



THE NEWSLETTER

August 2007

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

Sponsors and administrators of the Troll-Dickinson Scholarship Fund – Awarded yearly to deserving Turf Management Students.

Surrounded by Water, Chris Donato Battles the Drought of 2007

By Dick Trust

Forgive Chris Donato for doing a rain dance. A man will try anything when his golf course goes more than two months without measurable precipitation.

As Head Superintendent at Bass Rocks Golf Club in Gloucester, Mass., Donato confronts a lot of environmental issues that others in his position don't have to face. Lack of rain just adds to the mix.

"One of the things that I have to deal with here is I have a severe issue with salt, not only in my soils but in my water," said Donato, 35 and in his fourth year as Bass Rocks superintendent. "In a dry year, such as this one, I actually have 120 times my normal rate of salt."

"One of the first issues that we deal with is the dehydration of the grass blades on the top and it shortens the roots."

"The second issue is with the soils. It completely destroys the structure. In a normal year, I tend to go out with quite a bit of gypsum regularly right before I get a rain. That flushes and cleans the soils."

"In a year like this, where we've had so little rain – I haven't had any measurable rain in 67 days (as of Sept. 6) – I'm not able to flush it. My water is so salty that I'm not really replacing the sodium in the soil with any clean water."

Donato's program worked well for the last four years, but it's been a real battle during the drought of 2007.

Coastal Bass Rocks has two ponds, one less salty than the other. "We mix water from both ponds to try to dilute it a little bit to bring the salt content down to half of whatever the water in the well is," Donato said. "That's really the only thing we can do at this point, in addition to adding the

nozzles on sprinklers."

"But as for the salt, we're just living with it. Salty water is better than no water, at least at this point. As all of the superintendents know, sometimes you just have to deal with Mother Nature and what she gives you."

Bass Rocks is not alone when it comes to parched land. The drought has stretched its tentacles far and wide.

"I know of many golf courses in the area that are very strained for water," Donato said. "I'm sure there are others that have some salt issues – I hope that nobody has the content that we have – but I'm sure there are other coastal courses that are trying to resolve the salt issues."

Under different circumstances, one solution for Donato could be trucking in clean water. But that's not cost effective, nor practical. The city of Gloucester imposed a mandatory watering

ban, with rationing, in late summer. End of discussion.

"I have the ability to buy clean water from the city," Donato, "but we're allowed to purchase water only for an emergency. And with the regulations as they are now, with the watering ban, no municipal water can be put to outside use. So I haven't been able to buy any."

"One of the agreements we have



Ocean views abound at Bass Rocks

gypsum to clean the soils out."

A major cause of the super-salty conditions is the course's close proximity to the ocean. Beautiful views from almost every hole, but, oh, so many problems this year.

"It's been very difficult," Donato said. "My staff has been working ridiculously hard. We've done a lot of hand watering to hit the spots that don't get good coverage. We've even changed

Continued on page 2

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Chris Donato - Continued from page 1

with the city when we got the ability to tap into the city water supply was that we'd be able to use it only when we're about to run out, just to keep the greens and tees alive. Unfortunately, the city doesn't have enough water right now even for drinking."

Donato likes to keep his course on the dry side, anyway, so that it plays hard and fast. Most of the greens get hand watered under most conditions. But conditions this year have been extreme.

Still, said Donato, "We're green right now. Lean and green. The edges are crispy; I don't have much rough left this year. It's pretty brown, but it adds some nice definition."

Bass Rocks – 18 holes, 6,010 yards in length, par 69, a private equity course – abuts environmentally sensitive grounds and airspace. Most of the golf course lies within a buffer zone, with more than 20 wetland areas on the property.

Fox, coyotes, fisher cats, rabbits and more than a hundred different species of birds make the land their own.

"So just trying to make sure that we're working within state and local guidelines is really important to me," Donato said.

"As a golf course superintendent and a golfer, I like being out, seeing the birds and animals out there, too. So we try to keep it as environmentally friendly a golf course as we can. We work really hard assessing our programs over the winter, fine-tuning things and trying to use a lot of the new products that are less harmful to plants and animals."

"The biggest thing to do with the conservation areas is to have an open line of communication between me and my conservation officer. I like to meet at least once a year, go for a site walk and talk with her about what we hope to do in the next year and explain how I'm going to do things. She gives me her feedback as to how she would like certain things done. And we go from there."

"The most important thing is to be honest and forthright about what we want to do and follow through on the promises we make."

Donato and his staff have been working with Audubon International, trying to incorporate more environmentally sound practices into their opera-

tion.

"We've added a no-mow area around all our water features," he said. "It's a nice natural buffer to filter any runoff before its gets into the streams and lakes. Other areas get mowed once a year, just to keep the woody plants out. We've eliminated fertilizer from most rough areas, just to put as little fertilizer out as we need to."

"We're just trying to minimize the environmental impact we have as a golf course and trying to create some corridors for wildlife to move around the course."

Toward that end, Gloucester High School students built about 25 to 30 birdhouses two years ago for use in the Bass Rocks area.

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CALENDAR

Sep. 10	GCSANE Monthly Meeting Ludlow C.C. Host: Ronald Dobosz
Oct. 1	Dr. Joseph Troll Turf Classic The International Honoring Geoffrey Cornish Host: Brett Johnson, CGCS
Oct. 22	GCSANE Monthly Meeting Pleasant Valley C.C. Member/ Guest Tournament Host: Donald D'Errico
Oct. 25	GSCANE Assistant Supt. Tournament Tedesco CC Co-Hosts: Peter Hasak and Patrick McDonald
Nov. (TBA)	GCSANE Monthly Meeting Brockton C.C. 9-Hole Tournament Host: Justin Bousquet
Nov. 14&15	GCSAA Seminars "Annuals and Perennials" "Cutting Costs Not Corners" Cyprian Keyes GC Host: Richard Zepp, CGCS



4th Annual

Joseph Troll Turf Classic

The International - October 1, 2007

Geoffrey Cornish Honoree

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2007 Joseph Troll Turf Classic**

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_____	_____	\$250
_____	_____	\$250
_____	_____	\$250

Dinner Only:

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Donation:

_____ \$

Subtotal: _____

Total: _____

Contact Person

Address

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Credit Card # _____ Security Code _____

_____ Expiration Date

Signature

Please mail this form to : Sharon Brownell,
ATG Executive Secretary
300 Arnold Palmer Blvd.
Norton, MA 02766

Or Fax this form to: (508) 758-3688

**Special thanks to 2005 and 2006
premier sponsor Tom Irwin Co.**

"It's nice to see," Donato said, "that those are being occupied by some bluebirds and sparrows and swallows."

Mother Nature giveth and taketh away when it comes to any golf course. Bass Rocks has other issues besides drought and caring for its environmentally sensitive zones.

"I don't want it to sound like we're complaining about it because it's really such a unique and beautiful spot we have here," Donato said, "but it's tough in the spring when the ocean's keeping us cold. To drive down the line 20 minutes and see everybody green already and we're still tan from the winter for four weeks more than anybody else is frustrating."

"To get the winds off the water like we do, we tend to get a lot of desiccation damage from the winter because when we do get snow, it doesn't really stay. We don't get the protection sometimes that other folks get from snow in the winter-time."

"On the flip side, when everyone else is getting cold fall mornings, it's still nice and warm in Gloucester. We don't tend to get a lot of frost because the ocean keeps us a little warmer. We get it on the back end."

Bass Rocks is open year-round, weather permitting.

"We generally close greens right around December 1," Donato said, "but we do allow people to walk and play temporary greens and tees."

Designed by Herbert C. Leeds, Bass Rocks opened in 1896. Geographically an island course in East Gloucester, it doesn't directly abut the ocean but it does afford those gorgeous water views.

Donato is well qualified to manage the course in the face of its many challenges. A native of Madison, Conn., he's a Providence College graduate who in 1996 got his associate's degree in turf management from the University of Massachusetts' renowned Stockbridge School.

Donato's staff numbers 15 on the average. Together, they tackle whatever comes up. That includes an almost constant wind which affects the course.

"From a playability standpoint, absolutely," said Donato. "You get a

windy day here and there; but for the most part, if you're going to play golf at Bass Rocks, you better be a good wind player. You could play the same hole four days in a row, and one day you can hit a wedge and the next day you can hit a 4-iron. It really affects the way you play."

"We're just a hair over 6,000 yards



The gnarly coastal New England terrain of Bass Rocks

and par 69, and everybody I know just looks at the scorecard and says, 'Oh, that place is so short.' Then they come and play and it's not so short anymore. It's very challenging."

Before Bass Rocks, Donato spent seven years as the Assistant Superintendent at Silver Spring Country Club in Ridgefield, Conn. That prepared him well for the seat he now occupies.

"I was very fortunate in that my boss at Silver Spring (Peter Rappocicio, a Certified Golf Course Superintendent) afforded me the opportunity to do a lot more than maybe a lot of other guys in the business might have an opportunity to do," said Donato. "I was very involved in the installation of an irrigation system, and the day-to-day running of the golf course was pretty much my deal."

Donato did a yearlong student internship at The Patterson Club in Fairfield, Conn., before going to Silver Spring. Before that he worked, and virtually grew up, at Madison (Conn.) Country Club.

Co-captain of his high school golf team, he learned the game from his mother, Holly, when he was 7 or 8 years old.

"My mom had a set of clubs, and instead of whacking balls in my backyard, one day she said, 'Do you want

to play golf?' I said 'yes' and we went up and played one of the public courses in the middle of the state. I had a blast."

"About a year later she got me a junior membership at Madison and I started playing there. I absolutely fell in love with it. I still am in love it. I wish I could get out on the golf course every day and play. Unfortunately, I don't have the time. I think I might have played about 10 times this year, which is probably the most I've played in the last 10 years, to be honest with you."

For someone who grew up playing at least 18 holes every day – it earned him the Madison Junior Club Championship – such infrequency can be frustrating. It just goes with the territory.

"I try to set time aside; it just doesn't happen," Donato said. "The demands on superintendents today are much more. It used to be that we just took care of the course. Now we spend so much time in the office. There's so much paperwork, so much to do with the state and DEP and budgeting, so much more than there used to be."

"I try to force myself to get out there because I really do like to see the course from that perspective. I find that when I play my course as if a member were playing the course, I definitely see things that I wouldn't see if I were working."

"And it doesn't hurt to try to keep your game somewhat decent (Donato's handicap is about 7) because it's good to try to get out and play with the members or our staff as much as possible. It gives them an opportunity to ask you a few questions they might have and make yourself available to them."

Aside from finding the time play a round, Donato said he is "totally committed" to two major aspects of his life.

"First and foremost would be my family," Donato said, citing his wife Adrienne, and their year-old daughter, Julia. A son is due Christmas Eve – the ultimate holiday gift.

"Then it's my job. I take this very seriously. I don't just grow grass for a living. It's more than just growing grass. Having a nice golf course requires a lot of time."

Which leads to Donato's "biggest issue" – trying to find a balance between work and home.

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"It takes a lot of effort," he said, "but I'm a very lucky guy to have a wife who is as understanding as mine is."

Adrienne Donato doesn't play golf. Maybe someday.

"I don't know if she'll pick it up, but she loves to go for rides on the course," he said. "She loves it out there, but I don't know if she has the patience (for the game)."

"She does like being outside, riding the golf cart on the course with Julia. They enjoy the birds and the views. A golf course is a real pretty place, but we try not to bring Julia out too early because there are always golf balls flying around. Usually late in the afternoon is a nice time to get out and see the course. It's relatively safe then."

"And it is beautiful out there. From pretty much any hole you look out, you see the ocean. On a clear day, you can see Boston."

On a cloudy day, maybe they'll see some rain. Measurable rain.

GCSAA Announces Nominations for Board of Directors

The following Class A members of GCSAA have been nominated for the 2008 GCSAA Board of Directors and will appear on the ballot at the Annual Meeting in Orlando on February 1, 2008.

President -

David S. Downing II, CGCS

Vice-President -

Mark D. Kuhns, CGCS

Secretary/Treasurer -

James R. Fitzroy, CGCS and
Robert M. Randquist, CGCS

Directors (electing two) -

Patrick R. Finlen, CGCS;
John J. O'Keefe, CGCS;
Sanford G. Queen, CGCS;
Roger Mark Ruff, CGCS

There are two positions open for director this year, as Pat Finlen and Sandy Queen are both at the end of their two-year director's terms. However, since Jim Fitzroy and Bob Randquist are both in the middle of their two-year director terms, there will also be a one-year Presidential appointment to fill the director term of whoever is elected to the office of Secretary/Treasurer.

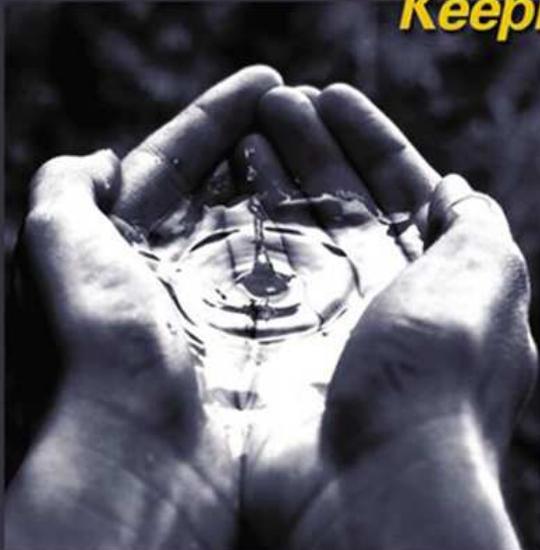
Keith A. Ihms, CGCS will remain on the board with one year remaining in his two-year director's term and Ricky D. Heine, CGCS will serve on the board as Immediate Past President during 2008. Sean A. Hoolehan, CGCS will be retiring from the GCSAA Board of Directors.

Source: GCSAA Press Release

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GCSANE Monthly Meeting - September 10, 2007

Ludlow Country Club

Host: Ronald P. Dobosz

Ludlow Country Club is a private, 18 hole club, founded in 1921, serving 520 members and over 40,000 rounds annually. The course was originally designed by Donald Ross, with some modifications made by Geoffrey Cornish in the late 1960's. The club has recently developed a Golf Course Master Plan with Mark Mungeam.

Ron is in his 2nd season as superintendent at Ludlow and he is assisted by Seth Germaine and Matthew Santos. Prior to Ludlow, Ron served as superintendent at Cedar Hill Golf Club in Stoughton.

Ron grew up in Shelburne Falls and got his start in the business by mowing greens at age 11 in Ashfield, Mass. Chuck Martineau, the long time superintendent at the famed Whippoorwill Club in New York (and Ron's uncle) sparked Ron's interest in the profession at a young age. Ron lists his mentors as Tom Colombo (then at New Seabury) where Ron worked summers while in school, Jim Fitzroy of Presidents, where Ron served as Jim's assistant for one year, and of

course, uncle Chuck. Ron is a graduate of the turf program at Stockbridge, class of '91.

Ron's biggest challenge this year has been controlling 2nd generation hyperodes and dealing with the drought of 2007. At last count, Ludlow had gone 31 days without a drop of rain. His favorite hole at Ludlow is the short par four 5th, where Donald Ross' style is most evident. His advice for those playing the course is to keep your ball below the hole on the sloped greens.

When asked about his favorite golf course, Ron quickly named the Seth Raynor masterpiece, Fisher's Island Club in New York, with the Whippoorwill Club a close second.

In his spare time, Ron enjoys playing golf and spending time with his family; Wife Jennifer and 5 year old twins, Sophia and Teddy.

Written By: Mark Gagne



Ludlow Country Club's home hole and clubhouse

Meeting Details

Monday, September 10, 2007

Host: Ronald P. Dobosz

9:00 am: Registration
10:00 am: Shotgun

Lunch on course

Heavy Hors d'oeuvres, prizes,
short meeting to follow golf

Cost: \$55 per person
Retired Members pay \$25

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Turf Blue bluegrass blend: Superb wear tolerance, rapid establishment, high turf density all year, fine leaf texture and excellent dark green color.

Bengal creeping bentgrass: Excellent spring green-up, high quality, disease resistant, wilt resistant, rich green color, excellent drought tolerance, excellent texture and a proven NTEP performer.

Pin High creeping bentgrass blend: Pin High has consistently proven itself – even in the most challenging environments. More resistant to dollar spot, snow mold, round patch and other diseases than most leading varieties. Pin High is shade tolerant.

▶ ROUGHS, BUNKERS & OUT OF PLAY AREAS

Turf Saver with RTF tall fescue blend: Unique "patented" technology, Rhizomes fill in bare spots, reduces clumps in turf, very fine leaf texture, endophyte enhanced, tolerates low mowing, dwarf type with low growth habit and shade tolerant.

Dunes Mix 8": Low maintenance out of play mix that will only grow to specific heights. (Also available Turf Sense Dunes Mix 1.5' and Turf Sense Dunes Mix 2.0')

Barkoel crested hairgrass: Barkoel is a new species to the world of turfgrass. A grass which virtually thrives on low cutting heights (under 1") and requires almost no fertilization after establishment. Barkoel has very fine leaves and resembles fine fescues with excellent drought and disease resistance.

Turf Blue bluegrass blend: Superb wear tolerance, rapid establishment, high turf density all year, fine leaf texture and excellent dark green color.

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Registrations now being taken for the UMASS TURF WINTER SCHOOL

While the weather is still plenty warm, it is not too early to start thinking about the UMass Winter School for Turf Managers. This highly acclaimed program runs from 2 January through 15 February 2008, and provides intensive coverage of principles of turf management, soils and fertilizers, arboriculture, irrigation and drainage, business management, and pest management (including diseases, insects, weeds, and pesticide issues). Most of the classes are taught by UMass faculty and staff, but we also include guest lectures from a USGA agronomist (Jim Skorulski), local golf course superintendents and sports turf managers, and irrigation specialists. There is something for everyone!

Some students have experience in turf management and just want to refine their understanding of the basics. Others are making career changes and

find that this program provides an excellent base for securing an excellent job in turf management.

Classes are from 10:10 to 5:15 Mondays, from 8:00 to 5:15 Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday, and from 8:00 to 12:05 on Fridays. Many students commute, while others arrange housing at hotels in the Amherst area. (Most of the hotels provide excellent rates, and a list of options is provided upon registration.)

Register now for the 2008 edition of Winter School for Turf Managers. The program fee is \$1,557. At least 21 Continuing and Professional Education Units (CEUs) are available through this program. In addition approval is expected from the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America and from the Sports Turf Managers Association for certified members. Also 10

contact hours are available for pesticide applicators who are already licensed or certified. These contact hours are accepted by all six New England states.

Please submit your application (including a letter explaining why you want to attend Winter School) by **September 14, 2007**.

For an application or further information, see:

http://www.umassturf.org/education/certificate_programs/winter_school.html

Alternatively, contact Karen White (kwhite@contined.umass.edu, 413-545-0268)

Source: UMass Press Release

GCSANE Golf Results Individual Championship Marlborough Country Club - August 21, 2007

Superintendent Division

1st Gross – Rich Tworig, 74
1st Net – Kurt Calderwood, 70
2nd Net – Jason Adams, 71

Senior Division

1st Gross – Brian Cowan, 83
1st Net – Ron Kirkman, 75
2nd Net – Mel O'Kelly, 76

Affiliate Division

1st Gross – Darin Eddy, 74
1st Net – Ken Mooradian, 73
2nd Net – Tim Berge, 75

Long Drive – Rich Tworig
Closest to Pin #7 – Kurt Calderwood
Closest to Pin #12 – John Sperandio



The 12th at Marlborough – A classic par 3
designed by Wayne Stiles

DIVOT DRIFT... announcements ... educational seminars ... job opportunities ...tournament results...and miscellaneous items of interest to the membership.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Welcome New Members:

Cory Bledsoe, Superintendent,
Leicester CC
Richard Gillis, Assistant, Bear Hill GC
Chris Leonard, Affiliate, Lesco Co.

Proposed New Members:

Daniel Allen, Assistant, Kernwood CC

Congratulations to Carl Miner of President's Golf Club for besting last year's performance and completing 121 holes in the Francis Ouimet Scholarship Fund's 15th Golf Marathon on August 8th. The Marathon was played, as always, at Stow Acres Country Club's South Course. The event raised a total of \$285,900 and the 2007 Ouimet Marathon, which is believed to be the highest fundraising Marathon in the US this year, brought to \$3.1 Million raised since the event's inception in 1993. Source: www.ouimet.org

Our condolences are extended to John Bresnahan and family on the recent passing of John's mother.

Our condolences are extended to Ed Eardley and family on the passing of Ed's father.

Our condolences are extended to Steve Mann and family on the recent passing of Steve's brother-in-law.

Our condolences are extended to Bill Affinito (PBI Gordon) and family on the passing of Bill's mother.

Congratulations to Pat and Meredith McDonald on the recent birth of their son Justin Douglas. Pat is the Assistant Superintendent at Tedesco CC.

All members are encouraged to contact Julie Heston to announce new arrivals so that we may purchase a savings bond in recognition of their birth. Phone: (401) 934-3677 or jheston@verizon.net

Dr. James Beard, Professor Emeritus, Turfgrass Science of Texas A&M University is searching for a 1963 book entitled "Golf Course Irrigation System Design" by Professor Pira. If anyone has a copy or knows where we might be able to find a copy, please contact Sharon Brownell at 1-800-833-4451. They would like to place this book in the Turfgrass Collection at the Michigan State University Library.

GCSANE Scholarships Awarded

The S&B Committee would like to congratulate the 2008 GCSANE scholarship winners:
Kimberley Conant
Matthew Hermanson
Ross Smith
Schofield Award Winner:
Meghan Comee

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