



# NEWSLETTER

OCTOBER 1967

## Golf Course Superintendents Association OF NEW ENGLAND



Sponsors and administrators of the Lawrence S. Dickenson Scholarship Fund — Awarded yearly to deserving Turf Management Students.

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# Golf Course Superintendents Association

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## SEPTEMBER MEETING

Congratulations to Mel Wendell for having his course in championship condition. Everyone will agree that we had a fine Pot Roast dinner before playing golf. There were 71 who sat down to eat.

Phil Cassidy made a motion to vote Homer C. Darling an Honorary Member. The motion was seconded and voted unanimously by all the members at the meeting.

Welcome to new Associate members: James McDonald and Anthony Kruckas.

### New Business:

Our association is thinking of hiring a Public Relations Director. The Finance committee will report at the November meeting on their projections for 1968. This will be an important meeting so please try to attend.

## RETURN CARDS

The cards have been in the mail for a month now and I am getting a slow response. Please return them with your President and Greens Chairman's address so that they can start receiving our monthly *Newsletter*.

## NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be the annual Pro-Superintendent golf tournament at Brae Burn Country Club, Newton, Mass. This event will be on Friday, October 13, 1967. Remember, either the Pro or the Superintendent must be a member of the P.G.A. or G.C.S.A. of N.E.

Host Supt.: Bob Grant. Host Pro: George Lane.

In support of President St. Pierre's article on "The Numbers Game" in the last issue of the *Newsletter*, I received the following letter from the dean of Golf Course Suppliers in New England.

I heartily agree with Leon's article "The Numbers Game" as we have seen some sorry results from use of materials sold under the "high pressure" sales tactics.

One of my talks before the late Prof. Dickinson's graduating class was headed "Put your confidence in your regular dealer's salesman." I tried to stress the point

that many firms, such as ours which has been some 40 years in the golf course supply business at its main enterprise, could not afford to use "pressure" sales tactics as we live with our customers year round and their success is ours just as their failures can be our problems too — that we fight shy of these many "miracle" products offered us for sale — that we are quite close to the industry, countrywide, by reason of our many contacts with manufacturers, experimental stations and other dealers, hence we often learn of these new gimmicks quite early — that we urge all manufacturers, especially those in the chemical and fertilizer business, to have tests run at our State experiment stations and they can stand or fall on what these dedicated men find.

Your reliable dealer is just as interested as you are in finding materials that will ease your problems, solve some puzzling situations, as this is part of the reasons he can justify his existence. His bread and butter is earned by the profits on his sales and he therefore cannot afford to jeopardize his good relations with some "quick buck" sale.

It is discouraging to us old timer, full line dealers, to see some Johnny-come-lately salesman invade the area and scoop up a lot of "quick buck" money, then move to areas where he and his operations are not known. These men not only dissipate the club budgets with unreliable products but they cast a reflection on the reliable dealers.

There is only one way to drive these men and their products outside and that is to *not* buy from them — not even some reliable products which they usually carry as a "blind" or use as a door opener. The younger and less experienced superintendents look to you older men for leadership and thru exercising your judgment you can lead these men away from these pitfalls.

I recently cleaned out my office, sending to the dump nearly 50 samples of special mixed fertilizers, chemicals for insect and fungus control, as well as gadgets and gimmicks, for the reason that none of these met with the critical examination of the product, its uses, abilities and the methods of distribution, that we feel we could reliably endorse.

Leon has been very frank and factual in his messages which should have helped many men who were a bit undecided. This is the kind of leadership we all need and should support.

O. O. Clapper



## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

## Perpetuating Poa Annua Is a Fraud

September 7, 1967

The superintendent has no aides standing around with atomizers so that he can come up smelling like a rose.

When he and the Green Committee and the U.S.G.A. Green Section Agronomist agree on plans and recommendations for the future benefit of the golf course, you may rest assured that it is a well-calculated and coordinated plan.

The year of 1966 can be classified as the year of the Poa Annua explosion. It was also the year that several older golf courses came to grips with the realities of Poa Annua — a year when a definite Poa Annua restriction program had to be motivated.

Living with Poa Annua was just faking it.

After it has been ascertained by you and the Green Committee that war has been declared on Poa, the proper steps should be taken.

As you know there are four different kinds of warfare. They are, psychological, mechanical, chemical and bacterial.

- A. *The Psychological Warfare* is preparing the memberships' mind on the conditions that will exist on the treated areas, once you commence firing. Prepare them well in advance of the wholesale loss of Poa. Warn them of the possibility of having bare ground. Even with your best efforts in alerting your membership on your program, some will want to know what has happened. They will ask you if you have applied too much fertilizer; over watered; have been hit by a fungus; chinch bugs or have gone on vacation.
- B. *Mechanical Warfare* is the aeration and verticutting the preparation of the seed bed and the over seeding.
- C. *The Chemical Warfare* is application of the Poa restriction chemicals, such as the Arsenicals, Betesan and Presan.
- D. *Bacterial Warfare* is the changing of soil ecology — making your soils more favorable for the growth of bent grasses. This in my opinion is the key to the success or failure of the whole operation.

The most important ingredient of them all for the superintendent is to take his cue from the lead song in the popular Broadway musical, "Damn Yankee," . . . *You Gotta Have Heart!*

Leon V. St. Pierre  
President

## CULTURAL PRACTICES OR CHEMICALS?

Should chemicals be put ahead of good cultural practices? No, too many superintendents use chemicals improperly and this is directed with the hopes that it may help them in some way. Chemicals are marvelous in that they can control diseases effectively and prevent extensive damage to valuable turf. Good cultural practices will prevent many of these diseases from ever starting and create a great need for less chemicals. I feel that an over use of chemicals weakens the turf extremely and thus shortens the life of what should be healthy turf. By weakening the turf grasses, poa annua will have a chance to take over and then, in most cases, you might as well have the disease.

There are five factors which favor the development of the fungi which can cause extensive damage to the turf. The first being the soil acidity. Soil samples should be taken at least yearly and in many cases bi-yearly to assure the healthiest possible turf to withstand the fungi which is ever present in the soil. Fungi grow and develop best when the soil is highly acid and the grass is at its weakest point. The second factor is matted turf. When the turf is allowed to mat the disease fungi has a place to start because it usually starts on dead grass or organic matter at the top of the soil. This matted grass holds the moisture for long periods of time between watering and rains and thus raises the chances for the development for the fungi. Cultural practices to control matting are: (1) thorough aeration, (2) brushing, (3) close clipping, and (4) top dressing frequently. The third factor is the fertility of the soil. Over fertilization produces a lush heavy top growth which is highly susceptible to disease. Fertilizer should not be applied in amounts which will break down rapidly and make the turf too lush. A fertilizer high in organic content applied in amounts of  $\frac{1}{4}$  to  $\frac{1}{2}$  pound of actual nitrogen per 1,000 sq. ft. will keep the grass at its healthiest point and the growth will be even throughout the summer. The fourth factor is moisture which is the most abused cultural practice of all. The majority of the superintendents, including myself, have a tendency to over water. The golfers want the turf soft so their shots will hold and this is the way it is usually accomplished along with spiking. Although sprinklers are faster than hand watering, they can be very damaging on poorly drained greens which are built with many rolls to them. During the hot summer months hand watering will produce a more even watering and can be better controlled than a manually operated sprinkler. Automatic systems are a different



story. There you can control the amount for each green by the clock. Without liberal amounts of water the fungi cannot develop and cause damage. The fifth factor is the temperature and as yet there is no control over this. Even though it does affect the fungi it will be less harmful if the other cultural practices are followed. With the constant checking of these practices chemicals can almost be eliminated; however, they should be kept on

hand for emergency conditions, but should only be used as a last resort not as the first choice. All the chemicals in the world will not control effectively when these management practices are not followed.

George E. Gorton, Jr.  
Superintendent  
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Quincy, Mass.

## FRIENDS OF THE ASSOCIATION

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