

NOVEMBER 2016

ON COURSE

OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE

ONTARIO GOLF SUPERINTENDENTS' ASSOCIATION

The Bethpage Black Experience

Volunteering at a PGA Tour Playoff Event

ALSO INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

Cupp's Canadian Connection Ran Deep

Do Housing Incentives Have Bite?

Staff Retention — Strategies To Keep Quality Employees

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



by Mark Prieur
OGSA President

As this golfing season draws to a close, one is reminded of how rewarding overcoming a challenge can be. The drought is over, leaving many to pick up the pieces and attempt to get the turf put to bed for the winter in relatively good shape. Upon speaking with many superintendents, friends and colleagues, many are glad this season is over with. Also many are glad that they have overcome the challenges that Mother Nature brought this year.

This, of course, leads to winter and conference time. The OGSA is hosting its annual Golf Course Management Conference, January 17th-19th, 2017 in Niagara Falls, Ontario. The Hilton Hotel and Fallsview Casino are by far the best venues we have been able to provide to date. In addition, the new format of linking industry suppliers directly to superintendent members is an exciting idea that will be the framework of future shows. The OGSA has done an excellent job listening to its members and the new format is exciting, educational and convenient for all classes of members. Kudos to the organizing committee and all their efforts.

This will be the last Presidents Message as my term will be complete at the Annual General Meeting in January. There are many people I would like to thank for their input, support and insight in helping shape the future of your association. First, Jeff Stauffer for nominating me for board service initially. Second, to Scott White and Chad Vibert for their friendship and support, as well as my family. Lastly, for all the people who work hard to shape the future of the industry that has been so good to all of us. It is very inspiring. Thank you.

If you haven't considered board service as of yet, please give it some thought. You meet many new people at all levels and sectors of the golf industry. It will improve your net worth both to yourself and your facility. I know it did for me. ■



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ON THE COVER

Zack Stevens, Steve Rabski and Ken Tilt standing in front of hole #17 at the Barclays.
Photo Courtesy: Ken Tilt

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Cam Shaw, Ken Tilt, Stephen Hicks

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

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Keynote Speaker:

Wednesday, January 18th, 2017



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Dr. Mike Agnew, Ph.D.

Technical manager, Syngenta
Turf and Landscape

An Agronomic Approach to
Managing Patch Diseases

Dr. Norm Hummel, Ph.D.

Owner & President of
Hummel & Co. Inc.

The Topdressing Dilemma:
Achieving Fast & Firm Greens

Dr. Geunhwa Jung, Ph.D.

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Massachusetts, Stockbridge
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Fungicide Resistance Management

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Plant Growth Regulators
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EDITORIAL MESSAGE



by Justin Parsons,
Engage Agro Corp.

As the temperatures drop and final preparations are made for winter, we are once again poised to evaluate another season. Since the maintenance staff plays a major role in anything that gets accomplished on the golf course, they are always featured prominently in any yearend evaluations that take place. Unfortunately, it is quite apparent that finding diligent and dependable young foot soldiers to carry out the maintenance plan is becoming a major

challenge at many facilities across Ontario.

Have we (the industry) changed? Have today's youth changed? Just why is it so difficult to find reliable and motivated young help to assist with turf operations? Naturally, we decided to speak with some superintendents who have had continued success in this area to find out what their secret is. I will spare you the expense and tell you right now that there is no magic formula. As much as we all want to believe that there is, there just isn't.

The millennial generation has grown up in a different world than the rest of us – everything can now be found in the palm of your hand instantly. This has proven somewhat problematic for an industry that must rely on good old fashioned hard work to

get most tasks accomplished. There is no easy way to hand-rake a bunker or line trim a ponds edge, you just have to put your head down and work hard until the job is accomplished.

While the world that shapes today's youth is changing rapidly, one thing that hasn't is what makes people happy. Deep down most people want to feel important and need to be appreciative of what they have. If this balance can be struck when hiring, training and leading young maintenance employees, success can be achieved. This notion is reinforced in Kevin Kobzan's article on staff retention that you will find in this issue of *ONCourse*.

In many ways, Steve Rabski's article on volunteering at The Barclay's PGA Tour Event also touches on this concept. Steve talks about how good it feels to be a part of a team working toward a common goal and how he was inspired to bring this feeling back to his own golf club.

In this issue you will also find an article from Robert Thompson on housing incentives for employees and how they can help attract staff to your property. While this luxury may not be possible at all clubs, it does highlight the need for offering more than just a paycheck to lure good employees. After Bob Cupp's passing a few months ago, Robert also writes about the legacy that the noted architect left in Canada. You will find all this and more as you flip through the pages of our November issue. ■

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WHAT'S NEW

by Sally Ross, OGSA Executive Manager

OGCM CONFERENCE 2017

We are deep in the throes of planning the conference and with the support of all our members getting on board with our new format, we expect a successful event, with exceptional returns to be experienced by all facets of our membership. We hope the conference will continue to reinforce the importance of life-long learning, while sharing a common cause, and the many friendships experienced by our membership in the past will be renewed once again. The conference will have an inclusive flavour, while adopting the all-inclusive plan.

We hope post conference that we can say without a doubt that the days of expecting our suppliers to spend tens of thousands of dollars to transport product, displays and equipment, just to experience a networking session with their clients, are gone. We aim to provide an exceptional educational and networking experience for everyone.

Sponsorship is a large part of our revenue stream for the event and we thank those companies who have already jumped on board. We hope that others will follow suit to help make this event as successful as possible. Please contact Sally Ross in the office for sponsorship opportunities. If you have not yet registered, please do so as

early as possible. It will assist us in planning and actually add more value to the event. We only seek to ensure that revenue is adequate enough to sustain the association, support our many activities and member services, while keeping dues at a manageable level for all members.

MEMBERSHIP DUES

All dues have been billed and were due on October 1st as per our by-laws. We are now at the stage where reminders are being sent out for unpaid dues. If you have not already paid your dues, please go online to pay, or call the office to arrange payment. Thank you to all those members who have paid promptly as it helps to cut down on the administrative costs.

If any of your personal or employment information has changed, we do ask that you contact the office immediately or update your online profile. Class changes must be done by the office. Questions or concerns? Please call us. We are here to help and we thank you for your ongoing support.

OGSA ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The OGSA Annual General Meeting is scheduled for 7:15 AM on Thursday, January 19th, 2017 in Maple A & B at the Fallsview Casino Hotel, Conference level.

WELCOME to Our New Members

Marc China	Class S
University of Guelph	
Denver Hart	Class S
University of Guelph	
Dustin Louth	Class F
Lake St. George Golf Club	
Alexander O'Hara	Class C
Wyndance Golf Club	
Victor Ranieri	Class C
Don Valley Golf Course	
Dalton Rowbotham	Class S
University of Guelph	
Jeffrey-William Thoburn ...	Class S
University of Guelph	
Leemco, Inc.	Class E

Annual Reports and financial statements will be provided at the meeting. If you are unable to attend, all reports will be available post conference, online.

Official notice of meeting and any accompanying information will be posted on our website and linked in *Clippings* as per our by-laws.

There will be a by-law change to comply with our GCSAA affiliation agreement; Class Supt will now become Class B.

GCSAA CHAPTER DELEGATES MEETING

OGSA Director Jason Boyce represented the OGSA at the GCSAA Chapter Delegates meeting held in Lawrence, Kansas this past October and will be carrying the vote for all OGSA members who have assigned their vote to the Chapter at the upcoming GCSAA AGM. If anyone wishes to express their opinion or has any concerns regarding the candidates that the OGSA will support for election to the GCSAA Board, or any other agenda items that will be voted upon at the GCSAA AGM, please contact Jason or the OGSA office prior to December 31st, 2016. Further details will be posted on our website when they become available. ■

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Assistants Tournament Recap

by Sally Ross, OGSA Executive Manager

This past August 23rd, 92 golfers participated in the OGSA's 14th Annual Assistants Tournament at Brantford Golf and Country Club.

The weather was exceptional and so too were the course conditions, which Superintendent Paul Evenden said were directly attributable to the hard work of Assistant Superintendent Ryan Marangoni and his crew. An excellent turnout and tremendous support from our sponsors helped make this a memorable day for all assistants who attended.

The first place team was Jeremy Hubbard from Pike Lake Golf Centre Ltd., Darren Fritz and John Mellor from Piper's Glen Golf Club, and Paul Lenartowich from Skyway Lawn Equipment Ltd., with a score of 59. Second place went to the team of Kyle Attwood and Matt Cockburn from Glen Abbey Golf Club, Jeff Mottershead from Willow Valley Golf Course and James Raynor from Vanden Bussche Irrigation with a 61 by retrogression. Also with a 61, the third place team was Michael Ainsworth from Rosedale Golf Club, Colin White from Bayer, Robert Lewis from Deer Creek Golf and Gerry Fox from Dalewood Golf Club.

There were some big winners of the day; Lesley Thomas from Scarboro Golf & Country Club won a Toro 20" Recycler Mower in a special draw, and Matt Booth from Oshawa Golf & Curling Club was the recipient of a Husqvarna gas powered trimmer for winning the putting contest. Both prizes and the management of the putting contest were courtesy of Turf Care Products. An additional prize of a barbecue was awarded to Virginia Kinney from Mad River Golf Club, courtesy of BrettYoung/Plant Science.

Other on course prizes, all a value of \$250 or more, were awarded to the following participants: Closest to the pins, Pat Sinclair from Copper Creek Golf Club and Darren Fritz from Piper's Glen Golf Club. Longest Drives went to Rob Lewis from Deer Creek Golf & Country Club and Dennis Kim from Scarboro Golf & Country Club. These prizes were courtesy of Ontario Seed Co., Vanden Bussche Irrigation, Syngenta and



Clockwise: 1st Place Team - John Mellor, Jeremy Hubbard, Paul Lenartowich, and Darren Fritz; Host Superintendent, Paul Evenden (left) receives a plaque for hosting the event; Host Assistant Superintendent Ryan Marangoni (left) receives a plaque from Stephen Hicks of Dundas Valley G&CC.

Zander Sod Co. Ltd. The OGSA would like to thank these companies for their support.

The OGSA would also like to thank our Platinum Sponsor; Turf Care Products, Gold Sponsors; Bayer and BrettYoung/Plant Science, and Silver Sponsors; G.C. Duke Equipment Ltd., Engage Agro Corp., Plant Products, Allturf and Quali-Pro. This support provided all attendees with a great gift from the prize table. Additional prizes donated for the draw were from R.J. Burnside, Nutrite, Bayer, Ontario Seed Co., G.C. Duke Equipment Ltd., Plant Products and BrettYoung.

Master of Ceremonies was Stephen Hicks from Dundas Valley Golf & Curling Club, who presented the prizes and the host awards to both Ryan Marangoni and Paul Evenden.

Special thanks go to Stephen Hicks from Dundas Valley Golf & Country Club and Ken Tilt from Trafalgar Golf & Country Club who worked on the tournament organization and acquisition of sponsorships and all the staff at Brantford Golf & Country Club who worked tirelessly to ensure everyone had a great experience. ■

ALEX McCLUMPHA MEMORIAL TOURNAMENT RECAP

by Sally Ross, OGSA Executive Manager

The OGSA's 70th Alex McClumpha Memorial Tournament was held at Whitevale Golf Club on Tuesday, October 11th. 83 golfers enjoyed the excellent late season golf conditions and post-Thanksgiving camaraderie at Whitevale.

OGSA Director Andrew Lombardo acted as the Emcee for the tournament and prior to dinner introduced David Kuypers from Syngenta, who had brought a special foursome out to enjoy the day. The legends of the industry, as the foursome was named, included Paul Dermott, OGSA Past President and Distinguished Service Award winner, Gregg Allan, recently retired from Syngenta and a strong supporter of superintendents, the association and the golf industry, Thom Charters, OGSA Past President and active long time member and Clay Switzer. Clay, along with Paul and Thom, pioneered the creation of the Guelph Turfgrass Institute. Clay was called upon to say a few words to the attendees. Some of Clay's achievements include; Chair of the Botany Department at University of Guelph, Associate Dean and Dean of the OAC, President of the Agricultural Institute of Canada, and lastly, Deputy Minister of Agriculture for Ontario. He has also served as President of the University of Guelph Alumni Association. He is OGSA's inaugural Distinguished Service Award winner and an honorary member of the OGSA.

Following dinner, Andrew Lombardo presented the host superintendent, Blair Rennie with a plaque, in acknowledgement of his contributions to the success of the event. Blair in turn praised his assistant, Kyle Young for his dedication. Andrew also thanked the companies that supported the event with sponsorship and specialty prizes; Allturf Ltd., Vanden Bussche Irrigation, and Turf Care Products for providing the traditional snow blower to the winner of the George Darou trophy. Companies and courses who provided prizes were also recognized; Royal Woodbine GC, Engage Agro Corp., Weston G&CC, Plant Products Inc., and BrettYoung.

The first time winner of the George Darou trophy was Rob Ackermann of Weston Golf and Country Club. The presentation was made by Bill Martel of Turf Care Products. First place for low gross of Flight A was Andrew Lombardo (Wyndance GC), second place was Stephen Hicks (Dundas Valley G&CC), and Matt Booth (Oshawa G&CC) came in third. First, second and third low net for Flight A went to Kyle Young (Whitevale GC), Jordan Barber (Beacon Hall GC), and Jim Flett (Muskoka Lakes G&CC) respectively. Low gross winner for Flight B was John Alpaugh (Allturf Ltd.), second low gross went to Kevin Holmes (MBTW Golf Design), and third low gross went to Paul Lenartowich (Skyway Lawn Equipment Ltd.). Scott White (Ontario Seed Co.) won the first low net for Flight B, with second and third places awarded to Corrie Almack (Almack Agronomic Services Inc.), and David Kuypers (Syngenta). Longest drive and closest to the pin for Flight A went to Matt Davidson (Devil's Pulpit GA) and Kyle Young (Whitevale GC). Flight B's longest drive and closest to the pin went to Tim Fleury (Conestoga G&CC) and Mike Kehoe (Nutrite). There were four skins awarded, sharing almost \$600. Mr. Lombardo thanked the attentive staff for their hard work and dedication for what was an exceptional day. ■



Andrew Lombardo of Wyndance GC
wins Low Gross - Flight A



John Alpaugh (left) of Allturf Ltd.,
wins Low Gross - Flight B



Scott White (left) of Ontario Seed
Co., wins Low Net - Flight B



Kyle Young (left) of Whitevale GC,
wins Low Net - Flight A



Robert Ackermann (left),
Superintendent at Weston G&CC,
receives the George Darou Trophy
from Bill Martel of Turf Care
Products



Superintendent Blair Rennie
(right) receives a plaque from OGSA
director Andrew Lombardo for
hosting the event



ONCourse contributors, L-R: Kevin Kobzan (Donalda Club), Reg Langen
(Richmond Hill G&CC), Cam Shaw (Piper's Heath GC), and Stephen
Hicks (Dundas Valley G&CC)



Above: Beacon Hall Golf Club, Hole #15; Right: Bob Cupp (left) with Paul Scenna, Director of Golf Course Operations at Beacon Hall.



Cupp's Canadian Connection Ran Deep

By Robert Thompson

Bob Cupp was one of the most successful and celebrated golf designers of the last three decades, as well as a renaissance man who drew, played guitar, painted, and sang.

Cupp, who died in August at the age of 76, made his mark in Canada, and specifically Ontario, with designs like Beacon Hall in Aurora, Mad River near Collingwood, and Deerhurst in the Muskokas.

His break in Canada came at Beacon Hall in 1988, followed by Deerhurst two years later, and Mad River (which he'd later extensively renovate) soon after. British Columbia's Big Sky, with its majestic mountain vistas, followed, and then nothing more. A plan to work in a collaboration with Doug Carrick on the site that became Coppinwood, near Uxbridge, Ont., fell through and Cupp never built another course in Canada.

"At the time when I broke in, Graham Cooke, Doug Carrick and Tom McBroom were just getting started," Cupp said in an interview in 2008. "There was a vacuum. I got work and it is the same reason Mike Hurdzan got Devil's Pulpit."

The Ontario superintendents who worked with Cupp remember him fondly as a man with a big vision for golf that matched his larger-than-life personality.

"He was a big strapping guy who loved hockey," says Ed Farnsworth, who worked with Cupp in the creation of Deerhurst. "His whole persona was big. He was terrific to work with."

Cupp's personality—and his understanding of the challenges facing golf superintendents—is something people who knew him talk about.

"He was a great supporter of the superintendent," says Bob Heron, who worked as superintendent at Beacon Hall soon after it opened. "He recognized the importance of our job. That's not the case with every golf architect, that's for sure."

Heron adds Cupp enjoyed the notion of having brown creep into a golf course, noting the back nine of Beacon Hall, with its links—like features, plays well when it is firm and fast.

"I think he was a frontrunner when it comes to brown is better," says Heron.

Cupp's design career slowed in recent years largely because he had so many other interests.

"I have too many hobbies," Cupp said. "I like to paint and sculpt. I'm a musician and singer. I just have too many distractions."

And instead of taking on more design work, Cupp wrote a novel, *The Edict*. A work of historical fiction, the book speculates that the ban on golf in 1457 by King James came about not because of the need to sway people from the links and train them as archers, but because one of the parliamentarians behind the law had huge outstanding golf bets.

"The idea of my book is that the story of golf goes so far back that we're not certain about a lot of the early years," he said. "But there's just enough to tickle your fancy. That's what fascinates me."

At Highlands and Beacon Hall, Cupp used Canadian architect Thomas McBroom as his site supervisor. Cupp was hired for the project because his fees were lower than some of the big names—like Jack Nicklaus—says Farnsworth. But Cupp proved his value on early walks around the Muskoka property as he identified key natural areas—like the rocky outcropping on the 10th hole—that he wished to incorporate into his design.

"We hired him because he'd worked for Nicklaus and because of how good Beacon Hall had turned out," Farnsworth says.

Paul Scenna, the current superintendent at Beacon Hall, first met Cupp on one of the architects many visits to the club. Cupp credited Beacon Hall as helping launch his career after he stopped working with Nicklaus.

"He said he would never choose favourites, but he always called Beacon Hall his first born," says Scenna. "It was really his first project and he was really proud of it."

But it was Cupp's unique personality that caught Scenna's attention. On one visit to Beacon Hall, Cupp stayed with Scenna and his family, fixing a guitar in the house and playing after dinner was complete.

"Most importantly he was a great guy and a super's friend," says Scenna. "He would listen to your suggestions and while he had opinions, he didn't push them. He was a guy you wanted to be around." ■

Brantford Golf & Country Club

11th Green
Credit: Ryan Marangoni

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About the Course

Established in 1879, Brantford is the fourth oldest golf club in North America

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Type of Club: Private

Number of Holes: 18

Number of Rounds Annually: 30,000

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Member Since 1991

Paul Evenden

Superintendent, Brantford Golf & Country Club

*by Ryan Marangoni, Assistant Superintendent,
Brantford Golf & Country Club*

Buckle your seat belt and strap yourself into the DeLorean because we are heading back to the 80's on a dark and stormy night many moons ago. Tucked away in a genetics lab at the University of Guelph, a student was peering out a window in deep thought as rain trickled down the glass. A bolt of lightning in the sky and a deep sigh from a young Paul Evenden signaled that something was not sitting quite right. "I just could not see myself working in a lab the rest of my life."

While studying at Guelph, Evenden worked for his father in a hobby shop sweeping floors and selling model airplanes to customers part-time. As fate would have it, one of Mr. Evendens' frequent patrons was the General Manager of Hamilton Golf and Country Club, John Mickle. He saw the fire in young Paul's eyes and offered him a summer job on the grounds crew while in school. It was not long after that



*Paul Evenden, Superintendent,
Brantford Golf & Country Club*

Evenden switched programs out of genetics into the Turf Management program at the University of Guelph where he graduated in 1991. When asked why, Evenden simply says, "I liked working outside too much."

Evenden worked as a student greenskeeper

In the Hot Seat

Q: Favourite golf tournament?

A: The Masters

Q: Favourite piece of turf equipment?

A: Toro ProCore 648

Q: Favourite golf course?

A: Hamilton G&CC, West & South

Q: Ultimate foursome?

A: Former superintendents at Brantford G&CC, Rick Piccolo, Vince Piccolo & Morley Finley

Q: Favourite Movie:

A: *Back to the Future*

Q: Lowest round and where?

A: 90 at Brantford G&CC

from 1987 to 1989 at Hamilton Golf and Country Club. In 1989, he was the first recipient of the Warren Harding Award, a coveted honour given to an employee by the membership to aid with the financial demands of post-secondary education. In 1990, he took his talents down the 403 to Glen Abbey Golf Club, where his strong work ethic contributed to the success of the Canadian Open. Although Evenden only had one season to gain experience from superintendent Dean Baker, it was a vital relationship nonetheless. "He taught me to maintain sanity in this industry. In order to do so, you need a good work-life balance. This job will eat you up pretty quick if you don't have the balance."

Upon graduation, Evenden went back to Hamilton and became Rhod Trainor's Assistant Golf Course Superintendent from 1991 to 1998. He cherished every year he was there, having a front row seat watching a very confident superintendent in Trainor, who set the bar higher for him and the golf course, always striving to do better. In 1999, amongst Y2K anticipation, Evenden landed the assistant superintendent position at Dundas Valley Golf and Curling Club, a title he held until 2001, at which point he tested

the waters in a career change, leaving the golf industry completely. Evenden remembers telling himself, "the only way I would get back into turfgrass is if an opportunity comes up at Brantford Golf and Country Club." As luck would have it, that prospect came to light and later in the year Evenden became the fifth superintendent at Brantford Golf and Country Club, a rank he continues to hold.

Throughout his sixteen years at the helm, Brantford Golf and Country Club has transformed into what it is today. In 2001, the clubhouse was rebuilt, and the ryegrass fairways were burned off and re-seeded to bentgrass. The bunkers also received a complete renovation in 2004 to 2005. In 2009, a brand new maintenance facility was built, and from 2012 to 2015 new forward tee decks on select holes were installed to support golf's changing demographic. You can certainly see aspects of his prior mentors in Paul's day to day operations at Brantford. Each day he continues to set the bar higher for himself and the crew.

Most recently he upgraded from the traditional chalk job board to a more modern turf management software program. Evenden is also frequently testing out new apps and tech gadgets that relate to turf and resource management. But what makes Evenden such a well-rounded professional is his demeanor with people. The trust he puts in his staff and the freedom he gives them to succeed and grow make him a true leader.

Like many superintendents, Evenden has a very meticulous nature which translates well to his hobbies away from the golf course. He is both a self-taught woodworker and beekeeper.



One of Evenden's Windsor chairs, crafted with traditional wood carving techniques – without power tools!

What You Need to Know

Predominant Grass Type: Poa/Bentgrass

Predominant Soil Type: Sandy loam

Type of Greens: Pushup

Course Length: 6,600 yards

Size of Property: 117 acres

Size of Greens: 2.5 acres

Size of Tees: 2.5 acres

Size of Fairways: 22.5 acres

Major Challenges

The changing work force. Difficulty finding new committed employees.

"Paul is a true professional and approaches his work with great interest, intensity and focus. Whether it is managing the golf course, beehives or woodworking he displays great passion for every activity in which he is involved. His positive attitude, engaging personality and open mind has taken the golf course to another level. I have known Paul since working on a grounds crew together twenty-six years ago and it is always a pleasure meeting to discuss business and catching up on the past and present as friends. I consider him to be one of the best in the business."

— Mike Kehoe, Technical Sales, Nutrite

Continued on page 15...

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7th Green; Photo Credit: Ryan Marangoni

His father introduced him to beekeeping at a very young age and he managed to pick it back up in 2013. Paul helped pioneer Brantford Golf and Country Club to be one of the first courses in Canada to support *Operation Pollinator*. Each year the wild flower areas expand to new parts of the golf course with the help of Paul's three beehives. "Bees are great for the golf course. I get honey and they enhance the flowering plants throughout the course," claims Evenden. The hives produce anywhere from 150 to 300 pounds of honey annually. The honey gets sold to members and it is especially satisfying to them to know it is honey created from their golf course.

Paul's second self-proclaimed hobby is woodworking. Specifically, the construction of Windsor chairs. "Woodworking and turf management are similar in the sense they both require extreme attention to detail,"



Evenden's hives produce anywhere from 150-300 pounds of honey annually.

says Evenden. All of the Windsor chairs Paul has made have been constructed from start to finish entirely by hand. Crafted with traditional techniques; no nails, no screws and definitely no power tools. In 2008, Paul completed his first Windsor chair course in New Hampshire. In 2015, seven years and seven different types of Windsor chairs later, Paul became a Knight of Windsor chair making. "It is solitary. I am not thinking about the course or members or staff. It is just me in the workshop with the dog, building a chair with my hands. Which [working with your hands] is something you do less of when you are a Super."

On the personal side of things, Paul has been married for 23 years to his wife Susan. Paul and Susan have two daughters, Emma and Jessica, and the family also has a two-year-old golden retriever named Myrtle. "Myrtle is a celebrity on the course. She chases geese once in a while," Evenden exclaims with a wink. Paul and Susan are big New England Patriots fans. "Well, my wife more so, I am just along for the ride. If you don't put the jersey on, they won't win!" The couple manages to get away a few times every year. Whether it is up to the cottage in Burk's Falls or down to New Hampshire, the Evenden's seem to have the work-life balance figured out. Emma started her first semester at the University of Guelph this fall, becoming the fourth generation of Evenden's to attend that institution. One of her study buildings is MacDonald Hall, which is the same building her great grandmother studied in years ago. Paul is a very proud father and husband and he is proud of the product he produces daily at the

fourth oldest golf club in North America.

When you consider his interesting family heritage, and the many success Paul has had in his career already, it would be hard to turn down a ride from Doc Brown to see what tremendous accomplishments the future has in store for Paul Evenden. ■

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Do Housing Incentives Have Bite?

By Robert Thompson with Stephen Hicks

Matt Eastman faced a number of challenges. A new job at a new private club, one in a new city following a move from Vancouver. But one of his biggest struggles was determining where to live.

Toronto, as most recognize, isn't inexpensive and finding decent rental housing is difficult, especially as one is getting themselves established.

Eastman came to Mississauga Golf and Country Club when former superintendent Adam Zubek joined in 2011. When the club offered accommodations in its classic clubhouse, Eastman took them up on the option. He had interned at Capilano, and joined the venerable private club outside of Toronto as an assistant superintendent in training. Needless to say, it wasn't a position that offered huge compensation, but the opportunity to learn under Zubek was beneficial.

"It was sort of like having a dorm room in university," says Eastman, of living in the clubhouse. "I really enjoyed it. And yes there are some challenges living in the clubhouse, but it worked out."

As finding qualified maintenance staff becomes increasingly difficult, clubs are

looking to options like providing housing in an effort to entice new employees. Mississauga is far from alone. While many clubs offer housing for their superintendents, it is becoming more common for clubs to follow Mississauga's lead. Clubs like Beacon Hall, Osprey Valley, and others have offered housing, claiming it is helpful in attracting and retaining new employees.

Beacon Hall in Aurora has housed many staffers who later moved to become superintendents. Lebovic's super, Colin Young, former Coppinwood super Sean DeSilva, and Essex's past superintendent Greg Brown, all spent time in the club's housing, nicknamed "The Treehouse."

Paul Scenna, the club's superintendent, says the housing is a big benefit given the costs of living in the area surrounding the club. Housing has been offered since the club opened in 1988.

"It's a great asset to attract both assistants, spray techs and interns who otherwise could

not afford the affluent area of Aurora while recently having completed school or are in school," he says. "It's an opportunity to pay back some bills, and maybe save some money while living in a fun environment close to work."

The house at Beacon has five bedrooms, a kitchen and a large common area, and Scenna says it is definitely a key to drawing interns to the club, which charges \$350 per month in rent for the space. That doesn't come close to covering the operating expenses of the house, he points out, adding it sometimes houses assistant golf pros as well as greens staff. Assistant Super Jordan Barber and spray tech Mark Patterson lived in the house this year, and were joined by Zach Tomlinson, an intern from the University of Guelph's turf program.

As for the question of what goes on in the house, Scenna says there's no question good times occur every so often.

"If only the walls could talk I am sure there are some great stories," he says. "The guys could tell you better, it does become a party house at times."

Eastman admits there can be some challenges to living in a clubhouse. Unlike clubs that offer housing removed from their operations, Mississauga's is part of a vibrant club. That meant dressing appropriately when leaving the clubhouse, and not readily being able to get outside of the club's gravity. Though there were concerns he'd be the first one called in the event of any problem at the course as he was the closest, that didn't turn out to be the case, he says.

However, on a personal level, Eastman had to plan his social life around his ability to get in and out of the clubhouse.

"You don't have the privacy you might otherwise expect," he says. "And doing anything socially can be a bit of an issue."

And don't think of inviting someone back to your living space in the clubhouse, he adds.

"That would be a little awkward," he says.

Reg Langen, an assistant at Richmond Hill Golf Club, says the public course has two places where staff can live. One is a farm house where the super lives, while Langen lived in an apartment that was part of the clubhouse. Living in the apartment was a taxable benefit, says Langen, and factored into his overall compensation. He lived in



"The Treehouse" at Beacon Hall Golf Club.

the apartment for five years, including a stint after he got married where the couple shared the space.

"There are downfalls to it, but honestly it was a huge benefit," he says.

Those living on site can be asked to do more than other employees, Langen says, and privacy can occasionally be an issue.

"I helped clear snow in the winter, and I'd get up really early to do that," he says. "That's pretty typical. As long as you feel it is mutually beneficial, especially in the winter when you need some downtime, I think it works. It gave me a chance to save money—and frankly I should have saved more."

Aaron Hill, the Assistant Superintendent at Osprey Valley, the sprawling public golf facility north of Toronto, lives in housing provided by the club. But unlike other clubs, Osprey Valley's housing is only available to club managers. While some see staff housing as opportunities for team building, Hill says it could be problematic to have management and staff living in the same space.

"The house is not open to staff," he says. "Being in management and mixing staff in the living quarters can be a bad idea. So the house has strictly been offered to myself."

However, there are advantages for the club, Hill says, as his proximity allows him to access the club in off-hours if need be.

"I believe more courses should look into this option," he says. "You may attract more interested workers with a passion for the job."

Often time's superintendents have houses as part of their compensation from the club. But that can be an issue if the super and the club part ways.

John Gall, the Superintendent at Cherry Hill Golf Club near Fort Erie, knows this all too well. When Gall parted ways with St. George's in Toronto a decade ago not only did he find himself without a job, but

without a home. Gall had previously lived in a club home when working at Oshawa Golf and Country Club.

That said, Gall never found the notion of living on site to be intrusive.

"I never had a GM or greens chair show up on my door on a Sunday," he says.

In fact, there were benefits—no commute, you could turn on the sprinklers on a warm July day if the poa was wilting, and "you could deal with a lightning strike on the course while watching a football game."

However, it wasn't all positive.

"You're not invested in real estate and that can be tough when you enter that market," he says.

The situation with superintendents is different than other maintenance staff. With housing, especially in urban centers, becoming prohibitively expensive when it comes to students and new employees, Scenna says there's a definite need for housing. It helps attract and retain the best possible new employees, as well as those from outside the immediate geographic region.

"For sure gives more opportunity to attract quality people outside of our area," he says. "If it's possible to include and offer it's a very valuable asset to have. People make the difference in any operation."

For Eastman, the program at Mississauga has proven invaluable, not just for him, but for the club moving forward.

"I would say it has been easier to bring on interns and other staffers," he explains. "It is something we highlight when we're seeking new employees and interns. There's no question it works." ■

Robert Thompson is a veteran golf writer and regular contributor to numerous magazines. Stephen Hicks is the Assistant Superintendent at Dundas Valley.

Staff Retention

Strategies To Keep Quality Employees

By Kevin Kobzan, Donalda Club

Any turf manager realizes the integral role that staff play in the monumental task of maintaining a golf course property. One of the biggest challenges superintendents now face is finding and retaining quality individuals that are required to carry out the maintenance plan. In fact, some may argue that this has become just as difficult a task as the maintenance itself.

Many factors come into play when attempting to understand why it has become so difficult to attract and keep valued employees. For example, a lack of full time employment, wages, early mornings and the amount of time spent at work can all be potential turnoffs for today's youth. Furthermore, the type of labour required in the golf course maintenance setting is very old-fashioned in that it requires a great deal of 'elbow grease' – something the millennial generation who have grown up in an automated world are not as accustomed to. With both time and money involved in training staff on equipment, etiquette and expectations, individuals who are reliable and versatile have become highly sought after assets.

So is there a magic formula that can assist managers to bring in and retain dependable

staff? After speaking with some Ontario superintendents, the answer is probably no. However, they do offer some tactics that may just help you in your pursuit to find and motivate your next crop of employees.

After 35 years as a superintendent, it's fair to say that John Taylor has observed a lot throughout the span of his managerial career. During his tenure, Taylor, who is currently the Superintendent at Grand Niagara Golf Club, has incorporated several non-traditional strategies in an attempt to keep his crew stimulated. He has witnessed first-hand when skilled workers seek other avenues for employment. "I have been in this business long enough and in my opinion we have lost too many great people," says Taylor.

Over the last few years, Taylor has altered the way he structures departmental shifts and has incorporated more of a nine-to-five work environment. Now, full-timers work 40 hours per week, while receiving two days off a week. The trade-off is having eight-hour day shifts on the weekends, with part-timers filling in to assist with the staffing.

"We try to make our atmosphere like the rest of the world and we find it helps with our staff retention and keeping them happy,"

says Taylor. "I've evolved with what we do today. We are not losing people and I believe it is a great system, something I honestly wish I had done many years ago."

However, top priority still revolves around the golf course and those who play it, which is something Taylor emphasizes with his staff. But just like any other operation, everyone involved needs to work together to make it succeed. "We are trying to present a very high end product and we can't let that drop," says Taylor. "If the way we staff things doesn't work we will have to modify it, but this year has gone extremely smooth. I've had great luck with this group here."

This makes having everyone focused and knowing their roles extremely important. For Taylor, training is the key to the operations' success. Even though he considers himself a 'progressive type' manager, having versatile staff is the objective. "For the most part you start at the bottom of the totem pole and work your way up," says Taylor. "I certainly want to have people trained on everything."

Although training is essential, putting trust in your staff and showing them respect are also key components for building a strong, motivated team. His approach to management is more hands off, and he gives



"I've never had staff retention like this in all my years, and trust me I've tried everything, and I attribute it to the schedule we have. It has proven to be effective and it helps keep great people around."

John Taylor, Superintendent
Grand Niagara Golf Club





"We like to expedite the process of developing staff once they gain our respect through hard work and dedication. Everybody has the chance to learn because people can become stagnant."

Al Schwemler, Superintendent
The Toronto Golf Club



a little leeway when required. "I don't like to stand over someone's shoulder and I don't like to lecture people, and in the end I think they appreciate it."

Taylor so far has experienced success since he has started using this approach, and is content and satisfied with the outcome. With the extended hours on the weekend, staff are always present, which in the event of bunker washouts, becomes useful. Moreover, lost time has been virtually erased, which is also beneficial. "It is human nature for people to lose interest in what they're doing, but people here were refreshed especially after a long hot summer," says Taylor.

In the end Taylor knows what works for him may not work for others, but it has proven to be effective with his personality and operation. "You need the right people and right property," says Taylor. "I've never had staff retention like this in all my years, and trust me I've tried everything, and I attribute it to the schedule we have. It has proven to be effective and it helps keep great people around."

Building a culture and creating an environment for growth within an organization can also contribute to long-term success. For Al Schwemler, Superintendent at The Toronto Golf Club, this statement stands true. Producing a family atmosphere where all employees have an opportunity to add to their personal portfolio helps improve morale. Staff are welcomed and encouraged to take courses to help shape their skillset.

"It is part of the clubs culture as a whole. Everybody likes to learn and the more they learn the better they are and we are," says Schwemler. "This helps keep people engaged."

The club employs 30 people, which is typical for a maintenance staff. However, approximately 20 have been in the organization over ten years, which speaks to the strength of the culture Schwemler and his team have built.

With 26 years' experience as a superintendent, Schwemler has developed management strategies based on his personal experiences and the different methodologies



The staff at The Toronto Golf Club participate in a team-building horseshoe tournament.

he's discovered have led to success along the way. The process at The Toronto Golf Club involves diversifying the tasks for everyone through extensive training. "We like to expedite the process of developing staff once they gain our respect through hard work and dedication," says Schwemler. "Everybody has the chance to learn because people can become stagnant."

Also, team meetings and on-site meetings assist in getting all involved and on the same page. This translates into productivity, and a sense of inclusion amongst the staff. Being approachable and allowing staff to solve problems creates a better environment where people can thrive. "First and foremost I'm not a dictator, our mentality is everyone is at the same level, including management," says Schwemler. "We work things out together and I encourage them to work it out. Make them think is something my parents told me."

The club also has great perks including a gratuity fund, paid uniforms and lunches, staff socials, and gift cards for birthdays. Time-and-a-half is paid Saturdays and after eight hours and double time on Sundays. Holidays pay eight hours, plus time and a half. Employees are allowed to bank up to 64 hours to put towards extra time off. This helps control fatigue and keeps staff interest at a high level.

Schwemler also offers his services to dog sit for staff if needed and vice versa. He pays them 30 dollars a day and provides all the food they can eat for their assistance, something he believes goes a long way with staff relations.

Since everybody is different, getting to know the individuals who work with you can create a sense of appreciation. For Grant Murphy, Associate Superintendent at the National Golf Club of Canada, understanding those around you is a step in establishing a trust in both communication and work production. Murphy has developed and learned through his mistakes as a younger manager and has acquired new knowledge throughout each of his 29 seasons.

"I don't know if it gets easier, but it's important to know your staff, because if you don't know them or treat them as an individual you may fail with that person," says Murphy. "My goal may not be to build a team, but to build individual relationships."

Murphy believes that if we are intentional about fostering relationships and allowing them to grow that the team will develop naturally. But hiring the right people, who fit the organizations' goals is essential. For example, if a person does not enjoy or have interest in a job, success may be difficult to achieve. People generally need to enjoy the environment they work in.

The National Golf Club of Canada has a set of core values and beliefs, which help guide their workplace culture, communication, and safety. And these standards encourage the staff to achieve excellence and continuous improvement at their course.

"We want people who love what we do and that is provide a world class product," says Murphy.

He stresses the importance of getting staff to understand the big picture of what they are doing on a daily basis. "We have found that the people who thrive in our environment are those who can balance the romance of The National with the reality of the hard work.

Continued on page 20...



"...it's important to know your staff, because if you don't know them or treat them as an individual you may fail with that person. My goal may not be to build a team, but to build individual relationships."

Grant Murphy, Associate Superintendent
The National Golf Club of Canada



We provide an exceptional experience for our clients, but there is a lot of noise that goes on behind the quiet. It's not the work, but the attitude of the worker that is critical for creating that balance. It's like the two tradesmen who are working side by side; one of them is laying bricks and the other is building a cathedral. We want cathedral builders! They are the ones who aren't just raking bunkers, they are helping to set the stage for an exceptional test of golf."

This makes hiring people that fit this model important. "The ones who don't love it, you aren't going to motivate or manage that, people should be working because they are a valuable contributor and asset to the operation," says Murphy.

So how do you keep valued employees

engaged and satisfied? This goes back to understanding each employee and doing your best to show them that they are a valued asset. Murphy believes that this is as important as ever with the millennial generation. Whether certain staff need more feedback or more freedom, a pat on the back or a kick in the butt, this leads to knowing each person and to challenge these young individuals. "Are we paying them enough, are we working them too hard, are we working them too little, in the end they don't know how capable they are," says Murphy. "There are always success stories every year." At the National they feel that providing a fair pay check, safe work environment and a place they can enjoy is priority.

Since golf in Ontario is seasonal, it can be difficult to keep people happy with their pay. "It is ultimately important, this is why people work, but the jury is out," says Murphy. "Do you attract better people with more money? I do think you keep good people with more money."

Throughout the years the National has tried to incorporate ways to help keep staff motivated and engaged. What they have found out is that all individuals are different, and uniquely work to achieve their goals. "We attempted to install all sorts of strategies to mitigate burn out and they have all failed," says Murphy. "You can only appeal to a percentage of the work force, you can't appeal to a team you can only appeal to a person. You've got to know your people." ■

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The Bethpage Black Experience

Volunteering at a PGA Tour Playoff Event

by Steve Rabski, Second Assistant Golf Course Manager at Bayview Golf & Country Club
Photos courtesy Steve Rabski & Ken Tilt

There is something to be said about the Black Course at Bethpage State Park. Some may say it is the golden fescue that tightly wraps itself around the high faces of all eight acres of bunkers. Others may discuss the aggressive elevation changes from tee to green. But those who have played will tell you the course is summarized perfectly on the first tee by a sign with bold red letters that reads, "Warning: The Black course is extremely difficult...". This message greets every player as they prepare to tackle what is likely to be one of the most difficult challenges in golf.

Nestled in the small town of Farmingdale, New York, lays a highly appreciated property known as Bethpage State Park. Designed by Mr. A.W. Tillinghast, the course was intended to be a true test of golf, forcing players to not only demonstrate physical toughness, but mental toughness as well. Complete with five 18-hole facilities, Bethpage was home to The Barclays 2016 golf tournament – the first of four events that make up the FedEx Cup Playoffs. The top 125 PGA players gathered to showcase their talents in hopes of climbing the rankings and being crowned the FedEx Cup champion.

All of the nail-biting moments during these tournaments make for an exciting finish to the long golf season. But there is



Steve Rabski and Zack Stevens at the first tee with the infamous Bethpage warning sign.

another type of excitement present long before golfers and spectators arrive at the course. This type of excitement comes from the dozens of dedicated turf professionals that travel from across the country to come and help prepare for an exciting week of early mornings, crucial pin placements and flawless bunker raking. During any tournament, the cameras cannot capture all the hard work that goes into providing perfect playing conditions, yet teamwork is the main ingredient for a successful event. This year I had the privilege of being able to volunteer at The Barclays along with fellow Canadians Zack Stevens from The Club at North Halton and Ken Tilt from Trafalgar Golf & Country Club. Our time at Bethpage not only allowed us to observe

a world class golf course, it also provided endless networking opportunities, a closer look at tournament preparation and most importantly, it allowed us the opportunity to be part of a dedicated team. We also learned the value of volunteering as a turf manager, and why the experience is something that we would recommend to others.

The idea of volunteering raised a lot of questions such as, what jobs we would be taking on, who we would be working with, and how we would learn to navigate our way around a new property in less than a week. As we drove into the parking lot of the maintenance facility, all those questions would soon be answered. This feeling of nervousness was quickly alleviated the moment we stepped out of the car and shook hands with Director of Agronomy, Mr. Andrew Wilson, and close colleague, and well known turf professional, Dr. Frank Rossi. Bethpage is dear to Rossi's heart with the Green Course project, and this was evident immediately upon making Rossi's acquaintance for the first time. The team was quick to show us around and introduce us to the men and women who had been working hard all summer to get the course in championship shape. These people did not just work at Bethpage, they truly felt passionate about the place and cared dearly about their work. Not to mention that they were somewhat relieved that backup had arrived to help make the week a success.

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Continued from page 21...

Orientation took place that evening. This was when we received our uniforms, details for the week, and the most anticipated piece of information, our first job. The jobs we received at The Barclays were different from the ones that we had heard from other colleagues' experiences volunteering. We were under the impression that we would either be raking bunkers, filling fairway divots or doing some rotary mowing. So we were slightly surprised when we looked at

the job board for the first time and saw our names accompanying the tasks of mowing greens, mowing tees and fairways. Now the nerves began to really kick in. With our industry experience these jobs were nothing new to us, however, performing such routine tasks on a grand scale was certainly a special feeling. A trained eye for detail goes into every job that takes place during a tournament; bunkers are to be edged perfectly, greens striped ever so straight and fairways must be left tidy with no debris for the camera.

Throughout the week jobs were rotated between all the volunteers; tasks such as greens mowing, tee mowing, rolling, fairway mowing, repairing divots and the occasional bunker raking were expected of any volunteer. A sense of pride developed amongst the volunteers, as we all accomplished our jobs, and strived to perform them in the most seamless manner. As Zack Stevens said to me, having the opportunity to see the course in person truly makes the experience much more special.

"Seeing PGA tournaments on television is one thing, however, walking across fairways, tees, greens, and taking in all of the elevation changes and intricacies of such a notable course is a remarkable experience. No filter can make the course seem as nice as with your own eyes in person. I would recommend volunteering to anyone in the industry. Understanding and being a part of an operation for a PGA tournament provides too many things to take away which makes it such an invaluable experience".

The week wrapped up successfully and as golfers interacted with volunteers and staff, they expressed their sincerest appreciation not only for the hard work that we did, but for just how special Bethpage was to them on a personal level. Most of all, it is encouraging to see that the tour professionals have such an appreciation for the game, and it certainly makes our job seem much more rewarding and that in itself made the experience a very special one.

An interesting question to ask is why is volunteering important? From personal experience, there were several takeaways





Top photo row, L-R: Hole #1, morning preparation on the Tuesday of the tournament; Zack Stevens mowing greens on the par 3 eighth at Bethpage; Watering greens Thursday evening. Bottom inset: The 18th hole on Saturday morning.

from volunteering at The Barclays, and certainly each volunteer will have their own unique experience to share with their colleagues.

Firstly, from the beginning there was a sense of belonging that was established between management, staff, and other volunteers. We were a diverse team, and there was a common goal at hand. This goal was to provide the best playing conditions possible, and this was achieved because of the hard work of dedicated individuals. As turf managers, it is part of our job to make our staff feel comfortable, while offering opportunities to set goals and to self-improve. In doing so, we provide an enjoyable workplace and in turn help improve efficiency on the course.

This sense of leadership began immediately with the strong presence of the management team led by Mr. Andrew Wilson. With an event of this size, Wilson emphasized the important role that volunteers have in achieving success.

"Volunteers are essential for hosting an event like The Barclays. Our goal was to complete morning maintenance around the first tee time, roughly 7:30 am. Volunteers make it possible to finish mowing greens, tees and fairways plus rake almost eight acres worth of bunkers each day and then check all the details once more before play."

He also stressed how valuable of an experience it is to volunteer at a tournament like The Barclays and the impact it has on any turf managers career. "Having volunteers also helps with team spirit. The camaraderie develops pretty quickly when

like-minded people are working together towards a goal. Getting in an hour before sunrise and working in the dark with other supers, assistants and interns is such a great reward and experience. This year we had local volunteers plus volunteers from Canada, Chicago plus interns who call England, Scotland and New Zealand home."

Looking back, it is evident now that staying composed during stressful times is essential, and all turf managers should have a plan for when the unexpected happens. Bringing in nearly 100 volunteers that were new to the property must have caused some concern for the management team, but the trust that they put in the volunteers allowed them to remain at ease. This trust goes a long way with employees, and when we show that we trust our staff, this can help a team accomplish goals as a unit.

As mentioned earlier, in the turf industry we work in a team environment and the team can only work as a unified group if all parties involved trust each other. This week proved that notion to be true, as the management staff allowed complete strangers to mow greens and tees during the most important week of the year. This makes me believe that we should be giving all our staff at our courses a chance to prove themselves and showcase their true potential.

Lastly, the most important takeaway from this trip was the people I met at The Barclays. This is what truly made volunteering an unforgettable experience for me. Being surrounded by dozens of high

energy, driven turf professionals was easily the cherry on top of the whole week. Also, having the ability to meet interns, assistants, and superintendents from all across the country was a really special experience. Seeing everyone take time away from their clubs to come help the event really illustrated how passionate these individuals are about our industry. It's also worth mentioning the superintendents who allowed for the time to be taken off by their assistants, which shows a lot of leadership on their behalf.

Volunteering at The Barclays allowed us to gain knowledge that we will utilize at our own courses and it has proven to be a truly valuable experience that I will always remember. As Ken Tilt explains, "participating in the 2016 Barclays was an amazing opportunity! Learning what it takes to execute a professional event becomes valuable knowledge for you and your club. I would highly encourage everyone to make volunteering a priority in their career."

It is difficult to explain just how important an experience like this is, but I suggest you try it for yourself if you are given the opportunity. I can promise that the volunteering experience will motivate you to not only excel in our profession, but it will educate you on how to be a better leader.

We would like to thank Andrew Wilson and his staff for making our experience a memorable one at The Barclays. Also, thank you to Ryan Scott, Mark Prieur and Mike MacGillivray for allowing the time away from work to participate in this unforgettable event. ■

Lessons Learned From The 2016 Season

It is an honour to be invited back to be a regular contributor to the newly launched *ONCourse*. I hope that I can provide some timely and informative technical information to Ontario golf superintendents.

HEAT AND HUMIDITY

In a summer like 2016, although it was an extremely difficult summer to grow grass, especially annual bluegrass, it revealed some of the poor growing environments caused by shade, poor air movement, poor drainage, poor irrigation coverage, etc. that superintendents are trying to manage. Annual bluegrass putting surfaces that struggled, especially toward the end of summer's heat wave are good areas to focus on now and over the next few years to try to create better growing environments for the future.

Cool season turfgrasses have optimum temperatures for growth. The conditions this summer were supra-optimum or above optimum, resulting in a decrease in photosynthesis. Essentially, the plant's mechanism for taking sunlight and making energy was compromised due to the heat. Add to that the fact that there was an increase in respiration rates as plants battled to stay alive and grow and the end result was that the turf simply ran out of energy. This is worse on heavy soils because they contain more water and water holds more heat than air, making the soils even hotter (Figure 1). The weakened turf was then more susceptible to wear, disease and any cultural practices that were thrown its way.

So what can be done about it now? We can learn from this extreme summer and evaluate the greens growing environment for:

- Shade
- Air movement
- Surface and sub-surface drainage
- Irrigation coverage and water quality
- Dominant turf species and
- Compaction

There are some pretty cool tools to aid you with this process. Some of the ones we use in our consulting company are the "Sun Seeker" app for determining shade on a green. Another invaluable tool is a penetrometer to determine just how deep and how hard the compaction layer or layers are on a green. One tool that has been mentioned on Twitter is the FLIR® thermal camera. It is great for showing just how hot it can be at a greens surface and how effective a fan can be at reducing a greens surface temperature or how short-lived a mid-day syringing can be for cooling the surface of a green.

Simply letting the existing turfgrass species (probably annual bluegrass) come back without changing any of the above mentioned factors will keep you on the turf loss merry-go-round. One of the worst aspects of this season is that so many superintendents are going into the fall/winter with turf that is still weak from the summer of 2016. To make matters worse, the weather gurus are calling for a harsh winter, so hang on to your hats, this ride could be a rough one.

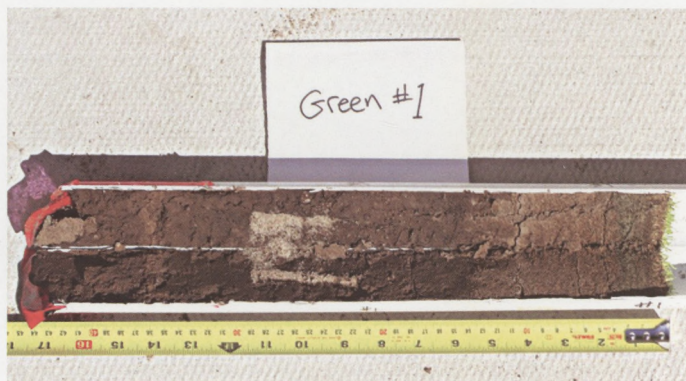


Figure 1. A cross-section of heavy textured wet soil on a golf green.

DISEASES

The heat and dry conditions early on in the summer seemed to actually stall the onset of dollar spot. I saw many courses where dollar spot did not begin on fairways until early July, which is almost unheard of. One disease that was very persistent this summer was brown patch (Figure 2). It is usually just a flash in the pan disease, but this summer it hung on for a good month to six weeks.

We can be relieved that most areas did not receive torrential rains during the very hot spell. If we did have both rain and high temperatures, that would have set conditions up for summer patch. Luckily, that one two punch did not occur in many areas.

INSECTS

The usual culprit, annual bluegrass weevil, did not seem to have a large impact on turf this summer. Due to the variable weather in the spring there seemed to be poor synchronization of the spring migration of adults into fairways. This meant that the feeding was not synchronized, which also meant less damage.

One observation made by Dr. Pat Vittum, from the University of Massachusetts, was that the first generation of annual bluegrass weevil damage occurred in the centre of fairways this spring, instead of on the edges. Her thought is that perhaps the annual bluegrass weevil overwintered in fairways last winter instead of in roughs and trees along the edges of fairways and migrated into the centre of fairways to lay eggs. If this is the case, it is a change in behaviour that could result in a change in the approach to pesticide placement. The idea of a sprayer width swath of insecticide along the edges of fairways may no longer work. This was a one season observation and may be a one-off so no need to change your approach to annual bluegrass weevil control yet.

That brings me next to white grubs. At peak adult flights of European chafers we were in the middle of the very, very dry period. This usually forces adult chafer females to delay egg laying on non-irrigated sites. However, the droughty conditions did persist



Figure 2. Persistent brown patch symptoms on a golf green.

throughout the full month of adult flights, so I don't know if the adults could delay egg laying for that extended period of time. I think it is safe to say that there will be fewer grubs on non-irrigated turf this fall. If there are grubs on non-irrigated turf, they would probably have developed later than usual and the damage would be at least a couple of weeks later than normal. On irrigated turf, everything occurred as it would in a normal year.

Another part of this puzzle is that the turf came back really well during August and September in most areas, so there may be grubs feeding but I have not seen or heard of widespread grub damage this fall. There is the usual feeding from secondary pests that started to occur in late September and will continue until the ground is frozen.

LOOKING FORWARD

The winter of 2014 is still vivid in many of our minds. Those that lost a lot of turf and were fortunate enough to have completely rebuilt root-zones and re-grassed greens are the winners, but many superintendents only had the budget to buy a lot of creeping bentgrass seed, throw it down and hope for the best. If nothing else changed, chances are the putting surfaces are back to being dominated by annual bluegrass.

There are some general recommendations for winterizing turf against the two most common types of winter injury - crown hydration and anoxia. These include:

- Raise the mowing height in the fall
- Fertilize with nitrogen in the fall, but no later than mid-September
- Avoid high levels of potassium in turf tissue going into fall
- A 1:1 N to K ratio in turf tissue recommended in the fall
- Provide adequate surface and sub-surface drainage
- Maximize creeping bentgrass populations
- Minimize shade
- Minimize thatch
- Alleviate soil compaction

Protective covers are used in many areas of Ontario to prevent winter injury. Different covers or cover combinations are recommended depending on your location, the amount of snow fall, and the type of injury that is prevalent. For instance, in the more northerly areas, where adequate insulating snow cover is present throughout the winter, impermeable covers alone are recommended because the snow keeps the greens temperature hovering around 0°C and the impermeable covers limit the occurrence of crown hydration in the spring. In other areas, where the amount of snow each winter varies, a system of a permeable cover, an insulating layer (usually straw, but can include drainage pipes in a serpentine pattern or any other form of an insulation layer) and an impermeable cover is recommended. Permeable covers can be used in the spring when winter protective covers are removed. It is also recommended that temperature under the protective covers be monitored throughout the winter.

ANOXIA PREVENTION

Anoxia can occur under an ice layer or under an impermeable protective cover. The most important factor in the prevention of anoxia is the turfgrass species, with *Poa annua* being much more susceptible to anoxia than creeping bentgrass.

If an ice layer forms on a *Poa annua* golf green, it would be advisable that attempts be made to remove ice before the 45 day mark to prevent anoxic conditions from killing the turfgrass plants. This can be accomplished through the use of dark coloured topdressing materials that can absorb heat. These can range from natural organic fertilizers to coloured topdressing sands, inorganic amendments, etc. These products honeycomb the ice layer, allowing for gaseous exchange. If ice layers are thick and persistent, mechanical disruption with a core aerator may be warranted in the spring.

If greens are covered for crown hydration protection with a permeable cover, straw and impermeable covers, it is recommended that these greens be vented using perforated drain pipe under the impermeable covers to prevent anoxia. These pipes must vent to the outside of the greens covers without letting water in under the covers. This can be accomplished by hooking up a leaf blower to the pipes. Many superintendents are experimenting with different insulation layers, venting methods and venting spacing. With each passing winter, more information on specific recommendations should be available to superintendents.

On greens with poor surface drainage and without protective covers, superintendents are also experimenting with techniques that remove a strip of sod from greens and collars to create a channel that allows water from melting snow to exit off the surface of the green in the spring. They are also experimenting with removing surface water on greens with large squeegees during the spring freeze/thaw cycles. In addition, others are removing snow off the greens in the spring, again to help prevent crown hydration.

There have been many hard frosts now and winter is just around the corner. Here's hoping that the weather gurus are wrong and that all of the golf course turf survives this winter! ■



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Foliage, Not Just Flowers, For Colour

Leaves can be used to build architecture and can be treated as a source of colour in addition to the flowers.

Foliage has an essential and complex function in the plant world; it converts sunlight to life-sustaining sugars. For example, in garden design, leaves assume equally important roles, because they prolong a border's attractions through the season, giving it depth, flow, and personality. Whereas flash-in-the-pan flowers display vibrant colours timed to guide inbound pollinators, leaves put on a longer-running show.

Leaves can be used to build architecture and can be treated as hedging, ground cover, background, striking specimen, and foliage can even help define garden contours and skylines.

In fact, planting limits to green palettes can be as attractive as a show of blooms. Of all colours, green is viewed and observed most easily, using various only shades of green, and interweaving delicate, airy foliage with coarser leaves, creates an impressive tapestry that's easy on the eyes. In an all-green garden, a single plant with bold, dramatic foliage assumes the focal point, where flowers would usually stand, and it has equal impact.

As if green's foliar offerings weren't gorgeous enough, a leaf hue can span the entire spectrum; purple, red, blue, silver, and golden foliage all supply pigments for composing vibrant garden masterpieces. Colour-splattered leaves, such as those found in coleus, match almost any other leaf or flower colour. Many plants also have contrasting leaf veins that coordinate with other foliage colours.

Every foliar hue has a special effect in the border; green calms and soothes, which is why gardens designed mainly with greens

offer welcome relief in urban settings and meditational refuges such as Japanese tea gardens. Blue and blue-green foliage found in fescue and oat grass, create a cool and elegant link to other colours in a garden. Blue leaves mixed with purple-leaf plants and magenta flowers are a spectacular combination.

You might associate yellow flowers with the sunny peak of summer, but golden foliage conveys instant warmth to a landscape year-round. Especially valuable in regions dominated by cloudy skies and diffused light, gold-leaf plants supply the missing sunshine. Shady areas, a frequent challenge in mature landscapes, can be brightened by utilizing shade tolerant plant material bearing yellow hues in their foliage. You have many options when it comes to painting the border gold. The gold-tone leaf has become a focus in recent breeding and gilds everything from ground covers and vines to trees.

Colours can be described as cool or warm. For example, green and blue are cool colours. They are usually associated with water, sky and forest and they evoke relaxed and calm feelings. Red, orange and yellow are warm colours often associated with heat, fire and the sun, and because of this, they demand attention and evoke excitement. Purple is often confusing because it can be either a cool or warm colour – it depends on other colours that appear adjacent to it in a landscape. When purple appears near blue, it is perceived as a cool colour. For example, fast food restaurants typically use warm colours to excite customers and get them in and out the door faster, whereas hospitals typically use cool colours in rooms to create a calm and relaxing atmosphere.

So choose your colour combinations with their locations in mind, and consider what kind of atmosphere you are trying to create, while keeping in mind the effects of foot traffic.

Also, when you are designing, it is interesting to consider using foliage during seasonal changes. Seasonal changes have a great impact on colour in the landscape and many plants have significant spring or fall colouration that is quite different from other seasons. This factor can lead to exciting plant combinations and colour schemes that can change entirely from one season to the next. Most foliage shows a hint of gold when first emerging in spring, and most tree and shrub foliage turns to burnished gold, prompted by fall frosts. Conifers, including *Chamaecyparis*, wear winter cloaks of gold-tinged green. For example, a landscape might express a monochromatic scheme of whites and pinks in the spring, cool greens in the summer, warm and energetic colours in the fall, and finally calm greens and browns for the winter. These seasonal changes can be used to create additional interest and richness in the landscape. Season changes can also lead to clashes if individual plants change to a colour that does not harmonize with the other plants during that particular season. The seasonality of colour is essential to consider when planning and designing every landscape.

It is also important to consider the colour effects of evergreen versus deciduous plants. Evergreen foliage provides permanent colour in a landscape since these plants are green year-round. Deciduous plants drop their leaves for the winter, but often still possess great winter interest in their bark colour and branch structure. Many ornamental grasses turn a pleasant tan or gold colour for the winter. These qualities can be used to create winter plant combinations that have subtle, yet beautiful, colour schemes.

Breeding has led to an incredible amount of selection when it comes to foliage colour. You can get completely different colours in the same species. For example, *Physocarpus* (Ninebark), now have varieties with leaf colours of gold (Dart's gold Ninebark), and a dark maroon (Diabolo Ninebark) which can be used together for an excellent contrast. Spireas come in multiple foliage colours as well. Some have new growth that changes from red to yellow, and there are some that are bright yellow all season. Dogwoods have variegated varieties, and *Sambucus* (Elderberry) come in multiple foliage colours, all of which can be used in combination together. Willows have variegated varieties, with pink hues in new growth (Flamingo dappled Willow), as well as white variegation, and shades of green with a bluish hue (Blue arctic Willow). The list is really endless when it comes to suggesting species which contain beautiful foliage colour. May I suggest that you consider Barberry's, Japanese maples, Smoke trees – the combination possibilities have no limits with all that is available. ■



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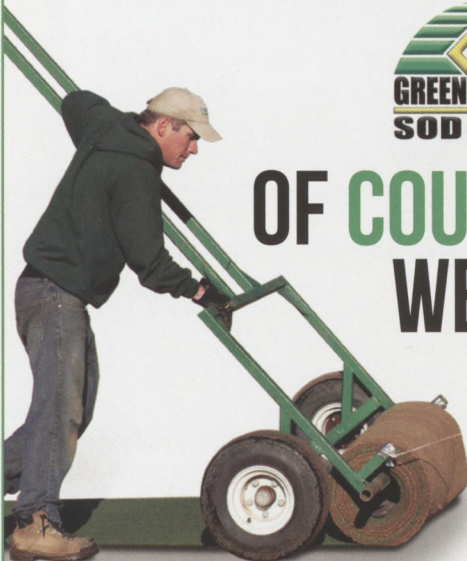
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MEMBER MOMENTS



- 1: Hawk soaring over Hole #3. **Dave Paterson**, Superintendent, Summit Golf & Country Club |
2: Staff showing some Blue Jays support. **Mike Magwood**, Superintendent, Niagara-on-the-Lake Golf Club |
3: Beautiful fall morning at The Club at North Halton. **Ryan Scott**, Superintendent, The Club at North Halton |
4: Beautiful view in the morning at Weston Golf & Country Club. **Matt Legg**, Assistant Superintendent, Weston Golf & Country Club |
5: Not sure if this is October or May! **Joe Adams**, Superintendent, Flamborough Hills Golf & Country Club.

Twenty Years Ago Today

In 1996, the OGSA Board of Directors were; **Alex LaBelle**, President, Merry Hill GC, **John Taylor**, Past President, Twenty Valley GC, **Simon George**, Vice President, Oakville GC, **Ian Bowen**, Os-hawa G&CC, **Paul Dodson**, Lionhead G&CC, **Bob Heron**, Beacon Hall GC, **Paul White**, Mississauga G&CC, **Jerry Richard**, Craigowan G&CC, **John Gravett**, Credit Valley G&CC, **Keith Bartlett**, Thornhill G&CC, **Monte Anderson**, Point West GC, **Jim Flett**, Muskoka Lakes G&CC, and **Mark Piccolo** (editor), Galt CC. **Cindi Charters** was the office manager.

AWARDS: Dr. Jack Eggens was the John B. Steel Distinguished Award recipient presented at the CGSA Conference, held in Vancouver in early March.

At the GCSAA Conference held in Orlando, **Paul Dermott** of Oakdale G&CC was presented with the Environmental Steward Award upon achieving Oakdale's designation as a "Certified Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary."

TOURNAMENTS: The Pro/Superintendent tournament was held in May at Glen Abbey GC hosted by Superintendent **Dean Baker**. Low gross team for superintendents were: 1st **Scott Dyker**, **Beverley G&CC**, 2nd **Ted DeCorso**, Victoria Park West GC, and 3rd **Dan La-vis**, Ingersoll GC. Low net team winners

were: **Ray Richards**, Mad River GC, 2nd **Rob Stevens**, Conestoga GC and 3rd **Steve Hallard**, Cedar Brae GC. Low gross superintendent was **Robbie Robinson** (79), Hidden Lake GC, and low net superintendent was **Pelino Scenna** (68), Burlington G&CC.

The Spring Field Day was held at the Guelph Turfgrass Institute. **Alex LaBelle** unveiled a plaque in recognition of **Dr. Clay Switzer's** contributions to the turfgrass industry. Golf followed at the Galt CC hosted by **Mark Piccolo**.

The President/Greens Chairman/Board of Directors/Superintendent Event was held at Angus Glen GC hosted by **Ernie Amsler**. **Jeff Burgess'** team from Weston G&CC was the winner. **Terri Yamada** was the guest speaker and updated us on the progress of the Audubon Co-Operative Sanctuary Program.

The Summer Field Day was held at the Cutten Club on August 11th hosted by **Richard Creed**.

The Alex McClumpha Memorial Golf Tournament was held at Nobleton Lakes GC hosted by **Barry Endicott**. **Bill Fach**, Rosedale GC and **Bob Heron**, Beacon Hall GC were the winners.

EVENTS: The Ontario Turfgrass Symposium was held for the first time in Toronto at the Constellation Hotel as a result of changes to the academic calendar at the University of Guelph. Over

1,500 people attended with **Bruce Burger** being the OGSA representative on the committee.

The Annual Curling Day meeting was held at the Club at North Halton hosted by **Alan Beeney**. The winning team was **Dean Baker**, **Corrie Almack** and **Nigel Rennie**.

Bob Hutcheson from Hutcheson Sand and Mixes hosted the OGSA/Hutcheson Ski Day at Osler Bluff Ski Hill on February 21st.

The OGSA covered the cost of outfitting all golfers with soft spikes on their shoes to promote their use at an OGSA Border Cities golf and meeting held at Beach Grove G&CC, hosted by **Randy Hooper**.

The Guelph Turfgrass Institute joined the ever growing community of turfgrass and golf related sites on the internet.

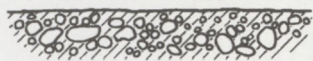
Two workers were fatally injured while scuba diving to recover golf balls at local golf courses, which brought to our attention that a golf course could be held responsible if the proper safety measures were not implemented. ■



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State of the Game Article #357

by Doug Breen, Superintendent
GolfNorth Properties

There have been about a million articles written about the decline of golf's profitability as an industry. Some theorize that there are too many courses and not enough golfers. Some theorize that we've designed courses that are simply too expensive to maintain, and that our turf budgets are responsible for the shrinking bottom line. While both of these things may be true, I'm proposing that the root cause of our financial woe, is that we've become as dull as ditch water.

No question, the industry overestimated the number of courses which would be required to service the hordes of retiring baby boomers. We (quite reasonably) assumed that they would want to continue to play the quantity (and quality) of golf that they played on their work expense accounts; after they didn't have to go to work anymore. One could reasonably surmise that they might even want to play more – but they didn't. Who knew that they'd be more interested in Geocaching and Tai Chi? Turns out that they loved golf, when someone else was paying for it, but not so much when it was their money.

It's also hard to debate the fact that turf budgets have exploded. When I started in the mid-eighties, we'd cut an entire property with two triplexes and a couple \$5000 gang mowers. Now a rough mower costs more than a pickup truck, and lasts about half as long. Around the same time, architects

(God bless them) decided that any course worth its salt needed forty acres of utterly unmaintainable bunkers. Then they built mounds that the Ministry of Labour won't even let us cut anymore, and we all decided that fairways needed to be 200 yards wide, and covered with bentgrass, cut at 1970's green heights.

I DON'T OFTEN PLAY GOLF



**BUT WHEN I DO, I HAVE TO
BE FAR LESS INTERESTING.**

Flat Revenues + Rising Costs = Less Profit. They teach you this on the first day of Business 101. The good news; is that there are many, many available tee times. Empty tee sheets are often held up in despair, as a sign of dire straits – but if the sheets have blank spaces, we have the opportunity to fill them. But how?

I believe that we've become "uncool", and we need to make golf "cool" again. I'm sure that "cool" isn't even the right word to use anymore, and sounds like "hep" or "groovy"

to our target market. The fact that I have no idea what the correct word would be, is likely symptomatic of the problem.

I've been reading a lot about Arnold Palmer since we lost him. He was a blue collar hero to millions. His father was a course superintendent, living in a house which (according to legend) didn't even have indoor plumbing. He learned to play on that local course, and competed in tournaments on nearby municipal courses. He pulled himself up by his own bootstraps, and earned the right to be held up among the kings of golf. Many would argue that he was The King of golf. When he and Jack played on TV on the weekend, millions tuned in to watch a simple, humble man – a man like themselves. People love an underdog. Happy Gilmore – unruly, and coached by a Pro who lost a fight over a ball with a gator. Tin Cup – deeply flawed, but honest and true to himself.

The "Average Joe" doesn't see himself on the PGA tour anymore – he sees Shooter McGavin – a whole boring, saccharine course full of them. NCAA coached, countless hours of media training, and without a shred of personality or sincerity. Think I'm being too harsh? Explain the popularity of John Daly then. The long drives, the pants, the smoking, the guitar playing in the nearest Hooters – he was an outsider with the cojones to stand out.

I believe that golf is declining, due to a shocking shortage of interesting, erratic characters. People (including me) don't see enough players on tour who they'd want to emulate – or even meet. When kids play hockey they want to be the reckless bad boy. NASCAR is rife with loose cannons. Basketball and Football – come on! But golf is just one upper middle class frat-boy, in a white belt, after the next. We're not just "uncool", we're "icky". Golf needs a janitor who can do math, or an overlooked minor college QB who gets his shot. We need Bull Durham. I believe that people aren't playing golf because they don't identify with us – actually, they dislike us. In the name of all that's holy – someone do something different this weekend. ■



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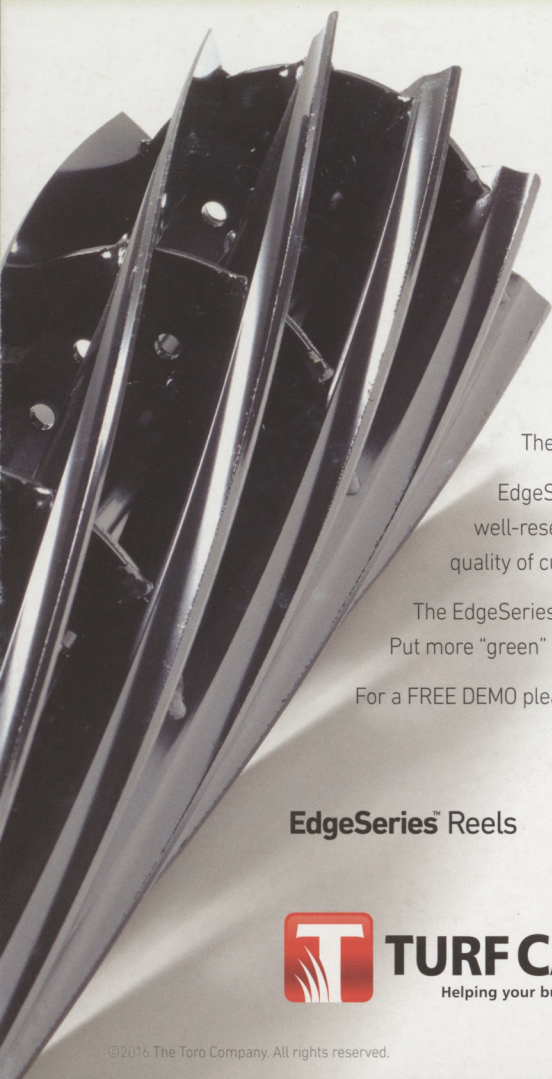
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