

Off The FAIRWAY

by **BOB HUSKY**

Palm Beach Post-Times,
Sunday, Dec. 16, 1956

THE Florida Golf Course Superintendents had one of their most interesting meetings this week when they gathered at the Lake Worth Golf Club where Joe Konwinski was host. Not only were there several items of great interest to the members in regards to their work, but there was an interesting steak dinner served by the women's association of the club.

And having had the pleasure of sinking our teeth into one of the giant cuts of prime beef, we want to give credit to Nat Smith who grilled the meat to perfection.

There were 31 members in attendance, coming all the way from the Miami area on the south and Melbourne on the north.

One of the things brought up before the membership was the importance of the golf course superintendent. Commonly referred to as greenskeeper in the past, he is no longer just that. At one time the greens were the all-important part of a golf course, and the greenskeeper's main object was to keep it in perfect condition. Today, however, the fairway, the rough, the traps, the tees, the drainage, the water supply, fertilization, equipment care, hiring of help and the keeping of books come under the duties of the golf course superintendent.

The golf course superintendent wants the recognition he rightfully deserves. If everything is ship-shape about the course, he should be given credit for the good playing conditions—the same as he is cri-

ticized for anything, imaginable or otherwise, that causes a golfer to make a bad shot.

C. C. Shaw of Miami, long-time member of the association, made a suggestion that any member caught referring to himself or any other course superintendent as a greenskeeper be fined a dollar. When asked to put that in the form of a motion, Shaw started off with "I make a motion that any greenskeeper. . ." Yep! Shaw was the first contributor of a crisp one-dollar bill. And in between the time the meeting ended and the members sat down to eat, Secretary Joe Konwinski, ambling about with ears alert, picked up two more dollars. One was the gift of Jimmy Blackledge, another old-timer in the association.

Another subject for discussion was the labor situation. Like most classes of work, competent help is difficult to find.

Norman Johnson, of the new Florida National Golf Club, told the group that a serious problem came up during the planting and growing period and that some semi-retired men residing in a nearby trailer camp solved his problem by offering their services.

Johnson said use of the older men had worked fine.

"They have pride in their work, and I don't have to tell them over and over how to do something," he said. "They are intelligent men, and successful men, too," he added.

One of his workmen owns a 400-acre farm near Peoria, Ill. Another owned a dry-cleaning plant at Irvington, N.J. Another is a one-armed man, but he can handle a tractor and he has a desire to do a good job.

John Schabinger, president of the association of superintendents says "the golf course superintendent of today has a more enviable reputation to uphold than the old greenskeeper had. The golfing public of today demands a course be kept in the best condition. Club officials demand the best course in the area with the least expenditure, and the superintendent demands of himself and his men the best they can give.

Schabinger, who has charge of the Breakers Hotel course, summed up a superintendent's four major problems as: 1. to satisfy his club officials; 2. to satisfy the golfer; 3. to satisfy the needs of the turf; and 4. to satisfy himself he has done the best job he can.

Schabinger points out the following facts:

"The superintendent has the responsibility for an annual expenditure averaging from \$40,000 to \$50,000 plus the value of the course which is dependent to a considerable degree upon his decisions at maintenance methods.

His decisions regarding the following duties, their performance and timing reflect in the economy of operations.

LANTANA PEAT & SOIL

1123 State Road 7
Boynton Beach, Fla.

732-4116
1-800-433-5552

STERILIZED SOILS • TOP DRESSING
TOP SOIL • MULCH • POTTING SOIL

"Keeping Golf Courses Green"

"First a yearly budget must be prepared for expected expenditures.

"In the budget, labor is the major item, followed by mechanical equipment, fertilizers, soil, water, tools and chemical supplies, and other items as the individual course may demand. A superintendent who operates and maintains a golf course economically and efficiently must keep records of these items along with a carefully prepared simple working schedule for his labor. With these records to refer to he can follow a budget and find out the best methods and practices to use in the future to profit by his past experiences and procedures."

"Labor-management relationship is regarded important by all big businesses of today and in golf course maintenance it is a must for continued economical operation because of the small amount of trained labor available in this field. Training of men is one of the superintendent's biggest jobs. After training the men the problem of keeping them by making their

jobs interesting is important."

Schabinger was wound up now. Continuing:

"A daily work schedule must be set up so they will be finished and out of the way, if possible, when the golfer wants to play.

"Watering must be timed for the convenience of the golfer as well as to supply the needs of the grass. A good irrigation system and one kept in good repair is the heart of any golf course. Watering a green is an art learned only by long experience and close observation.

"Fertilizer must be applied as the grass needs it, and preferably just prior to the need. It is one of the most economical ways, when applied properly, to obtain a beautiful course.

"Spraying must be done to save the grass that has already cost so much to get established. This is much cheaper than replanting. The identification of insects or diseases causing damage to turf, and choosing the most effective and economi-

cal spray is absolutely necessary.

"Light top dressings of soil are essential to maintain a smooth putting surface as well as strengthening the grass by the addition of new soil."

We already were late getting back to the office, but Schabinger wasn't about to stop. He was on his pet subject.

"The constant supervision regarding the time of mowing, height of cut and changing height of cut compensate for temperature, moisture and fertilizer availability, as well as the amount of play expected, is an essential duty.

"I could go on and on, such as the policing of the property, relocating of cups in the green, rebuilding of greens, tees and fairways, and attending turf conferences and meetings to learn about the always newer types of grasses, fertilizers, insecticides and methods of maintenance.

"You certainly stayed with me, Bob, but you asked for it." ■



THE NAME TO KNOW
FOR:

- FLAGS • POLES • TEE MARKERS
- CUPS • CUP CUTTERS • SIGNS
- BALL WASHERS • SAND TRAP RAKES
- MARKING PAINT • TEE TOWELS
- SPIKE BRUSHES • BENCHES • ROPE
- ALUMINUM MAINTENANCE RAKES

FOR ALL YOUR ACCESSORY NEEDS



EMCO
57 Cantee Street
Jacksonville, FL 32204
US 1-800-458-8873
FL 1-800-342-0881



Dan,

Thanks for the Florida Green. Bill Wagner will truly be missed. We were all fortunate to have known him.

Thanks again.

Jerry Broom

P.S.

Island life is great. But miss So. Florida

(305) 581-0444

Mobile (407) 479-9417

SPREAD-RITE, INC.

*Custom Spreading
Fertilizer • Dolomite • Aragonite*

LAMAR SAPP

6001 S.W. 19th Street
Plantation, FL 33317