

NEWSLETTER



NOVEMBER
~~OCTOBER~~ 1974



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.

TURNING 50 AND STILL GOING STRONG

It had to start...as most things, including the earth, do...with a creator. In this instance, there were two. Mr. Thomas Fahey and Mr. Alex Bryce, at the time "greenskeepers" respectively at the Winchester and Belmont Springs Country Clubs, looked around them and concluded that their profession needed some organization.

And it remained for these two gentlemen to walk the golfing grounds of Greater Boston to sound out their brethren. They knocked on the doors of maintenance buildings (although most were called barns in those days) and sought the feelings of others dedicated to the goal of bringing the best possible playing conditions to the golf-playing populace.

The response was overwhelming. So, it was decided to conduct a meeting during which an organizational arrangement could be studied and made ready for acceptance. From this meeting evolved a dinner-rap session at Cotrelle's Restaurant in Boston. The date was February 25, 1924. On that night 41 "greenskeepers" attended the dinner and participated in the discussion. Officers were elected, a constitution adopted and the Golf Course Superintendents Association of New England was born.

Only then it was called the "Greenskeepers Club of New England." It held firm to that title, too. But eventually, as the term "greenskeeper" became obsolete, the new organizational name was presented to and accepted by the membership.

The occasion of that first thrust for recognition of the superintendent and the accompanying goals to improve all facets of the profession for the betterment of golf will be marked with a 50th year anniversary party on November 1st at the Lantana Restaurant, Randolph, Mass. And it will be a genuine celebration for if any organization deserves to kick up its heels in noting its accomplishments, the NEGCSA fits the category. It has been a 50-year period of achievement, brotherhood, advancement, improvement and every other kind of performing accolade.

At the 25th anniversary of the organization, it should be noted that these achievements had been realized: Outdoor show of equipment. Publishing of its own professional paper (newsletter) on a regular monthly basis. Regular meetings in the interests of turf culture. Close cooperation with turf schools. Financial support of turf experimental work. Educational aids to members in the form of monthly meetings and special seminars. Programs promoting sound relations with the golf professional and club manager.

The list could run on endlessly. In recent years, the goals and ambitions of the association haven't strayed too much from that original concept established in the beginning 50 years ago. But down through the years the spirit of upgrading the opportunities available to members has been carried on by succeeding leaders of the group.

Presently, the rapport among the three functional key figures of the country club--superintendent, professional and manager--has never been at a more encouraging level. Through joint meetings, letters, tournaments and genuine respect for one or the other

profession, the three groups have developed into a working organization of their own. Each learns and often benefits from the experiences of the other. Indeed, the state of this relationship is most healthy.

Of course, technical advancement has always been a watchword of the association. In this vein, it has moved forward in offering members all information on the latest developments in equipment and the use thereof. Monthly meetings have been highlighted by visits from leading authorities in the turf cultural and turf equipment fields. There even has been an opportunity or two for members to acquaint themselves with the conditioning methods of superintendents representing other great courses in other great golfing countries.

The procession of accomplishments and deeds goes on...and they will continue to do so for the next 50 years and thensome. Happy birthday to us. It's truly a time to celebrate. See you at the Lantana.

Gerry Finn

I received a memo from the desk of
John Jones, but I didn't answer.
I never correspond with furniture.

Next Meeting...

NEEDHAM GOLF CLUB

NOV. 4, 1974

Golf any time after 10:00 A.M.

Buffet 5:00 P.M. sharp

Meeting after dinner

Golf Course Superintendents Association

BUDGETS UP UP AND AWAY

Let's see now: Fungicides...up 20 percent. Wetting agents (if you can get them)...up, from \$75 to \$105. Gas...up. Fuel...up.

That's it, Up, up and away!

In case you haven't heard, friends, the cost of everything is on a skyrocket pattern. And the rising cost index falls to rest at the door of the country club, for the budget talks are in session.

Budget time, Ah, the budget. It's that time of year when the golf course superintendent ups to the green chairman, that time of year when the green chairman ups to the grounds committee, the grounds committee ups to the board of governors...and the resultant concluding remark comes out: "I told you so in the first place."

That conclusion is familiar to all of us. It says in simple terms that the typical country club member wants (demands in some cases) the best possible playing conditions on the golf course. It has much more to do with than country club appearance. That appearance is secondary in this day and age. Naturally, the member would like to see his course saluted as "the best around." But his first reason for such a state is to be able to play that "best course around."

The two factors--the goal of having top playing conditions and the price you pay to achieve that goal-- walk hand in hand. And this year, more than ever, they are walking tall. Prices are up across the board. The member doesn't need the superintendent to advise him of this. He sees it every day in his own business, his personal tug with the economy.

One of the realistic side kickers to the making of the budget is the attitude of the membership. It must be fair in its thinking, although the decision on money amounts usually rests with its governing body. Whatever the case, the member must realize that he can't have the same golf course he played this year, next year for the same budget it cost in 1974.

True, the superintendent is always looking for more money to operate the course. He would be going against the grain of his

desires to give the member improved conditions, if he didn't seek a budget increase. In the past he has had to stifle his plea and get along with the old operating figure. This year it is impossible to do so. The cost of living is astonishing, and included in the cost of living is the cost of playing a round of golf.

The superintendent also knows the pinch of the times. In many budgets this year, capital expense for new machinery will be kept at a ridiculous minimum. The superintendent, in addition to being diligent, also is practical. He realizes this is no time to go off on a buying binge in order to streamline his equipment. Instead of replace, it will be repair.

This, then, brings up another budgetary eyebrow or two. If equipment is to be repaired rather than replaced, the superintendent will require compensation in the form of additional manpower to have the repair work completed. Right now his mechanical wing is kept busy with the normal flow of refurbishing chores through the winter. If the refurbishing is to be doubled and thensome, more hands will be needed to do the job.

In the long run, though, the saving will be there. Allowing for some problems with obtaining replacement parts, the cost of labor involved in repair will fall lower than the cost involved in replacing equipment. So, the country club can gain in this area.

For all practical purposes the country club should expect to absorb an overall increase of 20 percent in the budget. This falls in line with the average increase in material of 20 percent. Labor, which comprises a strong share of the operations outlay, will go up at least 10 percent. And, all along, there will be the underlying factor that materials will continue on the upward trend in price after the budget has been finalized.

Thus, the country club must fall in line with the rest of the country. It must realize its golf course condition follows the doctrine of an old adage, "You get what you pay for."

Gerry Finn



Anybody who's relaxed these days,
is probably quite nervous about it.

Directions to Needham Golf Club

From Route 128. Take exit 57
(Great Plains Ave.). Head west
towards Needham. Take fourth left,
which is Green St. Club is on right.

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SOUND OFF

(The animal kingdom, the super-future and all the rest of the ships at sea come storming onto the Sound Off scene this month. The action is always hot and heavy here, if not hilarious at times. This feature is for and by the reader. It gives him the opportunity to air his views on any golf subject. The ground rules are simple. Letters should be to the point without too much wearing verse. They should be funneled to Newsletter Mail Bag, 290 North Road, Sudbury, Mass. 01776. The Newsletter reserves the right to comment on all letters published.)

"Recently, I read a couple of articles in the Newsletter in which life in the 21st century was depicted. I found them interesting, to say the least. Of course, some of the imagination stretched by writer Gerry Finn might have bridged that canyon Evel Knievel attempted to negotiate last month. Anyway, some of his predictions dazzled me.

"I have a few ideas of my own as to what we, as superintendents and individuals, are likely to come upon in the year 2,000 and beyond. Right at the top of my list is the contribution of solar heating to the world. I can see that it will be a positive factor, what with the extended run on the energy crisis driving scientists and inventors in the direction of a practical solar heating system.

"Energy also enters my 2,000 A.D. picture. And maybe this sounds like that stretchy imagination again. But I see the day when power in this country will be derived from windmills. They will be of complex design. . . sophisticated, yet simple.

"The water supply will come under consideration, too. The construction of massive filtering systems for our ponds will be a part of the future. And, in keeping with the environs of the superintendent, I can see the day when he taps sewage as his main source of water for irrigation. The water will come from sewage, sent through a processing system which will make it applicable for irrigation.

The above prediction I consider of major importance to the goals of the golf world. If anything, the preservation of well-conditioned golf courses is in jeopardy through the threat of a dwindling supply of the resources necessary to effect good grooming of them.

"Also you can look for spray rigs operated on a cushion of air in your travels through the year 2,000. I would also guess that golf carts might use the same theory but the noise factor might be such to rule out the air-cushion application here.

"In the case of the latter, I would only hope that golfers would be walking more. . . by necessity, if nothing else. Perhaps certain shortages in the golf cart area may be a blessing in surprise. They could lengthen the life of the golf course and perhaps have some bearing in prlonging the life of the golfer through exposure to much-needed exercise.

"That's 2,000 A.D. -- as I see it."

LEON ST. PIERRE
Longmeadow, Mass.

"Several weeks ago, while I was playing golf with a friend, we were interrupted at the top of our backswing -- no less -- by loud unruly sounds coming from a nearby tree. Perched high in one of the branches was a huge bird which we suspected to be a chicken hawk.

"The noise was coming from three or four smaller birds -- they looked to be some form of sparrow -- who were trying to drive the hawk from the tree. The noise was so loud that even passing motorists stopped to see what all the commotion was about. The smaller birds would swoop down on the hawk and the scene took on the appearances of a World War II dogfight in which fighter planes were attacking bombers.

"Our first reaction was to cheer for the fighter plane guys. And they responded with enough 'strafing' action to drive the hawk out of the tree and off in a faraway direction. And when they pursued the big bird to make sure he knew his place, we all (motorists included) felt relieved.

"Now, I learn we were cheering for the wrong side. I hear that birds of prey (like the chicken hawk) are protected by law which prohibits the shooting of them. And it's said they are an asset to nature. How come?"

RODNEY CLARK
Southwick, Mass.

You certainly were cheering for the wrong side, Rodney. Birds of prey serve as control agents for golf course pests. . . especially those of the rodent family. Hip-hip horray for the hawk!

"I've read about animal stores in some of your issues. I have one for you, though, that isn't funny.

"On some of the courses in our area, there has been incidence of running dogs making a nuisance of themselves and in some cases even becoming a menace to players and course workers by attacking them.

"I'm told some of the dogs live nearby and their presence on the golf course is known by their owners. There have been attempts to keep them off and a few golfers have threatened to start wearing sidearms if their well being continues to be threatened by these dogs.

"I'm writing this in an attempt to reach those dog owners who might have pets running loose on the golf course and getting into trouble. My purpose is twofold -- I am a dog lover myself and would hate to see any harm come to one, but I am also a human being and can appreciate a situation where a dog is a threat to my well being."

GERALD KANE
Windsor, Conn.

Naturally, dogs can't read "no trespassing" signs, Gerald. But we assume their owners can. Ruff-ruff!

(That puts the lid on things for this time. Remember, your cards and letters make this feature tick. Let's hear from you.)

All we can add to this is the hope that all of us are there to see Leon welcome in these predictions when 2,000 rolls around!

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OF NEW ENGLAND, INC.

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