

# Golf Keeps America Beautiful



## AND HOW YOU CAN HELP

by **B. P. RUSSELL**

Chairman, Crum and Forster, Inc.

**I**'M A BUSINESSMAN and a golfer. I run an insurance holding company, but for several years I was president of Baltusrol Golf Club, in Springfield, New Jersey. You may recognize Baltusrol as the club has been host to six U.S. Open Championships. It is a terrific layout, and I admit to having seen every spot on all 36 holes. I am familiar with the product produced by the Golf Course Superintendents of America. In fact, I have been in good company with Joe Flaherty, the superintendent at Baltusrol, for many years.

I became involved with the USGA less than a year ago when I read a terrific article in *GOLF JOURNAL*, "The Search for Better Turfgrass" (January/February, 1983). I found I had an interest in turfgrass research, and I enjoyed reading about the progress being made. It seemed to me that turfgrass research has not received the kind of attention it should from the people who play on grass — the golfers themselves!

At this point, I must mention the fact that I'm not on the USGA Executive Committee. In fact, I have no association with the USGA at all except as the chairman of the USGA Capital Campaign. What this really means is that I am supposed to crew-chief the raising of \$10 million for the USGA and, by the way, well over \$2 million of that is for turfgrass research.

After reading the article "The Search for Better Turfgrass," it seemed to me that much more could be done on turfgrass research if, (a) substantial funds could be generated for a research budget, (b) if there was enough money to let long-term contracts, and (c) if the USGA Green Section and everybody else working on turfgrass research weren't constantly having to poor-boy it!

I wrote to Harry Easterly, then Senior Executive Director of the USGA, and suggested a simple plan. It would raise enough money to significantly move



*B. P. Russell*

turfgrass research ahead. Here is the plan. All golfers who are members of USGA Member Clubs would be asked to contribute \$2 a year, every single year, to the USGA Turfgrass Research Program. If this were done throughout the country, and on a consistent basis, the Green Section's turfgrass research budget worries would be over. When I mentioned the plan to some Baltusrol members, not one didn't feel that \$2 a year would be a fantastic bargain for what they are receiving from golf! Here was a way for every golfer to give something back to the game.

A few days later I had breakfast with Bob Potter, chairman of the grounds and green committee at Baltusrol, and superintendent Joe Flaherty to discuss what I had in mind. I asked if they

thought Baltusrol's board of governors would agree to the plan. Well, to make a long story short, these gentlemen carried the ball! The Baltusrol board passed a special resolution endorsing the concept. It said, in effect, that the club would contribute \$1,000 a year (\$2 each for 500 golfing members). Not only did the resolution pass, but the board wrote a letter to the USGA Senior Executive Director committing the club to the concept on a continuing basis.

**T**HE PURPOSE of all this is to lay out for you, the nation's leading golf course superintendents and club officials, a simple program showing how together we can raise the kind of research money we really need. The USGA Turfgrass Research Committee will decide and



## BALTUSROL GOLF CLUB

P. O. BOX 9

SPRINGFIELD, NEW JERSEY

07081

May 25, 1983

Mr. Harry W. Easterly, Jr.  
Senior Executive Director  
United States Golf Association  
Golf House  
Far Hills, New Jersey 07931

Dear Mr. Easterly:

The Board of Governors of Baltusrol Golf Club read with serious interest the article appearing in GOLF JOURNAL, "The Search for a Better Turfgrass". We feel strongly that the USGA's turfgrass research work as described in this article and your Turfgrass Research Case Statement will benefit our club, the game of golf, and, more generally, the quality of life in America.

We recognize that this research takes time and considerable funding. Baltusrol feels that as one of the beneficiaries of the USGA's research, we would like to lend our support. To this end, we are pleased to inform you that all Baltusrol golfing members have contributed \$2.00 each for a total contribution of \$1,000 to the USGA Foundation. These funds are to be used toward turfgrass research.

The enclosed donation is based on a formula of \$2.00 per golfing member. Supplemental contributions from individual club members are also being encouraged at Baltusrol, but the \$2.00 per golfing member will be received annually - as we realize the importance of a continuing program.

Baltusrol would like to be viewed as an active partner in the USGA mission to help preserve, protect, and promote the best interest of golf. We also look forward to receiving periodic reports about USGA turfgrass research activities and to continued participation in this worthwhile venture.

Sincerely,

Paul J. Hanna  
President

Robert A. Potter  
Vice President and  
Green Committee Chairman

Joseph R. Flaherty  
Golf Course  
Superintendent



account for how it will be spent. As you know, the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America is represented on that committee by Jim Prusa, Assistant Executive Director of the GCSAA. When your club members and all golfers consider how important lower maintenance costs are, how important it will be in the future to reduce water use and still provide grasses that will look and play well and still hold the ball up nice and pretty, how fantastic the dividends of this program can be — the idea of \$2 per member per year will surely need little selling. But someone has to start the ball rolling!

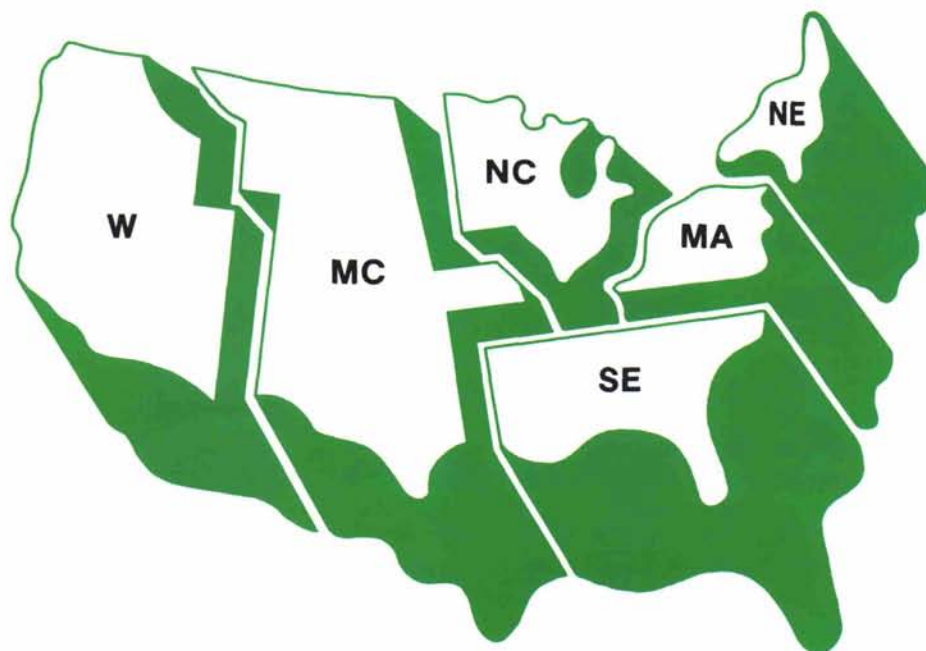
I'm asking you, Mr. Superintendent, to talk with your green committee chairman and get him to do for you (and turfgrass research) what Bob Potter and Joe Flaherty did at Baltusrol. Ask him to carry the ball to your club's board of directors, to make the proposal and put it on an annual, ongoing basis. We don't want to have to pass the hat every year. What we need is for your club to send the USGA a check for the amount developed by \$2 per golfing member. That money will be clearly earmarked for turfgrass research **only**. It should be generated on a continuing basis so the USGA and the GCSAA, working together, can actually finance longer-term research and development projects.

Yes, it's a simple idea, but, realistically, we think it will raise the right amount of money. The USGA and GCSAA can

accelerate everything of value being done today in turfgrass research. Please take this idea. Show this article and material to the chairman of your green committee. Ask him for his help in gaining the support of this plan by the board of directors at your club. I don't know how else we are going to get the kind of research money that we need, and get it consistently so we can do some solid, long-range planning.

As I mentioned earlier, of the \$10 million that we're trying to raise for the USGA Capital Campaign, over \$2 million of it is earmarked for turfgrass research. So we are starting with a good chunk of seed money. But we've got to keep the money coming, and the only way I know we can do that is with a commitment on the part of all golf clubs — on a continuing basis — for support of the research and development of Minimal Maintenance Turfgrasses for Golf.

**SELL THE IDEA!** Ask the president of your club to write a letter to Frank Hannigan, Senior Executive Director, USGA, Far Hills, New Jersey (perhaps following the format of the Baltusrol letter) that the USGA Green Section and the GCSAA can count on your club's support for the betterment of turf. Mr. Superintendent, nothing will happen without your enthusiastic input. Give the ball a push! Let's get it rolling — for better turfgrass tomorrow.



**New Address for the  
Western Green Section Office**

Gearing up for the 1984 Turf Advisory Service visiting season, Western Director Larry W. Gilhuly has a new office address and phone number. The new address is P.O. Box 3375, Tustin, CA 92681. The new phone number is (714) 544-4411.