

NEWSLETTER

JUNE 1972



Golf Course Superintendents Association
OF NEW ENGLAND, INC.

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THE ASSOCIATION... GOD BLESS IT

You're a member of a golf club and you're suspicious. Every first Monday of the month you look around your course for the superintendent and he's nowhere to be seen. He's a phantom. He's either out fishing or moonlighting at the local nursery.

Right? . . . Wrong! If your superintendent is one of the conscientious faith and in good standing with his senses, he is off to the monthly meeting of the Golf Course Superintendents Association of New England. And . . . believe me, he couldn't be in better hands.

So . . . you say to yourself . . . what's this gig all about? Is this some type of sanctuary for superintendents? Once a month do they get together in a moment of self-pity, put a keg of beer on tap and drink themselves into a state of accepting the country club for the next 30 days?

The answer is forthcoming and to wit: No! For your comfort and peace of mind, the superintendents of New England get together for the betterment of your own good. That's right. They do it for you members. In a word, they go back to school, back to the books and seminars . . . the gab sessions and the bull-throwing parlors. But their purpose is honorable. They gather to seek the answer to the eternal question: "How can I condition my course to threaten the boundaries of a golfing utopia?"

That's what these monthly meetings are all about. In most cases what comes out of them is that ounce of prevention everyone talks about but never finds. "We exchange problems and solutions of those problems", New England super prexy Bob Grant will tell you. "So many times I have been at meetings when I've become aware of a turf disease or something similar which I never suspected could happen at my course. And because I hear about it, we don't get it. I'm steered onto a chemical which prevents it, so I'm ahead of the thing before it starts."

The next GCSA of NE meeting will be June 6, 1972, a Monday, at the Crestview Country Club, Agawam, Massachusetts. This is the annual Superintendent Green Chairman meeting so we hope to see everyone there. Remember to fill out the post card and return it to Dave Clement for your reservation. There will be a buffet lunch at noon and golf will start at 1:15.

Guest speaker for the day will be Wallace M. Burnett, former Green Chairman and club official at the Longmeadow Country Club, Longmeadow, Mass. He has been a member of the M.G.A. for five years and is currently chairman of activities for state tournaments. His topic will be "Superintendent-Chairman Relationships."

Directions: Mass. pike to route 91 south. Follow Agawam exit over the South End bridge. Go right at circle to route 57 and follow to Bradley Field exit (rt. 75). Follow route 75 and go right opposite BP Station which is Shoemaker Road. Club is up the road.

There are some clubs in New England . . . and they must be listed among the staggering minority . . . that prefer to turn their back on the pleas of their super joining the Association. They are of the opinion that the group is a social-oriented flock of goldbrickers who steal away from their clubs for the sole purpose of making merry. And, this turns to be the farthest from the truth.

Association meetings in the summer do include the option of a member playing golf. But, actually, the golf is secondary. Usually, the golfing sector of the meeting is an educational endeavor in itself. The group stages tournaments as the superpress, super-golf chairman and super-pro competitions. Tell me if relationships spawned out of this sort of get together doesn't further the cause of golf and the golf course.

Then, too, each meeting often has an educational segment attached. This is especially true during the indoor winter meetings when the group's educational committee lines up a speaker who presents his specialty in a forum makeup which has been known to last as many as four hours. In the end, the course is the winner . . . and all through the superintendent's active participation in the association.

On the subject of playing golf, the association also serves as an outlet for tensions a super might live with as the result of his position. In this day and age of pressures from within and without country club members might liken their own plight to that of the super and, here again, a round of golf might be his best tonic to relax those tensions.

So, the first Monday of every month is not escape day from Stalag 17. It is the regular meeting of men dedicated to their profession and a time when perhaps the condition of their own course is made or broken at a chance jawing with a colleague. The association is a necessary part of a superintendent's life. If your super isn't making the scene, it's high time he did and high time you saw to it that he does.

— Gerry Finn

NEXT MEETING



Dave Clement is the super in charge of the Crestview Country Club and has held that position for a year and a half. The ambitious lad started his career under the leadership of his father and then worked for two years at the Vesper Country Club with Manny Francis, Sr. In 1961 he accepted the call to Crystal Springs Golf Club where he added a second nine and installed a water system with only his regular crew. After completing this task he took over at the Woodstock Country Club in Vermont, staying there for four years and admits he still likes the country living of Vermont. Dave said that "I can't think of any profession that presents such a challenge in so many different ways as that of a Golf Course Superintendent and I accept the challenge and find it most rewarding."

Golf Course Superintendents Association

WE ARE NOT YOUR ENEMY

There seems to be a fallacy among golfers, and an unwarranted one at that, concerning the relationship between golf course superintendent and country club member. The air should be cleared, the green swept and all that sort of thing.

First of all, there is this way-out theory that the superintendent is something apart from the game, that he comes to the course every morning with curses on his lips for golfers who have stomped and tramped over the holy ground he has nurtured as a sort of memorial to himself. In other words, some golfers believe the superintendent looks upon the golf course as a veritable Garden of Eden, a place to be admired only.

Such belief is for the birds . . . or is it the birdies? As a matter of fact, the superintendent . . . in most cases . . . is, himself, a golfer and in that position appreciates the original purpose of his job. He has in mind, when he applies his trade, the results of his efforts from the standpoint of the golfer — not the garden club member.

Did you know, for instance, that the superintendent is one of the genuine students of the game? The test for certification of a super has in it a special section for the rules of golf. In other words, a super often times knows more about the whys and wherefores of the sport than do the members who toil among the fruits of his contributions to the soil.

"I can think of nothing better than to give my member the same type of course conditions I would expect when I play", one super expresses the thoughts of his colleagues. "I think

By the same token, the super hopes that the member looks upon the course as something other than a piece of land which is staked out and conditioned for the sole purpose of him beating it to death. "I only hope that my members realize that my prime function is to cope with the problems posed by

Mother Nature", another super notes. "I don't think we're engaged to repair the damage done by the golfer. It should be a two-way street. The golfer must cooperate with us in upkeep of the course. We really have enough trouble trying to offset the complexities the elements present us. All in all, though, I think the average golfer agrees with this theory."

Therefore, a member might think it strange that the super place the flag sticks in the middle of the greens and push the tee markers up front in the beginning of the season. He should realize that there is purpose behind such an operation. "The member looks at the course as it is now", a super advises. "But we must look at it as it will be two, three months from now. That's why we jockey pins and tee markers at this time of the season. We are only thinking of the future and in that respect we are looking at the course conditions for the member the season-round."

The task of conditioning a golf course is something above that of producing a striking color to the greens and a certain texture to the fairway grasses. If the superintendent wanted to, he could peak his efforts for a certain time of season so as to bring gasps from his membership. But this is only a minute portion of what his obligation to the job is. Long after the lush days of the layout, there are to be played there round after round and the overall condition of the course outweighs the immediate or showcase version of same.

"I don't want to build any monument to a green thumb", another super volunteered along these lines. "I play golf and I service golfers. In the first person I like to play on a well-conditioned course. In the second I am aware of the considerations necessary to provide top-rate conditions the entire season. I only hope my members realize I am not their enemy. In effect, we all seek the same thing." — Gerry Finn

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SOUND OFF!!!!

(It's time once again for the reader to take over the editorial chores of the Newsletter and let his or her hair down. This is Sound Off, a special outlet for our good golfing friends to tell us like it is and also how it should be. Everyone is invited to take part. The route is simple. Just jot down your thoughts on any golfing subject and jet them off to Newsletter Mail Box, 24 Riverview Drive, Newbury, Mass. 01950. The Newsletter reserves the right to comment on all published letters.)

* * * *

"I am a young student in a state college and have been toying with the idea of setting my sights on a golf course superintendent's career. But there are a lot of ifs involved.

"Around the campus and my town I'm told that the golf business is dying and that more courses are being closed than new one being opened. This has caused me to think twice about pursuing my original vocation and I'm appealing to you to steer me straight.

"Actually, I am really interested in golf courses, their makeup and the challenge a superintendent's job will offer me. But there's still this hesitant bug biting me. What should I do?"

PAUL STARRETT
Wampum, Pa.

Only you know your capabilities, Paul. But, just to relieve your mind some, golf still is growing and new courses outnumber dying ones. So, stick in there and think super.

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Sound Off (continued)

* * * * *

"I am an irate country club member and I don't mind telling you supers so. It all has to do with golf carts or whatever you people choose to call the things which carry us to our appointed rounds.

"My course has been under a deluge of water in the early part of the season. But, I say that as long as the golf course is declared playable I should be able to run a golf cart on it. Our super says otherwise and our pro doesn't want to express an opinion. He doesn't want to get himself in the middle of the argument, either.

"Anyway, I'm expressing my opinion here and say that you people are unreasonable in trying to deter the use of electric carts when you say the course is playable. It's one way or the other. There is no in between here. I say that if electric carts aren't allowed on the course, the course should not be open. What do you have to say to that?"

CALVIN CRUZE
Bethany, Conn.

Calvin, you sound like the guy who says on a crowded flight that if he can't fly first class, he won't fly at all . . . in which case you are a person who will never get off the ground.

* * * * *

"I am a superintendent who just learned that I flunked my test to become certified. Believe me, this is quite a blow to my ego since I have been employed at a reputable club for many years and its course is considered to be one of the best conditioned in the state.

"At the moment I am at odds with myself and the certification movement. I really don't know whether or not I should bother to take the exam over again or throw in the sponge. As a matter of fact, I don't think any of my members care if I'm certified or not.

"What I'm saying is this certification bit is a humbling thing. I have been brought to my knees and I don't know whether I should lay down or come back fighting. What's the going thing among us flunkies?"

(Name, Club Withheld)

You are not the first to flunk and you are not the last. For one thing, passing the certification test — whether on the first or 10th try — gives one a feeling of self-satisfaction. If you don't take it over again, you'll have a tough time looking at yourself in the mirror when you shave every morning.

* * * * *

"Naturally, I can't sign this letter with my right name so you'll get the idea when you see the signature at the bottom.

"Anyway, I live and work in an area which is saturated with golf courses and I have to admit that most of them can be classified in the above average class.

"When I say work, I mean that I am a golf course superintendent at one of the aforementioned courses. Mine is perhaps one of the top five in the state which makes it close to tops in my particular area.

"The problem I have is one of my fellow supers. He works at a club similar to mine but he has had some pressure placed

on him as to the amount of budget he requires to keep up the condition of his course. He has sought to sound off myself and other supers in the immediate area so that he can present a budget that is comparable to mine and the rest of the boys.

"I don't go along with this. And I'm wondering if you feel the same? I realize that golf chairmen get together and talk about budgets of their respective clubs and this makes me a little leery of the whole idea. I don't want to look like a stiff neck or something but I think the super in question has one heck of a nerve trying to get me to set up a budget figure so that he won't look bad in the eyes of his chairman.

"Is this the proper thing to do or should I say nix on his suggestion of a meeting and let him sink or swim in his own figures?"

TOM THUMB
Seedling, Va.

You are caught in a bind but you must be your own man here. If your friend (?) is a bona fide super, he shouldn't need advice on his budget. Nuff said.

* * * * *

"Thank you for the precise and expert handling of the query by Mr. Charles Curtis from Charleston, S. C. Mr. Curtis' question was most timely . . . we have been concerned about updating our putting green specifications for some time now but only recently has the necessary research been completed and the specs are now in process of being rewritten. We will publish the updated article in our USGA Green Section Record and will be happy to make reprints of the article available to anyone desiring same as soon as reprints become available.

"Mr. Grant stated that to him it seemed a 'tight security was placed on information regarding technical attempts to improve construction of greens, tees and other aids to preparing a golf course.' We certainly do not agree with that statement for never before has there been so free an exchange of worthwhile information in all turfgrass publications (and they number more than ever available before), in turfgrass conferences on a local, state and national level, and in local golf course superintendents association meetings. I'd have to say to the contrary that there is more good information being disseminated than ever before through numerous agencies, and this is reflected in the general upgrading of golf courses throughout the nation.

"Best regards and keep up the fine work."

Alexander M. Radco, Eastern Director
U. S. Golf Asso, Green Section
Highland Park, N. J.

Thanks for setting the record straight, Al. There are no secrets among professional people.

* * * * *

(That does it for this time. Some interesting thoughts have been put forth and more will be coming. Let's have yours.)

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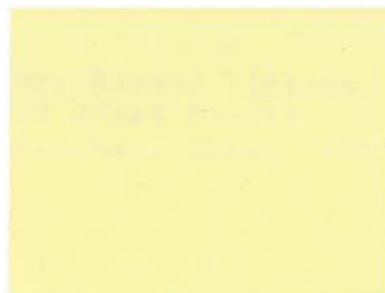
NEWSLETTER

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FIRST CLASS



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