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#### HOLE NOTES

OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE MINNESOTA GOLF COURSE SUPERINTENDENTS' ASSOCIATION

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# FROM THE PRESIDENT'S DESK

DALE CALDWELL

As many of you are no doubt aware by now, the Hazeltine National Golf Club has found and confirmed C-15 bacterial wilt on their putting greens. Hopefully, you are also aware that our quest-member event September is scheduled to be held at Hazeltine Golf Club. It has been decision of the Executive Board M.G.C.S.A. to retain this event at the Hazeltine site. The fact remains that Hazeltine is one of the ultimate tests of golf in this area if not in the entire country. I'm sure that everyone is still looking forward to playing Hazeltine as much as I am. Chris Hague will no doubt have his course in fine condition despite the unfortunate circumstances.

This year much of the proceeds from this event will be contributed to turfgrass research. This is something we have been trying to set up for the last two years. It is rather ironic that this first year of designating proceeds to research, that this problem of C-15 decline has become evident at the Hazeltine National Golf Club, the site of the event.

This tournament is to be named the Harold Stodola Research Tournament. This is to of our local former honor one superintendents who is legendary not only in this area, but nationally as well. Harold is a former superintendent at the Mendakota Country Club, Keller Golf Club, Tucson Country Club and Firestone Country He was president of our national organization. G.C.S.A.A. through the war years of 1941-1945.

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#### LIGHT-WEIGHT FAIRWAY MOWING

#### UPDATE AT INTERLACHEN

by DOUG MAHAL Superintendent Interlachen Country Club

Our light-weight fairway mowing program began early in the 1984 season. Previously, had heard about we the incredible results obtained with triplex cutting units on fairways and wanted to learn more about it. conducted a survey of 17 private country clubs in the country we knew were already on the program to get a true idea of what was involved and to get the full picture the horse's from mouth. superintendent. We found through the results of this survey that all the clubs noticed an increase in bentgrass populations even after one year. Most of the clubs also found it necessary to reduce their fairway acreage to make the effort more manageable. Over half began using less nitogen, less water and some even less fungicides, all at a smooth, clean 3/8" to 3/4" cutting height. were some of the things we were looking for in our fairway program-being able to apply less water and nutients over less acreage, reducing compaction and spin-out damage caused by the tractor units, and to increase our bentgrass population. After in-depth discussion with our board, we decided to try the program over a threeyear period and analyze the results vs. expense at that time.

Our first chore was to decide on the best type of mowing equipment for our conditions. We considered our topography, soil type, desired quality and maintenance factors. We looked at the 5-gang, wide 3-gangs and finally the triplex greensmower. During the time we were demonstrating all these various pieces of equipment, we found no other unit with quite the cutting quality, maneuverability, simplicity of operation and light-weight as the triplex greensmower. Our choice was to purchase

six units in order to complete a fairway cutting in six hours or less.

Our next chore was to determine when and how often to cut, and at what height. always thought, agronomically speaking, that it is best to cut when the leaf surface is dry - in the afternoon or I think the cutting early evening. quality is better and the dry conditions make scattering of clippings easier. only need throw the clippings at an angle into the wind and the breeze will help Coupled with the drier disperse them. turf and the fact that here at Interlachen we have limited play beyond 6:00 p.m., cutting is begun at 3:00 and concludes approximately 8:30. This gives us a couple good hours of uninterrupted cutting time. We determined that 1/2" cut to be adequate to hit from and verv membership found that height very pleasing Three cuttings per visually. Monday, Wednesday, and Friday worked out well. I send cutters out in tandem, which gives a very desireable 10' stripe and also reduces the boredom an operator may experience from a continuous 5 1/2 hour When hiring operators, I looked cutting. for people who only desired part-time employment and had no other jobs. On a few occassions during the season whether it be for special events or due to rainy weather, we are obliged to cut on odd days or during morning hours. It became quite important to us to find employees with a schedule. As flexible Ι mentioned earlier, we are removing clippings and scattering them in the roughs. original thought was that the clippings would really begin to pile up and start to produce some pungent odors. We have not found that to be the case at all if they are well scattered.

Improving turf quality generally requires kind of sacrifice. We've made several on our fairway program, most being financial. The mowing process requires 5 1/2 times more man hours. found it necessary to put on a part-time mechanic assistant just to keep up with the increased load. Initial machinery costs are actually about the same as the self-contained tractor/gang units but the machinery life is about one-fifth that of these larger units. We've discovered that we must perform some routine maintenance on the greensmowers after each cutting.

Continued on page 5



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The units were just not designed to cut rougher terrain found on fairways so we frequently must repair broken reel spider welds caused from nicking sprinkler heads and drain covers. Another drawback is the fact that instead of having one operator and one machine in the middle of play, the membership must now contend with six operators and six machines. Having the additional cutters also necessitates more supervisory time and mileage.

But the real bottom line is, does the program work? We've seen a surprising increase in our bentgrass population even after a year and a half. I can see patches up to 6000 sq. ft. in size of virtually pure bentgrass I hadn't seen previously. Much of that bent may have been there as individual plants or small plant groups but since beginning light-weight mowing, these small spots have coalesced into very large areas. Another benefit has been that I can hire less skilled operators due to the ease of operation of the triplex units and the limited training time required to learn High school students are the machine. very trainable and don't need the "hard knocks" experience on their resume. We've obviously seen less compaction, which I think is the single most important factor of the whole program. We now have the capability to cross-cut fairways in three or four directions with ease. virtually eliminated the long grass that used to form in the subtle hollows and around old sunken tile lines and drains. As with most of the other clubs using the triplex for fairways, we did reduce our acreage from 32 to 27 and found it essential to cut back on our applications of nitrogen and water. We can still keep the turf healthy without accumulating all those clippings. Our members appreciate the drier 1/2" cut because they can hit the ball farther due to increased ball Because of the maneuverability we now have, the opportunity exists to create very appealing, strong contours, which previously would have been difficult to cut with the 20' tractor unit. added much to the visual appearance of our fairway lines with this program.

As suggested earlier, we've made several sacrifices to obtain a quality 1/2" cut but these benefits I've discussed far outway the sacrifice.

I've generally touched on the past and present programs used here but what of the As I said, the triplex future? greensmower looked like the best unit for us at that time. but. as these machines wear out (about two more seasons) we'll again be looking for just the right unit. A great amount of research and development has been done as of late on the larger 3gang and especially the hydraulic 5-gang units. Perhaps the changes in cutting quality and maneuverability make these machines the best choice for us today. We'll also be looking for a more durable unit requiring less routine maintenance reel repair. As our bentarass populations continue to increase, our nitrogen, water and even fungicide usage will drop. I'm sure we'll have to begin a stringent fairway verticutting program as time passes. The bent is very vigorous at 1/2". I think it is safe to say, there will never be another 8,000 Lb., 22' wide self contained tractor unit on Interlachen fairways again. The program is expensive but without doubt, the playability, eye appeal, durability and over-all improved health of our fairway turf is easily worth the expense, especially if one is trying manage the seemingly ever-present, ever-popular species, Poa annua.



## VANDALISM AT THE GOLF COURSE

by JOHN NYLUND Superintendent Braemar Golf Course

Braemar Golf Course is a public facility in southwest Edina. It's a very busy course and also very accessible to vandalism. We all have our problems with vandalism of all forms. Sometimes very serious and sometimes minor. This particular incident happened on the night of June 25th.

Seven college students were bored at 2:00 a.m. and made the mistake of talking about

their vandalism plans while they were at The gas station an area gas station. attendant is an avid golfer and overheard their plans for Braemar that evening. When they left he phoned police who were at the course before the vandals arrived. lights out and car hidden, partolman was waiting by the clubhouse. The vandals arrived and parked away from clubhouse and proceeded to throw accessories from the course in the lakes and do damage to greens and tees. lone policeman hearing that many vandals on the course called for reinforcements from Eden Prairie and Bloomington which borders our course. They also had police dogs.

Eventually the vandals got the clubhouse area and wrecked a refreshment stand, tried to break the golf cars and set off the alarm in the pro shop. When that went off all seven scattered different directions. To their unfortunate surprise the place surrounded. Some went to their car were immediately apprehended. Others were chest high in muck in the swamp, hiding. The dogs had no problem with them.

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Needless to say, the vandals were flabergasted by all the excitement that evening. They were booked and charged with destroying public property and attempted burglary. They were all members of a U of M fraternity who wanted to outfit their residence with tee markers, ball washers, signs, etc.

I have to believe these young men have learned a lesson and will refrain from any further golf course vandalism. Our congratulations go out to the young man at the gas station and the police for the fine teamwork that evening. The newspaper also did its part to publicize the event and, hopefully, will deter future night time vandalism.

#### CONGRATULATIONS TO THE FOLLOWING NEW MEMBERS:

Lowell Blom, Class E, Anoka Vo-Tech; Richard Robinson, Class E, Anoka AVTI; Mike Davies, Class B, Ridgeview Country Club; Michael Netzel, Class A, Northland Country Club; Glenn Oliver, Class A, Lester Park Golf Course; Carter Wagner, Class F, Elanco Products Co.; Stephen Salmon, Class F, S and S Sales; Keith Stachowski, Class BII, Goodrich Golf Course; William Larson, Class BII, Minneapolis Golf Club; and Patrick Walton, Class BII, Golden Valley Country Club.

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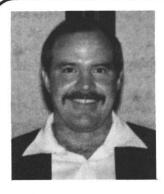
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## EDITOR'S CORNER

FRED ANDERSON, JR.

Another month has come and gone. This can only mean winter is getting closer and time to get reacquainted with friends and family again. Most of us get so involved with our golf course operations in the summer months that we many times overlook and don't give equal time to our families and friends. I feel that this is one of my weak areas and I'm sure many others have the same weakness. Why don't we try and strengthen this area.

Our July meeting held at Northland Country Club, Mike Netzel, host superintendent, was well attended. With a great golf course, a fine slate of speakers and of course being able to get away from the heat and play golf in the "air conditioned" city, however, it was probably the hotest its been in Duluth in 2 years. I understand some of the new young bloods shot quite well at Northland. Randy, you'd better be sharp on August 12 at Island View.

Thanks go to Mike Netzel and the Northland staff for making our day enjoyable, also Randall Nelson for continuing arrange speakers for our meetings, to Turf Supply Company for providing Dr. David Wehner, U of Illinois, and his talk on "Understanding Plant Stress", and Kaye Corp. for providing Mr. David Legg, Ranson Corp., and his talk on "Lightweight Fairway Mowing". Thanks also goes to Mrs. Leo Feser for contribution to the Research Fund and last but not least are last months HOLE NOTES writers, John Steiner, White Bear Yacht Club; Maurice Anderson, Greenhaven Golf Club; and Tom Haugen, Brayton Chemicals, Inc.

Don Lindblad is requesting a first call of names for nomination for directors of M.G.C.S.A. Please send names to Don at Majestic Oaks. Our annual superintendents tourney has all making for a great time; good competition; speakers; a putting contest and of course Island View Country Club, superintendent, Mark Poppitz. host good weather so plan quarantees Remember go west on Highway 5 attending. off of 494 through Victoria, 3 miles out turn right at Lakeside Ballroom, continue until "T" go right, then right at first road on the right, follow to course. Make sure you get there early enough for tee assignments for the 12:30 shotgun.

#### RESEARCH UPDATE

by SCOTT HOFFMANN and KERRY GLADER Co-chairmen Research Committee

With record numbers of golf clubs and associate members responding through generous contributions to our research fund we have been able to continue to expand our research efforts.

We would like to at this writing provide the membership with a brief update of 1985 research projects, followed this fall with a detailed account of receipts and expenses. Research project results are due November 15 of each year and will be published in the HOLE NOTES as we receive them.

#### 1985 Research Projects:

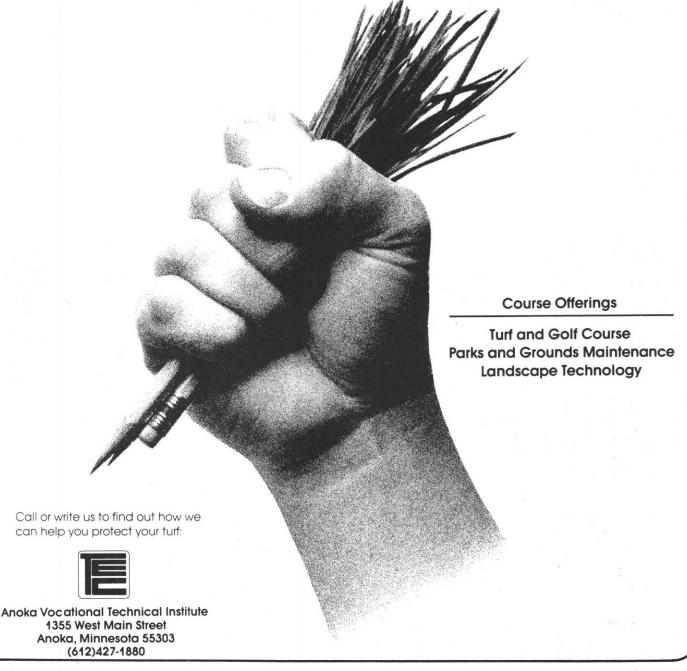
- 1) Poa Stress Management, Dr. Donald White, University of Minnesota. This is a continuation of a project started in 1984. It includes studies of a) growth regulators; b) seedhead control; c) triplex mowing of fairways. Dr. White welcomes inquiries about these projects and we encourage you to either phone him or better yet set aside a time to visit with him personally.
- 2) Summer Patch Control, Dr. Joseph Vargas, Michigan State University.
- 3) Turfgrass Competition, Dr. A. Douglas Brede, Oklahoma State University. This is the first year of a three year committment by the MGCSA. The project involves research into successfully overseeding bentgrass into Poa annua.

Continued on page 12

# OUR STUDENTS CAN HELP PROTECT YOUR TURF.

When it's your job to make sure that what's green stays green, time is in short supply. The last thing you need are maintenance crew members who need training. Your crew must not only be hard working, but also knowledgeable. With the pressures you face daily, you can't spend a lot of time training. That's where we can help. We're Anoka Vocational Technical Institute, and our one

and two year Horticulture Technology, programs have been designed with you in mind. Our programs are flexible, allowing you to send people for training during the off season, and have them back using what they've learned to help you when you need them most. And, when they complete our course and get their diploma, they're ready for even more responsibility in years to come.



#### LIGHTWEIGHT **MOWING OF GOLF COURSE** FAIRWAYS

Lightweight mowing of golf course fairways has been one of the most controversial subjects raised at recent golf superinten-

RANSOM CORP.

dents meetings. Most superintendents are waiting to see more evidence on the benefits of lightweight mowing before considering a change. Although there is certainly no concensus in favor of lightweight mowing, the number of courses switching is significant.

The topic certainly deserves fur

ther review.

When discussing lightweight mowing, one is usually referring to five or three reel unit mowers in which the cutting units are an integral part of the tractor. This is contrasted with the seven reel unit which can often be attached to an independent tractor. The small three gang units (triplexes) will weigh as little as 700 pounds, the five gang units will weigh approximately 3000 pounds while the independent tractor units may exceed 6000 pounds. With a range of lightweight units weighing from 700 pounds to 3000 pounds, the superintendent obviously has a larger decision confronting him than only whether to convert to lightweight fairway mowing. He must also decide how light.

To obtain a better understanding of this movement to lightweight mowing, information was gathered from conversations superintendents in various parts of the country who have adopted these methods. Although the information does not offer an absolute answer to the argument, it may help us to understand the pro's and con's of the method.

Our information indicates that the main areas of the continent concerned with lightweight mowing and/or the picking up of fairway clippings are those with cool seasons although compaction on fairways can certainly be a

problem on any golf course. ANOTHER VIEW Specifically, great interest in lightweight mowing can be found in the Midwest, some Eastern states, the Pacific Northwest, Southern Ontario and Quebec. A major portion of the playing surface on the courses in these areas contains Poa annua grass. Since the grass is shallow rooted, the high temperatures and low rainfall of the summer months often cause a summer 'wilt'. It is believed that lightweight mowing reduces compaction on fairways enabling the grass to develop a better root structure allowing greater resistance to this 'wilt'. It is also believed that the removal of clippings further aids the resistance by reducing a build-up on 'grass insulation'. This insulation helps retain the summer heat which can be detrimental to the grass.

> In the Pacific Northwest, where high amounts of rainfall cause the fairways to become soft and more likely to be damaged by heavy machinery, the use of lightweight equipment appears an obvious choice.

> Further elaborating on the benefits of lightweight mowing as presented by the superintendents:

#### 1. REDUCED TURF DAMAGE/ COMPACTION

Since the small triplex unit can weigh one-ninth that of the heavy tractor units, compaction is substantially reduced. Even the use of the five gang, which can weigh one-half that of the tractor unit, will reduce compaction. The smaller units will also reduce turf damage in undulating fairways because of their inherent ability to follow the terrain more closely. In addition, the smaller units have power drive to the reels which do not rely on draw bar pull as do ground drive or trailing type and thus the tractor drive wheels are less likely to 'spin out' on a slope or in a wet spot.

#### 2. PRECISE MOWING/CLEAN-**ER CUT**

The power driven reel can be speeded up or slowed down to obtain the clip rate required for the job. They can usually be reversed for back-

lapping, to insure the blades are sharp at all times. The units are narrower because the drive wheels are eliminated and so the mowers can go down into the hollows and yet not scalp over the mounds. One word of warning however, not all machines have a floating head which limits them to the smoother or level style of fairway. A floating head is one which follows the contours of the ground independent of frame work or the position of the tractor unit.

#### 3. ABILITY TO MOW IN DIF-FERENT DIRECTIONS/ **CROSS MOWING**

The smaller unit is more maneuverable and can cut against the 'grain' which is caused by only cutting in one or two directions. Cross mowing helps the grass stand upright and insures the same length thereby eliminating the unfair lie in the middle of the fairway.

#### 4. ABILITY TO COLLECT CLIP-PINGS DURING THE MOW-ING OPERATION

Some lightweight machines can be fitted with grass catchers or baskets. Clipping removal is said to lower the temperature of the ground surface by eliminating the 'silage effect', (the decomposition of the clippings which generate heat) relieving stress during periods of high temperatures. Collecting clippings also removes the Poa annua seed heads, which over a period of time may reduce the Poa and increase bent grass which, due to its better root structure, is more tolerant to heat.

Several superintendents who pick up clippings have reported that they have found it unnecessary to syringe when clubs around them have. In addition, they report that the population of bent has grass increased significantly.

Continued on page 11

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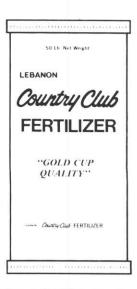
PANASEA: Liquified sea plant extract.

SUL-PO-MAG: Greens Grade; 22% Potash, 11% Magnesium, and 22% Sulfur.

SULFATE OF POTASH: 0-0-50 Greens Grade, Low Salt Index.

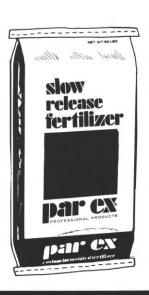
16-0-24: Greens Grade Fertilizer—IBDU with 8.0% W.I.N. plus

Sulfur, Iron and Manganese.









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