



*Golf Course Superintendents Association*

OF NEW ENGLAND, INC.

JULY 1975



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

## More Than Just A Job

There is a healthy sign gathering momentum among the nation's small army of "working naturalists" -that group which takes to the golf course each summer as part of the seasonal labor force. The sign is refreshing since it points to a sudden interest in what is being attempted and accomplished by golf course superintendents.

One superintendent, recently pleased by several comments from club members on the excellent condition of their golf course, epitomized this new surge of interest by course workers. "Everyone who picks up a shovel or pushes a mower here really takes pride in what we're trying to do," he told those same members. "I suppose it has something to do with being able to contribute to living things. Anyway, most of my help is just as eager to keep the course in shape as I am."

The same super also reports that his summer help are not clock-watchers. "You know how it usually is with kids who are just out to make a few bucks during the summer," he added. "They can't wait to hear that 'five o'clock whistle.' But our people are more concerned with finishing a job they've started earlier in the day than waiting for the regular time to quit."

It could be the influence of the times, Since most of the summer help is from the newer generation, that influence is apparent. "The young people of today have known or heard about nothing except death and killing things," another super explained. "That's why there's this big interest in raising plants and working backyard gardens. These kids like to think they're part of a project that promotes living things rather than one which destroys them."

Many of the year's part-time help are right up there in educational letters. There are graduate engineers, biology majors and the like. And their natural tendency to seek answers to things they encounter on the golf course has turned some of the lunch hours there into impromptu classrooms.

"I'll bet I spend at least 15 minutes a day in little rap sessions with my workers," another super disclosed. "It's kind of good for me, too. I find myself brushing up on what goes out there during the growing stages of the golf course. It's educational for all of us."

The labor market also has contributed to this new tone of involvement by seasonal help. College students, especially, have turned to the golf course as a source of employment for the summer. For one thing, the old plush jobs are difficult to find and for another, the very nature of a golf course job is inviting to an inquiring mind.

"Some of my help are studying botany and other related subjects," the same super continued. "In school, most of the time they are working with textbooks. When they get to the golf course, they can see those book words in action. That's why they're getting wrapped up in things here."

Of course, too, there also surfaces the fact that enthusiastic help identifies with the finished product. Some superintendents tell that their workers get more satisfaction out of seeing a flawless green than some of the members do playing such a green.

This new commentary on the part-time help isn't confined to youth, either. Some "regular" part-timers (older people who supplement retirement incomes with golf course jobs each year) are picking up the same attitudes. Perhaps, they also have had enough of death and destruction on their minds 24 hours a day and they combat it by contributing to the preservation of living things in the form of golf course plant growth.

Whatever, the sign is a welcome one for the superintendent and those who benefit by the interest-rise. To these surveyors of troubled times, breathing and encouraging to life beats destroying it every time.

Gerry Finn

### Next Meeting Super Championship

JULY 10, 1975

HALIFAX COUNTRY CLUB

Directors Meeting	10:00 AM
Regular Meeting	11:00 AM
Buffet	12 Noon
Golf	12:30

Directions: From Route 24 take W. Bridgewater exit. Follow Route 106 for 10 miles. Club is on the right.

From Route 3 take Route 3A exit in Kingston. This runs into Route 106. Follow for 10 miles. Club is on the left.

**NOTE:**

Tournaments are restricted to members only.

# Golf Course Superintendents Association

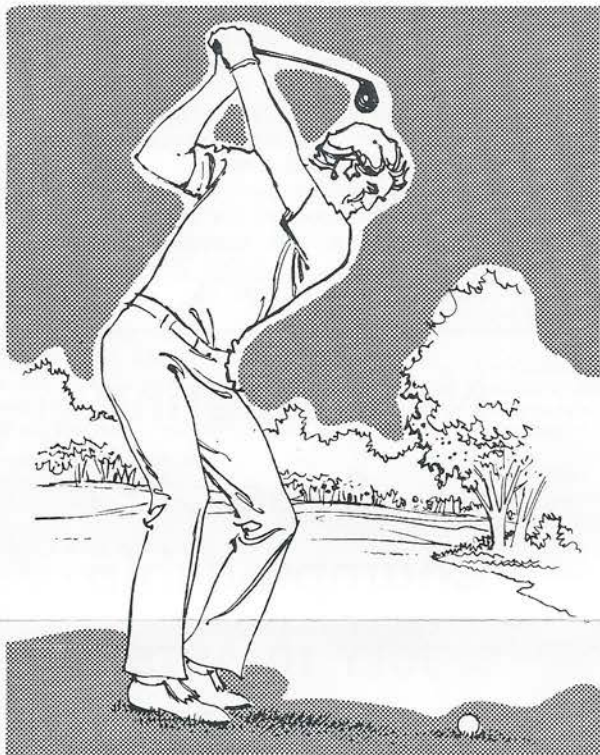
## Golf On A Drawing Board . . .

George C. Thomas, Jr. has written an interesting book.

Take away the date of publication and some of the cost figures quoted and "Golf Architecture in America" is almost as modern as the leisure suit or the graphite shaft. And... it was written in 1927!

Thomas' background is sketchy. Somehow, he imparts the assumption that he has been a club member in various parts of the country. And it is through his association with the game as a club member and player that he was drawn to its drawing board as an architect.

Most of Thomas' actual designing of courses occurred in California where he was the mind behind two municipal layouts in Los Angeles as well as the nationally known Ojai course in Ventura. However, along the way he had stops in the Eastern section of the United States where he touched and worked on such outstanding golf landmarks as Myopia, Essex, Sunny Brook and Pine Valley. Some of the influence on his blueprints and thought process in design come from such as Donald Ross, Hugh Wilson, Horrace Leeds, William Bullivant and George Crump.



Thomas' approach is very up to date, though. His handling of the great debate between distance and character reflects the design of recently completed courses. His architectural religion follows the teachings of Ross who is noted as an exceptional example of being able to join beauty and utility into perfect marriage in the layout of a championship course.

The author also recognizes the need for three courses in one -- made adaptable to playing proportions of championship, regular and easy with strategic formation of teeing areas. There the courses can be arranged according to the needs and aspirations of the individual player. . . just as it is on most of our better layouts today.

Thomas lends himself to retaining the natural look of the land, where possible, "The contours of our tees, of our hazards, of our greens, of our rough and of our fairways should melt into the land surrounding them," he says. "And should appear as having always been present."

One of Thomas' prevailing themes throughout his approach to the design of the golf course is the offering of as much playing strategy to the golfer as possible. Always, he claims, the golfer should be presented options related to consequent penalties in the playing of a hole. His theory is the severer the risk, the greater reward and in keeping with that . . . the harsher the penalty. Consequently, he suggests a sensible blend of character (hazards) and length to golf courses. A perfect blend of each is what makes the outstanding course.

Thomas goes off the modern track only because of a relation in time. That would be in construction and maintenance costs. His total cost for the building of a 6500-yard course seems amazing in this day and age. But in 1927 his estimate was \$76,000. Included in that figure was a watering system at an outlay of \$24,000 and a \$20,000 allocation for six months upkeep of the course -- to include cutting, care of greens and fairways, top dressing, fertilizing and other such necessary work as weeding, rock picking etc.

A typical 1927 Thomas budget also pops the eyeballs. In California districts, where the course is played the entire year and irrigated regularly for seven months, the average yearly budget ran between \$25,000 and \$30,000. In that year the average cost for ordinary labor was placed at \$4.00 to \$4.25 a day. "Roughly speaking," he advises, "it should take 20 men to care for the average 18-hole course properly."

Away from these "ridiculous" figures, though, one could pick Thomas out of the 1920's and drop him into the '70's of today and his theories would apply in substance to the present needs and desires of the golfer.

His one favorite line--to be savored by the golf course superintendent--has to be with priorities. "The golf course holds priority over all other facets of the country club", he insists. "Its avenue should be laid out first; the others after."

Gerry Finn

## Super Chairman Results

First net - Arthur Washburn & Roy Macdonald  
 Second net - Ken Mooridian & Bob Phillips  
 Third net - Bob Mucciarone & Fred Clapp  
 Fourth net - Dr. Troll & D. Suochak  
 Fifth net - J. Gerrasi & D. Lynch  
 Sixth net - D. Hearn & J. Perry

First gross - T. Carangels & L. Gregory  
 Second gross - M. O'Kelly & B. Willmont  
 Third gross - H. Chelmes & E. Wieloch  
 Individual - Narry Sperandio  
 (Narry had a hole in one) Congratulations

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# Sound Off

(Here we are, right back at the old baiting board. This is Sound Off, the monthly feature that's designed to guarantee every reader a piece of subject to which he or she can relate. Topics here are free-lance. Writers may expound on any golf subject; playing, promoting or preserving the game in its many forms. Ground rules are simple. Names and addresses of contributors are mandatory, although some will be withheld upon request. All flak should be directed to Newsletter Mail Bag, 290 North St., Sudbury, Mass. 01776. The Newsletter reserves the right to comment on any or all of the letters published in this space.)

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"I've played several courses in our area and seem to come to the conclusion that conditions on them are the best in many years.

"It does take a lot of knowledge, experience and patience by the golf course superintendent to get a course in shape. However, it has to be partially because of the weather that courses shape up better in some periods than they do in others.

"I noticed that the month of May was unusually warm for that time of year. And probably it helped in the growing of grasses to get our courses as lush so early in the year. Am I correct?"

JAMES CURTAIN  
Holyoke, Mass.

May certainly was a favorable "growth" month, Jim. Put these figures in your statistical bank: The average daily temperature was 77, some seven degrees above normal. We had four days in the 90-degree range and the average low was only 52. Precipitation totalled 3.16 inches which may have varied somewhat from community to community.

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"Recently, the acts of vandalism hit a new high in our area. On three different courses, motorcyclists put their tires to work on greens and made a mess of them. In some instances, the damage incurred resulted in repair costs exceeding \$1,000.

"I can't for the life of me understand why this destruction takes place. I only can conclude that people, who do this type of thing, must have something mentally wrong with them. I have seen such damage happen almost year after year and am amazed that nothing can be done about it.

"Further inquiry leads me to believe that the concentration of such unnatural behavior in one area means it could be the work of the same cyclist or group of cyclists. If only these culprits could be caught and given a lesson.

"If you print this letter, please don't use my name. Thank you."

Name Withheld  
Address Withheld

One of the ironies of this situation is that nothing happens to these "culprits", even when they are caught. What we need is a new set of laws and vigorous enforcement of them to discourage this vandalism.

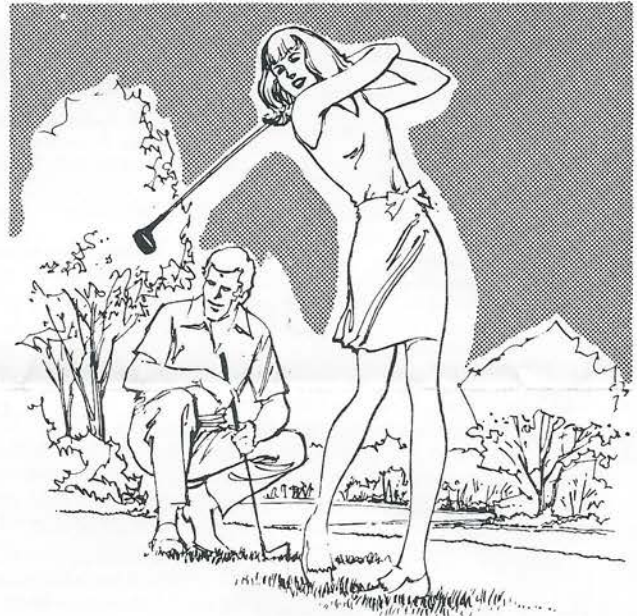
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"I see where you people have been given some tips on the conditioning of a golf course for tournaments. This reminds me that the old four-ball or member-guest season is in full swing by this time which has to put some pressure on the superintendent.

"There seems to be an increasing number of these events on the calendar every year and it must give the superintendent reason to believe somebody's out to get him with his fertilizer dragging.

"Are there any special things the super must do in order to keep his membership happy at four-ball time?"

VERNON SCHUTT  
Oxford, Mass.



All the super has to do is transform his course into Augusta National for four days. Unfortunately, no one's invented a kit to make an instant Augusta National at this writing.

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"There have been given many explanations for the missing of a so-called 'easy putt'. They follow:

"The putter (not the man who putts) is off line.

"The putter (the man who putts) didn't line it up right.

"Someone sneezed in the middle of the back stroke.

"A glare of sunlight bounced off the blade causing the player to experience a brief spell of blindness.

"The greens weren't mowed properly and the cup not placed correctly.

"Which is the feasible explanation?"

CARSON WALTERS  
Leeds, Mass.

Every one, except the last!

\*\*\*\*

"Is it true that golf course superintendents pray for rain, so that they can take the day off and go fishing or maybe even take in a movie?"

"Every time it rains I don't see anyone on our golf course, so I just assume you guys close up shop and take some time off. I'm not knocking it, mind you. But I was just curious."

JOHN ALWARD  
Pownal, Vt.

Rainy days are work days, John. With the expanded responsibilities placed on the superintendent, there are countless other jobs awaiting him and his crew when they're not able to operate on the golf course. The only thing the rain does to the super's life is make the grass grow (if it arrives on a sensible schedule).

\*\*\*\*

(That brings us to the end of another session with the reader. Keep those cards and letters coming. They always are welcome. . . good, bad or otherwise.)

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*tutors to the Lawrence S. Dickinson Scholarship Fund*

# NEWSLETTER

*Golf Course Superintendents Association*

OF NEW ENGLAND, INC.

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