

Rebuttal continued. . . .

Al Radko believes that too many Golf Course Superintendents are following the path of least resistance rather than standing up and saying, "You are wrong! My program is the best long range direction for the club, we'll do it my way completely and totally." ["Green is not Great", August, 1977, USGA Golf Journal]. However, the contention can be made that the Superintendent is not yielding to pressure from the membership but following the dictates of the United States Golf Association. Each year, the USGA is responsible for a voluminous publication, entitled. Decision on the Rules of Golf by the USGA. It seems that with the very first "decision" it was golf's ruling body that chose to follow the "path of least resistance" rather than honor the basic premises of playing the course as found and the ball as it lies.

The reason for the trend away from the "purist" attitude is simple. As the game golf progressed in the United States, Americans found the original standards too tasking. "Rub of the Green" was more than the golfer was willing to endure and has been reduced to such trivial occurrences as hitting the ball farther than anticipated and ending up in a hazard. It then becomes the fault of the Golf Course Superintendent because the course is too dry.

Time and time again, the Superintendent has heard from the golfer, "I only ask one thing from a golf course. . . consistency." Assuming that the turf manager follows Mr. Radko's "survival of the fittest" management

philosophy, how is consistency to be maintained? Obviously there would be browned out areas as well as patches of healthy green turf. The proficient golfer, whose shot ends up in an area of verdant growth would complain about the inequity of the situation when less than three feet away is the dormant turf and perfect lies that he desires. The high handicapper who lands in a browned out area, when he is surrounded by healthy green grass also bemoans his situation. In both instances, the Superintendent is to blame for failure to achieve consistency because of his "survival of the fittest" programs.

This attitude has been encouraged by the USGA in their Decisions on the Rules of Golf. To provide these playing conditions, the Golf Course Superintendent has two alternatives: Either all turf is killed or all turf is grown similarly to attain the same color, texture and playability. A golf operation with no turf has very little chance of success, thus the individual

responsible for maintenance of the course must strive for evenly textures, healthy sod by way of forced management.

The Superintendent's contention should be that the extensive programs employed on golf courses are a result of the dictates of the United States Golf Association itself, through it's "decisions". The burden of "purist" has been placed solely on the Golf Course Superintendent's shoulders. Intense, extensive maintenance is not the problem, but only the end product of the Decisions on the Rules of Golf by the USGA.

Golfers, club officials and the USGA cannot expect golf course maintenance to change unless the "decisions" are re-evaluated. "Survival of the Fittest" will only result in uneven growth and patches of live, dead and dormant turf, never satisfying the requirement for equality.

Golf has seen many changes in all aspects of the game. Equipment has become much more sophisticated, architecture has turned from the early "penal" design to the "strategic" concept, and interpretations of the rules have made the two basic premises somewhat obscure. Course management has kept pace with these changes. However, it is possible that the decisions have gone too far. The first lenient ruling contrary to the standards set at St. Andrews created the monster. To place the blame for assorted so-called inequities in playing conditions on the Golf Course Superintendent is unfair.

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Going through the Motions continued...

Frankly, I find these declarations somewhat incredulous. Having participated Phase I of the pesticide applicator's training program, I found it simplistic and fail to see its value. Success in Phase I consisted of attendance at a seminar where sample questions were worked out by instructors as well as passing an open book "True False", "Multiple Choice" examination. I doubt that Phase II will be any more tasking.



I cannot understand how such sophmoric training will increase anyone's understanding or awareness of pesticides and their judicious use. For the examination of Agricultural Pest Control Advisers in California it is up to the individual to acquaint himself with the information. The pesticide safety manual produced by the California Agricultural Extension Service contained over one hundred and fifty pages of information as opposed to forty two pages in the federally approved booklet used by the State of Wisconsin. California's exam was a three and a half hour closed book affair while in Wisconsin the open book test took most participants no more than an hour.

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I would feel much more confident about my ability to handle pesticides by passing California's standards than I would by simply "going through the motions" as is apparently the case in the State of Wisconsin. This is not to imply that a PHD in Agricultural Engineering or Environmental Sciences should be required to apply pesticides, but I do feel that more stringent educational requirements should be adopted.

Reinders

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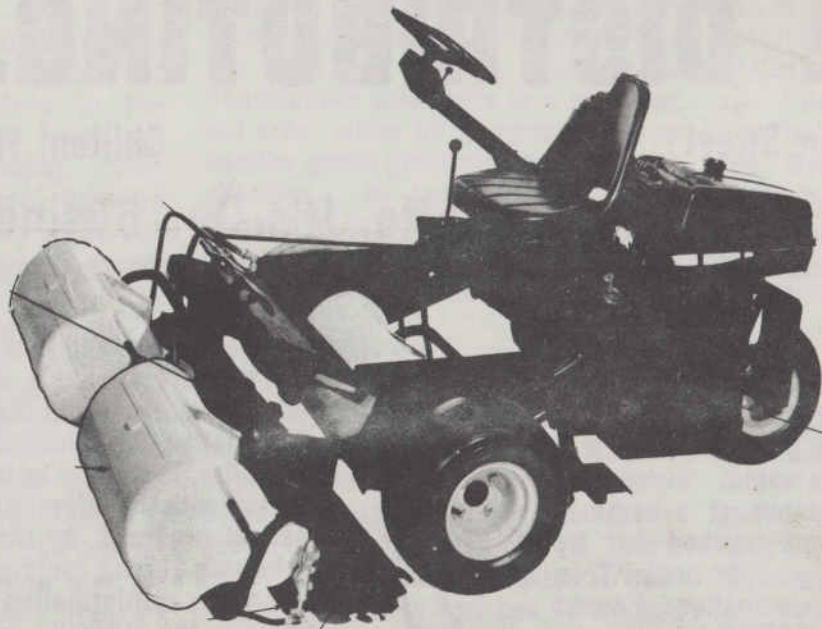
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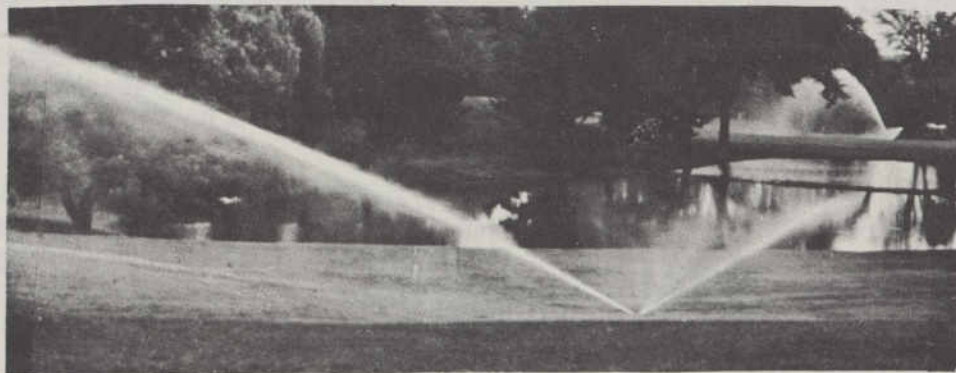
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West Bend Country Club to Host March 22nd WGCSA Meeting

The first meeting of the Wisconsin Golf Course Superintendents Association for 1978 will be held at West Bend Country Club, 5858 Highway "Z", West Bend, Wisconsin on Wednesday, March 22, 1978. Superintendent Dennis Willms will be our host for what has proved to be a traditionally fine day. Lunch will be served at 12:30 p.m. and dinner at 5:30 p.m. The business meeting will be a general discussion session following lunch. Cost for both meals will be \$15.00 and West Bend has been gracious enough to allow for split meal tickets for those who so desire. Tickets will be available at West Bend.

As stipulated by the WGCSA, a sports coat or leisure suit will be required. In addition, the R.S.V.P. policy established last year after the Bluemound meeting will be strictly enforced. Included in each issue of "The Grass Roots" will be a reply slip. It is the individual member's responsibility to return this slip to Bill Douglas [10757 N. Range Line Road, Mequon, WI 53092] no later than March 20th. Please note that postcards are no longer in use. If, for some reason, you must telephone, Dennis Willms [414]338-0540 or Bill Douglas [414-242-1020] will receive reservations no later than March 20th.

To be blunt, fellow members, "No card, No call, No show". See you at West Bend on March 22nd.



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Going Through the Motions!

Attendance at legislative meetings in Madison can sometimes be an interesting experience. I was at a public hearing before the Assembly Environmental Protection Committee on January 12, 1978.

The hearing was scheduled to receive testimony regarding AB 1093 which would ban the use of the herbicide, 2, 4, 5-T in the State of Wisconsin.

Apparently, the principal author of the bill,

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Wisconsin. As you may know, Assembly Bill 347, introduced in March, 1975, called for the prohibition of all phenoxy-type herbicides including 2,4-D, 2,4,5-TP [Silvex] MCPA and 2,4-DB. Fortunately with the assistance of WGCSA's testimony, the bill was defeated. However, it did show some opposition to the use of herbicides in Wisconsin.

It is, in part, a Golf Course Superintendent's responsibility to voice his concern over such matters as AB 1093 and AB347. At this point, I urge all WGCSA members to write to their



respective representatives and senators to express this concern.

Not to "change horses in midstream", a remark by State Representative, Lawrence Day from Marathon County at the same hearing, does merit special attention. Representative Day, speaking in opposition to AB 1093, contended that a ban on 2,4,5-T was unnecessary because Wisconsin's pesticide applicator's training program was in effect. If current federal EPA action against the herbicide produced the anticipated results, it would be a restricted material further limiting its use. According to Representative Day, current training offered by the State of Wisconsin will go a long way in solving the problems of pesticide use and abuse.

These opinions were echoed by Wisconsin's Deputy Secretary for Agriculture, Trade Consumer Protection, Kurtz whose contention was that the only problems with the program were questions regarding future enforcement. His implication was that the program is satisfactory because it conforms to federal guidelines.

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Greens Chairman Meeting Highlights

Canterbury CC green chairman, Mr. George Dawson, addressed the Northern Ohio GCSAA at the annual green chairman meeting at Youngstown CC giving his views on a green chairman's responsibilities as it relates to the superintendent.

Gentlemen:

It is with some trepidation that I address you. You superintendents in the audience have spent a lifetime dealing with greens chairmen--and I have only 3 years trying to give Burdick a little couch. Therefore, I am going to speak randomly about several items that are important to me.

Within certain given limitations wherever you find a well-conditioned golf course you're going to find a good golf course superintendent. But that does not mean that you're going to find good greens chairman. So part of these remarks should cover the care and feeding of greens chairmen.

I doubt if many of you realize that Bill Burdick has a PhD in psychology. When I first became greens chairman, Bill was nervous and uptight about getting a tired old man of my years and demeanor in a position where I could perhaps make decisions. He got quite ill... and as a result of the illness he became deaf. Whenever I asked him to modify a green or change a trap or even mow the rough lower, he couldn't hear me. Whenever I talked to him about pension benefits, bonuses, salary increases, or nymphomaniacs, his hearing improved remarkably. It is incredibly important

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for greens superintendents to turn a deaf ear to the suggestions of transient greens chairmen whose only knowledge of agronomy is what they gathered from a Thoreau novel in their prepublishing period.

Another point that I would make is that greens superintendents cannot win with everyone, although after watching your performance last month at the Brown Derby Motel, you certainly have a better batting average with barmaids than most. . . You were told in agronomy school that working in a country club atmosphere is going to be at best difficult and at worst impossible. So when you hire on to a club where all members have a vote, you are in deep..... You know that all clubs have at least one member who doesn't like the job you're doing or the height of the rough or something, and he is going to constantly agitate to the president or the greens chairman about having you fired or at least change your habits. When you get a new chairman it is important for you to communicate with him as to who these people are so that he can be on guard as soon as he takes on the assignment. At the risk of being sacrilegious, if Christ had been a greens superintendent, four of his disciples would have written to God complaining about his qualifications. Therefore, the greens chairman's job is primarily one of being a foil or buffer for you. I frankly think that is his most important job.

In a magazine called Golfdom, I was quoted as saying that somehow a greens chairman has to be precluded from building a monument to his tenure. The greens superintendent's job is to forestall that monument unless it has some tremendous value. In that same article in Golfdom magazine a year or so ago, Peter Miller said: "It's an advantage to not have a chairman. I think I can better plan the direction the course is taking. Long-range plans can be developed". I don't mean this to be a debate between Peter and me,

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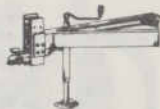
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Greens Chairman Meeting Highlights continued...

but boards of directors of private clubs take their responsibilities very seriously, I agree with Peter that their disinclination to make long-range plans works as a detriment to the operation of the golf course. However, there is no way that a board of directors is going to turn \$100,000 to \$300,000 over to a greens superintendent without having to be responsible for the monies expended on behalf of the golf course. Whether or not the greens chairman is competent or capable of monitoring these monies, the conscience of the rest of the board of directors is relieved of apprehension about the use of the monies. Thus I don't think that there will be a near-term change at most clubs about the reporting structure of greens superintendent to greens chairman to board. Club presidents change almost every year. Each board is reluctant to plan past their tenure and few are willing to commit funds from the coffers of future boards.

I had hoped to entitle this speech, "The Future of Greens Chairmen and Greens Superintendents". Unfortunately my crystal ball is no better than anyone else's. However, as a personal thought, if

golf courses as we know them today are to continue, costs must be cut astronomically. Let me quote a few numbers: In 1967 the dues in the clubs on the east side of Cleveland were about \$55.00 per month. Today they are \$125.00 a month. For the same period of time, the buying power of the dollar has declined 48 percent. Thus you can see in real terms that clubs have increased their relative costs over 25 percent faster than inflation. There are lots of ways to reduce overhead. From my point of view the first place to start would be in the kitchen during the winter months but I will not get into that in any great detail because that is outside our area of influence.

However, a general manager of a club, can and should integrate long-range plans for food service with house and course maintenance. Those of you who are not General Manager or aspire thereto will want to look at all three factors projected ahead for ten years.

A second aspect for cost-cutting consideration is the golf course maintenance and capital equipment. Much of your equipment is maximized daily or weekly at any golf club but some of it could be used on two, three, or four courses. Similarly, as the state of the art increases, compensation to qualified greens superintendents has to increase commensurately. It may be that clubs will not be able to afford one. It may be that a greens superintendent as we know him today will be gone.

With all the chemicals, licensing, and OSHA restrictions, etc., the superintendent may have to service two or three clubs in order: One, to enjoy the income which his degree of skill deserves, and two, make it possible for golfing to continue among people who are not filthy rich. This may, as Peter Miller discussed briefly last month, require outside services, independent contractors.

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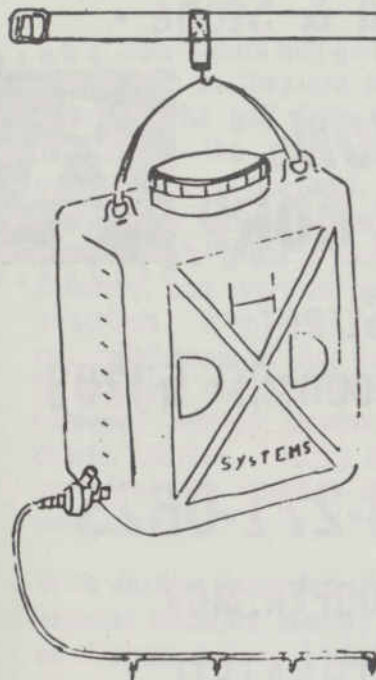
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