



WESTERN VIEWS

November - December, 1997

Official Publication of the West Michigan Golf Course Superintendents Association

1998 Meeting Schedule Western Michigan GCSA

January 13	The Highlands
February 2-8	GCSAA National Conference
March *	Roundtable GAM
April 27	Duck Lake CC
May *	
June 29	Travis Point CC (Joint with Detroit)
July *	(Joint with Northern)
August *	
September *	(Golf Day)
October *	(Annual Meeting)
November *	Kent CC (Fall Party)

* Dates and/or sites tentative.

President's Message

As another year comes to a close it's hard to imagine that the next century is only two years away. The year 2000, wow!! What will the next century bring? Are we ready to improve and protect the world around us? As Golf Course Superintendents, it's our job to be leaders in the area of environmental stewardship. To be conscious of golfers' expectations, but also to be concerned about the needs of Mother Nature. Winter is a perfect time to improve our knowledge in this area with the vast array of workshops and seminars. A good example is the

Turfgrass Ecology Seminar jointly sponsored by the W.M.G.C.S.A. and the G.C.S.A.A. to be held at the M.T.F. Conference in January. I encourage all to take advantage of these opportunities to help them prepare for the year 2000.

Once again, I'd like to express my thanks and support from the membership during the past two years. Happy Holidays to all and prosperity in the New Year.

Best wishes,
Paul Schippers
President

Western Michigan Fall Party

The Western Michigan Fall Party was held at the Holiday Inn in Mt. Pleasant on November 1st. Hosts for the party were Roger Barton and his wife, Virginia. Roger is the Superintendent at the PohlCat. Roger's boss, the General Manager of Operations, John Brehm, and his wife, Jody, were in attendance. Also, in attendance were Rick Hakken and his wife. Rick is the Superintendent of the Holiday Greens Course. The sixty-three people in attendance all had a great time and the accommodations were excellent. We would like to thank the staff at the Holiday Inn for the great service. We would also like to thank the vendors that contributed to the evening.

If you have any suggestions for improvements or changes to the Fall Party, please bring them up with a

member of the board. We are considering changes to make this an event that more of the membership would be able to take advantage of in the future.

1997 Fall Party Donations:

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Editor's Note: Please write me if you have any corrections or if you are interested in doing an article for us at:

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1998 ROSTER BOOK will be going to print in late January.
If you have any corrections or comments, Please Contact Us!

Michigan Hospitality Room

This year the Michigan Hospitality Room will be *the place* to meet. With the help of our vendors, the room is going to be bigger and better than ever before. Our goal is to raise the necessary funds before the show in Anaheim. This room will be a showcase for Michigan superintendents and vendors.

The room will be open February 4, 5, and 6 at the Anaheim Marriott, which is the exhibitors' headquarters. We are expecting approximately 300 guests per night. The room will be much larger for comfort, at a size of 2,500 square feet. We will be recognizing a superintendent from each of Associations each night.

Food, cocktails and friendship a plenty. Join us in Anaheim. Please contribute to the room. Send your donation to:

GDGCSA Michigan Room
P.O. Box 173
Troy, MI 48099
c/o Kate Mason

* * * *

Michigan superintendent receives environmental certification

Kathy M. Antaya, CGCS, of The Meadows Golf Club, Allendale, Mich., has earned an environmental management specialist certificate from the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America (GCSAA) for completing a specialization program for Golf Course Development.

GCSAA is addressing the environmental impact of golf course maintenance and the increasingly complex training needs of golf course superintendents by offering specialized training through its Environmental Management Program (EMP).

GCSAA's EMP consists of six specialized certification programs:

- Integrated Plant Management
- Underground Storage Tanks
- Employee Safety and Right-To-Know
- Water Quality and Application
- Golf Course Development
- Storage, Disposal and Recycling

Programs in the Golf Course Development specialization address issues ranging from environmentally aware design to wetland and wildlife management on golf courses. Design, preconstruction, construction and

renovation are a few of the important topics reviewed in these seminars.

Golf course superintendents may choose to complete one or more of the EMP specializations, each of which is composed of a series of relevant continuing education seminars. The program is open to all golf course management professionals seeking further environmental training and expertise.

The superintendent who successfully completes the required coursework in a specialization receives a certificate and special recognition from GCSAA. In addition, the superintendent who earns this valuable credential demonstrates a personal commitment to preserve and protect the environment.

Since 1926, GCSAA has been the leading professional association for the men and women who manage and maintain golf facilities in the United States and worldwide. From its headquarters in Lawrence, Kan., the association provides education, information and representation to more than 17,000 individual members from more than 50 countries. GCSAA's mission is to serve its members, advance their profession, and enrich the quality of golf and its environment.

1998 COMMITTEE ASSIGNMENTS

Education	Hopkins, Fulling, O'Connor
Scholarship	Barton, Thuemmel, Antaya
Monthly Meeting	Fulling, O'Connor, Paterson
Fall Party	Antaya, Barton, Paterson
Golf Day	Thuemmel, Barton, Paterson Bathum
Member Search	Thuemmel, Antaya, Paterson, Bathum
Hospitality Room	Fulling, Bathum
GAM	Hopkins, Fulling, Bathum
GCSAA	Bathum, Antaya, Schippers
MTF	Antaya, Thuemmel
Newsletter	Bathum, Antaya
Bylaw	Boyle, Schippers
Finance	Paterson
Membership	Paterson
Notification	Paterson

Welcome New Members

We would like to welcome the following people to our organization!

Kirk Carls,

Student, M.S.U.

Jason Dionne,

Railside Golf Club

Roger Griffith,

Century Rain Aid

**The Western Michigan GCSA and GCSAA
are sponsoring**

Turfgrass Ecology

**Held in conjunction with
The Michigan Turfgrass Conference**

**Friday
January 23, 1998
8 a.m. to 5 p.m.
Lansing, Michigan**

In this one-day seminar participants will study the major concepts of a sound Integrated Pest Management (IPM) program. The seminar will focus on the relation of these concepts to management practices such as mowing, fertilization and irrigation as well as the management of turfgrass under environmental stress. Participants will also discuss pest management and pesticide resistance. The textbook, *Turfgrass Ecology and Management*, is strongly recommended for this seminar.

Continuing Education Units: 0.7

Member Fee: \$110; Nonmember Fee: \$165

Member Fee Textbook: \$31; Nonmember Fee Textbook: \$48



**For more information
or to register,
contact 1/800-472-7878**

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She Was Playing Lift, Clean and Taste

GOLF JOURNAL, Nov./Dec. 1997

Scott and Loretta Sullivan of Cherry Hill, N.J., realize there are some new tricks you don't want to teach a dog. Swallowing golf balls is first among them.

When Hannah, the family's 3-year-old yellow Labrador, got sick earlier this summer, it wasn't until the veterinarian took x-rays and howled over what he saw that anyone realized the pooch wasn't hoarding golf balls from the yard, but swallowing them. Hannah required surgery, and when her shag bag was

emptied, no fewer than nine golf balls were removed from her stomach.

Scott Sullivan liked to take a bag of balls out into the yard to practice his chipping, and Hannah stood watch, waiting for the balls like a lion stalks its prey. Members of the family knew Hannah would gather up the balls in her mouth — they claim she had the ability to hold five at a time — but no one ever guessed even one slipped and went the wrong way.

"She just became obsessed with

chasing golf balls," Scott told a television reporter. "She wouldn't go after a tennis ball or any other ball, just golf balls."

The Sullivans like to joke that they've gone to extremes - switched to bowling - in order to prevent a recurrence. Actually, they're done using real golf balls and have started using a larger, vibrating plastic lookalike. So far, Hannah hasn't been able to get that up and down.

Court Is Now In Session

GOLF JOURNAL, Nov./Dec. 1997

You figured it was only a matter of time before the lawsuits over the mandatory use of alternative spikes began to pile up. That time, it would appear is now.

The latest litigation comes from Pittsburgh, Pa., where a lawsuit filed by amateur J. Mark Jennings tells an increasingly familiar tale.

When Jennings went out for a round at suburban Pittsburgh's Club at Nevillewood in 1995, course officials fitted his shoes with Softspikes' original swirl-designed plastic cleats in accordance with the facility's ban on metal spikes. While playing at a nearby course two weeks later - still using the spikes installed at Nevillewood -

Jennings slipped and broke his ankle. Doctors installed a plate and nine screws in Jennings's ankle to repair the injury.

Now, Jennings has filed a \$75,000 lawsuit against the company and the club that inserted the plastic spikes.

Continued, back page

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Court Is Now In Session, continued

Jennings claims that Softspikes negligently placed its alleged "defectively designed and unsafe" product on the market without adequate testing, and that both Softspikes and Nevillewood negligently failed to properly warn Jennings of the potential for injury while using the plastic cleats.

Jennings also contends the company and the club should be held strictly liable for his injuries - that is, automatically found liable due to the allegedly hazardous nature of the product itself rather than due to any individual's negligent acts. Finally, Jennings seeks a finding that Softspikes and the club breached both express and implied warranties that the plastic spikes were actually fit for use. The suit joins some half-dozen similar claims throughout the country stemming from alleged spikeless injuries.

In Los Angeles, a recreational golfer injured while wearing Softspikes is getting ready to go to trial against the company to seek damages for his injuries. In Albany, N.Y., attorneys for an injured local golfer anticipate that their spikeless trial will begin in December or early January. A Michigan golfer has settled an injury lawsuit for an undisclosed amount, and attorneys representing injured golfers in Rhode Island and New York are considering bringing new lawsuits of their own.

However, even amidst heightened legal examination of their product, Softspikes' attorneys claim that no direct connection linking such injuries to the plastic cleats. "We have not been presented with evidence in any case that an injury was caused by our product," says Softspikes attorney Robert Rosenbaum. "A comprehensive warning

is located on each package of Softspikes cleats that is sold to golf shops and golf retail stores," says Rosenbaum. "We supply the same warning to bulk purchasers, such as clubs, in sufficient quantity to provide one [printed warning card] to each member provided with our cleats. We feel it is important to alert consumers as to the areas on which they should exercise particular caution when wearing our cleats."

But even as manufacturers emphasize that tens of thousands of golfers heed those warnings - playing millions of rounds in plastic cleats without incident at the over 2,500 clubs now banning metal spikes - the handful of injury lawsuits has left spikeless company officials scrambling to maintain that their technology is not to blame for a few unfortunate accidents.

Ted Curtis



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