RHYS'S PIECES

○ Tom Mynaugh, former assistant at Manor Country Club, is now superintendent at the Walden Golf Course. Best wishes Tom!
○ Bob and Donna Miller are grandparents again. Bob’s daughter Debbie presented them with a 7-lb., 10-oz. granddaughter Jessica Leona Sergi on February 24. Congratulations!
○ Russ Bull, formerly at G.L. Cornell is now at N. J. Richardson & Sons, Inc.
○ Mark Merrick has announced that Ladies Night will be held this year on the Spirit of Baltimore Cruise Ship, which will depart out of Baltimore City on Sat., Oct. 10, 7:00 - 10:00. Look for more information on Ladies Night in future Turfgrass Matters.
○ Last month’s issue of this newsletter incorrectly reported that nonresident member Joel Ratcliff won low net in his flight at the National Championship. Actually, Joel won low gross, and is not the sandbagger most of you think he is.

The Western Section of the MAAGCS played at Cochise Golf Course in Scottsdale, Ariz. in February. Present were (l-r) Virgil Robinson, host, Desert Mountain Courses; Bill Black, Congressional CC; Tom Regan, Ariz. State’s Karstan GC; Bill Emerson, Paradise Valley CC

1992 Legislative Update

by Mark Schlossberg, Pro-Lawn Plus, Inc.

There are several bills in the Maryland Legislature this spring that would have an effect on the turfgrass industry in the state. The Maryland Alliance for the Responsible Regulation of Pesticides (MARRP) has been working to get our industry’s viewpoints known to the legislators. We have hired Jim Doyle, who has been a lobbyist in Annapolis for over 20 years, to represent us.

Following is a list of the bills that affect us and their status as of March 6, 1992:

HB 762/SB 549 - Pesticides - Uniform Regulation. This bill would preempt local jurisdictions from enacting their own pesticide regulations. We are obviously for this bill. As of March 6, the bills had hearings in the House and Senate. However, the Prince George’s and Montgomery County delegations are strongly against this bill. We feel we probably can get the bill passed, but we may need to compromise to accomplish that.

HB 655 - Fertilizer and Pesticide Tax - State Water Protection. This bill would have established an 8% tax on all non-agricultural fertilizer and pesticide sales and use to establish a state water protection program. Turf is considered non-agricultural in this bill. The hearing was on February 19 and, as of this writing, it was not voted on. However, we feel we made strong arguments on the damage this tax would do to Maryland business. Basically, we could buy our materials from out-of-state suppliers and avoid the tax because taxing the “use” would be difficult to enforce. We hope to receive an unfavorable report on this bill.

SB 571 - Clean Bay and Groundwater Protection - Fertilizer and Pesticide Tax. This bill would establish a 2% tax on all fertilizer and pesticide sales

Continued on page 4

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and use in Maryland to set up Bay protection fund. A
hearing was held on March 2. We feel that this bill
will probably be given an unfavorable report. A major
reason is the uncertainty over the overall changes in
the tax structure—so introducing a special interest tax
such as this in 1992 is unlikely.

I believe the turfgrass industry is in the public eye
now. Thus, legislators and environmental groups look
at us as a target. I strongly feel that the entire indus-
try including golf courses, sod producers, lawn care,
hydroseers and grounds maintenance business
must be organized politically and fight for our
interest. We must get our message out. It is impor-
tant that you call your delegates and senators at 410-
841-3000 (Baltimore) or 202-858-3000 (Washington) to
register your opinion.

Pesticide Perceptions

As an example of the bad perception that the media
shows toward our industry, the following article
submitted by Larry Ott is from the New Orleans Times
Picayune on February 15. It “reports” on the Friday
meeting of the GCSAA Conference on Environmental
Issues:

“Golf-course greens might be a little less so in the
future, thanks to tougher regulation of the pesticides golf
course superintendents use to help keep them that way,” a
pesticides expert said Friday.

Jay Feldman, coordinator of the national Coalition
Against the Misuse of Pesticides, told the greenskeepers
meeting at the New Orleans Convention Center that
they’d better start replacing their select grasses with less
spectacular but harder local varieties that don’t require
intensive chemical treatment to kill chomping bugs and
wilting fungi. Murmurs among the crowd of more than
1,000 members of the Golf Course Superintendents
Association of America showed they were not pleased with
the message.

Victor Kimm of the federal EPA said that a federal law
requiring manufacturers to prove existing pesticides aren’t
harmful probably will lead to many being taken off the
shelves, including several that are popular on golf courses.

Kimm explained a key concern relates to the contami-
nation of groundwater by pesticides that is being found
throughout the country. While in many cases the problem
is chemicals used in agriculture, golf courses also can be to
blame.

Feldman urged the greenskeepers to do their own
research to determine how risky chemicals were. He said he
didn’t expect them to throw away their pesticides immedi-
ately. Rather, he suggested they phase out pesticide use,
replacing it with less toxic pest management programs and
by careful selection of bug and fungus-resistant grasses.

Obviously the article is misleading and judgment-
tal. Its use of phrases such as “chomping bugs and
wilting fungi,” and the term “greenskeeper” shows
some of the limits of the writer. The writer assigns
more authority to Mr. Feldman’s comments than
they perhaps deserve. He also fails to mention the
third speaker at the session, John Stossell, a reporter
from the ABC network, who approached the pesti-
cide issue as one of risk versus benefit, and who also
discussed allowing the free marketplace to determine
the limits of pesticide use.

For those of you who were there, is this how you
would have reported the session?

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