

CONNECTICUT CLIPPINGS

Volume 29, No. 2

June, 1995

Modern golf course maintenance... good or bad!

by C. R. Skogley, Prof. Emeritus
Plant Sciences Department
University of Rhode Island

During past years, I was a frequent contributor to newsletters. Perhaps it was part of my job. I have always enjoyed writing when I thought I might be contributing to our profession. Since retirement, I have found it difficult to sit still long enough to put my thoughts on paper.

Since retiring, I have continued some research and have been able to maintain my office at the turfgrass research farm at URI. I continue to do a small amount of consulting, but of most interest has been my continuing effort in grass collecting. Most of these trips have been at the request of a plant breeder friend in the Pacific Northwest. During 1993, I spent about three weeks collecting grasses in Greece and during 1994 I concentrated on winter-damaged courses from Rhode Island to Maine.

As I continue to visit golf courses, talk with superintendents and golfers, and hark back on my experience, I have continued to formulate opinions about current expectations for our turf

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"This is my story, and I'm sticking to it!"

Dick Cook remembers

by John F. Streater, CGCS, Editor

Dick Cook, a veteran of golf course wars for some 40 years, retired in the Fall of 1994 from Hunter Memorial Golf Course.

During an invigorating session over dinner at Old Lyme's *Cherrystones*, I had the opportunity to reminisce with him as he shared some of his experiences on and off the golf course.

When Dick was nine years old and swimming in a pond at Norwich Golf Course, 98°, he got his first taste of the golf course. A few guys shouted down to him to come up to the course and caddy (two bags). Dick had no idea how to caddy, what to do, and he didn't know his way around the golf course. But, after carrying two bags for 18 holes, he earned \$1 from one guy and 75¢ from the other guy. "Why did one guy give

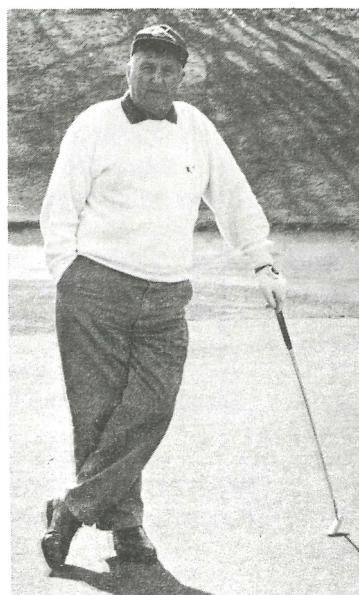
him \$1 and the other 75¢?" he asked. Well, as he tells it, once the \$1 guy called the 75¢ guy an "SOB", he gave him another \$5. That meant he earned

\$6.75 for the day carrying two bags. He gave it to his mother who in turn took it to his father. His father immediately went over to the golf course to see if, in fact, this was true. It was more than his father earned in a week.

Needless to say, Dick kept caddying, and when it was slow, they gave him a knife or a screw driver, and he would pull out weeds.

After serving our country in WWII, Dick started his journey into the golf business at the Norwich Golf Course

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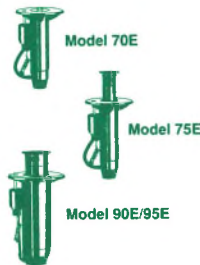


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Modern golf good...

and the management thereof. I am convinced that we have lost our perspective about the game of golf and the turf conditions necessary to play the game.

I believe we have sacrificed common sense and good agronomics in our efforts to provide perfection! To start with, consider the grasses we use, or should be using. During the first half of this century, before fairway irrigation and large budgets, colonial, creeping and velvet bentgrasses and fine fescues were our primary species -- not *Poa annua*. They persisted with few problems and for good reason. These are the grasses that naturalized on our acidic, infertile, light-textured soils of the Northeast. As long as lime, fertilizer and water was used minimally, these grasses thrived. Also, grasses were mowed less frequently and at greater heights. One quarter inch was long a standard on greens. Even with our improved varieties of bentgrass, the close cut provided today is unrealistic and grasses are constantly stressed. Daily mowing adds wear, continuous wounding and added compaction.

All grasses we use perform best, and with healthier root systems, when soils are moist but not wet. Overall management programs should be attuned to assuring a healthy root system and thus a healthier plant.

At least half of the requirement for growing suitable, healthy turf involves soil management. This is another area

(continued next page)

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course maintenance... ...or bad!

where I think we fail. A good soil is dynamic -- a vast host of microorganisms is present. Most of these organisms are of value and are involved in organic matter decomposition, nutrient availability, moisture relationships and disease suppression.

Until recent years, our greens were constructed of soil, possibly modified with sand and organic matter. These greens were "composted", not "topdressed", once or twice a year, usually following aerification. Composts were generally prepared on each course or commercial composts might be used. It seems reasonable to think that the use of this product helped keep the soil flora and fauna rejuvenated and our soils more "alive".

In the current era, we topdress with sterile sand and even build greens with sand. I can't picture a dynamic, complete soil environment under these conditions. Perhaps because we lack a healthy soil environment, we have increased the incidence of soil born (root) diseases that used to be rare. To cope with this increase in root disease, we are required to increase the use of fungicides that are efficacious in the soil.

What effect might these fungicides have on the desirable microorganisms?

Are we compounding the problems?

Each management input affects all others. It only takes one bad practice to reduce the positive effects of all others. In other words, all of our practices including mowing, fertilizing, liming, watering, topdressing, aerifying, rolling, and pesticide usage interrelate to determine turf quality and health. By mowing too closely and frequently, we weaken the grass, restrict root growth, and reduce the positive effects of all other management practices. The same goes for excessive water and fertilizer usage, and so on.


Some basics to consider: Can we not still enjoy golf with less than wall-to-wall green perfection? Should we not make an effort to meet the optimum growth requirements of our hardiest grasses, i.e., low to medium fertility and soil pH, keeping the soil on the dry side when possible, reducing the use of fungicides that might alter the quantity of soil microorganisms, composting rather than topdressing, avoiding early spring fertilization and limiting summer rates?

We can reduce our ever-increasing problems if we back off a bit on our current levels of maintenance and give more thought to optimum needs of the grasses we use and the soils they grow in. Golfers can and will continue to enjoy the game even though conditions were returned to a more natural and environmentally friendly state.



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Superintendents' Forum

Softspike issue

This is the first response to requests for input from superintendents regarding the issue of *Softspikes*.

While we wish we would have gotten a better response, we can always count on Bob Chalifour for comments and ideas.

Bob Chalifour says...

The fact that golf spikes cause damage to turf and compaction to soil has been known for years. It is difficult, however, to convince golfers of this fact. Many will argue that they want the extra stability when hitting drives.

So, why do you wear spikes when the ground is frozen? ANSWER - "These are my golf shoes."

Shennecossett Golf Course is open year round, weather permitting. This year, inspite of a mild winter, the course was only open one weekend in February due to snow or wet conditions. Play averages 50,000 to

52,000 rounds (accurate accounting) so it would be beneficial for both greens and tees to be treated a little more tenderly.

The problem with trying to promote softspikes or spikeless golf shoes is that much of our play is from players from out of the area who pay a greens fee, or are with an outing.

To try to promote not using spikes, I display a poster in the Pro Shop made up mostly of USGA articles warning of damage that could occur on greens that are frosted, partially thawed or too wet. One display is the ad for Dimension showing golf spikes that resemble tiger teeth. Next to this I wrote "PLEASE WEAR SPIKELESS SHOES".

When I first came to Shennecossett, there was a sign outside the Pro Shop that read, "YOU MUST WEAR GOLF SPIKES". I had the sign removed within a week.

I know spikeless shoes are less dam-

aging to the turf, but I wear them because they are comfortable. Furthermore, they can be worn almost anywhere, except boats and bowling.

.

Promoting the spikeless effort must come from our industry. The *Clippings* is a good place for us to begin our war in banning metal spikes.

Your editor, in conjunction with the Tri State Research Program, has been a guest speaker for two New York golf associations on the issue of *Softspikes*.

I can say this, the audience was attentive and interested in knowing more about this issue. I urge all of you to start some kind of promotion at your club and maybe drop a few notes for our readers in the *Clippings*.

.

Congratulations to the *Country Club of Darien*, Tim O'Neill, CGCS, superintendent. His club is now 100% spike free. Reports from Tim and the benefits of a spikeless golf course will be reported in coming issues.

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Our own Michael Wallace, CGCS, appointed to GCSAA Board of Directors

Michael Wallace, CGCS, superintendent at the Hop Meadow Country Club, was appointed to a one-year term on the GCSAA Board of Directors at the 1995 National Convention in San Francisco.

Mike has always been very involved with both CAGCS, serving as President, Vice President, Treasurer, Welfare Director and Education Director, and GCSAA, serving on the Public Relations Committee, Membership Services Committee, Chapter Relations Meeting, and the Career Development Resource Group. All of his experience should serve him well, and we are sure his input into GCSAA affairs will benefit us all.

Good luck to you, Mike!



A note of thanks

I would like to take a moment to thank all who were involved with my effort to become a Director of the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America. Having been through the process a few times, one realizes very quickly that it is a team effort. Pauline, with her words of wit and encouragement; John, with his political savvy; Peter with his unbelievable memory and outgoing personality, all helped me immeasurably in my effort. But, they are not the only ones ... not by a long shot.

I wish to thank all of you from the region that took the time to talk to people you knew about me. Without all of you, this would not have been possible.

What has happened since the election? It is still a bit of a blur.

There was the closing banquet. I hate tuxedos! The first GCSAA board meeting which took place the next day lasted 6 1/2 hours. The last few weeks have been busy with becoming oriented with the system and a great deal of reading and asking of questions. I was off to Kansas in

early April for the official orientation at headquarters. The first week of May has disappeared from my calendar with a committee meeting and the Spring board meeting. So, life has become a bit more hectic, as I knew it would.

Please feel free to approach me with concerns you might have about GCSAA. I know I have a great deal to learn and it may take me time to acquire the necessary information to answer any concerns; but, that is part of the position. After all, it is your association.

You may have noticed in the Annual Report that the very first page was dedicated to the mission statement of the Association. It reads as follows, "GCSAA is dedicated to serving its members, advancing their profession, and enriching the quality of golf and its environment". That is the goal.

Again, thank you to all who gave so generously of their time to help me. I look forward to the challenges of the future.

Michael Wallace, CGCS

Spend 15 minutes for better compensation

by Kim Heck, Career Development Manager, GCSAA

CAGCS and the GCSAA have teamed up to bring you comprehensive compensation and benefits information.

To do this, we need your help in filling out a compensation survey which will be sent to A and B members later this summer.

GCSAA will prepare and mail the survey, then sort and compile the data. From this data, GCSAA will produce a confidential compensation and benefits report for your chapter to use and distribute as you choose. The survey will

explore dozens of areas that will assist golf course superintendents in negotiating compensation packages with employers. Yet, it will only take 15 minutes to fill out!

Who benefits? We both do. Your chapter benefits by receiving statistically-valid compensation information. Information that is useful because it is geographically-specific. The survey will be conducted by qualified researchers using sophisticated techniques and equipment who have pro-

duced hundreds of surveys. Even better, it will be produced for your chapter at no charge. GCSAA benefits from the opportunity to test a survey to a segment of our non-members. Your responses will help us to prepare for our 1997 Compensation and Benefits Survey that will be mailed to all members of all GCSAA-affiliated chapters.

Watch for the survey this summer. Spend 15 minutes and help to provide a tool to better compensation to your chapter members.

Around the Association



contractor. Since joining P.I.E. in 1992, Art has been able to provide golf courses and municipalities with quality products and exceptional support.

Congratulations, Art!

.....

Robert N. Kennedy, a life member of CAGCS member died on May 6, 1995. He was a vice president and director of the Chas. C. Hart Seed Co., retiring in 1989, and he was the president of the Fer-Mel Corporation. Besides his wife, Framces, he is survived by five children.

The family asks that memorial contributions be made to the charity of the donor's choice.

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Re-routings

Les Kennedy, Jr., CGCS, has moved on to take over the reigns at the Country Club of Waterbury.

Larry Dodge from Essex Falls, NJ, has taken over at the Oak Lane Country Club.

We would also like to welcome **Tony Baviello** who is the new superintendent at the Yale Golf Course.

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GHO tickets available

As in the past, a limited number of GHO tickets will be available, courtesy of CAGCS.

They will be available at the "Will Call" booth at Millane Nurseries on Rt. 99, Cromwell.

Sponsor badges and parking passes must be returned at the end of the day. All other passes are for one day only.

Welcome New Members

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John W. W. Hoyt - Class C
Forefront Marketing

Chuck Meyer - Class C
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Robert Mullane - Class C
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Larry Pakkala, CGCS - Class A
Woodway Country Club

James Reinertson - Class A
Dedham Country & Polo Club

Joseph C. Stegman - Class A
Keney Golf Course

Green Books

The 1995 Membership Directory (Green Book) has been mailed out to all members. If any information pertaining to you is not correct, please contact the CAGCS office (387-0810).

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CAGCS Scholarships

Remember ... Deadline dates for scholarship applications are June 1st for high school students and June 15th for college students.

If you have any questions, contact Jeff Rogers, S & R Chairperson, at 203/668-5714 or 413/569-5831.

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Art deAtienza, of P.I.E. Supply has been appointed the Legacy Golf Sales Representative for Rhode Island, along with his Connecticut territory.

Before joining P.I.E., Art's experience consisted of six years in the agricultural field and seven years with a large CT irrigation

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Golf Results

April 18th - Whitney Farms GC

Our first golf meeting of the year was held at Whitney Farms Golf Course in Monroe, CT, Paul M. Christ, CGCS, superintendent (pictured at right). The format was a two-man scramble at 20% handicap.

Gross Winners

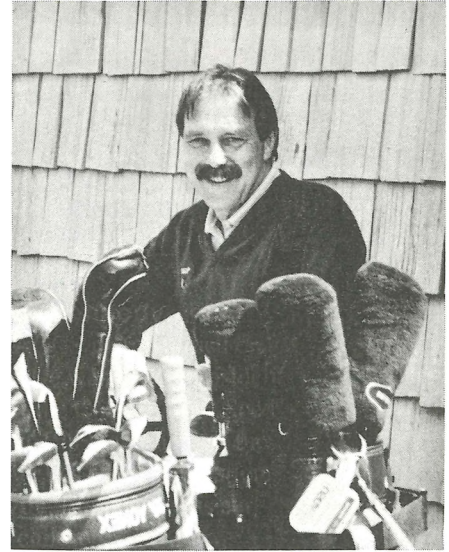
Mike Dukette/Frank Lamphier - 64
 Jud Smith/Don Grant - 71
 Chuck Meyer and
 Caroline Repenning - 74
 Frank Savakis/Bob Witkoski - 74

Skill Prizes

Closest to Pin #9 - Anthony Grosso
 Closest to Pin #12
 Caroline Repenning
 Longest Drive #3 - Mike Cornicelli
 Closest to the Line #10 - John Howe

Net Winners

Wayne Urban/Dennis Houle - 67.9
 Bob Szymanski and
 Tom Haudenschild - 69.4
 Dave Brownell/Tony Baviello - 70.6
 Chris Cowan/Mike Cornicelli - 71.5
 Dick Cook/Gary DePaola - 72.9
 Greg Stent/Peter Cure - 73



May 8th

Tashua Knolls GC

Edward J. Zenisky, Superintendent
 (pictured at right with his friend,
 Frank Lamphier)

This was the one qualifying round for the Met Team and the first round of the CAGCS Championship.

Watch for the July issue for final results!

Gross Winners - 4 flights

Mike Dukette - 75
 Frank Lamphier - 78
 Kevin D'Amico - 91
 John Napieracz - 99

Net Winners

0 - 9 Handicap
 Peter Pierson - 71
 Bob Witkoski - 72
 Jud Smith - 72

10-18 Handicap

Les Kennedy, Jr. - 73
 Peter Cure - 75
 Scott Ramsay - 76

19 - 26 Handicap

Carl Samuelson - 67
 Scott Gennings - 67
 Mike Moran - 75

27 - 36 Handicap

Paul Bednarczyk - 72
 Brian Skelly - 73
 Joel Simmons - 73

Skill Prizes

Closest to Pine #12
 Bob Witkoski

Closest to Pin #17
 Carl Samuelson

Closest to the Line #4
 Carl Wallace

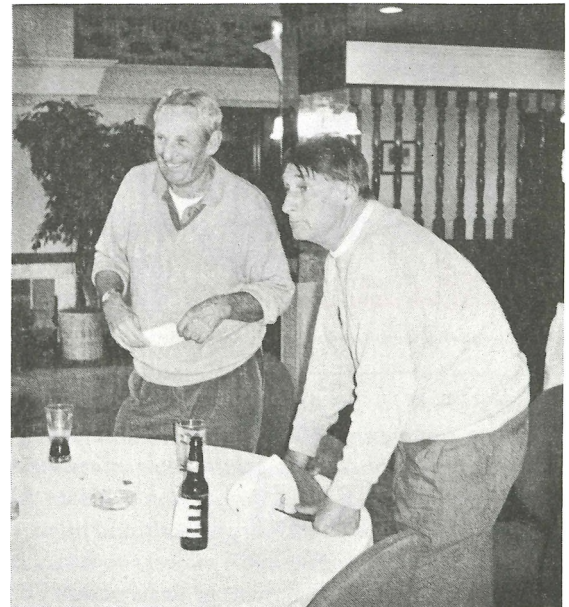
Longest Drive
 Bob Lippman

Congratulations to **John F. Streeter, CGCS**, for scoring his first hole-in-one on the 3rd hole, 157 yard par 3, using an 8 iron.

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Reminders from golf committee

1. Beginning with the June meeting, all tournament players will be required to have a USGA GHIN system handicap. If you do not have one, we will order one for you and bill you the \$10 charge.



If you have any questions, you can call the CAGCS office (387-0810) or the Golf Committee Co-Chairpersons, Anthony Grosso (822-6982) and John Motycka (742-9348).

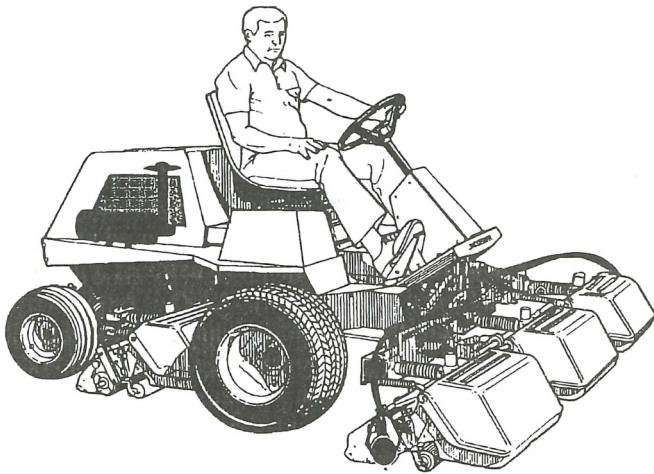
2. There will be a special award at the season's end for the member who compiles the best record over the season. Points will be awarded for the first through fifth place finishes ... gross and net. The one with the most points at season's end is the winner.

3. Closest to the pin, longest drive and closest to the line winners will be limited to a maximum of two prizes per season. The skill competitions will be open to all players.

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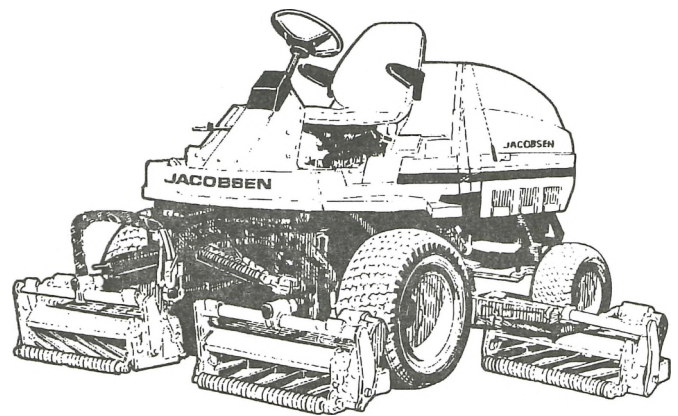
- Greater horsepower lower emissions certified engines
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Dick Cook remembers ...

Dick was one of the first superintendents to put a triplex greens mower on greens!

in 1946. Spending 10 years at Norwich as the foreman, Dick was an instrumental part in the upgrading of this classic Donald Ross course.

Of the many improvements that were made during that period, the one he is the most proud is the rebuilding of the first green. Having gone through a few rebuilds myself in the modern era, I was interested to find out how they accomplished this task in the days of little technology and without the benefit of labor-saving equipment.

Dick explains this very simply, "Back in those days, we did things with common sense and a lot of muscle." This new green which the Norwich Golf Course crew took on to rebuild in 1950 (Chet Jenkins, architect) was basically done with a wheelbarrow and an old Toro dump truck that had no springs. They hauled 14" of top soil and layed it on top of native gravel and created a very interesting 6,000 square foot green. The green was stolonized with C-1 and C-19 stolons.

"The green was shaped and contoured by eye using no grade stakes." To this day, this green performs very well and has no trouble with drainage or playability. Dick says, "You can hit a driver to that green and it will hold."

After serving as foreman for one year (1955-1956) at the prestigious Fishers Island Country Club, Dick moved into the head superintendent's position at the Old Lyme Country Club. While at Old Lyme, he kept himself busy with doing some reconstruction work on this interesting nine-hole track which as he states today, "Something that I still take a lot of pride in."

After spending 10 years at Old Lyme, Dick received a call from up the road for the newly constructed Black Hall Golf Club. This Robert Trent Jones design is rated one of the finest in the state and was the first tract of land that this famous architect put his signature on since 1927 when he did the Patterson Club.

Dick served as the construction superintendent while Black Hall was being built. After construction, he took over the reins as the golf course superintendent. While at Black Hall, Dick was one of the first superintendents to put a triplex greens mower on tees.

The first triplex greens mower, manufactured by the Jacobsen Co., was purchased by Dick from Kirt Stimson of the Magovern Company for the price of \$2,800 and started to set a new standard in golf course maintenance. The triplex mower was especially conducive to Dick's needs because of the large tee areas with which Black Hall was blessed.

Previous to the triplex mower, many labor hours were spent hand mowing without the advantage of being able to pick up the clippings.

When I asked Dick, "What particular tool has had the most impact on golf course maintenance?" Dick was quick to answer "the automatic irrigation system". I know some of you out there in this business today do not even remember what it was like to maintain a golf course without an automatic irrigation system. I, for one, am fortunate to have had the opportunity to maintain a golf course with some of the most obsolete irrigation of the post-war era. So, I certainly would have to agree with Dick Cook on his choice of the most important tool to come down in our business.

Talking about some philosophies that Dick Cook had practiced throughout his career was very comforting. To hear Dick say "The grass takes care of itself. All you have to do is help it along a little bit" makes a lot of sense. Common sense is an important facet in the art of maintaining a golf course. "Back 20 - 30 years

(continued on page 10)

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Introducing ...

New England Championship Tournament

1995 will mark the Inaugural New England Championship Tournament. It will be held on October 12, 1995 at Hop Meadow Country Club. All seven New England associations, Connecticut, Cape Cod, Maine, New England, New Hampshire, Rhode Island and Vermont will participate.

The tournament was founded with the idea of being a first-class tournament where all seven associations can get together and meet each other, and have some fun and competition. It will also be a tournament that includes all handicap levels. As I have said previously, Connecticut will host the 1995 tournament with a yearly rotation of all seven associations to follow.

Tournament format

1. Two-man team - best ball;
2. Eight players from each association (two for each flight) 56 total players;
3. Four Flights: (A 0 - 8) (B 9 - 16) (C 17 - 25) (D 26 - 36);
4. 100% of handicap;
5. Everyone must have a valid USGA handicap card - no exceptions;
6. The team title will be decided by adding together all four flight scores.

Prizes to be awarded: Team competition: 1st, 2nd, 3rd; Low Individual Gross; Low Individual Net; Closest to the Pin (2).

Qualifying for the 1995 tournament will be held at our June 6th meeting at Wampanoag Country Club using NET scores.

Dick Cook remembers (continued from page 9)

ago, we didn't have the advantage of having all of the pesticides which we have today. So most of us didn't bother spraying. We kept our greens clean of disease and insects by using some cultural and limited pesticide use and the rest of the golf course was maintained in a manner what we know today as IPM."

Aside from being a keeper of the links, Dick is also an accomplished golfer in his own right. For many years, Dick carried a 2 handicap and competed in many CAGCS and GCSAA golf tournaments. Most notably, in 1971, Dick placed 3rd in the national tournament which was held at Hilton Head, South Carolina.

In 1969, he won the CAGCS Championship which was held at the Yale Golf Club by firing a tough fought 71. Dick has also won the Roy McLaughlin Trophy seven times with the most recent coming in 1994 at the age of 67. It was most fitting for Dick to win this trophy at the Old Lyme Country Club which is where it all began with the McLaughlin. If you want more info on the McLaughlin trophy and its history, sit down with Dick and let him clue you in.

(continued on next page)

Dick Cook remembers (continued from page 10)

"When you love something, you love it!"

In talking about the national tournament, Dick tells us that he attended his first convention 29 years ago at his own expense, and the golf tournament fee was \$40. Dick has high respect for his friend and colleague, Frank Lamphier, who "If it wasn't for Frank, we would not have a national golf tournament today." As most of you may or may not know, Frank was the instrumental leader for many years in promoting and running the national tournament. As appreciation for his many years of service, GCSAA dedicated the low net team trophy to Frank and it is known today as the *Frank Lamphier Trophy*.

Dick says that Frank was one of the toughest players out there back then, and as we all know, he still is. "Frank would out-drive everybody by 40 to 50 yards."

One of Dick's proudest accomplishments was competing on the first team to win the trophy that was donated by the British Golf Course Superintendents Association. Dick also has had 6 holes-in-one in his career, with the most recent in 1993.

His last venture in the golf course business began in 1985 at the Hunter Golf Course in Meriden. After taking over at Hunter, golf course playing conditions were so improved that play increased twofold. This made it necessary to remodel the golf course to accommodate the flood of new golfers on the scene.

In 1986, Hunter Golf Club closed its doors for one year and Dick Cook and his crew began the awesome task of rebuilding and redesigning the golf course. Part of the renovations included reconstruction of 18 greens, installation of an automatic irrigation system, landscaping of clubhouse areas and redesigning a new practice facility... all improvements that have benefited the club ever since. Al

Sakoris was the architect and oversaw all construction. The total bill for all reconstruction was \$750,000. The quoted price as \$1.5 million, but because the crew took on a lot of the endeavors themselves, they did it for half the price.

Dick raises his hat to his crew who were responsible for the installation of the irrigation system and the installation of the cart path system, "by the way was done by hand with a two-ton truck".

During Dick's tenure there, Hunter gained a reputation as an exceptional golf course.

During our dinner, the stories were not only endless, but more interesting that I could ever imagine. Dick came up in the business knowing Charlie Baskin, Sr., CC of Waterbury, Andy Lentine, Tumble Brook CC, Lloyd Russell from the John McGovern Co.

There were stories about Roger Barrett, Len Kowalski and Pete Costa. Somewhere in these stories, even Gene Sarenson came into the picture.

Dick has had an incredible career in this business, and it is truly amazing to hear how much fun he had in this business. As he says, "When you love something, you love it!"

He loved playing his golf courses so he could see how the golfer saw it.

All I can say is if you have a few minutes, sit with Dick, and he'll be sure to tell them all to you, and believe me, "that's no balogna!"

Dick now spends his days with his lovely wife, Pat, and is always looking for a host club to accommodate him and his wife for an occasional round of golf.

By the way, Dick was a confirmed bachelor with plans to retire by age 55! Then Pat came along! They were married in 1971. He not only acquired a wife, but also three children and retired at the age of 67!

"What was the most enjoyable part of your job?" Dick says, he basically liked the "variety that comes with being a golf course superintendent." "Every day, there are new problems and new horizons to face. It is never boring and it sometimes can be quite frustrating."

As we all know, Dick loves to talk with people and his ability to communicate successfully with his members and past employers have helped him gain a reputable image in the golf course business.

Dick says he misses all of his buddies that he has made throughout the years being in the business, but we know we will still see him at our monthly meetings and open our doors when he calls for a round of golf.

Good luck in your twilight years and we all wish you the best!

P.S. Dick is predicting a dry summer!

Dates to Remember

June 6th

CAGCS Monthly Meeting
Wampanoag Country Club

July 10th // *12*

CAGCS Monthly Meeting
Willimantic Country Club

September 12th

CAGCS Annual Invitational
Tower Ridge Country Club

October 10th

CAGCS Annual S & R Tournament
Watertown Golf Course

October 12th

Inaugural New England Tournament
Hop Meadow Country Club
Host - CAGCS

October 16th

CAGCS Monthly Meeting
Ellington Ridge Country Club

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continued support of our Association.*