

PREVENTIVE. MAINTENANCE:

Another Freedom to Enjoy

By Michael L. Sheffield
Regional Sales Manager
Ransomes, Inc.
One Bob-Cat Lane
Johnson Creek, Wisconsin 53038

You may remember from history a collection of writings by Thomas Paine entitled, "Common Sense," commenting on the issues of the day. These comments helped shape opinions and decisions which played a major role in the future of a young country and the freedom we enjoy today.

Though not as critical to the liberties of a free nation, the "common sense" I speak of is critical to the "freedom" of all purchasers of turf maintenance equipment. Freedom from expensive breakdowns, lost productivity, idle manpower as well as undue frustration and stress is a freedom we can enjoy with just a touch of common sense.

Most of us are familiar with the term preventive maintenance. Certainly all of us agree with the theory. Where we may differ in in the application, i.e. when, how often, how much, etc. One thing we should agree on, by virtue of our common sense, is that preventive maintenance is a necessity.

As the representative of a major turf equipment manufacturer, I have the unique opportunity to view and examine a wide variety of equipment. Common problems that I see in our own equipment usually show up in another manufacturer's equipment, all at the same location. Yet, going just down the road, another customer's machines may not exhibit any problems.

What is the difference? Why do machines work well for one customer, problematic for another? "Obviously a lack of preventive maintenance" you say. So why does

the customer with the problem swear on his grease gun that he does indeed, perform proper maintenance?

Using our common sense, let's examine and agree upon some simple issues. Before we can find a solution, we must identify and isolate each problem regarding proper equipment care.

ATTITUDE — "What does attitude have to do with preventive maintenance?" you may ask. In one word, everything. How do you (and your crew) really feel about the equipment you are using? Do you view your machinery as sophisticated, well designed proper work tools, or just another object of your day's dreary routine? Do you respect and try to understand your machines, or loathe them?

RECORD KEEPING — Do you, or your mechanic, write down a daily log of the maintenance or repairs done to each machine? If you think you are too busy, or that records are not necessary, consider this. Would you continue to use the services of a doctor who refuses to keep records of your visits or diagnosis?

PLANNING — How would you expect your crew to perform needed work if a plan for each day, week and month were not organized? Just as you plan for tomorrow's work, plan for tomorrow's maintenance.

SERVICE SCHOOLS — Whenever service schools are offered, do you take advantage of them? If so, do you go to participate as well as to learn? Everything we learn, we learn from someone else. Sharing your knowledge with others, as well as learning, makes you a contributor to your chosen profession.

THOROUGHNESS — Most people think changing the oil and greasing the zerks is about the extent of preventive maintenance. Think of your equipment just as an airplane mechanic thinks of his. Every work performed has a life threatening consequence to it. Search the owner's manuals for every possible maintenance procedure recommended.

COMMITMENT — Good intentions are great — but it takes more to do the job. How committed to maintenance (preventive or otherwise) are you? Do you per-



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form a daily checklist? Are you dogmatic about how often and how thorough maintenance is performed? Are you willing to pull a machine from its days work to take care of its needs, just as a sick employee would not be expected to work?

Common sense tells us not to expect more from something than we are willing to give. Do you feed and bathe your body daily? Do you expect to live in a clean and healthy environment? Why not lavish the same attention on your equipment?

Turf maintenance equipment, by nature, is expensive and sensitive. It's working environment is dusty, dirty, humid, wet or dry, impregnated with chemicals and fertilizers. Subject to constant jolting and vibration, operator inexperience and/or abuse, components eventually loosen and wear. That is why a *daily* checklist is important to follow.

Preventive maintenance and common sense go together. Examine your attitude and learn to respect your equipment. Keep records and make a definite plan for each day's scheduled maintenance. Learn to become a problem-spotter instead of a trouble-shooter in order to prevent breakdowns. Attend factory sponsored service schools and go expecting to learn. Once you've decided to develop a proper preventive maintenance program, carry through and do it. Use your common sense and enjoy the freedom of trouble-free equipment. ■

DAILY CHECKLIST

- Check engine oil
- Check radiator water level
- Check fuel level
- Check transmission/hydraulic oil level
- Check tire pressure
- Clean air filter element
- Lubricate as scheduled
- Inspect hoses, hydraulic lines and fuel lines for wear or leakage
- Inspect for worn, loose, missing or damaged parts
- Inspect screens, shrouds and radiators for grass blockage
- Inspect for loose, dull or damaged rotary blades
- Inspect reel to bedknife adjustment on reel mowers
- Inspect height of cut on reel mowers

CONFERENCE & SHOW October 11-14

The Conference... Jerry Clower, noted country comic and former fertilizer salesman from Yazoo City, Mississippi, will entertain Monday afternoon's attendants.

The conference committee has planned essentially the same format of last year.

FTGA funded research reports will be given Monday morning. The three educational seminars Tuesday will encompass *golf turf, lawn and commercial turf, and principles of turfgrass management.*

The popular three day workshops will cover six subjects instead of four. To do this, three subjects will be presented two days. The third day three different subjects will be covered. Wednesday morning may be given over fully to the exhibits and the workshops.

WE WON'T GIVE AWAY ALL OUR SECRETS, BUT THERE IS A HINT OF A VERY LIVELY GRAND OPENING FOR FTGA '87.

The Show... More has been added to enhance the show this year. This year aisle signs and a carpeted center aisle in the exhibit hall have been added. Once again we promise a top professional presentation of turfgrass exhibitors from all over the country. We won't give away all our secrets, but there is a hint of a very lively grand opening for FTGA '87.

The Special Events... Look for some changes and additions to the social events you have come to expect and look forward to. ■



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