



April, 1981



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.

Distinguished by Design

Geoffrey Cornish couldn't understand it.

"All the grief I've caused golf course superintendents all over the world and they bestow this honor on me?" he exclaimed. "I am really overwhelmed and grateful. It's a moment I'll always treasure."

This was Geoff Cornish after receiving The Distinguished Service Award by the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America during the group's national turf conference in Anaheim. And it was, indeed, a rare occasion. After all, Cornish is a golf course architect. They're the guys supers are supposed to curse, not crown.

Cornish, though, is something special. A former president of the Golf Course Architects' Association, he is considered one of the giants of his profession. His signature is attached to more than 170 blueprints for courses across the United States, Canada and Europe.

The 66 year-old Amherst, Massachusetts resident -- who jogs his eight miles every day, is in his 45th year of plotting the demise of your average weekend hacker.

"I have no intentions of quitting," Geoff remarked. "I feel much younger than the date on my birth certificate indicates I should feel. I have new ideas and can't wait to get them on the drawing board."

Cornish began his distinguished career in Canada under the masterful direction of Stanley Thompson. A native of Winnipeg, Geoff got his degree in agronomy from British Columbia University in 1935 and took up his apprenticeship in golf course design at the princely sum of \$25 a week.

Geoff went off to World War II in 1940, serving overseas with the infantry where he rose to the rank of major. He went back to Vancouver for two more years with Thompson who also had another aspiring architect under his wing, one Robert Trent Jones.

In 1947, Cornish got a call from Professor Lawrence Dickinson at the University of Massachusetts to teach there. He stayed with Dickinson for five years during which he earned a masters degree at the university. He opened his own golf architect firm in 1952 and has been on the job ever since.

Presently, Geoff is locked into two projects.

"I'm writing a book on the history of golf course design," he disclosed. "It will be published in New York and London. In between visits to the publisher I have some redesigning assignments. One's in Wilmington, Delaware, and the other's in Westchester, New York."

Cornish is in partnership with Bill Robinson who is spearheading the new architectural work for the company in oil-rich Calgary. So, he doesn't have to wonder about keeping busy.

There's seldom a day when Geoff isn't asked about his favorite courses which first saw the light of day through his expertise and imagination.

Several of them are in New England. They include Crestview in Agawam, Mass.; Chicopee Country Club; the International in Bolton, Mass.; Spring Valley in Sharon, Mass. and the Elington Ridge Country Club of Ellington, Ct.

Other favorites are Summerlea in Montreal, York Down in Toronto, the Halifax Country Club in Nova Scotia and the Links at Porto Carras which is located in Northern Greece.

Geoff admits the architectural world has changed in his 45 years of moving earth and creating enjoyable golfing playgrounds for literally tens of thousands of golfers.

"It used to be easy to get a plan going," he sighed. "You could walk into a community and pick up a permit to build in a minute. But now there are other things to be considered. Environmental problems head that list. Of course, escalating costs have made their impact, too. But things go on and somehow everything survives."

Geoff Cornish, then, is still very much wrapped up in his love for creating the challenges golfers treat with almost a like affection.

"I'm still going strong and flourishing among my worthy and honorable competition," he added. "And I still wonder why the superintendents chose me for such a high honor as their distinguished service award. I must have impressed a few people along the way. It's always nice to be recognized for your life's work. This makes it all the more worthwhile to me."

Gerry Finn

NEXT MEETING

Eastward Ho

April 20, 1981

Directors Meeting 9:45

Regular Meeting 10:45

Lunch 12:00 Golf after lunch.

Directions

Route 6 to exit 11. Go left on route 137 for 50 yards to Pleasant Bay Rd. Follow to route 28. Go right on route 28 to golf course on Fox Hill Rd. To Wayside Inn. Go past Fox Hill Rd. to first traffic light. Go right to Chatham rotary. Go around rotary through town. Inn is on left. Parking in rear.

Host Supt. Brian Cowan

Tel# Home 432-9041 Office 945-9230

President's Message

The superintendents who were unable to attend the Massachusetts Fine Turf Conference or the Massachusetts Golf Associations seminars missed out on some exciting and informative sessions.

Dr. Joseph Troll is to be congratulated on his superior conference. As usual, the educational program and the industrial show were excellent. Congratulations are also in order for Geoffrey Cornish, Golf Course Architect, who received the Distinguished Service Award from the Golf Course Superintendent's Association of America. This is the second consecutive year the recipient was from Massachusetts, the other, Manny Francis Sr. - 1980. Congratulations are in order for Robert W. Osterman from Connecticut. Bob was appointed by the president of GCSAA, Mike Bavier, to serve as secretary - treasurer for 1981 term. We are indeed fortunate in having people like Bob willing and most able to serve in our national association.

We wish to express our appreciation to the Executive Committee of the Massachusetts Golf Association, for inviting the Course superintendents to serve on the panel and express his viewpoints to the club officials at the M.G.A. Spring Conference. Subjects covered were: Stress on the superintendent, Budgets, Staff, Environmental impact. The speakers were: Don Hearn, Brian Cowan, Tony Caranci and yours truly. The moderator was Guy Tedesco, Executive Director Massachusetts Golf Association. There were over 200 Club Directors and Superintendents at this particular seminar. Some excerpts of the panel which mystified club officials were: We have stringent regulations on chemicals and we must be certified by examination in order to purchase and apply restricted pesticides. Also, most of the best pesticides ever produced to control insects are now banned. The complaints many superintendents have to bear when a green is closed for a few hours to aerify, etc. The merciless harassment brought upon the superintendent when his golf course is justifiably closed because of unplayable conditions, and the one down the street is open. The senseless comparison of the golf course where one has a much larger budget than the other. The many 150 and 175 yard markers, whiffle balls on flag poles, diagramed cards, etc. With all these aids, have handicaps gone down? Has play speeded up? Are we removing certain skills from the game?

A responsible labor staff seems to be non-existent on many courses. The wage structure and the Saturday, Sunday and holiday work, benefits, sick days, medical, pension, vacation time are all important factors. Unions are close by and the speaker compared two unionized golf courses in Massachusetts. We now have four golf courses in this state that have union labor and it seems we are heading for more.

Ron Kirkman
President, NEGCSA

Golf Course Superintendents Association
February 2, 1981

Proposed Bylaw Changes

Present Bylaw

Page 6A - Article IV - Section I - Item 5

All members shall be elected by secret ballot. White balls elect and black cubes reject. Three black cubes shall reject an applicant from membership and his name shall not be presented again for one year.

Proposed Bylaw

Page 6A - Article IV - Section 1 - Item 5

All members shall be elected by majority vote of the Board of Directors.

Present Bylaw

Page 11 - Article VI - Section 1

The president, with the approval of the Directors, shall within sixty days preceding the Annual Meeting, appoint a Nominating Committee of five voting members of the Association, not more than two of whom shall be members of the Board of Directors. This committee shall nominate a slate of five officers in accordance with Article V, Section 1, and for the offices of First and Second Vice-Presidents shall nominate two candidates for each of these offices and five Directors as provided in Article V, Sections 2 and 3. The list so named shall be announced preceding the Annual Meeting and shall be published in the Newsletter prior to the Annual Meeting.

Proposed Bylaw

Page 11 - Article VI - Section 1

The President, with the approval of the Directors, shall within sixty days preceding the Annual Meeting, appoint a Nominating Committee of five voting members of the Association, not more than two of whom shall be members of the Board of Directors. This committee shall nominate a slate of five officers in accordance with Article V, Section 1, and five Directors as provided in Article V, Sections 2 and 3. The list so named shall be announced preceding the Annual Meeting and shall be published in the Newsletter prior to the Annual Meeting.

JOB OPENING - Unicorn G.C. Supt. position

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c/o Unicorn G.C.

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Fringes More Than Bait

It used to be that the employer could throw out his rod and reel in prospective employees with just one crackling sound of the dollar. Those were the so-called "fringeless," days when your take-home-pay was what you got and not a penny more in accompanying benefits.

However, the era of the fringe benefit is upon us. And, oddly enough, it could be of benefit to both employer and employee.

The tax structure of our country is such that plain, fat salaries are thinning out to a point where inflation eats up most raises and living expenses chew on what was there in the first place. This brings about a situation which almost rivals a Catch 22 hang-up.

Because the average golf course superintendent's salary puts the profession in a no-win stalemate as far as increases are concerned, it might be advantageous for both the country club and super to consider the option of fringe benefits.

How about that super, anyway?

Does he have fully-paid medical insurance? Is he covered by an extensive pension plan? Could he use a car or station wagon? Are his children protected against the high-rising cost of education beyond the secondary level? Does he have free dental care? Is there a gas credit card in his compartment?

The list of fringe benefits goes on. What's more important, though, is that most fringes come fully equipped. They have no tax attachment to them which makes them a pure 100 percent gain.

Of course, to each his own is the rule each superintendent must follow in suggesting the fringe benefit alternative to a straight-out raise in salary.

Many young supers are quick to note that such benefits as pension and educational aid fall into an immediate blind spot. Retirement is miles down the road for them. College costs for their children are things to worry about in the next decade.

This is where their foresight comes up short of 20-20.

Pension plans can be arranged so that they offer easy cash-conversion opportunities in the case of job termination or emergencies. In addition to offering a blend of security and equity, they take the place of savings plans under the guise of a "what you don't see you won't miss" arrangement.

Thus, the pension in lieu of salary increase is a godsend to the super in that he protects his future and is always there for the tapping if his present needs a financial shot.

Providing transportation, in the form of a car, station wagon or whatever, gives the country club and super another escape from the tax bite.

To be voted on at next meeting
Robert Sullivan, Glen Ellen G.C.
Associate Member

A car, paid for by the employer, is worth anywhere between \$3,000 and \$5,000 a year to the employee. Again the perk of avoiding taxes on that varying sum has to be a boon to the super who is offered such option.

Other benefits carry corresponding aids in fighting inflation.

At one time, rent and maintenance-free houses were considered one of the country club's strongest forms of ammunition in drawing a reputable super to its grounds. For some reason, both parties came to look upon such practice as unrealistic.

However, it might very well be revived under an increasing swing to the overload of fringe benefits by tax-wise employers. How much would a house, plus utilities be worth to a superintendent? Just multiply your monthly mortgage, heat, cooling, electric, gas and telephone bills by 12 and you come up with a spicy figure.

The alternate fringe benefit form of increased remuneration isn't for everyone. Unfortunately, there are still superintendents in the field who are underpaid to the point where they require salary increases to meet the basic cost of living.

There are those, though, who are flirting with salary and tax bracket levels which almost penalize them for having their paychecks pushed upward. The combination of inflation and taxes often wipes out a raise before it gets to the super's hands.

So, looking to the fringe benefit avenue is something more than bait in the case of the employer or country club. And it certainly doesn't make fish out of the employee or golf course superintendent. It is something to be considered, not in the future but now when the cost of living shrinks everything from a man's paycheck to his incentive to add to its numbers.

Gerry Finn

Tentative Outdoor Meetings

April - Eastward Ho

May - Holden Hills

June - Pinebrook (Super/Chairman)

July - Tedesco (Super/Championship)

August - Agawam hunt (combined with R.I. Assoc.)

Sept. - Haverhill (combined with N.H. Assoc.)

October - International G.C.

October - Brae Burn (Super/Pro)

November - The Presidents

Exact dates for each month are still not all firm, so watch the Newsletter for more information.

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NEWSLETTER

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