

# Turfgrass Matters



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Mid-Atlantic Golf Course Superintendents Newsletter

## Bretton Wood to host MAAGCS picnic Wednesday August 14

Bretton Wood Recreation Center is on 280 scenic acres along the Potomac River near Germantown, Md. It is a private club owned by the International Monetary Fund. They bought farmland and developed the area in the late 1960s as a recreational facility for their employees. Membership is limited to employees of the Fund, the World Bank, and several other affiliated organizations.

There is an 18-hole golf course at Bretton Woods, but as the name implies, golf is not the only game there. It also has a swimming pool complex; a tennis area with two hard courts, four Omni courts, and eight Har-Tru courts; two soccer fields; basketball and volleyball area; picnic area; and two playgrounds for children. There are large undeveloped areas of woods and fields along the perimeter of the property; these green spaces give Bretton Woods a rural character.

The golf course was designed by Eddie Ault, and it plays 6327 yards from the white tees and 6663 yards from the blue tees. Originally, there were wide fairways (old measurement figures show some 65 acres of fairways) and open rough areas. In recent years, fairway acreage has been substantially reduced, and the planting and growth of trees have brought more penalties into the rough.

The soil greens at Bretton Woods are bentgrass, with the usual intrusion of some *Poa annua*. They are mowed at 5/32" five times per week. Tees are

bentgrass and ryegrass, with some zoysia in areas of high use. The fairways are mostly ryegrass, with some areas of common bermuda and a few remnants of the original bentgrass. Fairways are mowed at 5/8" two or three times weekly.



Larry Ott

Management of the golf course involves the usual cultural, fertilizer, and pesticide programs, and the usual conflict of golfer expectations with the realities of the budget. Although the majority of the golfers at Bretton Woods are of moderate skill, the minority of skilled golfers are more vocal about matters such as height of cut and green speed. Because of these requests, management of the greens and of the general mowing and watering has become more aggressive than in the past.

Larry Ott has been superintendent at Bretton Woods since May, 1988. He grew up near Cleveland, Ohio, and started golf course work at an early age, first as a target on the driving range, then in the pro shop, then at the real world of the course itself. After

receiving a degree in Biology from Marietta College in Ohio, he worked on the crew at the Kittansett Club, a links-type course near Cape Cod, for five years. He then returned to school at the University of Rhode Island for a degree in Resource Management. Some time with a lawn service company, and then ten years managing the grounds at Gallaudet University in Washington, D. C. preceded his return to golf course work at Bretton Woods. Larry's principal hobbies at this time seem to be repairing ball marks, watching the irrigation pond drop, and waiting for Fall.

Any description of Bretton Woods would be incomplete without mention of its General Manager and the Maintenance staff. Gerry Gerard was the superintendent at Bretton Woods for 20 years, and is now its General Manager. Those who know Gerry from the old days can imagine how he thrives on negotiating building permits with the County and monitoring the maze of membership categories. Although the maintenance staff—Buzz Stine, Jim Barnes, Bill Beachley, Earl Fox, Buddy Kinsey, Mark Mills, Jerry Stine, and Larry Weller—is a small group for a large job, they are an example of a reliable and capable group.

**Directions:** Take the River Road exit from I-495, follow River Road west through Potomac to Bretton Woods. Bretton Woods is 12 miles from the Beltway, on the left side of River Road just before its intersection with Seneca Road.