



GRAU'S Answers to Turf Questions

BY FRED V. GRAU

The Women Will Love Fred for This!

Some 2600 people have returned home after attending the 36th International turfgrass show in Cleveland. Many and varied will be the reactions and comments in the post-mortems which will be discussed over many weeks. Some of the reactions will reach the supts' executive committee for its guidance in organizing the 37th at Kansas City. I shall attempt to crystallize some of the highlights of the conference. No conference can be expected to be so perfect that there would be no criticism. Weak spots inevitably occur.

No one who regularly attends an International conference can be unaware of the increasingly important part played by the ladies. Never before have I been so impressed with the tremendous influence of "Mrs. Superintendent." She is the unpaid half of a *team* that the club hired when it thought it was hiring a supt. only. Few people point out to clubs the terrific bargain they get when they hire a happily-married supt.

Bless Their Understanding!

The lady performs many vital functions besides being a wife and mother. She is the confidante of a tired, harassed mate who comes home discouraged about weather, heat, cold, drought, diseases, insects, indifferent labor, poor soil, machinery that breaks down, fussy members,

grass that won't respond, and green chairmen that are either underfoot or rarely around. A man under stress finds solace in an understanding mate who lives his troubles with him.

Another virtue of the wives of superintendents is that **THEY READ!** Many told me that when their husbands are too busy to read their magazines, they (the ladies) skim through the articles, digest them, and pass on the highlights to their weary mates. What a great way to get information painlessly! To top it off, the women attend conferences to better understand what makes the whole industry tick, and to have a bit of relaxation and fun before they have to start listening again to grass-fertilizer-labor-machinery talk. Let us hope that clubs will re-appraise their "Mr. and Mrs. Superintendent Team", if they haven't already, and escalate benefits accordingly.

Something About Slides

Kodachrome slides are valuable visual aids to complement a lecture for illustration and explanation with few or no words.

The most effective slides are:

1. Few in number;
2. Of highest quality and in sharp focus;
3. Pertinent to the subject;
4. Quickly explained, then dismissed.

Too many slides of dubious quality, for which apologies are felt necessary, quickly lose an audience. A workable plan is one in which the local association demands a dry run at a monthly meeting for pur-

poses of criticism and improvement. Anything below par must be discarded before the presentation can be considered suitable for an international affair.

Too Much Data

Black and white slides of data, charts and graphs become totally unacceptable when:

1. There is too much material on the slide;
2. Characters are too small to be read beyond the fifth row;
3. Lines of colors and broken dots and dashes coalesce and become indistinguishable.

Technical data is part and parcel of any educational conference. But it should be presented in small, easily digested bits that can be read with ease anywhere in a great ballroom.

Slides are presented by means of a projector and screen, both of which frequently fail to function. Conferences can be run much more smoothly when great care is taken in planning so that:

1. Slides fit the projector;
2. Someone knows how to operate equipment and is there when needed;
3. Slides are shown right side up;
4. Projector has sufficient candlepower properly to show details of slides;
5. A dry run eliminates faults in the system.

Young Ones Come Through

The 36th hit a new high with the brilliant presentations of Frank Dobie, Tom Burrows and Dick Blake on Thursday. Their talks epitomized the tremendous value of theoretical college education coupled with a solid foundation of practical training under a supt. who cares about the future of the profession. One gains confidence in the future with teachers like Roberts, Duich, Daniel, Troll, Engel and others who send students to courses where they will get a chance to grow.

Question and Answer Panels

Most questions are fairly personal and refer to a local situation where the member wants to know, "What can I do about this local condition?" It seems that this

type of panel is more suited to local chapter monthly meetings or to regional conferences. Panelists hesitate to answer fully and specifically for various reasons: (1) time factor; (2) unfamiliarity with specific local factors; (3) fear of misinterpretation; (4) fear of encroaching on another's specialty. Also, it seems to be difficult to equitably distribute the questions so that each panelist has an opportunity to serve.

Water Should Be Discussed

The subject of water is universal. Some phase of water supply, water use and misuse, and water relationships to soils, plants and organisms belongs on every program, national, regional and local. No one ever can know too much about this vital resource. Before too long we may see legislation that brands as criminal any act, thoughtless, selfish or otherwise, that leads to contamination or waste of our water supplies. Water belongs to everyone. The misuse of water certainly reaches a peak when water contaminated by an accumulation of nitrates is the cause of babies' deaths (J. F. Shrunck, 4th Assembly). This demands critical inspection of every water-using system that conceivably could contribute to this deplorable situation.

Split Sessions

Split sessions are logical and useful but when two sessions are run simultaneously, they deprive many supts. of information they come to acquire. Were the two sessions to be set up on succeeding days, every person involved in all phases of cool and warm-season grasses could gain full information on both programs.

The subject matter of "Research Findings" is essential to each and every International conference. Interpretation of data and translation into clear-cut explanations for the supt. are a necessary adjunct to each paper. An excellent plan is one that has each research paper followed by a 10 or 15-minute quiz session wherein a panel of two supts. and one technical man ask the speaker questions which are designed to clarify any confusion. The panel would have to study the paper
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Grau's Answers

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prior to presentation and would have to prepare the quiz in advance. The quiz would be rapid-fire and penetrating. It would minimize the confused mutterings in the aisles and the halls such as, "What did he say?"; "What did he mean?". *Pre-conference editing of papers is as important as pre-publication editing.*

Chairmen of committees traditionally receive honors on behalf of all the members. For the educational conference, we name Don Figurella and John Spodnik to receive the "Grau Award" for imagination and vision in developing and executing a first rate conference. The pattern set at Cleveland has provided guidelines for future successes, and for the continued elevation of the professional standing of all GCSA members.

Which Is Best?

Q. Toronto (C-15) bent stolons have been recommended for the greens on our new course. We thought that there was only one Toronto bent. Now it seems that there are at least four

or five types of Toronto. How will we know if we get the right one (the good one?) (Illinois)

A. Diligent search has failed to reveal a satisfactory answer to your question. After talking to representatives of two large firms that grow and sell Toronto (and other) stolons, it seems that both have the "good Toronto." Maybe they do. Both are sincere and both are sensitive to the image they have built in the turfgrass industry through honest dealings and careful nursery stolon management.

My advice is to avoid any Toronto stolons that have been grown under indifferent management that has permitted seed to ripen. Purchase from reputable growers (nurseries) whose interest is in selling "the best".

Apparently some of the "poor Toronto" came from golf course nurseries where seedheads formed and caused contamination. This is a "live" issue and you may be sure we will keep searching until we are satisfied that we have located the "good Toronto."

Non-Creepers Creep

Q. We planted our fairways to Colonial bentgrass seed several years ago. We have been sparing with water to discourage poa annua. Now we have a high percentage of creeping bents which require different management. We thought that Colonial bents were non-creepers. Can you explain this to us?

A. Studies at Penn State and elsewhere show that domestic-grown Colonial bents (Astoria