

Summer Issue 2021

GreenMaster

Publication of the CGSA



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John Scott, AGS
Believing
in the **Next
Generation**



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CANADIAN GOLF SUPERINTENDENTS ASSOCIATION

2605 Summerville Court, Unit A2082
Mississauga, ON L4X 0A2
Tel: 416-626-8873 Toll Free: 800-387-1056
Fax: 416-626-1958
cgsa@golfsupers.com www.golfsupers.com

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JEFF CALDERWOOD • PUBLISHER
jcalderwood@golfsupers.com

NATHALIE LAVALLÉE • ASSOCIATE PUBLISHER
nlavallee@ngcoa.ca

STACEY TAYLER • ART DIRECTOR
stayler@ngcoa.ca

BARB MANIFOLD • MANAGING EDITOR
bmanifold@golfsupers.com

SHAWN HUNTER • SENIOR EDITOR
shunter@ngcoa.ca

LAUREN CALDERWOOD, J.D. • COPY EDITOR
editor@ngcoa.ca

RYLEY SCOTT • DIRECTOR OF SALES
rscott@ngcoa.ca

KYLE WILKINSON • ADVERTISING SALES
kwilkinson@ngcoa.ca



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John Scott, AGS
CGSA PRESIDENT
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Full Steam

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John C. Scott, AGS, President
Summerlea Golf & Country Club, QC
john.scott@summerlea.com

Darren Kalyniuk, Past President
St. Boniface Golf & Country Club, MB
darren@stbonifacegolfclub.com

Pierre Vezeau, AGS, Vice President
Cooke Municipal Golf Course, SK
pvezeau@citypa.com

**Dustin Zdan, AGS, Secretary Treasurer
and Alberta Director**
Connaught Golf Club, AB
zdangolf@hotmail.com

John McLinden, Ontario Director
Ladies' Golf Club of Toronto, ON
john.mclinden@ladiesgolfclub.com

Bradley Allen, AGS, Atlantic Director
Cabot Links, NS
brad3allen@gmail.com

Braydon Gilbert, AGS, Manitoba Director
St. Charles Country Club, MB
braydon.gilbert@stcharlescountryclub.ca

Ken Brunesci AGS, British Columbia Director
Nk'Mip Canyon Desert Golf Course, BC
kbrunesci@nkmippgolf.com

Luc Ladouceur, Quebec Director
Le Club Laval-sur-le-lac, QC
terrain@clsl.ca

Tyler McComas, Saskatchewan Director
Dakota Dunes Golf Links, SK
superintendent@dakotadunes.ca

I am very honoured to be president of the CGSA. This journey began in 2012 when Christian Pilon and Jim Flett, AGS asked me to join the CGSA board. I was reluctant because I was still on the QGSA board, but I can confidently say that I am incredibly happy with my decision to join the CGSA board.

This has been an 8-year long journey. The first 4 years were exceedingly difficult with big deficits each year and then deciding to go through a redesign. Today, things are quite different. The association has produced a positive bottom line over the past 3 years. This positive outcome has allowed the CGSA to move forward instead of maintaining a conservative approach (i.e., budget cuts).

A prime example of this turnaround is an investment by the CGSA in a new Association Management System that allows us to manage our association efficiently as well as other associations (the new AMS has allowed us to partner with the Manitoba Golf Superintendents Association). This can expand to many more partnerships in the future.

Another area of growth is the investment in our team which has been downsized over the past 6 or 7 years. Recently, the board approved the hiring of a National Sales Manager to help with the sale of new sponsorships and memberships. In spite of the CGSA's improved financial situation, one factor remains a concern, membership numbers are decreasing every year. We must promote the many benefits of joining CGSA.

I want to thank Kathryn, Barb, Lori and Jeff for providing members with up to the minute protocols to help us prepare for the opening of our golf courses last spring, following up by calling members. Also, thank you for organizing a great virtual conference and AGM. This format was completely new to them and they hit it out of the park! These are only a few examples of the many services the CGSA offers its members and demonstrates the benefits of becoming a member.

Although we are ready to offer a virtual conference in 2022, let's hope we will once again be able to meet in one of Canada's great destinations for

Ahead

in person education and networking opportunities. Many decisions will be made pending the situation surrounding the COVID-19 pandemic.

Since golf courses are in operation, we will be putting together East and West Fall Field Days. The western Fall Field day will be at Canmore Golf and Curling Club in Alberta and the east will be at Summerlea Golf and Country Club in Québec. This change allows us to have our events and reduce travel across the country. We will continue to monitor the situation regarding COVID-19 pandemic across the country and update our members of changes.

I want to thank Darren for his work through this unprecedented year. I want to congratulate Pierre Vezeau, AGS, Vice President and Dustin Zdan, AGS, Secretary Treasurer. I look forward to working closer with Pierre and Dustin. I would like to welcome Tyler McComas to the board as Saskatchewan Director. We have a great team in place, and we will do our best to bring our association forward during these unprecedented times.

With vaccinations well on their way across the country, restrictions should be lifting and hopefully gatherings will be permitted. I would love to visit regional events during my term as president and talk to as many people as possible. I wish everyone a great start to the 2021 golf season and please stay vigilant with safety protocols for this upcoming season. Stay safe everyone.

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John Scott, AGS in the **Next**



The crew from the Canadian Junior Boys tournament in 2016.



Annual holidays in Florida attending Panthers and Montreal Canadians NHL game (left to right: John, Christopher, Renee, and Nicholas).

It is a great honour for me to introduce the CGSA's new president, my Dad, John Scott, AGS.

Superintendent at Summerlea Golf and Country Club in Vaudreuil-Dorion since 2002, his devotion to the golf industry spans almost half a century.

To say he grew up on a golf course is not an exaggeration. John's journey into the golf world began when his father purchased a small 9-hole golf course an hour north of Montreal in Rawdon, QC. John and his 4 siblings at the time moved into an apartment at the back of the clubhouse, only to move out a few years later after the birth of his little sister.

"Growing up on the golf course, my parents put my siblings and me to work. We grew up working on the golf course or in the clubhouse/pro shop. I remember driving a cart with my Dad, pulling hoses and sprinklers on the greens when I was around 5 or 6 years old," he said.

As he was graduating high school John's passion for his craft started to blossom. He was involved in expanding the club from a 9-hole course into an 18-hole course. In 1981, he was approached by a sales rep who told him about the short course at the University of Guelph. It took no time for him to fall in love with the business, and he enrolled in the Diploma program the following fall.

John credits his father, Gordon Scott, as being his biggest influence. "I grew up working by his side on the golf course. He did not teach me about turf, but he taught me about life and how to go for your dreams. My father was working in the labs at the Shell refinery in Montreal and one day decided to buy a golf course. He wasn't a golf pro, nor did he know about agronomy. He bought the golf course to be a business owner and do it his way. My father worked 7 days a week and showed me the value of hard work. His motto was do the work and then have fun," John says.

Believing Generation



30th reunion of class of 85A at Summerlea Golf and Country Club (left to right: Jerry Richards; John Scott, AGS; Eric Rubs; Angelo Capannelli; Dean Baker, CGCS; and Mark Schneider).



Drone picture of clubhouse and Summerlea Golf and Country Club.

After graduating from Guelph, John met Ron Leishman of the Royal Montreal Golf Club, who hired him as an assistant superintendent. He was then offered his first superintendent position at Rivermead Golf Club in Aylmer, QC, where he met his wife and my mother, Renée.

A few years later, John returned to Rawdon to become superintendent at the family golf course. After a couple of years back in his hometown, John dreamt of bigger horizons and moved his family to Montreal to become the superintendent at Elm Ridge Country Club, his first 36-hole club. In 2002, he left Elm Ridge to work at Summerlea Golf and Country

Club, where he is still superintendent to this day.

John joined the CGSA in 1984 after his first year of university. He values the importance of young, aspiring golf course superintendents to join and get involved early.

“My vision of the CGSA is to emphasize the importance of becoming a member. I wish the younger generation could experience the excitement I felt in 1985 at the Constellation Hotel in Toronto when I attended my first CGSA conference. I was a small-town boy taking in sessions with superintendents from across the country. I met superintendents that are still my friends to this

day. I want the assistants and students that are coming up in this industry to want to be a member like I wanted to be. I saw what it could do for me in my career.”

He believes the future of the association lies within the involvement of the next generation of superintendents. “If we can have the young generation embrace the association as my classmates and I did, that is half the battle for new members. We are only as strong as our membership.”

John speaks highly of his time as a member of the association, saying his 37-year membership has greatly benefited his career and personal friendships. “My involvement with



*John's trusted companion, Jacobsen, who is at work with him everyday (top left).
John and son Christopher coaching Nicholas's hockey team.*



John attending the first National Golf Day on Parliament Hill, Ottawa on May 29, 2018.

CGSA and QGSA has been extremely rewarding. I have been truly fortunate to work with amazing people that are dedicated to their careers as well as to a profession that is challenging and fulfilling."

Entering his 20th year at Summerlea, his love for his job still burns strong, and his passion is still infectious to his team. John's management style is based off of establishing good communication with his staff and taking time to talk with everyone. Making everyone and their tasks feel important is a big part of the way he motivates his staff.

"If I can convey my vision of the golf course, my staff can strive to meet or improve on that vision then we have a team that cares and can come together."

John's door is always open for staff to come in and ask questions or to ask him to double-check their work. To him, it is very important for his employees to show they want to be better and be the best they can be. John is very hands-on and likes to be involved in projects. This reinforces a strong team dynamic in the workplace and keeps everyone going.

His passion for the business even rubbed off on my brother and I. Some of my earliest memories are going to the family course and riding the tractors on my father's lap. I remember asking if I could accompany him to work on my days off school. I would lie about having finished my homework so I could ride with him in his cart while making the rounds on the course. He's inspired me so much that I am entering my third year as his spray tech, working alongside my brother Nico, who works as a student.

Working in this field can be challenging for family life due to the schedule and amount of energy needed to make a golf course run. Dad, I hope you know that Mom, Nico and I understand and are proud to have been there to witness your passion for your work, even on bad days. Although you say you would've liked to spend more time with us during the summer, we appreciate everything you and your career brought us. It allowed you to be Nico and my hockey coach throughout our entire minor hockey career, even if that might've stressed you out more than taking care of 36 holes.

Your whole family is proud of you, including Grandpa, who is smiling down on you right now in between his heavenly golf rounds. I know you're too modest to boast, but you deserve this moment. **GM**

Great job pops,
Chris

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Mitch Davidson

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jason.hooper@target-specialty.com
604.317.2476

Chris Paterson

Southern Alberta & Kootenays
chris.paterson@target-specialty.com
403.540.0157

Mark Scenna

Sales Manager, Canada
mark.scenna@target-specialty • 416.458.2396

Eric Gratopp

Northern Alberta
eric.gratopp@target-specialty.com
587.284.4744

Gregor Kowalski

Vancouver Island
gregor.kowalski@target-specialty.com
250.686.3909

Josh Seibel

Saskatchewan & Manitoba
josh.seibe@target-specialty.com
306.861.8296

Perry Brazeau

Toronto / East
perry.brazeau@target-specialty.com
416.705.8006

Colin Hindle

Ottawa & Eastern Ontario
colin.hindle@target-specialty.com
613.314.9711

Jason MacRae

Quebec North & West
jason.macrae@target-specialty.com
514.712.8006

Mitch Guy

Northern Ontario
mitch.guy@target-specialty.com
705.444.9010

Joey Losito

Quebec South & East
joseph.losito@target-specialty.com
819.571.1677

Craig McCutcheon

South-West Ontario
craig.mccutcheon@target-specialty.com
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Chris Nelson

Toronto West / Niagara
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The Canadian was an



With CGSA's first virtual conference now complete, The Canadian Experience Live exceeded expectations. With no travel costs, more people were able to register and participate from the comfort of their own home or office.

500+ ATTENDEES

Over 500 delegates and exhibitors, more attendees than in several years, experienced the virtual Canadian. With many attending for the education program, they were not disappointed. James Cronk, an industry leader with over 30 years of experience in the golf and service industry, kicked off the conference with his keynote address – Keep Your Sanity While Managing Humanity.

FIRST CLASS EDUCATION SESSIONS

Concurrent sessions provided all delegates with several options over the course of the three days. The education program remained available for delegates to participate and receive continuing education credits

after the conference ended as all sessions were recorded.

Our membership asked for sessions to help with obtaining CECs and leadership and that's exactly what we delivered, with over 16 hours of education exclusively sponsored by Syngenta. Sessions included: Optimizing Fungicide Performance with Dr. Rick Latin; What's Next in Golf Course Architecture with Jeff Mingay; Best Management Practices with Adam Moeller; After Grubs and Chinch Bugs with Tim O'Connor; Innovative Control Strategies for Dollar Spot and Snow Mold with Dr. Paul Koch; How to Drive Success Through Performance Agreements with Laura Williams; Dr. Frank Rossi's Life with Less Chemical Inputs; Roots Diseases in Turfgrass with Dr. Jesse Benelli; The Art of Application with Dr. Doug Baumann; Green Futures: Golf Course Landscapes, Climate Changes and Management with Dr. Richard Hebda; I Got Issues – Let's Talk BMP's with Dr. Thomas Nikolai; Precision Turfgrass Management with Katie Dodson; Turf Disease

Management with Dr. Tom Hsiang; and How to Program PGR's with Dr. William Kreuser.

Back by popular demand – the Superintendents Panel! This year's topic was The Challenge and Change of Human Resources Panel, which concluded the education program and was moderated by Adam Zubek with participants James Beebe, T-Jay Creamer, AGS and Trevor Anderson, MS, AGS. These superintendents shared personal experience regarding hiring, on-boarding, training and retention.

The vast majority of respondents indicated they were able to fulfill their priorities set for attending The Canadian. Many attendees also indicated they were extremely satisfied with the 2021 Virtual Canadian Golf Course Management Conference and were just as likely to recommend it to a colleague (see sidebar).

ENHANCED EQUIPMENT TECHNICIANS PROGRAM

A virtual format allowed us to offer more options for the Equipment

Live Experience!

Technician sessions including virtual tours of Muskoka Lakes Golf and Country Club and Capilano Golf and Country Club. Other sessions included: The Move to Electric Power presented by the 2020 CGSA/Foley Company Equipment Technician of the Year Bill Januszewski, Steering Your Shop to Success by Trent Manning; Diagnostic via-on Board Display with Don White and Mike McGrath; Electric Circuit Testing and Voltage Drop presented by The Toro Company; Purchasing vs Leasing by Toby McHale; and Troubleshooting Aftercut Appearance Issues with Trent Manning.

RECOGNIZING THE BEST IN THE BUSINESS

Although our awards presentations are typically in person, the presentations, sponsored by Bayer, were spread out through the duration of the conference this year allowing all delegates and exhibitors to support the award recipients.

NEW TAKE ON NETWORKING

Everyone missed the opportunity to connect in person but the Digital SociALL, sponsored by BrettYoung, provided an outstanding opportunity for delegates to network with their peers from across the country. Attendees could start at their favourite Canadian sports team or musician and move throughout the room to meet with everyone.

221 ***CGSA member superintendents in attendance.***

49 ***CGSA member assistant superintendents in attendance.***

250 ***Other attendees include golf equipment technicians, students, associates, and golf course management.***

81% ***was the overall rating of the event by all respondents.***

83% ***would recommend The Canadian to a colleague.***

90% ***of respondents attended for the education program.***

67% ***attended the trade show to research new products.***

24 HOUR TRADE SHOW ACCESS

The design and format of the Exhibit Hall in 2021 was user friendly and allowed exhibitors and delegates to meet “Live” or through chats. Attendees were able to research new products, identify new suppliers to do business with and connect with existing suppliers. 5 Live hours plus 24 hour access to exhibit booths was available. The Exhibit Hall was also open for 30 days after the conference.

INTRODUCING GAMIFICATION

Participants were introduced to a gamification game that allowed delegates to collect points for every exhibit booth they visited, for every Live Chat they had with exhibitors, education session, awards ceremony, online auction item visited and industry presentation attended. Congratulations to Kerry Watkins, AGS for collecting the highest number of points. Kerry received a \$500 Visa gift card. Congratulations to the over 30 delegates who also received prizes of Visa gift cards, merchandise, memberships, event registrations and Venngo subscriptions.

TOP NOTCH INDUSTRY PRESENTATIONS

Industry Presentations were also in a new format this year and more delegates than ever were able to attend because they were spread out during the 3 days of the conference. Those recordings were also available to delegates after the conference. Thanks to Brandt, Syngenta, Bayer and BASF.

\$18,000+ RAISED AT ONLINE AUCTION

CGSA introduced an online auction at this year’s conference. It was very user-friendly and raised over \$18,000. Bidders received automatic notification if they were outbid. Donors were also able to follow-along and watch the bidding. There was fierce competition at times and CGSA thanks all donors for contributing to our advocacy and scholarship programs. Thank you to The Toro Company; Bayco Golf; Turf Prophit; Wallah Golf, Hutcheson Sand and Mixes; BrettYoung; The Professional Gardener; AGSA; Mulligan International; Arbourdale; AllTurf; The Andersons and Super Golf Solutions.

AGM: WELCOME TO OUR NEW BOARD

Also new in 2021 was the Annual General Meeting, which typically takes place during the conference, but was held virtually this year on March 10. CGSA was pleased to recognize 25 and 30 year members, newly accredited and renewed members and scholarship winners. Congratulations to all.

The new board of directors were also elected with John Scott, AGS becoming the President, Pierre Vezeau, AGS as the new Vice President and Dustin Zdan, AGS as the Secretary Treasurer. Returning and elected members are Ken Bruniski, AGS, BC; John McLinden, Ontario; Bradley Allen, AGS, Atlantic; Braydon Gilbert, AGS, Manitoba; Luc Ladoceur, Quebec and Tyler McComas, Saskatchewan.

COUNTDOWN TO THE 2022 CANADIAN

Plans are underway for the 2022 Canadian Golf Course Management Conference and although our desire is to host an in-person event, we must follow all covid protocols and plan accordingly. **GM**

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2020 John B. Steel Recipient the late Stanley Thompson (1893-1953)



The 2020 John B. Steel award was accepted on Thursday, March 4, 2021 by Stanley and Matthew Thompson, great nephews of the late Stanley Thompson. They joined us virtually during the Awards Ceremony as part of The Canadian Golf Course Management conference on Thursday, March 4, 2021 and provided some family stories honouring their great uncle. The John B. Steel award with Stanley Thompson as the recipient will be housed at the Stanley Thompson Society in Burlington, Ontario.

Stanley Thompson was a Canadian golf course architect, and a high-standard amateur golfer. He was a co-founder of the American Society of Golf Course Architects. In 1980, Stanley Thompson was inducted into the Canadian Golf Hall of Fame. In 2004, Thompson was named a Person of National Historic Significance by the Canadian government and in 2015, he was inducted into the Canadian Sports Hall of Fame.

Stanley was born in 1893 and was the seventh of nine children. Stanley and his four brothers all developed into excellent golfers, and each made significant contributions to Canadian golf.

He attended Malvern Collegiate and served in the Canadian Artillery, World War 1, and received a citation as a gunner at Vimy Ridge. Thompson designed courses from 1912 to 1952, mostly in Canada. Thompson got his design start with George Cumming, mentor and long-time professional at the Toronto Golf Club, who designed several Canadian courses early in the 20th century. In 1948, Thompson was a co-founder, with Donald Ross and Robert Trent Jones, of the American Society of Golf Course Architects and Thompson served as ASGCA president in 1949.

“What a pleasure it was to announce that the late Stanley Thompson is the winner of our most prestigious award. The number of courses that carry Thompson’s signature in Canada is

impressive. He has definitely left his mark on the Canadian golf industry and those who are able to experience working at a Stanley Thompson golf course carry on his legacy,” said Darren Kalyniuk, CGSA Past President.

The CGSA John B. Steel Award commemorates CGSA’s first President, who was also the first superintendent to be inducted into the Canadian Golf Hall of Fame. This award is presented annually to an individual, chosen by the CGSA Board of Directors, who has made an outstanding contribution to the advancement of the profession of Golf Course Superintendent. The recipient is presented with an original soap stone carving designed and carved by Bill Fach, retired Master Superintendent at Black Bear Ridge Golf Course in Belleville, Ontario and former CGSA President. **GM**

► **FEATURE** ► **PAUL MACCORMACK, SUPERINTENDENT, FOX MEADOW GOLF COURSE**
JEFF MINGAY, MINGAY GOLF COURSE DESIGN



Just Enough: Fox Meadow

As golf courses age, remedial work is inevitably required. Bunkers deteriorate, tee and green surfaces shrink, and trees never stop growing to negatively affect turf health, complicate maintenance and impede play. And, frankly, some of the golf course architecture of the late 1990s and early 2000s doesn't measure up to the much leaner business of golf today.

As its twentieth anniversary approached, I realized our aging property at Fox Meadow Golf Course, in Stratford, Prince Edward Island, was going to need some work to simply keep it functional and enjoyable to play. It also became apparent that it would likely never be practical for Fox Meadow's ownership to embark on a full-scale golf course renovation project.

So, the idea of creating a golf course improvement plan that capitalized on our own in-house experience and abilities became the most practical approach. I enjoy the craft of golf course architecture and have renovation project experience, but I also knew that my employers were not going to get the biggest bang for their buck unless we engaged a competent and relevant golf course architect for assistance.

IMPROVING FUNCTIONALITY & ENHANCING PLAYABILITY

Jeff Mingay and I met in the spring of 2008. Jeff was invited to Charlottetown to speak on golf course architecture at the Atlantic Golf Symposium that year and he used that opportunity to visit a handful of courses on Prince Edward Island. I offered to tour Jeff around Stanley Thompson's 1939 layout at Green Gables, which was soon to undergo a full-scale renovation. Jeff and I traipsed around the current routing and ventured into the dunes along the north shore looking for remnants of original Thompson holes that had been lost to nature. As we searched for abandoned bunkers and other long lost features together, it became apparent to me that this wouldn't be our last walk on a golf course together.

Jeff and I became fast friends and stayed in touch casually over the next decade. When I became golf course superintendent at Fox Meadow, in 2010, Jeff and I began discussing the possibility of working on a golf course improvement plan together. The course had aged in typical fashion.

Principally, bunker drainage was damaged and much of the original sand had become contaminated from years of washouts and weathering. Many of the mowing patterns had changed significantly over time and there were areas of the course where the architecture simply needed to be improved. Take tee surfaces for example. At many holes, the teeing areas did not take proper advantage of available space to offer us enough room to effectively spread wear and offer more diverse set-up opportunities,

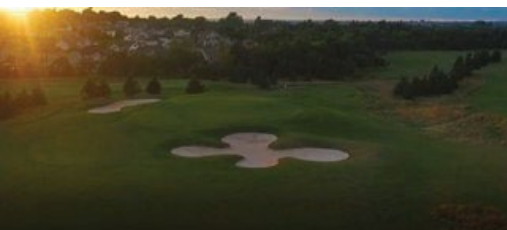
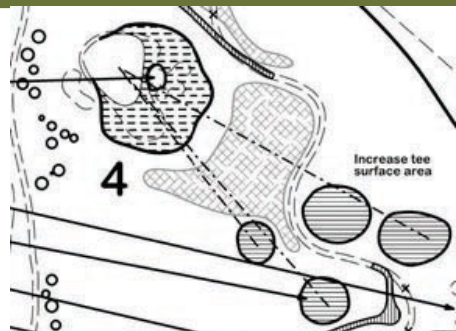


To say our first walk was chilly would be an understatement!

which would make the course more interesting to play.

The notion of developing a plan with Jeff didn't come to fruition until there was a change in ownership at Fox Meadow in 2018. By April that year, after convincing the new owners that a long-range golf course improvement plan would be a benefit to the entire operation, Jeff arrived for his first site visit. He had not seen the course previously and was pleasantly surprised by the interest and beauty of the property. Jeff was also complimentary on the efficiency of the routing and the varied and interesting character of the green surfaces.

Renovations at Golf Course



Typical of the original bunker shapes and sizes at Fox Meadow.

The plan and the new more versatile look of the par three 4th hole at Fox Meadow.

With this solid foundation, we set about with intent to improve the function of the course relative to efficiencies in maintenance and enhancing playability for golfers of all abilities. We also discussed how, in the process of carrying out required work, we could make Fox Meadow more distinctive and, in turn, more attractive to local and visiting golfers.

THE INITIAL DRAFT

Jeff wasted no time. An initial draft of his plan arrived the following month. Jeff's plan focused on bunkers, the introduction of short grass areas around many greens, and significantly enlarging tee surfaces. Again, he

also took this opportunity to reimagine the look of the golf course with intent to make it stand out in a very competitive golf market.

Most of the existing bunkers were comparatively large, and too many were set on the margins of the holes, way out in the rough. Jeff challenged us to look at every bunker on the golf course to determine its purpose. If a bunker didn't have a definite purpose relative to interesting golf, aesthetics or perhaps saving an errant shot from reaching a worse fate, Jeff suggested the bunker should be eliminated rather than renovated. At the end of the day, his plan called for a 47% reduction in total square footage of sand.

Ironically, being on an island surrounded by sand isn't a benefit relative to filling artificial bunkers with sand. One would think that bunker sand is inexpensive on Prince Edward Island. Alas! We import bunker sand at huge cost. Considering this potential expense, it was critical that every bunker slated for renovation and future maintenance at Fox Meadow had a well-defined purpose.

At many holes where bunkers have been eliminated as part of Jeff's plan, more fairway turf has been introduced to present a bit more latitude for tee shots, restore strategic angles, and enhance playing interest around the greens. At the greens, short grass is a great equalizer. Playing from a tight lie beside a green tends to enhance the challenge for low handicappers by presenting them with options to pitch, chip or putt. At the same time, any golfer can simply putt onto the green rather than unpredictably slash out of rough. Mowing expanded swaths of short grass has also simplified our maintenance operations. Continuing the fairway mow lines around the green surrounds unimpeded by bunkers and other superfluous features.

There's more short grass at teeing areas now, too. This greatly assisted our set up capabilities by giving us expanded areas to more effectively spread wear and tear.



An example of a smaller, more classic bunker shape and newly introduced short grass on Fox Meadow's 4th hole.



A good example of the new edge treatment on the lone fairway bunker on the 6th hole (there used to be 5!)



The before and after shots of the par three 12th hole. The tee area was also expanded to accommodate more traffic.

Over the past twenty years, Fox Meadow has averaged approximately 25-30,000 rounds annually. We put close to 34,000 golfers through in 2020!

Along with more effectively managing traffic and associated wear, as well as divot recovery, enlarged turf surfaces throughout the course present us with opportunities to significantly vary the set-up of the course day to day. Not only in terms of length but angles, too. This concept has been well-received by our members, who enjoy the variety.

PLAN IMPLEMENTATION

Implementation of the golf course improvement plan began in August 2018, at the par 5, 6th hole. Jeff visited again as work began to consult with our resident shaper, Lyle Robinson, on a bunker style and other feature shaping. The most popular layouts on Prince Edward Island were constructed during the golf course building boom of the 1990s and exhibit a comparatively modern look.

To differentiate Fox Meadow, Jeff decided to use a more classic 1920s era bunker style, featuring

grass faces and flatter sand bottoms. Most golfers are really enjoying this new look. From a maintenance perspective, we went with fescue on the bunker faces to reduce the need for excessive trimming. The flatter sand bottoms have drastically limited our washouts in the summer months as well.

Unfortunately, the COVID-19 pandemic complicated our collaborative process. Throughout 2020, the travel restrictions to Atlantic Canada prevented Jeff from visiting Prince Edward Island. Luckily though, it hasn't impacted our progress. Since August 2018, in consultation with Jeff virtually and by telephone, Lyle Robinson and I have continued to implement the plan in phases.

Having an experienced, creative shaper working with us in-house has significantly contributed to the success of this project. After working with Jeff onsite, at the 6th hole, Lyle quickly grasped the proposed concepts and style, and has executed our architect's vision beautifully.

When renovating a golf course, execution is important, but proper planning is most essential. During the first phase of this project, we attempted to complete the proposed work, from start to finish, in late fall. But, we quickly realized that grassing new features at that time of year didn't get us any further ahead from a turf quality perspective the following spring and early summer. We have since settled on shaping features in late fall, after closing the course to play. We then return in spring to complete work and grassing, and manage the grow-in.

It has been fascinating to practically learn how much better an aged golf course can become in terms of functionality and playability without changing heaven and earth or spending an excessive amount of money on renovation work. The whole ethos of our project at Fox Meadow focused on refining the existing golf course design. It was simply a matter of taking an honest look at the architectural features to determine what's actually necessary. Along with eliminating superfluous features, we allowed solving actual problems, with renovation and future maintenance costs in mind, to drive the plan.

FINAL STAGE

If all goes well this season, we hope to complete the fourth stage of the project. As we near the completion of the work, the golf course has become markedly better on several fronts. Golfers of all abilities are enjoying the reimagined holes. Most of them appreciate the simpler, more classic look presented at Fox Meadow.

Most importantly, the golf course is now on a more sustainable trajectory from both an architectural and maintenance point of view than it was before this refinement project. This renewed foundation will not only help the course from a structural standpoint, but creates a more solid financial footing for the ownership group as well. **GM**



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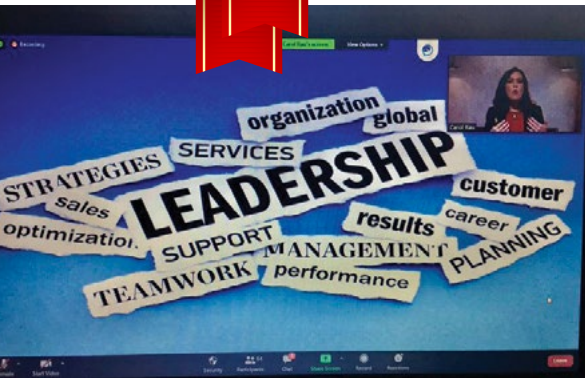
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► **FEATURE** ► **PAUL DAVEY, FIRST ASSISTANT SUPERINTENDENT,
CORDOVA BAY GOLF COURSE**



15th Annual Green Start Academy



Carlos Arraya, CGCS presented at the latest Green Start Academy session about multicultural organizations.

It was an honour to be selected for the 15th annual Green Start Academy which, for the first time, was held virtually. A big thank you to Bayer and John Deere for their support. The Academy provided great learning opportunities for all attendees, including the eight Canadian assistants who were in attendance. The virtual event created a space not only for the 2020 attendees, but also for alumni to join in and learn or impart wisdom.

I have attended many conferences and educational programs, and the Green Start Academy planned and executed a great event this year. I was really impressed with how Green Start Academy was organized and their willingness to alter plans on the fly. We participated in surveys at the end of each session to provide feedback on how things were going and what could be improved upon. The

seminars were extremely informative and provided great advice on how to achieve your goals.

It is all about finding the perfect FIT for you and the organization you want to work for. It was great to hear from the mentors and past attendees about their experiences. They also shared how the Green Start Academy helped them advance in their careers.

I have worked in this industry for twenty-two years, being fortunate to hold positions in the Rocky Mountains and on both coasts of Canada. I was employed as an assistant for a few years and then earned the superintendent role in PEI and realized that, unfortunately, this was not a good FIT for me. Now, I work for an outstanding organization and with a fantastic group of people as First Assistant in BC. This has made me realize how important FIT is in my career.

Although unable to meet in person, the virtual peer groups were a fun way to meet others in a more intimate environment. The mentors facilitated the peer groups and kept the event inviting and relaxed. There was a great amount of diversity, as the groups were composed of superintendents from various locations, but there was a similarity in the issues and challenges we were faced with as a profession.

I would recommend that any assistants aspiring for bigger things or seeking more information for managing a dynamic crew, apply for Green Start Academy. The knowledge that I gained is invaluable to my future. The mentors and event organizers were helpful and very approachable. I look forward to meeting them in person one day. Thank you for this opportunity. **GM**



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September 14 & 21, 2021

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More details will be coming soon and final details are pending COVID status and restrictions.

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Hard conversations relationships—

This article is based on the webinar presented at the 2021 CGSA 'The Canadian' Conference called 'After Grubs and Chinch Bugs, Your Greatest Challenge is How to Positively Influence What Golfers are Saying About You.'

Imagine this: It's late on a Saturday

morning, and you hear that the former men's captain of your club—an uber alpha male if there was one—is looking for you. And he's not happy. Word is that he was even in his match on 18 with his archrival—the current captain—when he bladed his bunker shot OB out of the right greenside trap.

"There's not enough &*(^% sand in this !@#\$ bunker!" he thundered. And now he's looking for you to give you an earful. Upon hearing this, what's your first instinct?

BENEFITS OF A TOUGH CONVERSATION

When I've shared the scenario above with superintendents, the answers are all over the map, including: "Time to go head home!" "How can I make myself scarce?" "Oh well, I better go find him." "Where's my resume?"

Whatever your instinct may be, no one likes the prospect of having what might be called a 'hard conversation.' When you get right down to it, the reason we dislike and often avoid uncomfortable and awkward conversations is fear—fear that things may get ugly, expose us to ridicule or criticism, or even cost us our jobs.

Ultimately, you are the person responsible for the playing conditions at your club, and there are times when a member—or a group of



don't kill they make them better



members—is angry, spreading rumours, casting doubt on your judgment and skill, and worse. And you're going to face unhappy owners and directors in your career. There's no getting around it.

To maintain some peace and—quite often—your job, you don't have an option: you must have those 'hard conversations.' But here's the irony: Hard conversations are most always a positive experience. Sure, they may be scary at first, but instead of killing a relationship they invariably make them better.

Not always, of course, but in the majority of circumstances, having a hard conversation leads to:

- Greater clarity and understanding
- Better communication
- More trust
- Better relationships

Having hard conversations is easier for some people than others, but this skill doesn't come naturally. It is a learned skill.

"After your ability to maintain a quality course, communications is the greatest factor in determining your future," said Thom Charters, former superintendent at Ontario clubs such as Taboo, Bayview, Weston and Islington.

Now retired, Charters adds, "To survive and thrive, you've got to be able to have difficult conversations with your members, owners, suppliers and even with your team."

As Charters attests, to prosper in your role, you will also be challenged to have frank conversations with employees who, for example, may be chronically late or fail to follow safety protocols.



ClubLink's Blue Springs Golf Club's Hole #2 (left) and Hole #14 (right) in Acton, ON.

Failure to have these conversations invariably makes things worse, leading to resentment, divisions between members and staff, misunderstanding, myths that become perceived as reality, poor staff morale, and a lack of confidence in the superintendent and his or her team. There is skill involved. And not even a communications professional or coach—that would be me—always gets it right.

THE TWO GOLDEN RULES

Last season, my communications company was engaged by ClubLink to publish newsletters for five of its west-end clubs in the Greater Toronto Area, including Blue Springs in Acton, Ontario.

In the midst of a drought and extreme heat in late June, Blue Springs lost its irrigation for four days due to a broken pipe, and the difficulty getting prompt delivery of a replacement part. Due to the heroic efforts of superintendent, Todd Joel, and his staff, they saved the greens with hand watering. Unfortunately, a number of fairways in low-lying areas and some tees were in tough shape. Not surprisingly, a number of members were upset.

I worked with Todd and Greg Pacenti, the club's Director of Operations, on how to communicate with the members about the process of healing the affected areas. I also play at Blue Springs. One Saturday

morning, I was paired with a member with whom I had never played. After hitting our approach shots, I told him about my role with the club that season. He immediately started to complain about some of the turf issues.

After he took a breath, I began lecturing him that the club staff were doing everything they could given COVID and the extreme heat, and there was no way to predict the "fluky" pipe break. The words weren't out of my mouth, and I realized that I had screwed up royally. I had taken his comments personally, I reacted rather than responded, and I was defensive.

On the 2nd tee, I apologized profusely. We went on to have a cordial round. It was a great learning experience for the coach. As we talked, it became abundantly clear that his passion sprang from how much he loved Blue Springs, the pride he had in telling people he played there, and in bringing guests. But under the circumstances, he was disappointed. He thanked me for listening to him, and I thanked him for providing me with a greater understanding of how this affected him.

I was reminded of the two golden rules of hard conversations, both of which I violated:

- Seek first to understand, then be understood
- Be the greatest listener in the history of the world

If you can follow these rules, you will master the core fundamentals of successfully having hard conversations. These skills enable you to:

- Defuse angry people
- Turn adversaries into allies
- Educate your members about agronomic practices and Augusta Syndrome
- Better manage perceptions and stories being told among your members about you and your team
- Build relationships with your members—and everyone in your life
- And lower your stress

BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS IS KEY

In my work with Todd Joel and Greg Pacenti, we focused on how to communicate to members in private conversations and through the twice-monthly newsletter. We focused on the recovery plan. Joel, who is entering his third season as Superintendent at Blue Springs, also understands another golden rule of communications: be seen and be heard—frequently.

Joel does his best to come out to men's nights and ladies day, and to stop and talk with members. By doing so, they get to know him. In other words, they form a relationship with him.

Why is this important? As humans, we're social animals. We instinctually want to get along, and we're uncomfortable with people we do not know. When we know people, we are far more prone to like them, listen to them respectfully, give them the benefit of the doubt, and wish them the best.

On one afternoon before men's night, Todd stopped his cart in the staging area with his trusty dog, Goose. A member walked over and they began to talk. As I watched, it became evident the member was asking questions about the course, and he began to talk about his frustrations. Todd looked the man in the eyes, and listened intently. He didn't say anything until the man was clearly finished speaking. Then Joel said simply, "I can understand why you'd feel that way."

The member's shoulders seemed to drop, and his face relaxed. He asked a few more questions, and then Joel explained the plans they had for the course, including verticutting to reduce thatch in the fairways, re-sodding several tees, installing isolation valves in the irrigation pipes, and installing a new satellite system that would allow Joel to control the irrigation from his smart phone. The fellow smiled, gave Joel a fist bump and headed to his cart.

In the weeks and months that followed, I noticed that this member was like an ambassador for Joel and his staff. On the patio, he inserted himself into conversations about the course, and he expressed his confidence in Joel and his staff to return Blue Springs to its former glory.

In his exchange with the member, Joel exemplified the golden rule of 'Seek first to understand, then be understood.' He drew the man out by asking open and non-judgmental questions. Joel also demonstrated empathetic listening by listening for the man's feelings as well as his words. By allowing the man to express what he felt, the fellow felt fully heard.

When we're upset with someone, it can feel like we have a disruptive electrical charge in the form of negative thoughts and angry feelings. While the charge persists, the relationship is fragile and in danger.

However, when we fully hear someone, that person releases their feelings, usually in a less combustible way. And something amazing happens: the charge is released, trust is restored, there's greater clarity, better communication, and the relationship is restored. Not 100 per cent of the time, but most of the time.

THE TWO GOLDEN RULES

- Seek first to understand, then be understood
- Be the greatest listener in the history of the world

What's more, going through tough times together bonds people. We gain a greater appreciation for each other; moving through adversity together is a true test of every relationship. This is how all solid relationships are built. Without having hard conversations, we build stories in our heads, trust rusts, morale deteriorates, and relationships suffer. And that's when superintendents get fired.

THE IMPACT ON YOUR MENTAL HEALTH

Failing to have hard conversations can also seriously damage your mental health, especially for superintendents, many of whom feel chronically stressed about the conditions of their course, and about what their members and bosses might be thinking about them and the job they are doing.

Most superintendents are men, and unfortunately, the dominant male culture tells us to figure it out on your own, power through, and whatever you do, don't appear weak. That toxic belief is a recipe for burnout, anxiety and feeling the weight of the world.

Unfortunately, depression, broken marriages, substance abuse and even suicide are prevalent among superintendents, as noted in a startling article in Golf Digest in September 2019 that is a must-read for everyone in the business.

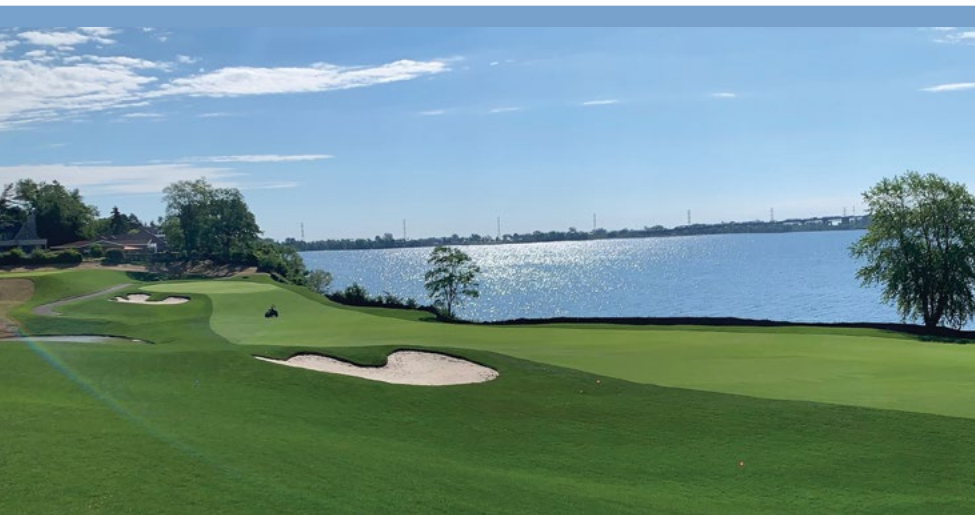
Taking the risk to have a hard conversation will help you form solid relationships with everyone in your life, it will help you keep your job, and it may even save your life.

While your first instinct may be to avoid hard conversations, by stepping into the fray and taking the risk, you'll give yourself a gift of healthier and stronger relationships that will sustain you in those inevitable times when Mother Nature throws you a curve ... and when a member blades one OB. **GM**

Tim O'Connor is a performance coach and speaker who coaches and teaches golf industry personnel about leadership and life skills. O'Connor Golf Communications publishes newsletters for golf clubs. Contact him at tim@oconnorgolf.ca.

► **BACK NINE** ► **DARREN KALYNIUK, CGSA PAST PRESIDENT, SUPERINTENDENT, ST. BONIFACE GOLF & COUNTRY CLUB**

Pursuit for



17th hole, along the shore of Burlington Bay, post construction 2020.



Maria and Ryan out for a hike in Inverness NS, during CGSA Fall Field Day 2019.

I have thoroughly enjoyed meeting and getting to know everyone I have written about in the Back Nine over the past couple of years.

This next person has been recognized for his leadership qualities and passion for the industry and was recently awarded the 2020 CGSA/Toro Assistant Superintendent of the Year award. Please allow me to introduce you to Ryan Marangoni, Assistant Superintendent of the Burlington Golf & Country Club in Burlington, ON.

Ryan's story began back in high school where he was wanting to complete a four-credit co-op program with a backyard landscaping company with ambitions to start his own company one day. "I had aspirations to start my own company, however the counselor suggested golf course maintenance instead," Ryan said. Knowing that he had a love for playing golf and was on the golf team, he took the advice.

In 2005, Marangoni opened the door to his career working at The Toronto Golf Club which he instantly fell in love with. "The support I received from Al Schwemler and Bill Green, AGS, in addition to having the ability to drive really cool equipment, was the main reason I wanted to pursue this industry as a career," he reminisces.

Having his goals in sight, Ryan knew the importance of education and decided to enroll in the 2-year Golf Course Turfgrass Management program at Penn State University, where he would excel in his class and eventually graduate with honours in 2010.

Marangoni has been privileged to work at many amazing courses throughout his career including a 6-month internship through Penn State, across the pond at Sunningdale Golf Club, the Old Course in England. Ryan

has also had some great accomplishments in his young career so far, with many more to come without a doubt. He mentioned that one of his proudest achievements thus far and most recently was being awarded the 2020 CGSA/Toro Assistant Superintendent of the year award at this year's virtual conference. "I am the proudest of this! It is such a huge honour, and I am so thankful."

When asked about influencers in his career, Ryan mentioned that he has been extremely fortunate to have worked with so many amazing mentors in his career. "Al Schwemler and Bill Green, AGS, had a big impact early on in my career and Paul Evenden was the first to hire me as an Assistant. Currently, there is never a dull day working alongside Dean Baker, CGCS." Marangoni is so grateful to have met these people as they helped shape his career each step of the way.

Perfection



Burlington Golf and Country Club's turf team, 2020.



Grow-in process, new 5th green, post construction 2020.



Fall Drill-n-fill, green expansions.

Marangoni has enjoyed many facets of working in the industry thus far especially the relentless pursuit for perfection. "It is so subjective, and everyone has their own definition, yet we strive for it every day in a way to satisfy the members and their guests." He continued, "Providing a playing surface for people of all ages and skill level to play golf on, always trying to make it better, is what I love the most."

Just like many of us, Ryan has encountered and overcome many challenges along his journey. When asked what he felt was the most challenging aspect of working on the turf side of things he mentioned the weather. "You can do all the planning in the world, have everything ready to go, but if Mother Nature has different ideas then you need to switch gears and react. This is also what makes working on a golf course so interesting!"

Over the years, we have all heard and lived by some sound advice from our mentors and peers. When asked what he felt was the best advice he has ever gotten Ryan mentioned, "You can't make everyone happy, so the sooner you stop trying the easier it will become."

When asked what piece of advice he would give, Marangoni said, "If I had to give some advice I'd say always work your hardest, never stop educating yourself and try to be better today than you were yesterday." That is some advice to live by!

Besides being an avid CrossFitter and pushing himself to the limits of fitness in his off time away from the course, Ryan also tries to play as much golf as he possibly can during the season, is a diehard Toronto Maple Leafs fan, and loves to travel with his fiancé Maria. "She is my support system at home!" He continued, "Her appetite for adventure is infectious."

We love food and trying new dishes wherever we go and consider ourselves quite the doughnut connoisseurs."

Many of us are very lucky to have the support of our loved ones including Marangoni. "Maria is quite aware of my early morning schedule and is very accepting if I happen to nod off during movie night... which may be more common than not especially during the summer." Ryan continued, "She has helped me push the boundaries of my comfort zone and in many cases go right through them. I am very glad she is the one I see at the end of a difficult day, she is my voice of reason, my best friend and I don't know what I would do without her love and support." **GM**

Talk Back

The Canadian Golf Course Management Conference

Canada's top in the industry were celebrated during The Canadian Experience Live Conference held virtually March 2 - 4, 2021. For the first time, recipients received their awards ahead of time and were recognized throughout the three days of the conference. Thank you to Bayer for sponsoring the awards presentations.

Pictured with their awards here are:



J. Paul Robertson, Victoria Golf Course - the 2020 CGSA/Bayer Superintendent of the Year. Paul was recognized by Josey Groeneveld, Territory Sales Manager for Western Canada from Bayer. A CGSA member since 2008, Paul was the 2018 BCGSA President and is a Gordon Witteveen Award winner and huge contributor to the golf industry. Ken Brunneski, AGS was also honoured to recognize Paul.



Ryan Marangoni, Burlington Golf and Country Club - the 2020 CGSA/Toro Assistant Superintendent of the Year. Josh Tubbs, Senior Marketing Manager, The Toro Company recognized Ryan's professionalism, outstanding leadership, work ethic and team approach. He has been a CGSA member since 2012 and in the industry for 15 years.



Mark Lane, Memphremagog Golf Club - the 2020 CGSA/Rain Bird Environmental Achievement Award Winner. Serge Gauthier, Rain Bird presented Mark with his award for his environmental stewardship including irrigation projects and maintaining and raising the quality of the golf course over the past few years and for his increased wildlife program for students.



Bill Januszewski, Capilano Golf & Country Club - the 2020 CGSA/Foley Company Equipment Technician of the Year. Paul Rauker, president and CEO of The Foley Company, acknowledged Bill's asset to his colleagues is seen as a peer and for his outstanding contributions to the industry.



Reid Solodan, AGS, Canmore Golf and Curling Club - the 2020 Gordon Witteveen Article of the Year supported by The Toro Company. Josh Tubbs, Senior Marketing Director, the Toro Company presented Reid with the award for his article in the Fall issue of GreenMaster "Vermicomposting 101".



John B. Steel - the late Stanley Thompson, received the award posthumously and was accepted by his nephews. Stanley was selected as the 2020 John B. Steel recipient as Canada's most celebrated golf course architect and one who has left his mark on the golf industry.

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SHAWN EMERSON
DIRECTOR OF AGRONOMY
DESERT MOUNTAIN GOLF CLUB
SCOTTSDALE, ARIZONA



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