

## Golf Course Superintendents Association OF NEW ENGLAND, INC.

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### THE SEVEN-DAY WEEK

Through no fault of their own (except for that uncommon malady of devotion to duty), most golf course superintendents in our neck of the woods enacted and virtually championed the seven-day work week this year.

Have you ever heard of someone working 100 straight days? You say not since pre-Emancipation Proclamation times?

Well, such a plunge of mind and matter was the rule rather than the exception during this summer to beat all summers. In fact, you can go back to the very beginnings of this waning golf season when Mother Nature rejected the courtship of the superintendent. Even in April it was evident that this was to be a long, hot summer.

You name it and the superintendent encountered it. In Vermont, for example, there was an extremist at work in the attempt to turn the tide of hot, oppressive weather. She dumped a flood on the area to add to the woes of the super. In that span of cleanup operations, certain superintendents added the 24-hour day onto the seven-day week.

Nothing was normal in the days from July to September. There were periods of high humidity, high temperatures and excessive moisture . . . not necessarily in that order. One day the super was fighting the throes of a dry spell trying to keep his plants wet. The next would find him taking on wet wilt as the rains came in buckets, bottles and boatloads.

"I have to admit that this has been a supreme test for me", one superintendent explained. "Certainly, I had no other solution except to keep on the job as long as I was needed. But at one point it got to the ridiculous stage. I was even afraid to skip home for lunch . . . for fear we wouldn't have a golf course when I returned!"

The average club member or the one, who still thinks that the club winds up the super with a 40-hour spring and then lets him unwind on overtime thereafter, will be surprised (maybe relieved) to learn that in 99 out of 100 cases the super works gratis on those extra days. "I had a member

who made a big joke out of the situation", another superintendent reported. "He wanted to bet me that with all the overtime I was making I probably was making more money per week than he was. We never got to comparing paychecks, though. Obviously, he would have lost the bet."

Another round-the-clock super was wondering how his chances stood in the divorce courts. "I haven't seen my wife since Memorial Day", he told. "That's when we were supposed to go away for our only free weekend of the summer. I said we were supposed to go. Actually, I'm not sure if my wife's still at home. She must be, though. I haven't heard from any lawyers and received any papers.

The free weekend, then, was a pipedream. And the holiday was something that happened in the long ago. "I'm not kidding." Super I came up for air again. "The Fourth of July fell in the middle of the week and I figured I could escape for a day. But it was another one of those weather-plagued days. I wanted the wife and kids to come over to the barn area for a cookout but they went to the beach instead."

Still another superintendent likened his work load this summer to that of a farmer. "I figure a herd of Holsteins would have been easier to take care of than a golf course", he quipped. "And I mean I would have been around for both the morning and evening milkings!"

One of the ironies to come out of this extended tour of duty is that through all the undying effort there were reports that some superintendents had been given their notices. "That caps everything", one noted member of the profession wrote us. "This is the toughest weather year we've had since I can remember and they're sacking people. I don't know what they expect a man to do under these weather conditions."

What was expected apparently was rendered. The super experienced a genuine seven-day work week. And what's all that talk going on about a four-day week in other professions?

— Gerry Finn

### Meeting October 29, 1973



Louis Ingalls, Superintendent at the Country Club of New Bedford will host the meeting on October 29, 1973. Louis is married and has 3 children. He is a graduate of Fitchburg State College and a former Navy pilot. Prior to coming to Country Club of New Bedford he was at Furmose Brook and

also trained under his father at the Marion Golf Course. A buffet will be served at noon.

Directions: From Boston area, use Rt. 24 to Rt. 140. Leave 140 at exit 3, Hathaway Rd., turn right about 1½ miles. Club will be on left. Cross Slocum Rd. to driveway, about 100 feet on left.

October 12, 1973 is the date of the Pro-Super meeting at Brae Burn. Tee times are open after 9 A. M. so see you there. Bob Grant promises very few oak leaves.



# Golf Course Superintendents Association

## SINGING THE BUDGET BLUES

The golf course superintendent was in direct competition with Mrs. Average American Housewife this summer as each engaged in the battle of the budget. Who won? It was a tossup.

Each, however, had to cut corners. And we all know how that is. You cut here and hear a scream there. While the housewife served the family a diet full of meatless wonders, the superintendent was out on the course virtually appealing for some help from above to keep his budget from skyrocketing out of sight.

"It's a good thing we aren't in the Metropolitan area", a super with a labor outlay far exceeding his expectations offered. "The average cost of labor there is \$4.40 an hour. You have to pay time and a half for Saturdays and double time on Sundays. With the kind of conditions we've had this year, I could go through my labor provisions in two months."

Naturally, labor made the biggest dent in the budget because of the high humidity-excessive moisture pattern of the weather. The only way to combat this was with manpower and the labor bank was hit hard.

The seven-day week for the super is covered in another piece in the Newsletter. But that unusual circumstance was compounded by the seven-day week for crew members. One superintendent revealed that he averaged four or five men working Saturdays and Sundays throughout the summer. This is why the Metropolitan New York scale would have killed the New England Association members.

The average hourly rate here is \$2.30. But this could change in the future. There is some strong talk about the Teamsters Union moving in to cover golf course workers. If this should occur, future budgets will take a whopping rise. Right now the average outlay of an 18-hole course for labor is \$75,000 per year. Toss in the increase in hourly rate and those over-time riders and it really riddles a budget.

While labor ate considerably of its share of adding to the budget blues, other factors also appeared to make shrinking violets of once healthy financial figures.

The trend was to go way over prescribed cost on fungicides. Again, this was precipitated by the weather. Whereas an ordinary summer might call for \$3,000 in fungicides, this year that figure was at least tripled and even went beyond that on some hardly-hit courses.

Repairs of equipment and even unavailability of certain parts also had their hand in the battle of the budget. A conservative estimate throws the cost of repairs up 15 percent from last year. This does not include certain items which couldn't be obtained to repair equipment, a setback which caused a switch to manpower again to provide a solution.

The whole idea of the budget being firmed in December and then being desecrated in July has to be the result of poor planning by the country club. Naturally, the super never gets as much as he wants in the line of budget money. This is a natural setting for a natural rivalry between those chosen to allow the spending and those chosen to actually do the spending. There is always a gap in each's thinking.

However, future budgets must contain contingency clauses to allow for unusual conditions such as were experienced this summer. Without such a clause, the superintendent could be placed in a position where he loses his golf course over the outlay of a few thousand dollars. The club member again must choose between having a course hanging by the thread of uncertainty (mostly the weather) and one that has the foresight to meet the demands of extreme conditions.

No one can predict a repeat of the summer of '73, but everyone can be ready for such a horrendous thought. It's all done at budget time.

— Gerry Finn

*Deciduous Garden Trees and Shrubs* is intended to serve as a companion to *Evergreen Garden Trees and Shrubs*. Edited by Anthony Huxley, this volume illustrates 200 deciduous species and subspecies — in full color, accompanied by horticultural notes and shown in scale drawings. Price: \$4.95. MacMillan Publishing Co., Inc., Riverside, N. J. 08075.

*OSHA Safety & Health* is a magazine published by the U. S. Department of Labor to provide the information an employer needs to carry out his responsibilities under the Occupational Safety and Health Act of 1970. The publication may be of interest to the golf course superintendent even though the contents are not specifically oriented toward golf course operations. Articles discuss standards and compliance, employer and employee safety activities, job health research, and careers in safety and health. Regular departments provide (1) the latest news from OSHA's national office, including regulations, policy statements and appointments; (2) summaries of research on which OSHA bases workplace standards; (3) highlights of successful safety activities and programs; (4) lists of current OSHA publications; and (5) answers to readers' questions. Subscription price: \$4.50 per year. *Superintendent of Documents, U. S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D. C. 20402.*

— Golf Superintendent/September/October 1973

## Superintendent-Celebrity

Results of tournament at Blue Hills: About 40 teams of golfers braved the wind and rain on Monday, September 24, 1973 at Blue Hills to play in the Super-Celebrity tournament. It ended in a tie to be played off at Brae Burn at a date in October. Tied for first net were Lanny Gregory and Tony Conigliaro of Tedesco and Ken Morradian and Bob Philips of Hopedale. Both had a net of 65. First gross went to Charles Borden and Ron Hobsen with a 76.

The Nominating Committee will meet at Brae Burn on October 12, 1973 at 4:30 P. M.

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## SOUND OFF !!!!

*(Here we go again. The pens are ready to strike which can only mean that it's time for another session of Sound Off, that feature of this publication which puts the power of the press into the hands of the man and woman on the street. Contributors are asked to include their name and address with each offering, although one or both will be withheld upon request. Send all your likes, dislikes or what have you concerning golf to Newsletter Mail Bag, 24 Riverside Drive, Newbury, Mass. 01950. The Newsletter reserves the right to comment on each published letter.)*

\* \* \* \*

"It's remarkable how many times I see comments and news first appearing in your journal suddenly popping up in other periodicals and the like.

"Although not a superintendent, I am exposed to the New England Newsletter and I find it most enjoyable . . . and darn right informative. It is that part of the publication to which I refer here.

"Only recently I read a long article in the *New York Times*, commenting on the horrible weather conditions the golf course superintendents of the Northeast encountered this summer. In fact, if I'm correct, it said that these conditions were the worst in 20 years.

"All of a sudden it dawned on me that I had read virtually the same thing in the August issue of your Newsletter. I was amazed at some of the words and terminology used . . . the result being that it was almost a word for word account taken from your publication.

"Of course, I see nothing wrong in the *New York Times* leaning on the New England Newsletter for the source of its articles. I just thought I'd let you know about it with the hope that it encourages other bits of subject matter worth repeating in such a well-known newspaper as the *Times*."

L. M. REYNOLDS  
Blandford, Mass.

We don't care where you read our copy, L. M., just as long as you can say, "I read it here first."

\* \* \* \*

"I know that youth must have its fling, but I'm wondering if other supers have experienced the same thing I did just before the start of the long Labor Day weekend.

"Seeing that conditions haven't been what you'd call ideal for grooming the golf course, I had counted on my staff to work right up until they returned to school (college). It was much to my surprise and disappointment, though, when most of the younger men deserted me a full week before Labor Day.

"This did me in as far as my schedule went. The remaining members of the crew had to put in double and triple overtime in order to keep the course under control. It was one of the most frightening weeks I have ever experienced.

"Are other supers confronted with this same problem, or is this a pitfall of the profession that happens only to unlucky people like me?"

CRAIG SEAVER  
Stevens, Vt.

Just as long as the workers are without a union and protection, the super will have to live with this problem. Part-time help is just that . . . you can lose all or part of it at any time!

\* \* \* \*

"I am a college student and have just completed my first season working on a golf course. It never entered my mind that I might think about making this my life's work . . . and it very well might end up that way. However, I have some observations that should interest you.

"The first and foremost is the lack of golf course etiquette by many country club members. They seem to think that etiquette only is required in matters of putting lines and what not. They fail to include the safety of golf course workers.

"Time and time again I saw golfers hit into work crews, arrive on the scene with their only concern . . . "where in blank-blank is my golf ball?" It seems to me they could at least inquire as to whether or not that blank-blank ball hit anyone.

"This type of abnormal behavior makes me think twice about my future. Not only am I talking about turning to the superintendent's field as a profession but whether I should even return to the course next year."

BOB CLOUGHLIN  
City Withheld

Through your career (whether as a super or not), you'll find that the world is full of inconsiderate people — some of whom seem to find their way to the golf course.

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"Just a few lines to let you know that the 'national' appears to have come up with another outstanding program for its 45th International Turfgrass Conference and Show at Anaheim.

"I have looked over the program and it is an excellent one. The social and cultural offerings — along with the entertainment efforts — are something that all GCSAA members should be proud of. It certainly looks as though there will be a record turnout.

"After having spent one of the roughest conditioning programs in my years as a golf superintendent, it will be a welcome relief for me to board an airplane for Anaheim. After reading the lineup of events and the like, I'm sure my fellow supers will agree with me. I have to hand it to the 'national' for following the same order of outstanding shows that we most recently experienced in Boston."

TED JOHNSON  
Fellowship, Md.

It looks like the next conference will earn a triple-A rating, Ted. It certainly has our endorsement. What time does that plane leave?

\* \* \* \*

*(That brings us to the end of another interesting session. Keep those cards and letters coming. Everyone's invited to express his views and complaints. We print 'em all).*

## MEETINGS COMING UP

October 29, 1973 — New Bedford

November — Bass River

December 3, 1973 — Holiday Inn, Newton

January 7, 1974 — Holiday Inn, Newton

February 10-15, 1974 — National Convention, Anaheim, Calif.

March, 1974 — Massachusetts Turf Conference

April 1, 1974 — Holiday Inn, Newton

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\* Contributors to the Lawrence S. Dickinson Scholarship Fund

# NEWSLETTER

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