

Turfgrass Matters



October 1991, vol. 44, no. 8

Mid-Atlantic Golf Course Superintendents Newsletter

1991 MAAGCS Championship to be held at Breton Bay on October 8

by *Bernie Beavan*

Overlooking Breton Bay and the Potomac River is Breton Bay Golf and Country Club, a semi-private, 18-hole golf course located in Leonardtown, Md. The facility also includes four tennis courts and a new swimming pool complex. Currently the club has 206 golfing memberships and 317 total memberships, averaging about 23,000 rounds of golf per year.

The course was built, owned and operated by Mr. Henry T. Waring as part of his housing development until 1982 when the membership formed Breton Bay Recreation, Inc. and bought the facility through the sale of 450 shares of stock.

The facility was operated as a private club until 1985 when the stockholders decided to go "semi-private" and take advantage of the golf boom.

Since this time, we have been able to make some major improvements such as updating the golf car and equipment fleets, building a new maintenance facility in 1989 and constructing a new pool complex in 1990. All but a few of the 52 bunkers have been renovated in the past three years and we are hoping for cart path installation in the near future.

The course measures 6933 yards from the blue tees and 6463 yards from the whites with a course rating of 71.2 and a 119

slope rating from the white.

The greens are primarily Penncross bentgrass with a small encroachment of Poa, and are mowed at 3/16" six days per week, tees are perennial ryegrass and common Bermuda and are mowed at 5/8" three times per week. Fairways are also perennial rye and common Bermuda and are mowed at 7/8" twice a week.

The irrigation system is an old Skinner system and because it is completely manual and the fact that we don't have sufficient water, the fairways are at Mother Nature's mercy for a good part of the summer and fall. We have, however, been pushing the common Bermuda through fertilization the last couple of years with pretty good success.

Bernie Beavan has been superintendent of Breton Bay for the past six years. Prior to that he was superintendent at Chesapeake Country Club for four years after assisting Mike Claffey there for the previous three years. In 1979 he

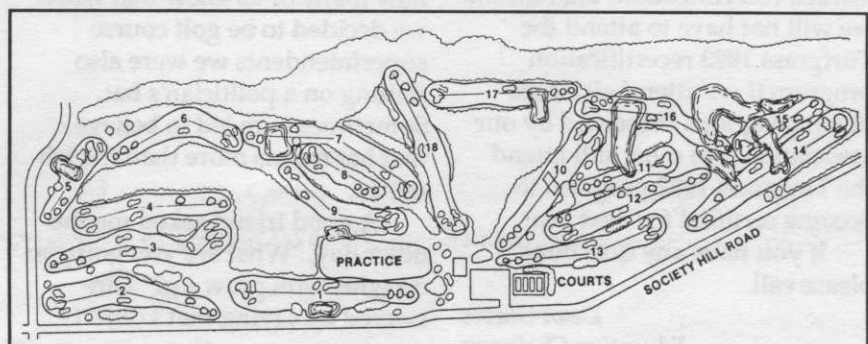
received his certificate in Turfgrass and Golf Course Management from the Institute of Applied Agriculture, and became a CGCS in February 1990. Bernie is a board member of the Maryland Turfgrass Council.

Bernie and his wife Shawn have two children, Danielle, seven and Brian, four.

Directions: Breton Bay is 45 miles south of the Washington Beltway. From D.C., take Rte. 5 south through Waldorf to Rte 243 (McDonald's on right). Turn right and go 1.5 miles to Bull Rd. Turn left, go 1.5 miles. Golf course is on the right.

From Baltimore: Take Rte 3 south to Rte 301 south to Waldorf. Turn left in Waldorf onto Rte 5 south and follow directions above.

Dinner will be at the Old Breton Inn. Cost: \$25. Open bar during the cocktail hour. Cocktails at 6 p.m., dinner at 7 p.m. For dinner reservations call 301-381-0030. For tee times beginning at 10:30 call 301-475-2300. *Note:* dress for dinner will be casual.



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MAAGCS Newsletter

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Many thanks to Mike Evans and the Prince Georges Country Club for making our day there so enjoyable. The



golf course was great thanks to Mike and his staff, the pro shop handled the tournament for us and the dinner was excellent.

During a season like we are having it is good to see that the job we do is appreciated by at least some of our employers.

I guess every year that Mother Nature makes her presence felt so strongly we are going to have a certain amount of displeasure at some of our courses, but it seems that the longer I am in this business the less tolerant golfers are.

With all the improved machinery, better irrigation systems, better pesticides and greater turf knowledge that is at our disposal, a better turf quality is and should be expected. However, we are also playing more people on shorter grass and when the weather is as bad as it has been this year, I don't think anyone can expect perfection.

I didn't think anyone was more critical of a golf course than the superintendent. I guess being critical and trying to take care of all the problems that come up during the year isn't enough all the time. What I really wonder is how many of us knew that when we decided to be golf course superintendents we were also putting on a politician's hat. Sometimes I am led to believe that hat means more than the job we do.

A good friend asked me the other day, "What are you going to do when you grow up?" I answered by saying that I didn't

think I could find anything else that would be as challenging to me as what I do.

I wonder if that is what makes me love what I do. I know we only have a small portion of the total control that keeps things going, but we thrive on it. Are we crazy or what?

See you all at Breton Bay for the annual tournament.

*Nick Vance, CGCS
President, MAAGCS*

GOLF NOTES

Our October meeting at Breton Bay will be the occasion of our 1991 MAAGCS Championship.

This year's Low Net Award will be given in honor of Mr. O.B. Fitts. Mr. Fitts was employed at the Arlington Turf Gardens from its beginning until 1928. At that time, he was hired by Columbia Country Club where he worked from 1928 until he retired in 1952. Mr. Fitts was one of the founding members of the MAAGCS and served as its first president in 1929. He was again elected president in 1938 and 1939.

Our Low Gross Award will be given in honor of Mr. W. H. Glover. The Bill Glover Award is presented annually to the low gross champion.

Also this year our Second Annual Long Drive Championship will be held prior to play on the driving range at Breton Bay. This event will again be sponsored by ProLawn Products and Mr. Tom Malehorn.

Any member of MAAGCS wishing to play should call for a tee time at 301-475-2300. Times available after 10 a.m. So get a foursome together, get a tee time and we will see you at Breton Bay.

Note: Three showers are available for those who wish.

*Scott Wagner
Golf Chairman, MAAGCS*

Attention Certified Pesticide Applicators!

The Maryland Department of Agriculture has approved our educational speakers for full credit toward recertification. That means we will not have to attend the Turfgrass 1993 recertification program if we attend all educational programs presented by our association. We must still attend the Turfgrass 1992 program to become certified for next year.

If you have any questions please call.

*Dean Graves
Education Chairman*

The Superintendent and the Architect

Understanding the role and intent of the other makes for happier working relationships and better golf courses

by Betty Ford

At times it may *seem* that the work of the golf course architect and the superintendent are at cross purposes—the architect who creates designs that are difficult and expensive to maintain, or the superintendent who ignores the intent of the original design and lets the course evolve too much.

To get the architect's perspective, we spoke with Brian Ault and Tom Clark, principals in the Kensington, Md. firm of Ault, Clark & Associates.

"When we leave a course," says Clark, "it is in the hands of the superintendent. Nine times out of ten when we come back several years later, we'll see things are entirely different. Greens may be grown in, or a bunker shape and character have completely changed over a period of time."

Changes are not necessarily the fault of the superintendent—it may be the equipment or other factors. To prevent or retard such evolution, Ault and Clark suggest that the superintendent familiarize himself with the original plans and be cognizant of the architect's intent. Ault also advises that the architect be invited back as a consultant from time to time.

"During the development of a new course," says Clark, "we always hope to get a superintendent on board at the start of construction so he can help act as project liaison. He can also help as far as interpretation of some of the plans and specifications for the contractor. And he is welcome to make suggestions during construction that will help his maintenance." With the superintendent present from the beginning of the project, it is easier to maintain the

course according to its original intent. "This is not to say we get everything perfect the first time. Maybe a year or two later a superintendent will notice the landing area on one of the holes is really too short, or maybe he finds a bunker is obsolete so why maintain it. There are a lot of adaptations that occur during the development of a course and we are willing to modify. There are a number of things we interact with the superintendent on because he's there daily."

Few superintendents have the

"Our public courses now look like private courses of the 19th century"

opportunity to be in on the development of a course from its beginning, but they can always check the original plans, and certainly for any reconstruction work, the principles are the same. Says Ault, "Superintendents need to learn the philosophy of the architect and respect the intent as much as practical because the golf course is always evolving and growing and very subject to change. Ignore it for a while and it will change drastically. Sometimes for the better, most of the time, not."

"We work as much as possible with the natural features of the terrain," says Clark. We must be cognizant of the drainage slopes and how that landscape will effect the playing of the game. But we look to the superintendent to make sure we don't forget that the golf course must be maintained.

We may want to use a steep slope to emphasize something, to create a shadow or a contrast of terrain. Once in a while we need to be reminded, 'Hey, I've gotta mow that slope.' Often we adjust it to get our point across and at the same time permit easier maintenance. That slope is going to be mowed twice a week forever."

The architect depends on the superintendent to act as construction supervisor. "It is important for the superintendent to be on site so that he sees what goes underground—especially with the irrigation system—the right size pipe, etc., and when the greens mix goes on are there exactly four inches of gravel, two inches of barrier layer, 12 inches of mix. We can easily come and walk around the course and say it's fine, but it's what is underneath that is important. The contractor should realize that he must satisfy the superintendent. The superintendent has a lot of power during construction."

A superintendent involved in the remodeling of a golf course, has a lot of input from the beginning. "One of the first things we do during a remodeling project is get the superintendent and the pro together and ask them their opinions of everything on that course they would like to see changed. They are the ones who are there every day," says Clark.

Architects constantly give superintendents challenges and manufacturers scramble to create equipment to make their design innovations practical. In turn, superintendents keep architects informed as to new developments

Continued on page 4

Architects, continued from page 3

in the maintenance industry. "They inform us of a lot of things—which items, concepts or ideas are working and which are not."

Today, golfers demand

"Once in a while we need to be reminded, 'Hey, I've gotta mow that slope.'"

innovative design. "They see games on TV, they expect those kinds of playing conditions and course concepts. Our public courses now look like private courses of the 19th century," notes Ault. "And in all likelihood, the fancier the course the more maintenance it's going to require."

Not only are golfers demanding more, but there are more and more golfers, putting more stress on existing courses. "We could

build 10 more courses around Washington and they would be filled tomorrow," says Ault. "We have 10 of them laid out but they can't build them right now because of the permits."

Tom Clark, president this year of the American Society of Golf Course Architects, sees this as one of the two major obstacles to new construction. As a result, the ASGCA has formed a committee whose work is to produce publications and a national computer data base to help in this process.

The second problem is financing new courses. Now with S&L money dried up, "we have to come up with creative ways to finance golf courses. Bill Love, another member of the Ault-Clark firm, is chairman of the ASGCA committee addressing this problem."

How can superintendents become better acquainted with the problems, purposes and perspec-

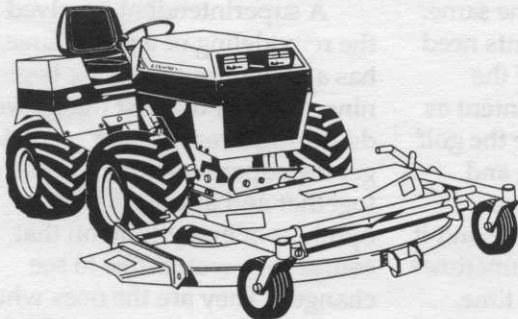
tive of the golf course architect? Probably at conferences, says Clark, who will present a program at GCSAA's national meeting. "Bob Graves and Jeff Cornish also put on a seminar on golf course architecture. It's very informative and I think superintendents would be better advised to know that we did something this way because we had to. Everyone likes to second guess the architect. You may not have known that under this spot was a nest of migratory swamp beetles or something and consequently we couldn't disturb the area. We had to put this bunker here because it filters out the water containing fertilizers, herbicides and pesticides."

Being informed is 90% of understanding, says Clark. Continuing education, staying up-to-date by information exchange, and attending conferences are the best methods.



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Lightning strikes again

It's a sad irony that a mere three weeks after Dr. James Belville of the National Weather Service spoke to MAAGCS members about lightning and lightning safety, a 15-year-old Paint Branch High School football player, Troy Trice, was critically injured by a strike.

The million-to-one chance phenomenon Dr. Belville mentioned—that lightning can strike up to five miles outside a storm—happened in suburban Maryland. It was raining but there had been no thunder, no lightning prior to the bolt that hit Trice. According to reports, he was saved because he was wearing a football helmet, because he was sweating (the moisture on the outside of his skin acted as a conductor, keeping the current away from his internal organs), and because he received

CPR promptly.

Dr. Belville spoke about the power of lightning strikes, as did *The Washington Post*, "The...bolt exploded through the rain at 60,000 miles a second, packing upwards of 100 million volts of electrical energy heated to 50,000 degrees Fahrenheit—five times the sun's temperature."

In the face of this power, superintendents and pros should not be in the least reluctant to clear the course early when a storm approaches.

At last month's meeting Bill Neus asked Dr. Belville about the shelters on his course, Hobbits Glen. They are open-sided but equipped with lightning rods. Dr. Belville was reluctant to give approval to such means of protection, encouraging one and all to seek *enclosed* shelter.

What to do when lightning is near

Most deaths occur when one is in the open or under a tree. In the open, stoop with only your feet contacting the ground.

- * Move away from isolated tall objects.
- * Seek shelter in a large building or enclosed auto.
- * Get away from open vehicles like golf carts or maintenance equipment.
- * Get away from water.
- * Drop all metal objects like golf clubs. Remove metal cleats.
- * If you feel an electrical charge, your hair stands on end or your skin tingles, drop to the ground immediately.
- * If someone is struck, start mouth-to-mouth or CPR.

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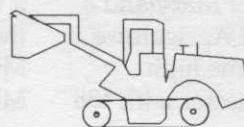
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BITS & PIECES

○ Mike and Judy Gilmore are the proud parents of Christopher Michael, born on September 12.

○ Don't forget the third Annual Turfgrass Research Golf Tournament to be held at Elkridge Country Club on Friday October 18. The cost is \$400 per team which includes lunch, golf, carts, greens fees, reception, dinner, refreshments on the course, prizes and lots of fun. Contact Steve Potter, CGCS, Woodholme Country Club, Pikesville, Md.; 301-486-8280.

○ GCSAA has launched a campaign to recruit new members and hopes to involve every member in its effort. Each member superintendent will receive, or has already received, a packet explaining "In Search Of," and the role the association hopes you will play in its efforts. At the same time, a separate mailing introducing GCSAA and its benefits was sent directly to prospective members, to help pave the way for current members' recruiting efforts.

○ The University of Maryland's Institute of Applied Agriculture announced an all-time high enrollment this semester with 138

students. In its 26-year history, the IAA has averaged 102 students; the last record of 136 was set in 1977. Dr. Ronald Seibel, director, attributes the enrollment increase to the growing popularity of the turfgrass program. Dr. Kevin Mathias, advisor for the turfgrass program, believes "the economy, alumni, opportunity, and industry have contributed to the growth of the program. People are looking for a job change and are coming back to the program for retraining."

○ Did you know that Michigan State University is the site of the Turfgrass Information Center? If something has been written on a related subject, they no doubt have it. Their library is considered one of the best in the country. Superintendents have access to this information through the USGA-sponsored Turfgrass Information File (TGIF). The center generally responds to requests within 48 hours.

The price of a search is \$20 plus duplication and mailing fees. You may also request information be sent to you on a disk or faxed, but it will cost extra. You can contact the Center at: W212 Library, Michigan State U, East Lansing, MI 48824-1048; 517-353-7209.

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