

Meyer's Collection "Probably a Sickness"



THERE'S COLLECTORS – and then there are collectors.

CGSA member Doug Meyer falls into the latter category. Obsessive is too weak an adjective to describe the greenkeeper's habit... err, hobby.

"There could be a lot worse habits," Meyer laughed, when asked what his wife thinks of this passion-filled pastime. "I'll probably turn it into a side business once I retire."

The turf manager at Beaconsfield Golf Club in Pointe-Claire, Quebec, started amassing his colossal collection as a kid. First, the many boys. It was hockey cards. Then, unlike many adolescents, the passion for collecting didn't dissipate, but rather grew and grew ached through his formative years.

"I started collecting when I was about 6 years old," Meyer recalled. "My dad used to buy me hockey cards in the 1950s and 60s and I got pretty interested in them after I graduated from high school. When it wasn't that popular, I started getting tobacco cards from 1910 right up to the present. I was one of the major collectors of hockey cards at that time before it became popular."

"Once I accomplished what I wanted with the cards, I got bored pretty quick. It's like a hunt. You are constantly trying to find something, and once you find it you just put it into a closet and leave it there!"

Today, Meyer's habit fills more than a closet. It literally spills out of a pair of rooms at his home in rural Kirkland, Quebec. He admits nothing is hung on the wall, and it's a bit of a mess. Besides hockey cards, the 2004 Superintendent of the Year collects coins, antiques, golf clubs and other artifacts from the grand-old-game, and even early push mowers his predecessors used in the early days of greenkeeping.

Some of Meyer's memorabilia has been featured in big-screen movies. For example, his golf trophies and hickory clubs were the ones seen in the 2005 biopic "The Greatest Game Ever Played."

Meyer has tended the turf at Beaconsfield for the past 11 years. Previously, he worked for ClubLink. After graduating from the University of Guelph's Turfgrass Institute, the superintendent came back to the Belle Province to take over his dad's dairy farm. It wasn't for him, so he got into the turf business.

Working in the environs of Montreal, he's got to know a lot of National Hockey League players, including Kevin Lowe, Patrick Roy and Guy Charron. Every time one of these players would visit him to play a round of golf, they would bring a stick - fueling another obsession. Meyer now has one of the major hockey stick collections (about 300), which includes one-piece sticks from the 1910 era. His equipment collection does not stop there. The superintendent also has skates and goalie pads from the early days of professional hockey.

"At one time I had Ken Dryden's pads," he said. "I currently have three Bobby Hull sticks, some of Bobby Orr's sticks and sticks from friend Yvan Cournoyer."

Besides hockey apparel, Meyer's hunt these days has turned to antique golf equipment. "I've got between 400-500 hickory-shafted clubs, a golf ball collection that dates back to the feathery ball and a complete collection of Tom Morris' irons," he said.

As Meyer approaches the golden years, he's started to slowly liquidate his stuff.

"I'm approaching 60 and my kids are not that interested in my collection, nor is my wife," he said. "It gets to a point where you just have too much and it's no longer a passion, probably a sickness!"

While for some collectors it's all about how much money they make, for Meyer – even though his stuff is sure to provide a nice retirement nest egg when he hangs up his superintendent hat – at the end of the day, it's all about having fun.

"Sometimes, it's more interesting than playing golf," he said.

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