

Spring 2015

Green is Beautiful

The Official Publication of Ontario Golf Superintendents' Association



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Using Social Media to Reach Members: #AreTheyListening?

ALSO INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

The Toronto Board of Trade Turns 50
The Performance Review
Understanding Biochar

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



by John McLinden
OGSA President

After speaking with many fellow superintendents around the province, most courses have emerged from the winter with minimal or isolated damage to their turf. This is a pleasant change from the widespread turf related issues that we experienced last spring. However, there are reports of extensive damage to numerous irrigation systems and I hope that each property recovers from their troubles in a timely manner.

The OGSA board continues to be busy this spring and we are constantly looking at ways to more effectively promote and serve all our members. Surveys are a vital source of information to the board and we offer thanks to all those who have completed surveys in the past so that we can continue to provide the best service and value possible. One issue we are regularly receiving comments about is the IPM public meeting. Our statistics over the last three years are showing that attendance at these meetings is dwindling. I would like to report that we have formally submitted a request to the Ministry of Environment proposing a change to the current state of the public meeting. We hope to have a response from the MOE in the near future and will inform all members once we are notified.

Promotion of the golf course superintendent and the OGSA continues to be a priority with the board. As a chapter of the GCSAA we do have access to many of their resources. One of these resources is in the form of grants for association promotion. We have been in discussions with the GCSAA and they are quite willing to provide the OGSA with a grant for a television commercial and possibly radio ads. The production of the advertisement is in the works and will be airing the spot at some point this summer during an Ontario golf event.

Finally, I wish continued success to all as we enter into the most stressful part of the season. ■

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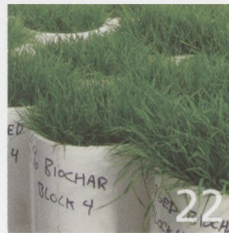
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The Official Publication of Ontario Golf Superintendents' Association

ON THE COVER

Alex Slabczynski, Westmount Golf and Country Club

*Photo courtesy:
Jeanette Thompson*

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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 2015

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EDITORIAL MESSAGE



by Justin Parsons,
Engage Agro Corp.

It's probably safe to say at this point that Twitter isn't going anywhere. At first, I thought it was a fad that wouldn't last, but over the last few years, it has become so ingrained

in both corporate and personal marketing, that it would take a revolutionary new way of communicating to render it obsolete.

The interesting thing to me is that some industries need Twitter, while others are trying to find ways to fit it in. As I write this, the news of Mike Babcock signing with the Maple Leafs is spreading like wild fire throughout the sports world. Twitter was the vehicle used to break the news, as it is now for every announcement in sports journalism. Sure the traditional outlets still exist to put meat on the bones, but Twitter is the only means of providing

instant outreach to hundreds, thousands, and in the case of some well-known celebrities, millions.

I would argue that our industry is still trying to find the right way to fit it in. I know many superintendents who are very active on Twitter, some that will post an update sporadically, and still others that have no time for it at all.

As you will read in Robert Thompson's article in this issue of *Green Is Beautiful*, there are many viewpoints on this social media hub and how it should be used in the turf world. The argument can certainly be made that it is not a necessity. However, what other way can you inform members or the golfing public within five minutes of them waking up that there is a frost delay? We may not have breaking news of the magnitude of Mike Babcock signing with the Leafs, but we do have messages that need to be communicated, and some times, the speed at which they get sent out is more important than the format they are sent out in. ■

RENAME Our Magazine

Green is Beautiful is seeking a new name. More in keeping with the times and the nature of the industry.

Members, please send in your suggestions to

manager@ogsa.ca


If chosen from member submissions, the winner will be awarded an all inclusive 2017 Conference registration and 3 nights hotel. 2017 OGCM Conference to take place in Niagara Falls at the Hilton Niagara Falls & the Fallsview Casino Hotel January 17th to 19th, 2017

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WHAT'S NEW

by Sally Ross, OGSA Executive Manager

MEMBERSHIP DIRECTORY

The 2015 – 2016 Membership Directory was included in the mail with this issue of *Green is Beautiful*.

You will notice a few changes to the directory this year. Addresses for golf clubs have been taken out of the superintendent lists and added to the club lists, and overall the pages are slightly larger which means the

page count has been reduced. We have also included the option for suppliers to have colour ads. The new structure has provided us with some savings on printing costs, but the biggest change is that the white cover is no more, after twenty years, we thought it was time to change things up a bit!

SUPERINTENDENT RECOGNITION PROGRAM

Once again, the OGSA Directors will be making presentations to superintendents who are hosting significant events throughout the summer, starting this June.

GCSAA CHAPTER OUTREACH GRANT

The OGSA has applied for and been awarded \$3,000 of financial support from the GCSAA to support a media campaign in Ontario, using the *Thank a Golf Course Superintendent* video customized for Ontario. Any funds received from the GCSAA require at least a matching contribution from the chapter.

TECHNICIANS TRAINING

A lunch and learn was held this past May with 12 technicians from around the area attending. Participants were surveyed for not only their feedback from the session itself, but also for what type of training they would like us to offer as well

as timing and location for future sessions. The OGSA would like to thank Glenn Burgess from Skyway Lawn Equipment, as well as Neil Beech and Derek Brooker from G.C. Duke Equipment and Dean Morison from Jacobsen. We hope to run other sessions for our technician members, with participation from more of our associate members. If there is subject matter you would like to see offered, or as a supplier member you have some expertise you would like to share, please contact Sally at the OGSA office, or OGSA Education Director, Tim Muys.

MEETINGS AND EVENTS

With the season now in full swing the OGSA Board met in person this past May and plans are to conduct online meetings throughout the summer.

The President's Day Tournament registration is now open and we hope to see many of our members at Lambton Golf & Country Club on July 13, 2015 for the OGSA's premier event of the season.

A location for the Assistant's Tournament will be finalized shortly and we hope we have a good turnout for the Alex McClumpha Memorial Tournament on the first Monday of October at Markland Wood Golf Club.

From the office, we wish all of you a great season. ■

WELCOME

to Our New Members

Yanik Mayer Class F
Granite Golf Club

Kerri Mulder Class Supt
Scenic Woods Golf Club

Nufarm Agriculture Inc... Class E

Younility Inc..... Class E

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

UPCOMING 2015 OGSA
Tournament & Events

Presidents' Day

Lambton Golf & Country Club
Toronto, Ontario
Monday, July 13, 2015

Assistants' Tournament

Location and Date
To Be Announced

Alex McClumpha Memorial Tournament

Markland Wood Golf Club
Toronto, Ontario
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Can/Am Challenge Recap

by Sally Ross, OGSA Executive Director

The 39th annual Can/Am Challenge took place on April 27th, 2015 at Pointe West Golf Club in Amherstberg, Ontario with host superintendent Lamont ('Monte') Anderson.

While the day dawned cold and moderately windy with a light rain, the rain subsided, however the sun never did appear and the golfers braved the cool and windy conditions.

Despite the weather, all 68 of the registrants played and were treated to a course that was in outstanding condition considering the late spring and lack of warm temperatures.

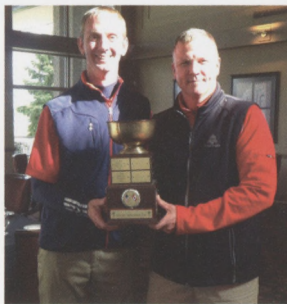
While the cup was originally presented to the Americans (26 to 25) and accepted by the first low gross team of Todd Genske (Eagle Crest GC) and James Higgs (Spartan Distributors) with a score of 70, a calculation error became apparent and after review the match scoring was changed (28 to 23) in favour of the Canadians. The Canadian first low gross team was John McLinden (Ladies GC of Toronto) and John Alpaugh (AllTurf), with a score of 72.

American low net team winners were Dan Dingman (Birmingham Country Club) and Greg Matthews (Residex). Canadian low net winning team was Paul Giordano (Bayer) and Doug Kennedy (Seven Lakes Golf Club).

Second place low gross winners were Ben Neuman and Eric Davey for the Americans, and Dan Friesen (Orchard View GC) and Mark Durand (OSC) for the Canadians. John Cooney and Dale Bauer garnered the second place low net for the Americans, and Trevor Morvay (Plant Products) and Christian Kuhn (Pine Knot GC) took the honours for the Canadians.



OGSA President, John McLinden (right) presents the host superintendent plaque to Lamont (Monte) Anderson.



1st place low gross team for the Americans, Todd Genske and James Higgs.



1st place low gross team for the Canadians, John McLinden and John Alpaugh.



Mark Durand from OSC happily accepts the prize money for the skins game.

The three closest to the pin winners were Greg Brown (Essex G & CC), Rhod Trainor (Hamilton G & CC) and Gary Thommes (Red Run GC), while Aaron Campbell (Turf Care) captured the longest drive award.

The big winner of the one skin awarded was Mark Durand who won \$335, with the

added bonus of the prize monies being a mix of Canadian and US dollars.

All in all, an outstanding day at Pointe West! John McLinden acted as emcee for the prizes and awards and thanked the host superintendent Monte, as well as the outstanding staff at Pointe West for a successful event. ■



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University of Guelph was represented by four teams at Turf Bowl 2015.

The Road to Turf Bowl 2015

by Jon Jacques, Student, University of Guelph

After a 170 kilometre drive to Buffalo and two planes rides, including a four hour layover in Charlotte, North Carolina, the University of Guelph 2015 Turf Bowl teams had finally made it to San Antonio, Texas for the competition and the Golf Industry Show (GIS).

Preparation started back in December and before we left for winter break we had the members of each of our four teams selected. When we returned in January, we knew we had to get things moving as Turf Bowl was only seven weeks away. Three times a week we would meet up for study sessions and practice quizzing. Since the program has such a strong alumni, we decided to use that to our advantage and reach out to past U of G turfgrass alumni for guidance and assistance with our preparation for Turf Bowl. In the past, teams would organize themselves so that there would be one academically 'stacked' team, but with this group of students it made more sense to go with the approach of having four well rounded teams.

The majority of the GIS 2015 education sessions were held prior to the competition. This gave us the opportunity to learn from the top professionals in the turf management industry. Thursday morning of the GIS week was the day of the Turf Bowl exam, which included over 70 teams representing 20 schools from across North America. The University of Guelph sent the only Canadian participants. The U of G teams placed 22nd, 28th, 56th and 65th and were the proud recipients of the 2015 School Spirit award.

On behalf of my fellow Turf Bowl participants, I would like to say a big thank you to our sponsors, The Ontario Golf Superintendents Association, Syngenta, GC Duke and the Student Federation of the Ontario Agricultural College. Without them this experience would not have been possible. I would also like to send a thank you to everyone who helped us prepare for the Turf Bowl exam and to those who participated in the Tweet rally on Twitter. Finally, I would like to thank the other students who participated in the Turf Bowl for putting in the hours of hard work studying and preparing for the competition.

This truly was a great experience and for all the future students, if you get the chance to participate in Turf Bowl, I highly recommend it. It is an opportunity you will not regret. ■



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18th Hole, East Course

The Toronto Board of Trade

Celebrates Notable 50-year History

by Sean Gunn, Superintendent,
The Country Club

Fifty years ago a group representing The Toronto Board of Trade decided to break ground in the small town of Woodbridge. Nestled in a valley aside the Humber River, 400 acres was given to Howard Watson where he sculpted two fantastic championship courses.

Thanks to Watson's vision, we now have the East and West courses being visited by 75,000 plus golfers each season. The Board has built an amazing history in the first 50 years of its existence. It started with hosting the 1967 Carling World Open Championship, won by Billy Casper. Two decades later, it was the host site for the 1986 LPGA Du Maurier Classic (one of the five majors), won by Pat Bradley. Over the years The Board has been blessed to have hosted some of the games greats like Jack Nicklaus, Arnold Palmer, Tom Watson, Gary Player, Nick Price, Lee Trevino, Ben Crenshaw, Chi Chi Rodriguez, Moe Norman, Craig Stadler, Peter Jacobson, Stewart Cink, Jeff Sluman, George Knudson, Vijay Singh, Stuart Appleby, Annika Sorenstram, Lori Kane and countless celebrities.

In 1981 the South course was added to



Gordon Witteveen and his team in 1974.

make the property a 45-hole facility, which it remains to this day. The South course was famous for being open all year long, with many members playing during the winter months. Sadly that came to an end along with the curling rink in 1998.

The Board of Trade changed its name to The Country Club in 2006 when ClubLink took over ownership and together the two companies have continued to deliver a great golfing venue.

With its rich history and its deep roots in the game of golf for the GTA region, nothing is more impressive than the long list of people who have served on the Turf Team over the years. George Clarke was the first superintendent, with Bob Heron and Barry Endicott following. However, it was Gordon Witteveen that had the longest tenure as superintendent and acted as a mentor to so many turf managers in our industry today. A member of the Canadian



8th Hole, East Course

Golf Hall of Fame, Gord served at the Board for 28 years before retiring in 1999. It is through those years that many, and I mean many, of today's superintendents cut their teeth in the business.

I was lucky enough to work at the Board during Gord's retired years in which he played golf twice a week. We drove around the East/West courses many times together and each time he had an amazing story about the history of every hole we were on. He was never shy to tell me his opinion of how the courses were presented, but he also wasn't shy to offer some help or tips to get me through my first couple of years.

On Monday, June 29th, the club will be celebrating its anniversary by having the people who made this club famous come



10th Hole, West Course

back for an alumni golf day. The day will consist of a shotgun golf event, followed by a dinner. If you are interested you can contact me at sgunn@clublink.ca. ■



The maintenance team at The Country Club, 2015.

With 50 years behind us, I thought it would really show how great this place is by mentioning all the people who have walked in and out of the famous green barn on Clarence Street. Here they are:

Gordon Witteveen, (Deceased) Retired & Canadian Golf Hall of Fame Member

Rob Ackermann, Weston G&CC

Herman Ackermann, St. George's G&CC

Keith Bartlett, St. George's G&CC

Nigel Rennie, AllTurf

Bob Heron, Retired

Ron Heesen, Nottawasga Inn Resort

Brian Markham, Beacon Hall GC

Bob Hale, Retired

George Clarke, Retired

Al Schwemler, Toronto GC

Jim Flett, Muskoka Lakes G&CC

Cory Janzen, Westmount G&CC

Brian Gouthro, Ashburn GC

Rick Ziegel, Pumptronics Inc.

Greg O'Heron, Peterborough G&CC

Jennifer Pendrith, Kawartha G&CC

Natalie and Albert Stok, Harbourview G&CC

Kevin Wingerton, CFB Borden GC

John Demko, Islington GC

Peter Holt, Weston G&CC

Rob Sloan, Cardinal GC

John McLellan, Ballantrae GC

Greg Fach, Terra Nova Resort & GC

Mike Jackson, York Downs G&CC

Patrick Greenman, Briars GC

Barry Endicott, Retired

Rob Bruce, Rosedale GC

Jason Boyce, Smuggler's Glen G&CC

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Chris Lecour, Evergro

Dan Lavis, Tarandawah GC

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Scott Paterson, Board/The Country Club

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The Performance Review

Key to Successful Relationships and Organizational Culture

by Mark Thompson, McKinley Solutions

For most organizations, people genuinely are their most important assets. As such, you need to look after your people if you want to get the best from them. One essential way that you can do this is with a well-run appraisal process. Not only does this give you a regular opportunity to provide feedback on how people can perform better individually, but it keeps you in touch with them so that you can formally recognize their successes, eliminate problems that are holding them back, and help them achieve their own career goals. So why are performance reviews dreaded by all? Perhaps dreaded is too strong a word, but it is safe to say that often times this is not everyone's favourite experience. There is a simple solution to this – change the process!

Performance reviews are typically done once per year and are a big time burden on the manager. The reason that I most often hear reviews are done this way is, “that is the way we have always done it”.

It is important to remember that if you manage people then it is your responsibility to be involved in the performance review, no one else's. Senior managers and department leads need to ensure that feedback is a part of the culture of the organization. Each feedback session is going to be unique based on the dialogue between two people. If training is needed, then make that happen – there is no excuse. Keep in mind feedback is critical to the success of a direct report relationship. Research shows that 82 per cent of people leave an organization because of the relationship with their direct boss. Further to that, 74 per cent indicate that they leave an organization because of the lack of training and development opportunity. Therefore, it is a double win to institute effective performance reviews.

As the saying goes, “if you always do what you have always done, you will always get what you always got”. The reality is that performance reviews conducted once per year just does not cut it. If you want to be an employer of choice, an organization that people want to join and one where current employees are proud to work, you need to make performance management and feedback part of the culture, not just a once a year thing.

Yes, there is a formal annual review for all full time staff, but the best also conduct a semiannual review as well. The process does not need to be complicated, but it does need to be specific. What are the goals the

individual is working on for the betterment of the organization and themselves? We recommend no more than 3-6 annual goals. These goals are not set in stone and can be adjusted as needed on a quarterly basis. They should be linked to the overall strategic plan of the organization, and if there is not a strategic plan, then the overall goals of the organization for that time period.

In addition to regular performance reviews, be sure to conduct exit interviews for all seasonal staff at the end of each season. There are three reasons for making this part of your program. First, you have only one set of eyes and getting feedback from all staff members provides a much deeper view on the season. Second, it helps enforce the philosophy which we strongly believe – that your employees are your employees for 12 months a year even if they are only with you for the summer season. This sets a completely different mindset for all involved. And third, it provides you a detailed overview of what you need to focus on with your full-time team in the off season.

Superintendents and other golf course managers may feel there is no time to do performance reviews other than once a year. We suggest this may not be true if you change how you look at the process.

Every employee deserves 10-15 minutes each quarter of focused one-on-one development time. These are often referred to as “punctuation points”, where you can look back together at progress towards existing goals, discuss and solve any related problems, and celebrate particular achievements.

ADVANTAGES OF REGULAR PERFORMANCE REVIEWS:

Detect and eliminate barriers to effective performance.

Pick up on dissatisfaction amongst employees that may otherwise lead people to leave.

Focus people's efforts in the right direction.

Motivate people to work towards important goals.

Helps them develop skills and competencies necessary to achieve future objectives.

Celebrate their successes – this is something that we should do more of.

Be careful though, the most common mistake is not mapping this process out. For example, spending 15 minutes with a direct report and not staying on point with the objectives of the meeting or providing the staff member warning that you will be having the meeting. The idea is that these are two way meetings with the majority of the talking being done by the staff, not the manager. ■



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About the Course

Camelot Golf & Country Club was designed by the renowned Canadian golf course architect, Thomas McBroom. With a course rating of 73.9 and slope of 136 from the back tees, the course has exceptional shot value, playability, design balance, memorability and aesthetics.

Established: 1991

Original Architect: Tom McBroom

Type of Club: Private, Equity

Number of Holes: 18

Number of Rounds Annually: ~25,000

Practice Facility: One acre grass tee deck with six target greens. Chipping green with two bunkers, chipping green with approach and an 8,000 ft² putting green.

Stuart Bradshaw

Superintendent, Camelot Golf & Country Club

by Kevin Kobzan, Granite Golf Club

Nine to five – these three words are uncommon among turf professionals, especially when so much time is devoted to our respective golf courses. Even though being a turf manager involves hard work and dedication, many find this to be a career that offers great satisfaction which allows for a true passion to be born. Ben Hogan once said, “as you walk down the fairway of life you must smell the roses for you only get to play one round.”

For Stuart Bradshaw, Superintendent at Camelot Golf and Country Club, discovering his fairway of life came at an early age and has blossomed into an occupation which feels natural. Bradshaw was born outside Birmingham, England, but his first exposure and interest with the game came when his family relocated to Burlington, Ontario at the age of eight. Once in Canada, golf became a hobby. Bradshaw found himself playing with

friends in local school yards and teeing it up with his father on weekends. This led to his first job in golf at Tyandaga Golf Course in Burlington as a back shop employee.

It wasn't until after high school, when he took on a summer job at Glen Abbey Golf Club to save money for schooling in the sports injury medicine field, that Bradshaw's appreciation for the field took root. “After one season I was hooked; I believe they say the rest is history,” says Bradshaw. “I loved walking greens first thing in the morning. Some of the views you are treated to as the sun rises are spectacular.” That fall he enrolled at Seneca College for the Golf Course Technician Program and has never looked back.

After two seasons at Glen Abbey, Bradshaw continued his learning at Hamilton Golf and Country Club, where he spent seven years including five as the assistant superintendent. There he found

In the Hot Seat

Q: Favourite golf tournament?

A: The Masters

Q: Favourite piece of turf equipment?

A: Toro ProCore

Q: Favourite golf course?

A: Cypress Point Club

Q: Favourite designer?

A: Allister Mackenzie

Q: Ultimate foursome?

A: Wayne Rooney, Sir Alex Ferguson, Warren Buffet

Q: Lowest round and where?

A: 80 at Heron Point Golf Links

himself under the tutelage of Superintendent Rhod Trainer and his other Assistant, Tracy Fowler. "Rhod was my biggest mentor over at Hamilton, we had a great relationship," says Bradshaw. "It wasn't until after I left Hamilton that I realized how much he actually taught me. I was always learning, but at times you don't realize (how much) until you take a step back." Bradshaw also credits Fowler for teaching and prepping him for maturing into an assistant's position. "You have to walk before you can run and she would guide me through the expectations of the assistant's role and how to do the day-to-day things."

In 2011, he took over the superintendent role at Camelot, embracing the opportunity. Although he has enjoyed the transition from assistant to superintendent, the challenges are different, such as dealing with members and boards, which tends to be a revolving door of people. "The hardest part is the political side of it," Bradshaw admits. "It is

something you can never train or be trained for. Every golf course is different and you are going to have different members and views. It is ongoing." His advice, simply be honest with everyone you come in contact with and people will respect you more.

This advice applies to how he handles his staff as well. He has also adopted a new approach with his employees, and that is to have individuals who are a bit older on staff because they tend to be a little more committed to their job. "To be more efficient you need a staff that can do a little of everything, then you have a more diverse staff and a group that will buy into you a little more," says Bradshaw. "We are trying to be more budget conscious."

With Camelot approaching the quarter century mark, new obstacles present themselves, which is something Bradshaw accepts and is working towards overcoming. After undergoing a successful bunker renovation a few years ago, other areas of

the golf course are beginning to show their age. "We are hitting that stage where we need a new irrigation system," Bradshaw explains. "We spend a lot of time fixing leaks, some heads are not properly spaced, the piping is undersized and it is showing more than ever. It's hard when you hit this financial time and these big ticket items are coming up."

Overall, Bradshaw, who was recently elected to the Ottawa Valley Turfgrass Association Board, remains committed and still loves going to work every day. He admits that finding a superintendent job was difficult in the Greater Toronto Area and had to expand his search away from home. "That was part of the issue. I had to look outside the GTA to get this opportunity as there were no superintendent jobs in the area," says Bradshaw. He gives a lot of credit to his fiancée, Gillian Tuneguzzo, who has supported him throughout his career, and supported his decision to relocate to Ottawa. "At the beginning of our relationship she was so patient; the hours are demanding but she always understood and stuck behind me and supported me," says Bradshaw.

At 31 years of age, Bradshaw has found his calling. His career motivates him and allows him to feel a great deal of pride. When asked where he would like to be in the future, his response is simply, "I am happy where I am right now. Ask me in another 10 years". ■

What You Need to Know

Predominant Grass Type: Bentgrass

Predominant Soil Type: Clay

Type of Greens: USGA, Bentgrass, originally seeded to pennecross

Course Length: 7,047 yards from the tips

Size of Property: 200 acres

Size of Greens: 4 acres

Size of Tees: 3.5 acres

Size of Fairways: 23 acres

Maintenance Challenges

The 11th green. It is a par 3 that sits in a bowl surrounded by trees.



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To Tweet Or Not To Tweet –

Is It Even A Question?

As the online frontier emerges, superintendents grapple with the ROI on social media

By Robert Thompson

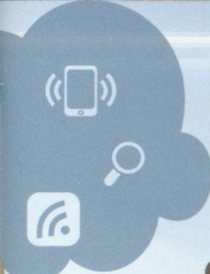
Scott White has a strong perspective on how social media should be used by golf course superintendents. White took to Twitter recently to suggest that the men and women who grow grass on golf courses might consider separating their personal from professional perspective when it comes to social media. It was met with mixed responses, but White, the superintendent at Toronto's Donalda Club, is convinced that the professionals who maintain Ontario's golf courses need to filter their private life from their professional one.

"To my way of thinking it is about separating church and state," he says. "Some people have Twitter accounts for their personal life, mine is for work. It is a decision I made early on."

Of course White is deep into the world of social media. He runs a blog for Donalda, in addition to his Twitter feed. But at the same time he wonders about the amount of time spent on social media versus the payoff and amount of attention it draws.

"I don't think the balance is there," he says. "It probably doesn't pay off when you get right down to it."

Social media is so vast these days that there are as many perspectives on how superintendents should use it as there are Tweets in a day. Should a superintendent utilize a blog to talk to golfers, or is that too time consuming for too little return? Does sending a Tweet potentially bring the 'super' into conflict with a member, or is it the best way to connect with golfers? Where does Facebook play



into all of this, and what's the role of a course or club website?

The truth is that social media use by superintendents has been evolutionary as they find different uses and purposes for each part. Along the way they are learning to sidestep the pitfalls that come with being part of the public media, with every Tweet and comment open to interpretation.

David Kuypers, the former superintendent at Cutten Fields in Guelph, Ont., was an early adopter of blogging for his club's members. Now working for Syngenta Canada Inc., Kuypers says the blog took a lot of his time, especially in the initial stages. Writing for members and the public can be time consuming, Kuypers explains, and the struggle superintendents face is balancing that against the demands of their work. Initially Kuypers tried to reach members through the printed club newsletter, but he found the time from the point where he wrote the material until it appeared meant it had little value. Blogging was more immediate, he says. But the more he blogged, the more he found only a handful of members paid attention to the material he was putting online.

"The reality is that it was frustrating," he explains. Despite that, he continued at it. "It became a big part of our communications strategy. But it took a massive amount of time and there are two elements to it—transmitting and receiving. Some members were much more connected because of it, but some didn't even know we were doing it."

Doug Erwin, the superintendent at Angus Glen Golf Club in Markham, Ont., has also struggled with the issue of the amount of time it takes for blogging. While Twitter is easy and quick, formulating his perspective in a blog is much more time consuming, Erwin says, which is probably why he's moved away from the format.

"I'd say if I was to do it more often the return on investment just wouldn't

be there," he says. "But if you had a very discerning membership that wanted a lot of information on the course, that might be different."

Truthfully, a lot of superintendents use the concept of a blog, with its ability to post pictures and add descriptions of what is going on at their courses, as a jumping off point for further social media interaction. Andrew Hardy, the superintendent at Newmarket's Pheasant Run Golf Club, uses Twitter prolifically, but started with his blog. Hardy uses the blog to talk about the evolution of the golf course where he works, but also personalizes it, discussing his children and their struggles as well.

"A huge part of my life is the 300 acres I look after, but I have a lot more going on as well," he explains.

Hardy says his owner is entirely supportive of his outspoken tone on his blog, and that style gravitated to Twitter when he joined in 2011. With more than 20,000 Tweets, Hardy says he doesn't have to be as careful as a superintendent at a private club when it comes to espousing his opinion. That means the occasional expletive is fine, and he basically puts his perspective online with few filters.

"What I can do is very different from what someone [at a private club] can put out there," he says.

One thing that anyone on social media should consider is the potential blowback from a negative interaction. Weston Golf and Country Club's Rob Ackermann had a public disagreement with a golfer soon after he started using Twitter, and addressed the issue head on. While others might feel Twitter's public nature is a potential problem for superintendents, Ackermann views it differently. Because the whole issue was conducted in a public forum, every member at his club was able to see both sides of the situation, which was quickly defused.

"I don't think there's any more risk than you'd have in any discussion with a member," says Ackermann. "There are trolls



Scott White @DonaldaGrounds

Some people have Twitter accounts for their personal life, mine is for work. It is a decision I made early on.

#DecisionsDecisions



David Kuypers @kuypersSYT

Some members were much more connected because of it, but some didn't even know we were doing it.

#MixedMembers



Robert Ackermann @robackermann

I don't think there's any more risk than you'd have in any discussion with a member. There are trolls in every walk of life, whether it is on Twitter or in person. I'm not going to hide from it.

#NoPressure

in every walk of life, whether it is on Twitter or in person. I'm not going to hide from it."

In fact Ackermann views his usage of Twitter, where he posts numerous photos of what is going on at Weston, as putting the club in a positive light, especially among younger, tech-savvy people who are coveted as potential members by private golf clubs.

Continued on page 18...

Continued from page 17...

"I look at Twitter as something that helps me be better at what I do," he says. "It helps my profile within the club and it is a marketing tool for any new member who wants to learn more about Weston."

While Twitter has caught on with many superintendents, many act as observers as opposed to regular participants, and there are many others who aren't engaged with social media at all. That's a professional loss, say those most active on Twitter, many of whom use it as a resource to correspond with others in the turf business.

"Twitter is such a great resource," says Hardy. "I've made so many friends in the industry because of it and learned so much from what other people post."

And even those who find social media time consuming recognize the alternatives are limited.

"If I really wanted to get a message out

to all the members, I'd simply stand on the first tee from 7 am to 10 am on a Saturday morning," says Kuypers. "But that isn't reasonable."

Ackermann says he uses Twitter in the same way as the notice board in the locker rooms.

"It is just an extension of the other communication I do," he says. "For me it is an education tool for both me and my members."

Even though Donald's White has strong perspectives on how Twitter should be used, he can't imagine walking away from the world of social media. He agrees with Hardy and others that the connections he's made within the turf sector far outweigh any potential challenges from social media.

"I use Twitter to constantly find new ways of doing things from my colleagues," he says. "You can float a question and get a comment from a local superintendent and someone from Naples, Florida. How else could I get that? I could hire a plane to do skywriting and it wouldn't get the same reaction."




Andrew Hardy @PheasantRunGolf

Twitter is such a great resource. I've made so many friends in the industry because of it and learned so much from what other people post.

#Lifesaver

Which is why White, and other superintendents like him, will continue to navigate the pitfalls and embrace the opportunities social media presents. ■


Golf analyst for Global Television, and the bestselling author of five books, Robert Thompson lives in London, Ont.



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The Architect's Take: The Bunker Trap

By Jeff Mingay

Bunkers are overrated—it's the ground that makes golf most interesting.

On the best courses, slope, contour and firm, slick turf, conspire to force golfers not only to consider yardage and ball flight, but more importantly, what their golf balls are going to do when they meet the ground again. On such courses, bunkers are redundant and unnecessary other than to present some variety.

Bobby Jones and Alister Mackenzie loved this type of golf and translated it beautifully to a slope-y inland site in Georgia. When Augusta opened for play during the early 1930s, the course had just 22 bunkers. Drawing inspiration from the great links (St. Andrews specifically), Jones and Mackenzie thoughtfully routed Augusta, and manipulated terrain where necessary, to create a course where the ground genuinely dictates strategy and presents a bulk of the interest and challenge.

Today Augusta has 44 bunkers, which is probably about 22 (or more) too many. I've argued elsewhere that more than a dozen of Augusta's bunkers could be eliminated without detriment to the playing interest, challenge or appearance of the course, even during The Masters. This is actually a very interesting and prudent way to look at any

course in the process of developing plans for improvement. Bunkers are remarkably expensive to build and maintain these days, so why not consider opportunities to fill in a few that do nothing to add to the playing interest, challenge or beauty of a course?

Bunkers are an important visual feature. They can certainly be made to be incredibly attractive. But no one really likes them. No matter what's done architecturally, golfers complain about playability and consistency.

Bunkers are an important visual feature. They can certainly be made to be incredibly attractive. But no one really likes them.

And golf course superintendents shake their heads at the effort and monies they're forced to spend on maintaining bunkers up to the ridiculous standard held by too many contemporary golfers. That's all the more reason to consider eliminating a few.

This is exactly what we're doing at Fircrest Golf Club, near Tacoma, Washington. Originally designed by Vernon Macan, an Irishman who pioneered golf architecture in the Pacific Northwest after immigrating to Victoria, B.C. shortly after the turn of the

Above: At Fircrest Golf Club's long par 4 2nd hole, two green-side bunkers were removed and replaced with a ridge that fronts the right side of the putting surface, creating a "punchbowl" feature, and a mown slope falling down to a short grass area below the level of the green, left.

20th century, Fircrest is an 8 km drive from Chambers Bay, where the U.S. Open will be played in June. Like Jones and Mackenzie, Macan advocated using as few bunkers as possible. His early 1920s plan for Fircrest included 53 bunkers. Most 18-hole courses these days have at least eighty.

The advantage at Fircrest is that the course occupies excellent ground for golf. The property is blessed with some links-like contour and just the right amount of elevation change to create interesting holes without requiring golfers to climb mountains.

Using both Macan's original plans and his general design philosophy, I've managed to whittle down the number of bunkers that will eventually dot Fircrest to about forty. I actually anticipate leaving out a few more in the process of implementing my restorative-based improvement plan there over the next few years.

The club would then be wise to consider using what's saved from building and subsequently maintaining fewer bunkers to invest in mowing more short grass,

"The Volcano Hole"

comprehensively improving drainage, and enhancing its sand topdressing program to firm things up. That way, like Augusta, the wonderful terrain at Fircrest will dictate strategy and provide a bulk of the playing interest and challenge.

With that, those bunkers that cost so much to build and maintain, and cause so many headaches for golfers and course superintendents alike, are sincerely redundant. ■

Based in Toronto, Jeff Mingay is one of Canada's best-known restoration architects. He's worked on a number of new projects in Canada alongside designer Rod Whitman, including Sagebrush, Blackhawk, and Cabot Links.

Right, top: Historic photo of Fircrest Golf Club's penultimate hole, the seventeenth. Affectionately referred to as "The Volcano Hole", it was designed by A.V. Macan during the early 1920s. Fircrest opened for play in 1923.

Right, bottom left: Fircrest's "Volcano Hole" in its evolved state, pre-restoration. (Fall 2014)

Right, bottom right: "The Volcano Hole" recently restored. (March 2015).



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Understanding Biochar

Looking at biochar as a root zone amendment and its environmental and financial impact

by Andrew Krek, Assistant
Rosedale Golf Club

When building a green, the USGA provides specifications for the particle sizing of the sand for optimal putting green performance. However, sand alone does not provide adequate water and nutrient holding capacity to fully support turfgrass growth. As a result, the USGA recommends a root zone amendment that can be either organic or inorganic.

Peat moss is the most common amendment of sand-based greens. In comparison to most organic amendments, peat moss has better water and nutrient retention and a significantly lower cost (Bigelow, 2004). Peat moss decomposes quickly which reduces its benefits over time.

Peat moss is harvested from peat bogs. The harvesting of peat is heavily scrutinized because it involves an environmentally disruptive process that destroys hundreds of years or more of ecosystem development. The loss of these ecosystems also displaces the species that inhabit them adding to the importance of finding alternative materials in place of peat.

WHAT IS BIOCHAR?

Biochar is a by-product of the pyrolysis

of plant biomass. The process of pyrolysis burns the plant material in an environment absent of oxygen; this process creates an ash like substance but preserves the structure of the original plant material.

Biochar is a viable
alternative to peat and can
be created without the
destruction of ecosystems.

Biochar has a high nutrient and water holding capacity. Fresh or new biochar can hinder plant growth. It isn't until after the biochar has accumulated a sufficient amount of nutrients on its exchange sites that a normal exchange of nutrients is achieved and the full benefits of biochar amendments become realized.

Initial research conducted at the Prairie Turfgrass Research Centre (PTRC) at Olds College in Alberta indicates that fresh biochar can be pre-treated in a nutrient solution to mimic the effects of a matured biochar for new putting green construction.

Nutrient loading the biochar successfully

mimicked a mature biochar. The statistics show significant differences in root length and clipping yield. Based on the plants ability to access a greater amount of nutrients and water during the period when fertilization ceased it can be concluded that, by nutrient loading a biochar the nutrients remain available to the plant in the soil solution and that growth is not significantly reduced when fertilization ceases.

It is hypothesised that biochar could also be tailored by loading it to affect pH and that the loading capabilities may not be limited only to plant available nutrients. Further research is warranted.

COULD BIOCHAR BE USED TO REPLACE PEAT AS AN AMENDMENT?

The properties of biochar allow it to be a more sustainable resource than sphagnum peat, lasting significantly longer in the environment. Research using biochar as a sand-based root zone amendment has shown that biochar increases water and nutrient retention, cation exchange capacity (CEC) and anion exchange capacity, while decreasing bulk density (Brockhoff, 2010). These properties are similar to peat and are favourable for a root zone amendment in a sand-based root zone.



Left to Right: Experiment setup; Healthy tillering bentgrass; Control vs 10% charged biochar at end of experiment.

The long term effects of biochar in a sand-based root zone for putting green applications have not been examined.

HOW COULD BIOCHAR HELP THE TURFGRASS INDUSTRY?

As stewards of the environment, turf managers should be looking for newer, better ways to manage their courses while supporting the ecosystem within which it exists. Biochar not only supports environmental preservation, it may reduce course maintenance costs.

Biochar is a viable alternative to peat and can be created without the destruction of ecosystems.

The cost to fertilize is growing due to the increase cost of manufacturing. Biochar may reduce costs associated with fertilizing and

maintenance while also reducing chemical use and exposure. Biochar represents a potential method to reduce the amount of fertilizer used while ensuring plant health and improving the root zone's ability to hold and exchange nutrients and water.

The breakdown of peat in the root zone is a contributing factor for having to renovate or rebuild putting greens in time. Biochar breaks down significantly slower than peat, potentially reducing or eliminating the need to renovate or rebuild greens. ■

Andrew Krek is the Assistant Superintendent at Rosedale Golf Club in Toronto, ON. He holds a Turfgrass Management Diploma from Seneca College and a Bachelor of Applied Science degree in Horticulture, majoring in Golf Course Management from Olds College.



Roots down 12 inches in the biochar root zone mixture

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This article has been based on the research conducted by Brent Lees, Sean Brown and Andrew Krek for the PTRC as part of an integrated project while completing their Applied Science Degree at Olds College.

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Every Second Counts

What a glorious day for a game of golf! The foursome arrives early in the morning with clubs polished and ready. As they enter the clubhouse sharing a few laughs, tragedy strikes. Andy collapses to the ground and appears to have stopped breathing. Chances are he only has minutes to live.

According to the Heart and Stroke Foundation, up to 40,000 cardiac arrests occur each year in Canada. That's one cardiac arrest every 12 minutes. Without rapid and appropriate treatment, most of these cardiac arrests will result in death. Thousands of lives could be saved through public access to automated external defibrillators (AED's).

As many as 85 per cent of all cardiac arrests occur in homes and public places (Vaillancourt & Stiell, 2004).

After more than 12 minutes of ventricular fibrillation, the survival rate from cardiac arrest is less than five per cent (Hazinski et al, 2004).

For every one minute delay in defibrillation, the survival rate of a cardiac arrest victim decreases by seven to 10 per cent (Larsen et al, 1993).

Combined with CPR, the use of an AED may increase the likelihood of survival by 75 per cent or more (Weisfeldt et al, 2010).

Okay, there are a lot of abbreviations here. But in Andy's situation—or perhaps someone you know—AEDs and CPR have life and death ramifications. What you should be aware of is that approximately 85 per cent of SCA incidents occur outside of a health care setting.

An AED is a portable, easy-to-use device that analyzes the heart rhythm of a person in cardiac arrest. If it detects a shockable rhythm, the user is instructed to press a button to deliver a shock. This stops the heart in the hopes of allowing it to restart at a normal rhythm. If a shockable rhythm is not detected, no shock is given and the user must perform CPR. The AED units will go back to the analyzing mode every two minutes (CPR is being done in between the analyzing mode) and it will continue to assess whether or not to deliver a shock.

The Heart and Stroke Foundation of Canada notes that improved designs have made them "safe and easy to use by people with little or no medical background". Recreational facility staff, instructors, and even family members can use today's AEDs.

Being involved in a situation when someone around you experiences



sudden cardiac arrest can be frightening. When you combine CPR/AED training with having one or more AEDs available on site, the odds greatly improve for the person's survival.

If an AED cannot be easily reached by emergency services within four minutes, it's worth developing an AED program. How many devices

should you have? Where should they be located? Who should have training on how to use them? These are critical decisions to make so that you are prepared when every second counts.

How prepared are you for such an incident? ■

Please note that the above information in no way is intended as a training guide on how to do CPR and use an AED. Proper certified instruction from an authorized vendor is advised.

Recreational facility staff,
instructors, and even family members
can use today's AEDs.



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by Ryan Gordon, Superintendent,
TPC Snoqualmie Ridge

We have a lot of bunkers here at TPC Snoqualmie Ridge. One-hundred-fourteen bunkers. All of these bunkers were constructed right on top of the property's native soil which is known as glacial till; a very dense mixture of boulders, gravel and coarse sand.

This stuff is what is merely inches underneath the white silica sand that is in our bunkers. Throw high annual rainfall amounts on top of the sand (75 inches in 2014) and BAM, you have frequent bunker washouts in which the sand is pulled off the sides of the bunkers, exposing the rocks and gravel underneath the sand. This is a perfect recipe for creating bunkers littered with unwanted debris such as silt, gravel and rocks.

This is obviously a headache for the maintenance staff to maintain and frustrating for golfers to play out of. The solution to this problem actually has many options. There are a myriad of different types of liners on the market that can be laid down on top of the subsoil on the floor of a bunker prior to filling with sand in order to keep the two elements separate and minimize contamination of the bunker sand. It seems



Glacial till exposed in a bunker following heavy rainfall.



Bunker at Fircrest Golf Club lined with sod.

like each region of the country has a preference for the type of liner used in their bunkers. The Puget-Sound region is no different.

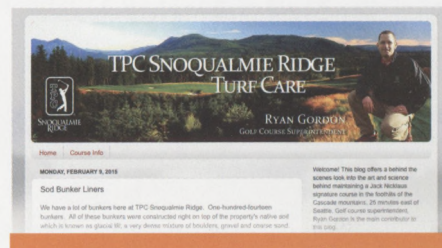
A very popular option in our area of the country has been to line the bunker floors with sod. Several local courses have recently completed or are in the process of completing bunker renovations in which this method is employed. I recently had the privilege of attending a chapter meeting for our local superintendent's association at Fircrest Golf Club in which I was able to see this process firsthand. The club is currently renovating its bunkers and as the picture below shows, they are using the sod liner method.

As you can see, the process is relatively simple. The floor of a bunker is lined with sod with the exception of the drain lines to maximize the flow of water through the bunker sand. The sod is laid down and given time to take root which at this time of the year can vary between six to eight weeks. Once the sod is firmly rooted, the grass is scalped down to stress the turf and/or sprayed with round-up, followed by smothering with new bunker sand. The thatch layer from the sod is essentially what serves as the liner that keeps unwanted rocks, gravel and silt from contaminating the clean bunker sand.

Through my years working in the industry, I have learned that what works somewhere else may not necessarily work here. We deal with many extremes here, especially as it pertains to weather. I am not so sure that this method has the ability to hold up to our high rainfall amounts and the constant exposure that the sod would receive due to bunker wash-outs. So, the only thing to do is do a test-run and try it and learn from it! For this experiment, we have chosen the greenside bunker on the right hand side of the 12th green. This bunker is actually one of the most contaminated bunkers we have and no matter what we do, we can't seem to keep the sand clean of rocks and gravel.

We plan to begin work on this bunker this week starting with excavation of the old sand. Once the sand is removed, we will touch up our drain lines with new gravel as needed, order some ryegrass sod and get it rolled-out on the bottom of this bunker. After that, we must wait the prescribed six to eight weeks for the sod to take root before we can come back and cover it up with sand. This way, the liner will be anchored properly where we need it.

In the meantime, if you happen to hit your ball into this bunker, please play it from the drop zone that we will have painted next to the



About the blog

This blog offers a behind the scenes look into the art and science behind maintaining a Jack Nicklaus signature course in the foothills of the Cascade mountains, 25 minutes east of Seattle.

tpcsrturfcare.blogspot.ca

Contributor: Ryan Gordon, Superintendent

bunker or if you are playing for fun, you may play it as it lies in the bunker. All we ask is that you take extreme care when walking on the newly laid sod as not to disrupt any newly formed roots which will be very important for the anchoring process.

We are excited to see how this project turns out and will be monitoring the results over the upcoming season. Perhaps, this could be our solution to those burdensome rocks that plague many of our bunkers. We shall see... ■

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Low Maintenance

When it comes to gardens, there is no such thing as no maintenance.

This article may start out sounding like a little bit of a rant, stick with me though, it will be informative.

When there is a proposal to install low maintenance gardens, some questions must be asked to the person requesting them. In my experience, I have found that if a person says the term “low maintenance” it means whatever type of gardens they envision are low maintenance in their minds. When in fact, once the materials, size and what they actually envision are discussed, it can turn out to be the opposite. It seems the term “low maintenance” is a phrase used loosely by those that don’t understand what it really takes to, one, install said gardens and, two, maintain them. It is our job as trained and experienced horticulturists to educate those requesting

projects what their requests really mean and entail for sustainability of the gardens. Beware installing new designs because resources that are said to be available to maintain them may not come to fruition because no matter what, when it starts to look unhealthy, overgrown or struggling, the blame comes to the person who installed it. Getting the details clear in the design process is very important to ensure that what you design balances between the aesthetic standard expected and the level of maintenance resources available.

A property with many low maintenance gardens can still be considered a high maintenance property. There is no such thing as no maintenance. Everything requires maintenance of some sort and everything has a life span. Gardens and plants are very

much included in this. Ornamental grasses are usually a staple of low maintenance garden designs, but they too come with a lifespan. Over time grasses can develop what is called the ‘halo’ where they stop producing growth in the centre of the plant and their root systems become old and woody. Typically at this point they require splitting to rejuvenate new root growth and prevent or fix this halo effect. Are there lower maintenance designs than others, sure there is. Are there practices used in the industry to reduce maintenance, sure there is. And are there plants that require less care than others, absolutely. Mulching for example will greatly reduce the amount of weeding required. It will also help with moisture retention and is a great way to add organic matter and nutrients to the soil once broken down. The flip side to this is mulch needs to be applied annually to be effective in weed suppression and applied at an industry standard minimum of three inches in thickness. Once it breaks down, after about a year or two, dependent on the type of mulch, it no longer has the ability to prevent weeds from germinating or growing. Wood chip or bark type mulches also rob the soil of nitrogen due to the decomposition process. This means that



Examples of lower maintenance designs at Muskoka Lakes Golf and Country Club. Top: This garden is beside the 10th tee; Bottom left to right: Garden at the clubhouse and the garden at the 18th green.

a spring application of nitrogen worked into your soils before mulching is beneficial for plant health. Do you see where I'm going with this? I'm certainly not suggesting not to mulch, not mulching means much more weeding as well as not gaining its other benefits. However, this does take time. You need to understand your soils and manage them for success as well as use practices to help reduce maintenance. Moreover, there are varieties of shrubs that are considered or marketed as low maintenance, for example Spirea varieties, Potentillas, Juniper species, boxwoods, and cotoneaster. Interestingly enough, these are all planting combinations used in fast food restaurant landscapes and other commercial building landscapes. After installation, these plantings usually come with no maintenance at all. They survive for a couple years, but that's all they do is survive and not thrive. The Junipers usually end up too big for their space and need to be pruned. The Potentilla become misshaped and eventually stop flowering along with the Spirea, as a result of little to no soil amending or cultivation. Eventually they should be lifted and replanted to promote new root growth as they get old and tired. That is what true low maintenance looks like. We have all seen it and eventually what happens is a complete renovation because the place looks so bad. It is totally uninviting and costly since all the work needs to be redone after a few years. Don't get me wrong, I love all those species of plants and they all have great attributes, but even the lowest maintenance plants require some degree of attention to at least live instead of needing to be ripped out and redone.

Now getting back to those questions for the person that needs educating and you truly defining their needs, wants, and objectives for

their property or golf course; after someone has stated that they would like low maintenance gardens installed, the questions to them should be what kind of maintenance expectations do they have in relation to time and financial resources? What are the goals and what style of gardens are they looking for? What do they envision when they look at the area? Establishing an aesthetic standard is extremely important when deciding the maintenance requirements of a new design or installation. As horticulturists we unfortunately have one weakness, and that weakness is passion. We love to be creative. We love to turn nothing into something great. We also love doing the work from design to the maintenance stage. We love the chance to install a new project. This passion can lead to creating more work than can be handled with the resources given and can further lead to neglected areas or areas not maintained to the high standard that was originally planned. The moral of the story is, in the event of a new project proposal, be sure to establish what resources will be available to maintain them moving forward and what the expected aesthetic standard is going to be. ■



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Five Years Ago Today

The Board of Directors of the OGSA in 2010 were: **Jeff Alexander** (President), Parry Sound G&CC, **Randy Booker** (Past President), Otter Creek GC, **Chris Andrejicka** (Vice President), Essex G&CC, **Doug Breen**, Brookfield G&CC, **Rob Gatto**, Chedoke GC, **Jarrod Barakett**, Deer Ridge GC, **Stu Leachman**, Diamond in the Ruff GC, **Jennifer Pendrith**, Kawartha G&CC and **Phil Scully**, Granite GC.

ON THE MOVE: **Sean DeSilva** left Coppinwood GC and went to Cedar Brae GC, **Brad Bell** went from Markland Wood CC to Lakeview GC, **Ken Emory** went to the Ambassador GC and **John Taylor** went to Oakville GC.

ACHIEVEMENTS: Congratulations went to OGSA members **Neil Acton** CGCS, Deer Creek G&CE, who was one of 23 GCSAA members honoured in San Diego for 25 years of certification and to **Andrew Hardy** and the Pheasant Run GC on becoming the 43rd golf course in Ontario to earn Certified Audubon Sanctuary status.

Jim Flett, Superintendent at Muskoka Lakes GC, was named the Ontario Director for the Canadian Golf Superintendents Association. Congratulations went to **Aldo Bortolon** and his course dog **Bronson** from Lookout Point CC, Fonthill, chosen to appear in the GCSAA's Lebanon Turf Dog Days of Golf calendar.

EVENTS: Golf courses were finding their way through the newly initiated Ontario Cosmetic Pesticide Ban which regulated that all golf courses in Ontario that are using pesticides are required to be accredited by an IPM body. The only courses exempt from this provision are those that have not yet used pesticides on the course (presumably new courses) which are exempt until two years after the first day that pesticides are applied on the course.

TOURNAMENTS: The OGSA Pro/Super Challenge was held at Otter Creek GC hosted by superintendent **Randy Booker**. The winning team was from Cobble Beach Golf Links consisting of **Jeff Thomas**, Assistant and **Warren Thomas**, Golf Pro. The Presidents' Day Tournament was held at Brampton G&CC hosted by **Martin Kopp**. The winning team was from Orr Lake GC led by **Jason Harris**.

The OGSA Summer Scramble was held at Springfield G&CC in Guelph, host Superintendent, **Ray Dlugokecki**. The winning team consisted of **Jamie Spencer**, Westminister Trails GC, **Mark Durand**, OSC, **Mark Trudell**, Maple Ridge GC and **Scott Gardner**, Echo Valley GC.

The OGSA Assistants Tournament was held at Braeben GC in Mississauga, hosted by **Dan Magrin**, Superintendent and **Blake Sicard**, Assistant Superintendent. The winning player was **Greg Brown**, Assistant Superintendent from Essex G&CC.

The Georgian Bay Golf Superintendents Association held their final tournament at Cobble Beach GC in Owen Sound, hosted by **John Anderson**. The final Western Ontario Golf Superintendents Association Tournament was held at the Galt CC in Cambridge, with host Superintendent **Mark Piccolo**. The 4th Annual Seniors Golf Tournament was held at Mono Hills GC with hosts **Doug Suter** and **Alan Beeney**. This tournament is open to all current and former OGSA members, associates, life members and honorary members over the age of 50. The Alex McClumpha Memorial Tournament was held at Black Bear Ridge GC in Belleville, hosted by **Bill Fach**. Low gross honours went to **Bill Gilkes**, Scarboro G&CC and the George Darou Trophy was presented to **David Stevens**, Beaverbrook GC, by **Ron Craig** of Turf Care.

IN MEMORIAM: **Keith Stevenson** passed away on December 20th in his 80th year. **Keith** was the superintendent at Haliburton Highlands before retiring. **Gordon Witteveen** passed away on December 16th at the age of 76. He was the superintendent at London Highland CC, Northwood GC and finally The Toronto Board of Trade CC. He became active with the OGSA and later helped found the CGSA. **Witteveen** initiated *GreenMaster* magazine of the CGSA and served as the editor for five years. He also served as a director of GCSAA and on its historical preservation committee. ■



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Acceptable Risk

by Doug Breen, Superintendent
GolfNorth Properties

There is a field of study called Actuarial Science. It's a real job, where people sit in starkly lit rooms in the bowels of insurance companies and the like, estimating the probability that a thing will (or won't) happen. Remember the guy in high school who was scary good at math, yet lacked any perceptible personality? In all likelihood, he's now an Actuarial Scientist. If you had the most unlikely of combinations, a math geek with a gregarious personality, (many have suggested that this guy doesn't exist, and that he's a myth, like unicorns or decent daytime television) – that guy is more than likely using his understanding of probability to run a sports betting website. While sitting in an office doing math all day sounds like the third ring of hell to me, the fact is, the results of the work done by Actuarial Scientists, affect us every day, through a

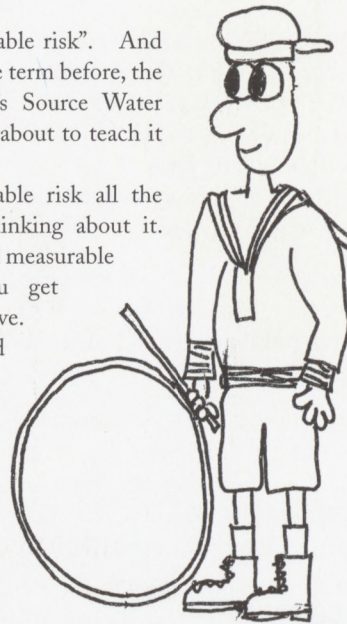
concept called "acceptable risk". And if you haven't heard the term before, the Ontario Government's Source Water Protection program is about to teach it to you.

We deal in acceptable risk all the time, without ever thinking about it. There is a very real and measurable risk, every time you get into your car and drive. The aforementioned dungeon of math heads at your insurance company, can calculate exactly what that risk is, and present you with a bill which will allow you the privilege of continuing to do so. (At 48, my risk is apparently about one tenth the risk of my 18 year old son). The relative risk of most of the activities that we take part in every day, has been calculated and documented. Someone has taken the time to estimate the risk of everything that we do; from flying to bungee jumping, smoking to breathing mold spores, using pesticides or storing fuel.

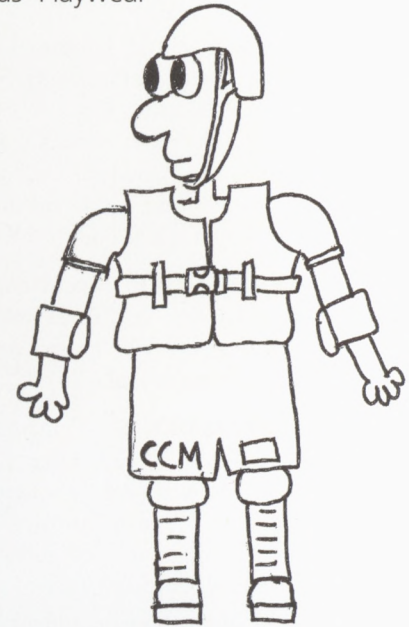
What we have to do with that information, is decide whether that risk is acceptable – and if not, come up with a risk mitigation strategy. Most of us have chosen to fly without concern, without ever thinking about why. Without realizing it, we are operating under the assumption that the airline is doing maintenance on its planes, and that someone from Transport Canada is checking on it. We assume that there are safeguards in place, so that people driving on Ontario roads actually have licences and functioning brakes. In a nutshell, this is what Source Water Protection is all about – the public assumes that when they turn on a tap, that municipal water is safe to drink. Many people, have spent most of the past decade, trying to calculate the real threats to public water supplies; and in turn, how to mitigate those risks.

Some of what we do on golf courses has an environmental risk associated with it. Suggesting that there isn't, is just as naïve as suggesting that everything that we do

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is damaging to the environment. Both extreme positions are uninformed. The good news is that we already have a lot of excellent science to tell us what those risks are, and how to manage them. The PMRA has done an exemplary job when it comes to understanding pesticide use. Ontario agriculture is already a world leader in the understanding of the risk of fertilizer use. When was the last time you saw a single walled fuel storage tank? It's all about acceptable risk.

The danger here, is that when it comes to things like our food supply, our children's well-being, or our drinking water; the public often demands zero risk, which doesn't exist, and is quite frankly – unnecessary. As long as the discussion remains one of acceptable risk, and the mitigation strategies don't become too financially onerous, Source Water Protection really shouldn't have too much effect on Ontario's golf industry. I've sat through dozens of meetings on the topic, sometimes wearing my OGSA hat, sometimes wearing my GolfNorth hat, and sometimes as a Municipal Councillor – and it seems like the people administering these plans, have a good understanding of acceptable risk. That being said, we need to keep an eye on this one, because if it becomes politicized – it could get ugly fast. ■

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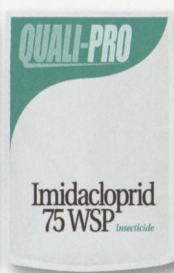


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