



JANUARY 1973



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.

UNIONS . . . ETHICAL OR NOT ???

Respect, recognition, reward.

Those might be a pretty good nutshellled version of what comprises the three "R's" of a profession. If you are not getting your proper share of each, you could be in a union mood.

There has been much rebuttal to the proposal that the golf course superintendent explore the possibility of joining a union . . . or even form one of his own. An association is one thing, a union another.

The main argument against a union is that it is not ethical in the light that a professional man doesn't resort to an agency to serve as his spokesman in bargaining for higher wages, better working conditions, or fringe benefits. "That type of thing is below us", comes the cry.

Well, for your information, more and more professional people are leaning toward unionizing in an attempt to better themselves. These include physicians, stock brokers, diplomats, professors, engineers and even scientists. Did you know, in addition, that the United Auto Workers have in their ranks some 9,000 professional employes at North American Rockwell? Ethical or not, they have turned to the union.

Some superintendents have expressed strong feelings in support of unionization. Naturally, their names cannot be made public for the obvious reason, but their voices should be heard.

"I am sick and tired of being regarded as a glorified gardener", one states. "We have done just about all we can do as far as trying to uplift our image. Some people just refuse to be convinced that we are highly skilled technicians. For the most part, they don't want to hear about it. Mostly, they're taking that attitude so it won't cost them money."

Of course, the task of bargaining now falls on the individual super who has little to fall back on when his requests fall

on deaf ears. The reaction to such a plight goes something like this:

"When I ask for something to improve my position and the answer is no, I'm dead right there", another superintendent pleads. "Where do I go when this happens. I'll tell you . . . I go home to my wife and she talks me out of quitting. But there has to be something a man can do when he is rebuffed unfairly."

That something could be the union. The power of the strike always has been taboo with the superintendent. And, perhaps, this is what he is afraid of putting himself into. He doesn't want to strike. He doesn't want to go that far.

The case against unions gets a lift because most of the publicity coating unions usually is concerned with strikes and strike threats. It is overpowering, too, because statistics show that the actual call of a strike doesn't occur that often.

There are some 125,000 union contracts governing labor-management relations and 97 percent of them are signed after peaceful negotiations. More workers miss work because of colds than because of strikes and strikes have to be authorized by the workers, themselves, before they can be conducted.

The next check against unions probably is that association with them carries the "worker" tag. After all, the superintendent has been trying to rise above that status for several years. To fall back would be to desert one's own principles.

The answer to that is contained near the top of this piece. If physicians, professors and engineers don't mind being the "labor" in a labor-management confrontation, the superintendent certainly should not.

Unionizing, then, is not all that filthy a word. If it fits the goals of the superintendent, it should be considered.

— Gerry Finn

See You in Boston! January 7-13, 1973

TWO FUTURE SUPERS

Two future superintendents were rewarded for their achievements in the classroom recently with the presentation of Professor Lawrence S. Dickinson scholarships to Stephen Finamore and Phillip DiRico, Jr.

Professor Joseph Troll of Stockbridge at the University of Massachusetts did the honors for two of his star pupils after being handed the certificates and moolah from Phil Cassidy of the scholarship committee and the New England Association.

Finamore is a senior in the four-year course and the apple of Dr. Troll's eye. "I'm hoping he goes on to work for his Masters", Dr. Troll reported. "He's that kind of student."

The diligent Finamore is a resident of Waltham and did his placement work at Wayland under Dave Barber.

DiRico, like Finamore, a former schoolboy hockey star at Chicopee High School . . . is a senior in the Stockbridge two-year program. He comes from a golfing family with brothers Tom and Danny professionals and a third brother, Dave, a junior standout on the links.

Philip has had three stops in his golf course experience — Longmeadow, Springfield and LaJolla, California. He is married and the father of a 20-month-old daughter.

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U.S.G.A. Green Section Conference on Golf Course Management Subject: Practical Turf Grass Management Friday, January 26, 1973 Biltmore Hotel, New York, N. Y.

Golf Course Superintendents Association

GOOD SHOW, PAUL !!!

Dr. Paul Alexander's Traveling Education Show stopped off at New England last month and from most of the reaction, he got himself some converts. It was a good show all the way.

The TES arrived in the form of the GCSAA's Management Seminar I and was presented in a two-day cram course in Windsor, Conn. Despite some typical gosh-awful weather, the turnout was most encouraging. In fact, the 46 signees comprised the largest group to reach for their pencils and pads on the Alexander circuit.

"We had good response", Dr. Alexander opined. "Don't forget, the shutoff figure was set at 50. So, we were operating at just four under capacity. It's a tribute to the section."

Dr. Alexander was a mite lenient in his praise of the New England Association, since only seven from the NEGCSA made the scene. Oddly enough, more than half of the "students" came from New York and New Jersey. Their combined total was 24. The next best was the Connecticut contingent which contributed 12 to the pot.

The seminar was a revelation for everyone canvassed after their tussles with facts, figures, costs, budgets, ratios and other thinking cap facets of managing a golf course. "It was a real test in being able to take notes", Dick Blake of Mount Pleasant admitted. "But all the hard work was worth it. I only wish I had been able to take the course a week earlier when I had to draw up my budget. It was worth every cent of the fee and every hour of the time spent."

That time element is interesting. In the first day of action, the group put in exactly 13 and one-half hours of absorbing lectures and taking part in practical exploration of the materials covered in the seminar. "I don't think there's a college in the country where someone would have to do as much as we did during that first day", Blake noted. "It really was an awakening for me. I had to sit down at night and sift through my notes to see if I was getting anywhere. And that took more time."

Roy Mackintosh of Twin Hills concurred with Blake. "When I got home, I found that I had taken 24 pages of notes", Roy quipped. "I don't know whether or not it was necessary to take all of that. But I wouldn't have missed this experience for anything. I was most impressed with the breakdown of a country club's financial statement. It's something we have to be familiar with as managers of people and physical property. It helps to know where everything comes in and everything goes out."

The idea of the seminar is elementary. It aids the superintendent in his primary duty as a manager. And that management calls for something more than a passing knowledge of budget formation. Unfortunately, some superintendents base their current budgets along the guidelines of what has been presented in previous years. If they were asked to analyze these figures, some embarrassing answers might result.

"More than anything, the seminar made me realize that the superintendent must relate his needs to the overall operation of the club", Mackintosh offered. "We must be aware of the other facets of the country club setup. We can't just sweep ourselves into a corner and be concerned with our individual problems. There is a logical answer for most of our problems, but we have to know how to arrive at it. That's just what the seminar presented."

Dr. Alexander agreed that the seminar wasn't one giant cure-all. "If we've accomplished anything, it's making the superintendent aware of the fact that he has to perform in a professional manner", he advised. "When he seeks something, he has to have a reason for the request. When he can put it down in black and white, his chances of getting it are that brighter."

So, it was a good show . . . good enough to call for more of same.

— Gerry Finn

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

During the past year, a great amount of time has been spent by the Officers, Directors and Members of the Golf Course Superintendents Association of New England, in preparing for the National Turf Conference in Boston. When our February meeting rolls around, the Conference will be history and we again should devote our time to Association business. Many areas, such as Golf Tournaments, Superintendent-Press Tournaments, and Scholarship Funds, should be reviewed. With only two inside or winter meetings left, we should attempt to review our problem areas at this time. Membership suggestions and ideas will help set the policies of the Association for the coming year. Committee assignments will be made at the February meeting so if you are interested in serving please contact me before February 1st.

Bob Grant President G.C.S.A., N.E.

NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the G.C.S.A. of N.E. will be February 11, 1973 at the Holiday Inn, Newton, Mass., off route 128. N. H. This year as in the past Bill Knoop of U.N.H. has The speaker will be Bob Carroll of the Turf Department at the University of Massachusetts.

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| Directors' Meeting | 10:30 a. m. |
| Regular Meeting | 11:15 a. m. |
| Lunch | 12:15 p. m. |
| Educational Program | 1:15 p. m. |

New members to be voted on at the February Meeting:
Regular Member -- Paul E. Johnson, Topsfield Country Club
Associate Member -- Robert A. LeBlanc, Westminster G. C. Inc.

JOB OPEN

Ould Newbury Golf Club, 9 holes. Apply to Mr. Philip Trussell, 196 High Rd., Newbury, Mass. 01950.

JOB OPEN

Sharon Country Club, 9 holes. Send resume to Mr. John Schoaf, 26 Davis Rd., Stoughton, Mass. 02072.

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|---|--|---|---|---|--|--|--|--|

SOUND OFF!!!!

(The reader speaks out and Sound Off is here to hear him. Yes, folks, once again it's time for the golf enthusiasts — be they a super or a sloppy-handicapped hacker — to comment on the game. Everyone is welcome to become a member of our contributing society. All it takes is a little time, a little ink and a little eight-cent stamp to put us in focus with your views. Send all of those to Newsletter Mail Box, 28 River-view Drive, Newbury, Mass. 01950. The Newsletter reserves the right to comment on all published letters.)

* * * *

"Your story about the grey-clouded position of the super-intendent's pension plan is indeed a sad one.

"From here it looks as though the attempt to give the super-intendent some practical security in his old age will die a slow death. It can't be for lack of interest on part of the national organization. From where I sit, it has taken more than one avenue to see that proposals were heard by he proper people.

"Now, if the national should fail to come up with an acceptable plan, what do we superintendents do then? I am in a position where I am starting to think of what happens when 'this old green thumb starts to tarnish'. Is there a possibility that my local section can go ahead with a plan of its own, or should I investigate the possibility of getting together with my present club and establishing a program on my own?"

TERRY SANFORD
Bath, Me.

A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush, Terry. Go get that individual pension plan while the time's right. You can always go for the second bird if the national comes up with a program of its own.

* * * *

"We girls have been having one awful time of it this year, what with many ice storms putting our platform tennis games on very thin but slippery ice.

"There is always the chance that one of us will take a bad fall and even suffer a severe injury. Of course, we assume that risk . . . I imagine . . . but someone else also should assume the duty of spreading salt or something on the courts to make them safe.

"I haven't been to any of our club meetings and am not expert on this matter. However, I believe the superintendent is supposed to take care of the platform tennis . . . while he cools his heels during the long winter.

"Our playing time is 7 a. m. and this also makes the conditions all that more perilous. Should I write to our super-intendent or should I wait for a bad injury and then sue him?"

CAROLINE SWIFT
Address Withheld

At 7 a. m. in the dead of winter everyone's life is in peril, Caroline. Why don't you sue God for all those ice storms?

* * * *

"It has just come to my attention that you superintendents are staging an internaional conference in Boston and that it would be to our advantage to send our man there.

"However, there is just one hitch to this. Our superintendent is not a member of your association. (Why, I don't know). Anyway, we would like to see him make it because of the educational value in the affair.

"Would it be possible for him to attend? We will be glad to pay his way into the conference and all other expenses. But we hate to send him all that way and see him kept out."

SAM THERIER
Cadence, W. Va.

Put him on the next plane, Sam. The conference is open to all, if they are willing to pay the non-member fee. By the way, tell your super to pick up an application for GCSAA when he arrives. That way you'll be killing two birds with one jet.

* * * *

"Your articles on unions have been widely received here, since we are in a heavy union area with a big worker population.

"The idea of making a superintendent join a union (when it is a closed shop situation as it is here) just doesn't seem to go along with the other workings of a professional group.

"There is still a certain amount of liberty left in this world and one is that a man have the right to join whatever group or organization he chooses to join. With the establishment of a union (and if it is to be strong), you would be taking that right away from the superintendent. I wonder if he wants the union all that bad?

"Certainly, there must be other ways for you people to let club owners and presidents know just what your feelings are in regards to earning the respect and professional response from them. From what I know of these club officials, they are professional men, themselves, and should be willing to respond in a professional manner.

"I am certainly against a professional man joining a union. It takes all the individuality out of life for one thing. Right now, you can rely on your talent and previous results to bargain for better wages and more fringe benefits. If you unionize, you take the one thing out of your profession that you should pride yourself on — incentive. Think twice before you jump into this."

BARRY CRAWFORD
Gary, Ind.

A well-groomed golf course is our incentive, Barry. It will always be there, union, association or no. It's built-in with us.

* * * *

(That puts us out of business for this time around. But keep those cards and letters coming. They make this exciting feature possible.)

The New Hampshire Turf Seminar will be February 8 and 9, 1973 at the New Hampshire Highway Hotel, Concord, N. H. This year as in the past Bill Knoop of U.N.H. has arranged another fine program with interesting speakers. If you are interested write to: William E. Knoop, Plant Science Dept., University of N. H., Durham, N. H. 03824.

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* Contributors to the Lawrence S. Dickinson Scholarship Fund

NEWSLETTER

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FIRST CLASS

