



THE NEWSLETTER

March 2019

of the **Golf Course Superintendents Association of New England, Inc.**

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Presidents Message

With the winter season winding down I hope time allowed you to prepare for the upcoming season. More importantly I hope that you had the opportunity to decompress, enjoy yourself and time with your family and friends relaxing for an extended time. I truly believe that taking care of your family and yourself are the most important things to be successful in this industry and in life.

Seminar season has been in full swing with some great offering at GIS, NERTF and by many of our industry partners that invest in providing some high quality education. The information I have gathered this winter has been instrumental in reflecting on and refining our 2019 agronomic program. It is exciting just knowing that we will be out on the turf soon preparing the course and implementing all of the ideas and improvements that have been planned.

Although the snow arrived in March it seems that most turf has survived the cold blasts of the winter months. It would be nice to have a “normal” spring when plants wake up slowly, void of any bizarre weather events, giving the weak turf plants a chance to survive the transition but also to allow for some good old fashioned root growth. Fingers crossed on this front.

Here is wishing you all a great and successful 2019 season with minimal stress. As always, please reach out to any of us on the GCSANE Board if you have ideas, comments or need anything from your association. There are always committee seats available if you wish to get more involved with your association moving forward.

All the Best for 2019 and hope to see you at a GCSANE meeting soon.

Dave Johnson, GCSANE President



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Thoughts From Your Executive Director *by Don Hearn*

Each year I include a few words about the Wee One Foundation and its purpose. This is more about this generous group of people who help others in our industry who are dealing with large financial hurdles due to medical expenses.

Where did the name Wee One come from?

In 1985, four friends traveled to Scotland on a golf trip. The caddies were making wagers as these golfers stood on the tee. One caddie declared, "My money's on the wee one!" The "wee one", Wayne Otto, CGCS, who was a dear friend and colleague of the three, passed away October 21, 2004 losing his battle to cancer. Wayne dedicated his life to the betterment of the golf maintenance profession he loved and the individuals who shared his passion.

What is the mission of the Wee One Foundation?

The Wee One Foundation was developed as a tribute to Wayne to assist golf course management professionals (or their dependents) who incur overwhelming expenses due to medical hardship without comprehensive insurance or adequate financial resources. Through the Foundation's work, Wayne's legacy will never be forgotten.

Where have donations been distributed?

Since its inception in 2004, membership within the Wee One Foundation has grown to over 350 in 27 states. More importantly, the Wee One Foundation has gifted over \$1,000,000 to families in Arizona, California, Colorado, Connecticut, Florida, Georgia, Iowa, Illinois, Kansas, Kentucky, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Montana, North Carolina, New York, Ohio, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania, Texas, Virginia and Wisconsin— As the Wee One grows more people are helped and more funds are needed to distribute. Please consider contributing today.

To read about the different ways you can contribute to the Wee One Foundation and learn more about its mission, please visit the foundation's webpage at weeone.org.

The 22nd Annual New England Regional Conference & Show is history. The title of the event for many has morphed into the "Providence Show" and it usually serves as the kickoff to the spring season and all associated with gearing up for the turfgrass maintenance season.

The equipment show was one day less than past years, and based on comments expressed it seems like it was a successful change. I'm sure Gary Sykes, Executive Director of the New England Regional Turfgrass Foundation and David Rosenberg, Show Director, will be surveying the participants for feedback on the changes.



from left – Bob Ruzsala, Josh Fortier, John Timothy Locke

The annual UMass Breakfast was held in a different location this year and it was a pleasure to be in the Rotunda Room. This breakfast is for alumni and friends of the UMass Amherst Turf Program. Dr. Michelle DaCosta brought the attendees up to date on some items related to the UMass turf program. Recipients of the Troll–Dickinson scholarship awards were presented certificates commemorating the scholarships granted from the fund by Bob Ruzsala, Trustee of the fund. Some of the scholarship recipients and UMass students attended the breakfast and enjoyed time at this annual conference.

Random photos of some of the supporters of the GCSA of New England



Photos of some of the supporters of the GCSA of New England



Photos of some of the supporters of the GCSA of New England



March 2019



Many of you know Pat Jones. He was our speaker at the Association's 2018 Annual Meeting.

Industry Leading Harrell's Increases Customer Experience with Addition of Industry Leading Influencer



Lakeland, Florida,
February 27, 2019- Employee-owned Harrell's, LLC is pleased to announce one of the turf industry's leading personalities and influencers, Pat Jones, has joined the Harrell's family as their Customer Experience Director.

Pat Jones transitions to Harrell's with over 30 years of experience in the turfgrass industry. For the past decade Jones has served as publisher and editorial director of *Golf Course Industry* magazine, the leading independent publication in the market. He is best known for his award-winning monthly "Parting Shots" column and his tell-it-like-it-is approach. He is a prolific writer, blogger and social media commentator and a frequent presenter at regional, national and international turf conferences. Jones began his career in the industry in 1987 on the GCSAA headquarters staff, where he oversaw communications, fundrais-

ing and lobbying through the mid-1990s. In 1998 he created and launched *Golfdom* magazine before starting his own company, Flagstick LLC, to provide marketing and research services to golf/turf companies and organizations. He joined GIE Media full-time in 2010 and, in addition to leading *GCI*, also oversaw *Lawn & Landscape* magazine for several years.

As the Customer Experience Director, Jones will help with the strategic growth of the Harrell's brand in existing regions and as they continue expansion throughout the country. "After nearly 15 years with GIE Media, I started thinking about what I would do in the final chapter of my crazy career," Jones said. "I've always admired and respected the Harrell's family and the culture they've created so the opportunity to be part of their company is a dream come true." Jones will also play a massive role in their customer communications programs, customer experience initiatives and telling the Harrell's story. "When Pat called me to tell me he wanted to make a career change and wanted that change to be with Harrell's, I knew this was an opportunity that Harrell's couldn't pass up," said Jack Harrell, III, Sr. VP of Turf Sales South and Marketing. "Our 'WHY' at Harrell's is 'Taking Care of People'. From our fellow employee-owners all the way to our customers and our vendors. Pat brings a wealth of knowledge on how to take care of people in the turf industry and we are excited to have him as a part of the Harrell's Family."

In addition to being one of the nation's largest distributors of branded fungicides, herbicides and insecticides, Harrell's produces top-quality, custom blended fertilizers, specialty liquids, and wetting agents. Harrell's guarantees stringent quality control procedures, tight manufacturing specifications and careful selection of raw materials for each product that carries the Harrell's name. They are also the world-class formulator and a leading world distributor of **POLYON®**, the industry's superior controlled-release fertilizer technology.

For more information about Harrell's including their core values to serve, honor and glorify God, take care of people, and grow their financial strength, visit www.harrells.com.

Glyphosate has taken a huge hit from many quarters over the past few years and Harrell's will no longer sell this product, but not for reasons you might expect. Please read the news release we recently received from the company explaining the reason for their action.



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Jack Harrell, Jr Provides Insights on Decision to Stop Selling Glyphosate

Lakeland, Florida, March 11, 2019- A letter from Jack Harrell, Jr. CEO of Harrell's regarding recent decision to discontinue distribution of glyphosate products.

There has obviously been some discussion and concern about our decision to stop selling glyphosate products. I apologize for any confusion about this and I would like to explain why we made this decision.

First, Harrell's is not making any judgment as to whether glyphosate is detrimental to anyone's health. In fact, the weight of scientific evidence strongly supports its safety when used properly.

That said, during our annual insurance renewal last month, we were surprised to learn that our insurance company was no longer willing to provide coverage for claims related to glyphosate due to the recent high-profile lawsuit and the many thousands of lawsuits since. We sought coverage from other companies but could not buy adequate coverage for the risk we would be incurring. So we had no choice other than to notify our Harrell's Team and customers that we would no longer offer products containing glyphosate as of March 1, 2019.

We are still ready and able to help you with a variety of alternative products that will meet your non-selective control needs

or to help you find glyphosate elsewhere. As always, we will make sure your needs are met no matter whether we sell a particular product or not.

Finally, be assured that Harrell's will continue to partner with our suppliers, customers, and all National, State and Local associations to advocate for responsible regulation and legislation of our products and practices. Together we can educate lawmakers and the public and ensure we can continue *Growing A Better World*.

In addition to being one of the nation's largest distributors of branded fungicides, herbicides and insecticides, Harrell's produces top-quality, custom blended fertilizers, specialty liquids, and wetting agents. Harrell's guarantees stringent quality control procedures, tight manufacturing specifications and careful selection of raw materials for each product that carries the Harrell's name. They are also the world-class formulator and a leading world distributor of **POLYON®**, the industry's superior controlled-release fertilizer technology.

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Going Back To School

by Ben Pacific, Assistant Superintendent- Nashawtuc Country Club, Concord, MA

Going back to school... was it fun? No. Was it worth it? Yes. This industry compels us to work long hours during the season, not giving us much time to get things done outside of work. Making the decision to go back to school was not an easy one, I had my concerns. Was the cost of tuition too much especially with already having student loans? I wondered if it would take away from my already lacking social and family time.

After talking things over with my wife and Superintendent at the course I work at, I decided to go for it. I was lucky enough the club paid for a class every year, which helped with the cost of tuition. I chose Penn State because of their reputation and turf program. The way the classes are structured for their online program is very well thought out. They allow you to move at your own pace and work on assignments when possible. There are exams and due dates, but they are reasonable and can be accomplished with some planning, even with a busy schedule.

The reason I decided to go back to school was because I did not have any education in turf besides a winter school certificate from UMASS Amherst. I got my bachelors of science in

Nutrition, no not plant nutrition. Even though I had a good amount of work experience I always felt a gap with my peers when it came to turf education. I wanted to be on the same level or even separate myself, so when it does come down to applying for a head superintendent position I don't feel like an underdog.

The PSU Masters in Turf Management program is set up where they have 5 core classes you need to take, 5 you get to pick from numerous subjects such as Project Management and Leadership in the Workplace, followed by a Capstone Project before you graduate.

I am expected to graduate this spring of 2019, it took me just about 3 years to complete the program. At times throughout the 3 years it certainly had its challenges, but now coming to the end, I can say for sure it was worth it. I learned a lot, not only about turf but what it takes to be a leader and someone people want to work for. So, if you are thinking about making the leap going back to school, I would tell you to go for it and grind it out because in the end you will be glad you did.

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Grassroots Engagement Makes the Difference: Getting to Know Your Elected Officials

One of your most important roles as a grassroots advocate is building relationships with your elected officials, especially those at the local level, and communicating with them on a regular basis. Building a relationship with an elected official in advance of a problem or issue will make it much easier to meet with that official to discuss your perspective when a problem does arise. Elected officials, especially at the local and state levels, want expert knowledge to make sound policy decisions, so communicating with them periodically throughout the year will help position you as a credible source when a question relating to your practices and pesticide and fertilizer input use arises.

Throughout New England, New York and the Mid-Atlantic there are opportunities right now to engage with elected officials about pesticide and fertilizer inputs and your practices. To learn more about the ordinances and bills in those locations and how to become engaged, contact Karen Reardon, RISE, kreardon@pestfacts.org for details and talking points about what's happening in your state and town.

A good first step towards getting to know your elected officials is by making a personal visit to them at their local or district office. Your first visit is to introduce yourself to the elected official and to talk about your club, its practices and role in the community. Here are some steps to make your visit productive:

- **Make an appointment:** State legislators have full committee schedules and most local legislators hold full time jobs in addition to their role as a council member, commissioner or member of the school board so you should make an appointment to meet with them. Be sure to provide several dates and times as options for your meeting as well as a brief description about why you would like to meet. (I live in Councilman Smith's district and would like to introduce myself and talk to him about my course and our role in the community.)
- **Introduce yourself and the purpose of your meeting:** When you meet with the elected official introduce yourself and state the reason for your visit. Remember you are meeting as a constituent and are there to talk about your interests as a constituent as well as about your course and its role in the community, including the use of pesticide and fertilizer inputs.
- **Do your homework:** Know some general information about the elected official with whom you are meeting (i.e. political party affiliation, how long they have been in office, on which committees they serve, their career field).
- **Know the elected official's position:** If you are meeting with the elected official to discuss specific legislation, learn his or her position prior to the meeting. If you are uncertain of the elected official's position, do not hesitate to ask during your meeting.

- **Be prepared:** Just like you, the elected official's time is valuable so you will want to keep your visit brief and stay on point. Know the message you want to deliver and have an outline of what you want to discuss. Try to anticipate any questions the elected official may ask you and be prepared to answer them.
- **Engage in two-way dialogue:** While you will want to keep your meeting brief, be certain to show an interest in the work of the elected official by asking a few general questions, i.e. what is your number one priority for this legislative session?
- **Be honest:** You want to be viewed as a credible resource for elected officials, so you should always provide factually accurate information and answers. If you cannot answer a question, tell the elected official that you do not have the answer, but you will get the answer to them as soon as possible.
- **Discuss the impact of legislation:** If you are meeting with your elected official to discuss specific legislation, be certain to explain how the legislation would impact you, as a constituent, your course and the elected official's constituency.
- **Show respect:** Even if you do not agree with the elected official on a certain issue, always maintain a high level of professionalism, be courteous and show respect for the elected office.
- **Request a specific action:** If discussing specific legislation, ask your elected official to take a position on the legislation you are discussing.
- **Provide written material:** Provide written material on your course letterhead which outlines the important points you made during your meeting with the elected official.
- **Follow-up:** After your meeting, send a handwritten thank you note to express your appreciation for the meeting and to invite the elected official to call upon you any time he or she has a question about your work and industry. Send thank you notes when the elected official takes the position you asked him or her to support.

There are many voices in the pesticide and fertilizer conversation. Taking the first step towards becoming a grassroots advocate is the best way to balance the conversation and to ensure policymakers have expert input about your practices – information you can provide. Contact your local or national association or RISE for resources to support your engagement, or if you learn about a local discussion impacting turf inputs.

Karen Reardon, RISE
Office 202-872-3893
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Something YOU MIGHT Never, Ever, Thought Would Be Considered Hazardous

The following is an article that might make those who manage courses along water bodies look at "water balls" from a completely different perspective.

Activist prompts Pebble Beach to clean up Father-daughter team dives into waters, collects 50,000 golf balls

Kate Cimini Salinas Californian USA TODAY NETWORK

In May 2016, Alex Weber and her father, Mike, swam out to a patch of ocean near Arrowhead Point in Carmel, where the water laps against the base of the cliff, so she could practice free diving.

Pearl divers do this, too, holding their breath rather than using an oxygen tank. But Alex was looking for a larger orb. They were treading water just below one of the world's top sea-side golf destinations, and everyone knew there were a few balls in the ocean.

Clad in a wetsuit to protect herself from the cold water, she dove fifteen feet to the ocean floor. What she and her father found shocked them: not a few balls, but large patches of the sea floor completely white with them.

"The golf balls along Pebble Beach were not a secret," said Mike Weber. "It was a well-known fact for many years. What was not known was that they were in such high concentrations."

By the end of that day, the Webers had picked up around a thousand balls. Satisfied they had done something worthwhile, they went home.

But when they came back a week later, shock turned to anger. The area was once again covered in small, white balls. They weren't new golf balls — these had clearly been tossing around the ocean for quite some time. They were worn smooth, smelled funky, and left a chalky residue on the Webers' hands.

Thus began The Plastic Pickup, Alex's name for a multi-year affair during which the father-daughter team dove for as long as eight or ten hours a day, collecting balls and kayaking them back to shore whenever conditions were good enough. Some months they went out every couple of days, while others they had to skip entirely due to rain, cold, or visibility concerns.

"It was a shot to the heart, this realization," said Alex. "I was 16 at the time and I was like, 'Why isn't anyone doing anything about this? It's outrageous.' And I came to the realization that I had to do something if anything was going to get done."

Over two years, Alex, her father and her friend, pulled more than 50,000 golf balls out of the water by hand, a punishing physical undertaking. Waves threw Alex against rocks, kelp tangled so tightly around her neck she had to slice it off, and she's

been forced to dodged incoming golf balls, driven into the water from above.

And, she says, there are still more down there.

The experiences that followed — the advocacy, meetings, writing and publishing a research paper before the age of 19 — came in waves, much like the ones that tumble the used balls about, smoothing and crumbling them, hiding and revealing them.

275 yards of rubber band caught in kelp forests

Beneath the surface of the ocean, golf balls are elusive. They are slightly negatively buoyant, and weigh less than two ounces, so they will never float to the top of the water. They bob lightly along the ocean floor, pushed about by the slightest current.

"It's like trying to catch feathers on a windy day when there's movement down there," said Alex. "The second you (disrupt) the sea floor, they're flying everywhere. That's why we're concerned about the degradation, because the water is constantly moving and they're losing bits of plastic."

They can be difficult to find, too. Tides jam them into rocks, waft the balls along the ocean floor. Kelp forests catch and hide them, and storms reveal them when they stir up the water along the shore. Once the sea settles again, so do the golf balls.

Nationwide, plastic pollution has become a concern. According to the National Oceanic and Atmosphere Administration, plastics harm the environment in both direct and indirect ways, filling the stomachs of marine life and causing malnutrition as well as absorbing and spreading banned chemicals around the ocean, which can potentially harm both marine life and humans.

Additionally, as the shells of the balls degrade, the 275-yard-long rubber band inside escapes and unspools, often getting tangled in the kelp forests around Pebble Beach and floating on the surface of the water.

"It's important to note that though some amount of microplastics have been lost to the environment, we don't think it's a massive amount regionally or globally," said Matt Savoca, a Stanford University scientist who worked with Weber on her research.

“But it could be if this goes unchecked.”

Besides Pebble Beach’s world-famous courses, many other links overlook the ocean in California alone. Cypress Point, Half Moon Bay, Sandpiper and Trump National Golf Club all touch the shore, making it easy for golfers to lose balls to the waves, whether accidentally or on purpose.

Research in 2009 by the Danish Golf Union found it can take between 100 and 1,000 years for golf balls to decompose.

Pebble Beach Golf Club incorporated in 1919, meaning it’s likely balls have been flying into the waves of Monterey Bay for a century.

Local golfer Mark Babcock said he’d heard of a tradition of hitting balls into the ocean from Pebble Beach’s 18th hole, but believed it had ended years ago.

Mark Stillwell, an attorney with Pebble Beach Co. said he had never heard of that tradition.

The discovery of ‘honey holes’

Alex was determined to do something about the pollution she and a few other divers were privy to. She contacted the Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary and Pebble Beach, and they agreed to meet in October of 2017, six months after her discovery.

At the meeting, Alex advocated for removal of the golf balls, and the creation of an education strategy to prevent further pollution of the sanctuary. The Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary undertook its own research to confirm Weber’s

findings.

Before Alex’s revelation, sanctuary staff were completely unaware of the proliferation of golf balls in the bay, Superintendent Paul Michel said. They frequently deal with pollution from runoff or discharge; any marine sanctuary has those problems if it butts up against the land. But the fact that so many golf balls were hidden beneath the waves stunned him.

Unlike bigger threats to the sanctuary, such as climate change or ocean acidification, the littering of golf balls throughout the bay was fairly simple to deal with, Michel said.

It quickly became evident Alex knew what she was talking about. The sanctuary managers conducted nearly twenty different surveys in 2016 and 2017 using scuba divers, snorkelers and tidepool surveys. Michel even went on a snorkeling expedition himself, emerging from the water at the end of the two hours exhausted, cold, and with a new understanding.

“The currents and tides go to work at sort of moving these balls into little hot spots,” Michel explained. “We called them ‘honey holes.’ You’ll be snorkeling along and won’t see any balls, and then you’ll see a pile of them.”

“That’s what the kids were telling us,” said Michel. “They’d clean up hundreds of balls in one area, come back a week later and clean up hundreds more.”

As the sanctuary employees conducted their own surveys, balls continued to pile up in the Webers’ garage, stored in 60-gallon drums originally used to hold organic cleanser for Mike Weber’s egg farm.

The logo for Atlantic golf & turf features the word "Atlantic" in a large, bold, green serif font. To the left of the "A" is a small green grass icon. Below "Atlantic" is the phrase "golf & turf" in a smaller, green, cursive script font.

The golf balls smelled like sulfur. The garage reeked. In an effort to figure out the rotten egg smell, Alex began reading scientific papers. She stumbled upon one on the topic by Savoca, who was about to start a fellowship at NOAA in Monterey.

According to Savoca's paper, plastic absorbs the chemicals and smells of the environment around it. Fish and birds often mistake plastic for food because it smells of the local plants, gnawing on it until they realize their mistake, only after they've exposed themselves to the chemicals and filled their stomachs with plastic.

Alex contacted Savoca, who upon visiting, encouraged her to write and publish her own research paper so lawmakers would have solid research on which to base future legislation.

"On a local scale, this is a substantial problem no one really knew about," Savoca said.

With her research as a jumping-off point, Alex hopes to make golf courses responsible for mitigation and removal protocol, collecting balls from the ocean and logging the data. She has been working with NOAA, the Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary, and is in contact with a few state assembly members as well, though no legislation has been presented to date.

A 12-by-18-foot wave of hand-picked trash

Alex sent her paper to the scientific journal Marine Pollution Bulletin in June and learned she would be published six months later, in January 2019. About to turn 19, she is studying science at Cabrillo College in Aptos and hopes to transfer to the University of California at Santa Barbara next year to study marine ecology, specifically sharks which, she says, "hold down our ecosystem."

"My favorite things in life are adrenaline and the ocean, so filling my body with adrenaline while a massive shark swims by as I scuba is the coolest thing I can do," Alex said, laughing.

"I'm really proud of the person she's become," said Mike Weber. "Her life took a turn as a result of this that no one could have expected. I have incredible respect for what she's doing."

Since publication of her paper, Pebble Beach Co. has begun voluntary collection efforts and has already recovered tens of thousands of balls, Stillwell said.

"We're still seeing historical balls — old golf balls that have been in the marine environment for a long time," said Michel. "We want to get to the point where we're only seeing fresh balls. That's going to be an important milestone."

The club donates gently-used balls to The First Tee, a Salinas-based nonprofit that teaches life skills through golf. Older balls are recycled through Terracycle, a New Jersey-based recycling company.

Furthermore, Stillwell said Pebble Beach has invested in education for its staff and caddies to help prevent golfers from driving shots directly into the surf on purpose, exactly as Alex suggested at their initial meeting.

"This is a story of cooperation," Mike Weber said. "Alex learned you need to make sure there's a win for everybody in this."

"I think the golf courses all know about this story," he continued. "They're all following it closely and they're all holding their breath. The last thing they want is for activists to show up and berate them."

Instead, he hopes golf courses around the U.S. follow the plan Pebble Beach has developed for collection.

Meanwhile, 50,000 balls are still sitting in barrels in the Webers' garage, stinking up the place. Alex has big plans for them.

She is working with Santa Cruzbased artist Ethan Estess to form the balls into a giant barrel wave measuring 12 feet by 18 feet that will be trailermounted and brought to events and concerts up and down California to drive awareness of the danger of singleuse plastics like lost golf balls.



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“The whole reason I started this was to create some sort of policy change that pushes courses to pick up their trash,” Alex said. “I went on this two-year journey to convince people to do this. Coming out of this, I just hope to see golf courses direct and mitigate their environmental impacts.”

This article made me think about golf balls in water in a totally different way. Before I read this, golf balls were merely white objects in a watery resting place. Don Hearn



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CONDOLENCES

Our sympathy to **Bill Yanakakis** on the loss of his father, **Ernest**, who suddenly passed away March 6 at 91 years of age.

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