



Green is Beautiful

Ontario Golf Superintendents Association

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FEBRUARY '88

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CINDI CHARTERS

From the President...

The game of golf is currently enjoying a significant increase in popularity. As a result, new courses are being built, older courses are being renovated, private clubs have full memberships with substantial waiting lists and public courses are hard pressed to accommodate the remaining, keen golfers. It stands to reason that all must be well for those who make their livelihood in this field.

Generally speaking, this is true. But there are a number of concerns that face golf course superintendents in particular. Increased golfer expectations due to increased fees and considerable improvements during the last ten years have put more pressure on today's superintendents. Furthermore, these expectations lead to dissatisfaction when the desired results are not immediate.

This fact, when coupled with the recent golf course construction boom, explains in part why there have been so many position changes in the past two years. This "shuffling of the deck" is likely a positive thing, at least in the short run; however, I believe some stability will be appreciated by the affected individuals and courses.

With this in mind, we hope that the information contained in this Special Edition of *Green is Beautiful* is helpful to all those who are involved with golf course maintenance.

We welcome your comments about this issue and take the opportunity to wish you the best in the fast approaching golf season.

Thom Charters,

Ooops!

In the last issue of "*Green is Beautiful*" we forgot to thank Dave Dick of O.M. Scotts for his support of the Spring Field Day held at Galt Country Club. Sorry, Dave . . . and thanks!

From the Editor...

In his final editorial, Neil Acton mentioned that all good things come to an end. It surely was a good thing for Neil, as he did an excellent job as Editor of this publication, evidence being that "*Green is Beautiful*" has, for the second time, won the GCSAA's award for best format and readability.

As I begin the task of taking over as editor, I am beginning to realize the amount of work Neil had to do to put out such a fine publication.

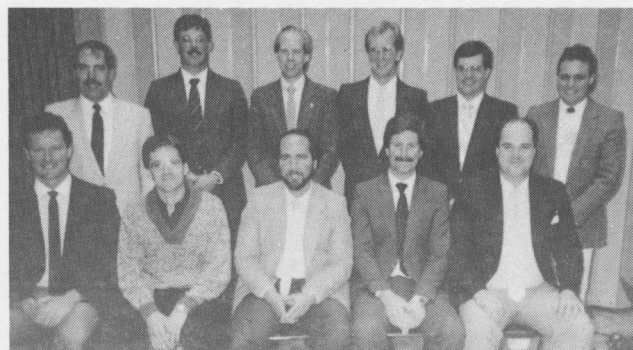
One of the most important functions in keeping this magazine fresh is locating and getting a good variety of interesting articles. I hope to be able to publish more articles on actual projects and/or situations that have gone on at golf courses right here in Ontario.

However, I am not a reporter and cannot hunt down all these interesting items, so if you should receive a call from me requesting an article or report on a particular topic or project at your course or place of business, please take it seriously and write it down (preferably typed) and send it off to me.

I am looking forward to putting out a publication that the members will want to read and hope that I can continue the good work where Neil has left off.

Rod Trainor,

OGSA Board of Directors 1988



Top row, L-R: Mark Hagen, Neil Acton, Thom Charters, Ron Heesen, Gord Nimmo, John Taylor.
Bottom row, L-R: David Gourlay, Rod Trainor, Greg O'Heron, Ed Farnsworth, Scott Dodson.

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**Ontario
Golf
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Association**

Superintendents On the Move

Barry Endicott begins his new duties as Superintendent of Nobleton Lakes Golf and Country Club in February. A great track. **Dave Nicol**, former golf course superintendent and most recently general manager at Nobleton Lakes is off to Hong Kong.

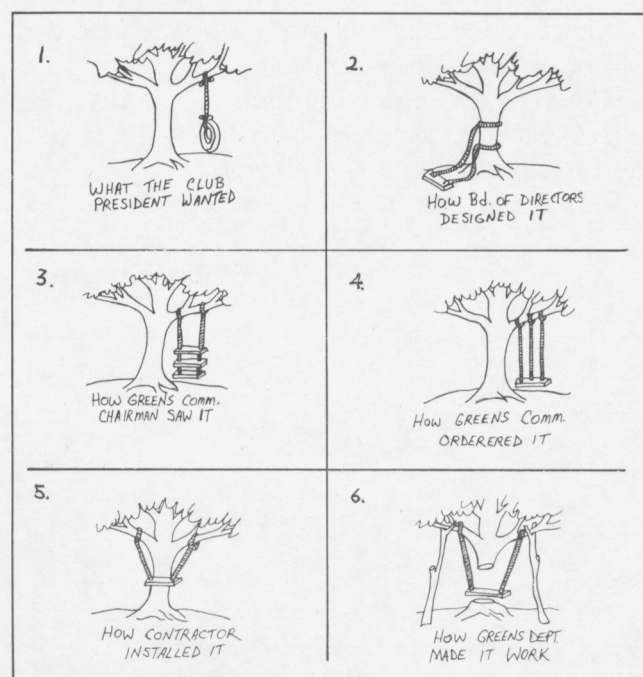
Walt Dudnick leaves Dalewood Golf and Country Club to assume the Superintendent's responsibilities at Millcroft Golf and Country Club. After moving that far west we hope Walt can still play hockey for the east squad in the annual East/West Hockey Challenge in March. Scott Dodson may have something to say about that.

Meanwhile, **Scott Dodson** is familiarizing himself with Summit Golf and Country Club.

The golf course construction boom continues with the latest new course position being filled by **Barry Britton** who leaves Glendale Golf and Country Club to go to a new Kaneff Homes course.

Associate member **Doug Colley** goes from Duke Equipment to Marmac Hydraulics and helps Jim Tanner set up shop and to sell Lesco.

We wish all these members good luck in their new positions.



You and your Association by Ed Farnsworth

The Ontario Golf Superintendents Association was established in 1924 and has remained as one of the oldest golf associations in North America. It was initiated by a group of Toronto area Superintendents for the purpose of discussing the turfgrass industry and its related problems. The first meetings were simple golf days followed by hearty conversations. Today, the most important aspect of the association remains the dissemination of information regarding industry to and between its members. This is accomplished in various manners, from an informal discussion by several superintendents during a golf day to the fall seminars or the January symposium where the best speakers and researchers in the industry are present. You may learn of a new disease or insect problem from the speakers but may also learn from fellow superintendents the most practical and least expensive solution. This friendly dialogue is one of the best information sources for superintendents to continue improving golf facilities in Ontario.

The annual Turfgrass Symposium in January brings together some of the best researchers from Canada and abroad to relate their findings. Fellow superintendents also discuss items of interest from their operations to increase the variety of speakers. The symposium was expanded to a two-day event in recent years to accommodate all of the interesting speakers available. Further expansion of the symposium is presently being discussed by the directors of the association.

Another benefit of the OGSA membership is its re-

lationship with the Golf Superintendents Association of America as a member chapter. Each fall the OGSA sponsors a GCSAA seminar on a popular topic ranging from insect problems to course construction. These seminars present industry-recognized instructors in small classroom-style meetings and are awarded GCSAA certification points. The OGSA's involvement with GCSAA has also been instrumental in maintaining a Canadian representation on the American board, from committee members to presidents.

Three golf tournaments are sponsored by the OGSA annually: Spring Field Day, Pro-Superintendent and the President-Green Chairman-Superintendent.

These tournaments are very useful, not only for the professional dialogue among superintendents, but also for the chance to view other superintendents' operations and "tricks of the trade". Tournament play also affords a prime opportunity for other executives of a club to observe other superintendent's professionalism.

Another example of the OGSA's commitment to informing its members is the periodical "Green is Beautiful", published quarterly. This magazine contains numerous articles on research, professionalism, news of fellow members, even the history of the association. With the addition of advertising, this magazine has also become profitable. The OGSA also produces a yearly roster which provides names and addresses of all members and associate members and a schedule of upcoming events for the year.

Looking back over the 64 years of the association's history, the initial objective of its founding members has not been lost. The OGSA is still bringing together other avenues for the member to educate himself and improve his profession.

"In this day and age, a golf course superintendent has be agronomist, an economist, and a good people manager.

If you put all this together with a love for a piece of earth, then you've got a good golf course superintendent."

Tom Watson

Can it get any worse?

by Rod Trainor CGCS

The season of 1987 for many Superintendents would be just as well forgotten. Weather proved to be the downfall of many turf maintenance programs. "Extreme" was the key word last year — extreme heat, extreme moisture, extreme dryness — all led to other extremes such as disease and costs.

1987 was just "one of those years" and it will be a long time before we get conditions like that again

... WRONG!

Scientists say mean global temperatures are on the rise — the greenhouse effect, some call it.

Nevertheless, I think we can expect more summers like we just experienced.

Whether you lost large amounts of grass or a little, **I don't believe anybody escaped.** A smart superintendent will use it to his advantage to finally convince his superiors that maybe the irrigation system does need looking at; or maybe some cultural practices such as aerating, verticutting and topdressing are important. Regardless of what was learned, we did learn something and hopefully we'll be better prepared the next time.

Do your members know what problems you were facing last year? Keeping a full membership informed is almost impossible and in most cases not necessary. They're just not interested in hearing that big long story about heat induced, thatch related fungus causing phenomena totally-out-of-your-con-

trol turf loss. If and when you do finally get someone to sit down and listen to all the reasons why we don't look like "perfection country club" down the road, their answer is usually, "Say, I'm bringing some guests out next week — you're not topdressing, are you?" You pull out what remaining hair you have and wonder why you put up with it all.

Then along comes fall with cooler temperatures and long awaited rain and that invisible "poa" starts to grow back and you have a golf course again. And the members forget (or do they?). With all the changes going on today, I think that maybe they aren't forgetting as much.

Perhaps one of the main reasons why so many of us get under the gun with our clubs is because they really don't know what's going on. Communication is the number one issue in our jobs today. We can all keep a golf course in good condition under ideal conditions, but what about when those conditions aren't ideal? Do the people we work for know our problems, and do they respect them and us?

Yes, it can get worse if we don't learn some proper communication skills. In this issue of "Green is Beautiful" a number of proven practices and approaches are presented.

We hope you will take the time to read at least some of these articles and maybe you will learn something that will prove useful at your own club. Golf is a booming business and golf courses are the showcases of the turf industry which makes the superintendent's image more important than it has ever been. You, as a superintendent, had better be ready to deal with it.

The OGSA extends its best wishes
to the
Canadian Golf Course Superintendents
Association
for a successful Conference and Trade Show
and welcomes all attendees with
the hope that you have an educational
and enjoyable week in Toronto.

Bienvenu ACSG

Pesticides

by Dr. R.J. Cooper
University of Massachusetts

Did you know . . .

. . . that contaminants are measured in parts per billion (ppb) and that 1 ppb is equivalent to 1 second in 32 years.

. . . that 99% of all carcinogens which humans ingest are the result of products other than man made pesticides.

. . . that public opinion grossly exaggerates the actual risk posed by pesticides. One U.S. poll had individuals rank 30 sources of risk, and their answers indicated that pesticides were 9th — with more related deaths than motor vehicle accidents, surgery or electrical power. In fact, **pesticides actually ranked 28th** and contributed to less annual deaths than vaccinations, scholastic football and lawn mower accidents.

This is not intended to portray pesticides as harmless materials. Rather, it is to emphasize that the current anti-pesticide furor is based on emotional reaction and is not supported by scientific fact.

Pesticides must be used responsibly and according to the label.

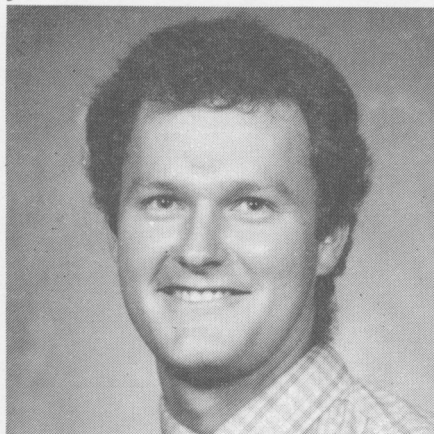
Golf course superintendents must guarantee it.

Consultants-

Do we really have any in Canada?

by Dave Gourlay

The origins of the turfgrass consultant in Canada are found with the golf course architects. Along with the design and construction of the golf course, the architects frequently were responsible for the maintenance of the turfgrass for a year or more.



Hence the beginning of the golf course consultant. This contractual consultant provided a much-needed service to the golf industry. As golf in Canada continued to evolve, so did the demands in turf management. As a result of the rapid advancements in turf management, the golf course architect made way to the Royal Canadian Golf Association and Ontario Golf Association appointed consultants. These consultants consisted of individual golf course superintendents who were greatly respected by their peers.

This intermediate stage of development in the history of the consultants was relatively short-lived and the R.C.G.A. stepped in. Being the governing body of Golf in Canada, the R.C.G.A. took the appropriate action in uniting a group of consultants across Canada. This concept of regionalization in appointing qualified consultants to specific regions across the country was indeed a good one. Unfortunately the credibility of this worthy group came to an abrupt end when these Canadian consultants

were passed over for consultants south of the border for use at the Glen Abbey Golf Course in Oakville.

Today there is quite a diversified group of consultants for use on golf courses. The most commonly used consultants now come from either the United States Golf Association Greens Section, Universities or Golf Course Superintendents from established golf courses. Certain specific problems are associated with each of the groups. Of these shortcomings the most evident is the lack of technical expertise utilized in backing up basic broad statements concerning the turf problems. Without the technical and scientific facts the consultants can hardly be considered objective. In order for Canadian consultants to gain the credibility they rightly deserve, certain basic prerequisites must be in place.

First off, the qualifications of the consultant must be such that credibility is installed. The consultant must have a well-rounded education, being a graduate of a recognized turfgrass management course, preferably a degree in agronomy. He must be able to draw upon his years of practical experience in his analysis of the situation. He must be able to communicate effectively with golf course superintendents, for it is the superintendent that must implement any ideas or suggestions the consultant may offer. He must also be able to provide a detailed technical report based on scientific information confirming his appraisal of the situation. Chemical testing of the turfgrass must become as routine as taking your temperature. It certainly is as important in the overall analysis of the report. And finally, the consultant should be registered with a recognized golf association, whether it be the R.C.G.A., C.G.S.A., O.G.A. or the O.G.S.A., etc. This way the consultant is accountable to the above for services rendered.

By using the guidelines mentioned above, I sincerely feel that the Canadian consultant can gain the respectability and degree of professionalism the golfing industry is in such dire need of.

Complainin' and Explainin'

The Member and Superintendent Relationship

It's a cloudy spring morning with a very light mist. A club member is driving past the course on his way to work. He notices the irrigation system is on and wonders why a currently wet golf course is being watered. Doesn't the superintendent know what he is doing?

This Wednesday an important client is in town and you've invited him to a round of golf. The course was in extraordinary condition last Saturday. You have lunch and tee off at 1 p.m.. You reach the first green and find it (and all the others) aerified and topdressed since last Monday! Why do they always have to tear up and ruin the greens just when they're perfect?

The preceding are just two examples of questions the golf course superintendent must answer daily. If he is approached with an inquisitive attitude and a desire for honest information, the superintendent can usually explain the situation. He can give good reasons that, hopefully, will not be perceived as excuses. The superintendent, on the other hand, must strive to avoid as many controversies as possible. When he sets his programs, he must attempt to disturb the fewest number of playing members.

The subject of communication has been discussed and written about by experts, so I will not attempt to discuss how to communicate; rather, I will try to explain several often-repeated complaints of golf course maintenance practices and some practical methods to reduce or eliminate these concerns.

Why can't the greens be slower, fairways longer and roughs shorter? Or, Why can't the greens be faster, fairways shorter and roughs higher?

These are very frequent questions asked by high and low handicap players. Often, high handicap players ask the former question while the low handicap player asks the latter. The important question for club officials to ask is, "What type of golf course does the membership want?"

As a general guideline, putting green speed for normal membership play in the 7-foot to 8-foot range (depending on green contours) should provide adequate pace. If a special tournament or club championship requires slightly faster greens, this can be achieved easily on the short term. Excessive speed on the long term is becoming an increasingly difficult problem. The player must understand the agronomic factors involved in excessively fast or slow greens, while the superintendent must provide the best putting surfaces for his membership.

For fairway playing conditions, a height of 1/2-inch (bentgrass, bermudagrass, zoysiagrass) to 3/4-inch (bluegrass) is desirable in most cases. A number of golfers want to know why fairways are cut so short. Raise the mowers and the ball will sit up higher, right? Wrong. The players should understand that a higher height of cut actually makes the ball sit down in the grass and results in more flyer lies. It becomes unfortunate when the height of a fairway cut is raised and complaints

suddenly begin about hard greens. We must all remember it is the responsibility of the player to put enough backspin on a ball to cause it to stop; it is not the responsibility of the green to hold any shot.

In regard to rough height, it depends primarily on the type of grass within the rough areas. A 2 1/2-inch bentgrass, bermudagrass or kikuyugrass rough will play with much greater difficulty than a 2 1/2-inch perennial ryegrass or Kentucky bluegrass rough. Again, the membership must be taken into account. Rough mowed at the 2- to 2 1/2-inch level for normal membership play will provide improved fairway framing and an adequate challenge. As with green speed, additional rough height for special tournaments can be achieved for short periods.

To summarize, putting green speed from seven feet to eight feet, fairways mowed from 1/2- to 3/4-inch, and roughs mowed 2- to 2 1/2-inches may provide the least amount of controversy from the golfing membership.

I just played Perfection Country Club last week. Why can't our course be as good?

Of all the complaints, this is the most difficult to answer. In many cases the best answer is no answer at all. Those golfers who insist on comparisons should obtain as much information as possible before they draw conclusions. As more information is delivered, the clearer the picture becomes. Comparing golf courses is like comparing snowflakes — no two are the same.

The continual little problems. Why are the benches wet? Why is there no water in the ball washers? Why are the ball washer towels always dirty? Why is there no sand in the bunkers? Why don't the employees turn off their equipment while I'm putting? Etc.

While many of these questions may seem petty, they actually are small indicators of how the maintenance staff views the golfers and their course. Instilling pride in the maintenance staff can eliminate many of these little problems. So often we take the little things for granted, and these small problems can become rather large. It is important to remind every crew member that he is working for the golfers and providing a service. Even the smallest complaint must be listed to attentively as it is important to that particular person.

While the preceding questions are some of the more frequently heard, they are by no means the only questions a superintendent must handle. The predictable and unpredictable problems that arise must be handled with tact and sincerity.

The effective turf manager knows many of the questions in advance, and he has carefully prepared the proper answers. He also takes advantage of every opportunity to pass on information about the golf course and the maintenance programs that affect play.

Several methods of information dispersal are available to the superintendent and green committee chairman. The more explanations about the course operations given to the membership, the more they are given an opportunity to understand the

peculiar problems in a golf course maintenance operation. These methods include:

1. Club newsletter — Every month, the superintendent should have a short article describing his planned operations or covering questions that are continually asked.
2. Monthly bill — When club dues notices are sent out, a short paragraph or two about course



"Why must they always aerify on the day I play?"

operations can reach many people who otherwise may not read the newsletter or notice articles posted throughout the club.

3. Announcement boards — While a bulletin board can be effective, many times it becomes cluttered. The superintendent's memos (aerification dates, top-dressing dates, fertilizer dates) can become lost or forgotten. An erasable announcement board for the golf course only, displayed in a prominent location, is more noticeable. Daily, weekly or monthly programs can be shown to forewarn players of maintenance practices. While many maintenance practices can mildly upset golfers, they can become very upset if these practices are a surprise and done without prior notice.

4. Special meetings — The idea of a special meeting in the spring put on by the superintendent and green committee chairman for the membership to outline the

coming year's operation has been used successfully at some clubs to disseminate information. You can expect several of the preceding questions to arise. This offers an excellent method to provide needed information to the membership. Also, it allows all members an opportunity to state complaints or comments concerning the golf course operation.

5. Occasional rounds of golf with both men's and ladies groups regardless of the superintendent's playing skill provides constructive conversation opportunities. It is important that the membership understands that the superintendent is a golfer and understands the game. This alone often gives credibility to the superintendent's programs. Without it, golfers wonder (often mistakenly) if the superintendent really does understand how to maintain a golf course.

While we should all strive to understand and respect the golfer's point of view, it is the superintendent's responsibility to educate the golfer about his maintenance programs. Through mutual respect and understanding, complainin' and explainin' can become a positive avenue to answer questions and disseminate information for the member and superintendent.

Oh where oh where have my Ethics gone

by Ron Heesen



It seems that there is never a year that passes without a claim or claims of a breach in our ethics. I feel our ethical standards and codes of conduct are laid out quite clearly, but we still hear of these breaches. Now, this article was and is intended to address public relations and the golf course superintendent. But, if we look at our own public relations and standards at our respective workplaces and place our code of ethics along side of it we can begin to form a picture of how the two fit together. We can avoid this ethics problem by improving our public relations. We'll get to the public relations later; first, let's discuss ethics.

First of all, most breaches of our code of ethics seem to crop up when another superintendent has been asked his/her opinion on certain practices and how they relate to the "other" or "inquiring" course. I suspect that the proper answer should be that if any information of this nature is required a meeting should be held between the two superintendents along with the green chairman. I also suspect that this response isn't always possible, especially when a director from another club shows up at your course management centre, tells you how great you are and would give anything for a tour of your facility.

These possible scenarios are endless, and in an industry that has shown great growth, the business of golf course superintending is also quite small and feelings are quite easily hurt.

Another sore spot seems to crop up with consulting — and I'm sure we've all been asked to consult in one form or another. But when consulting on a golf course — this is a different story. Immediately the consultant is perceived to be ahead of the course superintendent. How many consultants have explained to their customers that their course budget is double the other course, or dared to mention that their design and construction is so superior that given optimum turf conditions the "other" course will never stack up against the consultant's.

I've often felt that a good parallel is the teaching profession. I have a friend who gives seminars to other teachers of other school boards on the weekends. This sounds great, doesn't it? But our

consultants usually end up giving all their expertise to a Board of Directors. To me this method is equivalent to the teacher telling the students what kind of teacher to look for and how he/she should teach. How ridiculous!

Again, more scenarios, problems, etc. that no code of ethics may ever be able to solve no matter how detailed. There is nothing wrong with consulting or visiting other clubs — the manner in which they are done is the problem.

What are the solutions? I don't know, and I'm not sure many others do either. Ethics are almost like morals — everyone has their own standards. We all interpret them in our own fashion and cannot expect all superintendents to behave like clones. Look at other professions for comparison: lawyer Greenspan, Dr. Morgentaler, the Great Gretzky.

To become better we need good competition and a lot of flexibility. You'll notice that until now this story has sounded very negative. We all work in a very exciting and rewarding profession that, if respected, can provide a very attractive lifestyle. The only way out of this nasty ethical smethical mess and to prevent the aforementioned problems is through our now famous and overstated but underused public relations or personal promotion, or whatever you want to call it.

The way I see it, we should all:

- 1) Love ourselves; 2) Take care of our families; 3) Be neat, courteous, kind, always wear the club logo — I'm sure your staff has T-shirts, why not you? 4) Communicate; 5) Take care of your staff; 6) Promote your colleagues. If your neighbouring club does something you don't or can't, it usually ends up in an easy sell for equipment or an irrigation system for your golf course; 7) Jacket and tie at all meetings, concise reports on conditions and work completed presentations; 8) Today, we must be more open. Don't be afraid of criticism — it will come whether you want it or not. Have meetings at your shop — make it the course management centre. Even the Russians are trying it! 9) Respect your employer — it's their golf course and you'll never own it; 10) Eliminate the words "we can't do that" from your vocabulary; 11) Only you can

save your job. Make sure all is correct on the homefront before you – dare I say it – do some outside consulting; 12) Arrange visits of other golf course management centres with your committee. Don't wait for them to do it; 13) Communicate! 14) Learn from every meeting and put that knowledge to work in a fashion that benefits your course; 15) Be the happiest person on your management team and accept adversity as an enjoyable challenge; 16) Accept public relations as a daily ongoing ritual that does not stop at shaving in the morning, but must always continue to change and improve; 17) Take your days off on clubhouse closed days whenever possible. On busy Saturdays and Sundays it never hurts to be out inspecting conditions in the afternoon; 18) As a group we should view ourselves as Oscar nominees. Promote one another

and rather than write about the searing heat that made it impossible to grow grass, let's write about how magnificently we handled the stress and the superiority of our course conditions; 19) Be able to laugh at yourself; 20) Make your golf course the trend setter! 21) Accept criticism as constructive suggestions, not as a defamation of character; 22) Respect the wishes of the golfers.

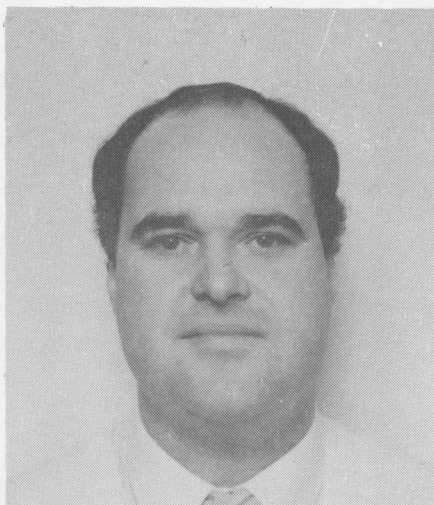
I hope this helps in our ethical dilemma. Who knows, if we follow these tips we may lose that consultant. I am sure they won't mind. I really do feel that ethics and public relations go hand-in-hand. Adhere to a strict program of good public relations, and you'd be amazed at the benefits. We work in an exciting arena and should all make the best of it, for we are a fortunate few!!

The Golf Course Management Team

by Scott Dodson

Many successful golf clubs have a management team in place that works very well together. This is very important in order for the golf club to run smoothly and efficiently. The General Manager, Golf Course Superintendent and Golf Pro should work together much like the top executives of a large corporation. Each person is skilled in his own area of expertise and each can contribute to the knowledge of the others and to the success of the club.

Communication is an important factor to consider in golf course management. Keeping people informed of what is taking place out on the golf course is the key to communication. The general manager and golf pro usually see most of the members at a club on any given day before the superintendent does, and if there are any complaints regarding the golf course often most members will go to the general manager or golf pro because of their accessibility of working out of one location. In most cases small problems or complaints



regarding the golf course can be handled by the general manager or golf pro as long as they have been informed by the course superintendent and given some answers to questions that club members would usually ask.

Another important factor to consider under communication would be the committee and management organization and the reporting relationships within the club. Some

clubs may seem to operate in a manner of confusion, where board or committee members, managers, golf pros and superintendents have "assumed" certain duties and responsibilities over a number of years and have not really followed an organized structure. The jobs of the general manager, superintendent and golf pro can often be made easier when they know which committee meetings they have to attend and the people they have to report to within the club.

The general manager is usually responsible to one member of the executive committee which in most cases is the Club President, for interpreting and applying club policies. The club budgets from the various departments come under the supervision of the general manager.

The operation of a golf club is a very serious business that requires trained professionals like the management team of the General Manager, Course Superintendent and Golf Pro.

Employee Relations

by Thom Charters

What makes a golf course as good as it can be? Obviously there are many contributing factors: equipment, irrigation, fertilizer and chemicals, to name but a few, and the importance of each will vary from one course to another. This is true, due to the unique combination of soil characteristics, management history, player's desires and financial position of each course. For these reasons it is unfair, if not impossible, for a lay person to compare maintenance programs.

However, courses do share one crucial, common element — wage expenses that account for the majority of their maintenance budgets. Whether it's a three-man or thirty-man operation, people make decisions and perform tasks that ultimately determine how close to its potential a golf course can be maintained.

In the past, golf course employees have been viewed as seasonal, unskilled labourers. While these adjectives may have applied at one time, they are inappropriate for most positions in this age of golf course management.

I believe the golf industry is at a critical stage. Playing conditions have been improved significantly during the last ten years and they cannot be maintained with mirrors. The complexities of routine maintenance alone demand dependable, well-trained employees. Today's greensmen and women must operate a myriad of expensive equipment, recognize the slightest flaws in performance, be safety conscious, aware of golf etiquette, show consideration for golfers and fellow staff members and above all, demonstrate a commitment to excellence.

While it is rare to find anyone who exhibits all of these abilities and qualities, most can be encouraged and/or trained to meet your expectations. They must,

of course, be rewarded both financially and psychologically to become loyal, valued employees. Quite simply, we must be good employers to expect the best employees, otherwise we will not compete in today's highly competitive job market. We require quality personnel to provide golfers with the quality product they expect. You must have a strong nucleus of full-time and full-time seasonal staff who will set positive examples for the seasonals.

To do this we must nurture an atmosphere and attitude that tells an employee he is important to us and that we are a conscientious employer. To be sure, there are costs involved, but the return on the investment would be significant.

How can this be achieved? I believe there are two primary necessities. You must create a positive work environment. This will be determined largely by the personality of the Golf Course Superintendent and his relationship with his staff. To support him in this endeavour, a functional maintenance shop with adequate staff areas should be provided. Furthermore, little perks such as uniforms, educational incentives, written compliments and a staff social event could go a long way to developing that environment.

Regarding wages, I don't presume to know what rates are adequate for different areas of the province, but I would suggest that you determine the wage levels of municipal or landscape company employees who perform similar tasks. While you're at it, don't forget to consider medical benefits and bonuses that may accompany those positions.

If these factors are considered and acted upon, they will, when combined with consistent supervision, develop better, more committed employees. In return, your golf course gets better value for its money.

Get to know your Golf Course Superintendent . . .

Your silent playing partner



What Did You Really Mean?

(an abbreviated list of frequently used terms of appraisal and some unlikely interpretations)

1) "Exceptionally well qualified"
Meaning – has committed no blunders to date.

2) "Quick Thinker"
Meaning – offers plausible excuses for errors

3) "Zealous Attitude"
Meaning – argumentative

4) "Tactful in dealing with superiors"
Meaning – knows when to keep mouth shut

5) "Approaches difficult problems with logic"
Meaning – finds someone else to do the job

6) "Expresses himself well"
Meaning – likes to talk

7) "Demonstrates Leadership abilities"
Meaning – has a loud voice

8) "Shows exceptionally good judgment"
Meaning – lucky

9) "Good sense of humor"
Meaning – laughs at bad jokes

10) "A very fine employee of great value to the company"
Meaning – gets to work on time.

Successful Negotiations

by Mark Hagen

Whenever people exchange ideas with the intent of changing relationships, or whenever they confer for agreement, they are negotiating. What makes for successful negotiations is the ability of both parties to recognize the inherent needs of each other and work towards that end. The negotiating process, which is a two-way street, happens every day — at home, in the workplace and the boardroom. If you are personally applying for a salary increase or if you are justifying an employee's wage, human behavioral traits and their negotiating skills become strongly apparent. Understand and use them so that both sides are content with an agreement once the negotiations are completed.

There are three basic types of Negotiators: The Novice, The Competent and The Complete. The Novice will present his requests in a very one-sided manner. He may get what he is after through hard-drive techniques, but in the long run will lose trust and co-operation with the other party.

The Competent Negotiator recognizes that there are at least two sides to a negotiation. This person is willing to "give a bit to get a bit", a trade-off process.

The most successful negotiators are the Complete Negotiators. These people recognize both sides of a problem situation and are willing to offer solutions. Their involvement and concern adds credibility to their negotiating requests.

Negotiations can progress along a competitive or a collaborative vein. In the competitive mode negotiations start with tough demands, they are very emotional and very few concessions are given. Collaborative negotiations are based on trust, and the understanding of the needs of the individuals. They are not necessarily based on money or material objects alone.

Although both approaches have had their place in the negotiation process, the collaborative approach is generally more successful since both parties have the opportunity to satisfy their financial and psychological needs and obligations.

Some basic Do's and Don'ts should be kept in mind when working together for a smooth, satisfactory settlement.

DO:

- Prepare thoroughly for negotiations. Know what you want and how to achieve it. Put it in writing.
- Make the negotiating issue clear to both parties.
- Clarify any assumptions.
- Work slowly and orderly through presentations.
- Bargain in good faith and play fair.
- Listen carefully to others.
- Carry out your negotiations where both parties are comfortable and relaxed.
- Solve problems together, sell the benefits of long term benefits and trust.
- Follow through on all agreements.

DON'T

- Rush negotiations and end up making a bad deal. Take a recess and reconvene when ready.
- Snowball people with information in your opening remarks and then sit there. Stay involved in the discussion.
- Be intimidated by others' strange behaviour or their dominance, or position.
- Allow personal emotions to cloud your perception of the issue at hand.

Whether negotiating a detailed contract, or a simple salary adjustment, remember that the interests of your golf course are at stake. Through honest, bilateral negotiating, both parties can win, and in the process, improve the atmosphere that is conducive to improving course conditions.

The Grass Isn't Always Greener

by Neil Acton

Professional turfgrass science and maintenance have done admirably well in keeping up with an ever-demanding golf population. As our golfers travel more, enjoying numerous golf courses in the process, they often return home with newfound expectations of what maintenance improvements they would like to see implemented at their home clubs.

Financial factors aside, there are many reasons why certain maintenance practices employed successfully at the golf course down the street may well prove disastrous if implemented at your club.

My first example is an obvious one, that being green speed. Many golfers are under the assumption that the superintendent simply lowers the height of cut on the greensmowers in the morning and presto! — Augusta National greens. Oh, if it were only true, we superintendents might be able to spend a little more time with our families. The truth of the matter is quite another story.

Fast, smooth greens are developed over time and kept that way with diligent expertise. To stress the turfgrass plant to that degree, **all** factors affecting turfgrass growth and development must be suitable. Turfgrass variety, root zone medium, irrigation capability, water quality, green size, microclimates, amount of play, as well as golfer acceptance are all factors which come quickly to mind.

Another consideration is the more frequent disruptions to play your golfers will experience. Fast greens require more of everything — mowing coring, vertical mowing, topdressing, pesticides and syringing. Excessive green speeds witnessed on television or experienced at 1 or 2 day Invitationals are usually only short-term conditions. Such speeds maintained for any great length of time may jeopardize long-term turfgrass health.

One of the more visually appealing as well as agronomically beneficial practices to appear in the past few years has been the mowing of fairways with light mowers and the subsequent removal of clippings.

This program is great if your turfgrass varieties are correct and your fairways are smooth enough. However, this practice would not turn out very well if adapted on predominantly Kentucky bluegrass fairways. Even the dwarf varieties of Kentucky bluegrass cannot withstand sustained cutting heights below ½ inch. The bentgrasses have excelled in this area. Even if your club is prepared to level and reseed your fair-

ways to bentgrass, make sure you secure your bentgrass seed prior to doing anything drastic. Turfgrass seed shortages, particularly bentgrass, have plagued the industry the past few years.

Most every golfer expects his golf ball to stop dead once it hits the green surface. It doesn't seem to matter how they hit the ball (probably a Surlyn cover), or how deep the grass was where they hit the ball. What seems to matter to them the most is how much water the green received last night. Should the ball fail to come to an abrupt stop, that blasted superintendent didn't water the green enough. FALSE!!

First, let's discuss the golfer. Fewer than 5% of golfers strike the ball properly to create backspin. These same golfers also use Balata balls which spin faster, thus creating more spin. This minority also hits the majority of their shots from short fairway turf where no grass will come between his clubface (utilizing those square grooves to the utmost) and the golf ball. If these people can't stop the ball, then let's look at problems other than insufficient water.

Are the greens constructed properly with the correct root zone medium? Are the greens angled to the golfers or do they run away from them, quite a common problem? (The transit will be required to ascertain this — you can't go by the eye.) Has play been kept off the greens at times of excessive moisture to avoid compaction? And last but not least, has the superintendent been permitted to aerify the greens whenever he has deemed it necessary or has there always been an "important" tournament or competition to take priority? The practice of hounding the superintendent to overwater the greens to accept any shot, no matter how poorly executed, just compounds the problem. Overwatering not only weakens the turfgrass in general, it also promotes further compaction.

Golf courses are -living, growing environments which require constant monitoring and care. The Professional Golf Course Superintendent is trained and educated to act and react to subtleties and nuances experienced on a daily basis on the golf course. His, or her, thoughts on any matter concerning the golf course should be sought and heeded. Their goals are the same as yours — that is, to provide the best possible playing conditions and surroundings with available resources.

After all, he is your silent playing partner.

REMEMBER
April is the month when the green returns
to the course . . . and to Revenue Canada.

The Role of Education Today

by Gord Nimmo CGCS

I first became involved in golf course maintenance in 1969, as a summer student at a private Toronto golf club. The grounds crew consisted of a superintendent, one mechanic, four or five seasonal workers from New Brunswick whose education ranged from grade 2 to 8, three or four university students and for the first time a University graduate hired to be a full time assistant superintendent.

Training was done by putting a new fellow with an older, experienced fellow. Only the superintendent had a spray license and all you were told was to wash before you ate.

The longer your years of service, the more you got to drive the equipment, not just the push the mowers or hand rake the traps. Irrigation was a simple, quick coupler turf sprinkler and maybe some pop ups around the greens. A course mechanic was a small engine handyman who had to learn to sharpen the mowers in the winter. Budgets at private clubs around Toronto were getting up toward the \$200,000 range.

Today in the 80's, superintendent's associations that were formed fifty and sixty years ago have become very aware of the need for education and work in close relationship with Universities and Colleges. Throughout both Canada and the United

States, graduates are entering the workplace trained in modern technology to be technicians to superintendents. Feedback is also used to evaluate the research.

Golf courses can now hire, from community colleges, students trained for golf course operations. They come trained in the use of chainsaws, tree pruners, push and riding mowers as well as the proper maintenance upkeep of that equipment. Most important of all, though, is that they usually have their own spraying licence. This is not a requirement, but they have better respect and understand the need for safe use of chemicals and safety equipment. When operators know the dangers to their own health, they are much more cleaner and cautious.

Irrigation systems are now at the computerized stage. Operators must be familiar with programming it properly, and new training is required. To some people this is very intimidating, but once educated on how it functions can save both money and grass.

The golf course mechanic is the center of the maintenance department. Before and even now on small budget clubs, superintendents are asked to do both jobs. Equipment advances have caused the job to become more complex. The mechanic is now asked to know small engines,

regular car and tractor engines and diesel engines. On top of this the bulk of the equipment has gone to hydraulics. All this is in addition to keeping breakdown, parts and stock records. It is not uncommon for a mechanic to have a helper or trainee.

Financial records must be kept on gas use, labour, equipment and supplies. A continual update on government assisted training programs should be kept.

Working budgets over \$600,000 are not uncommon, and when you add capital to that, three-quarters of a million a year is easily reached. Responsibility rests on the superintendent and his staff. But this is a turf man — how does he handle it? Education and designating responsibility to well-trained employees are his means to accomplish this goal. No longer can the bulk of the work force be hired through Manpower and the golf course not be affected.

This point of this article is not to put down the past, it is to show how the demands of today's courses have increased the need for more education, not just at the superintendents' or assistant level, but the whole staff. The end result is a safer, cost-efficient, well groomed golf course and, hopefully, greater respect for the people who are the backbone of every golf club.

Twenty Years Ago Today

by Barry Endicott

In 1968, Dave Gourlay was the president of the O.G.S.A. Keith Nesbit, Gord Witteveen and Dave Moote were retiring directors and Bob Moote was the past president. Tom Unsworth moved from Clearstream C.C. in Oakville to St. Thomas Golf Club and Bob Heron, assistant at the Board of Trade Country Club was appointed Superintendent at Brampton G.C. Dave Baker moved to Glen Cedar G.C. and Don Creed left London for Orchard Hills Golf and Country Club in Michigan. Ian Williamson moved to Castlegar Golf Club in B.C.

Tom Johnston replaced John Steel as President of the C.G.S.A.

On January 8th there was a curling meeting at Bayview Country Club with Ed Ortlieb as host. The rink skipped by Curly Endicott and comprising of John Stoughton, Carl Wagner and Bernie Macdonald won the trophy defeating Bob Moote's rink. President Gourlay reported on a possible Greens Chairman/Superintendent Day and a Pro/Superintendent Day. On July 9 at Richmond Hill Golf and Country Club the first Greens Chairman/Superintendent Day was held.

Tom Mascaro, president of West Point Products, was the guest speaker and George Darou was the host.

OGSA dues were \$15.00 for superintendents and \$25.00 for associates. CGSA membership dues were \$15.00 and GCSAA dues were \$150.00 Bill Forrester was made an Honorary member of the OGSA after retiring from 20-odd years at Weston Golf Club. Robbie Robinson was also presented with an Honorary membership on his retirement as Director of the Greens Section of the RCGA.

James Hickman, chartered member of the OGSA recently passed away in London. The CGSA held their first Turf Research Foundation meeting at the Skyline Hotel on March 19 in Toronto.



COMING EVENTS

March 6 - 10, 1988

Canadian Turfgrass Show
Toronto, Ontario

April 27, 1988

OGSA- Border Cities
Beachgrove Golf and Country Club

June 2, 1988

Spring Field Day,
Galt Country Club



**Green is
Beautiful**

Ontario Golf Superintendents Association