

NEWSLETTER

OCTOBER 1972



Golf Course Superintendents Association
OF NEW ENGLAND, INC.

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IN UNION THERE IS STRENGTH

Is the golf course superintendent running scared?

"Darned tootin'", one of the members of our own New England Association chirped the other day when the question was socked to him. "Sure, we're running scared and it's ridiculous."

Running scared is translated into a fear of losing one's job. "Yeah, that's it", our man without reservations roared. "Just look around you and see what happens when a half-decent job is open. I'll bet there are 50 applications for the thing. If we weren't running scared, there wouldn't be enough to have a bridge game."

So what's it all about? Same man speaking: "Do you want a good example of how shaky we are? Look at the Sound Off column. How many letters do you get from our members? You can count them, just like I can count that table for bridge. No one dares to put his job on the line. At least, that's how some of our people operate."

The feeling reigns that the golf membership of the country club is either in complete sympathy with the idea of making the superintendent believe he can operate on a shoestring or that it is not in tune with the problems of keeping the golf course in top shape.

"You know", our man continued, "You have to wait until you lose a green or see a fairway burnt out until you hear any kind of comment from certain members. Some of them still are living in the dark ages. I'll bet there are some people at my course who think I get up at three o'clock in the morning, run a hose out from the faucet and water every green. They probably think I have a 10-mile extension to that damn thing."

The theory expounded here, too, is a rather unique one. "Most of our guys are up tight about their jobs", the insider smirked. "And, on the other hand, most of them make it known that they're unhappy where they are. Now, that's one

hell of a circumstance. Here you are unhappy with your work and worrying that you might lose your job."

So, that's all right with the club members. If they feel they have the edge over the employe, more than not they'll milk him dry, let him give 100 percent effort and receive 50 percent return. What, then, does he do?

"One word", the irate super gets down to business. "I say we should form a union . . . and a strong union. Our association has served a purpose, organized us and all that. In some cases it has helped us to improve ourselves along wages and benefits lines. But it still can't have much to say when the big axe starts to swing."

Union may be too drastic a step at this stage of the development of the profession. But certainly it is a step not to be discarded and thrown out as an impossibility. The big problem is the unity of the New England Association. If members are content to see their jobs go to the lowest bidder or the "yes" man that many courses seek, then perhaps union is the only answer to keeping the profession sane.

"You have to know another thing, too", our union plugger states. "You talk to most supers and they rant and rave about our business being a profession and we being professional people. But just let a job have a hint of being open and everyone runs for the application blank. I guess it all depends on how hungry a man is."

The condition of the superintendent thus is not as all-glowing as sometimes we are led to believe. The esteem in which the super is held may be turning a corner and going the other way. To stop that unfortunate U-turn the supers must take a second look at themselves. "One for all and all for one" might sound trite at this point but it may not be such a bad idea. If you're running scared, you know just what is meant by this observation.

— Gerry Finn

NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the G.C.S.A. of N. E. will be October 2, 1972, at the Ledgemont Country Club in Seekonk, Massachusetts. This is the annual Superintendent-Press tournament. Golf will be any time after 11:15 a. m. and dinner will be served about 5:15 p. m. Tony Caranci is the super in charge of this fine layout and he has planned a good time for us all.

Directions: Route 1 to 1A south and to Route 15. Bear left on 15 and follow to 152 and go right on 152. Club will be on 152 on left side.

OCTOBER 27, 1972

Superintendent-Pro Tournament
at the Brae Burn Country Club, Newton, Mass.

NOVEMBER 6, 1972 MEETING

at the Highland Golf Club, Attleboro, Mass.



Tony Caranci

Golf Course Superintendents Association

THE CHICKEN vs. THE EGG

Which came first . . . the chicken or the egg? Which came first . . . the four-foot putt or the four parts-to-one martini?

The first question has in actuality become the eternal question. You know the action there. One person says there had to be a chicken in the first place in order to have an egg. But another chimes in with the fact that if there weren't an egg in the first place, there wouldn't be a chicken to begin with.

Let other keener and more patient minds argue that one out. What we're interested in and more apt to toss around in a more sensible manner is the four-foot putt and the four-to-one martini. The answer to that one is elementary, Dr. Watson. If there weren't a four-foot putt out there where it all begins (the golf course, natch), there wouldn't be any bother about the makeup of the martini . . . for there would not be a martini . . . nor a filet mignon, a chef to burn it or a sparkling-outfitted captain to serve it up to you.

This all came about recently on one of New England's foremost golf courses . . . where big name professionals were marveling at the condition of the fairways and greens and not even mentioning the condition of their martinis. And this prompted the green chairman of said club to admit that the physical makeup of the golf course was responsible for everything else that had shot out from its ribs.

"Of course," the same chairman added. "We had to make ourselves and the membership believe where is the beginning and where is the end in order to get the most out of our course and our superintendent. You know, it's nice to have a good superintendent but it's extra nice to have the same superintendent and the things he needs to prove he's that good."

In other words, this particular golf course was peaking at its top condition and it just didn't happen. "Oh no," our same informant continued. "Look at the weather pattern we

had in the spring and most of the early summer. Our super knew it would be a major task, maybe a miracle was needed to bring the course back to where most people might think it should be at big-name tournament time. So, we just put it on the line with the membership. What we did was enforce pride into their thinking. They went for the sell and we came out of it with all colors flying . . . and the predominant color was green."

The chairman, a man who was brought up in the shadow of authority as a longtime member of the club, also revealed that his club had now adopted a course-first attitude in way of expenditures. "We have learned the hard way", he advised. "At one time we ignored the golf course and concentrated on making the club a glorified restaurant. This worked for a while but the glamor of a perfectly-cooked steak or an on-the-button mixture of a cocktail soon wore off. The reason was simple. Our course had gone to pot and we didn't have any people to show just how great our clubhouse facilities were."

So, things have been different of late at least one club where prestige of membership still is regarded in a lofty state. Ironically, the clubhouse conditions have remained in a most presentable degree of comfort and the whole thing has worked out nicely.

"If a club is in trouble", the chairman concluded, "look around at the setup and you can see what needs to be done. More than likely most emphasis is being placed on food, drink and service while the course goes pleading for attention. A country club cannot succeed without giving its course maximum attention and the means to a prime condition lay-out. It's the starting point, no doubt about that."

So, the chicken and the egg can continue their private war. The four-foot putt and the four-to-one martini? There's just no contest in that department.

— Gerry Finn

Goethe's Rules for a Good Life

Goethe had nine requirements for a contented life. They have been summarized as follows:

- Health enough to make work a pleasure.
- Wealth enough to support your needs.
- Strength to battle with difficulties and overcome them.
- Grace enough to confess your sins and forsake them.
- Patience enough to toil until some good is accomplished.
- Charity enough to see some good in your neighbor.
- Love enough to move you to be useful and helpful to others.
- Faith enough to make real the things of God.
- Hope enough to remove all fears concerning the future.

New Application

New Application to be voted on at the next meeting for an Associate Membership: Patrick DiPietro

Safety and Health Act Audio-Visual Available

A 20-minute audio-visual analysis of the Occupational Safety and Health Act is now available for employers and insurance carriers.

"OSHA MADE CLEAR," consists of 80 color slides, packed, ready to show, in a Kodak carousel, with a 20-minute tape cassette. It is offered for purchase or weekly rental exclusively by The Film Library of the Greater Los Angeles Chapter of the National Safety Council.

Produced with the technical assistance of the U. S. Department of Labor, OSHA Enforcement Division, and the California Division of Industrial Safety, with special industry consultants, Marsh and McLennan, Los Angeles, this very latest update on the Occupational Safety and Health Act is concisely narrated by Joseph M. Kaplan, CAE, executive vice president of the Greater Los Angeles Chapter.

"OSHA MADE CLEAR" is a MUST for executives, management, supervisors, arborists, workmen's compensation personnel, industrial, employee relations, labor relations staff . . . in short, for each and every individual who has responsibility for meeting requirements of the Act.

Inquiries regarding "OSHA MADE CLEAR," as well as requests for The Film Library's new catalog of safety and training films, should be directed to: THE FILM LIBRARY, Greater Los Angeles Chapter, National Safety Council, 3388 West 8th St., Los Angeles, Calif. 90005.

(Reprint from Weeds, Trees and Turf, August 1972)

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SOUND OFF!!!!

(Now's the time to sit back and read what the readership is thinking these days. This is Sound Off and it's for you and by you. This regular feature lets the reader take up pen and become an author, a commentator or complainer if that be the case. Sound off welcomes letters and cards from any and everyone. All you have to do is sign your letter but upon request, names and affiliations will be withheld. So, get your ballpoint moving and let us have it. Send your views on any golf subject to Newsletter Mail Box, 24 Riverview Drive, Newburyport, Mass. 01950. The Newsletter reserves the right to comment on each published letter.

* * * *

"If you don't mind, I would like to wander away from golf for this time and say a few words about some of the club members at my club who use our tennis courts as a picnic grounds.

"It's a rare Monday when I don't have to send a crew over to the courts and have them 'police' the area after the weekend of fun and games our tennis enthusiasts enjoy. I am getting fed up with this situation and know it's useless to voice a complaint with our board of governors. As a matter of fact, I think two of them are tennis players."

NAME WITHHELD
Club Withheld

Some Friday evening before you leave for "parts unknown" why don't you just "misplace" the nets and leave a note saying they may be found in the trash cans — if the members can find them.

* * * *

"I am a longtime member here and can't for the life of me agree with the way our superintendent handles his help. If I were the boss over these men I'd make them move and in a hurry.

"All I hear from our superintendent is that he has a hard time getting and keeping help. As far as I can see, he should keep the help he now has forever. In fact, I would think that they would build a monument to him for the lenient way he treats them.

"What kind of a group is this superintendents' association, anyway? You people are always crying about low budgets, lack of labor and all that nonsense. In the meanwhile you let the help walk all over you and get nothing in return. After all, there is a shortage of jobs nowadays and no one should be that difficult to replace."

JORGENSON FREEMAN
Saranac, N. Y.

Did you ever try to hire someone for three bucks an hour and tell him he's to do carpenter or plumbing work that pays three times that much on the labor market? Wake up, friend, the golf course is not a galley ship.

* * * *

I'm just an ordinary member at a country club but couldn't help writing to you after what I saw the other day in our clubhouse.

"One of our new members came in from a round of golf and sat himself down in the 19th hole. He looked up at a busy bartender and began snapping his fingers and whistling for service. I thought right then and there that this guy is some kind of a jerk.

"Anyway, the bartender didn't go for this type of treatment and let this guy know about it. I was there and saw the whole thing. Now this new member is trying to bring the bartender up on charges. I think this is the most ridiculous incident I've ever seen around our club. Our bartender is one peach of a guy. That new member? He's from hunger. What do you think?"

LARRY JOHNSON
Treetorn, Md.

How about bringing the new member up on charges instead? Then let him whistle his way out of that one.

* * * *

"Is there any way you superintendents can hold off all of your reconstruction projects until after the golf season? I've been waiting for fall to come all summer, when the air would be clean and clear and I wouldn't get fatigued when I played golf.

"Now that the weather is perfect I find myself attacked by bulldozers and chain saws. What is the matter with you people?"

SARAH PALSBY
Danton, Va.

There's nothing wrong with us that a little cooperation by our members wouldn't help, Sarah. You don't see construction people building roads in the dead of winter, do you?

* * * *

"I am a superintendent and have an axe to grind with the feeling of some green chairmen that they are so many steps above us . . . in matter of social and economic means.

"Frankly, I hate being treated in a subservient manner. Now, I'll bet my chairman never thought I knew what that word means, let alone be able to spell it. Anyway, I don't think the green chairman should take on a master-slave attitude with their superiors.

"We're all in this together. What I do on the course reflects on the job my chairman has done in matter of communicating with me and everything else that goes with a productive relationship. He's only as good as I am . . . even though he doesn't think it."

NAME WITHHELD
Club Withheld

The super and chairman are the last two people to have such a relationship. Conditioning the course is too big a job to be hampered by stupid social airs.

* * * *

(So ends the battle of the ballpoint for this time. Keep those cards and letters coming. We need them to serve you better.)

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