

OAC Students Help Communities Following Natural Disasters

Students from the School of Environmental Design and Rural Development (SEDRD) are helping Goderich, Ont., recover from widespread damage following a powerful tornado on Aug. 21.

Students in the Rural Planning and Development (RPD) program are helping to create a consultation model to help Goderich engage its citizens in decision-making and developing a vision to rebuild what had been known “Canada’s Prettiest Town”. The class is also writing a manual for possible use in communities across North America, outlining best practices for community engagement after a natural disaster.



▲ Goderich tornado damage, photographed by fourth-year BLA student Alison Caldwell.

Fourth-year Bachelor of Landscape Architecture (BLA) students served as focus group facilitators for the town’s first public meeting and community workshop on parks and public spaces. BLA students and RPD master’s students are designing concepts and plans for public spaces devastated by the tornado, such as the historical Courthouse Square and Park.

The students and their faculty advisors will visit Goderich several times this semester, beginning with the public meeting. Mid-semester, they will present preliminary rebuilding designs for community input. They will present final scenarios near the end of the semester. Later this fall, BLA students will help Goderich residents plant trees under Wellington County’s Green Legacy Program. Students in SEDRD’s Capacity Development and Extension program are documenting Goderich residents’ stories of the tornado.

Another community benefitting from OAC student support is Joplin, Missouri. Students raised more than \$1,600 to help rebuild schools in the city that were damaged by a tornado in May. The students visited the town during this year’s Midwest Tour, an annual two-week field trip to agriculture production and industries in the American Midwest (see story on page 3). Donations came from students, the department, and the OAC dean’s office. ■



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Dean's Message

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It is one of the real pleasures of a new school term to see returning faces and to extend a warm welcome to our new students, staff and faculty. While many people think of summer as 'down time' and lazy holidays, at OAC it is traditionally one of the busiest times of the year.

Summer means supporting agriculture production with research that can only be conducted during the growing season. It means opportunities for students both on-campus and off, to engage in the kind of unique experiences that are part of OAC's renowned experiential learning.

At OAC, there are many opportunities for community engagement: whether as a direct result of coursework, such as the disaster recovery assistance by SEDRD students for Goderich, or through volunteerism and fundraising efforts like

the initiatives taken to support school re-building in Joplin, Missouri.

It is a part of our unique tradition and confidence in the future that we engage, support and grow our students whether on campus or in their communities.

This FACE>forward we salute the great graduates from all four OAC campuses who completed their studies in 2011. We welcome the Class of 2015 degree candidates, the Class of 2013 associate diploma students and the certificate candidates, all of whom will be so busy over the coming year.

I am looking forward to a full and exciting academic year, and trust that you are too. ■

Robert Gordon

Dean, Ontario Agricultural College
Guelph | Alfred | Kemptville | Ridgeway

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Students journey through U.S. farming heartland

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Seven states, 6300 km, 43 students, 14 days, and one bus.

It's OAC's biggest annual road trip – the MidWest tour, a field study course designed to increase students' knowledge of agricultural production and agri-business in North America.

From August 21 to September 4, senior undergraduate and graduate students, led by Clarence Swanton (Plant Agriculture) and Evan Fraser (Geography), crossed the breadbasket of America – Illinois, Iowa, Nebraska, Colorado, Kansas, Missouri and Indiana – touring cash crop and livestock farms, processing and manufacturing operations, elevators, stockyards, shipping centres and the Chicago Board of Trade.

"The trip was truly an eye-opening experience in terms of gaining a better understanding of the agricultural

industry in the MidWest United States and the scale at which a lot of farmers operate," says Robyn Walsh, in the Honours Agriculture Major of the BSc Agr. "It was amazing to see the innovation farmers and agricultural leaders have created in order to ensure their success in the industry, especially when many other industries are suffering."

"The tour continues to be an OAC tradition and one of the highlights of the academic year, creating lifelong bonds and memories," says Dean Robert Gordon, who has joined the group for a portion of the trip for the past two years. "There is tremendous academic value in seeing first hand the scale and complexities of the U.S. system, and the differences and similarities to our own."



As leader of the course for the past decade, Professor Clarence Swanton emphasizes the trip's success is also a direct result of the generosity and entrepreneurial spirit of the individual farmers who serve as hosts and guides, some of whom have participated since the tour first began.

Details of the trip, photos and students' daily blog, can be found at: <http://www.uoguelph.ca/~mwtour/> ■

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Students Find Career Possibilities in Summer Jobs

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From insect surveys through biodiversity research to the care and feeding of an organic dairy herd, almost 300 undergraduate, diploma and high school students were working across OAC units this summer.



Alicia Scott accepted a summer position in Animal & Poultry Science (APS) through the Undergraduate Student Experiential Learning program, part of the OMAFRA-U of G partnership. Working with experts in dairy research including Vern Osborne, APS, and Tom Wright, dairy cattle nutritionist at OMAFRA, Scott collected data for research on heat stress in calves.

“This position provides hands-on experience with producers,” says Scott, who is pursuing a Bachelor of Commerce in Food and Agricultural Business. “This builds a good personal connection and interaction with the farmers which I would not get sitting in an office.”



“We see this as an extension of our teaching role and a way in which we can provide hands-on training at the undergraduate and high school levels,” says Rene Van Acker, Associate Dean, External Relations, OAC. “The College is exposing students to opportunities in agriculture, food, the environment and communities, and becoming a major employer for undergraduate and high school students.”

“It’s one thing to have a summer job, but it’s another to have one related to science!”

says Sarah McClymott, a third year Biological Science student. She landed her lab assistant role in Plant Agriculture four years ago as a senior in high school. The department employs about 25% of OAC’s summer students and the highest contingent of high school students.



OAC’s three regional campuses employ about 40% of the College’s summer students. Second-year student Marc-André Picard was busy feeding and milking the cows at Alfred Campus’ dairy barn. He chuckles at the thought of receiving credits towards his diploma in Agricultural Technology when, according to him, all he was really doing is what he loves.



At Ridgetown Campus, research programs focusing on agronomy, crop protection, soil management and variety trials employ more than 70 students each summer. Some work as many as four consecutive summers, whether on campus or at regional research stations, or with area farm co-operators at off-site trial locations. ■

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OAC team breaks new record at 2011 Weed Olympics

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The title “Best Student Weed Scientists” in North America was claimed by a team of OAC undergraduates, after first place wins at the 2011 Weed Olympics held at the University of Tennessee in Knoxville, July 26-27.



^ The 2011 OAC Weeds Team consists of undergraduate and graduate students, and represented the University of Guelph as the only Canadian university at this year’s event.

The team not only ranked first within their divisional competition, they advanced to overall top standing against teams from 17 top American agricultural universities.

“Identifying over 100 weed species, calibrating a hand boom sprayer, solving a grower problem and distinguishing a particular herbicide from a group of 30 may be daunting at first, no other experience can be as beneficial and rewarding as the Weed Olympics,” said Michael Vanhie, who is majoring in Crop, Horticulture and Turfgrass Sciences in the BSc Agriculture program.

Vanhie, along with Jessica Gal, Thomas Judd and Adam Parker, also students in the BSc Agriculture program, achieved top honours in weed science and agronomy.

Since 1983, U of G undergraduate and graduate teams have participated in the Northeastern Weed Science Society’s Collegiate Weed Science Contest, and placed first in this regional competition 17 times. ■

Students are golden in North American dairy industry challenge



^ Representing the U of G at NAIDC were BSc (Agr) students (front row, from left) Matt Groen; Nick Janssens; Harrison Todd (back row, from left) Mark Carson, coach; Kelly Hart.

Animal Science students from OAC earned gold standing at the 10th North American Intercollegiate Dairy Challenge (NAIDC) held March 31-April 2 in Hickory, North Carolina.

The two-day contest opened with a walk-through of an operating dairy, analysis of farm data and a question-answer session with owners. Each team then developed recommendations for nutrition, reproduction, milking procedures, animal health, housing and financial management. The teams presented their recommendations to herd owners while being evaluated by a panel of five judges that included dairy producers, veterinarians and industry personnel.

“Our student team evaluated Piedmont Jerseys, the only dairy that was pasture-based. Since this production system is less common in Ontario, their challenge was a novel and interesting learning opportunity,” says Mark Carson (OVC MSc ‘09), who along with Prof John Walton (Animal & Poultry Science) and Ken Leslie (Poulation Medicine), coached the team to victory.

Organized by North Carolina State University and Virginia Tech, the 10th annual contest attracted 127 students from 30 universities across the United States and Canada. ■

Summer 2011 Convocation

Academic achievement, leadership, service and community spirit were celebrated as degrees, diplomas and certificates were conferred upon OAC students at summer convocation ceremonies held at Guelph, Ridgetown, Alfred and Kemptville during May and June.

Julie Anne McInnes, graduate in the Food, Nutrition and Risk Management program at Kemptville Campus, received this year's Governor General's Bronze Medal, awarded annually to the U of G associate diploma student with the highest academic standing.

It was a record convocation for the largest graduating class at Ridgetown Campus as 306 students were granted associate diplomas and certificates in Agriculture, Horticulture, Environmental Management, Veterinary Technology, Performance Horse Handling and Veterinary Medical Office Administration.

Profs. Les Evans and Stewart Hilts each received the Medal of Merit at convocation ceremonies in Guelph. The award is for retiring faculty members who have made outstanding contributions to teaching and improving the academic life and character of the University. Evans, Hilts and Len Ritter (School of Environmental Sciences) and Jana Janakiram (School of Environmental Design and Rural Development) have been appointed College Professor Emeriti.

The first cohort of students in the Equine Management major of Canada's only Bachelor of Bio-Resource Management (BBRM) program received their degrees this year. They began their studies at the Kemptville Campus in Fall 2007. The four-year honours program, which prepares students for leadership roles in biological resource-based industry, features two years of study at one of U of G's regional campuses, followed by two years of study at Guelph. ■

OAC salutes the service and dedication of recent retirees

Greg Boland, Denise Brennan, Hop Chang, Mark Evans, and Glen Wilson

(School of Environmental Sciences)

Karl Meilke (Food, Agricultural and Resource Economics)

Jim Atkinson, Steve Leeson and Larry Schaeffer (Animal and Poultry Science)

Theo Blom, Helen Fisher and Duane Falk (Plant Agriculture)

Maurice Nelischer (School of Environmental Design and Rural Development)

Brenda Bailey and Heather Renwick (OAC Dean's Office). ■

Turfgrass Education Initiative Helps Rural Communities

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Without cosmetic pesticides – banned in Ontario since 2009 – rural groundskeepers have had to make major changes to manage school and municipal sports fields.

Until now, public outreach has focused on the impacts on residential lawns and urban sports fields.

“Urban areas have often had municipal restrictions in place for a while, but in many cases, rural communities have had to adapt very quickly to managing turf without cosmetic pesticides,” said Prof Eric Lyons, of the department of Plant Agriculture. “The education and outreach to deal with that just isn’t in place in rural communities like it has been in urban centres.”

Lyons is managing a new Turfgrass Outreach Project (TOP) offering support to rural groundkeepers across southern Ontario, providing workshops, training programs and an online knowledge centre. TOP is pulling expertise from the Guelph Turfgrass Institute, SEDRD and OMAFRA to create accessible educational opportunities for rural groundskeepers. It’s also partnered with the Sports Turf Association.

The project is supported by the Knowledge Translation and Transfer (KTT) program under the University’s partnership agreement with OMAFRA. KTT sets aside funds for projects that improve research knowledge for audiences across the agriculture, food and rural sectors. ■



Director Named for School of Environmental Design and Rural Development

Wayne Caldwell, a professor in rural planning at the School of Environmental Design and Rural Development (SEDRD) since 1992, has been appointed as director of the School for a five-year term commencing August 8, 2011.

“We are extremely pleased to welcome Wayne to this role,” says Dean Robert Gordon. “In addition to his outstanding qualifications as an academic and expertise in the critical areas of rural planning and the environment, Wayne is an experienced facilitator and will bring outstanding leadership to the School. I would also like to take this opportunity to thank Professor Maurice Nelischer. Maurice has worked tirelessly as director of SEDRD for the last five years, with outstanding support for the School, the College, and the University.”

Caldwell is immediate past president of the Ontario Professional Planners Institute and he has served on the Council for the Canadian Institute of Planners. He is a founding member and past chair of the Ontario Rural Council and a founding member of the Huron Stewardship Council, and the Lake Huron Centre for Coastal Conservation.

“I look forward to working with SEDRD faculty, staff and students to profile and build our connections with communities, our respective professions and within the University,” says Caldwell. “SEDRD has a unique role within Canada and internationally. Our programs benefit our students, our respective professions, communities and society as a whole. In the future we will continue to build relationships and explore the potential for new partnerships and opportunities.” ■

Congratulations

- > **Amar Mohanty** (Department of Plant Agriculture) was presented with the Jim Hammer Memorial Service Award on September 29 in Vienna, Austria during the international conference of the BioEnvironmental Polymer Society's annual meeting. Mohanty, who is the Ontario Premier's Research Chair in Biomaterials and Transportation and director of the University's Bioproducts Discovery and Development Centre, was recognized for his contributions to the Society, his exemplary research and role as an ambassador for the field.



- > **Maurice Nelischer** (School of Environmental Design and Rural Development) was presented the 2010 Public Practice Award on March 25 at the annual general meeting of the Ontario Association of Landscape Architects. Nelischer was recognized for leadership in promoting and enhancing landscape architecture and appreciation of the work of landscape architects in both public and private practice.

- > **Art Schaafsma** (Plant Agriculture) has been made a Fellow of the Canadian Society of Agronomy in recognition of outstanding contributions to the field. His research has focused on fighting mycotoxins in grain crops. **Katelyn Congreves**, a PhD student working with Prof. Laura Van Eerd at Ridgetown, received the Best Oral Presentation Award from the Canadian Society of Horticultural Science. Congreves and Schaafsma received their awards at the Plant Canada meeting in July in Halifax.

^ **Glenn O'Connor, OALA, CSLA, President, Ontario Association of Landscape Architects, presented the 2010 Public Practice to Maurice Nelischer (at right).**

- > **Rickey Yada and Shai Barbut** (Food Science) have been named Fellows of the Institute of Food Technologists. The annual awards are a professional distinction by the worldwide scientific society that was founded in 1939. Barbut was honoured for being an internationally recognized authority on meat and food safety, especially poultry further processing. Yada, who holds a Tier 1 Canada Research Chair was recognized as an international food industry leader, contributing to food science research both in the classroom and in industry around the world.
- > **Jack T. Trevors** has been named a Fellow of the Royal Society of Chemistry (FRSC, UK). Trevors, a professor in SES, specializes in applied and environmental microbiology and bacteriology, including the bioremediation of pollutants in soil environments. The Royal Society of Chemistry is the largest organization in Europe for advancing the chemical sciences.
- > **Alumna Brenda Trask** is the 2011 recipient of the CSTA Seed Achievement Award. This award, presented annually by the Canadian Seed Trade Association (CSTA), recognizes and honours an individual for significant contributions to the Canadian seed industry. Brenda entered the industry in 1985 after graduating with an Honours degree in Agricultural Economics.
- > **Danielle Davis**, a 2011 graduate of the BLA program, won a Community Garden Grant from Live Green Toronto to help build a community garden this summer. ■

New member inducted into Order of OAC

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George W. Thurtell of Guelph became the newest member of the Order of OAC on May 5 when he was inducted at a ceremony held at the Arboretum Centre in conjunction with the OAC Alumni Foundation Annual General Meeting.

Thurtell, OAC '57 (General Science) and OAC '60 (MSc), continued his studies at the University of Wisconsin where he achieved his PhD and served as assistant professor from 1965-1968.

That same year, he returned to the U of G as associate professor in Land Resources Science; he retired in 1999. He supports the Thurtell Family Scholarship for the study of atmospheric science in OAC's School of Environmental Sciences.

The Order, established in 1999, recognizes significant financial contributions by individual donors through endowed donations that enrich the teaching and study of agriculture, food, the environment, community and rural development at OAC. ■

Update on the Better Planet Project

Planned Giving: Another Way to Remember OAC

OAC has invested in an important fundraising initiative to support the Better Planet Project.

"We have begun a telephone and letter campaign to 7,000 alumni asking them to consider OAC in their wills," says senior development manager Paul Klosler. "Many charities such as hospitals and other universities have done campaigns like this. People don't always think of OAC as an option in their will. It's a first for us and Guelph."

Klosler says financial and estate planning experts frequently advise leaving a gift to charity to minimize tax liabilities. Legacy Leaders, the company retained by the College to do the fundraising has never seen such a positive response and is impressed by the affinity people feel towards OAC. Some 4,500 alumni have been contacted and 1,500 of those have expressed some interest in learning more about leaving a bequest.

"The Campaign has gone fairly well," says Klosler. "The positive response has been gratifying because it reflects how highly people think of OAC and their time here." ■

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OAC entrepreneur launches one-of-a-kind horticultural expo

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Inspired by the World Agricultural Expo he attended several years ago in Talare, California, Jordon Underhill (DAgr '01) set out to create his own unique version – a showcase of the most innovative technology, equipment and products available to growers in today's horticultural sector. His efforts came to fruition in September with the launch of Canada's first Fruit & Veg Tech X-Change.

Held September 1-3 at a 200-acre venue on the shore of Lake Erie near Simcoe, the outdoor horticulture trade show connected producers across the province and more than 180 exhibitors serving the row crop, tobacco, orchard, vineyard and greenhouse sectors.

"Together, we're building a Canadian showcase we can all be proud of," said Jordon Underhill, founder and general manager of the X-Change, and owner of ROI Events Management. "The leaders in the industry have answered with tremendous support to display and demonstrate the latest and best technology and products on the market. It's also an opportunity for consumers who want to know how the local food movement is driving technology."

For more information: www.fruitvegtechxchange.com ■

Guardian of The Woods Honoured Zavitz Plaque Unveiling at the Arboretum



A legacy of conservation, reforestation and education that began more than 100 years ago has been marked with a University of Guelph historical plaque at The Arboretum.

The bronze plaque, which was unveiled on September 16, is dedicated to E.J. (Edmund John) Zavitz (1875-1968), who was appointed lecturer in forestry at OAC in 1905 after graduating with a Master of Science in Forestry from Michigan University. He was an historian, photographer and the author of many works on reforestation. Zavitz was appointed Ontario first Provincial Forester in 1912. Renowned as the "Father of Reforestation in Ontario", he was instrumental in the establishment of the Forest Fires Prevention Act in 1917 and the provincial air service for forest patrol.

The plaque is near some of the first white pines Zavitz planted on campus in 1907 as part of his study on the use of pines to reduce soil loss in the "blow sands" of Norfolk County. His plantings were destined to be protected for centuries with the establishment of The Arboretum in 1970. ■

^ **President Summerlee joins Peter Zavitz (Edmund's grandson), Prof. Andy Gordon (Forest Ecology and Agroforestry), and Dean Rob Gordon for the unveiling.**

World Experts in Animal Welfare Hosted at CCSAW Conference.

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The Campbell Centre for the Study of Animal Welfare (CCSAW) hosted the fifth International Conference on the Assessment of Animal Welfare at Farm and Group Level (WAFL), August 8 through 11.

More than 300 experts, including scientists, veterinarians, and specialists in agri-food businesses from Europe, Asia, South America, New Zealand, Canada and the United States, gathered at U of G to discuss existing and emerging animal welfare assessment methods, including those used in zoos and laboratories.



“Consumers, food retailers and regulatory agencies are increasingly requiring formal assurances about the way that animals are cared for. While the word ‘welfare’ may mean many different things to many people, there is underlying science, and we’re here to explore that,” said Prof. Tina Widowski.

As CCSAW director and a professor in the Department of Animal and Poultry Science, Widowski studies the effects of housing and management practices on the behavioural biology and welfare of farm animals. In May, she was named the Egg Farmers of Canada Research Chair in Poultry Welfare. CCSAW was the first Canadian centre for research on improving quality of life for animals and is internationally recognized as a hub for research and teaching, and for international partnerships with industry and government.

Conference sponsors included the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs (OMAFRA); Agri-Food and Rural Link; the Canadian Food Inspection Agency; the Canadian Pork Council; Chicken Farmers of Canada; Dairy Farmers of Canada; Dairy Farmers of Ontario; Egg Farmers of Canada; and IceRobotics. ■

Ridgetown’s Anaerobic Bio-Digester construction complete

A ceremony was held on August 31 to celebrate the completion of construction for the new Anaerobic Bio-digester at the University of Guelph’s Ridgetown Campus. Dave Van Kesteren, Member of Parliament for Chatham-Kent-Essex joined Art Schaafsma, director of the Ridgetown campus, and in officially lighting the bio-digester flare.

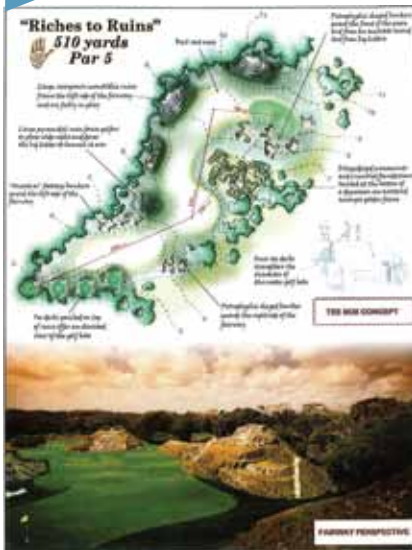
“It is exciting to see this project reaching completion” said Dean Gordon. [“On behalf of the University of Guelph and OAC, we are grateful for the investment in renewable energy technology and see it as a catalyst for our](#)

[ongoing commitments to food, agriculture, the environment and rural communities.”](#)

FedDev Ontario has invested nearly \$2.6 million in the construction of the farm-scale 250 kW anaerobic bio-digester, which converts agricultural and food industry biomass to biogas to create electricity. The purpose of the project is to strengthen the renewable energy sector and commercialize new technology and oil seed crops, as well as train students and farmers. ■

OAC winning at golf

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Christine Fraser, Masters of Landscape Architecture student, led the U of G women's golf team to a bronze medal at the Ontario University Athletics Championships held in Kingston in October. Fraser won silver for second overall with a two-day score of 161 (77 - 84).

For Riley Johns, a Bachelor of Landscape Architecture student, this summer was a story of Riches to Ruins – the title of his winning entry in the 2011 Mission Hills Fantasy Golf Hole Contest.

Johns' par 5 design captured the attention and votes of the judging panel, who deliberated over entries from more than 30 countries. His concept, along with the winning entries in the par 3 and par 4 categories, will be constructed as part of a new golf challenge at Mission Hills Resort in Haikou, China.

He credits this first design competition win to a new golf course architecture course taught by Robert Brown, a professor of landscape architecture in the School of Environmental Design and Rural Development.

"Many, maybe most, golf course architects in Canada have a landscape architecture degree from the University of Guelph, and there seems to be a growing interest in the topic among our students and applicants," says Brown.



Brendan McKee, another BLA student focusing on golf course design, is one of four 2011 Walter J. Travis Society Scholarship winners. Named for the influential early 20th century golfer, journalist and course designer, the Rochester, NY – based Walter J. Travis Society each year awards a limited number of academic scholarships to students studying towards a career in one of five professions: golf journalism; golf course architecture; turf grass management/greens superintendent; professional golf; or professional golf management.

Meanwhile, alumnus Geoffrey Corlett (BSc Agr '86), founder of TDI Golf, responded to a call for assistance from one of the most prominent players in international golf development: Donald Trump. Trump personally called Corlett at his Guelph office, asking him to commence work on restoring the greens on the 27-hole Trump International Golf Course in West Palm Beach, Florida. In a news release, TDI Golf stated that over the past 23 years, the firm has restored more than 10 million square feet of putting surface, restoring and transforming hundreds of the top courses across North America, including Guelph's Cutten Fields. ■