



THE NEWSLETTER

March - April 2024

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

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A Message from the GCSANE President **Eric Richardson**



As we transition into the heart of the spring season, I find it important to reflect on the unique challenges and joys that come with our roles as turfgrass managers. This spring, the New England weather has, as ever, tested our skills and resilience. While you will receive this note in late April, I am writing it on April 4th with three inches of snow on the ground, a day after mowing greens and fairways. My team used more salt in April than in February and March combined. That said, from every unexpected weather anomaly to the hopeful sunny spring days, each weather event reminds us of the unpredictable nature of our work environment. However, these challenges underscore the importance and essential nature of our profession. As stewards of the golf course and land we manage, we play a crucial role in ensuring the health and beauty of the turf, a responsibility that extends far beyond aesthetics. The turf's condition directly influences the course's playability, affecting the experience of every golfer who walks our greens, fairways, and tees. Our expertise in managing turf amidst the erratic New England weather ensures that all can enjoy the game of golf.

In light of any challenge we face, it becomes essential to communicate our stories and successes to our memberships, owners, and patrons via whatever channel is available to you. Sharing the behind-the-scenes efforts that go into turf management fosters a deeper appreciation for our work and builds a stronger sense of camaraderie. Highlighting the positive outcomes of our labor, from the seamless recovery of the greens post-aeration to the first drop of water exiting a sprinkler, paints a picture of dedication to those in every segment of the golf industry. Telling our story in a positive light does not mean shying away from the difficulties we face; rather, it involves framing these challenges as opportunities for innovation and growth. It's about celebrating small victories, whether implementing a new sustainable practice or simply achieving that perfect mowing pattern. We inspire our fellow turf managers and the golfing community by sharing these moments.

Amidst the daily grind, essential spring agronomic tasks, and spring projects that can/will create stress – internally and externally- we must not lose sight of why we love our job. The early mornings might be demanding, but they are also a time of quiet beauty, of peace before the day begins. There's something profoundly satisfying in the smell of the turf after the first mow of the season, a scent that evokes a sense of renewal and possibility. These simple joys remind us of the passion that drew us to this profession, sustaining us through the challenges and reinforcing our commitment to excellence, filling us with pride and satisfaction not easily found in other professions.

As we move forward into the season, please embrace the difficulties and successes of

continued on page 3

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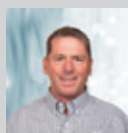
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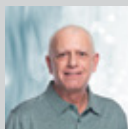
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continued from cover

turfgrass management. If you need help in any way, please reach out to your peers or any of us on the GCSANE Board. We are a community, and you are not alone in combating our profession's inevitable difficulties and challenges. Everyone's contact information is in our membership directory for a reason.

Finally, please take the time to read through the rest of this newsletter for important messages from your peers, Board Members, the association, and our industry partners as we continue to celebrate GCSANE's centennial year and you.

Sincerely,

Eric Richardson



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Affiliate, Huntington Bank, Dublin, Ohio

Huntington Bank,
Friend of the Association, Dublin, Ohio

Maxwell Quinn,
Assistant Superintendent, Essex County Club

John Romanovicz,
Superintendent, Veterans Memorial Golf Course

Brian Healy,
Equipment Manager, Brookmeadow Country Club

Tim Gerrish, RLA,
Associate, Gerrish + Gardner, Providence, RI

WELCOME RETURNING MEMBERS

Erin Welch, Assistant Superintendent, Oakley CC

Mark Williams, Superintendent, Sterling Golf Management

CONGRATULATIONS TO

Mike Sampson who is now superintendent at Furnace Brook Golf Course

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!

GCSANE Offers Website Banner advertising at www.gcsane.org



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For more information, please contact Don Hearn at 774-430-9040 or donhearn@gcsane.org

Back Issues!



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

GCSANE MERCHANDISE STORE



We now have GCSA of New England clothing and merchandise for sale.

To view the catalog click [here](#).

The merchandise can also be viewed on the Home Page of the GCSA of New England's website at gcsane.org.



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Thoughts From Your Executive Director *by Don Hearn*



from left: Jonathan Wilber, Eric Richardson, Greg Cormier, Bob Dembek, Andrew Travers

We were represented at this year's Francis Ouimet Annual Dinner by the gentlemen pictured. This is the largest golf dinner in the country. Nearly 1500 people attended. Executive Director, Colin McGuire made remarks and a brief presentation about the Fund's mission, this year's awards and future goals. This year's honoree was Julie Inkster an LPGA player who carries many accolades as a member of the LPGA Hall of Fame, the World Golf Hall of Fame and a winner of multiple major championships. She and Judy Rankin, also a World Golf Hall of Famer, had a fireside chat that entertained the audience, showed her humility and how she got interested in the game. The evening was another success produced by the talents of the Ouimet Fund staff, volunteers, board and executive committee, donors and major supporters like Dick Connolly, a close friend of mine for almost 70 years.



from left: Don Hearn, Eric Richardson, Ryan Boudreau, Jordan Koester at the GCSA of New England booth

The New England Regional Turfgrass Conference also known by many as "The Providence Show" was a huge success this year.

Show floor space was bulging against the walls, seminars were well attended and there were large audiences for the speaker presentations.

In the world of golf course maintenance the New England Regional Turfgrass Conference and Show stands out as a premier event where industry professionals converge to explore the latest trends, innovations, and best practices in turfgrass management. This event also serves, for many, as a beginning point for the upcoming golf season.

One of the defining features of the New England Regional Turfgrass Conference and Show is its lineup of seminars, workshops, and presentations delivered by speakers and industry leaders. Topics cover a wide range of subjects, including turfgrass maintenance, pest management, irrigation techniques, environmental sustainability, and emerging technologies. Attendees benefit from firsthand insights and practical strategies that can produce efficiency in their turf management practices.

The exhibition or "show" component of the conference showcases an array of products, equipment, and services from industry partners in the turfgrass industry. Participants have the opportunity to explore new solutions, compare offerings, and engage with experts to address their specific needs and challenges. From state-of-the-art machinery to eco-friendly fertilizers, the exhibit hall provides a glimpse into the latest innovations driving the evolution of turf care.

Beyond the educational and commercial aspects, the New England Regional Turfgrass Conference and Show creates a sense of camaraderie among attendees. Social gatherings create an environment where participants can make connections, share experiences, and build lasting relationships within the industry.

This conference and show has come a long way since its launch by Dr. Joseph Troll the patriarch of the event until his retirement, after which the event was moved to Boston. After a one-year stint in Boston it was decided to move the event to Providence. Congratulations to all who had the foresight to move the event to Providence an excellent location for the event. Also, congratulations to Gary Sykes, Executive Director of the New England Regional Turfgrass Foundation and his committee and board for the work they do creating the educational part of the conference; also David Rosenberg and his team for making all the pieces of the puzzle fit so well each year.

Thoughts *(continued)*



Norman Mucciarone

A sad day was experienced by many friends and fellow professionals in our industry to learn that Norman Mucciarone passed away March 23. Norman was a wonderful person that I had the good fortune to know and admire for more than 40 years. He was a hardworking person who always wanted to be doing something. When he retired after a 40-year stint as superintendent of Woodland Golf Club, he continued working with his friend and fellow superintendent, Bob DiRico at Brae Burn Country Club. Norman was a bright spot each day he came to the club to lend a hand with the day's set-up. He and his twin brother, Bobby, superintendent at the Dedham Country and Polo Club for 30 years, were past recipients of the Association's Distinguished Service Award. They were presented the award in 2009. Norman lived a life of 97 years, 74 of which were as a member of the GCSA of New England. He was succeeded at Woodland by his son David, a 33 year and now retired member of the Association.

An advertisement for John Deere OnLink Connectivity Solutions. The background is a photograph of a golfer in a grey jacket and cap operating a green John Deere riding mower on a golf course. The sky is overcast. The text "CONNECTION THAT KEEPS YOUR FLEET ON COURSE" is at the top. Below the photo, it says "Upgrade your operation with the latest John Deere OnLink Connectivity Solutions". At the bottom left are the John Deere logo and "FINCH TURF" logo with the website "www.finchturf.com". At the bottom right, it says "Ask us for a demo of the OnLink platform today!" with a blue circular icon containing a white lightning bolt.

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March - April 2024



SAVE THE DATE



**Celebrating 100 years of service to the
Turfgrass Management and Golf Industry**

*Please join your fellow members in celebrating our
past while looking forward to the future.*

Event Details

Friday, November, 8TH 2024

Peirce Farm at Witch Hill

116 Boston Street

Topsfield, MA 01983

Registration: Opens mid-summer

Cost: \$100 per attendee

*The primary registrant must be a current member of
GCSANE. A maximum of one paying guest per member*

Complete details are found on our website: <https://gcsane.org/>

2024 NERTF Conference and Trade Show Report

By: Gary Sykes, Executive Director NERTF



In the 27 years of hosting the New England Regional Turfgrass Conference and Show in Providence, the foundation has continued to focus on investing in our industry's future through turfgrass research and education. It has been reported that the turfgrass industry is more than a \$100 billion industry across the US and is growing. In the Northeast, we enjoy a good portion of that total as we witness industry activity growth in all areas, especially in the Lawn Care and Landscape sectors. Golf Course and Sports Field management also continue to do well as field and turf quality expectations continue to be at the highest levels. Much of this success stems from the ability of turfgrass managers being able to deliver. With the right budgets, tools, and knowledge producing and sustaining the highest quality turf becomes more achievable.

Since the beginning days of the foundation the focus on turfgrass education each year has been its number one priority. Our pro-

grams seek to provide usable information in your management schemes and to feed ideas. The approach to a new program is to identify what topics, which speakers, and what collaborations could provide the best educational experience for our attendees. Sometimes tidbits and morsels provide enough information to win the battle over a persistent issue, but we also know that innovation and experimentation may be what it takes to conquer larger and new challenges facing the industry. Each year we hope to balance the program with these types of speakers and topics. Our question is always: what is needed? Please know that any suggestions on speakers, topics and format or any aspect of the education program and the show is open for discussion. Your input on education especially will be appreciated so that our conference provides valuable information worth coming to Providence for. As little as an email can make the difference. We hope that you enjoyed and saw value in attending the 2024 conference. I heard many tell me how good the speakers were and how they appreciated being there. Tuesday seminars set records for attendance. One seminar, "High Grass Areas" had more than 180 people in it! More than 800 total seats were bought for

seminars and overall attendance was up more than 150 people since 2023. We hope to continue this trend with your help!

Let's talk about our 2024 show. For those who can remember way back to 2002 we had our largest trade show floor configuration. The show was still new, and the industry was growing rapidly along with the economy. We filled practically every inch of the Rhode Island Convention Center. It was an amazing feeling to be on the floor in a full house. But things did change, there was a lot of consolidation in the industry between companies and territories and over a few years 1/5 of our show floor eventually disappeared to our current levels. We have been solid for many years right around 315 booth spaces. Because of our size we shifted to floor to the right and used only 3 of the 4 exhibition halls. This year we were approached by exhibitors about expanding their floor presence and were contacted also by companies not in the show in 2023. This makes a show manager's day, but sometimes becomes a challenge to give one exhibitor more floor space while not upsetting others. With the new show interest, the floor expanded. One result was that we had to pull our driving range feature out for this year to make room for more booth space. We hope that 2025 will attract others to the show and we might have the need for more show floor space like we have used in the past and that we can bring back the range! Bottom line, there is interest by new companies to be at our show and good reasons to be an exhibitor. We are grateful for the support we receive each year from all our exhibitors and sponsors. The donations to the live auction were very generous, anyone could have step in as an auctioneer and sold them to such a willing crowd! Sponsorship support has grown and helped us to offer more each year to the attendee. Food for the seminars, morning refreshments, food on the floor, show receptions, auction refreshments, Trade Show Lunch. All these things enhance our program, and we extend our thanks for all sponsor efforts in making our show even that much better!

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2024 NERTF Conference (continued)

show each year. Please help us by thanking them when you see them!

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My report is very positive that the conference and show is doing well and in good health due to David Rosenberg's continued efforts, Mary Owen and our Education Committee, and because of your support either as an exhibitor, a speaker, a sponsor or as an attendee. The results will be that the foundation will be able to expand its research and education support to the universities. Any support to the universities will always be a critical link to the future of the industry. Thanks go to everyone who continues to support our Conference and Show, Tee-Up New England, the universities and our amazing industry!

Here are our 2025 Show Dates: March 4-6, 2025.

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The Newsletter

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I usually enjoy the Conference and Trade Show wrap-up as it gives me the opportunity to highlight the members who were recognized in so many ways. Phoenix was a little different, actually a LOT different! The Northeast region dominated many of the headlines! In case you missed it, here are those who caught fire in Phoenix!

Col. John Morley:



William "Bill" Murray, retired superintendent and 27-year member of the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America (GCSAA), has been named the recipient of the association's 2024 Col. John Morley Award.

Murray spent the final 26 years of his career in the seven-course Monmouth County (N.J.) Park System before retiring in 2022. Prior to that the Lee, Mass.

native spent time at courses in Connecticut, Massachusetts, New York and New Jersey.

"Bill is a prime example of what Col. John Morley stood for and what the Morley Award is all about," said GCSAA CEO Rhett Evans. "Throughout his long and successful career, he has given back so much to the profession through his service to his fellow GCSAA members on both the local and national level. He is truly worthy of the award, and we congratulate him."

Environmental Leaders in Golf Innovative Conservation Award

Jim Pavonetti, CGCS-Fairview Country Club-Greenwich, Conn.



Jim Pavonetti, CGCS is a 28-year GCSAA member and has served as the golf course superintendent at Fairview Country Club in Greenwich, Conn. since 2008.

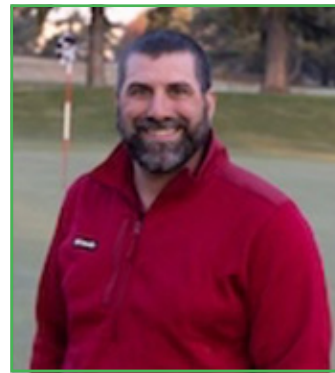
One of Pavonetti's environmental innovations involves the property's ponds. His use of barley straw and dye to create clean ponds has reduced herbicide usage by 90 percent. His team uses a combination of air diffusers, black pond dye and the barley straw to reduce algae blooms.

The limiting of inputs saved the club an average of \$9,000 per year and has reduced aquatic applications by more than 90 percent.

Leo Feser Award

A 28-year member of GCSAA, Pavonetti authored the story "Gold standards" that was published in the November 2022 issue of GCM <https://www.gcmonline.com/profession/operations/news/gold-standards-best-maintenance-practices>. The story was originally published in the July 2022 edition of Tee to Green, the chapter publication for the Metropolitan GCSA, and was reprinted with permission in GCM. Pavonetti's story examined the practice of establishing formal maintenance standards for golf courses, how he went about doing that at his facility, and the lessons he learned throughout the process.

The Emerging Leader Award



Kremer completed his fourth season as the superintendent at Hop Meadow Country Club in Simsbury, Conn. in November after spending six years in two different stints as an assistant at the course. He graduated from the University of Connecticut in 2010.

The 37-year-old Kremer began his golf course maintenance career as an intern at Hop

Meadow, while still a student at UConn. After two years as an assistant superintendent, Kremer left to be part of a landscaping company for four years. He then returned to Hop Meadow in 2016 and was promoted to superintendent in 2020.

Kremer has been very active at the chapter level where he presently serves as a board member of the Connecticut Association of Golf Course Superintendents (CAGCS). In addition to organizing winter seminars, he has helped grow the game by being the CAGCS representative to Connecticut's First Tee program.



The Melrose Leadership Academy supports the professional development of GCSAA superintendent members while the Melrose Equipment Management Experience provides professional development for GCSAA equipment managers. Both programs are administered

through the GCSAA Foundation, the philanthropic organization of GCSAA.

The Northeast member of the 2024 Melrose Leadership Academy was:

Bill Abbe, East Hartford Golf Club, East Hartford, Conn.

The Northeast member of the 2024 Melrose Equipment Management Experience was:

Christopher Hyman, Cobblestone Creek, Victor, N.Y.

Envu Superintendent Grant Program

As part of the selection process, all applications were judged anonymously by a panel of golf industry professionals, who evaluated applicants on their professional career development experiences, ability to motivate and mentor, innovation, self-expression, unique capabilities, talent and drive to excel as a superintendent.

The 2024 Envu Superintendent Grant Program winner from the Northeast region was:

Chris Knapp of Amherst (N.H.) Country Club

2024 Turf Bowl results

Purdue's Team #51 took first place in GCSAA's Collegiate Turf Bowl Competition, presented in partnership with John Deere Golf. The winning team includes Broden Piel, Jacob Winger, Hayden Flick, Eli Ziliak and advisor Cale Bigelow, Ph.D.

Rounding out the top 10:

Penn State University - Team 1

University of Massachusetts - Amherst - Team 8

Penn State University - Team 2

Penn State University - Team 3

University of Nebraska - Team 35

Iowa State University - Team 22

Colorado State University - Team 40

Cal Poly Pomona - Team 62

SUNY Delhi - Team 15

GCSAA Elections

Jeff L. White, CGCS the superintendent at Indian Hills Country Club in Mission Hills, Kan., was elected to a one-year term as president. White is the 87th president in the association's history and served as vice president of the association in 2023 and has been a member of the association's board of directors since 2018. A 33-year member of GCSAA, White is also a past president of the Heart of America GCSA.

In addition to White, chapter delegates elected T.A. Barker, CGCS, superintendent at Fore Lakes Golf Course in Taylorsville, Utah, as vice president, and Paul L. Carter, CGCS, superintendent at The Bear Trace at Harrison Bay in Harrison, Tenn., as secretary/treasurer.

Board members Douglas D. Dykstra, CGCS, superintendent at White Mountain Country Club in Pinetop, Ariz., and Marc E. Weston, CGCS, superintendent at Indian Hill Country Club in Newington, Conn., were re-elected to serve on the board, while Gregory B. Jones, CGCS, MG, director of agronomy at Champions Run in Omaha, Neb., was newly elected to join the board as a director.

100 Years of Service to the Industry

Two Northeast region affiliated associations were recognized for achieving 100 years of dedicated service to the industry in 2024. Pictured below are current board members and Executive Director of the GCSA of New England, and Executive Manager and board members of the Ontario Golf Superintendents Association. GCSAA board and CEO Rhett Evans were also on hand to congratulate the groups.



Attracting New Talent

By: Jonathan Wilber, Grounds Superintendent, Myopia Hunt Club



Twenty years ago, when I joined the maintenance team at New Haven Country Club, the perception in the business was that golf course superintendents and support staff were underappreciated and underpaid. The portrayal of our profession in the hit movie Caddy Shack, though funny, was unflattering. Twenty years later, this is no longer the case due to the hard work of organizations like the GCSAA, GCSANE, and the PGA. Sure, there are exceptions, but in 2024, nothing could be further from the truth. Superintendents have become highly valued employees at their facilities and are consistently recognized for their hard work at televised tournaments. Commentators often have conversations with Superintendents to get feedback on the course, and to acknowledge their dedication to producing

exceptional conditions regardless of weather conditions.

Over the years, golf remained insulated from inflation, stock market downturns, and challenging economies. Golf may have hiccups, but public course rounds are up, and private courses are doing more construction projects than ever. Turf School enrollment is down, and as an industry, we need to encourage more young adults to pursue careers in the turf industry. We must let them know that assistant superintendents and other team members are being compensated well and health care is provided with matching retirement plans. All and all, it is an excellent time to get into the golf course maintenance business. There are so many opportunities to succeed as a Golf Course Superintendent or Assistant Superintendent. I have repeatedly seen how hard work is being rewarded at golf facilities nationwide. Golf Course Superintendents are becoming the go-to leaders for large, complex projects at their facilities because of their strong management ability and unique set of working skills.

Over the last few years, I have found one of the best ways to recruit new talent is to hire a few new young adults each season. There will be the task of onboarding and training, but I have found, over the years, hard-working college-age adults, whether in or out of school, who are unsure about what they want to do or where they want to end up. Usually, these candidates apply to a golf course because they are already interested in golf maintenance, have a passion for golf, or love working in outdoor spaces. Once they are part of the team, we need to do our part to create a fun culture that encourages and rewards them. We want our recruits to see that a career in golf course maintenance can be an excellent life path for them. My three assistants and my two interns all fall under this category, having been unsure of their future paths until discovering our profession. It usually doesn't take much convincing when people see what this career offers and how much opportunity exists. Always keep your eye open for the next diamond in the rough.



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March - April 2024



Day of Education at The Country Club

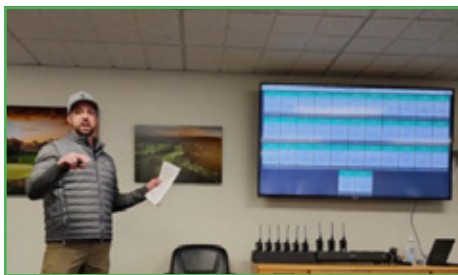
By: Ryan Boudreau, Assistant Superintendent, Framingham Country Club



Shaughn Mitchell
Photo Credit: Dan Peterson



Ryan Vierra
Photo Credit: Dan Peterson



Anthony Howard
Photo Credit: Dan Peterson

This past February, at The Country Club, about 40 Assistant Superintendents and Equipment Managers met for an informative day of education. Dave Johnson (Director of Grounds), Toby Christoun (Equipment Manager), Anthony Howard (Superintendent), Aidan O'Sullivan (Senior Assistant Superintendent), Shaughn Mitchell (Assistant Superintendent), Ryan Viera (Assistant Superintendent), Nick Cyrus (Grounds Administrator), and Patrick Laxton (Assistant GM) each shared their personal career experiences.

The main themes for the day included personal growth, the importance of communication among team members and across departments, evaluating the lifespan of equipment and determining the best purchasing options, how to inspire and develop staff, creating a positive work environment, and the invaluable role mentors play in a person's career.

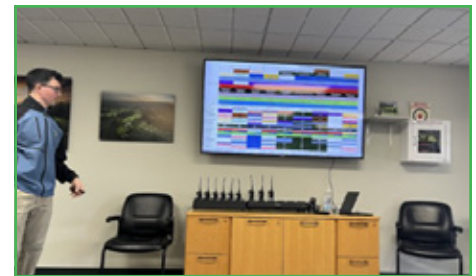
What would a meeting at the host site of the 2022 U.S. Open be without some discussion on preparing the golf course for one of the pinnacle events in golf? Many of the days' presenters touched on their experience leading up to and during the cham-



Patrick Laxton
Photo Credit: Dan Peterson



Aidan O'Sullivan
Photo Credit: Dan Peterson



Nick Cyrus
Photo Credit: Ryan Boudreau

pionship. We started the day with a mock morning meeting similar to U.S. Open Week. Later on, we received insight into discussions with the USGA during afternoon meetings utilizing data collection to reach the targeted performance of putting surfaces, logistics of mobilizing equipment and leading crews throughout the property, as well as ordering of supplies for staff and volunteers (spreadsheets that would make your head spin).

And, of course, the topic of topdressing was addressed. As many of you know, Dave loves playing with sand and topdressing is a major part of their operation. One of



BEALS + THOMAS

“Day Of Education” continued



Toby Christoun

Photo Credit: Dan Peterson



the key takeaways from this topic was the importance of communicating with your Equipment Manager to game plan and make the necessary adjustments post-application. This is not only important to minimize wear on equipment but also to the mental well-being of those who care for the equipment.



Attendees getting a lesson in curling

Photo Credit: Dan Peterson

The day concluded with a rare opportunity to throw some “stones” in the curling building at the club. We had a great instructor to give us a lesson on rules and techniques. I am glad to report there were no major injuries! Although many golf course operations are not to the scale of The Country Club, much of the aforementioned themes can be applied across any operation.

The Assistant Committee is committed to pursuing valuable education for our members and we are grateful to The Country Club for all their efforts in making this another successful event.

Assistant Superintendent Spotlight: Peter White- Ekwanok Country Club

Interviewed by Daniel Peterson, Assistant Superintendent Pocasset Golf Club



Peter at Machrihanish Dunes

Thank you for taking the time to participate in our ongoing Assistant Spotlight series. Tell me about your path to your current position, Assistant Superintendent at Ekwanok Country Club in Vermont.

I first got into the profession in high school when I joined the grounds crew at Worcester Country Club and fell in love with being out on the golf course. I particularly remember a slight outbreak of Pythium being the catalyst of my decision to pursue a career in turf; I had no idea grass could be infected with diseases, and I was immediately fascinated. My mother is also a Stockbridge graduate, so when I told her what I had learned at work that day, she introduced me to the Turfgrass Management program and I knew that was where I wanted to be. I fully immersed myself in the Turf Program at Stockbridge/UMass; I worked at the Joseph Troll Turf Research Center and in the greenhouses, joined the Turf Club, and really tried to make the most of my time on campus to prepare myself for my career. I was President of the Turf Club my senior year,

and in 2013, we won the GCSAA Turf Bowl competition. I interned at Brae Burn Country Club in West Newton, MA for 2 years, before spending a summer at Machrihanish Dunes, an environmentally sensitive golf course nestled in the dunes of southwest Scotland. Upon graduating, I returned to Brae Burn for 3 more seasons as an Assistant, where in addition to my daily duties on the championship course, I oversaw operations on the 9-hole course and was responsible for the grounds around our tennis facility. In 2016, I decided to make a change and moved to Ekwanok Country Club in Manchester, VT. I have loved being a part of such a unique club with such a fascinating history and have loved seeing how proud our membership is of their club.

What have been the most challenging moments in your career, and can you give me an example of how you handled them?

One of the more difficult challenges I have faced has been my transition from Brae Burn to Ekwanok. At Brae Burn, I worked both alongside, and then later in

Peter White (continued)

a supervisory position, with almost all our staff. That longevity made the transition to supervisor very easy, as I had developed strong relationships with the staff and when I transitioned from intern to Assistant, everyone was extremely receptive to my ideas and instruction. In contrast, when I arrived at Ekwanok, I had to re-develop those relationships with a staff that has mostly worked here longer than I have been in the business. I had to prove that I could assimilate with the crew, but also needed to establish the rapport required in order to earn their respect and trust. I strive to lead by example and foster collaboration and teamwork, so that each member of our staff sees and respects me as one of the leaders of the team, and also as one of its equal contributors. I really enjoy the mentorship opportunities that present themselves, I love to explain “the why” behind everything we do. I feel like teaching someone why we do something a certain way creates a sense of understanding and buy-in, and at the end of the day helps us to put our collective best foot forward.



Bunker Renovation

What is a task you enjoy doing at work? Do you have any tasks you no longer participate in that you would like to?

After what I can only estimate as 25,000+ cups changed, I still enjoy a cup-changing loop. It affords me the best way to see the property each day, offering insight on soil moisture, disease and insect scouting opportunities, evaluations of course conditioning, and real-time monitoring of our staff so that we make sure we are always presenting our best version of Ekwanok every day. I love soaking in the sunrises up here in the mountains as well, there's nothing more peaceful and beautiful than the golf course early in the morning. Not to mention, it's a great opportunity for my co-pilot Ziggy, my 3.5 year old Australian Shepherd, to stretch his legs and ward off the geese. As far as a task I no longer get to do, I definitely miss mowing greens. There is something to be said for just getting out on the course, putting on your favorite podcast, and mowing some grass. It brings me back to my roots on the golf course and is a great way to get the blood flowing early in the day. The exercise doesn't hurt either.

How do you maintain a work/life balance, given the specific strains Assistant Superintendents can be placed under?

Balance is certainly something I have placed more importance on as I have progressed in my career. I think the most important thing to remember is that the golf course will always be there tomorrow. There is a limit to the amount of productive work you can accomplish if you work yourself into the ground every day. I think that as you get more and more familiar with your property, you can anticipate future problems and address them proactively, rather than having to be on high alert at all times. Developing a staff that you can trust also plays a huge role in being able to find that balance, knowing that everyone can be accountable for playing their role each day. Actively choosing to make time for my hobbies and other obligations is something I have built into my daily life. I'm a new Dad, so going home to spend time with my family has a whole new degree of importance for me. Making the time to mow my lawn and tend my vegetable garden, or sneaking out for an afternoon fishing are also motivators for me to go home when the



Ziggy at Sunrise

Do you have upcoming, or have you recently completed, capital projects at Ekwanok? Is there a capital project you would most like to participate in?

In 2019, the membership at Ekwanok decided that they wanted to renovate the practice facilities, as well as add croquet to the club's offerings. With the help of NMP Golf Construction, we installed a croquet lawn, renovated the driving range tee, and built a new short-game practice facility, consisting of an additional putting green, a chipping fairway, a chipping green, and two practice bunkers. That project was my first exposure to major capital renovations on the golf course, so it was great to interact with the contractors and find ways to divide my time between our daily operations and the needs of the project. Looking to the future, the club is currently planning for a new HDPE irrigation system as well as a bunker restoration project. I am very excited about each of the upcoming projects for different reasons. The irrigation system will be another great large-scale, contracted project to learn from, while the bunker project is likely going to be an in-house operation, which will provide me with valuable experience in balancing daily operations with the demands of an in-house construction project.

Peter White (continued)



2013 GCSAA Turf Bowl Championship Team

work is done.

Tell me about winning the GCSAA Turf Bowl!

Winning the GCSAA Turf Bowl in 2013 was the perfect culmination of my college career. As a freshman at Stockbridge, I watched our team place 2nd in the competition and can remember the excitement within the program when they came back to campus. We immediately made it our goal to bring home that trophy as soon as we could. We had close calls in 2011 (3rd) and 2012 (2nd), so when my turn as President of the club came around, we knew what we had to do. After countless weekly review sessions with our professors, practice exams, collaborative case study preparations, and weed I.D. walks around campus, we flew off to San Diego feeling fully prepared. Despite all the preparation, each time our name was not called as the results were announced, we began to get more and more nervous that we had somehow made a drastic mistake. So, when we were finally called as the winning team, the elation felt all the more sweet, as we had finally achieved our goal. I still remember jumping out of my seat and being caught by one of my fellow teammates. I may or may not have shed a tear or two, but I think I can speak for the group of us and say that it was one of the best days of our time at UMass.

You have had experiences working and volunteering at many different golf courses around the world, tell me about your experiences and how they impact how you approach your career.

I think the greatest lesson I have learned across all of my experiences is the importance of being adaptable. I've spent most of my career at private country clubs, where I have been fortunate to always have the resources available to do the best job possible. When I arrived at Machrihanish Dunes, I was the 6th and final crew member for the season, so I learned how to be creative in order to care for such a large property with so few staff. In my experience volunteering for tournaments (The Senior Open Championship, and The Players), I was able to see just how meticulous you can be when even more resources are available. I pull from all of these



Bunker Preparation at The Players (TPC Sawgrass)

experiences daily, always trying to find ways to be more efficient. We're all in the business of trying to provide outstanding golf experiences for our members or customers, so being adaptable is key to finding ways to do that better every day.

Besides Ekwanok CC, what are your favorite courses you have played?

I loved playing Brae Burn, I loved how Ross's design required you to think your way through the golf course. I'm not a great golfer, so it was especially important for me to make the smart choice rather than to take the risk. While in Scotland, I loved playing links golf, no two rounds were ever the same. Machrihanish Dunes was always fun, the rawness of the terrain resulted in enjoyably unique walks around the golf course each time. I was fortunate enough to be able to travel across to Islay and play The Machrie, on possibly the windiest day I've ever played. The greens there were perfect that day, and I recall the Superintendent saying it was his first round of the year; he then proceeded to play scratch golf while the rest of us struggled.

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Rise and Grind

By Greg Cormier, CGCS, Client Representative for Tom Irwin, Inc.

As a society, we are always pushing to get to the next level. We start learning this in school trying to get higher grades. It translates into your career, trying to climb the ladder and earn more money, and more credentials. We go from having a transcript, and then a resume, to a list of our accomplishments on LinkedIn.

Make sure you enjoy the process/journey because there is no point at which you arrive at your goals and then just relax. There is always another goal to hit, something to accomplish. Whatever level or rank you are at right now must be enjoyed, because at what point will you start to enjoy the journey? If not now then when?

We often think once we get that first real job life will be good. Once we find that special someone and get married. Once we get that house we wanted. For some reason, once you get those things you worked so hard for, you quickly develop a new list of goals to achieve, and you start all over again. You believe everything will be perfect when I hit these goals, or get these things into my life.

When you are always chasing the next level, many of us forget to enjoy how far we have come and what we have accomplished.

Stop and think once in a while about where you are now in your life compared to a week, month, or year ago, What about 5 years ago, 10 years ago? Celebrate that for a few minutes. Drive and passion are great to have, but it's ok to reflect back also, and celebrate your success. I know for me I forget to do this sometimes. That rise and grind mentality is awesome, but don't forget to look in the rearview mirror once in a while, you might be surprised by how far you have come and what you have already accomplished. If you haven't accomplished much at all, but you found complete happiness. Good for you because that is uncommon!



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March - April 2024



This article features Tim O'Brien a member of the GCSA of New England and appeared in the TELEGRAM & GAZETTE newspaper and the Mass Golf WEEKENDER publication of April 5, 2024.

Golf: Green Hill superintendent Tim O'Brien helps friend in Brazil, while head pro Matt Moison tends to tasks in clubhouse

Bill Doyle Correspondent *Published 12:49 p.m. ET March 30, 2024*

While Green Hill Municipal Golf Course head pro Matt Moison spent part of the winter refinishing the hardwood floor in the clubhouse, superintendent Tim O'Brien volunteered for nearly a week to help a friend build a golf course in Brazil.

"I think I won that deal," O'Brien said.

From Feb. 8-13, O'Brien, 41, worked and stayed in Porto Belo, Brazil, with Butch Soto, the golf course construction manager at Porto Belo Golf Resort. The two had remained in touch after Soto served as a consultant for bunker renovations at Green Hill two years ago.

O'Brien, who is in his fourth season as superintendent, works for BrightView, a national landscaping company which has a contract with the city of Worcester to maintain Green Hill. Soto has worked on many projects for BrightView.

"It was fantastic working with him," O'Brien said. "We clicked very well from the start. Then the relationship just kept building. He likes whiskey. I like whiskey. He likes cigars. I like cigars. He's been in the industry for a very long time, and I gravitate toward that kind of experience and leadership."

Soto, 64, of Largo, Florida, has helped build or renovate more than 90 golf courses in the U.S. and as far away as Mexico, the Dominican Republic, Singapore and Malaysia. Green Hill is the only course he has worked on in New England.

Soto lives in Florida, but his wife, Mercedes, was able to spend a lot of time with him when he worked at Green Hill.

"She liked it there, and I liked it there," he said from Brazil. "We really liked the area, I liked Tim, I liked the BrightView people, and it all went well."

O'Brien followed Soto around in Brazil and watched how he oversaw a crew of workers who are building the front nine this year. "It was like Bring Your Kid To Work Day for Butch," O'Brien said.

"Tim is a very hard worker," Soto said. "He's a good people person from a diplomatic standpoint. He deals with a lot of different personalities with his crew."

The resort's front nine could open as soon as the end of this year, and work is expected to begin on the back nine next year.

O'Brien also helped spread grass clippings called sprigs on a couple of greens. He wasn't paid anything, and he took care of his own flights, but he said the trip was well worth it. In their downtime, the owner of the irrigation company working on the course took O'Brien and Soto hiking up mountains and near a waterfall along the coast, and they swam in the water below it. They were awed.

"We saw monkeys in the trees, all that stuff, lizards, everything," O'Brien said.

Porto Belo Golf Resort is only a one-minute walk to the nearest beach on the Atlantic Ocean. It's a high-end course that the owners want to be PGA Tour quality and it will be the only golf course in South America with lights. According to golflink.com, there are only two 18-hole, regulation length golf courses with lights in the U.S.

Soto said it has rained so often in recent months in Brazil, he has had to remain in his apartment for up to a week and a half at a time waiting for the course to dry enough so he can run his machines on it. It's summertime in Brazil when it's winter in the U.S. So it was 85 degrees when Soto spoke to the T&G recently.

Soto said the weather and him taking over after the original project manager was let go slowed the construction of the course. His predecessor installed five bunkers on the driving range, and Soto had to remove them.

"This is probably one of the first times in my career," Soto said, "where I'm doing a brand new golf construction and a remodel at the same time on the same property. It's crazy."

O'Brien hopes to become a better leader by observing Soto handle his crew. "He was level headed the whole time with a steady hand," he said. "Didn't matter what you threw at him, he was just calm and cool."

Soto speaks only English and relied on an interpreter at times because some of his workers spoke only Portuguese or Spanish.

Refinishing a hardwood floor may not seem as much fun as travel-



ing to Brazil, but Moison isn't complaining. He likes to work with his hands and not just with golf clubs in them.

"That's the favorite part of my job," he said. "I love doing construction work and projects."

A company was hired five or six years ago to refurbish the floor, but Moison decided to do it this time with the help of a couple of others, including Gino Ramaldi from the clubhouse restaurant, the Grill on the Hill.

They refinished the floor in the function room, the hall outside the carpeted pro shop and around the bar in the restaurant. For a couple of weeks in late January, they strip-sanded the floor with sanders rented from Home Depot, washed it, stained it a darker walnut color and polyurethaned it.

"Seventy-five percent of the people who walk in here don't even notice," he said.

Moison plans to refinish the hardwood floor at least one more time before he retires.

Moison's father, Ken, who died last year, worked as a contractor. "I always tell people I grew up sitting on the end of a board," Moison said. When his father wanted to cut a board, he would have his son sit on the end of it so it didn't move.

A couple of years ago, Moison and his assistant, Matt Foley, built a new counter with a slate-tile top in the pro shop.

Moison has done all sorts of projects at the three homes he has owned over the years. At his first house, he renovated his attic and built a spiral staircase up to it so his children could use the space as a library. At his second home, he built a kitchen and bathroom between the house and the garage, and he converted the garage into a living room. At his current home, he installed 11,000 pavers in the driveway and built a stone patio and a stone wall.

O'Brien hopes to spend two weeks with Soto in Brazil next winter, but he's also looking forward to improvements he has planned for Green Hill this season.

He expects to get more done by hiring a larger maintenance crew with fewer full-time workers. In the past, he had crews of 10 or 12 workers. This season, he'll have 15-17. About half a dozen of the workers will be Shrewsbury High basketball players. Shrewsbury High coach Adrian Machado is a Green Hill member. The expanded crew will be counted on to take better care of the bunkers and greens.

BrightView has merged its landscaping, tree and golf course maintenance operations so O'Brien has access to the landscaping and tree departments for the first time. In March, a five-man landscaping crew took care of Green Hill's mulch beds. The tree crew is scheduled to eventually remove and prune trees.

By June, O'Brien plans to mow all 18 holes in the morning three

days a week instead of mowing nine holes six days a week to avoid bothering golfers as often.

O'Brien plans to install new cups and pins on the greens this week.

O'Brien said after years of golfers asking him to mow a path through the native area up the hill from near the 11th green to the 12th tee, he will do so this season. The path will allow walkers to take a more direct route than the winding cart path to the 12th tee. He said he'd also mow a path from the 14th green down the hill to the 15th fairway to provide a shorter route to the 15th tee.

Green Hill opened for the season on Saturday, March 2, and the next day, the course hosted 280 golfers as the temperature reached into the low 60s.

"Everybody just wanted to get out of the house," Moison said. "I had no complaints or problems, which is always good. They all left the pro shop with a smile on their faces. Whether they finished with one is a different story."

That was quite a turnout considering the course was open only from 8 a.m. until 4:30 p.m. and no carts were allowed on the course at the time. By comparison, on a busy summer weekend day when the course is open from 6:30 a.m. to 8 p.m. and carts are allowed, Green Hill hosts about 300 golfers.

Submissions welcome

You can suggest story ideas for this golf column by reaching me at the email listed below. Comments are also welcome.

—Contact Bill Doyle at bcdoyl15@charter.net. Follow him on X, formerly known as Twitter @BillDoyle15.



Centennial Snapshot

Presented by Ryan Boudreau, Newsletter Chairman

As we celebrate the 100th year of our Association, we will be digging through the archives to pay homage to those who have come before us. We might as well start from the beginning, well at least the first published edition of the Newsletter. Formerly known as the Greenkeepers Club of New England, the Board of Directors created the Newsletter with the sole purpose of serving its members through sharing information and viewpoints by people in the industry. The same purpose of the Newsletter still exists today and we encourage you to share your knowledge and opinions, no matter the topic. (Please note that archived newsletters are available on the GCSANE website)

Greenkeepers Club of New England
NEWSLETTER

May, 1929. Vol. 1, No. 1.

Editor
Guy C. West
Associate Editors
Frank H. Wilson, Jr. James McCormack

"It is well for a man to respect his own vocation whatever it is, and to think himself bound to uphold it, and to claim for it the respect it deserves."
Charles Dickens.

This newsletter comes to you with one purpose, to serve you. It aims to help you, to give you the viewpoints of various men in this field of greenkeeping. All of the articles in this issue have been written by members of the Board of Directors of your club, men who are earnestly trying to make this club a vital force, serving its members well. Do you appreciate all that your Directors are doing for your club?

This then is your newsletter. It is on trial. Help it to help others. Your suggestions and articles for it are desired.

The May meeting held at the Charles River Country Club, Newton Centre, Mass. gave all who attended a fine opportunity to inspect the new demonstration plots which were planted last Fall in conjunction with the Green Section. Experiments are being carried on with various kinds of bent, fertilizer experiments, arsenate of lead, and height of cut. These plots are for you, and you should plan to inspect them often. The experiments are there under New England conditions for you to see at any time, and Frank Wilson will be glad to tell you about them when you drop around!

Plan to take in the June meeting, at Bear Hill Country Club, Wakefield, Mass. Let's get together!

NEWSLETTER

THE MAINTENANCE OF STOLON GREENS

Whether a putting green has been developed from seed or stolons, the quality of the turf depends on drainage, location, and the quality of the soil. It is a well known fact that all greens on a golf course do not produce the same results with the same treatments. Experience teaches us that each green is a problem in itself, but the following plan of maintenance has been generally followed on the stolon greens at the Lincoln Country Club.

Nine of our greens were planted with stolons in the Fall of 1928 and were opened for play in June, 1929. The second nine were planted in the summer of 1928 and opened for play the following spring.

As soon as the frost is out of the ground and the greens are dry enough, we roll them with an ordinary putting green roller. Our first top dressing is put on as soon as the grass begins to make new growth. This top dressing consists of one cubic yard of compost to which is added 25 pounds of ammonium sulphate and 50 pounds of 6-3-2 fertilizer for each 5000 square feet of green. This is followed up by a similar top dressing three weeks later, omitting the 6-3-2 fertilizer.

During the playing season, we top dress on the average of once in five weeks. This, however, is determined by weather conditions. With the last top dressing in the Fall, 100 pounds of bone meal is applied to each green.

As a preventive against brown patch, we have used several fungicides over a period of five years. During the last two years we have had very good results by treating with bichloride of mercury in April and May, three ounces to each thousand square feet of green, and by using a chlorophenol mercury preparation during the brown patch season.

The results obtained were especially encouraging during the season of 1928 which was considered to be one of the worst this district has experienced. For the last two seasons, we have watered our greens early in the morning. This, we believe has also helped to eliminate brown patch trouble. A treatment of bichloride of mercury solution in the Fall has also seemed to check snow-mold.

The first three seasons, we did not cut our greens as short as the regular putting green, as we believe it gave them a better chance to make a good foundation. Since then we have lowered our mowers and the last two seasons have been cutting them to the desired putting green closeness. We cut our greens daily and at times during the height of the growing season, find it necessary to cut them twice a day.

Very little weeding has been necessary on these greens as the thickness of the turf prevents weeds from growing. We have, however, had some chickweed in several of our greens. By treating with arsenate of lead, most of this was eliminated in one season. Our trouble with weeds undoubtedly was mostly due to green top dressing which we used during the first two seasons.

We have a nursery of the same strain of stolons as used on the putting greens. This we feel is very necessary in order to repair quickly any damage and also keep the greens of uniform texture and color.

We believe that the care of seeded and stolon greens is very nearly identical after the first two years. During this time, stolon greens require more frequent and heavier applications of top dressing than do seeded greens.

JAMES McCORMACK

BRAEBURN VELVET

From my experience I believe that velvet bent grows best on peaty soil. The eleventh and seventeenth at Braeburn, nearly solid velvet bent, have soil which is peat mixed with sandy loam. These two and nine or ten others were seeded at the same time with fourth German mixture and to my regret, the only two where the velvet bent has exceeded all of the other bents.

In caring for velvet bent greens, it is necessary to go slowly in the Spring; if you try to force them in the Spring and get cold rainy weather the latter part of April, they will go back.

NEWSLETTER

I get good results from a dressing of loam in the Spring, and after that about six or seven pounds of sulphate of ammonia mixed with four or five sheafherrows of loam every two or three weeks until October. What I consider the best dressing of all is compost made from equal parts of loam and horse manure, piled up for two years and turned over several times. A dressing of this applied in May and another in July not only acts as a fertilizer, but it holds the moisture around the roots of the grass in the hot weather, and saves a lot of watering.

I have a strong feeling that more than seventy-five per cent of the present day diseases on putting greens are caused by over fertilizing and over watering.

JOHN SHANAHAN

WINCHESTER BENT

At Winchester we have four different kinds of bent. Five years ago I got some stolons from Rhode Island which were supposed to be Rhode Island bent, but I proved them to be Seaside Bent. One year later I got some which were supposed to be the Washington strain. I planted four greens with this strain, and felt I had greens second best to none in the country, but later this strain gave me all kinds of trouble, being subject to brown-patch and snow-mold. In order to keep them from looking like the map of the world I had to top dress them every week!

Later on I was able to get the real Washington bent, and also some Metropolitan, and these two I am glad to write about, as I am having good results with them, and they make good putting greens. They do not require the care the other strains do.

In taking care of my bent greens, I mow them every day, using the well-known roller type of putting green mower, set to cut as closely as possible. I top dress them six or seven times during the growing season, using a dressing consisting of two-thirds screened top soil and one-third sharp sand, and containing ten to twenty pounds of sulphate of ammonia and fifty pounds of poultry manure per green, the whole dressing being well mixed first.

When planting stolons into nursery stock I believe in broadcasting the stolons as when planting a green. By raking with an iron rake, and then cutting with a high wheel lawn mower with grass catcher attached, you can easily have your stolons all ready for planting, thereby avoiding the necessity of pulling the matted stolons apart and chopping the long runners, thus saving much time. I prepare the ground as I would for seed, covering it as evenly as possible with stolons, taking care not to get them in bunches, as they would heat when watered. I then cover with one quarter inch of loam, and keep ground moist until well started.

THOMAS FAHEY

CHANGING FESCUE GREENS TO BENT

The process of changing fescue bent greens to seeded bent greens is slow and tedious, and for the first two years it seems as if little had been accomplished. The success of the year's work depends to a great extent on what luck you have with the weather, as a cold wet period may cause complete failure. At the start the most important item to be considered is the seed. Buy the best seed you can obtain and have it tested for purity and vitality. Buy it from a seed firm that obtains its seed from the same source each year.

The first and second years seed both Spring and Fall, either scratching the greens both ways with sharp-toothed rakes, or using some kind of a cut-in seeder. If the first method is used, sow the seed directly onto the grass as evenly as possible, top dress lightly with a sandy top dressing, and rub it into the green thoroughly; water the green well without flooding it. Use about one pound of seed per thousand square feet

NEWSLETTER

of green surface. At the beginning of the third year the bent will begin to show, and if South German mixed bent has been used, small patches of velvet bent the size of a silver dollar will be scattered over the greens. These patches grow in size from year to year, but slowly. After the second year sow early in the Fall, preferably in September, mixing the seed evenly through the compost, or better still using a cut-in seeder.

A nursery of bent seed helps materially in that winter killed patches can be soddied and chick weed plugged out with bent.

At the end of the fifth year your green should be nearly all bent.

FRANK H. WILSON, JR.

"LET THIS BE A WORLD OF FRIENDS"

HUBBARD

John Shanahan is spending his extra time this year looking after landscape work, cleaning and beautifying around Braeburn. Most of us could spend some time along this line!

Secretary Mitchell is planning to strip his eleventh green at Kerwood this year and reseed with pure Kerwood velvet bent. Read the story of Kerwood Bent in the June "Newsletter."

Tom Galvin has demonstrated how top dressings of sand will help dry wet areas on several approaches this Spring. Tom also enlarged several tees last Fall. Rhode Island is in fine shape this Spring!

Mike O'Grady is working hard at New Bedford carting away tons of rocks from the site of his new ninth fairway.

Ernest Lord has started a fine nursery of South German mixed bent at Cahoon, thirty by a hundred feet. Have you a good nursery?

John Lestrin expects to be busy this Summer laying two new greens.

How about visiting your fellow member who is located near you?

C. E. TREAT

SOAP FOR BALL WASHERS

The following information is given by a manager and owner of a large laundry. To dissolve in cold water to make suds and to rinse also, a low teter soap is needed, such as an olive oil soap of low teter strength. For a builder, to remove the dirt, and to prevent "killing off" of the soap, "Oxalite" is very good. Hence a very good soap for use in all ball washers consists of half an olive oil soap of low teter strength and half Oxalite, mixed thoroughly.

I have used such a mixture all this year to date, and have found it better than any others I have tried. This soap does not remove the paint from the balls but does clean well, and also lasts well in the washers.

GUY C. WEST

POULTRY MANURE AT WOODLAND

Several years ago we started using pulverized poultry dressing at Woodland and have had such success with it that we now depend in great measure on this one product for our greens.

We use this poultry manure mixed with loam and sand—2 parts poultry, 4 parts loam, and 2 part sand. We have also discovered that by dressing the greens with clear poultry dressing, using a fertilizer spreader and then brushing it in or matting it, that we can dress the eighteen greens in less than a day. We have used as high as 100 pounds per green. However, the greens should be well watered after the dressing should either method be used. We have taken advantage of many rainy days to put this material on clear, and it makes the ideal way.

It is well in using poultry manure, as with many other things, to mix or use with a little "grey matter," as a little headwork in knowing when and how to use it helps greatly.

C. E. TREAT



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Wellness Corner: Coffee's Brain-Boosting Effect Goes Beyond Caffeine

By Dr. Mark Hyman

If you love your morning cup of coffee, get ready for some good news. This study found positive neurobiological impacts from drinking coffee using functional MRIs, like boosted connectivity in the higher visual network and the right executive control network, which are linked to working memory, cognitive control, and goal-directed behavior. These same effects were not found from caffeine-infused water, meaning the coffee was impacting the brain through ways other than its caffeine content. Researchers found that individuals drinking coffee exhibited a heightened state of preparedness, being more responsive and attentive to external stimuli compared to the control group. This could mean even decaf coffee may hold some brainboosting benefits, though more data is needed.



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Upcoming Events

Mark your calendars for these upcoming events. Thank you to our hosts and hope to see you there!

May Meeting

Date: May 16
Location: Rockland Golf Course
Address: 276 Plain St.
Rockland, MA 02370



June Meeting

Date: June 24
Location: Nashawtuc Country Club
Address: 1861 Sudbury Rd
Concord, MA 01742



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March - April 2024



Pesticide Reporting 2024

Ryan Emerich Government Relations Chairman

Dear Licensed or Certified Pesticide Applicator or Licensed Pesticide Dealer:

The Department has once again launched the online forms for reporting annual [Pesticide Applicator Use and Pesticide Dealer Sales of Restricted Use Pesticides \(RUPs\)](#).

Please note that all reports of Calendar Year 2023 Pesticide Applicator Use and Dealer RUP Sales are due by June 30, 2024.

The attached brief guide will assist you with submitting your annual pesticide use report. Pesticide applicators must submit annual reports detailing the quantities of all pesticides used. Pesticide dealers are also required to submit yearly sales reports for restricted-use products. Failure to submit reports may result in the loss of eligibility for your license or certification renewal.

Paper forms will no longer be used. The Department will no longer send paper forms to each pesticide applicator, dealer, or their company. Instead, forms must be completed online. Each form includes a product look-up based on the required EPA Registration Number that you provide. Required fields for product information include a drop-down menu to make reporting the product and related data quick and easy.

You may submit one report on behalf of multiple Pesticide Applicators or Licensed Dealers who work for the same farm, company, or pesticide dealership. The Department will automatically receive notification of your submission, and a confirmation email will also be sent to the reporting party from PestExamLicense@mass.gov. The confirmation email with the attached report will be sent to the address provided by the reporting party.

Pesticide Dealers reporting RUP sales will receive a separate confirmation email for each unique product (based on the EPA Registration Number).

Submit your report today using the [Pesticide Applicator Use and Pesticide Dealer Sales Reporting](#) link.

If you have any questions, please contact the Pesticide Examination and Licensing Team at (508) 281-6787 or send email to pestexamlicense@mass.gov.

[Here](#) is a link for additional guidance for completing the report.

Sincerely,

Ryan Emerich – Government Relations Chairman

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Feature “Super Scenic Shot”



Photographer: Billy Baker **Title:** Assistant Superintendent **Course:** Blue Hills Country Club

Photo Description: “This is a shot of the 1st hole on the Championship Course looking down from the clubhouse. It was taken early in the 2023 season right before the first Monday outing of the year. I felt the crew did a great job focusing on straight lines and other details to make the course look its best for those coming out to play”

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March - April 2024



The following article was written by an Honorary Member of our Association, Jim McCabe, and was the topic of his weekly online publication titled Power Fades. Jim tells the story of a dedicated team of professionals who succeeded handling what could have been a catastrophe.

March 6, 2024

When a wildfire threatens GrayBull, those who love the turf save course

All the ingredients were in place – unseasonably warm weather (72 degrees), 40-to-50 mile per hour winds, dry ground given the low winter snowfall. So it wasn't a huge surprise to see a smoke plume 15 miles to the west at 10:30 on the morning of Feb. 26.

Nor was it time to embrace a sense of uncontrollable urgency, either, even as the wildfire surged to within 8 miles.

That's because another set of ingredients were also in place – a Director of Agronomy, committed members of his staff, unique irrigation technology, unyielding passion that is in their DNA to protect the land. So it's hardly a shock that when the raging wildfire reached the GrayBull Club in Maxwell – a town in the heralded Nebraska Sandhills – the picture had changed.

Yes, Mother Nature brought its fury. But guess what? Agronomists and superintendents bonded by a love of their turf refused to back down and ultimately won.

Now, should you tend to think golf is the PGA Tour where a parade of lads make the game look easy. Or you embrace golf for those days at your local club when you and your mates prove it is a difficult game, albeit thoroughly enthralling. No matter, you need to take this moment to shift gears. This is a golf story that focuses on the overlooked backbone to the game we all love.

A round of applause, if you will, for Michael Sheely, Director of Agronomy; for the husband-and-wife duo of Tyson Kramer (equipment manager) and Katie Kramer (assistant super); for Courtney Kohl (Integrated Pest Manager and crew member); for Ted Simmons (irrigation manager); and for Ben Boehm (who drove the water truck).

"When the fire was about 8 miles to the west of us, we kept getting conflicting reports," said Sheely. "But by 12:30 p.m. our property was on fire."

Panic was not included in Sheely's course of actions. "I'm pretty calm naturally. I don't show what's inside, but, yeah, my adrenaline was flowing."

Having been around his share of prescribed burnings (in a controlled setting, agronomists and superintendents burn grass every few years to revive the native land) "my instincts kicked in," said Sheely.

GrayBull is the latest addition to the robust string of golf courses that have been built across an approximate stretch of 256 miles of sand in north-central Nebraska. Sand Hills in Mullen, designed by Bill Coore and Ben Crenshaw, showed that if you build it beautifully they will come passionately. It opened in 1995 and others have arrived with much acclaim – Dismal River, The Prairie Club, CapRock Ranch.

Due to open later this year, GrayBull is a David McLay Kidd design that is the latest entry to the Dormie Network. While it is a magical landscape for golf, sand dunes and native grasses out in the Great Plains where the wind blows with might make wildfires a reality.

Thus did visionaries for Kidd and the Dormie Network put in a unique underground decoder-based irrigation system and Sheely was quick and prudent with the call. "We kicked all the water on."

What unfolded was nothing short of textbook teamwork, from switching on the irrigation, to hopping onto tractors to build firebreaks, to manning the water trucks to douse the golf course structures. The fire burned around the course and right up to

edges of the fairways, but never got any further.

"It was hectic and it was chaotic," said Sheely. "But by 4 p.m. it was out and everybody (on staff) looked at each other and said, 'Now, what do we do?'"

Typical of those who have the love of agronomy in their blood to always ask about the next work task and eschew the spotlight. But when he read about the GrayBull story, acclaimed designer Gil Hanse offered to sing the praises for Sheely and friends.

"I have always said that the golf course superintendents are the most under-appreciated workers in the golf industry," said Hanse, who designed CapRock, which is 140 miles north of GrayBull. "Their ability to react quickly, creatively, and intuitively to issues in the turf world is under-reported."

From Australia, where he is currently working, Hanse saluted the cohesive and well-thought-out measures of the GrayBull staff.

"To get something like this, where they have to think on their feet, not to defeat a pest or disease in the turf, but to save their golf course.

"I would expect nothing less from the superintendents that I know. Hard-working, dedicated, and conscientious are words that do not even adequately describe the passion they have for their craft."

What shouldn't be a surprise is that Sheely and colleagues did find more work after GrayBull was safely secured the evening of the 26th. They drove the water truck, which is filled from the lake on property, and joined the rest of the North Platte community to continue the firefight.

“Everybody out here helps everybody,” said Sheely, a native of Lincoln in the eastern side of Nebraska. “You just have to do what it takes.”

Sheely and his GrayBull staff will host a water-fill training for the Maxwell Volunteer Fire Department and a fundraiser has been initiated. All funds up to \$100,000 will be matched by Dormie Network Foundation to add another fire truck and expand Maxwell’s facilities.

Time for a big sigh of relief. Well, yes and no. This is the Nebraska Sandhills, where so much of the flat surface is wind sculptured. Grass-covered, stabilized sand dunes that is the sort of turf that Coore and Crenshaw, Hanse (CapRock, the 10-hole Horse Course at Prairie Club), Tom Doak (the Red Course at Dismal River), and McLay Kidd embrace.

But there are inherent concerns in the Sandhills, said Sheely, “and if we don’t get some rain, we’ll have our work cut out for us.”

That’s because “if we lose our native grasses, we lose our sand,” and that means the work for the agronomist and his staff will be compounded. Snow fences might have to be employed to keep sand in bunkers and measures will be to be taken to alleviate sand blown onto fairways.

In other words, Sheely and his staff did incredible work to help put out a fire. “But we’re not out of the woods yet,” he said, laughing softly because he appreciates the constant challenges he and fellow agronomists face.

So, too, does Hanse. “It is a tough job, but the guys I know in the Sandhills come to work every day and enjoy the wonders that nature has provided them in that region. They remain committed to providing amazing playing conditions.”



Save the Date: October 10th, 2024
The 18th Dr. Joseph Troll Turfgrass Research Classic
Fenway Golf Club, Scarsdale, NY
Robert Alonzi, Hosting Superintendent
Honoring: Bob Alonzi, CGCS and Joe Alonzi, CGCS

Fenway’s stature as one of the pre-eminent golf clubs in Westchester results from the time-tested greatness of its golf course and the rich history of its professionals. The course, designed by A. W. Tillinghast, one of America’s greatest architects, opened on July 4, 1924. Fenway’s sloping greens, deep bunkers, and deceptively difficult landing areas, have proven time and again that this golf course need be compared to no other and stands on its own as a premier test of golfing excellence. *“If it were located outside of the New York Metropolitan area, it would probably be a famous U.S. Open venue.” - Tom Doak*

This article was submitted by Dave Pease, Executive Secretary of the Alumni Turf Group (ATG)

STOCKBRIDGE ALUMNI SUPPORT STUDENT PARTICIPATION AT NATIONAL CONFERENCES

UMass Turf Students placed 3rd out of 63 teams competing in the 2024 GCSAA Turf Bowl at the GCSAA Conference & Trade Show. Many of these students work at Golf Course and Turfgrass Facilities throughout New England and the North East. Collegiate teams from 28 universities gathered in Phoenix at the 2024 GCSAA Conference and Trade Show for the 30th annual Turf Bowl. A total of 63 teams competed, with 245 participants entered.

Patrick Armstrong, Harrison Culhane, Will Morris and Jacob Zeliger, placed third in the GCSAA Turf Bowl knowledge competition and earned a \$1,000 prize that will support Stockbridge turfgrass programs. The other student team competing at the Turf Bowl comprised Matt Gillis, Lucas Melanson and Colby Soltysik.

For the first time in several years, Stockbridge sent four students to Daytona, Florida, to the Student Challenge of the Sports Field Management Association (SFMA) national conference. Students Carson Brean, Jack Collins, Jack Greeley and Ryan Malloy participated and also had the opportunity to network with Stockbridge alumni working in the turfgrass and field management industries.

<https://www.umass.edu/news/article/stockbridge-alumni-support-student-participation-national-conferences>

2024 Turf Bowl results

Team #51 from Purdue University wins 2024 Turf Bowl

Purdue's Team #51 took first place in GCSAA's Collegiate Turf Bowl Competition, presented in partnership with John Deere Golf. The winning team includes Broden Piel, Jacob Winger, Hayden Flick, Eli Ziliak and advisor Cale Bigelow, Ph.D.

Rounding out the top 10:

Penn State University - Team 1 University of Massachusetts - Amherst - Team 8 Penn State University - Team 2 Penn State University - Team 3 University of Nebraska - Team 35 Iowa State University - Team 22 Colorado State University - Team 40 Cal Poly Pomona - Team 62 SUNY Delhi - Team 15





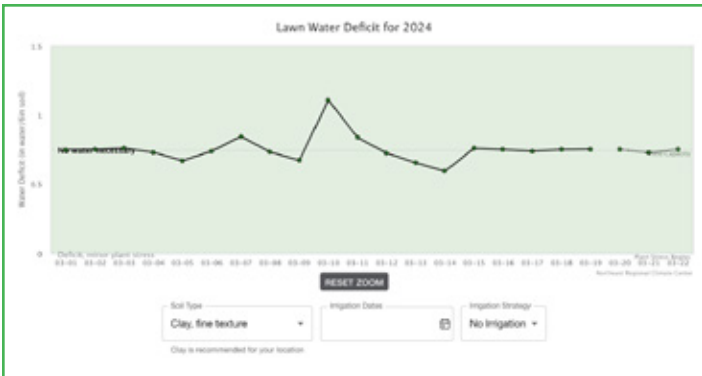
The Cornell Turf Show is back!

Welcome back ShortCUTT readers! As the growing season eases into gear (stalling this week), we are happy to announce the return of the Cornell Turf Show for its 5th season! One notable change is a move to a once-a-week format for 60 minutes. Don't worry, we'll still cover golf, sports and lawn turf, just in one episode a week. Register for our FREE, live shows held on Thursdays at 10am ET on the [Cornell Turfgrass website](#). For those who can't attend live, we'll post show recordings on [YouTube](#), and audio recordings on [Apple podcasts](#).

New ForeCast Tools

Another exciting announcement is the addition of several NEW tools to our [ForeCast website](#)! These tools are meant to provide guidance on timing of standard turf maintenance practices with the goal of optimizing how we use resources. Our hope is that these tools can help you "get more, with less".

Our new Lawn Watering Tool predicts the level of available soil water based on your location and soil type, and recommends irrigation strategies based on your goals. This is a preferred alternative to the M/W/F irrigation cycles that many homeowners default to, and has the capacity to reduce water use by over 50%. While it was built for lawn height turf, you may find it's a good approximation for the irrigation of sports fields or fairways on native soils.

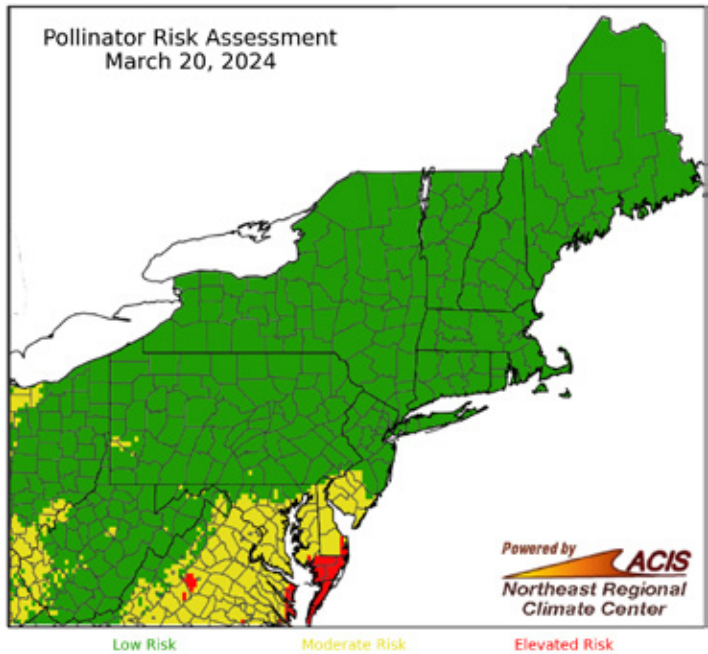


What is the optimal mowing frequency? Well, it depends on how fast the turf is growing. Lawns mowing frequencies can fluctuate between 5 and 21 days during the season based temperature, soil moisture, and day length. Our [Growth Potential Tool](#) takes these factors into account to recommend mowing strategies. The

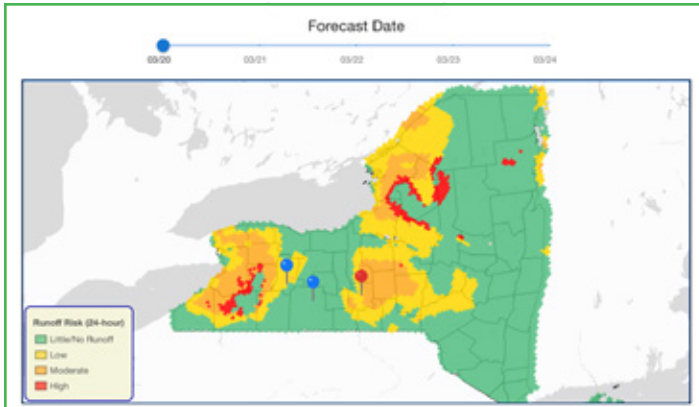
goal of this tool is to eliminate unnecessary mowing events that waste fuel, emit greenhouse gases, and needlessly wound the plant. However, you may find it also helps you time fertilizer applications or cultural practices like aeration.



Dandelion and clover are two common flowering plants in turf systems that attract pollinators. Of course, we should mow these flowers off before pesticide applications (a BMP), but we can further minimize the risk to pollinators by timing pesticides when these weeds are not flowering. Our [Pollinator Protection Tool](#) forecasts the flowering periods of dandelion and clover in the spring to help target these "flower-free" windows. Specifically, this may be useful when making preventative grub applications when a window will form between the end of dandelion flowering and start of clover flowering.



It is paramount to avoid applications of pesticides and fertilizers during conditions when material may runoff and cause water quality concerns. This [Runoff Risk tool](#) considers soil moisture and precipitation forecasts to indicate risk of runoff when applying these materials. If you're planning an application, look at this tool a couple days before to make sure your application won't be made when runoff risk is high.



As we progress through the season, we'll be reaching out to you for feedback. What do you like about the tool? How do you use it? What can be better? We'll need input from YOU, the users, to make these tools the best they can be. Please don't hesitate to send us a note with questions or comments!

Looking forward to a successful 2024 season,

Cornell Turf Team

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The image shows the Hart's Turf Pro logo, which is a red heart shape with the text "HART'S TURF PRO" in white. Below the heart is a stylized white eye. The logo is set against a background of green grass. Below the logo is the text "Quality & Trust Since 1892". At the bottom of the image is the text "THE CHAS. C. HART SEED CO." followed by the address "304 Main Street, Wethersfield, CT 06109-1826".

The image shows the logo for The Aquatrols Company. It is a circular emblem with a dark blue background and white text. The text "THE AQUATROLS" is arched across the top, and "COMPANY" is arched across the bottom. In the center is a shield divided into four quadrants. The top-left quadrant contains a white water drop, the top-right contains a white golf club, the bottom-left contains a white leaf, and the bottom-right contains a white plant. The shield is set against a white background.

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March - April 2024



Golf Course Superintendents Association of New England

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