



THE NEWSLETTER

September 2001

of the *Golf Course Superintendents Association of New England, Inc.*

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

New Oak Course challenges Pines Course for spotlight at 36-hole International G.C.

It's done in the unmistakable tradition of its older sibling, the Pines Course at the International Golf Club. Which means that the club's newest addition, the Oak Course, is the product of recognizable breeding and painstaking architectural input.

"Our owners had one definitive purpose in mind," Oak head superintendent Brett Johnson said on a recent day when the course sparkled in the afterglow of another shot of his maintenance acumen. "They wanted to create the premier 36-hole private golf club in the Northeast. From all reports we're pretty much on target."

"Our owners had one definite purpose in mind. They wanted to create the premier 36-hole private golf club in the Northeast. From all accounts we're pretty much on target."

Brett Johnson
Oak Course,
International G.C.

Naturally, the original 18 holes (Pines) still basks on worldwide renown. At its farthest stretching point at 8,325 yards, the Pines remains the longest golf course in existence. Such length has been challenged but never matched in the design of other layouts conceived since Geoff Cornish put the finishing touches on it in 1956 and Robert Trent Jones completed a remodeling job in 1969.

The Pines, however, has to share the limelight with the Oak as they combine for 36 holes of unique golfing pleasure. Johnson is ecstatic about the potential of the Oak. He thinks it's an architectural marvel on the basis of the astonishing fact that it was put into play only 11 months after the first shovel of earth was moved in the construction process.

"To begin with, Tom Fazio is its designer," Johnson said. "There's little to dispute Fazio's place in golf course architecture. He's recognized as perhaps the outstanding figure in his profession. His courses have a distinct makeup of individual holes with characteristics that distinguish them from their contemporaries. Really, he outdid himself here."

Johnson completed his first year at International last month. When he arrived in August of 2000, the majority of the holes had been built. Several holes had already been seeded and he dived into that chore from the outset.

"We finished seeding the second week of October," Brett disclosed, "We used L-93 bentgrass on the tees and greens and a mixture of Putter, Providence, and Penneagle on the fairways. They've all come through in great condition. We

opened the course June 13 and our members have had the opportunity to switch off from one course to the other virtually the whole golfing season."

Brett is especially pleased with the Oak's practice area. It is an 11-acre spread that presents almost every shot possibility that's encountered during a regular round. "There are four practice putting greens, six target greens, bunkers and rough (50 yards of it)," Johnson described. "It's quite a layout in itself and requires constant maintenance of its own. I have 34 people on my crew at the height of the season and three of them are designated for driving range work. It's sort of my baby. I jumped into getting it ready as soon as I got here."

Fazio visited the Oak four or five times during its construction. He also left an associate, Brian Bauers, to oversee the action on a day-to-day basis. So, theoretically, Fazio had a hand in the course from start to finish.

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THE NEWSLETTER

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"He knew what was going on all the time," Johnson said of the course's designer. "He set up everything and I had suggestions pertaining to maintenance matters. One of the more challenging of my contributions was the setting of rough around bunkers and greens.

"That turned out to be an exacting job. Because it was essential that the roughs were in place and playable the same times as the rest of the course, we decided to go with sod. We used 100,000 square feet of sod to accomplish the dual availability project. It worked out well when it was time to open the course."

In fact, the revved-up timetable for completion of the Oak rivals Brett's meteoric rise in his career. A Rowley native, he graduated from the University of Massachusetts in 1995 after three apprentice shifts at Myopia Hunt. He served Oak Hill C.C. two years as assistant superintendent and was head man from 1997 to 2000 when he got the call from the International. Keeping with the program, he also became certified while climbing his profession's ladder.

Somewhere along the line Johnson also developed a penchant for public relations, because he's probably as vocal a booster of the Oak as even Fazio.

"Oh, this is really a golfer's paradise," Brett explained. "The Oak has all the properties to service play at every level. It measures 6,944 yards from the back tees with a slope of 132. It can be scaled down distance and competitive-wise since there are at least four sets of tees on each hole. The back nine is particularly interesting with three par-5s and three par-3s.

"However, I think that if there is to be a signature hole it would be our 175-yard, par-3 fourth. It has an elevated tee with about a 100-foot drop from tee to green. From an aesthetic standpoint, it has a

"The Oak has all the properties to service play at every level."

Brett Johnson
International G.C.

sweeping view that draws from Mt. Wachusett and the Monadnock Mountains. Believe me, it's a breathtaking experience, standing on that tee."

The Oak has no water holes. It's probably a landmark course in this area, however, since it's dotted with seven "waste areas". Those are strategically placed and have a surface made up of sandy material which is a little rougher than the sand used in bunkers.

Kirk Hanefeld, this year's New England PGA champion, is the director of golf at the establishment. He also holds the Oak's course record of 66. Jim Whitley is the superintendent at the Pines and each course is maintained separately.

"They go the route expense-wise here," Johnson noted. "I pump 25 million gallons of water a month. A lot of courses don't use that much all season. As I said, we want to be the premier 36-hole club in the Northeast. We're almost there."

GERRY FINN

CALENDAR . . .

- Oct. 10 **GCSANE Monthly Meeting**
 Joint Meeting with Cape Cod GCSA
 Pocasset G.C.
 Pocasset, Mass.
 Supt. - Steve Carr
- Oct. 17 **John Shanahan Memorial Pro/Supt. Tournament***
 Shaker Hills G.C.
 Harvard, Mass.
 Supt. - Glen Misiaszek
 (*Register through the NEPGA)
- Nov. 5 **GCSANE Monthly Meeting**
 Annual Nine-Hole Meeting
 Amherst G.C.
 Amherst, Mass.
 Supt. - Carl Teschke
- Nov. 13 **GCSAA Seminar**
Fundamentals of Turfgrass Management II
 The International
 Bolton, Mass.
- Nov. 14 **GCSAA Seminar**
Strategic Planning for Golf Course Operations
 The International
 Bolton, Mass.
- Dec. 16 **GCSANE Holiday Gala**
 Wellesley C.C.
 Host - David Barber, CGCS
- Feb. 3-10, 2002 **GCSAA 73rd International Golf Course Conference & Show**
 Orlando, Fla.

Golf courses can plan ahead when facing tough competition in the labor market

by Mike Huck, Agronomist,
USGA Green Section,
Southwest Region

HELP WANTED:

Full time, free meals, health insurance, \$8.50 per hour. Apply at McDonalds of Steamboat Springs, Colorado.

Make up to \$10.00 per hour while training! Domino's Pizza, Various Orange County, California locations.

It is no wonder that golf course labor has been extremely difficult to find this season when fast food restaurants are paying either as well as or better than most golf courses. It is difficult for golf maintenance positions to compete with jobs like this even for the same pay. Just think about it. Would you rather work indoors in a controlled climate or be out in the 100-degree heat, smog, rain, frost, etc.? If I were someone not interested in golf, I pretty much know the decision I would make! On my recent trips throughout the southwest region, I have been speaking with superintendents about labor issues. Here are a few of their comments:

- "We have had an advertisement in the local papers for 3½ weeks without a single response. We are offering \$8.35 starting wage, and now things will only get worse since the summer help is returning to school."
- "Our incoming rate is pushing \$10.50 per hour. We couldn't attract anyone at a lower wage."
- "The quality of help we have been able to get is pitiful. We have turned over 40 people this season. I have hired people on Friday and they don't show up on Monday. We had four high school age kids go out to lunch, only to return and punch out and quit. They told me they didn't feel like working any more. I know part of the problem is the incoming wage here it's only \$6.50 per hour."
- "We have been operating an average of 1½ people short on each of our seven courses. In fact there is a new WalMart

down the street and they can't open yet because there are not enough people available to completely staff the store."

LABOR MARKET

You can bet there will be more of the same problems next season if the economy stays strong. Now is the time to start planning for the coming year in the budgeting process. Consider ideas such as:

Growth regulators. Growth regulation programs for fairways can be expensive, but if they reduce the labor required for mowing by 30% to 50% it may be worth it. Also, you don't have to worry about providing benefits for a bottle of growth regulator or if it does not show up on time! Look at growth regulators as a source of "liquid labor."

Efficient equipment. If you have not investigated spinner type topdressing applicators or rotary rough mowers, now is the time! You can cover most greens when topdressing in two to three passes since these units throw sand 30 feet and very uniformly! Rotary rough units can increase productivity over similar sized reel units by 30% to 40% based upon increased ground speed. Rotaries also require less maintenance.

Equipment lease packages. If you have a junk pile for an equipment inventory and are spending a bundle of money on parts and repairs, consider leasing utility vehicles and the primary mowing fleet. Any unit that has an expected useful life

span of five to seven years should be evaluated for a lease. Leasing allows you to turn over units before they become mechanical nightmares and then replace them with the most current and efficient technology available. New equipment can keep your operators out in the field mowing instead of watching the mechanic make repairs. In addition, you no longer have to worry about how to dispose of the old unit. The dealer picks it up and takes it away!

Seasonal labor bonus contracts. Once you hire seasonal labor, it can be difficult to keep them the entire summer. Consider giving seasonal labor a "contract" that assures them a 50-cent to \$1 bonus for each hour worked, provided they stay through dates agreed upon in writing at the time of hire. For additional information, see the article entitled, "Once You Get 'Em You Gotta Keep 'Em," by Dave Oatis, USGA Green Section Record, May/June 2000.

Part-time labor. Retirees are often interested in golf course work, especially if you can offer them free golf as a benefit. Also consider recruiting stay-at-home housewives for part-time labor. A few courses have marketed themselves to this untapped labor resource by hiring housewives to walk-mow greens and tees. Their advertisement in the paper reads: "Ladies: Now you can take your morning walk and get paid for it, too!"

Increase the payroll budget. There just may be no other way around this problem than to raise incoming wages. It appears the days of cheap help for golf maintenance are gone, and golf maintenance could be facing some tough competition in the labor market for several years to come.

The point is that you have to pay people well enough to keep them or they will just move on down the road to the next available paycheck. As one wise businessperson once told me: "The only way you can keep your help is to pay them well enough so that they are afraid to lose their job!"

"It appears the days of cheap help for golf maintenance are gone."

*Mike Huck
USGA Green Section*

GCSANE loses longtime member Gary Luccini; Ouimet Fund, meetings, & golf get rave reviews

I am sorry to report that Gary Luccini passed away on September 5. Gary was a true friend, mentor, and longtime member of GCSANE. We had a winter meeting at Franklin C.C. just about every year because of Gary. He was always there to help anyone. This year, when we had our March meeting at Franklin, Gary had his "Bear Tips," in which he gave everyone good, helpful ideas on how to recover from winter damage. Our condolences go out to his wife, Kathy, his sons Michael and Brian (who are both superintendents and GCSANE members) and to the rest of his family. Gary will be truly missed.

The Ouimet Marathon committee raised over \$4,000 this year. Thanks go out to Jim Fitzroy and his phon-a-thon team for their hard work. More "thanks" go to Dick Duggan for his record 602 holes of golf played in the marathon. The guest speaker and honoree for next year's Ouimet Banquet will be former President George H. W. Bush and will be held on May 30, 2002.

Gary was a true friend, mentor, and longtime member of GCSANE. This year, when we had our March meeting at Franklin, Gary had his "Bear Tips," in which he gave everyone good, helpful ideas on how to recover from winter damage.

Bob Ruszala
President, GCSANE

The New England Regional Turf Conference will take place from March 5-7, 2002 in Providence, R.I. Be sure to make your hotel arrangements soon.

FROM THE PRESIDENT

Our August meeting at Rockland G.C. went very well. Eric Newell had the course in great shape. On that day we invited our retired members to play golf with us. Nine retirees attended the meeting. It was nice to have these individuals share some of their knowledge and ideas. We plan on having a Retiree Day next year and hope many more attend. Our retired members have a tremendous amount of golf-related experience that is a valuable resource for all of us.

Some 116 people attended the Superintendent/ Club Official event in September. Winchester C.C. was in terrific shape. Dan Higgins was our host for the day. Thanks to Tom Landry for giving his presentation on the new MGA building and answering related questions.

Thanks also to Mike Hermanson, our Golf Chairman, who worked hard to make the day enjoyable for all.

Sincerely,
Bob Ruszala
President, GCSANE

The Ouimet Marathon Committee raised over \$4,000 this year . . . More "thanks" go to Dick Duggan for his record 602 holes of golf played in the marathon.

Bob Ruszala
President, GCSANE

Obituary: Gary "Bear" Luccini, 59, superintendent at Franklin C.C.

Gary "Bear" Luccini, 59, superintendent of Franklin Country Club, died Wednesday, September 5, 2001.

He leaves behind his wife, Katherine L. (Kinsella) Luccini.

Gary was a 30-year member of GCSANE. This was his 32nd year as superintendent at Franklin. His other head superintendent job was at Pine Oaks Golf Club in Easton, a course he built and spent five years at. Gary also worked as an assistant superintendent at both Dedham Country Club and Franklin Country Club.

From 1972-74, Gary constructed the 10-hole addition to Franklin C.C. In 1987 he was a turf consultant for Hale Irwin Golf Services on the construction of New England Country Club. He also designed

and constructed Pine Acres, an executive nine-hole course.

He enjoyed golf, auto racing, and was a fervent New York Jets fan. He also leaves behind parents Nello and Josephine Luccini of Franklin, Mass.; son Michael Luccini and his wife Lisa of Canton, Mass.; son Brian Luccini and his wife Kim of W. Kingston, R.I.; daughter Cheryl and her husband Christopher Palladini of Franklin; daughter Elizabeth Luccini of Franklin; brother Nello Luccini, Jr. and his wife Susan of Franklin; and brother Robert Luccini of Franklin. He also leaves behind grandchildren Marissa and Elizabeth Palladini and Christina Luccini.

Memorial donations may be made in his memory to Friends of Franklin, 50 Corbin Street, Franklin, MA 02038.

GCSAA announces Chuck Borman will replace Joe O'Brien as new Chief Operating Officer

Golf Course Superintendents Association of America (GCSAA) Chief Executive Officer Steve Mona, CAE, has announced that Chuck Borman, CAE, Executive Director of the Carolinas Golf Course Superintendents Association (Carolinas GCSA), has been selected GCSAA chief operating officer.

Borman replaces Joe O'Brien, who served in the COO capacity from January

1994 until December 2000. Borman, who was GCSAA's director of membership from March 1994 to March 1997, worked

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for the Carolinas GCSA as a coordinating advisor for one year before assuming the executive director position in April 1998. He received his bachelor's degree in

business from Southwestern (Texas) University in 1977, and a masters in business administration from Hardin-Simmons University in 1981.

Borman's GCSAA starting date will be determined in the near future.

Note: The "CAE" designation that appears after Borman's name stands for Certified Association Executive.

GCSANE names scholarship recipients for 2001

The Scholarship and Benevolence Committee has announced the scholarship award recipients for 2001.

GCSANE NEWS

This is the seventh year of giving these awards. This year the committee awarded a total of \$5,000 to three students. This brings the grand total to \$33,250 awarded to GCSANE member children.

This year the Scholarship & Benevolence recipients are:

- Paul Ruzala, Schofield Award Winner, \$2,500. Paul, a graduate of Holyoke Catholic H.S., is now a freshman at Worcester Polytechnic Institute.
- Pamela Eardley, \$1,500. Pamela recently graduated from Canton H.S. and is attending Assumption College this fall.
- Jennifer Wendell, \$1,000. Jennifer graduated from South Kingstown H. S. She is attending University of Rhode Island.

Congratulations to all the winners of this year's scholarships.



GCSAA

Education

FUNDAMENTALS OF TURFGRASS MANAGEMENT II

Tuesday, November 13, 2001
8 a.m. - 5 p.m.
The International
Bolton, Mass.

Member Fee: \$120
Non-Member Fee: \$180
CEUs: 0.7; Code: 02RS196-01

Textbook:
"Fundamentals of Turfgrass Management"
\$54; Recommended Text

STRATEGIC PLANNING FOR GOLF COURSE OPERATIONS

Wednesday, November 13, 2001
8 a.m. - 5 p.m.
The International
Bolton, Mass.

Member Fee: \$120
Non-Member Fee: \$180
CEUs: 0.7; Code: 02RS191-02

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PBI-Gordon issues alert on Bensumec 4LF: Company has reports of yellowing turf on greens

PBI-Gordon Corporation has asked golf course superintendents to stop using Bensumec 4LF until further notice. The company says it has had reports of yellowing turf on greens after application of the product.

According to Bill Brocker, vice president of marketing, the company has been working to find the cause since the first report. "Once we determined it was actually something in the product, we

began trying to identify the specific cause. We have now determined that one batch (lot 1286) is apparently contaminated with low levels of phenoxies and dicamba."

PRODUCT ALERT

On Saturday, Sept. 8, the company posted a notice to the GCSAA member Web forums asking superintendents to stop using Bensumec on their greens.

The company also posted a notice on its Web site at http://www.pbigordon.com/bensumec_message.htm, which includes the advisory and an injury recovery plan for greens that have been treated with Bensumec since Aug. 1.

The company asks that any golf course or superintendent that has applied the product since Aug. 1 please contact Gary Custis at (800) 821-7925 or (800) 471-3677.

DIVOT DRIFT...announcements...educational seminars...job opportunities ...tournament results...and miscellaneous items of interest to the membership.

MEMBERSHIP

Welcome New Members: Matthew Berger, Assistant, Vesper C.C.; Matthew Murphy, Assistant, Newton Commonwealth G.C.; Brendan Parkhurst, Assistant, Fairview G.C.; Mark Godwin, Affiliate, Lesco, Inc.; Agresource, Inc., Friend.

INFORMATION

GCSANE would like to thank Dan Higgins and the staff of Winchester C.C. for hosting this year's superintendent/club official tournament. A great time was had by all.

Three lucky winners will receive a free conference and show registration for GCSAA's 73rd International Golf Course Conference & Show in Orlando, Florida on February 3-9, 2002. To be eligible, you must send in three golf balls with your facility's logo for the 75th Anniversary Golf Ball Showcase by October 1, 2001. Three winners will be chosen at random from a list of all individuals who have submitted golf balls for this 75th anniversary promotion. The drawing will be held on October 15, 2001. Please send a business card and three golf balls to: GCSAA, Attn. Judy Ventsam, 1421 Research Park Drive, Lawrence, KS 66049-3859.

The Membership Committee is actively working on the 2002 membership directory. A mailing will be sent in the near future. It is also possible to update your information online at our home web page, gcsane.org.

Rich Tworig has returned to his previous post at Ponkapoag G.C. Congratulations.

This year's New England Superintendents Championship was held September 11 at the Country Club of Vermont. Host Vermont was the winner, with GCSANE finishing third. The GCSANE team included Dave Comee, Bob Healey, Arthur Silva, John Lenhart, Dan Higgins, and Captain Ron Kirkman.

Best wishes to newly-retired superintendent Bob LeBlanc of Westminster Country Club. His son, Bob, will take over where his father left off.

EDUCATION

GCSAA and the GCMA of Cape Cod are sponsoring two seminars to be held at the Cape Codder Resort in Hyannis, Mass. *Maximizing Turfgrass Disease Control* will take place November 7. On November 8, the seminar will be *Turfgrass Stress Management*. Cost is \$120 for each seminar and 0.7 CEUs are available. To register call (800) 472-7878 or visit gcsaa.org.

TOURNAMENT RESULTS

**Winchester Country Club
Winchester, Mass.
September 10, 2001
Superintendent/Club Official Tournament**
(2-person teams, best ball)

1st Gross: M. Francis, B. Longo (71)
2nd Gross: J. Hassett, P. Regan (72)
1st Net: A. Silva, B. Wild (60)
2nd Net: R. Kirkman, A. Cross (61)
3rd Net: D. Comee, J. McConnell (63)
4th Net: C. Dickow, F. Masey (63)

Closest to the Pin results:
Hole 9: Jim Fitzroy, 10' 11"
Hole 14: Paul Holmes, 6'7"

The 2001 New England Superintendents Championship was held on September 11 at the Country Club of Vermont. The host superintendent for the event was Mike Keohan. The format consisted of four flights of two-person teams using the Stableford scoring system.

1st Place: Vermont GCSA (169)
2nd Place: Connecticut GC SA (163)
3rd Place: GCSA of New England (158)
4th Place: GCMA of Cape Cod (154)
5th Place: New Hampshire GC SA (143)
6th Place: Maine GCSA (138)

(Due to the recent passing of Gary Luccini, Rhode Island GCSA was not able to field a team.)

The associations would also like to thank the following sponsors of this event:

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R.F. Morse and Friends.

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