

## NEW ASSOCIATION FORMED

FLORIDA MUNICIPAL GOLF COURSE ASSOCIATION has been officially formed. At a meeting held on June 28, 1979, at North Palm Beach Country Club, the association adopted its by-laws and elected its officers for the first year of operation. Those elected to serve as officers for the year are: President, Dick Medford of Cocoa Beach; Vice-President, Steve Baeumel of Pompano; Secretary-Treasurer, Bill Haycock of Orlando.

Dues have been established at \$30.00 a year for municipalities and \$60.00 for associate members, which are considered to be any person or organization having an interest in public golf courses.

The purpose of the association is to foster a general relationship, an exchange of ideas, procedures and operations to benefit municipality operating golf courses.

A comparative study of municipal golf courses has been taken and copies of the survey will be available to all members of the association who have paid their dues.

For the purpose of definition, municipalities are towns, cities, villages, counties, states or federal government which own or operate a public golf course. We would like to urge all municipalities in this state to become members of the association.

If you are interested, please contact:

Bill Haycock  
Dubsdread Golf Facility  
City of Orlando  
549 West Par Street  
Orlando, Florida 32804

## Municipal Golf Course Operation

By William W. Kriegel

We read many articles on the quality of turf found on our southern golf courses and the programs that the Superintendents use to achieve the high quality demanded by the membership. There is, however, one area of golf courses that has been greatly overlooked in this perspective of golf, the area of the municipal golf course.

Typical of southern courses, we are open every day of the year with no surcease in the number of rounds played each day. Being a course open to the public at all times, we, by virtue of this, have acquired an exceedingly large membership, often too large for the golf facilities to handle. During the season, we average approximately 360 players each

day. In the off season this figure will drop to about 200 a day. It does not take any great mental capacity to realize that the number of rounds played each year can totally defeat most maintenance programs needed to improve course quality.

From this maintenance stand point, all work has to be done around the players on the course. Work that is normally done in four hours can often take two days to accomplish and can only be accomplished at the inconvenience of the golfers and the maintenance personnel. Due to this hazard of work, there are two basic cries cited by the golfers: (1) "How come you are always tearing up the course when we want to paly", and (2) "We want the course to be like Augusta National but don't do any work while we are playing".

The superintendent on the municipal course, therefore, has a major problem in his maintenance program. If he does the work necessary to improve the course, he is damned because he interferes with play. If he tires to accomodate his members by doing just the minimum of maintenance, he is damned because he is letting the course deteriorate beyond the point of recovery.

In defense of the municipal golf course superintendent, I must say he probably has one of the hardest jobs of any superintendent on any golf course. Everything seems to work against him in his efforts to do his job. Excessive play constantly works against his efforts to relieve compaction on the course. It also beats his turf to death and in many instances creates bare spots where no grass can grow. He also has a very limited budget to operate with which does not allow him the luxury of having the supplies necessary to improve the course quality, but merely be able to hold the status quo. This area will get much worse in the next few years as there is a "tax payers revolt" to reduce the already inadequate monies necessary to meet the needs of rising inflation. Many of the courses are forty to fifty years old and are nothing more than a hodge-podge of grass, each requiring different maintenance practice. There is no uniformity of turf that exists with the mordern turf grasses and generally no capital improvement account to convert to the modern varieties.

I feel that any superintendent who achieves success in maintaining a municipal course at better than average standards should be given all the credit he can be. With a low budget, low pay, and excessive play, the municipal superintendent is in a class by himself as to devotion to his job and his desire to do the best possible with his existing conditions. Maybe all superintendents should have at least one year's experience on a public course before moving on to the better, private clubs.

# SEE YOU IN ST. LOUIS