

NEWSLETTER

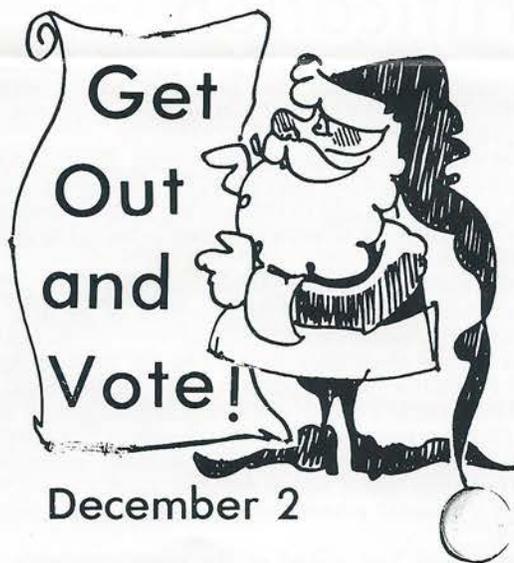
DECEMBER 1975



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.



December 2

Here it is just one year from that infamous day of New England Golf Course Superintendents Association apathy. . . that day when four or so tables of bridge showed for the annual meeting.

And here it is approaching us again.

This session promises to be no cut 'n dried event. Just as was the case a year ago there is certain to be presented new ideas and proposals to strengthen and increase interest in the organization. And there just could be something offered to instigate a floor fight. One never knows.

Of course, the annual meeting is a must. . . whether there is added flavor on the menu or not. It is that one time in the association's life when decisions are made, decisions which could affect the course of action to be taken for the many years ahead.

And, naturally, it is that time when the members get a chance to throw a voice into the situation with their vote. A new slate of officers will be proposed (giving it a change of guard look, by the way) for the acceptance of or rejection by the membership. It should be remembered that floor nominations are in order. So, anyone who doesn't like the handwriting on the ballot can make some of his own.

There is a possibility that the membership will be faced with one of the toughest problems surfacing at an annual meeting in many a turnout. It has been brought to the attention of some that the Newsletter could hang in the balance of electing someone to chair its operation.

A phase-out of same has been whispered about, leaving the only link between members the cold visible stare of the monthly post card. In other words, it soon would pass that a mailing relationship might very well be the forewarning of a complete breakdown in the organization of the association. . . and perhaps extinction.

Such a possibility exists, too. Needless to say there are many in the group who wouldn't be turned one way or the other if the NEGSCA were to meet an untimely death. And maybe it is in their direction that this message is cast. Those self-appointed shut-ins are the reason why articles of this type are necessary. Someone in some way must move them into coming back to the flock and becoming active members.

You may remember that the total attendance for last year's annual meeting was 19. Weather was not a factor, although snow flurries might have scared a few from making the trip. . . however long it is.

At the time proposals involving friends and other associates of the profession were introduced and but for the presence of calm and collected officers changes in the organizational setup could have been made with a minority turnout blessing them.

It was during the "annual", too, that some lively verbal exchanges on various subjects kept the honorable 19 in their places long after the usual break-up hour. And, for some peculiar reason, the following monthly meeting drew some 60 members to the "battleground".

It matters some, then, just what kind of meeting shapes up as to the number of people willing to attend it. And, certainly, this year's annual get-together promises to provide that kind of action afternoon.

Thus, it is in the best interests of the individual member as well as the body of members, that everyone make the scene this time. Get out and vote. . . and participate!

Gerry Finn

NEXT MEETING

Annual Meeting



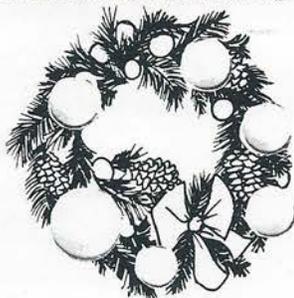
Date- December 2, 1975
Times- 11:00 Directors Meeting
12:00 Lunch on your own
1:00 Regular meeting followed by elections of officers
Place- Holiday Inn; Newton, Mass.

NOTE

President Curran would like a report from each committee chairman.

Golf Course Superintendents Association

Best Wishes for



a Happy Holiday

Four Years of Certification

A recent piece in the Wall Street Journal brought to mind the institution of the certification program of the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America.

It just so happens that a certification program was initiated among the nation's medical doctors about the same time the GCSAA came onto the scene with its version. And in each instance, the venture appears to be showing favorable signs.

Medical observers, passing judgment on the "certification for family practice" program, are enthused over the fact that so many doctors are tuned into it. Perhaps the one extra special benefit from the program is the continuing education of those who attempt to become certified. Indeed, one of the aims of certification is to make sure that doctors keep up with new developments in medicine.

In the field of golf course superintendents, the response hasn't been as overwhelming. But it shows signs of gradually being accepted and becoming a fixture in raising the standards of the profession.

A check with GCSAA educational director Bill Knoop's office shows that 13 percent of eligible certification candidates have passed the rigid test and have the old "sheepskin" to hang on the wall.

The breakdown in participation in the program is not conclusive since a marked upswing is being experienced between the fourth and fifth years of operation or between 1975 and the part of the year already spent.

The program was initiated in September of 1971 and from that date to a corresponding date on 1972, 32 candidates passed the

certification examination. So, the program had a natural beginning with only a mere handful getting passing grades. But still, it was promising.

The second year saw a pronounced jump in number of graduates. The overall number increased to 97 for a net gain of 65. There were 60 more in the fold in 1973 but the number trailed off somewhat in '74 when only 31 were accepted to bring the total to 185.

The count still goes on this year. At last checkpoint the total of certified had soared to 244 for an increase of 59 over the preceding year's figures. However, it should be remembered that this is only a partial accounting for '75. At the present rate it appears that the number of new grads could hit the 100 mark.

There have been made a couple of surveys in relationship to the GCSAA certification program. The first involved the certified super, themselves. It was, in effect, a personal assessment. Some of the responses told of higher salaries, more respect from members and a general overall improvement in the certified super's status.

The second survey was aimed at the superintendent's employer, the chairman of the golf board, green committee and what have you. The response here was summed up in the fact that club members have become more aware of the complexities involved in the work arrangement of the super. A definite recognition factor was surfaced with the implementation of the certification program and promises to become more prominent as the program continues.

It is too early in the game to come to a clear-cut assessment of the program. However, from the isolated cases involved it is apparent that certification one day will become an asset to both the superintendent and the club which hires him. It definitely is a plus in the ever-increasing strength in identity the super is experiencing.

Gerry Finn

SLATE OF OFFICERS

President-Wayne Zoppo
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Second Vice President- Ronald Kirkman
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Treasurer-Don Hearn
Finance Chairman-Al Auger
Golf Chairman-Brian Cowan
Educational Chairman-Pete Coste
Newsletter Chairman-

NOTE

Due to expanding responsibilities of my business and personal reasons, I will not be able to accept the nomination of newsletter chairman for the coming year. Anyone interested in this position, please contact Bob Grant.

Editor

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Sound Off

(All right, get ready for another salvo of orchids, onions and maybe the whole garden from our readers. This is Sound Off, the monthly taking of the golfing pulsebeat, presented by those who play or tend the sport. The rules for participation are simple. Simply get whatever item you wish spread to the rest of the readership down on a piece of paper, stuff it into a stamped envelope and send it to Newsletter Mail Bag, 290 North Road, Sudbury, Mass. 01776. Names and addresses should be included but will be withheld upon request. The Newsletter reserves the right to comment on all published letters.)

"Recently I got hold of a British newspaper in which there was an interesting article about an entire superintendent's course conditioning crew being fired after they staged a strike.

"The article went on to say that 'this was the first ever strike in greenkeeper history.' Furthermore, it revealed that the crew, including the head man, was appealing the sacking because of unfair labor practices or some other official language.

"The dispute arose over what the superintendent called poor pay and poor working conditions. In his plea for justice he pointed out that the course greenkeeper's barn (at a place called Grange Park) was a veritable death trap with a single wooden span holding up the roof. It is in the barn where his men and himself eat their lunches.

"Since I seldom get to see British papers, I was wondering if you people had heard of the incident and whatever became of the appeal?"

HARRY PEARSON
Wilbraham, Mass.

Haven't heard a thing about it, Harry. But it's an interesting case. Makes one wonder, too, what would happen if the entire super body went out on strike. . . like even the doctors are doing nowadays.

"The unusual warm weather (early November style) as I write this certainly has prolonged the golf season for those of us who have to depend strictly on the summer months to enjoy the game.

"With it, our course is enjoying more play on November weekends than during those sticky hot days of August. I was interested if the carryover of summer weather actually hinders or helps the superintendent in trying to get ready for the start of the next golf season which actually is only a few months away (April).

"It seems to me that you guys must be sick and tired of seeing golfers beating their way across the greens and over the fairways by this time of year. I know I would be in your situation."

JAMES CALDWELL
Somers, Conn.

The super really isn't that much of a stickler for proper order of season, Jim. In fact, he doesn't look upon the golf course as his holy domain. . . as some folks think. And his present season doesn't end until the golf course closes.

"I've noticed more than ever that many of the golfers I play with are aware of the certain types of grasses used in seeding greens, tees and fairways.

"It's probably a sign of the times since golfers and most of the other people who are interested in the participation of sports seem to make themselves aware of what goes into keeping a course in shape or making sure the right kind of surface is used on a tennis or paddle court.

"And as we learn further about these things, some of us are beginning to appreciate more the work that goes into keeping all these facilities in top playing condition. I used to think that all you people had to do was turn a spade and flip on a faucet in order to keep the grass growing tall and green. I did until I tried to put in a lawn of my own and keep it looking 'best in neighborhood'. Now I know there's much more to it. It's not all that easy."

STEVE MCCARTHY
Worcester, Mass.

You must have read that eye-opener here last month, Steve. You know, the one where the guy figured it would take him over \$400,000 to keep a golf course in shape if he projected his personal lawn costs there.

"Just hope some of my colleagues look upon the old budget time with the idea we have to keep calling to our chairmen the fact that our efforts require the embellishment of working equipment and chemical products to make the whole process of course conditioning feasible.

"In these times, when every word in a conversation usually starts out with something referring to cutting back or pinching this or saving here, we run the risk of undoing all the good by succumbing to the theory we can operate on a peeled-back budget.

"So, we just have to become salesmen in the hope of convincing our bosses that cutting back the golf course budget is the worst possible thing a country club can do at this moment. We have proof in the steady increase in play and the return to the club in lieu of other vacations.

"We have ammunition to work for increases rather than cut-backs. So, let's keep punching with the pitch that the golf course still remains the country club member's best buy. And it's that way because he's willing to spend a few dollars to keep it the best."

NAME WITHHELD
Club Withheld

Oh, budget time. Let's pray for logic by all on the subject. And logically speaking, we all need an increase!

(That wraps it up for now. Remember to keep those cards and letters coming. They are the backbone of this feature.)

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OF NEW ENGLAND, INC.

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