

Director's Column



by Timothy Kelly
Secretary/Treasurer, MAGCS

The Big Green Bill in California was defeated. This is good news for golf courses, and for the agriculture industry in California. What was Big Green? It was an environmental bill to basically ban all pesticide use throughout the state of California. This proposed law was defeated primarily because of an uncertain economy, coupled with the cost that this bill would have been for green and agricultural industries. Environmental groups plan to go after the objectives of Big Green in California in a smaller, piecemeal fashion.

What does this have to do with us, here in Illinois? The environmental movement is here, and everywhere throughout our nation. I think that all of us are responsible stewards of the small mini-environments that we take care of, commonly known to us as golf courses. I firmly believe that all superintendents are realistic environmentalists. But we need to be in the forefront of compliance and the utilization of pesticide safety. We must use pesticides judiciously and follow well planned Integrated Pest Management (IPM) procedures. Proper pesticide storage, application, and safety are a must today. Superintendents using pesticides are responsible for: the environment, safety of golfers & the public, neighbors, and our workers. Continuing education in the proper use of pesticides is important and will continue to be in the future. We need to continue to respond to do what is best for our golf courses and the environment. New techniques and improvements in technology that are beneficial must be utilized.

Superintendents have the ability to contribute information to the public and their members regarding the good news in our stewardship of our golf courses. We must tell the public about our need to use pesticides as part of a system to properly care for our golf courses. We can also tell them about our successes. The materials we utilize today for pest control are more effective and immensely more environmentally safe. We are applying pesticides today much more judiciously than in the past, utilizing IPM and new methods of pest detection. Our national association along with the USGA are researching to: reduce the use of pesticides on golf courses, and to develop natural biological control. Golf courses are good for the environment. They provide valuable green space. These "green islands" provide oxygen, and help to replenish ground water aquifers. Golf courses provide living space for birds and other wildlife.

I am sure that in the future we will have even safer means to control pests, but until then we all need to be good environmental stewards, and convey this to the public.

"Big Shoes to Fill ... Tribute to a Legend"

by Dudley Smith, Silver Lake C.C.

Dr. Fred V. Grau, last surviving member of the turf industry's big three (H. Burton Musser, O. J. Noer) passed away in Maryland on December 1, 1990. Dr. Grau was 88.

I met Fred Grau during the summer of 1949, when he walked into the proshop at Centre Hills C.C. to borrow my golf shoes to play nine holes with Burt Musser. When he returned my spikes, he inquired about my future interest in golf. With Dr. Grau's prodding and encouragement, I transferred from engineering at Syracuse to agronomy at Penn State.

Highlights in his memorable career:

- Fred was raised in Bennington, Nebraska where he was afflicted with polio that left him crippled. He graduated with a B.S. in agronomy from the University of Nebraska in 1931. He was president of the senior class.
- He earned a M.S. degree in 1933, and a doctorate degree from University of Maryland in 1935.
- Fred joined the staff at Penn State in 1935 as the first extension agronomist in turf in the United States. He traveled in that position until 1945.
- He developed and promoted the use of several grass varieties including the popular Merion bluegrass, meyer zoysia, and U-3 bermuda grass.
- Dr. Grau was director of the United States Golf Association, Green Section from 1945-1953 when its headquarters was at Beltsville, Maryland.
- In 1953 he released a certified crown vetch "Penngift" for highway slope erosion control. His company, Grasslyn produces crown vetch seed in Pine Grove Mills, Pa., a short distance from the Penn State campus.
- Dr. Grau was awarded the GCSAA Distinguished Service Award **twice** in 1954 and 1975.
- In 1968 he organized and became president of the H. Burton Musser International Turf Foundation dedicated to raising funds for students pursuing advanced degrees in turf management.

Most recently his efforts were directed to sports turf. Natural grass for stadiums with fewer injuries to athletes, plus drought tolerant to conserve water, and disease free to eliminate use of pesticides.

Fred Grau was an honorary member of MAGCS for over 35 years. Dr. Grau was a popular lecturer and moderator at midwest turf conferences from Ames, Iowa to Lafayette, Indiana. In fact, Mrs. Grau passed away at the 1976 Midwest Turf Clinic at Medinah.

Some of the young men, Hall of Fame calibre, whose careers were inspired by Fred Grau include: Dr. Marvin Ferguson, Al Radko, James Moncrief, Charlie Wilson, Bill Bengueyfield, Dr. James Watson and Dr. Joe Duich.

Two thoughts the man left with me: You are never fully dressed unless you have a notebook and pen in your jacket pocket. What good book have you read lately? Always read a thought provoking book, it chases away the cobwebs and stimulates the mind.

Yes indeed, Dr. Fred, you left us with big shoes to fill.

