

On Board

Q&A with Members of the Board of Directors

If you were given one week off in the dead middle of the season to leave and do anything you wanted what would it be?

E. Paul Eckholm, CGCS, Affiliate Member
with Yamaha Golf and Utility

My personal choice for a week break is to go somewhere there is sun and a beach with moderate temps. In other words, I would love to have a week in Maui, Hawaii. Although I hate the travel to get there, a week of total relaxation and decompression would be welcome any time of the year.



Jake Schmitz
Superintendent Olympic Hills Country Club

I would be on Little Long Lake north of Grand Rapids, with my wife and kids, spending a lazy week at a cabin. Boating, fishing, biking and hanging out by the campfire at night. Some way or another, I am going to make that happen one of these years, even though I am a golf course superintendent.

Pristine Prestwick: A Championship Venue



If you visited the quiet little town of Woodbury, Minnesota 30 years ago you probably would never have guessed that it would become the very definition of suburbia. With no downtown and acres upon acres of farmland, it was the definition of rural. What a difference 30 years makes. Woodbury has grown from a tiny blip on the edge of St. Paul to a 70,000 person super-suburb, and perhaps the heart of its growth is the Wedgewood Sub-division and its crown jewel the Prestwick Golf Club- host to the 2013 MGCSA Championship.

In its infancy, Prestwick was known as Wedgewood Valley Golf Club. The original idea of the golf course came

from a man named Norb Anderson. It was Anderson who dreamed and executed the process of procuring a golf course in Woodbury. However, the ball really got rolling when the Minnesota Mutual insurance company purchased the project and designed Minnesota's first planned golf course/residential community. That plan would become the standard across the metro area in the decades to come.

Wedgewood opened in 1985 and was designed by a host of contributing architects but the main layout was by Anderson. It opened as a public golf course that provided unlimited play memberships and remains a public course to this day. It regularly hosts outside tournaments while



By Dave Kazmierczak CGCS

Photo credit Dave Kazmierczak, CGCS

preserving a country club feel for its regular play customers. The high water mark for rounds was 42,000 in 1998 but has leveled off to between 32,000 and 36,000- the total for last year.

In 1996 the golf course and clubhouse were sold to John and David Mooty, who partnered until David eventually became sole owner in 2000. The name of the course was changed to Prestwick at the request of the seller, and reflects the Mooty's desire to link the course to the heritage of golf (Prestwick in Scotland is considered the second oldest course in existence) as well as the Mooty's Scottish ancestry.

Mooty has been the sole owner since 2000, and has shown his commitment to the course and the community by making solid changes to the course itself and by installing a full service restaurant in the clubhouse in 2005. Doubling the clubhouse, Mooty partnered with the Axel's chain of restaurants and opened Axel's at Pretwick in July of that year. In 2012 the Axel's people were bought out and the name changed to David's Chophouse, the restaurant that exists today.

While the initial layout between the large lots of Wedgewood was great for selling homes and protecting real estate property from errant shots, it left a little to be desired for playability from a golfer's prospective. For that reason Mooty hired Kurt Sandness from Sandness Design Group to devise a long term renovation plan for Prestwick in 2001. Under the direction from Sandness, Mooty and even the course Superintendent, Don Slegers and Park Construction undertook the task of changing the golf course into what it is today.

The major emphasis of the renovation was the bunkering. The total number of bunkers only changed from 67 to 76 but the positioning and location of them was a dramatic change. Holes number four and eighteen, both par fives, changed from linear, boring straight holes to strong par fives with shot placement critical to avoid bunkering designed to capture a missed shot on either side of the fairway.

Drainage was placed in every new



The Prestwick “A” Team, photo by Steve Sandberg

bunker along with a bunker liner in attempt to remedy the problem of bath tubs and contamination that was plaguing the old design.

Along with the bunkering, many tees were added or expanded to meet the demands of more and more rounds, and three of the greens; numbers seven, nine, and 13 were also re-shaped back to their original design that was abandoned for a more circular style of green.

Renovation was started in 2002 with holes two, three and nine and continued each year until 2009 when the economy worldwide and in golf in particular took a nose dive. Holes one, ten and 17 are still left on the renovation list.

But before any renovation was to take place, what Prestwick really needed was a new irrigation system. The old original block system was 16 years old in 2001 and in very bad shape. It was unable to meet the demands of higher turf quality and Mooty decided to pull the trigger on an \$850,000 tip-to-tip Toro and Flowtronix system comprising of 1,025 large sprinkler heads and roughly another 500 small heads to provide precision irrigation for the next quarter century.

It was a very hard, but very wise decision. That same system today would more than likely cost near double that price and continues to service the playing public at Prestwick at a high level. The system has grown since then, with the addition of another 175 heads to provide optimal

coverage.

The lineage of caretakers at Prestwick is a short list. Dennis Hendrickson served as the original superintendent from grow-in until 1994. He was there from the beginning and recalled Anderson literally telling him to go throw a stake in the ground, and that was going to be the first green, tee, etc. Hendrickson was succeeded by Jerry Webb, CGCS in 1994. In 2001, Dave Kazmierczak, CGCS became the third Superintendent and remains to this day.

Though the course has seen many recent changes, the people behind the scenes have been constant. Along with Kazmierczak's 13 years at the helm, Chad Braun, Equipment Manager and Building Supervisor is in his 17th



Hole 17, par 3 from the back tee. It could be your ace! Photo by Chad Braun.



Looking back onto the third hole. A pretty shot by Dave Kazmierczak, CGCS.

year. Dick Reig, Horticultural Manager is serving his 19th year as Lord of the annuals and perennials. Second Assistant Alejandro Leon has eight summers of experience under his belt. While he does not have Prestwick experience, first assistant Adam Lesmeister provides veteran leadership from years on the golf course. Even the Head Golf Professional, Tom Wahl, is in his 16th year at Prestwick. Many of the other part-time operators are at or past a decade of service. Together, they are the backbone of a team effort that makes Prestwick a high quality, beautiful course that challenges players of all skill levels.



Propane Offers A Promising

*Content and photo contributions Mark Linkletter,
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Golf Course maintenance crews can now power their mowers using a fuel that's as green as the grass they're cutting.

That fuel is propane, a product that's been powering gas-burning appliances at rural homes, farms, and businesses for decades. Found in both crude oil and natural gas, propane burns cleanly, especially when compared to gasoline and diesel fuel. In fact, propane, which is approved under the Energy Policy Act of 1992

for use by federal and state fleets as an alternative fuel, has an octane rating of 104 to 107 and allows for a higher compression ratio, enabling a propane engine to run just as powerfully and more efficiently than with gasoline, which has an octane ratio between 87 and 93. As a result, propane-fueled vehicles can meet the very tough Ultra-Low Emission Vehicle (ULEV) standards.

Lower emission costs



Alternative Part I

Propane's higher octane level, higher compression ratios, and closed systems, while being environmentally friendly, have another benefit—they lower maintenance costs.

Tests have shown that oil, oil filters, spark plugs, carburetors, and engines in propane-powered equipment last up to three times longer than gasoline-powered equivalents, and that during the lifespan of that equipment, fewer tune-ups are required. At present, new propane mowers can

be slightly more expensive than traditional gasoline equipment, but lower fuel and maintenance costs over the lifetime of the equipment more than balance the equation.

Lower fuel costs

For most grounds maintenance applications, propane is either delivered and stored in bulk tanks on site or delivered in ready-to-mount mower cylinders that are re-filled by the supplier after use. Either way,



there is a significant cost savings over gasoline. Overall, the price of propane compares favorably with the price of conventional or reformulated gasoline, historically running at under (75%) of retail costs. Many states offer fuel tax incentives or alternative fuel benefits to encourage the use of propane, helping to further increase fuel savings.

Another center of expense—fuel shrinkage—is virtually eliminated in a transition to propane. Propane is, at present, not a common fuel for cars and trucks and is less vulnerable to theft in the field and on site. Also, because of propane’s closed storage and delivery systems, fuel budget losses due to loss, evaporation, spillage, and theft, as well as contamination from rain, dirt, and other contaminants, are essentially eliminated.

Environmental benefits

A number of states across the union are either eyeing or actively pursuing legislation to cut the emissions of mower fleets owned by the state or its institutions. This, coupled with heightened senses of environmental and fiscal awareness at every level of business and education, bring new attention to clean-burning and economical propane as a fuel.

It is well known that gasoline engines on grounds maintenance equipment, in particular, emit high levels of carbon monoxide, volatile organic compounds, and nitrogen oxides. Those engines produce, on average, 5% of the nation’s air pollution, a number that can be significantly higher in metropolitan

areas. Emissions are so low that propane mowers can be used during “Ozone Action Days”—days deemed by cities or states as especially likely to foster the production of ozone—when the use of gasoline-powered engines is either prohibited or discouraged.

Propane-fueled equipment has minimal emissions. Studies indicate that smog-forming hydrocarbons are lowered 60% to 70% in propane-fueled engines vs. gasoline, along with 12% less carbon dioxide, 20% less nitrous oxide, and 60% less carbon monoxide. Toxins and carcinogens such as benzene and toluene are eliminated almost entirely as well, seeing 96% reduction in their level.

Gasoline, in addition to being a heavy post-burn pollutant, is a spillage and evaporation hazard. While propane is a gas in its uncompressed state, it is stored as a liquid. “Closed” storage and delivery systems, meaning airtight systems that keep propane in its compressed, liquid state, prevent leaking and evaporative emissions by their nature—effectively removing spillage hazards from your environment. Should a leak develop in the system, propane escapes. As a non-toxic gas, the environmental impact is minimal.

Propane tanks are also safer to have at your facility, having been rated at up to 20 times more puncture-resistant than gasoline tanks. On the whole, propane is a safer, more environmentally sound option than conventional or reformulated gasoline. Propane



Photo credit Chris Carpenter, UofM

has been referred to for years as an alternative fuel, but when it comes to powering mowers, there may be no better alternative.

Mark Linkletter is Mower Fuels Sales Manager for Ferrellgas, a nationwide propane company headquartered in Overland Park, Kansas. Find out more at www.ferrellgas.com and www.ferrellautogas.com.



Within the Leather

by David Kazmierczak, CGCS

Science, research and invention are funny things. People spend entire careers,

heck sometimes their whole lives trying to prove a theory or invent the next great thing. Some are successful, some are not. The ones who are successful become rich, famous or at least get a pat on the back from somebody. The ones who are not, well, thanks for trying.

Which is kind of tragic in a way, because there are a lot of those people who have painstakingly tried throughout history to better mankind through science and invention only to come up with nothing.

Compounding that notion of tragedy, are the people who got “lucky”. These are men and women who stumbled upon ground-breaking revelations by accident or by failure. There are many of these kinds of accidental products we know and use on an everyday basis.

Post-it notes are one of these. The 3-M corporation was working on a super-strong glue that would virtually never break. What they came up with in early trials was virtually the weakest glue ever known to man. The only thing that it would hold together was two pieces of paper. Bingo. I will go out on a limb and say there is nobody reading this that has never used a post-it note.

Another example is Viagra. The scientists that came up with Viagra invented it with

the sole purpose of helping cure arterial blockage and increase blood flow in older males. It increased blood flow alright. When the test subjects came back and reported their, um, findings it didn't take long before Viagra turned into a gold mine that kept old men and stockholders alike smiling.

Why am I bringing all this up you may ask? Well, we all have the ability to be closet researchers and scientists. All you have to do is open your eyes. Trials and tests of every theory known to man and every conceivable invention occur on a routine basis in your very environment, especially on the golf course. If you open your eyes, you might discover something new.

Such was the case for me on Sunday July 14. But before I share what I saw on that day, let me give you some background on why what I saw that day was so interesting.

About five years ago I started noticing that we would have these very long, fast growing what looked like leaf blades on a couple of our putting greens. It would last a few days and was very sporadic, yet by the end of the day they were noticeably higher than the rest of the canopy. It lasted about five days to a week and then seemed to subside.

The next season it occurred again, and I thought it was very strange so I had a couple samples sent off for analysis and asked around if anybody had experienced anything similar. The results from the samples were fairly inconclusive and ranged from a growth regulation issue to possibly a viral or bacterial problem. I found out that indeed others had experienced a similar thing with the same inconclusiveness.