

NEWSLETTER

NOVEMBER 1984



Golf Course Superintendents Association
OF NEW ENGLAND, INC.

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“Things Ain’t What They Used to Be”

Progress. Dictionaries tell us the word connotes movement forward nearer a goal - improvement along the way of a means to an end, if you will.

One now-generation golf course superintendent remarked on progress at a recent GCSANE meeting. His comments were interesting, not to mention controversial.

“I don’t want to be quoted on this,” he sought and was granted anonymity. “But the best description of progress lies in the state of our profession. Progress, in my mind, is exemplified by the modern-day acceptance of what makes and what doesn’t make a satisfactorily-conditioned golf course.

“What was considered a well-groomed course, say 20 or 30 years ago, would be looked at as a pasture today. It’s the truth. I’ve heard old time members say they wish they had the conditions they have now when they were younger because it’s almost impossible to blame a bad shot on the golf course now.”

That view may be exaggerated, as well as slightly ajar of an open-minded and neutral approach. However, the main thrust seems reasonable. Golfers of the present generation enjoy playing conditions far superior to their predecessors. And, just as their accessibility of those conditions have increased, so have their demands to even improve on them.

This matter of the superintendent’s input having to mesh with the club member’s demands has resulted in a natural order of progress. It is brought up as a reminder to both parties that getting the two factors together wasn’t all that simple.

For one thing, educating the golfer on the importance of the technical knowledge a superintendent imparts on a course has been an ongoing project. Sometimes, it has failed. Sorry to say that there is still that segment of the playing fraternity which adheres to the principle trumpeting Mother Nature as the guiding force behind favorable playing conditions.

Yes sir - and ma’am - there are some people who still regard the golf course superintendent as a spinoff of their local lawn service. Their conversion to the contrary, unfortunately, hasn’t been caught up in the rest of the progress syndrome.

And it never will catch up for a certain few. They insist on clinging to the archaic notion that the only thing professional about a country club is its membership. Anything else must be considered subordinate and, therefore, subject to change at a moment’s notice.

Ah - but progress has passed them by and taken hold on the rest of the golfing populace.

In order to appreciate progress in a field and a profession, one must become familiar with its beginnings.

For example, one must revel in the simple start of the grooming domain at The Country Club. Obviously, you must chuckle at the recall of the start of golf there in 1892 when a six-hole layout was constructed at a cost of \$50 and golf clubs (the club owned one full set) were rented at twenty-five cents an hour.

That progress rocked The Country Club is documented one year later with the addition of three holes to make a full nine. Cost for those instruments of progress “skyrocketed” to \$100. Grooming followed suit with an increase in the flock of sheep the club owned and employed to keep the fairways cropped short. Superintendents? They were four-legged!

In order to put the task of grooming a golf course in its proper perspective, it should be noted that no mention of the superintendent can be found in writings depicting the game’s early times in the United States. In fact, H.B. Martin, who penned “Fifty Years of American Golf” (1885-1935), mentions only that the golf professionals of that era were “catchalls” or a combination of player, teacher, architect and greenkeeper.

Therefore, the formation of the “Greenskeepers Club of New England” in 1924 probably serves as a starting point to follow the progress of the golf course superintendent in this area. Since then it has gone on to recognition and success at breakneck pace.

The superintendent, suppliers of equipment and other maintenance aids and the golfer have come a long way since those days when the sheep determined the cut of the greens at The Country Club and other courses of the sport’s infancy in New England.

Sure, “things ain’t what they used to be” in many facets of the profession and its outlook. And they won’t be fifty years from now, either. Progress comes with the program. It’s the original man in motion and all of golf has prospered by it. Next stop - perfection, if there is such a stop.

Gerry Finn

October Meeting

Unfortunately our golf tournament was cancelled due to rain. We did manage to have a fine educational program with Dick Haskell and Dick Crosby of the MGA our guest speakers. Everyone did have lunch and a few brave souls even played golf. Our thanks to Pete Coste and THE COUNTRY CLUB for being our host.

Golf Course Superintendents Association

YMCA pool to be dedicated

MARBLEHEAD - Marblehead-Swampscott YMCA officials and staffers will honor longtime YMCA benefactor and advisor Chester M. Sawtelle and his wife Harriet Sunday, when the new pool on Children's Island is dedicated in their names.

About 150 guests are expected to attend the dedication on the island, which was purchased under Sawtelle's leadership in 1956.

Sawtelle, a local resident and chairman of the board of Sawtelle Brothers Inc. in Swampscott, has been involved in YMCA affairs since 1943, when he joined its board. He remained an active board member for 25 years and has since stayed involved as an honorary member.

His leadership and advice has made Children's Island a model camp and recreation facility, YMCA officials say. The new \$135,000 pool completes the upgrading of the facilities.

"He led the group that purchased the island for \$12,000, and from that point forward he was the one individual who continued to see that the facilities were kept up," said Darryl Gallant, YMCA director. "If it weren't for Chet Sawtelle, Children's Island would never have survived.

"His own company put equipment out there. He held company parties to cut the grass and do other chores," said Gallant. "During the 1960s and 1970s, when the island was not financially sound, Chet would make sure that things got done.

"He has been a financial supporter, he has worked very hard himself. We went to the public for contributions for a brand new pool, and he was a major contributor and steering committee member," he said.

"The facilities are now what we consider top notch. Children's Island is in fantastic shape," he said.

"We are pleased to be able to turn around and say to this gentleman and his wife, 'thank you, for your years of contributions,'" Gallant said.

The new pool was completed July 1, the day before the summer camp programs began. It's a salt-water collegiate style lap pool that measures 10 by 25 yards. It has four large lanes for swimming and a 10-foot deck surrounding it. It replaces an archaic water cistern.

About 125 children attend the day camp on the island and an additional 40 attend the YMCA sailing program. On most days, an additional 30 staffers and 15 leaders are present, bringing the island's daytime summer population to 210.

The YMCA also runs an overnight camping program and allows Marblehead and Swampscott schools and local Scouts to use the facilities.

A ranger program for older children teaches them building, boating and camping skills.

Aug. 5, the YMCA will open up the island to local youngsters who wish to participate in an all-day swim meet.

DAILY EVENING ITEM, Lynn, Mass.

Editor's Note: Our congratulations to Mr. & Mrs. Chet Sawtelle on this honor. Chet has been a longtime friend of the association, therefore, I saw only fit to include this in our newsletter.





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Gerald R. Ford Receives Old Tom Morris Award



Former President of the United States Gerald R. Ford will receive the Old Tom Morris Award from the Golf Course Superintendents' Association of America (GCSAA). Ford is the 1985 recipient of this significant international award that is identified throughout the golfing world with the true heritage and traditional founding of the game.

"The award is presented to an individual who, through a continuing, selfless commitment to the game of golf, has helped to further the welfare of the game with the same dedication and zeal demonstrated by Old Tom Morris," said James W. Timmerman, CGCS, President of GCSAA.

Ford brought international attention to this popular leisure time activity while serving as President of the United States. His golf outings have been portrayed both positively and frequently by the press. Ford is renowned as a man of integrity, and his association with the game of golf only results in further enhancing golf's attributes of honor and sportsmanship in the eyes of the world.

During his term in the White House, he clearly expressed his love for golf and his respect for the golf course superintendent. In a 1976 letter to GCSAA, President Ford explained,

"Countless numbers of Americans derive pleasure, relaxation and exercise on our nation's golf courses. Evidence of the sport's growing popularity is seen from the increasing numbers who play it, from the rising sales of golf equipment, and from the media attention given to its major events. Holding a fascination for players of all levels and every social background, golf has become an important part of our national life."

"Much of the credit for this goes to you whose dedication and concern for perfection have made our courses into beautiful and reliable playing areas. The imagination and energy you bring to your tasks assure our nation's golf enthusiasts of the world's finest courses."

Since leaving office, Ford has continued to bring international attention to golf through his participation in charitable golfing events, as well as sponsoring his own charitable golf tournament, the Jerry Ford Invitational Golf Tournament.

"President Ford was selected for this award because he exemplifies some of the same characteristics that Old Tom demonstrated throughout his life. Ford's love for the game of golf is known around the world. Mr. Ford, like Old Tom, is a gentleman first, a gentleman last," said President Timmerman.

Old Tom Morris, one of golf's first greats, was a greenkeeper, golf professional, club and ball maker, golf course architect and accomplished player who won four British Open Championships between 1861 and 1867. At the Royal and Ancient, St. Andrews, Scotland, Old Tom acquired worldwide fame, boosting the popularity of golf throughout the British Isles and in many other parts of the world.

Golfing great Arnold Palmer and entertainer Bob Hope are previous recipients of the Old Tom Morris Award.

President Ford will accept the Old Tom Morris Award during GCSAA's 56th International Golf Course Conference and Show in Washington, D.C., February 5-13, 1985. The presentation will be made at GCSAA's annual banquet the evening of February 12th at the Sheraton Washington Hotel. An international golf audience and representation of every major golf association will be on hand for the banquet ceremonies. The banquet attendance is expected to reach 2,000. Country and western singer Tanya Tucker will be the evening's featured entertainment.

1984 November Meeting

**November 5, 1984
Segregansett C.C.
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Membership Meeting - 10:45 am
Lunch 11:30 am
Golf - 12 noon**

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