

## THINGS by Lee

Our July meeting was at Joe Andrade's Green Valley Golf & Country Club. As usual, Joe was the finest of hosts. But he seems to be lacking with pull upstairs. The weather was murderously hot. It was the beginning of a record setting heat wave, with temperatures hitting the 120° mark in some areas. Of course, this brought grief to some courses. But Joe had his courses looking like a million dollars before inflation. Good work, Joe, and invite us again soon, will you? \_ \_ \_ \_ \_

The levee break which inundated Andrus and Brannan Island, and put Isletown under water, had severe repercussions for the courses which take water out of the Contra Costa canal. Salt (Chloride) levels reached over 400 ppm. There were some readings in the 750 ppm range near the break area near Antioch, but the Contra Costa Water Co. tried everything in their power to dilute the salt content of the water. Any time that the chlorides exceed 150 ppm one can expect salt damage in some ornamentals. Grass has a slightly higher tolerance, but not that much unless you have Bermudas on your course. Those closest to the break had the greatest influence of the salt water intrusion. Those further down the line had the benefit of the dilution process which was initiated by Contra Costa Water with the help of the East Bay Municipal Utility District. To complicate matters, this was the time of the extreme heat. Courses had to make a choice of using water which they knew was too salty for the best irrigation water, or run their reserves down in their lakes. Those who chose the latter route all of a sudden found themselves without any water in the canal, when the main canal pump failed due to the hot weather. All in all, it certainly was a rather frightening situation, and some courses do show some damage. However, it could have been far worse.

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IN AUGUST we have a very rare treat. We hardly ever get to play on a military course, even though there are several around. But thanks to our good friend MERLE RUSSILL, we will be playing and gathering at the Fort Ord Base.

In order to know our host a little more, let's first talk about Merle. A lot of you know him, since he has been around golf courses for some time. This cagey old timer would not tell me how old he was. All he told me is that he was born originally in Oregon, but received most of his education here in California, almost all of it around the Watsonville area. World War II called him up, and he spent 3 glorious years in the South Pacific theater. At the end of the war, Merle found himself around the L.A. area. Having played golf since they still played on sand greens with gutta percha balls, Merle decided to enter the field, I believe as an assistant professional in Montibello in 1946. In 1950 Merle went to Ashland, Oregon with a friend, and built a 9-hole

course. He stayed on as the superintendent for 5 years. In 1955 he returned to California as the assistant professional in Fort Ord. After only 4 months, he took over as the superintendent, the position he presently still holds. Merle's family consists of his wife Trudi, and daughters, Susan, Jennifer, and Juliana, one horse and two dogs. All these can be found around their residence in Del Rey Oaks.

The course itself at Fort Ord is unique in the sense that it is built entirely on sand as most courses are on the Monterey Peninsula. It is not as old a course as some, having been started in 1953, and finished by 1954. The course was designed and built by General Robert B. McClure (retired) with the assist of Boots Widener. It is a regulation 18, which plays around 6300 yards but this can be stretched to 7200 yards. A second course was built in 1964, with the front nine going in in 1964 and the back nine in 1970. This portion was designed and built by Merle. The funds generated for the building of this course comes from the recreational facilities of the soldiers stationed there. Even though it is a military base, the entire crew is civilian with an equivalent status as that of Civil Service. The present crew size is 14 men. Merle has one assistant superintendent and 2 full-time mechanics. In order to break the wind which can be rather persistent in that area, Merle engaged in an extensive tree planting program using over 5000 Monterey Pines and Cypresses.

The courses on Fort Ord, having been built during various periods, do not have the same sprinkler systems on all. Merle has tried to standardize them, and at present two heads predominate--the Valve-in-head Toros, and the Thompson 220 Challenger. By now Merle should have gained enough experience with these two heads so that anyone interested in knowing more about these two types under actual field conditions can ask Merle for his advice.

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President Roger Larson has a request for all our members. In future meetings, please send in your reservation card promptly. If you are too late for some reason, pick up the phone and call the host super to let him know if you are coming or not. Also, if you have made a reservation, but find yourself unable to make it, notify. Many of the hosts have a problem in getting an idea of how many people will attend their meeting. They in turn have to communicate with the club manager to arrange for the food. When the menu they select calls for place settings, rather than a buffet luncheon, the superintendent has to guarantee a certain number. If there are more people than he had counted on, even with the 10% margin usually allowed, it can become very embarrassing to many people if there is not enough food. Conversely if far fewer people show up than were guaranteed, there will be a

lot of wasted food, and what is worse, the Association will be asked to pay for the guaranteed number, whether they are used or not. So, again, cooperate with this request:--Send in your card immediately upon receipt of the newsletter. If you can't make it, call your host and let him know.

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POSITION WANTED: Many of us have had contact with Tom Unruh through his work with the Department of Environmental Horticulture of the University of California at Davis. He usually is assisting Bill Davis in some of Bill's research projects. Tom is now looking for a position as superintendent of an 18-hole golf course. Tom has had a widely varied background, with a lot of experiences working on golf courses and aiding or supervising construction projects on various golf courses. He holds a degree from the University of California at Davis in Park and Recreation Administration. Tom will send interested parties a resume upon request. In view of his background I feel that Tom will be a valuable asset to some lucky course. Contact him at work (916) 752-0412  
Home (707) 745-3662

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POSITION OPEN: For the adventurous at heart, there is an opening for a superintendent to take charge of an 18-hole golf course in Bangkok, Thailand. This is a legitimate offer, and not a joke on my part. All I know is that the course is a regulation 18, close to the Indian Ocean. The grass is Bermuda, and the irrigation system of the quick-coupler type. Anyone eager to meet pretty Thai girls, call John Dallis (415) 365-1336 or (208) 726-5178

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BACK TO WORK: Last month through a snafu of the United States Mail Department, Myrtle Wagoner did not receive my carefully written monthly scandal sheet. One of the items I reported on was the illness of Smiling Jack Baker, the Assistant Chief at H. V. Carter, who has been a faithful supporter of the Association. Jack was in the hospital having some major surgery, and having a rough time with it. Anyway, I hear that old Jack has recovered and is back behind his desk. I certainly hope that he feels his old self shortly, and that we have the pleasure of seeing him again at our meetings. Welcome back to the old salt mines, Jack.

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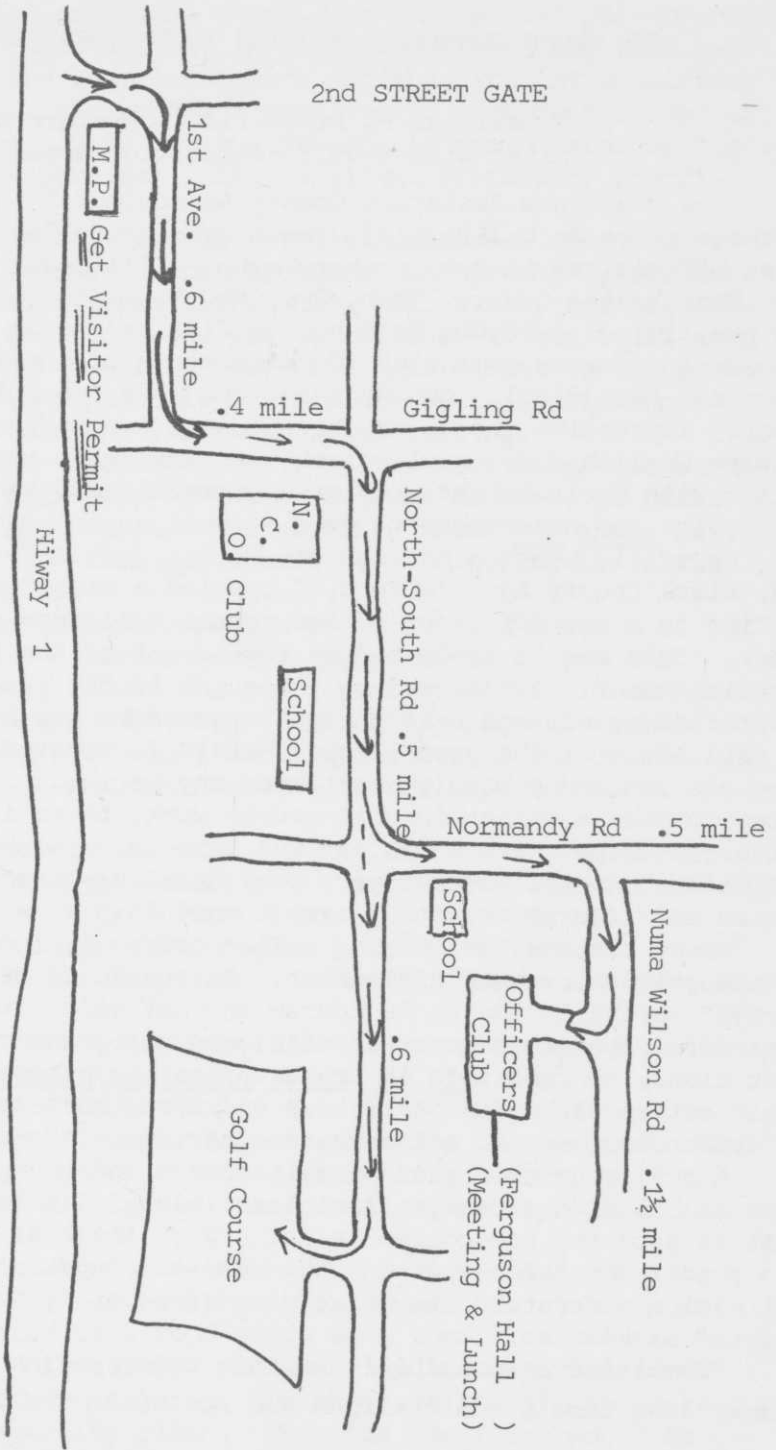
That is all, troups. See you all at Fort Ord.

Lee Huang

North to  
Gilroy and  
San Jose

FORT ORD

South to  
Monterey



## THE GREEN COMMITTEE AND THE GOLF COURSE SUPERINTENDENT

by

William H. Bengueyfield, Western Director  
United States Golf Association Green Section

As a brand new Assistant County Agricultural Agent (Farm Advisor to those of us in California), fresh from Ag College, I was making my first official visit to a country club. I'll never forget it!

Westchester Country Club, Rye, New York (in recent years host to the prestigious \$250,000 Westchester Classic) is an exclusive, well groomed and famous golf club 50 miles north of the Big City. Actually, there are two 18-hole courses here, one more "championship" than the other. Impressive enough is the entrance to the property, but the expansive English Tudor style clubhouse, the grass tanning courts, the patios with their brightly colored umbrellas and tables, etc. challenges any novice and non-member to even attempt an approach.

Carefully weaving through the Rolls, Cadillacs and Bentleys in an old, black County Agent's Ford, I spotted a sign "Ground Maintenance" leading to a far off group of low, green buildings partially hidden by trees. This was in 1950, before the advent of the title "Golf Course Superintendent." There was only one man in the area. I approached him, identified myself and asked; "Is the greenskeeper here?" "How is that?" he replied. "Is the greenskeeper here?" I repeated. "Son," he said, "you are new and probably don't know any better. But if you are ever going to make a career in golf course work, there is one lesson I had better teach you here and now. The term is 'Greenkeeper' not 'Greens-keeper.' I am the Greenkeeper, Tony Maselin--responsible for the entire golf course and don't ever forget it.' ---- I never have.

Being responsible for the entire course is indeed the assignment of the golf course superintendent. In the Rules of Golf, the term "green" refers to the whole course and not solely to the putting greens. Therefore, the green superintendent and his green committee are, at most clubs, charged with the major operating expense and investment of their entire club. It's a big job and when there is cooperation and understanding between all concerned parties, it can be a successful one.

A golf course program of maintenance and management is an intricate combination of men, materials, timing, climate, grasses, etc. What is good for one course is not always the best for the course down the road. But the new green chairman--the superintendent's boss--may not always understand these facts and frequently not recognize them as "facts" at all.

"Committee responsibilities in a country club" writes Dr. Fred M. Adams, long time green chairman and active in The Golf Association of

Michigan, "have always been an enigma to me. We have a real paradox; the Boards of Governors hire competent and in general well trained club managers, golf professionals and superintendents and then appoint committees composed of poorly trained, thoroughly inexperienced club members who are eager to run the operation. This obvious paradox in many instances leads to undermining the trained personnel with resultant confusion, inefficiencies and utter chaos.

"Human nature being what it is, most individuals when appointed to the green committee wish to make a contribution. Unfortunately for most of us, this contribution must represent change. After all, the new committee member has played golf for many years, not only in his local area but probably throughout the country. Now, with appointment to the green committee he finally has an opportunity to implement all of his experience and can hardly wait for the first committee meeting.

"Now let's stop a minute and objectively analyze our committee's preparedness for this job. While many of us have lawns at home, we still can't consider ourselves agronomists. We probably think Poa annua is a rare, exotic potted plant and dollarspot must have something to do with the Internal Revenue Service.

"Let's face it, we are ill prepared to offer much in the way of constructive criticism to a superintendent's maintenance procedures.

"What then, may we ask, should the green committee's functions be? How can these truly interested individuals make a significant contribution without jeopardizing the beauty and playability of the course, the maintenance practices of a superintendent or the superintendent himself?

"First of all, it becomes necessary for the Board of Directors to choose a chairman who has enough maturity and self-discipline to recognize that he really doesn't know much about agronomy. He will therefore be happy to leave the enormously complex problems related to growing grass up to the man who has been trained for this job--the superintendent.

"It's surprising how much more cooperative the superintendent will be if this philosophy is understood and conveyed to him from the start.

"Of equal importance is the projected tenure of this chairman. Nothing is more devastating to the efficient operation of the green committee than the common practice of changing the chairman every year or two. Just as our chairman has his and the committee's responsibilities in proper perspective--he retires!

"In my opinion, no one should be offered this job unless he is willing to serve at least 5 years and possibly longer. He also should have an indoctrination period of 2 to 3 years as a committee member before being offered the chairmanship. In this way the superintendent will have had an opportunity to make his own observations of the possibility of a potential personality clash. The club president would do

well to consult and heed the superintendent's feelings concerning the appointment of a new chairman."

Dr. Adams goes on to many more points concerning the role of the green chairman and his committee to the golf course superintendent and the maintenance program. His complete paper as well as another one prepared by the USGA Green Section on the subject, "A Guide For Green Committee Members" is available from your USGA Green Section office, Box 567, Garden Grove, CA 92642. We would be happy to send you a copy.

Almost everything written on the subject has been from the viewpoint of the green chairman and green committee responsibilities to the golf course superintendent and the maintenance program. Little has been written of the opposite direction; i.e., the superintendent's responsibilities to his committee and chairman. Perhaps these responsibilities are understood without detailing them. It's a simple employee-employer relationship isn't it? Or is it?

Green chairmen come and go, but superintendents go on forever. Anyone who has been in the business for any length of time will agree. I'm sure, that most green chairmen are understanding, reasonable and good men. Many associations develop into life long friendships. Certainly, most chairmen have been eminently successful in their own field and are good administrators.

On the other hand, all will agree that every now and then--perhaps from 1 out of 10 or 15 chairmen--a domineering, insistent, abrasive and unbending personality comes on the scene. What is the superintendent's responsibility to this man? How does one handle this situation when it becomes increasingly difficult to maintain the proper spirit of cooperation and communication? Unfortunately, there are no pat answers.

"The boss may not always be right, but he's always the boss" is one approach. Every effort to cooperate and meet the demands of ones superior seems essential in this or any job. Having a positive attitude (read the book if necessary) helps beyond belief. Keeping a proper perspective of things can turn a poor relationship into a liveable one. Perhaps the publications mentioned earlier in this article will help. Remember, most job changes are made because of a failure to assimilate and get along with other people--rather than because of technical deficiencies.

But we are all aware of seemingly impossible situations that develop between employee and employer. Even under these circumstances, one must always do his best on the job (if he's going to accept his paycheck) and, in the department of human relations, good counsel calls for an 'easy does it' approach. Review your own position on matters. Are you the insistent, unbending one? Always have an open mind. Direct confrontation can not always be avoided and, in some cases, it is better if it occurs sooner rather than later. At least the ground rules are then established.

As my friend pointed out, I'm the (continued on back page)

## WHAT DO "THEY" DO FOR ME?

By Dick Viergever

Most of us, as members of one organization or another have heard this question a number of times; indeed some of us have asked it ourselves.

"What do they -- The Association -- The Officers -- or whoever -- do for Me?

First of all, who are "they" who are supposed to be doing something for me? As an association, we have organized together as a group of professional people for the purpose of increasing our effectiveness in our work and thereby improving our own welfare. The question might, therefore, more appropriately be, "What are WE doing for US?" That puts part of the responsibility on ME and now we're getting somewhere. So come to think of it, what have I contributed lately?

But to get back to the original question, "What do "They" do for me?" of maybe it should be re-phrased now to read, "What Benefits do I get from the Association?" I find, on really thinking it over, there are many. Let me enumerate some of them:

1. A date, time and place are arranged for me to meet with most of the people in my profession; discuss our mutual problems, often arrive at solutions, observe the results of the work of other superintendents and generally keep up with progress in golf course maintenance. This happens about twelve times a year and I feel it is highly valuable to me.
2. A speaker is provided nearly every month who is usually a specialist in some part of my work, If I listen to him, I am almost certain to gain some worth while knowledge.
3. Surveys have been taken every few years to help keep me aware of how I stand compared to other superintendents in salary, benefits, budget, labor force and other points pertaining to my job.
4. The Association is affiliated with the National Group which publishes an informational magazine, promotes public relations for me, provides educational services and performs many other functions which, in the long run, add greatly to my prestige and welfare.
5. Purveyors and manufacturers of equipment, supplies and materials which we use in our work are able to meet with us and gain a better insight into our requirements so they can do a better job of meeting our needs.

Or if, by "They" we mean the officers and directors of the Association specifically, let's take a look at what they do for us if anything. Whether it does anything for us or not, they spend a lot of



their time and sometimes quite a bit of their own money doing what they think will benefit the members. They arrange for these meetings and programs every month and have not failed to do so in my recollection. They conduct the business of the Association and if they are not doing it well, I hope everyone is offering constructive suggestions. They have written our by-laws and if there is anything wrong with them, any member can initiate changes.

I think any member, if he has any ideas at all about how the Association should be run or what services should be provided, should make it a point to explain his ideas in detail to a member of the Board, or better yet, sit down and write a letter to the secretary or president. He can be assured that all suggestions will be discussed, seriously considered, and adopted if they appear to be beneficial to the majority of the members.

I can't think of much that "they" individually and personally, have done for me individually and personally but I do feel that because I have been a member of the Association I have personally received the following benefits:

1. I make more money than I would if it were not for the Association.
2. I enjoy more prestige and recognition in my work.
3. I know more about my job and am able to do it better.
4. I know more nearly where I stand in comparison with others in my field.
5. I know a hell of a lot of real good guys that I would never have met if I had not been a member of the Association.

Given more time and space I could think of more but, by and large, I feel that "they" do about as much for me as I could expect and maybe more. I think I'll give some more thought to how "WE" can do more for "US"

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Correction--In the page mailed last month to bring the Membership Directory up-to-date under address changes please correct.

Robert Muir Graves  
45 Quail Court, Suite 101  
Walnut Creek, California 94596

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The 44th Golf Course Superintendents Association of America Conference and Show will be held January 7-12, 1973, in Boston, Massachusetts. The Golf Superintendent publications schedule will be changed to August, October and December (special show issue).