

NEWSLETTER

Golf Course Superintendents Association
OF NEW ENGLAND, INC.

March, 1978



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

Lure Of The Long Green

Such was the headline over a recent syndicated column in which the author extolled the profession of golf course superintendent as one which still has room for those young people about to embark on a career.

One of the rather interesting revelations was the fact that there are some 600 job openings in the field each year. . . this according to information gathered from the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America. Another encouraging statistic - one which should serve as an inspiration to supers everywhere - was the salary potential of the job. . . "as much as \$30,000 annually at major golf courses."

Whether the above figures appear to embrace the extreme or not, it's evident that the superintendent's profession is beginning to be established as one with much appeal to the modern generation. Not only have there been inquiries from young men, it now appears that women are showing more than passing interest in the field.

Most expert career advisors trace this increasing interest - from male and female alike - to the lure of the wide open spaces rather than the lure of the long green or monetary reward. The back to nature movement is characteristic of those students and their contemporaries who would rather work for less outdoors than be stuck in some stuffy office or cramped factory even though the financial returns are greater.

Obviously, that \$30,000 salary figure is out of sight for most of those people about to take up the course conditioning chase. In fact, it is a pie-in-the-sky amount for many veteran supers who still have to fight for a decent livelihood on those courses uninformed as to the true value of their experience and expertise.

There is a light at the end of the tunnel for the proven super, however. It appears that the practice of replacing highly paid seasoned superintendents with unproven novices at cutrate salaries is phasing itself out. Fortunately, the country club and public course executive boards have realized that there is no short cut or shortchanged route to top notch playing conditions.

Reports have leaked out on several New England courses who have reversed their field in thinking they could slice budgets by starting at the top with axing the proven superintendent in favor of an unqualified but come-cheap replacement. One particular course did a complete turnabout in condition in a matter of two years, just for the sake of saving a few thousand dollars in its super's salary.

That same course has jumped back on the right track now. In fact, it found out that a low-cost superintendent cost the budget more money in the long run. When several greens were lost and other damage discovered, the cost of repair and rehabilitation of grasses far exceeded the money "saved" in the changing of superintendents.

With developments such as these, perhaps the projected salaries for those about to enter the profession aren't that far off

line after all. The results of clubs going with untested supers also has to make for an improvement in the salary picture for the established members of the profession.

The career-pointing column did stress the need for extended educational requirements for the aspiring superintendent. In addition to the prescribed courses in turf management, it was suggested that the student take a few hours of business in order to be better prepared for the all-important tasks of drawing budgets and keeping records.

The golf course superintendent, then, is a member of a profession with a promising future. And the addition of those young people headed into the field proves the validity of the job. . . the importance it holds in all phases of golf. With the emphasis on expanded education for the newcomers, the golf course of the future can expect nothing other than outstanding playing conditions.

Gerry Finn

NOTICE

In order to keep Newsletter expenses down for the coming year, there will be no double post cards sent to the membership. These post cards used in the past for announcing the meeting dates and a return post card for your dinner reservation have become too expensive. Meeting dates will be announced in advance along with directions, time, place and the telephone number and/or address of host superintendent. It will be up to each member to make his own reservation. This will take only several minutes of your time and I'm sure we are all responsible people and are able to do this small task. Please have the courtesy to inform the host superintendent of your plans.

Thank you

HELP!

Ken Mooradian, golf chairman, is looking for a club to host the May meeting. If you would like to be a host for your association and your club is available at that time, please call Ken at his home 473-2352 or office 473-3508.

Thank you

Supers Should Get Involved

There are numerous groups within a community to which a person can belong. Most are associated with fraternalism and/or group assistance in some type of service to the area in which its members live. These are fine, well and good. We heartily endorse all such benevolent groups. When and where he has the time, your golf superintendent should be part of such community interested associations. They need him.

But, as a general rule, most golf course superintendents are thought of by the vast majority of club members as a person whose prime and sole purpose in life is to be seen in, on, and around the links busy at work in some turf-related activity. As fast as this vocation is growing with almost daily changes by the governmental agencies, as well as in chemicals, fertilizers, machinery and management, the up-to-date golf course superintendent must keep himself and his club informed of these problems and changes, and make himself aware of how to go about making the changes, and solving the problems.

The only way this can be done cheaply, and economically is membership in turf-related primarily golf turf, organizations.

Your superintendent should first, be very active in his local area's superintendent's association. Then, the two state associations - Florida Turf-Grass Association, and the Golf Course Superintendents Association of Florida. On the national level, he should be an active member of the Golf Course Superintendents Association, in his class, and advance in the classes as he becomes eligible.

All dues, travel, and meals one spends money for should be reimbursed from allocated funds planned for within the budget. They say a doctor who doesn't read much, attend professional seminars and study continuously will become completely useless seven years after his internship, because of advancements in the field. This is probably just about the same for a non-progressive golf course superintendent. The entire chemical and fertilizer field, and nearly all the equipment requirements, have changed immensely since the fuel oil crisis of three years ago.

A golf course superintendent not up to date on these changes is wasting your money. If your club maintenance facility and/or chemical procedures are ever government inspected, and violations are found, it could cost the club thousands of dollars in penalties and fines.

Generally speaking, dues in these groups vary, but here are some round figures:

To belong to the local association, and the travel for the year could run between \$50 and \$100.

To belong to the Florida Turf-Grass Association, it would cost \$60 a year for dues, and \$100 to \$200 a year for the annual conference.

For the Golf Course Superintendents' Association of Florida, dues are \$5.

To belong to the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America, there are \$90 dues, plus \$300 to \$1,000 expenses, including airfare depending on the location of the national meeting.

Your finance committee will probably say "Too much." Just one fine by OSHA (Occupational Safety and Health Administration) could cost the club thousands of dollars. One misuse of chemicals injuring an employee, member, guest or even neighbors, yards or miles from the golf course could amount to hundreds of thousands of dollars in fines and possible legal suits.

After October 21, 1977, your superintendent must hold a qualified license recognized, both state and federally, to even own pesticides on the Environmental Protection Agency's restricted list, much less use them on club property. The superintendent is the one holding the license, not the golf club.

Now I ask you, is it too expensive to keep your superintendent actively engaged in a continuous educational program through dues, meetings, magazines, bulletins, and newsletters to make him better able to serve you and your members?

On the other hand, if your superintendent says he is too busy, that he doesn't get anything out of attending these meetings, or any other excuse about not having time or he can't get away from the job for not joining his peers, then, if he worked for me, I would watch him closely. And when I felt that he was going to get my club, or me, in serious trouble, turf-wise, or any other-wise, I'd quickly replace him.

There is no way that a superintendent today can isolate himself as the old timers did 20 or more years ago, and be giving his club dollars worth of values in services received. There's just not any way.

The golf superintendent today must be actively engaged in keeping abreast of all the many changing facets in his occupation that involve many required fields of expertise. Today's golf manager just doesn't water, fertilize and mow grass. He is a specialist, of which there are only 12-13,000 people in the whole U.S.A. that are qualified to fill his job. This makes him a special man among men. He must participate to remain so. See that he does.

Dan Hall is golf superintendent at Countyside C. C. in Clearwater. He is vice president of the Florida West Coast Golf Course Superintendents Association and has been in the business more than 20 years.

by Dan Hall, Jr.

(Reprinted from "Florida Golfweek")

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Golf Course Superintendents Association



It Pays To Ride

As the golf car becomes entrenched as an essential part of the cash flow to the course budget, the country club and public course now look for new ways to even increase their revenues from it. One of those ways apparently lies right under their noses.

It is an improvement in the maintenance process of the golf car, a process tossed into the hands of the superintendent. The business of stocking parts and buying them in volume is the key to cutting down on the cost of upkeep. Courses can expect to save thousands of dollars in repair fees if they concentrate on proper maintenance and regular checkups. In addition, they can save even more by being selective in their choice of parts distributors.

It had to happen sooner or later. . . the golf car has finally caught and passed the golf pro in revenue going into the cash register.

According to a completed study of the golf course market, average gross rental income from golf cars is \$41,866 compared to \$38,385 realized in pro shop gross sales.

In other words, golfers are spending more money to transport them around the course than they do in outfitting themselves with equipment available in the pro shop. You might say that for the golf course it pays to ride. The golf pro? His plight is complicated by the increasing number of outlets for equipment and materials which once were more or less his exclusive line. But his situation must be left for explanation in other journals, not here.

How come golf cars are generating such revenue?

Once upon a time their use was restricted to the convenience and comfort of those golfers willing to pay for a comparative "luxury" item in the business. They were cursed by the superintendent because of the obvious fact that they were a veritable weapon in the hands of people who were not cognizant of the damage they could do at the twist of a steering wheel or careless spin close to the greens.

When clubs and public courses, for that matter, realized just how much money the golf car could return in rental fees it was just a matter of time before "luxury" was turned into "necessity". Whereas use of the car had been restricted to those with physical ailments, the field was burst open for free deployment of the mechanized devils.

With revenues on the increase, many clubs discouraged members from buying their own cars. What's more, a number of private and resort courses soon made it mandatory for players to take a car. The reasons cited for forced wheeling are speed-up of play. . . and, more important and more to the truth, the amount of revenue generated by the rule.

Even though it has been a constant annoyance with the golf course superintendent, the golf car has become a source of so much income to the club that it could be the difference between operating in the red or the black. In fact, it has been the reason for certain clubs and courses to operate at all.

In keeping with the upswing in knowledge of parts buying and maintenance, the clubs also would do themselves a financial favor by instituting a golf car operation educational program for uses of same. Careless driving has been the cause of avoidable accidents and resulting costly repairs. The clubs could kill two birds with one stone in this action since a change in driving habits could prevent many incidences of inflicting damage on the course.

So, the golf car has become an integral part of the golf scene. It does have its drawbacks, mostly because certain riders fail to operate the vehicle judiciously. But it brings in more money than any of its pioneers ever dreamed. There are 16 million golfers out there and many of them ride their rounds. And those wheels are rolling in the revenue.

Gerry Finn

Cowan and Tedesco Winners at GCSAA Tournament in Corpus Christi

Brian Cowan, Superintendent at Eastward Ho! finished in a tie for first place net in the GCSAA National Golf Tournament. Cowan had rounds of 75 and 80 to tie with Frank Lamphier from Connecticut.

Guy Tedesco, Golf Director at New Seabury finished third in the Seniors Division in the GCSAA National Golf Tournament. Tedesco had identical rounds of 81.

Congratulations to both, who played extremely well in very cold and windy weather.

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