

## Ice... Golf's Hot Item

One of golf's hottest items at this time of the year . . . and the next few months to follow . . . is cold to the touch. Yet, the golf course superintendent's constitutional temperature rises at the very mention of ice. It is another natural enemy, especially in New England where the climate is conducive to its appearance and uninvited long stay.

Ice cover. It starts at any time in late fall, sometimes as early as November. It lasts, too often, as late as April. And, therein, lies the danger of what it can do to plant life.

Dr. Alexander Radko, eastern director of the USGA Green Section, has received many queries about the incidence of ice on the golf course this year. And he sheds light on the subject.

"Fortunately for areas in the Northeast like Jersey, lower New York and southern Connecticut, the ice doesn't stay around long enough to cause much damage," he reports. "However, New England is the focal point of ice's fatal properties. If a prolonged cover of it hits the golf course, the chances are that damage will occur."

Speaking of New England, Radko reveals that for some reason the ice here has been thicker than usual. "That's all the more cause to worry," he continues. "Naturally, the thicker the ice, the longer it takes to melt and the longer it has to keep the plant from receiving any kind of life-sustaining food."

What the frozen nuisance does is seal off the surface of the ground. Ice keeps that ground in a deep freeze condition. And, in the process, it shuts off the supply of oxygen and moisture to the plant. The longer it stays on top of the plant the more likely the plant will wilt, perhaps die, when it is exposed to the sunlight and normal temperatures of spring.

Radko has made a study of plant's reaction to prolonged ice cover and its results are most interesting.

"We have found that the time element is the key in projecting any damage caused by ice," he tells. "And, for this reason, the types of grasses used on the course are most important. Probably the most susceptible to damage is poa annua."

The ice cover study boils down to a 60-day stay of execution for poa annua plants. "We've found that poa annua can survive up to 60 days of solid ice cover," Radko discloses. "However, anything after that should send up the danger signals. It's touch and go after 60 days. . . mostly go as far as the plant's longevity is concerned."

On the other hand, Radko finds that bent grass can take more of ice's ammunition than most plants. "Again, we have put this thing on a time basis," Radko continues. "In the case of ice covering bent grass, the sustaining power of the plant improves to 100 days. So, it is nice to have bent in cold country. And New England certainly is cold country. I know. I remember."

Radko refers to the severe winter of 1963 when New England was locked in a deep freeze and ice cover swept the area. "That was the year of the Open at Brookline," Radko recalls. "Ice damage at The Country Club was severe. In fact, we sweat out the greens there right up to the final days of preparing the course for play. Fortunately, we did get greens at the height of their brilliance. But the ice almost killed us."



Common problem for New England 1976.

With a possible ice-covering time in excess of 100 days — should spring be late this year the cover could be with is for more than 120 days — the New England superintendent could be faced with a testy problem. And Radko warns that premature, healthy-looking plants in May don't necessarily mean that damage has been avoided.

"You can't tell the amount of damage until the plant has been exposed for a while," he warns. "Hopefully, the superintendents will escape this probability. Certainly, an early thaw would help."

So, ice could melt the dreams of many a super this spring. In his mind, it belongs only in cube form where it is appreciated — not abhorred.

Gerry Finn

**Mass. Turf Conference**  
March 3, 4, 5 1976



**NEXT MEETING**  
**CAPE COD**  
Outdoor Meeting  
**APRIL 1976**

DATE & TIME TO BE  
ANNOUNCED IN MARCH NEWSLETTER



# Golf Course Superintendents Association

## Cutback — A Curse or Blessing?

Indeed, in these times of economic turmoil, it has come about that "cutback" is the most commonly-used word in discussions of budgets in any form and at any level. Naturally, the cutback of golf budgets has been proposed and in some cases, put into practice.

In 90 percent of logical response to putting the scissors to expenditures on the golf course, it has come to the point where the golfer must ask himself: "What is it I desire in the condition of the course and how much am I willing to pay for it?"

In the conditioning process, the superintendent can cut back on expenses, only if the golfer will accept what amounts to a "new" playing area. Less grooming equals higher scores. And is the golfer going to be able to live with such a situation?



President Wayne Zoppo on the right presenting Tony Caranci and Cosmo Piantadosi their 25 year pins.

The cutback in financial outlay would be a cutback in labor and materials necessary to retain the present playing quality of the golf course. And, in most clubs, both members and superintendents don't really know whether it is a curse or a blessing.

What would happen in a straight swipe at the budget is this: Roughs wouldn't be cut as frequently as they are, hazards would be left to roam in growth, banks and entrances to hazards would not be mowed or developed into escape hatches, cuts of collars, aprons and the like would be minimized. In general, the golf course would take on the old natural look . . . and with it a tougher look.

The returns in savings would be something for members to think over twice. There would be a reduction in part-time labor (probably the most pronounced saving), there would be less strain on equipment . . . thereby resulting in less frequent replacement of same and breakdowns of it would shrink because of unstrained use.

There is sound logic in the statement that "overspending is a direct relative of overgrooming." And from the incidence of overgrooming, perhaps members would accept a "new" playing area.

A USGA spokesman, though, isn't so sure certain golfers will accept this form of comedown. "There is always that competition among clubs as far as condition of the course goes," he offered. "They may not want to be 'outgroomed' by a rival course. So, it really means it's up to the members."

On the other hand, there is some support for cutback in grooming and a return to the tighter, natural form of golf course. In the past 30 years most emphasis has been on providing the golfer with both the equipment and well-manicured course in order that he come away from it with a smile on his face and low numbers on his scorecard.

"It may not set too well with the ego-maniacs," is one reaction to slowing down the golf track. "Some golfers are determined to keep their handicaps at figures they compiled 10 and 20 years ago. So, if the course becomes tougher, there's no way they can keep those figures. Next, they may not want to live with them which means they'll want the same playing conditions as provided for in the original budget."

It's obvious that a period of adjustment lies ahead for both the superintendent and the member should the country club agree to a practical form of cutback in conditioning expenses. The super will have to realize his limitations in conditioning the course and the member, in turn, will have to be aware of the consequences stemming from those limitations.

Then, again, a cutback could result in a better game all-around for everyone. It definitely is a case of individual taste and individual need, combined with the realization that the budget figure coincides with both. Cutback? To some it's a curse, to others a blessing.

Gerry Finn

## Turf Research Fund

The turf research fund at the University of Massachusetts is due for a well-needed boost.

A group of turf lovers — Fran Downey, Bob Healey, Dino Frigo along with Dr. Joseph Troll — is conducting a raffle in order to raise money for the fund.

Association members will be asked to take part in the venture, with raffle tickets already made available at the February meeting as well as the 45th annual Fine Turf Conference in March.

Raffle tickets will be sold in books of three tickets at two dollars each. Through the cooperation and interest of the golfing public and those directly connected with the sport, it is hoped that at least \$1500 can be realized by this effort.

There will be three prizes — television set, toaster-oven and coffemaker.

In the past, most of the fund's resources were realized by direct donations from clubs. Now, everyone has a chance to participate. And the cause needs no drumming. It sells itself.

## TO BE VOTED ON AT THE NEXT MEETING

Robert Barber, Wayland Country Club  
Assistant Member

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# NEWSLETTER NOTES

This column will be used for and about the members of our association. It will be used to exchange ideas and experiences with fellow members so we can learn from each other. It will be used for information about the members of the association and give you an opportunity to express yourself on your thoughts and ideas. In doing this, out of necessity, there will be conflicting opinions. However, through discussion, solutions can be drawn that will be in the best interest of the members, the association, and the game of golf. Any letter with the request, will be printed without the name and address of the writer. Contents of this column does not necessarily reflect the opinion of the editor or the Newsletter Committee. So whether you're a superintendent, club official, commercial salesman, or a member of the golfing public, let us hear from you. Respond to Newsletter Editor, 145 Dedham St., Canton, Mass. 02021.

Would like to welcome Richard Gillis who has been voted an associate member of our association. Richard is superintendent at Norwood Country Club and we hope he will be an active member of the association. . . Would like to remind the superintendents who have not sent in their cards listing the names and addresses of their club presidents and greens chairmen to do so if you want these people to receive the Newsletter. . . Remember when we used to have raffles? They are going to start again at the monthly meetings with a percentage of the money to be set aside for turf research. Good idea. . . Brian Cowan, golf chairman, has 3 dates open for this coming golf season, he would like to fill as soon as possible. The June meeting which is the Superintendent-Greens Chairman tournament is open, the August meeting which is the championship is open, and the November meeting is open. Please contact Brian if you would like to have a meeting at your club. . . The idea of the game of golf is to get the ball in the hole in the fewest number of strokes and the greatest number of words!!! We missed Red Shultz of Mt. Pleasant Golf Club at the last meeting. Red was in the hospital for a few days and we hope Red will be back on his feet again soon. . . Mr. Chet Sawtelle of Sawtelle Brothers gave a very interesting slide presentation at the February meeting. He showed slides of equipment that was used to maintain golf courses back as far as 1890 and slides of some of our past and present members. (He also had slides of people who should be made honorary members). Before the presentation was made it was interesting to note a comment made by Cosmo Piantedosi when he received his 25 year pin. He said that he didn't think many present day superintendents would enjoy working on a golf course 30 or 40 years ago with the type of equipment that was available. After seeing the slides I would have to agree. Chet also had samples of a feather golf ball and tees made of sand that were held together with glue. These were used at the turn of the century. I wonder how far one of our long ball hitters like Ken Mooradian could hit a feathered ball? Chet also showed a slide of using a herd of sheep to cut grass. They were controlled by dogs. Not only would that save the labor budget, but it would cut fertilizer cost!!! A reminder to everyone that the Turf Conference put on by the University of Massachusetts will be held at the Treadway Inn in Chicopee, Mass. This is located at exit 6 off Mass. Turnpike. The Mass. Turf and Lawn Grass Council will meet on Wednesday afternoon, March 3 at 4:30 and the U. of Mass. Turf Alumni will meet at 4:45 p.m. Please attend. . . I'm sorry I failed to list the club affiliation

of secretary Dave Barber and past president Tom Curran at the bottom of the Newsletter. Dave is at Wayland Country Club and Tom is at Eastman Golf Club. My apologies. As noted earlier, Cosmo Piantedosi received his 25 year pin along with Tony Caranci at the February meeting. Cosmo has retired after 40 years at Oakley Country Club. That is a remarkable achievement to serve a club for that length of time and it is a credit to Cosmo and the members of Oakley Country Club. When Cosmo retired he was honored along with his wife and family at a dinner put on by the members of Oakley Country Club. Along with many gifts, the club gave Mr. and Mrs. Piantedosi a trip back home to Italy. A very nice gesture by the members and a well deserved trip for Cosmo and his wife. Tony has been a very active member of our association holding many offices including being a past president. He is also a past president of the Rhode Island association and is now president of the Mass Turf Lawn and Grass Council. Outside of the association, Tony was appointed State Commissioner of the Providence-Worcester Railroad in 1960 by the governor of Rhode Island. Most recently he was elected Director to the Board of Directors of the American Bank and Trust Company of Rhode Island. He also is chairman of the North Providence Republican Town Committee, member of the Rhode Island Republican State Central Committee and is serving his third term as councilman from District 2 in the town of North Providence. As you can see, Tony is a man of many talents. . . There was an article in the July 1929 Newsletter about a loam and compost baker. It measured 12' by 6'. There were side walls on both ends and 1 side about 18 inches high. The other side was left open to feed the wood. You put a piece of sheet iron on top of the baker and then put loam about 4 to 6 inches deep on the sheet. Two men would have to turn the loam while it was baking. The baking took 20 to 30 minutes with a good fire. In one day, 2 men could bake 4 to 5 cubic yards of loam. . . A final reminder about the Fine Turf Conferences put on by the University of Massachusetts, March 3, 4, 5 at the Treadway Inn at exit 6 off Mass. Turnpike. Don't miss this conference, Dr. Troll has some very fine speakers as always. . . Would like to hear what is on your mind, feel free to express yourself in the Newsletter.

Larry Bunn  
Newsletter Chairman

Dear Sir,

I don't understand the rationalizing of some of the golf clubs. I am superintendent of an 18 hole course with a budget of almost \$100,000.00. This year the club has cut out completely expenses for me to attend the national turf conference. The expense for me to attend is about 1/2 of 1% of the total budget. If a superintendent comes back with one idea to help cut cost at his club it will pay for the trip. I feel in these changing times, that we now experience, that it is all the more essential that we keep up-to-date in our profession. After all it is to the benefit of our clubs. The national turf conference has the best speakers from throughout the world and every piece of turf equipment is on display for us to see first hand. It seems foolish for my club to not see to it that I attend. Every year more and more superintendents are going to this conference and more like them to keep on top of their profession for the benefit of the club they work for.

Name withheld

(We couldn't agree with your more.)

## Golf Chairman

BRIAN COWAN  
Robins Way  
Harwich, Mass. 02645  
Home Phone 432-9941  
Office Phone 945-9230  
Club Affiliation  
Eastward Ho Country Club

## Educational Chairman

PETE COSTE, CGCS  
89 Pleasant St.  
Medfield, Mass. 02052  
Home Phone 358-7247  
Office Phone 558-0240  
Club Affiliation  
The Country Club

## Newsletter Chairman

LARRY BUNN  
145 Dedham St.  
Canton, Mass. 02021  
Home Phone 828-7206  
Office Phone 828-6540  
Club Affiliation  
Blue Hill Country Club

## Past President

THOMAS CURRAN  
Fox Chase Rd.  
South Sutton, N.H. 03273  
Home Phone 938-5436  
Office Phone 863-4500

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Philip A. Wogan  
Golf Course Architect  
21 Budleigh Ave., Beverly, Mass.

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# NEWSLETTER

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



LARRY BUNN  
Newsletter Committee Chairman  
145 Dedham St.  
Canton, Mass. 02021  
Home Phone 828-7266  
Office Phone 828-6540  
Club Affiliation  
Blue Hill Country Club  
DONALD HEARN  
Business Manager  
LEON ST. PIERRE  
Co-ordinator  
GERRY FINN  
Contributing Editor

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