

NOVEMBER 2017

ONCOURSE

OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE

ONTARIO GOLF SUPERINTENDENTS' ASSOCIATION

Communicating in a Crisis

Are you prepared?

ALSO INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

**Modernizing Your Operation
Before They Go, Get the Know
Mentorship in Motion**

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



By Cory Janzen
OGSA President

With the golf season coming to a close, I hope that everyone is taking time to enjoy the nice fall weather before winter grips Ontario.

The summer months were busy for the board. Representatives from OGSA and NAGA Ontario met with Conservative MPP, Ted Arnott (Critic, Environment and Climate Change) to discuss both the proposed increase to minimum wage, the public meeting requirement and the surrounding red tape in Regulation 63/09 of the Pesticides Act. Mr. Arnott has a very good understanding of our industry and had some great suggestions for us moving forward.

Significant change will be difficult and likely require a Conservative majority in next year's election however the OGSA will continue to work with the Provincial Government on issues important to our members.

We are also aware of the proposed changes to the pesticide licensing system. The MOECC has not provided us with much information about the changes but we have expressed our interest in being consulted on any potential changes in writing.

In the spirit of two-way communication (the theme of this month's *ONCourse* issue), I want to encourage members to register for the 2018 Conference. This conference is your chance to share your experiences with the OGSA Board, industry leaders and fellow members, and stay current in the field. Conference Chair, Jason Boyce and Executive Director, Sally Ross are putting the finishing touches on the event, which is once again, in Niagara Falls. The education program is excellent and there is outstanding value as the registration includes several meals and networking events. We have made some minor tweaks to an already great experience and we are confident it will be the best show yet – please join us!

As usual, we are looking for volunteers to write articles for *ONCourse* and serve on our Board and Committees. I know that we are all busy, but getting involved in the association is very rewarding and educational. Please contact Sally or any of the Board members if you are interested – you will be glad you did.

Reflecting back on this year as President, I would like to express my sincere thanks to all of the Board members, Sally, and her staff. I am always impressed by the professionalism and hard work that everyone demonstrates, and this really has made it a rewarding year! Lastly, thank you to all OGSA members – we are grateful that you see value in what we do.

See you at the Conference! ■



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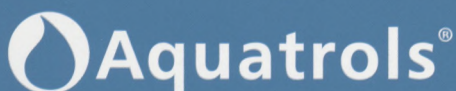


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OGSA is committed to serving its members, advancing their profession, and enriching the quality of golf and its environment.

ON THE COVER

Deer Ridge Golf Club, spring 2017.
Photo courtesy of Jason Winter.

ONCOURSE EDITORIAL COMMITTEE

Lacy Droste, Stephen Hicks, Kevin Kobzan, Sally Ross, Al Schwemler, Cam Shaw, Ken Tilt, Courtney White

"We are all in this together"



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EDUCATION SESSIONS

Just What the Grass Requires:
Using and Understanding
the MLSN Guidelines for
Nutrient Recommendations

Leaves of Grass: Applications
and Implications of Clipping
Volume

Dr. Micah Woods, Ph.D.
Chief Scientist at the Asian
Turfgrass Center, Assis-
tant-Adjunct Professor at
the University of Tennessee

The Rising Threat of
Fungicide Resistance &
Benefits of Fairway Rolling

Dr. Geunhwa Jung, Ph.D.
Professor, University of
Massachusetts, Stockbridge
School of Agriculture

High Performance Putting
Surfaces

Dr. Frank Rossi, Ph.D.
New York Extension
Turfgrass Specialist,
Associate Professor of
Turfgrass Science in the
Department of Horticulture
at Cornell University

Human Resource Session

Bob Farren
Director of Golf Course
Maintenance and Grounds
at Pinehurst Resort

Technology Session

J. Paul Robertson
Superintendent and Project
Manager at Victoria
Golf Club

EDITORIAL MESSAGE



By Sally Ross
OGSA Executive
Manager & Courtney
White, Guest Editor

An effective communication playbook is one of the most underrated, yet incredibly powerful tools in any organization's tool box, in any industry. This issue of *ONCourse* focuses on several ways an

effective communication strategy can enhance employee satisfaction, ease your work load and help you navigate through a crisis.

Our writers took to the courses to talk to experts in their respective fields to discuss how their preferred strategies impact their role and their day to day process!

Robert Thompson speaks to three superintendents who were each faced with a crisis situation. Discover how they survived those challenging times by recognizing potential implications and reacting quickly to ensure all stakeholders were kept informed until the issues were resolved. Thankfully not every day brings a crisis, but that does not mean

the playbook gets shelved. Communication is also essential to effective daily processes and is vital to the human resources function at a golf club, and not just when hiring. What happens when an employee decides to move on? Cam Shaw's article gives us insight into the advantages of conducting an exit interview.

I don't think we could talk about the importance of keeping the lines of communication open without touching on the latest and greatest in technology. Jason VanBuskirk discusses how digital whiteboards are revolutionising communication between superintendents and their staff in the workplace.

Once you've created or added to your own communication playbook, don't miss this issue's member profile, contributed by Stephen Hicks, highlighting the career of John Gall and the history of the Cherry Hill Club.

And finally, Doug Breen keeps us in stitches as he recounts his summer mission to play all 31 of Golf North's courses as way to avoid hitting the gym, but what he took from the experience was far more than better health!

Enjoy all this and more in this issue of *ONCourse*! ■



OGCM Conference Agenda Highlight

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 17, 2018

Bill Carr Work Inspired

Bill explores research into how the brain works and how we can use this knowledge to create an environment that will nurture a creative response to change and keep a healthy perspective in unhealthy times. Bill focuses on empathy and what he calls "contagious inspiration" and discusses how nurturing our relationship with ourselves and others can re-wire our neuro-pathways and change surviving into thriving and tragedy into strategy. ■

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WHAT'S NEW

By Sally Ross, OGSA Executive Manager

Joint Event with GBGSA

We had an excellent turnout for the GBGSA Year End Finale & OGSA Alex McClumpha Memorial Tournament joint event held late September at Rocky Crest Golf Club. Almost 130 golfers braved the scorching heat to play this beautiful course in its idyllic location. While the format changed slightly to accommodate both associations, we still managed to keep some of the McClumpha tournament traditions including the presentations of the George Darou Trophy, which went to John McLinden from Ladies Golf Club of Toronto, and the plaque to our host superintendent, Jeremy Geer.

We hope to continue creating partnerships with our Regional Associations for events.



Ready to go.



The winning team (L-R) Jay Sisko, Superintendent, Idylwyld G&CC, Jeff Allen, Superintendent, Lake Joseph GC, Mike Pellerin, Superintendent, Saugeen GC, and Mark Kay, Superintendent, Stone Ridge GC.



Mike Ovell (L), Assistant Superintendent, receives a plaque from Nicholas Bell, for hosting a successful event at Rocky Crest GC.



Tom Fischer (L) from Turf Care Products presents the George Darou trophy to John McLinden of Ladies Golf Club of Toronto.



Photo Courtesy of Kevin Doyle.

WELCOME to Our New Members

| | |
|--|----------------|
| Chris Chapman Camelot Golf & Country Club | Class A |
| Andrea Gelinas Devil's Pulpit Golf Association | Class C |
| Jeff Hansen Vespra Hills Golf Club | Class C |
| Kim McCarthy King's Forest Golf Course | Class C |
| Bradley Miller Westhaven Golf Club | Class C |
| Carol Turner Ladies Golf Club of Toronto | Class F |

Board and Staff Changes

This past September we said goodbye to OGSA Director (Vice President) Rod Speake. We would like to thank Rod for his almost 7 years of service and wish him well in his position at Pickseed Canada Inc.

The OGSA also said goodbye to Natalie Andrusko this past month, who moved on to take a position closer to her home. We would like to welcome Courtney White to the OGSA.

Notice of Annual-General Meeting

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 17, 2018

The OGSA Annual General Meeting will be held in the Maple A & B Rooms at the Casino Fallsview Conference Centre on Wednesday, January 17th, 2018. Annual reports and financial statements will be available at the meeting and posted online shortly thereafter. Official notice of meeting and agenda will be posted on the OGSA website in accordance with our by-laws.

Superintendent Recognition

Conference Registration and Planning

The Early Bird Registration deadline is November 30, 2017. Please register as soon as possible to save on your cost to attend and to facilitate our planning process.

Our opening night off-site party will be held at Margaritaville. A ticket for the event is included in your package if you are registered for the opening day. Extra tickets are available as the facility has a large capacity. Please call the office if you wish to acquire extra tickets.

Support of Turf Research



Sean Gunn (L), OTRF President, accepts a \$20,000 cheque presented by Cory Janzen, OGSA President, on behalf of the OGSA.

Cory Janzen, OGSA President attended the OTRF Fundraising Tournament held at Devil's Pulpit and presented a cheque for \$20,000.00 to Sean Gunn, OTRF President, in support of turf research. ■



Mike Pellerin, OGSA Board Director (L), presents a plaque to Superintendent, Jamie Downton, at Sawmill Creek Golf Resort, for hosting the Ontario Juvenile (U17) Boy's & Girls' Championships.



Tim Muys (L), OGSA Board Director, presents a plaque to Superintendent, Jim Moore, at Puslinch Lake GC, for hosting the Ontario PeeWee Girls' & Boys' Championships.



(L-R) Jason Boyce, OGSA Secretary/Treasurer, presents a plaque to Superintendent, Perry Beausoleil, and GM, Matt Clitheroe, at Hylands GC for hosting the Canadian PGA Tour - National Capital Open to Support our Troops.



Ian McQueen (L), Superintendent, St. George's G&CC, receives a plaque from Owen Russell, OGSA Board Director, for hosting the Invictus Games.

Cherry Hill Club

Hole 2
Courtesy: John Gall

912 Cherry Hill Boulevard
Ridgeway, ON
L0S 1N0
905 894 1122
john gall@cherryhillclub.ca
www.cherryhillclub.ca

About the Course

Built in 1922 by American interests (for obvious reasons) during the Prohibition times, and still maintains a 75% American membership. Many members own property on the north shore of Lake Erie.

Architect: Walter Travis; Ian Andrew (2008 – bunkers, select tees and grassing lines)

Type of Club: Private Club

Number of Holes: 18

Number of Rounds Annually: 15,000

Practice Facility: Driving and Short Range

Major Challenges

Heavy clay parent soils creating drainage issues and managing original 1922 pushup style greens.

Member Since 1982

John Gall

Superintendent, Cherry Hill Club

By: Stephen Hicks, Assistant Golf Course Superintendent, Brantford Golf and Country Club

Since the age of 12, John Gall has been actively involved in the golf industry. “I caddied at Thornhill when I was 12 to 15,” states Gall in a candid interview. It was during this time that he befriended David Gourlay Jr., and the two enjoyed many rounds together. David’s father, Gourlay Sr., was the Superintendent of Thornhill at a time when John’s father was a member. Gourlay Jr. notes “It was a big no no to hire a member’s son at the club, but I made a case with my father and John was hired.” One particularly memorable round, Gall and Gourlay Jr. discovered several Black Turfgrass Ataenius (BTA) after inspecting two large divots on the 8th hole. After finishing their round, they told Gourlay Sr., and an application of insecticide took place based on their active scouting. Gall enjoyed the job and took a liking to the physical and outdoor



John Gall, Superintendent, Cherry Hill.

nature the role offered. It wasn’t long before he worked his way up to Assistant at Thornhill in 1979.

After eight years at Thornhill, he recognized a similar phenomenon to what we see today; little to no opportunity for movement in the Greater Toronto Area. So in 1980, at age 22, Gall made the big decision to move on, taking a position at Sault Ste. Marie Country Club as their

In the Hot Seat

Q: Favourite tournament?

A: Masters

Q: Favourite Piece of Equipment?

A: Toss- up between a deep-tine aerator, spinner style topdresser, greens roller and moisture meter

Q: Ultimate Foursome?

A: Tiger Woods, Jack Nicklaus and Sam Snead

Q: Favourite Movie or Book?

A: Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid

Q: Favourite TV Show:

A: Seinfeld

Q: Lowest round?

A: 72 at Thornhill, Oshawa, St. George's and Don Valley GC

superintendent. The golf course was the only private club in the area and was quite good, but needed some refinements. His acumen for conditioning attracted many new members. Gall laments that he wishes he, "would have had a clause in my contract for new membership incentives, as they went from 280 to 600 members during my tenure." During the regular golf season, Gall oversaw a long-term greens renovation project. The job was seasonal however, and so in the off season, Gall focused on his other passion – skiing.

One September day in 1985, Gall recounts a day with temperatures in the high thirties. He was hosting some very important and special guests that day to come and see the course. Gall had applied for a position at Oshawa Golf and Country Club, and the selection committee wanted to see each finalist's property. The group was impressed enough to select him. After a first wet summer in Oshawa, Gall managed to instigate a renovation of the irrigation system from a single steel mainline with quick couplers and hoses, to a modernized system that helped reduce



Entire construction team at St. Georges. Photo by Ian Andrew.

labour and improve course conditioning. Additionally, he pushed a successful renovation of the 15th green and installed the required drainage systems to enhance playability.

In 1990, Gall accepted the robust challenge of superintendent at the prestigious St. George's Golf and Country Club in the heart of Toronto. After only one

year he converted all 30 acres of fairways to a pure creeping bentgrass sward. In his second season, his team worked hard to renovate the irrigation system to enhance the conditioning of the new bentgrass fairways. Gall fondly reminisces hosting many golf pros in the days leading up to the Canadian Open. He recounts himself and the members walking and discussing

What You Need to Know

Grass: Annual bluegrass & bentgrass

Tees: Bentgrass

Fairways: Bentgrass & annual bluegrass

Type of Greens: Native pushup

Course Length: 7,027 yds

Size of Property: 300 acres

Size of Greens: 3 acres

Size of Tees: 3.5 acres

Size of Fairways: 30 acres

"If my memory serves me correctly, I believe I had the pleasure of teaching John to cut greens. His lines were always much straighter than mine ever were. He was the perfectionist on the course and my father fondly enjoyed John working at the course. John knew members would be watching him and he never gave them any issue with his hire. He was simply the best!"

– David Gourlay Jr.



Hole 1 at Cherry Hill. Photo John Gall.

golf with the many stars of the day. Another star struck memory John shares is one of a senior professional event when a weather delay forced many pros to evacuate to the maintenance facility and hang out with John and his team. Later in his tenure, Gall was involved in a bunker renovation that restored much of the original character of Stanley Thompson's original design.

After leaving St. George's, Gall had the brief opportunity to consult on another bunker renovation at Scarboro Golf & Country Club. It wasn't long after that project concluded, that John was ready for his next career challenge. Not surprisingly, Gall acquired the position of superintendent at the Cherry Hill Club in Ridgeway, Ontario where he had the distinct pleasure of managing yet another bunker renovation. The project had already been approved before his arrival, and began his second day of work. Upon its completion, every bunker and 10 new tees had been constructed in just over nine months. The renovation ran from August to May and Gall admits the mild winter helped the project timeline. Gall claims that Cherry Hill is a wonderful property that poses some unique challenges and a few welcomed advantages. "With the lack of traffic (rounds total 15,000 per year), we don't have the same concerns about recovery from damage in the late fall." Last year, an unfortunate series of

events led to Cherry Hill Club hosting a MacKenzie (PGA Tour Canada) event with only six weeks' notice. The devastating wildfires in northern Alberta forced a delay and relocation of the tournament. Based on Cherry Hill's previously outspoken interests in hosting events, they were granted the opportunity. There was a slight problem, however, when it came to managing course playability. The Canadian Tour specifies

green speeds of approximately 11 feet for their events and Cherry Hill, well known for their slick surfaces, did not want to regress from their typical 12-foot stimp. In the end, they came to an agreement and the event was scheduled. Gall's biggest concern was that the drought of 2016 had left their roughs ravaged. So, the quick acting super decided to take matters into his own hands making supplemental applications of wetting agents and fertilizer to rejuvenate the thinned-out sward. Luckily, Mother Nature supplemented his plan and provided the necessary moisture to improve the process. Gall stated that having the course constantly in tournament ready condition helped make the transition to tour standards relatively simple.

John has seen a lot of changes throughout his career, and recognizes that when he was younger, the profession of greens keeping was not nearly as highly regarded. "No one knew who we (superintendents) really were," he stated candidly in the interview." Gall claims that there was a change of tide, when he overheard golfers talking about conditioning and naming superintendents at other clubs. When looking to the future, his advice to future superintendents is "When it is time to move on, choose small clubs if available, don't wait for the big name." ■

"I asked John for a lesson on turfgrass. This included numerous lessons in requirements, which led to lessons on growing environments. It opened my eyes to the fact that golf architecture is only half of my role. The other half was solving problems on how to create courses that were sustainable. I concentrate as much on sustainability – probably more really – than I do about golf design."

"There's no question that John's interest in the history of St. George's led to the full restoration of the bunkers. The committee allowed us to restore the 11th green as an example. They loved what they saw and asked John and I to research and restore the bunkers."

– Ian Andrew



Modernizing Your Operation

By Jason Van Buskirk, President/Founder, Turf Cloud, Inc.
Class A Golf Course Superintendent

STARTING OUT

At some point we have all used napkins, scorecards or loose sheets of paper to jot down notes to setup our daily job board. For many of us, despite our best planning, the day becomes a blur the minute we step onto the property and sometimes it starts before you even arrive. You know the days I am talking about. Your job board is set, your penmanship looks fantastic and the morning begins peacefully with typical morning rounds. When suddenly the radio crackles and you hear, "Radio 1, come in," says the caller sounding like the irrigation tech. You respond back with, "Go ahead!" willing his response to be good news. It's not. "Um yeah, we have a mainline blowout in the middle of #6." And just like that, your plans for the morning have come to a screeching halt and the rest of the day's plans need to be changed accordingly.

That whiteboard in your shop can fill up pretty quickly with dry-erase markups. Consequently, each day can become a grind of preparing new notes for the board and providing concise instructions to staff outlining what to do next. Sometimes plans need to be changed on the fly and not even your excellent penmanship can make this better.

THE POWERHOUSE

Fortunately, it's 2017 and we live in a time where our world is teeming with technology that lives in the palm of our hands. We even have watches updating us with the latest sports scores, important emails, phone calls, or text messages. To top it off, just when you think our tech giants have come out with the best advancements, the next month something better is released. We live in a world of productivity and efficiency and our smart devices can help to keep daily operations running smoothly at such a fast pace. Some individuals may be apprehensive allowing smart devices to organize their processes but, it's important to understand that leveraging technology in your turf operation means communication can be delivered and updated in a matter of seconds, most times with just the touch of a finger. Whether you're interested in writing, speaking on video, updating social media, analyzing data, taking pictures, or updating your virtual whiteboard while performing morning rounds, your role as manager has become a whole lot different.

THE BOARD

Having a solid grasp of the digital world in addition to business acumen has become increasingly important and turf managers have more technology at their fingertips than ever before. That whiteboard we discussed earlier is the core communication tool in just about every

maintenance operation you walk into. Whether it's multiple whiteboards or a giant wall feature, the dry-erase notes, cloth eraser, and board spray are the centerpiece for most break rooms. It is easy enough to write tasks down and erase them when they need to be changed but if we analyze the time we take to write, erase, and track labour, we become immediately aware that other tasks could have been completed during that time. Let's circle back to our irrigation issue on hole #6. Common Solution: radio call to the shop, or a physical trip back in to change jobs around in order to focus on the immediate problem and time is ticking. Certainly, technology isn't going to fix the irrigation issue but having access to a digital job board can improve efficiencies and productivity by logging on to the board from a smart device. This will cut down on drive time, writing time and best of all it will automatically shift labour investments.

Let's be honest, tracking labour is almost as important as writing down what your staff members need to do next. Embracing the use of technology allows us to leverage a digital job board to not only assign labour from a remote location, but also track that assigned labour.

PLATFORM DECISIONS

Deciding to embrace a digital white board means that a few small adjustments need to be made. The traditional white board retires its dry erase marker and a television, computer and specialized software will take its place. To start, you can setup a flat screen TV in the break room, locker room, or general shop. Adding a Chromebit and USB keyboard is the best solution to turn this TV into a computer running the chrome operating system (Chrome OS). Once logged into Chrome OS on your TV, you can access the internet via the Google Chrome browser and tap into multiple cloud services equipped with digital job board apps.

Most recently, Google Drive has been a fan favorite in the turf industry. While Google Drive is awesome, it takes quite a bit of spreadsheet engineering to automatically submit data logged. If you're looking for just a plain spreadsheet job board, this should be your choice. Google Drive doesn't cost anything except a small fee for extra cloud storage (only if needed). Another paid service is the Turf Cloud Turf Dash™ platform. This platform is cloud-based and mobile responsive, allowing you to quickly and easily edit, add, and change jobs. Turf Dash™ also allows for equipment repair tracking, agriculture planning, agenda management, moisture and weather tracking.

While there are many programs and apps available to fit your specific needs and budget, it is important to understand how productivity and efficiency is improved with a little help from technology. If you have an internet connection, anything is possible when employing cloud based services in your shop. Technology is here to stay and it's changing the overall environment around how turf managers not only manage, but conduct business daily! ■

Assistants Tournament Recap



First place team with a score of -16 was (L-R) Gerry Fox (Dalewood GC), Ben Collins (Glen Cedars GC), Shaemos Campbell (Pheasant Run GC), Rob Lewis (Deer Creek Golf & Banquet Facility). Trophy presented by (R) Greg Brown, OGSA guest.



(L-R) Ken Tilt, Assistant Superintendent, Trafalgar G&CC presents plaques to Ray Dlugokecki, Superintendent and Ryan Judd, Assistant Superintendent of Springfield G&CC for hosting.

By Sally Ross,
OGSA Executive Manager

This past September 21st, 92 golfers participated in the OGSA's 15th Annual Assistants Tournament at Springfield Golf and Country Club.

The weather was exceptional and certainly indicative of the Indian Summer we have enjoyed. Great participation, support from sponsors and the excellent course conditions, attributable to Golf Course Superintendent Ray Duke and Assistant Superintendent Ryan Judd made this year's event very successful.

The first-place team with a score of -16 was Rob Lewis (Deer Creek Golf & Banquet Facility), Gerry Fox (Dalewood GC), Ben Collins (Glen Cedars

GC) and Shaemos Campbell (Pheasant Run GC). Second place went to the team of Mike Bradley (Crosswinds G&CC), Derek Brooker (Duke Equip. Ltd), Paul Peterson (Legends on the Niagara) and Craig McCutcheon (Turfgrass Canada) with a score of -13. At -12 was the team of Alex O'Hara (Wyndance GC), Delky Dozzi (Nobleton Lakes GC), Tyler Szela (St. Thomas G&CC) and Zack Stevens (Summit G&CC).

There were some big winners of the day; all prizes were either \$250.00 Pro Shop Gift Cards, or prizes valued at \$250.00. Closest to the Pin on #4 was Scott Littleton from Osprey Valley Golf Links. The prize was sponsored by Syngenta. Closest to the Pin on #14 was Greg Brown from Essex G&CC. The prize was

sponsored by Zander Sod. Tim Lea from Toronto GC had the Longest Drive for the Men, and Lesley Thomas from Scarboro C&CC won the Ladies' Longest Drive, which was sponsored by Plant Products. An additional surprise prize of a barbeque for "Closest to the Case" on #1, was awarded to Dalton Rowbotham from Mad River GC, courtesy of BrettYoung.

The OGSA would like to thank our Platinum Sponsor; Bayer, and Gold Sponsors; Turf Care Products, and BrettYoung. Our Silver Sponsors; G.C. Duke Equipment Ltd., Engage Agro, Vanden Bussche Irrigation and Quali-Pro. This support provided all attendees with a great prize from the prize table. Additional prizes donated for the draw from a variety of companies in attendance and

we thank them all.

Master of Ceremonies was Ken Tilt from Trafalgar G&CC, who presented the prizes and the host awards to both Ryan Judd and Ray Duke.

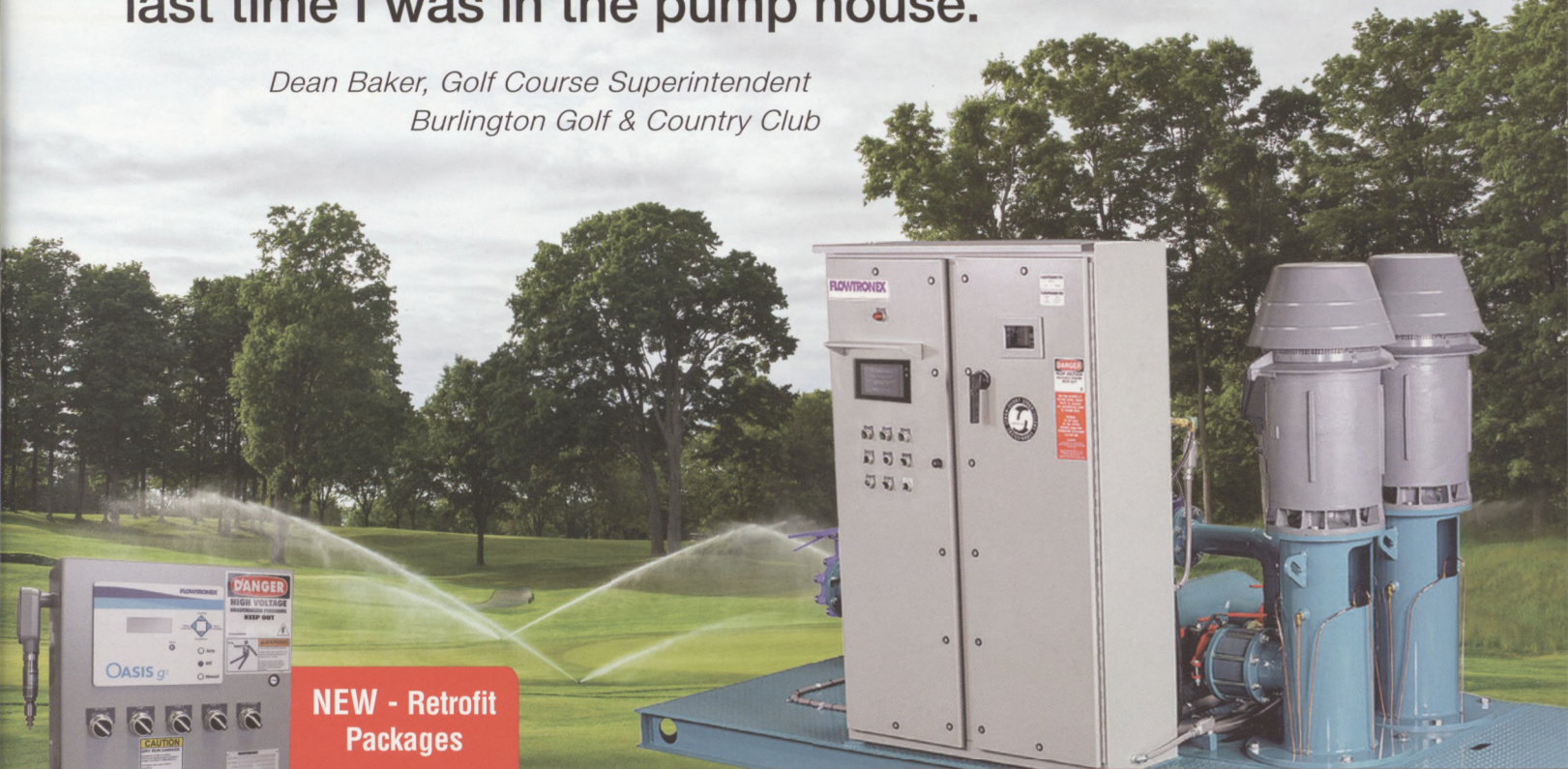
Special thanks go to Stephen Hicks from Brantford G&CC and Ken Tilt from Trafalgar G&CC, who worked on the acquisition of sponsorships and the purchase of prizes.

A more somber moment was the awarding of the winner's trophy, which was renamed for this tournament as "The Paul Brown Memorial Trophy," and was presented to the winning team by Greg Brown, who attended the tournament as the guest of the OGSA. Everyone in attendance appreciated the gesture that ensures Paul Brown will remain in our thoughts, especially at the Assistants Tournament. ■

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*Dean Baker, Golf Course Superintendent
Burlington Golf & Country Club*

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COMMUNICATING IN A CRISIS

#1 Fairway Bunker, Deer Ridge Golf Club, spring 2017. Photo courtesy of Jason Winter.

By Robert Thompson

Jason Winter knew something was coming—he just wasn't sure when or how big it would be and on the day in question, the watershed that feeds the Grand River was having one of those “once in 100 years” events. More than 100 mm of rain fell in two hours on a Friday evening just north of Deer Ridge Golf Club, the course where Winter is superintendent. That much precipitation in a short amount of time can't be ignored, and Winter was well aware that Deer Ridge, a private course just north of Highway 401 in Kitchener, would feel some of the ramifications of the rainfall.

Winter reached out to the club's general manager, Tom Schellenberg, to say Deer Ridge needed to be prepared. “We started thinking about how to communicate with the membership right away,” says Winter. “I mean I was talking to Tom about it before anything happened at the golf course. I wanted him to know something could happen and we should expect it.”

Winter was right—that evening the water rose to envelope practically all of the golf course. Golf pro, Rich Morel told a local newspaper of rapids forming on the 5th hole, and when morning light appeared the following day, Deer Ridge was largely

“Everything fails when you become emotional about the situation, when you react badly to what is happening. I had to think of a plan to deal with the course once the water receded, and how to let everyone know what was going on.”

lost underneath the Grand River. On two holes, the water stretched to the top of the flagsticks.

While the water was rising, Winter was already communicating with the

Deer Ridge's GM, board of directors, the membership, and even nearby clubs. “I was as proactive as I could be,” he explains. “Everything fails when you become emotional about the situation, when you react badly to what is happening. I had to think of a plan to deal with the course once the water receded, and how to let everyone know what was going on.”

Winter, who has dealt with tornado events and a previous flood, has learned first-hand that preparing for a crisis communication plan was a key facet of the recovery and calls himself “a bit of a disaster management specialist.” It isn't a title he is thrilled to have, but it does show the importance of being prepared when something unexpected hits. “I think supers are a resourceful group,” says Winter, “but you need to consider an emergency action plan, and effective communication is a part of that. You never know what the emergency is going to be, but you can plan how you'll deal with it once it arises.”

Increasingly superintendents need to

be ahead of the curve when it comes to communicating a golf course emergency, and there are a number of stakeholders that must be considered.

That means every superintendent should have a crisis communications plan that encompasses members, management, staff, and others who might become involved in the recovery process.

MANAGEMENT

One of the most immediate concerns for superintendents is connecting with the key members of the management team so they can deal with any matters—insurance claims, budgetary issues—that might arise as part of the emergency.

In Winter's experience, connecting with club leadership early and often is essential.

"The board is the voice for the club, so staying in touch with them is key," he says. "They are going to use their experience to help guide the club through the situation, and you have to keep them informed."

In his instance, Winter met with Schellenberg, the club's GM, on a daily basis during the flood, keeping him up to speed on the situation, and the progress. "There were a lot of issues to consider," he says, "from insurance claims to dealing with the long-term fallout from the flood." While Winter was dealing with trying to restore the golf course, Schellenberg was able to focus on the other issues that needed attention.

Superintendent Rob Ackermann has also faced a series of serious issues at Weston Golf Club, ranging from a chemical application that damaged the club's greens in 2010 to a flood that ravaged the Willie Park Jr. design three years later. In every instance, Ackermann says that personally connecting with as many board members as possible, providing an honest and clear assessment of the situation is the key to not only getting the situation under control, but also to moving forward.

"You want to speak in plain English, be clear, and take them on a personal tour of the course," says Ackermann. "Boards want face-to-face interaction, and seeing things up close really lets them know what's going on."

MEMBERS

Ackermann's strategy was to conduct tours of Weston when the club faced significant crisis. He believes that personal interaction, honest and open communication about the issue and the solutions are critical to



Weston Golf & Country Club, Summer 2013. Photos courtesy of Rob Ackermann.

managing member expectations. He also posted photos of damage so members could see the course's problems firsthand. "Nothing beats that personal connection, but a picture tells a thousand words," Ackermann says.

"You need to consider an emergency action plan, and effective communication is a part of that. You never know what the emergency is going to be, but you can plan how you'll deal with it once it arises."

Often times dealing with members in communications comes down to managing expectations, says Winter. "I liken it to a NASCAR—you know you're going to hit the wall at some point, but can you just put

some duct tape on the bumper and get it back out there, at least for the time being?" asks Winter. "That's what you've got to communicate."

OTHER INVOLVED PARTIES

Part of any effective communications plan is being able to get the word out when help is needed. Superintendent Ian McQueen was well aware of this when a flood hit Islington as he drove home in July, 2013. By the time he arrived back to the club, the creek that runs through the Stanley Thompson-design had jumped its banks, and was flowing through holes on the back nine.

McQueen recognized he had to react quickly. He knew all too well that if numerous courses were damaged, he'd be waiting in line for the necessary resources to start his course's recovery. That meant reaching out to the conservation authority immediately to let them know what had occurred, and connecting with construction companies to deal with course

Continued on page 18 ...



Rapids on the fairway, Deer Ridge Golf Club, spring 2017. Photos courtesy of Jason Winter

issues. The latter was key, says McQueen, because other clubs faced similar issues and golf construction companies quickly had all the work they could handle. McQueen also connected with the club's golf architect, Ian

Andrew, about the damage, recognizing his time would likely disappear quickly as well. McQueen recommends having a checklist of people you need to connect with should a disaster on the course occur.



Nearby superintendents assist with recovery.

"We were losing revenue because the course was closed and the sooner we could reopen it, the better off we'd be," McQueen said.

For Winter, reaching out to other superintendents in the area, including Mark Piccolo at nearby Galt Country Club was a major part of his crisis management strategy. Winter figured Piccolo would have some sense of how to handle the flood given the fact Galt is partially built on a flood plain. And when Winter recognized that much of the disaster recovery facing Deer Ridge was a cleanup effort, he reached out to other nearby superintendents, including those at clubs like Whistle Bear for help. In all, he gathered more than 100 members of local greens crews and members of the club to assist in cleaning up Deer Ridge.

"This is a small fraternity of guys, and they'll help you out," says Winter. "They know they could be next and I'd help them."

DON'T FORGET ABOUT YOUR TEAM

Both Ackermann and McQueen say that a crucial part of an effective crisis communication plan is dealing directly with the greens' staff at the club, letting them know the situation, and what they can expect.

Crisis Checklist:

- ☐ Plan ahead.
- ☐ Create effective recovery strategies for different types of crisis.
- ☐ Brainstorm best and worst case scenarios.
- ☐ Make a list of management and other key stakeholders who will need to be kept informed during the event. Prioritize the list.
- ☐ Assign communication roles during a crisis.
- ☐ Establish how you will communicate with your membership. Be open and communicate often.
- ☐ Develop strategies to notify, reassure and motivate employees.
- ☐ Build a contact list of people you might need to help you with recovery.
- ☐ Stay calm and keep your emotions at bay.



Islington Golf Club, Summer 2013. Photos courtesy of Ian McQueen

"You have staff that are suddenly going to be turning 12-hour workdays into 24 hour days," Ackermann says. "You can let them know what's going on in a variety of ways, and then once you're into the situation, you can use social media to notify, motivate and tell them about successes." McQueen agrees. "You're going to be asking a lot of your staff, and they are important to fixing the problem," he says. "You know they are worried initially. They don't know if the course is going to be closed for a long time or whether they even have a job. You need to communicate to reassure them."

Ackermann says a component of dealing with any situation is to have a close connection with the club's pro. Golf pros are often the staff that will interact with members and take the brunt of any pushback. You need the pros to be your spokesperson for what's going on at the course.

"Our pro at the club is really closer to the members than the greens staff," says Ackermann. "You want the pro and all the golf associates to be involved in getting an accurate message out to members."

CONCLUSION

Weston's Ackermann believes that you can't wait until an emergency to start a crisis communications plan. It should evolve out of the superintendent's weekly communication strategy for both members and management, whether that is through social media, or in e-blasts and club magazines.

"If you're starting your communications plan when an emergency happens you're already too late," he says. "You need to establish a personal connection with your board and members. If you wait until something happens to do that, you might find yourself out of a job."

As McQueen says, every superintendent recognizes that a crisis will occur—it just isn't clear when.

"You know, something is going to happen," he says. "And while you're always trying to minimize problems, you always need to be looking forward. Being clear and concise in your communication is a key part of that." ■

Veteran golf journalist Robert Thompson is Senior Writer at SCORE Golf, a columnist with Global Golf Post, and television golf analyst for Global News. from <https://greatwithtalent.me>

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Before They Go, Get the Know

By Cam Shaw, Communications and Outreach Coordinator, Guelph Turfgrass Institute, University of Guelph

There is a tendency amongst managers to look outward. Planning, delegating, supervising, training and providing feedback are all part of the job at the top. Yet, ask yourself, how do you get feedback from staff regarding your effectiveness as a leader? For the big boss, it can often be quite difficult to gauge the reality of the staff's culture. Employers are somewhat removed from the employee experience and it can be tricky collecting honest, outspoken answers about your operation. In today's challenging labour market, employers should be doing everything in their power to ensure their employees stay happy and the operation is perceived as a desirable place of employment. Antoinette Steede, Manager of Human Resources at the Donalda Club in Toronto's East end, claims the best way to check the pulse of your operation is through a comprehensive exit interview strategy.

Since 2007, when Donalda's program was initiated, Steede has performed every exit interview herself. In the early stages, the interview was emailed out to team members via an online survey, but poor return rates forced Steede to re-evaluate the process. Now, each employee takes the interview via survey on an on-site computer. The interview covers many bases beginning with an anonymous performance evaluation on their department as well as each of their managers. Next, the employee fills out a questionnaire providing general feedback on their jobs. Topics like wages, duties, communication, staff meals, training, and safety issues are covered here. At the end of the interview, there is an opportunity for the team member

to provide a testimonial which can be used on the website (www.donaldaclub.com). The process takes approximately one hour, and is performed on every single exiting staff member, seasonal and full-time alike. "It is important to get representation from all our staff whether they are short-term or long-term hires. Each employee has valuable information to give us, and if we do not tap into that resource, it becomes difficult for us to keep our fingers on the pulse of the club's

"Employees are much more forthright and outspoken when they understand the information can't be traced back to them"

operations," says Steede.

According to Donalda's HR guru, the biggest hurdle in developing your program is designing an atmosphere where the employee will provide honest, useful feedback. Steede claims the key to accurate data collection is the anonymous aspect of the process. "Employees are much more forthright and outspoken when they understand the information can't be traced back to them" says Steede. She goes on to explain that staff must also be made to feel the survey is not about snitching, but rather helping the club become a better place of employment. Steede suggests "When staff see we have made changes based on their suggestions, it reinforces the success of the program." Admittedly, there can be disgruntled or

troublesome employees who throw off the data, but Steede says the anomalies are easy to spot and disregard. SurveyMonkey is the tool Donalda uses for generating the input. The software collects information, organizes it into useful statistics and returns it to HR for analysis. This comprehensive format allows the HR team to gain valuable insight into the property's operations, but also provides helpful feedback to their management team. Each year, the feedback is shared with each manager during their own annual performance evaluations. Yes that's right...at times managers, too, need a helping hand to become better employees themselves. According to Steede, "the feedback is especially helpful for entry level managers who are new to their positions and learning how to be effective in their roles."

The exit interview data has been instrumental in growing Donalda into a competitive employer. The program has allowed them to focus their resources on what matters most to the demographics of their target area. Transportation subsidies, staff meals, benefits, golf privileges, annual bonus programs, increased parking, improved training packages and social events are all initiatives that have been





Jeff Lockhart (R), Assistant Superintendent of Burlington Golf and Country Club receiving feedback from foreman Brad Babiarz during a routine informal discussion.

implemented or improved based on pertinent feedback. "This all helps to create a vibrant and warm environment that our staff want to be a part of year after year," claims Steede. Donalda also goes the extra step during the exit interview process to finalize all concluding details with the exiting employee. Upon completion of their survey, the HR department issues the individual's final pay cheque and record of employment. If the employee is in good standing, they are asked to sign an offer letter for the following season. The offer letter is symbolic of Donalda's commitment to the staff, and in turn the staff's loyalty to the club.

Steede is quick to recognize that Donalda's program may not work at other properties. She agrees the process can be time consuming and not all clubs are fortunate enough to have an HR department to carry them out. Discover what works best for your club or team and don't be afraid to poke around to find out what others in your network are doing. Jeff Lockhart at Burlington Golf and Country Club suggests a great way to get feedback throughout the year is through frequent informal discussions. "I always make sure to take each employee, full-time or seasonal, aside to talk about their position and listen to what they have to say to me," says Lockhart. He also suggests giving staff an opportunity to voice their opinion openly during their annual performance evaluation

"It is important to get representation from all our staff whether they are short-term or long-term hires. Each employee has valuable information to give us, and if we do not tap into that resource, it becomes difficult for us to keep our fingers on the pulse of the club's operations."

is a good idea.

According to the GCSAA's Capital Budget and Labour Survey as well as the USGA Greens Section Record, 53% of superintendents list labour to be their top concern. Labour itself makes up 57% of an average golf course maintenance budget. With significant wage increases on the horizon and tighter bottom lines, it is becoming more important than ever for golf course superintendents to focus their attention on the people on their teams and their culture. Exit interviews are a great tool for determining the gross domestic happiness of one's squad. Do you currently employ any methods of collecting feedback amongst your team? Maybe exit interviews are worth a test run. After all, it could only take one small suggestion to make all the difference in the world. ■





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Mentorship in Motion



By Kevin Kobzan, Assistant Superintendent, Donalda Club

Choosing a career is not always easy but once we decide which path we want to take, we begin to work towards educating ourselves or start gaining practical field experience to build our skills. Entering an industry or a role as a novice can be intimidating and as the demand for a top-notch product increases, more often than not, we turn to those who came before us to help us develop throughout our careers.

Not only is becoming a mentee a key ingredient in the growth of an individual, but becoming a mentor offers an opportunity to pass on a lifetime of knowledge, leave behind a legacy, and help to foster an industry that will produce the next generation of expert leaders.

This especially holds true with equipment managers, a position that is critical to the golf operation. Countless hours are spent providing a fleet which is safe and performing in optimum condition; and the demand for experienced people becomes more important to the success of the team and industry.

For Warren Wybenga, a highly regarded equipment manager at Donalda Club, sharing his 27 years of wisdom is both satisfying and rewarding. His goal is to spark interest in an occupation he loves. "What is the point of it all if I can't pass on the knowledge I've acquired," said Wybenga. "The clubs that have the ability to

train a technician owe it to themselves and the industry to ensure that there are properly trained and knowledgeable technicians in the business."

Wybenga was first introduced to turf management at the Oshawa Golf and Country Club as an apprentice, and has called Donalda home since 1998. Here he assists in the guidance of others, most recently Rob Abuszyniec, a former back shop employee with no mechanical background, who accepted the assistant's role. "I had zero experience and I thought I was in over my head," said Abuszyniec. "I have lived in an apartment building all of my life and never even used a lawnmower prior to this."

Wybenga is looking forward to the opportunity to train a keen and green individual. During Abuszyniec's first season he became familiar with maintaining smaller pieces of equipment, the operations of the fleet and, perhaps most importantly, reels. "If he wants people to take his advice as a mechanic he needs to know what he is talking about," quipped Wybenga.

However, being a great mechanic doesn't necessarily translate into a successful career in a golf course setting; understanding the game of golf and club expectations are integral pieces to learn and accept. "You need to understand the turf stuff, how it relates and what the purpose of it all is," said Wybenga.

Throughout the past two seasons, Abuszyniec's confidence has grown substantially, which has had a positive effect on the working

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Rob Abuszyniec (L) and Warren Wybenga posing around the toolbox they frequent during the day.



Wybenga (R) sharing some information with Abuszyniec on the operation of a Triflex mower.

relationship between mentor and mentee. His progression with handling staff and operating equipment has impressed the veteran turf equipment manager. Additionally the young apprentice stays busy in the shop and is aware of the department's operations allowing Wybenga to focus on other areas of his job.

Wybenga's expectations for Abuszyniec is to be confident in his own abilities and have the tools necessary to run a fleet of his own. During his tutelage, no time line is set as all individuals have different learning curves. "My primary goal is to start and finish school, continue learning in the shop with Warren and then see what my options are," said Abuszyniec. "At this point I am very interested in the equipment, but I would like to become a better welder and learn more of the electrical stuff."

And what's Warren's plan for Abuszyniec while he learns the theory behind the electrical, mechanical and hydraulic aspect of the profession? "We will take that knowledge and expand on it, and as his skill-set develops more and more, he'll gain more independence," said Wybenga.

Warren continues to expose Abuszyniec to seminars and reinforce the importance of networking as a tool in his development. The two have attended several training and educational sessions together. "We found events like the OGSA lunch and learns very helpful," said Wybenga. "Even the time in a room with other technicians in the business is beneficial."

As Ernest Hemingway once wrote, "we are all apprentices in a craft where no one ever becomes a master." In an ever-evolving industry, continuous learning will always be a part of professional development and according to Wybenga, who knows firsthand how rewarding mentorship can be, "we can thrive if we help each other, nobody knows it all, nobody is that smart, and if they tell you that they are, then they're lying." ■

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BULBS

The simplest way to enter the topic of bulbs is to start with the basics. Spring flowering bulbs are planted in the fall, grow roots into winter, then sprout and bloom in the spring. These include favorites such as tulips, daffodils, hyacinth and many more. Summer flowering bulbs are also known as tender bulbs, meaning they don't typically survive cold or freezing ground temperatures; they're planted in the spring and flower throughout the summer. They include dahlias, gladiolas (depending on your climate), cannas, and calla lilies.

Spring flowering bulbs get the most attention of all the bulbs, although there

are many, many amazing plants that grow from a bulb. Flowering bulbs, which are planted individually and could be annuals, biennials, or perennials, produce a wide variety of blooms and foliage. Bulbs work beautifully in flower beds or containers, and can be used to accent other plants or make a stunning statement when used in mass plantings - meaning large groups of the same variety.

One of the benefits of using spring flowering bulbs is that they reproduce underground, meaning you get more and more bulbs every year which can be used to trade with other gardeners for plant

material or garden centers where you could potentially negotiate a credit for your goods. They could be given or sold to members of your golf club to help supplement your flora and fauna budget or to just increase your members' experience.

In areas where you are typically planting annuals you could add summer bulbs such as dahlia, begonia or canna which instead of being thrown in the compost at the end of the season like typical annuals they get stored to be reused in the next season allowing to further your budget dollars for plant material.

When planting bulbs one rule of thumb is that they don't like wet feet, so don't plant them where there is potential for standing water or in poorly drained soils. Prepare the planting bed by loosening the soil to a depth of 8 inches, which is typically the maximum depth for most bulb species, however, there are some species that only require a planting depth of 4 inches. A well drained, nutrient rich soil high in organic matter at a depth of at least 12 inches is the most suitable for growing most bulb species. And, add a fertilizer high in phosphorous to your planting holes.

For spring flowering bulbs once the foliage dies back or matures in the late spring or early summer, the bulb is dormant. As the foliage dies back, the roots that nourish the bulbs also die back. With fall rains, the bulb comes out of summer dormancy and roots begin to grow again to provide the bulb nutrients and moisture. Once the flowers have completely faded you can trim the stem off, but it is imperative that you leave the foliage to die back naturally. The leaves create energy for the bulb to store for next year's growth and bloom and cutting the leaves back too soon will result in poor growth and poor blooms the following year.

Once the spring bulbs enter dormancy, the time is right to dig up the bulbs if needed. Some bulbs benefit from digging to divide them as they reproduce underground creating little bulblets which can take energy away from the original bulb. If the choice is to dig bulbs, they should be stored in a well ventilated place and replanted in the fall. Every five years daffodils and crocus should be dug and replanted to prevent overcrowding. The first sign of overcrowding will be a decrease in the flower size, uneven bloom and uneven plant height. When this occurs, dig, spread bulbs

out and replant immediately.

Most summer flowering bulbs should be dug and stored when the leaves on the plants turn yellow. Use a spading fork to lift the bulbs from the ground. Wash off any soil that clings to the bulbs, except for bulbs that are stored in pots or with the soil around them. Leave the soil on begonia, canna, caladium and dahlia bulbs. Store these bulbs in clumps on a slightly moistened layer of peat moss or sawdust in a cool place. Wash and separate them just before planting in the spring. Any bulbs that are washed before winter storage should be spread out in a shaded place to dry. When dry, store them away from sunlight in a cool, dry basement, cellar, garage or shed at 60° to 65°F. Avoid temperatures below 50° or above 70°F. When preparing bulbs for storage inspect them for disease and rot.

Not all summer flowering bulbs need to be pulled and stored for winter, there are many that will survive in the ground in our climate. For example, Oriental Lilies, Asiatic Lilies, Crocosmia, Gladiola, Allium (ornamental onion), and Iris, are all amazing

bulb species and will all over-winter in the ground. I have had success with all of these in the Muskoka area, although we do get a healthy layer of insulating snow that helps to protect them; adding a layer of mulch

Bulbs work beautifully in flower beds or containers, and can be used to accent other plants or make a stunning statement

over them in the fall in areas where you don't get the snow load but get pretty cold temperatures will help. I was able to create an entire cut flower garden from exactly the species listed above and every few years if you dig some up at the end of the season you will be amazed how many more have been produced underground ready to be transplanted to a new garden or used as an

addition to existing beds. For the perennial type summer blooming bulbs mentioned above, let the foliage die back naturally before cutting them down, this usually occurs around the same time as the rest of your perennials when colder temperatures start to move in. Again, the bulbs need the leaves to create and store energy in order to produce the growth and blooms for the next season. A good practice, and one I use, is to prune off any developing seed pods. Allowing the plant to produce seeds takes away much needed storable energy for bloom and vegetative growth production for the following season.

I hope you start to consider the world of bulbs and bulb species and the benefits and joys in gardening with them. ■



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Fifteen Years Ago Today



Dave Svab (R), 1st Gross Winner at the Alex McClumpha Memorial Tournament.



Deborah Badger, OGSA staff.



Pelino Scenna, CGSA Superintendent of the Year.



OGSA Secretary, Paul Scenna (L), presents host Superintendent, Robert Ackermann (R), with a plaque.



(L-R) Greg Seemann, Host Golf Professional, Jeff Alexander, OGSA Director and Scott Clayworth, Host Superintendent of the Pro/Super Challenge.



Pro/Super Challenge Champions, Randy Booker (L) and John Kirkwood (R) with O.G.S.A. Director, Jeff Alexander (centre).

The Board of Directors in 2002 were as follows: **Jim Flett**, President, Muskoka Lakes G&CC, **Mark Piccolo**, Vice President, Galt CC, **John Gravett**, Past President, Granite GC, **Rob Ackermann**, Treasurer, Weston G&CC, **Paul Scenna**, Secretary, Donalda Club, **Jeff Alexander**, Parry Sound G&CC, **Randy Booker**, Dundas Valley G&CC, **Bob Burrows**, Rosedale GC, **Mike Courneya**, QTC Management, **Sean DeSilva**, Taboo Muskoka, **Greg O'Heron**, Peterborough G&CC, and **Jeff Stauffer**, Editor, Credit Valley G&CC. The OGSA office staff of **Dorothy Hills** and **Pat Thomas** welcomed **Deb Badger** as a new staff member.

ON THE MOVE:

Jennifer Pendrith left Muskoka Lakes G&CC, as an Assistant, and became the Superintendent at Kawartha G&CC. **Jeff Clark** moved to GreyHawk GC, **Sean Kelly** moved to Banty's Roost G&CC, **Chris Altoff** moved to Picton G&CC, **Chris Anderson** moved to Bay of Quinte G&CC, **Cory Janzen** moved to Westmount G&CC, **Sean Jessop** moved to Espanola G&CC, and **Peter Lucas** moved to Royal Oaks GC in Moncton, New Brunswick.

TOURNAMENTS:

The OGSA/GTI Spring Field Day was held at the Guelph Turfgrass Institute with **Rob Witherspoon**, Director of the GTI, welcoming everybody. In the afternoon, a golf tournament was held at Victoria Park East GC, hosted by **David DeCorso**. The low gross superintendent was **Thom Charters**, Bayview G&CC, and low net superintendent was **Jim Moore**, Puslinch Lake GC.

The Pro/Super Challenge was played at Wooden Sticks GC hosted by **Scott Clayworth**. There was a 3 way tie for the



Chris Dew (L), accepts a cheque from the OGSA on behalf of the OTRF from OGSA President, Jim Flett.



1st Low Net Winner at the Assistants Tournament, Jamie Goodrow (R), Hamilton G&CC.



Scott White (L), Donalda Club, congratulates 1st Low Gross Winner at the Assistants Tournament, Jamie Cooper, Prince Lee Acres.

top spot and to break the tie there was a putt off at the 18th green. The winning teams were: 1st, **Randy Booker**, Dundas Valley G&CC, 2nd, **Gary Gravett**, Saugeen GC, and 3rd, **Kelly Barnet**, Fox Glen GC.

The Ontario Turf Research Foundation golf tournament was held at the Royal Woodbine GC, hosted by **Robert Cowan**.



Ron Craig (L), of Turf Care Products presents Bruce Burger, with the George Darou Trophy.

The 57th Alex McClumpha Memorial Tournament was held at Weston G&CC in October, hosted by **Robert Ackermann**. **Ron Craig**, of Turf Care Products, presented **Bruce Burger** with the George Darou Trophy for low superintendent over 50. The first low gross superintendent winner was **Dave Svab** (79), Victoria Park West GC, and the second low superintendent winner was **Bruce Burger** (80), Lakeview GC.

The first annual Assistants Tournament was held in September at the Whirlpool GC, in Niagara Falls. 1st low gross winner was **Jason Cooper** (77), Prince Lee Acres, and 1st low net winner was **Jamie Goodrow** (65), Hamilton G&CC. The Hugh Kirkpatrick Bursary was started by the OGSA in conjunction with the Kirkpatrick family to recognize the leadership, commitment and accomplishments of Assistant Superintendent Members of the OGSA.

AWARDS:

Pelino Scenna, Burlington G&CC, was honoured by the CGSA as the Superintendent of the Year.

MILESTONES:

After 34 years of golf business, **Dennis McCracken** retired, and McCracken Golf Supplies was sold to Plant Products Inc. Dennis's father, **Bill**, started the business in 1962 until his death in 1968 and then Dennis took over.

Vince Gillis, Executive Director of the CGSA retired and was replaced by **Ken Cousineau**.

EVENTS:

The Annual Curling Day was held at the Club at North Halton, hosted by **Dean Baker**. The winning team consisted of **Alex McLeod**, **Greig Barker**, the Club at North Halton, **Pat Greenman**, Oakdale G&CC, and **Jim Flett**, Muskoka Lakes G&CC.

Master's Turf Supply held the 1st Annual Customer Appreciation Day fishing trip at Lake Erie, and was hosted by **Everett Nieuwkoop**. **Mike Creed**, Wildewood GC, brought in the biggest fish, and close behind were **Dave Tascone**, Granite Ridge GC, and **Charles Ashley**, Norfolk G&CC.

IN MEMORY:

George Garner, Superintendent at Glendale G&CC, **George Beck**, a retired equipment salesman for F. Manely and Sons, who sold Toro Equipment and Milorganite, and **Meryl (Curly) Endicott**, previous Owner/Superintendent of Richbrook GC and Evergreen GC, passed away. ■



*Barry Endicott
Retired Golf Course
Superintendent
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MEMBER MOMENTS



1: We gotta get these greens in shape Mum! I got the tools, you go get the staff. **Leasha Schwab, Superintendent**, Pheasant Run Golf Club. | 2: This is Crunchie. Mouser extraordinaire. Cat treat enthusiast. Professional daytime napper. **Mark Prieur, Superintendent**, Trafalgar Golf and Country Club. | 3: Large snapper on fairway. **Jayson Griffiths, Superintendent**, London Hunt Country Club | 4: Another reason to check for debris on greens before cutting. **James Horvath, Assistant Superintendent**, Richmond Hill Golf & Country Club | 5: What a little cutie. **Leasha Schwab, Superintendent**, Pheasant Run Golf Club.



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Rounds Report

By Doug Breen, Superintendent, Golf North Properties

I played more golf this past summer than I have in 20 years. By that I mean, I played more times than I had in the preceding 20 years combined. That's not hyperbole – that's a mathematical fact. There are a couple of completely unrelated factors, which conspired to allow this happen.

First, I'm trying not to die. Partially out of spite, because everyone assumes that my wife will outlive me and the thought of her retiring on my insurance cheque, when I paid 100% of the premiums, sort of irritates me. And partially because I'm over 50 and I think I saw the Grim Reaper drive past me on the 401 the other day – it was a bony old dude in a 1981 Lincoln Town Car – is that him? So, in a vain attempt to stave off my impending mortality, I started going to the gym last Christmas. Not trying to get down to my high school playing weight – just hoping to get to a weight that doesn't make everything hurt when I walk upstairs. It was going fairly well too – but I hate going to the gym more than a millennial hates a five-day work week. So, when I heard at a golf conference that 18 holes on a cart is an equal caloric burn to 1 ½ hours in the gym (just 9 holes if you walk) – well, that was the last time I darkened the gym door.

The second reason is that I have now become utterly irrelevant to the rest of the members of my family. Walker is at university studying football, Aniela is an 18 year-old girl so she often forgets that I even exist, and Krista never really cared when I came home anyway as long as the kids weren't bugging her for a ride and the horses had hay. As a result, when I announced that I was going to stop going to the gym and play golf for exercise instead, my daughter said, "You go to the gym?"

I needed a goal and long ago I gave up on the dream of a single digit handicap (or factor, or whatever I'm supposed to call it now), so I decided that my goal would be to play all 31 GolfNorth courses before the season ended. It was interesting to see how people reacted to my proclamation that I was going to try to play 31 rounds of golf. My daughter said, "GolfNorth has 31 courses?," and went back to texting (that reaction wasn't surprising). The troubling one was the assumption that anyone who was playing that much golf, was obviously a poor husband / father / employee. Even other superintendents would roll their eyes and say things like, "Must be nice to be semi-employed."

I was taken aback by the number of people, who operate golf courses for a living, who made snide remarks about how they "just couldn't be away from work that much." If we, who provide the platform for the game, don't see it as a valuable pursuit and worth the time that it takes – is it any wonder that we're having trouble selling it to the public at large?

Years ago, I was interviewed by Hugh Kirkpatrick, a legendary superintendent from Westmount GC in Kitchener. I didn't get the job, but he became a mentor to me for years to come nonetheless. During that interview he asked me what my handicap was. I lied. I told him that it was higher than it was because I thought that it

would make me seem like I was a harder worker if I said that I didn't have time to play very often. His reaction caught me off guard. He said that to properly understand the needs of their clientele, I was obligated to play the course often. Furthermore, I had to play with the members on men's night. And lastly, that I would be expected to take lessons (if necessary) to get down to a 15 handicap (average for Ontario at the time).

On this point, like countless others through the years, Hughie was 100% correct – even if it took me over two decades to realize it. Last summer, I played in league events and member tournaments – late nights and early mornings. With staff, members, public, friends, relatives, family – even by myself. I rode, I walked, I carried my bag (once – I said I'm over 50) – whatever the folks I got paired

with were doing. I played from the senior tees, I played from the tips, and I even occasionally played up on the forward tees. I played all 31 courses and I learned more about our courses, our clubhouses, our staff, and our players than I would have learned in 100 summers otherwise. During four hours on the course, customers and employees alike will tell you things that would never come out in a boardroom, survey, or letter of complaint. When it came to the properties themselves, I saw things that thrilled me, pleased me, surprised me, annoyed me, even disgusted me – and priorities for training, maintenance, and capital improvements would often be shuffled between nines.

I still haven't ground myself back down to a 15, and perhaps I never will, but I never dreamed that I could derive so much pleasure from doing something that makes me more effective at work, has actually made me healthier, and drove home a 25 year old lesson from a great superintendent. But now it's winter, and I'm back in the gym, dreaming of spring. ■





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