



# THE NEWSLETTER

Golf Course Superintendents Association OF NEW ENGLAND, INC.

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

October 1988

## -NEXT MEETING-

Thursday, November 3, 1988  
Whitinsville Golf Club

9:00 a.m. Director's meeting  
10:00 a.m. Regular meeting  
11:00 a.m. Lunch  
11:30 a.m. Golf

Host superintendent, Richard Zepp

Reservations Required  
(508) 234-2533  
(508) 234-6210

Directions: Take exit 21B (West Main St. Upton) off Rte. 495; go 4.7 miles to intersection with Rte. 140, continue straight across. Go .7 miles to end of road and turn right. Go 2.4 miles and turn right onto Church St. Go to fourth traffic light and turn left onto Douglas Rd. Take first left onto Fletcher St. and club will be on left—1/4 mile.

## A Stressful Year

Someone told me recently that if a golf course superintendent said he had no turf problems this year he had to be lying. All I can say, if anyone escaped with all grass intact, he had to be a magician. In my thirty plus years as a turfgrass agronomist I do not recall a season in which the weather treated us quite so bad. Last year was hard on grass because of a prolonged drought through much of the growing season. Without good irrigation much of our turf was totally dormant or dead by the end of August. With adequate irrigation there weren't many problems.

We had good rainfall during September of 1987, but October and November

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## The "Real" Pressure at Pleasant Valley



Pressure arrived early at the Pleasant Valley Country Club this year.

There it was July with the Bank of Boston Classic a little more than six weeks away and not a thirty or forty thousand-dollar putt in sight. So, why the stress?

"Tell me about it," PV golf course superintendent Paul Veshi lamented one day last month with the invasion of the world's best players only hours away. "What a kick in the teeth this is, really."

Veshi and Pleasant Valley was one of the victims of "Black Saturday," that day in July (30) which will live in infamy in the recall files of most New England superintendents.

"That was the day the damage peaked," Veshi said. "That's when we looked and saw what everyone thought was the best-groomed Pleasant Valley course ever turn around and become a disaster area."

Although unconfirmed reports pictured the long-time PGA Tour stop as one wiped out by pythium, Veshi insisted it wasn't true.

"We got hit pretty bad," he admitted. "However, there was a lot of exaggeration built into talk about reasons for our setback. It was a combination of things. And it wasn't as if the course wasn't fit for man, beast or touring pro.

"Obviously, the big worry was about the greens. They suffered varying degrees

of damage. One (16th) was hit the worst. We had to re-sod it and there's another story to go with that one. Regardless, there were four greens that were untouched. The rest ranged from one to forty percent loss."

There was little doubt as to why Pleasant Valley was to be numbered among Northeast golf courses squeezed and crushed by weather conditions of a brutal kind.

Veshi retraced its steps.

"Funny," he mused. "When we took our green covers off in March, everything was looking real good. But then the weather started to play tricks and the warning signs began to pop.

"April was so cold and dry and it didn't change until late in May when we got our first warming trend. It didn't stop, either, because we had a June that was choking hot without a trace of precipitation.

"Of course, July was the critical month and actually became a wolf in sheep's clothing because of its precipitation pattern. There were the two inches of rain we got July 8 and they helped out. But then there were four days when we got seven inches late in the month. That's when the turf was cooked to death."

When it all closed in on Paul on Black Saturday, there was no place to run, no place to hide. He had a major tournament to prepare for and time also was not on his side.

"This really was a blow," he told.

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**PLEASANT VALLEY**

*Cont. from page 1*

"Things were really looking up for my program here (PV). If you remember, I came here in 1986 at a time when I was flying around by the seat of my pants. Yet, we made it go.

"The improvement started to show last year and the course was coming around just the way I envisioned it. In fact, even in June of this year there were long-time members who said they'd never seen Pleasant Valley in such good condition. Then, wham!"

There wasn't any time to sit and lick his wounds, though.

"Uh-uh," Veshi remarked. "We were hit on all sides—greens, fairways...the works. But I had one good thing going for me—the best staff ever and we went to work.

"The greens were the key area and we concentrated there. Oh, the sod business. On top of everything else, we had a tough time getting enough. So, we had to put up with that inconvenience."

It's been a non-stop recoup counterattack ever since the course started to lose some of its glitter.

"There have been a lot of overtime hours and a lot of money poured into our attempt to give the pros a golf course they

**COMIC RELIEF**

It was his first show and the proud artist was horrified to hear a businessman refer to his masterpiece as a "pretty good picture of a boat."

"In the first place," he said haughtily, "that is not a picture; it's a painting. Secondly, it's not a boat; it's a ship. And finally, it's not 'pretty good', it's great!"

"I'll give you \$500 for it," the businessman offered.

"Mister," the artist responded, "you just bought yourself a pretty good picture of a boat!"

can play. For example, re-sodding the 16th green cost over \$10,000. And there have been other expenses we hadn't counted on.

"But we've been wading through the adversity and doing our best to get ready. Naturally, we're not going to be the belle of the ball as far as PGA Tour courses go. However, there will be a course there for the big boys to play—the best conditions possible under very, very unusual circumstances."

And that was Paul Veshi just before the pros were about to let 'em fly at Pleasant Valley. Smack, dab in the middle of the toughest assignment a superintendent could have, he was determined to give it his best shot. That's pressure—facing it and beating it.

**GERRY FINN**

**STRESSFUL YEAR**

*Cont. from page 1*

were again very dry months. The fall season is critical in the life of a grass plant as that is the time when it recovers from summer stresses, builds up reserves and forms buds for leaf and root growth for the following season. Certainly, some of this year's problems can be attributed to the poor fall, 1987, growing season. Renovation and overseeding in the fall of 1987 was not as successful as normal and for the same reason.

Early season, 1988, didn't get off to a good start either. Temperatures and rainfall were considerably below normal well into June. Grasses did not green up and make normal growth till much later than usual. Only with heavy early fertilization were grasses greened and this is a no-no. March, April, and May is the peak period of root growth, and feeding, particularly heavy feeding, results in green grass and top growth, but, at the expense of root growth.

When we are not getting normal leaf growth and extension during the spring,

the various leaf spot diseases are more serious. During leaf spot season the disease really digs in when leaves are not being renewed fairly rapidly. The longer each leaf stays on the plant, and is not mowed off, the more time leaf spot fungus has to grow and produce damage. These bad conditions prevailed this spring. Even our newer leaf spot resistant Kentucky bluegrasses, used by our sod producers, were widely damaged this year and many of them had to resort to fungicides.

Rainfall records here at our University Station provide some interesting statistics. For the month of April we had a total of 3.01 inches, but 2.27 inches fell on one day—the 28th. In May we again recorded 3.01 inches, but 2.5 inches occurred between the 11th and 25th. Of the 3.15 inches recorded in June 2.5 inches fell on one day—the 26th. For July we had 7.19 inches but 6.1 inches fell between the 20th and 28th. We had only one rainfall in August. Over one inch fell on the 24th (our Field Day).

We all know the weather was erratic this year. From August 3rd through the 15th we had thirteen nights with temperatures above 70°. Our somewhat coastal location is cooler than where many of you are located also.

Dollarspot, red thread, brown patch, Pythium and summer patch were all common and variously damaging this summer. Grasses actually drowned or cooked in poorly drained areas during the later July, early August period. Fungicides didn't help in these situations. Wet wilt was common and daily syringing was required in many instances.

You can tell your golfers and club officials that this was an extremely difficult growing season and few courses escaped the loss of some grass. A season such as this can be a great teacher, however. I believe we learned the value of good root systems and well aerated soils.

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## STRESSFUL YEAR

Cont. from page 2

Grasses in and around aerifier holes certainly stood out during the summer. The need for daily syringing is proof of a poor root system.

Suggestions for avoiding similar problems in future years:

1. Aerify turf extensively as early as possible in September to aid in improved grass growth through the fall season. Early aerification will help with root growth and permit rapid recovery of the turf.
2. Topdress with a good compost-type dressing if possible. This helps replenish minor and trace elements, and improves nutrient holding capacity of the soil (as opposed to straight sand).
3. Overseed in conjunction with aerifying topdressing, where needed. The slicer-seeders are by far the best way (Mataway, Jacobsen, Olathe).
4. Feed liberally through September and early October, and possibly in late November. Give the turf all the fertilizer it needs to recover from the summer and to build reserves. Don't overdue, however.
5. Use an effective fungicide as late as possible to prevent snow molds.
6. Refrain from early spring fertilizer applications. Don't worry about trying to green up the grass early. If it's been well fed through the fall it will have plenty of nutrients to promote a good root system. Remember, most root production occurs from March to May. Early feeding reduces this growth.
7. Refrain from watering in early season unless the soil gets unusually dry. If we keep the soil saturated with water during the spring we exclude oxygen and prevent normal root growth.
8. Aerify and topdress as late in the spring as possible. Wait until the grasses are growing vigorously so recovery is rapid. We aren't interrupting early season root growth, and we are also providing soil aerifica-

tion closer to the stress periods of the summer.

9. Consider changing cutting height. I believe we have gone overboard with cutting heights. Anything less than 3/16 inch is asking for trouble. With the excellent mowing and grooming devices available, with increased frequency of mowing and with adjusting watering practices, I believe we can provide fast, true putting surfaces without scalping our grasses. Close mowing during cool seasons may not be lethal but raising the cut through July and August is certainly advised. The 1988 growing season provided a lesson in the value of using all we know about agronomics.

C.R. Skogley, Professor  
UNIV. of Rhode Island  
Turfgrass Mgt. Specialist

## Members of the NEGCSA and Mr. Richard Zepp, President

Dear Members,

First, let me thank everyone for the wonderful chair presented to me at the July meeting of NEGCSA in Gardner. Obviously, someone knew that the only thing that I desire to do is to sit for awhile. A more well constructed piece, I have yet to see. Gardner, indeed, is the "Chair City"! Now, if only the kids would move and let me sit down!

I hope that most of you, that are reading this, were able to attend The Open at TCC. I think it was probably the most special event that I will ever be professionally involved with. The golf course was pretty fair, but it is the people that make the memory special to me. There is no way on earth to extend the thanks to the many that so richly deserve it.

The U.S. Open in New England is much like the coming of Haley's Comet...it may only occur once per life-

time. We felt responsible to the entire community in our efforts to make it a memorable experience for everyone. It was very much the desire of the people at the center to make this your Open, too. Hopefully, there was a part of you, on Monday afternoon, that had those feelings. I know that a part in all of us would feel failure if we had been unable to rouse those thoughts.

So, it is over and luckily it is a very fond event to look back upon. My family tolerated so much and could never be repaid. The crew at TCC, the people who really did the work, spoke for themselves with a product that was applauded by millions. I probably had the best "boss" and friend I could have had through such a trying time and the overall success of the tournament lies solely with him.

Once again, to all of you, it was so nice knowing you were there if we needed you. When the call came in 1963, NEGCSA rose to the challenge. This time around, you were able to relax and watch some golf. I hope that, following this wild summer, you all find peace in the great New England autumn.

Sincerely,

Bill Spence  
Superintendent  
The Country Club

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### -POSITION OPENINGS-

Manchester C.C. 18 hole  
South River Road  
Bedford, New Hampshire 03102

Contact Mr. Tom O'Neil,  
Green Chairman

Causeway Club 9 hole  
Southwest Harbor, Maine  
207-244-3780

Contact John H. Longmaid, President  
207-244-3106

Assistant Superintendent  
Eastman Golf Links, Eastman Projects  
Eastman, New Hampshire

Send Resume to:  
Tom Curran, Box 53  
Grantham, New Hampshire 03753



## The Super Speaks Out

Welcome to The Super Speaks Out—a monthly feature which offers the golf course superintendent a forum to express his or her views on topics and issues relating to their profession.

**This month's question:** *With the great rush of participation in golf going full steam and players coming out of the woodwork, how do you set up a maintenance schedule during tournament time at your course?*



**Gary Luccini, Franklin Country Club:** "I've come to accept the increase in number of tournaments, the outings and

all, as part of the business.

"This means if there is any adjustment to be done, the golf course superintendent at Franklin performs the adjustment.

"But, really, it hasn't been that much of a hardship on me other than the fact that sometimes it means mowing greens in the dark.

"Right. We don't have mowers with lights on them, so we more or less do some of our mowing by feel. I'm talking about 4:30 in the a.m., that's morning before the sun, especially when we get past Labor Day.

{So, that's when we need experienced people on the mowers. In fact, we have a couple of guys who've been here a long, long time. They seem to know where they're going and what they're doing, even if they can't see anything.

"The rest of the maintenance program boils down to scheduling jobs around the tournaments or outings. Things like raking traps and setting cups? We do those the night before.

"Frankly, I think I've adjusted my thinking to the philosophy that our golf course depends on tournaments and outings for revenue. It's my job to get the course ready for them and I'm always a

guy who likes to think he gets the job done."



**Mike Nagle, Worcester Country Club:** I haven't viewed the increasing number of tournaments here as a problem because there's a certain amount of cooperation on both sides.

"Which means that many of our tournaments are scheduled at times to accommodate the maintenance program.

"Take our one-day, member-guest events. Usually, they're scheduled as a shotgun affair with a 1 p.m. start. This gives us all morning to get ready for it, so there's no adjusting my schedule in that situation.

"Most of our tournaments are on weekends, so they don't interfere with any major maintenance projects.

"In the case of everything going off the first tee, I just set up my crew so that they're always ahead of the field if there is any work to be done.

"The only change I can think of is bringing in more people to do cutting. I'm probably not the person to be commenting on the subject because its effect has been minimal on me."



**Joe Rybka, Thorny Lea Golf Club:** "I know, I know. You called me because we're probably the busiest golf course

around when it comes to tournaments and outings. I mean, we're loaded with the things.

"This is nonstop golf here, no kidding. There are the outings on Monday, Tuesday means Ladies Day, then a one-day member-guest tournament fills us up on Wednesday which gives us just enough time to prepare for the weekend when it gets REAL busy.

"So, how do I cope?"

"For the most part, it means running around getting all the work done in the morning. And for that reason I hire more morning help. In fact, there are times when my morning work force is doubled.

"The club does make one big concession in the manner of allowing for main-

tenance. I'm allowed five days to aerate and top dress my greens. That's the one benefit that comes from keeping the course in tournament condition virtually the entire golf season.

"We do run into snags on times, though. Usually, we like to think the shotgun events will start at 1 p.m. However, there have been instances when someone has pulled a switch and shotguns wind up going off at 11 in the morning. That's when it gets hectic.

"But there's something going on all the time here. We have the national assistant pros championship every year. This year, we even had the state amateur to host. But that's the way it goes. Oh, and on top of everything else, we're changing our fairway grass from blue to bent.

"Like they say, never a dull moment."

GERRY FINN

## Divot Drift

Belmont C.C. hosted our annual Superintendent's team of two championship. Kevin Osgood from Newton Commonwealth and Don Levangie from Norfolk G.C. captured first net with a score of 61. In at 65 was Jack Hassett, Mt. Pleasant (Lowell) and Art Miller, Nabnasset Lake G.C. Third place at 66, was Brian Cowan, Eastward Ho C.C. and Bob St. Thomas, Willowbend C.C.

Jim O'Kelly, Brae Burn C.C. and Mel O'Kelly (retired) won the gross tournament with a sizzling 67.

Larry Bunn, Sawtelle Brothers and Steve Butler, Larchmont Eng. were the net winners in the commercial division with a 65. Jack Cronin and Larry Anshewitz, both from R.F. Morse Co. won the gross tournament with a score of 76.

Somehow or other Doug Johnson included all the participants in the skins game. To his advantage, of course! Team skins were won by Mike Hannigan and Robin Hayes, John Lenhart and Ron Ryan, Jack Hassett and Art Miller, Mike Hermanson and David Comee. Congratulations to Rick Arzillo, Unicorn G.C.,

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**DIVOT DRIFT** *Cont. from p. 4*

who scored a hole in one on the 155 yard 12th hole.

Arthur Silva had those beautiful Velvet greens slick as glass. He said he was preparing us for Salem C.C. and Brae Burn C.C. Did he mention Vesper C.C.? Tournament results from Vesper and Salem next month.

Arthur Anderson, retired superintendent of Brae Burn C.C. and Henry Genter, retired superintendent of Myopia C.C. recently passed away.

**GCSAA News**

**GCSAA Golf Championship  
in Palm Springs**

More than 450 members of the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America (GCSAA) are expected to gather in Palm Springs, Calif., several days before the organization's 60th International Golf Course Conference and Trade Show to compete in the association's golf championship.

The two-day tournament will be played on four courses in the desert resort area. The PGA West courses that will host the championship will be the TPC Stadium Golf Course, site of the annual Skins Game, and the Jack Nicklaus Resort Course, where the 1988 PGA Tour Qualifying School was held. Other participants will play the Citrus Course at LaQuinta and the Mission Hills Resort Course. The first three are in LaQuinta and the latter is in Rancho Mirage.

Many of today's superintendents are avid golfers, and their knowledge about the game plays an important role in the maintenance of their courses. "When you play, you can sympathize better and have a better understanding for the course difficulty," says defending champion Dave Powell, golf course superintendent at Myers Park Country Club in Charlotte, N.C. Powell won his second GCSAA championship title early in 1988 in Houston.

**GCSAA Conference sets  
sales record five months early**

This has been a record-breaking year for the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America (GCSAA). Earlier this year, the association welcomed its 8,000th member and as of today space sales for the 60th International Golf Course Conference and Trade Show—slated for Anaheim in early 1989—have reached a record five months in advance.

To date, more than 117,960 net square feet of display space has been committed to various manufacturers and distributors from all over the world. This surpasses the previous record of 112,000 net square feet in Houston earlier this year.

"We still have some space available, but it's truly incredible how quickly everyone has responded," said Karyn Davis, sales and marketing manager for GCSAA. "The industry is booming, and exhibitors are eager to display their products to the buyers—the golf course superintendent."

The show will run Feb. 6-13 in the Anaheim Convention Center and will be among the largest to be presented there. The GCSAA Conference and Show is a one-stop marketplace for today's golf course superintendents from around the world. More than 60 percent of the exhibitors have indicated that they will be revealing their new product lines and services for 1989 at the show.

the presence of another supervisor. Tell the employee specifically why they are receiving the warning or termination. Have the employee and supervisor sign written warnings and termination forms. It should be noted on the form if the employee refuses to sign. Keep these records for two years following termination. You are liable for a claim for two years.

Never terminate an employee for "performance" or "attitude". You will pay.

You may terminate an employee for misconduct and not pay compensation. There are five areas of misconduct. These include: 1. failure to follow supervisory instructions; 2. insubordination; 3. violation of company policy; 4. excessive and unexcused absence; 5. excessive and unexcused tardiness. Those released due to absences caused by non-work related illnesses should receive unemployment compensation.

You may use a 90 day probationary period to weed out unproductive employees. Tell them about the probationary period when you hire them. Terminations made within this period do not need to be substantiated.

There are a number of good reasons for collecting Unemployment Compensation. Worthy candidates should be protected by this. Paying an unworthy individual is unnecessary.

**By Scott Wahlin, Miami Lakes C.C.  
The Florida Green—Winter 1988**

**You Don't Have  
To Pay**

Paying Unemployment compensation to an unworthy individual is bad business. It can be avoided.

Warnings and recordkeeping are very important. These can take a minimal length of time and can serve as an aid to problem resolution eliminating the need for termination. Straightforward honest communication may be facilitated. Document verbal warnings and terminations in

**PROPOSED NEW MEMBERS**

**Carl L. Brooks**  
Fort Devens G.C. (associate)

**David Elder**  
Tedesco C.C. (assistant)

**S. Peter Nicolosi**  
Bass Rocks G.C.  
Essex, Mass. (regular)

**Pierre R. Theriault**  
Hillcrest C.C. (associate)

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Contact: Gary Hammond

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Don Reynolds, Rep.

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