

NEWSLETTER

JUNE 1973



Golf Course Superintendents Association
OF NEW ENGLAND, INC.

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

CHANGING DEMANDS OF CLUB MEMBERS

All right, let's look at the changing world of the country club. And doesn't this sound familiar?

The superintendent . . . once the keeper of the greens whose sole responsibility was to give the golfing member a playground on which he could swing and sway to his heart's content . . . is fast finding himself a jack of all trades. He is supposed to know everything and do everything to make the club member's life that more complete.

You think not? When was the last time you looked at your present surroundings? Well, for one thing . . . there might be a tennis court, or two, or three over which you have been placed in charge (in charge of seeing to it that the surface is rolled, watered, lined and whatever else in order to make it into another Wimbledon). And that's only the start of something bigger than the both of the jobs you used to do.

In the winter time there probably is a paddle tennis (platform, if you will) court, or two, or three which have to be conditioned for play no matter what kind of weather. In most cases the superintendent is responsible for plowing it, sanding or salting it and making sure all lights are in and at a good condition status.

Winter, you say? How about that pond where members now have decided to become future Ice Capades performers? This, too, has to be plowed and the path to same must be made accessible. And, if you are among the elite, there may be bowling alleys or curling rinks to be maintained.

Don't stop there, Mr. Super. Now, place yourself in the springtime of your job. You have to catch up, first of all, with what you couldn't do the autumn before. And, six will get you a half-dozen, there will be requests away from the golf course which will get you hung up on this particular detail.

Furthermore, there is the new breed in golf course conception. Once upon a time a golfer was satisfied to have slick

greens, close-crop teeing grounds and brassie-lie fairways. This was the ultimate in his needs on his private playground. But television changed all that . . . or at least its effects brought even more demands from the member.

With the popularity of television making members aware of the better sights of golfing life, there now has popped up the aesthetic touch which clubsters seek. They look at places like Augusta National — with her brilliant dogwoods and bursting azaleas — and ask themselves, "why, oh why can't we have the same on our course?"

So, now the superintendent finds himself prettying up the playground. He must make sure flowers front the tees and serve as a background on the putting areas. The 150-yard marker to the green must now be punctuated by a flowering crab instead of that old scrub pine which required little or no attention.

And, the appalling aspect of this whole new world of the golfer's paradise is that most of its residents expect the super to provide the ultra-ultra extras, not only on the same working budget but in many cases at a cut in same.

Little do they know, for instance, that at Augusta National there is a five or six-man staff which does nothing but court and pamper the dogwoods, etc., there. Little do they know that paddle and tennis courts come under the watchful eye of specialists in those fields at certain clubs. All they know is what they see and what they have come to expect . . . and this on an ever-shrinking budget.

This, then, is a pretty fair picture of the demands of the club member and how they have expanded to the point where the golf course superintendent has to be the master of many arts. It is unfortunate that responsibility is running away from remuneration in that specific race. In fact, it's a runaway. Is there no leveling off of these demands? We certainly hope so.

— Gerry Finn

MAY MEETING GOLF RESULTS

The association would like to thank Manny Francis and Son for the fine time they extended to us on May 14, 1973 at their golf course. This was the first outdoor meeting and it will be remembered as one of the best!

Golf results at Green Harbor:

Dave Barber — Low gross 74

Calloway results

Paul Jones — 71

Pete Costa — 71

Ron Kirkman — 71

Al Auger — 71

Applications to be voted on at the next meeting:

Mark Taylor, Associate membership. Amesbury Golf and Country Club, 22 Congress St., Amesbury, Mass.

James R. Fitzroy, Associate membership. Pleasant Valley Country Club, 12 Millbury Ave., Millbury, Massachusetts.



Waiting to tee off at Green Harbor on May 14, 1973.

Golf Course Superintendents Association

THE IDEAL COURSE WORKER

Is there such a thing as the ideal golf course worker? Would it take a Frankenstein to arrange him from the scattered remains of those who have come and gone over the trail of precisely-mowed greens and perfectly-set cups? Could be, could be.

At this time of the year labor on a golf course comes mainly from two sources. One is the students' well of young people who want to pick up enough money to perk up their social life when it comes time to return to the dormitory and the rigors of life away from home. The other is the vast reservoir of retired people, those proud gentlemen who feel that they still have enough energy to lead productive, rather than wasteful lives.

"I'd like to get a combination of the two", one astute super volunteers. "The young student is full of energy and strength but not too serious about the output of those assets. The retired person doesn't have the staying power of his younger counterpart but he has the smarts to regulate it . . . that is, if he had it."

One of the growing problems in hiring competent people to keep up with the growth of grass and the idling of the mowing machine, is the increasing amount of pressure on the course laborer. And this comes from within . . . or from the club member.

"Golfers are like any other person of these times", another super offered his views on the subject. "He wants to get playing without any interruption. He sets a fast pace for himself and expects the worker to do the same thing. When he looks at a man mowing the green, he figures that the worker is moving at half-time. He thinks the worker should get the job done as fast as he can . . . as fast as it takes to get out of the golfer's way."

Most of the retired men, working the golf courses, are stymied by their lack of earning power. There are restrictions

on the amount a Social Security collector can make over a certain period. Therefore, this tightens the retired person's effectiveness.

"I have a few retired people working for me", a superintendent noted. "And I really wish I could pay them enough, so that they wouldn't have to battle the Social Security hold on their availability. But you can't blame them for keeping out of the full-time picture. All of them work just so long and then they take off."

Another hangup with the retired worker is transportation. Most of them don't drive their own cars or are reluctant to. They would prefer to catch a bus at a reasonable hour in the morning and climb aboard another one at a convenient time in the afternoon. This restricts their worth, according to most reports.

The students comprise another story. "I have to set up their schedule of work around their social schedule", another super advised. "Most of my young people are interested in sports. Sometimes they make plans to take in a baseball game in Boston or even take part in a softball game at home. So, I have to conform to their yens."

One of the big complaints about the younger generation appears to be its reluctance to manual labor or work with the hands. "I've been told by some that they simply do not want to get their hands dirty", one irate super declared. "They don't last very long with me. Either they learn to like getting dirty or they're on their way."

The summertime help problem, then, does exist . . . although most supers state that there is not a shortage of applicants for the job. "We get enough inquiries", a superintendent revealed. "But it's tough to look at a person and know just what kind of a worker he's going to be. It's usually hit or miss. I've been lucky. I've had a lot of hits."

Summertime help . . . it's definitely a form of labor pains.

— Gerry Finn

NEXT MEETING

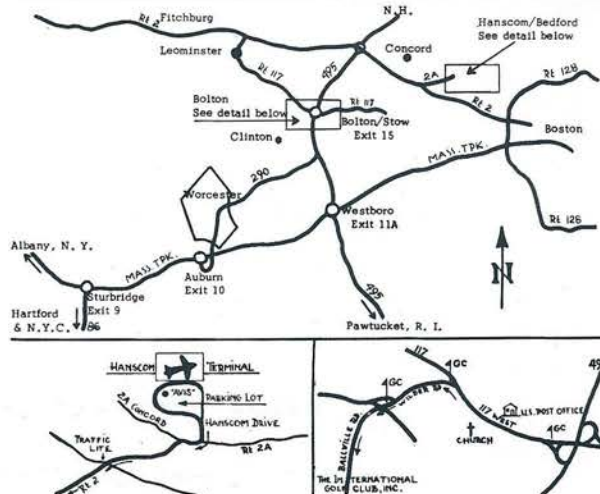
The next meeting of the association will be June 4, 1973 at the International Golf Club, Bolton, Massachusetts. This is the annual Superintendent-Green Chairman meeting and golf outing. We hope to see everyone there. Golf will be anytime after 10 A. M. and dinner will be served at 5:30 P. M. The cost will be \$20.00 per team for green fees, golf cart, and dinner.

From Hanscom Field Civil Air Terminal

DIRECTIONS: For convenience, note your mileage reading. Approx total distance to Int. Golf Club is 25.5 mi., or an easy 35 minute drive. From Hanscom Drive turn right onto Rt. 2A at sign "West 2A Concord". Then 2.4 mi. from Terminal, bear left at fork with sign "Rt. 2 Littleton/Ayer". At first traffic light — go straight — see sign — "Rt. 2 Littleton/Ayer". Continue Rt. 2 West. Pass Howard Johnson and State Police on right. Enter "Rotary" or traffic circle (7.6 mi. from Hanscom Terminal). Follow signs "Rts. 2 — 111 — Harvard/Ayer/Acton" with Getty Gas Station on right. Stay on Rt. 2 West 7.2 mi. Take "Interstate 495 south to Hudson/Worcester". On I-495 go 7.3 mi. to Exit 15.

FROM RT. 495 to Int. Golf Club: "Exit 15" onto Rt. 117 West (follow Bolton or Int. Golf Club sign). Remain on 117 through Bolton Center (Yellow Blinker overhead). Pass U.S.

Post Office on right, then red "corn crib" Church on left; look for Int. Golf Club sign at fork. (1.6 miles from I-495). Bear left onto Wilder Road and proceed to next Int. Golf Club sign (0.9 mile) on a tree in center of next fork. 0.8 mile from here to gate on right-hand side.



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SOUND OFF!!!!

(Once again it's time to roll back the flaps of the envelopes and let those comments come bursting onto the scene. This is the space in the Newsletter where the reader calls the shots. It's by and for him, an opportunity to let his hair down, his mind split wide open and his setbacks to be soothed. The subject here is not restricted. A contributor may comment on any phase of golf, from the cut of the greens to the size of his opponent's handicap. We do ask that each writer include his name and address. Each or both will be withheld upon request. So, keep those letters coming to Newsletter Mail Bag, 24 Riverview Drive, Newbury, Mass. 01950. The Newsletter reserves the right to pass its comment on all letters published.)

* * *
 "I read with much interest your article about women workers on the golf course. Somehow it just doesn't strike a favorable note with me, since I have always categorized golf course maintenance as a very trying occupation and much too tough for the fair sex.

"The mention of the girls turning to the tractors and the mowing machines also creates the feeling that you superintendents are attempting to get some publicity by giving them the chance to display their technical skills. If this is true, you are keeping some worthwhile males from making a good living by going to the glamor side of the labor market.

"Can you clear up this thing for me? I can't understand it at all. Women certainly have the right to practice whatever profession they choose, but there is a limit to everything. My wife never volunteered to mow our lawn in her life. Is she missing something?"

LEON KREIGER
 Seabank, N. S.

Women working on the golf course is no joke nor a publicity gag. They know how to mow, too. Why not get your wife a Toro for Christmas?

* * *
 "I have been trying to sell my members on the idea of installing a completely automatic irrigation system but have run into some of the most ridiculous opposition I've ever heard. The response from a certain member was so unbelievable that I had to tell your readers.

"According to him, an automatic irrigation system is nothing more than a status symbol . . . for me, no less! He argued that I was pushing for it in order that I would join a certain few other supers in our area who only had to push a button in order to make it rain on the course.

"I held back from answering him, but the strange part about his presentation (or rebuttal) was that some of the other members of our club went along with his thinking. Is this possible or am I out of touch with the rest of the world?"

"As far as I'm concerned, automatic irrigation is the answer to one of our pressing needs. Not only is it convenient (this I admit although it won't lessen my worry burden), it does a better job of seeing to it that our grasses are properly treated with moisture.

"At first I was tempted to drop the whole thing and tell the members that we could survive without A-I. But I left it up to them and we are going through with it. Just thought you'd like to know about the reaction of one very pointed-headed country club member."

NAME WITHHELD
 Club Withheld

That member ought to use his pointed head to stick it in the sand . . . especially when the tide's coming in!

"I have been very interested in the growth of tennis in the past few years and was wondering how it had affected the life of the golf course superintendent who, I assume, has to add tennis courts to his list of things to maintain for the day.

"Our club has become one of the most active tennis areas around the state. One of the reasons for this is the top-conditioned courts which we offer our members and guests. I haven't been around when these courts are placed into shape but I have to guess that our superintendent is the catalyst for getting them there.

"Are you people compensated on the side for this extra service or does it fall under the 'above and beyond the call of duty' category?"

C. N. HALL
 Gateway, Ga.

It is "way" beyond, above and anything else the call of duty, C. N. But such is the life of the super. His loss is someone else's gain.

* * *
 "We are planning to have a golf tournament at our course which will require special tees for youngsters. It is a parents-children affair and most of the young ones aren't big enough to drive a golf ball over some of our hazards from the regular tees.

"Would it be asking too much of our golf committee to request that part of the fairway be used as a teeing area? I realize the superintendent has his troubles trying to keep the fairways lush and green . . . so we would not want to cause any damage in that respect.

"Is this sort of thing done on other courses or should we dump the whole idea and wait for the kids to get strong enough to use the regular tees?"

GRACE SOMMERS
 Grantland, N. J.

* * *
 Only your super knows the lay of your golf course and its shortcomings. Consult him and we're sure he'll accommodate you. It's nice to know that you appreciate his position, though.

(Speaking of position, we are positioned just at the end of this month's Sound Off edition. But there'll be more and you can be part of it by sending us your golf comments. Do it today.)



The Retired and the Young. Left to right: Heidi Robertson, Arthur Anderson, Manny Francis, III, and Cheryl Robertson.

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* Contributors to the Lawrence S. Dickinson Scholarship Fund

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FIRST CLASS

