



Golf Course Superintendents Association
OF NEW ENGLAND, INC.

FEBRUARY, 1975



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

THE SPIRIT MOVED 'EM

It wasn't double stamp day. No one was to raffle off a Pinto. And free balloons did not go with every meal.

Nevertheless, the ranks of the New England Golf Course Superintendents Association gave it the enmass treatment for last month's follow-up meeting to the cry for more involvement. Alas, whereas the annual meeting had produced a weakling turnout of 19, the January confab drew some 60 partakers of the spoken word. And speak they did. The spirit apparently moved 'em.

President Tom Curran was surprised but satisfied with the gathering. And his call for action to bring out more than token attendance produced one of the liveliest sessions in the history of the organization.

Curran had appointed a study committee the month before. Its job was to come up with recommendations to stir up the membership and turn meeting places to bustling ports of interest rather than the ghost town status previous sessions had attained.

The committee pulled no punches and worked in enough ammunition to keep everyone in place for more than the usual after-dinner speech time slots. One of the recommendations, which would require a change in by-laws, held a stern to stern audience in its spell. This was the relaxing of qualifications for joining the NEGCSA. Another was the suggestion that "friends of the association" be allowed to attend meetings but only on an inactive basis.

The tone of the membership was against both proposals, but the committee felt it necessary to have printed duplicates of its recommendations made available to the members. Thus, all thoughts of voting on them were tabled until the entire membership has a chance to study them. It's expected that deeper discussion, and perhaps a vote, will be the order of the day during the February meeting.

Dick Blake, venturing all the way from Woodstock, Vt., was especially happy with the response of the Newsletter's call for more involvement by members. And he was a telltale force in the discussion period which highlighted the worthwhile session.

"If it takes some kind of floor fight to get the members out, then all well and good", the former national president piped. "Of course, I'm not in complete agreement with the study committee. There are some proposals that I'll oppose to the finish. However, they did come up with some good ideas. Anyway, they stimulated the membership. And they made the day interesting. Maybe that's what we should concentrate on in the future."

President Curran was in accord with this. He added that the New England supers probably had fallen into a rut where they felt attendance at meetings wouldn't take the dullness out of the sessions. "They're wrong", he remarked. "Anytime you get numbers you're going to get a number of different viewpoints. And this is what happened today. For the first time in some months our members really joined in on things. They did it because there was something of interest presented. I never had any intentions of stirring up radical ideas when I appointed the

study committee. And it isn't its intent, either. If the members want to see things go according to their wishes, they'll just have to be sure to show up from now on."

Even those of the minority point of view were pleased with the development. In all, it was one of the best meetings ever. And it set the pace for things to come. Surely, NEGCSA members have gotten the message. Their organization is only as strong as their individual participation.

Gerry Finn



Next Meeting . . .

FEB. 3, 1975

Holiday Inn

Newton Mass.

Directors Meeting 10:30 A.M.

Lunch on your own

Regular meeting 1:00 P.M.

Golf Course Superintendents Association

MORE WALKING, LESS RIDING?

The economic crunch hasn't really affected the golf course and its points of interest. Thus, we may hear of some country clubs and public layouts reporting banner financial years for 1974. A trend? No, not hardly; but we'll just have to wait and see.

Most experts attribute the increased 1974 play to a combination of good course conditions and the energy scare. "That was the case at my club", one super offered. "If you recall, there were gas lines almost up to the start of summer. This situation provided many of my members a new summer vacation outlet--the country club."

"So, instead of a member taking the month of August off and taking off for the shore, he stayed at home and found his entertainment at the country club. Along with him came the rest of the family. So, the course, the tennis courts and the swimming pool were busy. It made for a good year all around. Maybe there should be an energy scare every year."

The feeling this year is that the economic condition of the country might produce the same membership reaction. It also could be the basis for some cutback in membership spending. If so, it just might be that the golf cart business will be the logical starting point for reducing the family summertime entertainment budget.

In many instances, the cost of golf cart rentals is expected to rise. The popular price these days is \$10 per round. Some courses are thinking of an increase in the 20 to 30 percent range. If they are set, the cost of riding around the course might become over-expensive.

"The whole group of factors--the rough times or recession, the rising cost of cart rentals and the overlooked awareness of physical fitness--can change things", another super opined. "For years the golfer has fallen away from the original purpose of the game--exercise. Now he might be forced back into practicing it."

The high cost of riding figures to resurrect one of the vanishing breed of the golf course--the caddy. Should a member find his share of riding costs mounting to eight dollars a spin, he may reassess things and take a caddy. He might even try a pull cart.

One of the obvious results of the golf cart boom is the fact that male golfers oversubscribe to the luxury, whereas the distaff side of the family swing apparently tries to avoid it. The weight-figure

factor is evident here. The lady of the house finds it difficult to accept an increase in dress size. On the other hand, dad just goes to the rack where the suits hang larger and latches on to a new fit.

The superintendent always has been an enemy of the golf cart. Oh, there are some who don't make waves about it. But those supers usually have a stake in the business. If you get a cut of that rental fee, it's hard to sermonize against them. However, most courses bring the golf professional in on the golf cart take, even though all he does is sign them out while the super services them.

That's neither here nor there, though. At any rate, the golfer is going to make adjustments to the economic status of the country this golfing season. And...while he can't do without clubs, balls, gloves and the like...he can do without mechanized wheels.

The golfing gentry just might become a walking group again. And that's not all bad when you take everything into consideration.

Gerry Finn

1975 COMMITTEES

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Bob Grant, Norman Mucciarone

CONGRATULATIONS TO

Robert L. Petrillo
John A. Forest
Voted in as associate members

To be voted on at the next meeting
Leo Bouchard
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SOUND OFF

EDITORS NOTE

Cards will soon be coming out to update your Greens Chairman and Club Presidents for the Newsletter. Also on these cards are spaces for your telephone numbers, both business and your home for our new directory. Even though there is no change in your club officials please fill out the card completely and return as soon as possible. The old list on club officials will be deleted.

Thanks,
Tom Schofield

(All right, step up and listen to the pulse beat of the golfing world. This is where you can pick up the count. It's where the golfers, supers and observers of the sport are able to air their views. The ground rules are simple. Any letter on any subject pertaining to golf will be printed. All the requirements are wrapped up in the name and address of writer and even those will be withheld upon request. So, get those views on paper and spin them off to Newsletter Mail Bag, 290 North Road, Sudbury, Mass. 01776. The Newsletter reserves the right to comment on all published letters.)

"I am amazed at this country.

"Here we are in the middle of a financial drain on the family man and other members of the national population and all I see around me are people spending money like water on things other than the essentials.

"There is seldom a Sunday during the football season when we didn't hear of more professional sellouts than not. Now, the hockey season is packed with the same type of money outlay. On top of all this, I hear that people are hitting the shore points in Connecticut and Massachusetts for golf like they never did before.

"Am I a minority of one for not agreeing with this type of spending? I can't see why all the fuss about long unemployment lines and empty supper tables when the country seems to want to watch sports games and play them more than putting food on the table."

MARVIN SMITH
Brookline, Mass.

The golf turnouts have been amazing, Marvin. Guy Tedesco tells us of sellout days at New Seabury in January. Apparently people still value their golf swings. Then again, it could be a need for relaxation in otherwise trying times.

"The days are starting to get shorter here with the approach of spring. Some of our members, the fortunate ones, are still in the state of golfing grace at southern links and the such. But some of us, too, have to wait it out until New England greens up for play.

"The superintendent must have some thoughts about this time, since his job soon will be reaching a pressure point. It's always a game of wait and hope for golfers when March swings toward April. And more often than not, the golfer wants to test the old

country club turf before the super wants him to.

"Are there any set dates you people make for opening a course? If not, why don't you have opening and closing dates fixed so you won't have to have the spring and fall hassle with members?"

JIGGS O'NEILL
West Springfield, Mass.

Easier said than done, Jiggs. First of all, the members would never have it in the fall. Have you ever seen a November day with the temp in the 50's. What if the sun shone on November 16, one day after official closing? There'd be a golfers' revolution!

"Our club members were surprised to read in your last month's issue that some superintendents draw expense money to attend your organization's monthly meetings.

"We believe that our superintendent should provide his education for himself by himself. It is not up to us to see that he keep up with the latest course improvement developments. We think he has to see to it that he knows these without help from us. How many clubs provide this aid?"

NAME WITHHELD
Address Withheld

This is not "aid" in any sense of the word. It is a country club's joint interest in its superintendent and its course. And the educational benefits of attending meetings outweigh the cost to the club. By the way, many clubs provide such expense money.

"I read recently somewhere that certain golf clubs have set up so-called "winter courses".

"They are arranged in a sort of mini-makeup of holes, set inside the boundaries of the regular course. It provides members with an area to play during the winter months and at the same time saves wear and tear on those parts of the regular course that are so vital to condition levels in the summer.

"If you can provide me with some information on this, I would be in debt to you. We would like to see if it might be feasible for a public course to attempt this type of winter operation.

"We feel that perhaps we might even be able to provide a couple of extra jobs around the course if we can get approval. There are plenty of guys out of work these days and anything to give them an extra buck or two is worth the attempt."

JIM CARLIN
Pittsfield, Mass.

There is such an arrangement for "winter courses", Jim. However, we don't know of any in New England at the moment. Your contact would be the USGA which has experimented along those lines. Otherwise, support your local ski area.

(That puts the wrapper on things for this session with the Sound Off public. Remember, all letters are welcome. So, sit down and let us in on your point of view.)

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* Contributors to the Lawrence S. Dickinson Scholarship Fund

NEWSLETTER

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