



Golf Course Superintendents Association OF NEW ENGLAND, INC.

October 1978

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

Put Your PR to Work

It's time for the golf course superintendent to establish a little job security on his own. That's right. Never mind wishing for long-term contracts and court-proof binding verbal agreements. You have the best safeguard against pink slips in your own hands—the hands that shape the conditional destiny of the club where you apply your particular experience and expertise.

"The trouble with a lot of us," says one astute superintendent, "is that we don't communicate with our members. We just sit back and let the uneducated snipers take pot shots at us about our work and then wait for the consequences. That's almost promoting self-destruction."

Getting to know your members. That's the first step in creating a line of communication. And the best method to initiate such a much-needed meshing of personalities and exchange of thoughts is to be seen on your golf course.

"I make it a point to be conspicuous by my presence instead of my absence," the same super advised. "Too often we restrict our appearances on the course to the wee hours of the morning when we go out with the crew to line up the day's work. That's all well and good but the only other form of life on the course at that time of day is the squirrels and rabbits."

An occasional tour of the playing area during the height of the day's action gives the superintendent the exposure, plus the impression to members that he is interested in how the golfer reacts to the condition of the course. In fact, just a friendly hello and inquiry on how play is going is enough to start the public relations movement get off the ground.

Since most of the complaints concerning the course are initiated by the average member, he should be the target of the superintendent's effort to sell himself. "I try to nip a complaint in the bud," another super revealed. "Obviously, my course isn't perfect. But when a member approaches me for the answers to turf problems he might encounter during a round, I'm there for his benefit...and my own. I try to explain the reasons for the brown spot or the roughness in the green. And, usually, I've sent one satisfied customer back to his game."

The gradual involvement by all members in the conditioning process of the course has been nurtured by a new awareness to the complexities the superintendent's task encompasses. In the past, golfers paid little attention to the grooming of a golf course except for commenting on the end result. But the superintendent—through vehicles such as this Newsletter—now finds the member showing interest in his job and actually familiarizing himself with the overall input.

"I think the superintendent lives under a false assumption that silence from the members translates into satisfaction on their part," and super added. "And that's where we're all wrong. I just don't like the idea of hiding out in the maintenance building in order to avoid contact with the members. It's not a healthy situation and sooner or later it comes back to haunt us."

So, is there an established formula for promoting rapport between superintendent and member? Not really. However, the super should make himself available to members on an informal basis. This doesn't mean rushing to the 19th hole at the end of the

playing day and conducting a seminar. That's the extreme and very dangerous. But the superintendent should entertain inquiries and offer explanations in a friendly manner.

Perhaps some superintendents might shudder in horror over the possibility of having to subject himself to the third degree every time a trouble spot appears on the course. Naturally, this is not the intent of drawing a line of communication. On the contrary, the contact should be casual and not contrived.

What it boils down to is a form of educating the members to the conditioning problems so that they understand that such problems often are unavoidable and their solutions sometimes are a matter of cooperation from Mother Nature and the elements. This is far better than leaving the member to draw his own conclusion which, more often than not, places the super under extreme pressure and possible loss of job.

Therefore, the superintendent should put public relations to work, himself. And, as everyone realizes, a little PR never hurt anybody. Don't wait to meet and converse with your member until it's on the receiving end of a dismissal notice. Make him know you appreciate his presence and he'll retaliate. It's just another touch of professionalism which all of us can utilize in any job situation.

Gerry Finn

NEXT MEETING

Nov. 6, 1978

Foxboro Country Club

Host Superintendent - Bill Carter

Director's Meeting 9:30

Regular Meeting 10:30

Lunch 11:30

Golf following lunch

Directions:

Off Rte. 95 take exit for Rte. 140 North. Take first left onto Walnut St. and follow to club.

Reservations for lunch must be in by Nov. 3

Call or write:

Bill Carter

33 Walnut St.

Foxboro, Mass. 02035

Tel. 543-5068

More on the GM Advance

Recently, we pointed out the gradual advancement of the general manager concept in the operation of country clubs. The crux of that presentation was the fact that the clubhouse manager—through the inspiration and influence of his national association—is readying himself for a thrust at becoming the logical candidate for such a high and mighty position.

Now, we must busy ourselves with the reasons why there seems to be a need for the GM type of operation. It is apparent that clubs around the country are slowly turning to such a program with the latest count up around 20 percent in moving in that direction and the figure steadily on the increase.

There is solid backing of the general manager arrangement mounting from within the country club ranks because of a segregated three-ply operation from the individual efforts of clubhouse manager, golf professional and golf course superintendent. There is growing concern among club officials that the three positions are functioning too independently from the others and that the whole thing must be tied together with the establishment of a general manager and its director.

What has happened is that the golf professional appears to approach his duties as those separate from the effect on the clubhouse manager and superintendent. In turn, the others assume the same attitude of isolationist and they go along on their merry way.

Club officials sense this lack of cohesion among the three principals and envision the danger of one either running away from the other or lagging far behind. In this instance, too, they also see an example of competition—unplanned that it may be—taking hold and damaging the overall operation.

The popular observation running through many clubs is that one facet of the three-way management becomes more interested in its particular goals than the general goal of all concerned—to contribute to the success of the complete operation.

Just as in business and industry, there has to be one man or woman at the top to oversee the entire production or service scene. He is the person responsible for the melting of each individual effort into the final product. And, in the club, the final product is a happy and contented membership.

In some clubs, the satisfaction of the member often breaks down to the results of the offerings of the professional, clubhouse manager and superintendent. He likes what he sees in the pro shop and what emulates from there in way of service. However, he doesn't like the way the dining room is operating. And, then, he may not be too rosy in his assessment of the course's condition. Whatever the reaction, it can be just as isolated as the operational arrangement.

Realistically, such feeling is prevalent in the present arrangement of threefold direction. How many superintendents really are concerned with the way the clubhouse is run or how the golf shop treats its customers? And, in the same train of thought, are there many clubhouse managers who give a damn whether or not the greens are putting true?

There is strong reason to believe that eventually the three leaders of the one-way streets in country club operation will have to direct their efforts toward that previously mentioned common goal. Obviously, it will necessitate the naming of a

coordinator for such a concentrated and cooperative effort because there must be someone applying the string to the drawing together of the three.

Perhaps the clubhouse managers are clairvoyant, preparing for a future where the general manager concept will be the rule rather than the exception. And this is not meant to demean such outlook and foresight in advancing their particular profession.

And since there is a growing feeling among club officials that the general manager is the answer to one of their pressing problems, it would do the superintendent well to follow suit. Surely, not all supers are interested in such ascension. But those, who want to better themselves economically and professionally, should look into the future with the idea of making themselves ready to become GM material.

The GM concept is on its way. And it does make sense when its effects are considered. There just has to be one boss man at the top of the chain of command.

Gerry Finn

Job Opening Salem Country Club, Salem, Mass. Position open - Professional Agronomist Write to:

Mr. Arthur Connelly, Chairman
Ad Hoc Committee
Salem Country Club
P. O. Box 671
Peabody, Mass. 01960

Super/Super Championship Tournament Results Gross

1st - Mel O'Kelly & Art Washburn	72
2nd - Bruce Carlson & Linny Blodgett	73

Net

1st - Ron Kirkman & Bob Mucciarone	58
2nd - Tony Carranci & Wayne Zoppo	62
3rd - J. P. Jones & George Machado	64
4th - Dave Barber & Bob Connolly	65

CONGRATULATIONS to Henry Coffin, superintendent at Chestnut Hill Country Club who was voted in as a regular member at the last meeting.

TO BE VOTED at the next meeting will be John Pluta, superintendent at Westover Golf Club. He is to be an Associate Member.

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Nary Sperandio Honored

Last August one of my favorite people was honored on his 65 birthday by family, friends, and fellow superintendents. I am speaking of Nary Sperandio, superintendent at Concord Country Club. This was a surprise party and by the look on Nary's face when he entered the room was living proof that he had the wool pulled over his eyes. The party was planned by his wife Phyllis, son James Alan and daughter-in-law Linda, and daughter Karen Lee and son-in-law Dick.

Nary is a graduate of Stockbridge School of Agriculture. He and Phyllis were married in 1941 and they settled in Marlboro. He was owner of Marlboro Country Club and was one of the first golf courses to have a rope ski tow which Nary put in himself.

In 1943 Nary sold the club when he was called to service where he served the Navy Seabees during World War II. After discharge from the service he settled in Framingham and began employment as a milkman.

In 1945 Concord Country Club called Nary for an interview. He didn't have the gas which was rationed at that time to get to Concord. So the club sent him the necessary stamps to buy gas to come for the interview. Ever since Nary has maintained Concord Country Club giving the members one of the finest golf courses in the area. Along with the golf course, Nary has saved the club a lot of expense by doing work without the help of outside contractors. Examples are installation of an automatic irrigation, clay tennis courts, and reconstruction of areas of the golf course that needed to be rebuilt.

Nary has been an active member of our association over years. He has served in almost every capacity including president from 1960 to 1962. He worked in organizing and raising money when the national turn conference was held in Boston in 1950. It is a rare occasion if you go to a meeting, conference or seminar and Nary is not present. He and Phyllis did miss one meeting that was held on Martha's Vineyard. Seems they were late and were left standing on shore as the boat sailed off to the island!

His golfing career has had its ups and downs. In 1950 he was named Most Consistent Golfer and was nicknamed Nary "Routine" Sperandio. But later on he played in a tournament at Bellevue Golf Club shooting 48 on the first nine and 38 on the back nine. That doesn't sound very consistent to me, and worse than that he later found out it was a 9 hole tournament! Nary played in the first John Shanahan Memorial Superintendent/Pro Tournament in 1935 with pro Jack Harvey representing Marlboro Country Club finishing in fourth place. In 1946 he lost in a playoff and finally last year he and his pro Jock Hopkins took first place. I had the pleasure of playing with Nary at International Golf Club during the Superintendent and Greens Chairman Tournament when he had his hole in one. I will tell you one thing, if there ever was a perfect hole in one, that was. The shot was in all the way!

At age 65 Nary isn't thinking of retiring. His health is excellent and looking at him you would guess him to be 55. He and his wife Phyllis spend a lot of their time enjoying 4 lovely grandchildren. They are Robyn Lee age 6 and Colin age 1, daughter and son of Jimmy and his wife Linda; and Kerry Anne age 5 and Michelle Lee age 3, daughters of Karen and her husband Dick. They also spend their leisure time traveling and playing golf together.

If there ever was a model superintendent, Nary Sperandio is the one. A true professional at his job and dedicated to our association. He has left an impression on many of us. On behalf of our association, Nary we are looking forward to many, many more years together.

Larry Bunn,
Newsletter Chairman

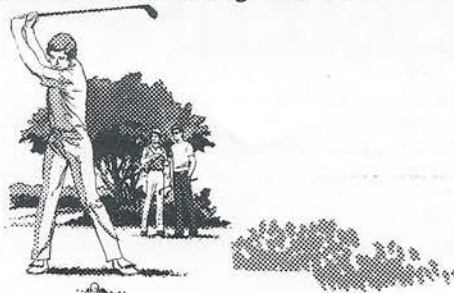
Newsletter Notes

Want to wish Pete Coste, superintendent at The Country Club a speedy recovery from an accident that happened at work. Pete suffered torn cartilage to the left knee. Hope you will be up and around soon.

Edward Buecher, who held membership in the GCSAA, GCSA of N.E. and GCSA of N.H. of which he was a Charter Member, passed away on June 28. He was a retired member having been employed by the Manchester Country Club, Manchester, N.H. for more than 50 years.

"The New Hampshire turf Seminar will be held on January 11 and 12, 1979, at the Sheraton-Wayfarer Motor Inn, Bedford, New Hampshire. This year the sponsors of the seminar have decided that all proceeds will go toward a scholarship for Jennifer Warren, the daughter of Dr. Clifford Warren, in memory of our past Extension Turfgrass Specialist."

Want to clear up a yearly problem that has developed again. Our association has a rule that states the following: "Members may bring prospective members to one meeting. The prospective member may partake in all activities, except the right to vote." We have members and Friends of the Association who bring guests to meetings who are not prospective members. When someone calls the host superintendent and asks to bring some friends to play golf at the meeting he is putting the host in an uneasy situation. If they say no they feel as if they are offending that person. Members of our association are extended the privilege of playing golf at the host club without paying a greens fee. For people to bring friends to play and not pay a greens fee, is over extending the association's privileges. In the future, no guests, and please don't call the host superintendent and put him in an embarrassing situation.



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*** Contributors to the Lawrence S. Dickinson Scholarship Fund**

NEWSLETTER

Golf Course Superintendents Association
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