

## 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.

Claud Corrigan, *Editor*  
Joe Gambatese, *Photographer*

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### From The Golf World

You can't help noticing how the TV networks, especially CBS, have been going out of their way to praise the work of the superintendent of the golf course from which they're broadcasting that week's Tour event. It may well be the intensive PR campaign put on by the GCSAA in recent years is beginning to get the point across that immaculately groomed golf courses just don't "happen" but are the result of some responsible person's knowledge, special skills, and hard work.

The CGSAA Executive Committee, by the way, is strongly plugging the new Mid-Year Conference and Show to be held in Indianapolis, September 19-24, complete with educational seminars, equipment trade show and outside demonstrations, turfgrass research sessions, and a golf championship to be played at nearby Crooked Stick Golf Club, an outstanding Pete Dye course.

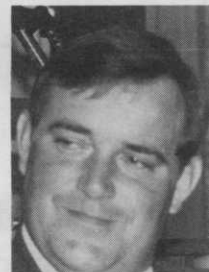
### Meeting Schedule, 1985

June 11 — Montgomery C.C., Jeff Miskin, Host  
July 9 — Winters Run G.C. (luncheon meeting), John Drew, Host  
August 13 — Bretton Woods, Annual Picnic, Gerry Gerard, Host  
September 10 — Hobbits Glen G.C., Bill Neus, Host  
October 14 — International C.C., Steve Nash, Host  
November 12 — Hunt Bailey G.C., Bob Orazi, Host  
December 10 — Naval Academy, Mike McKenzie, Host

## The President's Message

One of the greatest benefits afforded members of the Mid-Atlantic is the opportunity to attend monthly meetings held at different clubs in our area throughout the year. At these meetings, we are able to play golf, exchange ideas with fellow members, and participate in educational sessions. However, along with these benefits comes a responsibility—to be willing to host a meeting at your club. In that regard, it was brought to my attention at the April Board of Directors meeting that only four meeting locations have been secured for 1986. To correct this situation, I hope that other members will realize their responsibility to do their part. Take the initiative and volunteer to host a meeting next year. The scheduling of meetings for 1986 is being coordinated by our vice president, Gerry Gerard. See Gerry to make your arrangements.

A special note of thanks this month goes to Golf Chairman Dick Gieselman for all his hard work in organizing last month's Superintendent's-Pro Tournament, at which everyone had a great day. Our June meeting will be held at Montgomery Country Club, and our host is Jeff Miskin. Remember to register by calling the MAAGCS office at 964-0070.



Michael J. Larsen, *President*

## "Weeping May Endure For A Night"

by Virgil Robinson, *Superintendent*  
*Burning Tree Club*

The rest of the quote for the title of this article is "but joy cometh in the morning." As many of you know, this is a direct quote from Psalms 30:5. I would like to apply this quotation to a subject that is close to my heart and very common to our profession, a subject that most superintendents never broach, that causes many sleepless nights and many bleeding ulcers. That subject: personal trials or afflictions or failures.

As bona fide members of the human race, as golf course superintendents, we are quite willing to talk about our personal triumphs, our accomplishments, our successes. But, what about the real building blocks (a seemingly paradoxical statement) of our character, of our personhood — our failures.

Because of an experience in 1977, a "failure" if you will, and to other personal trials that are even now upon me, I believe I qualify as a specialist, an authority on the subject of failure. I make that statement out of thankfulness and humility, not regret or boastfulness. By relating that experience and what I obliquely learned, I hope to show that probably more is gained through our failures than our successes. In looking back eight years removed from that "failure" I consider it one of the most valuable experiences of my life; at the time, I was asking, no, demanding, why me, Lord?

1977, of course, was my first year at Burning Tree; I had reached a personal goal of mine, a tournament course or very fine private club, fully seven years before I could even dream of such a possibility. At a beautiful club, steeped in tradition, I was going to provide the first conditioned golf course on the East coast. After three successful years at Andrews AFB that seemed to be a reasonable goal at the time.

By August of that year the golf course — tees, greens and fairways — looked as if someone had done a poor job of spraying Round-up herbicide; the only thing consistently green were the leaves on the trees and they turned brown early that year. What happened? I still do not know. When things started going down in May or June, I certainly overreacted with certain management practices but not to the extent that the course was suffering.

If the turf was suffering, I was more so. My personal pride was being ripped out by the roots. For the first time in my life I realized I did not have control over my job situation or my personal destiny. That realization is both sobering and humbling. At the time and during those four months, I slept a maximum of two hours per night — the other 4-6 hours were spent endlessly tossing and turning and worrying; I did not share any of what I was going through with anyone, not even Karen. By the end of the season I was a basket case, even though I managed to put on a good front. Within myself, I got consolation from the fact that I probably would never take my own life since I hadn't already.

For those of you who may go through a similar experience, for those of you who may be having problems, trials, or afflictions not necessarily of your own making with green chairmen, committee chairmen, or members in general, for those of you who may be having personal problems, what did I learn from '77 that might possibly encourage you?

First of all, make certain your priorities are in line. What is most important to you? If you do not know what is most important, look to see where your time is spent; that is a pretty good barometer of your priorities. Do you pass up vacations with the family because the course would founder without you? Do you work seven days a week even though your wife would like you to visit relatives or go to church with her? Do you not participate in your children's activities because you have to work till 6 in the evening or on Saturday mornings?

For me, I learned my priorities were totally out of kilter. Because of my total personhood, who I was as an individual was tied up in my job at that time. Because my course was going under, I was going under also, as an individual. Out of 1977 came a realignment of my priorities. For me, faith in my Creator and trusting in him became numero uno, my family second, and job, third; everything else fell below each of these. This does not mean that my job is unimportant to me, that I do not give 100%, that I do not care; it does mean that it is in perspective to other areas of my life that I consider important. I believe that because of this I am even more valuable to my employer now.

Secondly, if you are having difficulties, open up to others and share your problems with them. As you do, it is amazing, absolutely amazing, how many other people have had or are having similar problems. The more you open up and expose your inner being, your thoughts, your feelings, your hopes, your dreams, your prayers to others, they in turn feel the freedom to open up to you. That ten ton weight of "bricks" or "baggage" suddenly becomes five tons when shared with another. That problem does not necessarily go away but it does become manageable; it is brought into perspective.

In the "summer of '77" I did not do this. I kept everything within. My pride would not allow me to share my problems; I was internally imploding. Death, truly, would have been a welcome relief.

Third and lastly, I feel that the "failure" eight years ago started me on the way to becoming a "people person". Not that I have arrived in this area of my life, far from it, but I'm on the road. It behooves each one of us to take the time to listen, truly listen, to what another is saying. He may be asking or crying out for our help and yet we are not really hearing his need; he may need a kind word of encouragement, a helping hand, a thank you or a please. Are we really listening?

In summing up, I would say that personal trials, afflictions and failures throughout life are going to come our way. How we choose to handle them, what we learn from them goes a long way toward our own personal happiness, contentment, and well-being. "Weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning".

## A Highly Incredible Stimpmeter Tale

by Douglas T. Hawes

A Texas superintendent recently told me this tale as the gospel truth. He is at a first-class club where the bentgrass greens seldom drop below a Stimpmeter speed of 8 feet. A superintendent from a local public golf course came by, asked about the Stimpmeter, was told how to use it, and then took it back to try it out on his greens. A few days later, the superintendent brought the tool back with these comments: "I triple verticut those suckers, lowered the height of cut to 1/8 inch, and triple cut them so there ain't hardly any grass on them. Got the speed up from 3 to 5. Sometime, I wish you'd tell me how you all get them to 8½."

This becomes a tall tale when you find out what the second superintendent meant by 3 and 5—lengths of the Stimpmeter, or 9 and 15 feet. What makes it almost believable to me is that I had seen the greens on that golf course a few years back. I took a picture of them at that time because they had such an incredibly thin stand of bentgrass. The picture is on Page 1 of the Nov.-Dec. 1984 *Record*, with the caption: "The scale can tip both ways—some greens are too thin; some too fat." If the greens were still that thin when the superintendent speeded them up from "3 to 5," I'd almost believe the story.

## New Members

David W. Young, Class F, Sales Representative, Jonathan Green & Sons, Inc.

David Stuffel, Class F, Sales Representative, Bowman's, Baltimore, MD



## Guttenberg Says: "We Need Each Other"

Speaking at the May 14 meeting at Woodmont, following the Superintendent-Pro Tournament, Mark Guttenberg, professional at Penderbrook Golf Course, poked some fun at the superintendent-pro relationship. Why should they like each other, he said: "One grows grass, the other's job involves destroying it." The superintendent, he joked, tracks mud into the pro shop, always waters greens heavily on Ladies Day so the pro catches hell, and bans carts because the Farmers' Almanac says its going to rain. Still, he said, they need each other, and the best way to strengthen that bond is through communication, letting each other know their schedules and providing member feedback; through education, by which the pro learns the scientific reasons behind the superintendent's decisions; and, through respect for each other's job. For practical reasons, they complement one another. The pro is a PR man who promotes golf and who can promote the superintendent's job or make him look bad; and, the way the superintendent does his job can greatly affect the pro's revenue and, hence, his success.

## A Challenge From Valley Members

Members of the Shenandoah Valley Turfgrass Association, many of whom are MAAGCS associate members, have issued a challenge to us for a golf match on June 27. We're asked to join them for a short meeting at 10 a.m. at the Shenandoah Valley Country Club in Front Royal, Va., followed by an informal lunch, and golf at 12 noon. If you'd like to participate, call Eric Linde at 703-635-3588.