

# How Four Leading Greenkeepers

JOHN MAC GREGOR\*

Chicago Golf Club  
Wheaton, Ill.

—carefully schedules in advance the work to be done and then sees that his men follow the schedule closely.

It is only fitting that some public acknowledgment be made of the remarkable work that your Second Vice President, John MacGregor, has done at Chicago Golf Club during the year just completed. His achievement is not only proof of his knowledge of grasses and ability to handle men, but is evidence of sound thinking and planning as evidenced by the unusual results obtained under the method of operation which for lack of a better term, we have called the MacGregor System of greenkeeping.

His system is adaptable to any club where the greenkeeper is willing to knuckle down and run his operations with the same degree of attention that a small manufacturer devotes to his plant.

The MacGregor system has had one year's trial. It has been a severe season—one of unusual expense. The system has demonstrated itself so well that there is no reason why, with the same application, it should not do equally well year after year. The club or greenkeeper not operating under this or a similar plan can not control cost with any degree of efficiency. It is inevitable that as knowledge of its operation grows, more and more progressive clubs will adopt it.

The continued bickering about greens appropriations is answered under this plan, because it cuts costs and maintains quality, and the one without the other means nothing. In discussing this matter, we will talk of the MacGregor system rather than the man. He originated it—he operated it—others will inevitably adopt it. The method was the result of long experience and an inventive mind. The

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\*MacGregor method as described in address of I. R. Allen, green-chairman, Chicago G. C., at Midwest Greenkeepers' Assn. meeting.

A. E. ARNOLD

Masonic Country Club  
Comstock Park, Mich.

—allots an equal portion of the grounds to each man and thus makes each man a complete greenkeeper.

I AM pleased to write what I can regarding our system of labor; how we operated at first, how we are doing now, and how it seems to work out for us.

First, I might say something of the kind of organization I am keeping greens for, the magnitude of our grounds and some of the conditions under which we are operating which, of course, would have some bearing on our system of labor management that might differ with the management of many other well-managed golf clubs.

We are a Masonic country club organization of approximately 1,500 members, operating on a nominal dues and fee-paying basis. The membership is interested largely in golf, although many are tennis players, some are bowling-on-the-green enthusiasts, and many are interested in all activities the Club is equipped to offer them. We maintain at present 27 holes of golf, occupying more than half of our 400-acre holdings, situated along the west slopes of Grand River Valley just north of the Grand Rapids city limits.

Our bowling green has six lanes. We have two professional clay tennis courts and two asphalt courts, a children's playground, about two miles of scenic driveways through our wooded areas. We have many other activities, such as indoor baseball, quoits, archery, all of which require maintenance labor of varied classes.

Our club has been organized about ten years, and during that time it has passed through the periods of construction, semi-construction and maintenance and on into the period of nearly all maintenance, at which time we have now about arrived.

Our golf grounds, both in its construction and its maintenance stages, has been our major problem; however, the many other things we have, have required their

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from the standpoint of one of the operators of a pioneer fairway watering system in the middle west. Mac has made an extensive and practical study of the fairway watering problem as it hits the average well-maintained course in the central and eastern states, and knows his stuff to the degree that he won't go to bat stating his own, particular system is the world's last word. This always is a program novelty.

Joe Williamson of Scoto is slated for an address on "Practical Greenskeeping," which has the keynote of aligning effectively the lessons of actual work on the course and the discoveries and suggestions of the laboratory turf scientists. Ed Dearie, another prominent greenkeeper, is ticketed for summarizing his observations on practical drainage of golf courses. With the budget calling for exact figuring by the greenkeepers the remarks of Edward W. Doty, treasurer of the Cleveland District Golf Association, are bound to prove illuminating to the greenkeepers. Doty has been a close student of golf club bookkeeping for some years and the pitfalls of maintenance bookkeeping that trap the unwary greenkeeper are old stuff to him.

A very interesting and practical phase of the program will be the competition in green construction between teams representing the eastern seaboard, the Pennsylvania sector, the mid-west and Canada. Each team will be given the details of a par four hole requiring a green.

On the technical side of the program the association has picked such stars as Prof. Lawrence Dickinson of Massachusetts Agricultural college, Prof. J. W. White of Penn State college, R. H. J. DeLoach, research expert of Armour Fertilizer works, Dr. Howard Sprague of New Jersey Agricultural college, B. R. Leach, Martin A. Davey, of Davey Tree Expert Co., and T. E. Odland of the Kingston (N. J.) Agricultural Experiment station.

## Each Worker A Greenkeeper Is Basic Policy

By A. E. ARNOLD

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share of construction and maintenance labor problems.

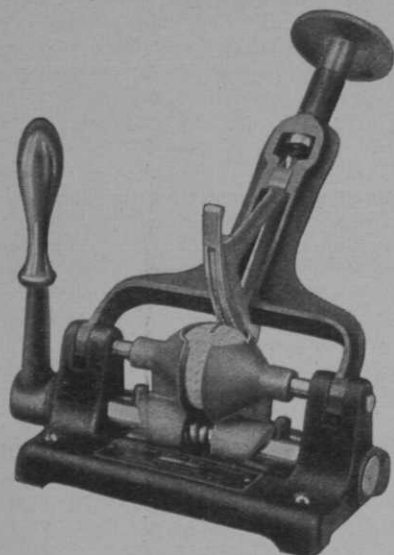
The first few years of its development and activities, the maintenance labor was to a large extent shifted about from maintenance to construction work and vice

versa. We did not allot any particular area or job to any one man, as our equipment was limited and the work was new. Our greens were watered by a night crew and were whipped and mowed the first thing each morning, the cups being re-set and the grounds in general dolled up by the maintenance crew—this work usually completed at noon, leaving the grounds in the afternoon as free from interference by working men as possible. The crew would be detailed to other work, preparing top-dressing materials, etc., but largely to construction work. Greens were topdressed regularly, weeded and fertilized by a part of this crew but always on a detailed plan, which at that time, seemed to be a conservative way.

As time went on and the construction work nearing an end, the demand began to grow for a higher state of perfection on our golf grounds in general. Together with this desire, the fungus diseases became prevalent, the desirability for a better strain of grass for the greens, the need for a greater and more efficient water supply, and a demand for more efficient service in general, together with the adoption of a budget system, all of which have necessitated a keen study of both labor management and turf culture.

The whole thing has boiled down to a well-established fact in my mind—that the nearer a greenkeeper one can make each man of our golf ground crew and the more interested he be kept in his work, the better one is able to maintain that high state of perfection on the grounds at the least possible cost.

With this belief in mind I am following that plan whereby each man of our maintenance crew is allotted a certain area of ground containing a certain number of greens, tees, traps, trees, etc., of which he has complete care, except, of course, the fairway mowing and the general watering which is done by a night-watering crew. He is equipped with all the tools that he needs, such as mowers, rake, shovel and shears. This system seems to promote a better condition, because it tends to create a spirit of competition between the men to produce the best greens and general appearance of his section. The size of the area and the number of greens and tees allotted to each man depends on the size of the budget which in turn is regulated by the income of the club. Of course, the fatter the budget, the more and better service can be given. But with a reason-



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able budget, this system does seem to prove out as the most satisfactory way to manage the maintenance labor.

During a part of our 1930 working season my budget allowed for one man for every three holes, including greens, tees, traps and any trees that were included in the area. Including a practice green and a bowling green (which is equivalent in area to two putting greens), we have the equivalent to 30 greens, which were divided into ten districts. Each district had one man for its care. In addition we employ two tractor operators, a night-watering man, an extra man for miscellaneous work and a foreman. I was well pleased with the results obtained with that crew. The season was very dry and it required a great amount of extra watering during the day.

Early night watering of the greens I think is by far the best time, but owing to the inability of the workmen in the dark to see as well where all the water is falling, especially when the wind changes, it is impossible always to get a good job; therefore the day man follows up and finishes that work each morning.

Topdressing materials heretofore have been a large labor item with us; however, last year I changed to a better plan for making compost which not only cut the labor cost of the material but produced a very much better grade of compost. We covered a quarter acre of sandy loam ground four inches thick with decomposed barnyard manure, plowed it about seven inches deep, covered again with two or three inches of the same kind of manure and disced in several times until it was well cut into the soil and followed up with a good discing each week until about the middle of August when we harvested it by scraping the soil to the depth of the plowing into huge windrows. Large piles or windrows tend to keep the material dry and available at all times to screen out and apply to the greens; also the soil bacteria (which have grown to the highest state) are kept dormant until the compost is applied to the greens. This change in method of preparing topdressing material I think is very much worth while, particularly because of the quality of the material it produces.