



## Golf Course Superintendents Association

OF NEW ENGLAND, INC.

July 1978

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

### Wake Up Your Membership

If your golf course is getting on in years, no doubt your members are finding it difficult to keep awake while playing the same old holes with the same old numbered clubs. In fact, some golfers - thrown onto a layout whose characteristics have become so familiar they lend themselves to tedium - often think they're playing their rounds in their sleep.

The solution to the golfing blahs is more than a tuneup (i.e. move a tee 30 yards back and toss a trap into a congested landing area). It calls for an overhaul in which the combination of aesthetic improvement and practical change brings about a complete fresh outlook to the daily or weekend round.

Naturally, the undertaking involves financial outlay and perhaps this is not the time to think of socking it to the members in the form of increased dues or annual assessments. However, the job can be done with a minimum of financial drain if it is spread out over several years and accomplished with as little inconvenience to the normal flow of play as possible.

Such a plan should be a now venture, too, since the rising costs of materials and labor do not appear to be headed for a leveling off point. A classic example of delayed improvements is an adequate irrigation system. The same system installed five years ago now has a price figure more than 50 percent in excess of the 1973 cost. What's more, the cost of a manual system of watering a course is the same today as the cost of the much more streamlined automatic system five years ago. Therefore, the sooner a reshaping program is put into working form the better it will be as far as financing is concerned.

The method for starting the wake-up operation must begin with a qualified architect who knows the problems of the golfer and the superintendent. His aim should be to give the golfer a course with a new look while retaining the originality of the overall layout. Along with this, he must keep in mind the maintenance requisites, pointing his changes to conform with the use of modern equipment and modern ideas for taking advantage of time and labor-saving devices.

Most older courses have a common problem - drainage. Consequently, improvement of the drainage system on fairways, traps, greens and roughs should assume a position of top priority. This problem can be relieved at a gradual pace - three or four holes at a time. The axiom that the better the drainage, the better the turf deserves strong consideration as the start to a more pleasing and less frustrating round of golf for the member.

The established course also suffers from widening of the fairways. It is a fact that through the years superintendents have extended the cut of their fairways and inadvertently have stripped those playing areas of the original sculptured look. Some golfers liken these tracks to super highway driving. . . straight, dull stretches which lapse them into a monotonous tour of the course. This is where the sleep-walking is encouraged. Thus, a few bends in the road will go a long way to livening up a round.

Some of the other changes fall into place. Surely, there are a number of trees on the course which have grown out of play or grown to an extent where they hinder many shots. Relocation of these, plus a long-range new tree planting program add to the spruce-up, fresh-up operation.

Next to drainage, the sore spot on the long-toothed course with the strongest tendency to destroy the typical round is the run-down sand trap. Renovation of bunkers in the form of redesign and reconstruction can do wonders to the look and practicality of the most popular hazard in golf. Again, this project can be spread out over three or four years.

With strategic setting of traps, trees and sculpturing of fairways, the road to a better and new challenge type of course gets into full swing. And other improvements can follow as time and money allow.

So, if your course is tired and your membership reflects such a deadpan setting, think about giving it a new face. The members probably will respond with appreciative gestures so much so that they won't mind the added expense to making their golfing day more enjoyable.

Gerry Finn

### Next Meeting



## August 16, 1978

**Mt. Pleasant Golf Club**

**Host Superintendent - Meindert Shultz**

**Director's Meeting - 9:30**

**Membership Meeting - 10:30**

**Lunch - 12:00**

**Golf - 1:00**

**Steak Cookout After Golf**

**Directions: Route 3 North to Exit 32. Take first right at rotary Westford Road. Go by incinerator and bear right. Club is fourth street on right.**

**Phone or mail your reservation by August 10.**

**Meindert Shultz**

**737 Princeton Blvd. Apt. 9**

**Lowell, Mass. 01851**

**Home Tele. 458-7605: Club Tele. 452-8228**



## Not So Private, Please

If you are a member of a private club or country club, you probably have been touched by what is becoming a common occurrence - the invasion of your course by so-called, "outsiders."

Not all private layouts have succumbed to the lure of juicy revenue generated by the opening of the gates to non-members but some of the more exclusive clubs are seeing fit to offer use of their facilities to service and professional groups.

There is still selectivity in the process of allowing outsiders on the course. However, the restrictions are slowly being lifted because of an incompatible realization - a state of zero population growth and spiraling operational cost growth in the private club sector.

There was a time when private clubs were very private. The member was held to having the same guest play the course only once or twice a month. And the only breakthrough in this arrangement came when once-a-year member-guest tournaments were staged. At that, even some of the non-tournament members frowned on "the hordes stampeding" their hallowed teeing and putting grounds.

It is not unusual nowadays to see the private club unleash several member-guest events over the course of a season. Most courses have gone to invitational mixed foursome tournaments, women's four-ball weekday presentations and guest day specials. However, the most drastic undertaking has been the wholesale lease of the golfing area and clubhouse to groups for a full day and night. It's either the bar association or the doctors association or the Elks or Knights of the Grip. You name them and in all likelihood they have or will have tested your course.

Some refer to this revenue-making change as the country club survival kit. While many members are not in agreement with outsiders being a source of keeping their club out of a red-ink bath,, others are only too happy to welcome the paying guests in order that year-end assessments and big dues increases can be avoided.

According to a report gathered by Harris, Kerr, Forster & Co. and published in "Turf-Grass Times," a static level of membership in private country clubs has existed in the 1975-76 period. It is interesting, too, that expected study for 1977 could even show a drop in the average size of the country club membership.

Correspondingly, the cost to operate the private country club is escalating at a round figure of six percent per year. So, if the membership total remains constant and the cost rises in accordance with the inflation level of the country, the private country club must rely on new revenues or intake other than dues and service fees.

The natural salution is to raise dues and tag assessments onto those increases in order to balance the operational budget. However, there is strong resistance to these added burdens on the members and club officials are seeking other means of relieving the financial pressure.

One alternative is almost as distasteful to members as the hike in dues and call of the assessment. This is a reduction in services offered by the club and a reduction in the days and hours of those services. In other words, the member is being asked (or told) to pay more and receive less. Obviously, this doesn't set too well with the majority.

Therefore, the club has gone to the course of last resort - entering the business of staging outing-type tournaments in order to make ends meet and keep its membership from changing stabilized numbers to reduced numbers in population. It's strictly an economic move and one that's becoming very popular. The private country club just isn't private anymore. . . not by design but by necessity. Good, bad or otherwise. . . it just has to be.

Gerry Finn

### SUPERINTENDENT/CHAIRMAN TOURNAMENT RESULTS WOODLAND COUNTRY CLUB

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R. Mello 71  
J. Morse

R. Dix 71  
B. Carlson

B. Willmott 72  
M. O'Kelly

#### LOW NET

R. Johnston 70  
N. Sperandio

R. Nocera 70  
G. Tedesco

A. Gogoen 70  
M. Hermanson

#### INDIVIDUAL

A. Lanoie 70  
D. Loker 72

All ties were broken by matching cards.

Want to thank the friendly people at Woodland Country Club for having us as their guests. The food and service they provided was certainly of high quality and most appreciated. A special thanks to Norm Mucciarone, the host superintendent. As always he provided us with an excellent golf course that not only looked good, but played as well as it looked. It's always a pleasure to play one of the finest golf courses in New England.

CONGRATULATIONS to BERT FREDERICK, superintendent from Vesper Country Club who had a hole in one on the 13th hole. This hole measures 204 yards and Bert made the perfect shot using a 3 iron.

#### PRESIDENT

DEAN ROBERTSON  
24 Riverview Drive  
Newbury, Mass. 01950  
Home Phone 462-4540  
Office Phone 745-7289  
Club Affiliation  
Kernwood Country Club

#### FIRST VICE PRESIDENT

RONALD KIRKMAN  
25 Green St.  
Needham, Mass. 02192  
Home Phone 444-8412  
Office Phone 444-5548  
Club Affiliation  
Needham Golf Club

#### SECOND VICE PRESIDENT

BRIAN COWAN CGCS  
Robins Way  
Harwich, Mass. 02645  
Home Phone 432-9041  
Office Phone 945-9230  
Club Affiliation  
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#### SECRETARY

DAVE BARBER CGCS  
P.O. Box 221  
Wayland, Mass. 01778  
Home Phone 358-7678  
Office Phone 358-4882  
Club Affiliation  
Wayland Country Club

#### TREASURER

DONALD HEARN CGCS  
4 Topeka Road  
Chelmsford, Mass. 01824  
Home Phone 256-8709  
Office Phone 894-5906  
Club Affiliation  
Weston Golf Club

#### TRUSTEE

PAUL JOHNSON  
4 Judith Dr.  
No. Reading, Mass. 01864  
Home Phone 664-6664  
Office Phone 777-1134  
Club Affiliation  
Fenncroft Country Club

#### TRUSTEE

MAX MIERZWA  
106 Crestwood St.  
Chicopee, Mass. 01020  
Home Phone 594-4996  
Office Phone 592-9540  
Club Affiliation  
Chicopee Country Club

#### TRUSTEE

BERT FREDERICK  
45 Stoney Brook Rd.  
Nabnaset, Mass. 01861  
Home Phone 692-6445  
Office Phone 453-1231  
Club Affiliation  
Vesper Country Club

#### FIANCE CHAIRMAN

ROBERT JOHNSTON  
128 Wilbraham Rd.  
Hamden, Mass. 01036  
Home Phone 566-3075  
Office Phone 566-3096  
Club Affiliation  
Hamden Country Club



## Follow the Beaten Path

Golf professionals have been trying to educate the followers of the little white pill on proper course behavior ever since the first swings of the sport were taken. "Golf etiquette" - they call it - a sort of list of do's and don'ts when pursuing the grand and ancient game.

Success of this effort hasn't been overwhelming, yet the drive to guide golfers toward a better grasp of the game and knowledge of its rules goes on. If anything, at least the attempt has made golfers aware of the fact that playing the sport can be made more enjoyable for all with a little restraint and application of plain course-side manners.

The golf course superintendent sometimes benefits from the action of the golf etiquette movement. Included in the suggestions therein are such turf-aiding acts as replacing divots, fixing ball marks on the greens and smoothing footprints in traps. Every little bit helps. . . just as every little bit of disorderly conduct hurts.

It is time for the superintendent to make a move in enlarging on the etiquette of golf. That endeavor concerns the proper use of mechanized golf cars - and pull carts, for that matter. Why not attempt to establish golf car etiquette?

Dean Robertson - president of the NEGCSA - notes an improvement in the behavior of golf car operators. "I think golfers are just beginning to realize that they have a dangerous weapon in their hands when they sit behind the wheel of a golf car," he advises. "And they're starting to pay attention to the fact that any damage they cause by reckless driving, as it were, could come back to hurt them where it hurts most. . . in the old pocketbook. In the end, they pay for their mistakes."

Robertson reminds all supers that the golf car has become an essential part of the country club and public course picture. "We have to be aware that the car is a valuable source of revenue for the club," he says. "There was a time when we thought we could fight them. But now we know we have to learn to live with them."

And we also must make a concentrated effort to see that members use them without tearing up the course."

The ideal situation is to have a course with a complete system of paved car paths. And lending to that is a restriction on the use of cars to those paths. The expense of such an undertaking is huge and the enforcing of the paved-paths-only rule is taxing on everyone.

"Most people now know that fairway turf can be bruised easily by continuous pounding of cars," Robertson remarks. "So, they make their tracks in the rough. However, they should realize that following the beaten path in high grass can be damaging. Burnt out areas from incessant travel can kill everything. So, drivers should vary their routes."

It has been proposed that perhaps a ranger system might be the answer to those golf car problems where drivers insist on breaking the rules. The ranger reports infractions to the grounds committee which in turn levels a penalty. "This would put the course of action right in the hands of the members where it belongs," one superintendent observes. "The committee could set up penalties for infractions - just like the motor vehicle department or the police force. There's nothing wrong with suspending a member's rights to drive a golf car. . . or ride in one. I think he or she would get the message if they had to walk three or four rounds."

Members must be reminded of golf car etiquette in any way, manner and form. Stickers on the car, rules of the road - posted in the lock room and pro shop or graphics depicting the results of poor driving tacked up in conspicuous places. All of these might create a full awareness of the member's obligation to the condition of HIS golf course.

Golf car etiquette, then, is something to think about. . . and something that goes beyond the thought process. Pound it into the members' heads and they just might respond. It's worth a try.

Gerry Finn

MY APOLOGIES to SAWTELLE BROTHERS for removing the asterick from their ad on the back page of the Newsletters that recognizes them as contributors to the Lawrence S. Dickinson Scholarship Fund. They not only contribute every year, but are the first to do so year in and year out. Please accept my apology.



**Bert Frederick**

Sorry to report the recent passing of Mrs. Edith Morgan Dickinson, widow of Lawrence S. Dickinson. Mrs. Dickinson died June 21 at the age of 88. Throughout her later years in life she maintained an interest in former students of Mr. Dickinson who are in the turf field. She had been living with their only child, Mrs. Edmund (Sally) Noyes at 95 Dover Road, New Britain, Conn. 06052. Contributions can be made to the Lawrence S. Dickinson Scholarship Fund in the name of Mrs. Dickinson. On behalf of the Golf Course Superintendents Association of New England, I would like to express our sincere sympathy to the family of Mrs. Dickinson.

### JOB OPENING

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Contact:  
Mrs. Joanne Blomstrom  
38 Malcom Rd.  
Stoughton, Mass. 02072

#### GOLF CHAIRMAN

KEN MOORADIAN  
134 Green St.  
Hopedale, Mass. 01747  
Home Phone 473-2352  
Office Phone 473-3508  
Club Affiliation  
Hopedale Country Club

#### EDUCATIONAL CHAIRMAN

PETE COSTE  
121 Granite St.  
Medfield, Mass. 02052  
Home Phone 359-7247  
Office Phone 596-0240  
Club Affiliation  
The Country Club

#### NEWSLETTER CHAIRMAN

LARRY BUNN  
145 Dedham St.  
Canton, Mass. 02021  
Home Phone 828-7266  
Office Phone 828-6540  
Club Affiliation  
Blue Hill Country Club

#### PAST PRESIDENT

WAYNE ZOPPO  
9A Village Green North  
E. Providence, R.I. 02915  
Home Phone 434-1759  
Office Phone 434-8512  
Club Affiliation  
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White Turf Engineering  
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617-297-0941

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

\* Contributors to the Lawrence S. Dickinson Scholarship Fund

# 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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