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# A PATCH Of GREEN

Official Publication of the Michigan & Border Cities Golf Course Superintendents Association



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# Holiday Greetings

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### 1978 - A busy year

Once again, we can look back at our past and feel a certain pride about our local chapter and its activities. Under the able guidance of President, Clem Wolfrom, we realized many of the goals set forth by the Board of Directors early in the year.

Last spring found us at the Detroit Golf Club participating in a joint venture with the U.S.G.A. and the Golf Association of Michigan discussing problems common to all of us. Among the subjects covered were golf carts and the Ataenius Spretulus, both

timely topics.

Outstanding educational programs at our monthly meetings continued to keep the interest of the membership for the remainder of the summer. We tried mini seminars prior to the business meetings. Subjects on Anthracnose, C.P.R., Irrigation problems, Sulfur coated ureas and soil vs. sand topdressing.

This fall we traveled to Traverse City to view the research conducted by MSU on the turf plots at the Country Club. The weather was not too cooperative but the rain did not dampen the

spirits of those in attendance.

Perhaps the highlight of the year was our highly successful fund raising day at our 13th annual Golf Field Day. Over \$12,000 was raised for future turfgrass research problems. It all started at the flower show at Cobo Hall early last spring where we sold chances for a camping trailer. The booth was well manned by our energetic members and their friends. The new golfing format was quite successful.

Weatherwise, 1978 was not all that great. Most of the Southeast corner of Michigan suffered through a serious drought from mid June thru mid September. The early days of the growing season were ideal for optimum turf

growth and many failed to apply the all important early fungicide applications that are so important. Once again, as so often is the case, serious outbreaks of diseases were reported all season. On the bright side of the ledger however, we did learn a little more about our new pests, Anthracnose and the aetenius beetle.

This fall was almost perfect. Most fall projects were completed and leaf cleanup was relatively easy because the leaves fell over a long period of

time and remained dry.

The perfect summer did take its toll on the turf however, because of of increased play and increased usage of golf carts. We observed an increase in soil compaction, more "wet" spots and a lot of worn areas adjacent to tees and greens.

If You Don't Know The Answers, At Least Know Where To Find Them.

#### GCSAA SEMINARS

#### Additional Activities

Recent conferences and symposiums were very enlightening. Among these were the Thirteenth Annual Wisconsin Golf Turf Symposium in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. This year's subject was "FAST GRASS". The speakers on the program discussed the factors that determine what makes a green fast or slow. Speed is relative. It is a condition of the turf associated with the velocity, speed and duration of roll after the ball is hit.

Shoot and leaf density cause resistance because the ball can nestle into turf. Topdressing can help because it reduces resistance. Other factors affecting speed are: height of cut (not as important as thought),

Continued on next page



ASSOCIATION

and the Patch Of Green editors.

mowing frequency, sharp mowers, mower characteristic (floating head or solid head), general health and vigor of turf, thatch, traffic, and the strain of grass (has to do with grain). It was very obvious that much can be done about the speed of a green. The stimpmeter is a good tool to judge the speed. Thanks to the USGA for this new tool.

Another GCSAA Seminar was held at Lansing, November 8-9, 1978. Twenty-three Superintendents interested in making an investment in their future and profession attended the "Management II" seminar. Leadership, Motivation and Employee Relations were the main topics of discussion. The seminar presented by the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America was taught by Ron Frame, a training consultant specializing in the basic principles of good management, including communications, employee motivation and handling crisis situations. More clubs should insist on their Superintendents attend these valuable seminars. The clubs are being short changed when their Superintendents fail to attend.

#### Wastewater Conference

A National "Wastewater Irrigation Conference sponsored by the U.S.G.A., National Golf Foundation, The American Society of Golf Course Architects and the G.C.S.A.A. was held in Chicago on November 13-14.

Over two hundred attendees heard the merits of using wastewater for irrigation of sports turf, including golf courses. To date, there are around fifty golf courses being irrigated by wastewater. We will be hearing a great deal more about this conservation of water.

#### Purdue Field Day

From The Midwest Turf Field Day held at Purdue University on September 25, 1978. We hear that several states and numerous companies have released cultivars and more will come. Today you can buy some 30 bluegrasses in the Midwest and nearly 50 within the USA. Generally, blends of 2-5 varieties are being used for sod, fairway, and lawn plantings.

Continued on next page

#### FUTURE MEETINGS

MSU Turfgrass Conference January 16 & 17, 1979 Kellog Center, MSU Campus East Lansing

GCSAA Turfgrass Conference & Show

February 6 - 11, 1979 Atlanta, Georgia "50th Annual Conference"

> MRTF Conference March 12 - 14, 1979 Purdue University

The ability to perform under stress, close cut, intense wear, high fertility, disease infections, and pesticide usage is favored by growth habits and genetic makeup. Thus, the new cultivars like Baron, Glade, Adelphi, and others. The ability to tolerate neglect, low Nitrogen, drought, high cutting and weed competition has kept the common types in the trade.

### Bluegrass organized into similar types

- Common types Park, Delta, Newport, Kenblue, S. Dakota.
- 2. Some shade tolerance Bristol, Nugget, Glade, Ben-Sun (A-34).
- 3. Similar turf Baron, Victa, Cheri.
- 4. Vigorous Brunswick, Touchdown, Wabash, Ben-Sun (A-20).
- Elite lawn types Adelphi, Galaxy, Parade, Plush, and many more.

# 1979 Officers and Directors



The two newly elected Directors; Fritz McMullen on the left, Superintendent of Forest Lake CC and Mike Edgerton, Superintendent of Meadowbrook CC.



NEW MICHIGAN & BORDER CITIES GCSA BOARD OF DIRECTORS: Front row, L to R: President Clem Wolfrom; Director Ed Heineman; Director Walter Trombely; retiring Director Ward Swanson. Back row. L to R: President Emeritus George Prieskorn; Vice President James Timmerman; Secretary-Treasurer Bruce Wolfrom; Director Roger O'Connell; new Directors Frtiz McMullen and Mike Edgerton.

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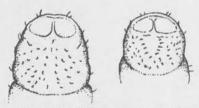
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#### Name For Ataenius Beetle Determined By Committee

The 1978 Committee on Common Names of Insects has approved a common name for Ataenius spretulus. The approved name is "black turfgrass ataenius."



ATAENIUS SPRETULUS (HALD.) APHODIUS GRANARIUS

The committee has also discovered another beetle that damages turf at the same time that Ataenius larvae do, according to Dr. Harry D. Niemczyk, Professor of Turfgrass Entomology. The insect has been determined as Aphodius granarius. Larvae of this species has been found damaging turf in Boulder, Colorado, and at two golf courses in Detroit, Michigan.

At first glance, adults appear identical to Ataenius spretulus. The larvae of Aphodius are slightly larger and have a somewhat darker head capsule. The most outstanding identifying feature of the larvae is the V-shaped series of spines located in the raster.

When coming upon an infestation during June or July which appears to be that of Ataenius, larvae should be carefully examined to determine the possibility of the other species being present, Niemczyk said.

The 1978 Committee on Common Names of Insects is comprised of members from the Entomological Society of America.

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#### Golf car revenue income benefits to the club

By George W. Prieskorn Superintendent, Burroughs Farm Golf Club

The golf car has made a tremendous impact on the golf industry in the past 15 years. In 1963, there were approximately 70,000 golf cars in use, while in 1977 there were more than 500,000.

This impact has been very significant in increasing revenue to the club, in fact, the revenue produced, most cases, ranks third behind membership dues and/or green fees, which are first, and food and beverage sales, which are second. In some clubs this golf car revenue may rival or even exceed dues and/or green fees and/or food and beverage sales. In any event it is recognized that golf car revenue is the fastest growing source of revenue available to the club. Frankly, some clubs may not be in business today, if it weren't for golf car revenue.

The reasons for the increased popularity of the golf car are many and include making the game of golf available to people with physical disabilities, who otherwise wouldn't be able to play. Also, by using cars correctly play can be speeded up. Golf cars are more popular because of the deterioration of caddy programs. And for some golfers, cars are

more popular because it simply is a more enjoyable way to play.

Keeping in mind that revenue production is the purpose of this part of our discussion, there are some key questions that must be considered. A point of paramount importance is whether the club should purchase cars or lease cars.

First, we must understand that there is no cut and dried formula that can be used to answer this question. Consideration must be given to the following:

1. The financial condition of the club. Is the club able financially to purchase a fleet of cars or isn't it?

2. Maintenance of the fleet. Does the club have, or is it willing to hire, a responsible person to maintain the fleet in top running condition. Does the club really want this responsibility?

These, I believe are the two key questions that must be answered first, of course there are other considerations. Surveys indicate that cars owned by the club have a life expectance of up to twice as long as cars that are leased, in other words,

Continued on page 13



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Or you may contact the next golf course supplier who calls on you and give him the information needed for application.

#### Golf car revenue continued

the members simply take better care of them. Also when cars are owned the club has complete control over them and over the prices that are charged. Price increases do not meet near the opposition when members know that the money is going entirely to the club. Insurance is another factor, when clubs purchase cars they must secure their own insurance, but when leasing the leasee takes care of this.

To summarize, purchase versus lease, it would seem that if the club has to borrow money to purchase the fleet there is little difference in the economics. This decision, purchase versus lease, should be made based on the net income objectives of the club. It can be safely said that purchase should net approximately 12% more than lease, after all, the golf car distributor is in business to make a profit as well.

Therefore, continuing our discussion with purchase in mind, that's where the most money is, we next should consider what product to buy.

Gasoline versus electric, the advantages of gasoline powered cars are, 1) you get more rounds per day, 2) the fuel costs are less, and 3) you don't need an electrical power packed charging station. The advantages of electric are, 1) little or no noise, 2) no air pollution, and 3) a better ride (the car is heavier). Environmental and energy concerns are moving the trend to more and more electric cars. But I see no signs that gasoline cars are going to be phased out. If, in

Continued on next page



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Turf Topics

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#### Golf car revenue continued

your operation, a number of your cars are going to be rented more than once per day, then you should give serious consideration to gasoline cars, if this is not the case, then it makes little difference which power system you choose. Granted there are electric cars that can be rented more than once per day, but only when batteries are relatively new and the golf course is fairly flat.

I don't want to present a strong case for either gasoline or electric, however, I do feel that your profit would be 5-6% higher with gasoline cars. This is based primarily on more rentals and lower fuel costs, granted, fuel costs could change over night, how far are we from \$1.00 per gallon for gasoline or even from gasoline rationing.

Three wheel versus four wheel, the trend is to four wheel and is based on safety. The four wheel car is harder to turn over. On one hand four wheel

costs more but I personally prefer the ride of a three wheel car which also is more maneuverable.

Other factors to consider when purchasing golf cars are ease of maintenance, ridability, handling characteristics, ease of entry and exit, golf club positioning and care and general appearance. Initial purchase price and anticipated trade-in values also are to be considered.

There are many excellent golf cars on the market today, but before you decide which one to buy, test the cars you are primarily interested in. Have the distributors drop them off for a couple of days and use them under normal playing conditions. See if they fit your needs and weigh them against the checks I have just listed.

As far as economics is concerned, sure you can create more profit from a less expensive car, but only if it is as serviceable as the more expensive one.

Continued on page 16

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An efficient method for forecasting your pesticide needs is to create an ongoing annual calendar, divided into months or weeks, as appropriate. Go through your records of actual pesticide usage for the past several years, noting in your calendar when pests or disease historically have appeared on your course and what action was most effective against them.

In addition to past experience, you should enter data collected from local experts, including universities, consultants and other superintendents. This information will make you aware of developing problems.

Taken together, this information will give you a rather specific time frame in which to be alert for a given pest or disease. Weather may affect your timetable somewhat, but you should be able to maintain a schedule accurate within ten days.

Reprint FORE FRONT

#### **USGA** election slated for January

Frank D. Tatum, of San Francisco, California, has been nominated for a second one-year term as president of the United States Golf Association.

The election of officers, members of the Executive Committee, and the General Counsel will take place during the 85th Annual Meeting of the USGA on Saturday, January 27, 1979, at the Plaza Hotel in New York City.

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#### Golf car revenue continued

How many cars should you have in your fleet? A rule of thumb that could be used for starters, is one car for every 800 rounds of golf played annually or one car for every 7 or 8 bags in the rack room. I am sure you will be able to make your own adjustments after a year or two. Some things to take into consideration, though are. 1) the affluence of your players, can they afford to rent golf cars, 2) consider the physical characteristics of your golf course, its obvious that players will more readily rent cars on hilly courses than they will on flat courses, and 3) consider the climate during the playing season, more cars are rented when it is hot and humid than when it is cloudy and damp.

Let's take a look at a typical revenue breakdown. This breakdown is for a three year period.

#### BREAKDOWN

If you are operating a 50 car fleet the annual profit would be \$26,000.

These figures, I believe are fairly accurate, but could we improve on them?

It is true that some golf courses do a much better job producing revenue with golf cars than others do. A major reason for this, I believe, is a better management program.

Consider the following:

1. Do you have an attractive and a dependable car to offer?

2. Are you charging a rate sufficient to satisfy your revenue objectives and yet being fair to your market?

3. Are your usage policies consistent with similar operations? More and more courses are making cars mandatory.

4. Is your public relations adequate? After all selling golf cars is nothing more than good PR. Are your cars always clean? Are they visible and lined up neatly? Does the person

Continued on next page

ZIP

Golf car revenue continued

responsible for sales ask, "May I put your clubs on a car today?" or "Are you playing for cars today?"

5. Do you have promotional programs, especially during slack times? How about 20% off days, 18 holes for the price of 9, 12 rentals for the price of 10, or even a seasonal rate?

6. Does your course have a definite policy when conditions are too wet? Has any consideration been given to developing a wet weather route?

7. Does your club rotate cars in order to extend their life expectancy?

8. Does your club have a good maintenance program? Are cars checked and cleaned daily? Are batteries and working parts kept clean? Is periodic maintenance performed? Are cars stored inside? Are dents, chips, and rust spots repaired and painted promptly?

These are a few of the things that could make your fleet more profitable. Most importantly, remember, you can never afford to have cars break down

or go dead on the golf course.

I hope I have provided you with some thoughts about golf car revenue.

We have talked about purchase versus lease, considerations about purchasing, a typical expense breakdown and ways of improving golf car profits.

May I point out again that these profits represent money actually available to the club for any use it desires, and that, in some cases this money actually has kept clubs going.

I close with the formula for good golf car operations: 1) buy a good products, 2) encourage its use, 3) charge a fair price, 4) maintain it well, these four points when added together, will equal maximum profits.

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#### Michigan public courses organize

The Michigan Association of Public Golf Courses, which has as its purpose the promotion of public golf in the state of Michigan through cooperative action, was organized in mid-summer.

The Association has 103 member golf courses with officers as follows: President - Dan Burgess, Hickory Hills

Golf Course, Jackson, MI.

Vice President - Keith Roman, Alwyn Downs Golf Course, Marshall, MI. Secretary/Treasurer - John Grossnickle, Perry Golf Course, Perry, MI.

Association headquarters are located at 15553 North East Street, Lansing, MI 48906; phone 517/484-7726

The first major project of the new Association was to conduct a statewide tournament named The Michigan Team Open. Proceeds from tournament was to be used for operating funds.

### 'The Golf Superintendent' changes format and name

Starting with the January, 1979 issue, The Golf Superintendent will be renamed "GOLF COURSE MANAGE-MENT". Along with the name change, an entirely new look will appear in the content of the magazine.

It was also announced that a new Director of Communications has joined the staff at GCSAA headquarters. John M. Schilling replaces Doug Fender. Schilling brings with him several years experience as editor and sales manager of a monthly magazine and in communications, public relations and advertising. He is a graduate of the University of Kansas, with a degree in Journalism. Good Luck!



Happy Holidays



# Season's Greetings

AND ALL GOOD WISHES FOR THE NEW YEAR



Bob, Burt, Don, Gordie, John Mac, John K., Dave, Roy, Jim, Ed, Ron & Paula



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