

DIRECTOR'S COLUMN

A WHOLE NEW LOOK FOR OUR CERTIFICATION PROGRAM

The G.C.S.A.A. Certification Committee unveiled in Las Vegas their first rough draft for upgrading the certification program. It was easy to see after reading their twenty-nine draft, that many hours of hard work and serious thought went into their proposal. This rough draft should be required reading for anyone considering entering the program, and especially those who have been opposed to certification.

In their first draft, the committee attempted to make major changes in the program, respective to the criticism that many members have voiced over the young life of the certification program. They proposed future minimum education requirements beginning with an associates degree or equivalent, escalating to a bachelor of science degree or its equivalent by the year 2005. This approach should end the criticism of no educational requirements. Another criticism has been that only "textbook" knowledge is necessary to become certified. The G.C.S.A.A. Committee has come up with some changes to make entering the program a little tougher. One area where they suggest a change is eligibility. Their plan is to, in the future, require an applicant to have completed an internship under a class "A" professional superintendent, and in the year 1995 making only C.G.C.S.'s mentors of interns.

There is also a requirement in the rough draft that each applicant be attested and recommended by two current C.G.C.S. or by two club officials. This is one part of the draft that I believe will be dropped or changed prior to approval. I do not think it is workable to have superintendents inspecting other superintendents to see if their course is good enough for them to enter the certification program.

For those of you who are currently C.G.C.S.'s, they propose dropping the renewal exam and requiring 15 C.E.U.'s every five years. Not only are they planning to make the entrance requirements tougher, but you have to work to stay in the program.

There are many other points mentioned in their rough draft that I didn't touch on, that are equally important, such as:

- 1) Going to a closed book exam
- 2) G.C.S.A.A. offering all of the C.E.U.'s needed to enter the program and continue in the program
- 3) Regional and chapter educational programs will be assigned a C.E.U. value
- 4) College credits can be transferred to the program
- 5) The G.C.S.A.A. educational programs are to be submitted for accreditation, which will assure the universal acceptance of our C.E.U.'s

The entire certification will be, in the very near future, going through a face lift. The look may not be exactly as proposed in the rough draft, but it will definitely be improved. When all changes are in place there will be a media blitz to promote the program so anyone connected with golf will know about the program.

Our certification program has been the subject of much criticism, some of it was justified, however, I believe that the forth coming changes in education and eligibility requirements, will successfully put to rest most of the criticism I have heard.

You must remember that no matter what requirements are finally decided upon, no matter how strict they are, being a Certified Golf Course Superintendent does not guarantee performance and only the superintendent's employer will be the judge of his, or her, performance. I strongly believe that, if given the chance, this revised program will benefit us all by providing the means that a superintendent can use to help make himself more valuable to his employer and a better professional turfgrass manager.

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

HOW WELL DO YOU KNOW YOUR TREES?

The loss of vigor, or death of a plant is usually the result of one or more of the following conditions. Disease, insects, mechanical damage, drought or flooding. This is true of all vegetation that exist on the golf course.

As golf course superintendents we are primarily concerned with the plants that are predominant on the golf course; Grass! That is unless you have devised a mode of existence where the necessities of life are eliminated or have a wife, girlfriend or combination thereof that will support you when your unemployment compensation expires.

A plant whose health and general condition is often overlooked until it has deteriorated into a dangerous state is a tree. This in spite of the fact the high wind and lightning are additional perils to those mentioned previously. It is not unusual when faced with conditions as hostile as was last summer that we tend to be concerned only about the grass and realize too late that many of the trees on the course were also adversely affected by the same conditions. The big difference is that there is no quick fix for a tree that has succumbed to conditions. A couple of yards of sod or a few pounds of seed will not replace a tree by the next season. It was with this in mind that we at Arrowhead contacted Dr. Thomas Green, plant pathologist at the Morton Arboretum.

Dr. Green has devised a system to rate trees as to size, shape, age, and general health on a scale from one to six. He also provides a service, at a cost that is nominal, that surveys all trees and furnishes a report that includes a reference number for each tree, identifies to species, height, shape, as well as plotting all trees on a plan of the golf course.

The report covers the condition of each tree and rates it on a scale that covers the entire spectrum from 1, a tree recently planted in good condition that has not yet reached its full height or shape; to 6, a tree that needs to be removed. Dr. Green also furnishes a plastic overlay that shows what any area will look like when the 5 and 6 are removed. Suggestions as to replanting are included with regard to both species and density.

The dimension of such a report coming from an acknowledged expert is more than enough to get a tree program out of the talking stage into reality as well as creating an awareness of the problems that can still be corrected and prolong the life of existing trees.

Robert K. Breen