



Mid-Atlantic Association of Golf Course Superintendents NEWSLETTER



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Belle Haven in October

by Jim Meier, CGCS

On October 13th, Jim Meier and Belle Haven Country Club will host our next monthly meeting. This may be the Mid-Atlantic Region but when you're talking Belle Haven, you're talking real southern history. Just for openers, 1000 (that's right, one zero zero zero) slaves are buried between the 4th green, 5th tee, 9th green, and 6th tee. The plantation house itself sat next to the springs to the left of the 5th fairway. The old plantation roads came in under the 4th green and between the 8th & 9th greens. The plantation itself ran all the way out to the island which is now in the middle of the Potomac. Springs come out of the ground during wet weather, which really makes my day. Prior to the plantation, the area was home to an Indian tribe.

During the Civil War, Union soldiers used the tombstones for practice and you can still find one of their bullets every now and then. Before proceeding into "new" Alexandria, trolley cars used to run where today's 17th tee is located and picked up passengers at a hotel that was once located on the site of the 3rd fairway/rough.

Belle Haven Country Club was built between 1924 and 1926. Originally constructed for the residents of Belle Haven Hill who worked in Alexandria, the course consisted of 9 holes and crossed both Fort Hunt and Belle Haven roads.

Members also had a hand in designing the greens and their handiwork shows in #2, 4, 5, 7, and 12. Records are spotty for the early years so it isn't always possible to identify who did what. For example, #1 was built 90 yards forward and #8 to the right. Rabbit & Sprigg did #10 and we can vouch that #'s 3, 9, 11, and the practice green have never been touched since construction. #3 is sinking and I feel for the cup cutter on #11 because it is common to have to chisel the plug out of the cutter.

The 13th and 16th holes were built from fill that came from the construction of the Woodrow Wilson Bridge and Route #1. Part of the driving range and other landfill came from Crystal City

President's Message

Those of you who attended the last meeting know that the Mid-Atlantic has submitted my name to the G.C.S.A.A. nominating committee for consideration as a candidate for the national board. I'd like to thank our board and membership for their continued support. Please remember that this is an application only and does not guarantee my candidacy. The following is my statement that accompanied the application.

I would like to serve on the board of directors of The Golf Course Superintendents Association of America to fulfill one of my career goals. My ambition has always been to be a member of the board of directors of our Association and to go on to higher office if possible. This is but a small part of a much bigger commitment to our profession. I firmly believe that everyone should put some of themselves back into their profession, to help improve and advance it. My career has been even more satisfying because of my continued involvement in association activities. I feel that through this service I have helped advance our profession. I would like to follow through this commitment of service and feel that I can best do so on the national level.

I have a good background of activity in the Association to use in my capacity as a member of the board. I have attended the National meetings of our Association twenty-four of the past twenty-six years, and have served on four different committees for a total of eight years. I've visited the National Headquarters and had the opportunity to work with the staff on several occasions. The Certification Committee met twice at Lawrence to revise the standards for Certification, I was a member of the Committee both times.

I've been involved with the Association long enough to know where we've been and the direction our membership wants us to go. I would like to be a part of that growth as a board member and officer of our Association.

Lee Dieter, *President*



excavation. Ed Ault designed the 13th through the 16th holes as well as the 17th and 18th greens. The 18th green was sodded but others were built by a company from North Carolina.

Since 1980 the course has had Midiron sprigged on it. Lakes are being rocked, bunkers rebuilt, new irrigation installed, and Zoysia is being plugged on #3, 4, 5, 15 and 16 tees. The lower tee on #17 and #1 tee are new. In past years, the course would be totally submerged after every rain storm. Now things are getting better, since 1984, this only occurs once or twice a year when the tide is in and electricity off. Joe Emanuel and I used to see if I could close the course, now we are hardly ever closed.

In 1980 Belle Haven played 20,000-25,000 round of golf. In 1986 we were at 39,506 rounds, which I was told was still under by 2,000.

Greens are poa and bent and are cut

6-7 days per week dependent on activity. (This past July & August, they were cut 5 days a week.) Height this year is set at 1/8 to 5/32 inch dependent on time of year. Tees and collars are cut twice a week at 1/2 inch and fairways at 9/16 inch 2-3 times each week. We overseed annually with rye on the fairways and tees and bent (when we can get it) on the greens.

As you can see, Belle Haven has a strong history and it certainly seems that every person in the U.S. has had a hand in its design/construction. It is a challenge to maintain as well as to play. Its history and setting should make for a memorable day of golf and I welcome all members to come and enjoy!

Golf is available after 11 a.m. Carts are \$14 and lunch is available; dinner is \$18.50. Cash or charge to club applies.

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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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Belle Haven (Continued from page 1)

Remember to RSVP to the MAAGCS hotline: (301) 381-0030.

Directions: From Richmond & West: Follow I-95 North. Exit at Route #1 South (Fort Belvoir). While exiting stay in right lane (Fort Hunt Road sign) which bears right and at first light make a left onto Fort Hunt Road. Proceed through next light and Belle Haven is on the left. (You will see the tennis bubble.)

Directions: From Baltimore: Follow I-95 South over the Woodrow Wilson Bridge. Exit at Route #1 South (Fort Belvoir). Proceed over the beltway overpass, staying in the right lane for the Fort Hunt Road exit from Route #1. Follow Fort Hunt Road exit. Once on Fort Hunt Road, proceed through first light and you will find Belle Haven on the left.

Permanent Solution to Drainage Problems

by John Strickland

Puddles of standing water are guaranteed indicators there's too much surface water for that type of soil to absorb and get rid of. This water is expensive to purchase, and in excess, live with. So lets get rid of it permanently!

By combining common sense and new technologies, we can rid ourselves of water that has to wait in line to get into our soil or the "good old sun" to dry up. The problem with "waiting" is that turf and ornamental plants get into trouble just about as fast as the man who is trying to maintain them for his employer. The time has arrived for turf professionals everywhere to get as tough with drainage problems as they are with disease, weeds insects and fertility problems.

All you need to know and remember are a few basic rules about soil and you are ready to begin your plan of attack.

Soils — All soil is made up of particles of rock and organic matter in various stages of decomposition. The more particles per cubic foot, the longer it takes for water to move through that soil.

Thatch — Thatch is that layer of mostly dead plant material that accumulates on the surface of soil and that slows water down dramatically before it ever gets to the soil. Make an honest effort to get rid of it!

Equipment — The job of cutting trenches into the soil, and getting rid of the soil dug out of the trench, can be the most expensive part of doing a drainage project. Unless you really need a very deep and very wide trench, fine turf areas are not the place for tractor-loader back-hoes. Chain trenchers "out dig" back-hoes dramatically, pulverize the soil for easy removal, and come in sizes perfect to fit the job. (Lord knows we don't need 4 ton digging monsters on our oversaturated turf.) New technology has recently brought us wheel trenchers that cut very narrow trenches so fast and efficiently that the expense of digging the trench and getting rid of the spoil is cut by huge amounts. Here again the soil dug out is pulverized.

Materials — The other "major expense" of a drainage project to the material you are putting back into the soil to give those lazy water molecules an easier path to follow . . . to get away from our fine turf or ornamental growing area.

Crushed Aggregate . . . The sharp points and corners of crushed stone keeps the stone at "arms length" away from each other. And as I stated earlier the bigger the particle size, the faster water can flow through and around the particles.

Perforated Pipe . . . Provides the "big space" in the trench for water to flow away from our drainage problem, provided we can get the water into it, and keep it from filling up the soil. (For reasons too lengthy to discuss in this article we do not recommend wrapping the perforated pipe with geotextiles. Don't use them!)

Geotextiles . . . Filter fabrics are the "saviors" of drainage systems. Skeptics, and the uninformed, content they will clog up and fill with soil. (In some cases they might, but all geotextiles are not created equal!) You must select one that is soft, pliable, strong and "fluffy". Just picture in your mind what a cross sectional profile of a fiberglass air filter looks like. That's exactly what a proper Geotextile looks like under a magnifying glass! They can't be stiff or "slick" to the touch. The best geotextiles for drainage are engineered to permit tiny soil particles to pass right through themselves. Muddy water must pass through one side and exit the other side still carrying those tiny particles of soil with them. By using a geotextile, we insure that our crushed aggregate, and perforated pipe, will stay clean and flow excess water away fast and permanent!

When selecting a proper geotextile, ask your supplier what the A.O.S. (Apparent Opening Size) or E.O.S. (Equivalent Opening Size) of his fabric is in standard U.S. sieve. Select the geotextile that has a range of 70-100. This assures you that you will be purchasing a proper drainage geotextile. (If your supplier can't supply a fabric with the 70-100 A.O.S. (or E.O.S.), don't buy it! — regardless of how cheap it is!)

Some geotextiles are made from polyester, other polypropylene. Polyester "wets" easier than polypropylene, and is more desirable in drainage. It is hydrophylic. That's a fancy word for loving water! Polyester blended into cotton makes clothing easy to launder! Polyester in drainage encourages water entry into our drainage system. Polypropylene repels water!

Space Age Solutions to Ancient Problems — In the past year you have been seeing more and more information on "Pre-Fabricated" or "Self-Contained" composite drainage systems. They are truly state-of-the-art solutions to turf and ornamental drainage problems. All employ the usage of geotextile wrapping a waffle-like core. They are comparatively thin, require trenches only 2" wide, need no connecting fittings, eliminate the displacement of huge amounts of soil and replacement gravel and the expense of perforated pipe and fittings. On a running foot basis they are up to 60% cheaper to install than conventional drainage systems! 60%! They can solve drainage problems anywhere conventional systems do, and you don't have to destroy your turf area (or take it out of play) while you are installing it. They offer drainage solutions to "reconstruction" problems.

(Continued on page 3)

Proposed By-Laws Changes

The Board of Directors has proposed the following changes to the M.A.A.G.C.S. By-Laws. In accordance with Article XII, By-Law Amendments, the following changes are hereby posted. Review them carefully as membership will vote on these recommended changes at our December 8th meeting at Army Navy Country Club.

Article I, Section B

Current language: "The office and mailing address of the Association shall be located at the home of the duly elected secretary."

Proposed language: "The office and mailing address of the Association shall be located at the Mid-Atlantic PGA Office."

Article V, Section C

Current language: "A member who becomes eligible for another classification by change of position or meeting the requirements of another classification, may apply for reclassification to the board of directors."

Proposed addendum to current language: "The Board of Directors may automatically upgrade the classification of

any member who meets the higher requirements."

Article V, Section H *(A)

Current language: "Class D - Asst. Golf Course Superintendent. To qualify for a Class D membership an applicant must be actively employed as an assistant golf course superintendent. Class D members shall have all the privileges of the Association except that such member may not vote or hold office."

Proposed language: "Class D - Asst. Golf Course Superintendent. To qualify for a Class D membership an applicant must be actively employed as a golf course superintendent or an assistant golf course superintendent. Class D members shall have all the privileges of the Association except that such member may not vote or hold office." (Note that we currently have at least 6 superintendents in Class D.)

"Section A - Classes" would be amended as follows to reflect the above change:

"Class D - Golf Course Superintendent or Asst. Golf Course Superintendent"

On The Tee . . .

Gerry Gerard, CGCS, Chairman of the Nominating Committee is accepting nominations for the Board. His Committeemen are Ben Stagg and Grant Pensinger, CGCS. Your nomination is a way of guiding the direction of the MAAGCS. The only bad idea is the one not vocalized! So sound off and GET INVOLVED!

Speaking of getting involved, a hearty thank you to all members who have taken the time and the effort (and I recognize this can be considerable) to submit articles for your newsletter. Keep them coming and remember Article of the Year receives a \$100 bond.

Tip of the Month is having a bit of rough going and needs some major domestic aid, however. Come on people, we know that superintendents are the most advice giving individuals in the world next to mothers-in-law! Let loose with a few of yours and win a \$25 bond if your tip gets published. As they say, nothing ventured, nothing gained — and our odds are certainly better than Ed McMahons!

Note the proposed By-Law changes and take some time to read them over and understand them. While the changes may not be of monumental significance, these are your by-laws and as a member you have an obligation to know what your voting for or against.

Lately the Board has gotten vocal by writing various letters to the PGA and John Deere. The PGA for their commercials depicting our lack of existence, and surely implied that we work for a golf director and John Deere for their total disregard in scheduling a tournament for club officials. President, General Manager, Golf Professional and Golf Superintendent. Somehow we were overlooked. Possibly, from arranging percentages of the entry fees being donated back to PGA funds, simultaneously playing a pro sweep event, making the fun day into one of competition for the pro only, since he will be playing his ball out regardless of the other three workers. Rumors have it the tournament winner is based only on how the pro plays. Hopefully those who played September 30, will not be stuck only carrying the golf bags but enjoy a good event, the original format was good anyway.

Please take a moment to introduce yourself to Carol Offenbacher and congratulate her on being this year's recipient of the MAAGCS scholarship. \$500 has been deposited into her student account. The decision was a difficult one, because all the applicants were truly outstanding. Carol presently works at Eisenhower Golf Course studying under the capable hands of Lou Rudinski. A formal presentation will take place during the Maryland Turfgrass Conference.

A Look Ahead . . .

The November meeting will be hosted by John Tutich and Herndon the 10th. This date should be the final round of the match play tournament. December 8th meeting will be hosted by Dave Fairbank, CGCS and Army Navy Country Club, for our election of Directors.

A three gang Blitzer unit is for sale. Units are five bladed, 4 x 20 semi-pneumatic tires with complete frames. Like new, please call for appointment. Originally \$6,080, take it away for \$3,500. Mr. Gillis, Sherwood Forest G.C.

Permanent Solution to Drainage Problems (Continued from page 2)

But beware! Just like any other product you buy to achieve a desired solution, cheaper is not always better. There are big differences in these systems! One key is the geotextile (there goes that word again). Does it have the correct properties for drainage which we learned earlier? Can you interlock the waffle-like core easily to make permanent locked together butt joints? Have you taken a rule and actually measured that core to see its true height and width? (In this instance, bigger is better.) Does the product have university testing to back up the claims of the supplier? Can you purchase this product from a supplier you depend on for service or quality products? Answer yes to the above questions and you have found the "best for your money" prefabricated drainage system.

Drainage Design — Federal laws protect our fragile environment from draining excess surface water loaded with pesticides and fertilizers directly into our natural watershed. These laws state that excess water must pass through the soil, or drainage aggregate prior to watershed entry. Exercise caution when considering catch basins, or drainage channels.

Properly designed sub-surface drainage, using the materials discussed above collects water after it percolates through soil and/or aggregates. It helps us fight the environmental battle to keep our natural resources clean longer. Identify your excess water sources. (If one happens to be the guy running the irrigation system — get him fired!) Then map your plan; and, if necessary, contact your turf supply dealer of quality drainage supplies. Please keep this last thought in mind gentle reader. The only creatures on this fragile green earth that don't get fired because of excess water problems are fish!

Puddles of standing surface water are the enemy of healthy turf, trees and shrubs. The time to declare war has arrived!

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