

Turfgrass Matters



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Mid-Atlantic Golf Course Superintendents Newsletter

Gary Angell and Wakefield Valley to host November 12 meeting

Wakefield Valley Golf Club, a semi-private facility in Westminster, Md. is the site of the November meeting.

The original owner, Dr. Earl Griswald, a professor at Western Maryland College, decided to convert the former dairy farm into a golf course. The original nine holes were built in 1978, and in 1980 what was then the back nine were opened. In 1983 Hank Majeski, then pro at Hobbits Glen and president of the Mid-Atlantic PGA, bought the course. In June 1987 the third nine were opened.

A local landscape architect designed the first 18 holes. Russell Roberts, in conjunction with Majeski, designed the third nine and has supervised all subsequent renovations.

The greens are Pencross bentgrass, the tees and fairways bluegrass, with the exception of one or two ryegrass or zoysia tees. "The bluegrass has done pretty well," says superintendent Gary Angell. "It's less humid in this area so we have fewer disease problems. There's a possibility we might change over to ryegrass in the future, but for now we are going to stay with the bluegrass. If I could get plenty of water, it would do just fine.

"We couldn't water the fairways this year; we didn't have enough water. Our irrigation pond is stream-fed. We have filed for well permits, but, this summer,

we had only enough water for the tees and greens, so the fairways browned out. There was a certain percentage of dieback, but they came back real well. There was one good thing about this summer," notes Gary. "What little poa we had was really knocked out. The bluegrass came back strong on top of it."

Says Gary, "I think the main attraction of the course is the setting, the layout. There are valleys and hills and you can see most of the golf course from wherever you are."

The course has already been the site of some pro tournaments. "We have had the U.S. Open quals here two out of the last three years," says Gary.

The brand new clubhouse at Wakefield Valley opened in September—Gary and his crew are just completing the landscaping. The building has a restaurant and banquet facilities that are open to the public. The original clubhouse—i.e. the former farmhouse, next door to the new clubhouse—was built in 1767. It now contains offices, but plans are for some of the rooms to be converted into meeting rooms. A patio and yard area are used for summer outings.

Gary, who completed a four-year degree in the turf program at the University of Maryland, worked as an assistant at Wakefield Valley from 1979 to

1983. He then took the position of grounds maintenance supervisor at nearby Western Maryland College. His duties included care of the nine-hole golf course, the athletic fields and the campus itself—a total of about 50 acres. "I grew up just alongside the course. I learned to play golf there," notes Gary.

In 1986 Wakefield's superintendent moved. Gary applied for and won the position. The third nine was just being completed when he took over.

Gary now lives near the entrance to the course in one of two houses that were on the dairy farm. He finds it a great advantage to live so close, but, he admits, it makes it difficult to forget work-related problems.

When not on the job, Gary likes to play golf, especially on other courses. He hopes to take his assistant, Todd Eckinroad—one of the better golfers in the area—to more superintendents' outings. Gary also enjoys other sports—he's an especially big fan of Caps Hockey. However, most of his spare time these days is devoted to family. His three children ages 11, 9, and 7, are all involved in school and community sports and activities.

Gary hopes you will all come out for the first meeting of MAAGCS here.

Directions and golf notes on page 3.