



THE NEWSLETTER

July 2001

of the *Golf Course Superintendents Association of New England, Inc.*

Sponsors and administrators of the Troll-Dickinson Scholarship Fund – Awarded yearly to deserving Turf Management Students.

New England's resilient superintendents share their war stories of The Winter of 2001

If you wanted to crown the winter of 2001 with an appropriate caption, a simple play on words captures the feeling that was to be the lament of many a golf course superintendent. Just call it "The Ice Age Returneth" – a spin-off of a New Englander's smash Broadway hit, Eugene O'Neill's "The Iceman Cometh".

At any rate, it was a winter of discontent for many superintendents battling the elements in our little corner of the golf world. Brian Skinner of the Bellevue Golf Club had his own label for his bout with ice and snow: "The glacier effect. Snow falling, snow melting, and then freezing again," he explained his ongoing dilemma. "The process never stopped. It cost us a lot of playing time and revenue. It was the worst winter I've ever encountered."

Skinner had his fingers crossed at the first hint of tremendous winterkill, in mid-January. "There was this awful odor," he recalled. "I really don't know the cause, probably the breakdown of organic matter. Anyway, we cleared off the snow from all

of our greens. In fact, we moved snow three different times until early February. Then, about a month after the first signs of serious damage, (I remember it well because it was the first week following the national conference), we did some serious probing."

The Bellevue crew went into "operation jackhammer", breaking through patches of eight-inch-thick ice, to get the built up gas out of the affected areas and create channels for the water to flow off. Another wait for results was set in place.

"In early April there was no telling how extensive the damage would be," Skinner noted. "But as mid-April was approaching, the originally intended time to open the course had passed, and the bad news was sitting there. Three greens were completely gone, three others were 75 percent dead and four had 50 percent worth of severe damage."

Skinner initiated his recovery program on April 14. He verticut the areas in two directions, aerated, seeded and fertilized. By that time, however, Mother Nature was still throwing curves as a dry spell moved in and a virtual drought took hold.

"We opened the course at the end of April with temporary greens," Skinner said. "But we didn't get too many players. Just before that we reseeded again, using a Graden machine which might have been the turning point in recovery. Two weeks later we seeded again, verticut, aerated and spoon-fed the fertilizer. All along we had to baby the areas. There was a lot of hand watering involved. But the constant, revolving application of recovery methods showed good results. We opened the

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*Brian Skinner
Bellevue Golf Club*

entire course, June 1 and a feeling of relief swept through the club."

Incidentally, Brian tells that Bellevue was most cooperative during the long ordeal, more so than the weather which continued to be a passive partner in the recovery process.

"The greens were our biggest problem," Skinner wrapped up his recall. "We also had a few tees to deal with and we gave them the same treatment. Here it is heading through July and I'd say the whole course is about 85 to 95 percent recovered. In all, I'd say we lost a good month-and-a

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“As we chipped away at ice, six to seven inches thick, I could see trouble ahead.”

*David Laffey
Oakley C.C.*

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half of normal operation time. It wasn't nice, believe me. Getting the course in shape was no picnic."

The third week in February was discovery time for Len Curtin, the five-year superintendent at the Lexington Golf Club. "That's when we started plowing greens and realized winter hadn't been kind to us," Curtin remarked. "We're a nine-hole club with 10 greens. Seven of those fell into the 40 to 80 percent severe damage range."

Curtin's first step on the road to recovery was the most time-consuming part of his program – chipping the ice to get some air into the damaged areas. "After that I had to get a program together," he said. "It was like piecing together a mystery story. Finally, I leaned on my experience in 1995 when I was faced with similar difficulties at Walpole Country Club.

"Then, the idea was to heat the soil first, which meant we weren't thinking sod, just seed. We wanted to get the soil temperature up around 60 degrees and did that with plastic covers. That brought us into the second week of April, one week after we usually open the course.

"We verticut in three directions. After that came the seeding, using a high quality seed that promotes quick germination. We used an organic fertilizer and went back to the plastic covers to retain moisture in order to help the germination along. I think the grass popped in 10 days. All during that time, though, we used temporary greens where the ones with severe damage lay."

Lexington opened April 21, three weeks later than usual. However, it's members and other players knew this was going to be a season of survival. They picked up on the virtue of patience, which gave Curtin a boost. By the end of May all the regular greens were open, tees were restored

through the magic of overseeding, and fairways turned out okay in time.

"This was tough on everything and everybody," Curtin revealed. "In effect, we had to create putting surfaces from scratch. My planned schedule was shuffled. It had to be. We still have bumps and bruises but we're coping. I've never seen winterkill damage like we had . . . never."

Woodland's David Mucciarone had a similar rude awakening when he took his greens into early spring after faithfully clearing them of snow all winter. "At least 10 of our greens were affected," he told. "One of the surprises was the condition of three greens we put in (sodded) in November. They had about three or four weeks growing time. When we looked them over in spring, it was remarkable. Not a blemish. So, that kept me kind of upbeat about the whole thing."

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CALENDAR . . .

- August 23 **GCSANE Monthly Meeting**
Rockland G.C.
Rockland, Mass.
Supt. - Eric Newell
- Sept. 10 **GCSANE Monthly Meeting**
Superintendent / Club Official
Winchester C.C.
Winchester, Mass.
Supt. - Daniel Higgins, CGCS
- Oct. 10 **GCSANE Monthly Meeting**
Joint Meeting with Cape Cod GCSA
Pocasset G.C.
Pocasset, Mass.
Supt. - Steve Carr
- Oct. 17 **Pro/Supt. Tournament**
Shaker Hills G.C.
Harvard, Mass.
Supt. - Glen Misiaszek
- Nov. 5 **GCSANE Monthly Meeting**
Annual Nine-Hole Meeting
Amherst G.C.
Amherst, Mass.
Supt. - Carl Teschke
- Nov. 13 **GCSAA Seminar**
Fundamentals of
Turfgrass Management II
The International
Bolton, Mass.
- Nov. 14 **GCSAA Seminar**
Strategic Planning
for Golf Course Operations
The International
Bolton, Mass.
- Dec. 16 **GCSANE Holiday Gala**
Wellesley C.C.
Host - David Barber, CGCS

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After that euphoric moment was put to bed, Mucciarone went to work on the damaged greens and other affected areas. It all started with quadtines, small holes that were seeded. One week later, the first week of April, a slice-seeding approach was put in place. Throughout the entire recovery program covers were put on the greens at night and removed in the day.

"That was a lot for work for our guys," Dave disclosed. "We were pulling a lot of 11-hour work days. When it became apparent that we were making progress, we topdressed the areas and fertilized. By mid-April we were into doing the same slice-seeding on the fairways. I mean, the Greater Boston area was under the gun. We were caught in a snow-ice pocket."

Woodland opened April 28 with eight regular greens, the rest temporary. Members understood the gravity of the situation and gave their support and confidence in the recovery effort.

"There never was anything like a deadline or added pressure for me to deal with," Mucciarone reported. "Everything worked out fine. The hardest part was pampering the greens and other areas. Yes, we babied them, but they came out smooth and excellent. We even had them in shape for our June member-guest event. Funny, I always was confident we'd lick this thing. But I'm glad it's over. It's a winter we won't soon forget."

David Laffey was in the same boat as his colleagues, but the severest damage was restricted to two fairways and three greens. Regardless, that damage had muscle.

"We went out and cleared the greens early," the Oakley Country Club superintendent said. "That was early February, and when I got back from the national conference, I was looking at 50 to 60 days of ice cover on those three affected greens. We got right to it, using sledgehammers, picks, shovels . . . anything that could penetrate. As we chipped away at ice, six to seven inches thick, I could see trouble ahead."

The key to Laffey's recovery approach was the use of polyethylene plastic covers. "After verticutting, slice-seeding and aerating, we covered those three greens with that plastic for two weeks. It gave us a greenhouse effect. And it produced instant reaction. We shut down those greens, going through the verticutting and other recovery efforts and going back to regular

covers. By the last week in May everything was in place and we were in a permanent, regular mode."

Laffey, who had a varying green cover program going, agreed that there are no preventive measures for the kind of winterkill he encountered. He called it a quirk of Mother Nature that hit certain areas and missed others. Like playing golf, it was simply the rub of the green.

A little over a year ago Michael Parks (not to be confused with the movie actor of the same name) was working out the winter at his superintendent's post, the Cape Neddick Country Club, near York, Maine. He completed the ensuing golf season and recently accepted the head job at the Brookline Golf Club. He started there in March . . . a mere five months ago.

"Wow! What a beginning," he chirped when he arrived to be greeted by the residue of a frightening winter. "This never happened to me in Maine. Here I was with extensive damage through the course, two greens completely gone and an irrigation system retrofit half-way completed. I mean, how many mountains do you have to climb before the landscape levels off?"

Parks figured that sometime in January or February water got trapped under sheets of ice up to eight inches thick and indiscriminate damage got the best of the golf course. His initial thought was to wait it out, chip away at the ice and hope the melting would give him recovery conditions to start a seeding program. The situation didn't present itself until the third week in April, way beyond normal opening

time at the municipal course. So, the first seeding took place then.

"The wait was for the soil to be warm enough to encourage germination," Parks explained. "I tried a combination of PennCross and fescue, hoping that one or the other or both would germinate. I used a drop spreader in two directions."

Nothing materialized, so Parks seeded again, using a Blec uni-seeder. He followed with an application of fertilizer and tried to keep everything moist. Of course his troubles were compounded by a drought that lasted through mid-May. With little or no help from the under-construction irrigation system, hand watering was the order of the day.

However, once again there was little growth action and another seeding leaked over to the third week of May. Voila! Things started to pop. Michael then set aside Memorial Day weekend for aerification, using half-inch tines. Nine days later Brookline was ready to open (June 9). And it did, even though course officials had set a July opening date. So, in effect, Parks brought the course in under schedule.

"Sure," he remarked sarcastically. "It was that easy. Seriously, I think we had 300 golfers on opening day. They were certainly patient. My bosses were, and I had to be. I cannot think of a more trying time to start a new job. But it's done and now I'm ready to tackle that irrigation system finishing job. I hope this is as bad as it gets."

A superintendent's winter of discontent . . . over and done with. What's next? Only Mother Nature knows.

GERRY FINN

"We verticut in three directions. After that came the seeding, using a high quality seed that promotes quick germination. We used an organic fertilizer and went back to the plastic covers to retain moisture in order to help the germination along. I think the grass popped in 10 days."

Len Curtin
Lexington G.C.

President makes note of Ouimet Marathon, URI Field Day, and Miller & Tyler meeting the challenge

The Ouimet Scholarship Marathon will be held August 8 at Stow Acres Country Club. This is the fundraiser for scholarships that are available for golf course workers who have worked for three years on the grounds, pro shop, or as a caddie. Our

Last year Dick (Duggan) played 326 holes in one day at this event (Ouimet Marathon). He will attempt to play more this year. Good luck to Dick, and don't forget to bring the Ben-Gay and other appropriate painkillers for the ride home.

Bob Ruszala
President, GCSANE

representative playing in this event is Dick Duggan of Peabody Municipal Golf Course. Last year Dick played 326 holes in one day at this event. He will attempt to play more this year. Good luck to Dick, and don't forget to bring the Ben-Gay and other appropriate painkillers for the ride home.

FROM THE PRESIDENT

Two superintendents from our association recently hosted Senior PGA and USGA events. Paul Miller of Nashawtuc Country Club and Kip Tyler of Salem Country Club are to be congratulated for the condition and success each had at their tournaments. Both suffered winterkill and ice damage on their golf courses this spring. Paul had some temporary greens and fairway damage, and Kip had to keep the entire golf course closed until the event began in late June due to severe damage on greens and fairways. Both golf courses came back in excellent shape. Paul and Kip, we are proud of you both, and congratulations are in order for a job well done.

Paul was president of GCSANE in 1990-91 and on the board of directors for many years. Kip also served on the board in the late 1980s and early 1990s, and was

also Newsletter chairman for a few years. Thank you both for your hard work in the past, and best wishes in the future.

The University of Rhode Island Field Day will be held August 15. The event is always a very good educational day and pesticide credits will be available. There are a few projects going on that have been funded by the New England Regional Turfgrass Association. I hope to see many of our members at this fine event.

Sincerely,
Bob Ruszala
President, GCSANE

Paul and Kip, we are proud of you both, and congratulations are in order for a job well done.

Bob Ruszala
President, GCSANE

Stockbridge School of Agriculture graduates 115; GCSANE member Jim Conant is commencement speaker

The Stockbridge School of Agriculture recently graduated 115 students with associate of science degrees. The commencement speaker for this year's event was Jim Conant, CGCS, superintendent at the Country Club of Pittsfield and a GCSANE member. Jim is also a 1983 graduate of Stockbridge.

Jim urged graduates to continue their education by joining professional associations. This would in turn broaden their horizons by associating with other professionals. "A lifelong commitment

to education will give you a long and successful career," Jim intoned.

UMASS NEWS

"Map out your own plan of commitment to your profession and community life, knowing that when you make a commitment, it will be easier for you to meet the challenges ahead."

He finished his words to the graduates by reciting the school's motto: "Give your best to dear old Stockbridge, body, heart, and soul."

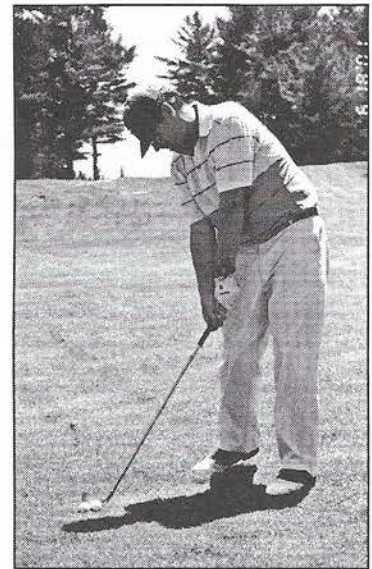
"A lifelong commitment to education will give you a long and successful career."

Jim Conant, CGCS
C.C. of Pittsfield

GCSANE member sightings on the course – Spring 2001

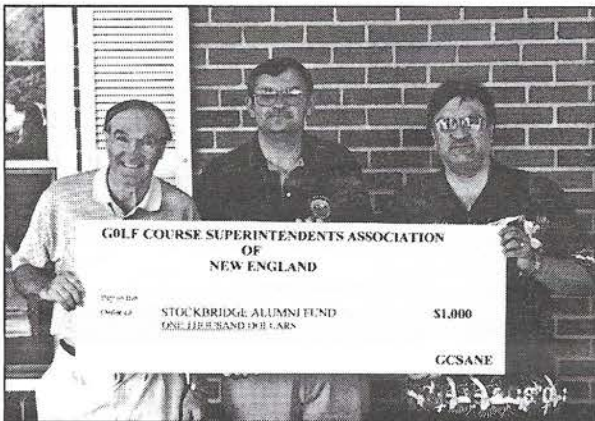


Above are Team-of-Two winners at Hickory Ridge C.C. on June 20: (l. to r.) Joe Piana & Ed Eardley, and Carl Teschke & Mike Howell. At left, at the Stockbridge Alumni Tournament at Westminster C.C. June 18, are (l. to r.) Jim Fitzroy, Bob Ruzsala, and Bob Healey. Below left, GCSANE president Bob Ruzsala presents a \$1000 donation to the Stockbridge Alumni Fund.



The master lines 'em up . . .

Having mastered the game, Bob Healey, above, moves on to a new challenge, playing through the course hitting two-balls-at-a-time.



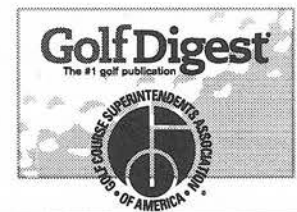
The Stockbridge Alumni Tournament also drew, at immediate left (l. to r.), Jim Fitzroy, Dave Comee, and Bob Healey. Just out of view is the sign they were reading: "Long Drive must be in your own fairway!"

Consider yourself a candidate.

Applications for the 2001 Environmental Leaders in Golf Awards are available from the May issue of *Golf Course Management* magazine, chapter leaders, *Golf Digest*, participating sponsors, and the GCSAA Service Center (800/472-7878) or the GCSAA Web site (www.gcsaa.org/environ/elga_form.html).

We'll look forward to receiving your application

by **October 1, 2001.**



DIVOT DRIFT...announcements...educational seminars...job opportunities ...tournament results...and miscellaneous items of interest to the membership.

MEMBERSHIP

Welcome New Members: Daniel Shay, Superintendent, Agawam Municipal G.C.; Thomas Mason, Assistant, Cedar Hill G.C.; Michael DiRico, Student; SV Moffett Company, Friend.

Proposed for Membership: Michael Barber, Assistant, Norfolk G.C.; Dennis Granahan, Assistant, The Country Club; Stumps Are Us, Friend; DGM Systems, Friend.

INFORMATION

Dave Comee, while teeing off on the ninth hole at Westminster G.C., was set upon by a "killer" chipmunk. We were not sure if it was 'Chip' or 'Dale', however the "killer" came up from behind, ran through Dave's legs and over the front of his right foot just as Dave was set to start his swing. The culprit then ran off across the tee and disappeared into the thicket. Although shaken, Dave was able to tee off and finish his round. Dave, what cologne were you wearing?

Thank you to Bob Ruzsala, superintendent at Hickory Ridge C.C., and his entire staff for hosting the June GCSANE meeting. Thanks also to Golf Cart Services, Inc. for providing the food and beverage cart during the event.

Thank yous are also in order for Rob Larson, Neil Hanrahan, and the staff of Pine Ridge C.C. They hosted the July meeting that went well in spite of the ominous forecast.

A reminder to all GCSANE members: If you are out of work, you may be eligible for a waiver of dues. Please contact the President via letter to explain your situation.

A reminder that the Ouimet Scholarship Fund is available to young people who have worked for three years in golf in Massachusetts. The award is renewable and can be worth \$10-\$15,000 over four years of college. Eligible applicants must have worked for three years as caddies, pro shop helpers or in course superintendent operations. Applicants must call the Ouimet office at (781) 891-6400 during the summer to be put on a mailing list and they will be mailed an application (for the 2002-03 academic year). Completed applications must be returned to The Fund by December 1.

EQUIPMENT WANTED

Attachments for a Steiner 420 Tractor: Snow blower, snowplow, stump cutter, etc. Call Pat Lucas, Innis Arden Golf Club at (203) 637-6945.

GOVT. RELATIONS

New Hampshire: The governor signed S.B. 89, to establish a committee to study methods of strengthening and clarifying the comprehensive shoreland protection act and its application. The committee will be responsible for studying the appropriateness of buffer zone distances for land management and alteration activities. For more information related to the Comprehensive Shoreland Protection Act, go to <http://www.des.state.nh.us/cspa/>.

New Hampshire: H.B. 186, to create a pesticide training program to provide education to commercial pesticide applicators, has been sent to the governor for signature.

Connecticut: S.B. 806, to require municipalities to verify that builders or developers have obtained appropriate stormwater discharge permits from the DEP prior to starting construction projects, died in committee.

Vermont: The following legislation will be carried over to the 2002 Vermont legislative session: H.B. 367, to prohibit the application of pesticides and herbicides within 100 feet of the normal mean watermark of any public waters of the state; S.B. 184, to allow local governments to regulate pesticide applications within their borders, including the creation of posting and notification requirements for outdoor pesticide applications and the establishment of buffer zones around waters of the state.

EMPLOYMENT

Second Assistant. Sagamore Spring Golf Club is a daily fee, 18-hole golf course approximately 20 minutes north of Boston. Opened in 1929, Sagamore Spring created a market for itself by offering affordable golf and exceptional conditioning to the everyday player. Background in turfgrass maintenance, mechanical knowledge, and pesticide license preferred. Responsibilities include assisting with staff supervision, customer satisfaction, turfgrass, irrigation, and equipment maintenance. Compensation includes a three-month trial period at hourly wage. If hired for full-time position, competitive industry salary and bonus. Company pays 100% family health insurance, dental insurance, life and disability insurance. Eligible for company profit sharing plan after one year, with paid vacation and personal days. Please send resume to: Brett K. Fellows, Sagamore Spring Golf Club, 1287 Main Street, Lynnfield, MA 01940. No phone calls please.

Superintendent. Scottish Meadows Golf Club is an 18-hole, semi-private course under construction. Seeking a motivated, energetic, hands-on, challenge-seeking individual. Golf construction and grow-in experience helpful but not necessary. Experience with irrigation installation preferred. A minimum of two years of turf school required, as is a Mass. pesticide applicator license. Interest in classic golf design and maintenance practices is helpful. Salary is commensurate with experience. Send resume to: James Fountain, Scottish Meadows Golf Club, 62 Comins Pond Road, Warren, MA 01083.

TOURNAMENT RESULTS

Hickory Ridge C.C. Team of Two Championship June 20, 2001

Superintendent Division

1st Gross: Ron Dobosz & Ed Gianni (69)
1st Net: Ed Eardley & Joe Piana (61)

Affiliate Division

1st Gross: Larry Anshewitz & Sean Moran (74)
1st Net: Bob Healey & Robin Hayes (60)

Pine Ridge C.C. Individual Championship Par 71 July 17, 2001

Superintendent Division

1st Gross: Chris Tufts (72)
2nd Gross: Ron Dobosz (75)
1st Net: Dave Barber (67)
2nd Net: Gary Luccini (69)
3rd Net: David Stowe (70)

Affiliate Division

1st Gross: Dave Antunes (78)
1st Net: Scott McCloud (63)
2nd Net: Greg Frederick (69)

GCSANE Four-Ball Results

Round #3

Anshewitz/Fitzroy def. Curtin/Miller, 4 and 3
Lazaro/Rybka def. Dobosz/Gianni, 7 and 5
Crimmings/Cullen def. V. Iacono/Varkonyi, 1-up
Moordian/Luccini def. Hayes/Healey, 4 and 3
Barber/Murphy def. Higgins/M. Iacono, 2-up

Round #4

Misodoulakis/Skinner def. Hayes/Healey, 24 holes
Comee/Hermanson def. Dobosz/Gianni, 2 and 1
Curtin/Miller def. Daly/Reinertson, 3 and 2

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Meet host superintendents Rob Larson & Neil Hanrahan, Pine Ridge C.C.

Host Superintendents for the July meeting of GCSANE are Rob Larson and Neil Hanrahan of Pine Ridge Country Club in North Oxford, Mass.

Rob, who is now director of golf course operations and general manager at Pine Ridge, has been at that club since 1997. A Stockbridge graduate in 1987, he was previously superintendent at Green Hill Municipal Golf Course in Worcester. Rob worked in that position for 10 seasons.

An eight-year member of GCSANE, Rob currently serves the membership on the board of directors as a trustee. He heads the Membership Committee and is responsible for issuing the membership directory each year. He is surely working

hard on next year's edition. Rob also serves on the UMass IPM Protocols Committee

HOST PROFILE

In addition to his responsibilities at work and elsewhere, he is a devoted family man. He and his wife, Dawn, have been married five years. They have one child, Ben (2), and are expecting a baby girl in September. In his spare time, Rob enjoys teaching martial arts.

Neil recently earned a promotion to superintendent at Pine Ridge. He was the assistant superintendent there for two years before taking the advancement last March. Neil spent many years at Putterham Meadows Golf Course in Brookline, Mass., both as assistant (1992-96) and superintendent (1996-99).

Neil has been a GCSANE member for three years and serves on the Membership Committee. He is also a 1997 graduate of the UMass Winter School for Turfgrass Management.

Neil and Lisa, his wife of four years, have three children. Chris (8), Emily (4), and Riley (1) round out the Hanrahan family. When not working or picking up Rob's slack, Neil enjoys football, golf, fishing, boating, and deer hunting.

Pine Ridge Country Club is a Phil Wogan course that opened in 1969. It plays to 6,002 yards from the tips and has a par of 71. The bent/pa greens are moderate in size, averaging 5,000 square feet. Tees consist of rye and poa; fairways are rye, blue, and poa.



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