



Newsletter

May 1960

The May meeting will be a joint meeting with the Rhode Island Golf Course Supt.'s Association, ladies are also invited. The meeting will be held at the New Bedford Country Club, New Bedford, Mass.

Sign up for golf and start playing when you arrive, the tournament will be Callaway system, Dinner will be served at 6:00 P.M., a barbecue roast beef a la O'Grady.

Those who haven't been to the New Bedford C.C. and enjoyed both the golf course and barbecue should make a special effort to attend. Hospitality is never wanting at New Bedford.

Points of interest at our April meeting held at Waltham were:

1. The donation of \$50.00 from our association to the Francis Ouimet Caddy Scholarship Fund.

2. We welcome two new members:

1. John Dolan - Supt. Sharan Country Club, Sharen, Mass.
2. Tom Curran - Supt. Oak Hill Country Club, Fitchburg, Mass.

3. Speakers:

Dr. Colby and Asst. Prof. Joe Kroll, they gave us a brief talk on the progress made at the University of Mass. A new man has been added to the teaching staff and a Par 3 golf course will be built in the near future for research work.

Van Brendarkis gave an interesting lecture and showed slides.

4. There were 65 in attendance.

5. Harold Moshen is confined at the Waltham Veterans Hospital. Harold is a past President of our Association.

Personnel Problems

by John P. Callahan, Supt.
Green Meadow Golf Course
Hudson, N. H.

Each year most golf course Supts. are faced with the problem of training new men to maintain the course. Some of us are fortunate enough to have 2 or 3 of the same men each year, but others are less fortunate.

This last season I ran into the problem of not knowing how many men I could depend on each day. This meant that, if one man who was trained to cut greens was out, I either had to train another man to cut greens or have one fellow cut twice as many greens. I found out that if each man is trained to do more than just one job it saves time and headaches if one man misses a day. For example, a fellow who cuts greens also knows how to change cups or the fellow who cuts tees and aprons also knows how to fertilize.

I also found that if you pay 2 Or 3 men more money than the rest they show more interest in their work. These men can do the spraying, fertilizing and any other special job that requires a little extra effort. Usually these men are the ones kept on during the off season.

If you tell each man what he is doing and why he is a doing it he will do a better job and more often than not will take pride in what he is doing.

As the golf season starts and the golfers demands for more and improved playing conditions, the need for more labor arises. Each year this problem becomes more serious. The problem doesn't seem to be pay scale alone as some courses are paying wages equal to wages paid in like business; some also pay time and one half and double time for Saturdays, Sundays and Holidays, some have fringe benefits, hospitalization and insurance; although the number of courses in this catagory is in the minority. What then is the answer?

I would appreciate anyone's view points on this subject, maybe if we all cooperate we can through this NEWSLETTER solve one of our biggest and oldest problems, obtaining and retaining desirable labor.

"Easy going old foreman was Drew;
Trusted luck to protect his own crew.
But control by loose rein,
He discovered with pain
Was the luck of a duck in a stew."

"Annual Report of the Grounds Supt. 1959" by John O'Connor, Supt.
Salem Country Club, Salem, Mass.

Below are listed some parts of John's Annual Report to his Grounds Committee.

1. Preparation for the 1959 Season - All mechanical equipment received a complete overhaul during the winter months. Mowers were sharpened, painted etc. In addition all outdoor equipment was repaired and painted. During this same period brush and dead trees were removed and low hanging branches pruned along the right of the fourth hole.

2. Greens and Approaches - The intense cold of last year killed much of the turf, mostly POA-ANNUA. Some of our greens and approaches were severely damaged. These greens were spiked, overseeded, and topdressed. Along came the rains of July, high humidity plus 95 temperature. This type of weather continued into August.

3. Tee Construction - #4 tee was plowed, harrowed and enlarged to 1800 sq. ft. and turfed with Merion Bluegrass. It is now open to play. The rebuilding and enlargement of #17 tee is one phase of a long range tee construction program. Many of our tees are loaded with tree roots. Poor sub-drainage and compaction caused difficult maintenance during July and August. The front tee on #17 was elevated and enlarged to 1800 sq. ft. and turfed with Merion Bluegrass. The back tee was enlarged to 2500 sq. ft. and turfed with sod from #3 green, this is a mixture of Bent and Poa-Annua. Irrigation will be added in the Spring (values etc.).

4. #3 Green - This green fell off along the left side and quite often a tee shot would hit the green and land in the trap that flanks the left side. With this in mind, Mr. Poor suggested that we re-build and re-contour, keeping in mind the basic principals of modern greens construction with as little variance as possible from the original drawings by Donald Ross.

All turf was stripped and used on #17 back tee. All loam was removed, 12-15 inches of rock and hardpan fill was removed and replaced with clean gravel taken from our own pit. 216 ft. of Orangeburg drain pipe plus 75 ft. of field tile was installed. This underground installation will drain into the brook in front of the green.

110 tons of concrete sand mixed with topsoil at a 2-1 ratio (2 yds. loam - 1 yd. sand). This mixture was applied to a depth of 14 inches. It will settle out to 11 inches.

250 ft. of 1½ inch Semi-rigid Styrene plastic pipe was used plus 4 Buckner snap valves.

The turf will be a new Poly-Cross variety, grown in our own nursery, developed by Dr. Musser of Penn. State Trade name Penn Cross.

Material cost to date has been \$475.00, the contractor's price was \$8000.00.

NOTES

All Bluegrass turf used on tees was grown in our nurseries which has a market value of \$2000.00.

Many of our greens need rebuilding. Compaction plus poor sub-soil drainage make it hard to grow turf by today's standards. Aerification with mechanical equipment is a great help, but not the final solution.

We now have about 4000 yds. of loam stock piled, valued at \$12,000.00 the cost to the club \$375.00 - Bulldozer hire.

Fairways were aerified and fertilized twice. Some 32 tons of Milorganite was used.

5½ tons of fertilizer was used on our tees.

6-3/4 lbs. of actual Nitrogen per 1000 sq. ft. was used on our greens. Chemical and organic.

All loam and gravel used in maintenance and construction was taken from our own property, (none was purchased) and hauled with our own trucks. The acquisition of an International Tractor with front end loader made possible this low cost construction work.

Turf Conferences

Turf Conferences are a must to any Golf Course Supt. regardless of who stands the cost. Research work is carried out at different experimental stations throughout the country, and staffed by career men who are dedicated to all phases of turf culture. The results of their finds are passed on to the golf course Supt. at these turf conferences. We in turn run a limited check in our own nurseries. This past season I have attended turf conferences at the University of Rhode Island, University of Mass. plus our monthly winter meetings at the Waltham Field Station.

The presentation of reports of this type certainly convey to the greens committee chairman the feeling that a course Supt. knows what he is doing, that he knows costs and is responsibly maintaining a course in a business like manner.

Golf Course Maintenance Costs

A survey of maintenance costs of 25 golf courses in Southern California was made in 1958, the results are as follows:

One of the interesting findings of this study is that Salaries, Wages, and payroll costs amount to 72.3% of the total golf course maintenance budget. It is also indicated that each succeeding survey shows a gradual increase in the percentage of the budget devoted to labor.

The report points out one very important fact to be kept in mind when costs are compared between clubs.

"No two courses present the same maintenance problems - there are differences in soil, terrain, maintenance background, and possibly most important, the type of course demanded by the members."

A study of the information in this survey leads one to several observations.

1. Labor is one of the major items of expense in golf course maintenance.
2. Labor costs are gradually rising.
3. The management of manpower for most effective use is assuming increasing importance.
4. An evaluation by each club of its various operations may lead to changes in golf course features or in levels of maintenance that would reduce the labor requirement.
5. Adequate, accurate records are necessary to determine the maintenance costs of individual parts of the golf course.
6. No cost comparisons between clubs should be attempted except on the basis of "units of maintenance".

The U.S.G.A. Green Section subcommittee on Uniform Accounting and terminology under the chairmanship of Mr. Allan Brown is presently conducting a pilot study of maintenance costs and methods of accounting. The eventual results hoped for are better accounting methods leading to more complete and accurate analysis of costs which, in turn, may point the way to eliminating or reducing some of the most expensive operations.

* * * * *

See you at New Bedford! Don't forget your wife and golf clubs.

The Editor - Dick Blake