On the Waterfront

by Jim Reed

I think my heading is the title of a book I read in high school or college. It was so long ago that I don't really remember when I read ir or if that is really the title. Regardless, my attempt here is to begin a monthly column that will inform **Bull Sheet** readers on irrigation issues. Being on the CMAC committee with Fred Opperman exposes all of us to Fred's urgings to write articles for our newsletter. Since I particularly enjoy Fred's "Leaves, Limbs, Needles and Boughs", a takeoff on that concept of a continuing presentation is my intention.

There are, obviously, many irrigation topics that you have an interest in. Pump station topics could include: how control systems work, what is the difference between submersible, centrifugal, and verticle turbine pumps, how can I upgrade my present pump station, how does a variable frequency drive control system operate differently from a control valve system? Sprinkler topics might focus on coverage, spacing, low pressure versus high pressure heads, gear drives versus impact sprinklers. Irrigation control systems questions might revolve around: how can I upgrade my present system, what is a radio controlled system, do I need a computer to operate my irrigation system, why do I need a weather station to run my programs? Your green chairman, president, and club members might ask: why does our superintendent want a new irrigation system when the old one is only ? years old, what is this going to cost, can't we save any of the old system, can't we put in a new system over ? years, why does my superintendent only want Company X's products and Company Y to install it. Another topic, and the one I plan to write on, is about irrigation piping systems.

During April and May of every year, when golf course superintendents in the Chicago area turn on their irrigation systems, the first question they ask of each other is "how many breaks" did they have? The first assumption many of you make is that "I didn't get all the water blown out of the pipes in the fall" or "water drained back through my valves in the low spots and froze in the pipes." These conclusions may be absolutely correct, incorrect, or just the end result of years of improperly operating an under-designed water supply system. I mean no disrespect in my last sentence. Many older systems are now being forced to operate beyond their design capabilities. Many superintendents are not aware of the design parameters of their water supply systems or of the potential damage they are doing to them by operating them the way they do or the way they are forced to water.

I have come across a very interesting article that was commissioned by members of the Irrigation Association relating to designing, operating, and mantaining piping systems. If I receive their blessing to have much of this article reprinted, and I have been given some encouragement to have the contents made available to you, then this will be the topic for a series of articles addressing questions I have been hearing you ask every spring.