

# NEWSLETTER

June, 1980



*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.

## Successful Sound-out Session

Although he was somewhat disappointed with the amount of membership input, New England Golf Course Superintendents Association president Ron Kirkman thought last month's by-laws tuneup session at Westover Golf Club was worthwhile and revealing.

The meeting turned into a sound-out period, directed at acquainting NEGCSA members with proposed changes in the association's by-laws. After a 13-year stay with the present guidelines, it appears the time is ripe to make a few alterations.

Some of the changes are simply a matter of semantics. Certain definitions are being restated in clearer and more precise language. And some references are being eliminated so as to streamline the revised set of by-laws.

Members are reminded that voting on any and all changes will take place during the association's July meeting at Mt. Pleasant Country Club in Boylston. "And we won't make an attempt to rush things there," Kirkman advised. "We want to give the membership enough time to think about and study the new proposals. And, when we get to Mt. Pleasant, we will entertain further discussion on them. There'll be no railroad job here."

Probably the most critical of changes pertains to the five-year waiting period before a new member receives full privileges. Presently, a member must be employed as a superintendent in charge of a golf course for at least five years before he becomes fully-franchised (the right to vote and hold association office). The new by-law would reduce that period of time to one year.

Strangely, the Westover confab churned little in way of positive or negative reaction to this drastic change. "I'm not sure why there wasn't any flak here," Kirkman wondered.

"Maybe it was a reflection on the group which showed at Westover. By the time we get to vote on it, there could be some different faces in the crowd. I expect there will be a fight over it. At any rate, I would think it wouldn't go unchallenged."

As a matter of fact, the new suggestion did cause response from the Westover gathering but only in a section that says the member shall be a member of the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America.

One member thought it unfair to include the requirement of joining the national because of the varying financial arrangements superintendents set up with their employers. "I would guess that half of the members belonging to the national do so because their dues are paid by their clubs," he advanced. "That brings the requirement into a shady place because it involves the member's ability to pay national dues. I realize most clubs do pick up the tab. What I would like to know is how many supers would join the national if they had to pay the dues, themselves?"

There was rebuttal to that comment, too. Another member thought the requirement helped the profession gain a show of unity and strength. "We should support the national association since it is a reflection of our concern and interest in our profession," he stated. "Besides, there are a number of benefits derived from being a member of the GCSAA. I don't see how we can have one without the other."

Kirkman was enthused with that particular part of the discussion period. "I thought both sides brought up good points," he said. "I have to be neutral, although I do have an opinion. However, this association is for the members. It should be by the members, too. That's why I would like to get as many viewpoints as possible before the vote."

Outside of the differing outlooks on the national's effect on the New England and other regional associations, most of the Westover group appeared to be in agreement with the changes and the timing of them.

"If anything, this is an educational process in itself," Kirkman added. "I think that we should take a look at the by-laws from time to time and become familiar with them. I only hope more members are present when we take the vote. The more involvement, the more assurance we'll have that any change is for the good of the entire membership."

Gerry Finn

### NEXT MEETING

**Super Chairman Tournament  
Cohasset C.C.**

**June 12, 1980**

**Host Supt. Art Washburn**

**Shotgun 1:00 pm  
Dinner After Golf**

#### Directions:

From route 3 take route 228 and cross route 3A club is on the fifth street on the right. Lambert St.

#### Congratulations to:

Mark Klimm	Peter Ohlson
Manual Viveiros	David Commee
Ed Brearley	Henry Stelline
Charles Harukewicz	Frank Wingate

Voted in as members last meeting.

## Ay, there's the rub

by WILLIAM S. BREWER, JR.  
Northeastern Agronomist, USGA Green Section

**"T**HOSE WHO DO NOT remember the past are condemned to repeat it." George Santayana said this — or something like it — but he left out one vital element. He didn't mention responsibility! Only as we feel personally responsible are we moved to at least attempt to direct events which become history. In any successful venture, plenty of people are willing to take credit — at the end — for whatever may have been achieved. How many of them, though, had their necks stuck out from the beginning when the outcome was still in question?

The history of any enterprise, whether it fails or succeeds, may sometimes even turn on luck. A golf course, for example, may be blessed with particularly favorable weather that greatly moderates or erases the effects of some serious mistakes. So pin a medal on the weatherman! The astute golf course superintendent knows wherein the determining bit of credit lies.

What we are all interested in achieving, however, is such consistency in conditioning that the course will hold together even in a season with adverse weather. Probably every good golf course superintendent realizes how thoroughly nature can stack the deck, and not a one of them would willingly gamble that next year will bring about such happy circumstances that the golf course under his care will thrive in spite of deficiencies in the resources for providing that care. Yet club officials, owners, and administrators consistently seem to misread the situation.

Almost always the superintendent is held to be ultimately responsible for everything bad that happens on or to his golf course. Without meaning to take away at all from the superintendent's rightful degree of accountability for his golf course, club officials must recognize and assume their own share of responsibility — before the fact — for the events to come in the history of their golf courses. They are the policymakers; it is they who set the limitations of resource and authority. Often it is front office actions either taken, postponed, or overlooked that have, in the end, forced an unhappy decision to make a change. Only a college football coach seems to have chosen a more precarious career than a golf course superintendent.

For a simplified example, consider a golf course hiring a new superintendent

early in fall to maintain greens, tees, collars and fairways that were predominantly annual bluegrass. That winter the course suffered extensive winter turf damage. Very early in the spring, when the time was right for overseeding damaged greens and such, it was also discovered that the irrigation system required some \$30,000 worth of work to make it effectively operational. That expenditure was not authorized until June, well past the time of critical need. The course subsequently experienced a most disappointing season. The superintendent was fired. The policymakers had succeeded once again in failing to take the responsibility to act when the time was appropriate. They succeeded once again to misplace the blame for the consequences of their mistakes.

Something roughly equivalent to this sad scenario is played out at many golf courses each year, and it will very likely be repeated at most of them through several cycles until new leadership arrives with a proper perception of how things function in any undertaking that involves a chain-of-command. The field general is granted a certain amount of authority, and he must assume an equivalent amount of responsibility. However, to at least the extent that the front office places restrictions (financial and otherwise) upon the field general, it retains ultimate responsibility (acknowledged or not) for the outcome as well. The field general may or may not be guilty of failing to make the most effective use of those powers and resources which are given to him, but to hold him solely responsible is a mistake that is all too easily made by those at the top.

Other than pointing to additional obvious instances where front office mistakes significantly contributed to disastrous golf course conditions, which were then made to reflect only upon the golf course superintendent, is there any evidence that this sort of misunderstanding of organizational responsibilities is widespread in the management of golf courses? Yes, if certain inferences be granted, some compelling statistics support a contention that top management must "get its act together" and accept its rightful responsibility for golf course conditions if it expects consistency from its field generals.

Would it be reasonable to assume that, as a group, the top 100 golf courses, as ranked in the November, 1979, *Golf*

*Digest*, represent excellence in conditioning as well as in challenging design? Certainly. What is interesting to know in this context is that a club from this group is over six times more likely to avail itself of the consultative assistance of the USGA Green Section's Turf Advisory Service than a course selected at random from among all the nation's golf facilities.

There may be a number of factors involved in explaining these data, but coincidence has nothing to do with it. It would even seem a not-unwarranted conclusion to find in this a more enlightened concern with course conditioning among the nation's premier golf facilities. Why else pay even so modest a fee as \$200 for an annual tour of the course and a follow-up written report by an agency whose only mission is precisely to foster more consistently fine playing conditions? The management of these facilities is not afraid, in other words, of what an impartial but critical eye may see. They prefer to be made aware of such existing or potential problems as may be found in time for corrective action to be taken, rather than to remain blissfully ignorant of troublesome situations that may be developing and which, if not addressed early, will very likely become costly to deal with once the effects have become compounded to the point where deteriorating golf conditions are unmistakable even to the casual observer.

There is a further point that begs to be cleared up. Club officials occasionally seem to be surprised that some of the very same points raised by the Green Section have already been presented to them by their superintendent. A degree of skepticism in the face of problematic news is to be anticipated, but it should also be comforting to find such instances of confirmation. Remember that both the golf course superintendent and the green section agronomist have expertise in the same field and are dedicated to achieving the same ends. It is true that they each bring a different perspective to the situation — because of the differing nature of their jobs and of their professional backgrounds — but it is by far the more desirable situation to have these orientations mesh smoothly and for this relationship to be harnessed by the responsible top management, forming a kind of triumvirate with respect to setting a course for the future.

The photographs illustrate one of the

#### PRESIDENT

Ronald Kirkman  
25 Green St.  
Needham, Mass. 02192  
Home Phone 444-8412  
Office Phone 444-5548  
Club Affiliation  
Needham Golf Club

#### FIRST VICE PRESIDENT

Brian Cowan CGCS  
Robins Way  
Harwich, Mass. 02645  
Home Phone 432-9041  
Office Phone 945-9230  
Club Affiliation  
Eastward Ho.

#### SECOND VICE PRESIDENT

Donald Hearn CGCS  
4 Topeka Rd.  
Chelmsford, Mass. 01824  
Home Phone 828-7266  
Office Phone 894-5906  
Club Affiliation  
Weston Golf Club

#### SECRETARY

David Barber CGCS  
145 Dedham St.  
Canton, Mass. 02021  
Home Phone 828-7266  
Office Phone 828-6540  
Club Affiliation  
Blue Hills C.C.

#### TREASURER

Pete Coste CGCS  
121 Granite St.  
Medfield, Mass. 02052  
Home Phone 359-7247  
Office Phone 566-0240  
Club Affiliation  
The Country Club

#### 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 Schults  
737 Princeton Blvd.  
Lowell, Mass. 01851  
Home Phone 458-7605  
Office Phone 452-8228  
Club Affiliation  
Mt. Pleasant G.C.

#### TRUSTEE

Melvin O'Kelly  
345 Plain St.  
Marshfield, Mass. 02050  
Home phone 834-4229  
Office Phone 837-3321  
Club Affiliation  
Marshfield C.C.

#### FINANCE CHAIRMAN

Robert Johnston CGCS  
128 Wilbraham Rd.  
Hamden, Mass. 01036  
Home Phone 566-3075  
Office Phone 566-3096  
Club Affiliation  
Hamden C.C.

problems which seems to be getting more out-of-hand: the employment each year of a high percentage of inexperienced people on golf course crews and the resultant increase in mistakes. Although this is generally perceived as a funding problem, it is more likely a question of policy and the allocation of funds. Given a fair chance, no superintendent in his right mind would want a preponderance of new workers every year, particularly if his permitted workforce was also smaller than in the past. But this is being forced upon him at an alarming number of courses. We know of at least two instances last season

when not only was the entire crew new, but also it was the superintendent's first year as a superintendent. Anyone who fails to appreciate the difficulties inherent in this sort of situation is simply out of touch with reality.

The point which would be well taken from this argument is simple: it is necessary for a golf facility to employ a good golf course superintendent, but that alone is not sufficient to ensure a good long-term result. There needs also to be a top management that is aware of problems and responds to the fundamentally important requirements of the golf course.

*from USGA Greens Section "RECORD"*

To be voted on next meeting  
**Richard Duggan**  
 Maynard C.C.

**Joint meeting**  
**Managers and Supt.**  
**June 9, 1980**  
 Metacomet C.C.

**May Tournament Results**  
 1st gross T. Ohlson  
 2nd gross B. Carlton  
 3rd gross K. Mooradian  
 4th gross A. Parchecky

1st net B. Mucciarone  
 2nd net R. Kirkman  
 3rd net G. Luccinni  
 4th net E. Wiacek

## Spring's Dilly-dally Effects

Now, that we're into June nights and the comforting warmth that they lend to the growing process, this story might be outdated by time and the intricacies of publishing just once a month. However, that was a peculiar spring which just passed us by, leaving a bad taste in many a golf course superintendent's mouth.

"Spring just dilly-dallied along as far as I'm concerned," one burnt-eared super moaned. "It wasn't until the middle of May that we had anything close to a warm night. I'd say we had to be two to three weeks behind our regular weather pattern in New England."

Because of the tardiness, plus the old uneducated golfer syndrome, several superintendents took some unfair shots concerning the condition of their courses. "I don't know what the reason is," our harassed super questioned. "But, I had more complaints about greens being hard and without color by people who forgot that winter doesn't just change into summer overnight. There has to be an in-between."

There was, all right, and it did nothing to speed up the conditioning process. "The soil just remained cold too darned long," our man remarked. "I couldn't do anything about that. In the meantime, my greens didn't respond to any kind of treatment."

"My members couldn't understand the situation. Although, I have to say that only a handful actually thought it was my doing. Anyway, I had to explain to them how our winter produced just enough snow to keep the greens under its cooling effect longer than I wished."

Country club golfers, those in the affluent sector, often are spoiled by the opportunity to spend time in the South when Northern courses are being belted by the weather. Many set their own transition standard which is zilch. They expect to step off a Florida course, step on a plane, arrive at the old home club and pick up their putting stroke on the same kind of greens they just left.

Actually, they're about three months off schedule. "The

biggest noise I encountered came on our greens," the super continued. "That's when I had to go through the routine of explaining how the snow first disappears from the rough, then the fairways, the tees and, finally, the greens. That's the way it's been happening around my course every year. Consequently, our greens are always the last to take shape."

Some of the comments collected from an informal gathering of supers at last month's NEGCSAA meeting at Westover Field spread some indifferent light on the subject.

The most cutting remark on early-season conditioning was heard by a super ("no names, please") who really takes pride in his efforts to give members the best possible playing conditions.

"This certain person should have known better," was the opener. "He knew that the course had been under heavy traffic all winter because of the snowless period and unusual pleasant temperatures. Yet, he insisted that our greens were the bumpiest he'd ever seen them. I wouldn't mind, but he was one of the people who caused the bumps by being part of that winter assault on the greens."

That's right, golfers. Bumpy greens are the scars of winter play. "Our membership is one of those that never knows when to quit," the super revealed. "I don't fault that. However, if members insist on playing the course when it is laid bare to possible damage, they should be willing to pay the price. Oh, the greens do get back to normal but the recovery time is dictated by the amount of winter play. The sooner the members realize this, the sooner they'll understand that greens must be treated with care...and respect."

So, because of a deceiving winter and an uninformed golfing few, some of our superintendents were under the gun this spring in a premature attack on their professional reputations. Hopefully, in the future, the complainers will check their calendars and their logistics.

Gerry Finn

**GOLF CHAIRMAN**  
 Ken Mooradian  
 134 Green St.  
 Hopedale, Mass. 01747  
 Home Phone 473-2352  
 Office Phone 473-3508  
 Club Affiliation  
 Hopedale C.C.

**EDUCATIONAL CHAIRMAN**  
 Paul Miller  
 173 Salem St.  
 Swampscott, Mass. 01907  
 Home Phone 581-2808  
 Office Phone 595-3107  
 Club Affiliation  
 Tedesco C.C.

**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**  
 Dean Robertson  
 24 Riverview Drive  
 Newbury, Mass. 01950  
 Home Phone 462-4540  
 Office Phone 745-7289  
 Club Affiliation  
 Kernwood C.C.

Information contained in this publication may be used freely, in whole or in part, without special permission as long as the true context is maintained. We would appreciate a credit line.

Please patronize **FRIENDS OF THE ASSOCIATION**

Baker Tractor Corp., Ford Tractors  
Harley Davidson Golf Cars  
Swansea, Mass.

Bordens Spreader Service  
Maynard, Mass.  
Tel. 617-897-2571  
Sales Rep. Jack Borden  
Bulk Limestone Dealer

The Charles C. Hart Seed Co.  
Wethersfield, Conn.  
Bob Kennedy, Rep.  
Roy Sibley, Rep.  
203-529-2537

Chester Drake & Sons Inc.  
222 Walnut St.  
Framingham, Mass. 01701  
Golf Course Construction  
617-875-7929

The Clapper Co.  
1121 Washington St.  
Newton, Mass.  
617-244-7900

Grounds Equipment Co., Inc.  
383 Boylston St.  
Newton Center, Mass.

Geoffrey S. Cornish & William G. Robinson  
Golf Course Architects  
Fiddlers Green, Amherst, Mass. 01002

C.S. Curran  
T.R.C. Products, Oils and Greases  
7 Linden St., Framingham, Mass.

Scotts Pro-Turf Div.  
Rep. Ed Wiacek 1-401-253-4284  
Rep. Allan Cumps 1-413-253-2995

Gold Star Sod Farms, Inc.  
Sod & Pine Bark Mulch  
Canterbury, N.H. 603-783-4717  
Weston, Mass. 617-894-5474

Holliston Sand Co., Inc.  
Lowland St., Holliston, Mass. 01746  
Sales Office: 401-769-3526  
Box 575 Woonsocket, R.I. 02895  
Contact: Dick Halpern  
USGA Spec top dressing and trap sand

I & E Supply, Inc.  
66 Erna Ave.

Box 9 Milford, Conn. 06460  
203-878-0658

\* Tom Irwin, Inc.  
11B A St.  
Burlington, Mass.

Larchmont Engineering and Irrig. Co.  
Larchmont Lane, Lexington, Mass.  
617-862-2550

\* The Magovern Co. Inc.  
27 Lawnacre Road  
Windsor Locks, Conn. 06096  
Tel. # 1-800-243-7718 or 1-203-623-2508  
Louis C. Rogers, Vice Pres.

D. L. Maher  
Box 127, Concord St.  
N. Reading, Mass. 01864

\* R. F. Morse & Son, Inc.  
W. Wareham, Mass. 02576  
Tel: 617-295-1553  
J. Willen Roell, Rep.  
Larry Bunn, Rep.

New England Sealcoating Co., Inc.  
Tennis Court Const. and Maintenance  
Sealcoating - Hingham Ind. Center  
Hingham, Mass. 749-6800

N.E. Chapter Land Improvement  
Contractors of America  
Professional Conservation of  
Soil and Water  
Contractor in your area,  
call Peter Whiting, Pres.  
617-877-5323

Now Chemical Corp.  
Bill Brennan, Rep.  
Tel. # 891-1275 anytime  
Box 522  
Holliston, Mass. 01746  
Tel. # 429-2044

\* Old Fox Chemical Inc.  
Fertilizers - Seeds - Turf Chemicals  
66 Valley St.  
E. Providence, R.I. 02914

Pro-Lawn Prod., Inc.  
Fred Anthony, Sales Rep.  
391 Tremont St.  
N. Dighton, Mass. 02764  
617-823-1348

Richey & Clapper, Inc.  
28 Rutledge Rd.  
Natick, Mass. 01760

\* Sawtelle Bros.  
565 Humphrey St.  
Swampscott, Mass.  
617-599-4856

Scott Associates, Inc.  
60 Water Street, Clinton, Mass.  
617-365-6341  
Pumps-Sales, service  
Installation- Vertical  
Turbine pump specialists

Tuckahoe Turf Farms, Inc.  
Slocum, R.I., Litchfield, N.H.  
1-800-556-6985  
Alan Anderson  
Sam Mitchell

Tuco Products Corp.  
Div. of the Upjohn Co.  
Kalamazoo, Mich.  
David Sylvester  
203-828-3790

Turf Products Corp.  
1496 John Fitch Blvd.  
S. Windsor, Conn. 06074  
1-203-289-3471  
John Perry, Sales Rep.

\* Turf Specialty, Inc.  
84 Merrimac St.  
Hooksett, N.H. 03106  
Turf & Ornamental Supplies  
Ken Turner 617-263-7526

Valley Farms Nursery & Supply, Inc.  
133 Hopemeadow St., Rt. 10  
Simsbury, Ct. 06070  
Putting Green Sod for the Professional  
Joe Bidwell Pres.  
Bus. - 203-651-8555 Res. - 203-658-6886

White Turf Engineering  
5 Summer Drive, Winchendon, Mass. 01475  
617-297-0941

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

\* Contributors to the Lawrence S. Dickinson  
Scholarship Fund

# NEWSLETTER

Golf Course Superintendents Association  
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

PETE COSTE  
Business Manager  
LEON ST. PIERRE  
Co-ordinator  
GERRY FINN  
Contributing Editor

Return to:  
TOM SCHOFIELD  
290 North Road  
Sudbury, MA 01776

**FIRST CLASS**

First Class  
U. S. Postage  
**PAID**  
Maynard, MA  
Permit #17