



THE NEWSLETTER

November 2019

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

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Thoughts From Your Executive Director by Don Hearn



The December meeting was held at the Warrior Ice Arena with lunch and a speaker afterward at the Stockyard Restaurant. The weather was lousy with snow causing many to cancel their attendance at the last minute. After watching the Boston Bruins practice we moved over to the Stockyard for lunch and a presentation by Dennis Roache about staffing issues. Dennis served as General Manager of the two Boston golf courses (George Wright GC and William J Devine GC) from 2008-2019. In addition to his role as General Manager, he concurrently served as the Director of Administration and Finance for the Boston Parks and Recreation Department. In that role, Dennis oversaw both the Finance and Human Resources Division of the department and has expertise in various topics including labor law and budgeting. Our thanks to Jeff Urquhart for his annual collecting of winter coats for distribution to those not able to afford one.

Some good news came recently for Jonathan Wilber, Superintendent and the members at Myopia Hunt Club. Myopia is now listed in the Top 100 Golf Course in the World as recently published by Golf Magazine. Since Jonathan's arrival the course has undergone extensive tree removals, establishment of fescue areas and other modifications recommended by golf course architect Gil Hanse and executed by Jonathan. Of course, once being ranked at this level it creates high expectations and a lot of pressure to continue moving up or just staying in the top 100. Best wishes and continued success to Jonathan.

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“ We felt the 9009A was the perfect fit for us here at Shelter Harbor. The quality of cut we got was just second to none. It was unbelievable how well that machine performed. ”

– Mike Dachowski, Superintendent



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– Keith Wood, Superintendent



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I attended the Annual Meeting of the Massachusetts Association of Lawn Care Professionals (MALCP) held at the Wayside Inn in Sudbury, December 5. While having the opportunity to meet others with much in common, I was interested in listening to Jim Noonan and Genevieve Lawlor, consultants working with the state to develop Healthy Soils legislation. Jim and Genevieve conducted a “listening session” to hear the concerns and suggestions of those in the lawn care industry. A bill in the legislature seeks to add an “expert in soils practices” to the Massachusetts Food Policy Council and related references to soil within the mission of the Council. It adds new responsibilities related to the development of a healthy soils program by the State Commission for Conservation of soil, water and related resources, and to promote the use of healthy soils policies and practices by private and public landowners. The bill establishes the Healthy Soils Program Fund to implement, administer and develop healthy soils practices under the HSP. It defines “Healthy soils”, Healthy soils practices which includes “reduce the use of fertilizers and herbicides”. There are many pieces to this program and it seems like an enormous task. A lot has to do with developers, builders and others leaving sites with poor soils in which homeowners and building owners are left to deal with poor drainage, lack of quality soil for good drainage and plant growth.

Atlantic

golf & turf

Thoughts from the Northshore

Dear Member,

The 2019 golf season is in the books, and I hope you are taking some time off to recharge and spend time with your family!

During periods of our so-called “offseason,” I reflect and objectively analyze my various programs and procedures in preparation for the next golf season. I would imagine this is a common practice for most of you. One exercise I hope you consider reviewing is how often and thoroughly you disinfect the various areas of your facility. While I know this may not sound like a page-turning topic, it is a topic that is important to me. In 2014, a simple blister that formed on my hand from chipping ice off a green became infected (MRSA) and resulted in four surgeries and a case of sepsis. I didn’t fully recover for three years and have lost some use of my right hand.

Some members of our teams do not have the best hygiene, and our locker rooms and bathrooms are perfect breeding grounds for bacteria and other contagions. Bacteria can easily spread to hand tools, steering wheels, doorknobs, etc. There are numerous types of staph infections, but there are two general categories, resistant and non-resistant. Methicillin-resistant Staphylococcus aureus (MRSA) is a type of bacteria resistant to penicillin-based antibiotics. Staph infections are common bacteria that typically live on the skin and in the nasal passages of roughly 30 percent of the U.S. population. You can have staph on your skin or in your nose and not be sick. Healthy people can be colonized with staph and have no ill effects, but they can pass the germ to others. Symptoms of staph infections include rash, shortness of breath, chills, chest pain, fatigue, muscle aches, and headache. The bacteria can get into the bloodstream, bones, joints, muscles, and lungs. Organ failure and death may result from untreated infections.

Please visit the CDC or Mayo Clinic websites for a detailed approach to prevention. The recommendations below are my own.

1. Make sure your team members are washing or sanitizing their hands regularly. According to the Mayo Clinic, hand sanitizer needs to have at least 60 percent alcohol in it to be effective.
2. Require wounds to be covered and cleaned at all times
3. Make sure you are utilizing high-quality disinfectants when cleaning your facilities. Disinfect hand tools, steering wheels, doorknobs and other items that get handled by multiple staff members regularly
4. Do not allow staff to share clothing or safety items such as respirators, hardhats, safety glasses, raingear, etc.
5. Regularly require staff members to clean their lockers with a disinfectant
6. Develop written procedures for facility cleaning and make sure your team is abiding by them

We are pest management experts. We obsess about annual bluegrass weevil applications, anthracnose, dollar spot resistance, and other possible negative impacts to turfgrass health. Making sure our facilities and equipment are free from all potential dangers and pests is in our skillset.

Sincerely,
Eric Richardson – Director of Grounds
Essex County Club



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Challenging Convention *by Ryan Green*

During my career in the golf course industry, I've worked at courses with all types of resources, from maintenance budgets of over 2 million, to under \$300,000 for an 18-hole golf course. During this time I've seen many different approaches to maintenance with varying levels of inputs. Back in 2008 I had the opportunity to visit Lahinch Golf Club, one of the top courses in Ireland and spoke with the superintendent at the shop during his 'tea break'. Their crew size wasn't much more than the modest crew I have at a public course in New England. At the time I was working at a private club in New Hampshire with a 20-plus person crew. That was one of the first seeds of thought I had about challenging conventional methods.

As it turns out, right after my visit to Lahinch, the bottom fell out of the U.S economy, with bank failures, and a stock market crash. The golf industry felt the pinch. It's no secret that most everyone's golf maintenance budgets were cut during this time. Club management and owners had to find ways to keep their courses profitable and many maintenance practices were questioned for their need or value. While we are seeing a recovery, golf course management personnel still need to be creative to be financially viable.

Here are some of my findings about adopting lower inputs. I'm sure all of our members made creative decisions in their own right during the golf recession. It is my belief that for all but the maybe the most exclusive clubs, most golfers cannot notice a significant difference. Think about when you are asked by a golfer about some maintenance practice. Usually after the first sentence of the explanation, there is a blank look and they're off to the next hole. They really don't care how you do it, just that they enjoy the course when they play it. The following are a few thoughts I've had over the years.

1. Triplex vs. walk mowing putting greens: I have personally seen no difference in greens quality between triplex mowing greens as opposed to walk mowing. Having worked with brand new A-4 and L-93 surfaces as well as older push up greens, I will say the newer varieties of bentgrass do show more tire wear on turns than older bent/poa mixtures and shadier, weaker greens may have some thinning on perimeter cuts. However, overall the labor savings of using a triplex mower is substantial enough to manage these issues. The next time you see a European Tour event on TV, look at the greens mowing stripes. 9 out of 10 course are mowed with a triplex as labor budgets are not as substantial compared to the United States.
2. Hand watering greens: I will discuss the two extremes here. At one facility, one assistant spent every morning hand watering greens. Just enough to get the turf through until noontime. At that point, 3 guys would go out with hoses to keep wilt in check until about 5pm. Another 2 person crew would hand water fairway hot spots from 5am to 5pm. Granted, this was in the New York Met area where competition is fierce and this

is just the culture. While this did produce the finest playability and bump and run conditions I have ever seen, it is not a viable option for most courses in our association. This is an extreme level of water management, however I have heard of other local courses hand watering their greens only. There are always the stories about superintendents who are under the gun to have greens roll at crazy speeds from dawn to dusk with more and more demanding memberships. Admittedly, I do not currently have these pressures at my club. However, with the labor shortage crisis in golf right now, I question the need for this practice. Personally I would rather give the green the water it needs in the morning, mow and roll, groom and topdress as needed, and just check the few spots that I know might need a hose around 1-2pm. This frees up more labor to complete the many other needed course projects and tasks and also lowers my stress about losing turf to wilt. Ok, my greens aren't 11 every day, but do they need to be?? The thought I have here is, how can I focus on anything else when the turf is constantly on the brink of permanent wilting point? Read on to the next section on topdressing for a solution to making water and sand work for your greens.

3. Topdressing greens: The more sand the better it seems and it goes hand in hand with greens watering. From my own experience, I always get the best comments on greens a few days after a topdressing. Regular topdressing helps infiltration and surface firmness and ball roll distance. This is no secret to golf course superintendents. What I have found, however, is that those who are putting the most sand down, at regular weekly or biweekly intervals have the fastest greens with the least effort. Speeds will stay high without the need to roll or lower height. One friend of mine puts nearly 600 tons of sand on his 3.5 acres of greens per year. This may sound a bit heavy or even ridiculous to some, but it makes the greens putt like glass. OK, your budget doesn't allow for 600 tons of sand? Mine doesn't either. Still, doing any sort of regular topdressing will aid your greens for sure. I included this practice, not as novel or unconventional, but as I believe it allows you to water with your overhead sprinklers, freeing up valuable labor.
4. Organic, granular fertilizers: Many superintendents, especially those with demanding memberships, have gone away from granular fertilizers in order to keep growth under control. My course, Crystal Lake Golf Club, is a public course and I am given the support and flexibility to experiment with different methods, without the intense scrutiny. So the greens there have been my guinea pig, so to speak, since I began as superintendent in 2014. I have varied with several approaches in that time. Synthetic granular fertilizers spaced out in spring, summer and fall, with a little foliar N didn't work so hot in my first year. Too many growth spurts, a roller coaster of growth. Going bi-weekly the next year with liquid synthetic fertilizers was an improvement, but still not ideal. The following year, I

used only one bridged granular product at spring aeration then sprayed weekly with iron and urea around 0.05 per week. It worked pretty well, but it would only last those 6-7 days before they looked hungry again and it was too also much labor for my small staff. I then played around more with putting down granular organic and synthetic N sources and managing growth with PGR's. This worked a little better but the desire to always tinker gets in the way of consistency! As a little bit of humor and a word the wise... if you mix 8 oz of Cutless with 2 oz of Aneuw per acre, your poa will look puke yellow and not grow at all for 3-4 weeks. It was a little scary looking at the time, but it did finally start to grow again. If I had pure poa greens they probably would have rolled 13 every day without mowing as the poa literally did not grow. Alas, it just looked like sunken depressions of poa in the bent. An 'oops' in the name of experimentation!

The use of composted organic chicken manure fertilizer turned out to be the key for me this past summer. I was always skeptical of it lasting the entire summer, but with a single application of 0.70 lbs/N at spring aeration, I did not need to add anything other than a foliar micronutrient every other week from May 5th through September 23rd when the greens were aerated. Mixed with a more prudent and field tested PGR program, the combination of turf health, growth regulation and reduced labor inputs, it is something I will finally settle in with for the long run, (but I'm sure I'll end up messing with it somehow). While organic fertilizers might be old hat to many of our members, as a new convert, it has many benefits which I would recommend to anyone considering the idea. Combined with a regular topdressing program, even with higher application rates of up to 1 lb/M, it is also working at some high-end private clubs that have a membership with a 'need for speed'.

5. Dollar spot and chemical budgets. Growing through it or letting it work out: For most courses it was a tough year for dollar spot. In years past, I could count on one hand where my course would get outbreaks, due to the fact that many of the fairways are unirrigated and were never sprayed with fungicide since it was built in the 1960's. There is a lot to be said for natural selection! The demands of golfers, (or our fear of what they will think), causes us to pull the trigger quickly when it comes to dollar spot control. Faced with a very limited chemical and fertilizer budget forces me to be creative and timely with applications. In some instances, such as in the fall after other disease pressures are off, a shot of ammonium sulfate or urea will grow it through. During an outbreak in late August I did a side by side on my 18th fairway. A 1/3 lb application of urea on the entire fairway, and only half the fairway treated with 0.8 oz of tebuconazole per 1000 sq ft. Both sides of the fairway looked identical the following week, growing out of the disease, despite the weather continuing to favor dollar spot disease pressure. It begged the question, 'do I need the fungicide at that point in the season, or can I just grow through it?' I know you're thinking, 'I can't have that surge of growth', or 'that won't work at my club', however, in the growing movement toward environmental responsibility that

we live in, we need to consider alternatives to chemical options when possible.

6. Labor and wages: To say that we underpay our seasonal labor in the golf course industry is an understatement. Many similar industries offer better wages which can lead to turnover and more so difficulty finding qualified candidates in the first place. In conjunction with all of the above listed items, I think there is room to get creative, trading extra laborers or large chemical and fertilization budgets to create positions with more accountability and responsibility. Personally I would rather pay one person more who does good work, is productive, cares and that I can trust vs. paying 2 under performing employees a low wage and need to train new employees year after year. Everyone has their budget constraints, and there is much disparity between courses when it comes to how much they have to spend. But there's always room to get creative.

As this season comes to a close and we are finally able to stop, think and breath for a while, it is always good to question the way we do things. What is the value of each aspect of our methods on the golf course. It is also easy to throw blame on other things: the ownership, the members, the golf industry, or anything at all. However, it is a very healthy practice to get out of your comfort zone. I find it always leads, ironically and in the long run, to being more comfortable in the end.



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Nashawtuc Country Club Bunker Renovation by Ben Pacific

Nashawtuc Country Club did a full bunker renovation designed by the Rees Jones Group. The project started in the fall of 2018 and ended in the spring of 2019. The bunkers were long overdue for a renovation, the drainage on most of the bunkers did not work and after rain storms each bunker turned into a mini pond. Along with filling with water the bunkers would constantly wash-out and many labor hours were spent getting them playable again. With all the wash-outs the bunkers were all contaminated with rocks and soil which was not good for playability.



After looking at different kinds of bunker renovation methods NCC chose The Better Billy Bunker method. Better Billy Bunker method has five steps:

1. Remove the old sand and inspect drain lines. Repair old drainage or install new drainage if needed.



November 2019



2. Install two inches of gravel.



3. Polymer is sprayed on gravel by certified installer.



4. Polymer cures for 24 hours and checked for any weak areas that are sprayed again.

5. Sand installed in bunker.



<https://www.billybunker.com/copy-of-better-billy-bunker-1>

The hardest thing we dealt with throughout the renovation was the weather. Massachusetts received about 61" of rain for 2018 with three feet coming in the second half of the year, right during the renovation. Due to the weather, the project finished slightly behind schedule wrapping up in early July.

Another challenge we faced during the renovation was irrigation lines being broken. We did our best to map out lines but with having an old system it was inevitable that lines would be pulled up by equipment. When lines were hit and needed to be fixed areas of the course would have to be valved off, making it a challenge to water all the new sod that was around the same area as the break. Like many in the industry, we found a way to keep everything alive and all the turf looked great once established.





The Better Billy Bunker Method is designed to hold a moisture level in the lower portion of the sand. Therefore once the sand settles we needed to add sand to some bunkers so that the top couple inches were dry for better playability.

Overall the renovation was a lot of work but the end result was awesome. This year we barely spent any labor hours fixing wash-outs. I can count on one hand the amount of bunkers that needed attention after rain and that was after some 2"+ rain storms. If your course has bunkers that are problematic, I highly recommend considering the Better Billy Bunker Method.

The members all had great things to say about the renovation and were all very pleased with the result.

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Sometimes it is a struggle to develop a new topic to include in association newsletters. Add to that, a highly fluctuating travel schedule, and there are issues where I unfortunately fail to deliver content. I really appreciate Greg Cormier's patience with me, and feedback I get from members regarding my content. The topic for this article was born on Thanksgiving Day. It gives you a little look at how I

tick, and the thoughts on overall team efficiency. It is a rant with a message that hopefully you will find useful.

My wife and I make a good team. She is a middle school special education teacher who relies heavily on structure to function personally and professionally. She plans and makes lists. We work well together because I can read and follow lists. We share most family duties including cooking. When it comes to large functions it is my kitchen and her support role is critical to get things from the oven to the table. It's a good team approach.

We hosted Thanksgiving which was planned for twelve. Two backed out last minute, causing angst for the planner. The missing mouths led to more uneaten food than expected. That caused me strife because it exposed an inefficiency that flat drives me nuts!



So even I would consider the numerical results a bit disappointing. I had honestly figured there would have been a much larger disparity. But as often happens with good research, I wanted to add an additional layer of inquiry. Of the 43 containers with matching lids, there were 17 different brands in the sample. That means there is a 40% chance the lid I would select would not match the container to begin with regardless of similarities!

Now picture the table covered with your irrigation parts, spare equipment items, or even the small tool area. Shop makeovers are

I fear the cabinet that holds our food storage containers. In my humble opinion, nothing ruins a wonderful meal like struggling to find a lid to match the container I just placed the leftovers in. For some strange reason, it happens to me every time! My teammate (wife) sees no issues with the current setup. So, as a superintendent, I stated my case regarding this perceived inefficiency in real-life research based scientific format. I dismantled the cabinet and counted everything to see if my perception met reality. Here is what I found:

- 49 containers
- 54 lids

Those numbers were closer than I expected, but I was undeterred. I then paired up the lids to match the containers:

- 43 containers with matching lids
- 6 containers with no lid
- 11 lids that fit no container
- 1 cracked container that had a lid (a refrigerator cleaning waiting to happen)
- 1 container with a broken lid



not easy. Parting with pieces that may be useful can lead to future expense and increased downtime. Neither situation is desirable. However, ensuring the items are still viable, well-marked, and in working order can increase the efficiency you and your team must rely on in the critical moment of need. If you aren't specifically responsible for the inventory, be sure to engage your staff and ask how they would streamline their process.

My research led to a positive result in my household. I threw away what didn't match while my wife was at work. I'll pay for that later.

If my employer finds out I cleaned out my container cabinet during work hours I might get in a little trouble for that too. While it was done in the name of pure scientific research in order to accomplish a business-related task, please don't tell them just in case.

Enacting small changes like these can take a prohibitively long time to achieve. However, if an equipment manager can immediately grab the exact belt he needs, or an irrigation technician easily

communicating from the field the correct part needed for a repair to a fellow staff member leads to a faster more effective process, that would be a massive benefit every time. Engaging the staff for feedback could be a motivating factor, it might also remove some frustration from those responsible for their areas of expertise. More engagement, less stress, and more efficient sounds like a winning combination to me.

GCSAA Resources and Deadlines **you Get Cool Stuff from your Association Already**

Registration opens for 2020 Golf Industry Show in Orlando

GCSAA and presenting partners, the Golf Course Builders Association of America (GCBA) and American Society of Golf Course Architects (ASGCA), will offer a dynamic, progressive week of unparalleled networking opportunities and hands-on access to golf course and facility management solutions for golf industry professionals.

SAVE THE DATE!!!!!!

Nor'Easter Ski Day 2020 will take place at Killington Resort on February 27th, 2020. Last year nearly 200 industry professionals, friends & family set an attendance record (nearly 200), and a GREAT time was had by all!! Be sure to mark that date on your calendar and plane to join others from Maryland to Maine! More information to follow soon.

Upcoming Webinars

Dec. 12 @ 10 a.m.

Best Management Practices for the Turf Care Center Gary Bogdanski

Jan. 9, 2020 @ 10 a.m.

Challenges and Possibilities of Irrigating Turfgrasses with Treated Effluent Water Elena Sevostianova, Ph.D.

Jan. 15 @ 10 a.m.

Core Components of Personal Finance Ross Miller

Again, if I can be of any assistance, please feel free to contact me.

Kevin Doyle

GCSAA Field Staff

kdoyle@gcsaa.org

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November 2019



DEC Will Take Immediate Action to Ban Aerial Use of Chlorpyrifos

Regulations to Ban Chlorpyrifos Will be in Effect by December 2020 for all Uses Except Spraying Apple Tree Trunks, Which Will be Banned by July 2021

New Restrictions on Pesticide Will Protect New Yorkers from Significant Adverse Public Health Impacts, Especially for Children

Governor Andrew M. Cuomo today directed DEC to take immediate action to ban aerial use of chlorpyrifos. DEC will also have regulations in place to ban chlorpyrifos for all uses, except spraying apple tree trunks, by December 2020. Chlorpyrifos will be banned for all uses by July 2021. These actions will protect New Yorkers from significant adverse public health impacts, especially for children.

“Chlorpyrifos is a pesticide that has the potential to cause serious health problems in people who ingest it,” Governor Cuomo said. “I am directing the state department of environmental conservation to ban the use of this toxic substance to help ensure New York families aren’t needlessly exposed to a dangerous chemical.”

While organophosphate pesticide chlorpyrifos has been banned for residential use since 2001, it is still currently approved for use in fifty different products, the majority of which are registered for use in agricultural production. The largest agricultural market for chlorpyrifos in terms of total pounds of active ingredient is corn. It is also used on soybeans, fruit and nut trees, Brussels sprouts, broccoli, and cauliflower, seed treatments, as well as other row crops.

Non-agricultural uses include golf courses, turf, green houses, and on non-structural wood treatments such as utility poles and fence posts. Scientific research has shown that chlorpyrifos can harm the development of nervous systems of infants and young children. Prenatal exposure to organophosphates can result in diminished cognitive ability, delays in motor development and Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD).

Chlorpyrifos is in some cases the only product available labeled for use against certain pests. It is particularly effective against the American plum borer and rosy apple aphid. Chlorpyrifos can also be used in rotation with other methods of pest management, such as treated seeds, as a means to manage pesticide resistance. As New York and nearby states are infiltrated by invasive species, such as the black stem borer, pest management tools are needed to prevent their spread and the ensuing damage.

The application of pesticides must be done in a manner that is protective of public health and the environment and New York State is one of a few states in the country with a regulatory program designed specifically to review and register pesticides, implement regulatory controls, and enforce worker protection standards. State law affords DEC with a broad range of regulatory powers including the ability to restrict the use of a pesticide to certain crops, limit application to specific conditions, and revocation of a product’s registration.

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Back Issues!



Past issues of the NEWSLETTER are available using this link: <http://bit.ly/GCSANEnewsletters>.

As in the past, *The Newsletter* continues to invite Affiliate members to submit a press release about new personnel, new products or a company bio. We will print each and every release **free of charge**. This is a great way to advertise for free. Who said nothing in this world is free? Free advertising to better your company, wow what an offer.

In 2020 GCSANE will reduce our Newsletter editions to 6 per year. The first issue will be in February 2020. We hope to have better content in each issue, by reducing the number of issues.



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November 2019

