

NEWSLETTER

JUNE, 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.

Come One, Come All!

Put a circle around June 11 and plan to be part of what promises to be a mutually beneficial joint meeting of the clubhouse managers and golf course superintendents of New England at the Metacomet Country Club in East Providence.

This is the suggestion, almost plea, of NEGCSA president Dean Robertson who has been working out the details of such a gathering with an old friend, Jim Goslin, of the CMAA.

"I really think this meeting will be of interest to every member of our organization," Robertson emphasizes. "With so much attention being directed toward a better relationship among the three department heads of country club operation, this gives our two groups the opportunity to meet on common ground and get to know each other and our problems better."

The session will be an all-day affair with lunch starting it off. Golf for supers and clubhouse managers will follow. Then it will be on to a roundtable educational discussion period, cocktail hour and dinner and what should be an outstanding speaking program to close out the event.

Robertson already has been in contact with Charles Tadge, president of the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America and at last word had been assured of his presence.

"This is a treat in itself for our members," Robertson advises. "It will give us the chance to meet and get to know our national leader. And it will present us the opportunity to get first-hand answers to any of the pertinent questions we may have concerning the GCSAA. Of course, we will be interested, too, to hear what Charlie has to offer in his formal speech after dinner."

While the Newsletter was in the process of going to press it was hoped that Whitney Travis, president of the Club Managers Association of America, could arrange his schedule so as to join Tadge in reaching the joint membership of the two organizations. Travis had been contacted and was making

every effort to be part of the mixture of superintendents and clubhouse managers.

"We're always talking about communications between the two factions of the country club and now we have the chance to do something about it," Robertson continues. "It goes without saying that one of the other can't operate at the fullest level of competency without a solid working relationship with each other."

It is expected that the hot issue of the general manager concept will take up some of the discussion time, as well as the informal conversation between clubhouse manager and super.

However, that topic should be but one of a number of country club subjects which affect each department head.

"I think that it's in the best interest of each profession to get to know what the other is doing and what it thinks about

cont. on page 2



NEXT MEETING SUPER-CHAIRMAN TOURNAMENT JUNE 18, 1979

Spring Valley Country Club
Host - George Machado
Be sure you have made reservations
and are pre-paid
Directions -

From 128 take 95 south to Sharon Exit.
(Cooney St.) This is the Walpole exit going
north.
Turn left on Cooney St. Take first left and
first left again. Club is on the right.

The NEGCS wishes to express their deepest sympathy to the family of John Morse who recently passed away.

Congratulations To
James Bean
Donald Levangie
Voted in at May meeting as Jr. Associate members

GM Concept... Sit on It

The general manager concept... to be or not to be?

By now your eyes must be burning and your ears ringing from the constant flow of rhetoric gushing from the mount of such temples as the association of golf course superintendents, the association of golf professionals and the association of clubhouse managers. The theme is the much-drummed theory that the operation of the country club be placed in the hands of that one person who oversees and controls its three cornerstones of service and deliverance--the superintendent, pro and clubhouse manager.

In theory the process emulates the big business chain of command with a chairman of the board last-wording it to the president, vice-prez and on down the line. The reason for proposing the position of general manager is to tighten ship's operation, so to speak. There apparently is no communication among the three department heads and each is wandering in separate, self-service direction.

The general manager would revive this spiritless triumvirate and set all oars pulling in the same downstream route with the common goal of no-hitch, smooth-sailing administration within reasonable sight. In essence, the concept is the election or appointment of one leader to coordinate the related but sometimes independent efforts of three sub-leaders.

The main arguments in support of the GM movement cover a spectrum of assumptions. It is said that many country club members are not willing to devote time to committee activities and a general manager would lessen in number the need for their participation. It also is thrown out that the club board of directors is content in establishing policy and having it administered by one person. And, then, there is the feeling that a leadership void is being filled with the adoption of a "chief operations officer."

Arguments against are many. It sounds nice but allowing one person the enormous responsibility, with attached authority, is something that just won't happen among the country club set. It is an expensive venture whose cutback threats hover over present department heads. No one person is qualified to understand the three-ply problems found in supervising grounds, pro shop and clubhouse input. And the concept's track record is a horrendous one, often resulting in a return to the old administrative method and a "I told you so" greeting by subservient-squeezed supers, pros and clubhouse managers.

The Golf Course Superintendents Association of America has presented an official position on the GM concept, without really taking a stand. This is not to fault the GCSAA which is in favor of the idea only if it lives up to a plethora of requirements. What the GCSAA says is that it does not support the theory as it is now practiced because its results are shabby and most of the attempts to implement it have strayed from the true meaning of a general manager operation.

We, the Golf Course Superintendents Association of New England, feel that the concept is not in the best interests of improving the overall operation of the country club nor is it in the best interests of our chosen profession.

We can find fault with almost every aspect of the general

manager concept, beginning with the pushing of a so-called "professional administrator"--a platitudinous title bestowed on that person who supposedly is capable of directing three different departments without knowing a lick about their individual makeup.

We maintain that the three departments can successfully operate independently and still attain the common goal of each without what would amount to interference by a chief operations officer. What is outlined as an orderly flow of command, with the general manager as the trigger on the actual work effort, would turn to confusion. Eventually, the concept would regress into an arena of brainpicking with the general manager groping for answers to relate back to the board of directors and club president.

Furthermore, we believe that the relationship between department head and corresponding committee retains the individual's interest and zeal in seeking to produce the best possible playing conditions for members and their guests. Under the present form of administration, that relationship is the force that binds the three departments in pursuit of the accepted common goal.

In any way or form, the general manager concept must be considered out of bounds as a means of improving country club operations. And the NEGCSA frowns on its adoption.

Gerry Finn

Come One, Come All *cont. from page 1*

certain issues and problems--whether they're related or not," Robertson remarks. "There is a growing assumption that the superintendent doesn't care what the clubhouse manager has to put up with and vice versa. Well, I'd like to eliminate that. After all, we are in this business together, and we do have a common goal in coming to make country club life as pleasant and satisfactory as possible for its members."

Goslin is in complete accord with Robertson as to the benefits such a session will bring to both parties.

"I have been appointed to a committee as part of the CMAA's attempt to develop a closer working relationship among members of our organization, the GCSAA and PGA," Goslin tells. "And this is one step in bringing about that goal. I have been part of similar joint meetings and can say that they were highly successful. I would hope that from this venture would be laid the groundwork for an annual affair. I can recall similar occasions from the past during which a lot was accomplished. Hopefully, we can get the masses out for this one."

The June 11 meeting, then, should be considered a must for all NEGCSA members. Certainly, it promises to offer everything along entertainment and educational lines. And anything except an outpouring of response would be an insult to those people who have worked diligently to arrange for such a worthwhile event. Be there, ya hear?

Gerry Finn

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Trees and Turf Maintenance

Trees of many shapes and sizes are an abundant resource in New England. They give to many of our courses the beauty, challenge, and unique character that is often associated with this area. The more aesthetically pleasing holes often utilize trees for a backdrop around greens, especially on a large percentage of our older courses. In construction, the future size and problems that trees would present (ie: root competition) was often not considered then, which leaves us with a problem today. Members, Greens Committee and Superintendent often will agree that the tree does provide that added character and beauty which distinguishes their course from the next. But because of those same trees, our job of maintaining a fine putting surface sometimes falls short of what is expected. A conflict of interest is definitely evident here.

The problem is the highly developed root system of trees and the slightly developed root system of the turf. A majority of the turfgrass root system is located in the upper 6 to 10 inches of soil, thus this is the zone where it is most important to control the roots.

The heavy feeding of a mature tree can absorb as much as 70% of the available nutrients and moisture on the area covered by the roots. The symptoms to recognize are hard spots with no vegetation or a covering of shallow rooted weeds, such as crabgrass.

There are various ways to solve the problem, short of cutting down the tree. Tree root pruning can be done by a mechanical trencher, backhoe, or with a specialized PTO driven Root Cutter. The third method minimizes turf disturbance. A trench in the immediate problem area, three to four foot in depth is sufficient. Sheet iron, tar paper, and



concrete have been placed in trenches for root control but are expensive and often ineffective.

At Marshfield, a backhoe is used every three to four years. This has no detrimental effect to the tree, and keeps the root system near the green small and undeveloped, and gives a noticeable increase in turf vigor.

Tree root pruning can be an important maintenance practice if utilized, and one step closer to making "everyone" happy.

Submitted by James O'Kelly
Marshfield Country Club

May Tournament Results

1st gross -

Jim Damian
Lenny Blodgett
Jack Pluto
Ed Wiacek

1st net -

Ken Mooradian
Max Mierzwa
Bob Mucciarone
Dick Zepp

2nd net -

Steve Chiavaroli
Ron Kirkman
Dave Clements
Julie Aksten



NOTICE

The Newsletter goofed last month in its reporting of a fatal accident at the Woodstock Country Club. Woodstock superintendent Dick Blake, the source of the OSHA preparedness story-- reveals there might have been some misunderstanding in the place of the accident. It did happen, all right, but not at Woodstock. The fatality occurred at a course in Colorado. The Newsletter regrets the error.

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