

NGF arranges Forum on Golf

In an effort to identify golf's critical problems and fathom how to solve them, the National Golf Foundation has scheduled a "Forum of Golf" meeting for October 18-20, 1981, in Dallas.

The meeting will be the first step in a proposed restructuring of NGF, to make it a more aggressive force in stimulating new interest and participation in the game of golf. Deane Beman of the PGA Tour told the NGF Board of Directors at their annual meeting that the average age of an American golfer has increased to 42.5 years old, golf is perceived as slow and costly, and "television ratings have decreased considerably in the last five years." Beman, Joe Black (also of the PGA), LPGA's Ray Volpe and NGF's James Long are scheduled to speak at the meeting.

In other NGF news, the foundation has scheduled its 1981 NGF Golf Course Management Workshop for November 29-December 2 at the Pheasant Run Convention Resort Hotel just outside of Chicago. The theme of the seventh annual workshop is "Survival in the 80's." Scheduled speakers include: Dick Nugent, American Society of Golf Course Architects; Marshall Dann, Western Golfers Association; Mike Bavier, Golf Course Superintendents Association of America; and John Husar, Chicago Tribune golf columnist.

NGF has named Annette Thompson, formerly women's golf coach at Penn State University, director of education services. Harry Eckhoff has moved to director of golf facility, while Mark Boorman has become NGF's director of communications.

Builders enter second decade

The Golf Course Builders of America has embarked on its second decade. The association, headquartered at 725 15th Street, N.W., Washington, DC 20005, was formed in 1970 as a national organization for companies that construct, renovate and rebuild golf courses.

Among its many membership services, GCBA publishes a yearbook-directory that also lists other golf trade groups and includes articles on construction by leading golf course architects. The association exhibits at the Golf Course Superintendents Association convention where it also holds its annual seminar on golf course construction and problems.

In 1981 Frank Underwood, Bowie, TX, was elected for an unprecedented third term as president of GCBA.

In other GCBA news, a sister organization, the British Association of Golf Course Constructors, has been formed. Located at 6 Fitzwalter Place, Chelmsford, Essex, England, it is comprised of contractors and supplier groups with the initial membership reaching 15.

Long Island superintendents choose Reilly

Ann Reilly, executive secretary of the New York State Turfgrass Association has been selected to be executive director of the Long Island Golf Course Superintendents Association. The decision was announced by LIGCSA President Edward Fufaro.

Reilly is also association manager for Mailorder Association of Nurserymen and florist groups in the Northeast. She is familiar with both turf and nursery specialists in the region and nationally.

Employee meal costs not taxable

A recent Supreme Court decision has ruled that FICA/FUCA taxes can not be taken on the cost of meals for employees. Many superintendents eat meals at their clubs so they can be reached in case of problems. This cost is not taxable according to the ruling. Lodging costs are also not taxable in certain circumstances. Refund claims can be filed for the years 1978 to the present. Contact the National Club Association for more information 1625 Eye St., NW, Washington, DC 20006 (202) 466-8424.

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year," said Daryl Spikes, Southern Turf Nurseries, Tifton, GA. "One reason is that a lot of housing construction had already started (before the current interest rate crunch). I think housing sales will be even slower in 1982." Like some other sod producers, Southern Turf Nurseries is planning to work around the housing shortage. "We are going to intensify our marketing strategy," said Spikes. "We're going to try and get a bigger percentage of new housing business and work more closely with the contractors and landscapers." Spikes noted that even in tough times golf courses provide a steady flow of business.

According to Garey, the current sod sales slowdown might have some beneficial side effects. "Sod producers are going to have to increase their management efficiency if they are going to effectively compete," said Garey. "When the economy rebounds and sales pick up, those companies should be in better shape." Garey also noted that growers should be alert to pick up hints from companies that do well during the slowdown. "With sales holding up in the northeast, one of the reasons could be their aggressive sales techniques," he speculated. "They do a good job of promoting sod."

According to sod growers, the mid-west has been hit by the housing slowdown and some areas of the south also report sluggish sales. The northeast and the west seem to be holding their own but many growers have resorted to price cutting for the first time. Sod producers in the Sunbelt and other growing metropolitan areas (e.g. Denver) reported strong sales.

With interest rates remaining high, some sod growers have turned to current home owners as a source of business, according to Garey. "When people can't afford to go into debt to buy a new home they will often spend the money to improve their current one," he said.

CHEMICAL

Houston plant fire wipes out '82 Dacthal

A fire in Diamond Shamrock's plant in Houston, Texas, in late July wiped out the 1982 supply of Dacthal preemergence herbicide for turf. Preemergence herbicides for turf have been in short supply for nearly three years. Losing a major product like Dacthal will send turf managers to suppliers now for 1982

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