



Parks, Recreation & Municipalities Testimonial Primer





WALKER
MANUFACTURING CO.

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Dear Parks and Recreation Professional,

Thank you for allowing us to present the Walker Mower to you for consideration in your facility operations. It is a real pleasure for us to be able to help communities become more efficient and versatile at their work along with an improvement in finished results.

Forty years ago, my dad, Max, my brother, Dean, and I were looking for a riding mower that was fast, easy to use and gave beautiful finished results. After trying a few machines (and even adapting a few—like farmers tend to do), we realized that if we wanted a mower to do what we were expecting, we would need to build it ourselves. Fortunately, my dad and brother are both gifted designers, and after three years of prototyping and receiving input from farmers and mowing contractors, we were ready to manufacture the Walker Mower. In 1980 we hand built 25 mowers, and since then we have been blessed to be able to build over 145,000 Walker Mowers.

As we became more familiar with the overall market needs, we also were able to identify various customer types. One customer that has been clearly identified has been municipalities, parks/recreational and institutional. We realize that although it may appear to some that “all mowing is the same”, we have seen over and over again the unique needs that arise in the high traffic areas of parks and recreational and institutional facilities.

We are thankful to tell you that as the Walker Mower has continued to evolve over the last 40 years, it has become a stronger tool for customers in this segment of the lawn care industry. Besides our popular Grass Handling System (GHS) that picks up grass, debris and leaves in a snap, our series of side, rear discharge and mulching decks have become favorites among many customers just like you because of the beautiful finished results. And, beyond mowing, we continue to hear from customers of all types about how beneficial the year-round versatility of the Walker has been to their operations.

What you have in your hands is a series of articles on facilities we have reprinted from our *Walker Talk* Magazine. *Walker Talk* is the longest running corporate publication in the Outdoor Power Equipment industry and features businesses and facilities who share their testimonial of how the Walker Mower has helped their work.

I appreciate you taking a moment to look at our line and see how it may fit your needs and improve the productivity of your organization.

Bob Walker, President



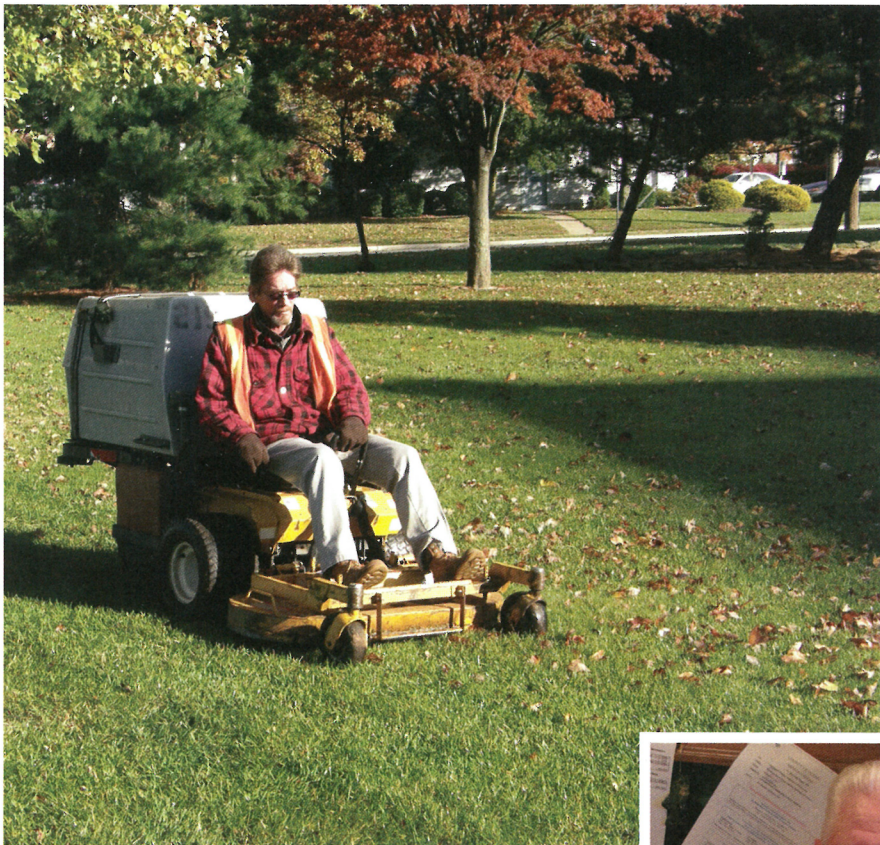
walker.com

On Display in Ocean County

A well-maintained landscape lends more than dollar value to a property. In Ocean County, New Jersey, for example, beautiful shade trees, attractive gardens and manicured turf create an inviting environment for both county office workers and visitors. Nowhere is that more evident than in the county seat of Toms River.



Seven of the county's 12 Walker Mowers pictured here share responsibility for mowing 36 acres of irrigated and 40 to 50 acres of non-irrigated turf.



Mowers outfitted with 42-inch GHS decks are ideally suited for handling fast-growing grass in the spring and leaves in the fall.

“A visitor recently asked me, ‘What campus is this?’” relates George Stryker, referring to the county’s downtown office complex. The inquiry added to the pride this retiring grounds supervisor holds for his department’s work. After all, it’s no small feat to install and maintain landscapes in one of the state’s largest and highest-profile counties—one that stretches for 638 square miles and extends 20 miles north and south of Toms River.

“I believe the public appreciates our efforts,” says Stryker. “We’re constantly planting and pruning trees, installing seasonal color, and policing the grounds. All together, our 10 groundskeepers also mow and maintain 36 acres of irrigated turf and 40 to 50 acres of non-irrigated turf.” The Ocean County Building and Grounds department provides all landscaping services in-house, excluding Integrated Pest Management (IPM) services and irrigation repair, which it subcontracts out.

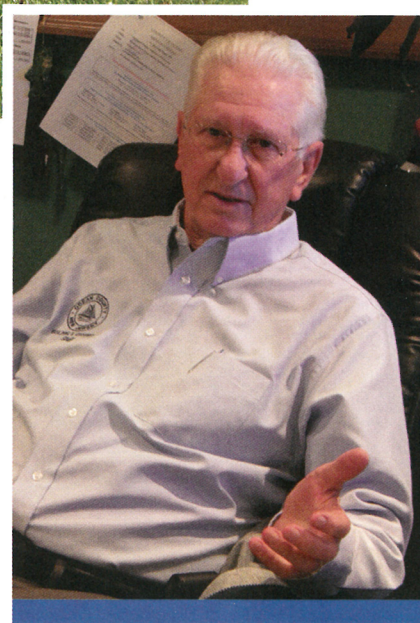
Despite the department’s green focus, its duties don’t end with the growing season. The grounds crew is also responsible for keeping properties snow- and ice-free, including clearing snow off five miles of sidewalks. The grounds supervisor also oversees the operation of emergency

generators that provide standby electrical power to many of the county’s 38 buildings.

LONG TENURE

Stryker began working for the county in 1993, starting out as a groundskeeper. “I’m turning 70 and it’s time to spend more time with my wife, Barbara, and a few more days a week with an old fishing buddy,” he relates. “Barbara will likely introduce me to the operation of a vacuum cleaner and a few other household tools, but I’ll plead ignorance.”

He can plead all he wants, but she knows that reliability should be her husband’s middle name. In fact, Stryker can only remember once in the last 18 years when he didn’t make it to work, and that occurred last year. “It snowed so much that I couldn’t open any door in the house,” he recalls. “I finally was able to remove a window in one of the doors and scrape the snow away, only to get stuck halfway down the drive.”



“Our department performs 85 percent of the maintenance on the machines, and we keep an inventory of belts and other repair items on hand.”

- George Stryker

What Stryker needed was what he didn’t have that morning, one of his department’s 12 Walker Mowers, outfitted with a snowblower and a cab. “We have a snowblower, blade and broom attachment for each of 10 mowers,” he explains, “along with a few other attachments including the Perfaerator and dethatcher.”

YEAR-ROUND VERSATILITY

Walker dealer Brian Lonergan, owner of Ace Outdoor Power Equipment in nearby Bayville, introduced the grounds department to Walker Mowers 15 years ago. Today, the department operates with four 23-hp and eight 20-hp models. The oldest is 10 years old, the newest is two,



George Stryker and supervisor Joseph LaManna take advantage of the Walker Mower's year-round versatility.

and three are diesel-powered.

“One of the features we like about the mower is that it does so many things for us,” explains supervisor of grounds Joseph LaManna, who started working for the county a year after the first Walker Mower made its appearance. “Right now it is fall cleanup time, and soon the Walkers will be readied for snow. During the growing season, crews employ 42-inch GHS decks when the grass is growing at its peak and then switch to 42-inch mulching

decks during hot, slower growing summer months.”

“They’re easy to maintain, too,” adds Stryker. “Our department performs 85 percent of the maintenance on the machines, and we keep an inventory of belts and other repair items on hand.” But most of all, he appreciates the quality of cut the mowers deliver. “We mow a lot of high-profile areas such as the courthouse and library,” he emphasizes. “No other machine leaves the cut a Walker does. We know; we’ve tried many brands.”

Two Kubota zero-turn mowers for wide-area mowing, RedMax backpack blowers, Tanaka edgers, and Stihl chainsaws and trimmers round out the bulk of the county’s lawn maintenance equipment. All the equipment is on a maintenance schedule, and the mowers are thoroughly cleaned and blades changed weekly. “Again, it’s important for the county’s image to keep equipment maintained and looking good,” Stryker notes.

Loneragan says other people notice, especially some of his customers. “Over the years, several contractor customers have actually waited for the county to trade in its mowers so they could buy them. They see them around town and know how well they’ve been maintained.” As he points out, it pays to keep equipment in top running order to optimize performance, minimize downtime, and increase resale value.

SUMMER HEAT

Being on the Jersey Shore has its advantages and disadvantages. Ocean County has become a retirement center, and summers see the area’s population jump from 600,000 to well over a million. That’s good news for local businesses, but for longtime residents it makes getting around town a little more arduous.

Summers can be very hot and humid, too. To beat the heat, mowing crews work from 6 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. from Memorial Day through Labor Day, and they’re allowed to wear shorts. They mow three days a week, and spend the other two installing color, weeding beds, pruning trees and performing other landscape maintenance services.

“When I first started working, this area over here was completely barren,” says Stryker, pointing to a park-like setting with several mature trees. A Walker Mower in the background is picking up leaves that have just begun to fall. “It is amazing how quickly time flies,” he reflects. “I’ve totally enjoyed my time here, but now it’s time to pass the baton.” And create subject matter for a few more fishing stories, he might add. **WT**



The University of Puget Sound Behind the Scenes at an Award-Winning Campus

For the 2,600 students who attend the University of Puget Sound in Tacoma, Washington, a beautiful, 94-acre campus is icing on their overall liberal arts education. Featuring ivy-covered walls on the older buildings, along with lush, green turf, the campus won a 2013 Green Star Award from the Professional Grounds Management Society (PGMS). The recognition is for excellence in ground maintenance at an urban university.

Award-winning campuses don't appear overnight. It takes a few seasons and sometimes several years for new land-

scaping elements to mature and maintenance practices to begin to take hold. The wait and effort are worth it, according to Grounds Manager Joe Kovolyan, who noted that the look of the campus is one of the top 10 reasons why prospective students apply to the school. It also might well have contributed to his decision two years ago to move his family all the way across country. At the time, he was the Grounds Manager at Phillips Exeter Academy in Exeter, New Hampshire.

"When I was hired, the school's administration charged me with improving the care and looks of the grounds,"

said Kovolyan. "The university, which dates back to 1888, was already nestled in a beautiful urban setting, but among their concerns they wanted my department to improve the quality of cut, do a more efficient job of handling yard debris, and find ways to reduce noise."

The PGMS award validates some of these recent improvements, but Kovolyan doesn't take much credit for the recognition. Instead, he says it goes to his dedicated staff, an administration that values a beautiful campus, and a few new additions to the university's grounds maintenance fleet.

A veteran grounds staff keeps the campus looking neat all year long. From left to right: Mark Jachimowicz, Andrew Lambert, Tim Putnam, Todd Bramble, Joe Kovolyan, Ed Cole, Barrett Tripp, Bill Boggs, Greg Pfeiffer and Jim Wells. Not shown is Mike Hammock.

FIRST THINGS FIRST

Kovolyan, who also heads up the school's automotive, sports turf, tree care, and solid waste departments, worked with his 10-person grounds staff to come up with a plan. Part of it involved improving communications with individual academic departments so mowing and other maintenance practices didn't interfere with class time.



Even wet leaves are no match for these diesel-powered Walker Mowers. Notice how the crews mow together to get in and out of sites quickly.

"We mow and maintain the grounds around the academic buildings early in the morning before 9 a.m. and then move to the dorms," Kovolyan explains. "Maintenance crews typically work together so they can get in and out of specific locations as quickly as possible. Students don't want to hear mowers and leaf blowers operating all day long at all parts of the campus."

Universities don't always run by the clock, either, so Kovolyan is in constant contact with instructors and other personnel who may be scheduling special events.

SNOWLESS NEAR SEATTLE

Despite the fact that Tacoma and nearby Seattle get very little snow compared to New Hampshire's White Mountains, maintaining the 54 acres of turf on the campus is still a full-time job for the grounds staff and its seasonal student interns.

"I was very happy to leave the New England winters," adds Kovolyan with a smile. "But this part of the country has

High-lift dumps take the backache out of removing leaves and clippings.

“We couldn’t do the job without the veteran staff here. A couple of employees have been with the school more than 20 years and several have 10 years under their belts.”
– Joe Kovolyan



Grounds Manager, Joe Kovolyan, left snowy New England two years ago to assume the grounds position at The University of Puget Sound.

other challenges. Because of the mild winters, we mow all 12 months, albeit the frequency is reduced from weekly to every three weeks in the heart of winter.

“The entire core campus is also irrigated, so grass doesn’t slow down in the hot, dry summer months. The area’s infamous wet falls saturate the soil and fallen leaves, creating challenging mowing and debris-handling conditions.”

Shortly after arriving in spring 2011, Kovolyan made two equipment moves. He purchased new Stihl backpack blowers to help alleviate noise issues. Two new diesel-powered Walker Mowers also helped in that area. “The engines were much quieter than those on the zero-turn gas mowers they replaced,” Kovolyan notes.

But that wasn’t the main reason he chose a different brand of mower. “I

used one (Walker) at the prep school and thought they would be ideal here. The GHS decks would do a great job picking up leaves and debris, even in wet conditions, and Walker Mowers are versatile. They can be equipped with a mulching deck for summer mowing, and a GHS deck for the rest of the year. We even purchased a couple of side-discharge decks for wide-area summer mowing, and a broom to sweep away an occasional snow off sidewalks.”

The grounds department currently operates three Walker Mowers, all MDD models with 20.9-hp diesel engines. In addition to having different sizes and types of decks at their disposal, each mower is also equipped with a high-lift dump and a deck height adjustment kit. The high-lift dump takes the backache out of removing leaves and clippings (the school recycled 800 tons of green waste at a local compost facility last year). The deck adjustment was said to be especially convenient when crews went from mow-

ing the grounds to trimming up sports fields that require a closer cut, and then returning again to mowing the grounds. A Toro “batwing” mower maintains the larger sports fields and recreational areas.

Crews allocate three and a half days to mow the entire campus, which leaves another day and a half to complete other maintenance chores, including installing three seasonal color changes a year; planting and pruning trees; and, yes, keeping the building ivy trimmed.

“We couldn’t do the job without the veteran staff here,” Kovolyan emphasizes. “A couple of employees have been with the school more than 20 years and several have 10 years under their belts. In addition, we employ 10 to 12 work study students during the summer and school year. They help us with special projects, including weeding and maintaining the color, and a few even get to operate the Walker Mowers.”

DOWN THE ROAD

The grounds department expects to have another Walker Mower in the near future. “They may not be as fast as zero-turn mowers with belly-mounted decks, but what we lose in speed we gain in quality of cut,” Kovolyan points out. “The front-mounted decks also dramatically reduce trimming time.”

Among other moves, he looks to streamline the university’s vehicle fleet, one that includes 16 passenger vans, 12 pickups and more than 20 utility vehicles. In addition to mowers, the grounds department operates edgers, renovators, trash trucks, a few tractors and aerial lifts, nine John Deere Gators and other utility vehicles, and a couple of golf carts.

At the moment, a new addition on the student union will require more landscaping elements. In the meantime, keeping up with the University’s Master Plan to provide an appealing outdoor space will keep the staff busy, not to mention living up to its reputation as stewards of a beautiful and award-winning campus. **WT**

Texas Campus Sports Big Challenges for Grounds Crew



West Texas A&M's grounds department maintains the 176-acre campus. Mowing, trimming, removing snow and keeping the grounds neat are among its responsibilities. The university has a landscape architect on board, but most of the new installations are subcontracted out.

Follow Route 27 south out of Amarillo, Texas for 20 miles and you will pass through Canyon, home of West Texas A&M. Situated on a beautiful 176-acre residential campus, the university has nearly 8,000 students, 252 full-time faculty, and 569 full-time staff members. Working behind the scenes to keep the campus in top shape are Grounds Manager, Larry Bedwell, and Transportation Manager, Bruce Bassett.

“Readying the campus for special events is one of our biggest challenges,” relates Bedwell, whose 17-member department maintains the landscape, clears the snow, and constantly polices the grounds. “The other is just keeping the turf mowed. We start in early March and go straight through until the end of November. Picking up leaves keeps us busy through Christmas.”

In the meantime, Bassett’s three-technician staff maintains the grounds equip-

ment and keeps the school’s 119 vehicles in top running order. “All the vehicles and equipment are on a maintenance schedule,” Bassett explains. “We bring them in when they’re ready for oil and filter changes, tire rotation or other preventive maintenance.”

Bassett’s department couldn’t do this efficiently without computers, what he calls one of the biggest changes he’s seen over a near 30-year career with the university. Not surprisingly, the other two

involve campus growth and the equipment used to maintain the grounds.

The university was established in 1910 as a teacher's college. Today it offers 62 undergraduate degrees, 41 master's degrees and one doctorate. The campus has 45 buildings, with 205 adjacent acres set aside for future expansion.

"Our newest addition is a sports complex that features baseball and softball fields, tennis courts and a walk-around track, among other amenities," says Bassett. "Because it is designed with artificial turf, the complex creates minimal work for Larry's department.

"When I started working here, we didn't need a huge contingent of mowers to maintain the turf," Bassett continues. "In fact, all we used were two Cub Cadet mowers, a couple of reel mowers, and a Woods three-point hitch mower. The Woods mower is the only piece we still have."

Ten Walker Mowers and five Grasshoppers now do the bulk of the mowing. Maintaining the turf around the classrooms and the main part of campus is the responsibility of the Walker Mowers equipped with GHS decks. Three of the 10 are fitted with side-discharge decks that do the wider-area mowing along with their Grasshopper counterparts. The Grounds Department still operates its first Walker Mower purchased from Amarillo Outdoor Power Equipment 14 years ago.

Bassett says the school selected Walker Mowers because they are very maneuverable and compact, something needed for mowing around the natural and man-made obstacles on campus. "Their debris-handling capability helps to keep the campus looking neat and comes in very handy for the fall leaf season. Eight of the 10 Walker Mowers feature Kubota diesel engines because of their longevity, and maintenance on them is very easy."

EXTREME CONDITIONS

Bedwell and Bassett make no bones about West Texas weather. "You can get all the weather here in one day," they remark.

"Readying the campus for special events is one of our biggest challenges. The other is just keeping the turf mowed. We start in early March and go straight through until the end of November."

- Grounds Manager Larry Bedwell

Unfortunately, moisture hasn't been part of that equation. All last year, the area received only 2.5 inches of rain, and during June the thermometer hit the 100-degree mark every day.

The high temps and lack of moisture taxed landscapes, to the extent that the transportation manager lost seven big trees on his property at home. The extreme weather didn't have the same

effect on campus plant life or the grounds department's twice-weekly mowing schedule. The turf, a combination of fescue and Bermuda grass, is irrigated.

Even though drought-plagued winters have been the norm in recent years, big snows have stormed through the area, unfettered by the flat landscape. "Working at a university where many students live in campus dorms means



Transportation Manager Bruce Bassett with Grounds Manager Larry Bedwell (seated).



Buffalo fountain near “Old Main” puts the university’s nickname in stone—36,000 pounds of granite stone to be precise.

you’re on call 24/7,” Bedwell emphasizes. “In the winter, if we have a serious snow or ice storm, sidewalks and drives have to be cleared to ensure they’re passable. Typically, though, we get more ice storms than a lot of snow, although each year is different.”

A 1995 West Texas A&M graduate, Bedwell anticipates that heated sidewalks for new dorms will minimize ice concerns, at least there. For snow-covered sidewalks, he says rotary brooms are most effective since they don’t tear up the concrete.

With the sound of Walker Mowers doing some last-minute mowing and leaf pick up, Bassett and Bedwell stroll over to the center of campus. They pull up in front of a fountain near the “Old Main” administrative building. A huge “buffalo” (the university’s nickname) sculpture stands in the center of the fountain. “The statue was carved out of a 76,000-pound slab of granite,” Bassett exclaims. “It only weighs 36,000 pounds now.” Just goes to show you that even in the Texas panhandle, big is beautiful. **WT**



Mark Huber, owner of Amarillo Outdoor Power Equipment, purchased the dealership 14 years ago and has since developed a close working relationship with the West Texas A&M grounds department.

Belle Fourche, South Dakota

CENTER OF NATION puts emphasis on maintenance

Not every city in the country can lay claim to being plumb in the geographic center of the country. Belle Fourche, South Dakota, can. Not every city can look at its public grounds and know they're being maintained with the same vigor and expertise as a proud homeowner would give his or her lawn. Again, Belle Fourche can.



Before joining the city 10 years ago, supervisor Willie Humann didn't know a thing about horticulture. Attending workshops and seminars, and plenty of on-the-job-training, has since brought him up to speed.

This city of some 5,000 residents lives up to its name — it means beautiful forks in French — with 80 acres of parks, ball fields and other turf areas groomed just as if every day were Memorial Day or the Fourth of July. The city does it with a maintenance department comprised of three full-time and six

or seven seasonal employees, and four Walker Mowers.

Willie Humann, supervisor for cemetery, parks and recreation, won't take credit for how the city looks, but he's proud of the end product. When *Walker Talk* visited in late spring, the grass was growing like wildfire, and Humann and his crew had all they could do to keep up with it.

"At times like this, we sometimes mow with our 62-inch side-discharge decks just to knock the grass

down, he adds, and the Memorial Day rush is over, the maintenance team can settle into a routine. That routine means mowing approximately 80 acres a week; aerating, spraying, fertilizing and pruning; maintaining the irrigation system that covers most of the acreage; and just keeping the city looking neat.

The city contracts out its irrigation work, and some of its fertilization and weed control. Aeration and other maintenance chores are kept in-house as is the routine maintenance on its Walker Mowers.

"The city has been real good about getting us the kind of equipment we need to get the job done."

down, and then come through with our 48-inch GHS decks to pick it up," says Humann, who has been working with the city for 10 years.

VERSATILITY AND FLEXIBILITY

The city saw its first Walker Mower at a Rapid City home and garden show in 1994. It purchased its first Walker a year later, and followed up with other purchases every year since.

Today it operates four Model T's with 20-hp Kohler engines. Each has a 48-inch GHS deck and a 62-inch side-discharge deck.

"We needed an industrial mower," relates Humann. "The Walker was also maneuverable around stones and trees, gave us the flexibility of using two decks, and was easy to maintain. The fact that the nearest dealer from here is three to four hours away in Nebraska was a concern at first.

(Left to right) City employees Frank Kulm, Bryan Christie, Willie Humann and Gwen Madison know where they will be most of the summer — somewhere amid 80 acres of Belle Fourche grass.





The “Belle” terrain is a contrast between wide-open areas and smaller, more heavily landscaped plots.

But it hasn’t proven to be a problem at all.”

Belle’s mowing terrain varies from the small plots of grass surrounding the library, Chamber of Commerce, recreation building and other coves in and around town to a large cemetery, four parks, a soccer field and several ballparks.

“We used to have gang mowers for the larger areas and thought about getting a wide-area mower before we purchased the Walkers,” tells Humann. “But the Walkers with the large-area decks do a good job.”

Put on the GHS decks and they make quick work of the cemetery, he adds. In fact, the use of Walker Mowers has completely eliminated using a push mower to trim around the headstones.

Walker dealer Dale Lee sold the city its mowers. He attributes some of their popularity to the GHS deck’s ability to vacuum the turf. The cemetery is a good example, he points out. The pine needles readily blanket the area, but the Walkers take care of them. It’s not just the mowers’ ability to mow that makes



Walker dealer Dale Lee visits Belle Fourche several times a year, including one time each spring when the city trades in one of its older Walkers.

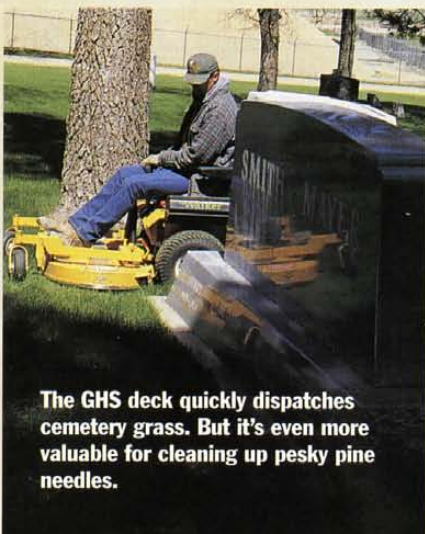
them stand out, he adds, but their ability to clean the turf, too.

Lee says he gets to Belle Fourche a few times a year, or whenever one of his customers gives him a call. In addition to the city’s four mowers, there are two other Walkers in town, one owned by the school and the other by a contractor. The city, he notes, rotates its equipment every three years, so every year a new Walker comes to town.

When parks and recreation people aren’t mowing, they’re maintaining the landscape in other ways. The city spends enough money per capita on trees to be named Tree City U.S.A. So Humann’s crews can be found installing new trees, or pruning or limbing older ones.

They also plant flowers, install fences, and ready the city for big special events such as a professional rodeo or smaller ones like a car rally in the main park.

“From Memorial Day to Labor Day, there’s always something going on,” says Humann who, before joining the city, said he knew absolutely nothing about landscape maintenance.



The GHS deck quickly dispatches cemetery grass. But it’s even more valuable for cleaning up pesky pine needles.

CENTER OF THE NATION?

Visitors to Belle Fourche, South Dakota, can hardly believe the town is the geographical center of the country. A quick glance at the map shows the city too far west and north to be in the exact center. But that first reckoning doesn’t take into consideration Alaska and Hawaii. What used to be in Kansas is now in Belle Fourche’s possession — or almost anyway.

The geographical center of the nation is really 20 miles north of Belle Fourche. But a snake problem years ago at the center point encouraged geographical purists to place the mark in town.



“The city has not only been real good about getting us the kind of equipment we need to get the job done, but they’ve also encouraged us to get the education we need. Whenever there is a seminar or workshop nearby on landscaping, tree care or lawn care, one of us attends.

“We were also pleasantly surprised when they allowed us to purchase the Walkers. Normally, buying something from out of state is frowned upon, but they knew we really wanted the mowers.”

The end result really speaks for itself because grass in Belle Fourche doesn’t stop growing when the spring rain ends. The fertilization, in combination with irrigation and hot summer days, keeps mowing crews and their Walkers busy all season long.



Vienna's Castles

Belvedere and Schönbrunn castles are truly unique places in Vienna, Austria. Combined, these two castles draw nearly 10 million visitors a year, and it is easy to see why visitors are charmed by the beauty of these venues. Part of that beauty is the maintenance of the grounds around the castles. From seas of perennial flowers to acres of finely manicured turf, visitors can easily see how involved just maintaining the grounds can be.

"We have to use only the best," explains Peter Pinzenohler, a co-manager at Schönbrunn. "We looked at everything else, and we found that the Walker was the only one that we had no negative remarks about." Pinzenohler, who is responsible for finding the best equipment to maintain the grounds at Schönbrunn, says he gives the Walker an "optimal" rating in his book. He says that is the best rating he has, and not many pieces of equipment receive his best rating.

As a 25-year veteran of Schönbrunn, Peter says his years of experience make him the perfect candidate for choosing the right equipment. "I have seen many different kinds of mowers in 25 years at Schönbrunn," tells Pinzenohler. "I have walked behind mowers and I have ridden mowers. But none of them compares to the Walker for productivity and cut."

Manfred Hovezak, a gardener at Belvedere, says virtually the same thing about the Walker. "We have people from all over the world coming to see our property," says Hovezak. "The Walker is a piece of equipment that works fast. But more



importantly, it makes the turf look beautiful.”

Belvedere takes pride in the vast number of perennial flowers which they plant each year. So, mowing the grass around them should be done carefully, as Hovezak explains.

“We put a lot of time into maintaining our flower beds, so we need to use a machine that makes trimming around the beds easy while doing a good job.” Hovezak says the Walker has become the tool they have found that gives them the kind of cut they need to complement their beautiful flower beds.

Both castles have full-time staffs; Belvedere employs 15 people to maintain its four-acre site, while Schönbrunn maintains its 1.5 million-square-meter property with 170 employees — 40 of which are apprentices who must have three years of previous experience to work there.

Sixty of Schönbrunn’s employees work in the gardens and parks while the remaining employees work in the numerous greenhouses throughout the property. Many of the gardening employees are involved in a bookkeeping process of each plant that starts in the greenhouses and is followed through to planting.

When the mowing is all said and done for Pinzenohler and Hovezak, they both agree on one thing — these castles are rich in history, which they admit is the main attraction. But they are eager to tell anyone who will listen that the grounds surrounding these pieces of history are also an integral part of attracting tourists. **WT2000**



The Walker is easily put through its paces at Schönbrunn around many obstacles including slopes, beds, ponds, and even an occasional tourist.



The perennial flower beds at Belvedere Castle give operators a perfect opportunity to show off the Walker’s maneuverability.



Walker’s clean cut complements the beautiful perennial flowers and roses, according to Walker operator Peter Pinzenohler.



Manfred Hovezak is the primary Walker operator at Belvedere.



*Luc Rehaume manœuvres
his Walker through a tight garden spot.*

*Luc Rébœume manœuvre son Walker
dans un espace restreint d'un jardin.*

Montreal Botanical Garden

*Machines and people work
in harmony to maintain
beautiful setting.*

With 18 different theme gardens, the Montreal Botanical Garden is surely a wonder for the eye. Yet, this Quebec showcase, established in 1939, has become more than a public exhibition of beautiful flowers, trees and plants. It is also a center for botanical research and education, and a place to gain new social and cultural experiences.

For 80 people who work in the horticulture grounds maintenance department, the beautiful 75-acre setting also poses a daily challenge, relates grounds supervisor Robert Malo. "Our biggest challenge, especially during high-season from May 1 to October 31, is to keep everything in perfect harmony, to keep all the gardens looking their very best. We

Jardin Botanique de Montréal

*Machines et ouvriers
travaillent ensemble pour
entretenir les lieux.*

Avec des jardins portant sur 18 thèmes différents, le jardin botanique de Montréal est certes un délice pour la vue. Pourtant cette exposition Québécoise établie en 1939 est devenue plus qu'un spectacle de jolies fleurs, d'arbres et de plantes. C'est aussi un centre de recherche et d'éducation en botanique ainsi qu'un endroit où vivre de nouvelles expériences sociales et culturelles.

Pour les 80 personnes qui travaillent dans le département d'entretien paysagiste, les 75 acres représentent un défi quotidien, dit Robert Malo, le superviseur des terrains. «Notre plus gros défi, particulièrement durant la saison forte, qui dure du 1er mai au 31 octobre, est de maintenir l'harmonie dans

do this, in part, by assigning our people exclusively to individual gardens, allowing them the luxury of developing and practicing the most effective maintenance practices for their areas.”

This approach holds true for mowing, as well. Montreal Botanical Garden operates two Walker Mowers. Equipped with 20- and 26-hp engines, the mowers each run approximately 35 hours a week. During that time, one can see any of 10 operators at the controls, maneuvering in and out of tight garden spots.

“The biggest advantage I could see in the beginning was the zero-turn maneuverability.”

“The operators are very familiar with their sections and can mow there in the most efficient way,” explains Malo. They’ve all been trained on the mower’s operation and understand how to take advantage of their many features, he adds.

Luc Rehaume was one of the first staff members to operate the Walker in 1995 when the grounds department rented its first machine on a trial basis.

“It was a little difficult to learn to drive at first,” Rehaume relates, “but I caught on pretty quickly. The biggest advantage I could see in the beginning was the zero-turn maneuverability. But I soon discovered that the machine’s ability to pick up debris would save us countless hours cleaning flower beds.”

The Walkers have since more than earned their keep, and they’ve even become part of the Garden’s attraction, says Rehaume.

“Visitors are intrigued by these mowers, by their small size and their ability to maneuver so effortlessly around the gardens. Just last week I was literally swarmed by visitors who may have thought the mower was a integral part of the Garden tour.”

It wasn’t, of course, but as far as Rehaume and the other operators are concerned, the gardens wouldn’t look the same without the Walkers and the mowing job they do. **WT**

le jardin, pour que tout soit à son meilleur. Ceci est accompli en déléguant un seul jardin à chaque individu, leur permettant ainsi de développer et de pratiquer les techniques d’entretien les plus efficaces pour leur jardin. »

Cette approche s’applique aussi pour tondre les pelouses. Le Jardin Botanique de Montréal possède deux Walkers équipés d’engins de 20 et 26cv et ils fonctionnent chacun environ 35 heures par semaine. N’importe lequel des 10 opérateurs disponibles peut accomplir le travail avec facilité, même dans les coins plus resserrés.

«Les opérateurs sont familiers avec leurs sections et y sont à leur plus efficace, » explique M. Malo. Les ouvriers ont reçu une formation sur l’équipement leur permettant de tirer le maximum d’avantage de leurs fonctions. Luc Rhéaume fut un des premiers employés à utiliser le Walker en 1995 lorsque le département a loué sa première machine à titre d’essai.

«L’appareil était un peu difficile à manœuvrer au début, » raconte M. Rhéaume, «mais je m’y suis habitué rapidement. L’avantage que j’ai remarqué en premier c’est sa manœuvrabilité. Je me suis bien vite rendu compte que la capacité de ramasser les débris que possède le Walker nous ferait gagner des heures au niveau du nettoyage des jardins. »

Les Walker se sont dès lors taillés une place importante dans notre équipe, même à titre d’attraction, dit M. Rhéaume.

«L’avantage que j’ai remarqué en premier c’est sa manœuvrabilité.»

«Les visiteurs sont intrigués par les tondeuses, notamment par leur petite taille et leur manœuvre efficace alors qu’on les observe au travail. La semaine passée j’ai été envahi par un groupe de visiteurs qui pensaient que la tondeuse faisait partie de la visite guidée. » Elle n’en faisait pas partie, on le sait bien, mais en ce qui nous concerne, les jardins ne seraient pas les mêmes sans le travail exceptionnel des Walker. **WT**



The Montreal Botanical Garden operates two Walker Mowers. The mowers each run approximately 35 hours a week.

Le Jardin Botanique de Montréal possède deux Walkers, ils fonctionnent chacun environ 35 heures par semaine.

ABOUT MONTREAL BOTANICAL GARDEN

The gardens are open every day from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. during the summer. Guided tours are available and, from May to October, a mini-train (free of charge) runs through the site, making a number of stops. In addition to 18 theme gardens, including the Rose Garden, Japanese Garden, Chinese Garden and the First Nations Garden, which opened in 2001, the grounds house spectacular greenhouses with more than 36,000 plants. There's also The Insectarium, with an extraordinary collection of 160,000 insects and arthropods.

A restaurant, gift shops and a Reception Centre are located on the grounds. For more information about the Montreal Botanical Garden telephone (514) 872-1400 or visit its website at www.ville.montreal.qc.ca/jardin.

AU SUJET DU JARDIN BOTANIQUE DE MONTRÉAL

Le Jardin Botanique de Montréal est ouvert tous les jours de 9h00 à 17h00 l'été. Des visites guidées sont disponibles et du mois de mai au mois d'octobre, un tour de mini-train gratuit vous fait découvrir le jardin avec des arrêts stratégiques. En plus des 18 jardins incluant le jardin de roses, le jardin japonais, le jardin chinois et le jardin des premières nations, qui se sont ouverts en 2001, le site possède des serres spectaculaires qui contiennent plus de 36 000 plantes. Il y a aussi l'insectarium, avec sa collection extraordinaire de 160 000 insectes et (arthropodes). Vous y trouverez aussi un restaurant, des boutiques de souvenirs et un centre de réception. Pour plus d'information sur le Jardin Botanique de Montréal, téléphonez au (514) 872-1400 ou visitez le site Internet au www.ville.montreal.qc.ca/jardin.

Robert Malo, le superviseur des terrains avec Luc Rhéaume, un des opérateurs. «Notre plus gros défi, particulièrement durant la saison forte, qui dure du 1er mai au 31 octobre, est de maintenir l'harmonie dans le jardin, pour que tout soit à son meilleur.» dit M. Malo.

Grounds supervisor Robert Malo with operator Luc Rehaume. "Our biggest challenge, especially during the high-season, is to keep everything in perfect harmony," says Malo.



Displays put Walkers to the test

Longwood Gardens gives new meaning to landscape maintenance

When Pierre S. du Pont bought Longwood in 1906, initial plans didn't call for developing his new property into the world's premier horticultural display gardens. Today, however, Longwood Gardens is just that. Located 30 miles west of Philadelphia in historic Brandywine Valley, Longwood features 1,050 outdoor acres and 20 indoor gardens. In addition to the 11,000 different kinds of plants that comprise the displays, the gardens have become a horticultural research center, a center of continuing education and a home for an extensive performing arts program where more than 400 musical and theatrical events are scheduled each year.

But the flowers and other beautifully landscaped elements are the main attraction for the 800,000 visi-

The gardens are open 365 days a year and from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. throughout the growing season.

tors who come to Longwood annually. And few people know the terrain better than senior groundskeeper Henry Schweibenz. A 32-year veteran



Senior groundskeeper Henry Schweibenz is a 32-year veteran of Longwood Gardens. He's one of 55 gardeners on staff who keep the grounds maintained year-round.

of numerous plantings, events, renovations and other maintenance and installation callings, Henry knows what it takes to keep his neighborhood groomed and growing.

He names the different exterior gardens without missing a beat. "Let's see, there's the Topiary Garden, Rose Garden, Flower Garden Drive and Walk, Water Garden, Wisteria Garden and Peony Garden." He pauses, then rushes to add the Hillside Garden, Peirce's Park and the Idea Garden which features ideas and information for the home gardener. The tight places throughout this set-

ting are maintained by Walker mowers, he tells. Longwood employs two Walker mowers, one with a 42-inch deck, the other with a 48-inch deck.

Then there are the wide, open spaces — lots of them — where maintenance crews look to their wide-area and front-cut Toros, Jakes and Ransomes to get the job done. There is even grass inside the conservatory where electric mowers get the call.

The entire landscape setting at Longwood, with its magnificent trees, flowers and lush grass, is maintained rigorously, along with the physical



Walkers are ideal for Longwood's garden setting where debris collection, maneuverability and a manicured look are requisites.

structures which require constant vigilance. The Italian Water Garden, for example, was recently rebuilt at a cost of more than \$4 million and the Main Fountain Garden is scheduled for a similar overhaul. By the year 2000 an estimated \$45 million will have been spent on physical plant restoration alone. Longwood offsets half its annual operating expenses of \$20 million from admission, garden shop sales, education programs, rentals and restaurant income. A du Pont endowment funds the rest.

Ideal setting

Henry remembers they purchased their first Walker in 1990 after the groundskeeping foreman saw the mower being used by a mowing contractor. "In about two days time, I was mowing in and around the gardens," he relates. "Before the Walkers, we used five push mowers. We'd start at one end of the gardens and just mow. We don't use the push mowers any-

more, except for a couple of areas where we can't drive the riders."

In many ways, this beautiful garden setting is ideal for the Walker. Scalping, turf damage and tree scrapes are out of the question. Yet being able to maneuver around obsta-

Longwood hosts 800,000 visitors annually.

cles and still be productive is a requisite. Collection is a necessity, too, where the alternative would be removing leaves and clippings from the beds. There's even a compost facility right on site to take care of the clippings and leaves.

Added challenge

But keeping a beautiful landscape manicured is not the only challenge for maintenance crews. As Henry's supervisor and groundskeeping and tree division head Phil Gruszka





Here's one place Walkers don't mow. Longwood has 20 indoor gardens, including open turf areas where maintenance crews employ electric mowers.

points out, "With so many visitors daily, equipment operators have to pay special attention to people, as well." Over the years, he adds, Longwood has altered its mowing schedule to accommodate visitors and keep noise to a minimum. Yet, with the gardens being open 365 days a year and from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. throughout the growing season, it's difficult to find a spot to mow without a visitor standing nearby. As Henry tells, operators always have to be on

their guard. "If I see someone approaching, I'll shut the machine down just to be safe and courteous," he adds.

Maintaining a couple hundred acres of outdoor gardens would be a challenge for any maintenance crew. Longwood has 55 gardeners on staff, along with a total work force of 444 full- and part-time employees, students and volunteers. Maintenance crews mow from spring to the middle of December, and winter keeps them busy with snow removal, pruning projects, and equipment maintenance. With that kind of schedule, it's

a wonder employees ever have time to enjoy the surroundings. Worse yet, they might learn to take the scenery for granted. "Not a chance," says

11,000 different kinds of plants make Longwood a gardener's paradise.

Henry. "There's one thing about a growing environment. It's always changing and offering new challenges." In Longwood's case, the changes are just that much more magnificent. **WT**

For more information about Longwood Gardens, write to Longwood Gardens, Inc., P.O. Box 501, Kennett Square, Pennsylvania. Or phone (610) 388-1000.



Elon College

Busy campus keeps maintenance crews on their toes ... and their Walkers

Graduation is only five days away and Larry Rhodes is moving fast. As manager of landscaping and grounds for Elon College in Elon College, North Carolina, he is largely responsible for how the campus will look on its biggest day of the year.

But this kind of pressure is not new to Rhodes or his staff of 11 full-time and eight seasonal employees. Elon College, the third largest of North Carolina's 36 private colleges and universities, is not only one of the top academic institutions in the South, it also has one of the most picturesque campuses ... and it's growing.

Since 1992 the school has increased its square footage of building space by 40% and expanded its acreage by 100%. Included in this building boom is a new campus center, science center, library and a residence complex. A new stadium is projected to open in the fall of 2001.

"Nearly every activity, including a new building project, impacts our department in one way or another," tells Rhodes, who graduated from the college in 1986. "In addition, managing a landscape department in a college setting is not much different in one way from managing a golf course. There is always a lot of people activity. And how and when you do your work is determined by their movement."

He notes, for example, that the school's nine irrigation systems can only operate between 11 p.m. and 6 a.m. This saves students and teachers from taking umbrellas to class on sunny days, he adds. And you won't find mowing crews mowing between 7 and 8:00 a.m. Instead, they will be "policing" the grounds for loose paper and other debris to ensure the campus is looking its very best for students, faculty and visitors.

Life has changed since he graduated, received an advanced degree from NC State in Turfgrass Management, Ornamentals and Landscaping, and came back to the school to work. As he puts it, the

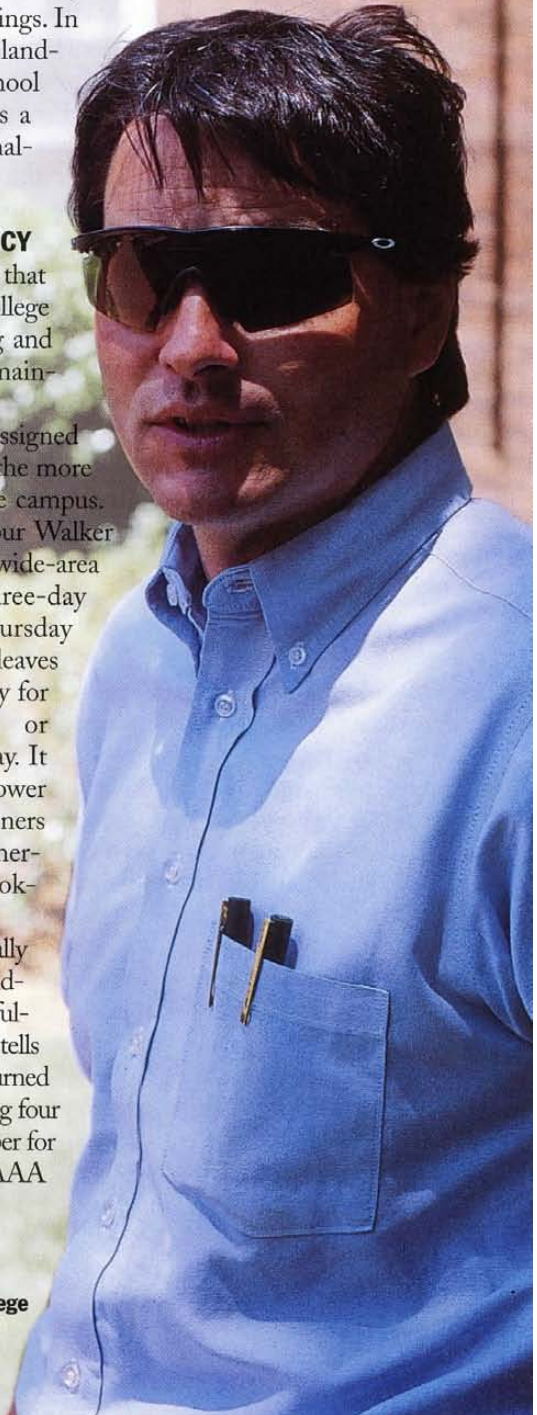
campus seems to be busy all year long, not only with classes but with special events, conferences and other happenings. In other words, being a landscape manager for a school such as Elon College is a full-time as well as challenging proposition.

THE RULE OF EFFICIENCY

Of the 500-plus acres that comprise the Elon College campus, the landscaping and grounds department maintains more than 200.

Four gardeners are assigned to specific areas within the more high-profile areas of the campus. Mowing crews using four Walker Mowers and one Toro wide-area mower work a three-day Tuesday through Thursday mowing schedule. This leaves either Monday or Friday for routine maintenance or making up for a rain day. It also allows would-be mower operators to help gardeners trim and prune, or otherwise keep the campus looking neat.

"Being efficient is really the key to operating a landscape department successfully in this environment," tells Rhodes, who recently returned to the college after working four years as head groundskeeper for the Charlotte Knights AAA baseball team.



“Our mowing crews are assigned the same areas each week to allow them to mow as efficiently as possible and to make them more aware of any unwanted landscape changes, e.g., a broken sprinkler head or disease or insect encroachment.” They are even assigned the same mowers, he adds, which gives them the feeling of “ownership” of their machine and familiarity with its operation.

Elon College operates nine 16- to 25-hp Walker Mowers. Two mowers equipped with 42-inch GHS decks, and two with 62-inch side-discharge decks, do most of the campus mowing, along with a Toro equipped with a 16-foot deck. All told, somewhere around 220 acres of grass are mowed weekly. Athletic fields with their Bermuda grass are maintained using a gang reel mower.

The other Walkers are assigned various tasks from blowing debris from sidewalks, shaping beds and removing snow during the winter.

“We use the Walkers for four basic reasons,” tells Rhodes. “They are very maneuverable and leave a nice striping effect. Key engine and mower components are also very accessible. And the manufacturer continues to make technological improvements.”

The mowers are durable, too, he adds, noting the school still has its first Walker it purchased 12 years ago. More recent purchases, however, are on a rotating replacement schedule.

In addition to the campus, landscape and grounds crews also tend to the college president’s house, a nearby community church and a couple of other college properties off campus. “We lock and load one crew everyday,” Rhodes explains.

Also keeping the staff busy is fertilizing, and a pesticide and herbicide program that covers the entire 200-plus acres. Some of the non-irrigated areas receive water, too, from water wheels. Special summer projects that include new walkways, new irrigation



Elon College has been using Walker Mowers to maintain its turf for 12 years. The school currently has nine mowers, including its first one.

lines and parking lots will directly or indirectly impact landscape operations, as well.

Currently, the campus is undergoing a tree audit to determine tree health, and point out any potential safety hazards individual trees might pose. “We’re still seeing tree damage from hurricanes that came through 10 years ago,” says Rhodes, adding that landscapes in any setting are constantly changing. Successful maintenance programs stay up with the changes.

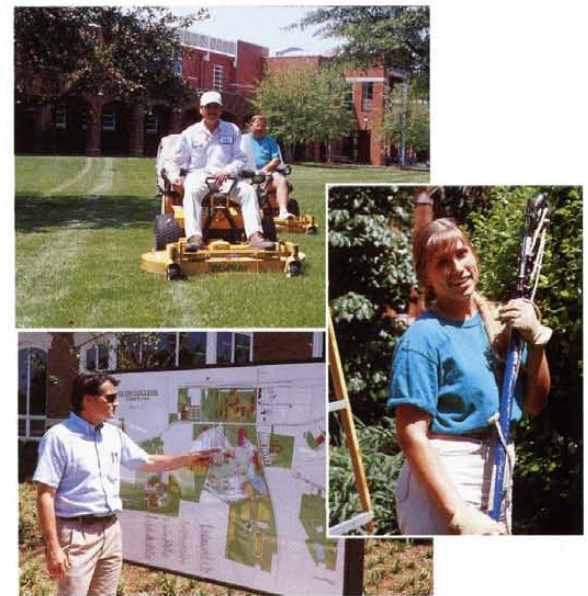
The biggest project currently underway is the new stadium that will bring even more turfgrass and landscape under the grounds department umbrella. With the new stadium will come a new stadium field, soccer field and practice field.

“As a department our focus has always been the campus area per se,” Rhodes explains. “The new stadium won’t necessarily change our focus. But it will shift part of our attention to a different part of the campus.”

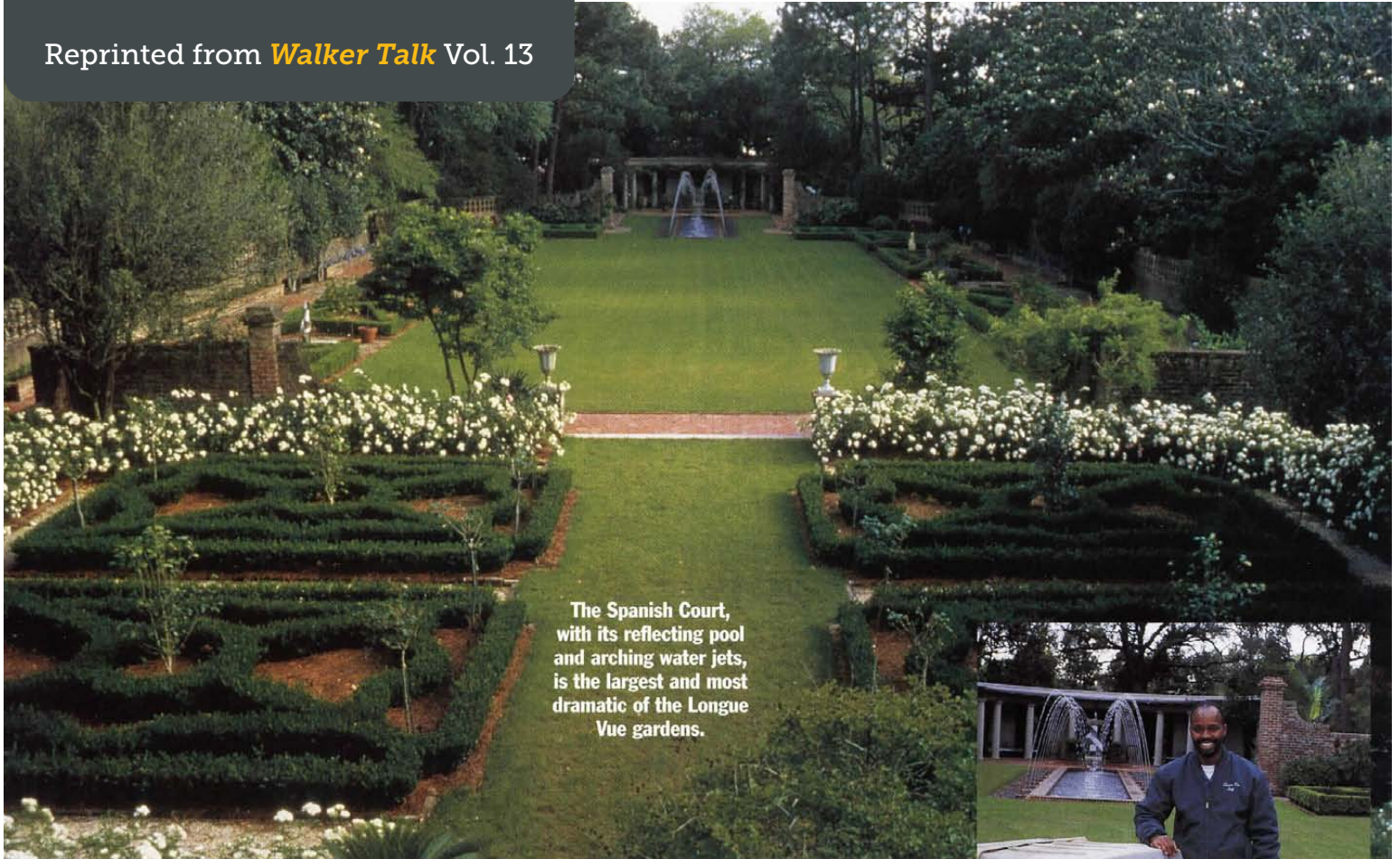
In the meantime, the focus at hand for the landscape and grounds team is graduation. Mowing crews are collecting nearly all 80 to 100 acres of mown grass, and gardeners are applying the finishing touches. “I’m proud to say this campus looks great 95%, no almost 100% of the time all year long thanks to a great staff dedicated to

maintaining the school’s image,” says Rhodes.

Graduation may not be the best time for our staff to relax and reflect on their effort, he adds, but their hard work is in full view for everyone else, including the graduating seniors and their parents. **WT**



Top: With graduation a few days away, mowers and mowing crews double up to bag all areas of the campus. Right: Dawn Hensley is one of four gardeners assigned to a specific area of the campus. Bottom: The campus has changed considerably since Larry Rhodes attended classes. A new stadium scheduled to open in the fall of 2001 is the newest addition.



The Spanish Court, with its reflecting pool and arching water jets, is the largest and most dramatic of the Longue Vue gardens.

*Longue Vue House and Gardens
in New Orleans*

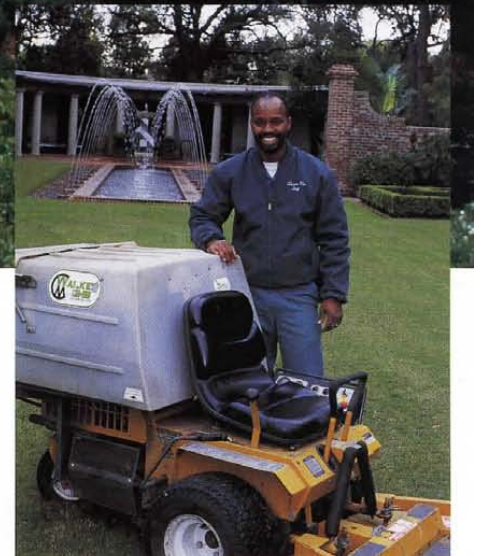
City estate continues to impress, educate

Visitors of Longue Vue House and Gardens can only imagine what it was like attending a formal garden party in the mid-1950s, or entertaining the likes of Eleanor Roosevelt, Adlai Stevenson, or John and Robert Kennedy.

This historic city estate was created by Mr. and Mrs. Edgar B. Stern and their designers between 1923 and 1968. Located on 8 acres a few minutes from the French Quarter, it fea-

tures a Classical Revival mansion with gardens. The southern section of the gardens was modified in the 1960s. Today, the gardens are highlighted by more than 20 working fountains.

Mrs. Stern opened the gardens to the public in 1968, and the house shortly before her death in 1980. Longue Vue House and Gardens hosts more than 50,000 visitors annually who come to view the beauty of the gardens, and to attend a wide variety of educational programs.



Longue Vue veteran employee Troy Chambers says the Walker's all-around maneuverability and ability to mow in wet conditions make it the best choice.

UNIQUE DESIGN

The house contains its original furnishings of English and American antiques, French and Oriental carpets, modern art, and collections of needlework, textiles and creamware from Wedgwood, Leeds and other British and Continental potteries.

As magnificent as the mansion is, with its late 18th and early 19th century, country-home atmosphere, the centerpiece is the formal gardens.



Head gardener Ann Donnelly and senior gardener Joseph Voltz discuss a little “green” strategy. November is the transition month at Longue Vue when the hybrid Bermuda grass gives way to winter Rye.

Today, the gardens are maintained by a staff of four people, along with many volunteers. They are the responsibility of head gardener Ann Donnelly. When asked to describe some of the challenges associated

with maintaining the gardens and grounds, she replies, “the pressure of keeping them immaculate every day.”

The estate purchased the Walker seven years ago. Today it mows the lawn twice a week in the summer and once a week during the winter.

“We had a reel mower at the time and wanted to upgrade,” remembers 15-year Longue Vue veteran Troy Chambers. They went with the Walker because of its maneuverability, and because it would mow in the wet, moist conditions often prevalent on the grounds. “It was important to get a machine that would evenly displace its weight,” he adds.

Since the purchase, the Walker Mower has worked in tandem with three small walk-behind mowers to keep the grounds in shape.

The grass-handling system has facilitated leaf pickup that’s nearly year-round thanks to countless live oaks and magnolia trees.

A mulching deck is employed during the November transition from hybrid Bermuda to winter Rye grass. As Donnelly relates, the mulching action does a good job of cutting the grass. Unlike the vacuum action of the GHS deck, it leaves the Rye grass seeds on the lawn where they belong.

The Walker’s size and ease of operation are also a benefit to a garden that generates much of its economic support from daily visitors. Small in stature, the Walker has an unobtrusive presence. And it quickly dispatches

the lawn, working eight hours per week during the summer season, and half that in the mild winter months.

“I have a relatively high intolerance for mowing,” explains senior gardener Joseph Voltz. “The Walker is not like other mowers. It’s actually easy to operate, and it’s very maneuverable.”

In addition to beautifully manicured lawns, along with live oaks and magnolias, the property is home for camellias, azaleas, roses, sweet olives, crepe myrtles and gardenias as permanent plantings. Throughout the year, they are combined with seasonal displays of tulips, chrysanthemums, poinsettias, pansies and Easter lilies. Periodically, there are also temporary sculpture exhibits in the gardens.

“The Walker is not like other mowers. It’s actually easy to operate, and it’s very maneuverable.”

And there’s more work forthcoming. The estate recently opened its Discovery Garden, an interesting and educational, interactive gardening display for children. The newly restored Wild Garden will be unveiled in the early part of 1999.

New Orleans may be famous for its Bourbon Street festivals, riverboats and culinary delights, but the city also features some of the richest culture in the South. Longue Vue is part of that culture and certainly should be on any garden lover’s list of places to visit.



Longue Vue is open 10:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday through Saturday; 1:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. Sunday. For information call (504) 488-5488.



When describing some of the challenges associated with maintaining the 8-acre city estate, head gardener Donnelly says, “the pressure of keeping them immaculate every day” is the biggest one.

They’re highlighted by the largest garden, the Spanish Court, with its mosaic sidewalks and fountain displays. Other gardens include the Pan, the Portico, and the Walled Gardens which feature roses; and the Yellow Garden, the Canal Garden and the Pond Garden.

The Wild Garden offers visitors a natural forest walk featuring native and indigenous plant materials. This area is presently under restoration.

Display gardens offer special maintenance challenges

Filoli Center turns back the clock

Here's a job most any landscape contractor would enjoy. Maintaining one of California's most prestigious display gardens. Located 30 miles south of San Francisco, Filoli Center beckons back to the early 1900s when wealthy residents built some of the most luxurious country homes of the century. This one, built by William Bowers Bourn II between 1915 and 1917, is still in its original setting.

Located on the eastern slope of the Coast Range mountains, Filoli is comprised of 654 acres and includes a magnificent 43-room mansion and 16 acres of display gardens. The estate was purchased by Mr. and Mrs. William P. Roth in 1936 and it remained in their possession until 1975, when Mrs. Roth deeded it to the National Trust for Historic Preservation.

Today, Filoli Center is open to the

public by reservation and by self-guided tours. Visitors can take tours of the house and garden or hike the nature trails. The beauty of the environs is nearly untouched by time. The original architecture of the Georgian Revival house remains in full bloom as do the gardens, the original design and color schemes of which are maintained to the fullest.

It's the latter that occupies the time of 13 full-time gardeners and more than 100 volunteers who devote their energies to keeping the estate looking its early 1900s best.

Maintenance challenges

Formal display gardens such as the one at Filoli offer maintenance personnel a set of new challenges, not the least of which, of course, is balancing modern maintenance practices with a tranquil setting. Weed trimmers, leaf blowers and



Assistant garden superintendent Alex Fernandez devotes approximately 75 percent of his time to actual hands-on maintenance activity.



Filoli's Walker was purchased three years ago. It gives maintenance personnel speed, maneuverability and grass handling capability.

riding mowers, for example, were not part of the estate's original list of tools. And nothing will more quickly awaken a visitor from a 1920s dream state than a Walker mower doing pirouettes around an Irish Yew. A pretty sight, to be sure, but one appreciated more by the operator than a visitor.

To keep noise and maintenance activity to a minimum, Filoli assistant garden superintendent Alex Fernandez schedules heavy maintenance such as mowing and string line trimming to be done on Mondays, when the estate is closed to the public. Small groups might walk through but generally speaking the crews have the grounds to themselves.

Of the 16 acres of gardens, there



Small reel mowers, working in conjunction with a Walker and Locke mower, give turf areas a golf-green like appearance.

are approximately four acres of lawn to mow, tells Alex, a recent graduate of Michigan State University with a master's degree in horticulture. Operators employ a combination of Honda rotary mowers, Trimmer reel mowers, a Locke reel mower and a Walker to keep the grounds manicured. Barring bad weather, the task is usually completed by 3:00 or 4:00 in the afternoon — not bad considering early morning fog and heavy dews sometimes keep mowing crews on hold until 10 a.m.

Lawns are mowed once a week from April to the end of November, and spot mowed the rest of the year.

Mulching, although necessary in many parts of the country, is not practical at Filoli and clippings from the Walker and the small reels with catchers are deposited in the estate's compost pile, the product of which is used to amend garden soil. Clippings from the Locke reel are minimal and left on the turf. There are plenty of places to put the compost to work. On average, 20,000 plants are planted annually.

Filoli's Walker was purchased three years ago to give grounds maintenance personnel more speed and maneuverability, tells John Mynott, whose job it is to keep the Walker and approximately 80 other pieces of equipment up and running. "At the time we were looking for a compact rider that would go through small gateways, climb the hills and still be very maneuverable and easy to handle," he recalls.

The sweeper is used three times a year to remove algae buildup from the brick walkways.

"Then we noticed the sweeper attachments and we were sold."

The sweeper is used only three times a year to remove algae buildup from the brick walkways — after the first major rainfall, before major events begin in the winter and before tours start in February. But when it runs it saves countless hours, John adds. Before the attachment, Filoli workers would put

down sand and water and literally scrub the walks by hand with a brush. With the sweeper attachment, someone applies the sand and water and the sweeper does the rest. "The attachment does a better job, too," says John.

The garden is divided into a number of separate areas, each with micro-climates that allow for a wide range of plantings. Weather patterns in

the San Francisco area also contribute to variety, allowing for a mixture of eastern and western plant life. It's not unusual for the valley around Filoli to receive 30 freezes in a year. And the winter months bring somewhere between 30 to 40 inches of rain. The total rainfall is not much different than Alex's home state of Michigan, except that Californians receive it in half the time. During the rest of the year, the gardens rely on an extensive irrigation system for moisture.

The biggest challenge for the turf area is people, not disease, explains Alex. Foot traffic, the result of better than 60,000 visitors annually, is a major concern. Yet traffic is well marked and controlled. In fact, the turf looks letter perfect, despite people and minimal use of chemicals. Location of the Crystal Springs reservoir nearby precludes large-scale chemical application.

What the lawn area receives, however, is annual rejuvenation through plug aeration and overseeding. And the old saying applies at



Here, the Walker starts a "figure eight" mowing pattern around the Irish Yews.

Filoli as well as almost any other property. The best defense against disease is a healthy turf.

Perfect to a fault

Country estates around San Francisco became popular after the devastating earthquake of 1906. The country seemed to be a safe place to build. And it was, and most cases it still is. Even though Filoli sits just to

the east of the San Andreas fault, bed rock keeps the ground stable. The recent major quake in San Francisco, for example, caused little damage at the estate. Still, a seismic upgrade, including installing a steel frame between the interior walls of the mansion and the brick exterior, will provide additional protection.

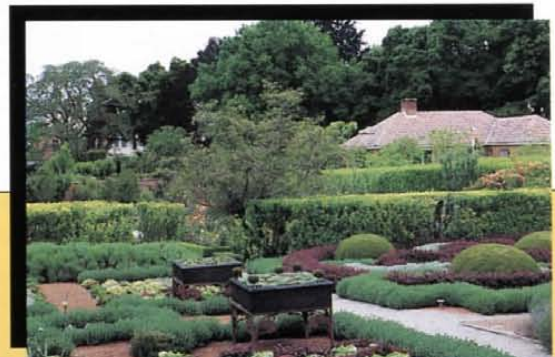
There's new construction, too, at the estate. A lecture hall/visitor center is scheduled for completion next year, which is part of a bigger plan to make Filoli even more accessible to the general public.

Filoli Center has received worldwide recognition for its architecture and gardens. And students from around the world come to work in the gardens. A gardening internship program takes in three to five interns four times a year. Interests vary from landscape architecture to lawn maintenance. Students are taught how to safely operate equipment and routine maintenance procedures.

Operating capital for the

estate is generated equally by endowments, revenue from tourists and fund-raising events. To help keep the 16 acres of gardens in tip-top shape, volunteers are requisites, as well. Upwards of 1,000 people (most of whom are retired) have their names on Filoli's volunteer list working in all aspects of the center's operation, from leading tours to manning the tea shop. Alex himself devotes approximately 75 percent of his time to actual hands-on maintenance; the rest is divided up among administrative chores, holding workshops and interacting with other training events.

Working at Filoli may not be every contractor's dream. After all, there is a big difference between working for yourself and working for someone else. But short of owning your own business, working at Filoli has other rewards. "It's probably a little more relaxing than working for yourself," notes Alex. "Hours are steady, too." The one similarity, however, is a big one, indeed. Customers come to expect nothing but the best. **WT**



It takes 13 full-time staff members and more than a 100 volunteers to maintain Filoli's 16 acres of gardens.

Vital statistics Filoli Center, Woodside, California

- Located on the eastern slope of the Coast Range Mountains. Built by William Bowers Bourn II in 1917. Purchased by Mr. and Mrs. William Roth and later donated by Mrs. Roth to the National Trust for Historic Preservation.

- 16 acres of formal display gardens. Highlights: over 200 Irish yews, 500 roses and a variety of garden settings, including the unusual Knot Garden with its complicated interwoven patterns, the Sunken Garden and the Walled Garden.

- The main residence was designed by architect Willis Polk. It contains 36,000 square feet of floor space, including 43 rooms not counting baths. There are 17 fireplaces, 11 chimneys and a ballroom that measures 32' wide and 70' long. The house is furnished with original pieces, recent gifts and loans.

Tours of the mansion and garden are available from mid-February through early November. Tours are by reservation only Tuesday through Thursday; self-guided tours are available Friday and Saturday. There is an admission charge of \$8.00. For more information call (415) 364-2880 or write to Filoli, Canada Road, Woodside, CA 94062.



The renovation of old buildings and upkeep of gardens have kept the Xavier campus in tip-top shape.

Orchestrating Cincinnati's gem

Many parts come together on XU grounds crew to compose this beautiful whole.

Xavier University is an alluring college campus. Woven like a fine tapestry into the cityscape of Cincinnati, this urban college is a parade of old buildings and mature landscapes that challenges even the keenest eye to decipher where the campus begins and where it ends.

Founded in 1831, Xavier has virtually grown up with the city of Cincinnati. Yet, the school's low-key approach within the community has positioned it as a humble fixture in the area. A large part of this coexistence has been the restoration of old campus buildings, and an undying dedication to maintain the campus grounds.

The university's man-in-charge of the grounds is grounds supervisor Dick Menke, who aptly directs a staff of 14 people and a diverse line of power equipment. During the growing season, under Menke's guidance, the campus explodes into a 128-acre symphony of manicured turf, colorful flowering beds, and an overall clean setting for higher education.

Two key members of his troop are 20-year veteran and crew leader/horticulturist Walt Bonvell, and 24-year veteran groundskeeper and proud Walker operator Rex Brown.

"We don't use the Walkers for every job," relates Bonvell, "but we could do virtually every job with them." It is a fine balance, he continues, "We know that without the Walkers we could not perform many of the maintenance jobs with the efficiency that we do now."

Bonvell's co-worker Brown agrees, noting with a degree of pleasure that he is the one who wears the Walker hat and carries the Walker keys. "I have gotten to know our Walkers," says Brown. "And since Walt and I are the only ones who really operate them, we give them special attention to make sure that they are on the job when we need them."

Xavier's Walkers have become a campus mainstay, and are well-known for their finishing job, low profile, and ability to maneuver into places where riding lawn mowers should not be able to go. Another way the Walkers excel is using the rotary broom attachment for winter work.

Bonvell explains, "During snows, we are able to run the broom on the brick-paved walkways to keep walking paths clear."

He recalls how handy the broom worked last year for clearing a late-afternoon snow from in front of the university's new 10,500-seat Cintas Center.

"It snowed just before a men's basketball game, and I just swept paths right through here," Bonvell proclaims proudly while ambling between tree beds in front of the grand building. "No one got snow on their shoes that

night!" He goes on to explain how a Walker using a rotary broom, along with a 20-year-old Toro Groundsmaster with a V-blade, make a pretty solid combination for removing snow at Xavier.

EVERYONE IS PART OF THE MIX

Bonvell and Brown emphasize that they are just two of many who help bring this horticultural concert together.

"Just like the equipment, we all play a part in this," explains Bonvell. He points to a campus softball diamond where the infield is mowed by a Walker and the outfield by a Dixie Chopper.



With almost 45 years at Xavier between them, Walt Bonvell and Rex Brown (seated) like to be known as the Walker guys on campus.

The grounds crew maintains everything on the fully irrigated campus from small patches of grass on the academic mall to large open fields now incorporated into the campus by a city park project between Xavier and the city of Cincinnati. They even maintain off-campus houses owned by the university.

Maintaining this much property with consistency requires a seasoned staff, one the grounds department develops from hiring full-time positions instead of seasonal help. "We tried seasonal help," recalls Bonvell, "but not all of them were as committed to the campus as we are — it was a good lesson."

To be sure, the university takes the condition of its grounds seriously. “The students and faculty like to be comfortable in their surroundings,” says Bonvell, “and it makes visiting parents believe they have made a good choice of universities — a tidy campus even gives people a sense of security.”

While actually mowing 40 to 45 acres a week, the grounds crew has learned to work around campus activities and meld in with the students. As a matter of fact, on the morning of *Walker Talk's* springtime visit to campus, a group of students was in the middle of a political protest. Bonvell politely approached them and explained his crew's responsibilities to irrigate and mow the turf they were sitting on. He says his crew enjoys a nice rapport with students. “You get to know these kids during their four to five years here; they see quite a bit of us, and it is nice having them around, too.”

Bonvell recognizes another significant player in Xavier's mix — local Walker dealer Larry Barber. “Larry has really been an asset to us when it comes to helping us with our mowers,” Bonvell says. “I can remember the time we bought a snow cab, and he came over and helped us assemble the entire cab, at no extra charge.”

When a summer's work day draws to a close, the Xavier grounds crew orchestra puts away its mowing instruments. Only then can they take a moment to glance over their work and admire the harmony that is the Xavier University campus. **WT**



The Walker's ability to fit in on campus has allowed the crew to work without many restrictions.

Brown says the Walker “makes his job easy” when it comes to odd-shaped areas and small slopes.

XU GROUNDS CREW ACCOLADES

Most people familiar with Xavier know about the business school, its longstanding Jesuit heritage, and the men's and women's basketball teams. Sometimes, lost in all of these achievements, is another award-winning segment of the university — the grounds crew.

In recent years, the crew has brought home a few prestigious awards. In 1999, they won second place in Professional Grounds Maintenance Society's (PGMS) Honors Award for an Urban University. And in 2000, Horticulturist and Crew Leader Walt Bonvell won the PGMS President's Award. Even Bonvell admits being a little shocked to receive the award at the PGMS banquet.

He recalls, “I had undone my tie and was ready to watch the presentation, and then they called my name as the winner of the President's Award — I just about fell out of my chair.”

Bonvell shouldn't be surprised about winning the PGMS President's Award. He has been active with PGMS for a number of years, including being a past president of the local chapter. During his term, Bonvell was able to use the campus as a study ground for the chapter, and he has used the university facilities to host monthly meetings.

Xavier is also listed as one of the top 20 leading grounds organizations in the United States by *Landscape Management Magazine*.

Bonvell is never too far away from his radio while working with the 14-member Xavier grounds crew.



BYU-Idaho

Mowers Are Good Fit For Campus Culture



Travel 80 miles southwest of West Yellowstone and you'll drive smack into Idaho's Snake River Valley. This area, known for its agriculture, is also home to the state's largest private university, BYU-Idaho, located in Rexburg. The school, affiliated with The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, has an enrollment of approximately 15,000 students and offers more than a dozen associate degrees and nearly 80 bachelor degrees.

Care of the beautiful 400-acre campus is the responsibility of Grounds Operation Director Jeffrey Wynn. "The school has 90 acres under irrigation, 69 of which are mowed weekly during the growing season," says Wynn, a graduate of BYU-Idaho's landscape management program. "We're in high desert here, so irrigation is a requisite." So, too, is keeping the campus in top shape.

"The Church is very particular about how the campus looks," Wynn explains. "Our 15 full-time grounds staff and 60 to 80 students who work part-time with us are very conscientious. They do a tremendous job with all aspects of maintenance. We also have a full-time arborist on staff who keeps the trees pruned and looking their best."

Wynn's staff stepped to the plate last year when a medical issue kept him sidelined for six weeks. "I don't think they missed me at all," he says with a laugh. "It just shows how dedicated they are."

LIVELY CAMPUS

This spring, the full grounds department spent a couple of days installing nearly 900 flats of annual color and countless 4-inch container plants, just in time to be in full bloom for summer graduation. The school is on three 14-week semesters, each ending with a graduation ceremony.

Getting the grounds in top shape for graduation poses an ongoing challenge for Wynn and his crew, but there are

Approximately 80 percent of the mowing on campus is done with Walker Mowers.



others. He explains, “One of the biggest challenges we face is repairing turf that was damaged by salt. We use a lot of salt during the winter to keep students upright, and because of that the turf naturally gets damaged. Concrete walks also suffer thanks to the salt and temperatures that routinely fall below 0° F.”

Working around major construction projects poses another obstacle. Over the last 15 years, several new buildings have been constructed, including an impressive BYU-Idaho Center that seats 15,000 people and features 10 basketball courts. More recently, the central quad was reno-

vated to accommodate an outdoor amphitheater. The school also has a new agriculture building, and additional student housing is currently under construction.

TURF TALK

Mowing and trimming keeps Wynn’s staff hopping throughout the spring and summer growing season. Approximately 80 percent of the mowing is done by 12 Walker Mowers, a fleet that includes four model B’s used primarily on hilly areas, along with eight MT’s with GHS decks. The school purchased its first Walker Mower in 2006. “What sold us

A Model B mows around a recently constructed quad amphitheater.

on the mower was the finished cut,” says Wynn. “Again, keeping the campus looking nice is a high priority for the school and the Church.”

Not to say getting the first mower on campus was an easy sell for Walker Mower distributor and local dealer, Coates Landscape Supply. “We demonstrated the mower two, maybe three times at the school,” relates Dan Coates, sales manager. “The big obstacle for them was lever steering. The grounds staff was comfortable using mowers with

“The Church is very particular about how the campus looks. Our 15 full-time grounds staff and 60 to 80 students who work part-time with us are very conscientious. They do a tremendous job with all aspects of maintenance.”

– Jeffrey Wynn



Dan Coates, Coates Landscape Supply sales manager, with Jeffrey Wynn.

steering wheels and reluctant to make the transition. It’s interesting. The students who mow probably had the easiest time adapting to the change. They had accrued less time with the steering-wheel mowers, and maybe all the texting gives them sharper hand-eye coordination.”

Either way, the machines made their way to the campus and are now used on

nearly every inch of turf—aside from small areas that still require walk-behind mowing and large expanses that call for wide-area mowers. “I don’t do any mowing,” admits Wynn. “I spend most of my day making sure people have what they need and dealing with any issues that arise.” Depending on the time of year, he also does a lot of interacting with

the greenhouse staff on campus.

Wynn notes the Walker Mowers are equipped with dethatching attachments for spring cleanup and make quick work of leaves in the fall. They are not used for snow, however, a task better left to tractors with brooms and trucks with plows. “We have a neat system for snow removal,” he adds. “Crews windrow the snow, which is then blown into trucks and hauled off campus.”

Thanks to the school’s Capital Needs Analysis program, Walker Mowers are on a five-year lifecycle. In fact, a couple of the newest ones had only accumulated 50-plus hours by early June. A full season of weekly mowing ahead, with crews starting at 6 a.m. and working until 3 p.m., promises to substantially add to that figure.

Wynn emphasizes that the mowers play an important role in keeping the campus looking nice, but are only part of the story. The school’s culture, working in combination with dedicated employees, is catalyst for a job well done. It’s a formula that works for BYU-Idaho and can work for any Walker Mower user. **WT**

Jeffrey Wynn with Cameron St. Amant, a junior at BYU-Idaho. Between 60 and 80 students work part-time for the grounds department.





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