



Mid-Atlantic Association of Golf Course Superintendents NEWSLETTER



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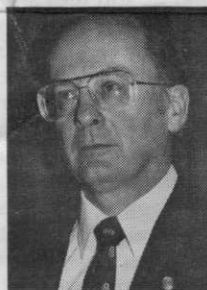
NUMBER 3

President's Message

Our meeting at Chestnut Ridge Country Club with our partners in the golf business, the Golf Professional, promises to be a repeat of our past successes. This is our fifteenth annual get together and the fifth year that we've played for the Clare Emery Trophy. Please come to the meeting and join the festivities even if you aren't going to play in the tournament, I'm sure a good time will be had by all.

Congratulations to those of you that got your reservations in early enough to join us on the Spirit of Washington for our trip down the Potomac on Saturday, June 6. To those of you that aren't attending this Ladies' Night, please get your reservations in early next time.

As most of you know, the Mid-Atlantic is losing one of its most well known and respected members. Virgil Robinson is moving to Phoenix as Director of Agronomy and Maintenance for Desert Mountain Development Corporation. We all wish Virgil the best in his new position and, of course, want to thank him for all his contributions to our association over the years. I personally want to thank him for the excellent job he has done as our Membership Chairman and Board Member. We wish you the best Virg, we'll all miss you.



Lee Dieter, President

Superintendent & Golf Professional Team Up for Tournament

On May 12th, Super's will play a net best ball event with their golf professional. Defending champions will test the field on the tough Chestnut Ridge course located in Baltimore County.

Measuring 6,172 yards from the white tees and 6,560 from the blues, Chestnut Ridge is viewed as a true test of golf with its rolling terrain and 4,000 to 6,000 sq. ft. greens. Established in 1957, you'll hopefully miss the water hazards and shoot close to the par 71. This event is favored by both supts and pros as a true "FUN DAY".

Mark Bertoldi has been superintendent of Chestnut Ridge Country Club since 1982. A graduate of Penn State with a B.S. degree with special studies in Turfgrass, Mark tenured for two years as an assistant at Fort Meade G.C. and Chestnut Ridge prior to moving into his present position. Mark doesn't boast much about his modest handicap on the tee, but waits and enjoys any action that comes his way. By the way, his game has slipped a bit to a 3.

Mark has been very busy reconditioning and adding blue teeing areas. Progress has been applied to both tees and fairways with excellent results and he plans to continue both programs. Greens are a combination Bentgrass/Poa built on existing soil, with 5 USGA sand greens. They are all mowed 7 days a week, at times double cut at 5/32", and receive 3#N annually. Tees are mowed 3 to 4 times a week at 1/2" and receive 4#N annually while fairways are mowed at 3/4" 3 times a week and receive 4#N.

Presently Mark's top priority is to secure adequate bids for repair work to his irrigation dam. Considerable damage occurred in 1978 from Hurricane David and the drought conditions of the past several years clearly pointed out the need for repairs.

The day's tournament events are as follows: Lunch is available starting at 11:00 a.m. with hot dogs and hamburgers being served outside. The shotgun tournament will begin play around 12:30 p.m. Towel service is provided and while a coat rack will be available, you may want to leave your change of clothes in your vehicle until your round is completed, then bring them into the locker room. Cocktails will begin at 6:00 p.m.

(Continued on page 3)

An Open Invitation

The 9th Annual Mid-Atlantic/Musser golfing event will be held October 27, 1987. Woodholme Country Club and Steve Potter, Superintendent, have made a solid commitment to supporting this event and we look forward to playing it on a fine course in tournament condition. Sponsored by the MAAGCS and Maryland Turfgrass Council, the golfing format is a four man team playing best gross and net ball.

Proceeds go to the Musser Foundation, originally established to support research and education in turfgrass science. Now, something new has been added! The contributions in TURF MANAGEMENT by fellow superintendents like yourself, have been invaluable in reducing injuries to children. As an outgrowth of these efforts, the Directors of the Musser Foundation approved, and in conjunction with the United States Department of Agriculture, organized the Safer Sports Turf Now National Sports Turf Council.

The goal was to reduce injuries on athletic fields, and from there move into the repair of deplorable playground facilities. Most felt that the money spent maintaining these areas was probably applied and used at the wrong time of the year. Something as simple as an appropriate fertilizer program might mean the difference between grass, dirt or worse?

Many superintendents have been hesitant to participate, possibly because of the potential for failure or worse — criticism! Well, we all know that a thin skin toughens fast in this business, so let's get involved. If you're not convinced of the need for such an effort, visit your local ball fields and playgrounds. With development eating up the existing open spaces, those remaining are precious few and see more concentrated usage. Your roughs could easily become a happy playground if current play areas are not maintained to stand high impact use. Let's try to help. Contributions can be pledged, tax free so that everyone can say, "I was there."

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

George Renault, C.G.C.S.
Editor

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A LOOK AHEAD

Below is a brief glance at meetings for June, July and August. Refer to your March Newsletter for detailed info and remember to make your reservation at (301) 381-0030.

June 9	Green Hill Yacht & C.C. James Kelly
July 14	Columbia Country Club Ken Ingram
August 11	Bretton Woods Rec. Center Gerry Gerard

An Open Letter to USGA

For many years the concept and practices of the USGA have confounded me, particularly that the green section acts as an advisory to the club on behalf of the superintendent. You have experienced it yourself on those occasions when you have unsuccessfully tried to sell an idea or a new purchase — everyone balks, or you get a “no” without commitment for future reconsideration. And then, along comes your USGA green section man who meets with you for four hours or so. He writes up his report and presto, you get almost all if not more than what you asked for earlier. Of course, he wrote a formal report which he sent to your Green Chairman, President and yourself.

What mystique! A person could almost come to believe in the existence of magic stationary, and all because that report produces such immediate obedience and agreement.

In all seriousness however, few of us disagree totally with the idea. While the

practices may be flawed, the concept has real merit. It's beneficial and prudent to get an outside feel for the place every now and again. In fact, it used to be and sometimes still is, a standard practice to ask your neighbor to visit for awhile, have lunch and then maybe play a round and discuss things. Now we seem to be blessed (?) with a consultant who swoops down telling all, and advising remedies. And you have the pleasure of paying extra for it!

As mentioned above, the concept of an independent, objective, expert analysis is beneficial. But how objective is that analysis? Do you really think the agronomist is going to speak the real truths about conditions in his letter to club officials? And how expert is his opinion? Just as book knowledge requires continual practical experience to maintain a high level of expertise, a USGA agronomist should return to the golf course

WINTER GOLF?

by Dr. Doug Hawes, Consultant

The green committee at a northeastern country club closed the course with the following note to members last winter:

“The grass-growing season for northern golf courses begins about April 15 and ends about December 31. During this time, the bentgrasses we encourage on greens, tees and fairways can recover with other plants that seek to encroach. During the entire growing season, an intensive turf maintenance and management program is directed totally to encourage more and more bentgrass and less *Poa annua* on greens, tees and fairways. This “battle” goes on during the entire growing season and if problems arise during this time, *Poa annua* is usually the reason! Heavy seed growth in the spring, slow putting surfaces, brown spots in greens caused by disease or wilt, uneven growth, excessive pollen to affect golfers with allergies all are problems caused by *Poa annua* that affect golfers and play.

Golf in the winter, when the bentgrass are frozen and dormant, totally favors *Poa annua*. *Poa annua* quickly takes advantage of any bentgrass weakness to gain foothold. *Poa annua* seed is ever-present and ready to germinate at the slightest opportunity.

Golf in winter compacts the soil . . . compact soils require more aeration during the spring and fall golfing seasons . . . and aeration at any time is disturbing to all golfers during the regular playing season. We reduced our program to one aeration of our greens and tees annually . . . with winter play, greens may have to be aerated at least twice annually during the regular golfing season. Aeration always requires heavy top-dressing — both are costly budget items.

Problems with golf turf in winter also concern involvement with soil temperatures and drainage. In winter, soil under turf freezes to depths from a few inches to several feet, depending upon the severity of cold experienced. Once the soil freezes, it negates all underground drainage until the frozen soil once again thaws completely. To compound the problem, part of the upper inch of soil thaws on sunny days, causing excessive wetness in this area from trapped water above frozen soil. Now this combination of circumstances results in severe compaction when play is allowed under these conditions because the thawed soil is compressed, vise-like, from foot pressure on solid ice below the thaw. Infrequently warm days will not thaw a deep freeze significantly. It takes 10 to 14 days of continuous air temperatures over 50 degrees for winter soils to thaw to a safe depth for play. SOIL TEMPERATURES ARE 10 TO 15 DEGREES COLDER THAN AIR TEMPERATURES. GRASS ROOTS DON'T BEGIN TO FUNCTION UNTIL SOIL TEMPERATURES REACH THE AREA OF 40 TO 45 DEGREES! The areas hurt most by winter play are greens and tees.

Therefore, in the interest of more enjoyable playing conditions for all golfers during the growing season, we deem it necessary to close the course from February 15 until we feel it safe to resume play in spring, approximately April 15.

We seek the support and understanding of all members in our quest for BETTER, STRONGER PERMANENT TURF with each and every passing year.”

Editorial Note: One course in our area — a public course in Fairfax, Va. — follows a similar policy. Reasoning is that winter revenues from greens fees would not offset the overhead and potential damage involved in maintaining open play. This may become a future consideration for country clubs, as the few who use the facility in the winter significantly drive up maintenance costs for the membership as a whole.

every 7 years to ensure that he remains current with conditions and practices. The Mid-Atlantic area with its many variables would be great for such a refresher session.

The concept and practices would be better implemented if the agronomist's services were included in the membership fee to either the USGA or state golf association. Establishing such advisories as a general benefit available to all members, as opposed to an enhanced benefit for those who wish to pay additional, would better protect the objectivity of the analysis. It might also be organized in such a manner as to economically fund refresher sessions. The prime benefit of such a change would be to the golfing community who pay in the long run anyway. Rich or poor, public or private, the entire golfing body would benefit without politics getting involved with maintenance and USGA practices.

What is Happening to Musser's Pennncross Bentgrass?

by Dr. Fred V. Grau

Pennncross putting greens with one-half inch roots? I didn't believe it until I saw it with my own eyes! Musser's Pennncross with 10-12" roots in living soil is possible and feasible. At Beltsville I helped to test Pennncross components under stress of drought and heat. Blended into a polycross, this creeping bentgrass has great tolerance to the stress of drought and disease when given a deep fertile soil in which a healthy root system can develop. Overindulgence of a multitude of applications of many materials have succeeded in reducing Musser's rugged sturdy Pennncross to a shadow of its real potential. This situation pertains to a greater extent on some greens more so than others. Professor Musser would turn in his grave were he to know what his grass is asked to endure.

Early in the usage history of Pennncross, this great grass was sullied by substitution, adulteration and mismanagement in production fields. The true worth of the real Pennncross was re-established and saved from degradation by the heroic efforts of Dr. Joe Duich and the growers. The route was through certification under rigid rules and regulations. Today Pennncross and its penn pal, Penneagle, are capable of providing perfection in putting greens worldwide.

I do not know the reasons for the current corry performance of Pennncross (and perhaps Penneagle) on some courses. I know only that it is time for every factor in the game to butt heads in an honest effort to find the answers. We start with the premise that Musser's Pennncross is blameless and go from there.

The MITF and NSTC have vested interests in the studies to be made. Shallow roots cannot be tolerated in putting greens or in sports turf such as athletic fields. Deep healthy root systems are the foundation of healthy wear and divot-resistant turf. This premise holds for all sports turf.

Having lived with grasses which reached 8 to 10 feet into the living soil for their life, it is anathema to me to see turfgrass managers struggling against insurmountable odds in trying to maintain tournament-quality turf on a root system one-half inch deep!

This note casts no stones and points no finger. It states a problem and seeks answers. Perhaps a return to naturalness and simplicity might bring about a more stable system which is more easily managed with the fewer applications of a multiplicity of materials. I cling steadfastly to the age-old belief in life in the soil and to directing all management practices toward encouraging its healthy continuation.

MITF and NSTC stand ready to assist in any way possible to preserve the integrity of great grasses and their innate ability to perform and to provide perfection.

SUPT. & GOLF PRO TOURNAMENT *(Continued from page 1)*

and dinner at 7:00 p.m. Awards will be presented upon completion. (Hopefully your editor will claim the Clare Emery Trophy.)

A hearty thanks to Chestnut Ridge C.C. and Mark Bertoldi for hosting what promises to be an exciting day of golf. The MAAGCS would also like to thank the following companies for their support of the Superintendent/Professional Golf Tournament: E.Z. Go Golf Carts, G.L. Cornell Co., T.E.S.C.O., Finch Golf and Turf Co., Lea's Green Meadows, Inc., and Hartford Industrial Minerals, Inc.

Only NON-PARTICIPANTS will have to RSVP to our office. Please do so by calling (301) 381-0030.

DIRECTIONS - FROM WASHINGTON: Route 95 North to 695 West, exit at #23 Falls Road. Take Falls Road North 3½ miles and course will be on the left.

Good luck to all, and don't be surprised if a sand bag isn't presented to you!

ON THE TEE . . .

Maryland State Golf Association (MSGGA) recently made available \$5,000 to fund our four scholarships at the University of Maryland. Students received the "Emmet Gary" award. Congratulations to: Carol A. Coradetti, Thomas P. Mynaugh and to twin brothers Bruce and Brian Zickafoose. The twins are agronomy sophomores and operate their own lawn care company. The scholarships are given to promote interest in the betterment of turf on golf courses, or people devoted to research and teaching! Hopefully, these considerations will be better weighed in the future.

TURFCOMMS is published and edited by Dr. Douglas T. Hawes, Certified Professional Agronomist, specializing in Golf Course Maintenance consultations. TURFCOMMS covers the majority of current interest topics and is a must for any conscientious person in golf course management. Dr. Hawes' travels permit him the opportunity to see and hear a wide variety of problems with differing approaches on how to resolve or cope with the situations. Subscription cost is \$10.00. Send check or money order to: Dr. Douglas T. Hawes, 2408 Roundrock Trail, Plano, Texas 75075, (214) 867-0176.

Radicalism Revisited

As anyone committed to outside organizations along with work and family will tell you, finding the time necessary for them is often difficult. But, the rewards are great. Involvement best teaches that one person, one voice, make a difference. Involvement builds networks of support with benefits reaching far beyond the limited scope of the immediate organization.

For me this concept represents an ironic turn of events. As a child of the 60's I envisioned myself as a radical, voiced my beliefs to anyone who would listen, and sent off my opinion to anyone who would read it. I also espoused the 60's perspective that "establishment" organizations were all talk and little action. As was inevitable however, I, along with all the other "radicals," went to work, had a family and matured.

Along the way the importance of organized effort and active involvement was forcibly brought home when a past president of the MAAGCS said, "You have to become active! Spend some time as a director, become an officer, then you'll appreciate the contributions made by your peers and yourself in bettering this profession."

Active involvement has indeed altered my perspective of the association. While younger superintendents make giant leaps toward an objective, older superintendents walk toward it, perhaps conserving their stamina. Regardless of how they get there, all those committed cross the bridge to take up the task at hand.

Active involvement has also demonstrated that for any organization to move forward, it requires the fire of youth tempered by the experience of maturity.

And so, for those who mutter, either loudly or in whispers, their dissatisfaction with the MAAGCS — don't stop, just get involved. Attend, contribute, work on a committee, run for an elected position — be a radical but get involved!

New Members/ Reclassifications

Chris Dieter, Class C
Student, Virginia Tech

Rick Hildreth, Class B
Asst. Superintendent, Columbia C.C.

Thomas J. Ritter, Class B
Asst. Superintendent, Laytonsville G.C.

Tom Hurd, Class D to B

Lou White, Class A to E

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R. John Shields, Class F
C.E.O., Glenn Dale G.C.

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