

MAGCS DIRECTORS COLUMN

A REVIEW OF 1983

To those who keep weather records, 1983 will go down in the books as the second hottest summer in the history of record keeping for the Chicago area. To the Golf Course Superintendents, 1983 was a year that none of us would like to see repeated.

It has been a problem year for all of us, but those of us who have harbored a goodly percentage of **Poa annua** in either Poa-Bent or Poa-Bluegrass mixtures found ourselves at times fighting a losing battle. The multiple combinations of heat stress, drought stress, disease, and in some cases insect damage gave billions of **Poa annua** plants an unusually short life span. There were also other factors to surface that added to our inability to favorably control the environment for the **Poa annua** plant.

Irrigation systems that had worked well in past years developed inadequacies due to the added demand placed on them during 1983. This has caused many to look at renozzling sprinklers and seeking more individual sprinkler head control. Syringing and hand watering during 1983 was a must in many cases. Even then many of us were subjected to golfer complaints because of wet playing conditions. This is all a result of our attempts to alter the environment in favor of the **Poa annua** plant.

In many cases new mowing techniques showed merit during 1983. Those who have used triplex mowers and removed clipping on fairways experienced less difficulty in maintaining fairway turf. This will cause many of us to keep our ears open during the upcoming conference season and seek answers to a few questions; Was it the use of lighter equipment and the potential for less compaction that improved the turf quality? Did the process of clipping removal actually reduce surface temperature? Why has bentgrass populations increased with triplex mowing and clipping removal? Can one get by with only spring time clipping removal, placing the emphasis on **Poa annua** seed removal? What does it actually cost to go the triplex route? We may find the answer to many of these questions at the Midwest Clinic portion of the North Central Turfgrass Exposition.

Another factor that gave many problems during 1983 was golf cart damage. During drought stress much turf was lost do to wheels rolling over wilting turf. There also was damage due to rutting of wet areas. We all hate to go the rope and stake route, but in many cases it is the only way to direct golf carts. "Carts in rough only" help, but cause another problem, the laying down of rough turf next to the fairways. Many of us will be proposing installation of more cart paths and/or setting up to rotary mow the rough areas next to the fairways.

1983 has caused many of us to think in terms of renovation. The **Poa annua** failure of 1983 has caused a few of us to grow tired of the gamble of maintaining it. Today we have some new renovation procedures using the herbicide, Roundup; the fungicide, Subdue; and **Poa annua** pre-emergence Bensulide. A few of our more progressive Golf Course Superintendents have been experimenting with this procedure over the past three or four years and have some interesting stories to tell. It has given the chance to maintain solely for the desirable turfgrass species. There is sure to be a number of talks on this subject during the upcoming conference season. The 18th Annual

Wisconsin Golf Turf Symposium on the subject of "Facts and Fallacies in **Poa annua** Management" on October 26 & 27, 1983, sounds very interesting in light of the Summer of 1983.

The Summer of 1983 was not a picnic for any of us, but as usual the degree of problems varied from one golf course to another. This brought about the usual comparison by a few golfers of one golf course to another. This is one of the hardest things for a Golf Course Superintendent to contend with. No matter how one attempts to explain it, to many it sounds like nothing more than a barrel of excuses. Here the only answer is perhaps better communication with the golfers. There is a need to educate the golfer of the variances of golf courses; we all know that soil conditions, thunder showers, budgets, turfgrass species, and etc. vary within a mile of each other, many golfers do not. It was sad the reaction our MAGCS President got from the newspapers with his attempt to explain the problems of golf course maintenance during 1983. It doesn't make good copy, was the reply - Perhaps this matter would be a good subject to discuss at a future conference or seminar.

1983 was an extreme year, our hottest in nearly thirty years. It also has come at a time when more extreme demands are expected of us as Golf Course Superintendents. The golfer today expects the highest of quality of playing conditions at all times and many don't want to accept extreme weather conditions as reasons for turfgrass failure. Several have already started with improvements that will make another year like 1983 easier to contend with. Fairway turf renovation, improvement of existing irrigation systems, total new installation of new irrigation systems, retiling of wet spots and laying the ground work for changing mowing techniques are but a few of the things being done to improve our chances of maintaining quality turf. 1983, although extreme, has been a learning experience. We should all take advantage of it and look for ways to upgrade our golf courses so that if Mother Nature gives us another Summer such as 1983 we may be better prepared to cope with it.

**Julius Albaugh, Golf Course Supt.
Westmoreland Country Club**

MAGCS COMMITTEE APPOINTMENTS

Employment	Peter Leuzinger Joe Williamson
Education	Dave Behrman, Chairman Jim Evans; Mike Hart
Arrangements	Julius Albaugh, Chairman Sean Daley; Mike Hart
Golf	Phil Taylor, Chairman Sean Daley; Julius Albaugh
Membership	Mike Hart, Chairman Phil Taylor; Dave Meyer
By-laws	Jim Evans, Chairman Mike Hart; Dave Behrman
Finance & Publicity	Joe Williamson, Chairman Dave Behrman; Dave Meyer

The Board of Directors and Editor, would like to wish each and every one of you a very Blessed Christmas and a Happy New Year.
