



SEPT.

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.

# Going Down for Third Time

*(The following is an actual conversation with a golf course superintendent whose identity must be withheld for obvious reasons.)*

"I've had it. At the end of the season, I'm quitting. Too much pressure. Too many headaches. I think I'll get a job keeping things green in a cemetery. I should be safe there."

Come on, you have to be kidding. You have a good job here, one of the top courses around. You can't be serious.

"I wish I was pulling your leg. But I'm not. This has been one hectic year for me. The weather's the reason. But how can you tell that to the members? They think I control everything, even the rain and humidity. Well, they can get themselves another boy."

This is only a temporary reaction. You're mad now, but you'll get over it. It happens to every superintendent. Show me one who's not been on the edge of resigning, and I'll show you the guy who has the perfect job. . . of which there are none.

"No, I've thought it all out. And I don't want to wind up like a lot of guys. . . getting the ax and tossed out on the street."

Oh? What seems to be the problem?

"That's problems. I have about 200 of them. And they call themselves members. There's just too much politics around here. My chairman doesn't back me up because it will cost him a contract or some juicy business connection. I suppose I can't blame him. He has to eat, too. But I guess he's used to eating high off the hog."

What's the setup here? Is this the kind of place where you have 200 agronomists running amok with golf clubs?

"That's about the size of it. Naturally, every member's an expert. . . in somebody else's business. When I turn on the water, they come at me complaining about sloppy lies. When I don't turn it on, they're on my neck because they can't hit the ball off dry spots. It's a case of being damned if you do and damned if you don't."

Well, you have a point. But there should be some kind of logical relationship between your chairman, the members and yourself. How can anyone expect a man to work for 200 different bosses with 200 different sets of ideas and demands?

"That's just it. They can't. But it seems to happen around here. I've tried to hold back my temper and go along with the program. But how long can you keep checking yourself? What bothers me is that I might fly off the handle and say something I don't want to say. I still have my pride and self-respect. . . and my dignity. I'm a professional just like most of my members."

So, what's their big beef? Course in bad shape? Are you cutting the greens too low? Maybe letting the rough grow in to make for some big scores?

"It's a combination of all those things. We've had some major problems with the turf here but we've licked most of them. I got the course to a point where I thought it was in the best possible condition considering past troubles. But then it went kaput."

What's that?

"We got that spell of high humidity and then we got a sneak rainstorm which pelted us with about five inches of water in a couple of hours. One of our greens was completely covered by

two-three feet or rain. The rest of the course had puddles all over it."

Don't tell me. Then it turned hot again, right?

"Did it ever. I saw wilt happen right before my eyes. I saw beautiful grass turn brown in a matter of minutes. Maybe you can't see grass grow but you can sit there and watch it decay. So, from a gem of a course, we had a germ of a course on our hands."

But that's not your fault you can't control Mother Nature.

"Tell that to my members. They must think I declare Mother Nature on my income tax. Some of them actually thought I should have known that storm was coming before it came. And they thought that because I knew, I'd be able to steer the water away from the low spots."

Wow. Have to run an IQ test around here?

"Hey, I don't want to get into personalities and things like that. All I know is that I've seen other superintendents buckle under the same kind of treatment and then have their jobs cut from under them. It's not going to happen to me. I'm going down for the third time and I don't want anybody throwing me a line. I've had it."

Too bad. You're really in a wonderful profession.

"You're right, but there's only one thing. It would be the best, if there weren't golfers and club members. They're driving me right up a wall and out of a job I used to love. Next time you see me I won't be here. And that's a promise."

Gerry Finn

### Next Meeting Sept. 10, 1979

Gannon Municipal Lynn  
Host Supt. Steve Murphy

Directors Meeting 10:00 a.m.

Regular Meeting 11:00 a.m.

Buffet lunch 11:45 a.m.

Golf After lunch

Call 592-8238 for reservations

Reservation cut off date Sept. 7, 1979

Directions - From Route 128, take exit 30 towards Lynn. Go through rotary follow Route 129. Just beyond the Union Hospital you will see a sign on the right (Great Woods Road). Club is on this street.

## Action in "Twister Alley"

The immediate vicinity encompasses that jagged path, starting in West Suffield, Connecticut and stretching to Hampden, Massachusetts. And plunked somewhere in between - smack-dab in the middle of "twister alley" is the Elmcrest Country club.

The calendar lied on that Friday of August 10. It wasn't Friday, the 10th. It had to be Friday, the 13th. Elmcrest co-owner Joe Pagos must have walked under a myriad of step ladders and played wet nurse to a litter of black cats.

At 4:30 of the ill-fated Friday, action in "twister alley" picked up considerably. A gathering of gusty winds had begun a drunken march outside of West Suffield, knocking down and uprooting trees as a form of preliminary muscle-flexing. When they reached Elmcrest, the playful mood had changed to one dealing destruction and possible death.

"We had about 60 golfers in the 19th hole," Pagos told. "They had come in to get out of what looked to be a real whopper of a storm brewing. Then, this wind started to come in with a terrific force. I looked out at the 18th fairway and every tree was parallel to the ground."

The golfers in the 19th viewed the next incident with amazement. A golf car came flying across the picture window and then the window blew into the back wall with glass rebounding off it in almost miraculously harmless fashion.

"We had only one injury that I know of," Pagos reported. "A member got several pieces of glass in his back. I believe it turned out to be a 26-stitch cut. We were very lucky on that account. I still don't see how people avoided being hit. It looked like war with shrapnel exploding everywhere."

The "Pagos luck" was shortlived.

Seconds later a huge gush of wind tore almost half of the clubhouse roof from its place and sent it swirling. Several days later, debris was being discovered as far as two miles away from Elmcrest.

"The walls of the dining room buckled and then it started to rain," Pagos recalled the instant fury of Mother Nature. "The dining room was unoccupied at the time. I hate to think what would have happened, if it was full. I don't know. Timing was the key. You can mend roofs and rebuild walls. But human life... it can't be restored with hammer and nails."

The rain, which accompanied the twister, didn't stop for some 48 hours. And it found a home through the gaping hole in the roof.

"You never really can estimate the final damage in something like this," Pagos explained. "Every hour it seems that I find a new wrinkle. I pick up a pile of glass here and discover another mangled two-by-four there. Right now we're talking in the neighborhood of \$100,000 to \$125,000. But that's only an estimate. It could go higher and probably will."

Through the ordeal, though, Pagos continues to count his and his membership's blessings.

Two women golfers just missed the path of the twister because of a last minute decision. They were playing the 18th hole when the warnings of the storm chased them toward the 19th hole. In mid-flight, they decided to turn back and recover their golf balls.

"That decision probably saved their lives," Pagos disclosed. "They were right on line with that wind which blew the window and roof when they took off in the other direction. I mean, if that golf car went sailing through the air, what chance would two women have?"]

The twister was the second at Elmcrest in the past eight years. A similar snarler visited the East Longmeadow, Massachusetts layout and also had the clubhouse roof as its target. Then, it lifted the roof and dropped it back in place. The damage was about one-tenth of what it was this time.

This twister knocked the clubhouse and banquet facilities out of operation for at least one month. The losses there will be staggering to banquet concessionaire Tom Corenzo who had solid bookings for the months of August and September.

"Insurance will cover some of the financial losses but not all of them," Pagos revealed. "That's why I'm doing a lot of the work myself. We just have to regroup here and start all over again. The course was spared, thank God. We lost about a dozen trees, but we're able to play and we're in about as good playing condition as we ever have been."

"Twister Alley," then, is all quiet for now after a 30-second hit which was awesome in power. It brought Elmcrest to its knees but it couldn't knock out the course. "And it never will," vowed Pagos.

Gerry Finn

The NEGCSA wish to express their deepest sympathy to Joe Rybka and his family on their recent loss.

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## What Union Organizers Look For

What do union organizers look for when they begin selecting an organizing target?

A recent published study suggests that unfair and harsh treatment by supervisors is a primary condition of this selection process.

The study - the Dartnell Management Report - also suggests that employees believe they can get even with management for real or imaginary wrongs by joining a union.

Here are some of the items, according to the report, that union organizers look for: a) Little, if any, personal recognition. Employees believe they could at least get forced recognition from the company; b) Lack of firm and fair discipline; c) Fear of job security. Employees feel they would have greater safety and job security in numbers; d) Failure of management to exercise confident leadership; e) "Open-door" complaint procedures that do not open doors; f) Failure of management to help employees identify themselves with their employees. Employees believe they would have the opportunity to achieve a personal need satisfaction through a union; g) Favoritism; h) Lack of standard or inadequate employee benefits; i) Substandard wages; j) Failure to put company personnel policies and employee benefits in writing.

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## Using Snapshots as Part of Your Inventory Records

credit GCSAA "Fore Front", May 1979

Insurance on your equipment and inventory is partial protection at best, unless you keep up-to-date records of your insured items. The most reliable of insurers will only comply with the terms of your policy, and it's always up to you to prove your losses.

First is the tedious step of inventorying your property. To simplify matters, start by taking a photograph safari through your building. Open drawers, lay things out, and photograph everything. Photograph one side of an area, then take closer shots of items located there. Repeat for the other side.

Color prints are best, although costly. To do the job right, getting everything you have on film will use up several rolls.

Taking snapshots will help you remember items you might otherwise fail to claim after a fire, theft, or other covered loss. People tend to understate claims by forgetting numerous items at a time of stress.

Your prints serve as the basis of your golf course inventory system. On the back of each close-up shot, list items shown, serial numbers if any, dates acquired and approximate values if possible.

Then the prints go in business envelopes along with canceled checks and invoices. The package should fit in a safe or in a safety deposit box.

Next, total the value of your equipment and inventory to see whether your insurance is adequate. Note that most policies pay a depreciated value. Many newer policies however, pay on the actual replacement value of these items.

## Marlboro Tournament Results



### Super-Super Championship

1st Place -	Ken Mooradian
	Gary Luccinni
2nd Place -	Jules Aksten
	Steve Chiavoroli
1st Gross -	Len Blodgett
	Leroy Allen
2nd Gross -	Dave Barber
	Art Washburn

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# NEWSLETTER

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