



Green is Beautiful

Winter 2015

The Official Publication of Ontario Golf Superintendents' Association

Building Steeper Greens Is The Way Forward

ALSO INSIDE THIS ISSUE:
2015 Conference Wrap Up
Motivating Maintenance Staff
The Hard Lessons Learned

CANADA POST PUBLICATIONS MAIL
PUBLICATIONS AGREEMENT No. 40027105
Postmaster: Please return undeliverable copies to
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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



by John McLinden
OGSA President

Greetings. It is my distinct honour and privilege to serve as your president as we embark on the 91st year of the OGSA. I am looking forward to a challenging and exhilarating year ahead. 2015 started on a very promising note as we had an outstanding and successful conference in Niagara Falls this past January. We will continue to build on the momentum of this conference as we move forward with the new and exciting format for future conferences.

One of my objectives this year is to continue fostering the existing interactions we have with the regional associations. The OGSA currently has a strong relationship with the eight existing regional associations, however, there is a great opportunity to advance and develop our profession in an affable manner. We will continue to work

closely and promote all of our regional associations and we hope our eight sturdy regional associations can work closely in assisting and promoting our solid provincial association.

It is our intent to have representation at more regional events this coming year and I look forward to playing some outstanding courses and meeting new friends. We are also exploring the possibility of instituting an equipment managers training program in specific areas throughout the province. The equipment manager is one of the most important assets to any golf course and the association feels we are presently lacking in providing educational opportunities for them. By offering an avenue to increase their knowledge and networking, this would be a benefit to our individual properties and the golf industry as a whole.

Finally, I would like to say a special thank you to current Past President Phil Scully for his years of dedication and contributions to the OGSA. Phil has served on the board of directors for six years and his involvement has been vital to the current status of the association.

I would like to wish each and every one of you all the best for a successful season and best of luck at your facility. ■

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Green is Beautiful is published four times a year (November / March / June / August) by Blenheim INK for:



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Published by Blenheim INK

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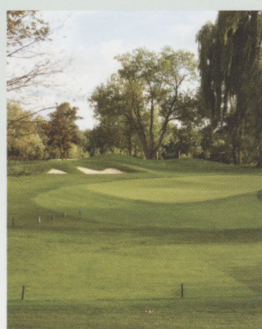
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Green is Beautiful

The Official Publication of Ontario Golf Superintendents' Association

ON THE COVER

Islington Golf Club,
6th Green

Photo courtesy:
Ian Andrew

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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.

"All intelligent thoughts have already been thought; what is necessary is only to try to think them again."
- Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

By the time this issue of *Green is Beautiful* reaches you, conference season will be wrapped up and most of you will be diligently preparing for another golf season. The month of March usually brings about significant change in the Ontario turf world. The beginning of the month typically feels a lot like winter, not just because of the cooler temperatures, but also because staff have not been called back to work yet and there usually aren't too many golfers loitering around the Pro Shop. By the end of the month however, the reinforcements have been called back to ready the course for another season and it is not

uncommon to see the odd course open for play.

Of course last March brought about a lot of extremes. Not just in terms of weather, but also in terms of workload, planning and execution, above and beyond the typical spring cleaning. Now, anyone who understands the profession of turf management has an appreciation for just how demanding it can be. Even during the best of times, it takes a great deal of strength and devotion to be successful. When Mother Nature throws a curveball down the pipe, nothing short of passion and perseverance will do.

In this issue you will find out just how resilient a bunch turf managers in Ontario really are. Never backing down from a challenge, this group of turf professionals always strives for improvement. Whether it is sharing past struggles and success with each other, trying new and innovative ideas or revisiting traditional ideas once thought to be buried, no stone gets left unturned when it comes to the betterment of turfgrass on Ontario golf courses. ■

MARK YOUR CALENDAR UPCOMING 2015 OGSA Tournament & Events

Can Am Challenge

Pointe West Golf Club
Amherstburg, Ontario
Monday, April 27, 2015

Pro/Super Challenge

Black Bear Ridge Golf Club
Belleville, Ontario
Monday, June 1, 2015

Presidents' Day

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

WELCOME to Our New Members

Don Anthony Class Supt
Settler's Ghost Golf Club

Bradley Adams Class F
Essex Golf & Country Club

Joel Archambault Class C
Devil's Pulpit Golf Association

Scott Barker Class C
Smuggler's Glen Golf & Country Club

Joey Bloomfield Class C
Cobble Beach Golf Links

Donnie Campbell Class Supt
Bear Creek Golf & Country Club

Bobby Cook Class C
Mississauga Golf & Country Club

Stewart Gibson Class A
Glancaster Golf & Country Club

James Horvath Class S
University of Guelph

Howard Houg Class C
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Andrew James Class C
Highland Gate Golf Club

Tim Lea Class F
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James Sheridan Class A
Anderson Links Golf Club

Joshua Sparks Class C
The National Golf Club of Canada

Dan Stockdale Class C
Taboo Resort, Golf & Spa

Scott Taylor Class F
Ladies Golf Club of Toronto

Derek Therrien Class A
Eagle Creek Golf Club

Daryll Thomas Class F
Lebovic Golf Course

Nikolas Tzimas Class C
Eagles Nest Golf Club

William Wallcraft Class F
Lambton Golf & Country Club

Kenneth Welzien Class D
Silver Spring Country Club

Dave Wilson Class D

Scott Wilson Class C
Bay of Quinte Golf & Country Club

Brett Young Seeds Class E

**Evergreen Liquid
Food Plant Ltd.** Class E

**KCM Construction
Group Inc.** Class E

**Paul Gillen
Sales Consultant** Class E

**Silicorp
Developments Inc.** Class E

XGD Systems Class E

2015 Conference Wrap Up

by Sally Ross, OGSA Executive Manager



L-R: John McLinden, OGSA President, and 50-year member OJ Piccolo

MILESTONES, SCHOLARSHIPS AND AWARDS

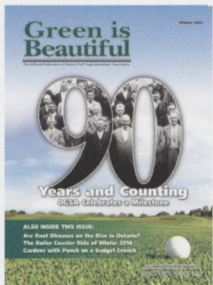
Two OGSA members were honoured for reaching the 50 year mark at the Annual Awards event held recently in Niagara Falls. Sam DiPinto and OJ Piccolo were the recipients. While Sam could not attend the event, OJ was on hand to accept the watch presented to him by OGSA Conference Chair and now President, John McLinden.

Thirteen members reached the 25-year milestone, some of whom were on hand to receive their awards, while others due to various reasons could not attend.

Robert Ackermann, Weston G&CC; Richard Butler, St. Andrew's East GC; Aldo Bortolon, Lookout Point CC; Richard Buttenham, Tri-links Ltd.; Ray Dlugokecki, Springfield G&CC; Doug Francis, Little River GC; Steven Holmes; James Hopkins, Deer Creek G&CC; Stephen Jones; Jay Kulak, Port Colborne CC; Paul Scenna, Beacon Hall GC; David Tascone, Granite Ridge G&CC and Alex Weathersen, Glen Cedars GC. Three associate member companies



L-R: Paul Scenna, Scott Horsburgh (Plant Products), Ray Dlugokecki, OJ Piccolo, Dave Schmelefske (Ontario Seed Co.), Aldo Bortolon, Richard Buttenham



The Barry Endicott Article of the Year was awarded to Reg Langen (Richmond Hill GC) for the Winter 2014 cover story "90 Years and Counting". Photo of the Year, pictured above right, was awarded to Matt Booth (Oshawa G&CC).



also reached the 25-year mark, Fast Forest, Ontario Seed Company Ltd., and Plant Products.

Megan Brown, daughter of Paul Brown (Turtle Creek Golf Club), received the Heritage Award and the Hugh Kirkpatrick Bursary was presented to Reg Langen from Richmond Hill Golf Club who received first place, as well as the Barry Endicott article of the year for his *Green is Beautiful* feature from the winter 2014 issue, "90 Years and Counting, OGSA Celebrates a Milestone". Virginia Kinney from Mad River Golf Club received the second place bursary, and Ken Tilt from Trafalgar Golf and Country Club was awarded third place. The Turfgrass Education Award was presented to Chris Copeman from the University of Guelph and Michael Gentry, Assistant at Silver Lakes Golf and Country Club was presented with the Short Course Award. The *Green is Beautiful* Photo of the Year was awarded to Matthew Booth from Oshawa Golf and Curling Club.

Christian Pilon was on hand at the awards breakfast to bring greetings from the CGSA, and prior to the keynote lunch, Jim Diodati, Mayor of Niagara Falls, addressed the group, welcoming them all to Niagara and wishing them a great conference.

SPEAKERS

Speakers came from near and far, the furthest, of course, Dr. Micah Woods from Thailand. Adam Moeller put in a great effort to make the show after being stranded in Rhode Island due to snow, and Dr. Thom Nikolai, Dr. John Kaminski, and Pat Jones all made the trip to Niagara. Chris Tritabaugh from Hazeltine National Golf Club, host club of the Ryder Cup in 2016, also made the trip and in addition to presenting an education session, joined Rob Ackermann and David Kuypers on a very well received panel presentation. Mark Thompson from McKinley Solutions presented a session on engaging and retaining great staff. The full speaker lineup was very well rated by our attendees, and while 6 IPM CEC's were available just on day one of the conference, it showed us that people come for everything that the show has to offer, as most registrations were for the full three days. Our surveys results to date confirm this fact. We would like to thank all our speakers for their support, professionalism and expertise. You made our show in 2015!



L-R: Virginia Kinney, Reg Langen, Ken Tilt, Chris Copeman, Michael Gentry



Front L-R: Sally Ross, Phil Scully, John McLinden, Mark Prieur, Scott White;
Back L-R: Jason Boyce, Tim Muys, Cory Janzen, Rod Speake, Chad Vibert

MEETINGS

The OGSA held a membership meeting during the conference to keep members up to date on various happenings with the association as well as future plans, and, in addition, met with the Ontario regional association representatives to discuss improving communications and a possible collaboration on some of our events.

The OGSA Annual General Meeting took place on Friday, January 30th. A by-law change to reduce the size of the board of directors from eleven to nine was unanimously approved by the membership and the meeting resulted in the following representation being elected to the board for 2015: John McLinden, President, Mark Prieur, Vice President, Chad Vibert, Secretary Treasurer and directors: Jason Boyce, Cory Janzen, Tim Muys, Rod Speake, and Scott White. Phil Scully, remains on the board as immediate Past President.

SPONSORS

We had outstanding support from our sponsors this year.

Syngenta and NGF Golf (Div. of Northgate Farms) sponsored the education sessions.

Bayer sponsored the name badges and Direct Solutions (now Evergro) sponsored the Trade Show Social. Allturf, Vanden Bussche Irrigation, Zander Sod and Hutcheson Sand sponsored the Party Night, and Masters Turf Supply, GT Golf & Turf, Ontario Seed Company and UPI Energy sponsored the shuttles. Turf Care, Nufarm Agriculture, and G.C. Duke Equipment sponsored the refreshment breaks.

We would not have been able to stage such a great event without your support, so a sincere thank you goes out to all companies who supported the conference. ■

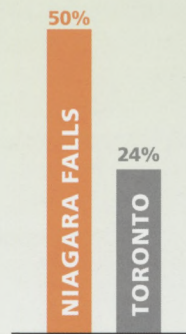
Survey Says...

COSTS

- Over 95 per cent of attendees registration costs were paid for by their clubs
- Of those who paid themselves, comments on the value received were positive

LOCATION

Niagara Falls came in once again as the preferred location for the conference, as nearly 50 per cent chose this as their top selection, followed by downtown Toronto with 24 per cent choosing this as their preferred location. The exhibitor / supplier choice was even higher for the Niagara Falls location. Less than one per cent of respondents suggested locations other than those listed.



WHY OUR DELEGATES ATTEND

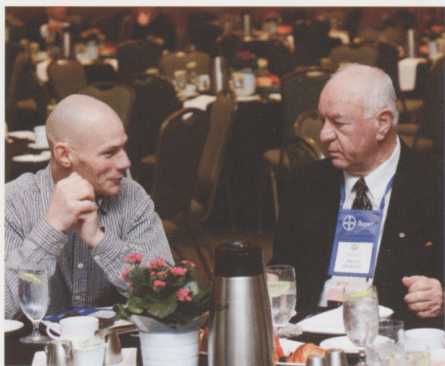
A staggering 92 per cent of respondents to our survey indicated that they attend for everything the conference offers in terms of education, networking and social events, with less than eight per cent attending for CEC's only. ■



The off-season can be a wonderful time of year. It allows the majority of us to enjoy a slower pace, regular weekends, and the chance to spend more quality time with our friends and families. Not just our families at home, but also our brothers and sisters in the turf industry. This is the underlying reason why the Ontario Golf Course Management Conference and Trade Show (OGCM) is such a special event; it is the family reunion of Ontario turfgrass professionals. Former colleagues, classmates, mentors, interns and associates with whom you have bonded with over the years are there to reconnect and collaborate on new ideas. The OGSA show is the largest turf based think tank of its kind in our province and it simultaneously offers OGSA members the opportunity to communicate, network, socialize, learn, laugh, and bond in a professional environment. It really is a beautiful thing.

Hosted in fabulous Niagara Falls, the 2015 OGCM Show was a hit. Featuring a world class lineup of speakers, a stimulating palette of topics, great food, and an opening night party which brought the house down, this year's show was a major success and cemented its significance as an annual tradition. For all who attend, experiences can vary greatly. Some members find value in the presentation of new scientific data and research, while others find listening to anecdotal sessions by fellow superintendents to be of greater use. Still yet, there are many who simply enjoy the chance to kibitz with industry reps, learning about new and exciting products coming to our market.

This year, we wanted to give a more personal account of what the show means to our members, so we at *Green is Beautiful* went straight to the source. The following testimonials were kindly provided by a variety of OGSA members from varying levels of the industry. They help to paint a picture that symbolizes what this show means to our members. If you enjoyed yourself, please find the time to fill out the survey online so we can continue to deliver the highest level of experiences at conferences to come. Thank you to all those OGSA members that attended the show this year. Your patronage is what makes the show so unique and special. A very heart felt thank you goes out to all the sponsors and volunteers. Without your gracious support, the show could not go on. We hope everyone had a wonderful time in Niagara Falls and we look forward to seeing you again next year in Toronto. ■



“Attending the Ontario Golf Course Management Conference is a responsibility to not only the long-term sustainability of our association but to the credibility, success and development of our profession. The value of collaborative thoughts, networking and educational opportunities is a testament to the ‘spirit of greenskeeping’.”

Jayson Griffiths, Superintendent
London Hunt and Country Club

“2015 was my first time attending the OGSA Trade Show and Conference. The educational speakers were first class. The ideas they brought were insightful and were delivered in an engaging fashion. The opening night party was a great time to kick back, relax, and chat. I look forward to attending the conference in coming years.”

Dan Sliastas, First Assistant
St. Catharines Golf and Country Club





“ The OGSA show was another wonderful educational and networking opportunity. It is always so great to meet new superintendents, assistants and industry representatives. The support and enthusiasm of everyone getting together to share their experiences is invaluable. Listening to other superintendents talk about their challenges and achievements helps us all learn and grow.”

Jessica Aytoun, Superintendent
Sutton Creek Golf Club

“ The networking opportunities while attending OGSA's annual conference is not about connecting with colleagues and industry representatives but rather with people whom I would call friends.”

Jeff Stauffer, Course Superintendent
Rosedale Golf Club

“ This has been the third conference I have attended; the overall passion and togetherness of the turfgrass industry continues to astound me.”

Matt Read, Second Assistant
Port Carling Golf and Country Club

Conference Photography:
Jason Sewell, Superintendent
Victoria Park East Golf Club
(Jason Sewell Photography)



Motivating Maintenance Staff To Build Commitment

By Lyn Purdy PhD, Associate Professor of Organizational Behavior at the Ivey Business School in London, ON

Earning commitment from your maintenance team doesn't happen overnight. With a limited pool of dedicated full time employees, lots of seasonal help, and a tight budget, asserting your role as leader requires dedication, patience, and insight into what makes your people tick.

Three common techniques are used to motivate staff: fear, compensation and belief. When people are motivated by fear, they tend to be compliant as long as the boss is around, but feel little motivation to complete the job without constant supervision. When pay determines commitment, an "I'll go somewhere else if things are not good here" mentality can often develop or they need an ever increasing level of pay to keep them motivated to do the job. The third motivational option – belief – is best for on-going commitment to get the course the best that it can

be. When the maintenance team gets behind the goals of the course, they are far more likely to feel a sense of commitment in working together towards achieving them.

Fostering this type of motivation requires a strong dedication to effective leadership. Here are some tips for fostering loyalty and gaining commitment from your team.

PREPARE, PREPARE, PREPARE!

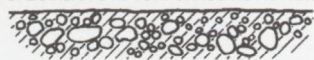
The first step to building commitment from your staff is to work out a clear plan. Identify the issues for your course, consider their implications, and begin to outline goals for the season. These goals will guide your day-to-day operations and give your staff clearer objectives to strive for.

While your concerns and desires are very important, so are those

Creating plans and goals for the season won't be useful if you keep them to yourself – get your staff involved.

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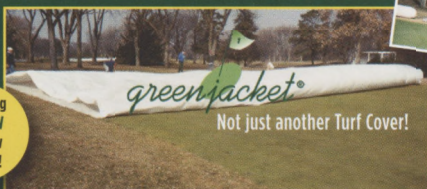
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of your staff. Consider a day in the life of one of your staff and ask yourself, what would I care most about if I were in their shoes? Take some time to explore the different options for meeting both your goals and theirs, while providing a clear direction for what you want to achieve, and how that plan affects them.

GET PEOPLE INVOLVED

Creating plans and goals for the season won't be useful if you keep them to yourself. Get your staff involved in setting these goals and show them the importance of their role in meeting them. Building a mutual understanding with your staff is a powerful tool.

Remember to acknowledge their feelings and paraphrase their points to show you take an active interest in their success. Keep in mind that something as small as acknowledging their contribution can go a long way toward building common ground.

Also, don't forget that gaining commitment is more about asking than telling. You will find your staff much more receptive to your ideas if you've considered theirs. Ask them for suggestions on how to deal with an issue and use it as a platform to build upon. This is where your preparation begins to pay off. If you've considered the situation from a variety of perspectives, then it will be much easier to integrate some of their ideas into your own.

Getting everyone involved is a great method of problem solving as opposed to simply telling your staff how to proceed. By using a joint problem-solving approach, actively listening, and engaging in two-way communication, while exploring the issue and deciding on the best course of action, your staff will take more ownership of the issue. And remember, ownership breeds commitment.

ASK THE RIGHT QUESTIONS

Some days it seems so much easier to just tell people what to do or answer their questions, but, as previously mentioned, that won't lead to commitment and motivation. Instead of automatically giving the right answer, try to ask the right questions. Resist the urge to solve the problems for your staff. If you give them a chance to work the problem out for themselves, then you are helping them to learn and grow in their role. Open-ended questions such as "How will we?" and "what if we?" can be very helpful in developing problem solving skills and giving those involved a sense of ownership over the issue.

Don't be afraid to ask others for advice – this is a great way to open the lines of communication with your staff. Their perspective can shed light on concerns you may not be aware of, and generate ideas you might not have considered.

CRAFT YOUR MESSAGE

When expressing your views, don't use confrontational language. While certain situations can be very frustrating, refrain from "you are" or "you never" statements. Lean towards the positive. For example, instead of interjecting by saying "but", try "yes... and." Try to focus on the impact of an issue without putting your staff on the defensive. Creating allies as opposed to enemies generates a team environment which will provide the focus and commitment needed to reach your goals.

Leading people can be quite a challenge, but no matter the current state of commitment and motivation at your course, all it takes is one decision on your part to set change in motion. By motivating your staff through goal setting, asking questions, and crafting your message before delivery, you provide your team with the tools they need to succeed. And when they succeed, so do you. ■



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MEMBER PROFILE



Bill Julie

Superintendent, Wildfire Golf Course

Bill Julie and his son, Calvin.

*by Alan Dolick, Assistant Superintendent
Wildfire Golf Club*

Like many in our industry, Bill Julie took the roundabout way to a career in golf. Julie's thirty plus years in golf started in 1981 working for his uncle George Julie at Sawmill Golf Club in Fenwick, Ontario. His first job at the course had nothing to do with maintaining the grounds, in reality, it was everything but. He started cleaning clubs, vacuuming locker rooms and washing golf carts. Julie says that he intended to only work at the course a few hours a week, but after showing a good work ethic he, "basically fell into a full-time job at 14."

After a couple years of doing odd jobs around the clubhouse, Julie

began to transition to working on the greens staff. He remembers the first job he performed on the grounds was raking bunkers and cutting tees, likely a similar starting point for most of us. While he relished the idea of working outside, he didn't love all aspects of the turf maintenance business. His fourth season was spent entirely cutting rough on an old tractor pulling around a 9-gang mower – a job that tested his patience.

For the next five or six seasons, Julie continued to split his time between working in the pro shop and working the grounds, all the while studying at the University of Guelph. His first go around in University was not related to turf, rather political science. However it was while he was at Guelph that he realized that he could take turf management and have a career in the golf business. Before going to Guelph, Julie recalls having, "no idea that one could even go to school for turf management." The thought of it being a career had never dawned on him. But once that seed had been sown, there was no looking back.

Julie completed his degree in political science at Christmas of 1989 and was back on campus in the fall of 1990 enrolled in the turf diploma program. It was during this time that Julie got his first real experience at a high-end private golf course, working for Richard Creed at the Cutten Club. Needless to say, it was a big change from his time at the family owned Sawmill Golf Club. Julie could not believe how much more there was to the job of course superintendent than he had first thought. "The amount of interaction with the membership, countless meetings, and golfer demands really took me by surprise." Undeterred, he continued to work hard at both his studies and on the golf course.

Once Julie graduated in the spring of 1992, he expected to land a full-time, year round job, which, for many graduates of the turf program, did not pan out the way he had anticipated. "It was a real eye-opener," Julie says. This propelled him to make his next move, across the country to British Columbia.

The early 1990's found British Columbia in a golf course construction boom. It was the wealth of jobs and the promise of year round employment that drew Julie to the West Coast.

IN THE HOT SEAT

Q – Favourite
tournament
A – The Masters

Q – Favourite architect
A – Tom McBroom

Q – Favourite equipment
A – Toro Procore 648

Q – Favourite golf course
A – Highlands Links,
Ingonish, Cape
Breton, N.S.

Q – Ultimate foursome
A – Jack Nicklaus,
Tiger Woods,
Wayne Gretzky

Q – Lowest round and
where
A – 80, Bell Bay Golf Club

Q – Favourite movie
A – *Wedding Crashers*

In February of 1993, Julie took his first golf course construction job at Belmont Golf Club in Fort Langley. Julie was charged with the maintenance of the irrigation system by then grow-in superintendent Joe Veller. While he enjoyed his time at Belmont, he was promised year-round employment, but it didn't exactly work out that way as he was laid off in the winter of 1994. By the following spring, he was working another grow-in project at Northview Golf Club.

He began working with a former classmate and friend, Dave Fehr, who is still the Superintendent at Northview to this day. Julie again spent much of his time working the irrigation system, while continuing to gain valuable experience in golf course construction.

It was during this season at Northview that Julie's former co-worker Eloise, moved out to the West Coast, to become Northview's horticulturalist. While he was enjoying working for a friend, he and Eloise became a couple, loving the west coast lifestyle. However, it wasn't all perfect for Julie. That winter he found himself laid off from the golf course, but he was given employment at a local sawmill that was also operated by Northview's owner." It was the toughest job I have ever had," Julie recalls as he lasted only a few weeks.

While he relished the idea of working outside, he didn't love all aspects of the turf maintenance business. His fourth season was spent entirely cutting rough on an old tractor pulling around a 9-gang mower – a job that tested his patience.

1997, the young couple packed up all of their belongings and moved to the opposite end of the country. Julie instantly fell in love with the east coast lifestyle and it was during this time that he and Eloise got married and had their first son, Calvin, shortly thereafter.

After the grow-in at Bell Bay, Rogers accepted a job in Ontario and left Julie with his first superintendent's position in the spring of 1998. While there was some small growing pains, Julie felt that his time under Rogers left him well prepared. "He was very organized and meticulous in his planning," Julie recalls. "He was a smart man and was very good at hiring quality people." It was during this first season as head superintendent that Bell Bay won Golf Digest's "Best New Canadian Course". Julie gives all the credit to Rogers for the honour.

While extremely happy on the east coast, it was the impending birth of his second son, Cameron, that forced Julie to re-evaluate where they were living. This ultimately led to the decision to move back to Ontario so his children could be closer to their grandparents

and families. So, in 2002 Julie was hired to build the new Tom McBroom course on Stony Lake, Wildfire Golf Club.

Wildfire would be Julie's first grow-in as a superintendent. It was a much different experience than previous projects. Much less physical labour, but much more responsibility. "Very demanding," Julie remembers. "Just constantly having to consider materials, budget, and the organization of trades and equipment."

In his 13 years at Wildfire, much has been accomplished. Multiple high level amateur events and by the end of this year, three professional PGA Tour Canada events will be under his belt. To this day, Julie could not be happier with his decision to move his young family to Lakefield, Ontario. "It is the perfect place to raise a family." ■



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Golf Course Superintendent:
Darryl Yorke

*Hole #18
Green looking down fairway.*

COURSE PROFILE

About the Course

Ash Brook is situated on picturesque countryside with a freshwater brook running through the course and mature ash trees that line the fairways to provide a challenge for all golfers.

Established: 1977, Redesigned 1986

Original Architect: Mac McEwen

Type of Club: Semi-Private

Number of Holes: 18

Number of Rounds Annually: 55,000

Biggest Maintenance Challenge

Being such a busy course it makes top dressing and aerating greens a tough challenge, while an older irrigation system can prove difficult as well.

A CLOSER LOOK

What You Need to Know

Predominant Grass Type: Bluegrass / Bentgrass

Predominant Soil Type: Sandy / Clay

Type of Greens: T-1 Bentgrass / Poa

Course Length: 6,438 yards

Size of Property: 150 Acres

Size of Greens: 2.5 Acres

Size of Tees: 1.5 Acres

Size of Fairways: 22 Acres



Building Steeper Greens is the Way Forward

By Ian Andrew

The most common answer to rebuilding greens, at least in my two decades of experience, has been to make them as gentle as possible.

There are plenty of reasons why. It avoids controversy, allows for high green speeds, and maximizes available pin positions. It can also lead to incredibly boring greens. While I can understand easing off one green to find more areas for flags and playing it a little safe, a set of flat greens leads to repetition.

That was the mindset at Islington Golf Club in Toronto. Islington was once notorious for its putting surfaces. Its Stanley Thompson greens could be devilish. Islington, like a lot of clubs, suffered a huge blow with the ice damage that hit Ontario courses with *Poa annua* greens last winter. The decision was made to rebuild the greens. After consulting with Superintendent Ian McQueen, we elected to create a set of greens that would once

again rival its nearby neighbours. The club entrusted Ian to select the green profile and turfgrass. They gave me the mandate to make the decisions on what should be done with the green surfaces. The plan was to build steep greens, something that hasn't exactly been in vogue in recent years.

I knew only half the greens were the original designs by Thompson and the club made it clear that they were not looking for preservation. They left it up to me to make the decisions on what the new greens should look like and how they should play.

I've been playing regularly at Islington since 1992. I could still remember a time when Islington's greens were famous for being lightning fast and the heart of the golf course. But shade and ice had conspired to create greens that no longer met expectations. Some trees on the property directly surrounding greens were cut down a few years ago, but it was too late to reverse the decline of the surfaces.



6th green post redesign and renovation.

My process in reconceiving the greens was to personally survey every putting surface, identifying all the problems, from ice formation on the surfaces to lack of 'pinnable' areas. I listed my favourite characteristics of each green and the aspects where I felt the surfaces could be improved. I retained every key feature, although a couple were shifted to bring them more into play. The greens at the course that had been rebuilt over the previous decades consistently featured mounds on the edges that effectively eliminated the ability to pin the perimeter and forced most hole locations to the centre. This is even more egregious when the mound began in the middle of a key bunker, eliminating the pin positions tightest to that feature. Have a look at courses with modern greens and more often than not you'll find the single most consistent architectural disappointment is that many greens can't be pinned to the outside edge.

Continued on page 18...



8th Green under construction.



The punchbowl was preserved on the 9th hole.

"I'd rather have Ian manage the speed than be forced to try and manufacture speed. Besides they'll drain better and he'll have more grass."

— Ian Andrew

I determined right away that a few of the iconic greens, those that were the heart of the course, were going to be replicated. I believe it's important as an architect to recognize that some things cannot be improved upon. I also believe that you must address all the problems and make the small modifications that will address ice or limited pin positions. Still, I had some decisions to make, which is the point when I resolved to move forward with more aggressive slopes.

My thought process was based upon the following logic: the bentgrass turf will provide the opportunity for greater speed, and Ian can control the moisture content, meaning firmer and drier green surfaces will generate speed. The most common complaint at Islington was that the greens were too slow, so naturally, the club wants consistently fast greens moving forward.

That said, my answer is to avoid forcing Ian to cut the greens as short as possible every day. By building them on the steep side they will be naturally fast greens. Therefore it's up to Ian to manage the speed, rather than be forced to manufacture speed out of flat greens.

I believe in three important principals that led me to my decision. All great golf courses have complicated greens that are decidedly on the steep side. Green speeds are not going to get slower. More turf equals healthier greens. The answer is a little counterintuitive, but healthy and fast greens were the goal.

I'm confident we've pulled it off at Islington and members will see for themselves when the course reopens this year after a long layoff. If members are engaged and excited by greens that run fast and are interesting, and Ian is able to have healthier turf that isn't as stressed, then it will surely be a win-win situation for all involved. ■

A member of the American Society of Golf Course Architects, Ian Andrew consults to more than 40 courses across Canada and the U.S.



Relocation of 15th green out of flood plain and into sunlight.



*Ian McQueen, Bryan Smith (KCM), Andre Aymar and Ian Andrew
(Credit: Brent Long).*

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The Hard Lessons Learned

The horrible winter of 2014 – and the resulting carnage – has led Ontario superintendents to consider how they operate.

by Robert Thompson

Wade Beaudoin recognizes the duality of the situation. Superintendents – along with practically everyone else in the Ontario golf industry – are tired of talking about the disastrous spring of 2014. They are worn out by the discussion of dead grass, of ice and snow, of temperatures that dipped into the double digits below zero in March.

But Beaudoin, the longtime superintendent at St. Thomas Golf and Country Club, a course that saw the same kind of carnage that hit many Ontario courses last year, also understands that you can't simply ignore what happened, put your head in a snow bank and hope it doesn't recur.

"The truth is what happened last year has everyone concerned," admits Beaudoin, who had temporary greens on much of his course until the end of May last year. "I'm not jumping to any conclusions. This year could be fine or we could have the wrong snow melt and lose it in 48 hours. You just can't tell for sure."

Because of that uncertainty, Beaudoin made subtle changes in what he did with the course. His goal was to be forward-thinking and try to prepare for whatever surprises the winter could throw at him. He explained what he was trying to accomplish to his members, and tried to educate them on the situation at the 90-year old course, which has Poa Annua or annual bluegrass greens.

Beaudoin is like many of his peers – trying to take whatever lessons he learned from the mess that was the spring of 2014 and put them into play into improving his course moving forward. And despite what occurred last year, he's optimistic.

"I'm actually really looking forward to the golf season starting," he says. "I'm really excited for it."

With that, *Green is Beautiful* looks at some of what superintendents in Ontario took away from the turf death of last year, and how they are moving forward with that knowledge.

USE THE FALL TO PREPARE

There have been plenty of ideas for how to deal with the potential challenge of an extremely cold winter. Tarps had mixed success for courses, while other superintendents talk about stripping off some turf in an attempt to keep water from pooling and freezing on their greens, as well as the removal of any collar dams. None of these ideas come with any guarantees, it seems.

But one thing that seems to be almost universal among turf managers with Poa greens is they all have raised mowing heights in an attempt to create heartier, healthier greens. Every superintendent contacted for this story said they raised green heights slightly in the fall

in an attempt to make them more resilient to any problems this winter.

However, raising green heights comes with some potential issues, namely the notion that golfers still relate mowing height in direct proportion to speed. That means many are reluctant to embrace raising mowing heights, even if they will have better greens the following year.

"We've faced a bit of an arms race in the golf business," says Beaudoin. "Golfers have come to expect great greens really late into the year."

But Beaudoin says most of his members didn't notice the change, which saw him raise the mowing height by 30 per cent late in the year and promote more nitrogen in the fall.

Al Schwemler, the property manager at Toronto Golf Club, a historic Harry Colt design, says he also raised his mowing height in the fall in the hope of creating heartier turf heading into the winter freeze.

"We have done everything we can do to promote healthy grass and a better growing environment," he says.

FIND AN AMBASSADOR TO YOUR GOLFERS

Greig Barker, Superintendent at Highland Country Club, isn't sure when the greens on his Stanley Thompson golf course in the heart of London, Ontario started to die last year, and in the end it didn't matter all that much. He had a problem and needed to explain to members not only what the issue was, but how he was dealing with it moving forward. Being proactive with communications, setting objectives that are achievable and are communicated to members, and avoiding rumors among golfers, are key takeaways from the disastrous spring, Barker explains. And part of that communication is connecting personally with the members, which was the case for superintendents at both public and private courses.

"You have to be available to talk to members – that's part of our job," he says. "These days members need to be updated, and if they want to know something, you need to be able to explain it to them. It is just the way our current world works with social media. Our members wanted to be assured we were doing everything we could do."

In Barker's case, he turned to Mike Silver, the club's longtime head pro, to help explain what was going on with the course. Silver regularly held court around the first tee on weekends, offering insights into the recovery process.

"He became my ambassador to the members, and that was really important," Barker says. "It was finding the right guy who understands the club, has a connection to the members. That was really significant."

That works with private clubs, but public courses face a different circumstance. While they can still communicate directly to their customers through social media and email lists, word can quickly spread through the Internet if a course has struggles with its greens

due to weather. That creates a problem, says one public assistant superintendent, who asked to remain anonymous, because a club never wants to admit it has conditioning problems for fear of scaring off paying golfers. And most public courses won't go to temporary greens, even if that is the best solution for their situation.

"At public courses I think your hands are more tied," says the assistant of an established Toronto public course. "And if you make a change it can imply you did something wrong, and that can cost you your job."

PREPARE FOR THE WORST

Burlington Golf and Country Club's Dean Baker had been gearing up for a change at his classic course since he first came to the club in 2012. At that time he found Burlington with too many trees around green sites and turf that was struggling as a result. It was at that point that Baker started an aggressive plan of removing trees to improve the light and airflow on the club's Poa greens.

In the end it couldn't save Burlington's greens, which were hammered by the cold weather and ice. But by being proactive, Baker was prepared for the next step – sodding the club's greens with bentgrass.

"The key was to have the proper growing environments to



Collars being sodded during greens renovation.

sustain bentgrass," Baker says. "Three years ago we wouldn't have been prepared to make this decision."

Beaudoin at St. Thomas faced a similar situation. In the past few years St. Thomas underwent an aggressive and ongoing tree-clearing program to promote healthier greens. While he still struggled with ice damage on his greens, the recovery time was improved on


the putting surfaces where trees had been cleared.

"Those greens were better off, there's no question about it," Beaudoin says.

Sometimes it takes a challenge to move a club forward. Both Beaudoin and Baker agree that their tree removal programs have left their clubs more prepared to deal with any problems that may occur in the future. In Baker's case, his new bentgrass greens should be much more resistant to anything Mother Nature throws at Burlington.

"As bad as it was, we've walked away a better club with a better course," Baker says. "In 10 years we'll be a lot better than we were [before the weather of 2014] and I'm betting at that point there will be grasses that will make the course better still."


Continued on page 23...





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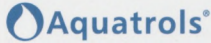


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Damage from the ice storm of late 2013 and the cold snap in the following months was so extensive that vast areas of turf simply died. Superintendents across the province are working to do everything they can to avoid repeating the situation.

Continued from page 21...

STAY THE COURSE

Al Schwemler doesn't remember a situation like the one that hit Toronto Golf Club – and many of the surrounding courses. And his members can't recall a situation like it either – even those members who have been around the historic course for four or five decades.

"It was the worst situation any of them can recall, and that includes members who have been here since the 1950s," says Schwemler. The course had 11 temporary greens, as well as the closure of its putting green, and didn't fully open until the middle of June. Like other clubs, Schwemler sent regular communications out to members, sometimes as many as three times a week, detailing the progress on the course.

That doesn't mean Schwemler didn't make any changes – he did raise mowing heights in the fall from .120 inches to .150 inches, following a pattern set by other clubs ("Members won't really notice a difference," he says) – but he isn't prepared to change his preparation or the direction of the course due to one winter that he expects is an anomaly.

Given that, Toronto Golf Club continues to create the best environments for its greens, which are 30 per cent bentgrass on average, and will continue to do so. That means clearing trees wherever possible, a plan that was in place well before 2014.

"Some clubs have opted to go fully bentgrass," says Schwemler, noting nearby clubs like Islington and St. George's closed to resurface their greens. "Instead of doing that we opted to create the best environments we could for our greens."

That's exactly what Jayson Griffiths, superintendent at London Hunt and Country Club, is planning on doing. Griffiths, who ran the CP Women's Open at his club last August despite decimated greens, says he was already trying to create strong growing environments at his club by removing trees wherever possible. Griffiths says part of the issue was how greens at older clubs were built. At Hunt, like many clubs, he has flat areas that collect water that can then freeze, and the greens don't always drain well. He's tried to remove any area where water can collect and advises clubs to work with their consulting architect and an agronomist to find the right way forward. He adds that wherever possible his team has removed slush from greens to keep it from turning into ice.

"The goal is to help move water off wherever possible," he says. "And you need the staff in place to be able to react to the situation."

Griffiths and Schwemler both agree that 2014 was an anomaly, a rare period where a variety of weather elements came together, and neither superintendent is prepared to treat it as the new normal. But that doesn't mean they won't do everything they can to protect their courses.

"I'm not expecting that we'll see that again," Schwemler says. "It was really the perfect storm of situations coming together."

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

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Heading to Greener Pastures

As of today, February 1st, 2015, the Roots to Shoots column will go quiet because I have entered the next stage of my life – retirement. My career as the OMAFRA Turfgrass Specialist began in November, 1991. As you can well imagine, the turf industry at that time was very different than it is today. Integrated Pest Management was taught in seminars, but not widely implemented on golf courses. There were no European crane flies in Ontario that we knew of, and golf superintendents wore plaid pants.

Fast forward to 2015, where IPM is now mandatory for all golf courses in Ontario in order to continue to use pesticides, European crane flies have spread to many areas of the province and golf superintendents wear solid coloured pants.

It has been my great pleasure to work with many of the OGSA board members (past and present) on things as varied as the speaker programs for the Ontario Turfgrass Symposium, the IPM Advisory Committee of the IPM Council of Canada and the Ontario Turfgrass Research Foundation. I have been a regular contributor to *Green is Beautiful* since the beginning of my career, but most recently with my Roots to Shoots column. It is a challenge that I enjoyed and hopefully the information was useful.

Over the last several months I have been busy creating a new publication, OMAFRA Publication 845, *Integrated Pest Management for Turf* with co-author Dr. Tom Hsiang from the University of Guelph. This publication replaces OMAFRA Publication 162, *Diseases and Insects of Turfgrass in Ontario* and

By the Numbers



20

Years of teaching the Turf Managers' Short Course



207

Technical turf articles written



455

Twitter followers: @ONTurf



2,789

Leatherjackets counted



6,478

Adult Japanese beetles collected

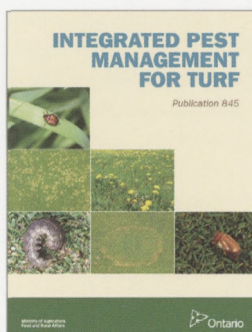


Priceless!

The number of friends and colleagues made over my career!

OMAFRA Publication 816, *Turf IPM Manual*. It contains information on turfgrass soil management and fertilizer use, turfgrass species and water management for turf that was previously found in OMAFRA Publication 384, *Turfgrass Management Recommendations*. The current OMAFRA Publication 384 has been renamed and is now called *Protection Guide for Turfgrass*. It is a companion publication to this publication (OMAFRA Publication 845, *Integrated Pest Management for Turf*).

OMAFRA Publication 845, *Integrated Pest Management for Turf* has been designed as a field handbook for golf courses, lawn care, sod growers and the parks



sector. It will become the recommended study material for the IPM accreditation exam for the Golf Course IPM Accreditation Program, which is required under The Pesticides Act and Regulation 63/09 and is administered by the IPM Council of Canada. There will be a new Golf IPM Exam and study guide written to reflect the new

material in this publication.

This publication contains extensive information on the diseases, insects, and weeds that are found in turf in Ontario with well over 110 colour slides. Also included is a turf disease identification key, turf disease time profile, turf scouting calendar, turf insect injury key and an example of a pest scouting sheet. This publication, along with OMAFRA Publication 384, *Protection Guide for Turfgrass*, provides a complete reference package on turf IPM for Ontario. This publication is available online: www.ontario.ca/crops.

Thank you and all the best! ■



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Gardens: More Than Meets the Eye

This time of year is when gardeners' eyes are bigger than their stomachs.

Pencils hit paper and fingers hit keyboards to begin the planning process for the upcoming season's landscape and garden projects. We all dream big and want to do so many amazing things, but obviously and unfortunately there are restraints, usually relating to finances and man power. As budgets grow tighter, competition grows stiffer and environmental issues continue to make news, we scramble to juggle all of these very precarious issues.

In most cases, gardens on golf course properties are the last thing money is spent on, since they are sometimes viewed as a large expense generating no return. What I have learned in many years designing, installing, maintaining and being involved in the horticulture industry is that there is more than meets the eye when it comes to gardens. Of course a well designed, properly installed garden or landscape has aesthetic value or can control traffic, but can it do more?



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Green for Life!

The decline in pollinating insect populations have been making headlines for a couple years with pesticides being the forerunner for the blame. Creating gardens specific to promoting indigenous pollinators to your area can alleviate some political challenges or public pushback all the while providing a location for life to thrive and sustain. The general opinion on this topic is to use native plant material for such gardens. I believe this to be true to a certain extent, but also know that native isn't always aesthetically pleasing. I also know that there are some non-native plant species that do an amazing job of feeding a multitude of pollinators. Butterfly bush comes to mind. Other plants that do a great job of feeding our pollinating insects and are great aesthetically are bee balm, spirea species, Echinacea cultivars, and lilacs. Advertising these types of gardens to your membership or public could be a strategy to market your club differently than competition in a society that is becoming increasingly environmentally sensitive.

Can gardens be used to create another revenue stream for your golf course property?

In the past I have hosted garden tours for our membership. This was done voluntarily and no additional cost was incurred by the membership. There was a demand for tours and because of my passion for educating people and showcasing my work, I felt no desire to charge the membership. If done differently, there could be a program created where your membership pays for this service which could include a lunch and a complete information/educational session. A large percentage of the population have some form of garden or landscape on their property which is either maintained by the homeowner or someone who is contracted to do it for them. The information provided through a tour can be marketed as teaching best practices and could save attendants money at home or give them confidence that the companies they are paying to maintain their properties are doing a professional job. Advertising the use of your gardens for tours could generate revenue from local horticultural societies, schools, retirement homes and even just the general public who have an interest in paying to see something beautiful and the wildlife that it attracts. In a recent seminar I attended at the Landscape Ontario Congress, I learned of a growing trend, using gardening or plants as a source of therapy for many types of conditions in the young and old alike. Offering the gardens on your property to horticultural or plant therapists can generate some additional income. You could also benefit from a little free labour, and not to mention help improve the lives of some fellow human beings.

How can there possibly be any more that we can get out of our gardens to benefit our club? Well, there is more. Does your property have a kitchen? Is there a farmers market nearby? Vegetable gardening has huge benefits and uses for a golf course property. Advertising to your membership or public that you serve fresh, organically grown, pesticide free food is another great way to separate yourself from your competition. If a strategic program is developed, potential for food cost savings is achievable. If and when there is an abundance that your kitchen can't utilize, a weekly trip to the farmers market can bring in some additional revenue. Using in-house grown vegetables can also be a way to help with retaining employees or sweetening their compensation packages. Food is a major expense impacting an employee's personal budget. Competing with local landscape companies, the retail industry, and the fast food industry for personnel with wages alone may not be enough to sway a person to choose to work in the golf industry over the others.

Finally, growing your own cut flowers can create significant savings if you already have flower arrangements in your clubhouse, proshop or other buildings on your property. Flower arrangements and floral displays can be quite expensive to purchase. I like to use plants like gladiola and lilies for my cut flower specific gardens. These are bulbs which multiply underground creating more and more amazing flowers year after year with very little maintenance. Cut flower specific gardens could be used for producing arrangements for weddings and other events held at your property. If you foresee an overflow or abundance that cannot be used on your site, advertising the sale of cut flowers could help generate a little extra revenue from the membership or public. If you think there might not be a demand, floriculture is a \$100 billion dollar industry globally and cut flowers are amongst the highest grossing cash crops in North America.

Being strategic and thinking outside of the box when it comes to your property can create multiple uses for a singular space that can bring many benefits to your operation. ■



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Fifteen Years Ago Today

The board of directors in 2000 were as follows: Keith Bartlett (President), Thornhill G&CC, Ian Bowen (Past President), Oshawa G&CC, John Gravett (Vice President), Granite GC, Jim Flett, Muskoka Lakes G&CC, Mark Piccolo, Galt CC, Rob Ackermann, Markland Wood CC, Dean Baker, Glen Abbey GC, Jeff Burgess, Weston GC, Robert Burrows (Editor), Rosedale GC, Dave Cours, Erie Shores G&CC, Robert Heron, Beacon Hall GC and Paul Scenna, Donalda Club. Dorothy Hills was the office administrator.

ON THE MOVE: John Taylor went from Twenty Valley G&CC to Hunters Pointe GC. Mark Sevsek, Assistant at Nobleton Lakes GC moved to Rio Vista GC. Chris Davies, who worked at Glen Abbey GC and before that Deer Creek, made a career change and started working for Vanden Bussche Irrigation.

MILESTONES: Alan Beene retired from the Halton Hills CC after thirty six years.

ACHIEVEMENTS: The CGSA Conference and Trade Show was held in Ottawa. Jim Wyllie was awarded the John B. Steel Distinguished Service Award. Paul Dermott, Property Manager of Oakdale G&CC, was the winner of the 2000 Environmental Achievement Award which was co-sponsored by the CGSA and The Toro Company.

At the CGSAA Convention held in New Orleans, *Green Is Beautiful* tied with Iowa's *The Reporter* for the Most Improved Publication at the years Newsletter Editor Session. Robert Burrows, Rosedale GC, was the editor.

EVENTS: Major rainfall events plagued the Toronto area golf courses from April to June. Extensive damage was reported from Robert Cowan, Royal Woodbine GC, Don Crymble, Markham Green GC and Rob Ackermann, Markland Wood CC. Courses were closed and major damage was reported from many other courses during three separate storms.

At the Ontario Turf Symposium, Gary Gravett, on behalf of the Georgian Bay Golf Superintendents Association, presented Rob Witherspoon, director of Guelph Turfgrass Institute, with a \$1,500 check to be put towards GTI research. The OTRF tournament was held at Wooden Sticks GC on August 14th was hosted by Brian Haus. Over \$40,000 was raised for turfgrass research. The GTI Summer Research Field Day was held at the Guelph Turfgrass Institute. After lunch, Jack Eggens, Pam Charbonneau and Ken Carey led the hands-on workshop.

TOURNAMENTS: The President/Greens Chairman/Superintendent Event was held at the Donalda Golf Club, hosted by Paul Scenna. This year's team champion, with a low score of 117, went to John Taylor from Hunters Pointe GC, second place went to Phil Brown from Summit GC (123) and third place went to Aldo Bortolon from Lookout Point CC (127).

The Pro/Superintendent Tournament was held at King Valley, hosted by Jason Honeyball. The top team was led by Ray Richards, Mad River GC, second led by Tom Murphy, Lampton G&CC and third led by Richard Butler, St. Andrews East G&CC. Low scoring superintendent was Jason Ireland from Conestoga CC.

Al Beene hosted the McClumpha Tournament and Keith Bartlett presented him with a watch inscribed with "Congratulations from your colleagues for your years of involvement in the association." First low gross was Bruce Burger (73) and first low net was Kenneth Patterson (64). The George Darou Trophy went to Tom Murphy for the best low gross for over 50.

TRIVIA: Bob Hutcheson, owner of Hutcheson Sand and Gravel, supplied the sand for the 2000 Summer Olympics in Sydney Australia to be used as the sand for the Beach Volley Ball competition.

Tiger mania came to the Canadian Open at Glen Abbey. It was the first time that tickets were sold out for the Canadian Open. To give you an idea of how successful the tournament was, consider these final numbers:

- Ticket sales on property \$100,000 (\$17,000 in 1999)
- Sunday crowds estimated at 60,000 (30,000 in 1999)
- 10,000 hats sold (4,000 in 1999)
- 180 Prime Rib Roasts (80 in 1999)
- 62 kegs = 7,000 glasses of beer (30 kegs in 1999)
- 8,400 bottles of beer (3,600 in 1999)

These figures were taken from an article written by Dean Baker who was the superintendent for many of those Canadian Opens held at Glen Abbey. ■



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Beards

by Doug Breen, Superintendent
GolfNorth Properties

I see that kids are growing beards again. Not the Don Johnson two day shadow of the 80's, or the carefully groomed goatees of the 90's, or the two hour shaving marathon that was the turn of the century chin strap. Nope, these are 1970's style, Grizzly Adams, Creedence Clearwater Revival tour bus, Hippie Jesus Freak, Hillbilly beards. I'm old enough to remember the last time these sweat soaked things were popular, and I don't miss them. At the time, I was too young to grow one, but I remember all of my older cousins looking like the cast of Hair, and smelling vaguely of soup. I always attributed the soupy smell to the beards, although I never really got close enough to any of them to know for sure.

And now the mountain man beard is starting to appear in sports. Did you watch

any of this season's NCAA Football Bowl Games? Didn't matter if it was the Rose Bowl on New Year's Day, or the Marge's Screen Door Repair & Recreational Apothecary Bowl two weeks before Christmas – on each sideline, there were about seventy players sporting enough facial hair to stuff a pillow (bet the thought of the beard hair pillow made you shudder a bit). And the CFL too – the kicker for the Edmonton Eskimos has a beauty, and when he puts on his helmet, the chin strap spreads it all over his face like a hair balaclava. He could rob a bank, if not for the number on his uniform. It's safe to assume that this will eventually find its way onto the golf course. Can it be long before PGA players all have beards like Happy Gilmore's caddy? Will there come a day, where Rory will be strolling up the fairway looking like ZZ Top?

There are even more luxuriant beards, if you go see a band play – especially an Indie band. And if the band has the odd banjo solo, or uses a violin from time to time – it will be plaid flannel and beards from wall to wall. And this is the part that I find the most puzzling – up until now, guys with beards were the toughest of the tough. You know – bikers, lumberjacks, pirates, and such. But now, extravagant facial hair is just as likely to be found on guys who play acoustic guitars, write poetry, and have feelings that they aren't faking. Guys are spending hours shaving their chests, while growing massive beards, and then spending hours grooming that beard. The whole point of these beards in the 70's was to show that "the man" wasn't going to show you how you had to present yourself – that, and they were so addled with drugs, that not having bugs living in your hair, was no longer a priority. What we've ended up with, is thousands of twenty-somethings that look like Gabby Hayes, but smell like Louis the 14th, and spend more time getting ready to go



Don't give those away. They'll be back
in style any day now.

out for the night than Cher. My son's working on a beard right now, but since he's only seventeen, it's coming in more like Joe Dirt's.

But I'm no curmudgeon; I can live with the beards. Just like the first time around, eventually the novelty of the beard will wear off, and girls will decide that looking homeless is unattractive (borderline disgusting), and everyone will shave them off in one weekend. What I'm far more concerned about, is the fact that 1970's clothes are sneaking back too. This is a disaster for the image of golf. We only just got many of our members to stop wearing Rodney Dangerfield's wardrobe from Caddyshack about two summers ago. I can still remember the skin tight peach polo, and plaid polyester pants. When I got into the business in the 80's, they were still being worn, sometimes even still sold on the bargain rack. I could live with PGA golfers growing beards like The Sheepdogs, because I know that they'll disappear, the first time some Club Bunny calls one of them "gross".

But if tour clothing gets any more "pastel" and "microfiber" we're going to have to call it what it is – peach polyester. Eventually, those styles will present themselves on local courses, because we all know that those old boys were far too cheap to actually throw out their 70's garb, and are just waiting for the opportunity to pull them back out of the closet. Then we'll be looking at another two decades of golfers looking like idiots – we have to stop this, the image of the game has come too far. ■

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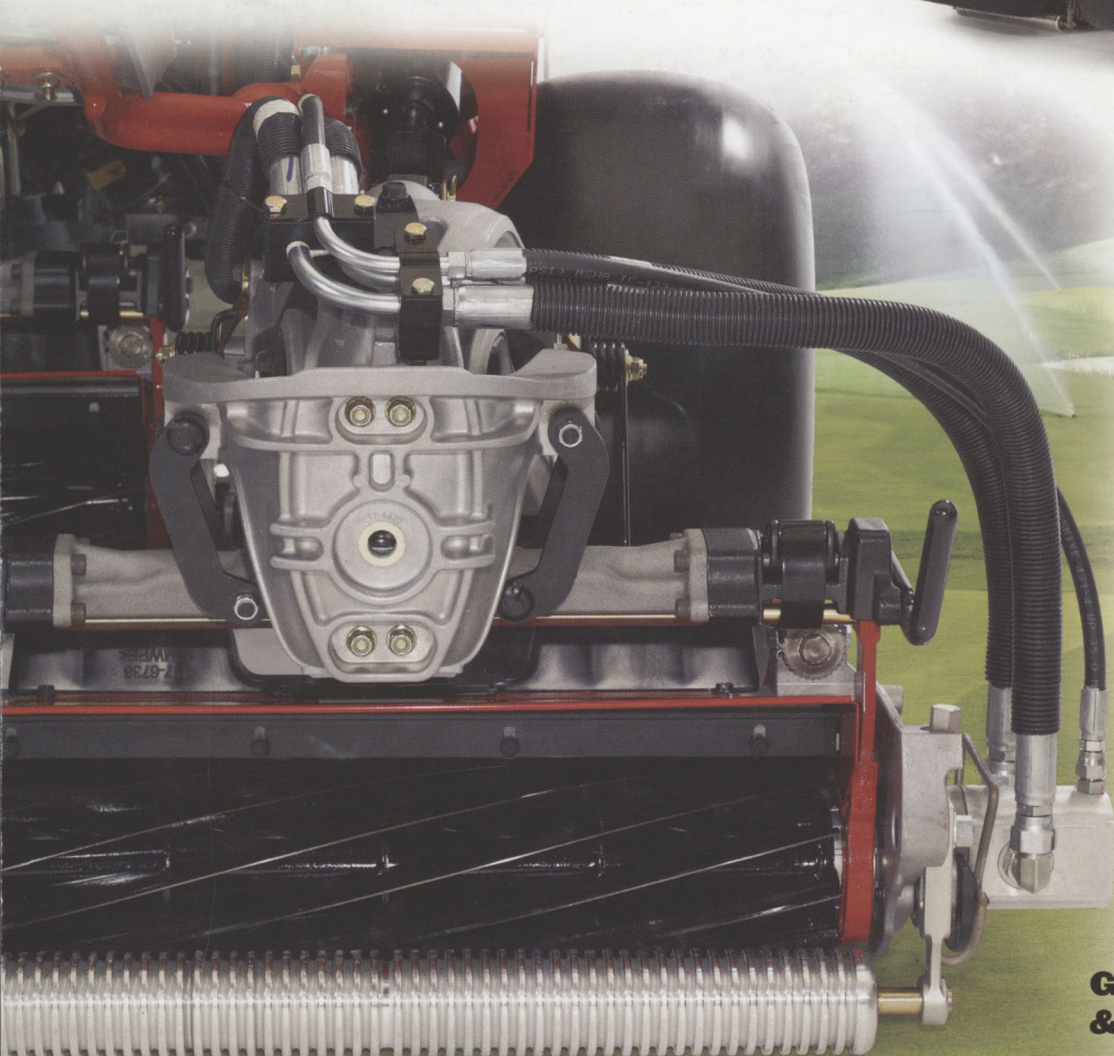


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