

# Chester Valley best conditioned on Senior Tour

By HAL PHILLIPS

**M**ALVERN, Pa. — When it comes to institutions of quality learning there are engineering factories (like MIT), football factories (Nebraska), even journalism factories (Missouri).

Add to that list Northern York (Pa.) High School, "Superintendent Factory."

Kirby Putt, superintendent at Chester Valley Golf Club here, and Scott Krout, the super at Desert Mountain's Cochise Course in Carefree, Ariz., are both Northern York graduates and recently finished 1-2 in a survey determining the Best Maintained Course on the Senior PGA Tour.

Each year Golf Course News polls playing professionals, asking which tour stop provides the best playing conditions. Last year, Superintendent Mike McBride and Muirfield Village GC were honored by PGA Tour players. The year before, LPGA members honored Mission Hills Country Club and superintendent Dave Johnson.

This year, Chester Valley — site of the Bell Atlantic Classic — was named the best-kept track on the senior circuit, as determined by the competitors themselves. Chester Valley barely outpolled Desert Mountain, site of The Tradition, which earned the honor in 1991.



Chester Valley's fairways show the grounds crew's meticulous care.

The respective careers of Putt and Krout have run along remarkably parallel lines. After attending Northern York, both served as assistants at West Shore Country Club in Camp Hill, Pa., and both moved on to Arizona — Putt to Arizona CC and Krout to Tucson CC.

"But after eight years in Arizona, I really wanted to move back to Pennsylvania," Putt explained. "I took the Chester Valley job two weeks before the tournament last spring. They didn't have a

superintendent for two months before-hand. The superintendent who preceded me, Jeff Broadbelt, did a fantastic job here. He deserves a great deal of credit. If I had any input, it was my decision to lower the greens and make them a little smoother. But really the course was in excellent shape when I got here."

Senior Tour players agreed. "Always in great shape but this year was the best ever," one player raved.

"Overall, the best conditioning on

tour," reported another.

The 1995 Bell Atlantic was the first televised-tournament preparation for Putt, whose friends call him Three.

"I wasn't too worried because the course was already in great shape," he said. "And I've also had some experience with big tournaments: the State Amateur and the Southwest PGA Sectional championships.

"The circus-type atmosphere that surrounds a TV tournament was interesting. But they've got it down to a science here [at Chester Valley]. The only thing we had to worry about was the weather. That's the hardest part of the adjustment from Arizona to the Mid-Atlantic region; not knowing what the weather will be.


"In Arizona, it's a slow death. The heat traumatizes the grass over time. Here it's a quick kill. You really have to be on your toes here in season."

With a full year under his belt, Putt plans to put his own mark on Chester Valley. A new irrigation system will be in place before this year's tournament begins. Nearly two holes were recently completed before the Philadelphia area

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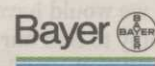
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## Obituaries

### VELVET BENTGRASS DEVELOPER MANNY FRANCIS DIES

MARSHFIELD, Mass. — Manual L. "Manny" Francis, 91, a longtime superintendent who developed Vesper velvet bentgrass and with his son, Manuel N. Francis Sr., built Green Harbor Golf Course here, died in October.

Mr. Francis, who came to America in 1919 at the age of 16, spent most of his life as a golf course superintendent. But his first work in the industry was working for a Mamaroneck, N.Y., developer who was hiring workers to build a series of courses for Donald Ross.

Mr. Francis turned his talents with plants, irrigation and heavy equipment into a foreman's job. When the Great Depression dried up construction, he turned to greenkeeping, moving with wife Shirley to South Portland (Maine) Municipal Golf Course. In 1948 he moved to Vesper Golf Club in Tyngsborough. It was there that he cultivated Vesper velvet bentgrass.

Velvet bentgrass is now on courses from Maine to Mexico and is being improved by Seed Research of Oregon.

Mr. Francis' son, Manny Sr., owns and operates Green Harbor Golf Course.

### USGA'S AL RADKO

Alexander M. "Al" Radko, former national director of the U.S. Golf Association (USGA) Green Section, has died.

Mr. Radko, who died Oct. 31, was a Green Section agronomist from 1947 to 1974 when he was named national director. He retired in 1982.

He was recipient of the 1983 USGA Green Section Award for distinguished service to golf through his work with turfgrass. He edited the *Green Section Record* for five years and was a primary editor of the USGA book "Turf Management for Golf Courses" by Dr. James Beard.

His family requested that memorial donations be made to the USGA Foundation in support of its Junior Golf Program. They can be sent to the USGA Foundation, P.O. Box 708, Far Hills, N.J. 07931.

### NJGCSA'S PAUL BOIZELLE

Paul Boizelle, 72, a former president of the New Jersey Turfgrass Association and Golf Course Superintendents Association of New Jersey, died Nov. 1.

A director of the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America in the early 1980s, Mr. Boizelle had been a superintendent at Fiddler's Elbow Country Club in Far Hills, N.J., and Onwentsia Club in Lake Forest, Ill., from which he retired several years ago.

He is survived by his wife, Jeanne, of Lake Bluff, Ill.

## Virginia GCSA honors Beljan

George Beljan received a Lifetime Achievement Award from the West Virginia Golf Course Superintendents Association during the group's annual conference held recently at the Lakeview Resort & Conference Center in Morgantown, W. Va. Beljan, 71, of Buckhannon (W. Va.) Country Club, spent many years working as a superintendent in



George Beljan

Pennsylvania before moving to West Virginia 27 years ago. His daughter, Jan, an architect with Tom Fazio Golf Course Designers, was a conference speaker and was present when her father received the award.

Harry Merritt, longtime superintendent at Riviera Country Club, also received a Lifetime Achievement Award but was could not attend.

## Chester Valley wins Best Maintained

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was walloped by three feet of snow, putting the project on hold.

TV — what the layman sees — is important to Putt also has a few ideas for tournament time. "I think the only thing we'll do differently is more aesthetic striping," he explained. "This gets away from agronomics but the coverage on me. I also think we can do a little more with

the green banks. I look forward to doing the tournament again this year. I feel lucky to have the chance. There's a lot of pride that goes along with that. Like any business, superintendent's work is very goal-oriented. Every day we're trying to cut a certain amount of grass and make it look and play the best it can."

Especially when the next high school reunion rolls around.

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