

The units were just not designed to cut rougher terrain found on fairways so we frequently must repair broken reel spider welds caused from nicking sprinkler heads and drain covers. Another drawback is the fact that instead of having one operator and one machine in the middle of play, the membership must now contend with six operators and six machines. Having the additional cutters also necessitates more supervisory time and mileage.

But the real bottom line is, does the program work? We've seen a surprising increase in our bentgrass population even after a year and a half. I can see patches up to 6000 sq. ft. in size of virtually pure bentgrass I hadn't seen previously. Much of that bent may have been there as individual plants or small plant groups but since beginning our light-weight mowing, these small spots have coalesced into very large areas. Another benefit has been that I can hire less skilled operators due to the ease of operation of the triplex units and the limited training time required to learn the machine. High school students are very trainable and don't need the "hard knocks" experience on their resume. We've obviously seen less compaction, which I think is the single most important factor of the whole program. We now have the capability to cross-cut fairways in three or four directions with ease. We've virtually eliminated the long grass that used to form in the subtle hollows and around old sunken tile lines and drains. As with most of the other clubs using the triplex for fairways, we did reduce our acreage from 32 to 27 and found it essential to cut back on our applications of nitrogen and water. We can still keep the turf healthy without accumulating all those clippings. Our members appreciate the drier 1/2" cut because they can hit the ball farther due to increased ball roll. Because of the maneuverability we now have, the opportunity exists to create very appealing, strong contours, which previously would have been difficult to cut with the 20' tractor unit. We've added much to the visual appearance of our fairway lines with this program.

As suggested earlier, we've made several sacrifices to obtain a quality 1/2" cut but these benefits I've discussed far outweigh the sacrifice.

I've generally touched on the past and present programs used here but what of the future? As I said, the triplex greensmower looked like the best unit for us at that time, but, as these machines wear out (about two more seasons) we'll again be looking for just the right unit. A great amount of research and development has been done as of late on the larger 3-gang and especially the hydraulic 5-gang units. Perhaps the changes in cutting quality and maneuverability make these machines the best choice for us today. We'll also be looking for a more durable unit requiring less routine maintenance and reel repair. As our bentgrass populations continue to increase, our nitrogen, water and even fungicide usage will drop. I'm sure we'll have to begin a stringent fairway verticutting program as time passes. The bent is very vigorous at 1/2". I think it is safe to say, there will never be another 8,000 Lb., 22' wide self contained tractor unit on Interlachen fairways again. The program is expensive but without doubt, the playability, eye appeal, durability and over-all improved health of our fairway turf is easily worth the expense, especially if one is trying to manage the seemingly ever-present, ever-popular species, *Poa annua*.



## VANDALISM AT THE GOLF COURSE

by JOHN NYLUND  
Superintendent Braemar Golf Course

Braemar Golf Course is a public facility in southwest Edina. It's a very busy course and also very accessible to vandalism. We all have our problems with vandalism of all forms. Sometimes very serious and sometimes minor. This particular incident happened on the night of June 25th.

Seven college students were bored at 2:00 a.m. and made the mistake of talking about

their vandalism plans while they were at an area gas station. The gas station attendant is an avid golfer and overheard their plans for Braemar that evening. When they left he phoned police who were at the course before the vandals arrived. With lights out and car hidden, one partolman was waiting by the clubhouse. The vandals arrived and parked away from the clubhouse and proceeded to throw accessories from the course in the lakes and do damage to greens and tees. The lone policeman hearing that many vandals on the course called for reinforcements from Eden Prairie and Bloomington which borders our course. They also had police dogs.

Eventually the vandals got to the clubhouse area and wrecked a refreshment stand, tried to break the golf cars out and set off the alarm in the pro shop. When that went off all seven scattered different directions. To their unfortunate surprise the place was surrounded. Some went to their car and were immediately apprehended. Others were chest high in muck in the swamp, hiding. The dogs had no problem with them.

Needless to say, the vandals were flabergasted by all the excitement that evening. They were booked and charged with destroying public property and attempted burglary. They were all members of a U of M fraternity who wanted to outfit their residence with tee markers, ball washers, signs, etc.

I have to believe these young men have learned a lesson and will refrain from any further golf course vandalism. Our congratulations go out to the young man at the gas station and the police for the fine teamwork that evening. The newspaper also did its part to publicize the event and, hopefully, will deter future night time vandalism.

CONGRATULATIONS TO THE FOLLOWING NEW MEMBERS;

Lowell Blom, Class E, Anoka Vo-Tech; Richard Robinson, Class E, Anoka AVTI; Mike Davies, Class B, Ridgeview Country Club; Michael Netzel, Class A, Northland Country Club; Glenn Oliver, Class A, Lester Park Golf Course; Carter Wagner, Class F, Elanco Products Co.; Stephen Salmon, Class F, S and S Sales; Keith Stachowski, Class BII, Goodrich Golf Course; William Larson, Class BII, Minneapolis Golf Club; and Patrick Walton, Class BII, Golden Valley Country Club.

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