Vibert (Mad River GC), Scott White (Donalda Club), Rod Speake (Mill Run GC), Cory Janzen (Westmount G&CC), David Kuypers (Cuttan Fields), and Jason Boyce (Smugglers Glen G&CC) were once again on the slate of nominees and elected for 2014.



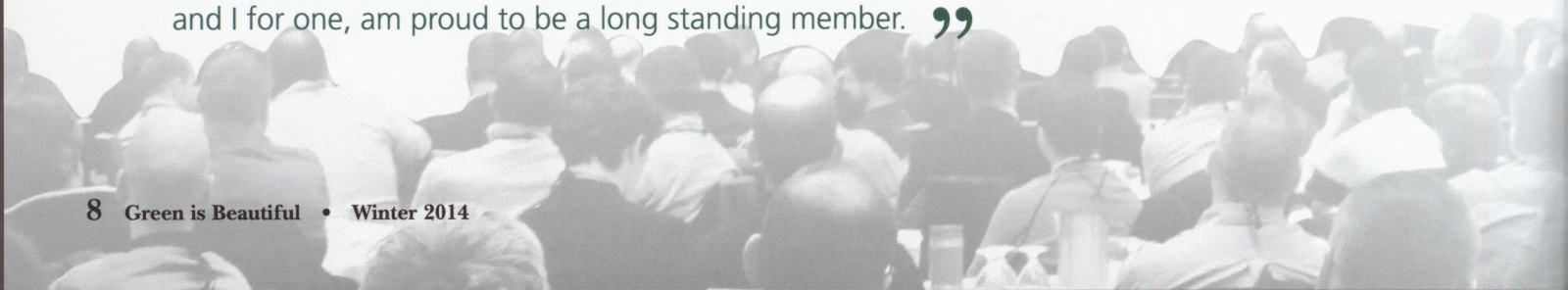
2014 Board of Directors, left to right: (Back Row) Jason Boyce, Chad Vibert, Rob Gatto, Mark Prieur, Tim Muys, Scott White, (Front Row) David Kuypers, Cory Janzen, John McLinden, Phil Scully, Rod Speake.

Congratulations go out to Phil Scully (Granite GC) who was elected President of the OGSA for 2014, with John McLinden (Ladies GC of Toronto) taking over the role of Vice President, and Mark Prieur (Trafalgar G&CC), assuming the role of Secretary/Treasurer.

Following the Annual General Meeting, breakfast was served on the trade show floor and GCSAA President Pat Finlen addressed the delegates, bringing greetings from the GCSAA. More dedicated trade show time followed until 10:30 a.m. when the last education session was held, Frank Rossi, Progressive Annual Bluegrass and Creeping Bentgrass, Population Management. The show wrapped up at noon on Friday, January 24th, allowing delegates and exhibitors to exit the city before the rush hour commute.

All in all, feedback from delegates has been excellent, with a majority looking forward to the easy access, parking and more family oriented atmosphere of Niagara Falls in January 2015. ■

“ You guys do a wonderful job! Keep up the good work and "thank you" for your hard work, dedication and sacrificing your time to increasing the professional image of the golf superintendent. We've all benefited in some way from our affiliation with this organization, and I for one, am proud to be a long standing member. ”





Survey Says...

by Sally Ross, OGSA Executive Manager

Our surveys this year revealed a lot of interesting information and I would like to point out some of the more interesting facts that we have found out as a result of our surveys.

We had 179 respondents to our survey from delegates. Of that group 46 did not attend the show; reasons ranged from lack of funding, access to IPM points elsewhere and not valuing the networking opportunities that were available at the show.

Some Interesting Statistics

- 90% of delegates had registration costs covered by their employers
- 60 – 70% of delegates had accommodation expenses covered by their employers and 30% were even covered for their travel expenses
- Speaker ratings averaged four out of a possible five overall

- The majority of respondents like having food included in their conference registration packages
- The majority of respondents chose Niagara Falls as their preferred conference location with downtown Toronto a close second
- 90% of respondents attend for education and networking or for everything the show has to offer with a small percentage attending for CEC's only
- 86% of associates found value in the trade show, however only 36% support the current format, the balance of the respondents would like to see a change of some kind in the format for the trade show

OGSA Membership Meeting

This meeting was held to allow for more informal discussion and gather input from all sectors of our membership. Disappointingly, not many assistants or associates attended. There were many

reasons for them not to attend, but many associate members didn't realize they were invited (63%), and some members felt they could just get information from others. We hope that we will get a better turnout to this meeting next year from all sectors of our membership in order to acquire different points of view.

Moving Forward

The OGSA will be evaluating the surveys in greater detail and the 2015 conference committee will try to respond to areas of most concern for the majority of our membership.

Education sessions may be a bit shorter, with more soft skills and management type seminars. The hotel pricing is 65% of Toronto at our upcoming venue which is in the preferred location, Niagara Falls.

We hope to see you all there, January 28th – 30th, 2015. ■

“Excellent format (dedicated time), food was wonderful, very well attended and organized. The best trade show I can remember in some time... well done!”

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Communication Vital to Success

by Dan McAllister, Assistant Superintendent
Donalda Club

Assistant superintendents have greater responsibility than ever before. With the demands, pressures and time constraints placed on superintendents' workdays, more work is being delegated to the assistant superintendent. Assistants are ready for these challenges because they are educated, have years of experience and, in many situations, have the greatest knowledge of what is happening on the property. Despite this insight, there are times when the operation does not perform as expected. I believe most of these instances are a result of poor communication.

The flow of information between staff and management is the key to the successful operation of any organization. Great planning and diverse skill sets are wasted when communication is not effective. It is the job of the assistant superintendent to provide their staff with training, performance expectations, task allocation, and supervision. Therefore, it is vitally important that they develop outstanding communication skills to implement these objectives.

One of the most fundamental concepts of communication is to make sure that the person being spoken to has a comprehension of the task at hand. On occasion, an employee leaves a conversation with a supervisor not understanding what has been asked of them. As their supervisor, it is our responsibility to ensure that they have understood the conversation and that they are able to produce what we have

asked. Assistant superintendents who can accomplish this will be able to reduce wasted time and incorrect work.

A communication mistake that assistant superintendents may also make is assuming that employees have knowledge of issues on the golf course or know why things are done a certain way. The supervisor must remember that very few of their employees have the same education and experience that they do. The assistant superintendent must also be careful not to use language and industry terms which the average employee may not be aware of. It is always better to simplify when possible.

When communicating with staff, assistant superintendents should attempt to incorporate methods other than just words to explain what they want staff to accomplish. Supplemental tools such as drawings, maps of the golf course, or photographs can be highly effective in getting messages understood. Although we are busy, there are times when it is necessary to simply go to the work site and give a hands-on explanation of the job we would like accomplished. This can often be the best way to avoid time-consuming and costly mistakes.

Lastly, a vital part of being an effective communicator is to develop strong listening skills. In order to communicate with staff, the assistant superintendent must first learn how to listen to complaints and concerns. This provides both manager and employee the opportunity to discuss their ideas and to feel as though their opinions matter. Regardless of the outcome, the employee should leave the conversation with greater understanding and clarity. ■

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Darren Little

Superintendent, Cedar Brae Golf and Country Club

by Kevin Kobzan
Foreman, Granite Golf Club

Deep rooted can be defined as something firmly established over time. This term can be used to describe the family heritage of Darren Little, Golf Course Superintendent at Cedar Brae Golf and Country Club. Now in his fourth year as superintendent, Little's humble beginnings started on a dairy farm in south Markham, which has been entrenched in his family history for over 150 years. Even though his stature resembles that of a football linebacker, his early sights were set on a career in law enforcement. As it turns out though, agriculture was too ingrained in his family history.

Before golf entered the picture, Little was gaining a strong work ethic and learning the core values of running a farm, such as handling animals and acquiring an aptitude towards operating equipment. With over 150 jersey cattle and 350 acres of crop to take care of, hard work was a must in order to ensure the success of the business. "When you were able to walk there was something to do. My grandfather would always have a chore for me," says Little. Although the farm is no longer operational, it remains in the family and has played a key role in shaping his future. "I consider golf

courses an extension of agriculture. I'm a little ways from milking cows and running crop, but it definitely had a bearing on my career choice."

A history also exists between Little and the property he manages. Cedar Brae, originally called Cedar Brook, changed properties, with the current club being built in 1969, by CE (Robbie) Robinson. Dating back 100 years, a large part of the property was owned by Little's great grandfather. "It's a pretty cool thing. I take ownership of the land as a portion was owned by my family, and knowing my forefathers would be proud that the land is still being worked."

Throughout high school, Little worked on the maintenance crew at Cedar Brae and decided to attend the University of Guelph for Agriculture Business and Turf Management. A few years later, he continued his education, completing turf management short courses at Guelph and Cornell Universities. In addition to his turf background, Little enrolled at the Ivy School of Business for a business development program catering towards the financial aspect of running a golf course.

With over 20 years of industry related experience, Little worked himself up the ladder at Cedar Brae, holding every position offered while gaining valuable knowledge. "I kept my eye on the prize.



Darren Little, Golf Course Superintendent,
Cedar Brae Golf and Country Club

The turf business as a second assistant or assistant can be grueling and there are a lot of hours to put in." Even though he earned his stripes over the years, Little has a lot of praise and respect for those who helped him along the way. He credits Warren Vout, Steve Hallard, Peter Lucas and Mike Ettles for playing integral parts in his success thus far. Little also acknowledges his assistants Dave Feddersen and Mike McGimpsey and mechanic Brad Lang, commenting how fortunate he is to have three people who care about the business as much as he does.

However, as a superintendent, Little accepts and embraces all the responsibilities associated with the job. Managing a golf course during any given season can present an array of obstacles. Besides Mother Nature and adapting to the environment, he believes handling staff each year is the hardest aspect to control. "Dealing with 25 personalities on a day-to-day basis is a challenge. Getting them to come to work and work is a challenge. Recognizing the signs of burnout of your employees and recognizing it before it becomes a problem is important. Whether it's awarding time off or a change of

IN THE HOT SEAT

Q – Favourite tournament
A – The Masters

Q – Favourite architect
A – Pete Dye

Q – Favourite equipment
A – Toro 648

Q – Favourite golf course
A – Augusta National

Q – Ultimate foursome
A – Dad, Brother, Fred Couples

Q – Lowest round and where
A – 78 at Bloomington Downs

Q – Favourite movie
A – *Forrest Gump*

scenery at work, I'll try to find a way (to make them) be happier."

Although technology and our understanding of the needs of a turfgrass plant is improving, Little feels one of the biggest challenges of the job is meeting member expectations despite unfavorable growing conditions. This can become even more problematic if restrictions prevent us from improving those environments. With Cedar Brae's location nestled in the Rouge Valley, acquiring permits can become a difficult and costly transaction. "We know so much more about growing environments and the amount of sunlight healthy turf needs to survive through the aggressive inputs we place on them, but permits are expensive and may not allow you to remove something even if you have a plan in place."

With a long range plan established, Cedar Brae and Little are entering into exciting times. In 2010, membership approved the rebuilding of the clubhouse starting in April, 2014, with completion

set for June, 2015. In 2012, the third hole at Cedar Brae was moved to allow for a land sale to help fund the new clubhouse. The green was taken apart, piece by piece, and the fairway turned from a slight dogleg right to a dogleg left. "This was the first green in the master plan to be rebuilt in the vision of Ian Andrew," says Little. The plan also includes a full bunker renovation over four years and tee rebuilding.

Although managing a golf course requires dedication and resolve, Little takes great pride in what Cedar Brae offers to those hitting the links. "We never take our foot off the gas from day one to the last game of the season. We strive to exceed member expectations. At the end of the day, we are employed by member satisfaction and we win and lose as a team." But with all the hard work involved, an appreciation for the environment and beauty a golf course possesses is what motivates Little. This, coupled with his gratitude towards people in the industry who share similar visions

and goals, is what keeps Little grounded and enjoying what his hard work has allowed him to achieve. "I love being there early mornings before a round is played, taking it in and just remembering why I do it."

In addition to his time spent on the golf course, Little also serves on the Board of Directors of Markham-East York Agricultural Society. There he assists in the operations of the Markham Fair, the largest four day fair in Canada with over 700 volunteers.

Overall, Little credits his work achievements to his healthy home life, praising his wife Natalie and twin sons Archer and Daniel. With all the attention a golf course requires, he credits the smooth transition from work to his home life to his family. "Having a happy household and a happy family is part of success in life and success in your job," says Little. "She [Natalie] understands that because you're the boss doesn't mean you work the least, it means you work the most." ■



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Jordan Hill

Assistant Superintendent:
Andre McNeely

Hole #4

Photo courtesy: Riverstone G&CC

COURSE PROFILE

About the Course

A challenging shot maker's golf course with the winding West Humber River coming into play on every golf hole.

Established: 2009

Original Architect: MBTW – Kevin Holmes

Type of Club: Semi-Private

Number of Holes: 9

Number of Rounds Annually: 15,000

Practice Facility: Short Game

Biggest Maintenance Challenge

Managing the traffic patterns due to the tight course layout along the West Humber River.

A CLOSER LOOK

What You Need to Know

Predominant Grass Type:
Bentgrass Greens, Bluegrass Tees and Fairways

Predominant Soil Type: Clay loam

Type of Greens: 80/20 sand profile

Course Length: 2,300–2,800 yards

Size of Property: 40 acres

Size of Greens: 2 acres

Size of Tees: 1 acres

Size of Fairways: 6 acres

90 Years and Counting

OGSA Celebrates a Milestone

by Reg Langen, Assistant Superintendent,
Richmond Hill Golf Club

This year marks the Ontario Golf Superintendents Association's (OGSA) 90th anniversary. In a time where many things are easily disposable, this achievement deserves to be celebrated. Nine decades after the first meeting was held at Weston Golf Club, with only 15 attendees, the OGSA currently connects over 900 golf course superintendent's, managers and associates, providing them with a line of communication, a voice, and support that is invaluable.

To learn the history of the OGSA, one has to look no further than Gordon Witteveen's book *A Century of Greenkeeping*. Witteveen walks readers through the history of greenkeeping in Ontario and profiles some of the historic events that helped evolve the profession in the province. While Witteveen himself was an extremely influential individual in the Ontario greenkeeping industry, he tells the stories of other men who played critical roles in the development of the OGSA and the profession as a whole.

The story of the OGSA begins with the very first meeting. The Weston Golf Club was the host site and the 15 attendees represented only nine golf clubs. The initial invitation was sent out late in the summer of 1924 by C.L. Knuth, who was the Secretary/Manager at Weston during that time. It was at this meeting that the OGSA story began and the first group of leaders was voted in.

William Sansom is probably the man most well known from this inaugural meeting because of the annual award presented under his name. The OGSA presents the "William Sansom" Distinguished Service Award only upon receipt of a nomination with supporting documentation and approved by the Board. This accolade is given to a professional that has devoted their career in Ontario to the turf industry and is held in an extremely high honour. William Sansom is essentially seen as the forefather

of the OGSA and was the association's very first president.

In 1924, Sansom was the Superintendent, or, at the time, "Greenkeeper" of the Toronto Golf Club. There is a belief that Sansom did some pre-meeting networking because at the first association meeting the group very quickly voted Sansom the first President. The original group name decided on was the Canadian Golf Greenkeepers Association. Upon applying for incorporation, the new group chose the more inexpensive route of incorporating provincially, thus becoming a provincial organization.

The idea behind forming this group was to develop a network of professionals that could share ideas and aid each other in times of crisis. There was a feeling that there was a need to establish prizes for friendly competition, and an agency to aid members in obtaining employment. The original membership entry fee was \$2.00, with annual dues of \$10.00, but it didn't take long for the young group to learn that those fees were a bit too steep. Due to a lack of interest in membership, the entrance fee was removed and annual dues were cut in half.

In 1930 at the Royal York Golf Club (now St. George's Golf and Country Club), the members hosted an equipment show. This event was a strong beginning for the group and was a historic event in Ontario greenkeeping. More than 200 professionals attended the conference from as far as Quebec and even from parts of the United States. This event gave the association the necessary funding it had been lacking and allowed them to continue in their growth.

This event had a large number of exhibitors for its time, but there was one company with one product in particular that was of much interest. Aikenhead Company arrived at the 1930 equipment show with a machine they called, "The Ideal Triplex". This machine was supposedly able to cut up to 40 acres of fairways in a single day. At the time, the



The idea behind forming this group was to develop a network of professionals that could share ideas and aid each other in times of crisis.

idea seemed ridiculous, but this company would eventually sell their design and remove itself from the turf market altogether. Aikenhead Company continued to grow in another industry and now goes by the name, "The Home Depot".

During this era of the association, conferences were often held alongside the American Association (GCSAA) because the membership was small in the Ontario group. It was at the 1932 trade show in New York that Sansom felt unhappy with the attendance of his fellow Ontario members and began urging many of them to begin planning for 1933 in Chicago. Low attendance was primarily due to the ongoing Great Depression, which resulted in many clubs having issues paying wages, as well as little funding for continuing education and networking events. Sansom continued to work diligently and build awareness for the group to help attract new members. Were it not for Sansom's hard work and determination during this time, the association may have never survived.

Another forefather of the Ontario association was Bert Hawkins of Lakeview Golf Club. Hawkins was also in attendance at the inaugural meeting and was voted in as the Ontario association's first secretary and treasurer. In those times, the role of secretary was similar to the position of vice president today. Hawkins was the secretary for the first 10 years of the association and became the second president in 1934. It is said that much of the success of the OGSA can be attributed to Hawkins hard work and dedication over his tenure on the committee. Hawkins would remain the president until the beginning of World War II in 1939. Ten years later, Hawkins was awarded a scroll for his commitment and faithful service to the association. He was employed at Lakeview Golf Club for more than 50 years and his obituary hung in their clubhouse for many years after his passing.

The beginning of World War II brought a several changes to the Ontario Greenkeepers Association. It was at the start of the war that both Sansom and Hawkins stepped down from their roles to make way for John Austin of Humber Valley Golf Club. Austin had served as a secretary for several years prior to his appointment as President, so he was more than qualified to continue the association's growth.

At a gathering of members in 1946, a discussion began regarding a golf event for the members. The event would be governed and organized by the association and prizes would be awarded to three greenkeepers, three assistant greenskeepers, and one to greenkeepers over the age of 50. There were many opinions and options for holding the first event, but eventually the decision was to hold it at Thornhill Country Club. Alex McClumpha was a director at that time and Greenskeeper at Thornhill. The event was designed to aid greenkeepers with some form of life insurance and to provide support for member's widows. This event was named The Alex McClumpha Tournament and has been an annual occurrence since that first meeting in 1946, which makes it the longest running golf event in OGSA's history. McClumpha would go on and become president of the OGSA from 1953-56.

It was not until the winter of 1950 that a discussion of a name change was brought to the table. The profession was advancing and the title of superintendent was much more common than greenskeeper. The new official name was changed to the Ontario Golf Superintendents' Association, which showed how far the profession had come.

In 1952, the association's membership was growing, so the Board of Directors decided to raise the annual dues from \$5.00 to \$10.00. This was necessary because the operation was running a deficit of \$160.

...continued on page 18



Continued from page 17...

Unfortunately, even with the fee increase all members were charged an additional \$5.00 fee to make up the difference. The Board then decided it was wise to begin taking on associate members. The associate member's annual dues would be \$10.00, but they would have no voting rights. Associate members consisted of contractors, suppliers, sales and other related professionals.

It was during this time that The Ontario Agricultural College (OAC) was slowly developing test plots of turf. These plots were located in Guelph on the south side of the greenhouses. They were small and not very well kept. The RCGA and OGSA were pushing the OAC and the Department of Horticulture to start doing more research to aid superintendents to better understand turf issues. In the summer of 1954, the O'Keefe Brewing Company decided they would provide a scholarship for students who were interested in pursuing a career in turf management. The OGSA desired to take this one step further and work with the OAC and O'Keefe Brewing Company on a turf education short course based in the Guelph area. Unfortunately, this dream was too ahead of the times and the O'Keefe Brewing Company ended the scholarship in 1958. Although this scholarship was removed, there was an announced winner in 1958. Witteveen says that although he was announced the winner, O'Keefe had decided to withdraw the \$700 prize. The OGSA's idea of the

short course didn't quite come to fruition at that time, but it wasn't long until the first group of men graduated the turfgrass short course in 1972.

It was during the 1960's that the Board of Directors decided to publish a newsletter. This newsletter would be sent out to members to let them know of some interesting stories and findings related to the industry. The newsletter started very small, but quickly gained value and moved from a few pages to a more substantial publication. A little known fact is that in 1966, when the Canadian Golf Course Superintendents Association (CGSA) was born, the OGSA graciously donated the name of their magazine (The Green Master) and their editor at the time to help the national association get their newsletter off the ground. It was later that the OGSA began publishing their new magazine under its current name, *Green is Beautiful*.

On the year of its golden anniversary, the OGSA decided that a big party was in order. The president at the time was Robert T. Heron. Heron, who was previously the assistant of CGSA President Jim Wylie, organized an event that would include golf and dinner at Lambton Golf Club. Invitations were sent out, not only to OGSA members, but also presidents and greens chairmen from other golf clubs. The guest of honor was the oldest current living member of the association, Dick Homewood. Homewood was a previous Superintendent of Lambton, the OGSA's fourth president (1948-1949), and, at the time of the event, was employed as a gardener at Lambton.

With the construction of new golf courses all over Ontario, the membership numbers grew significantly from 1975-2000. Although some members may have only been around for a short period, there were some key people during this time that helped forge a pathway for the association.

One of the major steps during this period was the development of the Ontario Turfgrass Research Foundation, the brainchild of Paul Dermott and Keith Nesbit. This foundation was instrumental in pushing the government to provide land at the University of Guelph which was the beginning of the Guelph Turfgrass Institute (GTI). The GTI is the current home of the OGSA and conducts countless numbers of studies and coordinates research for the turfgrass industry. This facility helps provide superintendents with the knowledge base necessary to maintain turf to today's standards.

A celebration of the OGSA's 75th Anniversary was an opportunity to host a cocktail party at the Constellation Hotel near Pearson International Airport. Many past presidents came out to multiple events to celebrate the accomplishment, including The Ontario Turfgrass Symposium and a June golf tournament. The OGSA, which had begun in 1924 with only 15 men at Weston Golf and Country Club, now consisted of an astonishing 400 members.

This year the OGSA is celebrating 90 years as an association. During the past nine decades, there have been countless people, too many to name in this one article, who have made significant contributions to not only the association, but also the industry and the profession in Ontario. The membership roster of the OGSA is a solid group of professionals who all still believe in many of the goals that Willam Sansom and Bert Hawkins drafted back in 1924. Happy Birthday OGSA and here is looking forward to "A Century of the OGSA." ■

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The Changing Face of Safety in Ontario

This article addresses a number of issues facing employers and supervisors in Ontario.

Health and safety in the workplace is going to change, and some of the changes are happening now. The Ontario Ministry of Labour (MOL) and the Workplace Safety and Insurance Board (WSIB) are working together in a more cohesive manner to jointly address health and safety issues in the workplace. Some of the key outcomes of this are:

- New training programs are being developed, regulations are being updated and there will be a greater emphasis on enforcement in the coming months and years. Some of you may already have experienced some of these changes.
- There is a greater emphasis being put on the training of supervisors in their roles and responsibilities. As I have discussed in previous columns, the MOL has developed new training documents for worker and supervisory training. These training requirements will begin to be enforced after July 1st of this year.
- If incidents occur where there are injuries or loss of life, the MOL will not be lenient and those employers and supervisors who have not met their legislative obligations will be in a position to be charged with "failure to comply". No organization or individual wants to be in this situation.
- Another change that is occurring is with respect to fall prevention. A new training program has been developed and in the early part of this year the MOL is going through a consultation process that will determine the implementation and enforcement schedule. If you want to download the Working at Heights Training Program Standard, you may do so by going to the following web address: www.labour.gov.on.ca/english/hs/pubs/wah/index.php
 - The training for both the Working at Heights Basic Theory module and the Working at Heights Practical Equipment Module will be valid for a period of three years from the date of successful completion.
 - Compliance will be required once a future regulation comes into effect, with initial application to those regulated under the construction regulations – Ontario Regulation 213/91 – Construction Projects. Regulatory consultations are scheduled to take place in early 2014.
 - For other sectors, it would be phased in subsequent to a consultation on the application of the standard and a regulatory amendment. However, all golf course operations should be aware that if construction-related work is taking place on the property, then the construction regulation takes effect. This means that this new standard will be required sooner than later.
- Another item that all golf courses need to address, first mentioned in this column last spring, pertains to new and young workers. Last year the MOL completed a safety blitz targeting new and young workers. It is interesting to note that during this blitz there were 2982 visits and there were an average of 2.92 orders issued per visit. All employers

must take this into consideration as the MOL and the WSIB have determined that this demographic is experiencing the highest number of incidents. As your golf club prepares for the coming golf season, please make sure that your hiring, training and orientation programs address the new and young workers coming into your workplace.

If you are interested in finding out more on the health and safety issues that are important to the MOL and WSIB, take the time to go to the following web addresses: www.labour.gov.on.ca/english/ and www.wsib.on.ca/en/community/WSIB

Enjoy the last of our wonderful winter and let's hope spring comes early. ■



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Are Root Diseases on the Rise in Ontario?

Based on the diagnostic samples that have come to the GTI Turfgrass Diagnostic Clinic over the past three years, I used to wonder if root diseases were on the rise in Ontario or if we were just getting more of them because they are harder to self-diagnose. However, after visiting numerous courses in person and speaking with a number of superintendents over the years, I would argue that root diseases are, in fact, more prevalent than they were a decade ago. The question is why?

The purpose of this article is to briefly mention some of the root diseases that we see coming through our laboratory, list recommendations for these diseases as a whole, and finally to speculate as to why we are seeing an increase in these "silent killers."

The Usual Suspects

The primary root diseases that we see on golf greens include Take-all patch (caused by the fungus *Gaeumannomyces graminis*) (Fig. 1), summer patch (*Magnaporthe poae*) (Fig. 2), *Pythium* root dysfunction (various *Pythium* spp.) (Fig. 3) and plant-parasitic nematodes. In the samples received in the clinic from throughout Canada, about 50% of our diseased samples (meaning that we exclude those that end up being caused by abiotic, or non-living issues) are diagnosed with take-all patch. Approximately 15% have summer patch, 10% have *Pythium* root dysfunction (or cool-season *Pythium*) and about 10% have plant-parasitic nematodes. If we look at just what we see in Ontario, the numbers change a bit to 30%, 20% 10%, 5%, respectively. Either way, however, over 50% of the diseased samples that we receive in the clinic are diagnosed with some type of root disease. As I mentioned above, it is possible that part of this is because root diseases are a bit more difficult for superintendents to self-diagnose, often leading to a request for outside help, but that is certainly not the whole story.

General Recommendations

There are some common recommendations for root diseases in general, but many of them are not practical for today's golf course superintendents. The first of these is increasing height of cut. This allows for greater area for photosynthesis, and, subsequently better root growth and recovery from stress. However, most turf managers are not willing to sacrifice ball roll distance for healthier turf as the demands of golfers will likely not allow it. Therefore, we recommend the following practices be followed to overcome some of the stress placed on plants that are cut exceptionally low:

1. **Reduce soil compaction through frequent core aeration.** Roots need large pore spaces to grow, especially when they are under attack. Core aeration creates such pore spaces

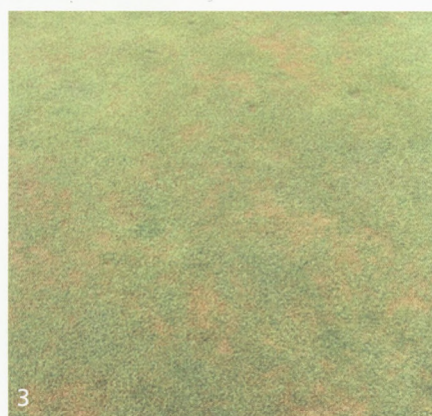


Fig. 1: Symptoms of take-all patch on a creeping bentgrass green. Fig. 2: Symptoms of take-all patch on an annual bluegrass green. Fig. 3: Cool-season *Pythium* on a mixed species green. Note the lack of pattern that could mimic abiotic damage.

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and allows the plants to better heal following infection

2. **Remove excess thatch, if present, or alter practices to reduce the potential for thatch to develop.** Roots can get bound in the thatch layer and be shorter and weaker, making it difficult to counteract infection
3. **Reduce excess soil moisture.** Each of the pathogens thrives in moist conditions, so reduction of soil moisture without creating stressful conditions for the plant will decrease the conditions under which the pathogens can grow
4. **Reduce stress in general.** This means altering traffic patterns and skipping clean-up cuts to allow the turf a chance to recover, especially during the season when more aggressive stress reduction practices cannot be implemented.
5. **Solid tine aeration.** During the season, solid tine aeration can help

increase root depth, allow oxygen into the rootzone and improve water infiltration temporarily, until core aeration can be done in the late summer.

Following some of these simple practices can increase health of the turf while, at the same time, reducing conditions that are conducive for development of root diseases.

Increased Root Diseases

Now back to the original question, are root diseases on the rise and if so, why? There are likely numerous factors, including that we are using fewer broad-spectrum fungicides that remain in the soil for extended periods of time (e.g. mercury). But I would argue that one of the main reasons we see an increase in root diseases is the excess stress that turf managers are placing on golf course greens turf year after year. Mowing heights are lower, there is more play, fertilizer applications (especially nitrogen) are being reduced and cultivation is often

being skipped due to demands by end users.

It is important that superintendents continue to strike a balance between keeping the golfers happy, while also ensuring that turfgrass is maintained in as sustainable a manner as is possible. Because root diseases attack root systems, if the overall plant is healthy, much of the damage can be overcome as root systems are quite redundant in turfgrass systems. By following the recommendations suggested in this article, greens sites are likely to have healthier root systems and turf, which is the best defense against root diseases. ■



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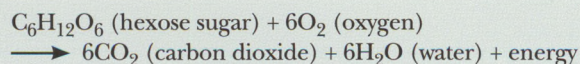
The Roller Coaster Ride of Winter 2014

It is Canada, it is winter and it is almost impossible not to talk about the weather so far. Let's start at the beginning. On Sunday, December 22, 2013, a blanket of freezing rain fell over many parts of south, central and eastern Ontario. For those that are not in the turf industry, it will be remembered by the downed trees, downed power lines and power outages. Those of us in the turf industry will remember the 2-5 cm of ice that covered the turf (Figure 1). Then along came the New Year greeting us on January 7th, with a low of -26°C and a wind chill of -40°C. All of this occurred with little or no snow cover. Next there was the "wintermission". On January 11th, 2014, the high in Guelph was 6°C and it rained all day. This resulted in a layer of snow on top, a layer of slush under that and a layer of ice on the bottom (Figure 2). Fast forward to today (January 21st, 2014) and we are in a deep freeze again with a low of -25°C expected tonight and a wind chill of -34°C. I think that summarizes the roller coaster weather so far this winter. Now let's examine the weather pattern, and, with some science background, we can try to predict the possible outcomes for golf greens this spring.

The four causes of turf death in the winter can be attributed to anoxia, direct low temperature injury, winter desiccation and snow moulds. Winter desiccation is rarely a problem in Ontario. It occurs in areas with little or no snow cover accompanied by desiccating winds during the winter. Most of the high quality turf surfaces are treated preventatively for snow moulds, so I will not discuss them in this article.

Anoxia

Let's start with the ice. Ice is a problem because it can seal off the greens from the outside atmosphere creating a condition called anoxia. Anoxia can occur under an ice cover or under a winter protective impermeable cover and it can kill turf. Anoxia means lack of oxygen. Under covers the turf plant uses up oxygen and other toxic gases, such as carbon dioxide (CO₂), can build up. During the winter, under snow, ice or covers, turfgrass plants respire. In this process, sugars within the plant are used in the presence of oxygen to provide energy for the plant so that it can stay alive during the winter. The equation for respiration is:



In a closed system such as the one that might exist under a golf green covered in ice, oxygen gets depleted and this process or reaction cannot occur. If this is the case, the turfgrass plants will run out of energy and eventually die. The other aspect of respiration in a closed system is that as the oxygen is depleted, carbon dioxide builds up and it may have deleterious effects. Usually anoxia can be detected by the foul smell that emanates from a green when it is uncovered in the spring. The smell is thought to be a result of the build-up of gases under the cover and



Fig. 1: A solid sheet of ice under the snow after the freezing rain storm.



Fig. 2: A layer of snow, over slush on top of ice

there is usually turf injury accompanying it.

In addition to respiration from turfgrass plants under covers, there are also soil bacteria that are respiring in the very same way as the turfgrass plants. This further contributes to the oxygen depletion and the carbon dioxide buildup. Factors that affect the rate of respiration of plants and soil bacteria are temperature under the ice cover, soil water content, degree of plant dormancy and soil organic matter content. Rochette et al. (2006) tested the respiration rates of soil based greens vs. USGA specification greens and found that the soil based greens consistently had higher respiration rates than the USGA specification greens, probably due to the presence of more microbes in soil based green.

Castonguay et al., (2009) found that annual bluegrass is more susceptible than creeping bentgrass to anoxia and if the temperature is lowered to -2°C, the damage from anoxia is much less than at higher temperatures. The good news is the anoxia seems to be worse if temperatures are higher. Our ice cover combined with low temperatures might lessen the damage due to anoxia.

Just how much more susceptible to anoxia is annual bluegrass? In laboratory and field experiments, annual bluegrass has died after 45 days of ice encasement. In the real world, superintendents from Quebec and Scandinavia report that within as little as 30 days of ice cover, annual bluegrass plants can die from anoxia.

Direct Low Temperature Injury

A properly cold acclimated turfgrass plant is more winter-hardy than one that is not acclimated. Cold acclimation, or hardening, is controlled by climate, day length, temperature, shade and grass species, as well as maintenance practices such as fertility.

Direct low temperature injury results when turf is exposed to lethal cold temperatures. Ice forms in the intercellular spaces from water that is drawn outside of the cell to form ice crystals. This results in cell leakage and cell dehydration. Cold hardiness levels decline slowly with time when plants are maintained at temperatures just below freezing, but the loss of cold hardiness is more rapid at colder temperatures.

The good news is that a properly cold acclimated creeping bentgrass plant on average has an LT₅₀ (the temperature at which 50% of the plants die from low temperature injury) of -35°C. Annual bluegrass, on the other hand, has LT₅₀ values of

-19 to -31°C. We also know that not all annual bluegrass plants are created equal. The maximum freezing tolerance achieved by annual bluegrass ecotypes from western Pennsylvania was superior to the ecotypes from Central Quebec that spend the majority of the winter under a thick insulating snow cover. After weeks of cold acclimation, the western Pennsylvania ecotypes had an LT₅₀ of -31.2°C and the Quebec ecotypes had an LT₅₀ of -22.8°C.

Turfgrass plants are most susceptible to direct low temperature injury in late winter to early spring. At this point, the sugars in the plants have been used up (see respiration equation above) and the plants will be dehardening as temperatures in the soil and air warm up. It is the temperature during the dehardening period in spring that most affects direct low temperature injury. Baseline LT₅₀'s in early winter were -20°C for annual bluegrass and -40°C for creeping bentgrass. By mid-March the LT₅₀ for annual bluegrass was -14°C and -30°C for creeping bentgrass. A rapid rise in temperature above 5°C is enough to de-harden annual bluegrass plants raising the LT values substantially.

Anoxia and Direct Low Temperature Injury

We know from research conducted at Olds College in Alberta that ice covers and ice encasement lower turfgrass winter hardiness levels. Tompkins et al. (2004) looked at cold hardiness levels of annual bluegrass and creeping bentgrass under ice cover, ice encasement, or snow for various lengths of time in a laboratory and a field study.

In the laboratory study, plants in the ice cover treatment were covered with a 2.5 cm thick layer of ice which was formed gradually by spraying the surface of the turf with a mist bottle in a freezer. Ice encasement was accomplished by completely saturating the soil of a plug of turfgrass and then adding the 2.5 cm layer of ice as described above for the ice cover treatment. The control treatments had a thick layer of snow cover maintained throughout the experiment.

Snow covered treatments maintained cold hardiness for the longest period of time and ice encasement produced the most rapid loss of cold hardiness. The differences were greater for annual bluegrass than creeping bentgrass, as you would expect. At 90 days after treatment, snow covered annual bluegrass had cold hardiness levels of -18°C, while the ice covered plants had cold hardiness levels of -4°C and ice encased annual bluegrass plants were dead.

Ice covered annual bluegrass had a rapid loss of hardiness between 75-90 days after treatment and ice encased annual bluegrass rapidly lost hardiness between 45-60 days after ice encasement. By contrast, creeping bentgrass began to lose hardiness at 90 days after treatment in both ice treatments, but retained moderate hardiness levels for 150 days. In the field study, annual bluegrass had a more rapid loss of hardiness than in the lab. Annual bluegrass plants subjected to ice encasement in the field study lost cold hardiness between day 45 and day 60.

So there seems to be some interaction between ice encasement and susceptibility to direct low temperature injury. Depending on the turf species and the length of time the turf is under ice, it doesn't require really cold temperatures in late winter or early spring to kill turf.

Back to the Winter Conditions

We definitely have a fairly solid ice cover over much of the short mown turf in many areas of Ontario, which started with the ice

storm. There was some hope during the "wintermission" that all of the snow and ice that formed in late December would melt. Here in Guelph, that didn't happen. In fact, the rain on top of the snow produced an even thicker layer of ice when temperatures dipped after wintermission and now, everything is frozen solid again. So essentially, there was no loss of ice cover so the clock is now at almost 30 days with a solid ice cover.

There have also been two periods after the ice was formed where the temperatures have dropped to -25°C. Annual bluegrass is winter-hardy to roughly -19-31°C.

What Can We Expect?

As far as anoxia is concerned, if you have an ice layer and soil based greens where the dominant turfgrass species is annual bluegrass, with very little snow cover the likelihood of some injury due to anoxia is high. That being said, the fact that the temperatures have been so cold is actually good news. We know anoxia is worse when temperatures hover around the 0°C mark. If you have sand based greens where the dominant turfgrass species is annual bluegrass, this is a better situation. If you have sand based greens and mostly creeping bentgrass, this is the best scenario.

The extremely cold temperatures that we have experienced so far have come at a time when the turfgrass plants are still probably at their maximum winter-hardiness.

...continued on page 24



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FROM ROOTS TO SHOOTS

Continued from page 23...

With the weather that we have experienced so far, there is good evidence in the science to suggest that there is a high likelihood of annual bluegrass damage due to direct low temperature injury, as well as anoxia, once spring comes. Should cold temperatures return in late winter to early spring, this will only make matters worse.

In an ideal world, it would have been great to get out and break the ice that formed during the ice storm that occurred during wintermission. It was quite easy to break up the ice layer at that point. During the winter of 2009-2010, many people removed ice with aerifiers starting sometime between day 30 and day 45 after ice cover formed. My recollection is that they reported mixed results. Another strategy is to blow off snow and apply a dark fertilizer, such as Milorganite, over top of the ice layer as soon as possible. Blake McMaster, retired superintendent at Royal Montreal Golf Club, reported good results with this technique.

Regardless, given the ice and the weather to date, it is a very good idea to go out and sample an area that you suspect might have anoxia or low temperature injury as soon as possible. There is a good video of how to do this on the USGA web site in the Northeast Regional Update for January.

Another important point is to document the conditions on your course and continually be sure to communicate with owners, club members, and club officials about the conditions that exist on the golf course. It is also worth mentioning what might be happening to turf, and what impacts the weather might have on winter survival and turf conditions in the spring. ■



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Lastly, I will continue to blog on the weather conditions as they unfold at www.onturf.wordpress.com. Follow the blog and the comments from superintendents. You can also follow my comments on Twitter @ONTurf and tweet about your own thoughts and experience of winter so far.

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A Well-Rounded Experience

Transitioning back to university is not an easy task. I'm 28 years old and I would be lying if I said that I wasn't nervous when I started my journey back in September. Experience is such a big factor in our young turf careers, and once you begin working, it is tough to convince yourself to go back to university. For those of you in management positions, it is imperative that the value of a well-rounded education is portrayed to your younger, aspiring superintendents. While it is easy to push the importance of a good education, there is much more to a post-secondary education than simply getting good marks.

When I first arrived here at the University of Guelph, I had one goal in mind; work hard to get the best marks I can, get that coveted piece of paper, and leave. No one can really blame me though. We all know it isn't cheap to attend university and all I could think about was getting back to making some money. I told myself that I was going to hibernate and make sure that I stayed focused on my academics, since this was the only thing that mattered in my mind at the time. It was only a couple weeks into my program that I realized that this probably is not the only thing I should be focusing on. Cue my epiphany. While I am still very focused on my studies, I am starting to realize that a large component of a good education in the turf industry includes focusing on everything that goes on outside of the classroom.

The number of ways to get involved during your post-secondary education is endless. Heading out for some grub with your classmates is a great way to get your name out there. We have 37 people in our graduating class of 2015 and there could not be a better way to help get your name out there than to mingle with 37 future colleagues. You never know who you might end up working with and a healthy mix of socializing with your fellow 'turfies' and extra-curricular activities can go a long way toward becoming truly educated.

Do not be afraid to get involved in as many activities as you can. Long after graduation, continuing education is critical to our success as turf managers so we may as well make use of what is available to us during our time at university. Turf club is a great way to share ideas and information with fellow classmates and meet numerous industry professionals along the way. Student committees allow you a chance to see how formal meetings are conducted and give you insight into how your program is run. Industry conferences and trade shows are also a great way to network and meet new people in turf.

The only way for us to truly learn and educate ourselves is to push our limits and be involved wherever possible. You will thank yourself later. ■



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First Impressions Set the Tone

First impressions are very important and far reaching in the golf and horticulture industry. A first impression begins as a feeling, then a judgement, and finally develops into an attitude. We want to encourage a positive attitude as a result of the visually appealing landscape before the golfers even set foot on the golf course itself. The goal then is for it to continue throughout their entire experience on the property.

We all want our members and guests to be happy when they hit the first tee. There are many factors that affect a golfer's attitude leading up to the first hole. Some of which we can control, such as property aesthetics, and other aspects that we as part of property maintenance cannot, such as poor service or inclement weather. In this article I will cover how the result of a first impression, whether positive or negative, has a ripple effect throughout your club, as well as give you some strategies for your front entrance, around buildings and parking lots and suggest how you can maintain these areas effectively.

The ripple effect that comes from a first impression can go as far as affecting the revenue of your club. How can this be you might ask? Every golfer, whether consciously or not, does a cost analysis of whether your property is giving them good value for their dollar. Regardless of how they play that day, if a golfer starts off his or her round with a negative first impression, usually the first thing to be blamed is the conditioning of the golf course. If conditions are considered to be below standard, they are likely to chalk up a list of negatives. If they feel they aren't getting value and expectations aren't being met, you can be assured that this will be followed by spending less on pro shop purchases, beverages and dining. Subsequently, this negative first impression can affect their decision to return, bring guests, and it may even encourage them to spread their disappointment by word of mouth. Managers and superintendents alike want to keep the revenue flowing and guests coming back.

It's important to remember that we are selling an entire golf experience, not just a round of golf. With this in mind, why not wrap the product in something that excites the recipient to open it? This can be done very easily with professionally designed and maintained landscaping, beginning at the entrance to the club. If you are selling the same product as your neighbour, one of the components that is going to set you apart is your packaging.

A well designed and maintained front entrance that commands the golfers' attention will evoke a feeling of interest and curiosity as to what the rest of the course holds. This is where their impression and attitude begin. Some of the key design elements to consider are proportions, signage location, colours, and aesthetic vantage points. Using bright warm colours and contrasting sizes as well as textures can be very aesthetically pleasing. This is an area where annual layering will give you the best bang for your buck due to all season interest. Every detail of your front entrance should be perfect because it represents how the rest of the property is perceived to be maintained. Dead heading, healthy plant material, clean sharp edges, as well as constantly cultivating a rich dark soil or using dark mulch will provide a great contrast to the plant material in the garden and to the surrounding turf or retaining walls. It is very important to maintain areas like these to the utmost. We want to lead golfers



The ripple effect that comes from a first impression can go as far as affecting the revenue of your club.

to the first tee with a high aesthetic standard.

Once the golfers are past the entrance, the next round of first impressions begins in the parking lot, around the pro shop and any other buildings that they may go to on their way to the first tee. This perpetuates the positive attitude we are shaping as they make their way throughout the property. Some suggestions for these areas include using ornamental grasses around areas like parking lots because they are highly effective and very successful plant material due to the hot and dry growing conditions surrounding asphalt, concrete and reflection off of buildings. It is very important when landscaping and planting around buildings that you match the building colour with complimentary flower colours. The gardens are not a detached entity, they are connected in the visual framework of the viewer's mind. You want to create an atmosphere and an impression that will make your golfers enjoy coming back and spending time on the property.

As you can see, the attitude that your client base develops is critical to the long term success of the golf club. Some of the benefits of this approach include an improved backdrop for future advertising material, repeat visits and increased membership. You can also boost spending on the property with this approach as well. The first impressions that your course gleans have an impact extending beyond visual appeal. Once you recognize the importance of having a strong, positive first impression, you will reap the rewards. ■



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Gardens with Punch on a Budget Crunch

I'll be the first to admit, when it came to all living plant material "off the fairways", I could barely differentiate between a ground ivy and impatiens. As an assistant superintendent, I always did my best to help out our gardener and provide assistance when needed, but for the most part, I stayed as far away as possible. To stray from my realm of comfort – all things relating and pertaining to the upkeep of a monocot mowed at two inches or less – into the world of dicots clearly stretched my horticultural knowledge to its limit.

Fortunately, at my previous employment, we had a very competent gardener who took care of all of our "off the fairway" areas so we didn't have to. That being said, in my recent travels, I have noticed a trend at some of our local golf courses – the absence of a head gardener on staff. I am told that for various reasons, it is a position that is getting increasingly difficult to fill. Fear not however, this is where Angela Bartlett fits in.

After graduating from the University of Guelph with a degree in horticulture, Angela embarked on a co-op at Banff Springs Golf Club and soon fell in love with caring for golf courses. Banff

Springs became a launching pad for stints at Westmount Golf Club, The Board of Trade Golf Club (now known as The Country Club) and Oakdale Golf Club. Fast forward a few years later and now Angela acts as a horticultural consultant for a half dozen or so golf courses in the GTA who do not have a head gardener in place. When asked why some clubs do not have a gardener on staff, Angela points to the seasonality of the position and budgetary constraints as contributing factors. "It's not easy to fill an eight to ten month position, and, as we all know, budgets are being cut, which includes gardening budgets,"

says Angela. "Also, some courses don't have huge formal gardens and don't need an onsite gardener."

Angela will work on design elements for clients during winter months and then assist these clients throughout the summer by either working with full-time staff or students to bring the proposed vision to fruition. "I will work on a part time basis with my client's staff during the golf season to help give them direction which ensures the work is being completed properly," says Angela.

Similar to the current trend where golf course superintendents are embracing efficiency and sustainability initiatives, so does Angela's design philosophy. From irrigation to plant selection, everything is scrutinized before it goes in the ground. "Due to cost, the industry is moving towards the selection of perennials over annuals as the latter can account for up to half a designated budget. This does not take into consideration the extra labour involved in caring for these annuals. Also, wiser irrigation choices, such as drip irrigation, to help conserve water and drought tolerant plants can also help reduce budgetary constraints."

In Angela's opinion, the current philosophy is to get away from lavish, formal, annual gardens as they do not fit in on golf courses, or, more importantly, do not adhere to the low maintenance approach. "These aren't botanical gardens after all," says Angela. "Spend the money wisely in high visibility areas such as the clubhouse or halfway house. A garden at every tee is too much work, very hard to maintain and eventually loses its appeal."

So there you have it. If, like me, where the thought of having to care for gardens makes you nervous, don't sweat it. Help could just be a phone call away. With a little luck, there is an Angela Bartlett at a golf course near you. ■



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Forty Years Ago Today

In 1974, the O.G.S.A. was celebrating its 50th Anniversary. The Board of Directors were **Bob Heron** (president), **Paul Dermott** (vice), **Al Beeney** (secretary), **Whitey Jones**, **Bob Hall**, **John Stoughton**, **Cameron Cairncross**, **Carl Bennett**, **Helmut Kopp**, **Paul Scenna**, **Jim Wyllie** (past president), and **Ross Haines** (newsletter editor).

NEW MEMBERS:

Members joining the O.G.S.A. that year were **Ken Wright**, Northwood Golf and Country Club, **Wendell Dymont**, Big Cedar Golf and Country Club, **Dave Dick**, Sleepy Hollow Golf Club and **Gerry Laferriere**, Garion Golf Club in Sudbury. Annual dues were increased from \$20.00 to \$30.00 per year.

ON THE MOVE:

Sam DiPinto, of the Lido Golf Centre, accepted the superintendent position at the Beverly Golf Club. **Steve Miller** moved from being Assistant at the Toronto Board of Trade Country Club to Superintendent at Dundas Valley Golf Club. **Jack Harris** retired from the Hamilton Golf Club and started building his own club called Knollwood Golf Course. **Stuart Mills** moved from London Highland Golf Club to Hamilton Golf Club. **Graham Shouldice** took over as superintendent at the Highland Golf Club.

IN MEMORANDUM:

Taylor Barnes passed away in March and **Norm MacDonald**, a former Superintendent at York Downs Golf Club, also passed away.

EVENTS:

The Fourth Annual Turfgrass Symposium of the O.G.S.A. was held on January 3rd at the Lambton Golf and Country Club with host **Jim Wyllie**. Seventy-five people attended and **Keith Nesbit** was the Session Chairman.

Stuart Mills helped make ice for the Canadian Curling Championships in London and **Helmut Kopp** won a gold medal at the Hotdog Championships at Blue Mountain.

The February monthly meeting was held at Uplands Golf Club in Thornhill and was hosted by **Helmut Kopp**. It was a combined skiing, business and lecture meeting. Other monthly meetings were held at North Halton, Bayview, Galt, P.G.A. National and Oshawa.

The G.C.S.A.A. Conference and Show was held in Anaheim California and the R.C.G.A. Turfgrass Conference and Show was held in Winnipeg, Manitoba.

Superintendents met weekly at the Centennial Arena in Etobicoke for hockey. **Blake McMaster**, Gormley Green, **Bruce Lewis**, Georgetown, **Whitey Jones**, Aurora, **Helmut Kopp**, Uplands, **Carl Bennett**, Oakville, **Paul Dermott**, Islington and **Bob Heron**, Markland Wood, all participated.

Minimum wage was \$1.65 per hour for a student under 18. Working under 28 hours was \$1.90 per hour for a learner during his first month and \$2.00 per hour for general employees.

TOURNAMENTS:

On August 9th, the Pro-Superintendent Golf Tournament was held at the Brampton Golf Club with **Ross Haines** as host.

The O.G.S.A. held its 50th Anniversary Golf Tournament at Lambton Golf and Country Club with **Jim Wyllie** as host. ■



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Pick up any golf magazine. Go to any industry conference. Turn on the Golf Channel. I guarantee you, that within 10 pages, two seminars, or one hour of air time – someone will be waxing eloquently about the state of our industry. They all conclude that golf is too expensive, too hard, and takes too long to play. So their recommendations end up being some variation on discounting green fees, dumbing down the game with bigger holes or shorter yardages, or pushing people around the course in less time by using MMA fighters as marshal/bouncers. I disagree.

It's cheaper to play golf now than it was when I was in high school. Sure, there are high-end public courses who are charging more money than we were in the 80's, but there's a ton of buck-a-hole golf out there, and those courses aren't full either. Cost-wise, it's actually a great time to be a golfer.

Players haven't suddenly found the game too hard. In fact, it's never been easier. I had to learn on forged irons with a sweet spot the size of a pin head, and used a persimmon driver that was smaller than a spring potato. With perimeter weighting and drivers the size of my skull, not to mention ball technology and far better playing conditions – a beginner today has it pretty darned easy.

And I'm not buying the time thing either. Sure, a hockey game is only three hours long, but it takes an hour of driving each way and we go for dinner first. Even a two-hour movie comes with a dinner before and dessert after. Concerts have an opening band, Monster Trucks have Pit Parties – so four or five hours for an entertainment outing is actually the norm. Furthermore, there's a course within fifteen minutes of pretty much every house in southern Ontario – so there's less driving and no need to leave early to beat the traffic.

We do lots of other things for entertainment that cost more, are harder to do, and take just as long. I believe that the problem is that people have tried the game and not come back – because they weren't having fun. Play by serious golfers is actually on the increase, but play by recreational golfers is in serious decline. Why is that? It wouldn't matter if golf took two hours, was free, and had holes three feet across – if they ain't having fun, they ain't coming back. Think back to the best time that you ever had

on a golf course – the day that your face hurt from laughing. Do you remember what it cost, what your score was, or how long it took to play? Of course not.

So how can we make golf more fun? Some have suggested that we take the "Rock and Bowl" path. Loud music, lights, live bands, glow in the dark golf, shooters on every hole, and turn it into a Coors Light Maxim Party – but that would get stale pretty quickly. I think we need to get back to our roots. I'd begin by eliminating stroke play from recreational golf. Alister MacKenzie wrote in 1933 that the new "card and pencil set" would destroy the game. He believed (as do I) that match play was a far superior game, especially for beginners and high handicappers. A bogey golfer

doesn't get to 90 by being one over par, eighteen times. Their scorecard (my scorecard) goes par, bogey, triple bogey, birdie, eight, par... and so on. If you're playing match play, that player has a reasonable chance of winning any individual hole, or they might take a ten, but it only matters for that hole. There are 18 individual games within the match – same as tennis, volleyball and a dozen other sports. By contrast, if I take a ten on the 3rd hole in stroke play, I'm sulking on the cart for the next three hours, because my game is over. Imagine knowing that you couldn't possibly win the

Stanley Cup because you had one terrible game in October. Would you still be having fun at Christmas? The popularity of golf expanded steadily for hundreds of years, until stroke play became the norm, and it started declining within a generation – just sayin'. Never mind that course conditioning (as MacKenzie predicted) had to become near perfect, because the "card and pencil set are forever crying about what is fair, instead of accepting the rub of the green."

The goal of making any competitive undertaking fun, is to have the outcome in doubt for as long as possible. Ideally, the last putt on the 18th green will matter to the outcome of the match. Match play gives a much greater chance of that happening; but there are many other games based on points, and skins, and scrambles, and partners that accomplish the same goal. For the recreational player, stroke play gives the least potential amount of fun and involvement. When it's all said and done, we produce a playing surface for a game. But recently the popularity of that game at the recreational level has waned. I propose that it's our own fault – we changed the game. Let's change it back. ■



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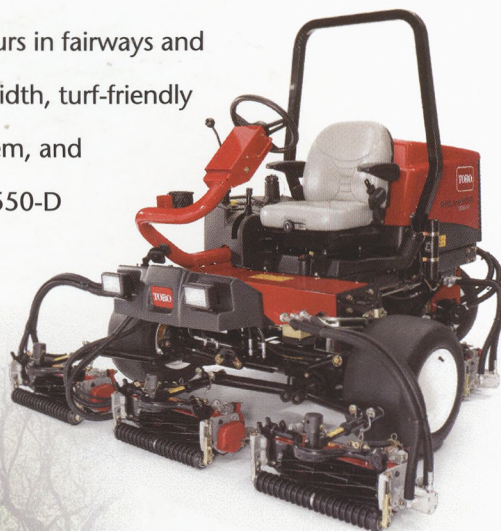
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