



Late Summer 2008

Turning Leaves

This Issue



Minimizing Fuel Costs Page 2



Planning for Fall Page 2

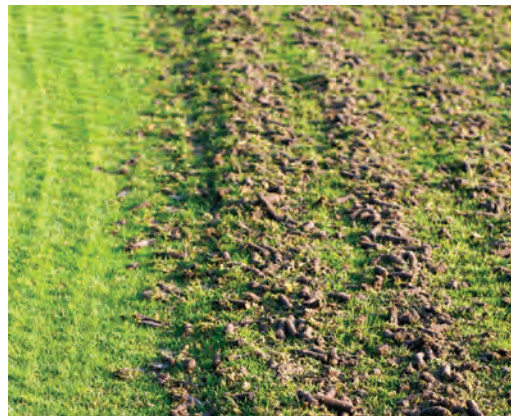


Village Shalom Page 3



Employee Profile Page 4

AERATION & OVERSEEDING Soothe stressed turf with late summer care



Clay soils, common in our region, should be aerated at once twice a year, especially if the turf receives a lot of traffic, or there is excessive thatch build-up.

Aeration's effectiveness relies on choosing the right method and using proper technique. Core aeration offers longer-lasting effects than spiking, which can actually contribute to soil damage and compaction. However, core aeration requires specialized equipment and knowledge of the proper size, depth and spacing of cores. Vertical aeration, or power raking, is a method particularly suited to thatch removal.

Cool season grasses should be aerated in the fall, when they are actively growing. Warm season grasses may need more frequent aeration during their May through July growing season. In all cases, aeration prior to fertilizing, seeding or applying crabgrass preventer helps maximize the treatment's effectiveness.

By aerating before your fall fertilizing and overseeding program, you'll be helping your grasses recover from the stress of a long, hot Kansas City summer, and you'll be rewarded with a thicker, happier lawn come springtime!

Kansas City summers can stress your grass, cause thinning and make room for weeds. That's why fall aeration and overseeding are vital to your turf care program.

By improving soil contact, aeration helps ensure the success of overseeding. It also combats the detrimental effects of thatch build-up, poor drainage and soil compaction.

Just as our bodies require air, food and water, so does a grass plant's root system, which makes up about 90 percent of the entire plant. Aeration, by opening up the surface of the soil, helps oxygen, nutrients and water reach the grass roots.

Construction or other activity that takes place on soggy soil is a common cause of compaction. But in most cases, there is no early sign that aeration is needed. Performing aeration as a regular part of turf maintenance can help prevent problems before they have a chance to start.





SIGNATURE TAKES STEPS TO MINIMIZE FUEL COSTS

By now, it's no secret that the cost of gas is affecting everything, from the daily commute to family summer vacations.

The tremendous increase in gasoline prices is likely to blame for the fact that the Consumer Price Index has risen five percent in the last 12 months – the largest annual jump since 1991.

Those rising consumer prices are a sign that businesses have begun passing on the costs of their own increased fuel expenditures.

But for many small businesses, the decision about how to deal with \$4 gas has been complicated and painful. One survey found that nearly 60 percent of small business owners are still trying to hold off on raising prices. Many are reluctant to increase charges to long-time, loyal customers; others continue to honor contracts drawn up before fuel prices skyrocketed in the past months.


Here at Signature Landscape, we too believe in honoring our agreements with our clients. Most of our proposals for work are drawn up in the fall of the previous year. Last fall, our proposals reflected the lower fuel costs.

Throughout this spring and summer, rather than add fuel surcharges or increase fees, Signature Landscape has addressed the rising cost of fuel through strategic deployment and routing of our crews and vehicles, as well as cost reduction efforts in other expense areas.

Unfortunately, these measures still don't offset the more than 60 percent cost increase to run our fleet of gasoline and diesel-powered vehicles in 2008.

Though Signature Landscape will continue to seek out ways to conserve fuel, we anticipate that a portion of these increased fuel costs will be reflected in the proposals we present for next year's services. However, we are doing all we can to keep any price increases minimal. We are seeking ways to cut our costs in other areas to offset fuel prices, and finding ways to provide the highest value for your ground maintenance dollars spent.

As business owners and managers, we all understand how important it is to continue providing quality services to our customers, even in times like these. Here at Signature Landscape we will work hard to ensure that you will continue to find our services a great value in 2009!



Summer will soon be a memory and fall is the perfect time to enhance the beauty of your landscape. Fall is a busy time for Signature Landscape and our clients. By planning ahead, we can be sure that bright colors will adorn your exterior and you'll be fully prepared for next spring.

Want to be sure your grass is lush and green next spring? Then fall is when you need to prepare by calling Signature Landscape. Fall aeration and overseeding is the most important step toward an active, vibrant spring lawn.

Also thinking about winter? Remember, Signature Winter Services will keep your property clear of dangerous snow and ice. It may still be 80 degrees outside, but now is the time to plan for the seasons ahead.

Planning for Fall



VILLAGE SHALOM

Residents benefit from total landscape care

Village Shalom is an award-winning Continuing Care Retirement Community (CCRC), housed in a state-of-the-art facility nestled on a large campus just south of the 119th Street corridor at Roe Avenue.

Though Village Shalom's tradition of caring has roots in the Kansas City-area's Jewish Community dating back to 1912, the current campus was completed in June of 2000.

Signature Landscape has provided total care of Village Shalom's grounds since 2005, including lawn care, landscaping, irrigation and snow and ice removal. Village Shalom's landscape features cheerful seasonal flower beds that greet visitors at the entrance and along the drive to the main entrance, while residents enjoy landscaped courtyards and a native grass-lined walking trail.

"Brian Cox, our account manager, is quick to respond to our needs. Our grounds are kept looking very nice, and we get numerous positive comments throughout the year on our landscaping and grounds," says Lee Kortemeyer, Village Shalom's director of facilities.

Signature has also been helping Village Shalom to meet its goal of being more water-conscious. "We have cut back on irrigation because we are trying to conserve water as

much as we can," says Lee. "We are trying to keep all plants, trees and shrubbery as native as possible. We're using tall fescue for turf grass because it requires less water than blue grass."

As an organization that is dedicated to all stages of the aging process, the Village Shalom campus incorporates 64 villas for independent living, as well as assisted living apartments, a rehabilitation center, and one of the area's best



programs for residents with Alzheimer's and other cognitive illnesses.

Signature Landscape's work directly affects the quality of life for residents, from providing yard maintenance for villa residents, to snow and ice removal, which is particularly important for a retirement community. "They definitely stay on top of that, monitoring snow conditions without us having to give them a call," says Lee.



Employee Profile

BOYD COOKS UP A COMMITMENT TO SERVICE

His clients may not know it, but Ben Boyd, senior account manager for Signature's Northland clients, can whip up Cajun dishes that would make his fellow Louisiana natives proud.

From an early age, Ben learned the fine art of Louisiana cuisine by cooking alongside his father. He continued mastering those skills in culinary arts school, which he attended after high school. But even the ability to make the greatest gumbo around (as his family and friends will tell you) couldn't keep him away from the outdoors – and the satisfaction he discovered in landscaping work.

Ben's interest in landscaping also began early in life. In elementary school, he started mowing lawns for neighbors, and had built his own full-fledged lawn care business by high school. The business sustained him through college.

After graduating from North East Louisiana University, Ben moved to the Kansas City area where he cofounded Nigro & Boyd Landscape Company. It was a success: Ben eventually merged with another com-

pany which later was sold—and Ben was out of landscaping for the first time since childhood.

Like fine cooking – which he continues to enjoy as a hobby – Ben couldn't just give up his life outdoors. It turns out that he had been friends with Bill Gordon for more than a decade. Bill had always been there to give Ben professional advice, so it was no surprise that Bill suggested Ben come to work for the company he owned – Signature Landscape.

"There is a unique culture at Signature that is genuinely honoring to its employees and customers," explains Ben. "Signature provides an optimistic commitment to growth and opportunity that allows for the continual betterment for its customers and employees."

Ben is quick to explain that this means his company finds the best person for the job, then invests in that employee, all of which benefits customers in the long run.

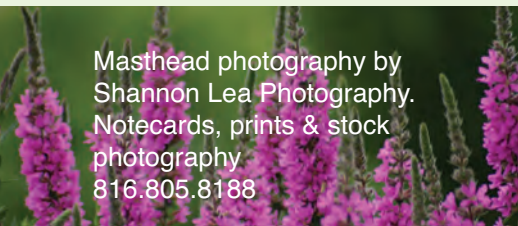
"What distinguishes Signature is its commitment to selecting the right account



managers to serve our clients," he says. "Then, once someone is hired, Signature's commitment is to their development and training—making sure we have the best account managers in the city. I get a kick out of that."

As senior account manager for Kansas City's Northland region, Ben works hard to make sure every Signature Landscape customer is fully satisfied with each step of the process. Most of his time is spent visiting client sites, giving personal attention to each job and each customer to ensure the most positive outcome.

At home, Boyd can still be found whipping up a bowl of his famous gumbo for his wife, Dana and their three children, Benjamin (19), Bethany (17) and Audra (12).



Masthead photography by Shannon Lea Photography. Notecards, prints & stock photography 816.805.8188

Turning Leaves is a seasonal publication of Signature Landscape. We welcome your questions, comments and suggestions. Please contact:

Bill Gordon
Signature Landscape
15705 Pflumm Road
Olathe, Kansas 66062

913.829.8181
Fax: 913.829.8197
www.signaturekc.com



15705 Pflumm Road
Olathe, Kansas 66062