The President’s Message

Last month’s article in this newsletter by Virgil Robinson struck home with me, and I’m sure many other readers agree. Our experiences as golf course superintendents result in a series of highs and lows. For the most part, I think we would all agree that there isn’t a more gratifying yet humbling profession. We have all had bad years. If you haven’t had yours, it’s just a matter of time. The demands of our profession are very taxing on our leisure time, often at the expense of time shared with our families.

Time away from the course is something that we owe ourselves, our families, and, yes, our employers. By being married to the course, a superintendent can become complacent or stale. You can easily begin overlooking details or symptoms you should be seeing. A mental break from the day-to-day operation at the club can give you a fresh outlook, help you to keep matters in perspective, and sharpen your senses.

Our July meeting will be at Winters Run Golf Club and our host is John Drew. This will be our first ever luncheon meeting, with golf following. Please note the details of the July 9 program on this page, and don’t neglect to register in advance by calling our office at 964-0070.

Michael J. Larsen, President

Some Insight Into New Zealand Courses

At our June Meeting at Montgomery Country Club, Paul Standerfer of Toro Turf Equipment ably filled in for a speaker forced to cancel at the last moment; he talked about golf course maintenance in New Zealand, based on his own experience in that faroff part of the world.

Himself a former superintendent in California, Paul said that after three years he left that business because of the stress level he encountered, and that circumstances made the relaxed attitude he found among superintendents very intriguing. The New Zealand Turf Culture Institute, their equivalent of the USGA Green Section, arranged for him to tour courses on the North Island, starting in Auckland. He found the two islands that make up the country to have the largest ratio of golf courses to people in the world, some 300 to 3 million.

Among the other things that Standerfer learned was that most greenskeepers in New Zealand have gotten their impressions of U.S. golf course maintenance from the superintendents’ magazine and the USGA Record; as a result, he had to spend a lot of time debunking ideas of what it is we do. Generally speaking, their procedures are much simpler and cheaper than ours. Some courses use grazing sheep to keep their fairways mowed, relying on low-charge electric fences to keep the animals off.

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