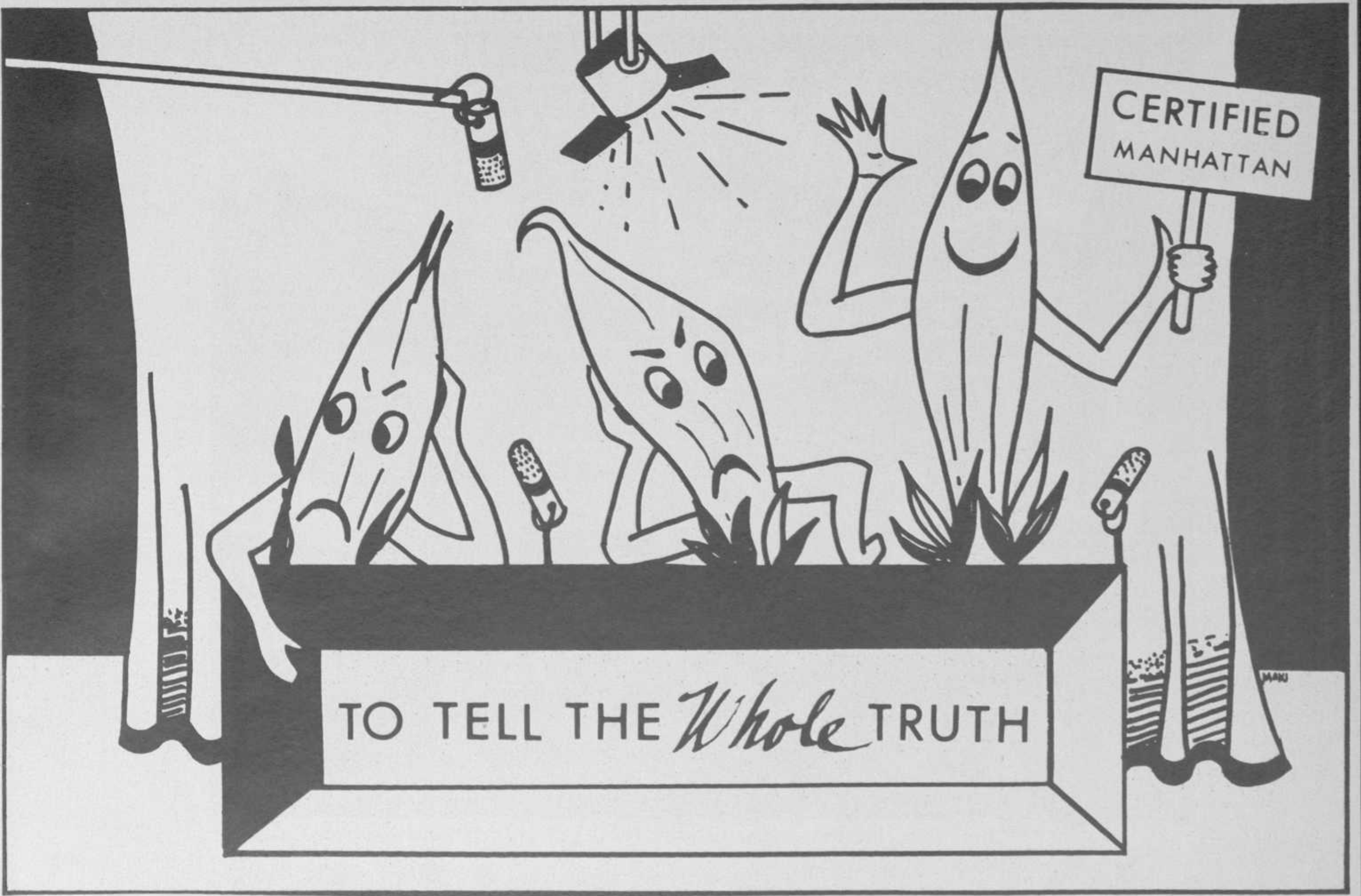

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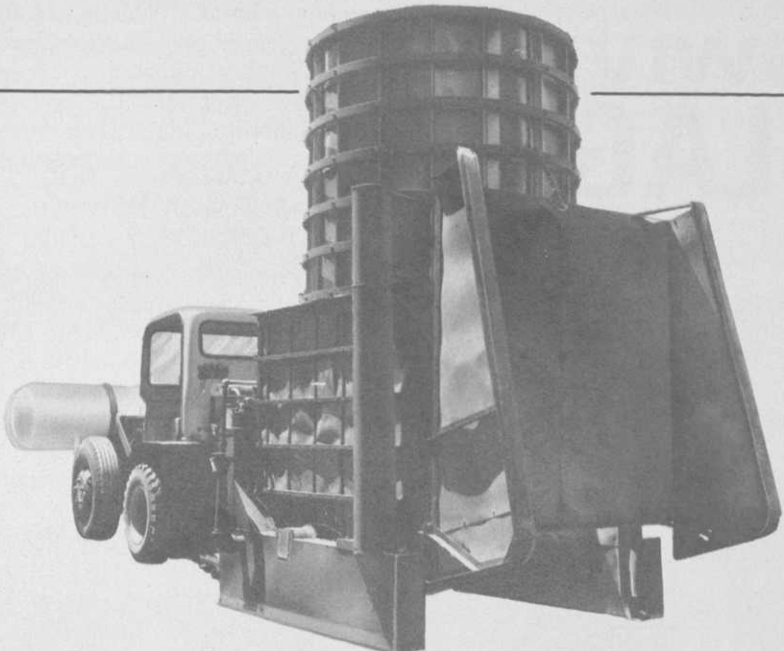
74-TF-2

ENERGY CRISIS

SEED SUPPLIES: *WHAT'S AHEAD?*

Seed growers fear shortages of fuel, fertilizer and petroleum-based chemicals will limit future expansion and present yields of seed production

by SCOTT LAMB President, Agricultural Commodity Promotions, Salem, Oregon



The O. S. U. plot burner (above) is one of several experimental models.

There is no doubt that the energy crisis will affect the production of grass seed in 1974, here in the heart of the grass seed growing region of the United States.

Oregon produces annually some 280,000 acres of grass seed; two-thirds of that production is turf seed; two-thirds of that production is turf seed. The majority of the turf seed is produced in western Oregon's Wilamette Valley, although it shares bluegrass production with eastern Washington and fine fescue and bluegrass production with eastern Oregon.

An opinion sampling of growers and seed dealers in this area of the country indicates there is at the least a problem in the production of grass seed and at worst a continued shortage. The dry weather of last summer throughout the grass seed production area reduced carryover of most varieties far below previous years. The unanswerable question of 1974 and beyond is whether or not fuel and fertilizer will be available to expand production or to maintain yields on present crops.

Grower Jesse Owre of Hubbard, Ore., expresses this ambiguity: "My supplier of both fertilizer and fuel has indicated we will get both, but he isn't sure of the quantity. Frankly, they are nervous about the availability of both fuel and fertilizer for this year's crop." Owre believes the price of wheat will also have an effect on the new plantings of grass seed. Present wheat prices would indicate a $400 per acre yield for western Oregon, he says. The price of most turf varieties would have to be increased to equal this profit factor, he believes.

John Wise, Woodburn grower, planted 160 acres of turfgrass last fall, but he hasn't received assurance that fertilizer will be available for the extra acres. His supplier thinks growers will get about 85 per cent of the previous year's fertilizer supply.

Carl Jensen, Silverton, Ore., seed grower is concerned about the availability of petroleum-based chemicals, such as 2, 4-D and others used in the production of grass seed. Jensen said this is another problem growers may have to face.

E. R. Townsend of Whitney-Dickinson Seeds, Inc., Buffalo, N.Y., handles several popular private varieties of grass seed. He thinks grass seed will be available to commercial users, such as golf courses. Townsend handles both Galaxie bluegrass and Manhattan perennial ryegrass and believes both varieties will be in ample supply, but suggests that superintendents planning to plant this spring or summer get their orders firmed up. Seaside bentgrass, he thinks, will be in short supply and priced higher this year. Most grass seeds will have moderate price increases for this year.

Buck Melton, president of Tee-2-Green Corp., marketers of Penncross bentgrass, said there is a short supply of Penncross bentgrass, but the price will not be increased this spring. "We are making every effort to see that the available supply is equitably spread on the market and we will hold the price on the 1973 crop at present levels," Melton said.

WHAT PRICE FIELD BURNING?

Beginning with the 1975 crop year, western Oregon growers will be faced with a crisis of their own. An Oregon law, expected to go into effect in January, will put an end to field burning. Growers feel that most grass seed fields must be burned, if high quality seed production is to be maintained. They are contributing one dollar per acre toward a research fund aimed at the invention of a field incinerator that can burn fields while keeping emissions within the limits set by the Department of Environmental Quality. So far, experimental models have been unsuccessful. With only one year left for experimentation, most growers think there is little hope for success before the 1975 deadline. They also feel that the state legislature will extend the open field burning deadline

continued on page 70

MANAGERS *from page 52*

chemicals in short supply.

• Some clubs are turning the "energy crisis blues" into an excuse for parties and other business stimulants. The manager of the Wilshire CC of Los Angeles has just thrown a successful party, which he tagged as the "Energy Crisis Candlelight Ball." Members brought their own candles (the only source of light for the affair). Ninety cent drinks and "energy crisis stew" (priced at $2.50 per person) were served, and the music probably emanated from nonelectrically powered instruments. Several other clubs reported they were using candles for many occasions and that their members loved the romantic atmosphere.

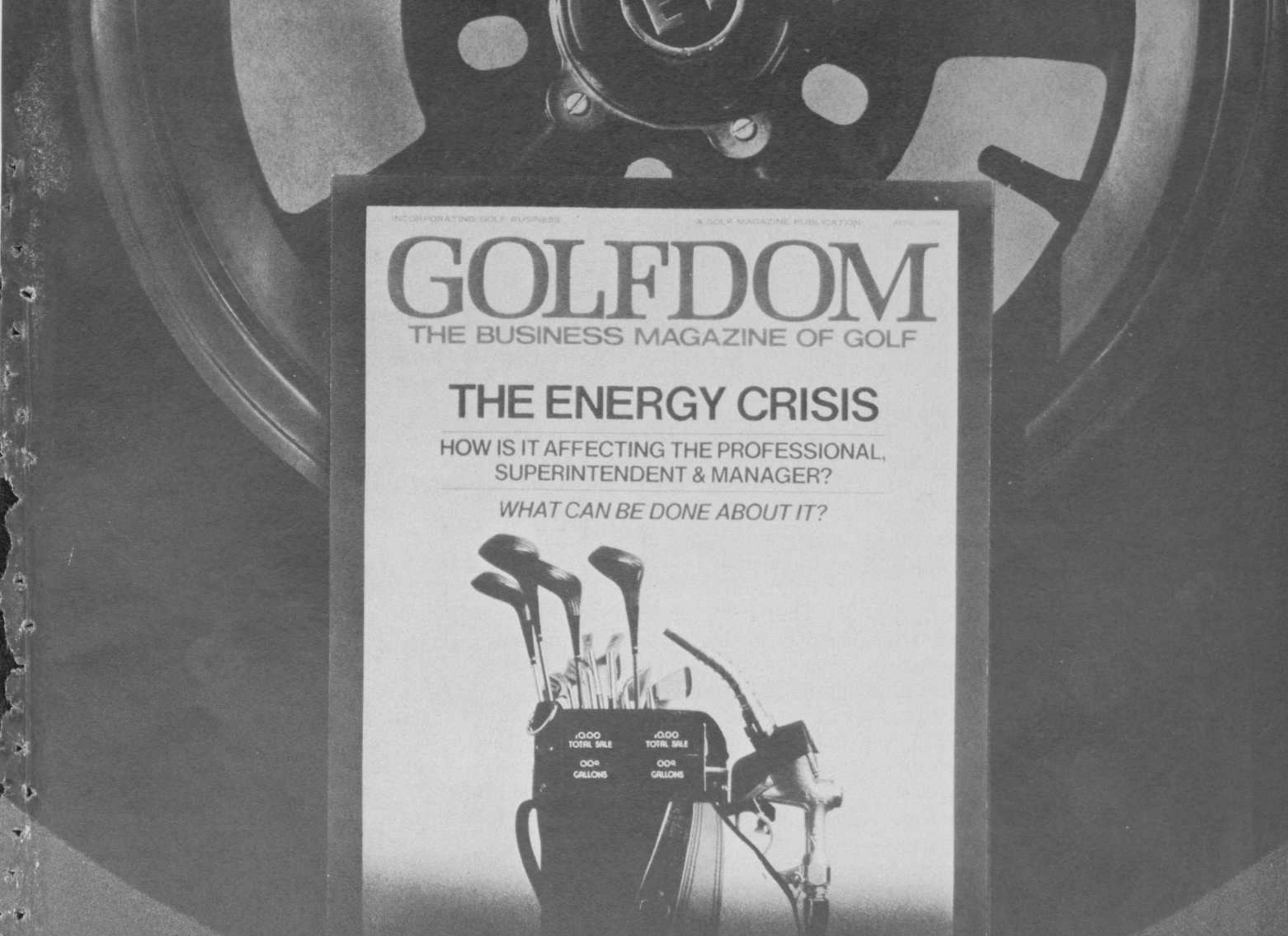
• Lowering green fees at special times worked to hype usually slow days at a few clubs, but some managers complained that this plan didn't offer them much benefit, because members who were already playing golf regularly were switching to the discount days.

PROSPECTS

It may be a source of comfort to all those connected with the golf industry to know that, despite difficulty at the pumps, airline flight cut-backs, material shortages and general public wariness over the disputed present and future effects of the "energy crisis," Federal officials have assured GOLFDOM that every effort will be made to fill golf club needs for fuel in the coming months. "This is true for all public recreational facilities because they are so important to people's morale," says one top government fuel authority. □

MANAGER TIPS
FOR WEATHERING
THE ENERGY CRISIS

1. Cement relations with suppliers.
2. Request purveyors to keep you informed of their continuing projections on delivery capacity.
3. Comply with Government suggestions on energy conservation—*i.e.,* turn down thermostats to 68 degrees and air conditioners to half power.
4. Close off rooms that get infrequent use.
5. Use electric light bulbs of lower wattages—ranging from 75 to 100.
6. Alert employees to your interest in energy savings ideas and have regular meetings to discuss their suggestions.
7. Keep membership abreast of your current and expected energy problems.
8. Invite energy experts to speak at club.
9. Prepare members for a less manicured golf course during the energy squeeze.
10. Cut use of ornamental lights.
11. Help form car pools and investigate minibus rentals.
12. Prepare members for cut in swimming pool usage due to chlorine shortage.
13. Curtail large-scale construction until materials in short supply are replenished.
14. Explore promotional ideas with energy crisis as the theme (see article).
15. Try discounting green fees on slow days.



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GOLFDOM
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NCA report

WASHINGTON, D.C.—According to a recent release from the National Club Assn., the following is a review of current legislation.

New legislation and problems: The House Ways and Means Committee has been sifting through the comments filed by interested parties on the pending bill (HR 1934), designed to increase the present 5 per cent rule to 15 per cent on outside income.

Informed sources deduce that the Internal Revenue Service is now planning to issue a series of rulings regarding the tax exempt status of clubs, the most important of which will be the restriction of living quarter rentals to permanent residents. A negative IRS ruling is expected for condominiums and cooperative apartment houses, which have sought to organize themselves as private clubs to affect a tax-exempt status.

Release from wage and price controls: The National Club Assn. filed last January a special request with the Cost of Living Council, which asked that all social and recreational clubs be exempt from Phase 4 Economic Stabilization Regulations. As of January 25, the Council exempted "pleasure and recreational clubs" from the regulations, but only those that were "non-commercial and non-profit in nature."

NCA based its request on the following points:

1. That private clubs are organized and operated to serve the recreational needs of the members.
2. That, although they earn their income in a variety of ways, all their charges may be regarded as self-assessed.
3. That the club industry has no inflationary impact upon the nation's economy, and the prices they charge do not go beyond the industry itself.

In granting the January 25th exemption, Cost of Living Council noted that dues paid by tax-exempt organizations, which operated on a membership basis, were already exempt from Phase 4 regulations and that many such organizations were also exempt from economic controls because of their small size. NCA recently filed a supplementary request seeking a similar exemption for proprietary and non-exempt clubs, to which a reply is expected shortly.

Reliable sources predict a reverse in the dilatorious approach the IRS has taken to club problems over the past few years.

Unrelated business tax regulations: Experts say that, in redrafting of the Proposed Regulations interpreting the Unrelated Business Income Tax Provisions of the Tax Reform Act of 1969, IRS technicians will seek to tighten up what the new IRS Commissioner considers "the overly munificent benefits to the club industry," contained in the original draft. One of the particular areas of contention was record-keeping, and it appears that in the new draft, these regulations will require more scrupulous attention to this time-consuming necessity.

Overhead deduction: There is every indication that many revenue agents will not accept the gross-to-gross allocation method for overhead deductions. □

CENTRAL *from page 35*

to be hurt to any great extent. If gas isn't restricted, they'll get their normal amount of patronage. If it is, they'll do even better. How about the semi-privates? Owners of these clubs see some possible benefits if rationing is invoked. If people have to stay at home they'll probably play more golf than they did last year. What else is there to do? But car pooling arrangements will have to be made and the clubs will have to take a hand in making them. Some owners say they are not as much concerned with gas rationing itself as they are with the effect that shortages may have on the economy. "If there is a pretty sharp increase in unemployment," says one, "we'll feel it. Even if people don't get laid off they'll start cutting back on recreation in fear that they may lose their jobs. If we only have to contend with rationing, I'm not too concerned. People who want to play golf will find a way to get out here."

Like most Americans, people who are in charge of running golf courses have their doubts about the severity of the oil crisis. They realize that there have been some rather serious dislocations in the fuel situation, but having lived with Watergate for a year and being somewhat distrustful of the oil industry, they aren't ready to buy the whole dreary package. One club manager pretty well sums up the sentiments of most club people when he says, "Maybe we are in awfully bad shape and we need a jolt. But I just can't believe what we are being told. A big country like ours just doesn't go to hell all of a sudden. I think it's another case of where we're being taken." □

EAST *from page 31*

boat Key GC in Sarasota, said recently she had talked to travelers from Ohio and North Carolina who had no trouble getting gasoline on their trek down to Florida's beckoning fairways. "Traffic is building up," she said, "and there are lots of out of state automobiles showing up. Motels have begun to post No Vacancy signs too."

Jim Sanders, manager at Pine Lakes GC in Jacksonville, continues to "knock on wood" as he was doing last summer when we first reported on East Coast activities. (GOLFDOM, Sept./Oct., 1973). Although Sanders is still obliged to specify the number of gallons of gasoline he estimates he'll need each month, he has had no problem with his supplier.

Currently enjoying his "biggest month to date in his best season so far," Sanders hopes his good fortune will continue. "There have been some tourist cancellations in areas, which may have affected over-all availability of gasoline," he said recently.

We talked to several of the clubs situated in Nassau County, New York, a 12-mile stretch due east from New York City's boundary line. Again . . . no pattern.

Effective measurements of shortage impacts are difficult this time of year due to variable weather conditions. When temperatures have risen sharply, courses have remained unplayable and maintenance has been almost impossible to carry out.

One superintendent reported he couldn't send any vehicles out because the grounds were so wet. "A few members wanted to play, so I had to send a man out on foot to place the flags. We don't know how we'll be hit when spring comes. Our tanks are full now, but in season we run to over 700 gallons a month. If what I see happening at highway stations is any indication, we'll be in for a lot of trouble this year." Nassau was one of the worst hit areas in terms of retail station closings due to unavailable gasoline.

Other sources indicated they were holding on to their reserves by seriously curtailing winter play, thus allowing the course to get a complete rest requiring little or no maintenance. Traditionally, in this area, golf can be played all year, if it doesn't snow, particularly since New York area weather has undergone such drastic change in the past few years. Bitter cold winters sealed in with heavy snows have given way to January thaws encouraged by temperatures sometimes soaring into the 60s.

Another North Shore, Long Island, spokesman reflected philosophically, "Why limit winter play? Maintenance is virtually impossible anyhow. The few projects we can tackle use up little gasoline because we have to keep the vehicles on the cart paths. It's just a clean up job this time of year at our course." When confronted with the prospects of a full work schedule, however, he was less than philosophic. "We're already planning a cutback in our mowing operation. Our plans for drainage trenching have been altered to include only the necessities. I'm afraid there'll be a lot of spade work and increased labor costs this coming season. Nassau County is hard hit already. It can only get worse."

Suggestions from East Coast spokesmen on how to cope with the fuel shortage usually reflect their direct involvement to date. If they have not faced shortages, they have given the problem less thought than those who have felt the pinch.

It's an elusive quandary. Curtail maintenance programs to conserve fuel and you set your over-all course improvement plan way behind schedule. Forge ahead as planned and you may stall completely due to dry fuel tanks. This may be the time to consider the return to some hand work, utilizing the manpower pool of available students in your community.

It will take careful study of priorities to determine the most judicious use of limited fuel supplies. Managers, superintendents and ground crews need, more than ever, to work closely together during the energy crisis.

Try to involve the membership as well. There is no clear cut solution, but your members' interests are at stake as well as your own. Conversely, the membership needs to be aware as early as possible of your plans to handle the potential cutbacks in services. Advice to the members might include a consideration of pooling, as the oil company spokesman suggested. A full parking lot generally means many members arrived by themselves, each driving his own automobile. Neighborhood pickups could "pool" foursomes. Turns could be taken the same as commuting pools do.

There is a great deal of confusion on the East Coast as to when and where, and most importantly, how much, gasoline shortage will affect this year's golf course operations. No one force, governmental or industrial, has come forth to clarify the situation.

Each superintendent or manager will have to find his own solutions in direct proportion to the severity of the shortages in his local area. The months ahead promise to test the degree of expertise each man brings to his own club.

It's a serious challenge that no one in golf circles asked for, but that must eventually be faced by all. □

NEWS OF THE INDUSTRY

SUPER SPORTS INTERNATIONAL SPONSORS AMATEUR PUTTING CHAMPIONSHIP AND PROFESSIONAL GOLF CLASSIC

NEW YORK—Super Sports International's president, Bobby Carrigan, announced his company's sponsorship of two major golf events for 1974, one for amateurs and one for professionals. A $125,000 first-prize national putting championship for amateurs will be held at Iron Shore Estates and CC, Montego Bay, Jamaica, from June through December, with a total championship purse in excess of $200,000. In addition, SSI will sponsor a $50,000 Golf Classic in Jamaica the second week in December, with total regional purses amounting to $256,000.

For the amateur championships, Carrigan says, "We're attracting the many golfers who feel they have the ability for that last crucial stroke—the winning putt—and offering the amateur the chance to putt for more dough than the pros.

"In a pro golf tournament," he added, "a lot of money rides on a short putt, and watching on TV can be a frustrating experience for those who play golf, but have never felt capable of trying for the top. The National Putting Championship gives them their chance." Carrigan also stated that the 18 greens for the amateur event were designed by Bill Glenn, former director of golf course design and construction for Arnold Palmer Enterprises.

Super Sports International has divided the eastern half of the United States into 64 tournament areas. All participants, regardless of their areas, will be flown to Jamaica as guests of the company. Each area will have its own qualifying tournament at Iron Shore. According to SSI, the top five from each qualifying tournament will return to Iron Shore to compete before a national television audience for the $125,000 first prize.

Local club professionals who sign up four or more amateur participants for the putting championship will get an opportunity to qualify in one of the 23 SSI-sponsored regional qualifying rounds. The low three qualifiers from these regions, according to the company, are entitled to participation in the SSI-sponsored Golf Classic.

In addition, the company will host a number of putting tournaments at country clubs country-wide, offering prizes worth $100 per club. The prizes will be in the form of merchandise from the host professional's pro shop.

CELEBRITIES ASSUME CONTROL OF LOBO GOLF CORP

ORLANDO, FLA.—A group of investors—including such celebrities as movie actor James Garner, quarterback John Unitas and former Masters champion Charles Coody—has assumed control of Lobo Golf Corp here.

The group, called Golf Investors Limited, is headed by Orlando oilman Bill D. Saxon, general partner, who was elected chairman of the board of Lobo.

Saxon said Garner and Unitas will be active in promoting golf clubs produced by Lobo, a growing two-year-old firm with $4.8 million in contracted sales anticipated this year.

In addition to investing in Lobo, it is anticipated that Coody will promote the clubs and become active in actual club design, said Saxon. Touring pro Chris Blocker remains on the Lobo sales staff.

"We're quite enthused to have such a cast of personalities with us. This is a young, dynamic company and with the kind of people we have the company can't help but grow rapidly," said Saxon.

PROFESSIONAL GOLF REPORTS EARNING GAIN

CHATTANOOGA, TENN.—For fiscal 1973, which ended September 29, 1973, Professional Golf Company reported sales of $15.044 million and after-tax earnings of $847,000 or 34 cents per share. Sales were up 25 per cent over fiscal 1972, while pre-tax earnings increased by 30 per cent. Earnings in 1972, which were only partially taxed due to tax loss carry-forwards, were 40 cents a share.

The Chattanooga-based company handles First Flight, Hotze and Arnold Palmer lines of golf equipment and the Duckster sportswear line.

STUDY SAYS CLUBS SHIFT CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS TO WAITING LIST

NEW YORK—Why the building and renovation programs of many country clubs may not be as ambitious now as in the past is explained in the newly-released, "Clubs in Town and Country—1973," the 20th annual report on club operating results prepared by the international accounting firm of Harris, Kerr, Forster & Company.

Inflation is continuing to cause private, city and country clubs to experience declines in the amount of money available for debt service, capital improvements and replacements, according to the report. The sample on which the report is based consists of a total of 200 clubs—100 country clubs and 100 city clubs—selected to represent all sections of the United States. It includes clubs with fiscal years ending through June 30, 1973. Both the city club and country club groups are broken down into four subgroups based on geography and four subgroups based on size.

Dealing here with country clubs only, it was reported that combined revenue and dues income for the 100 country clubs increased by 5.1 per cent over a year ago. Operating costs and expenses rose by 5.5 per cent, however, and the balance available for debt service, capital improvements and other finan-

continued on page 70

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NEWS *from page 68*

cial charges was down by 8.7 per cent. During the last 20 years, country clubs, on a per member basis (all classes), have had an increase of 99 per cent in total revenue and dues, which was insufficient to offset the effects of a rise of 113 per cent in total operating costs and expenses. Therefore, in the period under review, the balance available for debt service, capital improvements and other financial charges was lower by 43 per cent than it was 20 years ago.

The group of 100 country clubs retained 4.4 per cent of its current year's total sales and income (exclusive of dues) for application against capital charges. Food and beverage departmental net income equaled 3.2 per cent of food and beverage sales. Net operating costs per country club regular member averaged $816 in the current year.

There was an increase of .2 of 1 per cent over a year ago in the total membership of the country club sample and a rise of 5.2 per cent in the average annual dues rate per regular member, which was $876 in 1973.

Payroll and related costs absorbed 88.0 per cent of the current sales and income (exclusive of dues) of the 100 country clubs.

The average expenditure per country club member (all classes) in the current year was $883, exclusive of dues. Of that amount, $445 was for food, $198 for beverages, $123 for sports activities and $117 for all other charges.

Golf course maintenance costs for 100 clubs with a total of 2,151 holes were 4.9 per cent greater than a year ago, and net golf expenses showed an over-all advance of 7.8 per cent. Since 1954, course maintenance costs for the 100 country clubs (adjusted to reflect the trend disclosed by the latest sample) have advanced at an annual rate of 8.6 per cent.

MGA OUTLINES INCREASING ROLE IN "COMMUNITY SERVICES"

NEW YORK—The Metropolitan Golf Assn. officials voiced what they hope to be a new trend toward "better service to the community" at their annual meeting held here this winter.

Some of the organization's objectives will be to see that course conditions are improved, insurance rates possibly reduced, golf courses uniformly measured for par and efforts made to diminish the effects of the fuel shortage.

Edward Sulzberger, chairman of the steering committee, said that in World War II, horses and wagons brought members to his Quaker Ridge Club at Scarsdale from the Larchmont railroad station to play golf. Sulzberger did not anticipate such drastic measures now, but he warned that car pools might become necessary.

One of the speakers at the meeting, P. J. Boatright, executive director of the United States Golf Assn., assured everyone at the meeting that there would be no rule changes for golf in 1974 and possibly for 1975. The USGA and the Royal & Ancient of St. Andrews, Scotland, are the co-makers of the rules of the game.

WM. NORTON TO SELL MAJORITY INTEREST IN TORO FRANCHISE

PHOENIX, ARIZ.—William S. Norton, president of the Norton Corp., franchised distributor for Toro power mowers, irrigation systems and related turf maintenance equipment in Arizona and Nevada's Clark County, has announced his agreement to sell controlling interest in his company to Roy W. Simpson, director of distributor relations for The Toro Company. Terms of the sale, which became effective January 2, were not disclosed.

Simpson plans to leave his present post in Minneapolis and take over as president and chief executive officer to The Norton Corp. here. He has been on the Norton board of directors for the past two years.

In 1972, he was named Mr. Toro, the highest honor that the Toro Company can bestow on any of its 66 United States distributors.

RYAN AWARDS PRESENTED AT TURFGRASS CONFERENCE

LOS ANGELES—Watson Distributing Company, Inc., of Houston, has been named the 1973 Outstanding Dealer for Ryan turf equipment.

John R. Watson, president of Watson, accepted the award from Vern Worrel, Ryan's general manager, at the Busch Gardens here during the run of 45th Annual Golf Course Superintendents Assn. of America turfgrass conference, held in Anaheim in February. Ryan hosted more than 50 dealers throughout the nation at the Busch Gardens.

SEED *from page 63*

rather than see a drastic and crippling reduction in the state's $40 million a year grass seed industry.

Fields are burned after harvest to destroy weed seeds and diseases that would quickly reduce yields in most of the grass seed production. If open field burning is terminated, the addition of this problem to the present energy and fertilizer crisis would precipitate a tremendous seed shortage, resulting in even higher seed prices.

Joe Jacobs, manager of Normac, Inc., Tangent, Ore., told ryegrass growers at a meeting in Albany, Ore., that both growers and seed dealers would like to see a reasonable balance in supply and demand if nature would just cooperate. He said that the price of annual and perennial ryegrass is high compared to past years, but it is also the first time in recent years that growers have made a reasonable profit. He didn't feel that high prices were restricting the sale of ryegrass, because alternative seeds for overseeding were also high. He looked for little carryover of the 1973 ryegrass crop. The 1974 crop predictions must bow to the weather and the availability of fertilizers and fuel for validation, he said. He anticipates continuing higher prices for most grass seeds, if acreage is kept at the present level.

H. J. Ostland, district manager of the fertilizer division of Cheveron Chemical Company, Portland, Ore., told the same meeting that the fertilizer shortage was caused by a Federal law, which placed fertilizer under price controls in 1972 at a level that discouraged the building of new plants. In 1973, he said, fertilizer was exported at higher prices and resulted in a low carry-over at the end of the year. The Government removed the controls in 1973 and prices went up by as much as 50 per cent, but carry-over at the end of that year was minimal. He said several new ammonia plants for manufacturing nitrogen fertilizer were under construction, but it will take three years to get into production.

Over-all, the supply of grass seed should be reasonably good, but prices will no doubt be above last year's. There will be shortages in some specialty grasses, although a bumper crop in 1974 could reverse the trend. It's doubtful that grass seed prices will drop below those of the 1973 crop year. □