

Superintendent Pleads Guilty

MASSACHUSETTS SUPERINTENDENTS HOPE
INCIDENT DOESN'T TAINT PROFESSION

By Anthony Pioppi, Contributing Editor

The former superintendent of Charles River (Mass.) Country Club pleaded guilty to bilking the club out of thousands of dollars, ending a situation Massachusetts superintendents hope will soon be forgotten.

James Reinertson pled out to four counts of larceny over \$250 and will serve no jail time. He was sentenced to one year of probation, 125 hours of community service and ordered to send a letter of apology to the club. He does not have to make restitution to the club.

"It was a sad day for golf," said Michael Hermanson, president of the Golf Course Superintendents Association of New England.

Reinertson had been at Charles River for a nearly two years when he was arrested and charged with embezzling \$78,050 from the Newton, Mass., club, police said. Reinertson used various schemes to steal from Charles River, including the submission of false and inflated invoices and false rental bills to the club for reimbursement. He also made fraudulent equipment sales in which payments for the used items were made out to him. The larcenies took place between April 2001 and January 2003.

Privately, many superintendents are concerned that their profession will be tainted by the actions of Reinertson and hoped he would serve time to send a message.

In a victim impact statement to the judge, former Charles River president Steve Buckley chided Reinertson, who claimed he did what he did for the benefit of the club.

"If Mr. Reinertson was only trying to help Charles River, why has he been selling club property, ours and his prior employers', to used equipment vendors for more than 10 years, as one vendor told police authorities? Why did he pressure small businessmen who had done business with Charles River for years to work for his personal gain, but bill Charles River? Why did Mr. Reinertson undertake a carefully planned scam of counterfeit invoices, diversion of vendor invoices to his personal post office box, phantom employees and the purchase of supplies for his moonlighting consulting business through Charles River?"

According to the letter, Charles River paid Reinertson \$200,000 a year.

As a result of the verdict, Wellesley Country Club, who hired him following his dismissal from Charles River, fired Reinertson. Wellesley did not respond to e-mails asking for a comment on the decision.

"I am hopeful that today's hearing will allow [the] Charles River Country Club and I to return to what we do best — providing a great golf course for golfers," Reinertson said in a statement.

Quotable

"The more people that hear about biotechnology and understand the benefits and uses and that products are thoroughly regulated, the more comfortable they are with the technology."

— Lisa Dry, communications director of the Biotech Industry Organization

"I'm very fortunate to have found and prospered in a job that I enjoy every day. How many people can say they get up

every morning, ride around in a golf car on three beautiful courses and tell people what to do? Now tell me it gets better than that?"

— A Florida superintendent on his career choice.

"His influences on the game, and especially among minorities ... if he wasn't as persistent and as stubborn as he has been his entire life and his career, players like me may not have had a chance to play on the Tour."

— Tiger Woods, on Charlie Sifford, the first black chosen in the World Golf Hall of Fame. (*The Wire*)