

# NEWSLETTER

Golf Course Superintendents Association

OF NEW ENGLAND, INC.

FEBRUARY 1974



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

## THE FIRMER FOUNDATION

What is the latest in the old "which came first... the golf course or the country club?" debate?

The latest is that the country club is ready to concede...or rather, it is being forced to concede. Without a golf course, there is no sense in all the embellishments which it breeds. And now the breeding venture is being supplemented by the very, very necessary trailing words, "support".

That's right. Country clubs are beginning to engage in a greens fee war, or haven't you noticed lately the number of outside golf tournaments popping up in private clubs? If you haven't at yours, you are among the exceptions. In general, there is a new approach to financing the country club...bring in the greens fee dollar.

Things have taken such a swift turn in this direction that more than one country club budget is predicated upon the returns from a combination of golf course greens fees and golf cart rental fees. One superintendent reports that his entire outlay for the coming season will equal the income from those sources.

There really isn't anything wrong with this new form of fight to keep the country club's financial head above water. First of all it is quite a challenge to the membership which, after all, is the biggest beneficiary of such a move. If enough money can be realized from the golf course to operate all the phases of country

club life, the member won't be further taxed by increased dues and the always hated "emergency assessment".

In the meantime, though, the membership should be aware of the added woes green fees players bring to the superintendent. He is now faced with increased play which means less time for him to perform his normal duties without the annoying experience of having to work around golfers on the course.

The superintendent, affected by this new method of attaining financial stability, should be forewarned before his job becomes so overbearing it knocks his conditioning plan for a loop.

"If the country club expects to realize most of its overall operating income from the golf course, it must realize there will be an increased demand on the course", one super explains. "The traffic on the course usually determines what the amount of normal damage will be. With greens fees adding to this traffic, we're going to have a need for one or two things, either the membership overlooks the resulting damage or it becomes willing to increase my budget and my manpower."

Many superintendents, caught in this upswing of outside play, are of the opinion that they are taking the blame for financial losses incurred in places other than the course. There are many examples of clubhouses losing money, swimming pools operating in the red and other facilities draining the club bankroll. They feel compensations must be made for putting most of the financial burden on their backs.

Underlying all this, too, is the renewed realization that the golf course superintendent's job should not be taken lightly by the club membership. Obviously, if the superintendent's part in the financing of the country club increases in importance, his stature grows also. And, in the end, the situation proves that the golf course is the firmer foundation. It came first and it remains No. 1.

Gerry Finn

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the members of the New England Golf Course Superintendents Association for electing me President of your Association. I will make every effort to maintain the high standards of my predecessors.

This Association, the oldest of its kind, was founded by a group of gentlemen interested in golf and the maintenance of golf courses. The monthly meetings were designed as a way of improving course maintenance through an exchange of ideas and educational programs. This is still true today. But now we are in an age of rapidly changing techniques. Great progress is being made in turf research. We have an environmental factor to consider. All of these facts contribute to making our business more complex. What better way can we keep ourselves informed than to take advantage of every opportunity to attend the local association meetings, the regional turf conferences, and the National Turf Conference. It is the responsibility of every club to send their superintendent to these educational conferences, -- and the responsibility of the superintendent to use this opportunity to advance himself and his profession.

TOM CURRAN, President  
G.C.S.A. of New England

## Next Meeting Feb. 4, 1974

Note New Times:

11 A.M. Directors Meeting

Lunch On Your Own

1 P.M. Regular Meeting

Educational Meeting Following

Chuck Richards from N.E. Sealcoating will discuss construction of granular and all weather tennis courts and their maintenance.

# National Conference Feb. 10-15, Anaheim, Calif.

# Golf Course Superintendents Association

## WHERE HAVE ALL OUR ETHICS GONE?

Once again reports of second class citizenship behavior have filtered into our monthly news hole. And the theme is familiar...golf course superintendent jobs are being applied for before golf course superintendent job openings exist.

Such news is disturbing. We all have heard of the old lost golf ball dig...the one where a player discovers that he is losing his golf balls before they even stop rolling? Well, applying for positions on the golf course before they are officially made known as being vacant is akin to this situation.

Once again there is the question of confidentiality surfacing here. All too many times "friends" of a neighboring superintendent attempt to give him the jump on a new job which could be opening. "Friends", of course, are those members at country clubs who have no regard for confidential relationships between superintendent and board of directors.

When this is the case, the club is to blame. It becomes a matter of lost ethics among members. They seem to think that a superintendent will stoop to anything in order to better himself and his rank. Thus, they operate on the basis of rumor and half truths which can become embarrassing to one and all.

Rumors of job changes or job losses are the culprits which can influence the aspiring superintendent or that super who is "on the lookout" for a change in jobs himself. In this situation there is no honor among professionals. One superintendent hears of the possibility that a colleague is moving or is being dismissed and he can't wait to be first in line at the application desk.

"I think it should call for disciplinary action from our

organization", one unidentified member of the New England Association remarked upon hearing of false start applying methods. "I for one would vote for suspension. If we can't trust ourselves, who can we trust?"

While The Newsletter is responsible for its views to the members of our organization, its officers and the golf public in general...it also is responsible to a journalistic philosophy that dictates the making of a publication with fair play to all as its guiding hand. Therefore, the idea that unethical superintendents be treated in a harsh manner, especially when it does harm to the reputation of their own professional organization, receives an unqualified endorsement from this corner of the world.

Perhaps, too, the example presented here should serve as a catalyst in urging our organization to take proper steps in averting such a situation in the future. It would be advantageous to all parties if the New England Association acted as the official clearing house for all golf course superintendent job openings within its geographical boundaries.

This appears the practical... and ethical path for both the interests of the association and the individual members. If the country club population could be made to realize that behind-the-back negotiations do nothing but interrupt and endanger the relationship among superintendents, there would be no reason for the printed word here today to flow rather accusingly...."where have all our ethics gone?"

Gerry Finn

## LETTER FROM BOB GRANT

The past few months have been most enjoyable for the Golf Course Superintendent. After a long, grinding summer, the cool weather and rains of the Fall season have helped to heal the scars on golf course turf caused by excessive heat, moisture and disease. The Superintendent is able to relax, enjoy his family, and other activities after spending many hours on the Golf Course, Saturdays, Sundays and Holidays included.

Although Golf is over in most parts of New England for the next few months, the Superintendent is busy planning for next year. Programs must be drawn up, supplies ordered, equipment and golf cars overhauled to name a few. The Energy Crisis will effect Golf Course Maintenance and we must adjust programs to best serve our membership with the supplies and gasoline that is available. The increase in cost over the 5.5% guideline will be of major concern.

At this time of year it is possible to spend a little time thinking about the past. As past President of the Golf Course Superintendents Association of New England, I would like to thank my fellow Officers, Committee Chairmen, and the general Membership for their support and dedication the past two years.

My best wishes are extended to Tom Curran and the new Officers and Directors.

Sincerely,

Robert Grant C.G.C.S.

## CONGRATULATIONS

TO ROBERT B. KILLILEA

From Furnace Brook Golf Club

Voted in as an Associate member at the December meeting.

To be voted on at the next meeting - Thomas Wright

## Job Openings

Ould Newbury Golf Club

Contact Mr. Philip B. Trussell  
196 High Rd.  
Newbury, Mass. 01950

Old 9 Hole Walpole Country Club

Contact Mr. James Jones  
Flattley Co.  
Wood Road  
Braintree, Mass.

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# SOUND OFF

"Enjoyed your article in the December 1973 issue of the GCSA of New England's Newsletter regarding the golf spike. In 1958, tests were made on various types of golf shoes--the ripple sole, the lug soled shoe and the spiked shoe which showed us that the shoulder on the spike was the thing that was causing most damage. This test emphasized the need for more research and another test was set up which included a modified spike recommended by Dr. Marvin Ferguson who conducted the tests...one recessed into the leather so that the spike shoulder didn't protrude. This shoe, with recessed spike, caused far less damage than the shoe with the spike shoulder protruding.

"We enclose reprints of the two research articles written as a result of this test. There is no doubt that the spikes with recessed shoulders would be far less damaging to turfgrasses on golf courses."

ALEXANDER M. RADKO  
USGA Green Section

**You just cited the answer to the problem, Al. Let's hope the golf shoe manufacturers have big ears and hear about the advisability of using the recessed shoulder in their products.**

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"I read with much interest your article in last month's Newsletter concerning the new challenge the country club faces because of the current energy crisis.

"It is quite evident that the country club is going to become the backbone of the recreational activities of many cities and towns. And I would like to bring up a new problem in this regard since most country clubs are private.

"I live in the vicinity of a private club which has rolling terrain and becomes absolutely the best sliding surface around for miles when it snows. Only this week we have had two giant snowstorms and the sliding traffic at the club has been enormous.

"There now arises, I would think, another burden for you golf course superintendents. Surely, the increased traffic of sliders may do harm to the grasses, especially if the sliders continue on into early spring when much damage can be incurred. What do you do about it then, I wonder?

"And what is the attitude of the country club opening up its grounds to members of the community? These questions should be looked at immediately, because we are in the dead of winter and the sleds and toboggans are out in full force."

CANFIELD CORNING  
Southbury, Conn.

**Again, the super gets caught in the middle. This time we're passing the buck to the country club, itself. Whether it becomes a community playground is its baby!**

"There doesn't seem to be too much talk in your publication about curing the ills of grasses and other plants and I was asking our superintendent about this. He told me that he has nothing to do with the Newsletter but suggested I inquire through this letter.

"Is it the policy of your paper to ignore the discovery of new chemicals, et al and all the other aids to your profession? I am not trying to tell you how to run your business, but I am interested in plant life, too. My lawn had a very rugged summer last year and I was hoping to learn some of the cure-alls from your publication."

EMERY FARNSWORTH  
Siacca, Ont.

**First of all, we don't know how you get our Newsletter, Emery. Anyway, we are not a trade magazine. Above all, we are not a nursery service!**

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"Many of us older golfers are starting to get itchy as the gasoline shortage inches its way into spring and the coming golf season. Naturally, we are worried about it because we need the golf cart to play the game.

"We got together the other night and decided to pen this letter to you people who will have much to say when it comes to setting up priorities for the use of fuel in gasoline-fed golf carts.. It just so happens the carts at our course depend on gas.

"I suppose the country club directors will have to get together with the superintendent and set up a priority list for the use of gasoline on the course. I sincerely hope the superintendent and board of directors here will take into consideration the needs of the senior golfing citizen."

ROY PASK  
Franklin, N.H.

**The needs of all golfers will direct all decisions made in regard to fuel use. Course condition is a natural to top that priority list.**

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*(The letter opener is poised and the letters continue to come rolling in. Once again it's time for the reader to roll up his sleeves and pitch his two cents into this publication. Sound Off is the special feature the New England Association provided for people with a golf opinion or a golf beef. It is not restricted to subjects of exclusive interest to the superintendent. Rather, it offers space to all topics in the golf world. The Newsletter invites all to take part and they may do so by dropping a line to Newsletter Mail Bag, 290 North Road, Sudbury, Mass. 01776. The Newsletter reserves the right to comment on all letters published.)*

*(That turns us around the corner again. Remember, keep those cards and letters coming. This is your column. It belongs to you, so put those ballpoints in motion.)*

Golf Chairman	Educational Chairman	Newsletter Chairman	Past President
BRIAN COWAN Robbins Way Harwich, Mass. Phone 432-9041 Club Affiliation Eastward Ho Country Club	LARRY BUNN 145 Dedham Street Canton, Mass. 02021 Phone 828-0467 Club Affiliation Blue Hill Country Club	THOMAS SCHOFIELD 290 North Road Sudbury, Mass. 01776 Phone 443-3712 Club Affiliation Maynard Country Club	ROBERT GRANT CGCS 22 Patricia Road Sudbury, Mass. 01776 Phone 443-2671 Club Affiliation Brae Burn Country Club

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Golf Course Superintendents Association

OF NEW ENGLAND, INC.

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