



The 18th Hole at Broadmoor Golf Club, Seattle, Washington.

Money is Not the Problem

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FOR PRIVATELY run golf courses at least, the title "Money is Not the Problem" is a bit deceiving. Think about it for a moment; the more you do, the more examples of this phenomenon will come to mind. All too often, decisions are made and projects initiated by committees or directors at private clubs on the basis of a popularity contest rather than good overall planning.

The golf course superintendent, the man in the middle, is held responsible for an expenditure of several hundred thousand dollars annually to produce an attractive, enjoyable, playable surface, but he is not allowed to exercise any degree of control to prevent committees from spending monies on spur-of-the-moment or pet projects. Some superintendents are not even invited to attend committee meetings.

Has the time not come for club directors and committees to recognize that today's golf course superintendent is a

knowledgeable, valuable, and vital member of their team? Basically, he is the man who controls where the game is played. Unfortunately, because the superintendent does not always have exposure or constant contact with the members, club directors and committee members overlook him as a source of information and direction. There is no one else in the club organization with more direct knowledge or expertise in evaluating the mechanics of golf course projects. Money that is spent on the golf course should, therefore, be spent with the recommendation of the golf course superintendent.

Anyone who has been involved with club operations for a period of time will agree that as committees change, so does the direction of the club. Projects are conceived and completed under one regime only to be redone soon after to suit the new power structure. Costs are not given long-range benefit consideration because money is available

without strong guidelines. Money is not the problem! Too much money or the availability of money is the problem. This is especially true when it comes under the control of committees wanting to change the golf course to suit a particular game without considering the overall effect it will have on the game for others, or the golf course itself.

Far too many clubs totally change their green committees annually, if not every two years. There is no continuity in thought except for the golf course superintendent, and his views are seldom sought. Many superintendents take a subservient position when dealing with committees. In reality, they should take a leadership role. Not many corporations could exist with its directors (and department heads) changing every year or two as occurs at most private golf clubs. Because of this constant change, the following four recommendations are offered in regard to the structure of green committees:

1. A minimum 5-year appointment to the green committee. It often takes a year or two to become familiar enough with programs before an understanding and considered decision can be made.

2. Appoint people who are open-minded enough to view all sides of a situation.

3. Avoid having members who are all low- or all high-handicap golfers.

4. The board of directors should appoint a liaison person who also serves on the green committee. This should insure a proper flow of information in both directions.

MONEY IS NOT the problem. What we do with the available money is important. Hopefully, the superintendent's expertise will be recognized, along with his views in the decision-making process toward the most productive long-range goals. The superintendent must rely on the directors and committees to indicate the direction they want to go. When it comes to how to achieve these goals, the superintendent becomes the advisor and the committee becomes the advised. There is no need to reinvent the wheel each time a new committee is formed.

Directors are elected to operate the corporation efficiently. To me, that



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means hiring competent employees to accomplish established goals. Directors and committees should not get involved in the day-to-day operations of the club. That is exactly what the club is paying its supervisory personnel to do. If the club does not have faith in its department heads (personalities aside), then it would seem best for both parties to consider other arrangements.

One of the professional requirements of a golf course superintendent is to be an effective manager and leader. The superintendent cannot expect club officials to rely on his decisions if he does not continuously deserve their confidence and upgrade his knowledge. The GCSAA Conference, the GCSAA Certification Program, other seminars throughout the year, along with local universities and extension services offer us several opportunities to increase our knowledge. It is up to the professional golf course superintendent to take advantage of them.

I feel that money is usually available, but the direction for spending these funds is not controlled by the superintendent. Too often these monies are wasted on short-term, sometimes social projects and not on long-term golf course improvements. Golf course superintendents must never forget that we are employees of our clubs. But, I believe, we are hired because of our knowledge to direct and advise in the very specialized field of turfgrass management for golf. We are capable and experienced members of the green committee team. We want to fulfill our responsibilities to our committee, the club membership, and to the betterment of all of golf.

I Need A Secretary!

by **DR. DOUGLAS T. HAWES**

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I NEED A SECRETARY! I am away from my office 150 working days a year. I have 150 reports, 200 letters, and numerous monthly summaries to be typed.

Golf course superintendents and I, a traveling agronomist, have many things in common. For the most part we dislike being cooped up in an office for any length of time. We often do not give the same value to paper work as our bosses. We are likely to use the need to be out in the field as an excuse to postpone paper work that may be more necessary to the efficient running of our operation than we really appreciate.

A secretary can be helpful in getting that paper work done on time. A secre-

tary can make sure that you receive important telephone messages. A green committee chairman or club president expects to find us within an hour or two. Both of us must be reachable. A good secretary, combined with radio communication, can make that possible for you. A secretary quite often can calm the person on the other end of the line while making sure you get a readable message.

You are a busy man with a budget ranging from \$100,000 to \$500,000 or more. You have reports, letters, and records to keep along with budget calculations and prices to check. Indeed, a good secretary will save an amount of money equal to his or her annual salary

simply by comparative shopping for the best prices for parts, chemicals, fertilizers, and other golf course supplies. You cannot sit in the office all day and at the same time properly do your job. You must be in the field supervising.

I don't believe a secretary has to be a woman; the job could be filled quite nicely by a young student learning the golf course maintenance profession. The student could very easily fill in as a secretary three or four hours every day. This is an excellent way to learn from the paper work involved.

IT MAY BE difficult sometimes to justify hiring a full-time secretary. If this is the case, consider the possibility