



OCTOBER, 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.

Manny Makes His Mark

There has been placed in nomination for the Distinguished Service Award of the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America the name of Manuel Francis ... that's Manny the First, to distinguish him from his son, Manny, Jr.

It would seem that the act be automatic, since Manny has been one of the pillars of his profession almost from that day in South Portland, Maine when he began tinkering with a new strain of grass. From that backyard session, the seeds were sewn for the eventual full-growth development of Vesper Bent -- the pride of Manny's fertile mind.

Francis always has been a giant among his peers. His reputation hits responsive chords from all sections of the country. Golf officials in Mexico once offered him one of the most lucrative contracts ever extended a superintendent after his consulting services worked wonders with turf and other related problems there.

As a matter of fact, they once called off golf because of Manny. A course in New Hampshire decided to have a Manny Francis Day when the sage of the soil cured its conditional ills. And they staged it on a Sunday! "No golf today," club governors declared. "Today belongs to Manny."

Francis, in a stroke of irony, was born at sea ... between Brazil -- where his father was in the coffee business -- and Portugal. The year was 1905. Sixteen years later Manny left Louzan for the United States where he had heard, "there is gold in the streets of New York."

Before he could search for it, though, Manny stopped off in Danbury, Connecticut with several of his friends. There he went to work for a hat factory and eventually opened a small shop. However, there was a plant supervisor's job open in Portland. So, Manny applied for and got it.

That was the time of depression and the hat business fell victim to its ravages. The energetic Manny, who had worked in the construction of a golf course several years earlier, heard of a golf course superintendent job opening in South Portland and landed it. From that moment, golf became his life.

It was while he was at the South Portland Golf Club that Francis first experimented with Vesper Bent grass ... in the backyard of his home. From South Portland he went to Amesbury, then on to Haverhill and finally to the Vesper Country Club in Tyngsboro. He put his discovery to work at Vesper and soon the course was regarded as among the finest groomed in all of New England.

During his 20-year stay at Vesper, Manny's reputation grew and the demands for his consulting services escalated. In addition to his Mexican stint, he was sought for advice by countless numbers of New England courses. And, more often than not, when Manny had left a particular layout, its condition was headed toward top-grade status.

Another Francis innovation also caught hold in his profession ... that of top-dressing greens with sawdust. This conditioning aid was so successful that the U.S. government drew and produced an educational pamphlet explaining the process.

Along the way, Francis was flooded with honors. He is an honorary member of virtually every club in which he has

been in contact. And is a past-president of the New England Golf Course Superintendents Association. Naturally, he is held in high esteem by his fellow supers and his recognition spreads throughout North America.

After his retirement from Vesper, Manny and Manny, Jr. found a plot of land in Marshfield where they envisioned a golf course of their own. They have developed it into a championship layout and Green Harbor is prospering under the guidance of the Francis team.

The Distinguished Service Award nomination is just one of numerous examples of the appreciation the golf world expresses for Francis. His name is synonymous with the outstanding contributions top men of the profession have made in changing the grooming of a golf course into an absolute science.

Through it all, too, Manny has remained a person of impeccable integrity and flawless character. His personality has bubbled over since his entry into the golf course superintendent field. And his countless friends are testimony to the warm spirit he brings to the relationship. Like his work, Manny's reputation as a human being is at the same summit.

Manuel Francis is all that the profession stands for and New England is proud to call him one of its own.

Gerry Finn

Next Meeting Nov. 1, 1979 Whitinsville C.C.

Dick Zepp Host Supt.

Directors Meeting	10:00 a.m.
Regular Meeting	11:00 a.m.
Lunch	11:30 a.m.
Golf (Shotgun)	12:00 Noon

Tel. 234-2533 For Reservations
Cut off Date Oct. 26, 1979

Directions - From Mass. Pike take Route 122 south for 7 miles. Take right at stop light. At third stop light take left. Go over Bridge. Bear left. Club is on left.

The Oxford Incident

Oxford Country Club owner Michael (Lefty) Pajak and golf course superintendent Nick Salva are longtime and close friends. Yet, Lefty is the first to admit ... "we don't talk to each other."

Of course, there is overexaggeration in that statement. But it brings to light the catastrophic conditions at the nine-hole layout in Chicopee Falls, Massachusetts -- conditions that could bring ultimate destruction and death to the second oldest golf club in the United States.

Pajak is forever in Salva's path. Every day brings another crisis to the course. "We're fighting a losing battle," Pajak laments. "When the Connecticut Valley gets two inches of rain, we get four feet of water. Nick hasn't had a moment to himself for I can't remember when."

The source of Pajak's problems is Poor Brook which collects water miles away in East Springfield and usually dumps its overflow on Oxford. The fourth fairway, for example, is a sea of mud and silt. It runs along a much-traveled road which is under water more times than not. But the fourth is just the tip of the iceberg.

"Erosion is killing us," Pajak reveals. "A couple of weeks ago I measured only 15 feet between the edge of the fifth green and a spreading chasm. One more storm and I might find my fifth green either gone or on top of the sixth. But I'm sticking it out. It has to end sometime."

The tragic conditions have existed, according to Pajak, ever since the construction of the Springfield Industrial Park and Interstate 291. Lefty claims the catch basins run into Poor Brook and any kind of rain results in flooding conditions at Oxford. Obviously, it is costing him money.

"I had five floods this summer," Lefty tells. "Three in one month. I've had to rebuild my five bridges four different times. But the erosion is the maddening thing. It's creeping in and bringing with it a slow death of at least four of my holes -- the first, third, fifth and ninth. I don't know what to do. The state has expressed interest in having a study made of the situation and perhaps reroute Poor Brook. But they'd better get off their butts or I'll be out of business."

Pajak discloses that his revenue is off 75 percent from last year. He purchased the course 22 years ago when the old Oxford group bought land in Agawam and established the Crestview Country Club. The course, built in 1889, thrived under his leadership ... until the unchecked waters began to nibble away at it in 1964.

"We once had 225 members and a lot of transit action,"

Lefty says. "Now, the membership is down to 150 and still shrinking. I hardly see a stranger around here anymore. But I can't blame the golfers. Who wants to play someplace where you have to leap over lakes and plow through muck to get to your golf ball?"

He still has a number of diehard members who stick with him and play under virtually impossible conditions. "The members still aboard have been wonderful," he continues. "I don't know where I'd be without them. But how long can they put up with it? I mean having to walk down the street and then cross over to find your ball on the first fairway is somewhat of an inconvenience. If they quit me today, I'd understand and still consider them my friends."

Even Pajak is at a loss to explain his tenacity. "I had a very good appliance business before I bought this place," he shrugs. "My wife, Stella, and I used to work five and a-half days a week and we'd earn about \$40,000 between us. We came here where we work seven days a week and we're lucky if we clear 20 thousand. This year, when things have hit rock bottom, I'd say that figure is wishful thinking."

Pajak says his love of a challenge and accompanying love of golf have struck him with a determination to lick what appears to be an unsolvable problem without the aid of the state. "I'm still thinking that somebody will do something to bring the water under control, so that I can get to the job of restoring Oxford," Lefty advises. "But I can't do anything until I'm sure there'll be something here to improve on."

Thus, Pajak and Salva remain good friends but with reservations attached. "Everytime it rains, I shudder," Lefty sighs. "I know that it'll probably mean one more setback and another unscheduled task for Nick. I'm almost at the end of my rope. I only hope there's enough left to hang myself."

Gerry Finn

Sept. Tournament results

3 way tie for first place

Ken Mooradian	Steve Murphy	Pete Coste
Larry Bunn	Dave Locker	Len Blodgett
Gary Luccini	Doug Johnson	Leroy Allen
Frank Moran	Paul Murphy	Ed Wiacek

Job opening

Assist. Supt., Eastward Ho C.C.
Brian Cowan CGCS. 945-9230

NOTE

Annual Christmas Party

Dec. 7, 1979

Needham G.C.

Details to follow

Annual Pro-Supt. Tournament

Brae-Burn Country Club

Host Supt. Bob Grant CGCS.

October 12, 1979

Open to all NEPGA members and their supers and to all NEGCSA members and their professionals. No assistant pros or assistant supers unless they are members. ONE TEAM PER CLUB. Super must have bonafide handicap. Selected drives, alternate shots. Gross and net prizes. Net winners are the Champions. Starting times may be obtained by calling the Director at 617-777-3773 on TUESDAY, OCTOBER 2nd. First fee only, 8:00 AM to 1:30 PM. Call Brae Burn for cart arrangements, 617-244-0680.

PRESIDENT

DEAN ROBERTSON
24 Riverview Drive
Newbury, Mass. 01950
Home phone 462-4540
Office phone 745-7269
Club Affiliation
Kernwood C.C.

FIRST VICE PRESIDENT

RONALD KIRKMAN
25 Green St.
Needham, Mass. 02192
Home phone 444-8412
Office phone 444-5548
Club Affiliation
Needham Golf Club

SECOND VICE PRESIDENT

BRIAN COWAN CGCS
Robins Way
Harwich, Mass. 02645
Home phone 432-9041
Office phone 945-9230
Club Affiliation
Eastward Ho.

SECRETARY

DAVID BARBER CGCS
Box 221
Wayland, Mass. 01778
Home phone 328-1346
Office phone 358-4882
Club Affiliation
Wayland C.C.

TREASURER

DONALD HEARN CGCS
4 Topeka Rd.
Chelmsford, Mass. 01824
Home phone 258-8709
Office phone 894-5906
Club Affiliation
Weston Golf Club

TRUSTEE

MAX MIERZWA
106 Crestwood St.
Chicopee, Mass. 01020
Home phone 594-4906
Office phone 592-8540
Club Affiliation
Chicopee C.C.

TRUSTEE

BERT FREDERICK
45 Stoney Brook Rd.
Nabnasset, Mass. 01861
Home phone 692-6445
Office phone 453-1231
Club Affiliation
Vesper C.C.

TRUSTEE

MEINDERT F. SCHULTS
737 Princeton Blvd.
Lowell, Mass. 01851
Home phone 458-7655
Office phone 452-8228
Club Affiliation
Mt. Pleasant G.C.

FINANCE CHAIRMAN

ROBERT JOHNSON
128 Wilbraham Rd.
Hampden, Mass. 01036
Home phone 568-3073
Office phone 568-3096
Club Affiliation
Hampden C.C.



GOLF COURSE SUPERINTENDENTS ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA

1617 ST. ANDREWS DRIVE • LAWRENCE, KANSAS 66044
913 / 841-2240

August 17, 1979

Mr. Thomas Schofield, CGCS
Newsletter Chairman
Golf Course Superintendent Association
of New England, Inc.
290 North Road
Sudbury, Massachusetts 01776

Dear Tom:

We have just completed reading the August issue of the Newsletter published by Golf Course Superintendents Association of New England.

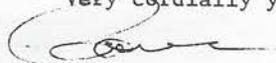
We noted with great interest on page two, an article by Gerry Finn entitled "National" Not All That Bad.

Needless to say, we were extremely pleased to see Gerry's kind words in your publication. All too often, people do not take the time to express their satisfaction with the services that GCSAA presents to its members. We of course, agree wholeheartedly with Gerry in that the article in Golf Business left much to be desired. Unfortunately, those people who are prone to criticism are also the same ones that are not intimately involved in the affairs of the Association.

We, of course, would have been happy to have participated in that "forum" so that some other views might have been presented, however, we were not given the opportunity to participate or to offer people who might be more favorable in their opinion.

At any rate, thank you for your kind words, we look forward to continuing the excellent relationship that exists between GCSAA and your group.

Very cordially yours,


Conrad L. Scheetz, CAE
Executive Director

CLS:naf

GOLF CHAIRMAN
KEN MOORADIAN
134 Green St.
Hopdale, Mass. 01747
Home phone 473-2352
Office phone 473-3508
Club Affiliation
Hopdale C.C.

EDUCATIONAL CHAIRMAN
PETE COSTE CGCS
121 Granite St.
Medfield, Mass. 02052
Home phone 359-7247
Office phone 566-0240
Club Affiliation
The Country Club

NEWSLETTER CHAIRMAN
TOM SCHOFIELD CGCS
290 North Rd.
Sudbury, Mass. 01776
Home phone 443-3712
Office phone 235-7333
Club Affiliation
Wellesley C.C.

PAST PRESIDENT
WAYNE ZOPPO
9A Village Green No.
E. Providence, R.I. 02915
Home phone 434-1759
Office phone 438-8512
Club Affiliation
Agawam Hunt G.C.

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Phillip Wogan
Golf Course Architect
21 Budleigh Ave., Beverly, Mass.

*Contributors to the Lawrence S. Dickinson
Scholarship Fund

NEWSLETTER

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OF NEW ENGLAND, INC.



TOM SCHOFIELD CGCS
Newsletter Committee Chairman
290 North Road
Sudbury, Mass. 01776
Home Phone 443-3712
Office Phone 235-7333
Club Affiliation
Wellesley Country Club
DONALD HEARN
Business Manager
LEON ST. PIERRE
Co-ordinator
GERRY FINN
Contributing Editor

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