ASILOMAR INSTITUTE REPORT

by

Steve Kilmer, TARP Technician

Participating superintendents from throughout California recently completed an intensive six-day institute entitled "Understanding our Agronomic Role". Held March 4-9, 1973 at the Asilomar Conference Grounds on the Monterey Peninsula, the gathering of forty-five superintendents were in general agreement that the program and the frequent interaction amongthemselves and the staff made this an outstanding educational experience.

The Institute was sponsored jointly by the Northern California Golf Association, Golf Course Superintendents Association of Northern California, U.C. Davis Extension and Agricultural Extension. The purpose of the Institute was to bring together practicing superintendents in order to communicate pertinent subject matter followed by small group discussions headed by a staff member to "drive home" the main points as they applied specifically to individual problems. These discussion groups, participants felt, were a major factor in the overall success of the Institute.

Following registration Sunday afternoon, participants and staff mingled and met those they didn't know during a cocktail party hosted by Roger Larson and the G.C.S.A.N.C.

William Davis, Turf Specialist, U.C. Davis and Dr. John Madison, Professor of Environmental Horticulture acted as program co-ordinators. Assisting them in the lecture program were Dr. Vic Gibeault and Dr. Vic Youngner of U.C. Riverside, several faculty members from U.C. Davis, and county farm advisors active in the turf field. These men formed a staff possessing a lot of technical and practical turfgrass knowledge. As many of us learned, communication of technical knowledge, even with the help of slides, drawings, demonstrations, or displays, is not always readily understood. With the opportunity to question the speaker, or raise the questions later during a group discussion period, better under standing was achieved. There was a great variety and quantity of knowledge traded in these sessions.

To assist in absorbing it all, half a dozen superintendents used tape recorders and enough cassettes to fill small libraries. The rest of us scrambled to record important points in notebooks which were provided.

Dr. Jack Paul of U.C. Davis delivered two especially interesting lectures. In one he characterized non-wettable spots on golf greens as small areas of greens soil that dries powder dry in a short period of time and then is extremely difficult to rewet because of an unknown chemical leached from the thatch. Usually a hand aerator and a wetting agent are needed in order to rewet this soil and save the grass. Later,

Dr. Paul gave us some indexes to use in interpreting soil analysis. In most cases our soil analyses are returned bearing a lot of figures and must be compared to some index the lab has established for a crop such as corn or celery and not turfgrass.

Unlike many of the two or three day seminars we attend in connection with our professions, there was little time for smoking and joking at Asilomar. Our school day began with breakfast at seven, and didn't end until after an hour and a half presentation and discussion that night at seven. Throughout these hours participants were together hearing lectures, meeting in discussion groups, eating meals, or as so many did walk the nearby beach and sand dunes.

The lectures were well broken up with breaks of some kind, but for this group of outdoor people, a larger break was planned for Wednesday afternoon. With the help of co-sponsor, N.C.G.A. and its Executive Director, Bob Hanna, Spyglass Hill was made available for everyone to play or walk this beautiful layout. The heavy spring rains had an effect on playing conditions and many hung up their clubs after nine holes rather than get their feet any wetter.

After dinner that night the group formally critiqued the 8 year old course with superintendent Frank Silva and Bob Hanna, being well aware of the course's problems and taking the brunt of the not so kind comments. Many superintendents joked of feeling better about their own golf course problems after playing Spyglass. On that Wednesday crews were just starting installations of a new 18 hole irrigation system.

Displays were set up during the week to illustrate material given in the lectures. They included publications and text books, 25 well clipped grass varieties and species, 16 batches of fertilizer materials and containers of different sand particle sizes. Each participant was given a box containing vials of each of the particle sizes for their own reference. Dr. Madison started Tuesday off with a convincing demonstration of how different parent soils or sands of different particle sizes behave under compacting forces, specifically in relation to water infiltration and conductivity. Equally convincing was his demonstration of how water enters a drainage tile. That is, excess water moves downward past the tile until it meets a relatively impermeable stratum. Additional water backs up over this stratum until it rises to the level of the tile where it enters at the bottom and flows downslope to an exit.

Throughout the week, staff members communicated their knowledge, and participants, through small discussion groups, sorted out this knowledge in relation to their specific level of understanding or home course problems. The certificate of attendance we received on Friday represented for most of us a valuable week of listening about and sharing knowledge of our agronomic role as golf course superintendents.

The second in the series of five Golf Course Superintendents' Institutes has already been scheduled for March 3-8, 1974. Many superinten-

dents had problems attending this year because of budget difficulties, and you are advised to plan now if you want to attend next year's program on Pest Control.

Conference proceedings are being assembled for publication and distribution this summer to participants. Bill Davis will have additional copies for sale to interested superintendents.

The certificate of attendance was awarded to the following:

Mike Clark
William Cambra
G. S. Sandhu
Bill Nigh
Dick Viergever
John Engen
Pat Camon
Norm Stewart
Bob Livesey
Fred Mays
David Rodriques
Robert Leas
Mulk Raj
Ken Stohl
Aubrey Babson
Jerome Faller
Joe Andrade
Merle Russill
Nick Del Selva
George Dye
Alfred Norman
Leonard Walsh
Robert Moffitt
Jim Ross
William Tiemann
John Williams
Charles Fountain
William Mason
John Olivera
Dale Achondo
John Burgess
Walter Collins
John Kalostos
Sohan Singh
Chuck Malone
Jim Jackson
Bob Anderson
Thomas Lewis
Bob Pierson
John Fleming
Frank Silva
John Buckley
Bob Dauterman
David Griffiths
Maximo Rodriques

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FOR SALE 3", 4", 6", 8" Used Flange type Gate Valves. Priced to sell. Ken Stohl, Orinda Country Club 415 254-4317

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"You can't build a reputation on what you are going to do."
--- Henry Ford