

Fall 2008

# Commonwealth Crier

News from the Virginia Golf Course Superintendents Association

## President's Message

Greetings!!

I hope this message finds everyone in good health and excited about fall projects, aerification, overseeding or inter-seeding those nuisance areas. Personally, I always breathe a sigh of relief when greens are aerified and the seed is flying; as it reminds me of football season, the upcoming holiday season and extra time with the family.

This time of year also reminds me of the upcoming "Education Season"—tradeshows, the GIS, seminars and more importantly, chapter meetings. There are some great chapter meetings lined up throughout the Commonwealth, I hope you will take the time and attend one or two. This is also the time to **GET INVOLVED!!!** The VGCSA is always looking for future leaders, and one way to get a taste of service is by volunteering to serve on one of our committees. Also, the GCSAA has called for volunteers to serve on a committee or task group. If you are on the fence about this, please pick up the phone and call me (I promise not to talk you into it but only answer questions honestly) or a friend who is involved. I will say that over the last couple of years, Virginia GCSA seems to be on the forefront of new and exciting issues.

Just recently VGCSA Board member Kim Garnett of Blacksburg Country Club was selected to attend the GCSAA Leadership Academy. We as a Board and as a statewide community of superintendents offer



our congratulations to her!! In addition, we offer congratulations and thanks to Peter McDonough, who will represent VGCSA on the Virginia Department of Agriculture's Technical Advisory Committee on fertilizer applications, which are being mandated by new legislation. Peter will look out for our interests.

I would also like to mention a new member service that will be implemented this fall. VGCSA will have new interactive electronic services through the Avectra NetForum software service, which is generally considered to be **THE** leader in association management software. Members will be able to manage their own account easier, with a personalized login and password to keep membership information current. Online registration will become much easier, including annual dues payments. We are excited about the new services to come, and if you are not already receiving email notifications of events, it's because we don't have your email address—please send it to our Executive Director David Norman at [DNorman007@aol.com](mailto:DNorman007@aol.com).

As the election year is winding down, the only thing that seems not to be slowing down is the ever-changing cost in products, especially fertilizers (this is by no means a slam on the vendors).

Going forward, we all will have to be sound managers, fiscally responsible, and especially open with communication. I have found it beneficial to share actual cost of products I actually use to on the golf course with club committee members. This has allowed for me to explain the purpose of the product, the cost and the ramifications if the product is scaled back or not used. We are all in the same boat here, and unfortunately I think it is only going to get worse before it gets better ... and the prices of these products will certainly never drop back to 2007 levels.

Again, thank you for allowing me to represent you as President of the VGCSA. It is an honor to be associated with a great state chapter and great members. I hope to see you all sometime during the Education Season and would love to have you serve on a committee, either with the VGCSA or GCSAA. I wish I could offer some type of resolution for the price of goods; however, the best I can come up with is to communicate with your members, customers, and stakeholders.

All the Best!

Eric D. Spurlock  
President  
Virginia GCSA



# Joe Saylor Memorial, October 27th

Chili Cookoff to be a fun part of the event!

The 4th Annual VGCSA Joe Saylor Memorial Tournament is scheduled for Monday, October 27, 2008 at the recently renovated Willow Oaks Country Club in Richmond. The format is two-man scramble, and there will be four divisions—Pro-Superintendent, Member-Member, Member-Guest and Open (two non-members).

Thanks to the excellent advance support of VGCSA sponsors, the entry fee for this event is just \$90 per person (\$180 per team), which includes green fees, carts, range balls, lunch and beverages, tee gift, lots of prizes and the awards party,

highlighted by the Chili Cookoff. The tournament will benefit the US Marine Corp's "Toys for Tots" program in Virginia. All participants are asked to bring a new toy for donation to this worthy cause.

For those who wish to stay overnight, our host hotel is the Holiday Inn Select Koger Center, and we have a special rate available for October 26–27 (details in the enclosed brochure—room reservation deadline is October 12). Please sign up right away, as last year's event was a sellout! An entry form is enclosed with the newsletter mailing.

## In Memorium ...

Jon Alan Hukkala, 46, former Superintendent at Penderbrook Golf Club in Fairfax, VA, passed away on September 25, 2008, at his home in Capon Bridge, WV.

Hukkala formerly worked for the Frederick County Parks and Recreation Department as a Turf Grass Specialist. He was a former officer of the Golf Course Superintendents Association, an avid golfer and sportsman.

Memorial contributions may be made to the SPCA, 115 Featherbed Lane, Winchester, VA 22601.

## Plan Now for the 2009 GCSAA Conference

The 2009 GCSAA Conference and Golf Industry Show plays in New Orleans Feb. 1-8. The Virginia GCSA, Mid-Atlantic AGCS and Eastern Shore GCSA chapters have set up shop at

the Astor Crowne Plaza on the corner of Canal and Bourbon Streets, and enclosed with the newsletter mailing is a reservation form (or call 800-442-7220) – sign up now!

Also, you'll want to mark Thursday, **February 5, 2009** on your calendar as the date of our joint social event, also at the Astor Crowne Plaza. See you in New Orleans!

### 2008 VGCSA Officers

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# VTA/SVTA Meeting at The Homestead a Big Success!

The VTA and SVTA held a joint meeting at The Homestead, with an excellent presentation from David Doherty, President and Founder of the International Sports Turf Research Center, Inc. (ISTRC).

Doherty holds three patents on the ISTRC System, which was developed to monitor the aging process of both sand and soil based golf greens. He is recognized by most in the industry to be the world's foremost authority on the Physical Properties of golf greens. The majority of the top 100 courses in all categories use the ISTRC System to monitor the effectiveness of their agronomic programs from year to year or from season to season. Much of his discussion centered on "displacement" through aeration techniques, in order to ensure oxygen for roots and the optimal physical properties.

Following the presentation, attendees were treated to golf on the famed Cascades Course, host to numerous national, regional and state championship events. The competition featured a stableford system with a blind draw for teams, and Doug Miller and his staff had the course in superb condition.



Members of the VTA and SVTA listen to ISTRC president David Doherty's presentation at the Homestead.



VTA President Dan Robertson and Harold Louthen of Draper Valley Country Club.

David Doherty is the recognized authority on the physical properties of golf turf.

# Wee One Foundation Tournament Raises Money to Assist Colleagues In Need

Cypress Creek Golfers Club played host to the Wee One Foundation fundraiser tournament on Monday, July 28. Host superintendent Phil Bailey was pleased with an excellent turnout to support this important charity for golf course superintendents.

The Wee One Foundation was developed to assist golf course management professionals or their dependents that incur overwhelming expenses due to medical hardship and are without comprehensive insurance or adequate financial resources. Since 2004, the Wee One Foundation has funded over \$120,000 to superintendents and colleagues in need.

Last year Virginia superintendents



2008 Wee One Tournament Champions Alford, Rash, Baier and Jeff Whitmire.

raised \$4,500 to donate to the Wee One Foundation. This year's event surpassed that mark by a wide margin, as nearly \$15,000 was raised. To note, the members



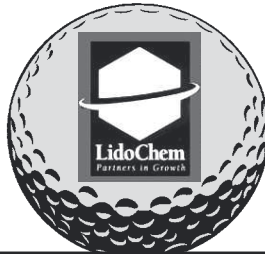
Two Rivers Country Club Superintendent Bob Ruff and Wee One leader Phil Bailey.

of Two Rivers Country Club made a special contribution of over \$2,000 themselves, helping support their superintendent Bob Ruff in his battle with cancer.

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# Communicating Through Today's Technology

Communicating in today's business world is more than sending and receiving messages. Images and impressions are created each time a conversation is conducted whether electronically or in person. Cell phones, voicemail, email, and other technological tools are changing the way we communicate. Using these communication methods is important for the golf course superintendent to continue to show their expertise.

## Voicemail

Voicemail has become one of the most commonly used methods of staying connected from remote sites. Good communication skills when using this tool can assist a superintendent when conducting business away from the maintenance facility or golf course. Most people prefer to receive short voicemail messages that include specific information. Those leaving long-winded messages are commonly placed at the bottom of return call lists.

Communication techniques superintendents can employ when using voicemail:

### Do:

- Consider whether leaving voicemail is the best medium for your message before leaving it.
- Organize your thoughts before you pick up the telephone. Anticipate the message you will leave if the receiver doesn't pick up.
- Assess: What is a bite-size, doable request on voicemail?
- Direct receivers to look for details in writing (email, memo, and so forth).
- Determine: What is the verb that will get your request across?
- Be precise. When, or by when?
- Break up run-on sentences by replacing *and*, *but*, and *so* with periods. Breathe.
- Keep the message simple.
- Be aware that voicemail is company property.

### Don't:

- Leave angry voicemails. Wait until you've cooled off.
- Leave voicemails criticizing the work of



the receiver or anyone else. Voicemails can easily be forwarded. Don't leave a message unless you're comfortable having it heard by other people.

- Pick up the phone to call until you know what you're asking the receiver to do.

## Business Communication

Email, the Internet, and other technologies are changing the way golf course superintendents communicate with various audiences. When communicating in an electronic format, remember you are creating an image, even though you are not face-to-face with the messenger.

### Email

Email is a form of communication that can be used at any time, determined by the message sender. Email can lead users to send undeveloped, abrupt messages. Professionally created email messages can help maintain clear and open lines of communication. Superintendents can follow these basic tips to create professional electronic communication:

- Use appropriate tone and language.
- Personalize messages to keep them from coming across tough and impersonal.
- Train staff to use technological tools so they can utilize information when you are away from the course.
- Be prompt in responding to email messages.
- Only send a response that is well developed and complete.
- Keep the lines of communication open by offering to provide additional information.

### Two-Way Radios

Communicating via radios is common for golf course superintendents. Effective use can be achieved with a few guidelines.

- Always use appropriate language.
- Move away or turn your back from a crowd or loud noises when speaking to

avoid transmitting background noise.

- Keep the radio a minimum of three inches away from your mouth so you can be better understood.
- Wait two to three seconds after holding the "speak" button before speaking.

### Internet

The internet has become a powerful communication source. Golf course superintendents can use the Internet to find information or discuss issues with peers from around the world. Discussion groups and chat rooms are commonly used communication methods.

### Rules of proper internet use

1. Remember the human – When you communicate electronically, all you see is a computer screen. You don't have the opportunity to use facial expressions, gestures, and tone of voice to communicate your meaning. Words are all you've got. **Keep in mind that different phrases, or slang words may have different meanings in different parts of the world.** When communicating online, it's easy to misinterpret another person's meaning.
2. Adhere to the same standards of behavior that you follow in real life – In cyberspace the chances of getting caught doing something wrong sometimes seem slim. Standards of behavior may be different in some areas of cyberspace, but they are not lower than in real life.
3. Know where you are in cyberspace – What's a perfectly acceptable in one area may be dreadfully rude in another. When you enter a new domain in cyberspace, take a look around and get a sense of how people act.
4. Respect other people's time and bandwidth – When you send email or post to a discussion group, you're taking up other people's time. It's your responsibility to ensure the time they spend reading your posting isn't wasted.
5. Make yourself look good online – On the Internet, you will be judged by the quality of your writing. Spelling and grammar do count. It's also

## Communication cont.

- important to pay attention to the content of your writing. Be sure you know what you're talking about. Be pleasant and polite. Don't use offensive language, and don't be confrontational.
6. Share expert knowledge – Don't be afraid to share what you know. The Internet was founded and grew because scientists wanted to share information.
  7. Help keep flame wars under control – Flame wars are a series of angry letters that can dominate the tone and destroy camaraderie of a discussion group. They're an unfair monopolization of bandwidth.
  8. Respect other people's privacy – You wouldn't go through someone else's desk, so don't read their email.
  9. Don't abuse your power – Knowing more than others, or having more power than they do, does not give

someone the right to take advantage of them.

10. Be forgiving of other people's mistakes – Everyone was a network newcomer once. When someone makes a mistake, be forgiving.

### From the Road

One of the advantages to new technological communication methods is the ability to access them almost anywhere you go. The catch to fully utilizing these tools is to be prepared and do your homework before leaving.

### Tips for using email on the road

- Work with the local internet service provider (ISP) to make sure everything is connected correctly. Before leaving home, conduct a trial run.
- When emailing from a remote location, it's important to deal with brevity. Limit attachments you send and receive.

- Don't assume email can be automatically accessed from a remote location. Both ends have to be considered. Having an email account does not automatically conclude it can be accessed from any location. Check with your ISP to find out if and how to access the account.
- Be succinct and direct. Use remote email as a communication device, not an entertainment medium.
- Be concise. Email on the road is easier to handle in smaller chunks of information.
- Be aware of charges that may be assessed by hotels or other locations from which the email is being checked.
- If using personal data assistant, check with the ISP to discover how to use Internet connections.



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# Melt Ice, Protect Water

Mike Goatley • Extension Turf Specialist • Associate Professor of Crop & Soil Environmental Sciences, Virginia Tech

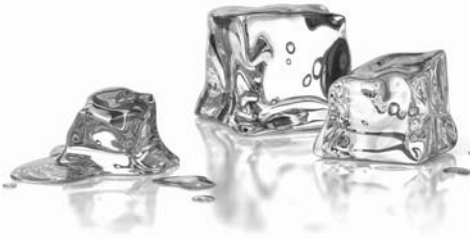
Any region that receives snow and ice has plenty of justification to periodically use “ice melt” chemicals on their roads, sidewalks and other hardscapes for motorist and pedestrian safety. Standard ice melt compounds are usually some form or combination of chloride salts (calcium chloride, magnesium chloride, potassium chloride, or sodium chloride are typically the most readily available and cheapest ice melt compounds).

Many municipalities have their own local statutes regarding mandatory snow and ice removal from sidewalks for both business and residential situations alike. No one can argue the importance of clearing our streets and sidewalks for public safety. At the same time it is always important to consider the possible environmental implications of using ice melt chemicals and to make sure that the products we apply do not have long-lasting environmental implications.

The compounds just listed are generally considered to be some of the most environmentally friendly products available but we know that even these materials can damage our roadside vegetation and even our vehicles if they are not properly cleaned.

You probably recognized some of the salts just detailed as items you likely have in your kitchen for seasoning food (NaCl “table salt”). Many of you have likely applied potassium chloride (often called “muriate of potash”) to your lawns and gardens based on the recommendation of a soil test—ever heard of 0-0-60? Are you a fan of home-made ice cream? If so, then it is likely you have added “rock salt” to your ice cream freezer to accelerate the hardening of the mix.

Using salt to make ice cream is applying the same chemistry principles that lead us to applying salts to our streets and sidewalks as ice melt. Salts work by lowering the freezing/melting point of water from 32° F. In general most salts work quite well at



preventing ice formation all the way down to temperatures around 15° F and then there are only very specialized formulations that will melt ice down to approximately 5° F.

The point of this article is not about giving a lesson in chemistry, but rather to encourage you to consider what material you are using or choosing for ice melt applications. With the onset of snow and ice comes another season when inappropriate chemicals are being used as ice melt sources. Many times these chemicals are some of our most popular lawn and garden fertilizers that contain nitrogen and/or phosphate and several years ago their use was widespread as ice melt sources. However, we know better and can do better in the 21st century.

Some turfgrass professionals from around the state have recently told me of situations where urea (46-0-0) and 10-10-10 were being marketed as ice melt chemicals. They certainly melt ice about as well as any of the other salts previously mentioned, but these chemicals present serious water pollution concerns due to their nitrogen and phosphorus components.

Think about it—one of the quickest ways our streams, lakes, and rivers are polluted by fertilizer is when it is inadvertently applied to “hardscapes” (typically streets and sidewalks that lead straight to storm sewer drains). These direct applications of N- and P-containing fertilizers to our streets and sidewalks make no more sense now than they do in the middle of summer, especially since we do have more environmentally friendly options for ice melt available.

The take-home message is simple. Do a little research before choosing and applying your ice-melt compound and make sure your source is environmentally friendly. Regardless of the season, it is always important to do everything we can to protect our water resources.

*This article was transcribed from a podcast found on the Virginia Cooperative Extension office's Turf and Garden Tips web page ([www.weblogs.cals.vt.edu](http://www.weblogs.cals.vt.edu)). The website is a collaborative project of turf and horticultural specialists from Virginia Cooperative Extension.*

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# News from Affiliated Chapters

## TTA Update

Well, we have survived another summer and are looking forward to another fall football season. This is a good year to be Georgia Bulldog alumni with our football team being a preseason #1. Overall, this summer was milder than past summers, especially compared to 2005 or last year. We still are facing some water shortages and could use some rain, but the recharge we typically get during the winter is not far away. The TTA had two events this summer that both were well attended.

The Annual Dick Cake Memorial was on June 30th and for the last several years, Elizabeth Manor Golf and Country Club was the host. This event is a staple in our schedule and Superintendent Rob Wilmans always does a great job with course conditioning. I heard many superintendents comment how the

greens are always in great shape for the event. Once again the low score was by Jeff Whitmire, with Tom Rash finishing second. I want to thank Bert Walton and Turf & Garden for once again for sponsoring the event.

The second year for the Wee One Foundation Tournament was a monumental success. The event was on July 28th at Cypress Creek Golfers Club. The Wee One Foundation is an organization that assists superintendents in need of financial assistance when faced with a medical hardship for them or their family. This event raised almost \$15,000 and the Wee One Foundation matched this amount. Almost \$30,000 went to assist Bob Ruff in his battle with cancer. Thank you to everyone that participated in the tournament and the

sponsors for the event. A special thanks to Cypress Creek golf course superintendent Phil Bailey, who hosted the event for the second year and was instrumental in the organization.

I want to encourage everyone to sign up for the Joe Saylor Memorial Golf Tournament being held this year on October 27th at Willow Oaks Country Club. This event was previously a TTA event but has since become a state event. Be on the lookout for information regarding the event.



Chris Petrelli  
TTA President  
Cedar Point Country Club



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# News from Affiliated Chapters

## Shenandoah Valley Turf Assoc. News

Dave Norman called me the other day, "Dave, we need your newsletter report as soon as possible." "When?" I answered. "Like yesterday" he said.

So, here I am, having my morning cup of joe in order to jolt those brain cells into coming up with something entertaining and informative. I hope that you may agree.

This is my last note as President of the SVTA. We have our elections in October and I leave the association in the capable hands of my fellow officers, especially President-elect Kurt Fellenstein. Many thanks to the hard work of David Lewallen, our Secretary. As always, thank you Bob Jenkins for your continued fiscal conservative watch over our treasury. I could say "tight-fisted."

While I'm at it, I am going to thank three particular people that have helped me over the years. Thank you Bob Ruff

for being there when I needed you. Thank you Peter McDonough for all the discussions on why Virginia needed to have a state GCSA. You were right.

Many thanks to my wife and best friend of 35 years, Marcia. You've put up with my mood swings for many a year. It's not easy being married to a Superintendent, as we all can probably attest.

Thank you to the too many to mention. Finally, take the opportunity to thank someone today.

Remember: October 30 ... One-Day Seminar at Spotswood Country Club, Harrisonburg, VA.



*David Geiger, CGCS  
President, SVTA  
(Future Past-President)*

## SVTA Fundraiser at Greene Hills is a success!

The SVTA held its annual fundraiser tournament for the Virginia Turfgrass Foundation at Greene Hills Country

Club in Standardsville, VA. The event raised \$2,500 for the foundation, while over 60 players competed.



2008 SVTA Fundraiser winners Barrett Evans, Michael Oates, Larry Cosh and Berni Hipkins

## News from the GWGCSA

The fall season is upon us and I hope everyone had a great summer. The meeting schedule is winding down and would like to thank the host Superintendents from Westfields Golf Club (John Burke), Stonewall Golf Club (Ed Long), Cannon Ridge Golf Club (Drew Matera), Forest Greens Golf Club (Jeff Van Fleet), and Virginia National Golf Club (Alan Sowers).

There is a change in the schedule for the Superintendent-Assistant tournament. The new site and date is Dominion Valley Country Club tournament on October 14, 2008. The speaker will be Dage Blixt from the USDA talking about goose control issues. The tournament is a two-person best ball, 80% handicap. This is a great opportunity for Superintendents and Assistants to network with your fellow colleagues in the industry.

The following meeting is a joint meeting with the Mid-Atlantic Golf Course Superintendents Association and the Greater Washington Golf Course Superintendents Association at Robert Trent Jones Golf Club on Monday November 3. This is a Superintendent-only tournament, with vendors allowed to bring two representatives from each company. Please get your RSVPs in early so we can let the club know how many caddies they will need. The speaker for the meeting will be Dr. Shawn Askew from Virginia Tech talking about his latest research projects.

Don't forget our Annual meeting at Evergreen Country Club on November 11. Please check the website at [www.vgcsa.org](http://www.vgcsa.org) for meeting agendas and updates. Hope to see you there.

*Mike Mueller  
GWGCSA Presidnet*

# News from Affiliated Chapters

## News from the Old Dominion GCSA

### Goodbye and Hello

Gentlemen, by now most of you know that I am leaving (no tears please) as the Golf Course Superintendent at Lake Chesdin Golf Club. While it has been an awesome 10-plus years at the helm, it is now time for a lifestyle change.

Let me say it has been a pleasure serving with everyone over the past six years. While there are challenges ahead for us, (water, fertilization and labor just to name a few) the ODGCSA is both fortunate and lucky to have a committed leadership group.

What I will miss the most are the many people who have helped me along the way. Guys like Peter McDonough who works tirelessly for issues that effect us all. Peter, thanks for sharing all of your knowledge with me. Jeff Whitmire, Jeff Holiday, Scott Kinnion, Dave Smith, and Tommy Adams are guys that always answered my call when I had questions, stupid or not. Thanks to David Norman for keeping us all together and heading the right direction. Thanks to Eric Spurlock, for helping me see the forest for the trees.

The last to come to mind are Jay Long and Andy Dumas, for believing in a 38 year old assistant and pushing for me to get this gig. My family and I will be forever grateful.

I am sure that I have left out many, but you all should be seeing more of me soon. So in Closing I say ... Goodbye and hello!



*Steve Burnette*  
President  
ODGCSA

## GCSAA Encourages Volunteering for a Committee

Volunteer for committee or task group service. The board of directors invites you to volunteer for a GCSAA committee or task group in 2009. Serving on a committee allows you to help guide the future of your association and profession, and gives you an opportunity to hone communication and leadership skills. The deadline to volunteer is Nov. 10, so learn more and sign up today at <http://www.gcsaa.org/community/volunteer.aspx>.

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# News from Affiliated Chapters

## News from the VTA

In September I had the great honor of being one of 25 individuals from across the nation who participated in the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America's Leadership Academy, September 23-24 at association headquarters in Lawrence, Kansas.

The two-day session brought together prospective chapter leaders in an event that offered speakers, role-playing and exercises.

The session:

- Helped participants learn practical skills to help successfully lead their golf facility and their chapter.
- Address current issues and future trends impacting the golf course superintendent profession and association management.
- Began building a professional network of peers who share best practices and innovative ideas

I was pretty humbled by our President's

statement, "the lifeblood of any organization is a membership that has vision and is engaged," GCSAA President David S. Downing, CGCS, said. "To guarantee those resources exist, we believe it is important to identify and cultivate leaders who can execute on the association's mission and the vision. We congratulate Kim because she has been recognized by her peers as having the talent to be a leader."

Among the sessions featured included a presentation from Steve Keating of the Toro Co., who focused on "The Five Levels of Leadership," by Randy Mosher of Syngenta Professional Products, who covered the "Life Zone Balance Four Triage," and by Mark Woodward, GCSAA Chief Executive Officer, who talked about association management. The event was presented in partnership with Syngenta Professional Products and the Toro Company. I hope to share more

details with you at an upcoming VTA meeting.

The VTA has had a great year so far. The Shenandoah Turfgrass Association teamed up with the Virginia Turfgrass Association and had a wonderful meeting at The Homestead in September. Chris Appel had the pleasure of introducing Dave Doherty for the topic "Physical Properties of Golf Courses." This was a great topic that is usually a full day seminar condensed in to 90 minutes. Then the gang played golf at The Cascades championship course. It was a great time with perfect weather!



Kim Garnett  
VTA Vice President

## 2008 VGCSA Partners – Thank You!

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# When the Going Gets Tough ...

Michael Guld

You've heard all the headlines ... "rising gas prices, housing sales down, auto sales down, the escalating credit crunch, rising inflation, looming recession and possibility of stagflation." Not exactly the kind of news that makes you want jump out of bed in the morning, is it? So what do you do? You could just roll over and go back to sleep; however, when you wake up the problem will still be there.

Neither individuals nor businesses care whether the country is technically in a recession or not—a decline in Gross Domestic Product (GDP) for two consecutive quarters or more—rather all they really *care* about is their pocketbooks and making a good living. Most businesses are, at a minimum, being affected by the slowdown and most individuals are, at the very least, uneasy about the potential fallout.

So how do we process all this *stuff* when the going gets *tough*? You may be familiar with the answer: "The tough get going!" This famous proverb, attributed to Joseph P. Kennedy, father of John F. Kennedy, could never be more applicable than it is today. Regardless of outside influences and mostly uncontrollable variables, you still have a business to run, a budget to make, employees or stockholders to support, bills to pay and a family counting on your success. Take the attitude that even in an economic slowdown, a number of people are still going to be in the market for the products or services that you offer ... and no one is going to satisfy their needs more than you. If there's going to be a recession, choose not to play.

So how do you put these words into action? Here's how ...

- 1. Live by the Serenity Prayer** – "Accept the things you cannot change, have courage to change the things you can and the wisdom to know the difference." In business, the wind is either going to blow against your back or directly in your face, but rarely will it blow neutral. Remain calm and composed and keep sailing full force forward through stormy seas ahead.
- 2. Ignite the passion for what you do** – Remember why you got into your given field and retain the enjoyment you have for the business. Passion creates *positive energy*, which ignites and excites, whereas stress creates *negative energy*, which deflates and fatigues. When you have a passion for what you do, you enjoy the *process* (your job) as much as the *end result* (your paycheck). And passion is contagious, lifting your staff, co-workers and customers and producing better results in the process.
- 3. Commit yourself to personal and professional goals** – *Dreams* are all about "wanting, hoping and waiting for it to happen," whereas goals are dreams with a deadline. The two most self-defeating words in goal setting are "if only;" they provide a built in excuse. Write your goals down, visualize achieving these goals and live for them everyday.
- 4. Have a plan** – "If you do not have a roadmap, any ole road will get you there." Make sure, when working towards the plan and on daily to-do tasks, the energy you exert has an economic benefit and gets you closer to your goal; otherwise it's wasted energy. Set mini goals with mini timelines and stay laser focused, ignoring the many distractions trying to sway you off track.
- 5. Work the plan** – While having a *positive attitude* is important, only when coupled with *positive activities* will bring success. Your plan should include sales, marketing and PR components to attract the business that you deserve.
- 6. Refine and live your value proposition** – In these days of hyper-competition, you have to have a USP (Unique Selling Proposition) that translates to a UBA (Unique Buying Advantage). If you're not unique, you can't compete. Know and promote your 3 Ds; what makes you *drastically and distinctively different*.
- 7. Provide a world-class customer experience** – During tougher economic times, there is a tendency for buyers to become more price conscious in an effort to save money. As competition increases and business slows, there is a knee-jerk reaction for businesses to reduce prices to match or beat the competition. Instead, focus on the unique value that you provide through an outstanding customer experience, with value-added benefits that customers and clients cannot receive anywhere else. Protect your turf by reinforcing the value that you provide before the competition out-positions or undersells you.
- 8. Focus on new business development** – If per-account spending is affected by a slow down, expanding your customer base can make up the difference. There are others in your market who could be just as satisfied with your products, services and customer experience as your existing clientele are ... they just don't know it yet.
- 9. Brand extend** – Consider new revenue sources that you can capitalize on within your business. Starbucks has been successful selling CDs, UPS stores selling greeting cards and Applebee's offering "Curbside to Go." What add-on products and services would be of interest to your existing clientele that could provide additional revenue without a lot of additional cost or additional effort?

While the above are *important* in any economic environment, they are *imperative* in tougher economic times. Business is cyclical, and those who dig deep to plant strong roots will not only *survive* the down cycle, but will *thrive* when the economy turns. Hunker down, get back to business and take back control of your destiny. You are in good hands ... your own!

*Michael Guld is an author, speaker, entrepreneur and radio commentator whose business development expertise lies in increasing sales performance, marketing exposure, employee productivity and creating a world-class service experience. He is the president of The Guld Resource Group and creator of "Talking Business with Michael Guld," airing on Central Virginia's Public Radio and heard at [www.talkingbiz.net](http://www.talkingbiz.net). He can be reached at (804) 360-3122 or at [michael.guld@guldresource.com](mailto:michael.guld@guldresource.com).*

# Leachate Filters for the Prevention of Off-site Nutrient Movement

Adam Nichols and Mike Goatley  
Crop & Soil Environmental Sciences Department  
Virginia Tech

Nutrient management and water quality are two closely related topics in turfgrass management that will only continue to expand in importance as urban agriculture expands. Due to the rising cost of fertilizers, turfgrass managers are exploring every possible means of maximizing fertilizer use efficiency. Common-sense strategies revolving around appropriate amounts, timing, and placement of fertilizers are more important than ever to stretch our fertilizer dollars and meet clientele expectations for turf aesthetics, playability, and function. For all intents and purposes, healthy, mature turfgrass systems are extremely efficient at capturing, utilizing, and filtering surface applied nutrients. Simply put, **turfgrass is one of Mother Nature's best filtration systems** and to borrow a theme from the Las Vegas strip, the VT Turf Team likes to say "Turf—What Happens Here Stays Here." However, there clearly are situations in turfgrass management where the potential for off-site nutrient movement and contamination of water resources are high.

One situation where both research and practical experience has shown that even the most conscientious turfgrass managers can negatively impact water quality: potential nutrient loading during turfgrass establishment of seed or sprig plantings on modified sand-based soils. Sand-based systems are a worst case scenario for water quality concerns given the high moisture requirement required by new plantings, the high leachability of the sand-based soil, and the very low nutrient and water use efficiency of recently planted seed or sprigs that are just getting a root and shoot system developed. Further compounding potential water quality impairment is the fact that most sand-based golf greens and athletic fields have subsurface drainage systems incorporated into their design in order to accelerate the movement of excessive water through and away from soil. Many

times, the discharge point through these drains is a nearby water source.

The leaching potential of the negatively charged nitrates ( $\text{NO}_3^-$ ) and phosphates ( $\text{H}_2\text{PO}_4^-$ ) (the ionic forms of nitrogen and phosphorus that are so critical to plant growth and development) is very high during the establishment phase, not only due to the lack of nutrient-capturing vegetation, but also due to the low nutrient/water holding capacity of sands and the high volumes and frequencies of irrigation cycles. Mr. Adam Nichols, M.S. candidate in the Department of Crop, Soil and Environmental Sciences, was posed with the challenge of designing a rechargeable filter to capture nitrates and phosphates in leachate, utilizing his background as an undergraduate chemistry major at Virginia Tech. Under the guidance of Dr. Erik Ervin, Dr. Matt Eick, Dr. Brandon Horvath and Dr. Mike Goatley, Adam has made significant progress in prototype filter development.

## Filter Design

Due to the greater immediate impact a leachate filter would have on golf courses, the initial design concepts targeted sand-based putting greens. Using the United States Golf Association (USGA) and the California-style systems for green construction as models of a typical sand-based putting green with subsurface drainage, the initial design called for a PVC filter housing to be attached to the corrugated pipe that is the main drain line. This filter housing had an opening where a cartridge containing the filter material could be inserted such that any leachate draining from the root zone of a sand-based putting green had to pass through the filter (Figure 1).

Other design features of the filter included accessibility to the filter and housing through a small irrigation box. This allowed the filter to be maintained easily by turf managers while at the same time minimizing the impact the presence of the filter would have on playability (Figure 2).



Figure 1 Filter housing and filter cartridge.



Figure 2 Filter cartridge inserted into filter housing, all within an easily accessed irrigation box.

# Leachate Filters cont.

## Filter Materials

With the filter design completed, the next challenge came in the form of determining what materials could be used within the filter to not only remove the nitrate and phosphate from the leachate of the sand-based putting greens, but could be easily regenerated for continual use. Since both compounds of interest from the leachate are anions (negatively charged particles), using anionic exchange resins (AER) as a filter material was a logical choice. Anionic exchange resins are a material containing an anionic counter-ion coupled to a positively charged surface. When a solution containing other anions (such as the leachate containing nitrate and phosphate), comes into contact with the AER, the counter-ion is replaced by the anion already in solution. Thus the contaminant is contained within the filter while a safer material is flushed into the surrounding watersheds.

Though our filter involves anion exchange, the concept is similar in function to cation exchange capacity (CEC) that occurs at the surfaces of clay minerals with exchangeable cations such as calcium, magnesium, potassium and sodium interacting with negative charges on the clays. The AER chosen for the filter material was manufactured with a chloride (Cl<sup>-</sup>) counter-ion. When this ion is exchanged for the nitrate or phosphate ions by the filter, the leachate becomes far less hazardous to the environment. Upon exhaustion, the filter can be removed from the filter housing and easily recharged by rinsing the filter material with a 10% chloride solution. Along with the AER, the filter contained glass beads that acted as a support material for the AER.

In a laboratory experiment, a solution containing concentrations of nitrate and phosphate ions normally found in the leachate from sand-based greens during the establishment phase was pumped through a container filled with the filter material. Samples of the solution were collected after passing through the filter material and tested for nitrate and phosphate concentrations to determine the effectiveness of the filter at removing the contaminants. A greenhouse study was also conducted. Five gallon bucket lysimeters were filled with five sand-based root zones over a gravel underlayer. Declaration® creeping bentgrass was seeded into the sand. Fertility and irrigation were provided at typical rates to simulate the establishment of a USGA-style putting green. Each bucket was equipped with two outlets with tubing directing leachate to a filter containing the AER and glass beads, and the other outlet serving as a control. Leachate samples were taken on a bimonthly basis from both the filter leachate and the control leachate and tested for the concentration of nitrate and phosphate to determine the efficacy of the filter in a controlled environment.

Figures 3 and 4 show the results of the laboratory and greenhouse studies, respectively. These studies indicated the AER was capable of capturing the nitrate both in the lab and the greenhouse studies. However, capture of phosphates was far less successful over an extended period.

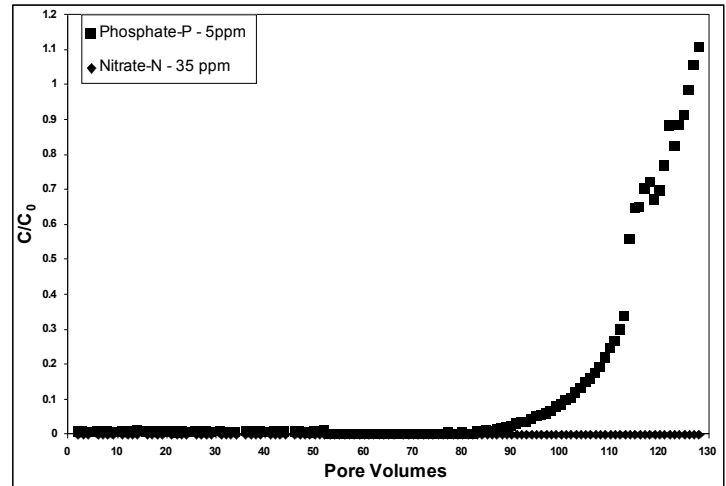


Figure 3 Laboratory results. C = Concentration of nitrate/phosphate in solution after passing through the filter. C<sub>0</sub> = Concentration of nitrate/phosphate in solution before entering filter. Pore Volumes = Volume of solution used to fill entire pore space of filter. 1 pore volume = 315mL.

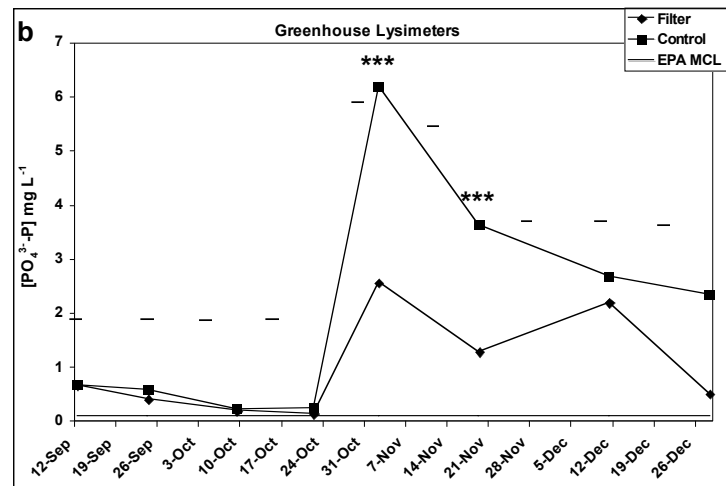
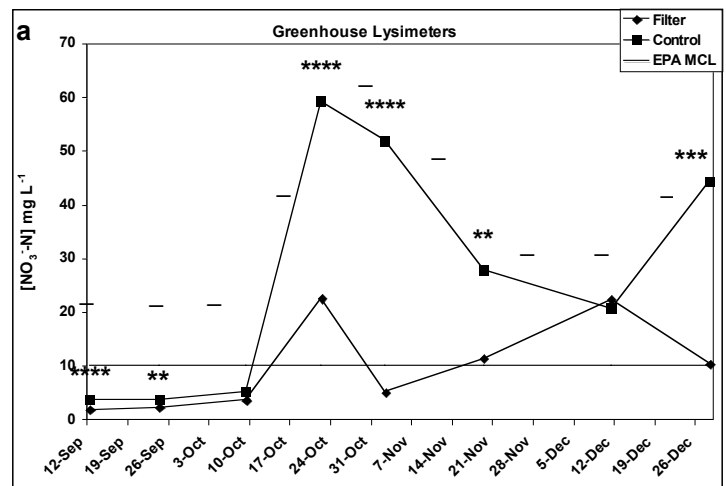


Figure 4 Greenhouse study results for a) nitrate and b) phosphate. Arrows represent dates of fertilization with a 1-1-1 fertilizer at a rate of 1lb/1000ft.<sup>2</sup>. \*, \*\*, \*\*\*, \*\*\*\* = significant differences at p = 0.05, 0.01, 0.001, and 0.0001 respectively.

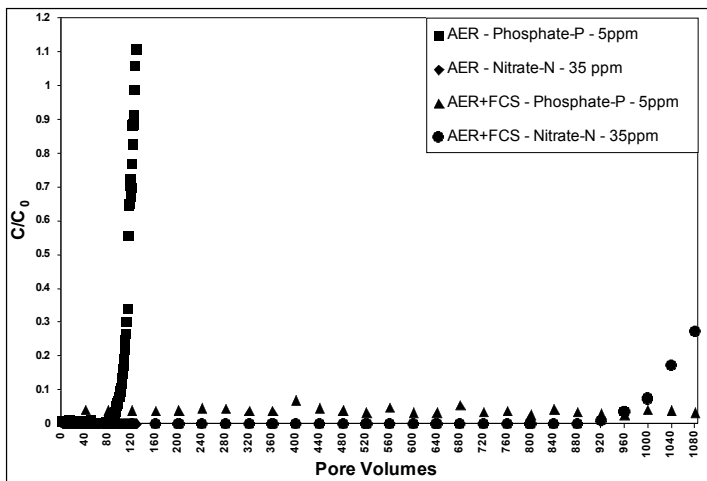


Figure 5 AER+FCS laboratory results. C = Concentration of nitrate/phosphate in solution after passing through the filter. C<sub>0</sub> = Concentration of nitrate/phosphate in solution before entering filter. Pore Volumes = Volume of solution used to fill entire pore space of filter. 1 pore volume = 130mL.

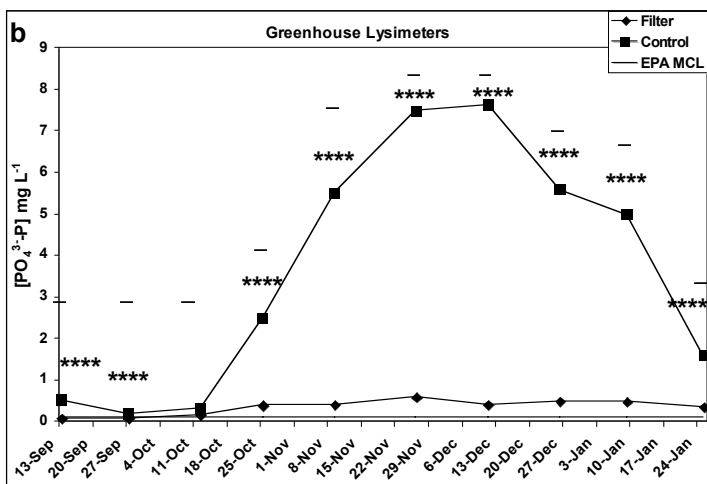
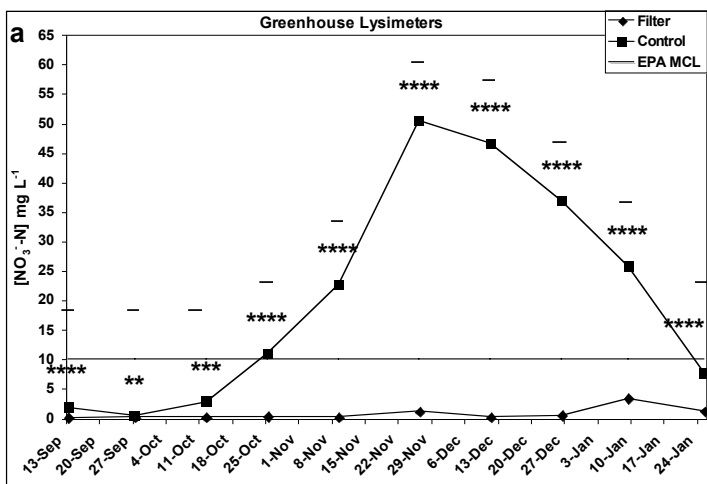


Figure 6 Greenhouse study results for a) nitrate and b) phosphate. Arrows represent dates of fertilization with a 1-1-1 fertilizer at a rate of 1lb/1000ft<sup>2</sup>. \*, \*\*, \*\*\*, \*\*\*\* = significant differences at p = 0.05, 0.01, 0.001, and 0.0001 respectively.

## Filter Material, Part 2

Following the success of nitrate capture but poor retention of phosphate, a second round of laboratory and greenhouse studies were conducted. However, to improve the phosphate capture, the glass beads were replaced with ferrihydrite-coated sand (FCS). Ferrihydrite is an amorphous iron oxide that is often found in soils. Phosphate is readily adsorbed to the surface of ferrihydrite; therefore, coating sand particles that have the same size as the glass beads with the ferrihydrite provided a support material that also gave better phosphate capture. Furthermore, additional AER was added to the filter mixture to enhance the capture of nitrate such that leachate levels remained below the EPA maximum contaminant level (MCL). Finally, by making the regeneration solution 10% chloride:2% hydroxide, the filter material was able to release the contaminants after being rinsed.

In the laboratory (Figures 5), nitrate and phosphate capture were greatly enhanced by the addition of the FCS to the AER. Nitrate levels in the leachate remained below the EPA MCL through the course of the entire greenhouse study (Figure 6a). Phosphate capture, although not below the MCL, was greatly improved by the addition of the FCS in the greenhouse study (Figure 6b).

## Challenges and Future Opportunities

Following the success of the laboratory and greenhouse studies, the focus of this work shifted from the controlled environments to field applications, not just on golf courses, but also on other sand-based turf systems, such as athletic fields. However, a new challenge presented itself while testing the flow rate through the filter material using the original filter design. Saturated flow was determined to be 0.5 gal/min. This is far from an acceptable flow rate considering flushes have flow rates as high as 40-50 gal/min. Therefore, current work is focused on finding a way to implement the materials in a manner that allows optimal flow rates while at the same time getting acceptable capture of the phosphate and nitrate from the leachate. The early stages of this work are being discussed as a collaborative effort between the researchers of Virginia Tech, Mr. Jesse Pritchard (athletic field manager at the University of Virginia), and a team from the UVa environmental engineering department to develop a filtration system for their sand-based athletic fields.

The success of the filter to date bodes well as another level of reducing potential environmental impact from the intensive management programs implemented on sand-based systems. The low nutrient holding capacity and high leachate potential in such sand systems are often described as 'worst case' scenarios in terms of potential nutrient movement, especially during grow-in. Future work evaluating additional modifications in filter composition and design will further prove the turfgrass industry's proactive approach in nutrient management.



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**Eligible organizations include:**

Virginia Golf Course Superintendents Association  
Virginia Turfgrass Foundation  
Virginia Turfgrass Council  
Wee Ones Foundation  
and many others



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**up•time (noun) { úp-tīm }**

1. *the time during which a machine or equipment is operating or ready for use*



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