

TurfTalk*



March 1990

Mid-Atlantic Golf Course Superintendents

Lester Tanner hosts March 13 meeting at Enterprise Golf Course

The inaugural meeting of the MAAGCS is scheduled for Tuesday, March 13. Lester Tanner and the Enterprise Golf Course are our hosts.

The Enterprise Golf Course is a public golf course owned by the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission, Prince George's County.

"The course was named in honor of the U.S.S. Enterprise aircraft carrier and its Captain, Newton White," explains Lester. "When Captain White died, his wife sold the property to the Commission at a price that could be considered a gift."

Enterprise opened in October 1976 under its first superintendent, Bob Bracey. In May 1978, Lester Tanner became superintendent. Donovan Associates designed the golf course and Bob Elder was entrusted with its construction. Russell Roberts designed and installed the irrigation system.

Enterprise is a busy place, recording 60,000-plus rounds of golf annually. Lester says that since 1985 the golf course has reached its saturation point. On a typical day, few, if any, open tee times are available. Tee times are awarded on a first-come, first-served basis. This policy has led to a unique situation. Some people have begun to arrive at the course at midnight to arrange the coveted early starting time. This occurs almost all the time during the spring, summer and fall, and typi-

cally there is a two to three hour wait beginning at 6 a.m.

The greens are fertilized with 6lbs. N, 2 lbs. P and 4 lbs. K per year. The fairways and tees receive 4 lbs. N, 1 lb. P and 2 lbs. K annually. The rough is treated with 2 lbs. N and just a hint of P and K every season.

The greens are mowed at 1/8 inch, seven days a week with Toro greensmowers. Fairways are mowed at 3/4 inch, two to three times per week with a Ransomes 350D. Tees are mowed at 5/8 inch two to three times per week with Toro Pro 84s. The rough is mowed

Some golfers at Enterprise have begun to arrive at midnight to get the coveted early starting times.

at 2 inches once a week with Jacobsen Blitzers.

"I feel Enterprise Golf Course has an outstanding staff," says Lester Tanner. Assistant superintendent Jay Vargo, foreman Mike Hall, mechanic George Railey, and course technicians Tom Nelson and Kevin Kreitzer. "It is these people with their various skills that make Enterprise look good. I depend on them and I'm proud to work with them."

Equally important, says Lester, "I work for a truly golf-oriented manager who has given me support and guidance. He is Frank Stoppa and you'll see him at the



Lester Tanner has been Enterprise's superintendent since 1978.

meeting." Cora Thompson is his assistant.

Dinner is at the Newton White Mansion near the Clubhouse. Golf is "anytime," Lester says. "You reserve tee time when you arrive," adding matter-of-factly: "If it's a nice day, you may have some wait. We all feel privileged to be your hosts and we'll be glad to assist you."

Directions:

From 95 going south: Take route 450 east. Right onto Route 193 (Enterprise Rd.) Course is about 3 miles on right.

From 95 going north: Take route 214 (Central Ave.) east. Left onto Route 193 (Enterprise Rd.) Course is about 3 miles on left.

From 301 going south: Take route 450 west. Turn left onto Route 193 (Enterprise Rd.) Course is about 3 miles on right.

From 301 going north: Take 214 (Central Ave.) west. Go right onto Route 193 (Enterprise Rd.) Course is about 3 miles on left.

President's Message

Here we are at the start of another glorious golfing season. It's kind of like a baseball team in spring training. Everybody is in first place with a chance to win the World Series. Our version of the Hot Stove League is strategizing to eliminate summer patch this year. Or maybe we have big plans to eliminate poa, or improve our staff. Whatever we plan to do this year there's always Mother Nature to contend with. I've already put in my order for something in between '88 & '89.



This year we are offering what has to be the finest monthly educational meetings in the country. Make the commitment to yourself now to be a part of these great opportunities. See you at Enterprise GC.

May all your days be 80 and your nights 55.

Bill Neus, C.G.C.S., President

Golf Notes

Our host this month, Lester Tanner, advises us that golf will be on a first-come, first-served basis. As we all know, if the weather is nice, there could be a lot of players trying out their new Christmas presents. For the March meeting, we will play a net skins game with a \$5 entry fee. Carts will cost \$16 each. You should also note that showers are available but you must bring your own towel. The cocktail hour will start at 6:00 p.m., followed by dinner at 7:00 p.m. The cost of dinner is \$25. We need an accurate headcount for this catered dinner, so please make your reservations by March 9.

RESERVATIONS
301-381-0030

How Green is Green?

by Bill Neus

It's the American way, isn't it? Work hard, be loyal, put in long hours, sacrifice, produce a good product day after day. Any business would appreciate and take care of an employee who provided these attributes, right? If you work as a golf course superintendent, too many times the answer seems to be an emphatic **no**.

There's a disturbing trend in our area right now. The new kids on the block, (or on the club board) are exercising a sort of George Steinbrenner style of management: "Take my team to the World Series every year or else!" Unfortunately, this is happening at clubs that have a history of good management by the superintendent. You put in many good years, the faces on the board change, and suddenly they tell you that you're not performing. Worse yet, they question your ability to do the job at all. How can they say these things after I've had another fine year, you lament.

Which brings me back to my original question. How green is green? Well, I don't have that answer, but many of this new breed feel the answer lies down the street at that other golf course, because they played there in May in the Member-Guest. Never mind that, by July, that other course had more problems than you could shake a stick (or a sprayer) at. The problem is that your people have this misguided perception of 365-days-per-year pristine perfection down the street.

You can fight these unfair comparisons all you want, but you'll never get rid of them. For all of you who are just getting your feet wet as superintendents, don't be so naive as to think it will never happen to you. That's when you will get hit the hardest. The golfer you make mad today will be your greens chairman tomorrow. It never fails.

So how can you prevent this type of

situation from developing at your club? I will not be so presumptuous as to say that I have an absolute answer, because there is no perfect solution in an imperfect world. But as author of this piece, please allow me to indulge in an unqualified opinion.

First, this situation has nothing to do with the ability to grow grass. We all can do that with our eyes closed, and if you think that you're better than the next guy then you are a fool. So, don't believe that just by growing good turf your problems are solved.

Second, this is a people problem. Personalities, egos, power plays, opinions from members who are—or want to be—in charge, and who constantly change. It's kind of like a football game where you let the fans change the rules at halftime every Sunday. How do you work at cultivating relationships with your members, new and old? If you do as good a job as I have, then you are all in a heap of trouble. I have learned, especially this year, that these ongoing relationships are as important as the quality of the turf you grow. So, if you are not working on the PR aspect of your job as hard as you are on the technical part, then you may be asking for trouble down the road.

One of my goals for this year is to focus on a commitment to deal with the members (especially the ones who are disagreeable and ornery) in a positive and aggressive way. Will this solve all of my problems? Of course not. Can I eliminate all of the ego and personality conflicts that are so prevalent in our industry? You've got to be kidding. But will I be able to look in the mirror and tell myself that I've made a strong attempt to improve on this difficult issue? Absolutely.

Start working on it today and never stop. make the effort to win these guys over. If you do, you may be able to avoid the debate over how green is green.

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1990 MAAGCS Schedule

Date	Club	Host	Speaker
March 13	Enterprise CC	Lester Tanner	Dr. Reed Funk
April 10	Maryland Golf & CC	Donn Dietrich	Dr. Robert Carrow
May 8	Prospect Bay	Bill Shirk	Stanley Zontek
June 12	Chestnut Ridge CC	Gary Crone	Dr. James Beard
July 11*	Caroline CC	Jim McHenry	Mary Ellen Setting
August 14	Hobbits Glen	Bill Neus	Picnic
September 11	Leisure World	Scott Wagner	Dr. Tom Turner
October 9	Woodmont CC	Mike Larsen	Dr. Joe Duich
November 13	Piney Branch	Gene Dyke	Mr. Tom Akins
December 11	Lakewood CC	Nat Binns	Elections

*Note: Wednesday meeting at noon

MAAGCS Board of Directors



MAAGCS board members, left to right: *Donn Dietrich*, Membership Chairman; *Steve Potter*, Treasurer, *Nick Vance*, Vice President, *Walter Montross*, President Emeritus, *John Laake*, Educational, *Jim Kelly*, Social & Benevolence, *Bill Neus*, President, *Scott Wagner*, Golf, *Ken Ingram*, Secretary, *Lou Rudinski*, Editorial & Publicity, and *Mitch Williams*, Finance & Newsletter.

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Name the Newsletter Contest

The editor would like member input for the name of our newsletter. So take a moment, write down your suggestion and send it to:

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The Board of Directors will choose a name from the suggestions. To make it worth your while, a \$50 Savings Bond will be awarded to winner!

Mid-Atlantic Association of Golf Course Superintendents
Mitchell Williams, C.G.C.S., Editor
Manor Country Club
14901 Carrolton Road
Rockville, MD 20853
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