

THE BULL SHEET, official publication of the MID-WEST ASSOCIATION OF GOLF COURSE SUPER-INTENDENTS.

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Dear Sports Editor:

How on Earth do you describe the type of season we have had this year? Think back to the killing frost we had as late as May 22. Most of the Spring was cold and wet; not a good start for developing deep roots in preparation for summer stress. Now we are in one of the toughest seasons one could imagine with intense heat, humidity and the ensuing problems that follow the peculiar weather that Mother Nature has scheduled. Since we are all in pretty much the same boat, (sinking ship?), I thought maybe it would be a good idea to contact the media and attempt to explain the situation to the professional writers. Then maybe most of the golfing public might be a little more understanding about what the local Golf Course Superintendent is up against. All I wanted to do was stimulate some interest in the fact that golf courses in the midwest might not be in tip-top shape because of the severe weather we have experienced this season. I wanted to explain that in spite of the comparative poor conditions, the superintendents have done so much to avoid even worse conditions. Dedication to the golf course has saved a good deal of turf, and golf courses have stayed open for golfing enjoyment when they probably should have been closed on some days because of the emergency work that had to be done. Yes, inspite of the heat, desiccation and/or diseases, golf carts were permitted to be used on the golf course, even though they kill fairway turf when it is severely stressed. I wanted to explain that, once again, the Golf Course Superintendent has no control over the conditions when weather extremes prevent us from doing what we normally do each day. Storms, uprooted trees, brown-outs, pump failures, insects, strange diseases, sun scald followed by wilt, and other frustrations that are too numerous to mention, have prevented us from doing our usual good job by providing the best playing conditions possible all year long. The irony of the situation is that the golfing public really is getting the best conditions possible because the man in charge of the golf course is working his fanny off. And so is his crew. I wanted more people to understand the complexities of this business; keeping golf course turf.

The problem is, according to my journalistic friend or his editor: "people out there won't read that. It doesn't make good copy. Golf is boring reading to the average sports fan." "They would rather read about sports scores, injuries, trades and winning." Well, I have news for you Mr. Sports Editor. You are wrong! People love their golf courses. They pay a lot of money to play, and they care about what is happening out there and why. Golf is important to millions of participating



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sports fans. You sports writers are missing the boat because of your failure to do some investigating about things you don't understand. You are not doing your job because you haven't figured out that golf courses and the Golf Course Superintendents are the most important part of the golf course operation. You should get to know the Superintendents in the Midwest area. They are touted as having the best golf courses in the world. You should find out what it is all about so that you could become more sensitive to the needs of the sport fans. You should visit the golf course and see what the Superintendents see. I know you would be amazed at the expertise and sensitivity of a Golf Course Superintendent and the product he puts out. You could do a better job of reporting golf tournaments, too. I'll never forget when Johnny Miller blamed his first 3 putt green on the greenkeeper in the 1975 U. S. Open at Medinah C.C. He thought the practice green was different than the regular greens. No one bothered to check with John Jackman about that. There are lots of things that don't get checked out when it comes to reporting golf. My suggestion to sports writers is to check with the Golf Course Superintendents if you care about better golf course reporting for our tens of thousands of golfers who do care about the condition of the golf courses they play.

Peter Leuzinger

COMMITMENT ...

is a word, I believe, that applies to the profession of Golf Course Superintendents. I admire their cooperation, helpfulness and genuine concern among their peers.

I'm taking time out to write about my devoted friend and companion, Dale W. Pieper, Golf Course Superintendent, and to share some of my observations about the golf course business. Dale has been in the business over 27 years, first as a crewman, for his now deceased father, Walter Pieper, Supt. of Flossmoor C.C., Flossmoor, IL, then as Walter's assistant, and finally as Supt. of Cherry Hills C.C., Flossmoor, IL. Dale, and all the other superintendents that I have met are conscientious professionals who enjoy watching things grow and enjoy the progress of their toils. Sometimes recognition is not given until they retire, but I believe that they all need a moral boost every now and then before they retire.

Here in the Midwest, the four seasons can have a favorable or detrimental effect on the total look of a golf course. Superintendents are challenged by the ubiquitous Mother Nature everyday ... bad winters, bad summers, (which is what we are having now), too much or too little rain, humidity, insects and fungus. Their experience and knowledge is indispensable in combating all the elements.

Then there is the other side of Mother Nature, which is human nature with which to contend ... good crews, bad crews, good bosses, bad bosses, and sometimes disrespectful golfers. During the playing season, their job is monumental just with everyday maintenance seven days a week. If the course looks good, everyone shares the complimentary remarks, but if the superintendents have some bad luck, the consequences are theirs to bear alone.

Through Dale, I've taken a different perspective and appreciation of golf courses. I share in his pride when things are going well and I worry with him when he has problems. Thank you, Dale and all the other superintendents that I have met through you. Here's looking ahead to some well-deserved R and R for all of you.

Rose M. Crockett

MAGCS DIRECTORS COLUMN

Let me begin by explaining to those who don't already know, each member of our board of directors is assigned one month of the year that he is to write an article for **THE BULLSHEET**. Well this is my month, that is if I can finish here and then figure out how to get this to our editor yet today, because, naturally, today is the deadline. It really is not that I didn't know ahead of time, our current leader, Pete, very thoughtfully told me of my assignment last December. The problem is that no one tells you what to write about. I have spent 9 months now trying to come up with a topic. I made list after list of possibilities (the first topic that came to mind was, of course, croquet) then after careful deliberation I realized that anyone who was once even remotely interested in building croquet courts or about the game itself, has probably already been cornered by me somewhere and already heard enough.

Then I considered writing about my use of AG grade fertilizer on my bluegrass fairways and tees. There are a lot of pros and cons about this procedure, some of which I am still uncertain about, so I scratched that one.

Of course, I didn't want to overlook the ever popular topic of sand top dressing. I am currently experimenting with sand on one of my croquet courts. (There I go with croquet again). The results after one year look good, but still inconclusive. I hope I never have to go to sand. That about sums up how I feel on that topic.

The next thought on my list of possibilities is the field modification of turfgrass equipment. I really liked that title the best. The problem with it is how much can you say about moving a battery from under a seat to out in the open where you can at least get to it with jumper cables when it goes bad because you forget to check the electrolyte level for a couple of months. Or, the engineering marvel of moving an air filter from an enclosed area on a sand trap rake to a place where it can get fresh air. Most superintendents I know are smart enough to figure these things out for themselves. Maybe I could write one on the topic for the engineering geniuses who design equipment for us someday.

The list is getting smaller and smaller, and my article is getting longer and longer.

The topics remaining on my list really all sound pretty good. Unfortunately, people smarter than me have pretty well covered them. Let's be realistic, if I were to write an in-depth article on maintaining bluegrass tees and fairways and Doctor So-And-So did one on the same subject, who would you listen to?

It is beginning to appear to me, and probably to you too, that I have absolutely nothing profound to say here. (So much for becoming a professional writer, I guess).

The one subject I really wanted to write on was "Why Be a Superintendent." I gave this subject a lot of thought, but my feelings are sometimes hard to put into words. Certainly, this business is not for everyone. The problems we face with the weather each day. The equipment always seems to break down when you need it the most. And it seems that the golfers almost never understand us or the problems we have. Still after twenty-two years on a golf course, I wake up every morning looking forward to whatever the day is going to bring. I cannot imagine what it would be like to not want to go to work, but to **have** to go. I truly enjoy being a professional golf course superintendent. I am also proud of what I have accomplished as a professional and can only hope that our job will always be as rewarding for you as it has for me.

So much for my obligation to the September **BULL SHEET**.

J. Michael Hart, C.G.C.S.