

JUNE 2017

ONCOURSE

OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE

ONTARIO GOLF SUPERINTENDENTS' ASSOCIATION

**Lessons Learned
from the Summer of 2016**

Soaring Temperatures and Sizzling Turf

ALSO INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

Can/Am Challenge Recap

**The Importance of Precise Irrigation
Offsetting Drought Through Design**

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



By Cory Janzen
OGSA President

June is one of my favourite months of the year. It is a great month for golf course turf because the winter is in our rear view mirror but the heat, humidity, and summer stress haven't arrived yet. We put a great deal of effort into preparing our turf for the stressful days on the horizon but do we put the same effort into preparing ourselves? Unfortunately, we have lost some very good people in this industry due to work/life balance issues. As important as our jobs and golf courses are to all of us, we owe it to ourselves and our families to find a balance that works for everyone involved. I encourage you to take a step back and evaluate what is most important in your life and ruthlessly protect your own and your family's well being. The old saying rings true, "It doesn't matter how successful you are outside your home if you're not successful inside it." We can all be better at this starting today.

In late February, the OGSA Board spent two days in Niagara Falls doing intensive strategic planning for the year ahead. This was extremely valuable to get everyone on the same page and focused moving forward. It also gave us a chance to tour potential sites for the 2018 Conference. In the end, we decided to go back to the Fallsview/Hilton again. It was an excellent venue that met or exceeded all of our needs and there is also great value in the pricing at that time of year. Last years show was very good and we learned from your feedback areas we needed to improve. Conference Chair Jason Boyce has been working hard with Sally and her staff to make this show even better and from what I have seen so far, I am certain it will be outstanding. Associate members can contact Sally at any time to discuss sponsorship opportunities – don't miss the chance to connect with a large portion of your customer base in one great location.

I would like to thank Andrew Lombardo for his Board service. Andrew resigned from the Board after taking a job in the Landscape industry this winter. As per OGSA bylaws, the Board chose to appoint Owen Russell from Markland Wood GC as Andrew's replacement. I have known Owen for a long time and I know he will be a great Director for many years to come.

Calling all writers! We are always looking for member submitted articles for *ONCourse* Magazine. We are repeatedly told that the best articles are written from those within the industry. It's a great way to promote yourself and your course. We are hoping to get one superintendent submitted article in every issue going forward. Even if you don't have a specific idea, I encourage you to talk to Sally or any of the Board members for thoughts on what to write about. Why not give it a try? We would love to hear from you. ■



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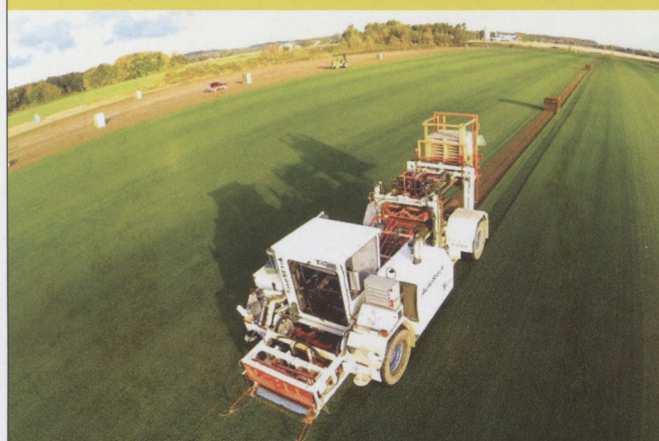
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Water reservoir at Piper's Heath Golf Club
Photo credit: Cam Shaw

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Al Schwemler, Cam Shaw, Ken Tilt

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— Mike Dachowski, Superintendent, Shelter Harbor Golf Club, Charlestown, RI USA



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— Keith Wood, Superintendent, Quail Hollow Club, Charlotte, NC USA



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EDITORIAL MESSAGE



By Sally Ross
OGSA Executive
Manager

It came as a bit of a surprise to me, that the role of editor fell to me for this issue, however despite the busy months of April and May in the OGSA office, we have managed to keep on schedule.

I would like to thank Justin Parsons for his many years of involvement with our magazine. His talents will be sorely missed. It is hoped that our readers will bear with us, as we adapt to putting our magazine together without Justin's considerable expertise.

In this issue of *ONCourse*, you will note that the theme is "Drought", something we hope won't challenge our members as much this year, as it

did last, but the sharing of information may spark some inspiration or useful tips for our readers.

Ken Tilt examines the lessons learned by several superintendents from the summer of 2016, and Cam Shaw speaks to Jeff Stauffer from Rosedale GC about the benefits of performing an irrigation audit.

Golf Course Architect Christine Fraser examines the concepts of designing for possible drought conditions, acknowledging that there needs to be a concerted effort to become more accepting of the natural conditions caused by reduced water usage, as more restrictions are sure to be sanctioned in the upcoming years.

We learn more about long time OGSA member Aldo Bortolon, and his home away from home, Lookout Point Country Club.

Not surprisingly, Doug Breen weighs in on the changing of the guard in Washington, in

his own unique style. This is a hot topic in the real world, the golf world, and the world of social media.

The recap of our 41st Can/Am Challenge displays the strong involvement in the event, from Board members representing three associations, a good contingent of our retirees, as well as the camaraderie and many friendships shared, between Ontario and Michigan Golf Course Superintendents.

President Cory Janzen, touches on the importance of maintaining a good work/life balance, which we know many in the industry find difficult to do, but to avoid burnout, it is imperative to try.

So, enjoy the June issue of *ONCourse*, and here's hoping for a moderate season, with a good dose of sunshine, and rain whenever its needed. ■

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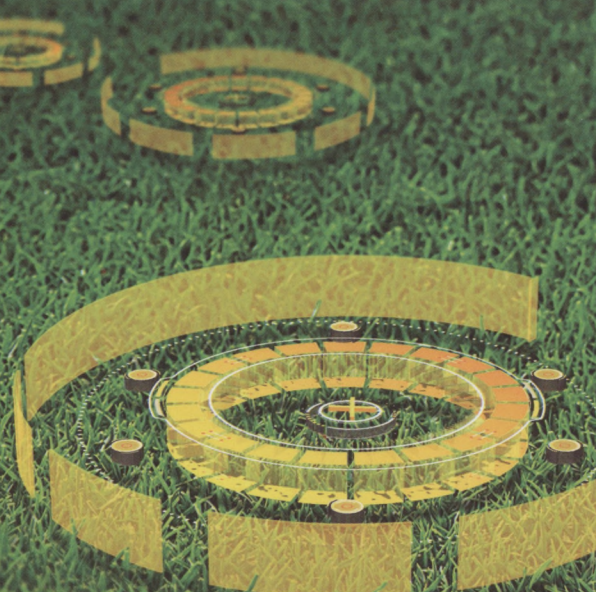
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WHAT'S NEW



The Beacon Hall grounds crew along with Superintendent Paul Scenna, were presented with a plaque from the OGSA to acknowledge their hosting of the first ever U.S. Open qualifier to be held in Canada. The event took place on Monday, May 8, 2017.

WELCOME to Our New Members

Scott Brook	Class A
Osprey Valley Golf	
Peter Brotton	Class B
Deep River Golf Club	
Lacy Droste	Class S
University of Guelph	
Bruce Gillis	Class C
Roseland Golf & Curling Club	
Eric Greaves	Class B
Stone Tree Golf & Fitness Club	
Matt Hague	Class S
University of Guelph	
Kevin Hart	Class B
Cherry Downs Golf Club	
Micheal Hull	Class C
Camden Braes Golf & Country Club	
Andrew James	Class C
Cherry Downs Golf Club	
George Kennedy	Class F
Acton Golf Club	
Chris Mitchell	Class F
King's Bay Golf Club	
Ryan Surette	Class A
Mystic Golf Club	
Brendan Wield	Class C
The Thornhill Club	
Pickseed Canada Inc.	Class E

By Sally Ross, OGSA Executive Manager

THANK A GOLF COURSE SUPERINTENDENT AND RECOGNITION PRESENTATIONS

We will once again be running the 30 second audio segment of the "Thank a Golf Course Superintendent" commercial on Sportsnet 590 The Fan in Toronto during the Canadian Open at Glen Abbey. We will be making presentations once again, to the host superintendents of significant tournaments held throughout the province this summer.

MEMBERSHIP DIRECTORY

Our membership directory accompanies this issue of *ONCourse*. We have tried to make it as accurate as possible, if your information is incorrect, please contact the office. As per usual the online search function will always be the most reliable source of information as it contains updates made since the directory went to print.

TECHNICIANS TRAINING

Due to our supplier members running training sessions this spring, we intend to hold further technician training events in the fall.

ASSOCIATE MEMBER COMPANY NEWS AND PRESS RELEASES

We have created a new section on our website to give further exposure to our associate members through press releases.

The cost to post a press release is minimal, and will include a notification and link in Clippings. This service will be offered free of charge to conference sponsors as part of their sponsorship deliverables.

ASSOCIATE MEMBER MEETING

A conference review meeting was held with members of the Associates Committee this past April. Committee members were thanked by OGSA President Cory Janzen, in particular for their contributions to the 2017 Conference, following which Cory announced that further associate input for future conferences would be solicited through Associate member involvement on our Conference Committee.

SPRING DIRECTORS MEETING

The OGSA Board of Directors met this February over a two-day period to discuss plans and initiatives for the coming year. New policies related to sponsorships, conflict of interest and confidentiality, were implemented, as well as procedures for improved communications. The Board also discussed the appointment of a new Director to replace Andrew Lombardo who had just resigned.

Committee representation for the upcoming year was approved, conference surveys and conference financial results were reviewed and discussed. Following the meetings, the Board appointed Owen Russell as a Director.



UNIVERSITY OF GUELPH TURF MANAGERS SHORT COURSE AWARD

Our congratulations go out to George Kennedy from Acton Golf Club, who is this year's recipient of the TMSC award. George received \$1,300.00 and membership in the association. ■

MARK YOUR CALENDARS UPCOMING 2017 OGSA Tournament & Events

Pro/Super Challenge

Osprey Valley Golf, Caledon, ON
Monday, June 5, 2017

OGSA Seniors Tournament

Mono Hills Country Club, Orangeville, ON
Thursday, August 10, 2017

Assistants Tournament

Springfield G&CC, Guelph, ON
Thursday, September 21, 2017

GBGSA Year End Finale / OGSA Alex McClumpha Memorial Tournament

Rocky Crest GC, MacTier, ON
Tuesday, September 26, 2017

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 - **Frank S. Rossi, Ph.D**
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Can/Am Challenge Recap

By Sally Ross
OGSA Executive Manager

It was a great day at Essex Golf and Country Club. A couple of days prior to the event, the tournament was indeed in jeopardy. With the consistent rains throughout Ontario, flooding was prevalent almost everywhere, and registrants were waiting to see if the event would even take place.

Thanks to the onslaught letting up a little bit and the hard work of the Essex grounds crew, Superintendent Chris Andrejicka and his Assistant Greg Brown, the mop up was completed in time.

With some help from the sun and wind, Monday morning

dawned and the course was more than just "golf-able," it was outstanding.

Well over eighty golfers showed up for the event, and they were rewarded with a beauty of a day with greens that were touted as "extraordinary," and a course that could be used for a commercial to display the expertise of the profession.

Many long time OGSA members were present representing the home team, including Ken Wright, Bill Fach, Bob Heron, Randy Hooper, Paul Dermott and Robbie Robinson, but their efforts as well as others, were in vain.

The U.S. won the Can/Am Cup and were happy to take it back to Michigan for the first time in a few years. Scores and handicaps were

jokingly questioned, as is usual, and camaraderie between the Michigan and Ontario Superintendents was at an all time high. The overall team scores were USA 39.5, Canada 26.5.

First place teams were for the Americans, Brian Schwehofer and Carey Mitchelson with a low gross score of 154, and for the Canadians, Brad Palmer and Paul Grosvenor with a low gross score of 157.

The low net winners were Kevin Doyle and Jason Boyce with a score of 147, (Jason helping out the U.S. contingent) and for the Canadians, Todd Currie and Ryan Beauchamp, with a score of 140.

In second place, Todd Genske and Jim Higgs for the Americans with a



OGSA President Cory Janzen, presents a plaque to host superintendent Chris Andrejicka.



Dan Dingman MiGCSA Vice President accepting the CanAm Cup from Cory Janzen.





1. Essex G&CC (Credit: Jason Boyce, Superintendent, Smuggler's Glen GC); 2. Tournament participants getting underway; 3. Brian Schweibofer, Franklin Hills CC, and Carey Mitchelson, College Fields; 4. Paul Grosvenor, Forest City National GC, and Brad Palmer, Intelligro; 5. Todd Currie, West Haven G&CC, and Ryan Beauchamp, Syngenta; 6. Dan Dingman, Birmingham CC, Gregg Matthews, Turf Fuel, Rob Field, BrettYoung, Rhod Trainor, Hamilton G&CC; 7. Kevin Doyle, GCSAA, Jason Boyce, Smuggler's Glen GC, Jason D'Andrea, GC Duke Equip. Al Schwemler, Toronto GC.

low gross score of 169, and Dan Friesen and Vince Gagnier for the Canadians, with a low gross score of 165.

Low Net winners were Tim Hornick and Greg Anderson, for the Americans with a score of 147, and the Canadian winners were Angelo Capannelli and Paul Brown.

The two closest to the pin winners were James Raynor and Dan Friesen, and the longest drive winner was Greg Clark.

So there we have it – the 41st Can/Am Challenge is in the books, and a great time was had by all.

Special thanks go out to BrettYoung who provided our dinner sponsorship, we can't thank you enough for your support of our association and our members. ■



Jason Boyce, OGSA Secretary/Treasurer, and Kevin Doyle, GCSAA Field Representative.



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1st Tee, Overlooking 1 and 10 Fairway
Courtesy: Aldo Bortolon

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Aldo Bortolon

Superintendent, Lookout Point Country Club

By Kevin Kobzan
Donalda Club

About the Course

Established in 1922, located on the highest point of the Niagara Escarpment

Architect: Walter J. Travis

Type of Club: Private

Number of Holes: 18

Number of Rounds Annually: 30,000

Practice Facility:

80,000 sq.ft. tee, 6 target greens,
325 yd. length, chipping green with bunker

Major Challenges

Wear patterns in the rough due to having 7 holes that run parallel with minimal rough in between along with mature trees.

As each morning approaches, Aldo Bortolon starts his day's journey on the Niagara Escarpment sharing the same sunrise he has seen since age 16. Since 1975, he has overlooked the impressive landscape that is Lookout Point Country Club. Designed by Walter J. Travis, the golf course played host to the PGA Tour's Brock Open in the 1930's where Hall-of-Famers Byron Nelson, Ben Hogan, Walter Hagen, Sam Snead and Gene Sarazen all played. Bortolon is entering his 43rd year at Lookout Point, his 31st as superintendent, and he couldn't be happier to call it home.

Bortolon's length of service at the golf club is an impressive milestone, which is very rarely achieved in any industry, and one he is looking to continue to build upon. To put his tenure in perspective, during his first season at Lookout Point, Pierre Trudeau was Prime Minister, Ali fought Frazier in the epic classic dubbed the "Thrilla in Manila" and Jack Nicklaus won the 39th Masters golf tournament. "This is a great industry, I'm not thinking about retiring



*Aldo Bortolon, Superintendent,
Lookout Point Country Club*

yet," says Bortolon. "My goal is to get 50 years here."

Furthermore, before he became the turf manager, his father-in-law ran the departments operation from 1971 until he took over in 1986. Now at 58, Bortolon can look back with appreciation knowing his family's footprints stretch back at the facility for over five decades. "I married the boss's daughter," he says with a laugh. "In regards to it being a second home for me, my wife

In the Hot Seat

Q: Favorite Major

A: The Masters

Q: Favourite piece of turf equipment?

A: Walking Greensmower

Q: Favourite golf course?

A: Augusta and Pebble Beach

Q: Ultimate foursome?

A: Jack Nicklaus, Arnold Palmer, Bill Murray

Q: Lowest round and where?

A: 77 Lookout Point

Q: Favourite Movie:

A: Obviously, *Caddy Shack*

has been part of this golf course since 1971.”

After spending a few seasons on the golf course, he knew turf was his calling in life. Bortolon received his education from the University of Guelph in the early 1980's, where he took the turf managers short course, and furthered his knowledge by getting a diploma in horticulture, where he received top marks in the program. Once his education was completed, he worked his way up to an assistant, and became a superintendent at age 27. “It's one of those professions where you fall in love with it accidentally. It is totally a lifestyle and I still look forward to work every day.” Bortolon confesses that he is still learning and continually striving to give the membership a better product. “I love my club, it is a part of me.”

Bortolon credits his accomplishments to the industry and the great colleagues he has encountered throughout the years. Whether he is at a conference, golf tournament, a social event, or talking over the phone, Bortolon feels that the networking in this industry, amongst its individuals, is second to none. He appreciates how approachable others are in the industry, and he is grateful towards those who helped mold him. “I remember when I was new in the industry some of the local guys like Cecil Hoekstra (Cherry Hill), John Piccolo (St. Catharines) and Bill

Glashan (Whirlpool) were great, and that is the beauty thing about this industry.”

Also, past Green Chairmen who have accompanied Bortolon to the Ontario Golf Course Management conference have witnessed the camaraderie and gained valuable respect for the turfgrass profession. “Bringing a Green Chair was one of the best things I did, the more we can educate the better.”

Bortolon has also created fantastic business contacts that have developed into friendships. Trevor Hunter, who works for Ontario Seed Company, has known Bortolon for over 18 years. Hunter appreciates Bortolon's hard work, dedication and turf intellect. “Aldo's passion, attention to detail and growth mindset are key attributes to a lengthy career at Lookout Point. He has an all in approach when he tackles any endeavour, both personally and professionally. His positive energy and ability to adapt have been key attributes to his long successful career at Lookout Point.”

Throughout his tenure at Lookout Point, many projects and changes have been implemented to assist with the growth of the club. For example, additional property was purchased in 2003 due to a demand for an improved practice facility. The driving range is equipped with an 80,000 square foot hitting area, six target greens and an extra chipping green. Additionally, a complete bunker renovation, new irrigation reservoir, wet well and clubhouse renovation were completed under Bortolon's watch.

However, his most satisfying project was the renovation of all the fairways from a predominantly poa stand to bentgrass. During the early 1990's, the costs associated with winter snow mould protection were high, which resulted in a fair amount of damage to golf courses. After a year of gathering information, which included trips to St. Georges (John Gall), Islington (Wayne Rath) and Oakdale (Paul Dermott), who were doing similar projects, a program

was put into place to convert to bentgrass fairways. The program consisted of spraying round up on the fairways and overseeding with a more desired turf species.

“We brought in the USGA and presented to the membership, who were surprised when you tell them you're going to kill the fairways and then renovate them,” says Bortolon. “The transformation was amazing.”

The 135 acre property consists of a sandy soil that allows for fantastic drainage but on the flip side dries out very quickly. The ninth hole, which is the highest point on the golf course, runs along a portion of land composed of sand and gravel deposited from glaciers known as the Fonthill Kame. “We could get two inches of rain and it just wicks through the profile, it's pretty incredible.”

Through all the challenges and changes his passion and willingness to learn remain constant. In fact, Bortolon still enjoys jumping into the mix to help out his staff. Whether it's cutting greens or assisting with other maintenance jobs, this hands on superintendent still relishes the opportunity to get involved with his team. “I still like doing it, it has kept me in great shape,” he says. “I never turn it off, it is almost 24/7 because grass doesn't take the weekend off - it's a living thing.”

Besides his devotion to golf, Bortolon has many other interests which occupy his time. Soccer has played a big part in his life, and he has spent many years coaching teams, including an assistant coaching job at Brock University. He also has a passion for sports cars, specifically the Porsche, of which he has owned three throughout his life. In addition, he enjoys running, woodworking (he has created many pieces of furniture) and also wine.

At the end of the day, Bortolon is very appreciative of the support he receives from his wife Dianne, daughter Deanna and son Stephen. “This golf course is a part of me, my wife and family. It's a unique piece of property and eventually I will have to move on but it still drives me.” Today Bortolon enjoys spending time with his grandson, Wyatt, who perhaps may be a future turf enthusiast. One thing is for sure, if he does decide to pursue his grandfather's career, he will have a great mentor. ■



Grandson Wyatt

What You Need to Know

Predominant Grass Type: Poa/Bentgrass

Predominant Soil Type: Sandy loam

Type of Greens: Soil Pushup

Course Length: 6,700 yds

Size of Property: 135 acres

Size of Greens: 70,000 sq. ft.

Size of Tees: 90,000 sq. ft.

Size of Fairways: 21 acres

The Importance of Precise Irrigation

By Cam Shaw, Assistant Superintendent, Piper's Heath Golf Club

The hot, dry summer of 2016 pushed many of our irrigation systems and water permits to the limit. Some courses barely made it through the year on their water supplies, and others, those not as fortunate enough to have gratuitous access to the sweet nectar of life, had to resort to more drastic measures. Recently, South Western British Columbia, as well as parts of California dealt with similar, if not worse, record breaking drought conditions. In the wake of such phenomena, we are forced to recognize that such weather trends could become more commonplace as our planet deals with it's incontrovertible rising temperatures and unpredictable climate trends. As water becomes increasingly precious, and our sources and usage rights become more finite, it becomes more important that our irrigation systems are calibrated and distributing water in the most productive and efficient manner possible. Having an audit performed on your irrigation system is the best way to test its accuracy. However, buyer beware, you may be in store for a surprise when you read through the results.

Back in the early 2000's, Jeff Stauffer (Superintendent, Rosedale Golf Club), then Superintendent at Credit Valley Golf Club, experienced such a surprise when he decided to perform an irrigation audit on his system. "I felt our irrigation practices could be better," claimed Stauffer. "We were constantly battling wet and dry spots in the mornings and the amount of time and people spent hand watering was becoming ridiculous and impractical." Because of his frustration, Stauffer hired a certified irrigation auditor and performed a full hydraulic assessment of three green sites and two fairways sites. What they discovered, confirmed Stauffer's suspicions about

their system's limited efficiency. The initial audit concluded there were significant flow restrictions in the system, more specifically, the old isolation valves had become corroded and were unable to open fully, which ultimately reduced the overall volume of water able to pass through the pipes. There was also insufficient pipe diameter in several locations which limited flow to certain zones and resulted in water windows in excess of 10 hours. "The cost of replacing the valves was approximately \$45,000 but the audit certainly helped when we brought the capital improvement project to the board for approval."

From there the initiative snowballed. Each year the team at Credit Valley chose three greens and three fairways to audit in hopes to complete the course by the fifth year. Stauffer himself even took the irrigation auditor's course and became certified. In the end, the results were extremely satisfying. Although, Stauffer claims the overall water usage in volume did not reduce significantly, he proudly stated the other positive results; significant reduction in man hours on hand watering, elimination of wet/dry spots on the course, drastically reduced water windows, and essentially eliminating the need for wetting agents¹. "We reduced costs, decreased disease incidence, improved fertility issues, and most importantly to the members, we improved the overall playing surfaces at the club," said Stauffer.

Since his arrival at Rosedale, Stauffer has implemented the same strategies and is currently in the process of auditing the course's irrigation system. "In year one we did all the greens, and in year two we chose four fairways, two of the wettest and two of the driest. So far we have been able to significantly reduce our overall usage but the process is not complete," claims Stauffer.

Stauffer warns that the time and cost of performing an audit can be difficult to assess. "It can vary from property to property depending on the state of each system. At Credit Valley we were able to cover



Top: Can catch test. (Credit: Jeff Stauffer); Bottom (l-r): Portable angle finder shows varying degrees of sprinkler heads from perfectly level to severely off level. Nozzle with particulate blocking upper outlet. Opposite: Sprinkler too low (depth greater than riser height). (Credit: Cam Shaw)

the cost of the audit and our isolation valve replacement in five years based on reduced labour hours for hand watering and reduced use of products.” Stauffer is quick to clarify that there are some hidden maintenance costs that can compound as well. Levelling heads can become a significant time investment each year, as well as replacing gear assemblies, and nozzles due to wear. “Keeping your heads level is probably the most important factor when considering precise distribution,” says Stauffer, “It can easily be assessed by using a portable angle finder, I keep one in my cart and am constantly checking heads and making a list for my team to revisit later.” Stauffer mentioned when checking heads, anything more than 6 or 7 degrees off level is considered to be significantly affecting your distribution, and is worth digging up and fixing. A head can also be too deep. If the depth of a head is greater than the height of the riser stem, then likely the water stream will be affected by the turf around it, hence influencing the arc, distance, and overall distribution.

Most superintendents who have performed an irrigation audit will tell you that it has changed the way they think and talk about running programs on the course. Rather than the older time based concept i.e. “I ran fairways for twenty minutes last night,” the concept becomes a volume based on depth of percolation and evapotranspiration i.e. “I watered to one tenth of an inch, or to 75% E.T. last night.” This concept and language is based on the actual needs of the turf based on the previous day’s losses and quantitatively represents the volume usage throughout the property.

So, is an irrigation audit something you should be considering? The answer is of course yes! Irrigation systems are in a constant state of flux when it comes to calibration. Winter heaving, ground settling, wear and tear of parts, water quality, as well as other factors all play havoc on a system’s overall accuracy. If you are currently having issues with your inadequate water supply, it certainly would be a worthwhile investment to confirm your delivery methods are true before exploring other options. If you are wondering about becoming a certified irrigation auditor, Stauffer admits it is not necessary unless you are seriously considering going into the business of irrigation auditing. However, any superintendent or assistant looking to expand their knowledge of how an irrigation system is intended to operate, as well as learn the how to’s of an audit, should consider taking a course. ■

¹ This was based on wetting agent technology available at the time, later as the technology improved, Stauffer slowly reintroduced the use of wetting agents



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Max Raike hustles as he syringes the 9th green through play, in between the morning and afternoon split tee starts during the first round of the 2017 RBC Canadian Open. On average a 4000 sq ft putting green would be syringed in no more than 30 seconds, as not to disrupt the pace of play or affect putting conditions between groups.



Soaring Temperatures and Sizzling Turf

Lessons Learned from the Summer of 2016

By Ken Tilt, Assistant Superintendent, Trafalgar Golf & Country Club

Every situation, good or bad, is a learning opportunity. While much of our industry would like to forget the summer of 2016, it will certainly be remembered as the season that put agronomy skills, irrigation systems and staff to the test.

I recently had the opportunity to speak with a few superintendents about last year's drought to better understand what was required to keep each of their courses in

the condition they wanted. In addition to swapping horror stories, I asked each of them what they learned and if they subsequently changed any practices in preparation for future dry spells. While not everyone faced the same struggle, some were blessed with timely rains that kept the grass alive and others fought Mother Nature every step of the way.

Todd Doering, Superintendent of The City of Kitchener's Rockway and Doon Valley Golf Courses, described how he works closely with the Grand River Conservation

Authority to make sure he has the water he needs at the courses. With a small staff and budget, he doesn't have the opportunity to hand-water, and therefore relies fully on his irrigation system. Todd is a Certified Golf Irrigation Auditor through the Irrigation Association, and understands that the smallest things can affect the Distribution Uniformity (DU) of his system. "With the help of my staff we continue to monitor our irrigation system to make sure everything is operating efficiently and address areas of concern." Luckily, both Rockway and Doon



Above: Aerial view of Glen Abbey Golf Club, tournament hole #3, 2017 RBC Canadian Open. Illustrating drought conditions in surrounding rough. Irrigation efforts focused on bentgrass surfaces. (Courtesy: Andrew Gyba); Left: Piper's Heath Golf Club. (Courtesy: Tim Muys)

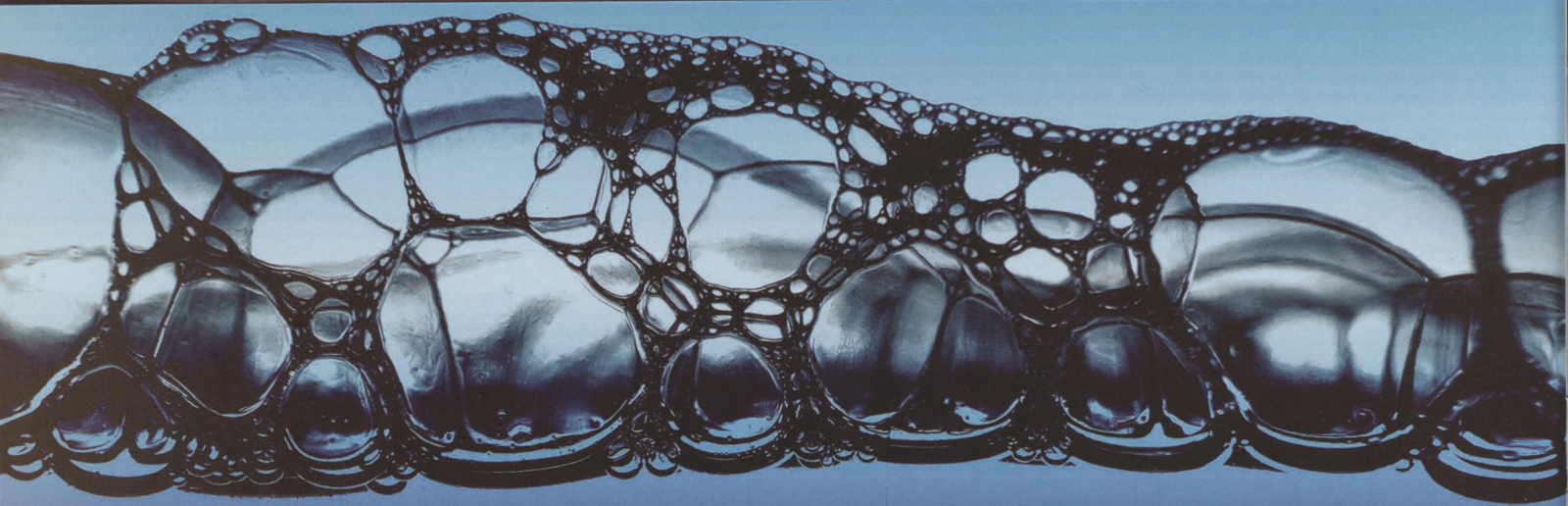
received some timely rain over the summer which helped relieve some of the drought stress. "Effective communication [with the higher-ups] will help them understand that when the weather turns dry, my cutting heights go up and frequency of cut goes down."

When asked how he fared in 2016, Joey Policelli, Superintendent of Carrying Place Golf Club responded that he has, "...seen parts of his reservoir that he never wants to see again." Policelli's water source is an eight acre reservoir which is filled by storm water run off. Carrying Place is located in a valley north of Vaughan and storms tend to pass right over his course. He explained that, "It

could be raining five minutes away, but we won't see a drop." With a water source high in salts and a drought to top things off, last year became much harder to manage turf. Policelli keeps his soil profile open with regularly scheduled cultural practices and reiterated that he "...keeps the soil loose to help water penetrate better." This practice is especially key to his greens to ensure that any water applied can help prevent salts from building up in the soil. Last summer Policelli was utilizing every water source on his property, pumping water from one pond to the next, and then into his reservoir. This was undoubtedly a huge team effort from his staff and he admits, "We all knew what we had

to do to keep this place alive, so we just put our heads down and worked." With the help of some four inch pumps he could actually see the reservoir gaining even after a night of irrigation. "The silver lining of a drought is that it shows the membership how hard we need to work to keep the course going with what we have," Policelli says. The drought last summer solidified that the existing irrigation system needed some attention. Policelli and his assistant will be updating parts of the system to increase efficiency and ensure that all heads are watering properly to help with future concerns.

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In case of a potential water shortage again this season, Policelli will start preparing this spring to make sure his course is as strong as possible before any stress ensues. Policelli concluded that with the help of wetting agents, proper nutrition and cultural practices, his turf will be as prepared as possible to handle the next test from Mother Nature.

Another superintendent who was tested by the drought last summer was Tim Muys at Piper's Heath Golf Club in Milton. Muys acknowledges that he put his 36,000,000 gallon reservoir to the test last summer with all but 4,000,000 gallons used by the end of the summer season. Usage to this extent had only previously occurred during the year of his grow-in. Strategy is the name of the game, as the course reservoir is solely filled by property drainage and he can only pump from 16 Mile Creek in the winter months. Muys has been adding to the irrigation system over the last ten years, installing heads along the edge of the fescue, tee sides and traffic areas in addition to adding quick couplers in areas that are constantly being hand watered. "The advantage of having multiple quick couplers is that it avoids having the untrained tap into irrigation heads," says Muys. Another one of his strategies includes applying wetting agents on the greens religiously, regardless of the season, and penetrants on fairways because of their heavy soil. Muys has also harnessed the power of technology over the last eight years, utilizing a weather station that collects evapotranspiration (ET) data and allocating water needs accordingly. "ET might help reduce water, but the main focus point is using the water more effectively." Leveraging the TDR tool on greens and soil probes on fairways also help him immediately address any areas of concern. In order to be proactive at his course, Muys also highlighted that he is



Piper's Heath reservoir was put to the test last summer with only 4,000,000 gallons to spare. (Credit: Cam Shaw)

spending more time to make sure his system is running correctly, before the season begins and water becomes a concern at the course. He's proactively ensuring all heads have the proper arc and trajectory so that when summer comes he can avoid finding a dry spot because of a head not turning correctly. Muys also highlighted another important aspect of dry summers, which is the impact that it can have on your staff. "When it's hot and all they've been concentrating on the same thing day in and day out, they will burn out very quickly," Muys says. The maintenance staff are one of the most important resources, so their health and morale should remain a top priority.

At Glen Abbey Golf Club in Oakville, in addition to fighting a record dry summer, Superintendent Andrew Gyba had the added pressure of a hosting the Canadian Open with many eyes watching. With more than 37,000 rounds per year and a mandatory cart rule, Gyba knew his rough was going to be severely affected by the drought. In late June of 2016, Gyba applied to the Region to start buying water because earlier that month he stopped watering his rough to conserve what little water was left in his 40,000,000 gallon

reservoir. Following permit approval, a meter was installed on an existing fire hydrant to supply an additional 200,000 – 300,000 gallons. However, conservation was still top of Gyba's mind as he instituted only 8-12 minute watering cycles; this was just enough to help perk up the rough that was severely suffering. While Gyba and his team were out during tournament play with hoses trying to keep everything cool and adding a bit of moisture, he describes how they couldn't affect the play of greens, but were, "losing more than 10 per cent VWC (volumetric water content) in a 24 hour period according to the TDR." Communication remained key last summer when his water became focused on greens, tees and fairways. "Data like weather records help show members, committees, management or owners what is required if put in that same situation," Gyba says. After living through the drought Gyba has learned a lot about his course and staff. Seeing his team come together and work towards a common goal has undoubtedly made him proud. As far as advice, Gyba says, "Train your staff correctly on how to water either with radios or hoses because the more information you can give them with maps and radio codes, means the more efficient they can be in getting the water to the right spots." With another summer approaching, Gyba now knows how far he can push his course and armed with that information is able to pull the trigger on what areas will need the most attention.

Effective communication, technology and management of resources play a vital role during times of drought. Challenging times teach even the most seasoned turf manager new things about themselves, their course and their staff. Properly managing each component is they key to survival for stressful seasons ahead. ■



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Left: A sketch by golf architect Tom Simpson illustrating how a player's strategy must adapt to varying playing conditions. Right: The contouring and consistency of landing areas will often enhance the strategy, interest, and challenge of reaching the green along the ground – Lahinch Golf Club, Ireland

Offsetting Drought Through Design Enhancing Playability Over Aesthetics

By Christine Fraser, Golf Course Architect, Hawtree Ltd.

Last summer, southern Ontario experienced a prolonged period of abnormally low rainfall leading to a shortage of water that caused one of the driest growing seasons on record. These extremely dry conditions were exactly that – extreme. And just as it would be ill-advised to design a golf course with only the top fraction of elite players in mind, it would be similarly unwise to design a golf course based on severe weather conditions experienced only a small fraction of the time. Realization of such design would lead to uninteresting putting surfaces and irrational hazard positioning during the remaining majority of the playing season.

However, as the climate changes Ontario will continue to experience an increasing likelihood of extreme drought and restricted water use. Golf course architects should be expected to acquaint themselves with the spectrum to which the local environment and soil conditions will fluctuate, and design to within those parameters.

There are two main aspects on a golf course which are affected by severe water deficiency that the architect may consider further – the first

being the maintenance regime. If a site is likely to experience extreme drought, then the following design techniques may be considered to minimize the maintenance burden during such conditions:

- Allow for larger areas for traffic dispersion around tees and greens, causing less wear and deterioration to turf in congested and sensitive areas. If area is limited, consider use of cart paths to reduce turf burden
- Implement irrigation systems with the ability to spot water specific areas of sensitivity during periods of prolonged drought
- Employ drainage techniques that will allow collection of water runoff and sub-surface flows into on-site storage ponds
- Avoid overly hilly or irregular terrain in landing areas as steep slopes make water retention more difficult
- Specify grass species that are best adapted to the local soil and climate and are the most drought tolerant
- Specify drought tolerant species of trees and shrubs, and create a planting plan that does not allow trees to encroach into sensitive

areas where they are able to amass precipitation from the surrounding turf

The second feature the architect may consider when designing within drought prone landscapes is course playability. Prolonged drought causes fairways to brown, greens to firm, and most significantly may generate an imbalance in surface consistency. There are design implements that an architect may employ to retain a certain degree of playability during drought without inhibiting playability during normal conditions. These principles focus on areas relating to the ground game, a trait often associated with links golf. The ground game is the player's utilization of the ground contours to bounce or roll the ball to a desired location. These often low-trajectory shots might become necessary when firm and fast fairways and greens do not allow target golf to be executed consistently or effectively.

The ground game can be applied to tee shots or second shots into par fives, but the most pervasive use is when approaching the green. The size, elevation, and contouring of the green itself deserves attention, but the architectural focus should be on the ground short of the green as it is integral in conveying the ball to the target. The shape given to these landing areas will either enhance or restrict the playability of the hole and will only be made more apparent during drought conditions. Therefore, it is essential to consider the strategy of the hole from tee to green and incorporate contouring that will deflect, retain, guide,

or diffuse the ball in ways appropriate to the previous yardage played.

Avoid cross hazards directly in front of the green on par 4s and long par 3s which may cause the impossibility of such a long, high shot to overtake due challenge. The player who is asked to hit a high lofted and high paced shot into a firm and fast green will likely be unduly penalized and come to rest beyond the target. Endeavor to design multiple routes into the target, offer different strategic decisions, and provide landing areas which are receptive to varying playing conditions.

Endeavor to design multiple routes into the target, offer different strategic decisions, and provide landing areas which are receptive to varying playing conditions.

Further value in providing an arena for the ground game is its capacity to encourage the player to grasp a greater variety of techniques and strategies. Drought conditions require the player to adapt her routing strategy and rethink her course management practices in order to score, as reaching the target conventionally may prove difficult. The game played along the ground demands more imagination,

greater strategy, and provides an opportunity to be creative in using a variety of de-lofted clubs. Furthermore, lower-trajectory shots often increase the margin for error and can become an easier method for higher handicapped players to reach their target.

It is also important to treat the landing areas the same throughout the course to promote consistency in roll and reaction and allow the player a reasonably predictable route into their target.

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Unconventional uses of native, drought tolerant turf cultivars can often produce aesthetically pleasing textures, hues, patterns, and forms throughout the season – Toronto Golf Club, Canada

Continued from page 21...

If it is unrealistic to treat all landing areas with similar maintenance regimes, then efforts should be concentrated on the green approach. It is most important that the consistency of the green approach matches that of the green. If topdressing is applied to the green, it must also be done so similarly to the approach. Providing an elongated consistent terrain through the approach and green will allow the player a much more controlled and navigable terrain to bump and run a ball into the green.

On holes that dogleg, introduce a feature at the outside of the turn to discourage the ball from running much beyond the fairway. A well-struck shot down the centre may be discouraged from overtaking the fairway and coming to rest in a more penal position by introducing a bunker or broken ground. Although rugged, hummocky ground or a

fairway bunker may alter the player's stance or lie, she will still have an opportunity to advance the ball towards the target in a less penal environment than from the woods or water she otherwise may have reached.

If incorporating design features into a golf course that is prone to drought will reduce the severity of the conditions without having adverse effects on the playability or strategy of the course otherwise, it is advantageous to do so. Design may be used to alleviate the maintenance burden by widening traffic berths and spreading wear, using spot irrigation to target strategic landing areas, utilizing drainage systems to collect water runoff, and establishing unconventional and locally suitable fauna cultivars that can better tolerate climate extremes.

A concerted and widespread effort to become more accepting of the natural conditions caused by reduced water usage is needed as more restrictions are sure to be sanctioned in the upcoming years. With a shift in perspective firm and fast playing conditions actually offer a vast number of benefits to course maintenance, playability, and aesthetic. Playing surfaces become truer and more consistent; opportunity to score is increased for the weaker player yet remains challenging for the stronger player; variety of natural colours and textures provides an aesthetic that is layered and diverse; and turf becomes more resilient to drought, diseases, and insects.

We must all – the maintenance crew, the player, and the architect – fundamentally choose playability over lush aesthetic and adaptation over convention and equip golf courses with the tools and resources to cope with the various harsh environmental conditions they will inevitably be exposed to. ■



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The Importance of Pruning

When to prune and when not to prune, that is the question? But it certainly is not the only question. What about how, where and why? Pruning is both a science and an art, like most aspects of ornamental horticulture. Proper pruning practices is one of the most overlooked and neglected jobs in the landscape. It so often doesn't get done until it's too late and then it becomes a decision of complete removal and a start over situation, or very heavy prune, which is much like starting from scratch again. Pruning is really the best preventive maintenance a young plant can receive. It is critical for young trees to be trained to encourage them to develop a strong structure.

Young trees pruned improperly or not pruned at all for several years may require heavy pruning to remove bigger branches to prevent trees from becoming deformed.

Pruning is an essential horticultural skill; when you prune correctly you encourage healthy growth, flowering for flowering shrubs, an aesthetically pleasing looking plant (which is the whole point of planting something in ornamental horticulture), fruit development, and you can create a well structured sturdy tree or shrub that can tolerate harsh conditions of Canadian winters, such as heavy snow loads and wind. Below is a list of reasons for pruning.

PRUNE TO PROMOTE PLANT HEALTH

- Remove dead or dying branches injured by disease, severe insect infestation, animals, storms, or other adverse mechanical damage.
- Remove branches that rub together.
- Remove branch stubs.

Avoid topping trees. Removing large branches leaves stubs that can cause several health problems. It also destroys the plant's natural shape and promotes suckering and development of weak branch structures.

PRUNE TO MAINTAIN PLANTS; INTENDED PURPOSES IN A LANDSCAPE, SUCH AS:

- Encouraging flower and fruit development.
- Maintaining a dense hedge.
- Maintaining a desired plant form or special garden forms.

PRUNE TO IMPROVE PLANT APPEARANCE

Appearance in the landscape is essential to a plants usefulness. For most landscapes, a plants natural form is best. Avoid shearing shrubs into tight geometrical forms that can adversely affect flowering unless it needs to be confined or trained for a specific purpose. When plants are properly pruned, it is difficult to see that they have been pruned. Prune to:

- Control plant size and shape.
- Keep shrubby evergreens well-proportioned and dense.
- Remove unwanted branches, waterspouts, suckers, and undesirable fruiting structures that detract from plant appearance.

PRUNE TO PROTECT PEOPLE AND PROPERTY

- Remove dead branches.
- Have hazardous trees taken down.
- Prune out weak or narrow-angled tree branches that overhang homes, parking areas, and sidewalks – anyplace falling limbs could injure people or damage property.
- Eliminate branches that interfere with street lights, traffic signals, and overhead wires. Prune branches that obscure vision at intersections.
- For security purposes, prune shrubs or tree branches that obscure the entry to your home or property.

For most trees and shrubs it's best to prune at the right time. You also need to be able to properly identify the species in question, and then determine what the best practice is for the timing to prune.

The late dormant season is the best time for most pruning. Pruning in late winter, just before spring growth starts, leaves fresh wounds exposed for only a short length of time before new growth begins the wound sealing process. Another advantage of dormant pruning is that it's easier to make pruning decisions without leaves obscuring plant branch structure. Pruning at the proper time can avoid certain disease and physiological problems. For example: prune apple trees, including flowering crabapples, mountain ash, hawthorns and shrub cotoneasters in late winter (February-early April). Spring or summer pruning increases chances for infection and spread of disease. Autumn or early winter pruning is more likely to result in drying and die-back at pruning sites.

Trees and shrubs that bloom early in the growing season on last year's growth should be pruned immediately after they finish blooming i.e. azalea, chokecherry, flowering plum or cherry, forsythia, lilac, magnolia, early blooming spirea.

Shrubs grown primarily for their foliage rather than showy flowers should be pruned in spring, before growth begins i.e. barberry, burning bush, dogwood, honeysuckle, ninebark, peashrub, purpleleaf sandcherry, smokebush.



Shrubs that bloom on new growth may be pruned in spring before growth begins. Hardier shrubs such as late blooming spireas and hydrangea arborescens should be pruned to the first pair of buds above the ground.

At planting, remove only diseased, dead, or broken branches. Begin training a plant during the dormant season following planting.

- Prune to shape young trees, but don't cut back the leader.
- Remove crossing branches and branches that grow back towards the center of the tree.
- As young trees grow, remove lower branches gradually to raise the crown, and remove branches that are too closely spaced on the trunk.
- Remove multiple leaders on evergreens and other trees where a single leader is desirable.

Pruning young shrubs is not as critical as pruning young trees, but take care and use the same principles to encourage good branch structure. Container grown shrubs require little pruning.

- When planting deciduous shrubs, thin out branches for good spacing and prune out any broken, diseased, or crossing/circling roots.
- When planting deciduous shrubs for hedges, prune each plant to within 6 inches of the ground.

After the initial pruning at planting, hedges need to be pruned often. Once the hedge reaches the desired height, prune new growth back whenever it grows another 6 to 8 inches. Prune to within 2 inches of the last pruning. Hedges may be pruned twice a year, in

spring and again in mid-summer, to keep them dense and attractive. Prune hedges so they're wider at the base than at the top, to allow all parts to receive sunlight and prevent legginess or stretching.

When faced with older overgrown shrubs requiring some renewal pruning remove up to one-third of the oldest, thickest stems or trunks, taking them right down to the ground every year. This will encourage the growth of new stems from the roots. Once there are no longer any thick, overgrown trunks left, switch to standard pruning as needed.

Deciduous shrubs that have multiple stems (cane-growth habit), and that have become very overgrown or neglected can be rejuvenated by cutting all canes back as close to the ground as possible in early spring. That season's flowers may be sacrificed but the benefits from bringing the plants back to their normal size and shape outweigh this temporary "collateral damage." This pruning technique works best for shrubs such as overgrown spirea, forsythia, cane-growth viburnums, honeysuckle and any other multiple stemmed shrubs that are otherwise healthy. Within one growing season, these shrubs will look like new plantings, full and natural shaped. ■



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Five Years Ago Today

The Board of Directors for 2012 were: **Doug Breen**, President, Brookfield CC, **Chris Andrejicka**, Past President, Essex G&CC, **Rob Gatto**, Vice President, King's Forest GC, **Phil Scully**, Secretary/Treasurer, Granite GC, **Cory Janzen**, Westmount G&CC, **David Kuypers**, Cutten Fields, **John McLinden**, Ladies GC of Toronto, **Mark Prieur**, Trafalgar G&CC, **Rod Speake**, Mill Run GC, **Chad Vibert**, Mad River GC and **Scott White**, Donalda Club. **Sally Ross** was the Executive Manager.

ON THE MOVE: Tangle Creek GC hired **Michael McDevitt** and **Chris Emerton** moved on to Oak Bay G&CC. **Greg Florence** is the new superintendent at Eagle Ridge GC and **Trevor Morvay** went to Sawmill Creek GC. At London Hunt and CC, **Bob Pattinson** retired and they hired assistant **Deb Dale**. **Kerry Whale** moved from Plant Products Inc. to AllTurf Ltd.

IN MEMORY: **Jack Austin**, Canadian Irrigation Consultants and **Darren Schuett**, Skyway Lawn Equipment Ltd., passed away.

TOURNAMENTS: The Pro/Super Challenge tournament was in May at the Georgian Bay Club in Collingwood hosted by **Bert McFadden**. The winning team was from Batteaux GC, **Paul Mickalko** and **Jim Rennie**.

The Presidents' Day Tournament was in July at Granite GC, hosted by **Phil Scully**. The winning team was from Islington GC, **Ian McQueen**, followed by Granite GC, **Phil Scully**, and in third place from Weston G&CC, **Robert Ackermann**.

In August, the Summer Scramble was held at Springfield G&CC, hosted by **Ray Dlugokecki**. The Flight A winners were **Jamie Spencer**, Westminster Trails GC, **Mark Trudell**, Mount Elgin GC, **Mark Durand**, Ontario Seed Co. and **Scott Gardner**, Echo Valley GC. The Flight B winners were **John McLinden**, Ladies GC of Toronto, **Mike Jennings**, Maple Downs G&CC, **Scott Heron**, The Toronto Hunt and **Scott Knox**, Syngenta.

The 6th Annual Seniors Tournament was hosted by **Nick Amsen** with **Alan Beeney**, **Doug Suter**, **Rae Murray**, **Paul White** and **Pelino Scenna** volunteering. The low gross winners were **Colin Nisbet**, Westview GC (72), **Thom Charters**, Coppinwood (78), **Dave Stevens**, Beaverbrook GC (80), **Bruce Dodson**, Heritage Hills GC (82) and **John Hughes**, Heritage Hills GC (82).

The Alex McClumpha Memorial Tournament was held at Scarboro G&CC hosted by **Bill Gilkes**. **Thom Charters**, Coppinwood, won the George Darou Trophy for superintendents over 50, and low gross honours went to **Vesselin Gueorguiev**, Royal Ontario GC.

The 2012 Ontario Turf Research Foundation Tournament was held at the Magna GC, hosted by **Wayne Rath**, raising \$40,000 for turfgrass research.

MILESTONES: **Art Oswald**, Grandview G&CC and **Jerry Richard**, Craigowan G&CC, were recognized as 25 year members.

The following clubs celebrated their 100th anniversary:

Guelph CC, **Gary Grosicki**, Sarnia G&CC, **Paul Brown**, Scarboro G&CC, **Bill Gilkes** and Summit G&CC, **Philip Brown**.

The following clubs celebrated their 50th anniversary:

Glen Eagle GC, **Michael McCarthy**, Puslinch Lake GC, **Jim Moore** and Summerheights GC, **Rory MacLennan**.



Alex McClumpha Memorial Tournament host Superintendent **Bill Gilkes**, his assistant **Lesley Thomas** and the rest of the crew of Scarboro G&CC.



OGSA President, **Doug Breen** (R), presents to host Superintendent of the President's Day Tournament, **Phil Scully** from Granite GC.



Doug Breen (L) presents the William Sansom Trophy to the winning team from Islington GC.



L-R - Foursome of **Chris Andrejicka**, OGSA Past President & Essex G&CC, **Kevin Doyle**, GCSAA, **Dennis Piccolo**, St. Catharines G&CC, and **Gary Morris**, Turf Care at Summer Scramble.



Ron Craig (L) Turf Care Products, presenting the George Darou Trophy to **Thom Charters**, Coppinwood.



Jerry Richard (L), receives 25 year membership award from Doug Breen.

The Guelph Turfgrass Institute celebrated its 25th anniversary. At the Research Field Day, many of the founders were recognized for their contributions to the development of the facility.

AWARDS: The late **Gordon Witteveen** was inducted into the Canadian Golf Hall of Fame.

Retired superintendent/past president **Pelino Scenna**, was the winner of the CGSA's John B. Steele Award.

Congratulations to Duke Equipment Ltd, GC which was awarded "North American



Doug Breen (L) presents to host Superintendent of the Manulife Financial LPGA Classic, Jeff Haynes from Grey Silo GC.

Dealer of the Year" at the GCSAA show in Las Vegas.

Andrew Hardy, Pheasant Run GC, was recognized by the GCSAA/Golf Digest for one of the Environmental Leaders in Golf Awards.

EVENTS: The 2012 Ontario Golf Course Management Conference and Trade Show was a success in Niagara Falls with over 500 delegates and 200 exhibitors.

Hamilton G&CC hosted the RBC Canadian Open, with Superintendent **Rhod Trainor**. Grey Silo GC, hosted the Manu-



Jeff Alexander (L), Parry Sound G&CC, presents a plaque to Choya Fraser, Midland G&CC, for hosting the Investors Group Senior Men's Amateur Championship

life Financial LPGA Classic, with Superintendent **Jeff Haynes**. Midland G&CC, hosted the Investors Group Senior Men's Amateur Championship, with Superintendent **Choya Fraser**. ■



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MEMBER MOMENTS



1: Ready to roll. **Joe Adams, Superintendent**, Flamborough Hills Golf & Country Club | **2:** No Parking Rico. **Corey Phillips, Superintendent**, Canadian Golf & Country Club | **3:** Dufton - Guide Dog in training. **Nicholas Bell, Superintendent**, Muskoka Highlands Golf Links | **4:** Course's version of a spray hawk. **Owen Russell, Superintendent**, Markland Wood Golf Club | **5:** Great Horned Owlet. **Jason Winter, Superintendent**, Deer Ridge Golf Club.



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POTUS with a 3 Handicap

By Doug Breen, Superintendent
GolfNorth Properties

Like most Ontarians, I celebrate the glory of the Canadian winter, by spending as much of it as possible in Florida. Fortunately, there are ample opportunities for me to attend golf industry events, which I have been able to convince my wife, are not only work – but necessary and unavoidable work. I look as sad as I possibly can, as I drag myself out the front door, with my suitcase in one hand and my clubs in the other. I mutter something like, “So disappointed that I won’t be able to take Aniela to her 6:00am hockey practices this week. If only I didn’t have to work – I’d much rather stay here and shovel snow with you guys.” Five hours later, I’m sitting on the patio of a Miller’s Ale House (working).

Anyhow, I told you that story, to tell you this one:

While sitting on the patio of Miller’s Ale House in Orlando, with a mixed crowd of American and Canadian golf people, someone made this statement, “At least we’ve finally got a golf course owner in the White House.” Well, you can imagine the chaos that followed that social hand grenade being tossed onto the table among the chicken wings and nachos. Let me assure you, that Americans who like Donald Trump – REALLY like Donald Trump. Likewise, those who don’t like Donald Trump – well, you’ve been on the internet. Let’s just say that in the great State of Florida, to suggest that the present President is a polarizing person, would be a gross understatement. I also learned that day, that we Canadians really enjoy a good donnybrook, and will relentlessly stir the pot for our own amusement.

But the question still remains – Is Donald Trump good for golf?

It’s no secret, that whenever a thing is endorsed by the leader of a country, it gives it a serious shot in the arm. Nixon bought a dog, and families all over the America went out and bought dogs. Everyone wanted Lincoln’s hat (and that unfortunate beard). Hitler’s moustache was incredibly popular in Germany; but not surprisingly, no one’s had one since 1945. I don’t know if our own Prime Minister plays golf, but he sure likes smoking dope, and look how popular that is! But does a President who not only plays golf, but owns 17 courses, help to promote

the game?

Golfers in the White House are nothing new. Those who criticize ‘The Donald’ for spending too much time working on his (alleged) three handicap, ought to remember that President Eisenhower was a member of Augusta National, and visited there for a week or more, 29 times while sitting as President. In fact, it’s been reported that President Eisenhower played 800 rounds during his 8 years in the White House. Like any good member, he also petitioned to have a tree removed, which he thought was “in the wrong place.” Augusta being Augusta – they said “No” to the most powerful man in the country. Kennedy played golf (at

least 85% of the times that he told his wife that he was playing golf). Barak Obama, and both Presidents Bush played as well. Most modern Presidents did.

But President Trump is the first one to own courses, and that should be good for the industry, right?

That brings us full circle to that polarizing figure business. Any potential advantage of the President engaging in golf, is dependent upon the public wishing to emulate that President. The jury is still out on this one. He’s clearly doing nothing to help to dispel the myth that golfers are all old, overweight, entitled white men with gaudy taste. He

hasn’t done too much to ingratiate himself to women, minorities, and immigrants, which are clearly our best opportunity for growth. We could certainly use a little help with the environmental movement, but gutting the EPA and calling them names, makes us look like we’re hiding something. Perhaps if we had a golfing Prime Minister, we could finally get golf to be an entertainment tax deduction again – like it is in nearly every other country, and nearly every other type of entertainment.

One last thought – we would be foolish to overlook the fact that Donald Trump is presently sitting in the ‘Biggest of Chairs’, because the public is tired of the status quo. They’re tired of feeling excluded, and they want to ‘drain the swamp’ of pretention. Those same words have been uttered against golf – many, many times. The core reasons that Trump was elected are very real and present in our game, and we need to give that serious consideration.

So once again, will the POTUS with the 3 handicap (allegedly), ultimately be a boom or a bust for golf? Like the man himself, opinions are divided, and only time will tell. ■



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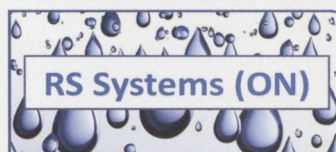
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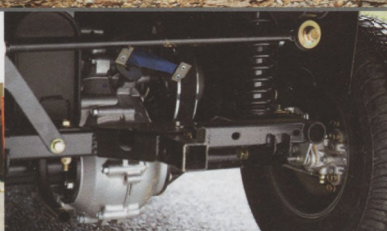
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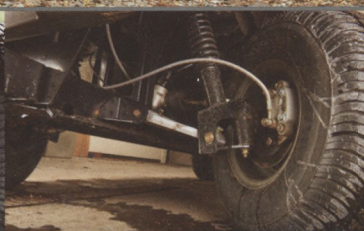
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