



By TERRY BUCHEN

WILLIAMSBURG, Va. — One of the best tools in the superintendent's public relations arsenal is the club/course newsletter,

which usually is written monthly, or at least quarterly. With this open forum written exclusively by and for the superintendent, communication with the golfing elite occurs in a lively and timely fashion. One of a super's favorite topics is the Turf Tip section, advising golfers of opportune topics of how to main-

tain their home lawns, trees, shrubs, annual flowers, wildflowers, irrigation systems, etc.

The real meat of the monthly column include such topics as the results of a recent green committee meeting; progress reports; capital improvements; capital equipment recent acquisitions and how they have made improve-

ments to the course; temporary greens during winter golf; frost delay policy; annual overseeding of warm season turf; renovation/restoration schedules; what is done on Mondays when the course is closed; what is being done on warm season courses during the off-season; maintenance objectives; tournament conditioning;

upcoming local/regional/state/national tournament conditioning; spikeless golf shoes; poa annua and what is being done about it; member/guest preparation; club championships; ladies days; replacing divot policy; ball mark repair "how-to-do"; hole location/tee marker policy; irrigation/drainage system explanations; bunker maintenance philosophies; lake maintenance; environmental issues; pesticide safety/licensing issues; integrated pest/plant management; Audubon International Signature Status; community public relations and involvement; driving range/chipping green/putting green management; turf care center improvements needed; turf nursery experimental plots; tree planting committee update; memorial tree planting update; on-course landscaping; lightning safety issues; employee of the month notification; employee safety and training details; clubhouse landscaping; swimming pool information; tennis court issues; vandalism/security measures; superintendents certification program; turf conference/seminar involvement; golf course architectural master plan; Rules of Golf and golf course maintenance; USGA agronomist visitation report results; and aerification/topdressing/verticutting schedules.

The greatest use for the newsletter is a progress report of what is going on out on the course, why it is being done, when it will be done or has been done, where it will be done and who is involved in the decision making process. What it all boils down to is that supers are explaining that the golf course is under the mercies of Mother Nature and how, with even the best laid plans, that nature many times prevails.

Probably the hardest aspect of writing a column is the timing as the press deadlines are many times 15 to 30 days prior to the mailing date, which makes it sometimes hard to predict what the weather will do and how it has affected progress on projects or turf growth or other non-predictable issues.

In addition to the newsletter, many supers have had excellent results including an exclusive letter along with a members monthly dues statement (sometimes called The Green Sheet) for explaining timely topics in a more detailed and personal manner.

This letter can be many pages long while still staying within the bulk mail rate guidelines. Many times a super will even provide a special, exclusive mailing to club members when important issues present themselves, as there is probably no better forum than a private letter/report to an attentive audience.

Newsletters: the superintendent's great public relations tool

