

Turfgrass Matters



September 1992, vol. 45, no. 7

Mid-Atlantic Golf Course Superintendents Newsletter

September 8 Lunch Meeting at Geneva Farm Golf Club—Charles Priestly to Host

Geneva Farm Golf Club is an 18-hole, public golf facility located in downtown Street, Md. At one time, the property was a family-owned and operated farm. In spite of the farm's long history—250 years as a dairy operation—the current owner decided to cut his losses in the declining Maryland ag market and convert to a golf facility. The golf course allows the property to stay in his family and still support itself.

The course was designed and built in 1989 by Robert L. Elder & Sons. The facility was completely seeded in March 1990 and opened for play that July. We have bent greens, ryegrass tees, fairways, and roughs. The course measures 6400 yards. We are known to occasionally mow, depending on whether or not our prehistoric turf mowing devices wish to leave the maintenance shop. The fertility program and cultural practices are probably consistent with what everyone else does.

The maintenance budget is around the \$170K range and at times I like to take all the excess monies and order supplies from the "Everything's-A-Dollar" store. The grounds crew of eight does a tremendous job with this large piece of turf, considering budget restrictions. My thanks to them! We seem to make significant upgrades and improvements each season and we believe we can have a top-notch course in a few more years.

The clubhouse at Geneva Farm Golf Course is a 200-year-old barn completely renovated by an Amish crew. Winding stairwells in the silos and stone walls in the banquet facility make this clubhouse one of the most intriguing in the Mid-Atlantic region. (No spikes in the downstairs banquet area, please!)

As for me, I was raised on a farm and worked there until finishing high school. My turfgrass education began in 1982 when I entered the United States Navy Basic Underwater Demolition/SEAL school. During my eight years as a Navy SEAL, I traveled to many countries in order to more closely study the various turfgrass species. Somewhere in the same time period I also managed to attend night school and after six years I received a B.S. in Aeronautical Engineering. In early 1990, I separated from the military and stumbled across this farmer who asked me to take responsibility for his 210 acres of grass.

I decided that my Navy turfgrass experience needed to be expanded in order to take on this job. I began reading books by people named Beard and Turgeon and attending courses held by the UM and Rutgers. I also learned the phone numbers of Tom Malehorn, John Drew, Donn Dietrich and Ron Weaver. Soon, I placed their phone numbers in my speed dial memory.

I am not attempting to poke fun at the professionalism of the golf course superintendent. As you know, with no experience and lacking formal turfgrass education, the past three years have been demanding. My saving grace has been in maintaining a sense of humor and keeping life in perspective. I love my new profession and plan to become certified in the future. I am proud to be a member of an organization that will open itself to a person in my circumstances. I have called upon at least 18 superintendents during this time and have yet to find one who would not lend suggestions, equipment or support to a struggling "super." I appreciate it all.

The Meeting: Lunch will be served at 11:30 followed by the meeting. Bring your appetites because the food is always great. It will be a sit-down meal; cost is \$25. Reservations: 301-490-6202.

Golf: Shotgun at 1:30. Carts are \$9. Call the pro shop at 410-893-1114. **Note:** I would like as many to play as possible. The course is a nice challenge and I welcome any constructive comments about how I can make it better.

From Baltimore and Washington: I-95 North to exit 77 B (Rt. 24). Go through Bel Air and Forest Hill. Rt. 24 will go through Rocks State Park (speed limit 25, watch for tickets). After exiting park, go 1.2 miles, turn right on Davis Road. Clubhouse is 1/2 mile on right.

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sions welcome. Send information
to MAAGCS, 12704 Rigdale
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MTC Tourney - Oct. 20

The Maryland Turfgrass Council will hold its Annual Research Golf Tournament at Breton Bay Golf & CC on October 20, 1992. Proceeds from this worthy event are directed toward Turf Research at the University of Maryland. The format will be a low two-ball net event. You can make up your own groups, or they will pair you. Contact Bernie Bevan for more information at 301-475-8070, or watch for a separate mailing coming soon. If you haven't played Breton Bay, you owe it to yourself to get out and play this wonderful course.

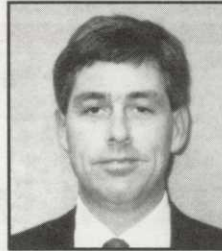
PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Golf Course superintendents and their families are perhaps the only people who could enjoy a picnic in the rain, and that was just what they did on August 11 at Hobbit's Glen. Our host Bill Neus pulled off another outstanding party despite the weather.

The association's coffers would be stretched to the limit feeding such a crowd so I have to thank the G. L. Cornell Co., TESCO, LESCO, Aqua Flo, Finch Services and Egypt Farms for their generous contributions. Also, having worked for this association for eight years, I know how much work Mark Merrick puts into the picnic. He is the picnic. Talk about delegating responsibility, though. Where would he be without Darrell Oxyer. I don't know how many burgers he flipped, but it was a bunch just for Tutich's table.

On September 8 we get back down to business again with a lunch meeting at Geneva Farms.

Charles Priestly has really supported the association since coming to our area and I hope you will all attend his meeting and reciprocate. No excuses about the long drive. If John Drew can do it for all these years, so can you.

**RHYS'S PIECES**

○ Tom Knoll, superintendent at Chantilly National, had a hectic week on July 29. Boasting more than six inches of rain on his course, and his wife Christine giving birth to a baby girl, Emilie Ann. From speaking with Tom, it sounded like he was in "Labor" keeping the grass alive after that much rain. However, both Christine and the grass are reported doing fine.

○ The Assistant Superintendent at International Town & CC, Robert Karnei and his wife Darcy are celebrating the birth of their new son, Kyle Robert on July 3. Congratulations to both Robert and Darcy.

○ Congratulations, or condolences (whichever is appropriate), to Rick Hill of Aqua-Flo Inc. who is celebrating 20 years of work in the Irrigation Industry this September. Rick started working for his father's business in 1972, and now manages the Chantilly office for Aqua-Flo. Rick, that's twice as long as I've been in the business. What I want to know is: What year does your hair turn Grey?

See Pieces, page 8



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What It Takes To Produce Certified Seed

by Sam Kessel, CGCS

In June of this year, after thirty years in the turf industry, I made my first trip to the seed fields of Oregon. It is an experience I recommend to anyone who has the opportunity.

The following is an overall observation of what it takes to bring the end user a good product.

Years of breeding, selection and evaluation are required in developing a new variety. The originator must provide documentation and receive approval before a variety is eligible for certification. Usually the breeder supplies seed from the breeder seed nursery which is used to produce the foundation or seed stock field.

The seed from this foundation field is used to establish certified (blue tag) seed fields. Seedstock (foundation) must be planted on clean ground that has proper cropping history and isolation from other varieties to assure genetic purity. When planting a commercial field, it is essential to have a clean and firm seedbed and provide the proper balance of nutrients. A crop management program must be implemented at each stage of growth and development throughout the growing season. Many growers plant their seeds in a band of charcoal to protect seedlings from the initial broadcast herbicides utilized for weed control. In some cases weeds that are taller than the crop can be removed by wiping glyphosate on them with a roller. Most often the field requires hand labor to spot spray or rogue containment in order to guarantee quality.

As the crop matures, it must be closely monitored to determine when to harvest to obtain the highest yield while assuring the

seed will have good germination and vigor. The crop is first cut down (swathed) and placed in a windrow to dry. A combine picks up the windrow and separates the seed from the straw. Harvest equipment must be thoroughly cleaned to avoid contamination from other crops or weeds and maintain genetic purity.

Post harvest management on grass seed fields begins immediately after harvest and procedures vary depending on the species.

Care must be taken in storing and handling seed to prevent mechanical damage or physical deterioration. The seed is cleaned to maximum purity by running it over a series of air-screen machines and other equipment to separate the seed from contaminants. Once the seed is cleaned, it is ready to be sampled and tested for pure seed components and viability.

Certified seed is sampled by a designated official.

When the seed has passed all of the certification and testing requirements it is ready for packing, blending and shipping in accordance to standards required for final use.

The trip showed me that a tremendous effort is made to produce a quality product. It also reinforced a fact in my mind, that you need to know where your seed was produced.

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Fire! A pre- and post-action plan

You hope it never, ever happens to you. It is one of the most devastating events ever: a pesticide storage facility fire becomes more than just a fire; it carries other dangers such as poisoning or environmental damage. By merely supplying your local fire department with information—a plan of your facility—you can perhaps avoid catastrophe. Further, the Maryland Department of Environment and the State Emergency Response Commission require that you send your pesticide inventory list to the local Emergency Planning Committee annually.

A pre-fire plan for handling pesticide and fertilizer fires is simple to prepare. Page 1 should contain the course's name and the location of the pesticide/fertilizer storage facility.

Include the main phone number and emergency day and night numbers. The superintendent's and assistants' names with day and night phone numbers should also appear on this page. If the course has a physician, include that number as well. The other important number is the CHEMTREC number: 800-424-9300. Most chemical companies provide emergency information on their products. They can be contacted through this number.

On the next sheet (preferably graph paper) draw a map showing the site and immediate surroundings. Outline the buildings, indicate type of construction, permanent interior walls, building openings, and major fixed equipment. Provide elevation views if more than one story is

involved. Locate all fixed outside equipment. Show perimeter fences, gates, floor drains, etc. Also show access routes and approximate distances to important buildings.

Identify areas dedicated to pesticides, flammables and oxidizers including bulk storage tanks. Fire departments use standard symbols—letters in a circle—such as: H (hydrant), B (sprinkler booster connection), G (main gas shutoff) and E (main electrical shutoff). Also FD (fire door) and FW (fire wall).

With a pesticide fire is runoff is a major concern. A map showing the surrounding area for about one mile in all directions could be useful in predicting runoff. Extend the map so that drainage can be traced to the

See Fire, page 7



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The winning regional team qualifies for the National Championship in Palm Springs, California, November 19-22. The foursome should consist of the *superintendent, president, general manager, and golf pro. The format is a modified scramble with limits on the team handicaps. Prizes, gift certificates and free use of John Deere turf products are among the team prizes.

Deere and company will be donating \$10 per team which participates on our regional qualifiers, to the GCSAA Scholarship and research fund. Finch Turf Equipment will be donating 10% of the entry fees to the superintendents association with the most participates for each tournament.

Each tournament is limited to the first 32 teams that respond. More information will be mailed to each golf club in our territory.

*The superintendent must be a member of the National GCSAA in order to go to the national event.

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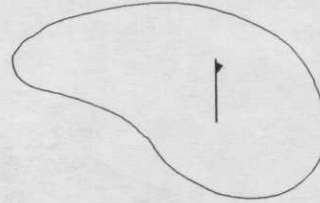
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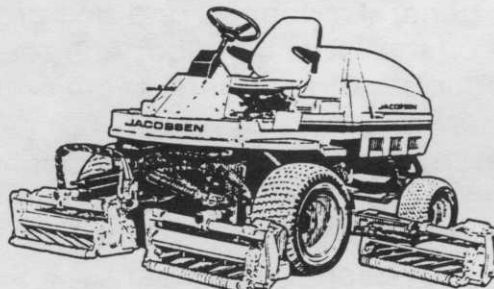


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Fire, continued from page 4
nearest large body of water. If runoff can be impounded, show the location and approximate number of gallons that can be contained. Locate where and how runoff may be blocked by dikes, dams, shutting off pumps, etc. Show surrounding land use (residential, industrial, agricultural). Show places of public assembly like schools or churches. Use an arrow with N to orient North on your map.

To help with the map you may use these Legend markers:

Fire Protection Equipment: Fire Hydrant; Sprinkler Booster Connection; Main Gas Shutoff; Main Electrical Shutoff.

Wall Construction: Concrete; Masonry; Metal; Wood; Fire Wall (add to wall symbol).

Building: Pedestrian Door; sliding door; Overhead Door; Fire Door (add to door symbol).

Exterior: Fence; Gate; Railroad; Drain Inlet; Manhole; Well; Drain Lines or Culverts (Surface and Underground), with direction of flow; Direction Ground Slopes; Stream or Creek; Impoundment Location; Lift Pump; Proposed Dike or Berm.

Make a list of those you need to notify. Start with the local and state agencies. If a public road or railroad would be blocked, even temporarily, have the names and phone numbers of those to contact. Give a written description of the immediate land use around your storage facility. This should cover out to approximately 1/4 to 1/2 mile in each direction. For example: North - commercial district 1/4 mile; residential 1/4 - 1/2 mile; hospital located on Main and Chestnut.

Where do you keep emergency equipment and supplies? Earth moving equipment? Portable water pumps? Street barriers? Sand bags? Other equipment that might be useful?

The location and types of water supplies including hydrants, ponds, irrigation canals, fresh or salt water, etc. should be included in the pre-fire

plan. Verify hydrant thread compatibility and water pressure and flow rates if they are not part of the municipal system.

Fire department procedures for fires involving pesticides and fertilizers go something like this:

1. Contact the superintendent and determine the type, quantity and hazards of products involved, then decide if the fire should be fought.
2. Notify physicians and obtain poison control information.
3. Notify manufacturers.
4. Evacuate people downwind and isolate the area.
5. Use personal protective equipment: rubber boots, neoprene gloves, turnouts and hats. If contact cannot be avoided (such as entering an unventilated building for rescue), use breathing apparatus.
6. The fire will be fought upwind and from a safe distance; bottles, drums, metal and aerosol cans are explosive hazards.
7. Combustibles will be cooled. Burning chemicals cannot be salvaged but cooling by water retards decomposition of chemicals.
8. Use as little water as possible to contain runoff. Water spreads contamination over a wide area. Dikes may be constructed to prevent flow to lakes, streams, sewers, etc.
9. Water will be fog sprayed. This avoids breaking bottles and bags that can add fuel. Straight streams spread contamination.
10. In the case of poisoning from smoke, runoff or mist, remove people and give prompt medical attention.

Any feeling of discomfort or illness may be a symptom of poisoning. Certain pesticide poisoning may not be felt until up to 12 hours after exposure.

It's not over until the post-fire cleanup is complete. You may consider shopping in advance for a clean-up firm that is available 24 hours a day for emergency containment and final disposition of the burned material. These firms are also available to handle underground storage tank emergencies.

Any contaminated protective equipment and clothing is impounded upon leaving the site. Once the fire fighters return to their station, they will shower, shampoo thoroughly and change into clean clothing. Contaminated clothing and equipment will be decontaminated in an isolated area. Cotton jacketed hosing may have to be destroyed.

See *Fire*, page 8

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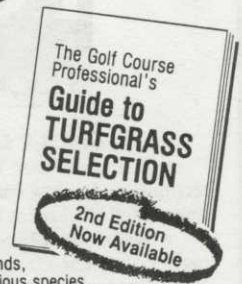
The **free Guide** is a quick, easy reference arranged by geographical areas. It suggests turfgrass species, and lists the varieties and seeding rates best suited to your locale. A separate section on southern winter overseeding details new trends, listing the advantages and drawbacks of various species.

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Fire, continued from page 7

Most are weakened by strong detergents.

A fire site will be isolated and secured; waste and runoff may be toxic. Federal, state and local authorities will be contacted for disposal instructions and approvals. Waste and runoff will be handled the same way as a product spill. Personal protective equipment is required.

Let's hope no one in the MAAGCS ever has to face this horror, but a little preparation can certainly avoid a larger problem. Inspect where you store pesticides and fertilizers and eliminate fire hazards. Have a pre-fire plan in place and an up-to-date set of material safety data sheets on hand. A brush-up course in first aid, especially dealing with pesticides, would be of benefit as well.

Get to know your local fire marshal. If he inspects your facility and suggests or requires changes,

make them quickly. Call him for a reinspection. Your concern with safety and complying with fire codes will go a long way to establish a good rapport with the department.

This article was adapted from one that appeared in The Greenside, newsletter of the GCSA of New Jersey. Thanks also to Robert Nemchin, Montgomery County Division of Emergency Management who helped with the adaptation.

Pieces, continued from page 2

○ Don't Forget! Ladies Night is scheduled for Saturday, October 10, from 6:30-10:00 on the cruise ship Spirit of Baltimore. The Ship will leave promptly at 7:00 p.m. More details will follow in future issues of **Turfgrass Matters**. This is a great event, so don't forget to bring your wife, or your girlfriend, but definitely not both! See you there!

Mr. Ralph McNeal, former superintendent of the Talbot Country Club, Easton, Md. for 26 years died on June 23 at the age of 69. Ralph was a longtime member of the MAAGCS and the Eastern Shore Association of Golf Course Superintendents, and was named an Honorary Life Member of this organization at the time of his retirement. He was highly respected by his peers for his quality of performance, endless energy and sense of humor. Ralph never had the privilege of enjoying his retirement as he had a stroke that resulted in paralysis on the left side and never recovered. His strength of character was evident during the two and a half year period of illness as he never showed remorse nor expected sympathy. He will be missed by those who knew him. He was a man of character, ability, pride of workmanship and a true "Eastern Shoreman."

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