



JANUARY 1979



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.

We Need Another Voice

Here it is. . . another year and another verbal venture, hopefully a successful attempt to get all readers of the Newsletter involved in the process of making news and perhaps forming opinion.

In a word, the input into this monthly publication has been virtually null and void as far as participation from the audience. This means members of the NEGCSA, green chairmen, friends of the association and everyone who picks us up and lays us down.

We'd like to change all that. By way of the grapevine, scuttlebutt and other modes of gleaning information - it's been learned that many of you would like to have your views known, by others. And we bow to those "silent" wishes with an open invitation to be our ghost writers, so to speak.

The Newsletter would like to enlist fresh ideas and a cross section of opinion on the major topics pertaining to the golf course superintendent's profession and those relating to the sport. That source is you, the reader. And we'll make it very easy for you.

Letters will be accepted. . . as will telephone calls, buttonhole comments and straight from the shoulder comments. The Newsletter, too, will cooperate in any manner in order to protect anyone coming forth with such offerings. Your identity will be withheld, if you choose, and never will the editors take advantage of a contributor by embarrassing him or her. Thus, no one need worry about jeopardizing his job, social station or reputation.

Obviously, there are a number of problems confronting the superintendent and we would like to know of them and their proposed solutions. This will be a clearing house for such proposals and in the publication of them another facet of continuing education will be realized.

Are you stuck for a topic? Well, allow us to suggest some.

What about the country club general manager concept? Are you in favor or against? Should the superintendent prepare himself for such a possibility or should the job be left to the grabs of the clubhouse managers who have gone on record as foreseeing a general manager sweep of the country's private and perhaps public clubs?

How do you feel about the superintendent's national certification program? Is it worthwhile? Should the concept become mandatory for membership in the national or regional associations? And what are your thoughts about re-certification? Is once enough as far as examinations and continuing education requirements are concerned?

Then, there always is the recognition issue among superintendents and other managerial wings of the country club administrative setup. Are you still treated like the course grooming slave of the dark ages? Do your members respect your expertise and knowledge in the never-ending argument of when to open and when to close the course? Do

you carry proper weight in the making of the annual budget? And where do you rate on the ladder of respect in regard to the clubhouse manager and the club professional?

What about the national association? Is it doing enough for you? Do you get anything out of being a member or is membership just a paperthin piece of proof that you belong to the profession? Does the national organization contribute to the advancement of the superintendent or is it another flim-flam vehicle operating under a false pretense?

Plunge into the technical aspects of your job and you have an endless well of topics for open-air discussion. Should you condition your course for the low handicapper or the hacker? Is the golf professional influencing your approach to course-grooming? How is the poa annua problem coming? Do you have any suggestions for tackling it? What are your thoughts on the return to natural setup of a golf course? Should the fairways be narrowed down? Are the roughs being manicured too finely? And what's with this irrigation business? Should you water to make the course green or temper the process in order to have a more firmer strain of turf?

These are only a few possibilities on which to lay the foundation for an association-wide sharing of ideas and opinions. Surely, you must have issues and topics of your own. . . those that we haven't covered and probably wouldn't cover without your personal involvement.

You get the gist of this appeal, then. Your Newsletter doesn't want to become a one-sided instrument of presenting subjects and expounding them. We want you to become an integral part of its monthly offering. No one will try to take you to task for speaking your piece, either. So, please heed this plea. We need another voice because we want to better the product and make it more appealing to the reader. Let us hear from you and the sooner the better.

Gerry Finn



Is Everybody Happy?????

That recent blurb in a national publication, hailing the life of the golf course superintendent as a bowl of cherries - a la mode, yet, has brought bristled reaction from those of the same vocational faith.

It seems that a superintendent brought it upon himself to let everyone know his profession and his particular place in it were something the artists sought when they were looking for a model to sketch Utopia. "What could be better than waking up with the birds at 5 a.m. and embarking on our daily chores?" the theme came bouncing through the type.

When it was thoroughly digested - after much strain on the stomach tissues - the story attempted to spread the gospel of self-satisfaction and almost subservient direction to those who allow common man to pursue the life of a superintendent.

"It was sickening," one NEGCSA member growled. "Every green chairman who read it probably thinks all superintendents would take a cut in pay, increase their work load from 70 to a hundred hours a week in order to get that great outdoors opportunity. That's rubbish."

More important, though, is the connotation that many superintendents probably are set in a position of complete contentment. . .hoping against hope that nothing happens to upset this happy, uncomplicated ride through life's valleys and over its hills.

"I don't know why we should feel that we've reached a certain position of acceptance and we now should stay put," the same super scowled. "Our main problem is too many people standing still after they've only gotten halfway up the mountain. We have a lot more mountain to climb, believe me. I'm not about to start backing up to the pay window every week."

You get the point here. The golf course superintendent is part of a professional field which lures many of the younger generation to its various wings. Young people have formed a sort of back-to-nature movement and look upon the combination of making a livelihood and doing it outdoors as a utopian realization.

"Some guys never know what's going on around them," our recoiled super advised. "Certainly, the profession has made great strides in many areas of being recognized and compensated according to input and production. But this doesn't mean we've hit a position where we should all sit back and declare how lucky we are and how wonderful it is to be working in the great outdoors."

This isn't to suggest that all superintendents should go around with chips on their shoulders. Nor is it presented to promote the negative atmosphere of the job. Mention is made of this fabricated happy state of mind with the hope that the whole profession doesn't go berserk and fall into a mood of complacency.

"The reason I brought up the article was because I don't want to get caught in the trap of reaching a certain point in life and leaving me right there," the concerned super added. "I always want to have the feeling that I can improve my station, whether it be going on to a bigger challenge or

remaining where I am and developing my knowledge and ability into something better than it is today."

There always is the danger that too much happiness on the job - or too much expression of it - dulls the mind and threatens to make it dormant. This is why the superintendent never must feel his position has reached fulfillment even though he has taken great strides toward that direction.

"I'll never feel that I've accomplished as much as I am capable of," the super snipped. "What the heck, how many of us can really say that our golf courses are in perfect condition? Well, it's the same way with our profession. It's not the ultimate, the very essence of perfection as a means to providing ourselves with the tangible and intangible riches of life. Maybe it could be. And this is why I'm popping off. It can be better and we can make it better."

So, getting up with the birds at 5 a.m. - starting each day with a song - talking to the animals etc - do not constitute grounds for the superintendent to pack in his initiative and join his feathered friends in a duet. Of course, a cheery environment lends itself to the pleasures of the job. But it doesn't hold water in the day to day problems and headaches that go with the same job. And it shouldn't cause a single superintendent to tell himself he's reached the end of the rainbow.

There are still miles and miles of bad road to be traveled before that happens. Some good road, too. But lots of land to be covered. That's for danged sure.

Gerry Finn



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Ode To A Greenskeeper

Man must be "Tetched" in the head . . . must be a "Looney" to be a Greenskeeper . . . The Good Lord helpeth him not . . . He blesseth him with dry, hot, humid weather and he giveth him many days of pouring rains . . . He finisheth him off with invasions of Japanese Beetles and other hostile forces . . . Man can give his members many years of beautifully groomed fairways and greens and then the Lord Sticketh his nose into his work and blesseth him with a cold icy winter with very little snow cover . . . The rays of the Winter Sun burneth thru the ice and destroyeth last year's beautiful grass . . . And all Hell breaketh loose . . . Yesterdays hero becometh this year's "Bum" . . . The Club's expert Agronomists who knoweth not how to care for their own lawns . . . again say that the grass is cuteth too long and or too short . . . that we watereth too much or not enough . . . that we haveth too much or not enough "Poania" in our greens . . .

The Lord haveth no love for him . . . Members when they misseth easy thirty foot putts complaineth about the greens . . . and life can be most trying for him . . .

Verily, the Lord understandeth not why man wanteth to be a Greenskeeper . . . When he could be a Plumber, Doctor or Lawyer . . .

Jed Simons

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