

## The Certification Syndrome

"The GCSAA giveth...and the GCSAA can taketh away."

That, in a rather tepid biblical presentation, sums up an ironic outgrowth of the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America's certification program. And it may cause some uproar.

It comes into the midnight clear that a superintendent is not set loose from the requirement chains that bind him, once he has passed his original certification test and placed his name among the 13 percent of the national group holding a diploma. Alas, after five years with his sheepskin, he could be asked to return it!

It's right there in the communique from 1617 St. Andrews Drive, Lawrence, Kansas. Every five years a certified super is reminded of his certification renewal obligation. One year's notice is given of his fifth year coming and renewal date. And a grim reminder is attached, something to the effect. . . "if your renewal requirements are not met by the cutoff date, your certified status will be dropped and may be regained only by reapplying for certification and completing all the requirements."

Sound kind of harsh to you? Does to me. It's akin to a college grad having to bone up and pass a degree renewal examination every two, three, five or whatever the amount of years specified. And if he doesn't complete the requirement, he has to send his diploma back to the old alma mater.

Probably the original intent of the GCSAA was noble and good. There is no doubt that a continuing educational program works for the benefit of both the superintendent and the golfers he services with his expertise in conditioning the course. However, what with only 13 percent of the entire membership in the certification fold, it hardly seems fair that 87 percent or the rest go their merry way without cracking a book or making a motion toward gaining certification.

What's more, the certification renewal requirements are such that they place a financial and time drain on the victim. The process goes like this:

Renewal application must be made to start things. In addition to completing the application, the super must accumulate at least six points from the date of certification to six months after the five-year expiration date. The points may be any combination of the following:

GCSAA Conference (one-half point for each up to maximum of two points). GCSAA Seminar (two points for each passed seminar up to max of six points). Certification renewal test (four points for passing a two-hour written test). Certification test or a retaking of the original six-hour examination (six points for passing).

In most cases, a renewal applicant will find it necessary to take the certification renewal test. For this, the GCSAA recommends a reference list which doesn't exactly qualify, itself, as food for the best sellers' lineup. Most of the books are in the 10 to \$20 range. A quick rundown of cost for all those suggested adds up to \$114. There are other fees involved which could make for a grand total of \$150 or thereabouts.

In addition to the financial outlay, the superintendent must find time to make arrangements for tests, study, review and other incidentals which might cramp his regular working style.

What's the alternative? Simple. As stated above, if the renewal requirements are not met, the super is stripped of his certification

status and must return to the back of the line in order to be reinstated.

Not only are the requirements and every nature of renewal a penalty for having incentive in the first place, the consequence for not making the five-year brush-up coat of knowledge is most severe. In effect, it takes away what the GCSAA should not be able to control, once a super has taken the time, money and pain to be certified.

And until that other 87 percent of the flock gets into step with the certification program, those holding degrees should be rewarded and not burdened with additional woes. . . such as the renewal noose around their necks.

Gerry Finn



Ron Kirkman, finished second low net at GCSAA's 50 year celebration tournament held at Sylvania Country Club and Glengary Country Club.

### NEXT MEETING

Oct. 15, 1976  
Brae Burn Country Club  
Host Superintendent Bob Grant, CGCS  
John Shanahan Memorial Tournament  
Superintendent-Pro  
Call George Wemyss at 245-5441 for starting times

# Golf Course Superintendents Association

## GCSAA Golden Anniversary Highlights

September 13, 1976 Sylvania, Ohio

The Golf Course Superintendents Association of New England was represented by a group consisting of Dave Barber of Wayland Country Club, Ron Kirkman of Needham Golf Club, Don Hearn of Weston Golf Club, Bert Frederick of Vesper Country Club, Meindert Shultz of Mt. Pleasant Golf Club, Pierre Coste of The Country Club, Dick Blake of Woodstock Country Club, Larry Bunn of Blue Hill Country Club, Dave Clement of Crestview Country Club, and Chet Sawtelle of Sawtelle Brothers.

The first day was a show of old equipment, displays of old golf equipment, a number of slide presentations, and some old movies. They all related to the growth of the game of golf and the progress that has been made over the last 50 years on the maintenance of the golf course. There were demonstrations on the use of some of the equipment. The one that stands out most is the demonstration of fairway mowing using a single mower that was pulled by a horse. Not only would this be time consuming but you also would have to be able to train a horse! There was also the presentation of the plaque to Sylvania Country Club, which is where the association was founded 50 years ago. The plaque was mounted on a stone in front of the club house. The evening banquet ended the first day of the celebration. The highlights of the banquet were many. Presentations were made to the 11 Outstanding Service Award recipients, a telegram of congratulations and continued success from President Gerald Ford was read, and the keynote address by Arnold Palmer. Palmer impressed those in attendance as a person not only devoted to the game of golf but as a man who is proud of his country and his heritage. As you know Arnold's father was a pro and superintendent for over 40 years before he passed away a short time ago. He made comments about how he worked on a golf course as a boy growing up. He remembers the problems his father had maintaining the golf course. He also has seen the progress that has been made over the years because of his family being in the golf business. He congratulated the superintendents for the success they have made over the years, and encourage them to not rest on their accomplishments. Arnold stated that everyone connected with the game of golf must work together to keep on improving what he calls the greatest game of all. After the banquet he stayed around to visit and sign autographs for well over an hour.

The next 2 days was devoted primarily to the golf tournament. Ron Kirkman placed second in the net tournament. Ron shot 87 and 79. He received a plaque and merchandise. The team that represented our association played well, but not well enough!! The individual winner was from Ohio and the team winner was from Michigan. The 2 golf courses were beautiful and in excellent condition. There were some holes with the narrowest fairways you'll ever see. You had to keep it straight.

It was an excellent celebration and everything went off very well. I know the fellows from our association had a great time.

Larry Bunn  
Newsletter Editor



Keynote speaker Arnold Palmer signing autographs at 50 year celebration banquet.



Bert Frederick, Meindert Shultz, Dick Cook of Conn., Pierre Coste at Victory Banquet held at Sylvania Country Club.



L. to R. Dave Barber, Don Hearn, Ron Kirkman, Bert Frederick on 1927 Worthington Model T tractor.



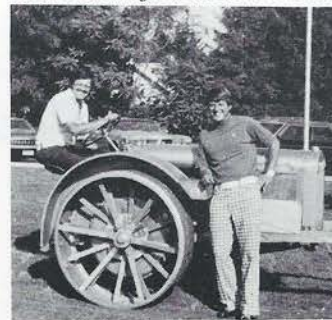
Larry Bunn looking at 50 year plaque mounted on stone in front of Sylvania Country Club.



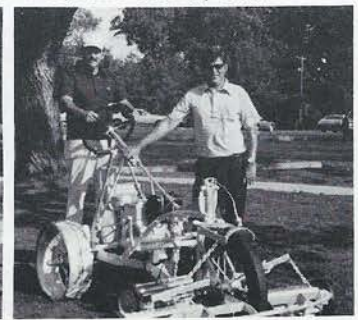
Hole No. 12 at Sylvania Country Club, 430 yds. Par 4.



Hole No. 18 at Glengary Country Club, 345 yds. Par 4.



Dave Barber and Ron Kirkman trying out an old tractor.



Bert Frederick and Don Hearn looking over an old triplex mower.

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# Newsletter Notes -

This month on October 15 our association will be playing for the John Shanahan Memorial Plaque. This is a tournament where the superintendent and pro play selective drive and alternate shot, with the superintendent using 1/2 his handicap. Since coming into the association 6 years ago I've always wondered who John Shanahan was and why this tournament was named for him. A lot of fellow superintendents have asked the same question, so I have done some research to find some information on John Shanahan.

John Shanahan was the greenskeeper at Brae Burn Country Club for 31 years before he passed away on October 31, 1934. John Shanahan was born in Templederry, County Tipperary, Ireland in 1864, coming to this country at the age of 24. He started in the early 1900's as a stone mason at Brae Burn Country Club. A lot of the stone work there you see today was done by Mr. Shanahan. He became the greenskeeper in 1903 and at that time they were building a lot of the golf course which was his responsibility. Donald Ross was the architect. John Shanahan was a leader and was particularly gifted with powers of observation and a vision to comprehend the various phases of his work. He was elected the first President of the Greenskeepers Club of New England and held that office for 4 years, and was made an honorary President, Arthur Anderson, the man who replaced Mr. Shanahan after his death tells me John used to sit in a rocking chair every Sunday on the first tee and greet the members as they were about to play golf. He was an extremely likable person and well respected by the people he worked for at Brae Burn Country club as well as surrounding clubs. When he passed away the association along with the officials at Brae Burn decided to have the tournament in his honor and that it would be a tournament for the pro and superintendent to be held annually at Brae Burn Country Club. A shield as a trophy would be hung in the trophy room at Brae Burn, and upon which would be inscribed the names of the winners of the tournament. The Greenskeepers Club of New England also voted to award annually a John Shanahan Award of Merit to the persons or person who make the most outstanding contribution to Greenkeeping in New England. Arthur Anderson said the award was presented for several years and somehow it has been misplaced or was not continued. If there are any readers who have any information on the award, which was a medal, I would be interested in hearing from you. This is something that should be re-established.

I would like to share with you some of the many tributes bestowed upon John Shanahan that was presented in the John Shanahan Memorial Newsletter in February of 1935. The first is from the members of Brae Burn Country Club and then from Professor Lawrence S. Dickinson of Massachusetts State College.

## RESOLUTIONS

Adopted December 17, 1934, at a meeting of the Board of Directors of the Brae Burn Country Club, West Newton, Massachusetts

WHEREAS;

### THE BRAE BURN COUNTRY CLUB

records with deep regret the decease of JOHN SHANAHAN its beloved and loyal Greenkeeper; and

WHEREAS: For thirty-two years Brae Burn has enjoyed the benefit of his knowledge and industry, resulting in the attainment of one of the finest examples of golf course architecture and maintenance in the United States; and

WHEREAS: During his long years of services, spanning the growth and development of golf as a National recreation in this country, John Shanahan prepared the Brae Burn course for many State and National Tournaments; and



JOHN SHANAHAN

WHEREAS: He was recognized as the dean of Greenskeepers, holding membership on the Advisory Committee of the Greens Section of the United States Golf Association and on the Executive Committee of the Greenskeepers Club of New England; and WHEREAS: Sincerity and sterling integrity were basic attributes of his character and a remarkable influence for good among his fellowmen; and now therefore be it RESOLVED,

That the Club express its appreciation of John Shanahan's long and faithful service, and extend to Mrs. Shanahan its sympathy in her loss of a loving companion, and be it also further

RESOLVED: That this tribute be spread on the records of the Club and that a duly authenticated copy be engrossed and presented to Mrs. Shanahan.

Brae Burn Country Club  
Leon B. Rogers, President  
William H. Rice, Secretary  
C.A. Sawyer Jr., Chairman, Grounds Committee

Greenskeepers and research workers in the field of Agrostology must never be permitted to forget John Shanahan. It is the duty of us who knew him to carry his splendid teachings and the inspiration of his rare personality to the future generations.

Greenkeeping was not his chosen profession, but a profession adopted by necessity. Thus his complete success became a greater tribute to his character.

John Shanahan was successful during the early period of greenkeeping because he realized that he was working with living plants: he was a clear observer and wise interpreter of signs and omens; he was not excitable, but calm and conservative; he had great faith in nature and wanted to help her.

In the middle period of his greenkeeping he was even more successful and a stronger and wiser leader and example. He was tolerant of new ideas and leaders, never destructive in criticism, by always encouraging, yet he never hesitated to give an honest opinion. His valuable influence was felt in this period by leading the greenskeepers to give of their knowledge, and by his willingness and desire to direct scientists in the solution of their research problems.

We are thankful that we were permitted to have John Shanahan with us during the final period of his greenkeeping career. For then he was to demonstrate by his practices and life the value of his example, teachings, and ideals. His acceptance, and adaptation of the results of scientific research was proof of their soundness, and his leadership was followed throughout the country.

The greenskeepers of New England have lost an able adviser, a living example of their ideals. The research worker has lost a true friend, a wise counsellor with an inspiring personality. The community has lost a valuable citizen.

Prof. Lawrence S. Dickinson  
Mass. State College

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# NEWSLETTER

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