

Turfgrass Matters



April 1991, vol. 44, no. 2

Mid-Atlantic Golf Course Superintendents Newsletter

JEFF BLIND WELCOMES MAAGCS TO HILLENDALE CC

Jeff Blind and Hillendale Country Club welcome MAAGCS members for the April 9 meeting.

Hillendale, a private country club in Phoenix, Md. with approximately 400 members, lies six miles north of Towson. The course was designed by William Gordon and opened for play on July 9, 1954.

Jeff, who graduated from Ohio State University with a degree in turf, has been superintendent since December 1989. Prior to that he was assistant superintendent at Baltimore Country Club for five years.

The course, a par 72, is about 6,700 yards from the blue tees, 6,500 from the white and 6,200 from the red. Fairways and tees are mowed three times a week at 1/2"; greens are mowed six times a week at 5/32". Fairways and tees are ryegrass; greens are bent and poa. Greens receive 4 to 5 lbs N a year and 10 to 12 lbs K per year.

Jeff and the club's seven other full-time employees have been busy this year overseeing installation — by Tanto Construction — of a new Toro VT-4 irrigation system. "This is definitely a major project," says Jeff. "We were lucky to get Tanto. They've been on site five weeks and are probably 85 percent finished." It has kept Jeff so occupied that he was could not get away for the March meeting. "Last year we enlarged a pond, but it was nothing compared to this; I feel lucky to have been here for it." By the April meeting all will be finished except some clean-up.

Jeff and his wife Marlene, a billing clerk for a check printing company, live in Belair. In the off-season Jeff enjoys hunting, especially in Western Maryland. He plays golf to an eight handicap. "I try to play once a month, if I'm lucky. I play mostly here, I try to play other places, but it's much more difficult to get away."

For tee times call the pro-shop: 301-592-9404.

Cocktails are from 6 to 7 p.m., dinner at 7. Cost is \$25 for dinner, \$30 for lunch, golf and dinner. Cash bar. For reservations call 301-381-0300.

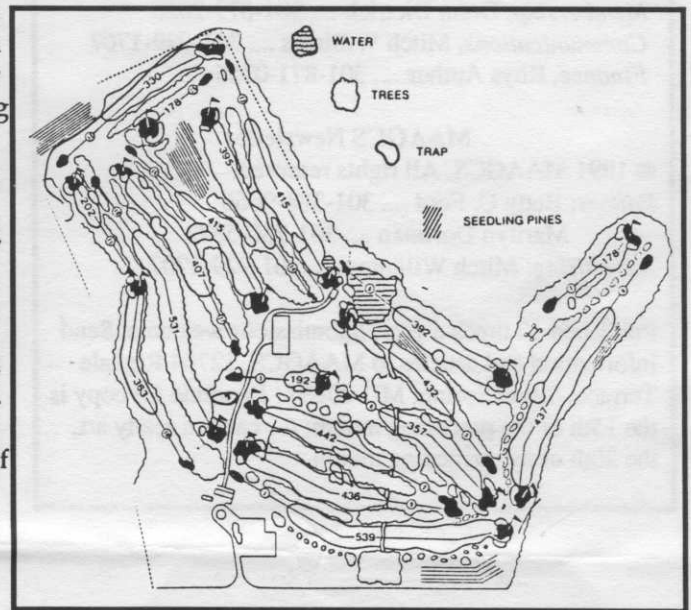
Directions: From D.C.: take 95 N to 695 N toward Towson. Continue about 10 miles to Dulaney Valley Road N; go 2 to 3 miles crossing the bridge over the reservoir. Bear left, go one mile to Blenheim Rd., turn right. Hillendale is 2 miles on the left.

From Baltimore: take the Beltway, follow directions above.

Golf Notes

Congratulations to our March winners.

In the Scotch Tournament, Low Net honors went to George Renault and Nick Vance with a



score of 73. In Second Place were Ron Weaver and Donn Dietrich at 75, followed by Mike Gilmore and Mark Waltz with a 77, and Lee Dieter and Walter Montross at 78. Low Gross winners were Ken Ingram and Scott Wagner with an 83.

The April meeting at Hillendale Country Club will feature golf between 12:00 and 1:00. The format will be individual play with prizes awarded in both the gross and net divisions. This event will allow at least one round of golf before our Superintendent-Pro Tournament.

And speaking of Superintendent-Pro, watch for the entry form which will be in the mail shortly. Ben Stagg of Hog Neck has promised us a day of fine golf and food.

Scott Wagner
Golf Chairman

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MAAGCS Newsletter

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Editors: Betty C. Ford 301-384-9666

Marilyn Dorfman 301-730-5877

Advertising: Mitch Williams 301-929-1707

Published 10 times a year. Submissions welcome. Send information and articles to MAAGCS, 12704 Rigdale Terrace, Silver Spring, MD 20904. Deadline for copy is the 15th of the preceding month; for camera-ready art, the 20th of the preceding month.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Our first meeting at Poolesville Golf Course and Potomac Valley Lodge was a huge success. I would imagine anyone who played golf there for the first time was pleasantly surprised with the layout and the condition of the golf course.



I also enjoyed the western-style dinner and hospitality of the Potomac Valley Lodge very much.

The one sour note of the day was in having to accept the fact that after all the reminders we have given to our membership about making reservations in advance to assist our hosts in preparing for their meetings, we still had to give out 16 "pink slips." We, as professionals, should be more considerate of our peers and make these reservations by the Friday before our meeting. Let's try to let all the clubs know that we understand their needs for preparation by being prepared enough ourselves to make our reservations in advance.

See you at the Hillendale Country Club in Phoenix, Md. on April 9.

Nick Vance, C.G.C.S.
 President MAAGCS

MEMBER NEWS

Bruce Steinmiller of Cambridge Country Club and his wife Linda had a son, Micah David, on December 17. Congratulations!

Dr. J. Kevin Mathias of the University of Maryland's Institute of Applied Agriculture, received the Agriculture Alumni Association's Excellence in Instruction Award at the association's annual banquet on March 12.

In Memoriam

Wallace Stedding passed away on January 27 at age 67. He had been superintendent at Westwood, Rolling Road and Carroll Valley CCs and a past member of MAAGCS. He will be missed by all.

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UM Fungicide Survey

Dr. Peter Dernoeden of the University of Maryland urgently requests the help of Mid-Atlantic superintendents. In order to solicit funds for research he needs data on fungicide use on golf courses in the area. Please fill out the enclosed form--anonymously. The address is printed on the reverse side so you need only fold, staple and stamp.

When 'Chemophobia' Strikes

Industry must continue to develop programs that provide economically sound pest management for turf while satisfying public concerns

*by R. L. Brandenburg, Ph.D., North Carolina State University
Reprinted with permission from Landscape Management, March 1990*

The past year has seen a dramatic shift in public concern over pesticides. All evidence suggests that these concerns, whether real or imaginary, will proliferate and create a greater demand for changes within the green industry.

So how is the industry to face this new challenge?

It is up to landscape professionals to help discourage this pesticide phobia. The green industry needs to develop programs that provide economically sound pest management for turf programs to satisfy the public.

Why the recent concern?

It appears the public has developed a recent fear toward scientific developments directed at benefitting mankind. Perhaps some of this fear is the result of the media focusing on dramatic stories that emphasize the negatives of recent advances in pesticide use. Although informing the public of potential health risks is certainly the responsibility of the news media (and many do so quite accurately), some prefer to capture the public's attention with a flare for the dramatic rather than for the facts.

The concern in the turf industry has coincided with common fears of pesticide residues in food. The focus has been that we are consuming large amounts of pesticide residues. Frank E. Young, when he was the commissioner of the U.S. Food and Drug Administration,

stated, "That's a myth, and another myth is that any residue, no matter how little or how legal, is harmful."

The public is confused. Not confused over the fears, but rather confused over the emotional stories and conflicting reports on the facts.

As recently as 20 years ago, science could detect residues only in parts per million. Levels of any substance up to 999 parts per billion were undetectable and showed up as zero residue. Now some substances can be found at one part in a quadrillion (1:1,000,000,000,000,000).

These measurements simply indicate an advance in science, not a new health risk.

On top of all this some consumer groups consider turf a non-essential use of pesticides. However, turf is a valuable commodity that introduces billions of dollars into the economy. Turf also provides oxygen, reduces pollution, stops erosion, reduces dust and contributes many other favorable attributes to the environment and our everyday lives.

As professionals, our livelihood depends on educating the public on the facts of your operations and the pesticides you use. You must also know the facts concerning pesticide risks and be prepared to discuss them in an intelligent manner. To simply disagree and fight any non-pesticide group simply creates an "us-and-them"

scenario in which no one benefits. At the same time, practicing good stewardship of both the environment and of pesticide use will help ease public fears. Through a better understanding, I believe we can prevent a "snowballing" effect of the "chemophobia"-based fears we are experiencing today.

Fact vs. fiction

One of our most difficult tasks is separating fact from fiction. This is especially difficult since we sometimes even see scientists disagreeing on the same topics. However, there are some important facts that all turf pesticide users should know. With this knowledge at hand, intelligent answers can be provided to clientele with legitimate—but perhaps, unfounded—fears. The two major fears are:

1. Pesticides are applied in a haphazard manner. *They are not;* they are applied either by personnel certified and licensed by the state or under the direct supervision of one who is licensed. Companies spend eight to 10 years and \$30 to \$50 million to get a pesticide registered. That includes all the research, not only on field trials, but also on toxicological and environmental studies.

Such a substantial investment pushes companies to insure proper limitations are placed on the label of each pesticide. Misuse

Continued on page 6

Attorney Thomas Lingan to discuss liability at April meeting

Did you know that where environmental law is concerned, an "accident" just cannot occur? There has to be some fault-based liability. Many do not realize how vulnerable they may be to this risk.

Thomas Lingan, an attorney with Venable, Baetjer & Howard, will address these dangers at the April 9 meeting. He will discuss "the nature of environmental law and its particular application to golf course superintendents and small businessmen." He will offer advice on how best to prevent and handle environmental problems in order to stay out of both enforcement troubles and how to treat civil suit which may be filed by third parties for environmental damage.

Says Lingan, "There are unique legal principles that are applicable to the handling of hazardous materials or various environmental concerns. There are strange, draconian punishments for people who happen to run afoul of the law. When we explain to clients the liabilities they face, many are astounded that a legal system would allow this."

Yet, says this attorney "It is healthy that environmental decisions are now becoming intrinsic to business decisions."

Lingan has been with Venable, Baetjer & Howard since 1986. For 12 years prior to that, he represented the Montgomery County Executive as a lobbyist before the Maryland General Assembly in Annapolis.

NEW MEMBERS

At the February board meeting the following applications for membership were approved

Todd Bahneman

Tebco Irrigation Co. ; Class F

Bruce Cadenelli

Caves Valley G.C. ; Class A

James Davies

Chester River Yacht & C.C.; Class A

Christopher Fagan

Lakewood C.C.; Class B

Douglas Fleming

The Suburban Club; Class B

Jon Machmuller

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Continued on page 8

could lead to loss of the product before the company ever had a chance to recoup its research costs. Therefore, the label restrictions limit any environmental or health hazard.

2. Pesticides are a threat to human health. Not necessarily. The misinformed perception of natural vs. synthetic has fueled the fire. People perceive "natural" foods as being healthier, yet they contain a surprising assortment of substances that consumers aren't aware exist in food.

It has been estimated that as much as 90 percent of our cancers may be related to the environment. Two articles in *Science* (April 17, 1987) present a startling presentation that the air we breathe in our home and other "natural" and daily aspects of life presents a much greater cancer risk than pesticide residues.

The public should not forget

the millions of lives pesticides have saved by eliminating diseases carried by insects. Such factors certainly play a significant role. People in developed countries live longer than those in underdeveloped ones. The public is willing to accept natural risks, while rejecting "synthetic" risks that pose only a minute threat.

Americans are living longer and healthier lives. Except for skin cancer, attributed to overexposure to sunlight, and lung cancer, linked to smoking, cancer rates are staying the same or have decreased, according to the National Cancer Institute.

The facts can work for you

The first thing you should do as a professional is to use the facts to your advantage. When you discuss pesticides with your clientele, present the information in a professional manner. Keep

emotion out of the discussion. You may even want to develop a pamphlet containing factual information to distribute. Consult your local extension office or university for additional information on pesticides in turf.

The public has a right to know the facts. Developing a trust in you as their turf manager is a big step in the right direction. Dressing and acting in a professional manner are also critical to develop a good reputation.

We need to practice good stewardship of the environment and make sure we use pesticides wisely. Calibrate properly, apply as directed and don't cut corners in safety. When accidents happen, it reflects on the whole industry.

Turf professionals can't afford to fight the posting laws being passed in many states. Although this is a sensitive subject, fighting these laws gives the appearance

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that there is something to hide.

Although these laws require extra work, they will help diminish some fears since people will know what's applied. Upon notification, they can avoid an area if they want to.

Look to alternatives

Turf managers may want to begin looking more at alternatives, such as cultural and biological controls.

Milky spore for Japanese beetle grubs is again increasing in popularity. Turf managers should be aware of biological controls as they are developed.

Universities are developing more information on Integrated Pest Management (IPM) for turf. New threshold and scouting techniques are continually being refined.

The future will see a natural progression away from preventive treatments to "on demand"

applications.

The public's current concerns certainly make this an excellent time for introducing IPM. The public is likely to readily support this; its success in several states offers the proof.

Make sure your own house is in order. Encourage all your workers to have proper training

Companies spend eight to 10 years and \$30 to \$50 million to get a pesticide registered.

and attend conferences to enhance their education. Keep your operation squeaky clean and be involved in the development of reasonable pesticide policy.

Finally, as an act of concern for environmental stewardship and health concerns, you might consider joining one of the many environmental groups (Sierra

Club, National Wildlife Federation, Nature Conservancy) to express your interest in their concerns. Not only will your membership support these organizations, it may also function as good publicity by showing that groups should work together for the intelligent resolution of differences in goals.

Decisions based on fact

This article is not meant to downplay the risks involved with the use of pesticides. They must still be properly used and applied. It does, however, present a scientifically based report on their use.

This information should be useful in minimizing the current fear many have of the green industry. The final decision on turf management lies with the membership; but let the membership decide based on facts, not on emotion.

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