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Mike Bavier — President

The President's Message

When is the course going to be open? Can we use the regular greens and tees? How does the grass look — is there any disease? These, as you well know, are typical questions this time of the year. Many times we can only answer these questions in generalities. Many of us would agree that we have had a mild winter this year that should be of some benefit to the turf. Although to predict we are going to have a super season ahead might be a little premature. We do, at least, have a good start on one.

The slump that the economy has been in has not slowed many of us in our purchasing. It was interesting to read in the Florida paper that the golf professionals enjoyed an outstanding show in Orlando this winter. The orders placed the first couple of days surpassed all of last year's sales at a similar show, a good example of how the golfers are still spending despite the economy. I do know one thing for sure — if we have to cut back on our spending, probably the first thing to go will be extra labor and jobs like continuous raking of sand traps and mowing every blade of grass on a hundred and sixty-five acres. But we will not be the only department at the club that will or should be concerned — each will have to cut some of the "frills", like the extra waitress in the clubhouse or the extra cart man on the pro shop staff. Let's keep this in mind as another golfing season approaches.

Since my last message, there has been so many things going on that I would like to "ramble" a little.

My first attempt at playing in the National Golf Tournament was indeed a pleasure. The courses were in fine condition in Pennsacola, the people were most congenial, and the overall arrangements were very well handled. Hats off to everyone involved!

The next week in New Orleans was quite an experience, in more ways than one! The three-section education program was quite an improvement over other years. I'm sure this will be expanded more in the future. Many thanks should go to the people that helped in the hospitality room, and a special thank you from the Midwest to Albie Staudt and Bob Breen for staying in the room.

Dr. Daniel put on another outstanding conference at Purdue the first week in March. (Those of you that attended know why he so richly deserved the GCSAA Distinguished Service Award.) Some of you might

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Dorothy Carey	349-7766
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say, "Just another conference." I feel that we have so many excellent programs in this area that I really do not like to miss any, including the chance to hear Dudley Smith talk to a "standing room only" group about female crew members. (I wonder if the topic had anything to do with the good showing!)

Just think—spring will soon be here, the tulips and crocus will be blooming, and "oh" for that first mowing of the grass. What a splendid time of the year to smile and be thankful for all the passing events of the winter and for the start of a new golfing season. Let's hope we can get over these rough times in our economy, for our own sakes and for that of our friends. Let's think positive, remember good times, and be ready to give our golfers another enjoyable season.

THE IMPACT OF INFLATION ON THE GOLF COURSE SUPERINTENDENT'S AND MAINTENANCE BUDGET

We generally reminisce about the "good old days" when a dollar was said to be worth a dollar, when quality labor was abundant, when materials were relatively low priced, and when the Golf Course Superintendent's standard of living was increasing. Today the dollar is barely worth thirty cents, quality labor is diminishing, and materials are being priced out of the market. I will attempt to evaluate these recent economic relationships as they pertain to the Superintendent's salary and the maintenance budget.

Column I of Table I lists actual 1968 data presented by Mr. Donald Gerber and Mr. Raymond Gerber before the Chicago District Golf Association Green Section Seminar in 1968. I then changed these 1968 amounts into comparable 1975 dollar figures under Column II. Remember that these 1975 dollar amounts only reflect the impact of inflation or what the same quantities of fertilizer and supplies purchased during 1968 would now cost during 1975. Thus, the average superintendent's salary of \$13,877 during 1968 must increase to \$21,703 during 1975 or his standard of living has decreased. Column II also illustrates the individual budget components in 1975 dollars. Without any increase in the quality of maintenance our golf course budget of \$89,067 in 1968 would be \$147,569 during 1975.

The preceding data has established a base year (1968) from which to start, and with the assistance of the Consumer Price Index and the Wholesale Price Index, I have constructed an objective or goal (Column II data) to measure our budgets and salary levels. Column III describes the Superintendent that strives towards a five percent increase in both his standard of living and his operating budget. This superintendent's salary now must reach \$30,536 to represent a yearly real five percent increase in his standard of living from \$13,877 in 1968. His maintenance budget would have to increase to \$207,629 from \$89,067.

Column IV represents data from twenty-eight Chicagoland golf courses. If we compare Column IV with the data in Column II we can evaluate the actual progress of the superintendent since 1968. Unfortun-

ately, the average salary has decreased, comparing \$21,703 to \$19,064 (17 golf courses from the north side of Chicago) and \$18,398 (11 golf courses from the west side of Chicago). Also, the average maintenance budget (\$131,530 from the northside and \$114,900 from the westside) fall short of the updated 1968 figure of \$147,569.

TABLE I
Analysis of Golf Course Budgets

	Col. I ¹ 1968	Col. II ² 1975 Dollars	Col. III ³ 5% Inc.	Col. IV ⁴ 1975 Survey
Supt. Salary	\$13,877	\$ 21,703	\$ 30,536	\$ 18,398 ⁵
Labor	51,000	85,374	120,121	19,064 ⁶
Gas & Oil	1,940	3,247	4,569	—
Sand	1,466	2,454	3,453	—
Soil	560	937	1,318	—
Seed	900	1,507	2,120	—
Chemicals	3,517	5,887	8,283	—
Fertilizer	3,600	6,026	8,479	—
Flowers	447	748	1,052	—
Educational Expense	560	937	1,318	—
Equipment Repairs	3,500	5,859	8,244	—
New Equipment	7,700	12,890	18,136	—
	<u>\$89,067</u>	<u>\$147,569</u>	<u>\$207,629</u>	\$131,530 ⁷ \$114,900 ⁸

1. 1968 Average Data from Seven Golf Courses.
2. 1968 Figures Adjusted for Inflation using a CPI of 156.4 and a WPI of 167.4.
3. Adjusting Col. II Data to include a real 5% increase.
4. Actual Data from 28 Chicago Golf Courses.
5. Average Supt. Salary for 11 Golf Courses on West-side of Chicago as of January 1975.
6. Average Supts. Salary for 17 Golf Courses on North-side of Chicago as of January 1975.
7. Average Budget for 20 Golf Courses on North-side of Chicago as of January 1975.
8. Average Budget for 11 Golf Courses on West-side of Chicago as of January 1975.

From the preceding exercise we are able to conclude that by comparing 1975 average figures to the "good old days of 1968", the Golf Course Superintendent's standard of living and his maintenance budget have not kept pace with the rapid inflation of the 1970's. The members of our country clubs are asking the Superintendent to raise the quality of the golf course while providing him with a smaller quantity of materials and a lower real income as an incentive.

If the preceding information is presented to the Board of Directors of our clubs, I believe that the Superintendent will have a better chance of obtaining, not only a sufficient budget, but also a better standard of living. We cannot expect the Board of Directors to increase budgets or our salaries unless specific data is presented to support our requests.

Robert E. Siebert
Naperville Country Club