

**RHYS'S PIECES**

○ **Tom Mynaugh**, former assistant at Manor Country Club, is now superintendent at the Walden Golf Course. Best wishes Tom!

○ **Bob and Donna Miller** are grandparents again. Bob's daughter Debbie presented them with a 7-lb., 10-oz. granddaughter Jessica Leona Sergi on February 24. Congratulations!

○ **Russ Bull**, formerly at G.L. Cornell is now at N. J. Richardson & Sons, Inc.

○ **Mark Merrick** has announced

that **Ladies Night** will be held this year on the Spirit of Baltimore Cruise Ship, which will depart out of Baltimore City on **Sat., Oct. 10, 7:00 - 10:00**. Look for more information on Ladies Night in future *Turfgrass Matters*.

○ Last month's issue of this newsletter incorrectly reported that nonresident member **Joel Ratcliff** won low net in his flight at the National Championship. Actually, Joel won low gross, and is not the sandbagger most of you think he is.



*The Western Section of the MAAGCS played at Cochise Golf Course in Scottsdale, Ariz. in February. Present were (l-r) Virgil Robinson, host, Desert Mountain Courses; Bill Black, Congressional CC; Tom Regan, Ariz. State's Karstan GC; Bill Emerson, Paradise Valley CC*

**1992 Legislative Update**

*by Mark Schlossberg, Pro-Lawn Plus, Inc.*

There are several bills in the Maryland Legislature this spring that would have an effect on the turfgrass industry in the state. The Maryland Alliance for the Responsible Regulation of Pesticides (MARRP) has been working to get our industry's viewpoints known to the legislators. We have hired Jim Doyle, who has been a lobbyist in Annapolis for over 20 years, to represent us.

Following is a list of the bills that affect us and their status as of March 6, 1992:

**HB 762/SB 549 - Pesticides - Uniform Regulation.** This bill would preempt local jurisdictions from enacting their own pesticide regulations. We are obviously for this bill. As of March 6, the bills had hearings in the House and Senate. However, the Prince George's and Montgomery County delegations are strongly against this bill. We feel we probably can get the bill passed, but we may need to compromise to accomplish that.

**HB 655 - Fertilizer and Pesticide Tax - State Water Protection.** This bill would have established an 8% tax on all non-agricultural fertilizer and pesticide sales and use to establish a state water protection program. Turf is considered non-agricultural in this bill. The hearing was on February 19 and, as of this writing, it was not voted on. However, we feel we made strong arguments on the damage this tax would do to Maryland business. Basically, we could buy our materials from out-of-state suppliers and avoid the tax because taxing the "use" would be difficult to enforce. We hope to receive an unfavor-

able report on this bill.

**SB 571 - Clean Bay and Groundwater Protection - Fertilizer and Pesticide Tax.** This bill would establish a 2% tax on all fertilizer and pesticide sales

*Continued on page 4*

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and use in Maryland to set up Bay protection fund. A hearing was held on March 2. We feel that this bill will probably be given an unfavorable report. A major reason is the uncertainty over the overall changes in the tax structure—so introducing a special interest tax such as this in 1992 is unlikely.

I believe the turfgrass industry is in the public eye now. Thus, legislators and environmental groups look

at us as a target. I strongly feel that the entire industry including golf courses, sod producers, lawn care, hydroseeders and grounds maintenance business must be organized politically and fight for our interest. We must get our message out. It is important that you call your delegates and senators at 410-841-3000 (Baltimore) or 202-858-3000 (Washington) to register your opinion.

## Pesticide Perceptions

As an example of the bad perception that the media shows toward our industry, the following article submitted by Lary Ott is from the New Orleans *Times Picayune* on February 15. It "reports" on the Friday meeting of the GCSAA Conference on Environmental Issues:

*"Golf-course greens might be a little less so in the future, thanks to tougher regulation of the pesticides golf course superintendents use to help keep them that way," a pesticides expert said Friday.*

Jay Feldman, coordinator of the national Coalition Against the Misuse of Pesticides, told the greenskeepers meeting at the New Orleans Convention Center that they'd better start replacing their select grasses with less spectacular but hardier local varieties that don't require intensive chemical treatment to kill chomping bugs and wilting fungi. Murmurs among the crowd of more than 1,000 members of the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America showed they were not pleased with the message.

Victor Kimm of the federal EPA said that a federal law requiring manufacturers to prove existing pesticides aren't harmful probably will lead to many being taken off the shelves, including several that are popular on golf courses.

Kimm explained a key concern relates to the contamination of groundwater by pesticides that is being found throughout the country. While in many cases the problem is chemicals used in agriculture, golf courses also can be to blame.

Feldman urged the greenskeepers to do their own research to determine how risky chemicals were. He said he didn't expect them to throw away their pesticides immediately. Rather, he suggested they phase out pesticide use, replacing it with less toxic pest management programs and by careful selection of bug and fungus-resistant grasses.

Obviously the article is misleading and judgmental. Its use of phrases such as "chomping bugs and wilting fungi," and the term "greenskeeper" shows some of the limits of the writer. The writer assigns more authority to Mr. Feldman's comments than they perhaps deserve. He also fails to mention the

third speaker at the session, John Stossell, a reporter from the ABC network, who approached the pesticide issue as one of risk versus benefit, and who also discussed allowing the free marketplace to determine the limits of pesticide use.

For those of you who were there, is this how you would have reported the session?



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