

NEWSLETTER

SEPTEMBER 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.

THE DIFFICULT SEASON OF 1973

By Alexander M. Radko, William C. Buchanan and Stanley J. Zontek, USGA Green Section, Eastern Region

Ever heard of Murphy's Law? It says in part, "if anything can go wrong, it will!" Murphy's Law applied to 1973 weather so far as the fine turfgrasses this year were concerned. Everything that could have gone wrong, did . . . and golf courses suffered excesses in turf loss on fairways, collars and aprons principally.

First came the very wet spring weather . . . skies were continuously overcast . . . and rains came often and heavily. Soils could accommodate little more water from the previous two years of heavy rain but new record rains came nevertheless. So long as the cool weather held, the weaknesses caused by these excesses did not show. It was when we first experienced clear, hot, sunny days followed by extended periods of high humidity that the bottom began to drop out. Without question, the year to this mid-August date has been one of the most difficult periods that superintendents have experienced in many years.

Then the extended periods without sunshine in spring caused the fine turfgrasses to grow weak and spindly . . . they were extremely tender, they were soft . . . they were not as good for golf as they normally are in spring . . . they did not exhibit firm growth at any time in spring. The week of July 4th came with several consecutive bright, sunny days . . . *the first strong sunlight that grasses were subjected to up to that point . . . it proved too much . . . it was tantamount to keeping a man in solitary confinement for three months in a cold, dark and damp cellar . . . then suddenly exposing him to the blazing desert sun . . . this is the torture treatment and this is exactly what our grasses were subjected to and they weakened quickly . . . there was no period of adjustment.*

This condition, coupled with record rainfalls, compounded

the problem. It set the stage for wilt, scald and diseases of every kind. It created new, and aggravated old drainage problems . . . water began to show in areas where it never was a problem before. It also caused a lot of mechanical injury . . . grasses *had to be cut* despite conditions that favored scalping, bruising, rutting, etc. . . . There were times when more water trailed mowers than grass clippings . . . it was bad, yes, but the grasses had to be mowed! Fairways otherwise would have looked like roughs and greens would have looked like fairways if left unmowed over weekends. The difficult part of it all was that every decision of whether to mow (Fridays especially) was critical. If you guessed wrong just once, wilt readily set in . . . and weak grasses don't quickly recover from wilt in the July-August heat.

The lesson learned is that the permanent grasses held up best during all this adversity . . . they went out where they drowned-out. No grass will survive long periods of flooding in summer. Blotches of permanent grasses stood out like islands . . . the *Poa annua* died in most areas or was severely set back all around the bentgrass and bluegrass clones. *Poa annua* was held in some cases by constant watering and syringing . . . golfers played through water sprays almost all of July and August where *Poa Annua* predominated. Courses where permanent grasses predominate in fairways were watered much less and were hardly ever syringed. From the golfing standpoint, firm fairways play superior to spongy, wet fairways. It's years like this that makes one wish that *Poa annua* never existed . . . superintendents and golfers wish they never heard of watered fairways . . . and superintendents and workers pray that they never have to install another drain ever again!

To date 1973 has been a torturous year for grasses . . . it is safe to predict that its praises will never be intoned in a ballad . . . it wasn't a very good year!

NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the GCSA of NE will be September 24, 1973 at the Blue Hill Country Club. This is the Super-Celebrity tournament. The Grill Room will be open from 11 a. m. to 2 p. m. for lunch and all teams will tee off at 12:30 p. m. Please be prompt as it will be a shotgun start.

Dinner will be served at 7 p. m. in the evening. If you want any information please call Larry Bunn at 828-7266. He is the super in charge of this fine 27-hole layout.

Larry Bunn has been Superintendent at Blue Hills for the past two years and from all reports the course is in excellent condition. Larry graduated from Stockbridge at the University of Mass. in 1970. Prior to that he was Super in charge of the Geneva Country Club in Iowa. While at Stockbridge he served his placement at the Country Club and then was at Milton Hoosic before moving to the Blue Hill Country Club.

Larry
Bunn



Directions — 128 south of Mass. Pike to exit 64. Go south on 138 to first set of lights and bear right (Shell Station). Follow about 1 mile to Pecunit St., and go right. Club is on Pecunit street.

Golf Course Superintendents Association

HIRE THE "HANDICAPPED"

Should a golf course superintendent hire the "handicapped?" In this case the word was being used to describe the varying abilities of golfers . . . not those physically disabled. Anyway, the scene was the second three-pronged meeting of the Northeast, Connecticut and New England sectional associations of the GCSA and there seemed to be some difference of opinion on whether or not a golfer makes a good course worker.

"Definitely", said Dave Roule of the Clinton Country Club, Clinton, Conn. "I think the greatest asset a course worker can have is to have had some experience playing the game. There's no doubt about it. Give me all the golfers you've got."

On the other hand, Jim Stanton . . . another member of the Connecticut delegation . . . had different thoughts on the matter. "I've tried hiring a crew of golfers", he disclosed. "And that's just what about half of them wound up doing. I don't mean on our course. But they were very unreliable about showing up for work, averaging about four days a week. Finally, I had to dump a few of them when it got out of hand."

The negative approach to hiring golfers for course maintenance was definitely in the minority as far as most of the superintendents on hand were concerned. The prevalent feeling was that golfers were close enough to the sport to know what club members preferred in the way of providing the best possible playing conditions.

"Golfers can relate to the situation", Roule continued. "You can imagine how much easier it is for me to train a golfer than a non-golfer in some of the jobs around the course. For instance, the golfer doesn't need to be schooled in where to set up a cup on the green. Moreover he takes special pains to set it right. When the club member strokes a ball toward that cup, he knows that only his contribution to the maneuver will matter in whether the ball falls or not. The golfing worker

sets the cup the way he'd like to see it when he plays."

Roule doesn't mean to imply that he would not hire a man who does not or has not played golf. "Oh, there are many jobs where a knowledge of the game has nothing to do with their execution", he added. "But I would like the nucleus of my work force to have some idea of how the game is played and under what conditions players prefer to play it."

Sometimes the theory of hiring the "handicapped" might backfire . . . as in the case of the other Connecticut super who got stuck with a few over-zealous golfers. And there are other reasons why Stanton says he thinks twice before he hires a golfer.

"This may sound weird, but I have proof of it", he injected. "There were examples of cup-setting by golfers on my course in which they went out of their way to make it difficult for members to score. I soon realized that a couple of them were playing games . . . setting cups in those places which would invite three, four and even five-putt greens. That's a sure way to get themselves fired . . . and maybe their boss, too."

Such an occurrence, though, seemed to be the exception rather than the rule in further inquiries of superintendents. "What I like most about the golfer-worker is the fact that he can relate to the situation", Roule put another two cents in for his side. "He knows what the reaction of the member will be if the greens aren't cut just right around the fringes or the cup isn't level with the terrain."

At the conclusion of the conversation the reaction appeared to be unanimous . . . unanimous that more golfers should get into the superintendent's profession. Hire the "handicapped" was the clear-cut winner over the opposite view of hiring the non-golfer. Logic apparently prevailed and rightly so.

— Gerry Finn

A Conference Preview . . .

45th International Turfgrass Conference and Show

February 10 - 15, 1974
Anaheim, California

GCSAA Golf Tournament — Thursday and Friday, Feb. 7 and 8. This year, the tournament will be played on two separate courses, Yorba Linda Country Club and Mile Square Golf Course, challenging your golf and giving you an opportunity to tour two facilities.

Conference Registration — Will open Sunday, Feb. 10. The Anaheim Convention Center will be the site of registration, while the Disneyland Hotel has been selected as the headquarters hotel and will be the site of many other activities.

Host Chapter Event — Monday evening, Feb. 11. Be Welcomed to the Conference and aboard HMS Queen Mary by members of the Southern California GCSA Chapter. Transportation will be provided.

Educational Program — Tuesday thru Thursday, Feb. 11-14. A host of renowned speakers will offer new insights into both

new and old areas. The six programs will be in the Anaheim Convention Center.

Annual Meeting and Election — Wednesday, Feb. 13. A full business agenda and the election of GCSAA's President, Vice President and Directors.

Banquet and Dance — Thursday evening, Feb. 14. A gala dinner and dance at the Disneyland Hotel will be highlighted by the entertainment of vocalist Gordon MacRae, marimbaist Mora Gray and comedian Berl Williams.

Industrial Show — Tuesday thru Thursday, Feb. 12-14. Opening to gentlemen only, 100,000 square feet of space in the North Exhibition Hall of the Anaheim Convention Center is expected to be filled by the nation's leading firms involved in the turfgrass industry.

Ladies' Program — Will open Sunday, Feb. 10. A Hospitality Center for the ladies will be operated in the Disneyland Hotel during the entire Conference. While the men are opening the Show Tuesday, the ladies will be enjoying a day-long tour which will include breakfast at the Universal Sheraton Hotel and an extensive tour of the Universal Studios.

MEETING DATES

October 12, 1973 — Brae Burn Super-Pro

October 29, 1973 — New Bedford Country Club

November — Bass River. Joint Meeting with the Cape Codders.

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 444-8412 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 Stoney Brook Road Nabunnet, 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!!!!

Once again it's time for the readers to react to the situation, take up their pencils and pads for another session of Sound Off. This feature is just what it says . . . an opportunity for each and every one of our readers to become authors of their own. The subject is easy . . . anything relating to golf. All letters should be signed and include the address of the writer. Names and addresses will be withheld upon request. The place to start all this is the Newsletter Mail Bag, 24 Riverview Drive, Newbury, Mass. 01950. The Newsletter reserves the right to comment on all letters published).

"I think that your Gerry Finn went off his rocker last month in inferring that golf courses might have to revert to their original physical state because of the alleged shortages around us.

"This is pure folly on Mr. Finn's part. He even had to get his big mouth going in support of banning the golf cart. I can't understand why he insists on bringing up the golf cart as a contributor every time a crisis in golf course maintenance appears or is dreamed up.

"As far as the return to the 'British' method of letting the roughs grow untamed, this is ridiculous. Do you realize what the reaction of most club members would be if this were allowed to happen? In the first place, most courses are too long and getting home in regulation from a perfect lie is hard enough without hiding the ball in the rough.

"The power shortages, real or unreal, will not affect anything on the golf course. This is just another way of Mr. Finn stirring up the public on a problem that doesn't exist."

E. E. CHILDS
Farmington, Conn.

When you're out on the 15th hole and your golf cart goes dead, don't say we didn't warn you, E. E. By the way . . . are you British?

"I didn't get a chance to see all of the superintendents on hand, but I thought this the next best way of expressing my sheer satisfaction with last month's superintendents' three-chapter meeting at the Crestview Country Club.

"Before I say another word, I would like to take this opportunity to thank superintendent Dave Clement, pro Frank Kringle and all the other members of the Crestview family who made our visit eventful and most pleasant. The golf course was in perfect condition, a tribute to Dave who has been under much pressure because of a recurring drainage problem.

"The idea behind the three-way meeting was to improve communications among the chapters close by. I think this was accomplished without too much insistence by way of a formal gathering. The informality of the meeting probably resulted in more exchanges of ideas than if we had decided to keep everyone glued to his seat listening to speeches.

"I am sure this is not the last of the inter-association get-togethers. I am happy that New England and Crestview had the opportunity to host the affair. I think it is the start of better and closer relationships among those active in the three organizations."

ROBERT GRANT, President
GCSA of New England

What more can we add, Bob? The meeting went without a hitch . . . even without a hitch in the swings of most players!

"I find it hard to believe, but my golf course . . . which is equipped with automatic irrigation . . . isn't in as good condition as the other one in town which doesn't have the irrigation system.

"I can't see why our superintendent doesn't take a trip over to that other course and see how a layout should be cared for. In the meantime, we players here are finding wet spots, turned into mushy layers of dead grass and all because of the irrigation!

"Don't they school you people on the use of these automatic systems or don't you pay attention to the instructions? I am thoroughly disgusted with the job being done here."

NAME WITHHELD
CLUB WITHHELD

You may have automatic irrigation but how about the drainage on the course. One doesn't work without the other.

"I would like to sound a loud and clear 'ay' to the proposal that golf course superintendents be required to earn some kind of college degree before they earn full-fledged title to their profession.

"This may sound both selfish and sniping, but we have found through experience that a superintendent with a college degree usually works out best with us. It has something to do with his method of approaching each problem that arises. Evidently, from his training, he doesn't take all day to find out where to look for solution to a problem.

"My suggestion probably will make it difficult for those already in the head superintendent class. Realizing this, the rules for a college degree should apply only to those who assume the title of golf course superintendent after January 1, 1974. In that way all the new supers will have enough warning to undertake more formal education."

ELDRIDGE SQUIRES
Clayton, Va.

Maybe someday your theory will work, Eldridge. But the transition must be gradual, if there be one at all. According to most supers on the job today, a practical education (on the job training) beats a formal education every time.

(That pulls us down to the three-oh mark for this time. Keep those cards and letters coming, folks).

JOB OPEN — Greenacres C. C. located in Lawrence Township, Trenton, N. J. Greenacres is an excellent 18-hole course which was recently redesigned by George Fazio. It is fully equipped including a Binar Automated Watering System. Salary \$18,000.00 Call or send resume to: Robert Albert, 15 Cadwalader Drive, Trenton, N. J. 08618. Tel-ephones Bus.: 609-882-2821; Home: 609-392-6419

FOR SALE: Jacobsen F-10, 7 Gang, Toro Greensmaster. Rogers Fairway Aerator Model 590 and a Larkin Utility Cart. For information call Paul Murphy at (617) 829-3062.

The Association was saddened by the death of Joseph E. Zoppo, Superintendent of the Nashawtuc Country Club. Our deepest sympathy to his family.

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NEWSLETTER

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