

NEWSLETTER



April, 1978

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.

40 Years Later

It's generally accepted as fact that no one before him or no one who followed him to the presidency of the Golf Course Superintendents' Association of America has left as much as a favorable impression as Bob Williams.

You could hear it in the buzzing of supers gathered at the UMass Turf Conference last month ... "a good man" ... "best we ever had" ... "he knows his business" ... "there'll never be another like him." So, Bob Williams holds the respect of one and all in the profession. And what he says will never go in one ear and out the other.

Williams, now in his 52nd year of chasing down the formula for putting a permanent glow on the condition of the golf course, tossed the budget around during his appearance on the conference panel of experts. He's a budget genius in a way. He has to be. They say that his course in Highland Park, Illinois (Bob O'Link Golf Club) is a showcase of his talents -- one of the gems of the midwest.

One of Bob's favorite subjects is the superintendent's profession and the progress it has made since his early dabbings in it. He was just 12 years old when he became interested in turf, golf courses and what make them do the things they do. "Most of it is still a mystery to me," he laughed. "I suppose we've come a long way with our methods and such. But plants still keep dying, don't they?"

Williams recalls his teeth-cutting days at the University of Massachusetts when he studied under Professor Lawrence S. Dickinson. Those memorable classroom lectures seem like only yesterday but they actually were delivered some 40 years ago.

"You know, Prof. Dickinson was 40 years ahead of his time," Williams remarked. "I can remember him standing up there and telling us that we had to concentrate on the business end of the profession, that we would become the most important official in the club and on the course. We had to be prepared to do something more than grow grass and keep it green."

That phase of the superintendent's responsibilities remains an actual problem, according to Williams. "We're still too grass-oriented and not enough business-oriented," he declared. "But I do have to say I have noticed an improvement in things the last few years. Probably, it's because of the club's realization that before anything can happen, there has to be a golf course. You don't build a restaurant without the course, you don't dig a pool or you don't think of having fancy parties ... unless the entire undertaking has a base. That base is the golf course."

Williams has a double-take outlook of the general manager concept, one which has been an issue in some parts of the country. "It's all a case of whether you can afford the luxury of the three-management system," Bob advised. "The ideal -- and most expensive -- is to have separate wings with the superintendent, golf professional and clubhouse manager at the respective tops. Note, I said clubhouse manager and not club manager. They are two different things."

When asked what he thought was the biggest weakness of the superintendent, Williams peeled off four points. "The super of today has to be well versed in business management, com-

munications, the written word and the spoken word," he said. "The only way he can improve in these fields is by attending seminars and reading. You know, the superintendent -- especially the young one -- should have people in his profession that he looks up to ... an image to be emulated. We have some very good people in the business and they should do more work in exposure to the rest of the profession. Seminars and conferences like this are perfect for projecting that image and inspiring improvement in others."

But Williams keeps going back to Prof. Dickinson and his UMass litany. "The superintendent is part of the country club's most important income-generating ingredient -- the golf course," he concluded. "That means his job is one of managing that ingredient in the business-like manner. His decisions are the most vital made. It's time that he realized this and did something to tone his executive muscles."

Gerry Finn

NEXT MEETING

April 3, 1978

Dedham Inn, Dedham, Mass.

Director's Meeting - 9:30 a.m.

Lunch on your own

Regular Meeting - 1:00 p.m.

Educational Program - 2:00 p.m.

Directions: Off Rte. 128 take Exit 60, Rte. 1 North. Take right at lights by theatre, Dedham Inn 1/4 mile on right.

MAY MEETING

May 8, 1978 Wellesley C.C., Wellesley, Mass.

Director's Meeting - 10 a.m.

Regular Meeting - 11 a.m.

Lunch - 12 Noon - \$6.00

We have beer and wine only. If you want to bring your own bottle we have set ups for sale.

Golf - 1 p.m.

Host Superintendent - Tom Schofield, CGCS

Directions: From Route 128 take Route 9 west 1/2 mile to Cedar Street. Take second exit under bridge (Needham-Dover). Follow the yellow line in the road to the club, 1-1/2 miles.

Reservation cut-off May 3, 1978

Telephone 235-7333, Ext. 25

Mail to: Wellesley Country Club

Box 14

Wellesley Hills, Mass. 02181

Golf Course Superintendents Association

"Have a Good Shot of Rye"

Paul Voykin is that man in every energetic crowd who has to be different. Mind you, he's not batting cleanup against convention just for the sake of attention or making loud noises. This maverick rides hard on the traditionally-accepted methods of grooming a golf course and usually stays in the saddle.

Voykin is the popular golf course superintendent at the Briarwood Country Club in Highland Park, Illinois. He makes the rounds of national and regional turf seminars because he is much in demand. An innovator -- a revolutionist, if you will -- he still draws crowds, wraps them to his own specifications with his expert approach to a subject and sends them away praising his presentation. He even makes a few converts along the way.

His topic at the UMass Turf Conference last month in Springfield was an interesting one -- short cuts in golf course maintenance. In these days of economic belt-tightening and budget belching, the super always is looking for the shortest route between a problem and a solution.

"The first thing I tell anybody about the shortest of the short cuts is its name," he quipped. "The shortest cut to maintenance ... I think we're talking management, too ... is hiring an experienced, qualified superintendent. And, when I'm speaking to

country club people, I emphasize that good supers don't come cheap. If the club heeds such advice, it is on the route to getting the most for its money."

Off-stage Voykin would rather talk about the general conception of the course conditioning rather than specific short-cut tools. He does stress that cooperative buying -- judiciously exercised -- can save an average of 25 to 30 percent and he is the champion of perennial rye grass.

"Give those fairways a good shot of rye and things can't help but improve," Voykin remarked. "I've been doing that at my club so long that the other supers around the area call the grass, 'Briarwood Bent.' But it works for me. Why, every year at Augusta National they throw rye grass seed around. If it's good enough for the Masters, why isn't it good enough for your average country club course?"

Those are just two of the Voykin contributions to bringing the end result around the corner instead of five miles down the road.

"There's no doubt that country clubs are caught up in this over-grooming kick," Paul noted. "As far as I'm concerned, over-grooming is over-spending. Television golf has helped to get the golfer think he has to hit every shot from a perfect lie. And in order to have that type of hitting surface everytime, there has to be over-grooming. That's one big problem we're trying to solve."

Voykin not only is an innovator in practice he also twists a word, phrase or idea around to suit his fancy. For example, one of his short cuts is to narrow fairways ... a little piece at a time. "I don't call it narrowing the fairways," he laughed. "I call it bringing in the rough where they should be and where the originators of the game intended them to be. Why should we be cutting every plant in sight? We should be thinking of some form of preservation of nature and what better place for this than the golf course?"

The modern approach to playing the game has been affected by the influence of the touring pros. "This is why a lot of amateurs are looking for those wide fairways, so they can bust the ball as far as they want," Voykin said. "The accent in golf should be on accuracy ... not length. And I think by bringing in the rough or narrowing the fairway, we can get the golfer back to thinking placement instead of power. In the long run they'd thank us because the club members' scores would improve with a more controlled, orderly game."

Voykin, then, tempers some of those revolutionary suggestions to short-cutting with mental visits to the past for some of his other ideas. "Over-grooming," he chanted. "That's the biggest sin we commit. Get grooming back to practicality and a savings will be realized. What's more, it will be a much more enjoyable game."

Gerry Finn

FUTURE DATES FOR PESTICIDE EXAMINATIONS

April 7	Essex County Agriculture School Danvers, Mass. 10:00 a.m.
April 21	Waltham Field Station Waltham, Mass. 10:00 a.m.
May 19	Worcester County Extension Service Worcester, Mass. 10:00 a.m.
May 5	Cranberry Experimental Station E. Wareham, Mass. 10:00 a.m.
May 26	Fanual Hall, U. of Mass. Amherst, Mass. 7:30 p.m. Bershire Garden Center Rt 102 & 183 Stockbridge, Mass. 1:00 p.m.
June 2	Essex County Agriculture School Danvers, Mass. 10:00 a.m. Waltham Field Station Waltham, Mass. 10:00 a.m.

Exams available:

Core Examination
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Study material available at:

H. Barrett, Cottage A
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Core manual cost \$2.50 - Ornamental & Turf manual cost \$3.50

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Newsletter Notes

After attending the conferences in San Antonio, Springfield and various seminars around the state everyone is anxious to start work outdoors on the course. The problem is convincing mother nature that spring is around the corner! The winter certainly has left its mark on golf course budgets. Labor hours for snow removal are triple, repairs to plowing equipment is enormous, and most people are behind schedule on repairs on golf course equipment. Not to mention what lies ahead, such as tree and shrub damage, fence damage, road damage, and worst of all there is as much as a foot of ice under the snow in some areas! So, clubs should be warned of what to expect and if possible additional funds be made available to repair and replace the scars left from winter.

Next year for a small fee, I will make travel arrangements for those who plan to attend the conference and golf tournament. Against the wishes of some fellow superintendents, I left Monday morning, Feb. 6 for San Antonio. My colleagues tried to talk me into leaving on Tuesday, Feb. 7 with them. I tried to convince them into leaving with me on Monday, but they wouldn't listen. So, I was in Texas when the blizzard hit, thankful I didn't relent to the pressure of others. My wife was also happy I got out, as she said I would have been unbearable to live with, as was the report from several households of those who didn't make it out in time. If it's any consolation, the weather was cold and windy.

I must report of one extremely dedicated superintendent. This person was snowed in at home on Monday as was everyone else. But at 5 o'clock Wednesday the airport at Hyannis opened (this may be a clue to the identity of the person) and he flew to Laguardia in New York. From there he took a bus to a helicopter terminal and flew a helicopter to Kennedy Airport in New York. At that point he got a flight from New York to San Antonio which arrived at 1:30 in the morning. After entering the terminal in San Antonio, he found that everything was closed! Being quick of mind, as this person is, he made arrangements to take a taxi from San Antonio to Corpus Christi! Four and one half hours later, a short drive of 144 miles, he arrived at Corpus Christi in time to have breakfast, found out his tee time, and was on the tee at 9:00 a.m.! A little ride in the night didn't bother this golfer, he went out and played a course he hadn't seen and shot 81!

On the serious side, the conference at San Antonio was excellent. The fast changing times of a golf course superintendent were kept up by the topics of the speakers and the industrial show. As always, the conference is continually growing in numbers, and clubs and superintendents should consider the many advantages of attending the conference.

Hats off to Dr. Joseph Troll, who once again presented us with a top notch conference in Springfield. This event has grown tremendously the last several years and has become one of the best conferences of its kind. Recognition must also be given to the planning committee which consisted of Anthony Caranci, Max Mierzwa, Dean Robertson, Allan Cumps, Robert Scagnetti, Charles Mruk, and John Zak. This conference has attracted some of the best speakers in the country and their topics are very timely. Also, many thanks to the commercial people who put on quite an elaborate industrial show for the superintendent. Products and equipment of every kind was available for viewing. A great deal of time and effort was put in by all those connected with the show and from all the talk from the

superintendents it was greatly appreciated.

Two of our former members have been voted in as a life member and honorary member by the board of directors. Julie Aksten was voted in as a life member. As you all know, Julie was very active in our association the 17 years he was a member before retirement. He served on the board a number of years and was always a hard worker for the association. He was always a frequent volunteer for work and his appointment as an life member was well deserved. Richard Blake was voted in as honorary member. Richard left our association this past year and became a member of the Northeast Golf Course Superintendent Association. He is superintendent at Woodstock Country Club in Woodstock, Vermont. Dick has served in almost every capacity in our association right on up to President. He also served as a director and president of the GCSAA, serving as president in 1973. Dick is a great leader and extremely hard worker, who is always working for the betterment of our profession. Congratulations to both of these gentlemen. We owe you our thanks for what you have done for our association. Hopefully you will be frequent participants in the association in times to come.

As posted in the Newsletter, the outdoor meeting dates are made known to you at this time. Please make notes on your calendar of these dates. Those that are not final at this time will be made known to you as soon as possible. There will be no cards sent out to the membership on meeting notices and reservations for dinners at the meetings. The cost is getting too high and every person should be able to take a couple of minutes of his own time to make his own reservation. Notice and directions of each meeting will be posted in advance in the Newsletter along with how to make your own reservation. Please have consideration for the host superintendent when making your reservation. Don't make them at the last minute and when you do make your reservation please honor it.

Also, if you have any changes in your club president or greens chairman send them along with their address so they can receive the Newsletter. Please send the names of those who should be removed from the mailing list also. Thank you.

Hope to see you at the next meeting.

Larry Bunn
Newsletter Chairman

OUTDOOR MEETING SCHEDULE

May 8	Wellesley Country Club Tom Schofield, Superintendent
June 6	Woodland Country Club Superintendent/Chairman Tournament Norm Mucciarone, Superintendent
July 11	Dedham Polo & Country Club Championship Tournament Bob Mucciarone, Superintendent
August	Mt. Pleasant Country Club Meidert Schultz, Superintendent
Sept. 18	Vesper Country Club Bert Fredericks, Superintendent
October 13	Brae Burn Country Club Superintendent/Pro Tournament Robert Grant CGCS, Superintendent
November	Open

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* Contributors to the Lawrence S. Dickinson Scholarship Fund

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OF NEW ENGLAND, INC.



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