Toronto Board of Trade superintendent Gordon Witteveen, a founding member of the Canadian Golf Superintendents Association (CGCSA) and Ontario Golf Course Superintendents Association (OGCSA), has retired. Then again, he has not really retired. By the time he was changing gears again, according to the latest National Golf Foundation figures (see story page 3), the fifth-year growth in golfers and rounds we enjoyed in 1997 has continued to first, maybe even reverse, the slight decline in those numbers in 1998.

Bandon Dunes superintendent Troy Russell (see story page 11) recently changed careers, giving up the farmer’s life of an Oregon vineyard owner for the course management duties at the heralded seaside links that opened recently along his native Southern Oregon coast.

• Developers of Forest Dunes (see story page 27), a private golf community featuring a Tom Weiskopf-designed course that opened recently at the gateway to Northern Michigan’s golf resorts, is trying to change the perception of this golf Mecca as a strictly daily-fee golf course hotbed.

• MorningStar Golf (see story page 27) has changed its name (formerly Masters Gold) and direction as it seeks to grow from a minor operator of two courses in the Scottsdale, Arizona, market to a major management firm with courses nationwide.

Change. It’s good. It’s inevitable. It’s golf.

— Peter Blais, associate editor
Levans’ farewell
Continued from page 8
reached the 1st green. It was late in the day, the last group was long gone, teeing off on 6 at this point.
But there, standing alone leaning against a lean Carolina pine, was Dr. Joe Duich, turfgrass consultant for Tee-2-Green Corp. and the “grandfather” of the G-2 bentgrass used at Pinehurst No. 2.
I sidled up. “I think they’re done for the day, Joe.”
“Oh no,” he said. “I’m waiting for Paul Jett’s crew to come down to cut to the cups for the first round. You see, this is when the real action starts.”
It’s been a blast leading the GCN editorial charge over the past two years. I just want to take this final opportunity to thank Mark Leslie and Pete Blais for their assistance as I got my feet firmly under me.
I don’t think there are two other people who know this industry and its players as well as they do. Golf Course News has been, and will remain, in good hands.

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Williams commentary
Continued from page 9
and abilities of superintendents;
• the advent of prescription soil profiles resulting from USGA and university research on greens construction;
• the cooperative efforts by manufacturers to produce and improve chemicals, machinery and processes; and
• perhaps, most importantly, the university researchers who have bred various grasses adaptable for situations in most any part of the country. Joe Duich of Penn State, Glen Barton of the University of Georgia and Terry Riordan of the University of Nebraska come quickly to mind, along with many others. These men are the real catalysts for better turf for better golf.

Computers have become all-important in course maintenance. The Golf Course Superintendents Association of America tells us 90 percent of superintendents are now computer literate. With the sophistication of computer-operated irrigation systems and the ability to be in direct contact with research bases at universities, it is a prerequisite to know where to find information when needed.

The constant competition between clubs to keep pace with one another has been another major incentive for change. As the number of clubs has grown, so has the competition.

Accompanying this has been a rise in expenses and revenues.

Construction costs have increased dramatically in the past century. A typical 18-hole course that cost $50,000 to build in the early 1900s, costs several million dollars today.

Annual maintenance costs have skyrocketed from less than $25,000 pre-World War II to $1 million and more today.

By the same token, average green fees have leapt from less than $5 in the 1930s to more than $20 at just about any daily-fee course today. Golf cars, which didn’t exist until the 1950s, add another $15 to $25 per person per round.

Wages have held steady at about 70 percent of the course maintenance budget. But the course worker who earned 25 to 50 cents per hour during the Depression makes $5 to $12 hourly today, not including health insurance and retirement benefits.

Superintendents have seen their annual salaries rise from $2,400 to $3,600 yearly to anywhere from $50,000 to $200,000. Superintendents have done their homework and are receiving their just rewards for the value and impact they have on their facilities.

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