

The Green Sheet



Central Pennsylvania Golf Course Superintendents Association

Volume 6 Issue 9

November/December 1998



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Pennsylvania
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Directors!*

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Don't Neglect Your Golf Course Superintendent

by Bradley S. Klein

Ask any golf course superintendent and they'll tell you, the hardest part of their job is dealing with in-house politics. Growing grass, dealing with drainage, making sure there's enough air and sunlight to keep their course in shape: these are the things they've trained years for. The best university program in turf management can't prepare them for all the nonsense entailed in responding to 400 bosses - all of them self-styled experts, and most of them accustomed to having their way.

Besides reading about *Poa annua* grass and the percolation rates of various soils, it might be helpful to spend a semester in turf school studying Machiavelli and Carl von Clausewitz. Not that dealing with the vagaries of weather is easy. But at least in responding to Mother Nature you don't have to negotiate along the way with someone else - or worse, yet, a committee.

The image of the superintendent as country bumpkin greenskeeper - dressed in jeans and suspenders, with little more than a few years as a farmhand for training - are long gone. You might not know it from the way some members treat their hired help, but superintendents today are the most highly trained professionals in the golf business. Most of them are licensed by their states to deal with pesticides, and many of them continue their college education through ongoing seminars organized by the 18,000-member Golf Course Superintendents Association of America or its regional affiliates. With all the recent developments in golf equipment, swing technique and physical training, the single most dramatic changes in howcontinued on page 2.....

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"Past" President's Message

by John Gehman

Ahhh!! At last...One less iron in the fire. And the weather had changed enough to slow down the gray leaf spot. Life is good.

I want to thank Jeff Fry and his staff for hosting our season finale. It was a beautiful day on a beautiful course to cap off a rather challenging season. On behalf of Bill Brooks and Bob Wert, our golf chairman, I want to thank the Pro Shop staff for their assistance in maintaining order in our golf tournament. Their's was a model for cooperation and professionalism that I haven't encountered anywhere else.

I need to thank this association for giving me the opportunity to go through the ranks and become a Past President. This has been new and uncharted waters for me. I was a bit apprehensive at first. (Or as Tony Gustaitis expressed it so eloquently, "It takes the first couple months to get your head out of your a—"). The responsibility became a bit more comfortable once I got some experience behind me. From that experience I honestly feel the position should be a two year stint. This would benefit both the organization and the person in charge. The learning curve is the hard part. The rest is delegate and call Wanda. I'm hopeful that subsequent Presidents will accept two successive years in that capacity.

An issue of concern that we've identified is membership participation. Is there a specific reason(s) why we are reluctant to leave our courses for a day each month? What value do we put on our monthly meetings and where does it fall on our list of priorities? Central Penn is not alone. At the Chapter Delegates Meeting, Dan Achenbach found that it's a concern all across the nation. Is the job of golf course superintendent so technical, multifaceted and time consuming that there is little room for fraternal associations. That kind of thinking could be self destructive. It was somewhat disappointing to see the relatively low turnouts this year. I also know there were times when I questioned whether or not I should leave the course on a particular day. You know what, the place was still there the next morning. I don't have a remedy at hand, but it would be helpful in planning next year's schedule if the board was offered suggestions or reasons why our meetings may not be a significant component of our career. This is our organization for our benefit. Your input is needed to guide us in the proper direction.

I know Ted will do an excellent job as President. I'm anticipating the same professionalism he displayed as Secretary and Treasurer. He didn't do a whole heck of a lot as Vice President, but then again, I didn't give him that much to do. I'm looking forward to being at the bottom of the totem pole. My only regret is that I wish my term had come at a time when it would have been the only "Iron in the fire". Yea, like that's ever gonna happen!!

Looking forward to 1999!

Don't neglectcontinued from page 1

golf looks and plays have come by way of refinements in golf course maintenance.

Whenever I have questions about a golf course, I go to the superintendent. The only trouble is finding them, because the good ones spend a lot more time in the field than in their office taking calls. Good superintendents know their courses as well as - sometimes better than - they know their own kids. And why not, since they spend more time tending them?

That's why it's always awkward, if not downright rude, when some thunderous business tycoon of a member raises hell about, well, you name it. "There's not enough water in the ponds." "Why can't you get your mowers off the course earlier." "The greens are too bumpy." "The ground is too wet." "The flowers need to be watered more." "Whaddya mean I can't take my golf cart on the fairway?" "The rakes should be inside the bunkers, not outside." "The fescue roughcontinued on page 4....."

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Bylaws Changes

The following bylaw changes were voted on and approved at the annual meeting on October 7, 1998.

Section 6.11. Class AF - Affiliate Members. To qualify for affiliate membership, an applicant must be a person interested in the growing, management or production of turf grasses, either individually or through employment by, or other affiliation with, a company, proprietorship, or association, who does not qualify for membership in another class. Affiliate members shall have all privileges of the association, except those of voting and holding office. Affiliate members shall not exceed forty (40%) of the total of Classes AA, A, B, C, and voting R members with the following exceptions: A bona fide turf oriented company may be granted one (1) membership representative into the association, regardless of the Class AA, A, B, C, and voting R members to commercial ratio, provided they are not presently represented in the association. He or she shall pay fees, dues, and assessments.

Student - To qualify for Student membership, an applicant must be a full time turfgrass student enrolled in a formal course of education, or have completed his or her formal education less than one year prior to the date of application for membership.

The following annual dues increases were also presented without objection.

Class A	\$75.00
Class B	\$75.00
Class C	\$65.00
Class AF	\$75.00
Class G	\$75.00
Class AS	\$65.00
Class I	\$50.00
Class M	\$75.00
Class R	\$17.50
Class H	-0-
Class AA	-0-

Member Updates

Congratulations to:

Lee and Dave Frey on the birth of their daughter.

Thomas and Jodi Mahute on the birth of their daughter.

Our thoughts go out to:

Jim and Jeffrey Jones on the loss of their mother



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Don't Neglect...continued from page 2

looks like hay." "What are the fairways stimping at?"

Many of these concerns come from excessive expectations. In the business, it's call "The Augusta National syndrome." An awful lot of people expect their golf courses to look like the annual site of the Masters. Of course, they wouldn't be willing to fund the necessary maintenance budget. And little do they realize that tournament venues are primed to look a certain way for one week a year and don't look that way every day.

The expectations are compounded by those Florida-bound snowbirds, the one who winter down south between Thanksgiving and April 1 and demand that their little havens look lush and plush no matter what.

Superintendents under such scrutiny have virtually no job security. I know many superintendents who have been on the job a decade and still fear the wrath of a disgruntled member or clique. If the course gets highly ranked, they are told "it's about time." Should the golf course fall off in comparison to some neighboring layout, the superintendent's head is first on the chopping block.

The problem is compounded by the proliferation of management companies, most of them eager to cut costs. Too many of them suffer the mistaken belief that they can slash without sacrificing. Many of these firms, interested only in short-term profits, try to force out veteran superintendent and replace him or her with a low-paid newcomer just to save \$20,000-\$30,000 a year - while putting a multi-million dollar asset at risk.

To be fair, there are clubs that value who and what they have. It's crucial to extend long-term contracts so that a superintendent doesn't feel constantly under the gun. The main reason that golf courses are over-watered, for instance, is that greenkeepers are afraid to make a mistake and "lose" an area of the course to brown out or disease. They end up saturating the place just to cater to certain expectations about "green is better," even if this invites other kinds of turf trouble.

Besides long-term contracts, clubs can encourage - and pay for - their superintendents to attend annual training workshops and national meetings. It would also help if superintendents were made to feel welcome teeing it up occasionally with members, or representing the club in area events. Clubs can also establish regular procedures so that complaints can be directed through a committee rather than having the superintendent respond to every complaint.

A long-term master plan to guide maintenance and any renovation projects is the only way to avoid the nastier forms of in-house politicking. Perhaps most important of all is establishing an adequate budget so that the superintendent doesn't have to cut corners.continued on page 7.....

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Membership News

We would like to welcome the following individuals into the association.

Andrew T. Affeldt, Superintendent

Iron Valley Golf Course.....Class A

George F. Barger, Agriculture Division Director

Nutramax Laboratories.....Class G

If you know of anyone who is interested in membership into the association or has questions on the status of their applications, please have them contact Mark Malasavage at (717) 533-3269.

Golf Results

Thank you to Jeff Fry and his staff for providing us with a great golf course. Thank you also to the Pro Shop staff who did virtually all the work! It was a pleasure working with them.

Championship Flight

Bob Wert 74

1st Flight

Jeff Fry 82

2nd Flight

Mark Eichner 88

3rd Flight

Rich Valentine 94

Long Drive Dan Achenbach

Closest to Pin #9 Steve Graybill

Closest to Pin #12 Bob Wert

Have a great fall and winter season! RELAX and spend time with the family!

Bill Brooks and Bob Wert, Golf Chairmen

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Please contact Jeff Fry at (717) 273-1944 if you are interested in the following equipment.

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Heather And Gorse

by Mark V. DelSantro, CGCS

Well campers, this is the last heather and gorse of the 1998 calendar year. Reviewing what we've covered over the past year, it is my sincere hope, that while you might not be any smarter as a result of reading this column, that at least 50% of you were half entertained. Sarcasm is not every person's idea of humor, but in my twisted mind, it is the best type of humor. Especially when the primary sarcastic focus is on simple, everyday events that occur in our own twisted little minds.

Through the course of the past year, I've proceeded to bust on the USGA, the PGA, the ADA, the EPA, Golf Corporations, OSU, Canada, and Mr. H. J. Loke, just to mention a few. Speaking of Mr. Loke, I have to tell you about the other day. Mr. Loke was gracious enough to invite Mr. Brooks, Mr. Wert, and myself to play his golf course. Some may speculate that the reasoning behind inviting me along was so that I might give him a break and not bust on him in this editorial. With this in mind, I promised Mr. Loke that I wouldn't tell anyone about his four putt from 15 feet on the 4th green at Bent Creek, so I won't. Similarly, I can't mention the fact that on the 12th hole (a 480 yard Par 5), Mr. Wert only had 130 yards remaining following his monstrous down wind tee shot and failed to reach the green until his 5th shot, finally recording a 7 on the hole. I also won't mention, the fact that Mr. Wert's inadequacies cost me two, for entertainment purposes only, dollars. Mr. Brooks was Mr. Brooks. He remained rather reserved and quiet, with the exception of when his ball rattled around in the trees. As for myself, I personally visited a number of residential establishments bordering Mr. Loke's golf course to get a true sense for what is meant by the phrase "life is good". Fortunately for me, there were no broken windows. In the end, the weather was fine, I wish my playing companions were beautiful, and a good time was had by all. In all seriousness, Mr. Loke's golf course was unequivocally, wall to wall, the best conditioned golf course I've ever seen. Whatever it is that he's doing out there, he best keep doing it.

For the educational portion of this editorial, I want to talk about what kind of manager you are. Anyone who has had the privilege of taking one of Gerry Sweda's managerial seminars knows that Gerry preaches the key to having a good staff is hiring people who work like you would work. In other words, clone yourself x times and you'd have the perfect staff. This approach might work in a perfectly cloned world, but the world of heather and gorse is far from perfect. There are too many factors that go into creating someone's personality. In fact, rare is the case when a group of employees will think alike, act alike, and perform alike, especially when dealing with the gold collar employees (generation X'ers).

For you as a manager, the challenge lies in what is known

as self-monitoring, or managerial flexibility. The easiest way to manage would be to treat all employees the same and if they can't conform to your methods, they either quit or get fired. A good self-monitoring manager adapts their ability to the differences in individual personalities based on the situation. What I'm saying is that, as a manager, the burden lies with you to figure out a way to get the employee to produce. Don't get me wrong, I'm not suggesting that every employee is an angel, nor that every person can be effectively managed. But, research has shown that any person, even an idiot savant, if taught/trained properly, can perform above the average acceptable performance level over time.

Taking it one step further, upon the employee reaching those acceptable levels, as a manager, you need to continue training and motivating the employees towards reaching new heights. Research has shown that once an employee reaches an acceptable performance level, that the employee tends to relax and take it easy, thus, never coming close to their potential. I'm not suggesting that you push your employees to their breaking point. Just keep in mind that nonproductivity in the work place costs employers a bundle of money. As a productive manager, if you can effectively show your employer how you have minimized nonproductivity, then your value to the organization is enhanced.

So remember, in a year where it seems that competent staff members are no where to be found, maybe by changing your attitudes towards the way you manage your employees, and adapting your management style to the employees, instead of the other way around, you just might be able to perform a little practical magic. For every piece of coal has the potential to become a diamond under the right circumstances. Sometimes, if you're good enough, you can find a diamond in the rough, or in my case, in the heather and gorse.

Upcoming Events

- Eastern Pennsylvania Turf Conference & Trade Show — January 5-7, 1999, Valley Forge Convention Center, King of Prussia, PA. Contact: PTC, P. O. Box 1078, Lemont, PA 16851-1078. (814) 863-3475.
- Northeastern PA Turfgrass & Grounds Maintenance School - January 28, 1999, The Resort at Split Rock, Lake Harmony, PA. Contact PTC, P. O. Box 1078, Lemont, PA (814) 863-3475.
- GCSAA 70th International Golf Course Conference and Show — February 8-14, 1999, Orlando, FL. Contact GCSAA at (800) 472-7878.
- Western Pennsylvania Turf Conference & Trade Show — February 23-25, 1999, Pittsburgh Expo Mart/Radisson Hotel, Monroeville, PA. Contact: PTC, P. O. Box 1078, Lemont, PA 16851-1078. (814) 863-3475.

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Dave Mattes

Don't Neglect...continued from page 4

For their own part, superintendents need to maintain regular communications. Proper signage at the first and tenth tees about pesticide application or cart traffic can forestall misunderstandings out on the course. A column in the club's monthly newsletter, or a note directly to the members, also helps. So does simply showing up at club meetings and the occasional social function.

What a pleasure it is to see a club that values its superintendent - and to see golfers acknowledging it, as well. The media in general, and televised golf in particular, do a lousy job of crediting the hard work most superintendents do. Among the many gracious touches in Justin Leonard's British Open championship speech in 1997 were his words praising Royal Troon's superintendent, William McLachlan.

When is the last time a winner of a major publicly thanked the greenskeeper? Come to think of it, when's the last time your members thanked you?

"Golfweek" architecture editor Bradley S Klein is the author of a new collection of golf essays, "Rough Meditations" (Sleeping Bear Press, 1-800-487-2323).

(This article can be posted at your golf facility or club newsletter and can be also found via GCSAA Website)

Just A Reminder

If you have any accomplishments or things you have done that could benefit other members, please be sure to get the information to Wanda so that it can be included in the newsletter.

Should you need to fax information to Wanda, the new phone and fax number for Central Penn GCSA is (717) 279-0368.

For Your Information...

- Don't forget to wear your name tags to all meetings. If you haven't received one or can not find yours, please contact Wanda to order a new one.
- Please contact Wanda if either your home or work address and telephone numbers change, so we can keep our records up to date.
- 1999 Dues Statements will be mailed within the next few weeks. Please note that the deadline is March 15, 1999.

Scholarship and Research

On behalf of the following individuals, we have received donations from Novartis: Dale Kintzer of Royal Oaks Golf Course and Tony Goodley of Heritage Hills Golf Resort.

Thanks to Novartis for the contributions and to these individuals for naming our association.

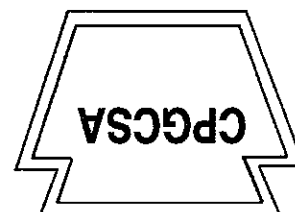


Happy Holidays



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The Green Sheet



The Rules of the Game

Question: In a match playing a Par 4, player A hits his ball on the putting green about thirty feet away from the hole and player B hits his ball on the putting green about three feet away from the hole. After marking, cleaning, and replacing his ball, player A takes his stance, but before he grounds his putter, a large gust of wind blows his ball about five feet closer to the hole. Claiming the wind moved the ball, player A plays his ball from where it came to rest, and proceeds to hole his putt out. Player B having marked, cleaned and replaced his ball, addresses his ball, but before he makes a putting stroke, a large gust of wind blows his ball into the hole. Claiming the the wind moved his ball, player B claims to have holed out. If both golfers were on the green in regulation, what were their scores and who won the hole?

Answer: Player A records a three, while player B still hasn't officially holed out. Rule 18-1/12 states the after a ball is replaced on a putting green and deemed to be at rest. If before a player addresses his ball a gust of wind moves it, the player must play the ball from its new position. The two keys to this are the definition of addressing the ball and the fact that wind is not considered an outside agency. To be deemed to have addressed the ball though the green, you must take your stance and ground your club, player A had not completely addressed the ball when the wind moved it. In the case of player B, he had addressed his ball prior to the wind moving it, as a result, whether the wind caused the ball to move or not, he is penalized one stroke and must replace his ball on the spot where it came to rest prior to being moved by the wind. If he then makes the putt, he would record a four, if fails to replace the ball and walks off the green, player B would receive an additional penalty stroke and record a five. Either way player A wins the hole. Remember, anytime you address the ball and it moves prior to you beginning your stroke, you are deemed to have caused the ball to move. As a result, there is a one stroke penalty and the ball must be replaced.