

NEWSLETTER

Golf Course Superintendents Association
OF NEW ENGLAND, INC.

NOVEMBER 1973



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

THE ENDLESS SEASON SYNDROME

It was a very trying summer, the summer just concluded, for the golf course superintendent. Weather conditions made his life miserable. Regular hours were a fool's prerogative. Getting home to the wife and kiddies in time for dinner was a luxury experienced out of the past. Most supers had to hang lanterns on themselves as they made the journey from club to home a night-time safari.

Now, the leaves have turned and fallen. This is the time of year for the reconstruction process. What the super does today will be reflected in what the golfer will have for playing conditions next spring. But . . . there is the endless season syndrome to contend with. Golfers never seem to know or come to realize when to toss their clubs in the attic.

"Come Thanksgiving . . . at the latest . . . and the golfer should kiss the season goodbye", a thinking man's superintendent offers. "That is the time of year when the plant isn't growing. It is the time when wear and tear can be most damaging."

The super usually thinks of the autumn as a time to recoup from the ills of summer. This is when he's busy renovating fairways, rebuilding tees and patching greens. He has to clear dead trees and other stricken plant life. It certainly is much easier if he doesn't have to contend with additional demands by the country club member.

"Sometimes I think our golfers have an idea they're living in the tropic zone", a superintendent from the Northeast remarks. "They really believe the golf course can't be abused by excessive play because there's nothing growing. How wrong they are."

What the super shouldn't have to worry about now is the present playing condition of his course. Yet, there are members who want the grounds to be as lush and lovely as they are at the height of the season. They actually are contributing to their future demise (terrible spring conditions) when they take the superintendent away from his long-range projects

for a smoother November putting surface.

A few clubs show exceptional courage by pinpointing a closing date and sticking to it regardless of the weather pattern at that time. "This is what we need", another super stresses a mandatory closing date. "I am up to my neck in projects which will be effective only if I can give them my fullest attention. My crew is at minimal size at this time of year. So, if the members insist on having top playing condition in November, I have to revise my work schedule."

Most supers feel that if turf damage exceeds 40 percent going into winter, they will be in big trouble come spring. "I set that figure as my goal", a superintendent reveals. "I feel that the spring conditions will be adequate if I repair 50 percent of the damage done during the preceding summer. And the only way I can insure this situation is to be able to work on the course's future, not its present."

All the manufacturing of new grass for the upcoming year is done during the fall. This means that the superintendent is cheating himself and his members, for that matter, if golfers take him away from the task of producing those new grasses. Therefore, some supers almost pray that members will be persuaded to keep off the beaten path and direct their energies to normal winter sports.

The freezing-thawing behavior of the grasses is another bugaboo the super abhors at the crossing of autumn into winter. Heavy traffic during this time invites danger and destruction of the grasses. Compaction is the usual result of play during the freeze-thaw period and the following spring shows its undesirable results.

So, the endless season is another enemy of the golf course superintendent. And awareness of its projected pitfalls should be enough to get those club in the attic where they belong.

— Gerry Finn

NEXT MEETING

The next meeting is November 12, 1973 at the Bass River Golf Course in S. Yarmouth, Mass. John Morse is the super in charge of this fine layout. This meeting will be a joint one with the Cape Cod Association. There will be sandwiches served at noon and dinner is at 5:30 p.m. sharp at the Riverway Lobster House in South Yarmouth, Mass. There will be a directors' meeting at 10:45 a.m. and a regular meeting at 11:15 a.m. for regular members and golf after lunch.

DIRECTIONS

Mid Cape Highway to exit 8. Go right to South Yarmouth and take a left on Regional Ave. after the Dennis Yarmouth High School. Club will be on your right.

* * * *

JOB OPEN

Glens Falls Country Club. Contact Frederick R. Doyle, Greens chairman, Glens Falls Country Club, R.D. No. 1, Glens Falls, N. Y. 12801.

RESULTS OF SUPER-PRO TOURNAMENT

Low Gross — 71, Guy Tedesco, John Solons

(Winners by sudden death)

Low Net — 67, Paul Johnson, John Thro

67, Joe Rybka, John Oteri

70, Brian Cowan, Dan Keefe

70, Dave Barber, Joe Browing

70, Pat DiPietro, Ross Loon

70, Julius Aksten, Les Bond

70, Tony Caranci, Bob Pacheco

71, Bob Mucciarone, Ed Kornasky

Welcome to Gary Luccini who was voted in as Associate Member at the October meeting.

New member to be voted on at the November 12, 1973 meeting is Robert Killilea, 40 Pond St., Weymouth, Mass., club affiliation, Furnace Brook Golf Club.

Golf Course Superintendents Association

NO GREEN PASTURES AHEAD

The green pastures at the end of man's productive years appear to be a myth as far as the golf course superintendent is concerned.

"The pension fund situation is a joke among superintendents and permanent members of his crew", an irate member of the profession tells. "In most cases, there are no vested rights which places the superintendent at the mercy of the country club or whoever is his employer. If something isn't done about it soon, any attraction the job holds for young men entering the field will continue to diminish."

There is no hope visible at the top level of the superintendent's professional association — the national. For some reason it has not been able to effect a plan which is suitable to the needs of the super nor acceptable by the Internal Revenue Service. Therefore, it appears that individual initiative is the only present means a superintendent has to find security when his productivity declines (age-wise) and he is deemed a candidate for retirement.

Some clubs have come up with retirement programs for their supers, but very few are adequate. "The question of vested rights is a burning one here. The superintendent, who changes jobs late in life, usually has nothing in the way of retirement benefits following him to his next position. It's like walking to the edge of a cliff and falling off with the only hope a chance that the landing will be cushioned, by some form of retirement returns at the next job.

Most superintendents are in a position where they would be willing to participate in a contributory type of plan. "I know that I have had to start an annuity program on my own because of the sparse returns I'll get when I retire from my present position", one super advises. "I hate to think what will happen to those colleagues who haven't had such foresight in their individual futures. I'd hate to think a golf course superintendent might have to join the bread line in order to exist after his working days are over."

Some country clubs . . . and they have to be praised for the act. . . are building nest eggs for their superintendent while the national goes about the task of drawing up an effective retirement plan. They are subsidizing the superintendent by contributing to a special bank account which will be poured into the plan when it is finalized.

"This is what all clubs should do", another superintendent says. "While the super should use his own initiative to create a nest egg for himself and his loved ones, the clubs ought to feel obligated to share that initiative with meaningful additions to his future. But no where is there anything that says the club HAS to do this."

Solutions to the problem run the gamut. One of the most popular conclusions brings the superintendent and his crew back to an old battle grounds — the creation of a union to insure him of bargaining powers and a voice in what his days of retirement will bring financially.

The superintendent speaks for himself in this quest for security and he also has the welfare of his help in mind. "My people working for me deserve the protection of a vested retirement program", a super with a heart insists. It's bad enough to get reliable people in the first place. And once I get

ANNUAL MEETING

Proposed slate of officers for 1974, to be voted on at the December 3, 1973 meeting at the Holiday Inn, Newton, Mass. Richard Blake is chairman of the nominating committee, with members Nary Sperandio, Joseph Rybka, David Barber and John O'Connor.

President — Tom Curran
1st Vice President — Wayne Zoppo, Dan Collins
2nd Vice President — Dean Robertson, Leon St. Pierre
Secretary — Ronald Kirkman
Treasurer — Lou Duval
Trustee 3 years — David Barber
Finance Committee — Nary Sperandio
Golf Committee — Brian Cowan
Educational Committee — Larry Bunn
Newsletter Committee — Tom Schofield

Lawn Mower Makers Eye Safety Standards

Safer lawn mowers producing fewer injuries may become a reality soon as a result of industry-wide efforts to incorporate upgraded safety standards on newer models.

The push comes partly because of severe penalties that can be imposed on manufacturers by the new U. S. Consumer Product Safety Commission. The outdoor power equipment people are currently eyeing a standard requiring mower exhaust to be directed away from the operator. They're also considering requiring an interlock on self-propelled walk-behind machines to prevent their starting in gear. Other expected improvements: braking distances for riding mowers would be halved, so a machine going five miles per hour would be able to stop within five feet. Batteries on riding mowers would come with an automatic latching device to position the handle. Still under study are requirements for blade-stopping time and for restrictions on thrown objects.

News & Views, October 1973

Winter Meeting Dates are as follows, at the Holiday Inn, Newton, Mass.

December 3, 1973
January 7, 1974
February 4, 1974
April 1, 1974

them I feel the club should foot some of the responsibility in keeping them."

The pastures that lie ahead for the golf course superintendent, then, are not flooded with the only green which counts when a man is pronounced to be beyond his age of productivity. Retirement programs have been dragging at an alarming rate. A superintendent should have the same opportunities to secure his future as comparable professions offer. He has a right to retire with dignity!

— Gerry Finn

President — ROBERT GRANT 22 Patricia Road Sudbury, Mass. 01776 Phone 443-2671 Club Affiliation Brae Burn Country Club	First Vice President — THOMAS CURRAN Fox Chase Road South Sutton, N. H. 03273 Club Affiliation Eastman Golf Course	Second Vice President — WAYNE ZOPPO 48 Barbary Drive Seekonk, Mass. 02771 Phone 399-7141 Club Affiliation Agawam Hunt	Secretary — RONALD KIRKMAN, CGCS 25 Green Street Needham, Mass. 02192 Phone 444-8472 Club Affiliation Needham Golf Club	Treasurer — LUCIEN DUVAL R.F. No. 5 Gault Road Bedford, N. H. 03105 Phone 472-3454 Club Affiliation Manchester Country Club	Trustee — NORMAN MUCCIARONE 101 Alban Road Waban, Mass. 02168 Phone 332-3056 Club Affiliation Woodland Golf Club	Trustee — BERT FREDERICK 45 Stony Brook Road Nabnasset, Mass. 01861 Phone 453-1231 Club Affiliation Vesper Country Club	Trustee — MAX MIERZWA 106 Crestwood Street Chicopee, Mass. 01020 Phone 594-4996 Club Affiliation Chicopee Country Club	Finance Chairman — NARY SPERANDIO Concord, Mass. 01742 Phone 369-4723 Club Affiliation Concord Country Club
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SOUND OFF!!!!

(Here we go gathering orchids and onions . . . which is another way of saying that the reader is upon us and he has something to tell the world. This is Sound Off, what we hope is the refreshing portion of the Newsletter which comes when the man or woman on the street takes pen in hand and tells it like they think it is . . . or should be. Contributors to this feature are requested to enclose names and addresses. Either or both will be withheld upon request. Letters reach us at Newsletter Mail Bag, 24 Riverview Drive, Newbury, Mass. 01950. The Newsletter reserves the right to comment on all published letters.)

* * * *

"This has nothing to do with golf course conditions or the work of the superintendent. But I think it is related and the only source of information for the answer to my question I can think of is the New England superintendents' Newsletter.

"You may recall the wholesale destruction of the turf at Shea Stadium in New York last month when the Mets won the National League championship. Some of the damage was appalling. There were large gouges of turf evident after people left the field. The turf was torn to shreds and large pieces of it were taken as souvenirs.

"Lo and behold, when the Mets returned to play the Oakland Athletics in the World Series, the Shea Stadium turf was back to normal. The scars had healed and the bare spots done over to make for perfect baseball playing conditions. What I would like to know is who was responsible for the excellent job of refurbishing the field?"

FRAN REPASS
Naugatuck, Conn.

Luckily for Shea Stadium a man named John McCarthy tends the turf there. It was McCarthy and his crew which turned the field from a disaster area into a perfect playground for the Mets and Athletics. They deserve all the praise heaped on them.

* * * *

"I am a superintendent who has been plagued with a problem the last few years and I really am at wit's end as to its solution.

"Over the years I have become friendly with some of my members and they have made job offers to me (part time, of course) that I'm not sure I should accept.

"What they want me to do is something more than consultant work on their home gardening projects. They have offered me pretty good sums of money to come out and help them (physically, if necessary) in tasks like rebuilding lawns and relocating shrubs and trees.

"Naturally, all of this would be done on my own time. My question is should I accept the jobs and accept the money offered; should I accept the jobs and not accept the money; or should I simply refuse and recommend a good lawn service instead?"

NAME WITHHELD
Club Withheld

No one can advise you on this. Let your conscience be your guide . . . and maybe your pocketbook if your salary is suffering from wilt!

"I read with interest the letter from Bob Cloughlin on his experiences with golfers who have no concern for workers on the course when they drive a golf ball. It is just another example of the lack of etiquette which is ruining the game.

"As a golfer, myself, I agree that certain species should be placed out in the middle of a driving range where every golf worker on their course should be armed with a driver and a bucket of balls. The irresponsible behavior of these culprits isn't restricted to putting the lives of workers in dangers. They also have no regard for other players.

"We have a strict rule in our club. No one is to drive a ball from the teeing area until the next foursome has reached the green of the hole it is playing. I realize that this tends to slow up play, but from our experience it helps to bring back some continuity into a round of golf. Perhaps it takes us 15 minutes or more to play the entire 18 holes but we haven't had a bombed player since the rule was instituted.

"There also are signs placed around the clubhouse as to the dangers present when workers are toiling in the line of play. Both parties (golfer and worker) are made aware of the possibilities of someone getting hit with a ball in flight. So far it has been a rarity when a worker is hit."

CHARLES SWANSON
Powder Hollow, Va.

An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure, right Charles? Keeps the old insurance rates down, too!

* * * *

"The trouble with most of your articles in the Newsletter is that the superintendent always appears to be getting the short end of the stick in everything pertaining to the country club.

"I am indeed aware of the good job the superintendent is doing but I cannot believe that he is the object of everything wrong which your stories often depict. Our superintendent is thoroughly appreciated here and he is treated like any other employee. After all, there are other people working at the club who are just as important as the golf course superintendent!"

HARRY BELLOWS
Overlook, Pa.

Name one, Harry . . . name one!!!!

* * * *

(That puts the three-oh mark on the offerings for this time. Don't forget your gems and germs are also welcome. So, sit down and let us have them).

* * * *

Grass Seed Prices Going Up

If you thought you paid more for grass seed this year, you're right.

But you can expect to pay even more next year. It seems likely that grass seed prices will continue to rise over the next two or three years, although it's questionable whether the increases will mean higher quality.

The elevated prices are due to what appears to be a world shortage of perennial rye grass, the most common constituent of grass seed mixtures. The shortage, which is expected to continue in future years, began in 1972 when that year's crop, which was not particularly good anyhow, suffered substantial loss of life in mature seed and heavy wastage.

News & Views, October 1973

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