

AUGUST 2021

ONCOURSE

OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE
ONTARIO GOLF SUPERINTENDENTS' ASSOCIATION

Planning and Unplanning the RBC Canadian Open

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Engine Check - Maintaining Your Irrigation Well
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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



By Al Schwemler,
OGSA President.

It would be very remiss to not acknowledge the dedication and commitment of Sally Ross to the OGSA. As the Executive Manager of the OGSA for nearly 11 years, Sally was instrumental in setting up the association to succeed in the future. Unfortunately, her passing was much too soon. Rest in peace Sally!

The OGSA Board of Directors are happy to announce that the "Interim" title has been removed and Courtney White is officially the Executive Manager of the OGSA. Congratulations and we look forward to your guidance and visions for the association moving forward.

It has been a wild ride this year with golf opening, then shutting down, then re-opening (May 22), to the Stage 3 removal of most course protocols in place for 2020/2021 on July 16. We Are Golf - Ontario was instrumental in lobbying the government on behalf of all Ontario golf courses throughout the closures and stay at home orders. The diligence of this committee (especially Shawn Hunter of NGCOA and Mike Kelly of Golf Ontario) was instrumental in assisting the cause to re-open golf courses.

As Covid-19 case numbers continue to remain low and more Ontarians are vaccinated, we are hopeful to be able to offer an in-person conference in 2022, as well as, a late season 2021 golf event. As advertised, the OGSA is excited to host the Assistants' tournament at Deerhurst Resort on August 31. It will be such a relief to be able to network and gather face to face again with minimal or no restrictions.

I hope everyone's season is progressing well despite early season drought conditions, followed by high temperatures and humidity, and the multiple storm cells throughout the province. It is hard to believe it is August already. The daylight hours are diminishing and it will soon be fall. Remember to find that essential work - life balance!

Keep well and stay safe. ■



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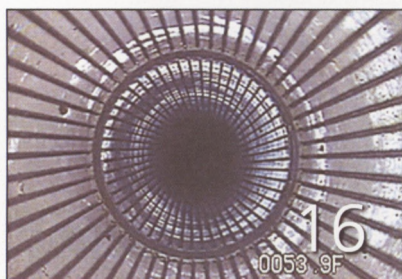
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Prepping greens for RBC Canadian Open, St. George's Golf and Country Club. Photo by Marco China.

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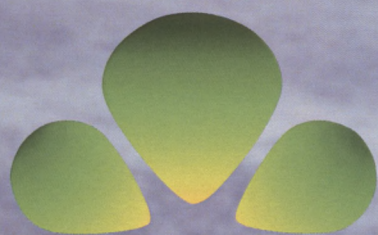
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EDITORIAL MESSAGE

Happy Summer Everyone.

Before the courses were flooded with eager golfers, the extended stay-at-home order that was issued in the spring brought about tournament cancellations and postponements in Ontario. The OGSA typically spends the summer recognizing superintendents and their teams for their considerable contributions to significant tournaments held throughout the province, but what happens when tournaments get cancelled? Marco China, new to the ONCourse committee, gives us insight into planning and unplanning the RBC Canadian Open – twice, and what we can look forward to when the tournament (hopefully) takes place next year.

With Ontario's Stage 3 in full effect, I am delighted to read about superintendents putting rakes back in bunkers, pins back in cups, and generally making plans for the future based on the lessons learned over the last two seasons.

No one knows better than the superintendents and assistants working at municipal courses just how much golf has meant to the public as they cope with social

distancing and travel restrictions during fair weather seasons. Chris Lecour connected with a few Ontario superintendents from different municipalities to talk about their maintenance practices during the various stages of reopening golf.

Doug Breen reflects on the up-swing in golf's popularity through the social media lens and provides some much-needed comic relief and sage advice about what to do when golfers review your course on popular social media forums.

Despite hectic tee time schedules, it's business as usual when it comes to maintaining equipment and reviewing health and safety standards around the course. Stephen Kajan has put together an informative article about maintaining your irrigation well, and Bill Godkin shares common safety hazards often overlooked on the golf course.

Chris Cummings discusses the advantages and versatility of container gardens on golf courses, and we've highlighted the achievements of several members in Member Moments.

Each issue, I try to reiterate just how much ONCourse relies on its member volunteers. Although I may not have mentioned you here, your contributions to this publication are appreciated. Our committee has done a wonderful job researching, coordinating, or writing these articles for the membership.

I'd especially like to thank our summer intern and guest editor, Madeleine White. Madeleine is a public relations graduate from Algonquin College, who will pursue her degree this fall. She has been a critical part of the ONCourse team and can take credit for most of the editing that went into the June and August issues.

Enjoy! ■



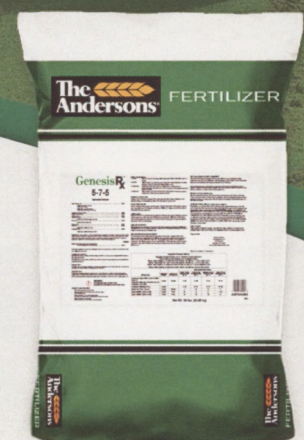
*Courtney White,
Executive Manager, OGSA
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WHAT'S NEW

By Courtney White, Executive Manager, OGSA.

Superintendent Recognition

In the spring of 2003, the Ontario Golf Superintendents' Association (OGSA) Board of Directors instituted a recognition program for superintendents and their teams, who host provincially significant

ALLTURF tournaments at their respective courses to acknowledge their considerable contribution to a successful tournament. This year we invited a partnering sponsor, Allturf Ltd. to help us acknowledge these efforts. This acknowledgement includes plaque presentation and refreshments for the maintenance team.

General Manager John Alpaugh said, "We are driven to support education, professional development and recognition of turf managers in any way we can. Partnering with OGSA to support tournament hosting superintendents is an important means of acknowledging the extra hard work associated with tournament preparations for those managers whose efforts often go unnoticed."

The recognition program will run until the end of September, and we'd like to thank the teams who have allowed us to visit so far this season.

Heritage Awards

The OGSA would like to congratulate Sydney Ackermann, on winning first place, and Holly Lecour and Grayden Stauffer, who have tied for second place, on earning the top spots for the OGSA Heritage Award. Each winner will receive a cash award of \$1,500 to help offset the cost of their education as they pursue their chosen fields of study. ■



Superintendent Paul Powers, (centre left) Courtney White, OGSA (far left), and Nigel Rennie, Allturf, (centre right), and the maintenance team from Walter Gretzky Municipal GC accept their acknowledgement for hosting the Junior Spring Classic (U19) Girls' Championship.



Superintendent Tom Kinsman, (centre left) and Nigel Rennie, Allturf, (centre right), and the maintenance team from Whistle Bear GC accept their acknowledgement for hosting the Ontario Junior (U19) Boys' Championship.



Superintendent Brooks Young, (centre right) and Nigel Rennie, Allturf, (centre left), and the maintenance team from Shelburne G&CC accept their acknowledgement for hosting the Junior Spring Classic (U19) Boys' Championship.

WELCOME to Our New Members

Nicholas Hagg Kawartha Lakes G&CC	Class C
Alex Gambino Wildfire GC	Class F
Dawson Riml Club at North Halton	Class F
Andrea Gelinas Blue Springs GC	Class C
Isaac Ford St. George's G&CC	Class F
Dan Howie Beacon Hall GC	Class C



Dear Members,

*By Courtney White,
Executive Manager,
OGSA.*

Growing roots in the OGSA has been a slow growth experience beginning with my first introduction to the association, as

your account manager from The Personal Insurance Company. I joined you at two conferences to peddle my wares and give away iPads, but ended up meeting many directors and members – and quite frankly, had a great time getting to know you. Little did I know that the seed for the next chapter in my career had been planted.

A few years later, I was approached by Sally Ross, who invited me to interview for the Member Service position. Given my previous encounters with the association, it wasn't a hard decision to accept the role in 2017. I had never worked for an association before, the work was diverse and challenging, the office a few short minutes from home, and let's face it, who wouldn't want to work with such an excellent group of people?

Here's why she hired me.

I have over 15 years of experience in corporate communications, copy writing, editorial and journalism, event planning, marketing support, account management and client/member services in a range of industry.

I studied public relations at Conestoga College and graduated with distinction. My career evolved out of an internship at the Waterloo Region Record, a newspaper, where I primarily focused on their community relations and events. I worked at an event planning company (Grand River Shows) producing several large consumer shows in the Kitchener-Waterloo area each year, and an insurance company (The Personal) preparing significant RFP responses, other corporate communications and overseeing their event marketing program for most of

Canada – which came with a sizable budget to manage. I eventually became an account manager for The Personal, working in sales and relationship management - which as I mentioned, lead me to you. Although I hadn't worked with an association, I was accustomed to working in small teams, wearing many hats.

Over the last three and a half years I've helped to plan OGSA events, produce ONCourse, serve the membership, and learned much about the OGSA and its inner workings.

It's a difficult task to watch your leader concede to illness and leave her beloved position far before she is ready. So, when I was asked if I'd like to interview for the Interim Executive Manager position, I considered it a bitter-sweet opportunity – but an opportunity I was ready for.

With Sally cheering me on, I applied, and after a three-tiered interview process, (that's

right...one with the president, one with the executive board, and one with the entire board) I was offered the position.

This time allowed me to gain insight into the EM role and responsibilities, but more importantly it gave the board and me an opportunity to work together and discuss a vision for the OGSA.

Part of this vision is to increase education offerings and member benefits, update our communication tools including our website, and continue to offer the excellent conferences and events that you've grown accustomed to. I am now pleased to accept the permanent EM position, and I look forward to working with members and the OGSA board.

Thank you to everyone who has reached out with congratulations over the last few months. Cheers to a fun and exciting future with the OGSA. ■

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Neil Beech

Vice President, G.C. Duke Equipment Ltd.

By Neil Beech, Vice President, G.C. Duke Equipment Ltd. Photos provided by G.C. Duke Equipment.

“Can you get up early?
Real early?”

“Yes Sir” I replied, not knowing real early meant 4 AM. And so, I began my first job, 12-year-old Neil Beech was the official tree waterer at the fledgling Saw Whet Golf Club in Oakville, Ontario. My job responsibilities that summer were dragging a 150', 2" diameter yellow hose around the then five-hole course. No one explained where the water came from, but I eventually discovered the magic that was a quick coupler. I would drag that hose around the course watering all the newly planted trees. When finished, I would look up at the owner, Ray Patterson, and “keep going” was always the answer. Good thing I was earning the big bucks, \$2.25 an hour; I was going to be rich.

I spent the next five years working for Ray and his son Mike. By age 13, I was cutting greens, changing holes, topdressing with a shovel, and driving the 1962 purple Dodge



Neil Beech, Vice President, G.C. Duke Equipment Ltd.

pick-up around the course. It was the best job ever. Ray Patterson risked everything he had to build that course. The equipment was old and things broke, but somehow, we managed to get the job done. Both Ray and Mike were incredible influences on me. They taught me about loyalty, work ethic, and respect. Two great people who took the time to teach and explain. Seeing that course grow over the years to what it became

always made me smile. The Patterson family deserved their success.

My next job was at Millcroft Golf in Burlington, as it was being built, where I worked for a true gentleman in Barry Endicott. I spent the summer fixing irrigation breaks and cleaning out clogged heads. With no golfers to bother us, it was a fun summer and like most courses, it had its share of characters. The shop was an old cattle barn. The mechanic, Frank, was obsessed with flies and had fly tape everywhere. You could not walk in the shop or lunchroom without bumping into one of these sticky tape rolls hanging from the ceiling covered in flies. Most staff opted to eat outside.

I was to attend Carleton University in September but one day, for some strange reason, I read the classified ads in the paper and saw a tiny posting for a “Demo Rep” at G.C. Duke Equipment. They wanted someone with golf equipment experience. I called up after hours and some guy named Dick answered. He told me about the job, and I told him “Sounds great, I’m your man, I’ll be in when I have some time.” Apparently I was a little cocky in my youth. A few days

In the Hot Seat

Q: Favourite Major?

A: The Masters

Q: Best piece of turf equipment?

A: Smithco 3180 GPS Sprayer

Q: Ultimate foursome:

You and which three?

A: My dad, brother and John Candy

Q: Lowest round ever and where?

A: 35 at Lido Golf Centre Mini Putt

Q: Favourite meal?

A: Pork chops with apple sauce

Q: Favourite movie?

A: Shawshank Redemption

Q: Favourite golf course?

A: Sage Valley, Aiken SC

Q: Favourite course designer?

A: Dick Kirkpatrick

Q: Favourite Band?

A: Queen

later, with my dad's trench coat wrapped around me, I showed up. Dick turned out to be Dick Raycroft, the Sales Manager at Duke, and an absolute legend who hired me and in October of 1988, I began my career at Duke Equipment. It's now been 33 years and what a ride it has been.

When I started, I was given a map of Ontario, truck keys, a 32' goose neck trailer, and a roll of quarters to call in for messages. "Load up the trailer with this equipment, start in Windsor and demo eastward till you hit the Maritimes, then come back." The reps would arrange demos and I showed up to demonstrate what it could do. Back then, we were selling National 84 Triplex's, Cushman Trucksters, Turfco Mete-R-Matic top dressers, Ransomes 180 trim mowers, and Ransomes 350D Rough mowers. Every part of a course was cut with reels, Toro Parkmasters, Jacobsen F-10's, and towed gang mowers. It was a different era. Over the next year and a half, I probably saw every course in Ontario. I would be in Sudbury one day and the GTA the next. I began to see changes in the industry. I remember pulling into Islington Golf Club and seeing a young Wayne Rath and his crew aerating fairways with a bunch of Ryan



The first annual Paul Brown Internship Award was presented to (centre) Isaac Swanton, by (left) Greg Brown and (right) Neil Beech from G.C. Duke Equipment.

Greensaire 2 aerators; a slow process but the first time I had truly seen fairways treated like greens.

In 1990, I was given a small territory of my own (eastern Toronto east to the Kawartha's). I only had 77 accounts, so I became a fixture at most of these clubs. I would leave the yard at 3:30 or 4 AM, be in the territory before most clubs opened, and would be waiting at the gate of my first call with a box of donuts. I remember Bob (RT) Heron when he was at Beacon Hall saying, "Kid, if I buy this roller do you promise not to come back for a month?"

The industry changed quickly in the early 90's. Lightweight Fairway Mowers replaced the Parkmasters and F-10's. Everyone was buying Jacobsen LF 100's and soon after, Toro 223's. Lastec introduced the 7-gang Rotary Articulator and soon, the gang mowers disappeared from the rough. The Cushman Truckster and GA-60 aerators

became a must-have piece of equipment. Sprayers evolved from tow type units to Truckster mounted 150 gallon and 200-gallon units with spray control systems.

As the agronomics changed, so did the perceived need for more courses. The late 90's and early 2000's were a sales rep's dream. Everywhere you went there was a new course being built. Leasing became the most important tool we had. It became about payments and structured lease streams. Equipment was being replaced on 3-5-year cycles. As the number of courses grew, so grew the need for more superintendents. All the young assistants were moving up the ladder to clubs of their own. It was akin to a changing of the guard.

As golf changed, so did operations at Duke. In 1999, the company purchased the rights to the Jacobsen equipment line from OTEC. I was covering all the GTA and Niagara and had a demo rep working

About the Business

G.C. Duke was founded in 1948 by G.C. (George Clinton) Duke. The company is still located at the same address where G.C. started it all 73 years ago. The company is now owned by Nolan Duke, the grandson of G.C.

G.C. Duke sells and represents such brands as Jacobsen, Cushman, E-Z-GO, Smithco, Turfco, Lastec, Foley and Buffalo Turbine.

Number of staff: 42

for me. We were hiring on-road techs to service all the equipment in the field versus hauling it back to the shop. We started a new division called Duke Distribution, selling landscape equipment to an extensive dealer network.

When I started at Duke, G.C. was still around, the man, then in his early 90's, was still a fireball. He had a golf cart and would drive around the property. He would often stop and tell me to get in. He would regale me with stories and his thoughts on the world. The rides were educational, entertaining, and 100% intimidating. He lived a heck of a life and built a great company.

Richard (R.N.) Duke was running the company at that point. His grasp of business and strategy was unmatched. Golfing with R.N. and Nolan were some of the best rounds of my life. One needed thick skin to survive those outings. He was sorely missed after his passing in 2008.

Today, the company is owned and run by Nolan Duke. A better friend and leader, I could not ask for. Nolan started off cutting the grass, worked in parts, delivered sold units, ran a sales territory and was general manager prior to taking control. He had experience, understood our customers needs,

and under his leadership, the company has grown exponentially. In 2009, Duke took on Fleet Distribution rights for E-Z-GO Golf Carts for Ontario and Quebec. This third division has grown beyond our wildest dreams. The introduction of the E-Z-GO RXV Elite Lithium cart has been a game changer for us.

I have been very lucky to spend my entire career with a company like Duke. I went from demo rep to sales rep to lease manager to GM to my current position as vice-president. We have a great team of people and many of our staff have been with us for 20-40 years. Our head technician, Gord Wilson, has been with the company for 55 years and is still going strong.

How a company treats its employees is a reflection of the company as a whole. I am a testament to that. It's no secret I have faced a few health battles over the years. In 1999, I was diagnosed with a rare form of multiple myeloma. It's a blood disease that creates millions of proteins that clog or attack my organs. I have had two kidney transplants, lost 60% of my lung function, had almost 2' of intestines removed, my vision is compromised, and I undergo chemo regularly to control it. Sounds bad, but I am incredibly thankful and lucky. We

have one of the best medical systems in the world, my employer has always supported me, I am able to work, and have watched my two daughters, Natalie (22) and Madeline (19) grow up to be incredible women. When you face an obstacle, you adjust. My life is full of new norms. I can't gain weight, so I have leg weakness and I hate stairs but have learned to adapt. I may not be running marathons, but I can get out and walk. My screen fonts are massive, and I carry a flashlight everywhere (I have zero night vision and limited detail vision). All in all, I get up everyday and can do what needs to be done. It never helps to feel sorry for yourself - push through, adapt, never give up, and appreciate family and friends. There is always someone worse off than you. As Nolan Duke often comments, "you look horrible but still have great hair."

It's been a heck of a 33-year ride seeing this industry change and meeting so many kind and dedicated professionals. Everything I have I owe to golf. If I had to start the journey all over, there is not much I would change. As long as they can keep rebuilding me, I am looking forward to the next 33 years and see what the future holds for this great industry. ■

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By Chris Lecour, Senior Turf Sales Representative BASF Canada.

With thanks to Aaron McMullen (Tomahawk Golf Course), Brad Bell (Lakeview Golf Course), Dan Magrin (BraeBen Golf Course), and Tom Newton (Niagara Parks Golf), for their contributions to this article including photo contributions.

Like all of us across the province, golf course operators can hardly wait for life to get back to normal, but with one exception: the hope that the current popularity for golf and the record number of players continues. Golf provided a safe and healthy physical and emotional outlet when many other recreational activities were shut down due to Covid restrictions. The resurgence in golf is just what the sport needed at the time it needed it most.

Perhaps more than any other sector of golf, municipal or government owned and operated golf courses really needed the boost. Municipal golf courses provide the most affordable and accessible means to discover the game for new players in their communities. In many cases, these courses do not turn a profit and usually rely on taxpayer contributions to survive. This often leaves them wide open for criticism and as an easy target for those that don't play the game and want to see golf courses repurposed.

The Town of Blue Mountains' Tomahawk Golf Course, located in Thornbury, has been constantly evolving since the town took ownership of the course 15 years ago. Aaron McMullen has been the Superintendent at Tomahawk since and has seen a number of changes at the course over the years.

Originally set up as a play-for-donation course designed to

attract new golfers and those looking for a relaxing round in a casual atmosphere, the town began implementing a set rate for play two years ago. With the onset of Covid, the town took the opportunity to begin the process of creating a more structured tee time booking system and revenue collection process. Course improvements in conditioning that began long before Covid, prepared it for the inevitable increase in traffic and the subsequent expenses were easily justified with the improvement in revenue reporting. Since the honour system was originally in place at the club, it is difficult to determine how many rounds Tomahawk saw in its early years. By looking at the annual revenue generated and the suggested donation amount, an average of 7500 rounds may have been the norm prior to Covid. In 2020, there was an increase of over 2000 rounds despite the 6-week delay to the season. In the first 47 days of operation for the 2021 season, the course has seen 4100 rounds.

Tomahawk Golf Course discourages walk-on traffic and tee times are now required. Golfers can book up to five days in advance, tee times are every 15 minutes, and the town has hired an attendant to monitor and control groups accessing the course. This is a far cry from the days when golfers would stuff \$5 or \$10 in a wooden box at the first tee. With the exception of the honour system for payment, the course plans to go back to their pre-Covid operating procedures (rakes in bunkers and allowing flagsticks to be removed, for example), as soon as it's determined to be safe. Even with additional expenses over the last two years, such as an increase in staffing, signage, and barriers to control the flow of traffic, the increase in revenue has offset the added expenses.



Tomahawk 10th hole.



Tomahawk Eagle at hole one.

The Niagara Parks Commission (NPC) is an agency of the Government of Ontario and serves to protect the natural and cultural heritage along the Niagara River and does not rely on taxpayer contributions for operations. Operating and capital expenses are covered by income from retail, restaurants and other attractions operated by Niagara Parks. Two such attractions are the Whirlpool Golf Course and Legends on the Niagara. Tom Newton has been the Senior Superintendent of Niagara Parks Golf, overseeing both properties, for the last six years.

Niagara Parks Golf has had a similar Covid experience to many golf courses across both the province and country since early 2020. Rounds in 2020 and 2021 are up approximately 25% compared to the previous years' averages. There have been no weddings, no indoor or outdoor dining, and limited food & beverage options. An increase in expenses was seen for such things as signage, disinfectants, PPE, increased training, and janitorial labour costs. The initial approach at NPC golf last season was to reduce costs significantly by reducing labour. However, Newton notes that "after a year of running thin in labour and the golf course being busier than in previous years, in 2021 we increased our labour contingent to pre-Covid levels in order to manage the day-to-day challenges of a busy golf course, i.e., cart traffic control, divot repair, and seeding and fertilizer inputs." While many golf courses are expected to reintroduce course accessories like rakes and ball washers onto the courses as soon as they can, NPC has no immediate plans to do so. Since the implementation of Covid

safety measures, the course staff have managed to regularly rake all bunkers for their guests. Even as restrictions lift, their goal is to uphold the conditions guests have grown accustomed to and are looking into creative options that will maintain the reduction of shared accessories on the course. An example of an idea in the works is to include a bunker rake with each golf cart.

On July 16th of this year, the Ontario government proceeded to Step 3 of the province's reopening response to COVID-19. For golf courses operators, this offers possibly the biggest return to what could be considered normal since the beginning of Covid:

- Outdoor social gatherings with up to 100 people,
- Indoor gatherings with up to 25 people,
- Non-essential retail allowed with capacity limits (social distancing),
- Many of the previous guidelines around touchpoints has been removed,
- Clubhouses can open at 50% capacity, and
- Masks are no longer required when riding a golf cart.

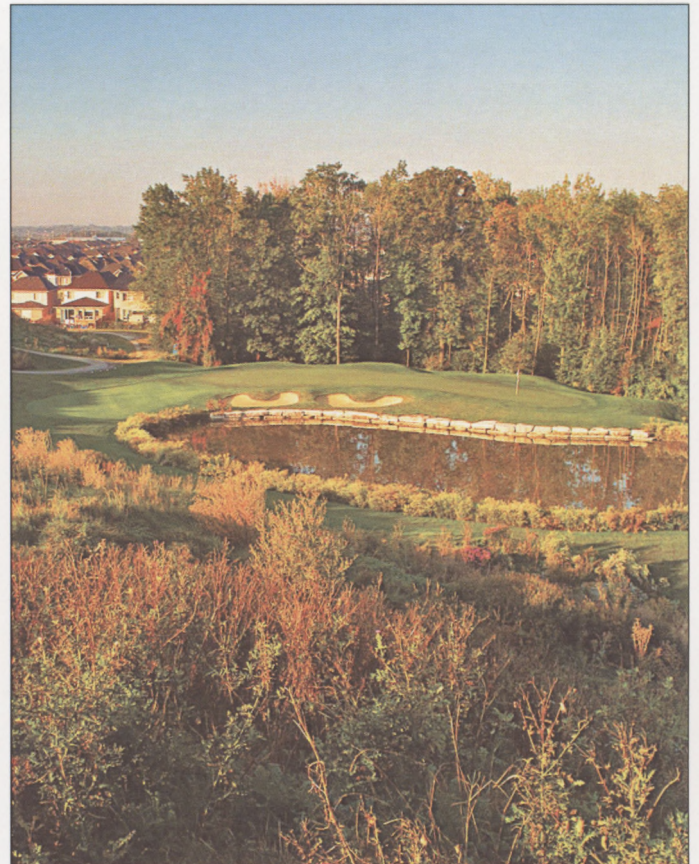
Some golf courses were already preparing for the July 16th date to return bunker rakes and ball washers to the golf courses as the guidelines were relaxed. Surely there are many clubs eager to allow more patrons onto patios and into the clubhouse, even if it is accompanied by some natural unease or nervousness but Newton says his courses have no intention at this time to open the clubhouse to more people for dining. Legends' limited halfway house menu has been able to satisfy the expectations of most of their guests, who tend not to stick around after golf for food.

"After a year of running thin in labour and the golf course being busier than in previous years, in 2021 we increased our labour contingent to pre-Covid levels in order to manage the day-to-day challenges of a busy golf course, i.e., cart traffic control, divot repair, and seeding and fertilizer inputs."

Tom Newton



Covid sign.



BraeBen 7th hole.

Operating two golf courses, the City of Mississauga offers a combined 45 holes between BraeBen Golf Course and Lakeview Golf Course. Both saw a reduction in F&B services and an increase in expenses for signage, disinfectant, etc. The superintendents at both golf courses intend to return to some pre-Covid policies and procedures slowly, but others may take longer to return. Brad Bell at Lakeview says his team plans to progress slowly as restrictions are lifted to minimize the amount of touch points introduced at one time. Bell also recognizes that staggered start time for maintenance staff can offer some benefits post Covid. “Offsetting start times for various staff reduces the congestion of everyone leaving the shop at one time. This does, however, make it more difficult for morning meetings and communicating to all the staff at once. Reducing touchpoints should allow staff to stay healthier during times like a regular flu season.” Over at BraeBen Golf Course, Superintendent Dan Magrin plans on keeping current maintenance practices the same unless there is pressure to revert to previous maintenance practices. This is particularly true when it comes to bunker maintenance at BraeBen. “Without rakes, some of the high traffic bunkers are in pretty bad shape after a few days,” says Magrin. “As bad as they have been, we haven’t had any negative feedback about their condition. Post Covid, the thought is we’ll continue to operate without bunker rakes and monitor the feedback.”

There remains hope within the industry that once other recreational activities became available, golfers will continue to participate at the same levels the sport is enjoying now. Whether or not participation rates sustain themselves in the near future remains to be seen. Whatever happens, golf at every level in Ontario, private or public, resort or municipal operated facilities, will continue to adapt and adjust for their survival and the survival of the game, just as they have always done. ■



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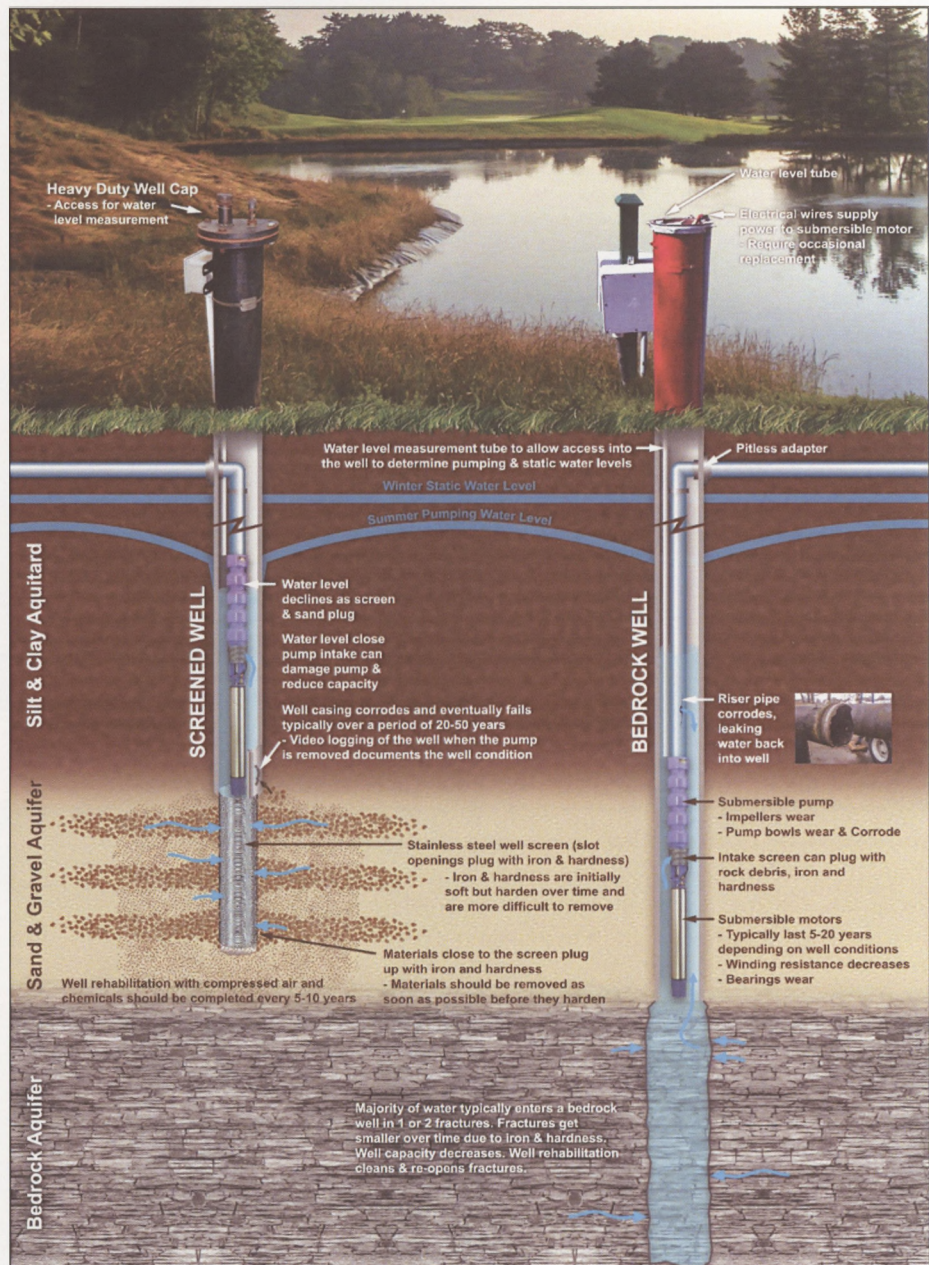
By Stephen Kajan, P.Eng, Water Resources Engineer, R.J. Burnside & Associates Limited.

No matter your club's place in the golf market, water is always a hot button issue. Much like Goldilocks' porridge, there is either too much or too little, and is rarely just right. In very recent weeks, much of Southern Ontario has received significant amounts of precipitation which was preceded by an early spring drought. Without making this an article about climate change (a polarizing, complex topic on its own), weather extremes are becoming more frequent – longer periods of drought interspersed with high intensity, heavy rain events. Having a reliable water supply continues to play an important role in the management of turf as drought periods get longer.

In Ontario, approximately 59% of permitted golf courses utilize groundwater or a combination of groundwater/surface water for irrigation water supplies. That equates to 326 golf courses in Ontario that use groundwater wells! As a superintendent reading this article, you are more likely to have a well than not and are very likely to encounter use of a groundwater well at some point in your career.

UNDERSTANDING YOUR WELL

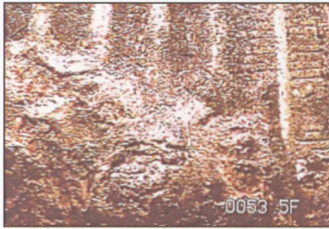
These days, establishing a groundwater well for use as an irrigation supply takes a large financial commitment and can be a complex process. You have to find the best place to drill, hire a contractor to drill the well, bring in power and piping, install a pump, and of course, complete all the testing and permitting to use the well. Depth, diameter, and distance from power source all play huge factors in the overall costs to establish a well. One would expect the costs to range between \$70,000 to \$150,000. A costly venture for something that most well owners largely ignore until there is a problem.



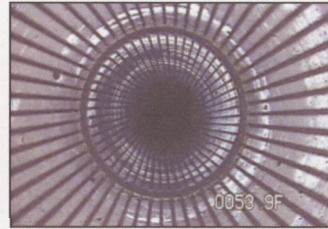
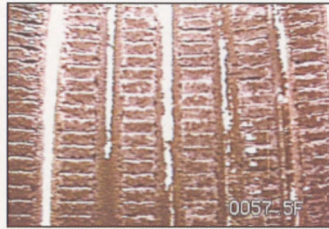
Regulations in Ontario require a well record to be completed by the well contractor which is submitted to the Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks (MECP). The well record is a key document and includes information such as depth, diameter, location, a description of the geology, testing information, proposed flow rate and water level information. You should have a copy of this record to help troubleshoot problems. If you don't have a copy, contact the well driller and request one. Otherwise, the MECP operates an online GIS database of well records that is

available to the public to access.

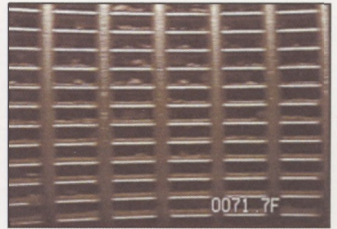
In most cases, a submersible pump is installed in your well, deep below ground, and requires a crane for removal. Electrical power wire is fed down along the column pipe to the motor. The well pump sits inside the well casing above the well screen, which is slotted and allows water to flow from the geologic formation (aquifer) into the well. Water is pumped up through the column pipe and connected to your transfer pipe by a pitless adapter. This adapter allows for easy removal of the pump and column pipe. You also most likely have a flow meter, or some



A plugged well screen from precipitate building. Courtesy of Well Initiatives Ltd.



The same screen following well rehabilitation. Courtesy of Well Initiatives Ltd.



means of measuring flow (for your Permit to Take Water). Each one of these components has a life cycle that will depend on choice of materials, geology of the aquifer, amount of use, and quality of groundwater

TYPICAL WELL INSTALLATION

Typically, a submersible pump lasts 15 years (gasp!). Certainly, you may get many more years out of your pump, but on average, one should plan to replace it after 15 years. Most would attest that the pump will inevitably fail when you absolutely cannot afford it to. Column pipe can be a variety of materials – poly pipe, pvc, galvanized, black or stainless steel and overtime can degrade impacting performance of the pump. The casing and screen materials are commonly steel and stainless steel and can last upwards of 50-60 years or beyond. Quality of the water can play a significant role in the life

cycle of the casing. Hard water can impact the casing causing the buildup of precipitate or even degradation of the steel causing holes.

More often than not, as long as water comes out the top, most well owners do not spend any time or resources on maintaining their well. However, maintaining your irrigation well should be treated like maintaining any other piece of equipment within your fleet. After all, a groundwater well is a big investment and is likely your primary source of irrigation water. Can you imagine never changing the oil in your greens' mowers? Never greasing the rough mower decks? Never blowing out your irrigation system? Seems crazy, right?

Having a properly working, reliable irrigation well gives you the comfort of knowing you can water when you need it and can be the difference between cutting back on water or losing turf all together. So, what does an irrigation well maintenance program look like?

PREVENTATIVE MAINTENANCE

Much like the analogous oil change, an irrigation well should be checked regularly by a licensed well contractor. Generally, every 5-10 years, a precise flow test should be conducted, water levels measured, and the pump assembly pulled from the well to be visually inspected for scarring, pitting or signs of motor overheating. Today, technology affords us the opportunity to drop a down-hole video camera in the well to visually inspect the pitless adapter, the structural integrity of the well casing, and the condition of the well screen. Keeping a frequent eye on things allows you to compare well performance from the last time it was serviced and identify any problems that could be developing over time. Regular service also allows you to identify potential issues, complete preventative maintenance and proactively budget for and repair any conditions that may potentially lead to failure.

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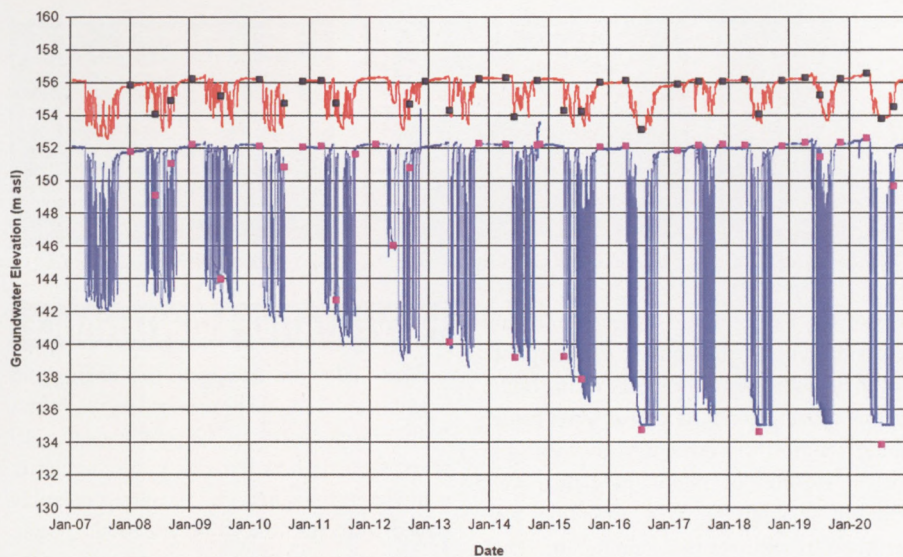


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Pumping Level (Blue) decline over time requiring rehabilitation.

Pump failure is the most common issue facing well owners. However, overtime and depending on the geology of your well, material can build-up on the well screen, limiting the passage of water through it. If enough build-up occurs, it can reduce the flow through the screen or bedrock fractures that supply the water, lowering the pumping level and capacity of your well. If the pumping water level drops too low, it can cause the

pump to break suction (mixing of air and water = bad). Submersible pumps also require approximately 3-6 ft of water above them to run efficiently. Plugging of the screen can cause a motor to overheat and fail early. The pump failure may just be a symptom of a bigger problem you cannot see from the surface, so it's best to get some assessment of the capacity every time you get the pump serviced. In cases with many years of neglect, the damage to the screen and/or casing may be too great and could require drilling of a brand-new replacement well. The photos on page 17 show what a plugged screen looks like, and a clean screen beside it.

left too long, the mineral scale can become too hard to remove and the well capacity can be permanently reduced.

A pump may also fail because it was sized incorrectly. A pump that is sized too small may not be able to deliver the flow rates you need from the depths required in your well. A pump sized too big may over pump the well, break suction and burn out from overheating. A pump correctly sized ensures that a) your well is not being pumped beyond its physical capacity and b) your well pumping is within your permitted rates.

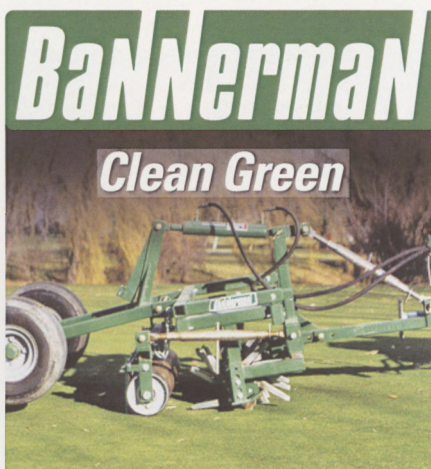
Other indications that there may be a problem with your well include changes in the water quality, reductions in the flow rate, changes in the temperature, and changes in the water levels. Having the initial well record provided to you by the well driller, the original hydrogeological report, and frequent maintenance can help you identify these changes before they become full

blown problems. Continuous water level measurements can also provide some indication of the well performance over time. The graph attached shows a decline in the pumping water levels (blue) over time by almost 10 meters, which also resulted in a slow decline of the flow rate within the well. Overtime this can drop so low, the motor cannot cool

Maintaining your irrigation well should be treated like maintaining any other piece of equipment within your fleet. After all, a groundwater well is a big investment and is likely your primary source of irrigation water.

properly and can fail. The monitoring well (red) does not show the same decline over time showing that the decline is only in the pumping well and not the aquifer.

Much like any other piece of turf equipment, a properly maintained and cared for well will deliver the performance you need for years to come, particularly as the drought pressure increases. Do not take for granted that when you turn on your well and water comes out, that everything is fine. Be proactive, monitor your well flow rates and water levels as these are simple yet effective tools to catch problems before they arise. Budget for well pump replacements on a 15-year cycle and make sure you get regular capacity testing done with every service every 5-10 years. Without preventative maintenance and monitoring, you might be missing all the signs that a problem is developing. Murphy's law takes no days off. ■



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PREVENTATIVE MAINTENANCE

There are a number of methods and techniques a licensed well contractor can use to remove material deposits from the well screen to return it to its former glory. This is called well rehabilitation and it includes processes like compressed air lifting and surging, jetting, as well as chemical rehabilitation. These methods and their efficacy can range considerable. The key, much like the oil change, is preventative maintenance. Regular servicing limits the amount and hardness of material build up over time and can even potentially reverse the process keeping water flowing freely into the well, just as the day it was first constructed. If

Planning and Unplanning the RBC Canadian Open



Prepping greens for play, using same techniques perfected for the RBC Canadian Open.

Written by and photos provided by: Marco China, Assistant Superintendent, St. George's Golf & Country Club.

In 2018, St. George's Golf and Country Club was awarded the 2020 and 2024 RBC Canadian Open. As our team set about preparing for the tournament, the COVID-19 pandemic hit, and the world seemed to change overnight. The lockdowns and closures affected the way we lived our daily lives, and it was no different for the team at St. George's and the much-anticipated RBC Canadian Open. Over its storied tenure as Canada's tournament, it was cancelled only twice before 2020, during periods of wartime in 1915-1918 and 1943-1944. The years 2020 and 2021 have now been added to this list. To say planning and preparing for the RBC Canadian Open two years in a row has been a test of patience would be an understatement. However, through the frustration and disappointment, it has also been a time for tremendous growth and learning for the future.

The turf team at St. George's Golf and Country Club could not be more prepared for the 2022 RBC Canadian Open. When late fall preparations began in 2019 for the 2020 Open, the staff and management were excited to welcome thousands of patrons to the grounds of St. George's for the following spring. The seasonal staff, including a

handful that were around for the 2010 RBC Canadian Open, were sharing stories of past experiences and creating a sense of excitement around the event for anyone that had yet to experience it. The sense of pride in everyone's work was shining through with attention to detail and excitement for what the next season would bring.

The team had time to fine tune and enhance any agronomic plans they had in place; it is not very often that a venue gets two practice runs to prepare to host an event like a PGA tournament.

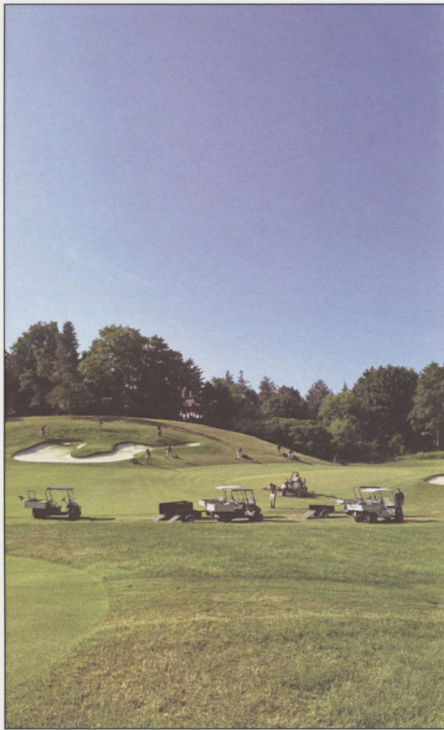
The majority of the seasonal staff, many of whom work to pay their way through post-secondary education, were going to experience being part of a world class golf event showcased on televisions around the world. Many were eager to return just for this experience alone. Throughout the winter, management planned to recruit a large group of volunteers to help make the

event one that would rival other marquee tournaments on the PGA schedule and help the course compete against the world's best. We were flooded with applications that came on a global scale with volunteers committing from as far away as Germany and England. (Keep in mind this is January and February of 2020. Times have certainly changed!)

As the winter progressed and March 2020 rolled around, the world collectively came to a grinding halt, and we were left with many questions as to what June 2020 and the RBC Canadian Open would look like. Would there be fans? Who would play? Who could work? These questions remained unanswered for quite some time. The season started with minimal staff and we raced to get everything in order and make sure we could at least provide the same conditions our members expected on a daily basis with the new staffing

Volunteers Needed

Volunteers are needed for the 2022 RBC Canadian Open. If you have an interest, please email: MChina@stgeorges.org for more information.



guidelines. As the hired seasonal staff waited for a return to work, they echoed those same questions. Eventually, the decision was made to cancel the tournament as the pandemic continued and restrictions remained in place.

The announcement was made to staff and the overwhelming response was, "Let's plan for the next one!" And so, preparations for the 2021 RBC Canadian Open began. With a successful 2020 season in the books and experience navigating various COVID protocols and stages, we felt ready and prepared for whatever the much anticipated 2021 RBC Canadian Open would look like. With the PGA making a season out of rescheduled events, it seemed as if the 2021 RBC Canadian Open would be a go. The turf team came together in 2020 to create amazing playing conditions and made a lasting impression on anyone that was fortunate enough to play the course. The standard of excellence shown by the staff was unparalleled and many returned for the 2021 season to showcase all they had prepared for in 2020.

The 2021 season began with much hope and anticipation for a 2021 RBC Canadian Open as we saw modified events south of the border with minimal fans or no fans at all. It was thought that we would at least hold the Open with the pros taking on an extremely tough test of golf at St. George's. The volunteer group for 2021 was going to be the same size however, it would be limited to include volunteers from only Ontario in order to make sure there would be no issues



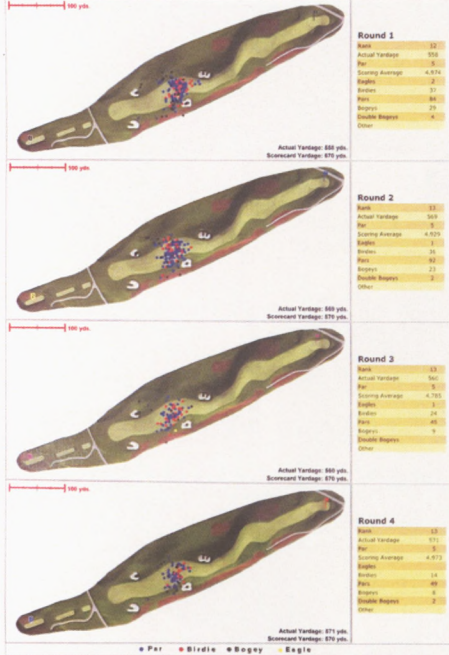
(Left) Large number of staff required to push mow and manage bunkers. Used the practice runs to see what staffing numbers would be needed to have all these tasks completed ahead of tournament play. (Top) Removing pins and cups from greens shortly after opening in 2021 after Ontario was placed into another emergency lockdown. (Above) Rolling and watering greens. A task that has been practice over and over for daily play ensuring we are ready for tournament play.

with travel. With everything in place and with a "practice run" season behind us, we were ready to go. Excitement was in the air as we did our early season prep work and staff began arriving with plans that included an exciting May and June preparing St. George's to host the world's best. That excitement turned to frustration as the pandemic in Ontario and Canada seemed to drag on as other areas in the world were opening up. In the end, the decision was made to, once again, cancel the RBC Canadian Open for 2021.

Despite seeing the tournament cancelled two years in a row, it was not all a loss. The team had time to fine tune and enhance any agronomic plans they had in place; it is not very often that a venue gets two practice runs to prepare to host an event like a PGA tournament. Fertilizer programs were implemented and changed twice, and the

timing of these applications were tracked and managed to see if the desired results appeared. We were able to determine if the staffing levels were sufficient and evaluate the volunteer program to see how it could best fit our needs for getting around the course efficiently. We considered the maintenance area and what we may need to add or modify to ensure a smooth transition from member play to PGA professional play. Every aspect of holding the tournament from our team's perspective has been analyzed and adapted twice over. The frustration has been great at times but the reward in the end will be worth it when the world sees what two years of practice runs can do for a tournament. Throughout the two years of preparation, members have also enjoyed the added bonus of playing conditions that are tournament-ready on any given day.

Hole 15 - Tee Shot - Par 5 - 570yds



Shotlink Data used from the 2010 RBC Canadian Open to help us understand how the course was played and pointed out areas that we will need to pay special attention to in regard to preparation and recovery from member play to PGA Tour play.



Countdown Clock used to boost staff morale and a daily reminder of the exciting and challenging times that lay ahead. The countdown has been reset twice.

In the end, the team at St. George's has stayed committed to making the eventual RBC Canadian Open a success. The crew has never been more prepared and more excited, especially as we see Canada and Ontario enter re-opening stages and we see parts of daily life get back to normal.

We have learned from these events and

have grown with patience and determination to succeed and show the world what two years of preparation can do when put on the world stage. The triumphant return to professional golf in Canada awaits and St. George's Golf and Country Club and its turf team are ready to showcase it to the world at the next RBC Canadian Open. ■



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Common Safety Hazards on Golf Courses



Overcrowded storage areas.

By Bill Godkin, CEafety.

Since 2006, CEafety has been working with golf courses all across Ontario, Alberta, and beyond to identify and eliminate safety hazards that may otherwise result in a serious injury to a worker or a customer. Some employers in the golf industry still aren't sure about what is or is not a safety hazard and how to correct it. Others fear that it maybe cost prohibitive to deal with the safety hazards that could be picked up during an audit by us or even by a provincial inspector.

What we will do in this document is outline some of the most common safety hazards we have been finding at golf courses and provide solutions that will not only eliminate the safety hazards but will also be very economical at the same time.

ISSUE #1: HOUSEKEEPING

Too often we find storage areas in shops, kitchens, bars, Pro Shops, etc. so overcrowded that it is virtually impossible for workers to safely access the items stored there. In most Provincial regulations, employers are required to keep floors clear of obstructions, materials are to be stored in such a way that they won't tip over, collapse, or fall on a worker, and workers must be able to safely access any stored item. Below are some photos of storage areas that are too unsafe for workers to access or were stored dangerously overhead.

Provincial inspectors look for hazards like these and will write orders for an employer to deal with these situations and may even

take the building out of service to workers until that has been done. The inexpensive solution to these situations is to have a clean-up day and put scrap metal into its own bin. At least that way you can recoup some of the expenses. Remember that there is no excuse for poor housekeeping when it comes to the safety of your workers.

ISSUE #2: EYEWASH STATIONS

Another hot topic is the lack of adequate eyewash stations on golf courses where hazardous chemicals are being dispensed. Even though there is no clear definition in Canada about what is and is not an eyewash station, some Provincial inspectors are enforcing regulation ANSI Z358.1, 2014 version. This is the American National Standards Institute's regulation requiring an upward stream of water or saline solution. Most safety data sheets instruct users to flush their eyes for 15 minutes when the person gets that chemical in their eyes and the eyewash bottles simply cannot provide that. Installing hard plumbed eyewash stations can be expensive but the photo below shows an effective and inexpensive solution. If you already have the eyewash bottles, keep them for First Aid use to get a person to the nearest eyewash station.

One of our clients installed this tub with taps and a Bradley Eyewash Faucet in his shop all for under \$200 and this is a permanent solution! ANSI Z358.1 requires an eyewash station to be located within ten seconds of unencumbered access from where chemicals are being dispensed so installing these tubs not only puts you in compliance, but it does so inexpensively as well.



Items that are impossible for workers to safely access.

Global Industries sells the eyewash faucets for about \$80 each. Remember to clean, flush, and inspect all eyewash stations weekly and keep a record of those inspections. An inspector may ask to see the record.

ISSUE #3: SAFETY DATA SHEETS

Every golf course we visit has hazardous chemicals being used; this includes retail chemicals. Even though retail products are exempt under WHMIS regulations, having a safety data sheet for these chemicals and training employees to safely work with and around them is still a requirement under Duties of Employers in Section 25 of Ontario's Occupational Health and Safety Act and is part of every other Provincial OHS Act. Inspectors will look to see that you have safety data sheets for ALL hazardous chemicals.

What we often suggest to our clients is to reduce the number of chemicals you have on site, especially the retail products like Javex, Mr. Clean, etc. If you buy your chemicals from a supplier such as Ecolab, they are required to provide you with current safety data sheets to make your life easier and have the company making money off you do this leg work instead. If you have to look some up online or can't find a specific sheet, I.E. No Name brand chlorine, go to a website like Ecolab's and download their safety data sheet. Use Petro Canada sheets for your shop products, gasoline, and diesel fuel. Inspectors will be happy you have current sheets that have the information on them needed to protect your workers. Remember to do your WHMIS training yearly!

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safety data sheets expire three years after their date of issue has been removed from WHMIS and the OHS Act. On July 20, 2016, I spoke with a senior member of the MOL, and they are no longer enforcing this requirement. They are looking to see that employers have safety data sheets for the hazardous chemicals and materials on site, the sheets are adequate to protect the workers and that training in WHMIS has been done, both generic and workplace specific training. Similar regulations are now being put into effect right across the country so be sure to check your Provincial regulations as soon as possible so you can comply and protect your workers.

ISSUE #4: GROUND FAULT CIRCUIT INTERRUPTER PROTECTION

Ontario's Section 44.1 of Regulation 851 states: when used outdoors or in wet locations, portable electrical tools shall be protected by a ground fault circuit interrupter installed at the receptacle or on the circuit at the panel. Similar requirements exist in virtually every other Province and Territory! Inspectors routinely write orders requiring employers to do just that. You can install 20-amp GFCI outlets that can be purchased from Home Depot or Nedco online, install GFCI protection on the panel itself, or you can buy small portable cords.

One of the problems with installing GFCI protection on the panel is that if one breaker trips, power to the entire panel will go off. If you have a small outer building or shop, this could be the solution for you. If not, then consider installing GFCI outlets near doors where workers may plug in electrically powered tools for use outdoors. The small cords are ideal for use anywhere in your facility. We don't recommend this solution for most clubhouses as losing power to a kitchen when you are preparing food for a large gathering, especially baking, could be very problematic.

Of course, there are many more types of safety hazards in a golf course, but this list will give you a good place to start. Contact me seven days a week if you have a question or a concern. ■



Ken Malcolmson.

By Madeleine White, OGSA Member Services Intern.

The Governor General's Academic Medals were created to encourage academic excellence across the nation and over its 148 years of existence, it's become the most prestigious award that students attending a post-secondary institution in Canada can receive. The award is handed to students graduating with the highest average from any approved high school, college, or university program.

Today, these academic medals are delegated at four levels:

- Bronze: Secondary school level
- Collegiate Bronze: Post-secondary, diploma
- Silver: Undergraduate level
- Gold: Graduate level

The OGSA was excited to hear that, on the recommendation of the Senate of the University of Guelph, Ken Malcolmson, a turfgrass management student, has been awarded this year's Governor General's Academic Collegiate Bronze Medal.

Ken's scholastic journey began when he attended Wilfrid Laurier University in Waterloo, where he studied kinesiology (inspired by his love for sports and competitive curling growing up) and obtained his bachelor's degree. Not really knowing what he wanted to do next, he landed a summer job at the Elmira Golf Club as the golf course assistant superintendent. "A lot of people in turf start out with the summer job on a golf course," Ken explains. "I love mornings, I'm an outdoor person, and I love working outside. I think everyone who ends up in this industry can say the same thing." It wasn't long before he realized with a mix of love for golf and interest in turf, that he

Ken Malcolmson

Winner of the Governor General's Academic Bronze Medal

wanted to continue his education in turfgrass management.

Cam Shaw, manager of the University of Guelph Diploma in Turfgrass Management (DTM) Program says, "A standout student, Ken has been continuously recognized by his peers and our program instructors as a quiet yet diligent leader who aspires to excel in his studies. His keen participation in class discussions, willingness to help and support other students, and overall passion for the turfgrass industry have made him a student who is respected socially and academically."

Not only did he manage to maintain excellence in his grades throughout his studies but was also an active member of the Turf Club, participating in its extracurricular activities and attending the weekly club meetings. He even represented the Ontario Agriculture College and the UofG in attendance at turfgrass industry events and conferences.

When asked about his experience in the program, Ken states "Great program, I loved how thorough it was. It's such a well-

rounded program so you see all aspects of the job and you learn so much." He also touched on his impressive time management skills explaining "I'm pretty organized, I stay on top of things. I'm one of those people who would complete assignments two weeks in advance, so I had really good balance. I was a book worm for school but maintained a great social life."

With his hands on experiences from assistant superintendent to top DTM student and university ambassador, and now Academic Bronze Medalist, Ken Malcolmson is on a journey to utmost success in an industry he has grown ever so passionate about. "I want to be superintendent, that's the career goal," says Ken. "The mark I want to leave on the industry is to get my hands in some projects surrounding the environmental aspect of turf care and make some positive changes where necessary."

We wish Ken the best of luck in his future endeavors and look forward to his continued involvement in the golf turf industry. ■

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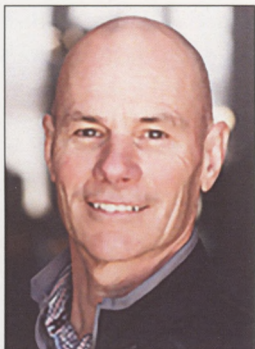
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Niagara Golf Wall of Recognition



ALDO BORTOLON

"I'm just doing my job and I am grateful that Niagara Golf and the Ontario Golf Association are recognizing our side of the industry." Bortolon has been the Golf Course Superintendent at Lookout Point for 35 years, and has been at the club since 1974, an absolute incredible feat.



TED BISHOP

"This is a big honour for me having been at the same club for so many years. What keeps me motivated is having a big impact on the younger generation." Bishop has proudly been the Golf Course Superintendent at Rolling Meadows since 1986.



JOHN TAYLOR

"It must mean I'm getting old," he shared with a laugh. "It's a great honour, I was surprised to get the call." Taylor is currently the property manager and superintendent at Grand Niagara Golf Club since 2008 and has been a superintendent since the tender age of 19. He is also a past president of the OGSA (1995) and current president of the WOGSA.



O.J. PICCOLO

O.J. spent the final years of his career mentoring his son, Dennis Piccolo, who himself recently retired from St. Catharines Golf and Country Club at the end of the 2019 season. O.J. plays golf twice a week at his formerly managed club and notes that, "the new superintendent, Dan, is doing a fabulous job; the course is in fantastic shape. My son trained him well."



ANGELO TOTO

"This is a big achievement that I am very proud of and did not expect." Angelo still finds himself "going into work" at least once a week, whether to play golf, see the staff or just help out when needed.

By Ryan L. Scott, Superintendent, Oakville Golf Club.

On June 11th, 2021, Niagara Golf in conjunction with the Golf Association of Ontario, introduced the Niagara Golf Wall of Recognition. The Wall of Recognition acknowledges not only players that have exceeded expectations, but also the professionals, owners, press, management, volunteers and of course: superintendents.

When selecting superintendents to be inducted, John White a

PGA of Canada Director of Golf Operations at Beechwood Golf & Social and one of five members on the Wall of Recognition Selection Committee states that, "the first criteria was longevity at their present club or in the Niagara area." White continued to explain that the selection committee also considered, "any involvement in their association or contributions to the golfing community."

OGSA is exceptionally proud of its five long-time members who were the first to be inducted in this category. Ted Bishop, (Rolling Meadows Golf & CC), Aldo Bortolon, (Lookout Point Golf & CC), O.J. Piccolo (St. Catherines Golf & CC, retired), John Taylor (Grand Niagara Golf Club), and Angelo Toto (Willodell Golf Club, retired).

These gentlemen have been entrenched in the management and care of Niagara golf courses for many years and are well respected superintendents in the golf turf industry here in Ontario. When asked what this induction means to them, the answer given by each and every one of them was that they are "humbled and honoured" for the recognition, but they "don't do this for the accolades."

The OGSA wants to congratulate these fine superintendents as the inaugural group of superintendents in the Niagara Golf Wall of Recognition. ■

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What is one thing that seems to be consistent from golf course to golf course whether it's a big budget private club or a mom and pop nine hole?

The obvious thought is that they all have greens, tees, and fairways. Though that is certainly correct, there is another commonality among them: container gardens, also known as planters. Now, I have to add, I haven't been to every single golf course in Ontario, however, I have been on every golf course in Muskoka, from the private clubs to the small budget public courses and I have been to courses all over Ontario. I always find container gardens somewhere on the property. Usually, the planters are found around high traffic areas like the clubhouse or pro-shop entrances and outdoor social/dining areas like patios or decks. Of-course the quantity and scale of container garden/planter displays is budget dependant, but planters are a very effective way to add a punch of colour and interest to your property.

Just like everything, planters require maintenance. The level of maintenance is determined by a few factors like the plant material selected, size of the container itself, growing conditions, and soil. Here are a couple tips to minimize the maintenance burden.

WATER

Planters typically require frequent watering as a result of the limited soil/rootzone. You can combat this by using the maximum size planter the space allows; the more soil the less frequent the watering will be.

ADD COMPOST

Mixing potting soil with high quality compost or triple-mix can add moisture

retention properties while still providing good drainage. Adding compost or triple mix into the soil mix adds some nutritional value which can reduce the fertilizing requirements, you can also add a pelletized slow release fertilizer to the mix as well.

Well thought out and well positioned planter gardens are an excellent way to add colour and interest to different areas of your property throughout the season.

CHOOSE LOW MAINTENANCE PLANTS

Choose lower maintenance plants that don't require deadheading, or a mid-season shearing to rejuvenate the plant and increase flowering. Selecting plants whose aesthetic value is in their foliage is a good way to minimize maintenance on planters, however, Begonia or Scaevola are flowering species that are prolific bloomers and put on a great show all season. They require no deadheading and are virtually maintenance free.

DESIGNING PLANTERS

Planters add versatility to gardens large and small. They lend instant color, provide a focal point in the garden, or tie the architecture of the building to the garden. A guideline for designing a planter combination is to include

“a thriller, a spiller, and a filler.”

For example, combine one focal-point plant (the thriller), such as Coleus or a Geranium with multicolored leaves, with several plants that spill over the edge of the pots such as, Petunias, Bacopa, Creeping Zinnias, or Ornamental Sweet Potatoes. Finally, add the fillers, which are plants with smaller leaves and flowers that add color and fill in the arrangement all season long. Good fillers include Salvias, Verbenas, Ornamental Peppers, and Wax Begonias, as well as foliage plants like Parsley or Licorice plants. You may also want to include a plant for height, such as purple fountain grass.

Keep in mind the colour scheme of buildings and surrounding gardens, if there are any, and not just for the plant material palette selection but for selecting the container itself and its location.

SPRUCE UP EVENTS

Using planters to spruce up an area for an event is a great way create a positive, welcoming atmosphere. For example, on Lady's Days at Muskoka Lakes G&CC, I used to grow extra planters, which were in 16" round fibre pots, and place them on the lady's tee decks beside the blocks on the par 3's. The pro shop would also use them for Lady's Camp Days and the clubhouse manager would use them to spruce up areas around the clubhouse for events. The extra effort was always well received by the members and the plants made the view that much nicer.

EDIBLE GARDENS & POLLINATORS

Lastly, planters are a great way to produce fresh herbs for the kitchen, if there is one on site, and to monitor or attract pollinators which can in turn be used as an educational tool for junior programs, staff, or an added part of the experience for those who come to the property.

Overall, well thought out and well positioned planter gardens are an excellent way to add colour and interest to different areas of your property throughout the season. They're portable, multifaceted, and an effective way to welcome golfers to your course. ■



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Fifteen Years Ago Today

The 2006 OGSA Board of Directors



(Back Row L-R): Rob Gatto (King's Forest), Jarred Barakett (Deer Ridge), Doug Breen (Golf North), Jeff Stauffer (Credit Valley), Randy Booker (Dundas Valley), Trevor Clapperton (Dalewood). (Front Row L-R): Jeff Alexander (Parry Sound), Chris Nelson (Markland Wood), Chris Andrejicka (Essex), Bob Burrows (Rosedale), Sean DeSilva (Coppinwood), Paul Scenna (Beacon Hall).

IN MEMORIAM

Bruce Summers of the Winchester Golf Club, Jeremy Thompson, superintendent of the Dominion Golf and Country Club and Tom Yates, former superintendent at Castlemore Golf and Country Club.

ON THE MOVE

Bob Heron retired from Beacon Hall, Paul Scenna moved from Donalda to Beacon Hall, and Scott White took over for Paul at Donalda. Frank Guthro to Forest Golf, Greig Barker to Copetown Woods, Jeff Allen to Lake Joseph Club, Greame Hughes to Maples of Ballantrae, Scott Jamison to Saugeen, Jamie Camalucci to Timber Wolf, Gary Mcbeath to Royal Ontario, Mark Pickering to Bushwood, Steve Phillips to Ingersol, Wray Barret to Willow Valley, Chelsea Stroud to Muskoka Highland, Dan Lavis to Tanandowah, Allan Couroux to Bear Creek and Jordan Stanev to Barry's Bay.

Plant Products was pleased to announce the addition of Gary Tate as their new representative and Jason Ireton was the turf manager.

Jason Harris, left Plant Products to be the owner/superintendent of Orr Lake Golf Course, north of Barrie. Maple Turf Supply welcomed Mark Schneider and Hutcheson Sand and Gravel announced Ian Bowen and Alex McDonald joined the team. Colin White was now the territory manager for Bayer Environmental Science and Brad Chisholm started at Masters Turf Supply. Vanden Bussch Irrigation announced that Jason Becket was promoted to golf manager and Kory Kopko would be the new golf territory manager for Weston Ontario.

AWARDS

There were many 25 year members recognized at the Ontario Golf Course Management Conference and Trade Show: Tim Clarridge, Spring Lakes, John



Superintendent Recognition Program: David Kuypers & Jarrod Barakett.



Incoming President Bob Burrows accepting gavel from Paul Scenna.

Cunningham, Mandarin, Ed Farnsworth, Deerhurst, Ted and Carmen DeCorso, Victoria Park, Greg Aljoe, Oviinbyrd, Sid Witteveen, Loch March and Randy Hooper, Beach Grove.

EVENTS

Mississauga, Galt and Oshawa celebrated their centennial years and Westmount had a 75th anniversary.

The GCSAA Golf Industry Conference scheduled for February in New Orleans was canceled because of Hurricane Katrina and was moved to Atlanta.



38th Annual Presidents' Day - 1st place team from Lambton Golf & Country Club.



25 Year Members: Ted & Carmen DeCorso.



(L-R) James Darryl of Islington GC won 1st low gross at the Assistants' Tournament held at the Briar's GC. Trophy presented by Keith Lefebvre of Nu-Gro.



Alex McClumpha Memorial Tournament - Ron Craig presents Bill Fach with the George Darou Trophy Superintendent over 50 with low gross (Bill had an 82).



Superintendent Recognition Program - Harry Daniel, GAO President with Dennis Piccolo and Rob Gatto.



(L-R) 25 Years Member - Tim Clarridge, John Cunningham, and Ed Farnsworth.

ACHIEVEMENTS

Cindy Charters, who had been the Ontario Turfgrass Research Foundation executive administrator for the past 15 years, retired.

Congratulations went to David Gourlay who was this year's recipient of the William Sansom Distinguished Service Award.

CGSA History of Greenskeeping, written by Gordon Witteveen, was well underway and available for their 40th anniversary celebrations.

TOURNAMENTS

The Pro/Super Tournament was held at Weston Golf Club hosted by Rob

Ackermann. The winning team was from Parry Sound, Jeff Alexander, 2nd Cedar Brae, Darren Little, 3rd Trafalgar, Mark Prieur, and 4th Deer Creek, Neil Acton.

The Spring Field Day held at St. Thomas Golf and Country Club was hosted by Wade Beaudoin. Scott Gardner, Echo Valley, was low gross with 73.

The 38th Annual President's Day Tournament was held at Rosedale hosted by Bob Burrows. Winners were as follows: 1st place went to Peter Kinch, Lampton, 2nd went to Jarrod Barakett, Deer Ridge and 3rd to Steve Muys, Twenty Valley.

The McClumpha Tournament was held

at Bond Head Golf Club hosted by Ian McQueen. Ron Craig of Turf Care presented Bill Fach, Black Bear Ridge, with the George Darou trophy for the over 50 superintendent with the lowest gross. Low gross scores were David May and Kevin Holmes. and low net scores were David Caldwell and Bruce Stanley. ■



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Fall 2021

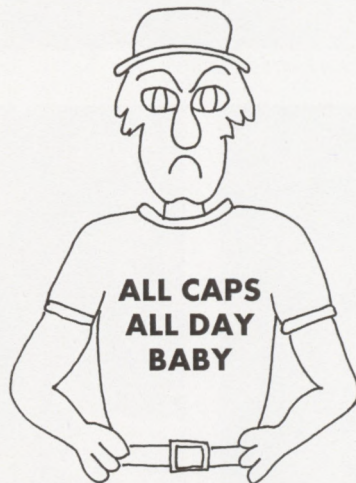
Un-Social Media

By Doug Breen, Superintendent,
Golf North Properties.

I'm old enough to remember when there was no internet. In fact, I'm old enough to remember when there were no personal computers, and the mainframe at the University of Guelph filled the entire basements of several buildings. The first article that I submitted to the OGSA under the title *Turf or Consequences* was hand-written. In cursive! One of my favourite facts, is from the Kennedy Space Center in Florida. The computers used to get humanity onto the surface of the moon had less computing power than a first-generation smartphone.

The devices that we hold in our hands every day, and the internet that connects them together, are truly a miracle. What's less miraculous is what we choose to use them for. For most of us, they serve two purposes. One; mundane activities like finding each other in a crowd, making excuses for why we're running late (alternatively, looking for the guy who's always late), or asking Krista what I'm bringing home for dinner. Two; ensuring that we don't have a single unexpressed idea, no matter how trivial or wrongheaded, and that said idea is seen by the maximum possible number of people.

This second one is a problem. There was a time when a letter of complaint (to I dunno, say a golf course...) required a pen, some paper, an envelope, a phone book to find the address of the company's head office, and a stamp. In the unlikely event that you had all these items in your house, the inevitable passage of time between the unthinkable act of someone putting ice in your glass when you SPECIFICALLY ASKED FOR NO ICE, made a person begin to question whether an angry letter was really an appropriate reaction. *Time heals all wounds*, the old saying goes – and often a bit of distance has a way of putting things into perspective.



He's a 3-star guy, with 5-star expectations and a 1-star budget. There will be a bad review and an angry email on Monday.

Now each of us (including minors, seniors, and the mentally unstable) has more broadcasting power, and a larger potential audience, than Walter Cronkite or Ron Burgundy ever dreamed of. And without the benefit of time (and editors), the grammatically stunted ravings against whatever business has treated you in such an egregious manner (let's say a golf course), will be available to the entire world before you make the turn to the back nine.

Many course owners, GM's, and Superintendents will take a one-star review personally. I don't. I often read one-star reviews as entertainment – because I always assume that there's more to the story; and I try to guess what actually happened. It's remarkable how often confronting an idiot vandalizing your property with a golf cart (also your property) will result in a one-star review and the demand that we improve our customer service training. I have video of a man stealing golf balls from the proshop and taking a bottle from behind the bar. Calling him on those actions resulted in a one-star review of our *mosquito infested hell-hole*. People lie.

When reading online reviews, I throw out all the extremes. I assume that the one-star crowd is either a basement dwelling troll, or that they're over-reacting

to something that happened. On the other extreme, I assume that all five-star reviews are written by friends, relatives, and staff. What I'm looking for are patterns. I assume that the people in the middle are reasonable (and real) people, so if there are more two-star than four-star reviews – I get concerned. If half the comments are that the greens are slow, then they probably are. If one person says that the turf staff was rude, that's a lot different than twenty people saying it. Look for patterns that are within your control, and then control them.

The best advice for online reviews is – DON'T FEED THE BEAST!

You absolutely cannot win an online battle. Also, every time you reply the post goes back to the top and buries your good reviews. The one exception is the Wendy's twitter account, where they pay stand-up comedians to take on their customers. It's very funny, but not really a good template for the golf industry. Your only hope is to take it offline. Make one post, introducing yourself and telling them that you'd love to discuss this with them. 99% will never call you. The anonymity of the internet makes folks very brave – they will avoid any situation where their ideas might be challenged. The few who do call, will often become your greatest allies once you have a chance to speak to the issue. If all else fails, you have the golfer's name, address, and email – a well written cease and desist letter usually ends the online assault.

Social media is one of the greatest inventions in history – but it also exposes some of the worst parts of human nature. It gives a disproportionately loud voice to people who would otherwise never be heard. It's a blessing and a curse. Same when it comes to online reviews. Use them as a window into your customer base – but remember that some of those panes of glass are very broken. ■



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*Rob Wright, Golf Course Superintendent
The Pulpit Club*






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