

city. There is also another definition that says, 'If you want to insure that nothing gets done, give it to a committee.'"

At golf clubs it is hard to get a group of members together because of demands on their time. The chairman, therefore, bears the major responsibility, committee or not. His job is important because he decides for the members the kind of golf course they will have. As superintendents, we must not forget that this chairman joined the club for enjoyment. It's supposed to be a place to come and relax, not a place for more headaches and worry. As superintendents, we must make his job as easy as we can. We can do this by preparing budgets, keeping daily logs, being available to meet with him at his convenience. We must handle and solve problems as they arise.

When a problem requires his time, we should outline it so that a decision can be made without lengthy research on his part.

A superintendent should keep a list of topics that need to be discussed at meetings so that nothing is overlooked. Save the topics for such meetings; don't bother the chairman while he's out there playing golf.

In conclusion, the chairman and superintendent must look to the future with a common goal of constant betterment of the golf course. Together they must seek out help from the outside to insure that major problems or projects are done as effectively and efficiently as possible. As superintendents we must run the golf course operation as a business. We must keep records not only dealing with finances, but also with the total operation so that up-to-date information is available. The computer will play a big part in our future business. The biggest factor to success, however, is our pride and desire to have the best. This is a goal that a chairman and superintendent must share with equal enthusiasm.



The More Information We Pass On — The Less We Have to Communicate!

by **JOE LUIGS**

President, Crooked Stick Country Club, Indiana

THE GREEN COMMITTEE at Crooked Stick decided long ago that our superintendent would commit a deadly sin if he didn't keep the general membership informed about his operation.

Information does not mean communication. We hear a lot about the need for communication between the superintendent and the membership. I believe communication between the superintendent and the green committee is necessary, but communication has always indicated to me a give and take. As a green committee, I think we are

in the business of giving, but none of us are terribly interested in the taking. The only taking we are concerned about involves those suggestions that appear in our green committee suggestion box.

Dan Pierson is our green superintendent, and he does his job so well that the green committee and chairman appear to be doing a much more competent job than is really the case. We do not interfere with Dan's agronomic practices, nor do we interfere with the use of his allotted budget. In fact, unless Dan specifically asks for help, the green committee and I are not involved in his



budgeting. In my opinion, should it be necessary to be involved in either day-to-day golf course practices or the scrutinizing of Dan's budget, it would be time to replace the superintendent.

We have no agronomists in our membership. We have no one in our membership who has the knowledge to purchase the chemicals, inventory material, or keep abreast of the state of the art in equipment. So as the supposed supervisors of the golf course operation, our job is really very simple; we should always be available should Dan need us for emergency financial help, or for simple reassurance if he is anxious about an agronomic experiment, or if he just needs someone to talk to about the playability of the golf course. Other than that, we should obtain as much money as possible from our membership for Dan to manage the golf course. Then we should stay out of his way.

Most of the time the chairman and the green committee act as a buffer for Dan, to run interference between him and the membership. I am his public relations manager. I help him inform the membership.

So while we are not involved in the communication business, we are involved in the information business, and we simply try to overwhelm our membership with information, information of all varieties. As our golf season begins in the spring, we call a special membership meeting. At that meeting Dan and I have the floor for as long as is necessary to present information about the coming season. In the past we have talked about mowing fairways with the new triplex units, and Dan has explained to the membership both the agronomic and the monetary realities of conducting such programs. We have also presented long-range construction plans so that

when the members see the beginning of such construction, they will have already been informed.

This year, unfortunately, we will consider the probability that contaminated C-15 Toronto bentgrass is present in most of our greens. The topic of C-15 bacterial wilt will be presented in depth. We'll describe the consequences of such wilt disease and the subsequent steps to bring the golf course back to life after the infestation. We believe that if we have to ask the membership for several tens of thousands of dollars and interrupt play in order to revive our greens, it should be so noted by the membership well in advance of the act itself. We believe this kind of preparation could have saved the jobs of many superintendents in the past few years in the Midwest.

OUR NEXT ITEM of information distribution is the publication of the USGA Turf Advisory Service report and its subsequent presentation to our Board of Directors and conspicuous posting in the clubhouse for everyone to read. This information has always been generally positive at our club and simply reinforces, by an objective personality, that the committee's directives and Dan's agronomic practices are both modern and effective.

We are also experimenting with a daily information board. Material is conspicuously posted outside our golf shop and is updated daily. A member of our green crew, whose responsibility it is to mow the adjacent practice putting green, is also responsible for then taking Stimpmeter readings on the green and posting that result on the information board. Dan's assistant, responsible for daily contact with the weather bureau, posts the current forecast on the information board. This information also helps the crew member whose responsibilities include the daily setup of the golf course. At our golf course the wind conditions can affect play by as much as three to five strokes if the setup is improper.

Our golf course can be set up for member play at a minimum of 6,200 yards to perhaps a maximum championship play of 7,300 yards. This variation is taken into account by the assistant who sets up the golf course. We ask him to be so aware of the setup that he is responsible for the approximate measurement of each hole as he sets the holes and the tees. He must then

post this information on the message board. We like the course to measure approximately 6,400 yards from the members' tees and between 6,900 and 7,000 yards from the championship tees. Our tees and greens are so generous that a sloppy setup can create a much too difficult or a much too easy golf course. We accomplish two goals with this information: first, that the golf course is indeed set up properly, and, second, that the member knows how much to bite off when he goes to the first tee.

Under the "other information" section of the message board, we will have variations such as construction taking place on the golf course, for example, a broken irrigation line or perhaps an entire hole closed for play. We have decided it is not the golf shop's responsibility to disseminate this information to the membership. Of course, routine information, such as where carts are to be taken because of wilt conditions or drainage problems, and soggy areas on the golf course, also are noted on the message board.

We also have very strong ideas about what the golf course should look like and what kind of barriers we do not

allow. We refuse to rope off areas, chain them off, or paint white lines on the golf course. Using a series of attractive signs and a series of barriers made of telephone poles and elephant rope, the path is directed properly. We have found that both methods are complimentary to our golf course and helpful to the member who sometimes gets lost on his cart. Should we see members who violate either cart sign directions or the intentions of the barriers, Dan and the green committee have the authority to redirect them. The Board of Directors may revoke the members' cart privileges should these violations be frequent. But we do not allow the superintendent to get in trouble because of this information.

WE ALSO TRY to inform the members that we love them and that we want them to play a golf course under tournament conditions every time they visit the first tee. Another of Dan's assistants paints the golf course for ground under repair and checks each hazard stake and each out-of-bounds stake every Friday. This accomplishes several purposes. First, the paint is visible from the heavy play over the weekend through ladies' play on Tuesday

and our men's day on Wednesday. Painting also allows the member to play by the Rules of Golf and avoid arguments about whether or not his ball lies in ground under repair. Secondly, when we are host to our normal four or five USGA qualifying rounds and two major benefit tournaments annually, preparing the golf course for these events is easy, because we have kept the golf course ready for championships on a weekly basis. The third factor, which is the most important of all, is that the assistant finally gets tired of painting the same area over and over again and will eventually repair the flaw. Also, a great deal of pride is generated during the season as the assistant uses less and less paint to complete these projects.

Our system at Crooked Stick, therefore, is one of trust between the superintendent, the green committee chairman, and the green committee; one of trust between the green committee and the board of directors and one of trust between the superintendent and the general membership. The more information we can relay, the more each of these groups will feel itself to be a part of the club. The more information we pass on, the less we have to communicate.

Our Business is Golf Course Maintenance

by **DAVID E. GREEN**

CGCS, Bell Meade Country Club, Nashville, Tennessee

THE DEMANDS placed on the golf course superintendent are far greater today than ever before. Golfers demand a quality turf playing surface, and our job is to provide it. Clubs are judged by their golf course; it is the most important asset the club possesses. Its beauty and playing attractiveness is enhanced by the capabilities of its superintendent, but in order to achieve results with a smooth and efficient operation, the working relationship between the green committee chairman and golf course superintendent must be a cooperative one.

The superintendent must be an educator — someone who can teach the ever-changing green committee members

David Green



and chairmen. The superintendent must communicate to the green committee the management practices of the golf course. To do so, he must be organized, have prepared his plans for turf management, and have knowledge of their cost.

Your green committee chairman is most likely a good golfer, moreover a successful business manager. He is accustomed to facts and figures. The superintendent should provide him the data that supports any management decision. The golf course superintendent should have available adequate records regarding daily operations, equipment, fuel and power, pesticides, fertilizer and seed, water, soil tests, weather, cultural practices, personnel, and budgets.