

GCSA Convention

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long time for them to clear through customs. Sulfate of ammonia is the most common fertilizer although the birds give a supt. a big lift by delivering plenty of guano for the greens.

Sixth Session

It's Supts' Day at the Meeting

Fred V. Grau, consulting agronomist for Hercules Powder Co., handled the introductions at the sixth all-supts. session. His list of speakers included Joe B. Williams, Santa Ana (Calif.) CC; John L. Kolb of Minikahada in Minneapolis; Clifford A. Wagoner of Del Rio G & CC, Modesto, Calif.; and Ted J. Rupel of Cherry Hills in Denver. Panelists for this gathering were Charles F. Shiley, North Hills, Milwaukee, Paul N. Voykin, Briarwood, Deerfield, Ill. and Robert V. Mitchell, Sunset CC, Sappington, Mo.

The first speaker on the "Course Man-

agement Aids" program, Joe Williams, may have been the busiest man at the GCSA conclave. He handled the stage props in the 750-seat convention hall, was a semi-official photographer, and as a member of the host Hi-Lo chapter, had a full week of shaking hands and greeting visitors. If the pressure took its toll of Joe it wasn't evident in his speech, one of the best of the conference.

Would Enlarge Training Plan

Williams encouraged supts. to break away completely from the still deeply entrenched and hidebound attitude that training an assistant may mean training a replacement for the greenmaster's job. "We have an obligation to ourselves and the club," said the Santa Ana turfman, "to have a No. 2 man on hand to take over in our absence. Sickness, emergencies and the need for taking occasional vacations are unavoidable. If nobody is capable of filling in for us when we're away, we'll find that we wish we had trained someone to backstop us. Looking at the situation from a larger viewpoint," Williams continued, "enough supts. are retiring each year to make us feel obligated to provide replacements for them from our own organization."

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The Santa Ana supt., who has been carrying on an assistant training program at his club for several years, outlined how it works. He hires young men who are attending college and majoring in agriculture or horticulture and gives them part-time and summertime work. This comes only after Williams has thoroughly checked their grades and interviewed them to determine, if they have the desired aptitude. While the students are in training, they not only are taught every phase of maintenance but records are kept on their progress. Joe also insists they learn to play golf so that they get a full understanding of the player's viewpoints. So far, five of the young men who have worked for Williams have graduated to greenmaster's jobs.

"Fundamentals of Equipment Handling" was the subject of the discussion by Jack Kolb, who also gave an excellent account of himself on the podium. His speech was broken down into two parts, one on the handling of equipment, and the second, calibration.

Must Understand Machinery

Under the subject of handling, Kolb said that the operation of each piece of machinery should be thoroughly understood as to both performance capabilities and limitations. Familiarity, too, with the cleaning and servicing of all course equipment is another requisite. It is only when these things are fully grasped, the Minikahda supt. said, that a person in charge of the maintenance department can train men to service and repair mowers, tractors, etc., and then determine if these things are being properly done.

Calibration, Kolb stated, calls for close adherence to manufacturers' specifications as well as frequent testing. Tire pressures, for example, should be frequently checked to prevent damage to both turf and machinery. Calibration, such as between

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a sprayer and boom, should quite often be tested out on the job to make sure the spray unit is delivering the prescribed amounts of fungicides, herbicides, etc. Spreaders, hand sprayers and accessory equipment also should be similarly checked. Kolb warned against taking mower settings for granted, saying that it isn't unusual to make three or four bench adjustments and end up with as many different results even though the same setting is desired in each instance.

Intelligent Interviewing

Cliff Wagoner, who has worked as a supt. in Northern Calif. since the end of World War II and is a member of the USGA green section committee, explained some of the techniques of hiring men and breaking them in. "There are two methods of hiring," Wagoner pointed out. "One is rather passive and doesn't give you much information about the applicant. Here, you put Yes or No answers into the fellow's mouth and never really get him to open up.

"You'll have a much more informative interview," Wagoner continued, "if you contrive questions that make the prospective employee do some of the leading. Let

him explain some of the answers he gives. If you say, 'Is your health good,' you know beforehand what the reply will be. But if you ask, 'How many days have you been off because of illness?' you'll probably get a real insight into the applicant's health. It's all in the way you ask the questions."

Training starts, Wagoner said, by giving the employee a full briefing on what is expected of him. At the same time, be sure he knows everything the job offers in the way of promotion and salary prospects and is familiar with the fringe benefits. One of the first things a supt. should do is instruct the new employee in golf etiquette. It also doesn't hurt to explain the game to him if he doesn't know much about it. On the job, Wagoner stated, instruct by example, stress that there should be uniformity of maintenance on every hole and above all, impress the new man with the fact that he should always try to use good judgment.

How Not to Groom

Ted Rupel, the Colorado State U. alumnus who has been at Cherry Hills for nearly 10 years, discussed course grooming. Rupel approached his subject in a rather oblique way by citing things that should



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be neglected if the supt. wants to win a course rating of something near .000.

"Don't pick up any debris," Ted advised, "but let the mowers chew it up and the wind carry it away — Skip the trimming — you injure the grass . . . Leave the rough and the area around the ponds and lake uncut so employees can step up the harvest of lost balls . . . Let the wind pile up the leaves — that will take care of composting.

"The really ironic thing," Rupel concluded, "is that at a few courses I've seen they seem to have anticipated the advice I'm giving here."

The panel of experts for the sixth session included Charley Shiley, who has been at North Hills in Milwaukee for 11 years and in the turf business for 27; Paul Voykin, a suave young man who reads books such as *Tarus Bulba* in the raw Russian; and Bob Mitchell, one of the GC-SA's top golfers and who, after getting a degree in Business Administration, turned to the soil to make a living.

Camera Is A Useful Tool

Shiley stressed the value of using Koda-

slides in keeping permanent office records, and urged supts. to invest in cameras so that they can detail course conditions, construction, landscaping operations, etc. for reference and future study. A camera is a further aid, Shiley said, in making a record for insurance claims for any damage to the course, clubhouse, etc., that is caused by weather or vandalism. It also comes in handy for persuading committees and club officials that improvements or changes in the course are needed.

Reports Can Save Jobs

Ideas for the makeup periodic reports for club officials and members were outlined by Paul Voykin. These should include weather summaries, statistical information on the consumption of water and the use of fertilizers, any changes in maintenance procedures such as reduced or increased cutting heights, notices of new construction, etc. "When you can quote some impressive cost figures," Voykin emphasized, "be sure to get them into your report." The Deerfield, Ill. turfmaster also includes terse reminders to repair ball marks and divots, and makes requests such



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as not to disturb the duck hens that are nesting near the lake in anticipation of a further population explosion.

"Some supts," Voykin observed, "regard reports as so much paper to be tossed aside. But they shouldn't overlook the fact that reports become a part of a record that, in some cases, can save a man's job. Just a year ago, for example, some Midwest supts. were hard put to explain the ravages of winterkill. Because of it a few of them were three-quarters of the way out of a job. Those who had weather reports to back up the claim that they had to cope with extremely adverse conditions didn't have nearly as tough a time in explaining what had happened as supts. who never bothered with them."

Fashion Note — On Ladies Day at Voykin's Briarwood club, Paul introduces an artistic and imaginative novelty that has greatly impressed the feminine swingers. He removes the regular tee markers and substitutes potted flowers, such as geraniums, in their place. It doesn't take much more than an hour to make the switch.

Dealing with The Committee

Bob Mitchell spoke on the makeup of the green committee and the conduct of meetings with this group. The committee,

in his estimation, shouldn't have any more than four or five members and, if possible, should include a high handicapper, a fair golfer and a good one so that their opinions represent the views of the entire club. When a new group comes into office, Mitchell said, it is to the advantage of the supt. to thoroughly explain the maintenance picture. Then, the committeemen have some idea of what course upkeep entails, and can either make intelligent decisions or don't interfere with those that have to be made.

Keep It Moving

As for the conduct of meetings with people on the green committee, Mitchell said that the supt. should bend over backwards to hold these gatherings at their convenience. He pointed out that if the greenmaster doesn't take it upon himself to prepare an agenda, the meetings many times are pointless. However, it should be recognized that the green chairman is in charge, regardless of whom may prepare the discussion schedule. Finally, Mitchell cautioned his listeners that the supt. has an obligation to keep the committee members fully informed as to what goes on in his department. The withholding of information, he said, too often works to the disadvantage of the supt. in the long run.



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