

James B. Beard

**NORTHERN MICHIGAN TURF MANAGERS ASSOCIATION**

C. E. "TUCK" TATE, PRESIDENT  
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M O N D A Y, JULY 9, 1984.  
HIDDEN VALLEY  
GAYLORD, MICHIGAN



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The next meeting of this Association will be held at the above listed location on the day indicated. This could be a full day if you care to participate and take advantage of everything to be offered. Thanks to Fred Miller, he has again procured for us a qualified instructor in cardio pulmonary resuscitation (CPR) if you are interested. We must know in advance of the number that would like to take advantage of this opportunity so that they may schedule enough equipment for you to work on. It is necessary that you either telephone "Tuck" Tate or place a note on the enclosed postcard that you will take the course. Hidden Valley has been kind enough to provide us with a room near the golf course and classes will start at 9:00 A.M. By taking this course, you could save the life of someone near and dear to you. At the same time, credit for the course will help in recertification at G.C.S.A.A.

The next part of our program for the day will be golf. Starting times are a must between the hours of 10:30 A.M. and 2:00 P. M.. To arrange for times, the number to call is 517/732-4653. The golf professional is "Chuck" Snyder and "Jim" Olli is the golf course superintendent. They together with Mr. "Pat" Duffy, invites you to play their lovely 18 hole golf course. You will be expected to pay cart fees plus two bucks for the golf kitty.

This year for dinner at Hidden Valley, we have been invited to have our dinner, cocktails and meeting at their River Cabin. Steaks will be the main item of food and you can expect a good one as George Barker has always served us the finest food on every occasion. Transportation from the golfing area to the River Cabin, will be in Hidden Valley's transportation. They will take us there and will bring us back so we will have our own private party which is something to look forward to. Cost of dinner will be \$11.50 including tax and tip.

Dinner will be served at 6:15 P.M. therefore those coming just for dinner should plan your arrival so as to get to the River Cabin. Those who will take C.P.R., 9:00 A.M. is starting time for class, those who will play golf, schedule your starting time keeping dinner time in mind.

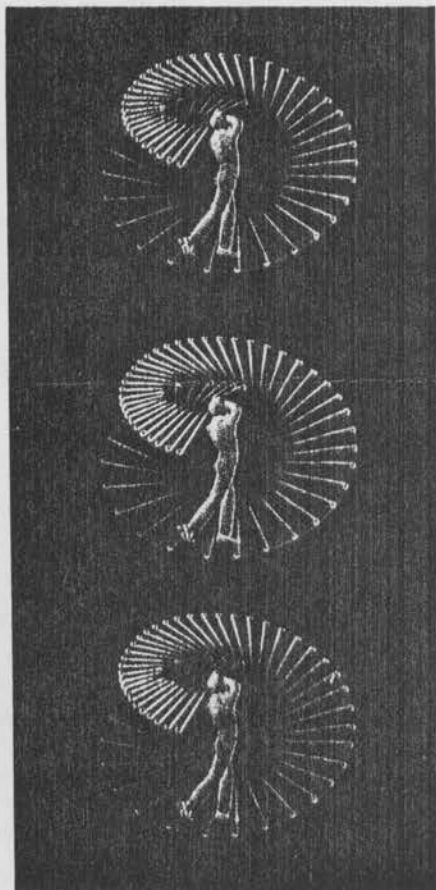
Our speaker, Dr. Ralph Hepp, Professor of Finance at Michigan State University, will speak on financial matters dealing with Estate Planning and Pensions. In this letter, we have included a page out of Golfdom Magazine by Dr. Fred V. Grau, dated 1973. Many years have passed since its publication however it is more true today probably then it was when he wrote the article. You can never start your own pension or retirement plan too early, as tomorrow seems never to come. We have had Dr. Hepp before and we promise a very interesting talk. Bring your personal notes and questions, with you. One last thing, THE POSTCARD, make up your mind and mail it today. Remember CPR, please indicate.

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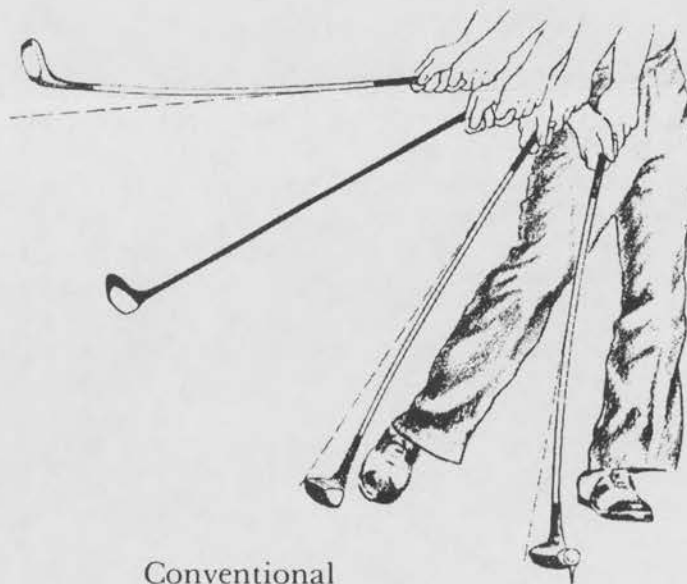
# Those Featherlight Clubs

*Whether lightweight clubs are a fad or a fixture in golf equipment, their introduction is causing conversation.*

by CLAUD CORRIGAN



Photograph Courtesy of RAM GOLF COMPANY



Drawings Courtesy of RAM GOLF COMPANY

Conventional

**A** FEW YEARS ago I flew to Guadalajara, Mexico, on a golf trip. When I claimed my luggage, I learned to my exasperation that the airline had left my golf clubs in Dallas, where they weren't going to do me any good (or harm, for that matter). So, on my first day in Mexico, I was forced to rent a battered set at the Club de Golf Atlas, in Guadalajara.

Once I was out on the course, I discovered rather quickly that most of the irons were women's clubs. No matter; I hit them very well that day. As a matter of fact, that round was the lowest I shot on the trip, several strokes better than anything I managed after my own clubs arrived.

Now I wonder whether I was being offered a lesson that I just wasn't ready for. I talked recently with a friend, and we marveled at the excitement the featherlight clubs were causing. When he remarked that he had played one of his best rounds several years ago using a borrowed set of women's clubs, I remembered my own experience in Guadalajara. It dawned on me that perhaps the world was now ready for a fine, new notion.

**T**HE WORLD of custom clubmaking, certainly, is inhabited by devotees of the game who are aware of new developments in golf equipment almost before the manufacturers can produce prototypes. It follows that nothing has excited them quite like the featherlight clubs that were introduced early this year during the PGA Merchandise Show, in Miami Beach, Florida.

I know this because, as a part-time clubmaker, I received phone calls about the concept just about the time I first read some of the details. Most callers asked whether very light clubs would really work; if I thought they would, could I make sets for them?

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CLAUD CORRIGAN is an editor, handyman, and low-handicap golfer who lives near Washington, D.C. He has previously contributed to GOLF JOURNAL.

Young reporter to successful businessman: "What's the secret of your success?"

Businessman: "A strong will."

Reporter: "Can you elaborate on that?"

Businessman: "Yes, a strong will that left me \$1 million."



Featherlite™

My offhand answers were nothing very definitive. After all, the initial field testing of featherlights was performed by one of the manufacturers, so the results the company reported might be open to argument. And yet, the manufacturer was so impressed with the results that he converted his entire production to the new clubs. Tests had involved golfers of varied skill hitting shots with their own traditional clubs and with the featherlights.

The three or four major manufacturers who first offered the clubs for sale in January have since been joined by another half-dozen or so, and if the clubs fulfill even some of the promises, they could be a big item in this year's market.

The basic theories behind the featherlights are these: They may be swung faster, and the greater clubhead speed will produce more distance; the lighter shaft, which reduces clubhead drag, delays its release (return to a straight position) almost until impact, and this results in more accurate shots.

Clubhead speed with conventional, heavier clubs reaches its maximum when the player's hands are about

at the level of the waist, so that the clubhead is moving more slowly from that point on.

Photographs taken with stroboscopic light of good golf swings appear to support the basic premises.

**L**IGHTER CLUBS are not a new idea. One manufacturer has sold lightweight stiff shafts and relatively light swingweights (C-9) with commercial success since they first came out, but the featherlights go far beyond that, measured in terms of light weight.

The featherlights range in swingweight from B-8 to C-6, depending on the maker, and they do not use stiff shafts, because of the lighter weight in the clubhead. If they did, the clubs would lack "feel," a word used to describe the slight flexing of the shaft when the club is wagged.

When you discuss the various shafts available, you encounter a certain amount of double-talk. For example, the developer of the shaft used in several of the first featherlights places stress on frequency-matching — that is, matching the shafts used in a set of clubs by their rate of vibration when they are plucked. According to this theory, shafts that vibrate at the same frequency will react alike when they strike a golf ball. Skeptics claim that only a golfer of consummate skill would benefit when shafts are matched to this extreme.

Moreover, some scientists who play golf believe that the rate of vibration, or harmonics, has little, if anything, to do with a shaft's performance. They point out that a shaft vibrates at one frequency in one position, but if it is rotated 45 degrees and plucked again, the frequency rate will change. Another 45-degree turn will produce a different rate of vibration. This variance indicates that one side of the shaft wall is stronger or weaker than the others. So, should the strongest side of the shaft be inserted into the clubhead to face the way the shaft flexes, thus providing the strongest reaction?

At this point, the real question may be: just how technical do we want to be about our golf games?

**M**Y INITIAL experiment in building a featherlight supported the reasoning that these clubs must have relatively soft shafts if they are to be playable. Using a carborundum wheel, I ground down the back of the blade of an old stainless steel 5-iron head until it was significantly lighter than it had been originally.

Next, I inserted a weak shaft (A flex) into the head. This shaft is recommended usually for senior golfers



*"Dang it — these new featherweight clubs are ruining my game!  
I never used to reach that bunker!"*

and strong women players. With the light head, however, the shaft felt much stronger. When I finished the grinding and polishing, the club's swingweight was B-8, and it weighed more than an ounce less than a standard 5-iron.

It was now time to test my handiwork. I headed for my club, 5-iron in hand. Despite the bad weather in Virginia at that time of year, the practice range was open. I hit a few shots; to my surprise, the club felt quite solid, although the trajectory of my shots was higher than normal for me.

Several people saw me, and they wanted to try my 5-iron — including a few skeptical assistant professionals. Most of them were impressed by the performance of the trial featherlight club. Indeed, two of them have since bought commercially produced sets of featherlights when they became available in the golf shop.

**I** WAS STILL evaluating the club, and searching for lighter heads that wouldn't need to undergo the grinding process when Bill Whedon, an old customer of mine, called from Connecticut. He wanted a sample featherlight to use during a golf trip in Florida.

I sent him the experimental 5-iron. When he returned, he told me that the shots he hit with it during his trip so impressed him that he now wanted an entire set made up. He told me that he had shown the club to a number of professionals and that most of them had a hard time believing a club that hit the ball so well was really only a B-8 swingweight.

Whedon still has that 5-iron, and I have since put together four woods and seven irons to go with it for him. Moreover, I have built a set for myself, and I have used them. I have found that the woods swing very well, and I'm able to hit a nice, straight ball. With the lighter irons, however, I've discovered that there is a tendency to be a little quick, thus producing more fat shots than I like.

Although I may be approaching believer status, only time will tell if the proponents of this unorthodox approach to equipment are correct. It might be just the meteoric start of another fad; after all, who can forget the great aluminum shaft gamble of 15 or 20 years ago, in which everyone lost — makers, sellers, and users?

So, the jury is still hearing evidence, and the trial's end is not in sight.

# NOT EVEN A GOLD WATCH

Current evidence indicates that there is a wide spread lack of pension plans for superintendents. Many superintendents, upon retirement, are finding themselves with nothing to show for their years of loyal service

by FRED V. GRAU

*The brief article that follows stresses once again a serious problem that was brought to light in an earlier editorial by Dr. Grau, "What? No Pension?" Because this issue is of such vital importance to superintendents, the original editorial is also included on page 44 for those*

*who may have missed it the first time around.*

*Currently, Dr. Grau is researching the problem of inadequate pension plans for superintendents, and his findings will be the basis of an in-depth article in an up-coming issue of GOLFDOM.*

*We ask our readers to help Dr. Grau by writing him directly at Drawer AA, College Park, Md. 20740. Tell him what kind of pension plan you have. Or if you presently have no plan, let him hear about it. Individual letters will be kept in the strictest confidence.*

Having concentrated on helping people grow turf for so many years, I must confess that I have not given adequate attention to the very important consideration of pensions and retirement benefits for golf course superintendents. Only recently have I become painfully aware of serious deficiencies in the "system." I now ask the rhetorical question, "Is there a problem?" just for openers.

In developing a background for an honest answer to the question, I have contacted leaders in Pennsylvania and across the nation by letter, by telephone and in face-to-face conversations. My real contact with golf course superintendents started in 1935 when I began my 10-year travels in Pennsylvania helping the "greenkeepers" to understand the basics of producing better turf. I've made a lot of friends, many of whom now are about to retire or have retired. Some, of course, have preceded us into eternity with little or no recognition. Those whom I first knew have now been in the business for 40 years or longer.

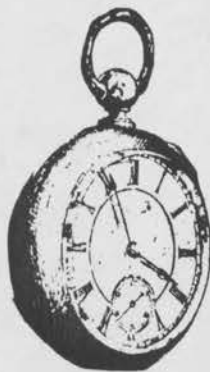
Most of us recall a man who was a loyal employee of a railroad or some industrial firm. At retirement time, he was given a testimonial dinner, an engraved gold watch and many admonitions to "stay healthy." At that point he was considered unemployable and, in many cases, when forced into unaccustomed idleness, he just "dried up and blew away." I knew one who died the day before his "retirement party."

As I receive reports from friends in turf, I gain the distinct impression that many long-time superintendents have been summarily retired or released, often without the customary dinner, watch and admonitions. What a pity!

At this point, I will answer my own question unequivocally and without hesitation or fear of contradiction. **Yes, there is a problem.** The problem is not just in Pennsyl-

*continued*

8/73 GOLFDOM MAGAZINE 43



## GOLD WATCH *continued*

vania or in Kansas or in California. It is very nearly universal. Details are not a part of this editorial. They will be documented in a later article for GOLFDOM. In the meantime, it is my hope that club officials will have read this piece and will make a meaningful start toward establishing an adequate pension-retirement program for the golf course superintendent. It is later than you think!

### WHAT? NO PENSION?

A good friend of long standing, a retired golf course superintendent now living in Florida, wrote to me recently. After 26 years of devoted service to his club (and he had many good years of service left) he was "retired," actually dismissed, without a pension of any kind. I know the man and I know the club. He introduced innovations in equipment, fertilizers, ground covers and many other things. What I don't understand is how the businessmen for whom he worked could so callously turn him out to pasture without the thank you and the courtesy of some sort of pension or endowment. It is a bit like unharnessing the horse, opening the pasture gate and giving him a slap on the rump.

This friend is understandably bitter, soft-spoken as he is. It is too late to turn back the clock for him, but his experience, which is shared by many, should guide present and future negotiations between club and superintendent. Surely there must be some guidelines that can help the new or old superintendent achieve a just and honorable contract, which will help to sustain him when he retires. Club officials should bow their heads in shame if they do not insist upon some such stipulation in the contract. One may safely assume that nine out of 10 businessmen in the club have made sure that they will have a retirement income. Shouldn't they also do the same for one of their most devoted employees?

I have just talked with another good friend who has been at his club since it was built about 1952. He has tried to negotiate a retirement benefit for several years, but each time he is told that he is being selfish in wanting something just for himself. These short-sighted officials one day will wonder, "Why can't we attract good men?" The horse is not likely to be drawn to an empty feedbag. □

Our Michigan Turfgrass Foundation Benefit day at Boyne Highlands was very successful and we had 84 golfers participating plus an additional group that came just for the dinner and fine talk given by "Jim" Timmerman, president of G.C.S.A.A. "Jim" brought out about the close alliance with with the same goals between these two turfgrass organizations. Research for the future, for the grasses that everyone would like to see. All this of course requires money and the new plan between is to get the player to help contribute through private clubs, public golf courses and wherever people that benefit may contribute to this worthy cause.

Mr. Jim Vince with the help of Mr. Jim Sage, put on a "Closest to The Pin" contest again and we thank them for their contributions as a result. In addition for their donations, our thanks to Jim Bogart, Tom Reed and Dave Sapp.

We also asked superintendents to bring prizes, so thanks to Baumer, Longfield, Tate and White for their donations as prizes.

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TURFGRASS MANAGEMENT UPDATE, M.S.U.

While clovers, black medic and plantains can be easily controlled at this time with a combination herbicide, other broadleaves are past prime control time. Combination herbicides including mixtures of 2,4-D and MCPP or 2,4-D, MCPP and Dicamba. With the continued hot dry weather, moisture stress problems are developing. The most common one is mowing water-stressed turfs. Tire patterns will develop later in the day and in extreme cases can totally kill some turf. This is a particular severe problem on newly sodded lawns. Stress problems can usually be avoided by completing turf operations by 10 or 11 in the morning or by properly irrigating beforehand.

On the disease front, Dollarspot should soon become a problem on untreated golf turfs. Bleached out patches of 1 or 2 inches are symptomatic of this disease. Symptoms and controls can be found in Extension Bulletin E-1540. Anthracnose may also become a problem if the warm, humid nights continue. Symptoms and controls can be found in Extension Bulletin E-1541. Initial infestations of sod web worms may now be occurring. While the larvae of this insect prefers bluegrass lawns, especially sodded ones, they can affect all turfgrass species. Identification and control of this summer-time pest can be found in Extension Bulletin E-1480

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Marie Pompei, Research Agronomist with Lofts, Inc. announces the 5th edition of the "Guide to Seed and Sod in the U.S. and Canada" is now available to anyone who has interest in the growing and maintenance of turf. The guide which she co-authored with Richard Hurley, Lofts Director of Research, is ready reference presenting complete information for grass adaptation, recommended uses, and planting rates and dates in a clear and concise format.

For your free copy contact: Karen Ciosek, Lofts Inc., P. O. Box 146, Bound Brook, N. J. 08805, (201) 560-1590



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"I'd move heaven and earth to break 100," announced the duffer golfer as he banded away in a sand trap.  
"Try heaven," advised his partner. "I think you've already moved enough earth."

PLEASE, GET YOUR POSTCARD IN THE MAIL SO WE CAN INFORM HIDDEN VALLEY....