



MID-ATLANTIC News Letter



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Mid-Atlantic Association of Golf Course Superintendents to aid in the Advancement of the Golf Course Superintendent through Education and Merit

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MAY, 1961

On April 4, 1961, fifty-four members of the Mid-Atlantic Association of Golf Course Superintendents met at Woodholme Country Club in Pikesville, Maryland. The day was cold with a bitter wind blowing, but, in spite of adverse weather conditions, a large number of golfers traversed the well-manicured course. Superintendent, Carroll Hitchcock, had his C7 greens in excellent condition. His newly sodded Merion collars made a striking contrast to the lighter Cohansey greens.

Following dinner Mike Burkholder awarded golf prizes to the following: Charles Lynch, Dick Stedman, Scot Morris, Bob Martino, Woodrow Pitman, Stanley Zontek, and George Cornwell.

The meeting consisted of a suggestion discussion led by Buck Whetsell, followed by slides shown by Bob Wiley on the use of his Aero-Thatch. The new power take-off Aero-Thatch showed some very good results where it was used prior to over-seeding fairways where the undesirable grasses had been killed by the use of sodium arsenate. Jim Reid, Superintendent of the Suburban Country Club of Baltimore, also showed slides on the verticutting of Bermuda tees just as they break dormancy.

Five years ago:

The May meeting was held at Farmington Country Club in Charlottesville. Forty-nine members and guests were present. Superintendent, Marcus Pleasants, had the course in fine shape. Of the golfers, Bob Hopkins had the low gross of 72, and Bill Schrieber had the low net. So that John Connelly will not get the idea that George Cornell is always an easy mark, we will remind him that George beat him by 8 strokes five years ago.

The Greater Washington Chapter of the Mid-Atlantic Association of Golf Course Superintendents held their first meeting on April 18 at the Mount Vernon Country Club. Charley Hallowell gave a fine talk on the advancements in the field of turf grass culture, and stressed the fine work being done at many of our universities. They are a big help to the superintendent and his club, and so let's stay right behind them with our help and our support.

New members:

John J. Hurley, DuPont Co.
Scott R. Kezer, Swift & Co.

From Bob Shields:

James C. Seacrist: 1916 - 1961

Jay Seacrist was killed April 12 while engaged in his job at the Hagerstown Municipal Golf Course.

Jay met an untimely death while working along pulling out trees with a large earthmoving machine to make way for a new fairway he was building. The body was found by his son, Allen, an employee on the course, who went searching when his father had not been seen for a couple of hours. When found the machine was running in neutral gear, and Jay's body was on the ground with an 8-inch tree across his chest. Death came as a result of the crushed chest.

Jay was well-liked by his fellow superintendents, the Hagerstown city officials, and the people of Hagerstown. The city golf course, of which he was Superintendent-Manager, was closed for four days in tribute. The Minnich Funeral Home said its large chapel was filled to capacity at services on Sunday. The town mayor, the park officials and some dozen superintendents were in attendance. The local florists were swamped by calls for flowers, including those from the Mid-Atlantic and the GCSAA, and they completely covered one side of the chapel wall.

Jay was born at Crown Hill, West Virginia, and had held the position at Hagerstown for eight years. He is survived by his wife, Dottie, and five children: Allen, David, Barbara, Martha, and Kathy, ranging in ages from 21 to 3 years. Allen has been appointed to take his father's place on the golf course where the family lives.

The members of the Mid-Atlantic regret this sudden passing of a highly respected superintendent and friend, and we extend our sympathies to the survivors.

Editorial:

With the coming of new superintendent's associations, turf grass associations, and other associations designed to give education and information to its members, let us not lose sight of what should be our main aim: to advance the professional standings of the Golf Course Superintendent. I will wager that, if you were to take a poll of the members of any club, better than 75% of the members could not tell you what the initials, GCSAA, stand for, while there are very few who do not know what the initials, PGA, stand for. Yet the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America is doing more through grants and scholarships than any other single organization to improve the playing conditions of the golf courses throughout the country.

We like to think that we have a good association and provide a fine educational program for our members. Yet take the plight of a new club looking for a superintendent or any club that lacks a well-informed greens chairman or greens committee. What help are we offering these clubs? To find a superintendent, they ask their pro if he knows anyone, they ask members in other clubs, and, in a few instances, they come to the superintendent associations. Here is where we should try to channel all requests from clubs seeking a superintendent. Let us try to improve not just ourselves, but the profession as a whole. We should work toward the day when all clubs will realize the fact that it is just as important to have a superintendent who is a GCSAA member as it is to have a PGA pro.

May meeting at Andrews:

Host Superintendent, Ray Etchison, has been at Andrews since May, 1954. Prior to that, Ray worked for six years at the Naval Hospital in Bethesda, Maryland, where he helped build and maintain the 9 hole course on the grounds. A Maryland boy, Ray graduated from Rockville High School and attended a course in Turf Management in Chicago. Before going to the Bethesda Hospital, Ray worked at White Flint Golf Course and summers for Dick Watson at Chevy Chase. Ray is a Civil Service employee and has been for fifteen years.

From the campus:

Reported by Eliot C. Roberts, Turfgrass Research Specialist at Iowa State University

Nutrient-Disease Relationships in Turfgrass

Whether disease problems are centered primarily on putting greens or on greens, tees and fairways alike the frequent use of fungicides will be essential to the production of quality turf. There is little possibility of obtaining turfgrass species and strains which are immune or sufficiently resistant to disease to make use of fungicides completely unnecessary. Further, at the present time, there are no turfgrass maintenance practices which can be effective against the fungus pathogen either directly or indirectly as to replace the use of chemical fungicides. It should be stressed, however, that in order for the use of these materials to insure best results the turf must have some resistance toward diseases in general. Where the grass has no ability to "fight for itself" it is extremely difficult to get 100 per cent control from the use of any fungicide.

The fungus produces its disease symptoms in turf by feeding on the contents of cells that make up the grass plant. Basically, when a fungus pathogen infects a turf it does so in two stages. The first step is the entry of the fungus into the interior or tissue of the plant. The second step is the establishment of the fungus within the plant so that it can feed on the food substances produced by the turf. Resistance to disease may occur at either or both of these stages.

In general, the nutritional effect on creating conditions unfavorable to fungal entry into the plant tissue is limited. There has been some evidence that deficiencies of potassium accompanied by the accumulation of excess calcium leads to thin walled surface cells that are easily penetrated by the fungus. Also, excessively moist growth conditions often result in the production of soft surfaced cells that are easily entered and infected.

In regards to the second stage of infection, changes may be brought about in the chemical composition of the tissue that effect the degree to which the fungus becomes adjusted to parasitism within the grass plant. It is known that the production of certain organic acids, sugars, tannin as well as some pigments and other compounds within the cells result in specific protective reactions in favor of the grass and against the fungus. These materials may counteract the effect of enzymes or other materials produced by the fungus that act to kill the

plant cell. It is believed that such conditions as high carbohydrate to nitrogen ratio and the presence of compounds like magnesium sulfate and potassium phosphate within the cell effect the amount of harmful enzyme produced by the fungus or in some way modify it's behavior so that injury to the plant is reduced. These substances produced by the fungus not only slowly kill the cell but also may act to break down structural material between cells. This enables the fungus to spread with ease throughout the entire plant. It has been observed that cell walls with a high fiber content are more resistant to decomposition than those with less fiber.

Because of differences between turfgrass species and strains, such as special nutritional requirements; and because of the diversity of pathogens such as relative ability to infect weakened turf in comparison to vigorously growing turf; and because of differences in soil type affecting total nutrient supply and balance, it is not possible to make sweeping generalizations concerning nutritional relationships to disease control. The primary consideration in this regard is the promotion of maximum productivity of quality turf and as a by-product disease resistance will be enhanced. It has been well demonstrated that least disease resistance may be expected where soils are either extremely deficient in all major plant food elements or out of balance with respect to nitrogen. (Too little or too much nitrogen in relation to other essential nutrients). The source of nitrogen has been found to influence disease susceptibility, perhaps through rate of nitrogen supply to the turf.

These relationships represent a broad field for further investigation. It is certain that a better and more complete understanding of nutrient-disease relationships will be gained through the evaluation of research results in this area.