



Col. Harry C. Eckhoff



New GCSAA officers, left to right, are: John J. Spodnik, vice-president; Walter R. Boysen, president-emeritus; and James W. Brandt, president.

39th Annual International Turfgrass Conference and Show Report

Golf Courses Become Integral Part of Plans For New U.S. Communities

Few conventions match the spectacular staged by golf superintendents at the San Francisco Hilton, Feb. 18-23. Even fewer give their members as complete exposure to new methods and equipment at these annual

Program Moderator Dr. Marvin H. Ferguson, Mid-Continent Director, USGA Green Section, opens afternoon session.



events as does the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America.

Meeting for their 39th International Turfgrass Conference and Show, members needed to cover some 42,000 square feet of floor space in order to visit the 258 exhibit booths plus the meeting sessions. Practically every type of equipment available for turf care and golf course maintenance was on display. Conference sessions featured leaders in the field and offered the equal of a comprehensive course in course management for benefit of the delegation of almost 3000

9 Million Golfers In '67

Trends in the business proved a highlight of both formal and hallway sessions. Colonel Harry C. Eckhoff, facility development consultant, National Golf Foundation, in discussing these trends

said that an interesting golf course is now considered an integral part of newly planned communities.

Eckhoff reported that 9 million persons in the nation now play the 9000 existing courses. Further, golfers are increasing at a rate of 10% yearly. Estimated cost to maintain the nation's golf courses last year amounted to \$245 million. But golf related expenditures of such items as equipment, apparel, refreshments, and other items of cost makes golf spending a billion dollar business.

Public courses comprise only 14% of the total courses in the country. But these public courses receive about 40% of the total golf play. Semi-private courses account of 35% of the play and the remaining 25% play is on private country club courses. Eckhoff reported that play on many 18-hole public courses averages 250 to 300 rounds every

day during the season. Play is booming with the big increase coming from women and junior golfers.

Despite a growth in facilities, Eckhoff said that courses are becoming more crowded each year. A total of 437 golf facilities were opened for play in 1967. These included 278 new regulation length courses, 114 additions to regulation length courses, 40 new par-3 layouts, and 5 additions to par-3's. Leading states in new facility development were: California, 39; Pennsylvania, 27; Ohio, 26; New York, 25; Michigan, 24; Florida, 22; and Texas, 17.

New Junior Courses

Of interest was the opening of 2 junior courses. The Lincoln Junior Golf Course, a 9-hole par-3 municipal operation was opened at Lincoln, Neb., by the city's Park and Recreation Department at a cost of \$58,000. A 4-hole, 335 yard layout for children only was also opened at Bangor, Me. Three other known junior courses, at Minneapolis, Minn., Syracuse, N. Y., and Hershey, Pa., are in operation.

Both new course openings and facility starts were down in 1967, Eckhoff said, largely because of a shortage of available mortgage money at reasonable rates. With an easing of the money market, Eckhoff indicated that this downward trend will shortly reverse itself. Golf, he said, continues to attract players from every economic level. It is a sport played by persons of all ages throughout their lifetimes. Further, he said, golf facilities benefit a community in many ways. Civic pride is stimulated, new business created, open space increases property values, new industry is attracted, and healthful recreation is provided.

Trees require the same good management for growth which is needed for turf. Carl F. Whitcomb, horticulturist at the Uni-

versity of Florida, Gainesville, told superintendents that experiments at the Florida Station showed that trees and turf can be grown together successfully if managed properly.

Turfgrass, Whitcomb said, when maintained in a healthy state is a vigorous competitor. It can successfully compete with weeds, and can compete as well with trees, to the detriment of the trees, unless steps are taken to select the right type trees and then protect them.

Whitcomb reported that Florida tests showed that established bluegrass was not hurt by tree competition when light, water, and nutrients were adequate. Foliar growth, stand density, and root development proved normal.

However, the bluegrass did influence tree root development. Shallow rooted trees such as silver maple suffered from grass competition. Honey-locust, a deep rooted tree did not. Whitcomb listed other shallow rooted trees such as sweet gum, cottonwood, willow, and Australian-pine which should not be planted near greens or tees. If they survive, they will eventually create severe root problems. Deep rooted trees such as the honey-locust and Kentucky coffee tree are less likely to cause a maintenance problem.

Customer Service Important

Manufacturers today expect and encourage customers to use warranty services. So, Thomas E. Ames, manager of field service for Toro Manufacturing, Minneapolis, Minn., told superintendents. Makers of equipment, he said, like to have problems taken care of early. This is important from the standpoint of customer satisfaction and as a product indicator to the manufacturer. Ames listed the following services to which a customer is entitled after purchase: (1) services of a competent company specialist; (2) analysis of a cus-

tomers' production goals, labor, and operating problems; (3) willingness to demonstrate; (4) pre-delivery assembly and adjustment; (5) post-delivery field adjustment and instruction; (6) responsibility for satisfactory performance; (8) an adequately equipped repair shop staffed with factory-trained personnel; and (9) periodic service after expiration of the warranty at the customer's expense.

Your Front Door

The friendliest gesture man can extend is an invitation to enter the "front door." This is the thinking of Warren Bidwell, golf course superintendent at the Philadelphia Country Club, Gladwyne, Pa. Speaking to the group, Bidwell pointed out, the moment a member or daily fee player enters club property, he should feel that he has just entered the front door of your club. Literally speaking, Bidwell told superintendents, your members should feel your very presence as though you are there to greet him personally. "This is done by your handiwork of fine grooming and finesse," he said. Here, Bidwell was referring to the entrance to the club, the actual setting of the clubhouse, and the grounds that surround it. This should make the so-called entrance hall appear as a classic piece of landscape architecture for the game of golf, and for all the other recreation facilities found at the modern day club.

Landscaping architecture, Bidwell believes, should be likened to a giant mirror that ultimately reflects the personality of the superintendent. If used properly, it can serve as an introduction to the individual member. The "front door," Bidwell said, can be a great image builder for the superintendent. A good job of projecting this image can remind members that the superintendent is responsible for the beauty and enjoyment which members receive at the club.