



THE NEWSLETTER

Golf Course Superintendents Association OF NEW ENGLAND, INC.

Sponsors and administrators of the Troll-Dickinson Scholarship Fund — Awarded yearly to deserving Turf Management Students.

August 1988

DATES TO REMEMBER

- AUG. 24 Univ. of R.I. Turfgrass Field Day, Turfgrass Research Farm, Kingston, R.I.
- SEPT. 19 Superintendents & Club Managers Annual Meeting Blue Hill Country Club

Divot Drift

Special thanks to Steve Carr, superintendent Pocasset G.C. for hosting the club official tournament in June. On very short notice we were able to have 75% of the available positions filled. The team from Woodland G.C. won low gross. First net was won by the team from Woods Hole G.C. Second net was the team from Franklin G.C. and third net was captured by the team from Needham Golf Club.

Onward to Gardner Muni G.C. for the first round of the associations championship. Another hot, humid day. The championship flight has Bob Garrity leading in the gross division and Mike Hermanson placing first in the net division followed by Paul Jamrog. In the first flight, Mike Nagle is at the top and Don Levangie is leading in the net division with Ron Milenski a close second. The seniors division has Max Mierzwa on top in the gross division and Jim Beane running away in the net division. In the sales division the leader is Steve Butler from Larchmont Eng. and Lesco's Ron Tumiski is leading in the net tournament. Doug Johnson had the skins game going and the winners were Mike Hermanson, Steve Murphy, Bob Garrity, Ron Tumiski, Ron Kirkman and Len Blodget.

Robin Hayes, formerly from I & E Supply is now with Boston Irrigation.

Good Relationship Grows in Weston

Bob Bullard didn't hesitate.

"What's the function of the green chairman?" he repeated the question. "That's easy. It's to act as cheerleader for the golf course superintendent."

It follows, then, that a lot of "sis-boom-bahs" are heard around the Weston Golf Club these days.

Which has to mean that Bob Bullard's right on top of his job.

Bullard is, by the way, Weston's green chairman and one of the refreshing results of his two-term tenure is the ideal relationship he's nurtured between him and golf course superintendent Don Hearn.

Each claims the other is the catalyst for an association where everyone and everything at Weston, especially the golf course, benefits.

"I've tried to create an atmosphere where our members realize golf course maintenance comes first at Weston," Bullard explained his approach to heading the green committee. "I try to tell members, 'if the pro shop closed its doors tomorrow, we'd still play golf. But if the maintenance isn't there, we're not going to play golf, guys.' That's a fact of country club life."

The green chairman and the superintendent at Weston are friends, all right, but not to the extent that their friendship gets in the way of their common denominator—the best interests of the club.

"Communication", Bullard emphasized. "That's the key. That's where it all begins between Donny and me. That's where it should start in every green chairman-superintendent situation. After all, if you can't talk with each other, there's

little hope a joint-effort in the direction of improving and maintaining playing conditions will work."

Therefore, Bullard and Hearn talk it up.

"I don't think there's a morning that my green chairman doesn't stop by my office," Hearn told. "And a lot of the time the visit has nothing to do with golf. We just like to keep in touch."

Bullard embellishes that explanation with another fact of life at Weston. "Donny Hearn brews a good cup of coffee," he flapped.

On a more topical note, Bullard suggests that the first line of communication should come from the superintendent.

"The superintendent must be a communicator," he continued. "Donny has made me take an interest in maintenance by encouraging my participation. Of course, it helps that I'm a golf nut and see things beyond the numbers on a scorecard when I look at the course. Maybe I'm just a frustrated golf course architect and superintendent."

Obviously, Hearn has sold himself to Bullard because the green chairman does everything within reason to provide the support the superintendent needs to give Weston members the best possible playing conditions.

"Another of my functions is to get every penny Donny needs to condition the course," Bullard said. "When it's time, he and I sit down and work up a budget. So far, a lot of good things have come to Weston because we were successful at it."

Weston has a maintenance complex

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GOOD RELATIONS *Cont. from p. 1*

that's the talk of the superintendent's profession. It's the result of Bullard's influence on the rest of the board of directors. Another Bullard touch surfaces in an equipment replacement program that's added to the overall effectiveness of Hearn's maintenance effort.

Speaking of budgets, there is built into Weston's funds for the green chairman to attend the annual national turf conference of the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America.

"I've gone four or five times," Bullard disclosed. "What an education that is. I've met a lot of people and through those meetings a worthwhile exchange of ideas has taken place. Well, where do you think I learned that a mower costs more than a Mercedes?"

Bullard points to Hearn as an exemplary figure in his profession, perhaps one some superintendents would do well to emulate.

"Aside from all the artistic gains Donny generates on the golf course, there is another important side of the man," Bullard noted. "Wherever you see him,

Donny always looks and plays the part of a professional. He's always presentable in dress and appearance. That's the image most green chairmen would prefer to see in their superintendent."

Relationships at Weston abound with "the right stuff". Hearn is one of four department heads to have a three-year contract and there is a pension plan for every employee on the grounds. Incidentally, Weston even provides course workers with club T-shirts.

So, that's no odd couple out there when Bob Bullard and Don Hearn get together at Weston. It's a relationship born out of mutual respect and a common goal to raise the golf course to its highest possible maintenance level. As Bullard tells, "we operate out of co-action, not reaction". Nothing could improve on that description.

GERRY FINN

The Super Speaks Out

Welcome to The Super Speaks Out—a monthly feature which offers the golf course superintendent a forum to express his or her views on topics and issues relating to their profession.

This month's question: *In light of the labor crunch, how have you handled the golf course labor problem this year and is there any connection between the quality of a part-timer's work and his knowledge of golf?*

Doug Stachura, Springfield Country Club: "Frankly, this is one of my worst years in the matter of having enough help, especially at the more critical times of the golf season.

"Right now, I'm running one to two people short and not having much luck advertising to fill those holes.

"My club realizes that a shortage exists and it has cooperated in spending

more money to relieve trying labor times. However, nothing seems to get applicants flocking to our door.

"My part-time workers are a combination of old and young. My retirees seem to be more interested in incentives other than money—like being able to play the golf course and arrange flexible working hours.

"Those playing privileges, which are another effort of the club to ease the situation, have been a big boost in landing people who take pride in their work.

"That's tied in with a knowledge of the golf course and the game. Certainly, people familiar with golf, have a better idea of how a green should look after it's mowed or how a collar should be groomed. As far as I'm concerned, I'll take all the golfers I can get to work on the course just as long as they're responsible during working hours."



Bob Matthews, Marshfield Country Club. "What labor shortage are you talking about? Is there one here?"

"But let me explain. This is my first year at Marshfield after working on the (New) Jersey shore. Now, that's an area where help comes up short. I had that problem all the time I was there.

"So, I was surprised when I turned up with more applicants than positions available this summer. I actually had a choice of part-time workers, which is a wonder in itself because the competition is stiff.

"Perhaps one of the reasons I've had no problem is our club which meets those summer help wages. We pay an average of between 6 and 7 dollars an hour. We also encourage members' children to apply for work because it's worked out so well here in the past.

"I definitely prefer golf-oriented people to do the part-time work. You know that if a worker's been around golf,

Continued on page 3

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THE SUPER *Continued from page 2*

you're not going to wind up seeing a pin placed in the middle of a mountain or a bunker.

"Presently, we're running seven or eight part-time workers in addition to three retirees who stretch their work time over the whole year and average around 25 hours a week.

"Therefore, I guess I'm lucky compared to some of the other superintendents I hear about. I'm keeping my fingers crossed, too, because I know how critical it is to have enough help."



Jack Pluta, Country Club of Pittsfield:

"There's been some talk about plenty of help being available in the Berkshires but don't you believe it. It's still tough to get part-timers up here.

"However, I'm very fortunate because of a work-scholarship arrangement the club has instituted to help me cope with the shortage.

"I have seven or eight college kids and because of the possibility of getting scholarship funds, I get a lot of the same ones back summer after summer. Well, three of our guys qualified for scholarships this year, so we have plenty of incentive for them to return.

"In fact, we even go beyond summer-help boundaries. I've set up a plan where some of the same college students are able to make a few dollars during vacations and school breaks. We have paddle tennis courts here, there's always plowing and painting to do in the winter and we also have a squash court.

"Another plus for me is the quality of help I've managed to keep. I used to be against hiring member's children. But, hey, I was wrong. They've worked out real well for me.

"I guess you'd have to say those workers are golf-oriented but I don't think

things like being able to play on Mondays are that much of an incentive. All in all, I've just lucked out with the present bunch I have. Maybe we've met the problem head-on and licked it. I hope so."

GERRY FINN

Government Relation News

Score one for the good guys!! As you all may know, on July 13, 1988 the House Ways and Means Committee went into executive session with many matters at hand, one being the infamous Hodgkin's Bill. When the meeting ended the committee voted not to report out Hodgkin's version of pesticide reform at this time due to the great controversies embracing the legislation. This occurrence is very significant in that despite the continued pressure by Rep. Hodgkin and fellow committee member Rep. Decas for immediate action of this matter, the other members of the House Ways and Means Committee had the presences of mind to recognize the problems surrounding this legislation.

Congratulations to all of our members!!! Your efforts along with those of the coalition groups, we again have been temporarily successful. We now have a prime opportunity to set the wheels in motion by communicating with the Joint Committee on Natural Resources that House Ways and Means have substantial problems with the Hodgkin's Bill and that isn't it time that they released the more accepted realistic Pesticide Reform Bill, Senate Bill 1444. Also we should let the members of the House Ways and Means Committee know that S.B.1444 is still being held by the Joint Committee on Natural Resources and that if they want to see a more realistic, problem solving, less controversial, more efficient, cost effective,

alternative to pesticide reform then they should demand to receive Senate Bill 1444. Also remind them that the reasons they didn't report H.B.4872 are not going to vanish unless the bill is amended to the point it will be rendered ineffective.

Thank you for your support and efforts. Below are the members of the various committees mentioned in this message. NOTE!! The Hodgkin's Bill is no longer referred to as H.B.4872, it's new code is **House Bill 6048. WE STILL DO SUPPORT SENATE BILL 1444 AND ENCOURAGE SWIFT ACTION NOW!**

CHARLES PASSIOS, C.G.C.S.

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