

From The President

A Christmas Poem

THRU THE GREEN

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THRU THE GREEN

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Association of
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'Twas the night before Christmas
And all through the course
The breeze was not stirring
Not even the Gorse

This night I would be home
With family and friends
Wishing for peace on earth
And good will to all men

The shop was locked and quiet
The equipment neatly put away
Awaiting a day off
That next Christmas Day

The crew would sleep in
On this cold frosty morn
Unless they were woken
By the kids new french horn

The dads and their children
At home they would stay
The golf course would wait
For Power Rangers to play

Most golfers would be home
All cozy and well fed
While dreams of their new clubs
Went round in their heads

And the course superintendent
Would politely take leave
"Be back in an hour, honey
I need to check greens"

Off to the course
Me, with my coffee
What a sight to behold
The course glistening and frosty

The golf course was closed
That cold Christmas Day
But that small group of hackers
Were waiting to play

"It's Christmas Day," I said.
"Merry Christmas to you."
And away they all plodded
Down fairway number two

Christmas is what you make it
With friends by their side
With a bottle of brandy
Down the fairway they stride

And back to the family
Turkey, toys, and football
In the Spirit of the Season
Happy Holidays to all.

My apologies to poet Clement C. Moore for somewhat plagiarizing his wonderful poem, but this was my one chance to become a published poet. (It's great to be the editor!)

In advance, I'd like to thank our great affiliate members for their contributions to this years Christmas Party. We keep going to these folks for contributions to our special events, and they always come through. **Thank you all.** Now, there's another part to this message, and I know you've heard it all before, but it bears repeating. These affiliate contributions are not just charity. These folks donate to our events for recognition, so their support, and better

when that guy calls talking about) with over from that where to stick his next summer when destructs. Purchase and supplies from who support our

Don't forget to GCSAA seminars Pleasanton, sending out special seminars as they the information, registration form, information is in Professional them if you don't

And lastly, I very happy holiday season. In our profession, that seems to be so very hectic for most of the year, this season is welcomed as a natural time to slow down and spend some time at home with the family. I guess you could say, stop and smell the poinsettias. Remember, there is more to life than golf.



Happy Holidays
Richard Lavine, CGCS

Office Notes

By Barbara Mikel

Just a quick reminder about your dues. They are delinquent if not paid by December 31, 1995. That means I need them in the office or at least postmarked by that time. I will assess a \$20.00 late fee in January, 1996 so if you haven't already sent them to accounting get going!

With that out of the way on to more pleasant notes. As a result of the Board of Directors removing the testing requirement for Class A and Class B, you will now qualify for an upgrade without testing. The Membership Chairmen, Roger Martinez and Wayne Lindelof will be forming a committee in January to review all renewal applications for 1996 so be sure to include the number of years in your position. That is total years as superintendent or assistant superintendent not just at your present course. Shortly after that review, I will order new cards reflecting the Membership Committee requested changes of classification.

Dear Fellow Golf Course Superintendent:

I have been asked by our Golf Committee to research the different programs that other golf courses have initiated to reduce or eliminate the negative effects of Geese on their facilities. The primary concern of our members is the Geese droppings. Our committee's desire is to reduce or remove the Geese population. At our facility the concern is the migratory birds.

Name _____ Golf Course _____
 Projects to control Geese Population or Maintenance Practice related to Water Fowl. Please also indicate the outcome and cost of the projects:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Please FAX your response to me at (510) 376-7835. I will send you a copy of the results.

Gary Ingram, CGCS
 Moraga Country Club

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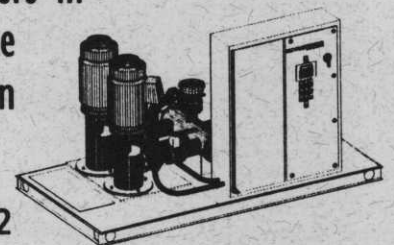
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Rancho Cañada - No 3-peat (Cont'd)

communicate maintenance tasks to the crew and provided a little comic relief.

The range of problems confronting the maintenance staff were immense. As a result of the flood waters, debris in the form of limbs, trees, picnic tables, fences and other household items from neighboring properties were scattered throughout the courses. Twenty two satellite controllers had been flooded, many contained up to a foot of silt. Sections of asphalt cart path had been lifted and floated several feet before coming to rest. Over forty bunkers had been destroyed. But the most devastating problems were the complete loss of one bridge and damage to three others, severe erosion along sections of the river bank, which left sprinklers and lateral lines dangling in the water, and over 25 acres of silt which covered portions of fairways and roughs.

Silt Removal A Challenge

"Removing the silt from the fairways and roughs was the most difficult challenge we faced," Greenwald said. "In some areas we were looking at up to three feet of material." The removal was painstaking. Thanks to past experience and a resourceful mechanic, a solution was found. A 3" roller from a flail mower was welded to the blade of a small dozer, allowing the operator to rest the blade on the turf. He then was able to push the silt into piles, leaving the turf and irrigation system intact. "We pushed silt for over two months," said Greenwald. When we completed the initial scrape with the dozer, a second operator scraped the turf one last time with a box scraper mounted on

a small tractor." The piles of silt were then loaded and transported to staging areas throughout the golf course where the material was eventually used in a variety of projects. Unfortunately, in spite of the efficiency of the silt removal, almost all the turf areas that had been affected were lost.

Next came the process of reestablishing the turf. Overseeding was the only cost effective solution, and so began the process of preparing the soil for seed. "We used a combination of techniques Greenwald reports." All the areas were dragged with a harrow to establish a finish grade and loosen the fine silt layer. Perennial ryegrass seed was then placed with a drill seeder, loaned courtesy of Weststar Distributing. Some areas were aerified as well, to penetrate the silt layer and provide a more protected seed bed.

On Memorial Day, 71 days later, Rancho Cañada was back in operation as a 36 hole golf facility, but by no means was the work complete. A bridge still needed to be replaced and numerous miscellaneous projects need to be completed. As a result, a three person flood crew was kept busy into early September.

Looking back, Greenwald shakes his head and says that during those first few days after the flood, he knew that it would require time and patience to put it all back together. However, each day brought a little progress and Greenwald credits the dedication and efforts of the maintenance staff for making it happen. "I can't say enough about the crew," Greenwald says. "A lot of the work was pretty physical, under less than ideal conditions, but no one complained, in fact the challenge

brought us all a little closer. There's no question the situation demanded a lot of all of us. To maintain morale we met with the crew frequently, establishing a series of short term goals, otherwise the situation looked to overwhelming. An occasional BBQ also helped relieve some of the pressure, and prior to the opening of the 'Dream 18', we had a staff golf tournament."

Few Reminders Remain

Eight months later only a few reminders remain from a day Greenwald and his staff would just as soon forget. "In many ways, the courses have ben-

efited from the disaster," reflects Greenwald. "There's no question, the bunkers were renovated, the new bridge, and the areas that were reseeded have improved the appearance and playability of the courses." When asked his thoughts as he looks back upon the past several months Greenwald's smile returns as he says, "It's amazing the challenges this business throws your way, particularly when you least expect it. In spite of it all, there's no greater feeling than knowing that as a staff, you overcame the situation and the courses are better than ever. ☀

Institute A Success

By all accounts, the 1995 Institute lived up to its advanced billing. Attendance at this years seminar was the highest ever, and comments were overwhelmingly positive. The topic of lake management proved to be a complex one. By days end, it was clear that the cause of aquatic problems are many, and their solutions vary based upon a variety of factors. Although the seminar may not have provided specific answers, it did present the topic in a comprehensive manner. The bottom line is that lake management is no different that any aspect of turf management. There are no single solutions, and perhaps we need to accept the fact that like putting greens, it may not be realistic for aquatic features to appear "perfect" at all times.

As always, successful events such as these are the result of the collective efforts of many. Our thanks to Dr. Harivandi, Randy Gai, Robert Tyler and staff at the Fountaingrove Resort, the affiliate members, whose participation in the trade show provides the funds for the

reception, and most importantly to the membership for their annual support. Through the excellent response we received in the survey, the education committee is dedicated to making next years event equally successful.

Institute Sponsors

This years Institute would not have been possible without the generous contributions of our very supportive Affiliate sponsors. Please acknowledge this helpful group: Delta Bluegrass, Weststar Distributing, Micro Solutions, Turf Equipment Services, Rainbird Golf Division, Target Specialty Products, The Scotts Co., Zeneca, Soil Solutions Corp., West Coast Turf, DHR Construction, Pacific Open Space, Inc., Sierra Pacific Turf Supply, Western Farm Service, Hunter Associates, United Horticultural Supply, Par Ex/Vigro Industries, Thompson Irrigation Co., R.V. Cloud, Linwood Supply, Cambridge Sportsturf Systems, Automatic Rain Company, E.D. Aeration, Diversified Waterscapes, Applied Biochemists, Far West Supply, J. R. Simplot/Best Fertilizer Co., Prescription Turf & Ornamental Naiad Company, Inc.

USGA

Is The Game Really Any Better?

by Mike Huck

It has been twenty years since I entered the golf business; my how things have changed. I started on the crew at a daily fee course back in Wisconsin where we only irrigated the greens and tees. The irrigation system was a night water person dragging around portable sprinklers connected to hoses.

The unirrigated fairways were a mixture of fine fescue and Kentucky bluegrass mowed with a 9 gang at a height of about 1 inch. During any rainy periods the bluegrass would dominate and you played a lot of "flier" lies. When there was a dry spell the fescue offered some color but with very tight lies. Eventually during a dry season most of the course would begin to look something like toast. The Kentucky bluegrass tees were mowed at about 3/4" with an old 76" triplex unit that was resurrected from the junk pile, we made do with what we had. The greens were considered some of the fastest and best

around the area and were cut between 7/32 and 1/4 of an inch. We sprayed on occasion throughout the summer for dollar spot and late each fall for snow mold. The rough was cut at 2" with a 5 gang and there was so much acreage it could barely be cut in a week, even with a full time man dedicated to it. We did all the trim mowing with twenty inch rotary mowers because we couldn't afford an out front rotary. The first weedeater we bought had a two horsepower engine and required a shoulder strap for the operator to support the weight. Using it was like carrying a sack of fertilizer over your shoulder all day. The total annual budget was about equal to what the combined salaries of a superintendent and assistant would be today. Our staff size peaked at about five to seven by mid summer, how we ever accomplished all the work I will never know.

Playing conditions were far from great but no one complained much at the time. By

modern standards this place was an absolute goat ranch, although everyone seemed to enjoy playing the game just as much as they do now. Expectations were much lower, life moved a bit slower, and as I remember rounds of golf were played faster.


Our modern world of golf course maintenance has brought us lightweight mowers, computerized irrigation, and ever increasing maintenance budgets. These advancements allow us to provide nearly wall to wall perfection and in the process changed the golfer's attitude from appreciating good conditions to demanding them on a daily basis. In fact, I would dare to bet some players have forgotten how to play a few shots they used to have in their bag back then, such as hardpan and thin lies associated with dry conditions. These conditions are seldom found on modern courses, let alone tolerated.

So with all the improvements our industry
(Continued on page 7)

Craig Linquist
Estimator
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"Strictly Business"

By Bob Costa

Occasionally, situations arise in the workplace concerning employee performance which require exercising some form of disciplinary action. When confronted with such a problem, your responsibility should be to communicate directly with the employee, specifically identifying all work related problems. Your goal should not be centered on punishment, but rather providing him or her with the opportunity to correct their behavior and improve performance. Successfully accomplishing this goal, while protecting you and your employer in the event of a labor dispute, requires the development of disciplinary procedures.

Many times performance problems can be avoided, or better managed, if you invest the time to carefully and specifically define company policies and procedures, as well as the responsibilities and expectations for each position. This services to reduce the likelihood of

performance problems due to the "I didn't know" syndrome and establishes very clearly what the expectations for employment are.

In the event that a violation of a company policy, procedure, or work practice occurs which you feel warrants corrective action, here is a summary of the procedures you should consider following.

Issue a Verbal Warning - A verbal warning is issued to an employee at such a time when his or her behavior is considered a violation of the policies, procedures, or work practices set forth by management. A verbal warning should be conducted in private and the discussion must include; a specific statement of the problem, the corrective measures which you are seeking, suggestions for improvement, an explanation of the consequences, and documentation of your discussion for your files.

If the employee does not satisfactorily meet the conditions of the verbal warning you should then consider issuing a written warning.

Written Warning - A written warning is issued when the objectives of the verbal

warning have not been satisfactorily met. A written warning should include a private discussion of the problem. The discussion must include; a restating of the problem, including dates if applicable. A restating of the corrective measures which you are seeking and suggestions for improvement. A specific reference to the initial verbal conversation. An explanation of the consequences; in this case a second written warning and suspension. Documentation, signed and dated by the supervisor and a signed and dated statement from the employee which confirms his or her understanding of the problem, including the potential consequences. A copy should be made available to the employee.

If, in spite of the verbal and written warning satisfactory improvement is not shown, a second written warning and suspension should be initiated.

Suspension - A suspension is issued when the conditions of the written warning have not been satisfactorily met. A suspension shall be accompanied by a second written warning. A private meeting should result, with the discussion including all of



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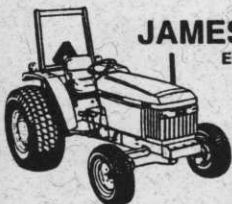
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the elements of the first written warning. When informing an employee of a suspension, ask them to determine in their absence, whether or not they wish to continue working, or feel they are capable of fulfilling the requirements of the job. In other words, force them to take responsibility for their actions. When they return, ask them to explain their decision.

Discharge - Discharge of an employee should occur when the conditions of the verbal and written warnings have not been met, and all the procedures outlined above have been satisfactorily completed. A private meeting should be scheduled with the employee and should include: a summary of the cause of dismissal, the final compensation check, the collection of all company property including keys, uniforms and notification of insurance benefits if applicable. At the conclusion of the meeting a summary of the discussion should be prepared for your files.

Although this process may seem rather lengthy and appears to provide more than ample time for an employee to correct their performance problems it accomplishes the

objectives stated earlier.

In summary, managing disciplinary problems requires time, forethought and a plan. Keep these thoughts in mind the next time you are faced with a situation which requires disciplinary action; as often as possible define expectations for performance in writing, be specific in stating the problem, include dates, be thorough in your documentation and finally take responsibility for your employees behavior. Generally, most employees want to perform well. Perhaps their failures are a result of poor training, expectations that were not clearly defined, or maybe they never should have been hired in the first place, and whose fault is that? *

Is The Game Better? (Cont'd.)

has made in the last twenty years my question is: Have we improved the game or just made the playing field more attractive to look at? Could we enjoy the game just as much if a little less time and money were spent on conditioning? Could more people afford to enjoy the game if it were not so expensive to play? Is it really any more fun to play golf now than it was then? Is the game really any better? As for myself, I'm not sure. *

Naumann's NorCal News

Dave Smith has left Tilden Park G.C. in Berkeley to become the superintendent at Micke Grove GC in Lodi, replacing Bob Francine . . . Sam Singh is leaving Mountain Shadows Golf Resort in Rhonert Park to take over for Dave Smith at Tilden Park. All three facilities are managed by American Golf . . . Castle and Cook has taken Riverside GC in Coyote back under its own management team. Mike Swing, superintendent at Seven Oaks CC in Bakersfield is temporarily overseeing the operation until permanent positions are given . . . Mike Higuera left Riverside GC and is the superintendent at Seascape GC in Aptos. He was the superintendent at both courses prior to going full time at Seascape GC.

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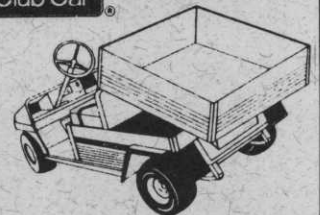
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