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Chairman, Green on Job, Tells How He Got By OK

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Orchard Lake (Mich.) C. C.

THE GREENKEEPER at Orchard Lake, when I joined, was a fellow who had started in when the water system was installed. The architect told the Board of Directors, as I got it, "Here is a man, a virgin, with no bad tricks." So he worked himself up from doing plumbing while the water system was being provided, and just like that, fell into a \$3,600 job as greenkeeper.

I believe it might prove interesting to tell how I became chairman of the greens. Why, is still a mystery to me and, for a while afterwards to many of the members.

The green-committee, struggling with the problem, consisted of three men; one was president of a large manufacturing plant, another, the editor of a newspaper and the third held an important position with the Detroit Water Works.

I had been coming along. I was elected to the Board of Directors. By this time the bond salesmen in our midst were dropping, here and there, one of their several memberships in clubs. Things were getting plenty tough. The Board ordered the green-committee to cut expenses.

Now in these exclusive clubs there are certain qualifications that one must have to get in. I remember that one member, in bringing up an applicant always said he was of an old New England family,

and his wife was so and so, and they both were the very dear friends of the Fleet-foots. He added he was quiet. Being mouthy is bad. After being elected to the Board I wondered how some of us got in the thing. Then I did some more broadcasting when I should have known better. That put me on the green-committee.

No Fairway of Rose Petals

When the Board ordered a cut in this department, we of the greens decided the rough might grow, and it did. Then we stopped watering the fairways, and I announced I would work out a labor system that would knock them cuckoo. Right at that time the Washington bent greens, having had more than they needed of manure and water soaking, decided to grow a heavy coat of fur for the winter. The grass on the fairways, which was underlaid with sandy gravel for more than one hundred feet in depth (for I drilled three water wells later) just curled up and blew away. When all of this was going on, the other members of the committee decided their business needed them and they just disappeared. My business about that time was not too hot, and I did not feel any too good.

The fall was coming along and so was my re-election to the Board. When I went

out to the election that night, there on the walls were several placards which read, "Elect Isgrigg for concrete fairways." Believe it or not, I was re-elected and then was made chairman of the greens. I guess country clubs are just funny that way. I had bought a farm one time in one of my many weak moments and other than my lawn, which never looked as good as my neighbor's, that was the full extent of what I knew about grasses.

The greenkeeper did not go out of his way to be helpful. I believed that greenkeepers wondered why green-chairmen were allowed to live. I can see now how they got that way. I had, some time before, spoken to the county farm agent about my farm and remembering his helpful suggestions at that time, I now determined to apply for help concerning this new problem.

I sent an SOS telegram to the Michigan Agricultural college. I received an answer advising the head of the horticultural department was on his way to our club. I met him and sitting out there on one of those hills, this man listened to my story. Brother, I was talking. I told him I wanted to make a golf course out of the place. (Some of my friends had advised me to plow it up and plant corn.) I told him I did not know anything about it. He listened to a complete confession of all my shortcomings. I told him I just had to make good.

He walked over the nearest green and I followed in his deep footprints. One could have seen them at night. He asked me if they were all like this and I replied that some were not as good. He looked at the fairways, dug up what few roots he could see and found that they pulverized between his fingers. I listened to his directions and delayed him until I could write them down. This man spoke the English I had learned. He later, from time to time, wrote me and also came to the course when I asked him to do so.

The greenkeeper did not think much of all this, but it sounded great to me and right there and then I insisted on it being followed to the letter. More and more I now find greenkeepers consulting such institutions and the Green Section of the USGA.

Hired the Right Man

I now hired a new greenkeeper. He was a Scotchman, having worked at the trade in his homeland and for several

years in this country. Three other Scotch greenkeepers, holding good positions, recommended him. I learned that the right way to hire men was by getting those recommended by other practical men and not by officials. Right here let me tell you that the thousands of golf players in this country owe much to the clan for their golf game and their golf courses.

I began to find out what a chairman's duties should be. He should maintain a first class golf course at the lowest possible cost. He should be a member of the Board and should know greenkeeping. He should have understudies and be free to spend much time on the grounds with the greenkeeper. If he does not know what he is doing, he is a useless and dangerous link in the system.

We followed the advice of experts, put in force through the greenkeeper.

Owing to the gravel subsoil our fairways require considerable water and fertilizer. The layout is long. The greens are very large and of Washington bent grass. There is a spacious clubhouse grounds, many trees and considerable shrubbery. The whole area includes 182 acres. It has ample traps, the usual practice green and fairway. I will not discuss the traps, except to say we have our own sand. And as the tees are bent grass, the care of them is similar to the greens. The tees are large and average more than two to each hole.

The rough is sheep fescue and I recommend it. We cut it until July first, then again in September. It does not grow much in the interval. It is found in bunches and the "lies" are not generally a "setup." It requires but little attention.

Hose Fairway-Watering

The fairways are cut continuously through the growing season with power mowers and the minimum of hand cutting. Never too close. The course has a powerful watering system, well planned. Lake water is used. Seven thousand feet of heavy duty hose is connected to the outlets off the mains, which supply 125 revolving sprinklers. The fairways are watered from June 1st to September 10th, using two men every night and one man day time, excepting that the watering is discontinued on Wednesdays at noon and on week ends and holidays and when we receive rains.

The first thing in the spring the fairways are rolled and then once a month thereafter a roller is used that has spikes



Here's where golf is making certain of a flourishing tomorrow. Bobby Cruickshank, noted pro at Virginia CC., Richmond, has his cradle roll and his "junior leaguers" out for one of the popular group lessons.

2½ in. long and ½ in. square that makes holes in the ground 4 in. on center. This is also used before seeding by running over the fairways several times.

A good commercial fertilizer is applied on the fairways each spring. It requires 1,000 lbs. to every acre of fairways. Each fall we sow 1,000 lbs. of fescue for all the fairways. When the fairways were destroyed we sowed ½ each of fescue, red-top, and bluegrass, both that fall and the next spring and used considerable compost and lime, and at present our grass stand is about of this proportion, although we anticipate that in another two years the fescue will predominate. We have beautiful fairways with an abundance of upright grass.

Our greens have good drainage. They are Washington bent and are pure. Some chickweed appears at times, but it is removed at once by arsenate of lead or by cutting out.

In the spring we first roll the greens after the frost is out of the ground. Then they are given a liberal treatment of commercial fertilizer. This gives the grass a good start. In the fall they receive another application of fertilizer. After the first few cuttings the greens are given a topdressing of a very light sandy soil, which has been finely screened and kept dry. The soil is such that it forms a good body when worked down, but sharp enough to keep the grass fighting to come up through straight and thin of blade.

This is repeated every 30 days. The soil that is used is prepared a year ahead. Two weeks after each topdressing ammonium sulfate is carefully applied.

Starting about June 1st and bi-monthly, throughout the growing season we apply 1½ ounces of corrosive sublimate, mixed with dry sandy earth, to each 1,000 square feet of green, and then watered in. When brown or dollar patch appears, additional applications are applied at once and repeated every 3rd day, until the growth shows that same has been arrested. On an average about 200 lbs. of this chemical is required each year. By soil tests, so far, our ground under the greens does not indicate the need of any lime. There are inexpensive ways of removing earth and other ground worms, destructive to bent greens, which we employ.

The watering of the greens is done by hand, so it can be regulated and thereby the growth is controlled. We strive for a fine putting surface and too much watering will not only defeat the purpose but has other ill effects. We do not water greens at night. The greens are cut close every morning, with heavy hand mowers.

The three years previous to my administration as green-chairman, not including capital investment, club grounds and equipment or repairs to same, the costs were as follows:

1928	\$17,744
1929	19,524
1930	17,689

Under the present administration and including all the items not included above, the cost were:

1931	\$13,252
1932	10,439
1933	9,200
Main Items, Year 1933	
A good greenkeeper	\$.....
Labor (14,000 hours).....
Fertilizer (45 tons).....
Ammonium sulfate (2 tons).....
Corrosive sublimate (200 lbs.).....
Seed for fairways (1,000 lbs.).....
Other chemicals	50.00
Electricity for water system.....	700.00
Gasoline and oil for tractors.....	400.00
Equipment and repairs.....	900.00
Trucking	35.00
All other items.....	100.00

NEW DEAL IN NAGA?

Greenkeepers' Association Considers Broader Plan of National Operation

REVISION of the organization structure of the National Association of Greenkeepers of America so the association will become more effectively and accurately national in scope and strength is contemplated.

Efforts are being made to get the ideas of sectional greenkeeping organization concerning the proposed change. Members of the Midwest Greenkeepers' Association recently were sent a letter by John MacGregor, president of the national organization, outlining the situation and inviting suggestions. The letter:

Present conditions emphasize the fact that the lack of co-operative organization among greenkeepers is the glaring weakness of the profession today. The present membership in all existing greenkeeper's associations in the United States and Canada is a ridiculously small proportion of the number of greenkeepers in that territory. Even the successful organizations are distinctly limited in their extent.

The Board of this Association is aware of this condition and encouraged by suggestions from various local groups, feels that steps to co-ordinate and extend the existing organizations should not be delayed longer.

In view of this feeling it seems logical to approach the existing organizations for reactions and suggestions as to ways and means of accomplishing the desired end.

Will you not give this question your attention and consideration? Is it not

possible to develop the NAGA through modification of its present type of representation so as to bring all groups closer together as well as reach those not now in any group? Would not district organizations be strengthened as an integral part of truly national activities, amplified through a polling of all the interests of our profession?

Again we commend the matter to your consideration and hope for early response which will make possible constructive steps in the direction of progress at the convention of the NAGA in Pittsburgh, January 30 to February 2, 1934.

At present the plan in the rough is to adopt substantially the PGA plan of federated organizations that retain their sectional identity and independence to deal with sectional matters but which can muster national strength and agree together on national policies.

Technical sectional differences in greenkeeping practice and conditions, probably as much as anything else have handicapped efforts to build a truly national organization. Sectional organizations formed prior to the national body were said to be somewhat fearful of loss of local independence were they to ally with a national group. Then, too, the matter of political misunderstandings and arguments unavoidable in the earlier stages of national organizing had something to do with preventing expansion of a national organization until it was national in fact.

Sharp curtailment in greenkeepers' incomes and Cleveland bank situation which has tied up and possibly done away with the greater part of the national association's substantial bank balance has been responsible for consideration of a change in organization plans. With possibility of code regulations still further complicating the problems of all greenkeepers and the almost complete disappearance of an insular attitude among greenkeepers, it is believed that a substantial broadening of greenkeepers' organization can be effected.

IN CELEBRATION of its tenth anniversary, the Greenkeepers Club of New England will hold a dinner-dance and entertainment on February 5 at the Woodland Golf Club, Auburndale, Mass. With better than 75 members in good standing, this organization of turf experts expects to usher in the second decade of its existence in great style.

Committee in charge of the event consists of Guy C. West, John Shanahan, Frank Wilson, Carl Treat and James McCormack.