

CONVENTION FLASHBACK



Convention notes

In Denver during the 52nd annual meeting of the Golf Course Superintendents Assn. of America (February 7 to 11), there were many moments of truth for the golfer who pays and pays and pays. The program was fundamentally money-oriented. And superintendents took the realistic

view that how much they get paid depends on what the golfer can afford to pay.

Superintendents were also concerned about ecologists' cry for a reappraisal of chemical treatment of turf. Consensus was that some revisions of treatments are inevitable, not because course managers have been stupid or selfish in sinning

against man and his environment, but because the politics of the situation require changes of some sort.

But economics rather than ecology headlined the program that drew 4,000 to the conference. About 3,300 were superintendents; others were their wives and the salesmen at the 112-exhibits of equipment, supplies and services.

Labor continues to account for 60 to 70 per cent of the maintenance costs of most courses. One section of the program was devoted to the problems of recruiting, training, managing and rewarding golf course labor. There were bright sides to the labor situation. One was shown when Robert O. Williams, superintendent, Bob O' Link GC, Highland Park, Ill., and GCSAA president in 1958, was presented with a plaque signed by 48 superintendents and assistant superintendents he had employed on their ways up. One unusual item in the Williams use of young men in Bob O' Link maintenance was the summer he employed one-third of the turf management class at Penn State.

Also reflecting a healthy executive level working condition in golf business was GOLFDOM's Annual Father and Son Luncheon. Present were 62 fathers and sons and sons-in-law in course management positions. The characters and achievements of the sons of veteran superintendents distinguish them as young men rated by golf business and their parents with justifiably high pride.

Greens gang mowers and automatic watering system equipment headlined the vast equipment display. There were lots of debates about the merits of various makes of mowers. Superintendents did agree that on busy courses the gang green mowers are essential to keeping ahead of golfers and release crew members for other essential work.

Irrigation and drainage problems were the theme of one session that considered the headaches of unsuitable water and the importance of adjusting watering to course requirements. Overwatering continues to be a frequent fault in course maintenance, experts noted, but it is being reduced by the automatic programs. Speakers repeated that the main problems with the automatic system is to get the correct installation.

"The Thinking Superintendent," a panel discussion directed at using brains to improve maintenance while

economizing money and time, had so much information applicable to course operations that this reporter would estimate this afternoon alone yielded enough ideas to more than compensate for the expense of sending superintendents to the convention.

A highlight of the conference was the tale told by slides and words of Fred Grau of the history, status and prospective development of course maintenance. The fantastic progress in course conditioning has been steady and generally lacking in "circus," so superintendents and golfers themselves don't realize what advances have been made. That's partially why superintendents haven't been able to follow the good advice given by John Husar, Chicago Tribune golf editor, about acquainting golfers with the immense improvement in golf due to superintendents' achievements.

Organization of ideas that superintendents and their chairmen get and channeling the notions into effective work on the course accounted for an intensely interesting and profitable series of lessons. Even the weather was weighed carefully on the budget scales in the manner in which golf course irrigation problems were viewed.

Discussions about GCSAA's certification program seem to be easing almost to where formally qualifying superintendents will be no more disturbing to competent men than applying for an automobile license. Veteran superintendents, who have been tested and promoted, and the agricultural school graduates in course management claim their work is more complex, more exacting and more urgent than the jobs of their associates in the golf clubs' table of organization, so it's more difficult to identify a capable man for course management than it is to examine and rate a club manager or pro.

Buying was reported as being better than during the previous two years. New equipment that saves labor on essential work, and equipment that gives touches of perfection to a course, watering equipment, a broad array of chemical controls and fertilizers, apparently okay from the ecological angle, had sales managers in a bright mood.

The improvement in the actual or tentative buying was noted by some course equipment and supply dealers who recalled that last year there were slow payments by some clubs



of a Class A type of membership, socially and financially.

Proceedings of the conference are valuable reading for a green chairman of a private club or owner or man in over-all charge of a pay-play course. Cost is \$3 to a GCSAA member; \$10 to a non-member. Order from the Golf Course Superintendents Assn., 3158 Des Plaines Ave., Des Plaines, Ill. 60018.

—Herb Graffis

Election results

President, Richard C. Blake, superintendent, Mt. Pleasant CC, Boylston, Mass.; vice president, Robert V. Mitchell, superintendent, Sunset CC, St. Louis, Mo.; directors, Charles G. Baskin, CC of Waterbury, Waterbury, Conn.; Richard W. Malpass, Riverside G & CC, Portland, Ore.; and Paul E. Mechling, Sylvania CC, Sylvania, Ohio.

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NCA

Election results

Elected president of NCA was Cyril F. Brickfield, Bethesda CC, Bethesda, Md. Vice presidents elected were: Maurice A. Hessian, Minneapolis Athletic Club and Interlachen CC, Edina, Minn.; Paul J. McGraw, Country Club of Ithaca, N.Y.; Al Meillon, California GC, California City, Calif.; and Willard Steger, River Oaks CC, Houston, Tex. Louis L. Szep, Oklahoma City G & CC, Okla., was elected secretary, and George C. Delp, Lancaster CC, Lancaster, Pa., was named treasurer. Eight new directors were elected: James H. Brewer, Los Angeles CC, Los Angeles; Joseph J. Donoghue, Losanteville CC, Cincinnati; Jack Burke, Champions GC, Houston; Samuel E. Fulton, Tavistock CC, Haddenfield, N.J.; William Gosselin, Chilton Club, Boston; Melvan Jacobs, Northmoor CC, Chicago; H. Alton Owen, Harbour View Club, New York City, and Milton E. Meyer Jr., Pinehurst CC, Denver.

Conference notes

Members attending the National Club Assn.'s 10th annual meeting in London, England, were able to participate in a panel discussion on the advisability of retaining non-profit exemptions and account-

ing problems under the new tax regulations. Appearing on the panel were Arthur Iredell, partner in the firm of Harris, Kerr, Forster, Inc., Robert Kranzler, partner in Laventhol, Kreckstein, Horvath and Horvath, and Milton E. Meyer, secretary, Pinehurst CC, a tax paying, member-owned golf club.

Attendees also heard John Fry, editorial director of GOLF and GOLFDOM Magazines, present an in-depth review of his magazines' research into the effect of rising property taxes on the private club industry.

In the association's Tax Clinic, Jack P. Janetatos, NCA's general counsel, analyzed the probable effect on private clubs of the forthcoming guidelines to the Tax Reform Act of 1969.

Janetatos noted, "Our clubs have now been subject to the law for a year . . . begin your thinking about compliance with this law by recognizing this—every club will have some tax liability. If you submit a return showing no tax due, you may expect a visit from agents of the Internal Revenue Service very soon thereafter . . . We have been subject to the law for a year and we have had no help from the Service by way of guidelines to interpret the law . . . This situation will change today."

Janetatos then discussed a meeting between NCA and the IRS

(see p. 10) in which the problems presented by the law were discussed in detail. He noted that clubs can expect major revisions in Revenue Procedure 64-36; that the question of reimbursement will remain paramount; that the rules on reciprocity will be tightened and that the Service will probably be flexible on deductions, although clubs will have to separate member and non-member expenses.

Janetatos also discussed the question of retaining or giving up a club's non-profit exemption in these words: "No decision can be made in the abstract as to whether tax exempt or taxable status is preferable. In our view the decision must be made by each club based upon its own circumstances."

Concluding the session, Janetatos said, ". . . I wish to urge upon you an attitude of tax-consciousness. You must understand the tax law and recognize its impact. Then you must apply it in your own case. Finally, you must plan your future activity and transactions in light of the tax law."

On the lighter, social side, 600 members of the association were guests of the Guinness Harp Corp. at a Black Velvet Party and attended their own membership reception and luncheon.

—Ken Emerson

CONVENTION FLASHBACK

CMAA

In England one often hears the phrase, "we will lay it on." Translated into American this means "to do it up right." The city of London, the Grosvenor House Hotel and all of England "laid it on" for the Club Managers Assn. of America, the National Club Assn. and their wives and guests.

At Heathrow Airport, Ireland, we were greeted by genial John Cremers of the Empire State Club (New York City) and the members of the Hospitality Committee. Some of the managers were whisked away to the CMAA board of directors meeting leaving their wives to clear customs and complete embarkation procedures. Those managers who remained were taken by bus to the Grosvenor House Hotel.

On Sunday evening, January 17th, one of five groups of diners was scheduled for an Elizabethan dinner at the Gore Hotel.

Monday, January 18th, began with registration, a meeting of the Club Management Institute and the National Club Assn. tax clinic in the ballroom of the Dorchester Hotel. In the afternoon, the ladies at a tea received information concerning London.

At six the following morning, some 150 people assembled to tour the Convent Flower Market. Following tea and cheese buns, the tour returned to the hotel for an all-day tour of London, which included the British Museum, London University, Trafalgar Square, the Houses of Parliament, Westminster Abbey and the changing of the guards at Buckingham Palace. At noon, a Ploughman's Lunch of beer, bread and cheese was served in about 10 London pubs. That afternoon the tour continued through Fleet Street, St. Paul's Cathedral, the Bank of England and the Tower of London.

On Wednesday early risers were taken to Billingsgate Fish Market. From 9 until 11:30 a.m. the ballroom was packed with those who had come to see Peter Berners-Price, conference and banqueting executive of the Grosvenor House, demonstrate the serving of French, Russian, English and American foods.

At lunch, the 900 attendees and their wives dined with British club secretaries and their wives for a "Counterpart" Luncheon. Richard Edmonds, secretary of the famous Boodles Club, spoke on British private clubs. Following luncheon some 15 British club secretaries formed a "Meet the Press" type panel and discussed British clubs and secretary's duties with their American counterparts. Half way through the discussion, the tables were turned and the Englishmen questioned the American managers.

On Thursday, once again early risers were on the move, journeying to the Smithfield Market, which is London's meat market. At 9:30 a.m. one of the finest days of seminars in CMAA's history began. Dr. Robert Beck, Dean of the School of Hotel and Restaurant Administration, Cornell University, spoke on planning for the future. Raymond Oliver, owner of France's renowned Le Grande Vefour Restaurant, discussed the preparation of French cuisine. Included in the seminars were tours of the Naval and Military Club, the Oxford and Cambridge Club, the Sackville Club, the Garrick Club and the Roehampton Club. Also toured were the Tanqueray and Beefeater distilleries, the Whitbread and Guinness breweries and the Le Begue Wine Cellars. Films, provided by the Scotch Whiskey Assn.

and Beefeaters Distillery, augmented our seminar program.

In addition, Dr. James C. Taylor, Dean of the School of Hotel and Restaurant Administration, Houston University, spoke on personnel training. Professor Colin Laycock of Sheffield Polytechnic Institute lectured on management training techniques used in England.

Friday, January 22nd, and now the conference was nearing an end. In the morning there was an Educational Wrap-Up Panel with Deans Beck and Taylor and Dr. Derek Gladwell who heads up the Department of Hotel and Institutional Management at Sheffield Polytechnic Institute. They exchanged views on their opinions of English clubs and American club managers.

Following luncheon we entered the final phase of our conference and with it our closing business and voting session. The proposed elimination of the one-year waiting period for eligibility for CMAA membership was voted down. Membership requirements remain one year at one club for managers and two consecutive years at one club for assistant managers. Affiliate memberships were abolished, and it was established that new chapters must now have 10, instead of seven to organize or continue a chapter of CMAA.

On Saturday, the Farewell Hunt Breakfast was held. Many stories will follow concerning visits to St. Andrews and Turnberry Golf Clubs and trips to Guinness Brewery in Dublin, the Scottish distilleries in the Highlands and visits to the wine country. But none can compare with the fabulous week in London when they "laid it on" for the CMAA.

—Jerry Marlatt