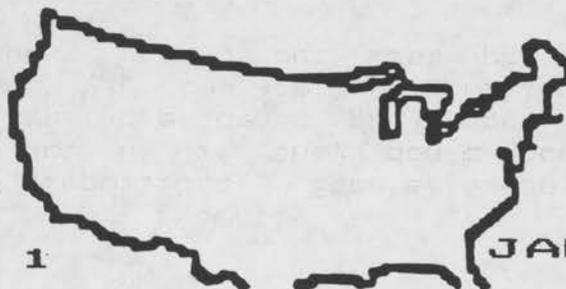


TURFCOMMS



V. 6, I. 1

JAN. 5, '91

PURPOSE: To pass on what we learn willingly and happily to others in the profession so as to improve turf conditions around the country.

THE INDUSTRY IS PARANOID - List price, said one salesman friend, in the turf equipment industry has been way too high since the end of Richard Nixon's price freeze. Salesman don't like to give list prices out because it scares away customers that know they can get a better deal elsewhere -- and they can.

Did you ever try to get list prices for the equipment in the Toro, Jacobsen, John Deere, or the what-have-you-line. Not for one piece of equipment but, for a whole line?

Try it! I did recently and have tried in the past. It is essentially impossible. Some salesmen are very cooperative but, most will not be if they don't know you. Go to company vice presidents and presidents and forget it you'll get no where. I did get one VIP to admit very willingly that his industry was paranoid about giving out list prices. I didn't obtain any prices from him.

Nobody should pay list prices unless they are obtaining a package of no interest financing or some other type of "discount". List prices in the turf equipment industry, when you can find them out, appear to be at least 30% over the price a customer paying cash and/or customer buying in volume can obtain. They may well be 40 to 50% above actual prices paid by large buyers.

Some list prices I did obtain, with sold for cash prices:

1. The standard Toro Greensmaster triplex greensmower lists at \$13,400 can obtained for \$10,000 cash.

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Subscription cost is \$15. Send checks to Doug Hawes at the above address.

2. A Turfcats T422D mower out-front rotary 72-inch side discharge deck, a riding designed to mow steep banks. With hydraulic implement drive and standard equipment. List at \$13,500. Can be purchased for cash at \$10,200.

3. Ryan GA 60 fairway aerifier can be purchased for \$16,000. Has been offered as a package deal with the Cushman truckster needed to pull it for \$25,000

4. The standard Jacobsen Greens King IV triplex greens-mower can purchased for \$9,500 cash. List is \$13,170. Diesel list for \$16,160

READERSHIP - As of the October, '90 issue there were 137 issues of Turfcomms mailed. These were sent to 29 states. Four states were in double digits: TX- 36, KS- 16, NE- 14, CO- 10. For your information readership is broken into four different categories: golf course superintendents - 85, related industry personnel (other than editors) - 25, editors of newsletters or magazines - 12, relatives & friends - 15. Some included in the Superintendents category were also editors, some were owners, some were municipal park administrators with golf course responsibilities.

GCSAA DUES - Jeff Kreie, Editor of Kansas Grass Roots Superintendent of a 9 hole municipal g.c. and GCSAA member, builds upon my comment on GCSAA dues in the last issue of that newsletter. He also emphasized the difficulty of paying \$210 when at many courses. "I am one of these 9 hole superintendents. When I asked my City Manager several years ago if the City would pay my dues to join GCSAA, he was very hesitant. He pointed out that it didn't cost nearly as much to belong to the national city manager's organization or the national city clerk's organization, but he finally went for it." from the Oct. 1990 issue of Grass Roots.

Kreie does suggest that the GCSAA should give serious thought to a "tiered dues structure with certified superintendents paying the highest dues and receiving the greatest benefits and 9 hole superintendents paying the least dues with reduced benefits." He notes that there may be many problems associated with this. The greatest might be that dues are not returned to any great extent in individual services and thus not easily allocated as privileges of different tiers.

Kreie also quoted Dave Fearis, supt. at another Kansas g.c., who suggested the GCSAA get the information concerning benefits of belonging to the organization to superintendents that are not members by hand delivery, an idea GCSAA is considering. Then

follow it up with a visit from a nearby superintendent. The GCSAA was considering using retired members for this. I don't think there are enough retired members to cover the country but, it is a good place to start.

LET'S HEAR FROM SOME MORE OF YOU ON THIS SUBJECT!

A golf course architect friend saw the article on GCSAA dues and laughed. He said his dues were fixed at \$250/year BUT, they get assessments of several thousand dollars every year including splitting the cost of the annual meeting, banquet, and expenses for speakers whether they attend or not.

A successful golf course architect takes in more on one design job than any superintendent makes in one year. Yes, they have expenses including consulting agronomists.

Maybe if more superintendents became entrepreneurs and started bidding for the maintenance of golf courses they could and would find money for a professional organization that would help them with their management responsibilities. I don't foresee any great move in that direction, although management companies appear to have taken over five to ten percent of the golf courses

I do see a day when the management of golf courses may be under a team rather than a superintendent. The better superintendents have already adopted a team approach. No superintendent can handle the paperwork, public relations, leadership, and organization responsibilities handed to him at a major club.

THE INNISBROOK RESORT ARTICLE brought a strong defense of Innisbrook from another resort superintendent. He said that golf course was lush and plush with not a grass blade out of place. He said he would be proud to have that place's reputation and he understood the tough management that it must have taken to obtain it. He probably went out and fired all his assistants so that he could begin to produce such perfection.

He was quick to admit that up to now he hadn't turned over assistants every six months but, he did expect them to work 60 or more hours a week. The 60 hours or more a week is normal enough I agree. I find no problem with that however, turning over the 13 junior management people every six months is ridiculous in my book.

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TURF ADVISORY VISIT
from Doug the Turf Doc.

18 Hole Farm To Market

by

Brad Baxter

Some of us play golf, and we nearly all stink. But we love the game and travel it like an old farm to market road, miles from nowhere. We coast along as though we were reliving a reasonably pleasant, meaningful past. There's the same trees, the same streams, the same mounds, and during our backswing, the same sounds. And sure enough, we always notice something new, something kind of scary.

It catches up to us somehow, this old game, where men aren't real men. We're apprehensive and clumsy, and hoping we won't become lonely and lost and wet... like young dogs without papers. Still, on the golf course, among friends, we're always naive and cute.

We hit ridiculous shots and try to explain what happened, with big brown pouting eyes.

"I pulled up I guess. Did you notice?"

"Yeah, that shot's somewhere on the next fairway. Pick me up while you're over there."

Short pause.

"Boy, I didn't know that water was there."

"Long before Adam and Eve."

"It has not. That's casual water."

"It's a damn lake, with big fish and a draw bridge."

"Baloney; they must have flooded the fairway to green it up."

"Ok, find it, and we won't say a thing."

After thirty minutes of trolling, two snake scares, and three twosomes passing, we all decide to move on. One of us is wet, the others are laughing, and the farm to market feels a bit like Baja California... with ocean tides.

"You simple son of a bitch; don't use an eight iron here. You'll carry the green a mile."

"No way, I'm almost 125 out."

"The red marker is 100 you dope. You're only about 70, 75 at the most."

"Oh."

The clearly disguised back fringe could have pinned another mongrel down. Big brown puppy eyes look at the ball intently, strike cleanly, and feel relieved to have been spared, unneutered.

"Nice shot. The sand trap's a lot better than flying the green."

"Shut up."

The old farm to market was becoming an ordeal; but still, the fairways were pretty and green, the water an alluring blue, the traps a piece of yesterday and today, and the greens, the greens were so so warm and peaceful, even an old Dalmation could come home to die.

"You're finally on. Wanna pick up?"

"If I make this putt, I'll finish with a 96."

"Not bad for nine holes."

"Shut up."

The F.M. was always slow, winding, wooded, wet and new. It was always easy to reach, quite available to dogs like us. It traveled as well as most roads travel after years. We roamed through trees, splashed in water and dug around in sand. And when we reached the hard to reach precipice, that "big dog dance floor," we all felt as though we'd lived and relived some good, meaningful times... and rid ourselves of a portion of the "dog days" we lived within. Then again...

"There's a bit of a break from 85 feet."

"Shut up."