President’s Message

By now those of you who were in attendance at the National have gotten back into the routine and are, along with many of us in our profession, taking a hindsight just to see how far we have progressed in turf management in the last 20-plus years. It’s really astounding and somewhat startling to see what really has been accomplished by so many dedicated and interested individuals and groups. We do indeed have a profession of which we all can be unduly proud. Charley Baskins, our National Past President, and the Board of Directors, along with the headquarters staff, are due another round of applause for the progress made this year on the National level.

Well, it’s that time of year again when we are all making landscape plans or designing plant beds, etc. Whether you plan some complete renovation or making some first time plantings, go over your areas and check for the effects you want to accomplish with trees, evergreens, flowering shrubs, or flowers. Get your ideas and designs on paper to make sure nothing has been left out or overlooked. Always have a plan ready at this time of year so that when planting season arrives you are ready.

Always incorporate new ideas and innovations, get a fresh approach with your flower beds, try to achieve continuous bloom throughout the growing season. Plan your beds, if possible, in sunny spots so that the colors are more fully observed and situate them in areas that are free from encroaching roots of trees and shrubbery. Make sure the soil is well prepared and fortified with humus. Use one of the many fine plant foods that are available to sustain the type of plant material you are planting.

If you order your planting materials, don’t wait until time to plant. Order in plenty of time so that you will be ready when warm weather arrives.

Alex Watson

The Thinking Superintendent– A Maintenance Tip

Years ago, while listening to old timers like Reg Giddingo, Ruben Hines and Bob Scott, I heard them talk of using hydrated lime for control of turfgrass diseases on greens back in the days when they did not have the fancy (and expensive) disease control chemicals we have today. They said when disease appeared they just went out and sprinkled a mixture of sand and lime they kept mixed in the shop ready to go.

O. J. Noer mentioned lime as a control for scald on greens in a bulletin titled “The Role of Lime in Turf Management,” published by the Milwaukee Sewage Commission in 1958. He suggested hydrated lime at about 10 pounds per green mixed with sand and broadcast or applied with a power sprayer at weekly intervals during hot weather for control of algae. The idea is to keep the lime on the surface to counteract toxic organic compounds formed by soil organism in wet soil.

Dr. Fred Grau, writing in Golfdom, September, 1961, suggested we take another look at lime as a control for disease on putting greens. He said many superintendents keep hydrated lime on hand and use it weekly during the summer. Very light applications of 1 to 2 pounds per thousand square feet dusted on in late afternoon and allowed to stay on until watered in next morning would check disease and algae and renew turf vigor.

Since lime can be applied at any time, and since pH changes take place in the soil very slowly and there are benefits to be obtained by using lime against disease and algae, it seems like good management to me to make lime applications during the summer, instead of during the winter. I have followed this practice for years and will do so again this year.

A word of caution: apply lime a week or 10 days before or after fertilizer applications. If applied together, the nitrogen in the fertilizer is released into the air and lost. If a green is loaded up with nitrogen and a heavy application of hydrated lime is made during very hot weather, serious trouble could result from the immediate release of nitrogen. I know, it happened to me in 1968.

Bob Shields
Woodmont Country Club
Rockville, Maryland

A Member Speaks Up

I’ve been a member of the Mid-Atlantic GCSA and the GCSAA for a comparatively short time in relation to many of our other superintendents. However, I feel compelled to write this letter because I think that both the National and the Mid-Atlantic are falling far short in one respect. The area in which the associations are falling short is in the endorsement of each and every superintendent. This is to (Continued on page 2)
A Member Speaks Up (Continued)

say that the associations should back each and every superintendent from the time he applies for the job right through until he accepts the position, and continue to represent the superintendent for however long he keeps the job.

The crux of the situation lies in the fact that there is no real job assurance for the superintendent in that he has no real contact. Up until now there has never been a standard contract for superintendents on a national or sectional level. Many superintendents have them and many of them are similar but none are truly endorsed by the associations. Of the three major executives of the club — the pro, the club manager, and the superintendent — all have contracts except the superintendent. This to me is highly unjustified.

The superintendent has more wide ranging responsibilities than the others. He is responsible for the planning and maintenance of millions of dollars worth of land, turf, ornamental plantings and equipment. These reasons, along with the fact that the pro or manager can be an uneducated individual and still be at the top of his profession when for the most part superintendents are educated through at least 2 years of specialized college training. It is interesting to note that a club professional must be seated by the local association. He must have an approved contract in which salary and benefits are set. If a pro comes in from another section and undercuts a job, both he and the club are black balled by the PGA. This means that the club can host only club events, and that the pro can be dropped from the association nationally. Gentlemen, we are the low men on the totem poles. We here in the Mid-Atlantic have had competition from gardeners, landscapers, consultants, out of town superintendents and overbearing golf professionals for years. All of the people trying to undermine the position of the professional superintendent with no real help from the clubs, or most of all from the superintendents associations.

One thing that really burns me is to have an older more established superintendent tell a young superintendent that he has taken his first job without a contract at a low salary. He continues to tell him that he in turn has undercut local standards, thus screwing his fellow superintendents. As far as I'm concerned, when that young superintendent applied for that job, it was a step up for him. He has taken that job at a low salary, but at least he is a superintendent and on his way to better things. When he applied he was on his own. The association wasn't there. Until the association can really back the superintendent in his demands, they have no right to tell that individual what he can or can't do.

By the same token, the superintendent has no backing after he has accepted the position. The years of '72 and '73 were shining examples of this. With the bad environmental conditions, good superintendents had problems with turf. For the most part, the golf courses the superintendents were caring for were not constructed well, thus enhancing the problems. When these good superintendents went before their respective boards, made up of doctors, lawyers, etc., he was on his own again, no help from the association. If the superintendent was then let go by his club, he was out in the cold with no more than a "Gee, that's a shame," from the association. Face it fellas, even coal miners have better contracts and associations than we do.
As I am not one to criticize without adding some constructive ideas, here are mine.

First of all, certification is a must. It gives the superintendent tremendous leverage in his club. He has shown his club officials that he has proven himself at the top of his profession.

Secondly, the superintendent must have a standard contract approved by the sectional and national associations. We are professionals, if we are worth our salt, we should be able to uphold our part of the contract as well as the club upholding theirs. With standard sectional contracts there would be no bickering among the association about salaries and benefits. All superintendents young or old would get desired salaries with backing of the association.

Third, the clubs should be encouraged to hire only the endorsed superintendent. This would encourage the good superintendent to constantly improve himself and keep out the riff-raff. This would insure the clubs good superintendents. We should also offer the clubs a consultation service. We can't automatically go in and say we are now under contract, so if you don't like it lump it. Give the club something extra so that they may benefit also.

Fourth, and this may hurt a little, a change in the officers of the associations. If the officers cannot think along progressive lines they are no longer viable officials to represent us. It has probably been a long while since many of the sectional and national association officers have fought for jobs. These people may not know or not remember how it was when they were getting their start. As a result they are not protecting the young superintendent. You administrators may unknowingly have become complacent. We, the younger superintendents, look to you for advice, counseling and direction. If you can't give us these, it is time to step down.

I don't claim to have all the answers. I welcome your comments. Constructive criticism only, please.

Wayne Evans
Brandywine Country Club