

The superintendent as the club historian

By TERRY BUCHEN

It's that time of year for many superintendents — time to catch-up on wintertime goals and objectives from their master calendar. And what better way to spend quality time than to update and prepare the history of your golf course.

"The golf superintendent is the

best resource to document the history of a course by taking many, many pictures at different times each year," exclaimed Melvin B. Lucas, Jr., CGCS. Lucas should know, he is often referred to as "The Resident Greenkeeper of the Golf Collectors Society" by none other than Joe Murdoch, founding father of

the society.

Lucas is president of Links Counsellor, an international agronomy consulting firm. He is also a former Golf Course Superintendents Association of America (GCSAA) president and immediate past president of the Golf Collectors Society.

"By chronicling the history of

the golf course through pictures and documentation in the superintendent's file system, the course history will never be lost or forgotten," Lucas continued. "Many courses are now writing their 75th and 100th anniversary books and the superintendent has many pictures a course historian might not

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know even exist. Historical photos, taken by supers, can really help a course during the restoration process — to 'put-it-back-the-way-it-was,' with never a doubt

to the architectural accuracy of the restoration.

"Many courses will contact former superintendents to help write a course's anniversary history book. They help document old photos and go through the super's history files — simply from memory."

According to Lucas, there are many "angels" in golf who can help the superintendent and course historian plan and execute the publishing of a history book. They include Brian Lewis of Sleeping Bear Press, a resident expert on history book publishing; Ron Whitten, architecture editor of Golf Digest, who along with Geoff Cornish have written two history books on golf courses and their architects and are world renowned experts on golf course history in America; Bob Grant of Droitwich, England, who does club histories in the U.K. and about famous European golfers as well; Dr. William Quirin, golf writer for The Met Golfer, who is doing Garden City Country Club's 100th anniversary book; Bradley Klein, architecture editor for GolfWeek and freelance architecture writer; Ross Goodner, retired golf writer for Golf Digest who lives in Oklahoma and has done history books on Shinnecock Hills Golf Club and St. Andrews Golf Club of Hastings-on-Hudson, N.Y.; and Desmond Tolhurst, retired golf writer who is also doing course history books now and has completed Merion Golf Club's book.

"Back in the 1920's," Lucas said, "most of the U.S. was aerial photographed. County seats and state governments have reproductions of these wonderful old black-and-white photos for a super's use. Today, most areas of the U.S. are aerial photographed every three to five years, especially if they are near farms."

Supers should continue keeping golf course files complete with dates of restoration chronologically — with many pictures — during all of the seasons of the year. Once a course history book is written, they are commonly donated to the U.S. Golf Association Library, GCSAA Library, state and local golf association libraries, and local GCSAA chapter association archives.

"Videotaping and photographing, especially in both black and white and color, is historically important," Lucas added, "from a new course under construction to the oldest course in the country."



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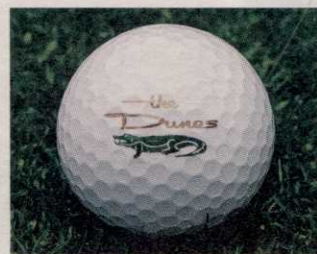
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