

GCSAA Provides Host of Services

Increasing your technical knowledge and level of professionalism are two key ingredients for a successful career as a Golf Course Superintendent. GCSAA can help. As a member, a wide range of educational opportunities and services are available to assist you in your professional development. Many of these programs are highlighted in the **1995-1996 Professional Development Catalog** which was distributed to all members this fall. Here's a quick rundown of some of those programs:

Career Development — A wide variety of materials are available including a job referral service and employment resource kit. The resource kit includes five booklets which take you step by step through the entire employment process.

Technical Information Services — TIS provides a wide assortment of prepackaged materials that provide information on some of the common issues facing superintendents. Also available, are a large assortment of video materials that can be rented or purchased for use in training, safety programs or, for self improvement instruction.

Public Relations and Media Services/Public Affairs

These two departments can provide assistance in the development of a public relations campaign, guidance in media relations, and tools for communication with the golfing public.

Seminars — Education seminars are available nationally, regionally and through correspondence courses. Participation can expand your knowledge of the industry and sharpen your business management skills. The Technician Training Program also has been developed to provide a fundamental level of instruction for Assistant Superintendents, Golf Course Mechanics and Spray Technicians.

Certification — The Certification program offers superintendents an opportunity to attain recognition for achieving high standards of professional excellence.

Those of you who are members, or those who are contemplating membership, are urged to take advantage of these and many other services which are available. For more information consult your Professional Development Catalog, or contact the GCSAA headquarters at (800) 472-7878.

Some Things Never Change

By: Mike Huck, Agronomist, USGA Green Section

After reading Dr. Alister Mackenzie's book, *The Spirit of St. Andrews*, I was amazed at how many statements and observations he made that are absolutely timeless. He addresses architecture, construction, greenkeeping and playing the game with foresight and complete candor. He really tells it like it is, or was, since the book was written in 1934. I suddenly realized that not much has changed over the sixty years since the book was originally written when I constantly found myself thinking "I have heard this somewhere before."

Mackenzie's comments concerning committees and management hold true to this day. It was his opinion that a permanent green committee should be maintained. He felt that having a permanent committee was the only way continuity could be preserved. Mackenzie stated that when a committee is appointed they will initially make mistakes. He then goes on to say that just as they begin to learn from these mistakes, they resign from office. A new committee is formed that will make even greater mistakes, and so it goes

on. I think, Mackenzie is absolutely right, the most progressive and successful courses we visit have long term committees and management teams. Unfortunately, this case is more often the exception than the rule.

Mackenzie states that committees consisting of doctors, lawyers, engineers and architects recognize the value of mental training and experience in their own professions, but often place little importance on it when it concerns the design and maintenance of their golf course. He noted that committees often have a difficult time paying for "mental labor" such as the services of an architect or consultant, but would not hesitate to spend excessive sums of money for laborers. He infers that if he were hired to oversee a course's construction from the start, his expertise would result in savings that would offset his fee several times. I again agree with Dr. Mackenzie and the same scenario holds true when a good superintendent is hired, versus a lesser qualified individual.

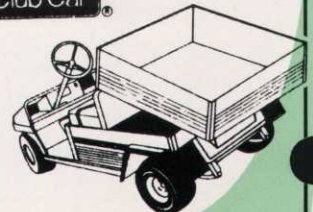
Concerning golf course design and construction Mackenzie stresses one word, this was "finality". He states

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that the goal should always be to do things correctly the first time so that funds will not have to be spent later correcting mistakes. If funds are lacking, he suggests finishing the greens and tees first, because bunkers and fairway irrigation can be installed later. Meanwhile, the golf course can still be used. He points out that it costs more money to correct a poorly designed and built course than it would have cost to have properly constructed it in the first place. Each of us has often used the old cliché, "there is never enough time or money to do things right the first time, but there is always enough time and money to do things over." Finality is a word that should become a part of all of our vocabularies.

Mackenzie felt strong that "specialists" should be hired to engineer irrigation and drainage systems and sent as far as to say "this is an age of specialists". He felt if the architect did not devote all his energies to the design of the course and attempted to design the irrigation and drainage systems, it would be a disservice to the course owners. Mackenzie also saw value in hiring outside consultants for soil analysis and plant selection advice. He understood that local knowledge was key to the success of his projects. Many committees questioned his decision to hire these consultants, he said, citing their hesitations to pay for "trained minds and mental labor."

Regarding greenkeeping, he said that good greenkeepers keep a careful watch on their turf, and have

sleepless nights until they overcome everything that may be the matter with it. He compares turf maintenance to medicine when he said, "the best physicians are those who prescribe poisonous drugs only after most careful consideration." No treatment was required if nature could provide the cure, he felt. He also made the point that there was a lot to learn regarding turfgrass maintenance practices and that more money needed to be dedicated to research. One can hardly argue with any of these statements.

Concerning the game, Dr. Mackenzie thought that the best way to learn and understand the golf swing would be to study the exact sequence of movements each joint within the body makes in the process. Interestingly enough, the USGA is currently conducting biomechanics research and gathering data similar to what Mackenzie suggested. Most importantly he reminds us that "golf is a game and should be played for fun" and "the only reason for the existence of the game is to promote the health, pleasure and even the prosperity of the community." This is something I feel too many people have forgotten.

I think one would agree that each of the cited examples still applies today in some way to our modern golf business. These selected topics only scratch the surface of the many observations and points Mackenzie makes throughout the book. If you have not had the chance to read the *Spirit of St. Andrews*, I highly recommend that you do so. You may even want to recommend it to your committee members. They may not only find it interesting, but educational. It seems true, that some things never do change. ♦

Strictly Business

(Continued)

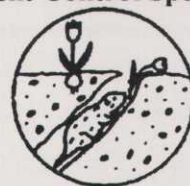
to make sacrifices like allowing carts on the course under wet conditions, sending employees home on rainy days, reducing your staff size during the slower times of the year, performing some maintenance activities without closing a portion of the course, or maybe just increasing the overall efficiency of your operation.

Don't be disappointed if, in your effort to become more sensitive to the financial health of the business, or after altering your maintenance program to increase profit, you find that you still have to campaign just as aggressively for funds to improve your facility. What you likely to gain, aside from a new piece of equipment, or additional labor, is recognition from your manager or owner, that your skills as a Golf Course Superintendent are multidimensional, thereby, increasing your value as a key member of the Management Team. ♦

GCSAA Joins The Web

When you're in Orlando next week, don't forget to stop in at the GCSAA member services booth to check out the GCSAA Home Page on the Web. This is a prototype of the service that is expected to go on-line by July 1, 1996. Staff members David Bishop and Nancee Torkelson will be demonstrating the use of this system and all the member benefits that will be only a few keystrokes away. **Check it out!**

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