

Some Things Don't Seem to Change, Do They?

Are Mid-Atlantic Association meetings really so different from those of 50 years ago? Thanks to a diary kept by Ed Worthington, now of Saranac Lake, N.Y., it would seem that some things haven't changed all that much over the years. His diary entry for August 14, 1933, consisted of notes made at a Middle Atlantic Association of Greenskeepers meeting held at Columbia Country Club.

This was the meeting summary, for example: "Discussion on condition of the greens at the various clubs and what they are doing to prevent scalding, controlling brown patch, fertilizing, etc. Played golf in the afternoon, dinner and discussion in the evening."

The list of members present included Reg Giddings of Gibson Island and Annapolis Roads, the president; Dick Scott, the secretary, of Rolling Road, Tom Fisher of Burning Tree, the treasurer; Dr. Doll of the U.S. Department of Agriculture Greens Section; Russell Coltrider of Suburban Club; Dick Watson of Congressional and Chevy Chase; Reuben Hines of Manor; Mr. Chamberlain of Kenwood; O.B. Fitz of Columbia; Bob Scott of Five Farms, Baltimore Country Club and Hillendale; and Nat Mather of the new Maryland Country Club. The Naval Academy and Belle Haven were listed, followed by question marks; did someone not show up? Or was the diarist uncertain of who their greenskeepers were?

Fifty years is not such a long time ago—only back to 1933—and some of the names on that list are still familiar to members who have spent a few years in this business themselves. Our own collection of meeting minutes goes back to 1928, and these names crop up in them, of course; Reuben Hines, for example, moved on to Georgetown Prep, went into golf course construction, and raised turf grasses. He rebuilt No. 12 green and some tees at Washington Golf and Country Club in Arlington in the 1950's. His son is now a superintendent in Florida, carrying on the family name in the profession.

Both Dick and Bob Scott came from a golfing family that included another brother who became a golf pro in Baltimore. Bob's son, Bob Jr., later became superintendent at Hillendale and is now the starter at a Baltimore municipal course. O. B. Fitz originally worked at the Arlington turf farm that was located where they built the Pentagon, at which point the farm moved to Beltsville; he worked many years at Columbia. Dick Watson, a charter member of the association, has been retired from Chevy Chase Club for more than 20 years but still lives in this area; he held jobs at several local clubs concurrently because of his broadly based knowledge and served as a consultant to other clubs.

Considerations on Thatch and Watering

by Don Taylor, Assistant Professor,
Department of Soil Service, University of Minnesota

The development of thatch is a normal consequence in intensively cultured turf-grass. Due to the nature of golf green culture, thatch development can be particularly rapid. Superintendents have devised several methods of controlling excessive thatch accumulations such as frequent, light vertical mowing; aerification; top dressing; light vertical mowing; aerification; top dressing; light applications of lime; and reduced nitrogen application. Despite control efforts, seldom, if ever, is there a green with no thatch, nor, in our opinion, would that be a desirable situation. A small amount of thatch protects the soil surface and provides resiliency and increased tolerance for the turf. Realizing that we will normally be working with some thatch on the greens, whether excessive or not, it is important to know some of the effects thatch may have on the water relations of a golf green.

Studies have shown that thatch contains very large pores as compared to soil, even after compaction. Due to these large pores, the water-holding capacity of thatch is low. This can cause problems in cases where the majority of the root system is in the thatch layer and the grass plants are not able to extract significant amounts of water from the soil below the thatch. In such cases, irrigation must be inordinately frequent. Reduction of thatch or improvement of soil to encourage root development below the thatch layer is extremely important in order to sustain growth between irrigations. If, on the other hand, roots are down into the soil in sufficient quantity to extract water there, the lack of water-holding capacity in the thatch should not present a critical problem. The amount of water available to plants would then be determined by the water-holding capacity of the soil and the depth of the roots into the soil.

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Mid-Atlantic Association of Golf Course Superintendents NEWSLETTER

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President's Message

Please note the change in the date of the November meeting—we'll be getting together a week earlier than we thought. The highlight of our October meeting at Ocean City Golf and Yacht Club was our annual memorial tournament, and I would like to thank G.L. Cornell for donating the Bill Glover Trophy and Bert Yingling for the Reuben Hines Trophy, in addition to extending our appreciation to George Murphy, our host.



With cool nights and some precipitation at last, we should be able to sleep a little bit better. During the past year, your Board of Directors has accomplished a majority of the items it set out to do. We are all aware that it takes a lot of hard work and time to be a good Board member, so let's take this into consideration when we vote in the upcoming election in December. The Association can only be as good as the professionals who represent it. During the past year, many questions have come before the Board, and we have tried to come up with the right answers, ones that the majority feels are right for the Association.

Looking forward to seeing everybody at the next meeting,

Ken Braun, *President*

Further Developments In Daconil Lawsuit

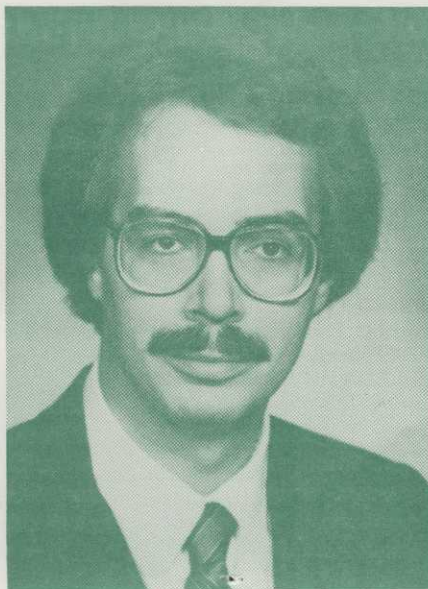
The country club that is charged along with Diamond Shamrock Corporation with responsibility for the death last year of a young Navy officer who played golf the morning the greens were sprayed with Daconil fungicide has told the court that the death was a result of an unforeseeable allergic reaction to the chemical. At the same time, the club has filed a cross-claim that in the event of a judgment against it, Diamond Shamrock should be required to pay the award, since such a judgment would be the result of the corporation's negligence and/or carelessness in failing to provide the proper instructions and warnings concerning the use of the product it had manufactured and supplied. Daconil has been made and widely used for more than 15 years, and the EPA has indicated it was unaware of any serious problems resulting from its use. Its label on the chemical's containers warns it should be kept away from eyes, skin, and clothing and not inhaled or ingested.

DIRECTORS MEET NOV. 1

As a result of the change in November meeting date, the Nov. 3 meeting of the Board of Directors will be held on Nov. 1 at Leisure World, an hour before the evening program starts.

Musser Tournament Won by BVCC Team

A Bonnie View Country Club team of Lance Poe, Jeff Staton, Mark Bertoldi, and Ken Braun fired a 5 under par best-ball of 67 on October 14 at Woodmont Country Club to win low gross honors in the annual Musser Tournament. Low net went to the Hunt Valley team of Bob Orazi, John Haines, Bruck Baker, and John Banks with a two best-ball total of 128, one stroke in front of the Baltimore Country Club team of Dean Graves, Terry Haviland, Steve Potter, and Rick Baeth. Third net was won by the Twin Shields foursome of Tim Rooney, Bill Mathews, John Shields, and Jeff Shields. Long drive winner was John Dobson of Woodmont, while Dean Graves took closest to the pin.



John M. Schilling

Schilling Named New GCSAA Executive Director

John M. Schilling, Associate Executive Director of the GCSAA, was appointed as the association's new Executive Director effective September 7, succeeding Jim McLoughlin, who had resigned earlier in the year. In making the announcement, President Bob Osterman noted that since joining GCSAA in 1978 Schilling had been involved in almost every aspect of the association's affairs, including serving as Director of Communications and editor of *Golf Course Management*, manager of informational services, Director of Marketing and Sales, and Director of Conference and Show.

Schilling is a graduate in journalism from the University of Kansas and has completed his course work for an M.A. degree in business administration at Kansas. He and his wife, Pamela, live in Topeka with their sons, John and James.

SCHEDULE OF 1983 MEETINGS

November 1 — Leisure World
December 13 — Belle Haven Country Club

THATCH AND WATERING (Continued from page 2)

The effect of thatch on water infiltration may be different than its effect on water-holding capacity. In the past it has generally been felt that thatch reduces the amount of water getting into the soil. Studies done at several Minnesota golf courses as well as laboratory studies at the University of Minnesota suggest two important aspects concerning thatch and water infiltration rate: 1) for a short period of time, dry thatch can reduce severely the rate of water infiltration, and 2) once the thatch is wet with water flowing through it, the thatch will not reduce the rate of water infiltration. In laboratory profiles of sand without thatch and with a thatch layer at the surface that had been allowed to dry, initial water infiltration rate was much different for the thatch-covered profiles and the profiles without thatch. After a short period of time during which the water was constantly kept ponded on the surface of the profile, the infiltration rates changes until there was no difference between the thatch-covered profiles and those without thatch. The period of time during which thatch restricted water infiltration was always less than 10 minutes. It appeared that this reduction was due to the hydrophobic quality of the thatch.

Infiltration rates, after establishing a constant rate, were measured at six golf greens, one athletic field, and two turfgrass roof gardens with the surface thatch layer present. The surface thatch was then removed and the infiltration rate measured again. Removal of thatch did not significantly increase the steady-state infiltration rate at any of the sites. Evidence indicates that thatch, even thin layers of thatch, can have significant effects on the water relations of greens, particularly if the thatch dries out. Though the thatch-water relations are complex and much remains to be learned, the following suggestions seem appropriate:

- 1) From the aspect of water relations, thatch is excessive whenever the majority of the plant roots are now growing through the thatch and down into the soil to an acceptance depth.
- 2) A syringe irrigation cycle to wet the thatch prior to an expected thunderstorm or irrigation when the thatch is excessively dry will probably increase the amount of water that gets into the soil.
- 3) It is important to set the irrigation schedule to apply water long enough to wet the thatch. Once the thatch is thoroughly wet, it will not restrict the rate water enters the soil.
- 4) If the rate of water infiltration is excessively low even after the thatch is wet, alleviating solid compaction by aeration will probably improve water relations more than thatch reduction.

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