



# TURFGRASS MATTERS

Mid-Atlantic Association of Golf Course Superintendents

September/October 1996

Volume 1, Number 4

## Minus Steam and Sizzle, Summer '96 is a Breeze

By Peter Finn and Angela Couloumbis

Washington Post Staff Writers

August 15, 1996



Washington, normally an oppressive, sweltering place in August, has become Maine on the Potomac. After a cool and wet July, the weather forecasters said heat and haze were finally on the way.

Wrong.

Today will be the 29th summer day in a row below 90 degrees, tying a record set in 1972, according to the National Weather Service. And the record probably will be broken tomorrow, the Weather Service said, predicting a high in the mid 80's.

Add to that the above-average rainfall and a sun that has broken through the clouds for only 52 percent of daylight hours since July 1—62 percent is the norm—and the summer of 1996 spells cool.

Way cool.

It has been a good news, bad news kind of summer. Area residents are hitting the beach less often but sleeping to the curl of nightly breezes. Homeowners are saving money on air-conditioning bills but are getting out the lawn mower more often.

Plants need less water, but certain fungi are blooming. The air quality is good, but allergists expect the ragweed pollen count to be worse this year than last.

But all in all, no one is in too much of a sweat.

"You can't beat it," said Emmanuel Ottley, standing in the shade outside the Safeway on 17th Street NW, where he sells T-shirts, incense and framed portraits from a small stand. "It's the nicest weather we've had in some years here."



What gives?

That is a question both great and small. To be sure, there are some immediate explanations. A strong ridge of high pressure over the southwestern states has kept an area of low pressure, known as a trough, over the Northeast, bringing a northerly air flow, unseasonable coolness and lots of rain.

But why is this trough so persistent?

Tough question

"We're still investigating," said Rich Tinker, a climatologist at the National Weather Service.

Tinker's prime suspect: The North Atlantic Oscillation Pattern.

This is a mega-shift in circulation patterns in the upper atmosphere across the far northern latitudes that occurs every 10 to 15 years, he explained. The oscillation pattern indicates where ridges and troughs are likely to dominate across Europe, Greenland, and the United States as the jet stream, a river-shaped band of air in the upper atmosphere, moves

across the Northern Hemisphere.

In the 1970's, the pattern caused more troughs to dominate in the eastern United States and favored harsh winters and mild summers. But through the 1980's until last winter, the upper atmosphere pattern caused more ridges-high pressure-in the East, favoring mild winters and warm summers. Indeed, the six hottest Washington summers since officials began keeping records in 1871 occurred from 1980 to 1995.

Now, said Tinker, it looks as if we're back to the pattern of the 1970's, with the shift having occurred sometime last fall. The first result was all the snow that was dumped on us last winter the second is this summer's cool weather.

"Look, I've got a T-shirt on," said Charlie Dalton, wearing pants and plucking at the nap of a green underneath beneath a white work shirt

*continued on page 5*

**Be Sure To Post Your  
USGA Rules Pullout  
on Page 7!**

*Published by the  
Mid-Atlantic Association of  
Golf Course Superintendents*



## Summer '96

*Continued from page 1*

labeled Tender Lawn Care.

Dalton was standing in the bed of a Dodge pickup on 17th Street NW, laying down branches that Eddied Cents trimmed from a damaged tree. Cents said the cool weather reminded him of his native Guatemala.

"Usually by this time of year I've got everybody wearing shorts and trying to start at 5 in the morning," said Dalton, of Frederick County, Md. This morning we started at 6." What Bob Bernard, of Potomac, has enjoyed this summer is the coolness after the rains. The sharp, sweet-smelling breeze at night has made it easier for him to sleep.

"This weather has made for lower electric bills," said Bernard, whose July bill was \$25 less than normal. "It's rare that you can open your windows in the middle of August"

Air-conditioning use is down across the region, according to Potomac Electric Power Co. and Virginia Power. Pepco said total energy consumption fell 10 percent in July compared with

the same month last year. Virginia Power was unable to provide a July figure.

Demand for water is lower. The Fairfax County Water Authority, for instance, reports a 13 percent drop in consumption in July and August compared with the same period last year.

Air pollution is down, too. Maryland state officials reported only three days this summer in which air quality violated federal standards, compared with 14 days last summer. There have been no violations in Virginia, compared with 12 days last summer.

For David M. Sell, an airconditioning sales and repair man in Sterling, it has been a summer of thumb-twiddling.

"I don't remember it being as quiet as this," Sell said. Business is off 40 percent. I have a lot of spare time."

Sell isn't the only one cool to the low barometric pressure.

"It's been a strange summer. There's definitely less traffic," said Jay Knerr, co-owner of the Kite Loft stores in Ocean City, Md. "A couple of weeks it rained all week, and that really put

the crunch on us."

Knerr remembers with fondness that at this time last year, Washington had a streak of 20 days with temperatures in the 90's, which sent lots of people to the beach.

Maggie Aldridge, 27, who works at the Hair Cuttery at Congressional Plaza in Rockville, said that both times she has had to escape to the beach this summer, she has been disappointed by overcast skies and sudden thunderstorms.

"For beachgoers, the rain was a bummer," Aldridge said. "I've really enjoyed the cool weather and the breezes, but the rain put a damper on some of my plans."

The pools are quiet, too.

At the Longbranch Pool in Silver Spring, there's much less traffic than in other years, according to Dechanta Hill, a cashier at the pool.

"It's been pretty slow all summer," Hill said. "It has to be the cool temperatures."

In Loudoun County, wine growers are working overtime to keep grapes

*continued on page 9*

GCSAA Member

MAAGCS Member

# CHESAPEAKE

## Environmental Management, Inc.

*'Science in Harmony with Nature'*

### ✓ Water Resources

- \* Detailed Water-Supply Plans
- \* Irrigation Pond Design & Siting
- \* Well Location & Development
- \* Pond Water-Quality Assessments
- \* Permitting & Expert Testimony

### ✓ Compliance

- \* OSHA Compliance Audits
- \* Worker Right-To-Know Plans
- \* Emergency Response Plans
- \* Community Right-To-Know Plans
- \* Staff Training & Support



### ✓ GREENMAP™

- \* Complete Course As-Built Map
- \* Construction Planning
- \* Irrigation Mapping Using GPS
- \* IPM & BMP Planning
- \* Digital, Color & Mylar Outputs

### ✓ Natural Resources

- \* Wetland Delineations
- \* Forest Conservation Plans
- \* Stream Restoration Programs
- \* Audubon Certification Plans
- \* Wildlife Habitat Assessments

Let Us Put Our Experience to Work for You

260 Gateway Dr. Suite 21-C Bel Air, MD 21014 • (410) 893-9016

National Golf Foundation Member

Audubon Society of New York Member

# News & Notes

## New Members

Richard Ashley	Granite Ridge Fish Hatchery	Class F
Bryan Bielecki	Diamond Ridge GC	Class D
Robert Butterworth	Green Meadows Turf Supply	Class F
Jeff Cooley	Annapolis GC	Class A
Craig Farish	Hidden Creek CC	Class D
Harry Fridley	Green Meadows Turf Supply	Class F
Paul McMahon	Hydro Designs, Inc	Class F
R. Scott Parbin	Chantilly National CC	Class D
Tom Sikand	Arctech	Class F

## Congratulations

Kenny Ingram, of Bretton Woods Recreation Center, and his wife Denise, who gave new meaning to the holiday, Labor Day, with the birth Sept. 2nd of their 7lb 13oz son, Bradley Soohoo Ingram

Thomas Tuttle, of River Downs Golfers Club, and his wife, Colleen Sundholm, on the July 30th birth of their 9lb son, James Thomas Tuttle

## Condolences

To Wayne Brissey, of the Fairfax County Park Authority, and his family on the loss of his wife, Deborah, on September 1st. Donations can be made in her name to the Anderson Medical Center

## Summer '96

*Continued from page 5*

from rotting or collecting mildew, and fruit and tomato growers are battling early blight because of the rain.

"We're having to spend more time and more money than we normally do to maintain the vineyards," said Marian Czarnecki, who has been growing grapes at Oakworth Vineyards just outside Leesburg since 1981. "I'd say our workload has

increased 100 percent. I can't remember a year like this."

Home gardeners are experiencing similar problems.

"We should be seeing hoses and sprinklers left and right, but we're not moving anything this year," said John DeMarce, assistant manager at Bill's Garden Center in Arlington. "But we are seeing a lot more fungicide, because all this moisture is causing plant disease."

But for every weather grouch, there's an army of others enjoying the

tickle of the sun and the pleasant breeze.

"I like it cool in the summer," said Richard Hill, a security guard and writer who lives in the District. "It sure has been delightful"

*Staff writers Peter Pae and Karl Vick contributed to this report*

*Reprinted with permission from The Washington Post, 8/16/96*

*"Since 1950"*



# Jeter Paving

**company inc.**

**Specialists for 40 yrs.  
Servicing your needs  
in  
Asphalt/Sealcoating  
Crackfilling/Striping**

1445 Oak Ridge Place, Hagerstown, MD 21740

**301-797-6941**

**"A Reputation Built On Integrity"**