



# THE NEWSLETTER

Golf Course Superintendents Association OF NEW ENGLAND, INC.

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

April 1988

## —NEXT MEETING—

Thursday, April 21, 1988  
C.C.T.M.A. and G.C.S.A.N.E.  
Quashnet Valley C.C.  
Mashpee, MA (Cape Cod)

11:00 a.m. Shotgun-Blind Draw  
\$25 per person includes golf, carts, meal, prizes.

Educational, Dr. James Adams, Nor-Am Chemical

Utilization of Pro-Grass

Reservations Required by  
April 17, 1988  
(617) 477-4412

Directions - Rte. 6 to 130 (exit 2) towards Mashpee - Quashnet entrance on right approximately 4 miles from highway.

## The Super Speaks Out

Welcome to **The Super Speaks Out** — a monthly feature which offers the golf course superintendent a forum to express his or her views on topics and issues relating to their profession.

**This month's question:** *What are your comments on the Jim McMahon bare-footed playing incident in the Bob Hope Pro-Am, along with your opinion on a dress code for NEGCSA members?*



**Tom Scholfield, Wellesley Country Club:** "I heard about the Jim McMahon aftermath when someone said he was 'an insult to his host'. That's only half of it.

*Continued on page 2*

## Spence Right Where He Belongs— at the Top

There has been one constant running in tandem with Bill Spence's career as a golf course superintendent. Almost from its infancy Bill's been at the top.



After the "just lucky I guess" and "being in the right place at the right time" explanations for his success sink in, one overriding factor dwarfs them. The man is very good at what he does.

"Are you kidding?" Dr. Joseph Troll begs our pardon. "He's (Spence) one of the very best. You're talking about a 4.0 turf school student. You're talking about a guy who turned his back on one of the biggest jobs in the profession (Pebble Beach) and continues to go on to bigger and better things."

That's the booster shot from Bill's old professor. But Joe Troll is one old professor who doesn't toss around accolades freely. You don't get them unless you earn them.

So...how did it all happen for The Country Club super who's back to his old tricks of preparing that storied course for championship play when the U.S. Open parks its logo there in June?

First, perhaps it's fitting to note what didn't happen to Bill after it appeared he'd burst out of Bruce Springsteen Country and his hometown of Middletown, New Jersey to knock 'em dead in the field of journalism.

"I just up and switched my professional goals," he told. "And I had really

been into journalism. Hey, I covered high school basketball for the Middletown Currier. Did I cover Springsteen? No. But I remember when he used to sing for free."

Interest in the superintendent's profession had begun for Bill when he caddied, got tired of no steady pay and went to work on the course at Bamm Hollow Country Club (at \$1.35 an hour). Then, when it was time for college, he chose UMass because of its reputation for producing successful golf course superintendents and the presence of Dr. Troll.

Bill was, indeed, a prized student. While attaining that 4.0 classroom average, he served as a lab assistant and editor of the Massachusetts Turf Bulletin. Come graduation in 1973 and at the height of the spurt of enthusiasm for outside work Bill skipped a grade and immediately began his career as head superintendent at Monmouth County Park where he was responsible for conditioning two courses.

That event was like a rocket-launch.

Less than two years later, following a conversation with a UMass colleague who just happened to be the general manager at Pebble Beach, Spence became head superintendent at the internationally-famous course.

During his stay there, Bill prepared the layout for three Bing Crosby Pro-Ams (when they were the talk of the PGA circuit) and the PGA Championship of 1977.

All were slam-bang affairs and Bill was at the top of his profession. But...

*Continued on page 2*

**BILL SPENCE**

*Continued from page 1*

"But my job was all administration," Spence said. "I found myself trapped in an office. There were times when I wouldn't see the courses for weeks. It was a tough decision to look for something else, living in Carmel and all. But I heard the Kansas City (Country Club) job was open, so I sent a resume."

Bingo! Bill was hired in the spring of 1978 to rejuvenate a golf course that had encountered a major flood the year before and had one Tom Watson sitting on one or more of the club's major committees.

Spence spent seven years, learning more about his profession from the player's (Watson) view and putting a spit and polish on the KC spread. Also about that time Bill heard from Dr. Troll, telling about some openings coming in the Northeast.

"I wanted to get back home," Bill explained. "My roots are in the Northeast, so when I heard the TCC job was open I applied. When Tom found out, he not only agreed to give me a letter of recommendation, he called and made it on the telephone."

While Bill says Watson's call brought attention to his resume, it's evident The Country Club had its man when his resume arrived. That was four years ago and Bill's performance has been hailed from within and outside TCC walls.

Bill has been an integral part of a restoration project at TCC and has brought new life to the condition of its course. Presently, his talents are immersed in giving the Open the best layout The Country Club can offer.

He's happy, too, as are wife, Mae, and the couple's two sons—Chris and Ryan.

Bill Spence, then, is right where he belongs—at the top. It's his turf. How fortunate we are to have him.

**GERRY FINN**

**THE SUPER** *Continued from page 1*

"When he played without shoes, he showed that he has no class whatsoever. I mean, his act was not a put-on. What you see is what you get. And here we've been all these years, fighting caddies to put their shoes on.

"The dress code? Well, there's been some improvement in our choice of clothes at meetings and other functions. I supposed we've dragged ourselves up but it should be one-hundred percent.

"I see a connection between McMahon and our members who find it difficult to conform to proper dress for the occasion. I think when they come to a club in shabby attire and the like, it's an insult to the host superintendent.

"Actually, disregard for a dress code hurts us all. How we act, how we dress is a reflection of our profession and association. Most of the time, remember, speakers at our meetings are impressed by what they see and hear among the members. And some guy in work clothes or whatever can turn it into a bad impression.

"I don't know about the rest of the superintendents but I sweat it out every time I go to a meeting, seminar or tournament. I just fear the next guy to walk through the door will look like a mess. It's disturbing."



**Dean Robertson,  
Kernwood Country  
Club:** "McMahon's  
behavior gets only a  
one-word comment  
from me—disgusting!

"I'll tell you. Some of our meetings and tournaments aren't exactly a day at the beach. You see some guy park his pick-up truck in the driveway and thunder into the building wearing work clothes and boots. There's no place in our profession for that.

"But it seems to me some of us are going backwards. I remember when Leon St. Pierre was our president and launched a drive to establish a dress code. We harped on it all the time and it looked like we were making some headway. But you still see sloppy people showing up.

"I don't know. Is there something we can do to get rid of this problem? I suppose it has to start at the top. Maybe if we lead by example, it might lead to better appearances by all.

"My idea of going to a tournament is to dress as if you're going out to dinner and have a change of clothes for golfing. I don't see how difficult that is to conform to.

"And underneath it all I see it hurting our image. I for one have been trying to lift

*Continued on next page*



**1988 Board of Directors** Front Row: Charlie Passios, Dave Barber, Kip Tyler, Paul Miller, Chip Brearly, Ron Kirkman. Back Row: Tom Schofield, Doug Johnson, Dick Zepp, Steve Chiavarelli, Ron Milenski. Absent: Jim O'Kelly.

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**THE SUPER** *Continued from page 2*

that image. I think we've come a long way, too. We're not talking about the majority. If we can just reach those certain few who need reminding that their appearance and behavior are reflections of their profession, we might have the problem licked.

"Maybe if we keep harping on it enough, they'll see the light. I hope so."



**Jim O'Kelly, Brae Burn Country Club:**

"I see where Jim McMahon wants to buy his own golf course so he doesn't have to wear shoes when he plays. That's something. What he did is definitely wrong. I don't care who he is.

"As for ourselves, I think we should keep driving the point home that a superintendent reflects his profession and association. I know it might seem like overkill, but anything we can do to make our group more professional is worth it.

"As golf chairman for the association, I probably pay more attention to dress at tournaments than some of the guys.

"I can see showing up in golf clothes for a tournament. However, my code is shirt, coat and tie at dinner. I think every member should be prepared to dress properly wherever he goes.

"Obviously, the kind of event should govern the type of clothes you wear. Regardless, the thought of every superintendent is to act and dress in a manner that expresses professionalism. That's my main concern. We are professionals. Therefore, we should act and dress like professionals.

"Again, I'm all for bringing up this subject for as long as it takes to cause all of our members to adhere to a dress code. I'm also in favor of letting those guilty parties know what they're doing to the point of embarrassing them."

**GERRY FINN**

**RIGHT TO KNOW LAW**

**Educational Seminar  
Tuesday, April 19, 1988  
9 a.m. to 11 a.m.**

**The International Golf Club  
(Conference Center)**

Pay fee at door \$25.00  
Instructor, Steve Zimmerman - from  
Chevron Chemical

This session meets the requirement of The Right to Know Law which has to be presented to all employees. It is in your best interest to attend this 2 hour seminar.

Directions - Rte. 495 to exit 27 (Bolton) follow signs to International approximately 2 1/2 miles from exit.

Host Superintendent Ron Milenski CGCS

**Monday, May 9, 1988  
Ocean Edge C.C. (Cape Cod)**

9:00 a.m. Directors Meeting  
11:00 a.m. Regular Meeting  
Noon Lunch  
1:00 p.m. Shotgun (blind draw)

**Reservations Required  
(617) 896-5911 or (617) 896-5912**

Host superintendent - Jeffrey Carlson  
Equipment demonstration 8:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m.

All interested distributors contact Ron Milenski. (617) 779-6911.

Directions Rte. 6 East to exit 11, go right on Rte. 137 North and entrance to Ocean Edge is 2 1/2 miles on the right.

**-Proposed New Members-**

**Bruce McIntyre  
Tara Hyannis Hotel & Golf Club**

**-NEW MEMBERS-**

Welcome and congratulations to

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**John Kotoski, Berkshire Hills C.C.**

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**THE NEWSLETTER**

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