



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.

February 1988

—NEXT MEETING—

Monday, February 22, 1988
Norfolk G.C.

- 9:00 Directors Meeting
- 10:45 Regular Meeting
- 12:00 Lunch
- 1:00 Educational

Educational speaker is Kathy Pappalardo the Editor and Executive Director of the NewEngland Agricultural Chemical Association. Kathy will speak on House Bill #3015—"An Act To Reform The Massachusetts Pesticide Control Act."

Host Superintendent - Don Levangie

Reservations Required -
(617) 326-9750—Thurs.-Sun.
(617) 326-3801—Mon.-Fri.

Saturday, February 27, 1988
MGA Spring Conference
February 29 - March 3, 1988
57th Massachusetts Turfgrass Conference
and 12th Industrial show

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: *Can you see the day when competition among country club department heads develops for labor because of the competitive hourly wage rates making the rounds?*

Tom Brodeur, Essex Country Club: "I'd say this is a tough question to

Continued on page 2

Zepp and Super Profession the Right "Chemistry"

It was a nice bright day, temperatures headed for the 60s with the changing of seasons—from winter to spring—at hand.

The time was almost 15 years ago, the place the University of Massachusetts campus at Amherst. That's when Dick Zepp got a 1000-watt idea.

"I just marched out of the chemistry lab, walked over to Joe Troll's office and asked him what I had to do to get into THIS business," he tells. Naturally, the first words out of Joe's mouth were, 'what are you, nuts?' I guess he had a point, though."

A point, to be sure.

Dick Zepp, recently elected NEGCSA president, at the time was far removed from that office. In fact, while teaching freshman courses at UMass he was in pursuit of a Ph.D. in organic chemistry after preparing for that lofty goal at Worcester Polytechnic Institute (WPI).

Therefore on that day in Amherst, the season wasn't the only thing that changed. But why change careers in the middle of the stream?

"I thought I had gone as far as I could go without committing myself to a lifetime in the chemistry field," informs Dick whose father is a retired WPI professor. "I wasn't really happy and that old call to the outdoors was ringing in my ears. It just wouldn't go away."

Of course, Dr. Joseph Troll welcomed Zepp into the two-year turf management course at Stockbridge with open arms—once he got over the shock of Dick's decision to reverse his vocational field.

In fact, with his educational background and native intelligence leading his charge into the golf course superintendent profession, Zepp completed that two-year course in 12 months.

From there, the new New England prexy plunked himself on the job at the Whitinsville Golf Club where he's been the head superintendent ever since.

"I know, I know, even now the way I got into the business must seem crazy to some people," Zepp admits. "But ever since I worked summers for Dick Blake (then-super) at Mount Pleasant, I always had getting into the profession in the back of my mind.

"I'm a firm believer in the 'life is short as it is' school of thought. I mean we're not around long enough to do something every day that we don't like. The day when I dread going to work could change that thinking but it hasn't happened yet. I enjoy this—100 percent."



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ZEPP AND SUPER *Cont. from page 1*

And Dick means to enjoy his term as NEGCSA president.

"Oh, yeah, this is what it's all about," Zepp says. "I've been involved in the association from the time I joined it. It's been kind of a quick trip to the presidency (just 12 years with other elected posts on the way up) but I hope I'm here long enough to see some of my ideas put into practice."

Those ideas have a wide range—from the association's effort to emphasize superintendent Bill Spence's input when the U.S. Open comes to The Country Club to a projected piece of lobby as a source of superintendent's information and voice in the state legislature.

"Education probably will take up more of my attention than anything while I'm president," Dick advises. "We are living in an ever-changing world. Pesticide and ground water issues, presently heating up, will be the biggest issues in our careers for some of us."

"We really have to know what's going on when it comes to state laws and bills affecting our profession. We really have to be on our toes, not only technically but politically. That's where the possibility of lobby action comes in. After all, somebody has to look out for us."

Zepp also is concerned with numbers, a lot of them.

"First, I'd like to find out what we're doing wrong, if that's what's keeping members from meetings," he explains. "We have something like 130 members and it's rare when we get half of them at monthly meetings and other events."

"That 130 bothers me, too. We should have more members than that. We have upgraded the reputation of the profession through an educational program where professional recognition no longer is a problem. Now, we have to work on the association."

"What we need is more involvement by our members, more movement in the

direction of public relations. Things like the old super-press and super-celebrity golf tournaments. We should revive PR tools like them. We have to help ourselves."

Dick's presence at the national conference in Houston is a must, there, he hopes to pick up information and other educational aides to implement them in New England. In other words, his ears are wide open to any and all suggestions.

He has, by the way, found the right mix—the right chemistry is there between the golf course superintendent profession and Dick Zepp. It's worked for him, now he's determined to make it work for the association. What a plus for all of us, huh?

GERRY FINN

FEBRUARY NOTICES

A navy blue overcoat size 42 regular was taken by mistake at the Christmas party at Needham Golf Club. Contact John Lenhart. You have his and he has yours.

Please update your address and phone number if different from the 1987 membership directory. Contact Tom Schofield. Strange as it may seem, we average at least one hundred changes (100) per year in making up a new directory.

The GCSANE Constitution and By-Laws book are available by contacting Steve Chiavaroli. Call him and he will send you one.

Don't forget the meeting at Norfolk Golf Club. Call for reservations—(617) 326-9750 Thurs. - Sun. (617) 326-3801 Mon. - Fri.

If you have a new President or Green Chairman - let Tom Schofield know the address if you want them to get the newsletter

MGA meeting - Spring Conference is Saturday, February 27. The speaker for the Green Section will be Tom Morgan, USGA Green Section Agronomist in charge of tournament preparation.

THE SUPER *Continued from page 1*

answer since I suppose that competition already has happened.

"Let's face facts, though. People working in country clubs—at any job for that matter—often have conversation where the topic eventually gets to money or how much they're making. You can't stop that. It's bound to happen."

"There is a moral side to this. It's really not fair to the head of the department who originally hired someone that's lured away by more money or better working conditions within the same club."

"However, as far as I know, the lines of communication between department heads haven't addressed that problem yet. Perhaps they should open up. Let the heads engage in an exchange of hourly wage figures and start the ball rolling in the direction of avoiding what could be embarrassing situations."

"In some instances we're talking about 50 cents an hour. On the outside, though, it's almost reached a ridiculous point. The latest confirmation report I get is that Pizza Hut in Peabody is paying up to \$10 an hour. I mean, how do you match that?"

"Of course, the working outdoors factor is in the superintendent's corner. We just hope it's some kind of an attraction in the prevention of raids from the outside and other country club departments. In the end, though, we just have to upgrade our pay scale."

Mike Nagle, Worcester Country Club: "It seems we have thought of the possibility of conflict between departments here because we have sort of an unwritten rule that suggests we don't encourage competition for labor from within."

"However, it's happened at other clubs and, naturally, it has become a source of strained relationships between department heads. In all probability, it's up to the clubs to minimize its incidence."

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"Personally, I have been very aware of the outside influence on retaining my help. I'm talking about those eight and nine bucks an hour jobs that take a big chunk out of the labor market. Here, I, I mean we, are doing something about it.

"Actually, the pay structure is coming around to the point where we can compete with the fast food places and other businesses that have to offer absurd hourly rates to survive.

"The way to avoid losing help is to keep that help satisfied. That's what we're trying to do and I think we're succeeding because our members realize our rates must go up.

"Sure, working outdoors is an attraction and it gives us some advantage. But we have to make the job attractive in other ways—where it counts—in a worker's paycheck."

John Paul Jones, Walpole Country Club: "You called the right person on this one because the topic has hit me.

"Only thing is that someone from another department came to mine because he wasn't happy doing what he did in the club restaurant.

"I've never lost the other way but I know it could happen. Regardless, when you're talking job changes within the club, usually it comes about because of working conditions or personalities.

"I think the superintendent has an advantage over the other department heads because of the outdoor work factor. Hey, how many kids do you think would prefer working outside instead of being penned in—especially on a hot summer day?

"That advantage has to be supplemented by better wages and, fortunately for me, my club has been receptive to increasing the rates. I'm not talking about token raises, either. In some cases, the rate has gone up as much as two dollars an hour.

"I'm attacking the problem other ways, too. Right now the push is on to

upgrade some jobs into full-time positions, so I don't have to worry about filling in with part-timers. Of course, I also endorse and implement hiring senior citizens.

"In the end, I think the problem of golf course labor is going to be licked, at least here. Competition from within? I'd say it's up to the individual worker and the individual department head. Most of the time your help's only as good as you treat them."

GERRY FINN

-POSITION OPENINGS-

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North Ashland Road
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(603) 536-2214

Assistant Superintendent
Warwick C.C. 18 Hole
Warwick, RI

Contact: Superintendent Don Silven
(401) 737-9030

**57th MASSACHUSETTS TURFGRASS
CONFERENCE AND 12th INDUSTRIAL SHOW
(Springfield Civic Center)**

Program

MONDAY (Feb. 29)

- 12:30-2:00 **Registration**
- 2:00-4:00 **Turfgrass Insects and Their Control—Dr. Paul Heller**

TUESDAY (Mar. 1)

- 8:30-4:00 **Registration**
- 9:00-12:45 **Industrial Show Open**
- 1:00 **Welcome—Dr. Joseph Troll**
- 1:15 **Environmental Toxicology: Issues of Chronic Toxicity—Dr. Judith K. Marquis**
- 1:45 **How Toxic are Golf Course Chemicals—Dr. Paul Sartoretto**
- 2:15 **Delayed Chronic Toxicity—George Hauschel, Superintendent**
- 3:00 **Break**
- 3:15 **Golf Course Superintendent and the Environmentalist—Monroe S. Miller, Superintendent**
- 3:45 **Pollution Exclusion in Insurance—John L. Dana**
- 4:30-6:30 **Industrial Show Open**

WEDNESDAY (Mar. 2)

- 8:00-4:00 **Registration**
- 9:00 **Turfgrass Challenges of the South—George Thompson, Superintendent**

- 9:40 **Black Layer and Sulfur—Dr. Paul Sartoretto**
- 10:20 **Review of Changing Fertilizer Formations—Dr. Norman Hummel**
- 11:00-2:00 **Industrial Show Open**
- 2:00 **Golf Course Restoration—Rees Jones, Golf Course Architect**
- 2:40 **Maintaining Newly Restored Areas of Turf—William Spence, Superintendent**
- 3:20 **Massachusetts Water Management Act—Steven Roy, DEQE**
- 4:00 **Obtaining Water the Hard Way—Anthony B. Caranci, Superintendent**
- 4:30-7:00 **Industrial Show Open**

THURSDAY (Mar. 3)

- 9:00 **The Biggest Problem of Golf Course Turf—James Snow, USGA**
- 9:40 **Necrotic Ring Spot—Dr. Gayle Worf**
- 10:30 **What's New in Nematode Control—Dr. Richard A. Rohde**
- 11:30 **Understanding Annual Bluegrass to Bentgrass Conversions Using Plant Growth Retardations —Dr. William Pound**

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