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# JOHN DEERE

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VOL 51, ISSUE 3

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BY BETH GERACI

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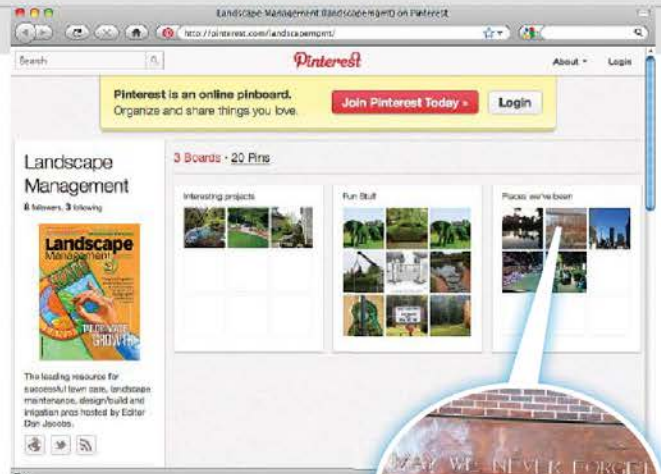


## THE LM DAILY

### DID YOU CATCH THE LATEST FROM THE BLOG?

» My little dictionary says the word "change" means: to make or become different, to replace with another. And for "improve" it says: to enhance or increase in value or quality, to grow and become better. I won't look up "fade away" because we aren't going there.... but companies can and do fade away if needed change or improvement doesn't happen.

Visit [landscapemanagement.blogspot.com/](http://landscapemanagement.blogspot.com/) to get the latest from the *LM* staff and from a few top Green Industry contractors.



## PIN THE PICTURE

Are you following *LM*'s Pinterest page? Check out the places we've been, some beautiful landscape projects and take a look at the humorous side of landscaping. Visit: <http://pinterest.com/landscapemgmt/>

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## Meet the LM Team



**DAN JACOBS**  
Editor-in-Chief

Jacobs is a veteran of the Green Industry and an award-winning journalist. During his 20-year career, he has written for a variety of newspapers and magazines. He is a past president of the Press Club of Cleveland and a graduate of the University of Cincinnati and John Carroll University. He joined *Landscape Management* in 2006 as Managing Editor and was promoted to Editor-in-Chief in April 2011.



**BETH GERACI**  
Senior Editor

Geraci has worked as a professional journalist for more than 15 years, including six years as a writer for the Chicago Tribune. A graduate of Allegheny College and Northwestern University's Medill School of Journalism, Geraci is an award-winning reporter who has expertise in both print and online media.



**MARTY WHITFORD**  
Editorial Director

Whitford is an award-winning journalist and editorial leader at Questex Media. He has served Questex's Green Group for four years, including two years at the helm of *LM*. He steered *LM*'s reader-driven print and website redesigns that helped the brand win a record number of awards from the Turf & Ornamental Communicators Association (TOCA). Whitford brings 18 years of experience in business-to-business integrated media.

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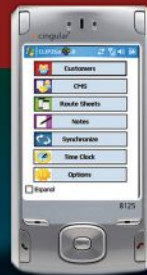
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## What I learned at the gym

**L**ife's lessons come in the strangest of places. Some of you might remember what I learned playing softball ([tinyurl.com/6tj7sct](http://tinyurl.com/6tj7sct)). Here are a few lessons I picked up at the health club.

**1 Some people don't follow the rules.** The gym is filled with all sorts of exercise equipment and weight machines designed to induce sweating. Signs posted around the facility remind members to wipe down the equipment as a courtesy to the next user. Most people abide by the rules, but I've seen too many folks either give the machine a cursory swipe with their sweaty towel or simply walk away, completely disregarding the rules. Just explaining the rules isn't enough. Some of your employees are going to look for ways to cut corners.

**2 Some people make up their own rules.** The pool has limited space, which often requires swimmers to share lanes. Longtime participants develop routines and rituals they don't like disturbed. Sometimes those traditions are bad habits no one has bothered to correct. Your longtime crewmembers might have their own bad habits. Rule enforcement must come from higher up.

**3 Groups take coordination.** My wife convinced me to take a group class (until recently, I was the only guy). The class is 60 minutes of pure torture. I'm convinced our instructor spends her week thinking up new ways to inflict pain. But she does keep the class flowing. And meeting the needs of 20 people at 20 different skill levels requires talent.

**4 Changing the size of a group also changes the group dynamic.** As I mentioned, sometimes each lane in the pool is filled with two, three or even four swimmers. When there are two, each can swim at his or her own pace and on their own side of the lane. Add a third person and to make it work, swimmers must travel in a circular pattern. It's not a

huge change, but it's key to success. Add a new person to any group and it changes the way that group interacts. That's not necessarily a bad thing, but it is something you need to know.

**5 Encouragement helps.** Starting an exercise regimen is easy — I've done it dozens of times. The first week is easy and then something comes up. I miss a day and then another and another. So much for that plan. My latest attempt has lasted a year in large part because my wife has been encouraging and pushing me. Everyone has a bad day; regular encouragement and support are keys to ensuring your employees follow the plan. Marci is there when I need her to keep me on track. Who does that for your employees?

**6 Change it up.** My usual routine includes the elliptical machine followed by weights. But doing the same thing every day gets boring. Sometimes I'll use the treadmill or take a dip in the pool. There's comfort and value (efficiency and productivity) in having a familiar mode of operation. Employees become experts and are able to do their jobs that much better, but if it's needed, employees should have an opportunity to switch gears.

**7 It's important to show up.** I can't say I've made it to the gym every day in the past year, but I've averaged 4-5 days a week. And the results are apparent. My weight has dropped considerably and all those numbers doctors like to check have improved. Clients and employees appreciate consistency.

**8 It's important to treat yourself.** As dedicated as I am to getting my health back on track (see December 2011's column: [tinyurl.com/6wggq9cn](http://tinyurl.com/6wggq9cn)), never treating myself to something sweet (sugar-free, of course) would make the process exponentially more difficult. No matter what the business climate is, remember to have some fun. Your employees work hard for you. Reward them now and then.

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# PROGRESS

## Battling Old Man Winter

**A**t the time that *Landscape Management* launched, so did the automobile age and with that, suburban growth. In the '60s, the proliferation of new shopping centers, office parks and industrial centers created the need for private snow removal equipment and services to clear parking lots and walkways for customers and employees.

Many landscapers, like Ontario-based Clintar Landscape Management and Milwaukee-based Kujawa Enterprises, seized the opportunity by providing snow and ice removal services as early as the late '60s, proliferating into the new century.

"We got into the snow and ice removal business because we wanted to make sure our summer guys would stick around all year and have a reliable source of income to eat year-round," says Bob Wilton, president of Clintar.

The explosion of companies moving snow and ice has created a huge market for versatile and customized equipment and spurred technology to develop more specialized functions.

"When we first started snow and ice removal, all we really had was straight blade plows attached to our trucks," says Chris Kujawa, owner of Kujawa Enterprises. Wilton remembers the early days when to get the correct angle on his plows, he would hop out of his truck, navigate through the 'clunky' levers and put the pin in different positions manually.

Over the last several decades, snow and ice removal equipment has become quite diverse with stronger, more reliable and user-friendly plows. "Making up the current contractor's arsenal are blades auto-adjustable and versatile

**Changes in technology have made snow and ice removal easier, but weather unpredictability still requires contractors to remain flexible.**

enough to fit on just about any vehicle, including ATVs, quad 4-wheelers, compact tractors, farm tractors, front end loaders and backhoes," says Patrick Dietz, manager of product development for Western Snowplows. In recent years, he adds, the growth in "winged technology" is one of the key innovations in snow and ice removal for his contractor customers, increasing the width of snow plow blades as well as minimizing snow spill off.

As snow removal efforts progressed with the addition of sanding and salting, protests by environmentalists, highway engineers and rust-clad motorists grew.

Sand and salt are far from the magic bullet in ice removal, according to Kujawa. "We have to lay off the salt, especially with new pavement," he says. "Pre-treating with chemical de-icers might help in cost-cutting, but it's still all about how well you physically remove that ice and snow."

Weather reporting is the biggest advancement in technology in the industry, according to Wilton. Space technology entered the snow and ice removal effort as early as 1959, when the first satellite launched. "The reporting, forecasting, and accuracy of weather has made planning and executing more efficient," says Wilton. "Computers, Internet, websites and weather stations made it easy for us to be ahead of the storm."



Suburban sprawl created a need for private snow and ice services.

But, Kujawa points out, weather remains unpredictable, especially when your customers'

properties sit on or near a large body of water or mountain range.

Smart phones and GPS systems have been valuable replacements for the old two-way radios and "roll of the dimes" played by the drivers when locating pay-phones to contact their offices at the end of every job. "These communication technologies have not only made our lives' easier, but our customers are more accessible in case of emergencies and dealing with other issues," says Wilton.

When the Snow and Ice Management Association (SIMA) formed in 1996, many in the industry observed that effort as the most important in establishing legitimacy for the industry.

The constant Kujawa says is the importance of having quality contractors available to customers. "By quality, I mean experienced employees, proper employment of high-tech equipment, understanding weather predictions and consistent, quality performance," he says. "Everything else is secondary."