

Certification for GCSAA Members

by CLIFFORD A. WAGONER,

Secretary-Treasurer Golf Course Superintendents Association of America

The launching of a certification program by the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America — the only internationally recognized organization of golf course superintendents — opens a whole new frontier for the profession.

The implications of such a program are far-reaching, offering outstanding career advantages that will mean greater recognition, job stability, higher income and increased opportunities to the golf course superintendent.

Nearly three years in the planning, the GCSAA certification program marks a major image change from yesteryear's "greenkeeper" to the vast storehouse of scientific and managerial skills that a superintendent must have today.

Officially announced to the membership in June, the program's primary objective is to provide a long-needed "standard" for measuring the capabilities and qualifications of a superintendent. Club officials and other interested persons in the golfing world will now have a reliable set of standards to follow. Significantly, they are standards set by golf course superintendents themselves rather than by people less knowledgeable about their profession.

The entire program was developed and assembled by Director of Education, Dr. Paul

M. Alexander under the guidance and direction of the Association's Certification Committee and GCSAA Executive Committee.

GCSAA members who are eligible for certification are those who are: (1) currently employed as golf course superintendents and (2) have held Class A membership for at least three years.

A tenure and experience provision is also available for all qualifying members. They must have held Class A status for 20 years and have been employed as golf course superintendents for the same number of years. These members are not required to take an examination if they apply in writing before September 1, 1973.

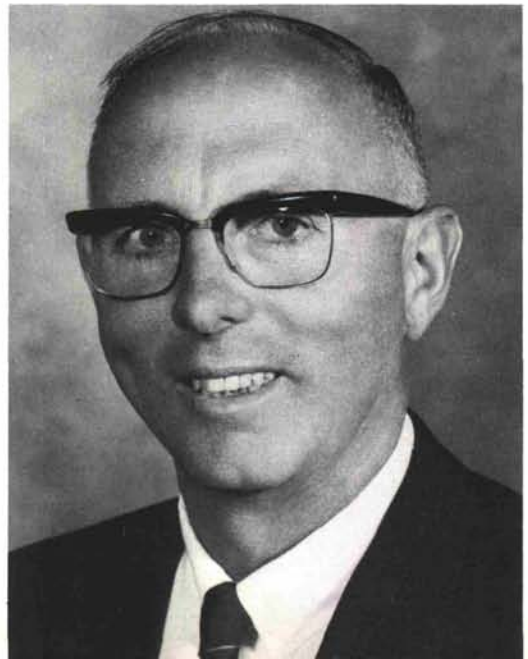
The written examination is divided into six major categories. Each segment covers important points of knowledge and skills needed by top superintendents. Among them are turf culture procedures, plant protectant chemicals, business administration, management, rules and game of golf, and understanding of the GCSAA.

Each part of the examination is graded separately and a passing grade is required in each classification to achieve certification.

If a candidate fails any part of the exam, he may retake those portions at a later date. He will not be required to pay an additional fee for

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

CLIFFORD A. WAGONER is superintendent at the Del Rio Golf and Country Club, Modesto, Calif., where he began his career in golf turf maintenance in 1946. He has also held the superintendent's position at two other clubs, but returned to Del Rio in 1954. He has served in GCSA of Northern California as President, Vice President, Secretary and Director; he has also been President, Vice President and Director of the California Federation of Golf Course Superintendents Associations. He is also a member of the Northern California Turfgrass Council and the USGA Green Section Committee. Wagoner has served on the Executive Committee of the GCSAA since 1968 and has been a member of the National Association for the past 14 years.



re-examination if he successfully completes all six parts of the exam within one year from the date he began testing.

Applicants may prepare as long as they like for the examination. Once the candidate feels he is ready for the examination, a date will be set that is mutually agreeable to him and an official monitor in his area. The one important source a candidate will use to prepare for certification will be study material that is provided by the GCSAA upon receipt and clearance of his application.

Since today's golf course superintendent must keep abreast of all current discoveries in the research and development of turfgrass science, new equipment, and improved business techniques, re-examination will be required within five years after completion of his first certification test. In addition, superintendents are required to maintain their membership in GCSAA and remain actively employed in their profession. They must also complete one regional GCSAA workshop or successfully complete a GCSAA-approved turf management correspondence course.

There is more to the certification program than the obvious benefits to the superintendent. The program also has both inherent and potential benefits for club owners and officials, club members, golfers and all other agencies concerned with golfing. Eventually, these across-the-board guidelines for superintendents may lead to establishing similar guidelines in turf management education. What a full scale accomplishment it would be if the nearly 200 schools that have reached no common ground of agreement on the basic courses offered in turf management would soon enjoy a standardization of curricula.

Certainly there is no guarantee that certification will improve the performance of the individual superintendent. On the other hand, it does unmistakably define the level above which any given superintendent can be expected to perform. In the final analysis, the superintendent who has successfully completed the entire testing program can clearly be expected to perform in accordance with those professional standards that accompany the title "Certified Golf Course Superintendent."

SUPER SAM by Paprocki

