

Mid-Atlantic Association of Golf Course Superintendents NEWSLETTER

Published by this Association to aid the advancement of the Golf Course Superintendent through education and merit.

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From the Golf World

Word from Lawrence, Kansas, is that the Early Bird registration deadline for the upcoming national conference and show here in Washington February 5-13 has been extended to October 15. By signing up early, you get a 10% discount on all conference fees, a 25% discount on educational tapes purchased, and preferential banquet seating and seminar assignments.

MAAGCS treasurer Lee Dieter was in Lawrence on September 8 as a member of the GCSAA Nominating Committee, whose selection of candidate for the February 12 election will be announced later this fall.

There's always a lot of griping about the ex-football stars and basketball announcers who do TV golf commentary, so ABC's broadcast of the U.S. Amateur final in September was a refreshing change. The network had only golfers to do the verbal work, and Dave Marr and Bob Rosburg made up the team, with John Schroeder out on the course with the players. They kept the gab to a minimum, said what had to be said and said it well, and are to be commended,

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1984 Meeting Dates

October 9 – Maryland Golf and Country Club, Ron Hall, Host

November 13 – Hobbits Glen Golf Course, Bill Neus, Host

December 11 – Lakewood Country Club, Jerry Robine, Host

Basic Survival—Stress and the Superintendent

by Bill Smart, IBMCC

The general overall playability of a course is important to a golfer. He does not notice the technical turf problems that scream out to the superintendent day in and day out. We tend to get so caught up with the bad stuff, we overlook the acres of good stuff.

A buddy of mine said, "If I could only cut out the junk and put it in one corner, no one would ever notice it." The truth is that no one was paying any attention anyway. Did you ever hear that old saying, "When in trouble and in doubt, run in circles, scream and shout"? Well it doesn't work, everybody is so busy running and screaming in their own circles that you can't get their attention.

It is certainly your job to know your course, warts and all. However, there never was the perfect golf course and there never will be, it is just not the nature of the beast. There are too many things over which you have no control. Your desire for the perfect golf course could be termed a mild form of insanity.

One strong defense against stress is to enlist the help of the golfer with a good public relations program. How do you do this? . . . It has been talked about and written about for years. None of what I heard or read was my style. I do not give talks to the garden club, wear a three-piece suit, attend all the club functions, or greet everyone on the first tee on Saturday or Sunday. These have all been suggested and might help if you are so inclined. There is an easier and more rewarding way. It is simple, direct, and once you get the hang of it, a lot of fun. It is to talk to the golfer. Many turfmen treat the golfer as the enemy and avoid contact as if they had something catching. Talk to them, the good and the bad, the old and the young, the men and the women and anyone in between. My PR time (I ran away before I knew better) with the members is the most productive part of my day.

About 80% of the golfers are not adamant about the condition of the course; they will usually accept conditions as they find them without too much fuss. They will respond well to your PR attempts. Ten percent will accept any conditions and just don't care enough to even think about it. They will respond to a friendly 'Hi' and a few pleasant words. The 10% that are left you will really have to work on. This is the group that sometimes make you wish you had a 9 to 5 job in the office. They are usually very verbal, fair to good golfers, and communicate pretty well within the club and themselves. It is not easy to convert chronic bitchers, but it is well worth the effort and everyone should keep working at it. Select the loudest and strongest and project your public relations pitch to him — or her, as is sometimes the case. I won one over by the simple expedient of sitting down and having lunch with him. It ruined by lunch and my digestion, but with that start he is now one of my biggest boosters. Seems his biggest complaint was that no one listened to him — meaning me, the pro, and officials of the club. That was easy, I can listen like crazy. Of course, I have to put up with a 5-minute discussion everytime I see him, but that is a small price to pay for his good will. He has also done my PR work for me within the chronic bitching group. One really needs the support of this group when you encounter the other type of stress.

For want of any other name I will call it "Disaster Stress." This happens when your mistake is very obvious and right out there for all to see, and can't be passed off as a natural event such as bad weather or disease.

I had one happen to me in mid-season; the worst time. Early on there is a good chance that active growth will get you out of trouble. Late in the season the cool nights, warm days, and fall rains are very forgiving. Then too, you are doing renovation work anyway.

Before the current pesticide regulations we used some pretty potent chemicals. I used sodium arsenate to control weeds in sand traps. It was cheaper, killed in few hours, and also soaked through my sneakers and inflamed the skin under my toenails. My casual attitude about this has changed along with our chemicals. After one of these sprays, I sent one of my summer college students to rinse out the tank. In view of what happened, it is ironic that he was a chemistry major. My instructions were to spray the small amount of material in the tank into the brushy edge of the woods on the way to the pumphouse, rinse the tank out, then refill with water for the next use. A day or two later, I added fungicide to the tank and sent two men to apply it to the greens. The chemistry major had not rinsed the tank, merely filled it. The residue chemical in the tank was enough to brown out the first nine greens, which happened to be the back nine. Upon refilling, the dilution rate was so high the rest of the

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Annual Championship Will Be Held Oct. 9

by George Renault, Golf Chairman

October brings to mind pumpkins, frost, Halloween, and—our Annual MAAGCS Golf Championship. Superintendents only will be competing for the Bill Glover and Ruben Hines trophies, given to the gross and net winners, respectively, in the 1984 tournament to be played at Maryland Golf and Country Club. Entry fee will be \$5, payable at registration.

Members showing up with a four-some will have priority starting times, which begin at 11:30 a.m. and go to 1:15 p.m., but you can be sure of a pairing if you get to the first tee. As noted, only superintendents will be eligible for the trophies, but members and guests will compete for other gross and net prizes. There will also be prizes for closest to the pin on Nos. 3 and 16 and for the longest—and straightest—drive on No. 18. Don't forget to phone in your reservations for golf and/or dinner!

NEW MEMBERS

Frank C. DeYoung, Class D
Superintendent, Chester River Yacht
and Country Club
Chestertown, MD.

Thomas P. Walsh, Class D
Assistant Superintendent
Chartwell Golf and Country Club
Severna Park, MD.

FROM THE GOLF WORLD

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along with ABC. It was a giant step forward for TV golf.

An interesting little controversy blew up last month between Wilson Sporting Goods and the USGA. Wilson, in its advertising, referred to tests of its new Staff ball being conducted by its "Iron Byron" driving machine. The USGA, which also has an "Iron Byron" that it uses to test shafts, clubs, and balls for velocity and distance, objected, saying that the ads implied USGA participation. Wilson's rejoinder was that all such machines were nicknamed "Iron Byron" by their maker, True Temper Sports, Inc., because they replicated Byron Nelson's classic golf swing, that 25 machines had been built and were in use, and that the name was not under USGA copyright. Hence, they'd advertise as they pleased. So there.

Safe Pesticide Practices—A Must for Superintendents

by Bob Lambert, Superintendent, Andrews AFB Golf Course

Now that the spraying for most major pests is behind us for this year, I hope all of you have had a safe year. I feel that we have discussed almost all aspects of maintaining our golf courses, but little or no discussion has covered the safe use of pesticides.

Being at a military installation, safety is paramount for my crew, and we are constantly monitored to ensure that safe practices are being used. As the user, it is our responsibility to use pesticides safely from the day we select and buy a pesticide until the empty container has been disposed of properly. Do you always read and follow the label instruction before using a pesticide? Changes to these labels do occur from year to year in some cases. How many greens and other turf areas are set back or lost because someone failed to read a label? Use pesticide only for the purpose given on the label.

Protection is a key aspect of this problem. What type of protective clothing and equipment do you and your people use when applying pesticides? Cotton coveralls (polyester-blend type does not provide adequate protection) are excellent protection and prevent many pesticide poisons from entering through the skin if used along with waterproof gloves, boots, an approved respirator, safety goggles, and a rubber apron when mixing. An excellent respirator that we use is a MSA COMFO II with renewable cartridge filter. These are manufactured by the Mine Safety Appliances Company, Pittsburgh, Pa., 15208 (Washington telephone 785-2565). These respirators come in three sizes and must be fitted to the individual's face. Proper care and maintenance could save your life or that of one of your employees. Some points to remember are to wash clothing after each day's use as the body can absorb pesticide poisons from contaminated clothing. Always wash your gloves and boots after each use. Remember that toxic chemicals can enter the body in three ways: through the skin, swallowing, and breathing. Remember it's your choice—sickness or death—if no protective measures are taken.

What emergency procedures do you have in case of spills or fire? These present a special hazard to you and to the environment because they occur as uncontrolled events. You must use good procedures and proper equipment to bring the situation back under control. For spills, keep a container of absorbent cleaning compound, cat litter, or clay (turface) which are good to soak-up any spilled pesticides. A list of chemicals that you store should be given to your nearest fire department in case of fire. In an emergency, planning ahead can help reduce hazards and may also save time and life.

In addition to the safety precautions mentioned above, all persons who handle pesticides should have regular periodic checks of their cholinesterase activity, for this is the only way that absorption can be monitored and inadvertent exposures detected. The frequency of the test should be at least twice annually, prior to exposure and after spraying operations are completed. We are fortunate in that the above safety precautions are monitored by our Environmental Medicine personnel annually for all personnel who apply pesticides. Remember, good daily safety precaution could save you from many problems down the road. If you did not use these safety precautions during this year, I hope that you will be more aware and make them a part of your 1985 safety program. BE SAFE!

BASIC SURVIVAL (Cont. from page 2)

greens were not harmed. The damage was evident the next day, and it was not hard to figure out what happened. I called the Greens Chairman at once. He voiced his primary concern in the first question, "Does it affect the putting?" (again notice the golfers interest in playability). I replied, "No, but they look like hell." He asked when they would recover. With a knot in my stomach and a lie in my teeth I said, "a week or two." He said not to worry — easy for him to say.

I was amazed at the reaction of the club in general. Much of it was similar to that expressed by the chairman and quite a few voiced their concern about my feeling badly about the damage to "your beautiful greens." I received 100% support from the club. I don't like to think what might have happened if my relations with the club had been poor. Factually, I have seen many more jobs lost due to poor interpersonal relations that due to poor work performance. To put it in very basic terms, if they love you, you can get away with just about anything.

Excerpted from The Mountain State Greenletter

