

June 2021

ONCOURSE

OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE
ONTARIO GOLF SUPERINTENDENTS' ASSOCIATION

Improving Plant Health and Reducing Inputs

ALSO IN THIS ISSUE:

**Equipment Managers,
The Unsung Heroes of Turf
Risks and Best Practices
When Hiring Seasonal Employees**

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



By Al Schwemler,
OGSA President.

I am elated to report that Courtney White has accepted the position of Interim Executive Manager of the OGSA. The Board is excited to work with Courtney in her new role and to explore her visions for our association.

The OGSA Board of Directors welcomes Sean Gunn as a new member of the Board. Sean is the Golf Course Superintendent at Clublink's The Country Club.

As I compose this message, the province of Ontario is under a Declaration of Emergency and province wide Stay-at-Home order, effective April 8 for six weeks. The promising and busy start to the golf season came to a screeching halt on April 17, as the government put a complete stop to all golf in the province. Several courses were forced to close, while others were just getting ready to open. During the closure, "We are Golf – Ontario" continued to lobby the government to re-open golf courses and other outdoor recreation, stressing safety protocols and physical and mental well-being. Numerous letters and emails were sent to the Premier's office, as well as the Ontario Jobs and Recovery Committee. Virtual meetings were held with various Ministers to help clarify any concerns about a safe return of golf.

Although there is still a great amount of uncertainty moving forward, the Board and staff are working diligently to expand membership services. We are exploring both virtual and in person golf events, educational opportunities, and a hybrid version of the Golf Management Conference. Blue Mountain Resort and Village Conference Centre in Collingwood remains on hold for January 2022. Obviously, Covid related restrictions will weigh heavily on what offerings will be available.

Hopefully the move to the new GTI is complete by the time this message is published, even if work from home mandates are still in place. It will be nice to be ready for "business as usual" when the time comes.

Stay safe and I hope restrictions have been lifted or relaxed by the time you read this message. A return to some semblance of normality would be welcomed. ■



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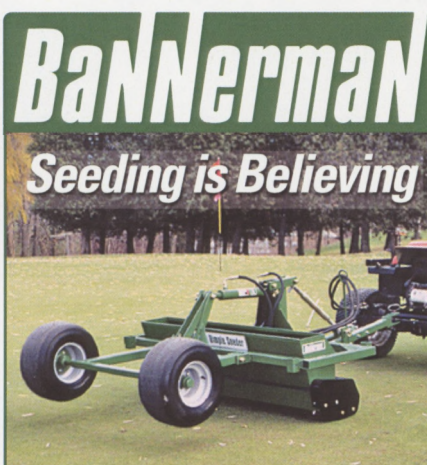
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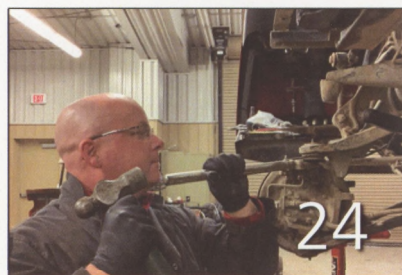
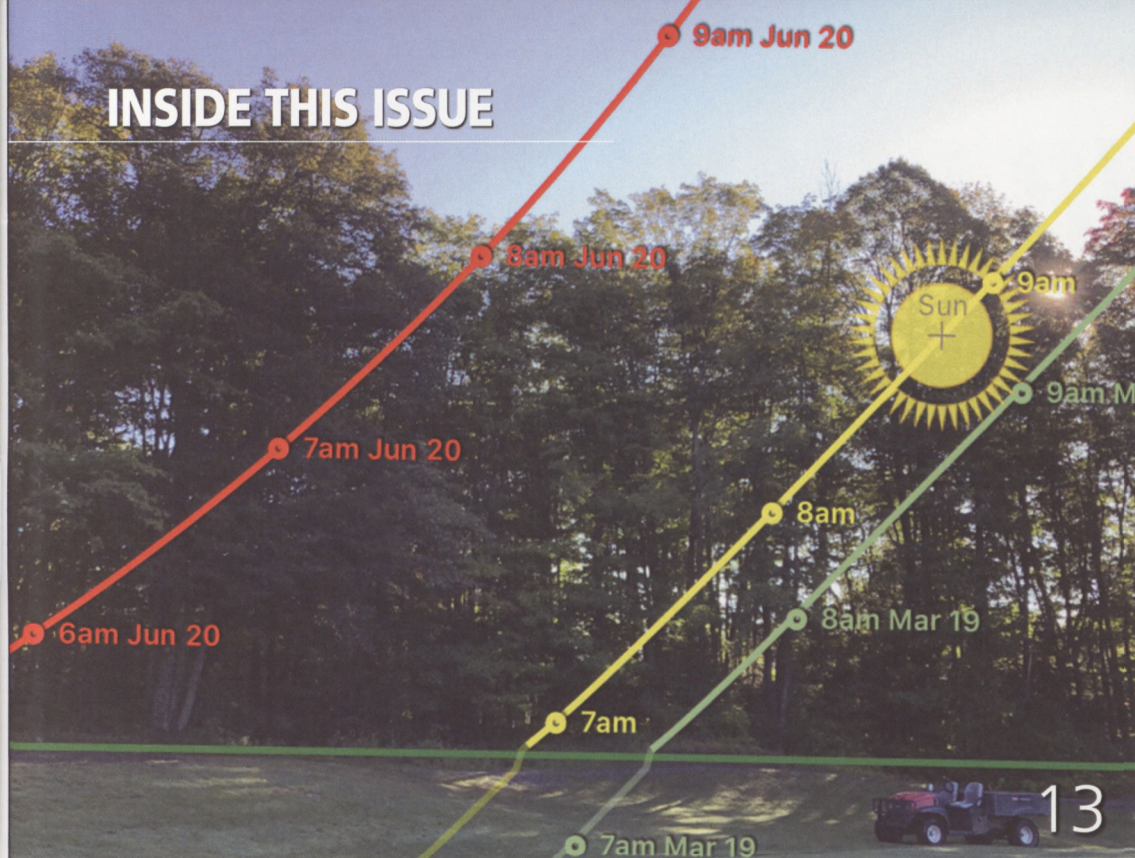
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INSIDE THIS ISSUE



ON THE COVER

Cover photo provided by Deb Dale, Assistant Superintendent, London Hunt & Country Club.

Features

- 9 **We are Golf**
- 10 **GC Highlight & Member Profile**
Deb Dale, Assistant Superintendent,
London Hunt & Country Club
- 13 **Improving Plant Health
and Reducing Inputs**
- 16 **Risks and Best Practices
When Hiring Seasonal Employees**
- 18 **Mastering the Microbes**

Regular Contributors

- 27 **Off the Fairway**
- 28 **Looking Back**
- 30 **Turf or Consequences**

Departments

- 3 **President's Message**
- 7 **Editorial Message**
- 8 **What's New**
- 21 **On Research**
- 24 **Member Moments**
Equipment Managers,
The Unsung Heroes of Turf

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INDEX OF ADVERTISERS

ADVANCED EQUIPMENT www.advancedequipmentsales.ca	17, 22
ALMACK AGRONOMIC SERVICES INC.	14
AQUATROLS www.can.aquatrols.com	6
BANNERMAN www.sportsturfmagic.com	3, 19
BELCHIM www.belchimturf.ca	4
BRAEMAR BUILDING SYSTEMS www.braemarbuildings.com	20
BRETTYOUNG www.brettyoung.ca	25
GREENHORIZONS www.greenhorizonssod.com	31
ONTARIO SEED COMPANY www.oscturf.com	8
P.D. SOLUTIONS www.pdsolutions.ca	3
S.W. STONWORKS www.swstoneworks.com	7
TARGET SPECIALTY PRODUCTS www.target-specialty.com	2
TERRAPURE www.terrapureenv.com	15
THE ANDERSONS www.andersonsplantnutrient.com	12
TURF CARE PRODUCTS CANADA www.turfcare.ca	26, 32
ZANDER SOD CO. LIMITED www.zandersod.com	29

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EDITORIAL MESSAGE

As I write this message, golf courses are closed. Again. I, like many of you, find this daunting. I'm the type of person who tries to find the bright light through the cracks. Since the last stay at home order was issued, one of the strategies I use, for work at least, is to watch the Today in Ontario video. I've watched it at least a dozen times within the last few weeks, and it inspires me.

Although the courses are closed, superintendents and their teams are still up with the dawn, performing essential duties to protect the game's greatest asset so that when this stay-at-home order is lifted (hopefully by the time you read this), golf courses can welcome community members across this province to play, relax and connect.

In this issue we tip our hats to the crew! Steven Rabski shares his thoughts on the value of a good Equipment Manager, and we're excited to feature a longtime member and Assistant Superintendent, Deb Dale,

London Hunt & Country Club, written by Chris Lecour.

The OGSA recently held an informative session about Best Practices When Hiring Seasonal Employees with Ed Snetsinger, a lawyer with Sherrard Kuzz LLP, one of Canada's leading employment and labour law firms. If you missed it, don't worry. We've included the session's highlights inside this issue for you to use as a reference. Randy Booker has provided the second segment of his regenerative greenkeeping series, Mastering Microbes, and Mike Pellerin spoke with Mark Brooks, Todd Currie and Robert Clark, to get their take on Improving Plant Health and Reducing Inputs. This issue also features ONResearch and Dr. Tom Hsiang has shared some Amazing Facts About Snow Mold.

Barry Endicott takes us back to 2011, Chris Cummings shares his expert advice on Flowering Shrubs, and Doug Breen

shares his ever humorous insights.

Not only do I want to acknowledge the ONCourse committee and everyone who volunteered their time to help pull this issue together, I'd also like to welcome Marc China and Joel Johnston to the team. I look forward to working with you both.

Keep well! ■



Courtney White,
Interim Executive
Manager, OGSA and
ONCourse Editor.
manager@ogsa.ca

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WHAT'S NEW

By Courtney White, Interim Executive Manager, OGSA.

OGSA Board of Directors and Staff Update

2021 has brought about extensive change for the OGSA.

I'd like to begin by thanking Al Schwemler for the warm introduction in his president's message. I am equally elated to step into the Interim Executive Manager role, and I do look forward to working with you to support this excellent association.

As people move on to the next step in their lives, the OGSA Board continues to transform. As Al mentioned in his president's message, we welcome Sean Gunn to the OGSA board and we look forward to putting his extensive board experience to good use! The OGSA has also accepted Jessica Aytoun's resignation from the board. Jessica has decided to accept an exciting opportunity with Vanden Bussche Irrigation, and of course we wish her the best of luck!

During this transition time, the Board has met twice virtually to discuss upcoming events and initiatives to support members during the 2021 season. With such uncertainty surrounding social distancing requirements, we continue to plan for both virtual and in person events for 2021 and 2022. We will announce upcoming initiatives as they become finalized through Twitter and Clippings. We look forward to connecting with the membership in person once again!

We have hired a summer student to help answer emails and execute projects during this transition time and will hire a permanent member services person in the immediate future.

We continue to work remotely, and we encourage you to reach out via email if you need to contact us.

admin@ogsa.ca

Membership Directory

Our printed directory has arrived with this ONCourse issue. This information is gathered from our online directory which we hope you had a chance to update! We'd like to thank the suppliers who placed an ad to support this much loved networking tool! We know our members love it!

Today in Ontario Social Media Contest! Ends November 30th, 2021

Today In Ontario campaign was developed to remind us all that superintendents, and their teams are critical to the overwhelmingly positive impact the game of golf has, every day. As a sport, and recreational activity, golf stands alone in the positive effect that it has on people, environments, and wildlife.

What you do each day, makes this possible. **More now than ever, we need to remember this, and we need to tweet about it!** So, take photos of your teams at work, beautiful vistas and the wildlife that surrounds you, and tweet. Don't forget to use #TodayInOntario and tag @OntarioGSA to enter!

Turf Managers' Short Course Award

Each year, the OGSA awards a \$1,000 scholarship and a one year membership to the OGSA to the student with the highest overall class mark. The student must be employed at a golf course in Ontario to qualify! It is with great pleasure that we announce this year's highest mark was earned by Nick Hagg, Assistant in Training, Kawartha Golf and Country Club. Congratulations, Nick!

G. M. Frost Centre

The G. M. Frost Centre is in its final stages of completion and the OGSA will move to this new location within the next few months.

WELCOME to Our New Members

Philip Bodini Victoria Park East GC	Class C
Cari Gillan Muskoka Bay Club	Class F
Eric Andrejicka Granite Golf Club	Class C

Norman McCollum Turfgrass Entrance Scholarship

This scholarship is administered by the University of Guelph and is for students entering the associate diploma program in turfgrass management. The OGSA is proud to announce that it has committed another \$5,000 of support, over the next five years. The past recipients of this scholarship are:

- 2020 - Lucas Sardone & Christian Sardone
- 2019 - Ethan Evanitsk
- 2018 - William Ralston
- 2017 - Scott Powers
- 2016 - Denver Hart

LebanonTurf Dog of the Year

Thanks to Floki and Lesley Thomas' (Scarboro Golf & Country Club) BIG WIN as Dog of the Year, the OGSA was awarded \$3,000. These funds were donated to the Wounded Warriors K9 PTSD Service Dogs foundation. ■

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WE ARE GOLF

Ontario Chapter

By Al Schwemler, President, OGSA.

We are Golf – Ontario (formerly National Allied Golf Associations – Ontario) is comprised of the governing bodies of golf within the province. This committee is comprised of representatives from the following Ontario regional associations:

- Ontario Golf Superintendents' Association (OGSA)
- National Golf Course Owners Association (NGCOA), Ontario Chapters
- Golf Ontario (GAO)
- Professional Golfers' Association of Ontario (PGA)
- The Canadian Society of Club Managers (CSCM) Ontario Branch

The objective of the group is to work cooperatively together as industry leaders. Committee representatives communicate to each of the participating associations, keeping each other abreast on current initiatives and association specific updates.

Collectively, the group has participated at Queen's Park on National Golf day (May 2019), discussing golf's economic impact, health and philanthropic benefits, and the IPM process with MPPs. These meetings had a direct impact on eliminating the requirement for the costly annual public IPM meeting component from O. Reg. 63/09, effective May 2020.

Most recently, with the COVID-19 outbreak and subsequent restrictions on golf in 2020 and 2021, We are Golf Ontario has taken a lead role in communicating, lobbying, educating, and seeking clarification for the golf industry as a whole.

From a turf management standpoint, the committee was instrumental in lobbying for essential maintenance during closures, provided recommendations and documents with safety protocols for re-opening (for all golf operations), lobbied to re-open golf, and maintained dialogue with government officials for clarification on mandated public health measures. They have also provided timely communications and updates to be distributed to each association's membership.

The OGSA, on behalf of We are Golf, will continue to monitor regulatory issues which may impact water use, IPM, nutrient usage, and anything else that may impact golf operations.

Current Committee Members:

OGSA: Kevin Collier (BOD), Al Schwemler (President)

NGCOA: Shawn Hunter (SW Ont. Director), Blair Breen (Central Ont. Director), Greg Chambers (Eastern Ont. Director)

GAO: Mike Kelly (Executive Director), Dave Struthers (Senior Director)

PGA: Ontario – Melanie van der Hoop (Executive Director), Carol Ann Baxter (Executive Director – Ottawa Zone)

CSCM: Paul Bussiere (Ont. Branch), Chris Serre (Ont. Branch) ■



London Hunt & Country Club

1431 Oxford St. W
www.londonhuntclub.
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Sunrise

Member since 1995

Deb Dale

Assistant Superintendent, London Hunt & Country Club

By Chris Lecour, Senior Turf Sales Representative, BASF. Photos provide by Deb Dale and the London Hunt & Country Club.

About the Course

About the Course: The London Hunt and Country Club, a meticulously landscaped hideaway featuring a 7,200 yard, 18-hole championship golf course with a short-range practice facility, ten professional clay tennis courts, fitness facilities, trap and skeet fields, and a 72,000 square foot Georgian style Clubhouse.

Private, semi-private, public, municipal, resort? Private

Architect: Robert Trent Jones Sr/Rees Jones/Chris & Mike Hurdzan currently

Number of holes: 18 holes

Practice Facility: Driving range and short-range practice facility.

Number of staff year-round, seasonal?: 6/37-42

How many mechanics, assistants: Superintendent (Jayson Griffiths) One mechanic and an assistant (Mark McCallum/Randy Rau) Assistant Superintendent (Deb Dale).

The relationship between a golf course superintendent and an assistant GCS is integral to the success of any turf management team and to a large degree, the success of the entire club. A superintendent needs to be able to trust his or her second-in-command without question. They also rely on their assistant's contrasting point of view and different management style to complement their own method of managing the department. If you have the chance to meet and spend time with Deb Dale, it becomes evident almost immediately that her management style and the degree to which she cares about her teammates would elevate most any turf management team.

Dale did not set out to have a long and successful career at one of Southwestern Ontario's premier private golf clubs when she accepted a part-time job at London Hunt Club as a teenager. Not completely unfamiliar to turf maintenance as she earned money mowing lawns in her neighbourhood as a



Deb Dale, Assistant Superintendent, London Hunt & Country Club.

young girl, Dale was initially hired by Hunt Club Superintendent John Bennett for a two-week period. She was hired to, as she put it, "dig some holes and lay some sod." Bennett must have been impressed by her work ethic as she was invited to continue working with the turf crew beyond that initial two-week period. One of her main motivations for working at the club was to help pay for

In the Hot Seat

Q: Favourite Major?

A: The Masters

Q: Best piece of turf equipment?

A: TDR/Salsco roller

Q: Ultimate foursome:

You and which three?

A: Close family and friends

Q: Lowest round ever and where?

A: 77 Caledonia Golf and Fish Club,
South Carolina

Q: Favourite meal?

A: Surf & Turf

Q: Favourite movie?

A: Christmas Vacation

Q: Favourite golf course?

A: Caledonia Golf and Fish Club,
South Carolina

Q: Favourite course designer?

A: No one in particular

Q: Favourite Band?

A: I listen to all different types

university. She originally intended to become a teacher, graduating from the University of Western Ontario with both an undergraduate and a teaching degree. Unfortunately, this was back in the 1990's when full-time teaching jobs in Ontario were difficult to come by for recent graduates. Sadly, John Bennett died suddenly during the middle of one season and then-assistant Bob Pattinson took over as superintendent. She continued to work at the golf club on a part-time basis while she was substitute teaching. Eventually, the lack of full-time teaching work and the lure of a rewarding turf maintenance career, combined. Pattinson asked Dale to accept the vacant assistant superintendent role and she accepted the position she has held for 24 years. She credits Pattinson for being a true mentor during their time together at the club. The on-course education he provided was supplemented by the University of Guelph's Turf Managers' Short Course. As if that path to a long career wasn't interesting enough, in between those two stints at university, Dale joined the police force and was an officer for several years.

At the height of the season, the Hunt Club maintenance team begins work at 5:30AM,



Seventh Green.

which means Dale and the rest of the management team are at the shop by at least 5AM. She begins each day by reviewing daily job assignments for the team and adjusting if necessary. When asked what a regular day looks like, Dale chuckled and replied, "There's

no such thing as a regular day," a sentiment many turf managers could relate to.

When asked to share one memorable experience among many from her career, one day from her early years at the club stands out. "I went out one day to cut greens

What You Need to Know

Predominant grass type: Bentgrass/Poa mix

Predominant soil type: Sandy Soils

Types of greens: Push up

Size of greens: 4 acres of greens on course,
1 acre of greens on short course.

Size of tees: 3 acres

Size of fairways: 28 acres

Major Challenges: Member expectations ever increasing green speeds. Summer patch likes to show its head every once and a while as well.

"Deb Dale is a true compassionate leader. She has the ability to elevate those around her. Her dedication, commitment, and keen observational skills balanced with a competitive spirit has elevated our daily operation. Many who know, know the immense amount of mental energy and planning that takes place behind the scenes. I am fortunate to call Deb my equal. We meet each morning on the 14th green before sunrise without fail to talk turf, people, and the day ahead. She is a great conversationalist, astute observer, and an exacting operator. She is simply the best."

— *Jayson Griffiths, Superintendent at London Hunt Club*



Overlooking 2nd Green.



18th Hole.



14th Hole.

and saw about seven cows on the seventh fairway and called John Bennett, golf course superintendent at the time. He laughed and thought that maybe I was still feeling effects from the previous night. At the time, there was farmland that ran along the sixth fairway and apparently they had come in through the back gate. Crazy!"

Dale and several foremen at London Hunt do most of the hiring of seasonal staff, from students to retirees, which is no small challenge. The number of staff can reach up to 42 individuals in the middle of the golf season, with many of those employees being part-time staff who blitz the golf course each morning to prepare it for daily play and then

get out of the way of the onslaught of golfers, which was certainly the case in 2020. Rounds at London Hunt Club in 2020 were up 35% over the previous year, despite a late spring start due to Covid.

The challenges Dale faces in recruiting and keeping staff are the same challenges a mom-and-pop golf club down the road would face. It's one thing to hire good people, but "keeping people is the challenge," she says. She believes that what motivates employees today is the same as it has always been, which is to say, it's always been a grind. This is one area Dale excels in: interacting with staff, motivating them, and getting the best out of them she can.

Her upbeat attitude and even temperament

are keys to both her longevity and success at London Hunt over the years. Asked what advice she would give to young people looking to enter the turf industry in this day and age, Dale offers this simple advice: "Enjoy the ride. No matter how hard your day may be, someone else is always worse off. Appreciate all the good that you have." Knowing how many employees she must have mentored over the years, if even a handful of them came away from a summer working at London Hunt Club with an attitude like that towards life, then she has done her job. One might say Deb Dale wound up becoming a remarkable teacher after all. ■

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Improving Plant Health and Reducing Inputs

Superintendent Success Stories

17th Hole at Legacy Ridge. Photo provided by superintendent Marc Brooks.

By Mike Pellerin, Superintendent, Saugeen Golf Club, OGSA director.

One of the things I enjoy the most about our profession is the camaraderie shared between fellow superintendents. Turfgrass professionals are happy to share their stories of failure and success, if their experiences can help others in the business succeed. With the growing trend of reducing chemical inputs on golf courses gaining traction in many circles, more and more golf course superintendents are placing a higher emphasis on improving plant health to better withstand the onslaught of biotic and abiotic stresses. The superintendents profiled in this article share some of the techniques they have used to improve growing conditions and increase plant health at their properties. They have found considerable reductions in the resources required to provide their members and guests with quality playing conditions.

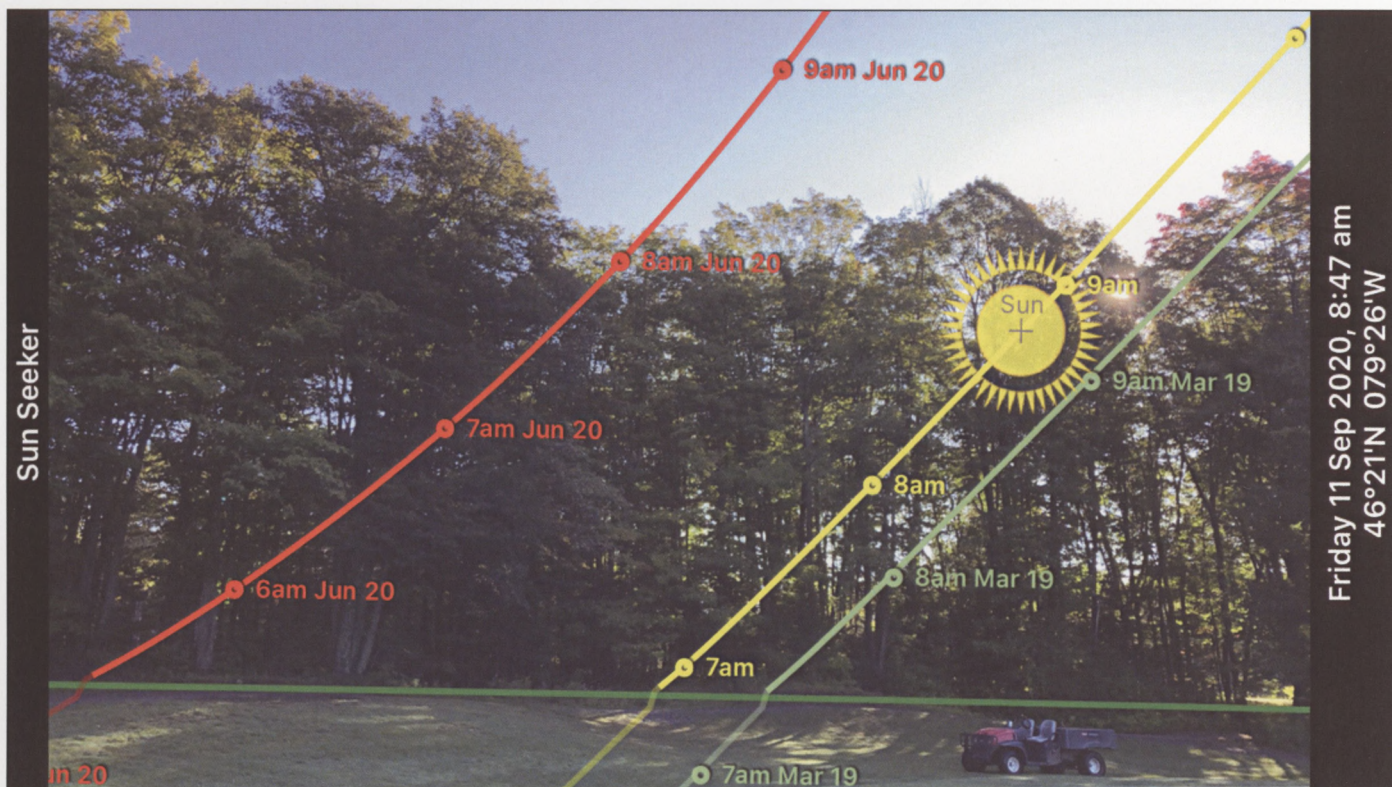
Legacy Ridge Golf Club – Superintendent, Marc Brooks

As he enters his 10th season as superintendent at Legacy Ridge Golf Club, Marc explains that his focus on improving growing conditions began the day he started at the 100-year-old Stanley Thompson layout which sits on the west side of Owen Sound

Removing and reducing abiotic stress can have a dramatic impact on plant health and improve the plant's natural ability to handle biotic stresses.

overlooking part of Georgian Bay. From the outset, his goal was to provide the best possible environmental conditions for plant health, encouraging resilient turf that is better equipped to handle environmental extremes and stresses associated with heavy traffic. When asked about some of the management practices he has implemented to reduce inputs, here is what he had to say, "My goal for the primary playing surfaces is to cater to the cultural programs that promote creeping bent grass. I have pruned and removed trees to improve air flow and increase exposure to morning sunlight. We have installed supplemental drainage on every golf hole throughout the property, literally miles of pipe." Marc instituted topdressing programs for fairway, tee, and green surfaces. "2 inches of USGA spec sand have been added to the surface of our push up greens. I have been using a locally sourced brick sand on tees and fairways with great success. We are seeing tremendous benefits from these topdressing programs – firmer surfaces, healthier more resilient plants that are better able to handle traffic and environmental stresses."

His team drag dew daily and roll fairways during the months of July and August to reduce the amount of dollar spot pressure. Irrigation requirements are carefully monitored to ensure the plant does not become too stressed during the summer months. Over the past ten seasons, Marc has been able to reduce his chemical and fertility inputs by just over 50%. He sums up his approach to reducing



Robert Clark using Sunseeker App to Identify Sun Angles.

inputs as, "The more I concentrate on the fundamentals, the better my results and overall playing conditions."

West Haven Golf and Country Club – Superintendent, Todd Currie

Opened in 1990, West Haven Golf and Country Club in London is a modern links style course designed by Rene Muylaert. Superintendent Todd Currie describes the growing conditions on the property as being quite good, "We have plenty of open space, good sun light and air movement through out the property." Despite having good exposure to sun and air flow, managing dollar spot on West Haven's fairways has been one of his biggest challenges. Traditionally, three applications per season were enough to achieve acceptable control and provide quality playing conditions. An increase in disease pressure over the years required Todd and his crew to make up to five applications a season in order to control the disease. Frustrated with this progression, he decided it was time for a change of strategy for his fairway management

program. In 2018, West Haven participated in a fairway roller trial where they were rolled over a period of 2-3 months and Todd was convinced of the benefits. The practice would be to become a permanent piece of West Haven's dollar spot reduction program. At the beginning of the 2019 season, he combined his fairway rolling with applications of growth regulator to further reduce clippings and mowing and increase plant health. Rolling and regulating plant growth has allowed him to reduce fairway cutting in the summer heat, removing another plant stress. "PGR use has been greatly beneficial with reductions in machine hours, labor, fuel and clippings. We have seen plant health benefits, especially in shaded environments, and overall turf quality for our fairway surfaces are much better." Over the past three seasons, Todd has been able to reduce his annual fairway dollar spot applications back down to three. He credits this success to an increase in plant health and reducing stress during the summer months when plant stress is at its highest. "Dew removal has always been a priority for our team when managing dollar spot. After we added PGR and a fairway rolling program, we have seen a reduction in dollar spot activity and an increase in plant health and playing conditions." Moving into the 2021 season, Todd is looking forward to implementing programs that will bolster soil health at West Haven with hopes of further reducing disease pressure and improving growing conditions.

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North Bay Golf and Country Club – Superintendent Robert Clark

Robert Clark manages another 100-year-old Stanley Thompson design as the superintendent of the North Bay Golf and Country Club. Dense hardwood tree stands add to the beauty and character of this Northern Ontario property but present management challenges for the turf and the golf course superintendent.



Fairway Rolling at West Haven. Photo provided by superintendent Todd Currie.

"Lack of sunlight and air movement throughout the course is one of the biggest challenges we have faced. These issues have created conditions that prolong leaf blade wetness, and the turf has struggled with disease in heavily shaded areas." Robert and his crew began to focus on tree removal towards the end of the 2016 season. The goal was to improve sunlight on the heavily shaded greens. His work has been rewarded with healthier, denser turf. A green site of specific concern was the 14th green. The green had not seen early morning sun for at least 10 years and 5 carefully selected trees were removed in the fall of 2018. That winter, the green suffered from ice damage and Robert described the additional sun as a "blessing" for the recovery efforts which had produced a very quick turn around compared to previous years when the green was buried in shade. He was happy to report that green now receives 98% sun by 6:30 am. Recently, Robert has shifted his attention to removing under brush to help exhaust the air flow. The turf team at North Bay has also increased the amount of solid tine aeration over the earlier part of the season accompanied with heavy topdressing events. Deep tine aeration is used to push the sand into the profile creating deep channels to help with drainage and root development. Coring takes place in the fall followed by another heavy topdressing and deep tine aeration event. By improving growing environments and increasing plant health, Robert has reduced the average amount of control product applications. "In 2016 and 2017, we sprayed 18 times. In 2018, we reduced that number by four and in 2019 and 2020, we have reduced our total number of applications down to 12."

Removing and reducing abiotic stress can have a dramatic impact on plant health and improve the plant's natural ability to handle biotic stresses. These resourceful superintendents have demonstrated that by improving growing environments and increasing plant health they can reduce inputs and provide quality turf with improved playing surfaces. ■

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Risks and Best Practices When Hiring Seasonal Employees

Employment Contract

By Jessica Aytoun, former OGSA Director and Superintendent, Sutton Creek Golf Club, and, lawyer with Sherrard Kuzz LLP.

Given the nature of the industry, golf courses and facilities hire numerous seasonal employees. One might even say seasonal employment is par for the course. However, with seasonal employment comes heightened risks every organization should consider and prepare for to protect the business. Here are a few common risks and best practices.

RISK

Violating the Ontario Human Rights Code (the "Code") in the hiring process, including the job posting and interview.

Human rights legislation prohibits discrimination in employment on the basis of several grounds, including race, ancestry, place of origin, colour, ethnic origin, citizenship, creed, sex, sexual orientation, age, record of offences, marital status, family status, gender identity, gender expression or disability (referred to as "protected grounds"). The exception is if a job requirement is a bona fide occupational requirement (e.g., you need to be at least 18 years old to serve liquor in a restaurant). Even inadvertent or accidental discrimination is considered discrimination, so you need to stay alert to these issues and proactively avoid them.

BEST PRACTICE

Watch the language you use in your job posting.

Ensure the job description does not directly or indirectly discriminate on the basis of a characteristic protected under the Code. For example, an advertisement that seeks a "young and energetic worker" may be found as discriminatory against older candidates on the basis of age. Similarly, an advertisement seeking "a strong man capable of lifting 100 plus pounds" may be found to discriminate against a female candidate on the basis of sex or a disabled candidate on the basis of a disability. The examples are endless.

During an interview, avoid asking questions that would solicit information about a Code protected ground.

For example, while you may be genuinely interested, avoid questions like, "where's your accent from", "in your spare time, what do you like to do with your family", or even more direct, "are you married" or "do you have kids?"

Even if a decision to not hire a candidate is made entirely unrelated to one of these protected grounds, the fact the employer gathered this information by asking a question may expose it to a claim. The most effective way to mitigate the risk of a discrimination claim at the hiring stage is to use an interview questionnaire with standardized questions and/or criteria against which all candidates are evaluated.

RISK

Assuming you have an inherent right to temporarily layoff an employee at the end of season and not recall them the following year without any liability.

People often use the terms “termination” and “layoff” assuming they mean the same thing. That is not the case. When an employee is terminated, the relationship between employee and employer ceases to exist. When an employee is laid off, the employer-employee relationship is said to be suspended rather than terminated because there is a possibility that employee may return to work.

Once a temporary layoff reaches a certain duration, it is deemed a termination even when an employer is permitted to do so through an express right as per the above. In Ontario, that period varies depending on a number of factors, and can be as short as 13 weeks in any period of 20 consecutive weeks. When the layoff is deemed a termination, the employee will be owed something in terms of pay in lieu of notice and/or severance.

Contrary to popular belief, a seasonal employer does not have an inherent right to temporarily lay off an employee at the end of the season. The fact the business is closed because of weather or COVID-19 for example, does not matter. Under the employment standards legislation, an employment contract must include an express or implied right to temporarily lay off an employee, otherwise an employer has no right to do so.

If there is no express or implied right, a layoff may amount to a fundamental breach of the employment contract. This is referred to as constructive dismissal, entitling the employee to notice or pay in lieu of notice, and possibly severance pay. While such an implied right may exist for some employers in the golf industry, this is not guaranteed and the cost to fight that battle, should you need to, could be very high.

BEST PRACTICE

Ensure all employees sign a properly worded employment contract prior to beginning their employment that includes an express right to temporarily lay off.

FINAL WORD

A well-written, enforceable employment contract is the single most effective and cost-efficient way for any employer (and especially a seasonal employer) to manage its employees and protect its interest.

Without an enforceable contract, on termination, an employee is presumed to be owed “common law notice” whether or not it occurs immediately or is deemed to occur at the end of a temporary layoff. Common law notice can amount to more than one month of notice or pay in lieu per year of service. For a long-standing employee, this can add up quickly.

The only way to avoid owing these entitlements is to agree with the employee to provide something less, but not lesser than an employee’s minimum entitlements under the Employment Standards Act. That agreement is best done through a written employment contract and with the advice and assistance of an experienced employment lawyer. The small investment you will make at the outset of the employment relationship, will more than pay for itself in the long run.



To learn more and for assistance, contact Sherrard Kuzz LLP.

Jessica Aytoun is the previous superintendent at Sutton Creek Golf Club in Windsor and served on the OGSA's Board of Directors. Ed Snetsinger is a lawyer with Sherrard Kuzz LLP, one of Canada's leading employment and labour law firms. He is also an avid golfer and former member of the University of Windsor golf team. He can be reached at 416.603.6245 esnetsinger@sherrardkuzz.com.

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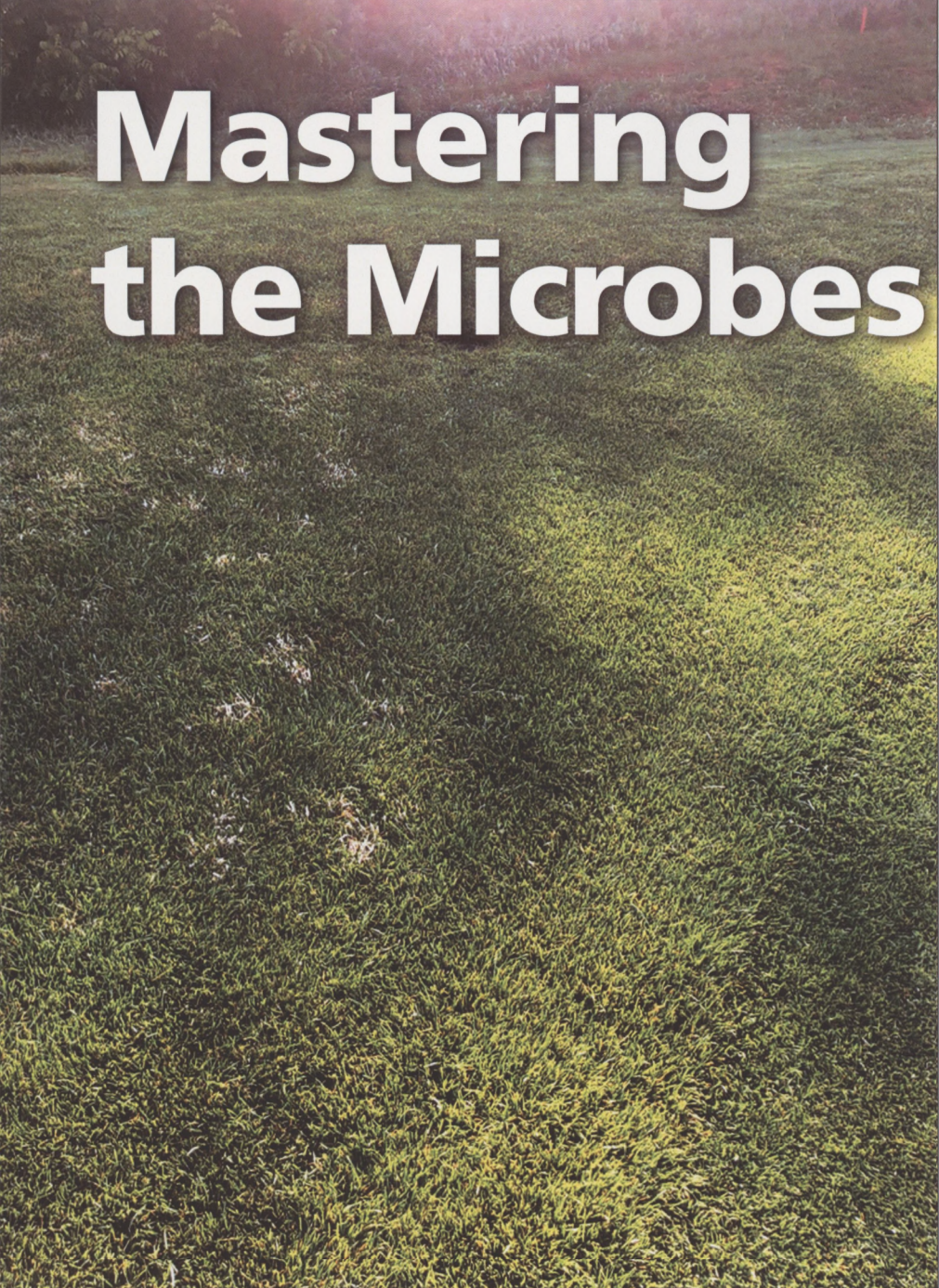
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Mastering the Microbes



Otter Creek Golf Club, notice the concise spray boom pattern from the application of compost extract on the right.

*By Randy Booker, Superintendent,
Otter Creek Golf Club.*

The Soil Food Web is a major apparatus by which plants get their nutrition. If this is kept well fed, well mineralized, and protected, then there can be zero soil disease, and plant health is maximized. The plants provide the carbon (exudates) to the microbes and in return, the microbes provide nutrients and water back to the plants - it's a two-way street.

It's important to understand that plants don't produce enzymes, they rely on the soil microbes to make their food available. Plants understand this synergy with the microbes,

why else would a plant give up 30 - 50% of their total sugar production? Plants are in control and will recruit microbes with their ever-changing exudates at any point in time depending on the plant's needs.

The one detriment to this system is the continued use of synthetic fertilizers, when applied continually the plant no longer needs to produce the exudates to call for the microbial connection and the Soil Food Web shuts down and functions very poorly.

In order for the soil food web to fully function, there must be the complete web consisting of the following: Bacteria, Fungi, Nematodes, Protozoa, Arthropods and yes, our (sometimes) enemy Earthworms.

Bacteria

Bacteria are microscopic one celled organisms that feed on simple carbon compounds like grass clippings. There can be up to 500,000 bacteria that can fit in the period at the end of this sentence and anywhere from 11,000 up to 30,000 species.

Bacteria contribute to soil stability by emitting glues that bind the fine soil particles together to form micro-aggregates. They also can decompose pesticides, and store and cycle Nitrogen. Bacteria are somewhat immobile and only travel six micrometers in their lifetime.

Fungi

Multi-celled organisms that usually grow in strands or hyphae. There are upwards of 3000 species and two main types: saprophytic and mycorrhiza. The saprophytes feed on the hard to digest lignin compounds while the mycorrhiza (plant mutualists) trade nutrients and water for the plants carbon. Fungi also contribute to soil structure and stability through their production of glomalin (sticky glue) that combines the bacterial micro-aggregates into larger macro-aggregates allowing for the formation of pore space in soil. Fungi are much more mobile and can grow up to 40 micrometers a minute to form what can be called the underground internet allowing communication between plants and microbes through chemical signaling. Recent studies have begun to show fungi as the main brain of the Soil Food Web (Dr. Christine Jones).

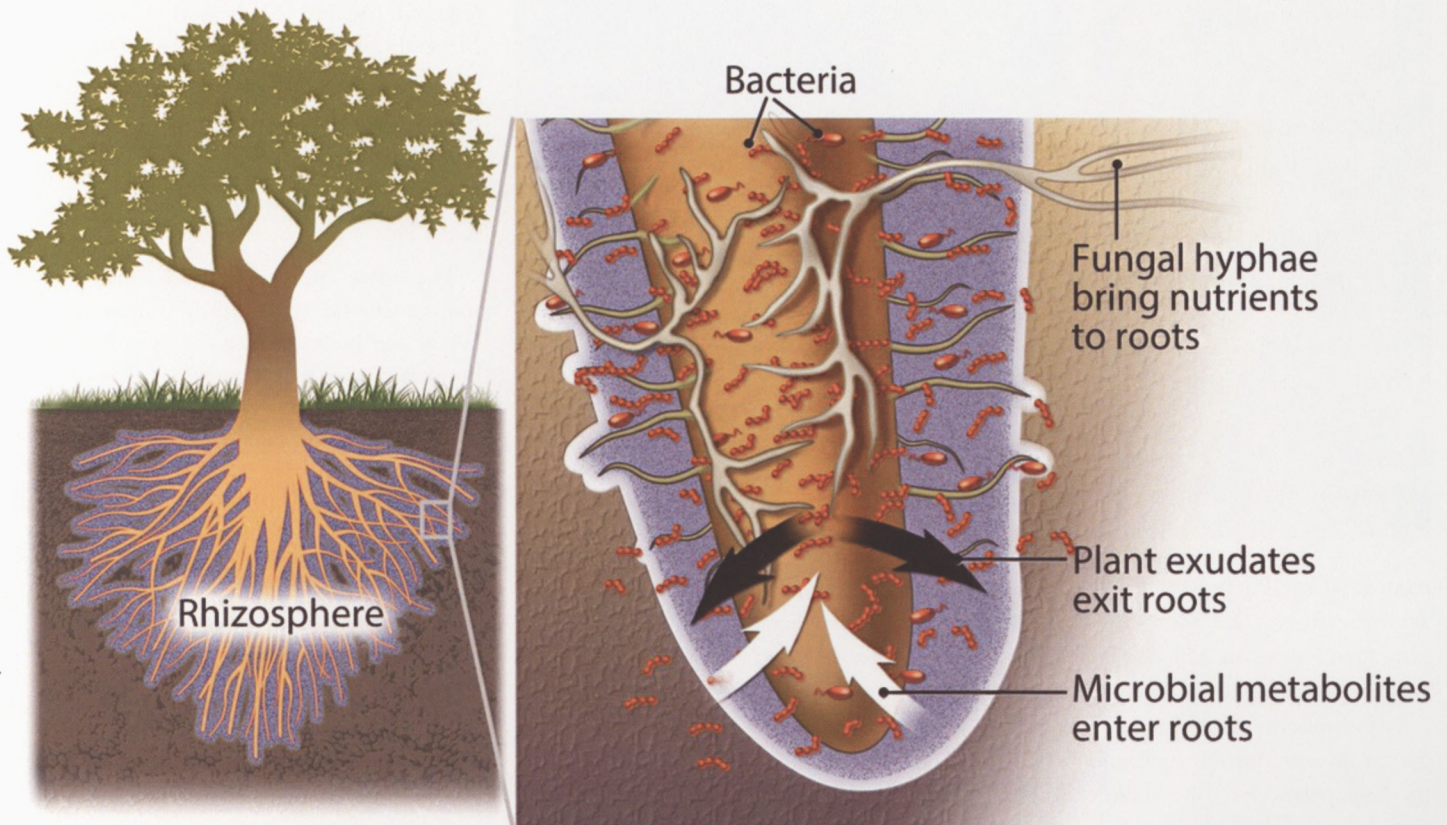
Nematodes

Non-segmented blind round worms that feed on fungi, bacteria, other nematodes, and plants. They are important nitrogen cyclers and nutrient mineralizers. Nematodes serve as a transport system for bacteria that attach to them. Over 20,000 species and 10 - 20 individuals in a gram of soil.

Protozoa

Single celled organisms that feed on bacteria (10,000 per day), fungi, soluble organic matter, and other protozoa. There are 60,000 known kinds of protozoa and can be over 1,000,000 per gram of healthy soil, another important part of the nitrogen cycle and nutrient cyclers.

The rhizosphere is a biological bazaar where microbes and plants trade nutrients, metabolites, and exudates.



Arthropods

The invertebrates that include insects and arachnids. They are the shredders in the soil and break apart organic matter making it available to microbial attack. They also transport smaller microbes throughout the soil profile.

Earthworms

The fertilizer factories of the soil and introduce new microbes to the soil as they decompose organic matter.

I trust you can see that the soil microbes are the hidden workforce which determine our turfs' success. They have been assaulted on all fronts with modern greenkeeping, but there can be tremendous gains in their regeneration.

One way to repair the soil food web is through the reintroduction of beneficial species. Microbial inoculums such as compost have a diverse range of beneficial organisms that are free of pathogens. There are several types of inoculum including compost teas and extracts, task specific blends, and single species.

Compost teas and extracts are amongst

the easiest methods to introduce biology to our turf. Fully composted materials are the key ingredients and contain all the necessary elements to kickstart the biological process.

Compost teas are simply a mixture of compost, water and food sources that are aerobically brewed with the use of air. Compost is added to a sock-like tea bag as a 1% mix (i.e. 1kg/100 liters of water) and brewed for 24-48 hours depending on your chosen final product (less time for bacterial brews, longer periods for fungal dominance). The addition of food sources such as kelp, molasses, humic and fulvic acids act as catalysts for the growing population of microbes. Teas are meant as a foliar applied product that have less diversity but larger biomass. Typical volumes are 50 liters of tea per hectare with a finer spray pattern for foliar distribution. The one detracting aspect of compost tea is the importance of a thorough cleaning of both the brewer and spray tank, otherwise a biofilm will develop and could contain pathogens for the next brew.

Compost extracts are similar but do not require any aeration. The compost is added to the extraction tank either in a similar sock or just left to free float and move around. Extracts typically consist of a 10%

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Mastering the Microbes involves the following:

- 1) **Developing practices** that are microbe friendly by minimizing the disturbance through the reduction of salts and chemicals.
- 2) **Introducing new microbes** with compost and microbial inoculums.
- 3) **Feeding the soil** with food sources for the microbes like humates, molasses, fish hydrolysates, and kelp.
- 4) **Foliar fertilize** the plant to avoid soil nutrient lockups and increase photosynthesis which generates an increase in exudates.
- 5) **Eliminate or reduce the use of the most damaging pesticides.**

mixture (10kg/100 liters) and are left to soak anywhere from a 1/2 hour to 6 hours. No extra food sources are added at this time but are to be added in the final spray solution just prior to application. Extracts contain a much greater diversity for soil application to build up the populations so plants may choose the organisms to work with.

Applications range from 50-100 liters of extract per hectare with a coarse flood jet type nozzle and higher water volumes. A few turns of the irrigation heads can assist the movement into the soil profile. The best source of compost for extracts is vermicompost due to the high biological content of the worms' process.

MICROBE FOOD

The higher the species' variety and numbers, the more diverse the food source required. Amino Acids and Micronized Minerals are general food sources for teas and extracts.

Fungal Foods include Humic Acid, kelp, Fish Hydrolysate, Aloe Vera, and oats.

Bacterial Foods include simple household sugar, Fulvic Acid, and molasses.

The total amount of additional food sources should make up no more than 1% of the brewed/ extracted volume. An important note to remember is that foods are added to teas at the beginning of the brewing process whereas the food for extracts is not added until the final spray solution is mixed in the tank just prior to application.

Microbe management is the essence of a regenerative mindset and is often where the paradigm shift is required. As Professor William Jackson states "Microorganism activity in one healthy hectare uses the same energy in soil preparation as 10,000 people would burn for the same work. We must nourish, protect and stimulate this invisible workforce." ■

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Amazing Facts About Snow Molds

Figure 1. The gray snow mold fungus *Typhula incarnata* produces reddish brown sclerotia up to 5 mm (0.04 in) across. Here it is attached to a dried leaf blade of creeping bentgrass.

By Dr. Tom Hsiang, Professor, Environmental Sciences,
University of Guelph.

As the snow is melting after a long winter, you can see circular patches of dead grass often matted together with fungal growth. These symptoms are caused by snow molds, but how did the snow mold get there and what is it doing there under the snow? This article will examine the life cycle of the fungi that cause the *Typhula* snow molds, specifically gray snow mold and speckled snow mold, and explore the biology of these organisms.

Gray snow mold is caused by a fungus called *Typhula incarnata* which is more common in areas with between two to three months of continuous snow cover. Speckled snow mold is caused by a closely related species, *Typhula ishikariensis*, which is more common in areas with more than three months of snow cover. These organisms are active in the winter, but dormant during the summer. Throughout most of the year and all

of the regular growing season, these organisms persist in the form of sclerotia. These sclerotia are small dark compact bodies resembling poppy seeds or small mouse dropping (Figures 1 and 2) that are formed and built to survive conditions unfavorable for fungal growth. Footwear or equipment may also move them around.

Spore production is timed to coincide with temperatures dipping down to freezing, since the snow provides a dark, wet, and protected environment that is just right for snow mold growth.

Typhula snow mold sclerotia are formed at the end of winter on colonized plant tissues. At snow melt, they fall into the thatch to wait for cool (<10 C), wet conditions in autumn to begin growth. Under cool wet conditions, the sclerotia will germinate to produce stalks that bear spores (Figure 3). Each stalk is a sexually reproductive body and can produce thousands upon thousands of spores. Each spore then must make its way into the world and find a compatible mate. For *Typhula* fungi, each spore can mate only with a spore of a different sex, but since there are potentially thousands of different sexes in the gene pool, nearly every spore encountered will be compatible. However, the limitation is that the compatible spores need to land



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Figure 2. The speckled snow mold fungus, *Typhula ishikariensis*, which is favored by longer duration snow cover, produces small, black, round sclerotia less than 2 mm (0.08 in) across. Here it is embedded among decayed leaf blades of creeping bentgrass.

within a very short distance of each other (measured in micrometers which are a millionth of a meter), and this is one reason that many thousands of spores from one stalk do not all lead to snow mold infections. Sclerotia can also germinate to produce fungal growth called hyphae. This probably happens more often under snow cover since production of spores under the snow would not allow the fungus to be dispersed widely.

Spore production is timed to coincide with temperatures dipping down to freezing, since the snow provides a dark, wet, and protected environment that is just right for snow mold growth. After compatible spores have landed on the appropriate grass host, they do not cause infections right away on live grass cells, but will feed on dead and dying plant tissues. Similarly, when sclerotia germinate under snow to produce hyphae, the hyphae start to feed on dead grass and other organic tissues, even maple keys. Under the snow, the fungi continue to feed on dead organic matter and build up body mass in preparation to infect live plant tissue when the plant tissue becomes vulnerable, which is when the plant begins to exhaust its food reserves. Under snow cover, plants are not able to photosynthesize, and begin to use up their carbohydrate reserves so that after many weeks of snow cover, the grass plants, especially in closely mown areas, become even weaker and unable to fight off infection. Keep in mind that even when plants go into winter dormancy, there is still a base rate of metabolism going on in plants



Figure 3: Spore-producing stalks of (A) *Typhula incarnata*, (B) *Typhula phacorrhiza*, and (C) *Typhula ishikariensis*, with scalebar at bottom of each picture representing 5mm. The stalks grow out of sclerotia under wet cool conditions. *Typhula incarnata* and *Typhula ishikariensis* cause snow mold, while *Typhula phacorrhiza* is known as a biological control agent for snow molds.



Figure 4: Ice crystals which form in water look like coins (A), whereas ice crystals which are inhibited by snow mold antifreeze proteins develop fancy shapes such as this double starfish (B) or this maple leaf (C).

which will use up their reserves.

Snow mold fungi mount their attack on their plant hosts by secreting enzymes. The enzymes would be immobilized and inactive if they were frozen. Amazingly, these snow mold fungi have been found to produce compounds that can moderate their environment by reducing the temperature at which ice formation occurs. These compounds, called antifreeze proteins, are able to slightly reduce the temperature at which ice crystals grow, and may aid fungal survival by preventing explosive expansion of ice crystals that could cause injury to fungal cells. Alternating freeze-thaw cycles in winter are when plant cells are most prone to injury.

But how do fungi moderate ice crystal formation? Ice crystals which form in water look like coins (Figure 4A), whereas ice crystals which are inhibited by snow mold antifreeze proteins develop fancy shapes such as this double starfish (Figure 4B) or this maple leaf (Figure 4C). Under snow cover, the temperature at the soil surface remains near 0C. But if the snow layer is reduced by wind, snow melt or sublimation (snow crystals becoming water

vapour directly), or if the insulative capacity of the snow layer is compromised by rainfall, then temperatures at the soil surface or on grass leaf blades may drop below 0C. The antifreeze proteins then give the fungus a small edge by slightly decreasing the temperature at which ice crystals form.

This article has described how the *Typhula* snow mold fungi travel (by spores or by sclerotia being moved around), and what they do under snow cover (moderate their environment with antifreeze proteins and wait for the grass plants to weaken). If you would like to know more, just search online for snow mold or snow mould. There's even a recently published book on snow molds: www.springer.com/gp/book/9789811007576.

Amazingly, these snow mold fungi have been found to produce compounds that can moderate their environment by reducing the temperature at which ice formation occurs.

Dr. Tom Hsiang is a Professor in the School of Environmental Sciences at the University of Guelph. He began his research on snow molds as an adaption to the cold winter conditions (a reason to look forward to winter?) after being transplanted from the west coast. He can be reached at thsiang@uoguelph.ca. ■

Equipment Managers, The Unsung Heroes of Turf



Quality checks after morning mowing.

By Steven Rabski, Assistant Golf Course Superintendent, Idylwylde Golf & Country Club in collaboration with Matthew Smit, Assistant Golf Course Manager and David Currie, Equipment Manager, Bayview Golf & Country Club. Photos provided by David Currie.

Prior to working at a private club with a large team, and a full time equipment manager with a forever growing fleet of new equipment, I worked at a smaller semi-private country club. There, the superintendent was the Jack of all trades. He was responsible for maintaining the course, managing the staff, and maintaining the irrigation system, but he spent most of his time in the shop fixing equipment, and sharpening all the reels; a task that many of us probably reading this article are still familiar with.

The equipment manager is the driving force that keeps the well-oiled machine running, pun intended. The superintendent is able

to focus on agronomics and team management and doesn't have to think twice about any of the equipment. Well maintained equipment, or lack thereof, can either make or break a superintendent's day. If a mower is not cutting properly, the turf is more at risk of disease and agronomic inputs will likely increase as a result. When a mower is cutting properly, it is not uncommon for superintendents to see a reduction in agronomic inputs. The work that equipment managers do is worth their weight in gold!

Superintendents and assistants have had to adapt to many changes over the last several years as technology has helped to evolve the way we care for golf course turfgrass. Yet we rarely talk about the impact that these developments have had on the way equipment managers work and navigate their day. Whether we are talking about GPS sprayers, robotic greens mowers or soon to be self-driving fairway mowers, we often forget about the "maintenance" portion that is involved embracing these tools. Equipment managers are driven to



David Currie pictured working on Toro Workman.



Resuing old reels to make a grinder stand.

spark their own kind of innovation to keep things moving and daily operations never seem to break stride when these new toys make their way through the door. So how do they stay on top of best practices and creative solutions to keep our tools in top notch shape?

This niche group of individuals share a strong sense of comradery regardless of where they work. There is a shared mentality that “everyone helps everyone” and “every little bit helps.” In order to keep up to date as well as share new custom “innovations”, many equipment managers have turned to Twitter as their communication tool of choice. If you spend any amount of time scrolling through your Twitter feed, you will likely see shared posts that highlight common equipment problems, tips and tricks, or even new creations that make life on the course that much easier. If you’re like me, you

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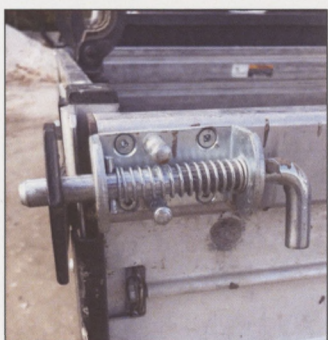
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can't help but think, "Wow, that is a good idea!"

Several equipment managers use WhatsApp to keep in touch and share information. The benefit to using WhatsApp over Twitter is that sharing is quick and easy, and the information doesn't become lost in an endless feed. Another great way they increase their knowledge and education is to listen to related podcasts. *Reel Turf Techs* is a podcast that was started by Trent Manning who focuses on all things related to turf equipment. Each week, he interviews a new guest where they discuss issues faced by turf techs amongst other shop talk. His guests range from turf technicians, equipment manufacturers, and other industry leaders.

Not only do they spend a considerable amount of time finding budget friendly solutions to mechanical issues far and wide, with all the new health safety protocols in place they now have to sanitize all the equipment daily, for their own safety, as well as their co-workers. With so many moving parts these days, superintendents and assistants need to reflect and understand the position that many equipment managers are put in when we draw up our wish list of things to do on the course. As such an indispensable asset to the team, it is vital that we keep them in the loop and more involved with the planning.

It's important that we show our appreciation, and many equipment managers would agree that the best way to do this is to respect the equipment and treat it like it's your own, ahem... the staff especially. This means handling each piece of equipment with care, making sure mowing equipment is spotless before being serviced, and cleaning your carts out at the end of the day. They do so much for us, so it is the least that we can do for them. ■

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Flowering Shrubs

Imagine it would be easy to guess that the Master's is my favourite PGA tournament to watch, especially when it's held in April when all the spring flowering shrubs are in bloom. People argue that what takes place at Augusta National is unattainable for any other location simply because of budget. Yes, budget plays a massive part, those flowering shrubs don't prune themselves in a knowledgeable way to maximize flowering and overall health. It takes people and people take money. However, regardless of the budget, there are people that do that work who are passionate, knowledgeable, and adhere to a higher standard for the work they do. Not all of these people work at Augusta, they walk amongst us, everywhere. Some are watching the Master's looking for inspiration to take their own personal standard in their craft to a higher place from all kinds of vocations whether it be horticulturists, turf maintenance, landscape architectural, golf course designer, or even a hobbyist gardeners.

With so many species of flowering shrubs, it can take years of experience to get to know what is required to properly prune and care for them. Here are some general rules of thumb to guide you.

- 1) Spring blooming shrubs should be pruned shortly after flowering.
- 2) Summer blooming shrubs should be pruned in late winter or early spring as you see nodes start to swell or just before.
- 3) Flowering fruit should be pruned in late winter (March).

You need to know the species you are working with and its individual needs. Some plants bloom from new growth where others bloom from old growth and some bloom on branches of a certain diameter or maturity where others stop flowering on branches that reach a certain maturity.

Some flowering shrubs should not be pruned until flowering is complete and in a timely manner; Lilacs are a good example of one. They produce the following season's flower bud on present summer's growth. Pruning too late in the season puts next year's flowers at risk. Lilacs should be maintained to contain a mix of young and old branches because when they over mature, they grow beyond 2" in diameter and they will stop flowering. Suckers should be managed on Lilacs but leaving some of the stronger ones to support flowering later as you remove older growth.

Some Spirea varieties are examples of flowering shrubs that will slow flower production with maturity. When this starts happening, shear the shrubs near ground level in early spring before new growth starts.

Hydrangea Paniculata varieties are late summer bloomers and produce blossoms on new growth so they require pruning as you see the buds swell in early spring.

Suckers should be managed to maintain good form and prevent branch rubbing. Conversely, Hydrangea Macrophylla, which I'm still trying to figure out because I'm in zone 4, bloom on old wood. Do not cut these back in the fall or spring.

Pruning practices to maximize plant health and promote the best flowering and shape are to be done in the following order and I will explain why.

- 1) Start by pruning out dead, broken, or diseased branches. This can be done at any point in time regardless of flowering time as you are removing this stuff to promote over all good health and won't have blooms on a branch that isn't there anyway.
- 2) Any branches that are crossing and rubbing which has caused or will cause a wound.
- 3) Sucker growth, understand the plant you are working with to determine how best to handle the suckers. More often than not they need to be removed.
- 4) Branches that are growing across the plant towards the centre or within the centre that will not get sufficient light and prevent airflow through the plant.
- 5) Prune branches to maintain shape, any branches or growth that take away from the aesthetic appearance and to allow for best light uptake, flower production, space, and airflow in and around the plant and general overall appearance within its setting amongst other plants around it.

The reason for following these steps in this order is because you don't want to remove more than one third of the plant in one season. By the time you get down to step five, you need to observe how much living material you've removed from the plant. Pruning is a long game play for best results; patience is required especially if you have something that is completely overgrown. In that situation, it may take a couple seasons to turn it around without causing detriment to the plant by removing too much at one time.

Another important part of pruning is the actual cut that will be made. Use very sharp pruning tools and keep them as sharp as possible. Make your cuts at 90 degree angles to the stem you're cutting, meaning keep the wound surface area as small as possible and without any ripping or bark peeling. Happy pruning! ■



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Ten Years Ago Today

The 2011 OGSA Board of Directors



In 2011, the Board of Directors were as follows (Back Row L-R): Mark Prieur, Trafalgar G&CC; John McLinden, Ladies GC of Toronto; Rod Speake, Mill Run GC; Stu Leachman, Diamond In The Rough; Chad Vibert, Mad River GC; Scott White, Donalda Club; Phil Scully, Granite GC; (Front Row L-R): Jeff Alexander (past pres), Parry Sound G&CC; Rob Gatto (tres), King's Forest GC; Chris Andrejicka (pres), Essex G&CC; Doug Breen (vice), Golf North; Jennifer Pendrith (sec), Kawartha G&CC. Dorothy Hills, the OGSA Executive Manager retired and was replaced by Sally Ross. Congratulations went to Jennifer Penrith, superintendent at Kawartha, on the arrival of a baby girl, Brooklyn.

ON THE MOVE

Paul White retired from the Briers and was replaced by his assistant Patrick Greenman. Bob Pattinson retired from The London Hunt and was replaced by Deb Dale. John Trelford left St. Andrews Valley and was replaced by Bryan Wasylw. Corey Philips took over Frog's Breath and Rob Burrows left for Banff Springs. John Taylor left Oakville and moved to Grand Niagara. He was replaced by Scott Thompson from Toronto Hunt. Scott Heron from Bigwin Island moved to Toronto Hunt and was replaced by Kevin Schultz. Paul Grosvenor was the new superintendent at Forest City National and Tim Baxter was now at Sutton Creek. Mark Trudell was now superintendent at Mount

Elgin Golf Club. Michael Schneider was the new superintendent at Diamond In the Ruff. Michael McDevitt moved to Tangle Creek. Ian McQueen moved to Islington. John Chang moved to Bushwood. Mark Pickering moved to 4 Seasons Country Club and James White went to Woodington Lake. Ted Tom was the new superintendent at Uplands Golf Club as well as teaching at Seneca College.

ACHIEVEMENTS

Bob Moote and David Gourlay received 50 Year Member Awards. The following superintendents received 25 Year Member Awards: Kelly Barnet, Leo Daigle, Charles Eberle, George Forest, Mark Mallot,

Gerald Sterling and John Taylor.

Paul Dermott was the recipient of the 5th William Sansom Award by the OGSA and Ken Wright, Devil's Pulpit, received the CGSA Superintendent of the Year Award.

Congratulations to Jamie Downton, Superintendent at Sawmill Creek as the winner of CGSA's Gordon Witteveen Award.

Aldo Bortolon's dog, Bronson of Lookout Point Country Club, was picked for the GCSAA Lebanon Turf 'Dog Days of Golf' calendar.

Tom Brain, Burlington Golf & Country Club, qualified to play in the 13th annual Toronto Star Men's Amateur Tournament.



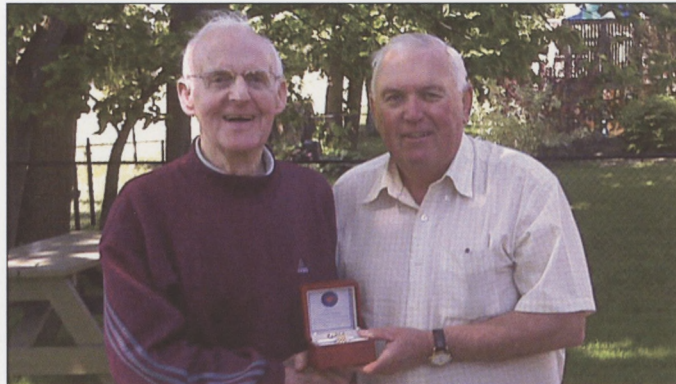
(L-R) Phil Scully presents Al Schwemler, Superintendent, with President's Day plaque.



(L-R) Mark Prieur presents Bob Moote with his 50 Year member award.



(L-R) Winners of the Pro Super Challenge – Superintendent, Chris Emerton and Pro Rob Mininni, Tangle Creek G&CC with a score of 67.



(L-R) David Gourley receives his 50 Year Member award, presented by OGSA President Paul White.

TOURNAMENTS

The Pro Super Challenge was held at Windance Golf Club hosted by Jake Riekstins. Chris Emerton and pro Rob Mininni from Tangle Creek won with a score of 67.

The McClumpha Tournament was held at Oslerbrook Golf & Country Club in Collingwood hosted by Jason Honeyball. Flight A Low Gross was Bert McFadden with a 77, Georgian Bay Club and 1st Low Net was Dan McAllister with a 68, Donalda Club. Flight B (Associates and Guests) Low Gross was Sean Lavin with a 74, Turf Care and 1st Low Net was Dave Jacobsen with a 69, Weston GC. The George Darou Trophy for superintendents over 50 went to Ray Richards from Mad River Golf Club.

Greystone Golf Club was the venue for the annual OTRF golf tournament hosted by Adam Trenton and \$27,000 was raised for turf grass research.

President's Day tournament was held at Toronto Golf Club hosted by Al Schwemler. The team from Otter Creek, Randy Booker, took top honours with a minus 23, second was Orr Lake, Jason Harris and 3rd was Weston, Rob Ackermann.

The Summer Scramble was held at Springfield

Golf & Country Club hosted by Ray Dlugokecki. The winning team from flight A at 15 under par was Jamie Spencer, Scott Gardner, Mark Trudell and Graeme Calder. Flight B winning team was the father-son duo Paul and Scott White, with Don McAllister and Paul Halk at 10 under par. ■



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Spring 2021 Policy

By Doug Breen, Superintendent,
Golf North Properties.

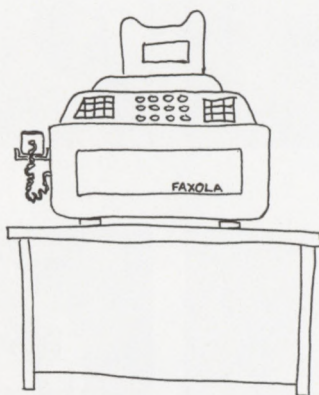
I often have American cash in my wallet. I like the idea that at any moment, I could jump in the car and drive to California – and I wouldn't want to impede my clandestine escape by having to go to a currency exchange. In the age of COVID, it's hard to imagine crossing the border anytime soon, so I went to the bank to change some American money back into Canadian money. Let me clarify. I was taking *legal tender* from our neighbouring country and trying to exchange it for *legal tender* from this country. At a bank. Banks are full of money. Not my money admittedly, but I know there's money there. I've seen it. US dollars are accepted in countries where you can't even use the local currency. Should be easy, right? That's what I thought too.

The conversation went like this. "Can I help you sir?" Now I should have seen trouble bearing down on me like a COVID Enforcement Officer bearing down on a kids soccer game. People who call you 'sir' never really want to help you. Policemen call you 'sir' while they suspend your driver's license. Loan officers call you 'sir' while they're declining your credit application. The border guard calls you 'sir' while he's snapping on the latex gloves.

"Yes," I said, "I've got an easy one for you," referring to the man who'd been at the wicket for twenty minutes in front of me (apparently trying to get financing for a battleship), "I just need to change this money back to Canadian."

I put the neatly stacked bills and coins on the counter. "Do you have an account here, sir?" There was that 'sir' again.

"Does it matter? Are you going to run out of money if you just start randomly exchanging currency for every Tom, Dick, or Harry that walks in here with \$120.68 US?"



"The bank still only takes documents by FAX. Fortunately, I found ours by the rotary phones and the typewriters, where we keep the floppy discs and the 8-Track cassettes. Tell them that I'll send it to them in 1985."

"It's just our policy sir, do you have an account at this branch?"

"I do, but would you exchange my \$120.68 if I didn't?"

"Yes, but if you do have one, I'll need your bank card."

"Why?"

"Policy."

"Then I don't have an account here."

"You just said that you did."

"I lied."

At this point, the Stepford Wife smile on the teller was beginning to look a bit strained, and some of the other staff were beginning to eavesdrop. One of the other tellers explained to me again that this was just policy. "I'll give you my bank card if you can give me any rational reason why you need it to exchange currency."

"It's our policy, sir."

"That's not a reason, that's a defense."

"I'm new here."

"OK, I'll make you a deal. If you'll admit that there's not a single reason why I should give it to you, and that it's a ridiculous policy, then I'll let you have it."

"Fair enough." So she swiped my bank card, so that the FBI, CIA and CSIS would know what I was doing that day and she asked, "How much do you have?"

"\$120.68 U.S."

"Sorry, we don't take coins."

"Of course you don't."

The next teller over chimed in again, "We don't take American change unless it's rolled and being deposited to an American dollar account. And we don't take pennies at all."

"Policy?"

"Policy."

"If I was changing from Canadian Currency to American and it came to an uneven amount, would you give me a penny?"

"Yes."

"So you have American pennies, but you don't take them."

"Yes."

"Policy?"

"Yes."

So I put the change back into my pocket. "In that case I have \$120.00"

"That will come to \$144.79 Canadian."

"You're going to have to round that up to \$144.80 then."

"Why?"

"I don't take pennies either." She looked annoyed at me over her glasses, the way a grade two teacher does when you track mud into the classroom. "It's *my* policy," I added.

"I can't do that," the irony was lost on her.

"I was just kidding. Sounded pretty stupid when I said it though, didn't it?"

"Yes."

I took my \$144.79 and left. There is no moral to the story. If this civilization lasts another three generations, it will be a miracle. ■

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