

"YOUR COMMITTEE BEGS LEAVE TO REPORT:"

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BY WAY of introduction let me volunteer the information that I occupy the hazardous position of Chairman of the Green-Committee of a golf club in central United States. I say central United States advisedly, because that's where the hazard comes in. That area imposes problems of turf maintenance little known to my more fortunate contemporaries in other territories.

Mr. Kettering of General Motors fame is authority for the statement that research chemists would give anything in the world if they could find out what makes the grass green. I would consider myself a horticultural genius if I could find out how to keep it green—or to keep it at all, for that matter.

When I fell for the lure of the links some 30 years ago, the paramount problem plaguing the members had more to do with perennial deficits and house management than the maintenance of fairways. At that time the house committee was the doormat on which the members wiped their feet. Which recalls the familiar story of the club guest rushing around the locker-room in search of a cuspidor—or shall I say spittoon, since this is more of a Western experience—rendered necessary by his cheek full of chewing tobacco. The alert chairman of the house committee observed his predicament and approached the guest, asking if he could be of assistance.

"I'm looking for a place to spit," said

Here's one that's too, too true; written by a green-chairman.

It points out that the committee's tough job isn't always with the grass, but with the members.

It also tips off the value of the Green Section service of the USGA. But what can expert service do to over-rule the unwise demands of members?

The answer seems to be a constant educational campaign of bulletin-board notices, telling the members what it's all about.

the guest, with his lower lip propped up to avoid the overflow; "where the hell is the —"

"Oh, never mind the spittoon," broke in the host, "I'm chairman of the house committee; just spit on me."

Of late years, and especially since the introduction of fairway watering, competition between club committees for tribulation honors is ended. The green-committee is well out in front.

After several years of heat and drought, which took their toll of turf, it is not surprising that golf players concluded that a watering system on the fairways was an absolute necessity. What if crab grass should appear; any kind of green covering was preferable to no covering; and what could be so drab as a bald headed fairway relieved only by touches of milk purslane, which, for the information of the reader, is a flat lacy weed which proclaims a drought and a hard soil.

The members talked about the watered fairways of Hokey Duke at Chicago, with bluegrass like a velvet carpet; the La Lalla course at Los Angeles, with a bigger and better turf; the Bermuda turf at Atlanta, which brought smiles to the face of

Fort Worth (Tex.) Golf Assn. has the right idea about getting the folks to apply for district handicap cards. They put on a deadline and if applications aren't received by that time, it's too bad for the applicants. This year the association has 650 members, largest in its history. Numerous applications, received after May 3, the announced deadline, were turned down.

the brassie; the bent courses of New England; and on they rambled. So to the tune of many dollars a watering system was installed. After a year's experience with watering your committee hereby submits its report:

To the Board of Directors, Midcontinent Golf Club:

Your Committee begs leave to report that after an exhaustive study of grasses suitable for this area, watering considered, which included conferences and correspondence with the most expert advisers on the subject, your Committee selected a mixture of bluegrass and Rhode Island bent. A heavy fall planting with a good germination resulted in a beautiful spring turf, which brought cheers to the members and compliments to the Committee. But your Committee was a little embarrassed by what it feared might prove to be premature praise. The real test of mid-summer weather had not arrived.

It might be appropriate to interpolate here that the golf member is as appreciative of results as he is critical of mistakes. He may be silent when it comes to mentioning his high scores; or timid about counting his third putt, but when it comes to telling the green-committee what he wants, he cannot be accused of either silence or timidity.

Grass Height Is Debated

Your Committee had planned, as hot weather approached, to raise the mowers until the blades of grass were cut nearly two inches in height, to afford shade for the roots and to enable the plant to properly engage in what the experts describe as its photosynthesis process. But as this time approached and the mowers had been lifted for a cut somewhat in excess of an inch some slight difficulties arose with the membership. The Committee was politely but emphatically advised that after all we were operating a golf course, not a grass nursery. Did the green-committee remember that there was such a club as a

brassie, which needed a clear lie? Or was the Committee going to furnish pins for tees for brassie shots. One inquired without a smile whether the Committee was introducing niblick fairways.

Although your Committee felt it necessary to have inch and a half grass it found it much more peaceful to lower the mowers to an inch.

Subsequently when Summer was in full swing and scattering blades of crab grass began thumbing their noses at your Committee, it recognized the signal to reduce watering to a minimum—just enough to keep the cultivated turf barely alive. But as the course began to assume a dryer appearance a fresh shower of suggestions descended on our ears. "My gawd, we've got a watering system, why don't we use it." "Are we saving the water for a rainy day?" "What, no quarters for the water meter?"

Notwithstanding the many objections, your Committee decided to stand firm this time and carry out its own ideas. At least that is what they determined to do, not what they actually did. After all, the Committee was not made up of experts, and when opinion multiplied that we were allowing the grass to dry up and die, when the members had spent their good dough to avert just this calamity, your Committee fell for the pressure again and resorted to more frequent watering.

Then Came Mid-August

We need not call attention to what happened to the course by the middle of August. You have heard all about the green-committee's luxuriant \$25,000 crop of crab grass—a crop that yields no dividends except of the Irish variety. Ironically enough, your Committee knew what the trouble was. In the first place, the grass was cut too short, and in the second place far too much water was used.

There is another strange bit of information that has reached us. Because of loose bits of sod here and there on the course it was surmised that the workmen had evidently permitted the mower blades to

Rudy Sauer, at 74, is probably the oldest locker-room attendant at any golf club in the United States. Rudy has been at the Superior Golf Club, Minneapolis, for 10 years. He's so spry on the job members and guests didn't suspect his age until he was featured in a "Behind the Scenes" sports pictorial by Mickey Bach in the Minneapolis Star.

get so dull that they pulled out small furrows of sod, especially where the water was spared and the turf tanned. But white grub worms had a better explanation for this condition. They had eaten all the roots of the turf in areas from four to six feet square, leaving nothing but a thin layer of sod that could be lifted as readily as a small rug from the floor, and the mowers had indeed torn up those furrows of sod. In some places the grubs numbered as many as 30 to a square foot.

This prolific visitation of grubs naturally invites the inquiry: why had they not appeared before? At least two reasons were suggested. Heretofore the ground in summer was too dry and hard for the animals to navigate and flourish with such freedom. The watering system had removed that impediment and made their burrowing easy, and our robins—which feed on worms—had all but abandoned our golf course. The spray of water from the revolving nozzles, shooting vast quantities of water in the radius of 90 feet into the trees, had frightened the birds from their roosts and caused them to seek quieter resting places in neighboring timber.

We learned that these white pests were to hibernate during the winter and, after their metamorphosis, sail forth in the spring as May bugs, lay their eggs again, hatch out as grubs and start again their vicious circle. What was to be done? An SOS was sent to various departments of Agriculture of the several States, and soon the awaited remedies came pouring in.

A Mess of Poking!

Here was one—Plow to a depth sufficient to uncover the grub and introduce a lot of hogs and chickens. What a remedy for a golf course! Nearly every mail brought this remedy—Get a small steel rod and poke it in their holes. Ye gods, 30 holes to the square foot and probably 10 acres of holes!

As mechanical remedies seemed impracticable, chemical poisoning appeared as the only hope. While we were trying to make up our minds as to the proper chemical treatment, an old gardener suggested that when the grub had turned to a beetle in the Spring, all we had to do was to set out a number of red lights in a bucket of oil; the flying bug, attracted by the light would bump his head, fall into the oil and drown.

As this suggestion came from many

Golf clubs in Cleveland (O.) are fingerprinting caddies for the purpose of protecting the good kids from jams that follow depredations and robberies committed by young hoodlums who manage to get caddie assignments.

sources, we passed it on to the United States Department of Agriculture for its approval. Sure enough the scheme had been tried under scientific auspices—but found wanting. The light attracted only the male bug—(a red light would!)—and the few females that found the oil had already laid their eggs.

While the grub elimination efforts were under way, your Committee faced the problem of doing something about the \$25,000 crop of crab grass—goose grass to be exact. Fall seeding was at hand. But when seeding was attempted the clumps of goose grass resisted the discs of the planting machine, and continued to resist even after the discs were sharpened to a carving knife edge.

Now what was to be done? The Committee was stumped. But not some members, who wondered why the dumb committee didn't rake off the crab grass like they had just done at Blissful Hills in Kansas City. They knew that was the answer. They had seen it done.

How simple the suggestion, but how wide of the mark! The fact is that there wasn't any goose grass on Blissful Hills. They had raised only the short-rooted, simple crab grass, readily removed by raking, whereas our goose grass was deep rooted and as tenacious as a bulldog. Only plowing would remove it, and your Committee feels certain that such a remedy would result in the removal of both the grass and your committee, which latter remedy your Committee is now about ready to invite.

While pondering the solution of this problem, not to mention others of equal difficulty, your Committee was reminded of the solemn conclusion reached by a group of greenkeepers in this territory, which reads as follows:

"It is said that Father Adam knew something about grass—that cows would eat it. For some unexplained reasons he made no effort to increase his learning on the subject. We have concluded after years of experience that Father Adam was a wise guy."

Perhaps that is the answer; but your Committee is foolish enough to keep trying.