

# NEWSLETTER

January 1984



*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.

## The Course Is Still No. 1

Every now and then isolated incidents surface requiring another refresher program in the appreciation of the golf course.

It's hard to fathom, but there still are people who believe in a warped sense of priorities. They insist, and often in dogmatic fashion, that the clubhouse and its attending facilities are the backbone of the country club.

Let this corner be the first to remind them that without a golf course, there would be no country club. Alas, four-foot putts take precedence over the 4-to-1 martini. And, as far as individual jobs are concerned, the golf course superintendent's responsibilities stand head and shoulder above those of their colleagues making points with members while the real foundation of the club (course) lies in wait to provide the most enjoyable hours of a member's day.

True, it takes several representatives of the country club employment wing to work together and blend their talents in the common goal of establishing and maintaining a prestige-bathed meeting place for its members. There have to be organizational-oriented club managers, glib-tongued maitre des hotel, fancy-stepping waiters, wall-to-wall smiling pros and gourmet starred chefs to give the clubhouse and pro shop the all-efficient look.

The assumption, definitely false — by the way, sometimes suggests that the golf course takes care of itself and that its caretaker (superintendent) is nothing more than an overseer in the means to that end.

The disturbing aside to this attitude is that some members (obviously, those uneducated in the accepted guidelines to country club operation) share that outlook with the dolts initiating it. Often, those members are placed in policy-making positions and the recognition of responsibility takes a damaging turn for the worse.

This unsettling situation leads to an attention gap between the board of governors and the superintendent. Eventually, there is heavy concentration on the operation of the clubhouse and pro shop, leaving the golf course on the outside looking in.

There are several examples, all documented, that qualify as proof the golf course is uppermost in the minds of members when unscheduled disasters come to call.

There is the story of the country club that was sold, leaving employees in the dark as to their future employment there. The first to be re-hired was the golf course superintendent as the new owners sought to keep things just as the old owners had left them.

Another incident concerns a country club that was leveled by a devastating fire. The club president was out of town at the time and was informed of the catastrophe by telephone. He was told that the clubhouse, pro shop ... every building on the premises had been wiped out.

"And the golf course?" the upset president pleaded. "Nothing happened to it," was the reply. "Oh, I'm relieved," he sighed. "We can always build another clubhouse, the pro can work out of a trailer. But we could never replace that layout. It's the one thing we can't do without."

The truth of the matter is that in situations where country clubs plunge into financial difficulty, usually the cause of the crisis is traced to an overemphasis on providing members services that originate in the clubhouse.

And, more often than not, the upkeep and improvement of the golf course gets lost in the lopsided attention given that club's social offerings. As a result, the course goes to seed, so to speak, and its fading appeal leads to a drop in membership ... sometimes reaching the point where drastic and expensive recuperative measures are necessary to return things to normal.

"If a club is in trouble," one veteran country club squire declared, "look around the clubhouse and you can spot its source. Usually, its members have gone berserk trying to upgrade foods, drink and services while the golf course goes begging for attention. A club cannot succeed without seeing to the needs of the course before everything else. It's the starting point; no doubt about that."

A restated word to the wise, then, should be sufficient. Sure, the filet mignon must come out of the kitchen ready to slice with a fork. And, yes, the 4-to-1 martini just might make a member's day if it's prepared perfectly. However, without the conditions to make that four-foot putt, service-splashed country clubs will soon see dues-paying members doing a slow fade. The golf course is No. 1 and don't you ever forget it.

Refresher course class is dismissed!

Gerry Finn

### Next Meeting - Annual Meeting

January 9, 1984  
Franklin Country Club  
Rt. 140, Franklin, Mass

Directors Meeting - 10:30 a.m.  
Lunch - 11:45 a.m.  
Annual Meeting - after lunch

Host - Gary Luccini

DIRECTIONS - From Rt. 495 take King St. exit in Franklin. Head towards Franklin to Rt. 140 at light. Take a right on 140, Club will be on right approx. 1 mile.

# Golf Course Superintendents Association

## President's Message



As the last few days of the 1983 season draw to a close, let me take this opportunity to express my sincere thanks to the Officers, Board of Directors, and the entire membership of GCSA of N.E. for their continued support during my reign as your President. They were certainly two years I will long remember.

The future of our Association, as well as our profession, looks very bright. However, the new officers and directors will continue to need and look for your in-put, suggestions, and new ideas.

Also, I wish to thank, Dick Haskell and Dick Crosby, as well as the Executive Committee of the MCA for including the President of GCSA of N.E. into their future plans. It was a pleasure to work with and meet so many nice people.

In closing, I wish to thank all the Superintendents that hosted meetings and provided such excellent golf courses, and a special note of thanks to Dave Barber (1982) and Ron Kirkman (1983) for two really nice Christmas Parties.

Here's wishing everyone the Happiest and most prosperous New Year in '84!

See you at the Annual Meeting!

Brian Cowan, CGCS  
President, GCSA of NE

## It's Wrong Not to Write

Yup, when you went to sleep last night, the world didn't stop. Nor did the calendar remain on hold. Sure, it's still you you're looking at in the mirror, but the time has changed ... into another year, in fact, and still another verbal venture to update the membership of the New England Golf Course Superintendents Association on where your Newsletter has been and where it's going.

You say, the messages you receive have been one-sided? Right. Put 100% at the top of your paper and go to the head of the class.

In a quicky review, this vehicle never has been in a stall. We have tried to keep you abreast of the contributions and projects of certain colleagues by way of occasional profiles. If you have not been among the subjects, it's not because we've forgotten you. Another time, another word picture of the most important man on the golf course ... you!

Along the way, too, we have taken the liberty of laying pertinent commentary material on you. Sometimes you may agree and sometimes not. However, sad to say, there's no way for us to sift through the orchids and the onions. Alas, for the most part, your views, opinions and the like are hidden behind a strange veil of silence.

Absolutely, you may sit back now and say, "he's singing our song."

Right again. Each year at this time the Newsletter makes its annual plea for membership involvement in its contents. The attempt is genuine. It is not intended to bathe the responsive member in embarrassment or to expose him as a perennial complainer. It's offered in the spirit of obtaining constructive criticism, suggestions, humorous stories etc and relaying them to your fellow professionals.

Problems are right up our alley. If you have one, know of someone who has or think something's amiss in the world of the golf course superintendent, it's almost your duty to share it with us and the rest of the membership.

Obviously, there is a burning issue that just won't go out. Along the way, we've heard of a recognition gap haunting certain superintendents. Surely, the victims of this unjust situation should be heard. How? Right here. By writing that wrong.

Apparently, the reluctance to sound off carries with it a fear that job security would be threatened should the writer's views be made public. No problem there. Any and all submitted material will be printed without the name of the sender, if that request is made. So, you can throw out barbs and brickbats to your heart's content without any danger of it causing a backlash effect.

There is a scolding aspect of this plea, too. You didn't think you were going to get away without that, did you?

Too often, association officers and Newsletter personnel hear of your complaints through the grapevine, second-hand sources and other forms of indirect communication.

Regardless of the subject matter, those views certainly can't be accorded creditability under the above conditions of expressing them.

This is not to suggest that the association expects to be privy to private conversations and the like. However, if the matter is too important that it lends itself to amplification outside the realm of normal channels, certainly it's worthy of your sounding board which is located on the pages you're reading now.

An association-wide sharing of ideas and opinions should be the basis for much of the material in this publication. And, many of those ideas and opinions must come from you. Too many members are unaware of their expertise and the importance of spreading it among their fellow supers. We think you know your business. In fact, we're sure of it. That's why we're making this plea.

So, don't throw this away or stash it in that file where you bury things to do tomorrow which never get done. We need your voice to upgrade your Newsletter.

Your input will make for a better product which just happens to be at the top of our agenda for things to do today. A better publication means a better association and this is what we're all striving for.

Thanks for your time ... and Happy New Year.

Gerry Finn

**Divot Drift ...** I hope everyone has had a happy holiday season. Our thanks to Ron Kirkman and Needham Golf Club for hosting our Christmas Party. Everyone had a great time .... Winter is certainly here. Not only is the snow and cold a sure sign, but also the word out of Medfield that the "helicopter" has taken to the basement nets. The report we got is that Pete is hitting 200 balls a night and that he will be out to avenge his embarrassing performance at last years GCSAA tournament .... Our congratulations to Bobby Johnston on his new position at Wampanaug in Conn. Bob has been very active in GCSANE serving as finance chairman and will surely be missed .... GCSANE will have a large contingent once again headed to Phoenix for the golf tournament and then on to Las Vegas for the convention. Hope to see you there .... Finally our thanks to Gary Luccini and Franklin Country Club for being our December host.

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## GCSAA News

Golf Course superintendents from all parts of the world and other interested attendees will have the opportunity to hear prominent author and futurist, Dr. Leon Martel, address them at GCSAA's 55th International Turfgrass Conference and Show to be held in Las Vegas January 28 through February 3, 1984. Dr. Martel will keynote the Conference at the opening session on Monday, January 30, 1984, at 9:00 a.m.

GCSAA expects up to 10,000 persons to attend the Conference and Show with more than 3,000 on hand for the opening session to hear Dr. Martel. GCSAA's Conference has featured a prominent keynote speaker for several years, including Congressman Guy Vander Jagt from Michigan last year and ABC sports commentator Jim McKay in 1982.

Martel, in his speech, will be covering a long-term world perspective and how problems such as population growth, food production, energy resources and raw material supplies will affect the golf course industry. Dr. Martel will be discussing ways golf course managers can plan realistically for the future in the context of their specific environments.

Martel is a noted author, with the books *Lend-Lease, Loans In The Cold War, The Next 200 Years, and Managing Change: How To Prepare For The Future*, to his credit at this time. Martel has served as project leader for studies for the President of the United States, Vice President and the Secretary of Defense.

Martel believes that planning for the future requires more than analyzing trends; it requires a new strategy — specifically, a strategy of managing change. As he states in his new book, *Managing Change: How To Prepare For The Future*, this strategy must be a conscious, ongoing activity. It requires a new habit of mind, one that finds reason for action — not cause of fear — in change.

All conference attendees are invited to attend Martel's keynote speech, which will be held in the Rotunda of the Las Vegas Convention Center.

For further information on registration and participation in GCSAA's conference and show in Las Vegas call, toll-free, 1-800-GSA SUPT if outside Kansas.

### Position Openings

**Furnace Brook, Quincy, Ma.**

9 holes

Contact: Paul Ceriani  
25 Bowditch St.  
Braintree, MA 02184

**Wannamoisett C.C.**

46 Hoyt Ave., Rumford, R.I.

Contact: Bill Looney

## GCSAA to hold Golf Championships

The Golf Course Superintendents Association of America (GCSAA) will hold its annual Golf Championships in Scottsdale, Ariz., on Jan. 26-27, 1984.

Held annually in conjunction with GCSAA's International Turfgrass Conference and Show since 1938, the Golf Tournament was established to provide fun and fellowship among the membership and guests of the Association, and to place a greater emphasis on the game of golf.

The 1984 tournament will be played on the Palm Course at McCormick Ranch Golf Club and the Phoenician Golf & Racquet Club, with the women's tournament being held at the Orange Tree Golf Club.

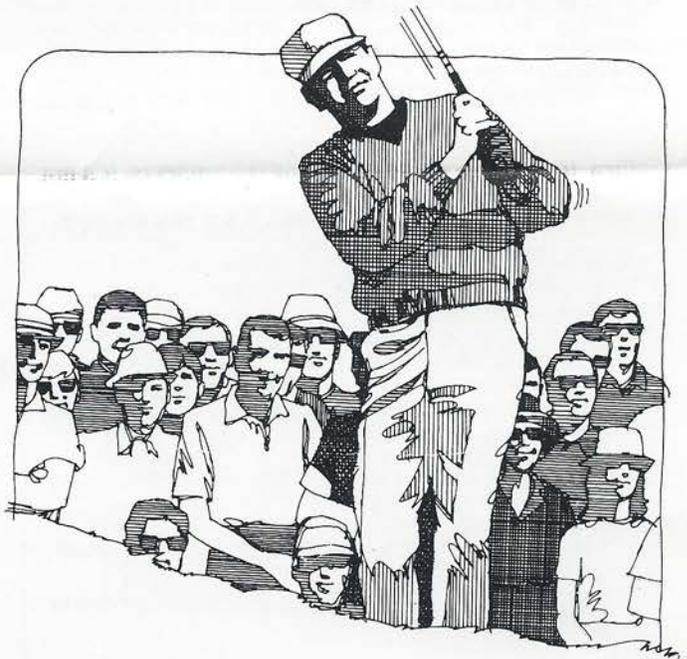
The men's tournament will be a 36-hole stroke play competition with shotgun starts. A strong field approaching the 288-player maximum is anticipated according to tournament chairman, Riley Stottern, CGCS.

In 1954 the United States Golf Association provided a beautiful traveling trophy, a replica of the U.S. Open Championship trophy, that is presented to the winner each year. Roger Null, the 1983 Champion, is currently in possession of the coveted trophy but will have a tough job in trying to keep it. No one has won the trophy two years in a row since 1973.

Prizes are awarded in four championship flights with low gross and low net awards in each of those flights. Additionally, there are flights for seniors and exhibitors, club officials and associate members of the Association.

Teams representing affiliated chapters of GCSAA also will compete for the Chapter Team Championship and the traveling Scottish Cup Trophy. Many chapters choose team members through season-long competition to present their best golfers in the tournament, which has been a part of the over-all championship since 1969.

For further information call, toll-free, 1-800-GSA-SUPT if outside Kansas.



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