



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.

May 1988

Government Relation News



Thank you!! to all who have helped our efforts to attain a common sense approach to pesticide reform in Massachusetts. A special thanks to those of you who were in attendance at the public hearing in March. Our showing in body along with all the communications to date HAS MADE A DIFFERENCE!!! The Golf Course Superintendents of Massachusetts are now known to not only those involved with these issues but to legislators throughout the state due to your efforts. We now have an active line of communication in progress with key players involved with the on-going evaluation of the bills before us. Attention that has been given this issue has prompted the joint committee on natural resources to consider gathering a legislative work group to sit with the parties involved and work on one bill or the other and produce a bill that will be acceptable to all concerned. It will be quiet for a short period until the meetings are organized and the legislators decide which direction they will be taking. BUT!!!! Don't think because of the quiet it is time to sit back. Our best efforts would be to keep our communications flowing. The more they hear from us the more we will be heard. You may ask "How many times can I repeat myself?" 100 times!!!! Just remind them of your feelings of support for SB1444 and opposition to HB3851 and HB4872. Most of

Continued on page 2

The Priming of The Country Club



Bill Spence likes to lay it out wall-to-wall. "Plan for the worst, hope for the best." That's the superintendent's rallying cry at The Country Club where thoughts of "prime cut" move from the dining room to the golf course in the never-ending process of conditioning it for the United States Open next month.

"I feel good about the way our program is leading into the tournament," Spence said the other week. "We know what the USGA (sponsoring group and last word on which way the grass is supposed to bend) wants. I think they'll get it, too. Well, you have to be positive."

In recent times, Spence and his crack maintenance crew have been working on the project of transformation or changing TCC's look from country club to major tournament site.

"It's plain, old construction," Bill explained. "We have to concern ourselves with such things as strategic spots for scoreboards, television towers, communication lines, additional access gates, bleachers and physical projects of that type.

"And you always have to be on the lookout for outside workers who are not accustomed to treating a golf course with kind hands and loving care. Some of them have never seen a golf course before. My most frightening sight is to envision someone dragging a piece of equipment across a green."

Ah, the TCC greens. They wintered well.

"Sure did," Spence reported. "In fact, we came out of the winter in better condition than any year in recent club history. That's a boost. You always look to get a jump on things, see the edge and take it. We're not fighting Mother Nature, just trying to take advantage of the opportunity when she's in a co-operative mood."

Much of the cause for optimism surfaced in March when Spence saw the effects of an extensive cover-protection program for TCC's greens and tees. For this project, Spence went out on a limb, so to speak. He became the first superintendent to use the cover, "enkamat".

"The results were beyond expectations," Bill told. "We even used the cover on the practice pitching green. That came out beautiful. Tell you the truth, the results picked up the whole crew. They gave us kind of a head start on getting the rest of the course ready."

Even though Spence has had big-time tournament-prep experience, what with his successful grooming stories written at Pebble Beach for the PGA Championship and Crosby Pro-Am, he realizes there is more than an "old hat" attitude prevailing at TCC as the Open approaches.

There are some unusual asides to readying the course, even for Spence.

"Yeah, like the request to give the Open as firm bunkers as we can," he disclosed. "The way the USGA puts it, they would like to see bunkers where someone walks through them without leaving a footprint. So, we're into compacting them.

"It's kind of weird, too, for our members. They're aware that the Open calls

Continued on page 2

COUNTRY CLUB

Cont. from page 1

for a firmer foundation in the sand. Therefore, we're trying to emphasize 'light raking' during their rounds. We've even thought of providing short-tooth rakes. Maybe we'll ask them to jump up and down after blasting from a trap."

The size of the maintenance crew at TCC has been blown to conform with the importance of grooming the course to the edge of and perhaps into perfection.

"We'll have about 25 people on the grounds by the middle of May," Bill said. "Normally, we run 12 or 13 in the height of the season. So, the crew is just about doubled in size. Not only that, I consider it an elite crew."

The talent search began last year with Bill and assistant super, Patty Knaggs, actually going to the turf classrooms to line up additional help. It paid off, too.

Presently, the crew is laced with aspiring superintendents, recruited from top-notch schools like Stockbridge and Michigan State. Those two institutions have been granted credit-earning situations for those students who join Bill and Patty at TCC.

So, the atmosphere at The Country Club is the atmosphere of the United States Open.

"You can feel it, the anxiety and anticipation are beginning to build," Spence concluded. "I have to thank Patty for keeping the crew on their toes. Everyone has one goal—to give Open contestants the best possible playing conditions in the tradition that tournament has established and nurtured. I feel that goal is within reach."

Sounds as though TCC and the Open are a compatible mix. And it starts from the grounds up... the grounds where Bill Spence and his crew have things under control.

GERRY FINN

GOV. RELATIONS *Cont. from page 1*

all, we as professionals want a COMMON SENSE APPROACH to the issue!! Golf Course Superintendents and the Golf Industry MUST be involved.

Hazardous Waste Regulation: Golf Courses do produce hazardous waste! So don't fool yourself into thinking this doesn't affect you. Everyone should be registered by now and if you are not contact Nancy Wrenn, DEQE Boston, 292-5898 or C. Passios.

Water Management: If you registered by the January 4, 1988 deadline you should have heard back by now. The process is slow because the review is by river basin not first in first review. If you haven't received any communication call the Division of Water Supply at your local DEQE office.

Right To Know: This law has been in affect since 1985 in Massachusetts and everyone in golf courses has complied RIGHT? We know that there is a federal version and there will be some change. As of this draft this author still hasn't been able to get an answer to whether the state law will supercede the federal law. Hopefully, by the time you read this, we will all know the answer!!

Fuel Storage Registration: As of 1987 you should be filed with the fire department in your town under the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act section 9002. Also some local boards of health now require similar registration. CHECK ON IT!

Employment: Everyone hired after November 1986 must have completed the new Employment Eligibility Verification form I-9. This is for both foreign and American citizens! Keep these filed for 3 years after hiring date or one year after employment termination.

Remember, being made an example of could be very costly to those involved!

CHARLIE PASSIOS, CGCS

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: Based on your recent experience with covered greens, what are the results of the process and how strong are you in the area of recommending their use?



Norm Mucciarone, Woodland Country Club: "This was my third winter with covered greens and each year the results seem to get better.

"This time I covered 10 and I'm on a schedule of adding two or three each year. Eventually, I'd like to cover all 18 greens. That's how much of an asset they've been here.

"I removed my covers March 28 and they were a good two weeks ahead of the non-covered greens in health and appearance. Do I recommend them? Absolutely. No superintendent should be without them."

Scott Reynolds, Charles River Country Club: "I used the solid, plastic covers, five in all.

"Three came through with flying colors and two showed the effects of snow mold. However, I'm highly pleased with the overall effect they've had on my maintenance program.

"For the most part, I use covers as a precautionary measure against wind desiccation and I'd like to increase the number as time goes on.

"I put mine on the last week of November and took them off the second

Continued on page 3

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SUPER SPEAKS *Cont. from page 2*

week of March. Those three headliners look like they're growing in the middle of June rather than April. You can't beat that, so, sure, I endorse them."



Doug Johnson, Pine Brook Country Club: "I think I'm one of the first to cover my greens and this means I've just finished my sixth year with them.

"This year the number was 13 and I can see the day when I put covers on all of my greens. The results are very favorable, but just the fact that I did something to combat winter almost makes it worthwhile in itself.

"I like to hold off putting them on as late as I can—sometime between Christmas and New Year's Day. Takeoff date this year was March 20 and they came through real well. I cut them the first day.

"So, I'm all for them. I think we'll see the day when every superintendent uses them."



Kip Tyler, Salem Country Club: "I guess you might call me a 'part-timer' in the green cover program since I did parts of six greens this year and two more, entirely.

"This is my fifth year with covers only in critical areas, like my 18th green. So, at this point, I'm happy with my program the way it is. When it works, you don't change it."

Leon St. Pierre, Longmeadow Country Club: "There's no doubt. The winter-cover theory works, sometimes wonders. It's not a thing of the future, then. It's now and I'm proof it's another valuable aid for the superintendent as he strives for better playing conditions for his members.

"I don't know who started it all. However, I've been covering greens for about six years with a gradual move to utilize them over the entire course.

"This winter I covered 17 of 19 greens, and I'd have to say it's the best results we've ever had here. Those results have influenced my thinking enough to perhaps get into covering tees.

"Like everything of this nature, covers have improved over the years. Materials are changing and the overall effect is to make it easier for the superintendent to put them on and take them off.

"My schedule called for removing them the last week in March and they responded favorably right on schedule. In fact, what I saw was beyond my expectations.

"Of course, the purpose of the cover is to reduce the effects of desiccating winds. Using it almost guarantees the green to come through the winter without desiccation.

"Added to the physical results is the place of mind factor. Once you get the covers on, it's a relief to know the chances of desiccation have diminished considerably. It's like flight insurance. You take it and with it comes peace of mind.

"No question, covers can make a super's winter day. As far as I'm concerned, it's the only way to go."

GERRY FINN

TCC's "A" Team

The Country Club assistant golf course superintendent Patty Knaggs has provided The Newsletter with a crack maintenance lineup. It's TCC's "A" Team. Here they are, complete with their responsibilities:

Kevin Bramer (fairway mowing). Mike Conner (tee, green, rough mowing). Dan Coutu (tee, green, collar mowing). Len Curtin (course setup, fairway, rough mowing). Gene Dhooge (tee, green, rough mowing). John Driscoll (tee, green, rough mowing).

Paul Driscoll (tee, green, rough mowing). Brian Francis (head mechanic). Eric Goodrich (tee, rough mowing). Chris Haggerty (fairway mowing). Tony Horvath (irrigation maintenance/repair, fairway mowing). Bernard Lawson (irrigation/pump/drainage, mechanical consultant).

Joe Lebus (mechanical assistant, fairway mowing). Bob Manley (head irrigation maintenance/repair). Tim McCarthy (green, fairway, rough mowing, fertilizer applications). Jerry McDonough (green, tee, collar, rough mowing). Tom Morris (U.S. Open construction).

Mike Murray (green, tee, collar mowing). Karen Nyquist (green, tee, rough mowing, fertilizer applications). Dan Poirier (U.S. Open construction). Tom Russo (green, tee, collar, rough mowing). Chu Nien Yang (gardner, clubhouse grounds). Lee Joung Yang (gardner, clubhouse grounds).

Bill Spence (head superintendent). Patty Knaggs (assistant superintendent). Roger Ferguson (assistant superintendent).

Average age of crew: 26.7 years (with a range of 16 to 70).

Average years of college: 2.18.

Years at The Country Club: Range of one month to 50 years.

"A" Team subs: As reported in early April, 10 members of the New England Golf Course Superintendents Association had volunteered to work the week of the Open (June 13-19).

DATE TO REMEMBER

JUNE 23 University of Massachusetts Turfgrass Research Field Day

University of Massachusetts Turfgrass Research Center, South Deerfield, MA. Contact: Dr. Richard J. Cooper, Dept. of Plant and Soil Sciences, Univ. of Mass., Amherst, MA 01003 (413) 545-2353.

—NEW MEMBER—

Welcome and congratulations to

Bruce McIntyre
Tara Hyannis Hotel & Golf Club

Electronic Bulletin Board for the Turf Industry

TURFBYTE, the first computer accessible bulletin board for the turf industry opened its doors this month for anyone desiring to take part in a new and unique way of communicating. Centrally located in Lawrence, Kansas, it offers the turf manager a way to gain valuable information and insight through the sharing of experiences from across the country for the price of a phone call.

The use of electronic bulletin boards to trade information among persons of similar interests is on the increase nationwide. No longer just for computer experts, telecommunications is now common in all professions, and the use of bulletin boards offers a renewed sense of community in a world which has grown too large to easily assimilate. It is reminiscent of the old time "party line" concept which kept the neighborhood together through a bit of harmless eavesdropping. With bulletin boards, everyone is encour-

aged to listen in and participate in the discussion, though not necessarily at the same time. Being able to join a discussion at one's convenience is the real value of this type of communication and a reason for its rapid growth.

TURFBYTE evolved from an idea presented in the November, 1987 issue of *Golf Course Management* on telecommunications by Jon Scott, Valhalla Golf Club, and Bill Spence of The Country Club at Brookline, site of the 1988 US Open. That article interested Duane Patton of the Lawrence (KS) Country Club. With the guidance of Dale Gadd, founder of his own computer[®] bulletin board, TURFBYTE was created. At present, Duane is the system operator, or "Sysop" in computer jargon, and runs the service on his office computer at the club. Duane, and the others using TURFBYTE, welcome all newcomers to the board, and encourage anyone with a computer and telephone modem to sign on and become a regular contributor.

"Connecting to TURFBYTE is as easy as dialing a number," says Scott. "All you need is a computer modem and some type of communications software. When a connection is made with the bulletin board, simple, friendly instructions

quickly get you signed up and communicating."

A typical visit takes five to ten minutes once one becomes familiar with the system. First visits are slightly longer, but a few extra minutes reading instructions and bulletins pay off in faster visits. Messages from other users are read on command and replied to or commented on at will.

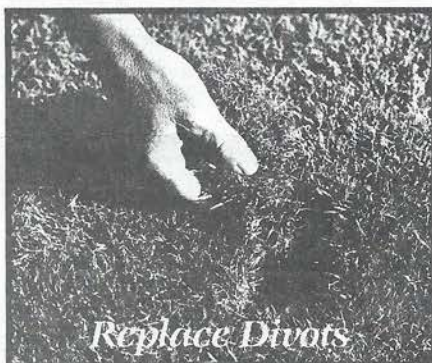
"The real value of the bulletin board concept depends on the user's participation in a discussion," Patton offers. "One subject may have as many comments or suggestions as there are users," he continues. "Messages to specific individuals can be addressed and sent very much like letters, and can be either private, seen by only the receiver, or public, shared by all. Whole text files and public computer programs, called shareware and public domain, can be sent to the board for all to download and use. Industry announcements are posted in the 'Bulletins' section for all to read on sign-on. Messages can be left requesting a return phone call at a specified time eliminating the need to play phone tag."

Patton and Scott feel the uses of the board are varied and many, depending on the expertise and needs of the visitor. "It does not take long to get started," says Scott. "The greatest fear I had was the idea that the phone meter was running, and I'd see a big bill cross my manager's desk. Now I am spending less total time on the phone than before and able to make my call when the rates are lower. That is saving money, and at the same time I am gaining valuable information I might otherwise miss."

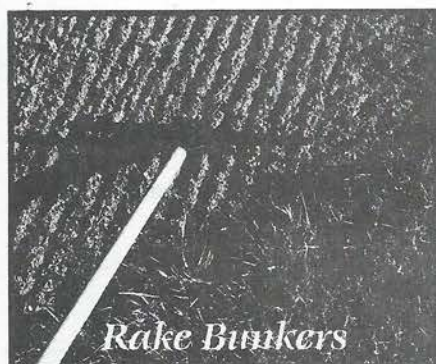
TURFBYTE currently supports 300 and 1200 baud modems with parity settings of 8 bits, No parity, 1 stop bit. The phone number is 913-842-0592 and the hours of operation are from 4:30 pm to 7:00 am Central Time daily. Patton is available during business hours for voice communications by dialing the same number. Jon Scott can be reached at 502-245-1715 for further information on accessing TURFBYTE.

Jon Scott, Valhalla Golf Club,
Louisville, KY

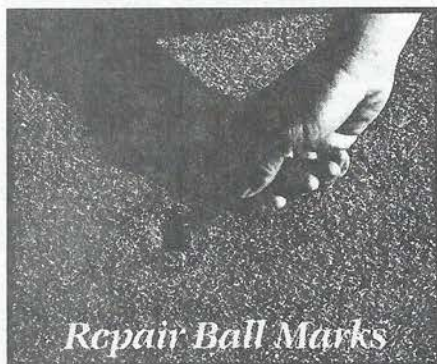
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through, don't
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Are We Using the Best Grasses

The Rhode Island State Agricultural School and Agricultural Experiment Station were established in 1888. That makes this year a special birthday. The Agricultural School was promoted to college status and renamed the Rhode Island College of Agriculture and Mechanic Arts in 1892. University status was granted in 1951.

The first reference to turfgrass research at the experiment station was in 1890 - and we are still at it 98 years later. In reviewing some of the early studies and the conclusions drawn in earlier days I sometimes wonder why we haven't taken more advantage of sage advice handed down by our predecessors. We often hear that "there is nothing new under the sun". Many times we don't have, or take, the time to review history to determine how much we already know. It may be easier to initiate new research to help find answers than to review literature.

I mention all this history to make a point. We as turfgrass managers are in constant quandary as to what are the best turfgrass species or mixtures to use for our various purposes - be it fairways, greens, athletic fields or lawns. We are fortunate to have even better varieties of grasses to work with today but we should remember - we have the same species today that we had 100 years ago. And here is the point - every species has its own optimum growing conditions. If we are to easily and successfully establish and maintain a stand of grass we should try to approach the optimum growth requirements of that grass.

Grass growth is influenced by soil texture, fertility, pH, moisture availability, cutting height and so on. Each species responds differently to individual and combined environmental factors. A turfgrass study initiated at the RI Agricultural Experiment Station in 1905 and

continued through 1916 turned up some interesting results. When the researchers summarized their findings they wrote the following: "On general principles, Perennial grasses will be permanent to the extent that these specific requirements are fulfilled either naturally or artificially. A knowledge of these requirements is essential for the best measure of success with any particular kind of grass. Owing to the great variations in the optimum requirements of different kinds of grasses, it is difficult to maintain a set of conditions which will promote equally the growth of different grasses in a mixture and thus prevent certain of the grasses from predominating over the others. The nature of a permanent herbage is therefore rarely determined by the seed mixture."

That sage advice was presented more than 60 years ago yet we still wonder why *Poa annua* encroaches in our greens and fairways! Is it possible that we are providing ideal growing conditions for *Poa* and have ignored the conditions favoring bentgrasses? I believe also that we haven't been utilizing the grasses best adapted to our New England soils and climate on our tees and fairways. We can utilize many grasses for these purposes successfully but we may need to alter management and this can be expensive if we are to succeed.

In our current society, when there are many concerns (justifiable or otherwise) about heavy use of fertilizers and pesticides, increasing costs of these materials, expending limited natural resources, water availability and expense, and cost of labor it would appear that changes are in order. Perhaps it is time to give serious thought to grass species requirements and take advantage of those that will meet our needs with the least input. Our current research programs are geared to help you make better decisions in those regards.

**C.R. Skogley, Professor
The University of
Rhode Island**

-COMMERCIAL CLIPPINGS-

Boston Irrigation Supply Co., Inc. has added Steve Bridgewater to its sales force. The announcement was made by John Ramey, company president. BISCO is a full line irrigation supply company.

Bridgewater will be responsible for irrigation product sales in Vermont, Western Massachusetts and Connecticut. Prior to joining BISCO, he spent 2 years with a prominent landscape and irrigation supply company. Previously, he spent 15 years as an irrigation contractor.



Boston Irrigation Supply Co., Inc. has named Roy Getting to form its new pump division. The announcement was made by John Ramey, company president. BISCO is a full line irrigation supply company.

Getting will be responsible for pump selection, pump system design and sales for the division. Prior to joining BISCO he spent six years with a Dallas, Texas pump wholesaler and previously as a sales representative with a major pump manufacturer. He is also a licensed Texas irrigator.

Getting has designed and sold AG irrigation equipment in South Dakota.

-POSITION OPENING-

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Philip Wogan
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