



History of CGSA

1966 - 2009

The founding meeting of the Canadian Golf Superintendents Association took place at the Lachute Golf Club, Lachute, Quebec, on **October 7, 1966**.

The "seeds" for such an organization were planted in **1924**, when the Royal Canadian Golf Association (RCGA) formed a 'Green Section' and the Ontario Golf Superintendents Association was formed.

Key Canadians of the time were also instrumental in forming the National Association of Greenkeepers of America, now known as the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America (GCSAA).

In **1966**, meetings were held by interested superintendents in Kansas City, during a Toro Luncheon, at the National Association of Greenkeepers of America (now known as the GCSAA) conference and at the 17th Annual Canadian Turfgrass Conference in March 1966, in Toronto.

At that time, superintendents from Manitoba, Quebec and Ontario met officially to discuss the formation of a new association and to establish goals and objectives. As a result of this meeting, an organizing committee was formed: from Quebec, Harold Gard, Tom Johnston and Marcel Notz; from Ontario, Keith Nisbet, David Gourlay, Maurice Ducharme and Gordon Witteveen; and from Manitoba, William Woolley, John B. Steel and George Kendall.

The three provincial associations provided considerable support to this committee, and together with great input from Gordon Witteveen, the idea of a national association of superintendents became a reality.

The first meeting at Lachute attracted 49 people, each of whom paid a membership fee of \$5.00. There was a business meeting, and the election of the first Board of Directors. Elected as President was John B. Steel (Manitoba); first Vice-President, Herb Creed (Ontario); second Vice-President, Bob Paris (Quebec); Secretary/Treasurer, Gordon Witteveen (Ontario); Manitoba Director, George Kendall; Quebec Director, Tom Johnston; Ontario Director, Joe Reid.

In November of that same year (1966), the new board met at the Board of Trade in Woodbridge, Ontario, for a full day followed by an evening meeting with RCGA officials.

The first Annual Meeting was held at the Skyline Hotel (now International Plaza Hotel), Toronto, on **March 15, 1967**, and the CGSA Charter was signed and approved on April 15 the same year. By July 1967, membership numbered 350.

In 1975, the CGSA took control of its own destiny by assuming sponsorship of the Canadian International Turfgrass Conference and Trade Show from the Royal Canadian Golf Association (RCGA). The educational program and the trade show have continued to expand since then. Between 1975 and 1981, the conference was managed by David Gourlay, R.T. (Bob) Heron and Jim Wyllie. In 1989 two (2) conferences were held as CGSA changed months from March to December for its annual event. (No conference was held in 1993.) In 1994, in Calgary, the Association returned the Canadian Turfgrass Conference and Trade Show to its original March time slot.

The official publication of CGSA, GreenMaster (named by David Moote), originated with the Ontario Golf Superintendents Association, under editor Gordon Witteveen, in 1964; he remained the editor when it was transferred to the CGSA for a sum of \$1.00, in January 1967, until 1970. Jim Boyce then edited the magazine until Lois Lane took over in 1972. From 1973 through 1981, David Gourlay was editor with Bob Heron as co-editor from 1976 to 1980. After 1981, the CGSA office staff edited the magazine. In 1991, Kenilworth Publishing began publishing GreenMaster (under contract) for CGSA. GreenMaster remains 100% owned by CGSA.

CGSA, in co-operation with RCGA, sponsored the formation of the Canadian Turfgrass Research Foundation, in 1967. CTRF was officially registered as a charitable organization by the Federal Government in 1977. It was administrated by CGSA until that responsibility was transferred to RCGA on April 1, 1992.

The CGSA office between 1970 and 1972 was located in Ottawa followed by a series of office locations in Downsview, then Weston (Toronto), Ontario, along its main artery, Weston Road during the 1980's. In February of 1991, CGSA moved to more modern offices in Mississauga, immediately south of the Toronto International (Pearson) Airport.

1991 marked the 25th anniversary of CGSA. The John B. Steel Award for Distinguished Service was

established and John Steel (CGSA's first president) was the first recipient. Also, the Gordon Witteveen Superintendent - Authored Article of the Year for GreenMaster was created in 1991.

The CGSA Fall Field Day has been a significant event since the early days of the association. The late Tom Johnston was the generous host superintendent for many years at Carling Lake Golf Club in Brownsburg, Quebec. The event returned to its original venue for the association's 25th anniversary in 1991. The Fall Field Day remains a highlight on the CGSA calendar, and is now held at various clubs across Canada alternating east and west with the conference.

In 1995, the National Foursomes golf tournament, which was initiated during the 25th anniversary year, was merged with the regular awards at the Annual Fall Field Day. The foursome with the best score each year is eligible for the Ransomes trophy, which was originally donated in 1991.

1992 was the year the CGSA Scholars Fund Program was created for deserving CGSA Student members. A new program, the CGSA/Toro Future Superintendent Award, was added in 1998. The new CGSA/Toro Environmental Excellence Award was introduced in 1999.

The first major Membership Opinion Survey was conducted among CGSA members in 1992. Approximately 37% of those sent survey forms returned them. The resulting information provided the impetus for the association's long range planning committee to tackle specific objectives.

In 1997, there was a 58% participation rate for the new Benefits and Compensation Survey for Golf Superintendents. In 1998, participation rose to 63%!

In 1993, the board adopted the association's first mission statement: "The Canadian Golf Superintendents Association is a society committed to excellence in golf course management and environmental responsibility through the continuing professional development of its members."

In 1994, membership passed the 1400 member mark for the first time. In 1998, membership passed the 1600 member mark.

Also, in 1994 the Association re-vitalized its Master Superintendent Program (originally launched in 1988) by requiring a written exam to be taken by applicants.

The National Occupational Standards (N.O.S) Committee, with "buy-in" from all regions, employers and the Federal Government in 1997, began to travel the country selling the N.O.S. In March 1998, at the Calgary Conference AGM, the nationally validated National Occupational Standards were approved. In 1999 an awareness campaign was launched to achieve recognition of the standards by golf course owners/managers.

In 1995, CGSA revamped its seminar program, formerly known as the National Seminar Program. It was renamed the Canadian Seminar Series and took on a new look. Seminars were held in various parts of the country and an active plan was begun to develop "made in Canada" seminars. Many seminars during the early nineties were organized in cooperation with GCSAA.

In 1996, a committee on the environment was established at the Vancouver conference. The association sponsored the first "Roundtable on the Environment." In 1997 work began, in earnest, on the Environmental Management Resource Manual©. Kirk Morrison and Mark Scenna, were commissioned to author this landmark document in August 1998. Representatives from all the golf associations in Canada, industry affiliates and environmental assessment consultants, etc., were invited to participate in an open discussion about where CGSA should devote its energy with respect to environmental issues.

In 1996, CGSA members Thom Charters, Bob Heron, Doug Meyer and Dean Morrison, along with six representatives from the Golf Course Superintendents Association of American (GCSAA) and two from the Argentinean Golf Superintendents Association, represented "the Americas" against the "Rest of the World" and won, at the very first Hayter International Cup, in England.

In 1998, Sylvain Alarie, Mike Baden, Doug Meyer and Dean Piller won again in Atlanta GA. This event although, not officially a replacement for, does fill the void when the international competition originally involving teams representing various countries known as the Ransomes Tri-Annual International Golf Tournament was suspended.

The first Ransomes team from CGSA (in 1972) included David Gourlay, Jack Harris, Keith Nisbet, Bill Shaw and Lauchlan Shaw. CGSA teams won the Ransomes event in 1982 (with Bob Heron, Doug Meyer, Steve Miller and Lauchlan Shaw), 1985 (with Bob Heron, Doug Meyer, Kimmo Salonen and Lauchlan Shaw) and 1991 (with Thom Charters, Bob Heron, Doug Meyer and Robbie Robinson).

In 1996 the Early-Timers Committee was created to re-visit CGSA's history and to help maintain a strong continuity in CGSA's evolution in service to its members.

In 1999, CGSA's Web Site www.golfsupers.com was launched. In the mid-2000, a specially pass-coded member's only section was introduced to CGSA's Website.

Also, in 1999, the Oshawa Airport Golf Club became the first Canadian team to win the John Deere Team Championship in its 13th year. In 2000, the Greenwood Golf Course team from Sarnia, Ontario, became the 2nd Canadian team to win the Deere Tournament. (John Deere provides financial support to CGSA's Scholar's Fund each year based upon the number of Canadian teams participating in the qualifying tournaments.)

The CGSA Board of Directors adopted a new Committee structure for the Association **in 2002**. Included in that change were a Professional Development and Research, Conference and Events, Marketing, Communications and Public Relations, Member Services, Environment and Equipment Technician Committees. In the first year, approximately 30 members volunteered to serve on those committees on behalf of the Association.

At the **2004** Annual General Meeting in Halifax, Nova Scotia, the members adopted a revised set of by-laws for the CGSA. Also, in 2004 CGSA introduced the new SuperSearch program, a job placement initiative that replaced the Employee Referral Service (ERS) and is free to all CGSA members.

On **January 1, 2005** the Golf Equipment Technicians Association of Canada (GETAC) amalgamated with the Canadian Golf Superintendents Association (CGSA). At the March 2005 CGSA Board of Director's meeting, the first CGSA "Golf Equipment Technicians Advisory Committee" was established.

In 2005, CGSA Members passed a motion to adopt a new accreditation program. The Professional Development and Research Committee developed the program and it was implemented in **July, 2006**. 150 members were grandfathered in as "Accredited Golf Superintendents" (AGS).

In the fall of **2006**, CGSA and Michigan State University Libraries formed an alliance allowing CGSA members access to the Turfgrass Information File, an online database of research information.

In **2008**, new examination were adopted for both the AGS and Master Superintendent designations.

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