

NEWSLETTER

DECEMBER 1968



Golf Course Superintendents Association OF NEW ENGLAND, INC.

Sponsors and administrators of the Lawrence S. Dickinson Scholarship Fund — Awarded yearly to deserving Turf Management Students.

DON'T STAND STILL

Just as the world around us changes, so, too, does the green-acred domain of the golf course superintendent.

It is this element of change which has certain people worried.

How about starting with the expression "old-fashioned"?

Too many of the men, who keep a smile on the face of the country club member by creating a feeling of pride through spic and span condition of his golf course, are trying to build tomorrow's dreams with yesterday's tools.

This, as a matter of fact, is the respected opinion of a pioneer in his own right — Orville O. Clapper. Now, Orville is a so-called supplier, if you will, but he also is a businessman with a lot of sense.

"And I wouldn't call it horse sense, either", Orville chirps. "I may not be of the new generation but I must survive in it. Let's call it mechanized sense for lack of a better description. I've acquired it. I'd say the superintendent should at least look into it before the world passes him by."

This new outlook, as presented by Clapper, is bred out of the one universal problem of the superintendent — that of performing well at the labor market. The shortage of adequate help has not been kept in check. On the contrary, the needs of turf management go begging by the season. It shall not be long before a national recruitment movement is proposed to curb the number of dropouts who desert the ranks of golf course maintenance.

Clapper's suggestion is sound. "There is only one real answer to the problem," he offers. "We must attack it with an old weapon with a new name — automation. In this case it's been forced upon us by labor, itself. New machines, which eliminate the need for using man hours, are in the process of being invented, developed and applied to make a superintendent's task easier. The only fly in the ointment comes from the super and the club he represents. One or the other usually can't see the advantages of investing money in new mechanical aids. This is rather silly in a way, because in the end everyone comes out ahead."

Most of Clapper's thinking is directed toward the maker of the country club budget. "I have visited many courses where man hours are being wasted in an impractical way", Orville



An Old Timer with Young Ideas

contends. "Take a piece of antiquated equipment that is forever breaking down. A superintendent must direct his attention, time and help on the refurbishing of it. Usually, by the time the old wreck is launched again . . . the job it was to do has either been completed by hand or been swallowed up in defeat of poor course condition."

The problem of equipment breakdown is directly related to the woes of labor dropout and improper utilization of the labor on hand. "If a club or public course would realize that man hours poured into repair of equipment constitutes a loss of budget funds, they would soon see the advantage of replacing the crippled machinery with healthy, long-life machinery", Clapper advises. "It is simply a matter of dollars and cents."

There is added to the Clapper contribution the fact that modern equipment puts speed into a job and thus further cuts down on outlay of money in the form of overtime hours to labor.

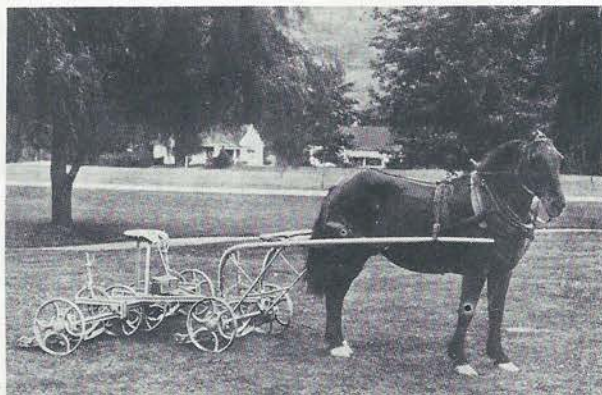
The cold state of the situation prohibits argument to this theory. For one thing, it is becoming increasingly difficult to find good labor and almost impossible to retain it. Competition from other fields acts as a drain on the market available to the superintendent.

Therefore, the club and super cannot afford to stand still in the way of trying to slide by with inadequate equipment. If one machine can do the work of three men, it should be inferred as virtually sacrilegious not to purchase it. This is not a last-resort remedy. It is the only logical answer to a diminishing labor market. It deserves consideration when the superintendent and club treasury come to grips in their annual confrontation this winter. — Gerry Finn

NEXT MEETING

The Next Meeting on December 2, 1968 will be our Annual Meeting. It will be held at Holiday Inn, Grove St., exit 128, Newton, Mass.

Directors	10:30 A.M.
Regular	11:00 A.M.
Dinner	12:15 Sharp
Educational Program	1:15 P.M.



Golf Course Superintendents Association

LAST MEETING

The November meeting was held at Sam Mitchell's Easton Golf Club and a Beef Stew was served prior to playing a 9-hole tournament. Those who did not play golf toured the "new nine" that will be ready for spring play. Phil Cassidy reported that the Scholarship Committee had worked up a letter that would be sent to all alumni of Stockbridge and to the Golf Course Superintendents far and wide. Your copy is enclosed. Remember that these donations are tax exempt.



Tom Niblet (left) and Joe Rybka, Thorney Lea Golf Course
Winners of the Pro-Super Tournament at Brae Burn
on October 28, 1968

PLEASE NO OVERTIME

Here we are racing into winter and the golf season supposedly on its last legs . . . if it already hasn't been shot down.

Yet, out there among the persistent the click of club striking ball and the crunch of spike pounding into the green continue. All the while it is sour music to the superintendent, that is if his club insists its members have rights to use regular greens just as long as they can see them.

We of the concerned set know of the consequences promiscuous use of regular greens brings. The New England Association — with the exception of those areas where climatic conditions dictate otherwise — take a firm stand in support of temporary or alternate greens.

For the most part golfers are reasonable men and women. They realize the pitfalls of the superintendent's profession — one of which is the hidden dangers found in allowing members to prance about on frozen greens and recently thawed putting surfaces. This message, then, is not for them. It applies to the few who are blinded by the false indication that greens without snow should remain open when in an all-clear condition.

One of the virtues of the cooperative member should be foresight. The use of greens in winter sometimes leaves the golfer with a deceiving impression. The harm done the greens very often is a delayed reaction type of hurt. Very often it won't show until midway through the following summer. One of its signs is the sudden appearance of poa annua, that pesty growth which sneaks into injured areas whenever presented the opportunity. Such an occurrence is the direct result of damage wrought by regular green use in winter. So, the delayed reaction strikes, but the uneducated look for other avenues to place the blame.

Anyone, with even a bare introduction to the problems of maintaining a proud playing surface, knows that late winter and early spring are the most difficult time for turf. Traffic on greens at these times is an absolute drain on the efforts of the superintendent to give members a healthy playing area during the normal span of the golf season. If anything, golfers owe it to themselves to declare war on sending the season into overtime.

— Gerry Finn

New member to be voted on at next meeting:

Stephen D. Kristof, 23 Belknap Road, Medfield, Mass.
Club Affiliation — Charles River

The Nominating Committee recommended the following slate:

President — Anthony Caranci, Jr.
First Vice President — Richard Blake, Leo Brown
Second Vice President — Robert Grant, Michael O'Grady
Secretary — Thomas Curran, Joseph Zoppo
Treasurer — Lucien Duval
Trustee 3 years — Robert Mucciarone
Finance Committee Chairman — Julius Aksten
Educational Committee Chairman — Edward J. Murphy
Golf Committee Chairman — Wayne Ripley
Newsletter Committee Chairman — Dean Robertson

Points to Ponder - Desiccation

By ALEXANDER M. RADKO
Eastern Director, USGA Green Section

Desiccation is and has been our winter problem for years, but like all problems it doesn't hit home or seem to be important until it happens to you. Last winter was one of the meanest winters for the golf courses in the Northeast in many a year. The winter was open (no snow cover) and windy . . . in fact strong winds blew incessantly day and night and the grasses in exposed areas dried out. Few escaped injury, and these were principally the newer courses. After the GCSAA Conference we began to get reports of dusty, dry and crackly turf that was powder-dry in February.

Desiccation can occur on certain areas during years of good snow cover too. Courses in the northernmost areas normally enjoy more snow cover than we in the lower New England and Midwestern States; however, even on snow-bound courses strong winds can remove the snow to expose areas which can become desiccated. Superintendents in the northernmost areas soon learned that one way to curb serious injury if desiccation was a threat on a green or tee is to topdress the exposed area heavily in January or February, with double the normal amount of topdressing soil (i.e., two cubic yards per 5,000 instead of one). This affords good protection, and those who have done it swear by it as an excellent treatment to reduce desiccation problems to a minimum.

This past winter others watered as best they could; some rented city water trucks, some watered with their spray tanks — and this helped — if enough water was applied.

Other materials advocated or being tested are polyethylene plastic tarps, polypropylene screens (black and green), snow fences, branches and brush, fertilizers (principally organic) and anti-desiccant materials. In my experience to date, the topdressing technique has been the most successful of all. Additionally, topsoil acts as a smoothing and truing material to keep greens in top form. Not just any soil is suitable, it must be the kind that is normally used for topdressing your greens. Another side benefit is that snow mold fungicides, applied to topsoil after it is spread, will keep the green protected better than if the fungicide were applied alone.

How do you know whether you will need to protect your greens against desiccation this winter? Only time will tell! It isn't possible to forecast this anymore than it is possible to forecast January's exact weather at this time. You must wait and see how the winter breaks. If it is an open and continuously windy winter, as it was from December '67 through February '68, be ready to treat greens that are exposed by mid-January.

If the winter is mild, or if lots of snow falls, there will be less danger that desiccation will occur. But this is what makes the job a challenging one — after one experiences the rigors of summer mortis, it would be helpful to have a relaxing winter. If we could count on it, we'd all be happier when spring rolls around.

Vandalism . . . The Continuing Curse

Vandalism had another productive year on the golf course . . . according to the earthy-tongued response to a spot survey among N. E. superintendents.

There was nothing new in the way of method of operation, although there were some reports of more than usual brazen acts. One super lost two golf carts despite the protection of a chain link fence. "They simply cut a hole in the fence and away they went," was the terse message which should key a renewed effort to establish laws beefy enough to discourage potential culprits.

The New England Association once again will help sponsor a bill in the state legislature with the intention of setting a mandatory fine payable in every conviction involving golf course vandalism cases.

A year ago the effort was unsuccessful. However, a new plan has been arranged and a new bill will be submitted with a reduction in the \$200 figure for the fine. It was believed that \$200 was deemed too severe a penalty. Thus, this year's try will come with a more practical figure to push the bill's passage.

Vandalism, as a sworn enemy of the New England Association, is an annual pest. Conservative estimates range from \$500 to \$1,000 in damages. The loss in dollars and cents,



4th Green at Chestnut Hill

though, is secondary in importance. The real hurt comes in the inconvenience it brings in matter of repairing or replacing the selected target, plus the scars it leaves on a course.

Superintendents can help themselves in this fight. The biggest aid in retaliation is strict enforcement of personal punishment. In other words, punishment should not be selective. If the guilty party happens to be a disgruntled caddie or a fun-seeking son of a prominent member, the penalty should be the same and as severe as the circumstance will allow in order to set an example as a weapon for future incidents.

True, vandalism is a continuing curse. But more than a passing awareness of the problem and a concentrated effort to substitute penalty for warning might give the superintendent enough ammunition to deal the recurrence of this shameful behavior a convincing setback.

— Gerry Finn

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V. President, Robert Grant	Secretary, Thomas Curran
Treasurer, Lucien Duval	
Norman Mucciarone	Edward Murphy
Robert Mucciarone	Wayne Ripley
Philip Cassidy	Dean Robertson
Albert Allen	Leon St. Pierre

The Case For Certification

(This is the first of a two-part series on the proposal to further dignify the profession of Golf Course Superintendent by establishing a program of certification. Part one deals with the reasons for considering such a big step. Part two will cover the requirements proposed for certification.)

So, you think you're a genuine, grade-A, publicly-accepted golf course superintendent. And you just might be that. But here I am, a show-me . . . I'm-from-Missouri Doubting Thomas. Let's see those credentials!

The opening paragraph should not be misconstrued as a pugnacious challenge to the authenticity of the position of the thousands who dedicate their lives to the game of golf through the daily application of their knowledge of turf management. Rather, it is offered as an awakening to the fact that the profession is in need of some type of nationally-accepted method of distinguishing the dedicated from the fly-by-nights.

Obviously, certification is the answer. It is offered to the superintendent and country club as a twofold guide in bringing about a more organized relationship with the professional world. It is a boon to both parties. The professional superintendent benefits in many ways. He is protected in his position by the very implication of the term, certification. It means he is qualified to undertake a particular job and competent to apply these same qualifications to it. The country club also reaps the satisfaction that it has in its employ the type of man associated with success in the profession.

Certification is a necessity for many other reasons. It safeguards against the infiltration of the unqualified who not only harm their personal reputations with half-hearted, groping efforts but also bear false witness against the profession they unjustly represent.

In the same breath certification sets a number of standards for the bona fide superintendent to abide by. It is a measure of keeping the super on his toes, a situation which in the end will keep him razor sharp in regard to the demands of his position.

In matters of seeking employment, certification must rate another plus. A certified superintendent, once the term is publicly accepted, will be able to apply for a job knowing that he will be considered in the light of a qualified professional. And once the country clubs fall in line with the practice of considering only certified men for openings, the program will prevent the engaging of self-appointed supers.

The wage scale of the superintendent can only be improved by adoption of certification. With a code of ethics accompanying the requirements, it follows that certain salary minimums would be set up to prevent the possibility of undercutting offers by applicants for a job.

More than anything, though, certification is simply another way of lifting the public image of the superintendent. It lets the public know the profession is interested enough in itself to be selective in the matter of accepting its own members. This is reason enough to launch a full scale investigation into the possibilities of establishing certification.

(Next month: How certification would work.)

— Gerry Finn



"Some people still haven't learned"

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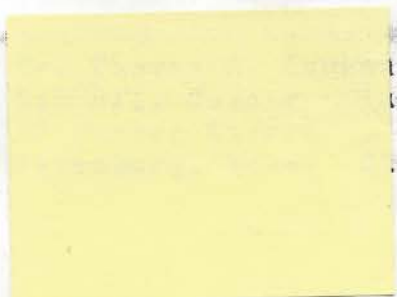
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OF NEW ENGLAND, INC.



GERRY FINN
Contributing Editor
LEON V. ST. PIERRE
Business Manager
DEAN ROBERTSON
Newsletter Committee Chairman
24 Riverview Drive
Newbury, Massachusetts 01950
Phone 462-4540
Club Affiliation
Chestnut Hill Country Club

FIRST CLASS



420