

NEWSLETTER

November 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.

More Than Just A Lawn Service

A shocking revelation has been unearthed by Herb Graffis, the eminent senior editor of *Golfdom* magazine. While researching the cost of his personal lawn maintenance program for the year, Herb discovered that if his figure per acre were spent on his country club course conditioning arrangement the budget for one season would be \$467,543.60.

Now, that's an astounding outlay. What superintendent wouldn't relish the opportunity to start with more than four hundred grand in the till before he sweeps one green?

The reason behind Graffis' unusual tinkering with figures is elementary. He wanted to emphasize the fact that supers actually are giving country club members a bargain in keeping the nation's fairways and greens playable. He also had in the back of his mind an instrument of awakening for those golfers who are unaware of the amount of time, expertise, planning and money that go into the maintenance program of a course. Alas, some people still think that the course maintains itself.

In light of this meaningful projection, it still is a mystery why a number of clubs and public layouts are looking to a slash in the maintenance budget for the coming year. A quick survey shows that clubs feeling the pinch of an uncertain economy are looking for relief from a source sorely in need of an increase in operating funds, rather than a cutback.

Strange are the ways of certain country clubs.

Some actually attempt to pay Peter while cheating Paul. It has been learned that maintenance budgets face the cutback knife because of failures in other phases of the country club operational program. If, for example, the club dining room loses "X" number of dollars the deficit is made up by slashing budgets in other

areas. Unfortunately, the first well to be tapped is the most important of the entire setup — the funds required to keep the course in as good a playing condition as possible.

Not only have these clubs set the maintenance budget as the target for cutback in the coming year, there has been evidence that some have taken upon themselves the audacity to slash budgets in the middle of the season!

One of the areas of the superintendent's conditioning process hard hit in this manner is his labor pool. There have been instances when summer help has been cut from the payroll a full month in advance of the normal labor force reduction date.

"It's a shame that this has to happen," one superintendent states. "Obviously, the sudden reduction in help makes it necessary for me to change my maintenance program. And, obviously, the course suffers. You cannot complete the job of two men with one pair of hands. The result is a slowdown in my timetable and eventual damage to the course."

Another horrendous result of mid-season labor slashes is the effect such cutbacks has on the future. If a superintendent draws his summer help from a pool of experienced workers (college students and retired persons are usually its makeup), there is a good chance those people will think twice before signing on when another summer rolls around. Some of these workers base their own lifestyle budgets on the money they earn in the summer months. They can't afford to take the chance they will be relieved of duty at the height of their earning power period.

The maintenance budget, then, is under attack again. It sometimes is ironic, too, that a superintendent doing a good job can suffer because of his efficiency. The average golfer sees the condition of the course thriving and automatically suggests that the same level of condition can be maintained with a reduction in the financial means at the super's command.

They should make note of Graffis' deductions and realize that the job the superintendent does is more than just a lawn service.

Gerry Finn

NEXT MEETING HOPEDALE C.C.

NOV. 4, 1975

TIMES	Directors Meeting	10:00 a.m.
	Regular Meeting	10:30 a.m.
	Golf	11:00 a.m.
	Dinner	5:00 p.m.

DIRECTIONS From Route 495 take Milford exit. This is Route 109 and 16. Go through Milford into Hopedale then left on Route 16 at Gulf station. Club is 1 mile down the road.

CHRISTMAS PARTY FRIDAY, DECEMBER 5, 1975 CHESTNUT HILL COUNTRY CLUB



DEALERS COCKTAIL HOUR 7 - 8
DINNER & DANCING 8 - 12

Any friend of the association wishing to sponsor the Cocktail Hour please notify Pete Coste at 566-0240 or 359-7247.

Golf Course Superintendents Association

It's For The Real Birds Too

Welcome to the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds.

The British-based organization is one of the fastest-growing groups of its kind. At latest count it had enlisted the aid and interest of over 170,000 bird fanciers, lovers and just plain watchers. Its purpose is to encourage conservation of wild birds by developing public interest in their beauty and place in nature.

One of its wings, so to speak, is a publication — naturally called "Birds". Through the written word it has spread the gospel of RSPB and enlisted responses in letter form from a number of people. Occasionally, the magazine tosses out a loaded question or statement to get the pulse beat of the populace.

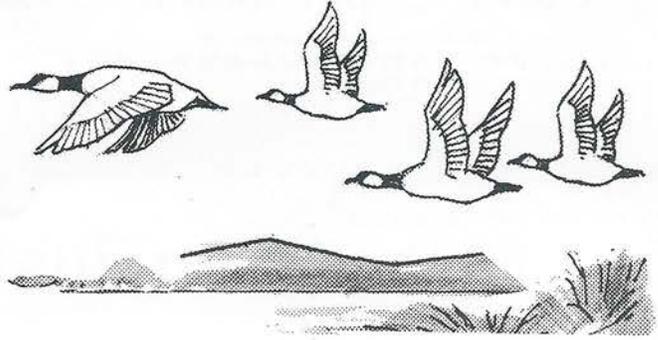
One of the more interesting issues surfaced earlier this year when a letter was printed criticizing the growth of golf courses because of the adverse effect it had on the preservation of habitat for birds such as the skylark, wood warbler, nightingale, yellowhammer, whitethroat and others familiar to the British Isles' scene.

The letter brought immediate rebuttal from golf lovers who, in turn by their reaction, revealed that they also were bird lovers.

One gentleman wrote:

"I would suggest that the golf course is one of the last havens for wildlife of all kinds. The courses are patrolled only by the golfers and the greenkeeper's staff and since the single aim of the player is to keep to the straight and narrow, the scrub and trees are seldom, if ever, visited. The only occasions on which this does not apply are perhaps public holidays when there may be some trespassing.

"I and my friends play at 7 a.m. in the summer and as early as the light will allow in winter and I can assure you that the sounds and sights of birds to be seen and heard are abundant and beautiful.



"I appreciate the fact that construction of new courses might disturb the normal existence of wildlife. But, in most cases, their architects realize the value of leaving substantial areas untouched or transplanting them so that they may become havens themselves."

Another writer unloads:

"The heavily used public course at which I play seems to my untrained eye to hold a selection and number of birds equal to equivalent farmland. Skylarks in particular are quite abundant.

"Many odd corners of a golf course remain out of reach of the wildest stroke and therefore provide undisturbed habitat for birds. In any case I have noticed that birds on golf courses become less nervous of people than is usual, no doubt due to being ignored by preoccupied golfers. I have seen a pair of magpies nesting within six yards of a green."

The presentation of the above letters and corresponding mention of the RSPB movement is noteworthy here because of the part our own golf courses are playing in the preservation of wildlife. Likewise, it should be brought to the attention of all that the golf course superintendent (or most of the breed) is a bird lover and environmentalist in his own right.

Recent tales from supers and country club members in reference to the concern shown on the course for the well being of certain wildlife should emphasize that the golf course has a strong and meaningful place in the makeup of nature.

There are birdies on the course and there are birds on it, too. It appears the two are compatible, one more reason to raise the contention that golf is nature's very own game.

Gerry Finn

NOTICE

The USGA Greens Section Educational Conf. is to be held at the Biltmore Hotel, Madison Ave. and 43rd St., New York City on Friday, Jan. 30, 1976.

PRO-SUPT. TOURNAMENT RESULTS



GROSS

73 - John Dolan-Bluik
 74 - Peter Brusis-Ryan
 75 - M. Hermanson-Debie
 77 - Mark Taylor-Mellon
 77 - Dave Barber-Browning
 77 - R Marcus-Samson

NET

81 - 66 Bob Johnston-Dirico
 78 - 68 N. Mucciarone-Doyle
 83 - 68 Frank Santos-Madson
 77 - 69 Don Hearn-Browning
 77 - 70 L. Blodgett-Shea
 77 - 71 A. Washburn-Peterson

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Sound Off

(Those words of wisdom are about to flow once more. This is Sound Off, the vehicle which runs wild each month in the Newsletter. The feature is for the reader, who we hope, will become the writer and transfer his or her knowledge to all of us. The ground rules are simple. Letters must be accompanied by the name and address of the sender. In turn, the Newsletter will withhold either or both upon request. All letters should be sent to Newsletter Mail Bag, 290 North St., Sudbury, Mass. 01776. The Newsletter reserves the right to comment on all letters.)

"I couldn't help but recall that in a Newsletter I read about the club, it must have been a month or so ago, some startling figures were accumulated during the heavy rainfall we experienced this summer.

"It also was startling to me, being a novice in the art of growing grass, that rain sometimes can be a definite destructive force to the conditioning process on a golf course.

"When I was young and living on a farm, we were taught to pray for rain and sunshine. However, after seeing some of the rain that fell here, it would seem that many prayers were offered by someone.

"Was that big rainfall of summer that much of a bother to the golf course superintendent?"

R. G. CONNORS
Winthrop, Mass.

The rain probably made for one of the most testing seasons ever for the superintendent, although its fall varied. . . even from community to community. By the way, here are some new ones for you! The rainfall for September was 9.22 inches compared to a norm of 3.71 inches. On one day, it totalled 3.21 inches. So, the assault carried over into fall!

"I would appreciate the deletion of my name on this matter.

"Obviously, I am upset because of some recent criticism of the course at my club where I am the superintendent.

"Let me rephrase that a bit. The criticism didn't originate from the members at the club, but from a few outsiders who played the course in a member-guest tournament.

"I am irritated by it because I think the remarks are unfair in light of the circumstances that caused slight damage to a couple of our fairways during that period of wet wilt and rot when I was lucky the course wasn't washed away.

"The criticism got back to me in late September. Apparently, the players had seen the course at its worst, I mean patches of rotted turf here and there. I admit that at the time the course wasn't a national velvet advertisement.

"What irked me, though, was the fact that the course was in top condition most of the summer, returning to that state in September. I thought it might have been in the best shape ever. Then, because of a few people who played it once, the criticism came and really hurt.

"This is in no way offered to promote sympathy. Rather, it is intended to straighten out those golfers who take time to criticize a course when it is not at its peak of condition and are ignorant of the fact that it enjoyed marvelous condition most of the year."

NAME WITHHELD
Club Withheld

The so-called "guests" must be great members wherever they belong. But it's the same old story. The complaints come on loud and strong. The raves are mere whispers.

"Recently your Gerry Finn wrote about the increasing responsibilities of the golf course superintendent in regard to his overseeing the maintenance program of country club tennis courts. I agree with the fact presented but I am not quite clear as to the unusual tag placed on it. He wrote the article as if the superintendent was not supposed to serve the needs of all country club members.

"Perhaps there is a matter of interpretation present here. I am not at fault with the article so much as I am at fault with the assumption that the country club is for golfers only.

"With the increase in interest in tennis all over the world, it is only natural for tennis players to seek facilities and environment of their own choosing. Many country clubs have constructed additional tennis courts and some are offering memberships on a tennis-social basis.

"Therefore, I would assume that tennis members receive the same considerations and services that golfers do. This should include the service of the superintendent, too, shouldn't it?"

CRAIG JOHNSTON
Somers, Conn.

Your gripe should be with your club, Craig. It probably has added the responsibility of maintaining tennis courts to the superintendent without adding the means with which he can accomplish the job.

"I enjoy your Newsletter when I get a chance to read it.

"Anyway, I was interested in the feature about setting up a golf course for a tournament and some of the reaction by superintendents. It seems to me the welfare of the course should come before the welfare of a name professional's reputation. I wouldn't want to see our course ruined for the rest of the season just for the sake of watching a few birdies for four days."

PAUL JUSTUS
Quincy, Mass.

Then you agree with us, Paul. We think the same way.

(That puts the windup sign on things for this time. Remember to get into the swing of Sound Off. Your letters keep this feature going, so let's hear from you.)

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OF NEW ENGLAND, INC.

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