



Oh, Canada!

COVERAGE OF THE 50TH CANADIAN INTERNATIONAL TURFGRASS CONFERENCE & TRADE SHOW CONTINUES ON PAGES 20-25.

Super of the Year: Stay enthusiastic

By MARK LESLIE

BRAMPTON, Ontario, Canada — Ask Bob Heron about his accomplishments and he first points away from himself, to his many assistants who have gone on to take head superintendent jobs from North America to Loch Lomond, Scotland. Ask about his family and he embellishes about 29-year-old son Scott “whose resume is better than mine.” But ask colleagues of Canada’s 1998 Superintendent of the Year and they remark about a man who has greatly impacted this career field.

“Bob Heron has a good relationship with his members and he produces a pretty fine golf club,” Gordon Witteveen of The Board of Trade Country Club in Woodbridge said about the man who is now head superintendent at Beacon Hall Golf Club here. “He’s an upbeat guy and always has a positive personality, which makes him fun to be around.”

“R. Tee’s contributions to the game of golf locally, nationally and internationally have been many and continue to be ongoing,” said golfing pal Paul Dermott



Above is Beacon Hall Golf Club’s 2nd hole, which keeps Bob Heron, below, and his crew busy in Brampton, Ontario.

of Oakdale Golf & Country Club in Downsview, who nominated Heron on behalf of the Ontario Golf Course Superintendents Association. “He’s a good player and always turns out a playable and well-maintained course for his membership. He’s always been a real proponent of bentgrass, and he was one of the first ones up here to experiment with some chemicals to eradicate poa annua.”

Indeed, several innovations in golf course maintenance have been pio-

Continued on page 20



Bubble Cover wins converts in Quebec

By MARK LESLIE

TORONTO — Be it laser shooting, Global Positioning Satellite technology or soil sensors, some of the greatest advances in the world of golf have been borrowed from other industries. Enter the latest: Bubble Covers, originally designed to lay over swimming pools to keep them warm.

Quebec superintendents have been experimenting with Bubble Covers to protect their greens from winter injury, and, according to Serge Gauthier, they have found success while saving money.

Speaking at the Canadian International Turfgrass Conference here, the superintendent at Islesmere Golf and Country Club in Laval, Quebec, said his experience with Bubble Cover over the last three winters has been extraordinary in terms of effectiveness, ease of installation and removal, and cost compared to using straw.

Traditionally, Gauthier had protected his greens during winters by laying down a strong netting, spreading a layer of straw over that and then covering both with a greens cover.

Continued on page 25

BRIEFS



PTC AWARDS \$175,000 FOR RESEARCH

The Pennsylvania Turfgrass Council has announced allocation of funds to Penn State for the 1998-99 fiscal year. The \$175,000 research grant brings to almost \$2.5 million what the council has donated to Penn State over the years. The funds will support research projects in the departments of agronomy, entomology, and plant pathology. It will also support eight scholarships and awards granted to undergraduate and graduate students.

IGCSA ANNOUNCES NEW DIRECTORS

DES MOINES, Iowa — The following superintendents were elected to serve on the board of directors for the Iowa Golf Course Superintendents Association at the Iowa Turfgrass Conference here. President Dennis Watters, of the Fort Dodge Country Club in Fort Dodge, Iowa, will be assisted by new directors Ron Stephan, Joyce Hamilton, John Ausen and Tom Verrips.

Pooch sniffs out golf course’s elusive PVC

By PETER BLAIS

BRUTUS, Mich. — Think dogs are just good for chasing geese off golf courses? Well, Steve Sump, superintendent at Hidden River Golf & Casting Club here has a PVC-seeking missile of a Labrador Retriever that can find clogged drainage caps through the deepest, murkiest standing water allowing Sump to get the flooded parts of his course back in play in two shakes of a dog’s tail.

Buddy is an 18-month-old, 80-pound yellow lab who has lived in the Sump household since he was six weeks old. Buddy began accompanying Sump to work almost immediately, riding on the superintendent’s cart and quickly developing into a top-flight goose deterrent.

“I originally brought him out here to chase the geese,” Sump said. “We don’t have any geese now. We’ve got more turkeys than anything, and a few ducks. I got him to understand not to chase the turkeys or the ducks.”

Being a retriever, Buddy loved to pick things up and bring

Continued on page 27



Buddy and partner Steve Sump quite a team at Hidden River Golf & Casting Club.

Headhunters are the new niche in job placement

By TERRY BUCHEN

WILLIAMSBURG, Va. — While networking with fellow course officials and investigating local and national job-referral services have long been used to discover superintendents’ jobs, search firms, or “headhunters,” are gaining credence with clubs and general managers.

“We are sensing there is a growing need for using search firms such as ours in the recruiting of superintendents and

directors of golf maintenance operations,” said Richard Farrell, a partner with Golf Search Personnel in Clemont, Fla. “We found we can be a neutral source for private clubs, ensuring no favoritism is involved as there can be in club politics. Also, using a search firm brings the confidentiality that needs to be involved in a search.”

Headhunters follow a similar format, though each has their own unique style.

Dick Kopplin of Kopplin Search, Inc. in LaQuinta, Calif., has been in the golf business for 28 years, many of those as a well-connected club general manager.

“We provide a specialty service to clubs where the general manager or president will contact me to help them find a qualified superintendent,” Kopplin said. “After sending them a packet of information about my company, with references, I

Continued on page 26

OTF donates \$197,000, elects directors

COLUMBUS, Ohio — The Ohio Turfgrass Foundation (OTF) has donated \$197,000 to turfgrass research and education, and elected three trustees to its board of directors.

The \$197,000 went to OTF's 10-member Technical Advisory Committee of researchers from Ohio State University and \$20,000 for scholarships presented to students of Ohio's turfgrass programs.

Glen Pottenger, elected to his first term on the board, is a certified golf course superintendent at Sugar Valley Country Club in Bellbrook. A 1974 graduate of Agricultural Technical Institute (ATI), Pottenger has been a superintendent for 28 years.

Re-elected to the board of directors were Hank Chafin and Dr. Chuck Darrah. Hank Chafin has been a board member since

1986, and is its past president. He has been golf course superintendent at Community Golf Course, Madden Golf Course and Kittyhawk Golf Course in Dayton.

Darrah has been actively involved in the turfgrass industry since 1969. While an assistant professor of agronomy and Extension turf specialist at the University of Maryland, he served as executive secretary for the Maryland Turfgrass Association. He owns CLC LABS, which specializes in providing laboratory and consulting services to the green industry.

PVC pooch

Continued from page 19

them to Sump. One of the items Buddy would frequently carry back was an extra 4-inch, green drainage cap that fit over a drain tile. The cap quickly became one of his favorite toys.

Following a particularly heavy rain last June, parts of the Hidden River course flooded when the drainage caps scattered around the course clogged with debris and clippings. Sump removed his shoes, rolled up his pant legs and started poking around through the water and clippings trying to find the caps. Meanwhile, Buddy splashed in the dark green liquid.

"For some reason I said 'Bud find your *drain*,' the name we'd given his cap toy," Sump said. "All of a sudden he starts looking around, paws under the water and pops out one of the drain caps."

"I thought maybe it was a fluke, that he'd just happened to step on it. So we went to another area and I said 'Hey Bud, go find a drain.' He starts sniffing around and sniffing around, paws under the water again, lifts out another drain cap and the water starts draining down the hole. He must have found 10 caps that day."

Sump knew there were other caps he'd been unable to find that had grown over with grass. "I'd take him out in dry conditions and say 'Find a cap.' He'd begin sniffing and then go from cap to cap to cap, pulling them out, something it would have taken me hours to do. On other courses, I'd sent guys out for hours at a time with a pitch fork and shovel looking for those things. Now I have a dog that can go out and find them."

To keep his PVC senses honed, Sump occasionally sends Buddy off in search of a cap, whether he needs to find one or not.

"Last week [late February] we got 15 inches of snow," Sump said. "I went out on my snowshoes and I started wondering if Buddy could find a cap through the snow. Sure enough, in 30 seconds he had his head down in a snow bank and out pops a drainage cap... If he sees one sometimes he'll go and pop it out on his own. That's the only down side. He'll bring it to you and sit there, waiting for his treat."

Last fall while blowing out his irrigation lines, Buddy helped find numerous lost quick couplers, locating the brass sprinkler heads by the scent of their small, PVC tops.

"Basically we trained Buddy by just playing with him when he was a puppy here in the shop," Sump said. "He'd be bored, I'd hide his drainage cap somewhere here in the shop and give him his treat when he located it and brought it back to me."

Your Choice for Treating Localized Dry Spots

Just Got Clearer.

AQUEDUCT[®]

Proven to be the most effective surfactant to treat LDS and promote the rapid recovery of turf under stress

AQUATROLS

Formulating For Effectiveness

5 North Olney Ave., Cherry Hill, N.J. 08003
1-800-257-7797 or 1-609-751-0309
Fax 1-609-751-3859
www.aquatrols.com

For More Information Call
1.800.257.7797

