

# SPORTS TURF MANAGER

... for better, safer Sports Turf

SEPTEMBER 2000

VOLUME 13 ♦ ISSUE 3

## In Recognition of Michael Bladon

AWARDED AN HONOURARY MEMBERSHIP AT THE AUGUST FIELD DAY

**M**ichael Bladon, a visionary in the sports turf industry was honoured by his fellow turf managers by being named an Honourary Life Member of the Sports Turf Association at their annual summer field day on August 16, 2000.

In January of '87, a group gathered for a brain storming session at the University of Guelph's Arboretum. They met to explore the possibilities of forming an organization to service the void in the Ontario turfgrass industry which was not being covered adequately by the only existing group speaking for turf management at that time, the Ontario Golf Superintendents' Association.

STM

Service has been the watch word of Michael Bladon. He is a member of several associations and has been on the STA Board since its inception.

The group recognized the need for an association with interests directed to the needs of those who cultured turf for a wide variety of sports, ranging from soccer and baseball to thoroughbred racing. Their discussions set in motion the organization of

the Sports Turf Association of Ontario in 1987. The mission statement of the fledgling Association was "to promote better and safer sports turf." During the past 14 years, Michael has volunteered much of his time to promoting that mission statement, particularly the safety aspect to turf for sport.

Michael hails from London, England; coming to Canada to complete his high school education in the town of Walkerton, Ontario. He left high school for a five year stint in the Royal Canadian Navy. In 1959, he came back to dry land to spend from 1959 to 1962 at the Niagara Parks Commission School of Horticulture. Upon graduation with a Diploma in Horticulture, he tried several types of employment in the horticultural industry, ending up at the Wascana Centre Authority in Regina, Saskatchewan where he assisted in maintaining that oasis of green in the land of drought and winter. After having his nose nipped by frost for four winters, he returned to Ontario to join the Grounds Department of the Univer-

Michael Bladon (right) accepts his STA Honourary Membership from STA Director Bob Sheard August 16 at the Annual Field Day.

sity of Guelph in 1969. He moved through the ranks to become Director of Grounds, a position from which he retired in 1996.

Service has been the watch word of Michael Bladon. He is a member of several associations in the horticultural and educational fields. He has served as President of the Alumni Association of the NPC School of Horticulture, but of most importance to this organization, as its first President, Past President, ... see page 2



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# Honourary Membership for Bladon

CONTINUED FROM FRONT COVER

... Editor of the *Sports Turf Manager* and as a Director since the inception of the Association. The *Athletic Field Managers' Guide* and a series of videotapes on turf were the result of initiatives originating with Michael Bladon.

While in Regina, Michael met Elaine. Elaine was a beautiful prairie girl, a nurse, and an excellent cook. That meeting and their subsequent marriage has spawned two children, John, superintendent of the Guelph Lakes Golf Course, and Alexis, a member of the staff of the Ontario Uni-

versities' Application Centre.

Mike and Elaine now wisely spend much of their time during the summer at a cottage at Lion's Head on the Bruce Peninsula. There he reads, writes humour (he wrote a Ham Landers column for *PlayBoar* magazine) and cultivates wild flowers.

Sports fields in Ontario and in Canada are safer and better from your presence, Mike, for which we give you thanks and wish you well! ♦

— Bob Sheard



## Letter of Thanks

To the Board of Directors and members of the Sports Turf Association, my thanks for the Honourary Life Membership presented to me at the Field Day in August.

Not only was it a surprise, but also it is something that I will always treasure. It is very different starting an Association versus joining one. I have to thank my wife Elaine as well as my daughter Alexis. Elaine's support and bookkeeping skills were a big help in the early stages of development. Alexis logged many hours typ-

ing for the newsletter, designing brochures, etc. Uwe Sehmerau from Tourism and Recreation, Annette Anderson, the first Turf Extension Specialist, Ron Dubyk, Robert Allen and Bruce Calhoun all played major roles in the beginning. In later years, Dr. Bob Sheard was instrumental in putting our Association on a firm administrative footing and in organizing strong boards which have kept us at the forefront of the turf industry.

Once again, thank you for this honour. I see a great future for the Association. ♦

— Michael Bladon

## Turf News Brief from the UK

NEW CHIEF EXECUTIVE FOR STRI

DR. GORDON MCKILLOP has been appointed as the new Chief Executive for the Sports Turf Research Institute. He officially took over the role on July 10.

Dr. McKillop joins STRI from the Central Science Laboratories in York. CSL is an agency for the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (MAFF). He joined CSL in 1978, where he progressed from the Science Team to Science Manager, to his position of Commercial Business

Strategy Manager, working on strategies to further the commercial development of CSL.

Growing up in Glasgow, he studied at the University of Glasgow before obtaining his Ph.D. from Reading University. In 1997, he was awarded an MBA from Henley Management College.

Dr. McKillop is looking forward to the challenges of his new appointment. He brings with him qualifications, skills and experience which will enable him to combine business management skills with science in his role as Chief Executive at STRI. ♦

**DEADLINE: OCTOBER 14**  
Content for December issue

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#### STA OFFICE HOURS

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# A Natural Approach to Dandelion Control

FUNGI CAN REDUCE AMOUNT OF HERBICIDE NEEDED FOR PESKY WEED

**A** national effort to find an environmentally friendly dandelion control has set its sights on naturally occurring fungi that weaken the weed's growth and decrease pesticide use.

Preliminary findings of a five-year search by a university-industry research team co-ordinated by Professor Greg Boland, Environmental Biology, show that using selected fungi can appreciably reduce the herbicide rate needed to effectively control dandelions.



The ban of 2,4-D in many public areas in Ontario because of concerns about high-volume pesticide use has increased the need for an effective non-chemical method of managing dandelions.

"Ideally, a biological control agent (BCA) would control dandelions on its own, but this may not be enough," says Parry Schnick, a former graduate student of Boland's. "A combination of BCA and low rates of a herbicide, however, may effectively manage weeds while decreasing the amount of chemical herbicide required."

Integrating fungi with reduced herbicide doses could decrease the cost of commercial weed management and can have the advantage of being host-specific, says Schnick. So the team is testing fungi for

the properties required to become a successful BCA (also known as a bioherbicide). These fungi – or plant pathogens – are found naturally on dandelions or in soil or plant debris.

The fungi attack dandelions by forming lesions on their leaves. This either kills the plant or decreases the energy available to it, making it less competitive. Wounds caused by the BCA that don't kill the dandelion may allow other natural pests to take hold and kill or weaken the weed.

Controlling dandelions is tough. They survive a wide range of environmental conditions, produce many airborne seeds and are perennial, which means they survive winters to grow during two or more summers. Evaluating and developing a commercially acceptable bioherbicide has been a narrowing-down process. Researchers from across the country – U of G, the Nova Scotia Agricultural College and MacDonald College at McGill University – collected diseased dandelion plants and isolated fungi that caused damage. The pathogens were then screened for specific traits such as efficacy, host range and ease of production.

Schnick tested three of the identified pathogens in combination with reduced doses of three chemical herbicides (2,4-D, diquat and glyphosate). Their effective-

ness was tested under laboratory and field conditions at the Guelph Turfgrass Institute. Each pathogen and herbicide was also tested alone, to compare single and combination treatments.

Results showed that some BCA-herbicide combinations were more effective than herbicides or BCAs alone, in both lab and field. But combination treatments were less effective under field conditions, suggesting that environmental factors may play a role in overall effectiveness.

The next step in developing a commercial product is to investigate storage and shelf-life qualities of the BCAs, as well as production costs. If more research and assessments are carried out and found promising, researchers predict a BCA product could be available in the near future.

This research was sponsored by Dow AgroSciences Canada, the Bio-Products Centre, Philom Bios, the Saskatchewan Wheat Pool, the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, and the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council.

For more information about lawn care and dandelion control, call the Guelph Turfgrass Institute at [519] 767-5009 or visit the website [www.uoguelph.ca/GTI](http://www.uoguelph.ca/GTI).

— "At Guelph," May 24, 2000,  
Juhie Bhatia, Office of Research

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## The President's Desk

JANE ARNETT-RIVERS

It's hard to imagine that September is half way past – this has certainly been a fast paced summer. And that elusive burn off I wrote of in the last news letter? Oakville hasn't seen it. In seasons past, the challenge has been keeping the turf healthy and strong during the drought periods in July and August. This year it has been keeping the surfaces playable after the heavy rains we have received. There are a lot of products on the market designed for just that – moderating moisture levels. More than in past summers, we have had field closures, especially ball fields, due to rain. The surfaces on which the amendments were applied have remained playable. I suggest you look into them, the financial investment this year has definitely paid off.

Congratulations to Mike Bladon on his Honourary Life Membership. If you have attended a symposium or Field Day over the years, you have run across Mike. A founding member of this Association, Mike has made a career of giving our industry professionalism and respectability. His interest in safety above all has been the corner stone of the Sports Turf Association. He is currently the editor of the *Sports Turf Manager*, a position we are so fortunate to have him occupy. I am happy to be on the Board which honours him rightfully. Cheers, Mike, we all look forward to many more years of your input and guidance.

Mentioning the Ontario Turfgrass Symposium, do you have your team together for the Jeopardy challenge? Last year's session was very entertaining, so don't miss out. Please call either Lee Huether at 519-763-9431 or myself at 905-847-9181. Team Oakville has agreed to step back up to the plate and try to retain the trophy. Be sure when picking your team to spread out the expertise – questions

range from sharpening bed knives to pest controls to construction.

When you register for the Symposium, don't forget to tick the Sports Turf Association Box on the form so your support is credited to us.

Something new for the Association is an educational day we are putting together with the Ontario Recreational Facilities Association, scheduled for October in the Township of East Gwillimbury. Watch for details. Topics for discussion include risk management, putting your fields to bed for the winter and getting a head start in spring, constructing the sports field, drainage and irrigation, and the basics of sports turf management. This new partnership with ORFA is very exciting and we look forward to more information sharing with their Association. ♦

## STA New Members

### Welcome to the STA

**Frank Pandullo**

Peter Pan Landscaping Ltd.  
Mississauga, ON

**Don Lobb**

Don Lobb & Associates  
Terra Cotta, ON

**Darin Ayres**

Facility Manager  
Syl Apps Arena, Paris, ON

**Jeff Stewart**

Manager of Parks & Environmental  
Services, Town of Ajax, ON

**Robin Langille**

Facility Manager  
Township of North Dundas, ON



## Ontario Turfgrass Symposium

Education & Trade Show

**January 3-5, 2001, Toronto, ON**

Support your association and save money too!

Early bird registration date: November 20!

When registering for the OTS, be sure to indicate you are a member of the Sports Turf Association, a sponsoring association of the symposium. On your registration form please  Sports Turf Association to ensure your membership credit is directed to us!

**Save more money** on the registration fees of others from your facility/organization who are not members of the STA. Non-members registered **at the same time** as a member qualify for the same lower association rates. Send the registration in the same envelope, fax it at the same time, or make just one phone call to register.

# Oakville Expands and Renovates Lawn Bowling Green

CHRIS MARK, ASSISTANT DIRECTOR – OPERATIONS, TOWN OF OAKVILLE PARKS & RECREATION

This past spring, the Town of Oakville expanded and renovated its lawn bowling green in downtown Oakville. The process, which took approximately eight weeks to complete, took several years to plan and approve due to many neighbourhood contentious issues. Following four public meetings, several Council Meetings, and several years of fund raising, the Oakville Lawn Bowling Club is now playing on a newly sodded, irrigated, tile drained and regulation size green.

Since the Club's inception in 1903, members have played on a green 109 ft. x 120 ft. Unfortunately, club members found it very difficult to bowl on a regulation size 120 ft. x 120 ft. green at other clubs, especially during tournaments due to their home green being 11 ft. smaller in one direction. Plus newcomers to the game should ideally be trained on a regulation size green. Provincially sanctioned tournaments were not able to be accommodated due to the non-regulation size green.

The primary elements of the expansion were as follows;

- Excavation and green expansion of 11 ft. This included relocation of light poles and a retaining wall.
- Installation of new plinth around the entire green
- Installation of new irrigation system and shed to house plumbing and controller equipment
- Installation of tile drainage system
- Installation of new bentgrass surface over the entire green

## Local Issues

The green expansion was very contentious with local neighbours due to:

- 1) the Club being located in a Heritage District, hence change is very difficult to accept, and frankly completely undesired by some local people. Heritage Review Committee Approval was required on the design of the shed, exterior colour and finish, and material for the new retaining wall and perimeter fence;
- 2) several trees required removal due to the 11 ft expansion; and



- 3) 11 ft. of passive adjacent parkland from a small parkette would be lost.

## Project Funding

The construction project was a partnership between the Club and the Parks and Recreation Department. Since the Club had been saving for the project for several years, a Green Expansion Sub-Committee wanted to be fully involved in the project from planning to supervision. The funding for the expansion was as follows:

Town of Oakville Loan	\$35,000
Trillium Foundation Grant	\$22,000
Parks and Recreation Dep't *	\$13,000
Club Savings	<u>\$10,000</u>
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$80,000</b>

\* needed to replace 2 other retaining walls not dependent on expansion, but required replacement

This was an interesting project because it took many twists and turns along the way. Initially, the scope of work was simply an expansion of 11 ft., new retaining wall and irrigation. Due to grant money being available, a drainage system and an entire new sodded surface over the green was included later in the project. The Heritage Committee applied significant pressure to replace a chain link fence with a picket fence which appears in historic photos. Hence, the work was not tendered as one large project with one general contractor, but broken up into many quotations for all the various work elements. This resulted in many sub-trades coming off and on the site and coordination was critical. The on-site supervision was pro-

vided by the Club Volunteer Committee, with all invoices paid by the Town so GST rebates would assist in reducing the overall cost.

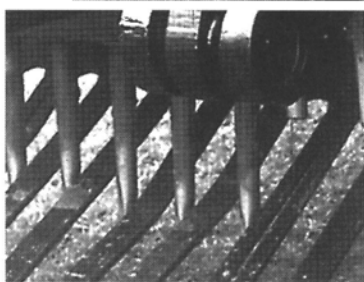
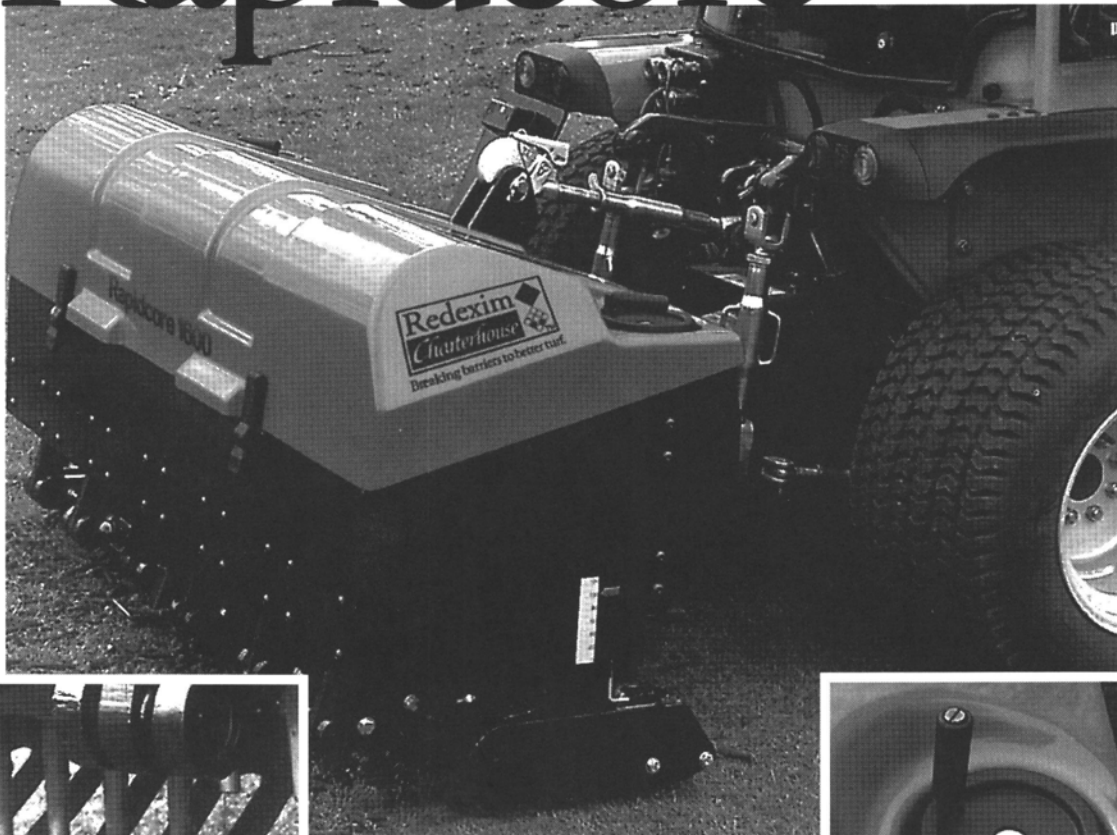
A soil and turf consultant was added to the project team since the soil for the new green and a proper nutritional program was assessed to be very important. Based on soil samples, the soil in the adjacent parkette was a very close match with the green, hence the bulk of the material required for the 11 ft. expansion could come from the parkette. This provided significant savings as the original budget estimate accounted for all green base material being imported from off-site. Additional material would be an 80/20 mix (sand/peat) to level the surface. Starter fertilizers were incorporated prior to sodding for additional nutrients.

## Tile Drainage System

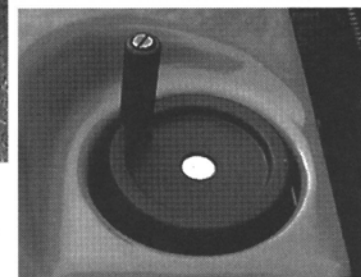
When it became apparent additional grant funds would be available, it made sense to include a drainage system for the green. Previously the green, although sand based, was poorly drained and required significant squeegee work following heavy or extended rainfalls. In total 13,500 sq. ft. were tile drained. The system included 22 trenches using 2 in. drainage pipe installed on 5 foot centers. A 4 in. diameter header line was placed along one end of the green, installed approximately 14 in. deep. A laser level was used for each line to ensure positive drainage.

The entire green is situated approximately 3-5 feet below street level, hence there were no catch basins available to provide an easy outlet. Water could either be collected in a sump hole and pumped up into a curb catch basin, or a rectangular drainage bed could be constructed behind a retaining wall to collect water from the green. The latter option proved to be the most cost efficient and effective method. The drainage bed was 12 ft. long x 4 ft. wide x 4 ft. deep. The bed was lined with filter cloth and filled with clear gravel. Filter cloth also was installed across the top of the bed to ensure no backfill material would migrate down into

# Rapidcore



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the bed. Within the drainage bed, a 10 ft. long, 4 in. drainage pipe was installed connected by 3 header lines exiting from the green.

### Green Renovation

With additional grant funds, the entire green surface was renovated since the majority of the turf was *Poa annua* and not bentgrass. (Originally the soil consultant expressed concern an 11 ft. expansion would be sodded with #1 bentgrass when the majority of the green was *Poa annua*.) The following process was undertaken for the renovation:

- All existing turf was sprayed with Round-up. Fourteen days following the application, sod was removed to a depth of 1 inch.
- 2-4 inches of 80/20 mix (sand/peat) was added to the green and rototilled to a depth of 6-8 inches over the entire green.
- Entire bowling green area was leveled with a laser level and prepared for installation of #1 bentgrass.
- Starter fertilizers were incorporated into the new soil mix. 0-22-0 agricultural grade sulphomag was incorporated at 25 kg/1000 sq. ft. A second fertilizer, 38-0-0 S.C.U, was also incorporated at a rate of 5 lbs/1000 sq. ft.
- Bentgrass turf was installed using plywood boards.

The green expansion and renovation was a challenging project in many respects. Luckily, the lead volunteer from the Club was an exceptional individual who spent hundreds of hours obtaining quotations for the various work elements and performing the site supervision.

Since additional funding was obtained late in the project, it required a concerted effort by all to organize the work and keep all trades working in unison and harmony. Because of very heavy rains during May and June, the contractors' schedules were constantly revised.

Now that essentially a brand new green has been installed, a proper fertility and maintenance program was required. Unfortunately, previous budget cutbacks had reduced maintenance which resulted in the green becoming essentially *Poa annua*.

- A fertilizer program was developed which delivered nitrogen and potassium at 1:1 or 1:2 ratio.

- Monthly applications of greens grade sulphate of potassium (0-0-50) at a rate of 3 lbs/1000 sq. ft.
- Topdressing the green every 3 weeks with regular aerating of perimeter areas where players stand to bowl.
- 5 applications of greens grade 36% magnesium (Pro-mag) at a rate of 4 lbs/1000 sq. ft. Applications timed 1 month apart.
- Application of a dormant (November) ammonium sulphate (21-0-0) at a rate of 5 lbs/1000 sq. ft.
- Utilize a deep tine aerator such as a verti-drain twice per year. This has a shattering effect and does not remove soil from the green.

On June 11, 2000, Oakville Mayor Ann Mulvale threw out the first ball on the new green. Club members began play approximately one week later. To assist the new green for 2000, no major tournaments are proposed except club matches.

Prior to the project, Oakville had possibly one of the worst greens in southern Ontario. It is now one of the best. The drainage system works superbly, and after several applications of topdressing sand, the green is becoming more level and playing much faster. An infestation of pythium blight immediately following the sod installation was detected and controlled with an application of truban fungicide.

The project was a success because all involved worked cooperatively and quality professional individuals were engaged to perform and provide consultation on the work. Special thanks to David Smith, DCS Agronomic Services, who provided the turf and soil consultative services, Jim Baker, Bakers Landscaping, who installed the drainage system and new green, and Robert Trillia who was the lead member of the Oakville Lawn Bowling Club and provided on-site supervision and financial accounting for the project. It was truly a team effort. ♦

### PLEASE NOTE

The opinions expressed in articles published in *Sports Turf Manager* are those of the author and not necessarily those of the Sports Turf Association, unless otherwise indicated.

## Press Release

### **RAINCOVERPlusT Means Cooler Turf and Less Chance of Rainouts**



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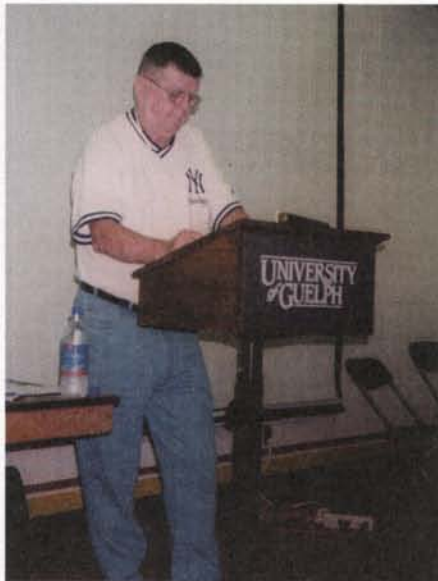


Mark your calendar now for OTS 2001, January 3-5 at the Regal Constellation Hotel, Toronto. Early bird registration details are on page 4 of this issue.

# STA 13th Annual Field Day Coverage

HELD AUGUST 16 AT ALUMNI STADIUM, UNIVERSITY OF GUELPH. ARTICLE BY MIKE BLADON

**T**he STA 13th Annual Field Day was very well attended with 90 delegates and another 25-30 turf industry suppliers. Although windy, the day was perfect for showing and testing the various turf equipment and all suppliers were given a chance to talk about their various wares.



## Groundskeeper Ed Miller

On the speaker program, Ed Miller, formerly of the New York Yankees, entertained with baseball stories and suggested many ideas on how to best maintain a baseball field like the pros.

Some of his tips related to diagramming different mowing patterns (the outfield can be mowed in five different ways) and for the infield, changes in dragging patterns. Many do not remove the bases when dragging. This is poor procedure. Ed suggests to always rake the base paths lengthways. When re-establishing the infield grass, use a line from the back of third base over to the middle of second base and then to the back of first base. Then use a sod cutter to get good straight lines. Ed also talked about the use of Turface to help dry the infield and using a piece of fire hose filled with water to drag water off the diamond and onto the outfield grass.

In the majors, the infield grass edge is swept with a corn broom so no mound will build up. Likewise, the warning track is

painted for a guide to run the sod cutter then dragged to remove any weeds, particularly when no spraying is allowed. Ed installs a pipe behind third and first base to mark foul lines rather than measuring each time. He finished his talk with videos on pitching mound construction and the installation of home plates and advised turf managers to wear hats and to use sun block – skin cancer is a growing concern in the turf care profession.

## Barrie Community Sports Complex

Due to an emergency, the scheduled speakers were unable to attend, however, Ken Bannerman, a long-time Field Manager with the City of Barrie, and Gordon Dol, STA Director and private contractor who is doing the construction of the fields in this complex, were on hand and gave a very interesting talk.

The 118 acre site is an old forestry station which the city purchased from the government. Blocks of trees that originally protected young seedlings grown at the forestry station have been retained.

While a city-owned facility, the Barrie complex has been designed with input from various user groups who will eventually take over the complex. It is situated on a sandy well drained loam and comprises two quad or pinwheel diamonds, a championship diamond, and several soc-

cer and football fields. It is fully irrigated with work done by Vanden Bussche Irrigation. Although originally scheduled to be completed in four phases, it will now be done in two. Total cost is estimated at \$11 million – the city has put in \$6-8 million and user groups will contribute the rest. Gerry Ray, Executive Director of the complex, has a passion for the job and has contacted school boards and worked with other user groups and the general contractor. Included in the plan will be a banquet hall and a 5,000 seat stadium with change rooms, administrative offices, washrooms, etc.

Gord Dol mentioned that all fields have been graded to a fall of 1/8" in 2,500 feet with no under drainage due to almost all of the complex being sand with some clay at the top end of the property. There is an irrigation pond of 2-1/2 acres with two 50 HP pumps pushing water through 10-12" mains. There is 4-6" of topsoil on the fields and all were seeded rather than sodded. Pickseed Sports Turf Mix was used containing a 25% rye and 75% bluegrass blend. Fescue was used around the parking areas. Ron Martin of Mar-Co Clay Products amended the soils on the championship infield. There has been minimal clearing of trees and fence height has been kept at 1-1/2 metres to allow the passage of deer.





## Pest Diagnostic Clinic

Marilyn Dykstra, Director of the Laboratory Services Division, University of Guelph, gave a brief but informative talk on the Pest Diagnostic Clinic located at 1 Stone Road in Guelph. She and her staff process samples of food and pesticides and do research on the identification and diagnosis of woody plants, vegetables, greenhouse crops, turf and soil diseases and fungi. The lab will give background information on the problem and will do a microscopic exam. They will then do a culture of the problem if needed. Usually, physiological problems are due to some form of stress.

Charges are \$50 for a turf sample with a 24 hour turn around – a visual is done in 24 hours with a follow-up call to the sender. Cultures require more time. Samples of turf should be 10 cm square and uniform with the whole root system. Submit the sample before you spray. Send it when the problem develops – do not send dead grass! Wrap it in newspaper to prepare it for courier shipping or delivery. Make sure you indicate time of year, type of weather, and any other pertinent infor-

mation. Don't water the sample or send it regular mail – prevent decay with fast delivery.

## Dave Smith, DCS Agronomic Services

Dave spoke on soil characteristics in general detailing factors such as light, water, air and organic matter which comprise 95% of the composition of a plant. While discussing exchange capacity, he used the analogy of a bicycle tire and a tractor tire both inflated to 50 lbs. of pressure as it related to clay soils versus sandy loams. He believes it is useful to test soils at least once per year. His company specializes in this and will set you up on a program of nutrient application if required.

DCS Agronomic Services interprets approximately 2,000 soil tests annually. In addition to standard soil reports, they also utilize saturated soil reports, physical analysis and irrigation water analysis to develop recommendations for clients.

This concluded a very worthwhile and informative day. Lunch provided by the University was tasty, however, it has been

discovered that turf managers do not like banana bread with their coffee in the morning! In all seriousness, thanks to the university for providing a great venue – it was ideal for lecturers and distributors alike. ♦



Far left: Former New York Yankees groundskeeper Ed Miller entertains delegates. Bottom: Gord Dol of Dol Turf Restoration Ltd., STA Board member and exhibitor. Above: Exhibitor George Bannerman.

# For perfect diamonds

## Edge it & Groom it



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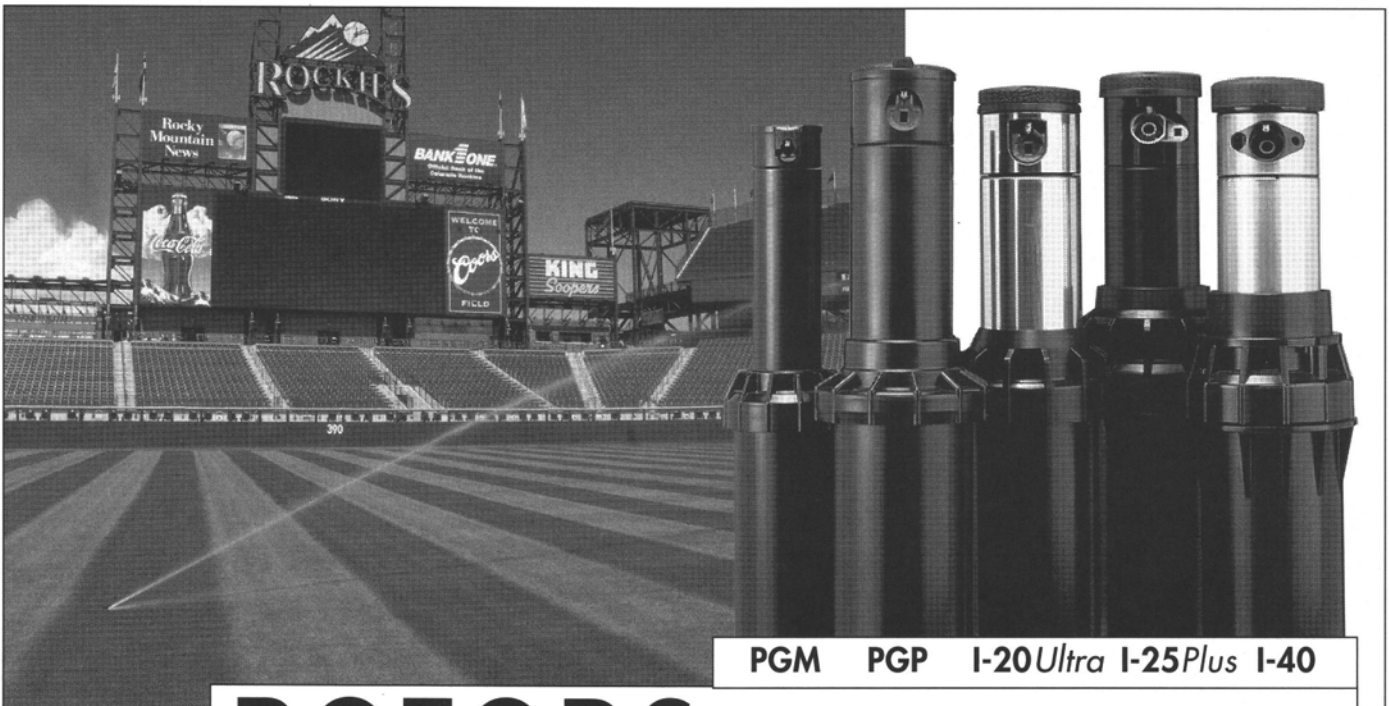
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# Coping with Change

DOES YOUR COMPANY COMBAT CHANGE EFFECTIVELY? ARTICLE BY MIKE BLADON

About 2,500 years ago, a Greek philosopher named Heraclitus stated “nothing is more permanent than change” after years of study and examination. History is a record of changes through time. People today, however, think that change-related problems are unique to this era. Beneficial change is easy to take, but we have difficulty accepting changes that are annoying or inconvenient to us. There is evidence that people generally are tired of the indecision brought about by changing times. The World Future Society stated, “People no longer feel certain of anything – spouse, job, church, moral principles – because everything is changing.

For years now, management experts have been putting out the word that the only thing modern organizations can look forward to with absolute assurance is rapid and continual change (Royal Bank Letter, Jan/Feb 1988). Managers tell you that they are very aware of trends in their industry and the marketplace. They know they live in dynamic times, and feel they are coping with change very well. Too regularly, the most they are doing is just coping. Change creates problems, and managers are problem-solvers. We need to be more diligent, and not let change happen and then react. Organizations have to become committed to rejuvenation and renewal to become more energized, focused and agile, and therefore better positioned to compete in an extremely dynamic environment.

Successful transformation requires complete commitment and involvement, everyone has to “walk the talk.” It con-



sists of changing people’s behavior and mind-set as much as strategic direction.

Unfortunately, organizations are prone to hardening of the arteries. They are made up of people and people become set in their ways. Employees tend to cling to fixed rules and fixed methods, and over the years, they develop vested interests. Changes required within the organization to meet external changes threaten their security and self confidence, particularly when they are asked to learn new tasks or to take on a larger work-load. So the tendency, of course, is to hang on to the status quo.

To quote a Buddhist saying, “All suffering of mankind is produced by attachment to a previous condition of existence.” People sometimes mistakenly think there are right or wrong ways of coping and feel they should always seek a positive spin on an event or situation. We do not have to like disruption. Successful people learn to live in it. They find a way to succeed afterwards, and build humour into their lives. Someone said it is not so much that we are afraid of change or so in love with the old ways, it’s the place in

between that we fear. So, how do we cope with change?

Change occurs when something ends and something new or different begins. The period between the two points is called transition. Some of the feelings we have to come to terms with are security, competence, relationships, sense of direction, and territory. The transition involves denial, resistance, exploration, and commitment.

People still harbour the mistaken belief about the changes facing them that things will get back to normal; that they don’t have to understand it; that staying the same is an option. None of these represent reality. The most important process of change is to accept the conversion yourself. You cannot lead change if you do not accept it. So we need to clarify with our staff as to what is being abandoned and why. Deal with what is being changed to, not what is being changed from. Make sure that during the change you are visible, communicative and available.

Some strategies for helping employees renew their energy:

- Celebrate successes. If your organization has been in a state of confusion for a lengthy period, those left have no doubt gone above and beyond the call of duty time after time. Highlight their successes and let them know how well they have done so far. Create a wall of fame with stories and photographs of employees who have done something special.

- Encourage innovation. It is more important than any time during our history to look for new and different approaches to solving problems. Adaptability is the

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law which governs survival in business as in life. The organization that encourages creativity and is able to adapt to shifting conditions is the one that will win the spoils in the marketplace. Ask for their help, implement their ideas, and let them know you respect the information they share.

• Reward initiative. With fewer managers to provide direction, employees can no longer rely on someone else to tell them what they should or should not do. This is an opportunity to teach employees to take the lead now that your department is running lean. Provide them with guidelines and turn them loose. In many companies, this approach has worked very well and the former manager becomes more of a facilitator than supervisor.

• Don't punish the survivors by piling on more work or cutting benefits. Likewise, don't shoot messengers who carry bad news. Welcome truth. Search for evidence that changes aren't working rather than proof they are. Take care of the "me" issues quickly. Every employee looks at change as to how they will be affected. Self-preservation becomes a major concern. (Will I have a new boss? Will I get

to keep my job? How will my pay or benefits be affected?) People are unable to focus on their work until these issues are resolved. They tend to worry, gossip, and trade rumours.

• Provide opportunities for people to ventilate and express themselves. A coping skill is to recognize that people will tend to blame the boss, resist help, or behave in self-destructive ways. You will face all the emotions of trust, self-pity, frustration, bitterness, anger, and depression. Usually you are not the target, you just happen to be in range.

So how do we cope with change? By recognizing that change is inevitable and to some extent predictable. Alvin Toffler in his book *Future Shock* wrote, "By making an imaginative use of change to channel change, we can not only spare ourselves the trauma of future shock, we can reach out and humanize future tomorrows." In closing, a quote from *Possibilities*, the Bank of Montreal newsletter: "The 'business innovation cycle' has compressed from five years to only six months since the mid-eighties. So new products come to market faster. Old products and services become redundant faster.

Technologies are eclipsed faster. And skills must keep pace. The best adapters must now possess not only written and verbal competence, computer proficiency, and customer service know-how, but also "core" skills such as interpersonal, problem-solving, motivational, conceptual, and leadership skills – skills of resilience and character."

Will you prepare yourself for change or will you resist?!?! ♦

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Landscape Ontario *Garden Expo*  
Toronto, ON, Information:  
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## September 27-30

Communities in Bloom  
*National Symposium on Parks & Grounds*, Edmonton, AB  
Information: 514-694-8871

## October 11 (to be confirmed)

*STA/ORFA Educational Workshop*  
East Gwillumbury, ON, Information:  
519-763-9431 (STA) or 416-426-7062 (ORFA), see the President's Message on page 4 for more details

## November 12-15

National Institute on Park and Grounds Management *30th Annual Educational Conference*, Orlando, FL  
Information: 920-733-1201

## November 14-16

New York State Turfgrass Association  
*Turf and Grounds Exposition*  
Syracuse, NY  
Information: 518-783-1229

## November 14-16

*4th Decennial National Irrigation Symposium*, Phoenix, AZ  
Information: 616-428-6327

## November 15-16

*Prairie East Horticultural Trade Show and Conference*, Winnipeg, MB  
Information: 204-947-9766 (x205)

## January 3-5, 2001

*Ontario Turfgrass Symposium*  
Toronto, ON, Information: 519-767-5000

## January 9-11, 2001

*Landscape Ontario Congress 2001*  
Toronto, ON, Information: 905-875-1805

## January 17-21, 2001

Sports Turf Managers Association  
*12th Annual Conference and Exhibition*  
Tampa, FL, Information: 712-366-2669

## February 5-March 3, 2001

University of Guelph  
*Turf Managers' Short Course*  
Information: 519-767-5000

## February 24-27, 2001

Canadian Golf Superintendents Association/Western Canada Turfgrass Association *52nd Canadian Int'l Turfgrass Conference and Trade Show*, Vancouver, BC, Information: 1-800-387-1056

## February 27 & March 6 and

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— *Weeds Trees & Turf*, Volume 25,  
Number 4, September 1986

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— *Weeds, Trees & Turf, September 1986*



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