



Golf Course Superintendents Association

OF NEW ENGLAND, INC.

SEPTEMBER 1972



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

WHEN THE MAN-POWER GOES OFF

This is the time of year when the golf course superintendent experiences labor pains.

In fact, one super made a funny about it when he revealed (and without a crack of a smile on his face), "I usually lose my help about the day before Labor Day."

Yes, this is September and brings on a recall to the books which sends many a strapping lad off the golf course and back to the classroom. It happens every year at summer's end, but it always come as a shock to the super . . . even though he's prepared for it.

"This is when I probably need more help than at any other time of the season", another super offered. "I would like to hire people from the regular labor market but they won't touch this work . . . and the pay that goes with it."

When play starts to fall off and the super gets a little breathing room around the course, he likes to take advantage of the opening. "I have a lot of projects that can be launched only during the fall", he tells. "You don't go rebuilding greens in the middle of summer. It's not practical. But when the college kids pick up and leave, I'm left with a very large headache."

The college crew probably has saved the golf course from the strong possibility of a labor crisis. Most of the college boys want to work during their vacations and welcome the physical challenge of the golf course. On the other hand, the pay scale isn't attractive enough to lure members of the regular labor market there.

One superintendent blames the country club for holding the so-called 5% wage hike line when it isn't applicable to the golf course. "They have tried to put one over on us", he opined.

"But if you see what is happening, they usually pay for it in the end."

Preaching this kind of sawdust has actually hurt a few clubs. At one establishment management took a firm stand on holding a wage line that never existed. The help took off to leave the club without a single employee. What happened? New help was hired and at rates far exceeding what the original workers were seeking!

Back in the land of the super, the situation is acute — festered by the mass exodus of the student. "I hate to say this", a superintendent from out of the New England section said. "But they don't even pay time and a half at my course. They expect a guy to go out at three in the morning to start cutting greens for one of their big tournaments and then work his regular day at straight time. It's sickening."

Oddly enough, the economical slowdown of the country has been a blessing to some courses. Raw labor jobs have been taken over by people who wouldn't ordinarily do that type of work (semi-retirees and the like). But even now the threat of a shrinking market lives.

"Our help looks down the street and sees what the construction guy is getting", another super barks. "Some day they might get up and walk out on me if I can't give them comparable wages. And I know I won't be able to. I say that if the country club wants to play the big shot, it must pay the big shot price."

And so the labor pains linger. And there doesn't seem to be any relief in sight.

— Gerry Finn

MAN IN THE MIDDLE

Do you ever get the feeling that you are the only one who gives a damn about your golf course? I get this feeling almost every time I impose restrictions on play. Every Country Club has its share of soap box orators. Does this sound familiar: "How come we can't use carts; they're using them at So & So Country Club and we drain better than they do. The golf course is in good shape but you won't let us use it, and what are you saving the course for, the season's almost over?"

During the month of June in which all of us had over a foot of rain we heard this type statement many times. As always we are in an impossible situation, whatever decision is made is unpopular with certain people. You are criticized when you close and when you open, when you restrict carts and when you don't. This was the first year I've heard people say, "why did he let carts go today, he isn't using his authority properly." Regardless of what restrictions are needed, this is

a Superintendent's Decision and he should have written into his contract or have some written authority from the Board stating this. I don't believe a superintendent can be held responsible for course conditions if he doesn't have the right to restrict play. Any Green's Chairman who takes this responsibility on himself has got to be crazy. He has his own business to run; if he ran out to the course every time it rained, he would be bankrupt. I've seen many a good superintendent leave the business because that authority has been wrestled away from him. We are all in this business because we enjoy it, we certainly are not in it for the money.

I hope you have enjoyed the spring of 1972 more than I have.

George B. Thompson, Pres., Mid-Atlantic Association of Golf Course Superintendents.

Reprinted from *Mid-Atlantic News Letter*, August 1972

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SIZING UP THE BUDGET

If you are a country club member and aware of the financial bugs that set your dues on a riotous course, perhaps you have a wrong slant on the makeup and character of your superintendent's budget. In some cases you probably think the figure outrageous. And when compared with that of surrounding clubs, you might even want to launch an investigation.

In the first place, "the golf and grounds budget" or the well the super goes to in order to keep the course spic and span, has so many intangibles even he has to go through an occasional mental drill to see if he has it straight.

For instance, don't go frothing off at the mouth over the enormous size of the budget, because there are some hidden beauties in there which tend to balloon it.

Payroll figures often are startling, but in many budgets the salary of the pro is included and sometimes even that of the assistant pro. And there are the payroll charges. Put those all together and you may think that the super is running his own welfare department, when in reality he is not.

Next in the little known outlay of the super are the costs for maintenance of house grounds, buildings, tennis courts and the like which include such bargains as heat, light and power. In budgets where lighting for paddle tennis courts, for example, are included, that sport alone can sweeten the pot.

You also may be surprised to know that the super takes out of his budget the costs for the club joining the USGA, MGA, CIA (or whatever) and often the luxury of a pro being sent to a tournament comes out of the super's pocket . . . so to speak.

This is only the beginning. Tack on the logical costs . . . including a lofty sum for depreciation of equipment . . . and you start to get a clear picture of where your dues buck is going.

Then, too, you must take into consideration the physical makeup and age of the course where you play. This is most important in sizing up the budget of one club against another.

Geography, type of construction and time of construction have much to do with the cost of conditioning a course. Does your course have a lot of trees? If so, look at them long and enjoy the scenery in the height of summer. In the end the total cost for leaf control and the care and replacement of trees could run as high as \$15,000. Down the street they may not have trees. Consequently, that budget looks thin compared to your super's spending spree.

Older courses again must yield to the times. Many of these have elevated greens with severe bankings. All cutting here falls under the heading of hand labor — very expensive and time-consuming. Also to be considered are the care of water hazards and traps. They make for a better golf course but also for higher upkeep costs.

Soil type is another intangible. Medium loam perhaps is the ideal situation, but if there's heavy clay out there many problems can arise. Problems, as you know, equal expense.

So, the next time you're bowled over by the size of that budget, don't be. It takes a lot of money to make the green grass grow green and to keep the leaves blowing with the wind. In fact, when you size it up, it's a bargain. It says here.

— Gerry Finn

NEXT MEETING

The next G.C.S.A. of New England meeting will be September 18, 1972 at the Thorny Lea Golf Club, Brockton, Massachusetts. The super in charge of this fine layout is Joe Rybka and he has been there for the past seven years. Prior to that Joe spent six years at Basin Harbor G. C. in Vergennes, Vermont and was the assistant at St. Andrews at Hastings on the Hudson in New York for three years.



BROCKTON, MASSACHUSETTS

Directions to Thorny Lea: Rt. 128 to Rt. 24 south to Rt. 27 towards Brockton. Turn right on Pleasant St. (Kentucky Chicken) and right on West street to King's Dept. Take right on Torres Street to the Club.

Nominating Committee	10:30 a.m.
Directors' Meeting	11:00 a.m.
Regular Meeting	11:45 a.m.
Luncheon	12:45 p.m.
Golf after Lunch	

New application to be voted on at the September meeting:

Frank Murphy, Halifax C. C.
390 Plymouth St.
Halifax, Mass.

At the last meeting President Grant appointed a Nominating Committee and it consists of: R. Blake, chairman, D. Barber, B. Frederick, T. Caranci and D. Cowan. They will meet before the directors' meeting at Thorny Lea on September 18, 1972.

President Grant also appointed an Advisory Committee to the National and it consists of Don Hearn and Larry Dunn.

The winner of the Golf Super Championship at Hyannisport was Bob St. Thomas with a low gross of 73. Low net went to Al Auger with a 68.

Super-Press Tourney

The date of the October meeting is October 2, 1972 at the Ledgesmont Country Club in Seekonk, Massachusetts. Gentlemen, this is the annual Super-Press Tournament, so let's line up our partners to play golf on this eventful day. It is the duty of every member to have a member of the press or the news media with him on October 2, 1972 at Ledgesmont.

President — ROBERT GRANT 22 Patricia Road Sudbury, Mass. 01776 Phone 443-2671 Club Affiliation Irae Burn Country Club	First Vice President — THOMAS CURRAN 153 Fisher Street Walpole, Mass. 02081 Phone 668-7221 Club Affiliation The Country Club	Second Vice President — WAYNE ZOPPO 48 Barbary Drive Seekonk, Mass. Phone 399-7141 Club Affiliation Agawam Hunt	Secretary — RONALD KIRKMAN 25 Green Street Needham, Mass. 02192 Phone 444-8412 Club Affiliation Needham Golf Club	Treasurer — LUCIEN DUVAL R.F. No. 5 Gault Road Bedford, N. H. 03105 Phone 472-3454 Club Affiliation Manchester Country Club	Trustee — MAX MIERZWA 105 Crestwood Street Chicopee, Mass. 01020 Phone 594-4996 Club Affiliation Chicopee Country Club	Trustee — NORMAN MUCCIARONE 101 Allen Road Woburn, Mass. 02168 Phone 332-3056 Club Affiliation Woodland Golf Club	Trustee — BERT FREDERICK 45 Shorey Brook Road Hobbsville, Mass. Phone 453-1231 Club Affiliation Vesper Country Club	Finance Chairman — MARY SPERANDIO Concord, Mass. 01742 Phone 349-4723 Club Affiliation Concord Country Club
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SOUND OFF!!!!

(Here it is, that time when our readers take pen in hand and start to thrust their message to the golf world. This is Sound Off and it is for anyone who has thoughts on any subject pertaining to golf. It can be a compliment or a kick in the pants. We accept anything from anyone. But we do reserve the right to comment on each letter published. So, get with it and get with us. Send your comments to Newsletter Mail Box, 24 Riverview Drive, Newbury, Mass. 01950).

"I'm a superintendent at a club I don't care to reveal, but I have a funny story which can be told as long as nobody knows where it came from.

"Anyway, it has to do with doctor certificates for those people who insist that they must have a golf cart every time they play golf. And after talking to a doctor friend of mine, who also must remain nameless, the whole thing becomes a joke.

"He told me that he writes out certificates by the dozen and most of them are phony. 'If I don't do it, they just go down the street to some other doctor and get one', he said. So I'm here now to tell you that those certificates are from hunger."

Name Withheld
Club Withheld

I wonder if you could get that same doctor to examine me. I hurt my back at work the other day and . . .

"There hasn't been a day this summer that my wife and I haven't been out to the golf course when we weren't attacked and eaten alive by all kinds of insects.

"I think that this is a disgrace. To think that I pay all kinds of good money to join an exclusive country club and wind up in the middle of the round, swatting bugs and scratching my head off.

"This ridiculous situation even could lead me to the divorce court. The other day a mosquito landed on my wife's leg (the upper part) and I slapped it so hard my hit made a bigger welt than the bite. Now she says she might divorce me. And all because we were bugged."

CLARENCE CARLIN
Caution, Kan.

The plain facts of pest control are that the ban of DDT has hurt, but if mosquitoes are caught in the larva stage they can be controlled. Oh yes, who is the mosquito testifying for in the divorce case?

"I'm here to tell you that there's a new look in vandalism on golf courses and it doesn't have anything to do with stealing flags.

"The latest craze is to break into equipment buildings, steal golf carts and turn figure eights on the greens. This has happened at my course twice this year (I think one time it was the night of our local high school graduation.)

"Of course, the persons who do this type of damage are simply thrill seekers who don't have anything better to do.

I know that our laws are not in keeping with this crime but what laws are in keeping with any crime nowadays? I don't know what I can do."

JERRY SANDERS
Knox, S. C.

Your only hope is that one of these darlings steals a cart, has it roll over on him and scares him to death. Even then, it would be too good for him.

"I want to compliment the superintendent at our golf course for the splendid way he has brought beauty onto the grounds, and I'm not referring to those cute little hedges and Japanese yews around the clubhouse.

"I am referring to the time and energy he takes each fall to plant flower bulbs on certain sections of the course. I realize he's going out of his way to do this and all of us girls are indeed grateful for the effort.

"In the spring when these flowers burst into bloom, they make for a far better sight to us than a green without ball marks or a tee that doesn't have a lick of crab grass in it.

"Anyway, I think our super is 'super' for this gesture."

RACHEL HORNSBY
Woodstock, Vt.

If you and the rest of the girls can get your husbands to like flowers, we won't have to worry about those ball marks on the green!

"The fallacy of the tri-plex mower has to be put into print.

"I have one at our club and in the long run I think it has been the source of more headache than the good I first thought it was supposed to bring.

"Using it on my banked greens is virtually impossible. There has been scalping to mention one thing. However, even on the bigger and flatter greens continued use has resulted in compaction and caused me to spend more money and time trying to get the green back to the point where it will hold an approach shot.

"Am I alone in this feeling or have others experienced it?"

NAME WITHHELD
CLUB WITHHELD

This is a good open floor question for our membership. Because of the situation, better that they "sound off" about your headache.

(For once we leave you on a sober note. But keep those cards and letters coming. We're always here with the letter opener.)

JOB OPEN

Philip Cassidy of the Weston Golf Club is retiring as of the first of the year and the club is now accepting applications with a complete resume. Application and resume should be sent to each of the following committee men listed below. The course is an 18-hole course and the superintendent is responsible for general maintenance, also the house grounds, thirty-five golf carts, clay tennis courts, and paddle tennis courts. Send resumes to the following: Mr. Donald Patnode, 75 Sherburn Circle, Weston, Mass. and to Mr. Nate Ricker, Weston Golf Club, Weston, Mass.

Golf Chairman —

JULIUS AKSTEN
6 Main Street
Southboro, Mass. 01772
Phone 485-8885
Club Affiliation
St. Mark's Golf Club

Educational Chairman —

LARRY BLINN
145 Dedham Street
Canton, Mass.
Phone 828-0467
Club Affiliation
Blue Hill Country Club

Newsletter Chairman —

DEAN ROBERTSON
24 Riverview Drive
Newbury, Mass. 01950
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Club Affiliation
Chestnut Hill Country Club

Past President —

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211 Sewall Street
Boylston, Mass. 01505
Phone 869-2737
Club Affiliation
Mt. Pleasant Country Club

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* Contributors to the Lawrence S. Dickinson Scholarship Fund

NEWSLETTER

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