

## 29th VIRGINIA TURFGRASS CONFERENCE

The 29th Annual Conference and Trade Show held this past January in Richmond attracted 1139 paid participants to the three day conference. The show was filled with education programs set against a trade show background. This year's Trade show included 246 booths from over 115 different exhibitors. This diverse group of exhibitors formed the largest trade show to date.

Some of the many noted speakers who led the educational program were: Dr. Mike Agnue, University of Iowa, Dr. Keith Karnok, University of Georgia, Dr. Reid Funk, Rutgers University, and Ms. Kathy Copley, Consultant, Grounds Maintenance Magazine. New to the conference this year was a "Women in the Green Industry" breakfast, held on Thursday morning.

Several people were recognized for

their long service to the turfgrass industry during the annual banquet. Larry Boitnott was awarded the "R.D. (Dick) Cake Memorial Award." The "Virginia Turfgrass Council Award" was presented to Jack McClenahan. President Dick Fisher presented the "Presidents Award" to Sam Kessel for his longtime service to the industry. Robert Ruff senior was made a lifetime member for his many years of dedicated service. Virginia Tech students, Mike Tyson, Billie Fuller, and Steve Jenkins were all awarded scholarships at the banquet.

1990 will be an exciting year for the Council, with the 30th Anniversary celebration. The Conference and Trade Show is planned for the week of January 15-19, 1990. We'll keep you informed of the details, stay tuned.

ployment office on a monthly basis and you can be assured of having at least some applicants sent to you. If you contact them only once, your name soon disappears from the active list of potential employers.

A source of summer help is to visit the guidance offices of nearby high schools and colleges and leave some copies of your summer job opportunity that can be easily handed to the students or posted on a bulletin board. Take the copies with you and they will feel some obligation to get them handed out. Don't expect them to make the copies for you, it will never happen. This will give you an advantage over all the letters and phone calls the guidance offices receive for summer employment.

There are other sources to be tapped for labor such as churches, FFA, vo-tech schools, garden clubs and don't forget about retired individuals looking for part time or seasonal employment. The procedures for contacting these people are much the same as outlined earlier.

The best source of labor is valuable employees who are already on the staff. It is best to have summer kids and seasonal help asking you if they can come back next year and to have satisfied full time employees not looking for other positions. This goal is only accomplished when you go to bat for your employees. Make your club understand the monetary cost associated with retraining employees every year. These costs include damage to very expensive equipment, lost time due to training, expanded crews due to the inefficiency of untrained crew members, increased personal accidents and subsequent increased insurance rates because of the same lack of training, etc. Make sure that your greens committee chairman knows about all these incidents when they happen so that they are verified at budget time. At the same time, make your chairman aware of a special project that was completed without the use of an outside contractor or a tournament being pulled off when some of the undesirable labor didn't show up because your trained staff dug in and got the job done. Finally, at budget time, go for twice the inflation rate for raises or even one time increases of \$1.00 to \$2.00 per hour to make your pay scale competitive with other labor rates in this area. If desired, make sure the budget committee knows the problems to be encountered on *their* golf course should you lose any of those trained individuals. Give end of the season bonuses and/or Christmas bonuses. Have an employee bull roast, crab feast, Christmas party, New Years party or just a cookout. Do something to let those valued employees know that you appreciate their efforts and dedication and they in turn will make your job that much easier. You will have an easier season and your members will have a better golfing season.

### 1989 MAAGCS SCHEDULE

Date	Location/Host	Speaker/Topic
March 14	Chevy Chase C.C. George Renault, CGCS	Joint meeting with the USGA Stanley Zontek, Regional Dir.
April 11	Laytonville G.C. Nick Vance, CGCS	To be announced
April 17	Springfield Golf and C.C. Golf Course Supts. Walter Montross, CGCS	GCSAA Seminar Golf Course Safety, Security, and Risk Management

## Developing A Qualified Greens Maintenance Crew

by Steve Potter, CGCS

It is accepted that golf course labor consists of employees who are "at the bottom of the barrel" in the labor pool. But does it always have to be this way? No! There are options open to both you and your club to remedy the ever increasing problem of developing a qualified greens maintenance crew.

The first and easiest solution is to simply compete for your portion of the labor pool. This includes competing with construction crew wages that vary between \$8.00 and \$12.00 per hour and offering benefits such as medical coverage, vacation, sick leave, personal leave, overtime, etc. This solution is very unrealistic for the needed seasonal help and unfortunately is not met by approval from golf course budget committees for even full time employees. When money is the limiting factor, there are still several options available.

The most widely used option is to put an ad in the newspaper and select from these candidates. This can be very time consuming and a secretary is usually required because on the average, 30 to 40

people will call, about 25 of those will set up an appointment, and then only about 5 will show up for that interview. If you can get one good employee out of the five, then it must be considered a success no matter how time consuming the ordeal was. The reason for such a low response is, of course, that construction has taken most of the reliable, experienced labor and of those who are unemployed, many wish to remain this way. Those who wish to remain unemployed are most easily identified by either not showing up for an interview or coming late to the interview and demanding wages up to twice what they were making at their last job.

Another option is to contact the unemployment office. Only 5 or 6 people will be referred to you but it saves the cost of putting an ad in the paper and saves the time of taking all the phone calls and setting up interviews. Another advantage of this method over a newspaper ad is that the applicants have generally worked somewhere as a laborer in the last 18 months. Keep in touch with the unem-