



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 1989

NEXT MEETING

Tuesday, September 5, 1989
Gannon G.C.
Lynn, MA

9:00 am Director's meeting
10:30 am Regular meeting &
Educational Session
11:30 noon Lunch, Golf after lunch

Member-Member Tournament

Host Superintendent—
Stephen Murphy

Reservations required by Friday
Sept. 1, 1989 (617) 592-1433

Steve has been supt. there for 13 years. He received his degree from Stockbridge in 1971. Currently living in Swampscott, MA with his wife Carolyn, Steve enjoys Golf, Skiing and Sailing. He has been a past Golf Chairman for GCSANE for 5 years.

Directions—128 North to exit 44B (129 Lynn). Follow 129 east for about 2 miles. Turn right on Great Woods Road. Go straight through pillars, make left up the hill to Gannon.

NEW MEMBERS

Welcome & Congratulations to
James Reinertson, Associate
Wayland, C.C.

FUTURE MEETING DATES

September 12 - Wampanoag C.C.—Joint meeting, New England and CT.
October 16 - Brae Burn C.C.—Supt. & Pro
October 19 - Hyannisport C.C.—Supt. & Green Chairman
November 2 - Mt Pleasant C.C.—Lowell, MA

Time to Spread His Wings, So Barrie Spreads 'Em



Barrie Robertson takes it literally... practices what he preaches.

"The time has come when the golf course superintendent has to spread his wings."

Robertson managed between chores at his new base of operations—the Lake Sunapee Country Club. "The more you can do the better chance you have if something goes wrong."

The what-went-wrong disease hits the superintendent's profession now and then and it's discomfoting to learn of a friend, a colleague losing his job.

Therefore, Robertson is an advocate of funneling his energy and talent into as many avenues of endeavor as he deems reasonable. Indeed, he intends his to be a well-rounded background.

Presently, Barrie is directing that energy and talent to a number of ambitious projects initiated by third-generation Lake Sunapee owner Doug Homan. The club is headed toward a resort area concept while retaining a golf community atmosphere.

"The plans call for over 100 condominiums," Robertson revealed. "Right now there are 50 built and the owner's approach is a safeguard against financial shortfall. He never keeps more than one in inventory, so the next condo built is the next condo sold."

Barrie's part in this particular phase of the Lake Sunapee expansion explosion is as supervisor of all maintenance operations, including heavy concentration on landscaping.

There are close to 450 acres to be either developed or re-shaped in the area's master plan. The extremes would tickle any golf course superintendent's fancy—maintaining an air strip and over-seeing installation of an irrigation system that waters the course in the summer and makes snow in the winter.

"The air strip job is neat," Robertson told. "My job is to keep everything working... lights, landing area, the works. I mean, when

you have your own airport, I guess you can say you're part of something special in the way of developing sports and recreation complexes."

The two-way irrigation system indicates Lake Sunapee leans toward diversification.

"Oh, the snow is for our cross-country skiing program," Barrie explained. "Over 60 kilometers of trails will be set up before we're through. So, Lake Sunapee's not just for summer."

Robertson boned up at Sky Meadow Country Club for his latest venture. Originally, he was hired as golf course superintendent, then he moved into management of construction and maintenance of all facilities.

"It was a meaningful experience," Barrie described his six-year stay at Sky Meadow. "It prepared me for my present position and kind of laid the groundwork for building the confidence you need taking up this kind of challenge."

Robertson brought his own golf course superintendent to Lake Sunapee. He's Michael Ross whose name makes for a piece of coincidence since famed golf architect Donald Ross designed the course in 1929.

"There have been some changes made to the original layout," Robertson noted. "However, overall the course keeps the original Donald Ross character. That's evident since it continues to be popular with golfers."

Lake Sunapee, this year, went private and the response was such that a waiting list already exists. In numbers, the golf course membership runs 450 and membership in the overall facility stands at 750.

Robertson, a workaholic who once worked 28 straight days without any time off, has a 50-mile commute to Lake Sunapee since he still lives in Merrimack.

"It'll be a little easier for a while, though," Barrie disclosed, "because we're renting a cottage on the lake for five months this summer and fall. But when I'm back in Merrimack a typical day begins at 5:30 a.m. and ends at

Continued on page 2

BARRIE SPREADS 'EM *Cont. pg 1*

8:30 p.m."

Lake Sunapee is the fourth stop for Robertson in his career which found him doing placement work at Wentworth by the Sea, running things at Keene Country Club for eight years and filling the next six years with expanded responsibilities at Sky Meadow.

One other thing that steps up the Lake Sunapee attraction for Robertson. His boss, Doug Homan—the only man he answers to—is a fellow alumnus of Stockbridge. "That makes for a more compatible relationship," he remarked.

Which just about says it all in the Barrie Robertson-Lake Sunapee hookup. They really get along together. "Famously," Barrie added.

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: *Who should decide the speed of greens, who does decide at your club and what's your reaction to all the attention directed to this latest golf syndrome?*

Mike Iacono, Metacomet Country Club: "Of course, I'm going for the profession ticket as to who should determine how fast the greens are. Naturally, the golf course superintendent is the logical choice.

"That's the way it is at my club, too, although my membership tends to like their greens as fast as I can make them. And that's impossible because the most important factor in this situation is the health and condition of the greens. You can't sacrifice it for speed.

"To go along with the fact that my members prefer slick putting surfaces, I must add that they also realize our greens can't be tournament-fast all the time. There are times when we have to resort to what I call membership-fast. After all, if the truth were known, the majority of members everywhere would have trouble putting very fast greens.

"We use the Stimpmeter as our guide in setting the speed of greens. I'd say that the popular reading here is somewhere between 9 and 9.95. That's above average speed but it

seems to work for me.

"As for all the fuss about making greens wicked fast, it's another one of those fads that hit the sport every now and then. Really, it's no big deal but people seem to think fast greens upgrade the public's rating of their golf course. To each his own.



Don Hearn, Weston Golf Club: "My answers to your questions, in order, are super-super and so what if the putts are reading 7 or 17 feet per drop?"

"Seriously, speed of greens doesn't get much reaction from me on the attention charts. Sure, some of my members hit me with that 'the greens are too slow' salutation on occasion but the majority understand that medium-fast is just about all the average player can take.

"What's happening in the speed of greens department is another prestige-inspired standard. Actually, it doesn't hold any water because of what I just said about most of my members and putting. They prefer so-called membership-fast greens. Why not? They're easier to putt.

"Another mystifying part of this situation is the Stimpmeter. Come to think of it, when my members realize it's just a piece of metal with a groove in it, they're not all that impressed with the numbers in its readings.

"I really don't rely on the 'Stimp', although I have measured my greens with it. I would say we pretty much hold at 8.6 and I consider that fast for member play. We might speed it up a little for tournaments but, really, isn't consistency in the roll and speed of greens more important than how fast we can make them?"

"There's also the part TV has played in making some country club members think they have to have the fastest greens possible. It's another spinoff of the kind of conditions the pros demand and the average player can't handle.

"Personally, I haven't had much flak from my members on the subject. Where this started I don't know. It makes no sense at all."



Tony Caranci, Ledgesmont Country Club: "But, of course, the golf course superintendent is the one to decide how fast his greens will be and that's how it goes here.

"You know, putting always has been the

most interesting and probably the most controversial part of golf since the sport began. Hit any 19th hole and you hear that the greens were either too fast or too slow. That's what the players who didn't putt well say. The ones, rolling in the turnpike jobs? To them, the greens were just 'perfect'.

"One of the guidelines I go by in cutting my greens—in fact, I've even gone to a greens groomer to give my members the best conditions I can—is the stress factor as emphasized by the USGA.

"Yeah, we use the Stimpmeter here and I'd guess that our readings average out between 8 and 9. At those readings, I know our greens are fast enough for my members. Maybe one or two of them don't think so but we're not in the business to satisfy one or two when the majority's wishes oppose them.

"The talk about a lot of members using the speed of greens as a selling point in establishing and maintaining prestige at the country club seems to have taken hold. And it's so ridiculous. Some people put so much emphasis on greens-speed they might wind up calling a pasture a great course just because the greens are super-fast. That's why approaching the subject with prestige in mind doesn't cut it. Hey, that might be a joke.

"Finally, we all know that poor putting is always the result of the greens and not the people doing the putting, don't we? If it's not the speed, it's the placement of the cups. So, I guess we have to roll with all the talk.

"Oh, one more thing. All we need is to have a golf course lose a green because of excessive cutting to make it fast. See what happens then or do you already know?"

(Ed. Note: More on speed of greens next month.)

GERRY FINN

Research Drive Update

As you already know, our research drive is in full swing. We have established a goal of \$15,000 to be raised through donations from each club in the golfing fraternity. We are taking the opportunity to suggest to those of you who have not donated to this deserving cause due to budget restraints, to be creative. Some superintendents are organizing a golf tournament with proceeds going to turf research. Others are convincing their clubs to

Continued on page 3

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RESEARCH UPDATE *Cont. pg 2*

ask each member to donate \$1.00. If research is to be conducted we golf course superintendents must be the catalyst and the golf participant must support it.

The following is a list of clubs that have already contributed as of July 10, 1989.

Thorney Lea	Whitinsville
Nashawtuc	Wollaston
Ipswich	Twin Hills
Poquoy Brook	Hatherly
Mt. Pleasant-Boylston	Agway Chemical
Tara-Femcroft	The Country Club
Kittansett	Falmouth Country
Wellesley	Club-Maine
Waubeeka Golf Link	Blue Hill
Pinebrook	Eastward Ho
Brae Burn	Framingham
Needham	The International
Tatnuck	Oakley
The Orchards	Larry Gannon

Thanks to those who have given.

Sincerely,
The Research Committee

Tuesday, September 12, 1989
Wampanoag C.C., West Hartford, CT

Joint meeting CT & New England

12:00 noon Lunch, Golf after lunch

Host Superintendent— Robert Johnston

Reservations Required by Fri. Sept. 8th
(203) 236-1691



Bob was supt. at Hampden C.C. in Hampden, MA for 10 years before spending the last 6 years at Wampanoag. Bob received his education at Stockbridge School of Agriculture and American International College. A past GCSANE Finance Chairman Bob lives in Granby, CT with his wife and two children Bobby and Brian.

Directions—Mass Pike to I-84 to exit 41 in West Hartford. Coming from east go right onto South Main Street. Coming from west go left onto South Main Street. Then proceed 4.6 miles to Wampanoag Drive on left. Look for Northwest Catholic High School sign on corner of Wampanoag Drive. (South Main Street becomes North Main Street in West Hartford center)

GCSAA News

The Golf Course Superintendents Association of America (GCSAA) will break ground in early 1990 to begin construction of a \$4 million headquarters complex one mile from the group's current Lawrence, Kan., site. GCSAA President Dennis D. Lyon, CGCS, said that the association's officers approved schematic plans for the project during a meeting at the U.S. Open in Rochester, N.Y.

"GCSAA's growth has mirrored that of the rest of the golf industry," Lyon said. "We now have more than 8,600 members and the association offers more services to them than ever before. This new building will allow us to keep meeting the needs of our growing membership and the golf community at large."

The new site is just west of the current GCSAA building, which has been located on the Alvarado Golf & Country Club since the association moved to Lawrence in 1974. Despite the relocation, the new headquarters will still overlook an Alvarado course: a new 18-hole championship layout being designed by architect Ken Kavanaugh and developed by Alvarado owner Robert Billings. Construction of the course is set to start early next year and both building and course should be complete and open in 1991.

"We plan to have the building finished and the staff moved by summer of 1991," said John M. Schilling, GCSAA's executive director. Schilling added that the building could be ready for occupancy by spring of 1991 "if the Kansas weather cooperates."

Planned for 35,000 square feet, the new building will nearly triple the space available for GCSAA's 42-member professional staff and still leave room for projected growth. In

**The annual
University of Rhode Island
Turfgrass Field Day**

will be held on
Wednesday, August 30, 1989
at the Turfgrass Research Farm
Plains Road, Kingston, RI 02881.

For information contact:
Dr. C.R. Skogley
Plant Sciences Department
Woodward Hall
Kingston, RI 02881

addition to the four-story headquarters building, the new complex will feature an attached 70-seat classroom and meeting facility. The entire design, which is being completed by the Lawrence architectural firm of Peters, Kubota & Glenn, P.A., will "make superintendents who visit feel proud to be members of GCSAA," according to Lyon.

Since 1926, GCSAA has been the national professional association for men and women who "keep golf green." By providing a wide range of opportunities for education and professional development for superintendents, the association has played an ongoing role in improving golf conditions both in America and abroad.

**GCSAA Donates \$25,000 for
Turfgrass Research**

The Golf Course Superintendents Association of America recently contributed \$25,000 to the USGA/GCSAA Turfgrass Research Committee to support ongoing scientific work on new turfgrass varieties that would require less water and be more disease resistant. GCSAA President Dennis D. Lyon, CGCS, made the presentation June 14 at the annual USGA/Golf Writers Association of America banquet during the U.S. Open in Rochester, N.Y.

More than \$2.8 million has been distributed by the committee since 1983, according to William H. Bengueyfield, national director of the USGA Green Section. The committee currently supports 25 research projects, he said.

"We do thank GCSAA for the research funding they provide, and we also appreciate the time people like (GCSAA Vice President) Jerry Faubel, Dennis Lyon and (GCSAA Executive Director) John Schilling contribute to the committee," Bengueyfield said. "And \$25,000 is absolutely fantastic."

Lyon said: "GCSAA sincerely supports the USGA turfgrass research project. We look forward to working together with the USGA on other projects in the future."

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THE NEWSLETTER

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