

NEWSLETTER

September 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.

“Red”

The cigarette would be couched as usual between his index and second finger. The top third of the index finger had been fashioned into a stub many years ago. He would take his customary long drag and with the same motion of the muted digit guide the rim of his glasses into a comfortable seat on the bridge of his nose. This natural characteristic would continue with intermittent precision for the entire conversation except for an occasional blinking, grimace or twitch of the nose which was, of course, the reason for the unusual posture of the glasses. He told me one time, that as a youth he had accompanied his father to work at a restaurant in Woburn where he was employed as a Pastry Chef. It seemed that his curiosity was aroused by an exhaust fan that was siphoning the heat, smoke and flies from the kitchen. His desire to know prompted him to insert his finger into the rear of the mechanized blade resulting in the involuntary amputation of the first joint. I sensed at the time that he was somewhat embarrassed with the recollection of the incident but I laughed anyway.

He would dominate any discussion and as one got to know him he would find it easier to listen than to compete with argument. He dealt only in facts and absolutes and would not permit his mind to entertain any unsubstantiated probabilities. It was always either black or white, yes or no or right or wrong. He was not an easy man to know. He was of Dutch and Irish heritage and as stubborn as granite. He would not go to you. You became his friend only after submitting to his personal doctrine of appraisal. I doubt that he could ever verbalize such an acceptance. You knew only when he would share a confidence that a bond of respect and trust had been consummated. He developed solid friendships and when you got to really know him you had to like him. I have a sense of regret for those who were denied the luxury of perceiving and understanding the various facets of character of this unusual individual.

He possessed a pride, not the shallow ego reflected from a mirror, but rather a pride of accomplishment, a self gratification in positive achievement augmented by a strong will and dogged determination. I would estimate that his pride was his greatest asset and strength. He was irascible of nature and at times recalcitrant as he suffered annually through his appointed supervisors who more often than not knew less than nothing of his profession. He harbored an insatiable curiosity and could not countenance a problem without a solution.

It seems ironic that it was such a “problem” with no solution that contributed to his death. He was vigorous and energetic and demanded of his employees the same degree of dedication which he exhibited. He was also a great competitor. I played a number of years with him as his four-ball partner. We would leave the first tee and he would have total concentration and desire until the match was finished. He would speak to no one and if spoken to, he would perhaps grunt. And you had better make sure that you played by the rules because he knew them all. On occasion when someone did violate a regulation of golf, he would not hesitate to tell them with adamant conviction to

put the ball in his pocket and go to the next tee; that, “he was out of the hole.” He did not lose easily nor gracefully and only the passing of time could pacify his agitation. The psychological benefits gleaned from such encounters were both amusing and beneficial. He really was something else. And he had a sense of humor. He possessed a duckhook that could travel across two counties; and once in the City Tournament coming off nine, he lugged two out of bounds and after hitting five off the tee, he put his next shot into the trap to the right of the green and was lying six. Now, with the crowd encircling the green, and full of anger, concentration and confidence, he proceeded to knock the next one into the jar for a seven amidst the wild applause from the gallery. He exited the trap with a tip of the cap and a big wide grin knowing the crowd thought he made a magnificent birdie when in reality, he had made triple bogey.

I believe that it was in 1956 that Meindert Francis Schults was hired to fill the position that was then referred to as Greenskeeper at Mount Pleasant Golf Club in Lowell, Mass. “Red” was perhaps twenty-nine or thirty years old at the time and had left a job at Raytheon to assume this position. He had lived adjacent to the old number five and six fairways since he was eight or nine and had spent a great part of his youth caddying, playing

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NOTICE

Pro-Super Tournament
Oct. 16, 1981 Brae Burn C.C.
West Newton, Mass.

Next Meeting

Oct. 13, 1981

The International

Host Super

*** Ron Milenski**

8:30 Directors Meeting

9:00 Regular Meeting

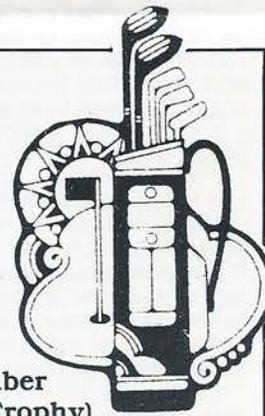
10:00 Brunch

11:30 Golf - Member/Member

(Arthur Anderson Trophy)

Please call Ron at 617-365-3060 before Oct. 10 and let him know that you are coming. The cost for food, carts, and refreshment is \$20.00. Don't cause unnecessary embarrassment by not calling ahead.

Directions: From 495 take exit 27 (Bolton) to Rt. 117. Take 117 through Bolton center, follow The International signs to the front gate.



Golf Course Superintendents Association

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and working at the Course. That, in total, represented his entire practical experience and I doubt that he would have even been considered in today's market. The intangibles he possesses were obvious only to the astute. I doubt that in the history of Mt. Pleasant a more beneficial decision was ever made than the hiring of the "Redhead." How I wish I could adequately describe with words, the conditions under which he began, and document the evolution that he orchestrated, which brought Character to Mount Pleasant.

In 1956 there was no water and when someone would discard a cigarette on three, it would ignite a peat fire that would burn all season. There was little or no grass. The hill and fairway on four, and the fairways on five, eight, nine and two would be burnt and dry, and all had clay tees. The old two, three and six greens would all fit into today's number seven. He had no budget, very little equipment and no help and was paid not much more than a nickel an hour. But, there I go trying to draw a picture that could never be really done accurately. The older members will know my reference.

One had to really experience the changes to fully comprehend the startling transformation that evolved from the talent of this self-taught man. He initiated his system, budgeted his needs, and with the cooperation of the various Boards received the equipment he needed to progress. We have Meindert Francis "Red" Schults to thank for developing this most beautiful and competitive nine-hole golf course, perhaps one of the best in the Country and most certainly in New England. He accomplished it all with limited budget and minimum assistance; developing new tees, new and longer fairways, a water system, new and larger greens and traps and added the aesthetics of trees and flowers. He did indeed convert the sows ear into the silk purse, and along the way he developed the friendship and respect of his fellow Superintendents across the Country.

I would estimate that the replacement of Meindert Francis Schults as Course Superintendent will be considerably

more expensive than was ever contemplated. The void he has left will become more manifest with each passing day, and perhaps finally the realization of his true worth will be made apparent.

Death fosters varied emotions. "Red" had a beautiful Mass and Funeral. The Church was full of his friends. It was especially nice to see all the Golf Course Superintendents, some from Connecticut and New York in attendance and the wonderful representation from Mount Pleasant was a real tribute. He lies about a wedge behind the Chapel at St. Patrick's Cemetery a soft chip in from the left hand side of the road. I left the cemetery finding it difficult to believe he was not going to be around any more. He fought such a tough fight. I did not feel like going back to work immediately and I drove back to the Club after passing by "Red's" garage. Such irony. It was City Tournament Day at Mount Pleasant, and it was a beautiful day. The hustle and bustle going on was in anticipation of the crowd that would be coming. Beer Coolers, Tables, Chairs and Umbrellas were moved here and there. I grabbed a Chair and sat down to the right of number one tee and looked out at Red's Golf Course. They were finishing manicuring the rough on the left of number one. The Flowers were beautiful along the wall and around the flag pole and the entire Course looked magnificent. I thought to myself how many times I had seen him plod across the various fairways with a stride likened to that of a farmer and wondered if there possibly could be one inch of ground that he has not traversed in his forty-five years around Mount Pleasant. And then, for the first time, the realization of what he had accomplished was evident. It was all there in front of me. I felt a contentment for "Red" because I knew he would always be there as long as there is a Mount Pleasant. This indeed was the legacy from Golf Course Superintendent, Meindert Francis Schults. I could picture him tipping his cap with his big wide grin and winking at me. I felt elated as I drove back to work realizing it was City Tournament day, the Golf Course was at its zenith, and "Red" was with his Maker.

Rest in peace, my friend.

Bill Neary
Lowell, Mass.

Article Four... Another Test

It has been just about one year since the Golf Course Superintendents Association of New England ran its by-laws through a detergent and cleaned up a few discrepancies, therein.

An enthusiastic turnout of 67 raced through a set of revisions and brought the by-laws up to date with overwhelming vote ease in September of 1980.

"There's only one thing wrong," one judicious super recalled the race to make several changes in wording and redefinitions of requirements for membership. "There was only a half-job completed on Article IV. The revamping of it should have gone all the way."

The Article IV issue pertained to the old waiting period of five years for acceptance of new members. Before wiping it out, regular members became enfranchised to vote and hold office in the association only if they had been a superintendent five years. Under the new edict, that holdup has been reduced to one year.

However, there is still criticism concerning the second half of Article IV. It states that an incoming member to the New England group must also apply for and be accepted to membership of the "National" -- Golf Course Superintendents Association of America.

The heat of that so-called penalty has become so intense that the by-laws will come under renewed discussion and possible revision when the NE supers gather October 13 at

the International Golf Club in Bolton.

"We should have freedom of choice in this matter," offered one superintendent who has been an associate member of the NEGCSA for 14 years and unable to take meaningful part in the association. "After all, we are a separate entity. The National owes us nothing; we owe it nothing."

It is essential that the NEGCSA take a strong second look at Article IV, since the stated opinion is not an isolated one. There are a number of members, including those locked into the National, who believe the two associations should not be intertwined by this mandatory rider.

Another super has been adamant about refusing to go along with the requirement to join the National.

"I've been going to meetings for years and I'll continue to attend them," he disclosed. "However, it is unfair that I can contribute to discussion and offer my limited expertise to problems. Yet, when there is a vote coming up, I am not allowed to express my views in that process. It's not a case of being stubborn, either. There is principle involved. In all probability, I might even join the National -- if I have freedom of choice. That's what the argument is all about."

Of course, there is some irony attached to the upcoming session on the controversial amendment-to-be.

Because only regular members can vote on amending

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and revising the by-laws, only those belonging to the National have the privilege of deciding the budding issue and the fate of those it affects.

"I always thought the first goal of the New England Association was to concentrate on upgrading our own group," another amendment booster declared. "The way it's set up now we're nothing more than the tail of the dog and the national's the head. Well, I don't want anyone wagging my tail. I can do it myself."

Another strong point favoring the attempt to drop the National-membership requirement is the occasional splitting of opinions on certain issues concerning the golf course superintendents' profession. There are times when the NEGCSA is absolutely in disagreement with proposals set forth by the GCSAA.

"That may be stretching our argument a little fine," one associate members said. "But I can name quite a few situations where the stand of the National was in direct conflict with ours. This is not to say that the new England group adopts everything the National puts forth. But that relationship, spurred by the requirement to join GCSAA, kind of gives us a hand-me-down feeling."

It is said that the Article IV rider is responsible for several NEGCSA membership candidates not even bothering to apply. There even is talk of potential spinoff groups forming over the failure to lift the restriction.

NEGCSA president Ron Kirkman is happy that the issue has come out of the information discussion and argument stage and put in front of the membership for action - one way or the other.

"We're going to give this thing a thorough going over before any change is proposed," Kirkman advised. "We are a democratic organization and that process will be the foundation for anything that happens at Bolton. It is an important issue, though, and I'm looking for a large attendance."

So, Article IV gets another test. This one should be a lively one.

Gerry Finn

Expanding Golf Etiquette

Your foursome dilly-dallies, either someone has lost a ball or the pace has disintegrated into an agonizing creep for the group behind you. So, you wave it through and one of the game's prime rules of etiquette has been obeyed - practiced to the full extent of its unwritten dictate.

Does golf etiquette begin and end there?

Unfortunately, many golfers restrict their display of etiquette to those areas concerning only behavior within the framework of playing a round. They forget that etiquette takes on more responsibility than keeping harmony within the club's membership or retaining proper order of shotmaking within a particular group.

Care and respect for the upkeep of the golf course often are ignored in the golfer's definition of etiquette.

Probably the most abused understanding between player and course maintenance is that he repair ball marks on the green.

Time is of the essence in preventing extensive damage when a shot turns up turf on the putting surface. If the mark is repaired quickly - and it takes no more than 10 seconds to perform that remedial act - it will heal within 24 hours. If it goes unrepaired for more than one hour, the recuperation period can run up to 15 days.

Footprints in a sand trap have been the curse of the

errant-shooting golfer almost from the beginning of golf's popularity spread. In essence, raking holes and other forms of unscheduled handicaps for doomed players doesn't aid in the maintenance program.

However, the habit of raking all areas of the trap could avoid costly repair work. Golfers sometime leave a trap from its deepest end, breaking down construction of that particular side of the hazard which invites a number of possible upkeep problems. Rule here is simple - leave via the shallow end and rake everything behind you.

One of the careless acts of the golfer comes in the manipulation of the flagstick on the green. Flagsticks always should be held with the end still in the center of the cup. Resting them on an angle behind the cup will scar and leave an indentation in the spot. Eventually, this leads to bumpy greens and screaming the golf course superintendent's name in vain during the 19th hole chatter.

It seems that the divot problem is eternal. Why? Because many golfers allow divots to lay where they fall or do not take enough time to replace them properly.

The practice of picking up a divot and dropping it in the general area from where it was taken is almost as damaging as ignoring it completely.

The ideal replacing process is to take a little time and return it to its original position.

Of course, the maintenance woes of a superintendent can be multiplied by the number of golf car users who operate the mechanized monsters in a reckless manner. Obviously, golf cars should be restricted to cart paths when at all feasible. When they are allowed to roam from them and rough areas, the driver is responsible for keeping within reasonable distance of greens, tees and other delicate spots.

Even more trying on a superintendent's nerves are the pull cart cowboys of the great green way.

Pull cart users are notoriously noted for dragging their bag carriers across tees and parking them on the fringes of greens. Then, too, they have been seen traversing bunkers with them and sometimes using them as riding devices for young children.

The refresher course might appear to be a never-ending trail of "don't do this and don't do that" for the golfer. However, what it boils down to is the simple application of common sense and respect for the golf course. There are no heavy demands on the golfer in lending a hand to the maintenance of the course he plays.

In fact, the golfer actually does himself a favor in recognizing his responsibility of doing everything he can to avoid inflicting damage to the course. In the private club sector, he not only preserves the condition of his layout, he helps prevent damage which could hurt him in the pocketbook. The public player also benefits in that lower maintenance outlay keeps the green fee he pays, from soaring out of sight and beyond his means.

Golf etiquette, then, doesn't stop with being courteous to fellow players. It extends to a feeling of respect and pride for the golf course. Funny thing, all it costs is a little time - a small price to pay for anything.

Gerry Finn

**To be voted on next meeting:
Russell Bragdon - Assoc. Member
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