

President's Message

I had always heard a lot about Prospect Bay Golf Club and let me tell you, if you didn't play golf there at the Superintendent-Pro Tournament, you missed a first rate treat. Bill Shirk had a great golf course in great condition. Unfortunately, I left my game in the trunk of my car. Maybe next year.



June brings us to Chestnut Ridge Country Club and Gary Crone who has done a tremendous amount of construction in the last few years. It will be fun to see the course again with all the changes. Mark your calendars for the 12th. See you on the tee.

Bill Neus, C.G.C.S. President

Bits and Pieces

○ Here is a chance to show off your photographic skills. The *Compendium of Turfgrass Diseases* needs a cover shot. Send entries to: Dr. Pete Dernoeden, Department of Agronomy, University of Maryland, H.J. Patterson Hall, College Park, MD 20742.

○ Sam Kessel, formerly of the Country Club of Fairfax is now on the sales staff of Lea's Green Meadows, Inc. Good luck Sam!

○ Russ Bull of G.L. Cornell Co. is home recuperating from surgery. Best wishes, Russ!

The Golfing Superintendent

by Nick Vance

Last fall I was visiting a long-time family friend who has moved to a retirement community in Florida. I was invited to play golf with him and two of his neighbors. The golf course was a short (5400 yds.) fairly easy layout with about 20 bunkers and water on four holes. We played the course in three hours and ten minutes, but while I was there I saw a lot of good reasons to support the theory that a superintendent should play golf, especially his own course.

On the third hole, the superintendent came by and my friend called him over to introduce us. He left his utility vehicle there and walked along with us for four holes. We were swapping some work related stories and during that time he told me he had been at the course for 22 years. During that time he had tried to play golf twice. He said that he did not like the game and he wouldn't invest the time if he was not going to enjoy himself.

On the sixth hole, he showed me a real problem area that he had been fighting for years. We discussed his options for improving the situation and I was quite surprised that he had not thought of them before our discussion. When I thought about it later, it dawned on me that the probable reason he couldn't see the options was his lack of knowledge about the game of golf.

Let me say at this point that the golf course was in excellent condition, well-manicured and very playable.

Another problem we discussed was a short (312 yds.) par four with water about 140 yards from the tee. The body of water was about 60 yards long. At that hole I watched my playing partners all hit short irons to the

area in front of the pond. From that area they had about 160 to 180 yards to reach the green. The area to which they had hit their tee shot was nothing but divot holes. The superintendent told me that only about 15 percent of the members could carry the pond and the others had to lay up or hit their tee shots in the pond and then drop to that same area.

In my mind he had two other options that he might have thought of if he had a player's knowledge of the game. The tee could have very easily been moved to one of two other locations. One location would have given the entire membership a chance to "go for it" and the other would have provided a larger place for locating a more suitable landing area.

Because of this incident, I decided to do an informal survey at the International Conference and Show in Orlando, Florida. I asked 62 golf course superintendents from all areas of the country three questions: Do you think superintendents should play golf? Does it matter if he plays competitively? Does the golf course benefit from a superintendent who plays?

All 62 said that they thought a superintendent should definitely play golf. Forty-eight said that superintendents should play reasonably well if not competitively. Ten said that it didn't matter what his ability was as long as an attempt was made. Four said they didn't know if his ability mattered.

Fifty-eight of the 62 felt that the golf course would benefit from a superintendent who played golf.

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(301) 381-0030

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Are Doan's Pills the Answer?

by Steve Potter

As golf course superintendents, one of our biggest risks is chronic back injury. Some years ago, pesticide exposure was our biggest health hazard, but if you follow all current safety guidelines, exposure to harmful chemicals now is minimal. No matter how careful you may be, however, you are constantly exposing your back to potential injury.

The most common problem is the extensive use of the utility vehicle to get around the golf course. There is no cart that I am aware of that gives adequate support to the lower back between the fourth and fifth vertebrae. This is the location of most back pain. It is also almost always where ruptured discs are trimmed or removed. Every time the cart takes a bounce or hits a rough spot, its suspension system absorbs as much shock as it can but the discs in your back absorb the rest.

Think about how much riding you do in a day's time and the thousands of small shocks that occur. Add to this the number of times you twist to get in and out of the vehicle. The possibility of injury is evident.

As with many of our prob-

lems, there is no solution but there are things you can do to help an existing problem or prevent more damage:

- If possible, make your first round of the day on foot. This saves at least 100 twisting procedures getting in and out of carts. An average 18-hole golf course can be walked, tee to green, in two hours.

- Get a sport seat such as those sold by Ricarro and mount it onto your vehicle right through the existing cushion. This will provide additional shock absorption and support.

- Get an air bag that fits behind the seat cushion and inflate it to provide support and cushion right at the fourth and fifth vertebrae.

- Contact a doctor and get a book to show you how to take care of your back and some simple exercises to do at home.

- Shed the excess pounds that add strain on your back.

- Finally, if all else fails, take some Doan's pills and wash them down with your favorite beverage.

note: Brand names listed were for convenience only, not as an endorsement of the product.

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Four said that it would not benefit the course.

My personal observation is that I see a lot more detail of the golf course as a player than I do riding on a utility vehicle or walking the golf course. I can tell how each green holds a shot. I can determine any difference in greens speed and I can also recognize any unfair or extremely difficult pin positions.

Because I enjoy the game I can also relate a little better to that member who only has weekends off and shows up at 6 a.m. to play only to be told by that "darn greenskeeper" that he can't go off until 9 a.m. because of the frost.

I also feel that the loudest voices heard around the clubhouse are the low handicap players. The better we relate to those voices the more recognition and consideration we get from them. This not only makes our job easier, I think it helps us do a better job.

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Mid-Atlantic Association of Golf Course Superintendents

Mitchell Williams, Editor
Manor Country Club
14901 Carrolton Road
Rockville, MD 20853
(301) 929-1707

