

A Secretary for The Golf Course Superintendent – The Need is Great!

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THE MANAGEMENT of a golf course today is big business. It often involves:

- A. A real estate investment of over \$1 million,
- B. A yearly budget of \$150,000 to over \$600,000,
- C. A labor force of from 10 to 40 employees, and
- D. A projected income ranging from about \$300,000 to \$2 million.

Think about it! If you owned or worked for a company that met these criteria, wouldn't you want, expect, and indeed find essential a competent secretary? I am sure you would. Further, what manager or executive in his right mind would attempt to act as his own secretary in such a large operation? Well, at Oak Hill Country Club, in Rochester, New York, we have been using a secretary in the maintenance department since 1978. In fulfilling the responsibilities of today's golf course superintendent, such an addition to the staff, I feel, can be more than justified. Some background information may be in order.

At my two previous clubs (both 18 holes) prior to my coming to Oak Hill, I did all the paperwork, with the help of my wife. Upon arriving at Oak Hill in 1978, we were faced with preparing the course for the 1981 PGA Championship, only three years away. Oak Hill has 36 holes, and I found it physically and mentally impossible to work, manage, and keep track of all the bookkeeping, correspondence, telephone calls, budget, and report writing necessary to do my job in a thoroughly professional and complete manner.

To help ease the burden, I hired a part-time secretary, who worked on an average of between 20 and 30 hours a week, depending on seasonal needs. There is no doubt in my mind that I

could not have accomplished all that we did without the services of this secretary!

At this point, you are probably thinking to yourself, "Ahhh, but I really don't need a secretary at MY course." However, how many times have fellow superintendents . . . or your Green Committee Chairman . . . been unable to reach you? And how many incomplete phone messages have you tried to decipher (i.e., six-digit phone numbers), if you were lucky enough to even get the message at all? Effective communications are extremely important in successful

golf course operations. A secretary provides the vital link between the golf course superintendent and the rest of the industry.

What are some of the other responsibilities of our secretary? The following is a brief job description of her duties. She must be able to:

- A. Set up and administer a simple accounts payable, receivable and purchase order system. (My ability to stay within budget has been greatly improved as a result of having my secretary handle this responsibility!)

Superintendent Richard Bator and secretary Joanne Santone form a team for today's effective golf course management.



- B. Type budgets, long-range planning reports, edit newsletters and articles for publication.
- C. Read and understand monthly financial statements and run a cash flow chart.
- D. Set up and help me keep appointments, including keeping me abreast of tournament dates.
- E. Keep an accurate filing system.
- F. Know the layout of the golf course.
- G. Take dictation reasonably well.
- H. Act as a confidante.
- I. Have effective telephone skills.
- J. Help manage a payroll system along with keeping an accurate overtime ledger.
- K. Occasionally go after repair parts.
- L. And finally, to present an outgoing, pleasant, and professional personality.

I consider my secretary an inside assistant and an invaluable link in insuring effective communications on the golf course. Initially, there are added expenses, such as her salary, additional office equipment, supplies, club benefits and a separate washroom. However, in the long run, she will save you time, aggravation, and money, besides making you a much more organized and efficient manager.

What Qualities Should You Look For in A Secretary?

In selecting a secretary, you might think that a young, attractive, centerfold-quality female who can type 100 words a minute, graduated from a top university, is pleasant on the telephone and has a great sense of humor would be a perfect secretary. However, a recent survey shows this notion is wrong. Qualities such as reliability, intelligence, conscientiousness, along with good skills in grammar, dictation, and typing accuracy, as well as the ability to deal with people, lead the list of qualities to seek in a secretary.

Selling The Idea

This is all well and good, but how can the golf course superintendent convince his club that such managerial assistance is really necessary? The answer is simple and basic. The operation of a golf course today is big business. How can the general manager, club manager, and even club professional, along with all the businessmen on the Board of Directors in their own operations function without a secretary? These people should *most* appreciate the value of a good secretary to the efficient operation of a business or an office.

These are businessmen. Approach it on the basis of better business management. Granted, not all clubs require a secretary. However, the larger and more complicated the golf course operation becomes, the more justification there is for a secretary.

In my opinion, for too long the green superintendent has been kept in the background and has not aggressively pursued an upgrading of his professional image and/or business operation for better efficiency and ease of accomplishment. After working the long days so necessary in our profession, it may be unrealistic to expect the superintendent to also take paperwork home with him. Isn't there already enough mental anguish in the job during the day?

In my opinion, once the superintendent's needs are explained and the benefits analyzed, the Green Committee Chairman and Board of Directors should be very receptive to the idea. It is amazing what can be accomplished simply by asking!

The benefits of a secretary in the grounds department are many. If your club is a large enough operation, then by acquiring the services of a secretary, you will be doing yourself, your family, and your club a great service.

News Notes for Midsummer

Carl Schwartzkopf Resigns; James Snow Appointed Northeastern Director

Carl Schwartzkopf announced his resignation from the Green Section staff on June 1, 1982. He will pursue new opportunities in his home state of Michigan. Carl joined the Green Section in 1971 in the North Central Region. He traveled widely, however, serving USGA Member Clubs in the Western and Eastern regions as well. In 1980, he became the Northeastern Director and Assistant National Director. His many friends within the USGA and throughout the turfgrass world wish him well and great success in his new endeavors.

James T. Snow, formerly Senior Agronomist of the Northeastern Region, succeeds Carl Schwartzkopf as Director. A graduate of Cornell University, Jim Snow joined the Green Section staff in 1976 after completing his Master's Degree there in Ornamental Horticulture. Jim is widely known and respected for his turfgrass knowledge, speaking and writing abilities.

Avoiding the Ugly Pond

This article, by Timothy G. Ansett, appeared in the January/February 1982 RECORD. A correction is required on page 3. A liner thickness of "10 mm" should read "10 mils." To our friends from Mexico City, our thanks for the correction. To our other friends, we apologize. We trust the misprint was questioned.

Charles "Bud" White Named Southeastern Director

The Green Section's Southeastern Region has a new Director in **Charles B. White**. A graduate of Tennessee Tech with a Master's Degree from Clemson University, Bud White became a member of the Green Section staff in 1978 and succeeds retiring James B. Moncrief as Southeastern Director. As Senior Agronomist, Bud has been consulting with USGA Member Clubs throughout the South for the past four years. He is ably assisted in the region by **Steve M. Batten**, who joined the Green Section earlier this year.

1983 Fee for Turfgrass Advisory Service to Remain at Current Level

Stephen J. Horrell, USGA Green Section Committee Chairman, announced in mid-June that 1983 fees for the Green Section Turfgrass Advisory Service will remain at the current level. This means that the annual fee will remain at \$450 per visit *if payment is received at Golf House not later than April 15, 1983*. Thereafter, \$500 per visit will be charged. The earlier sign-up permits more efficient travel scheduling and thus lowers the cost of operation.

The Green Section has received the support of just over 1,000 subscribing clubs this year and is looking forward to improving its contribution even more to course superintendents and green committees of USGA Member Clubs in 1983. The annual fee of \$500 is less than one-quarter of one percent of most golf maintenance budgets today. It represents the best buy in golf management — for you, your club — for all of golf.