

Turfgrass Matters



December 1993, vol. 45, no. 10

Mid-Atlantic Golf Course Superintendents Newsletter

1993 Annual Meeting to Be at Turf Valley

Mike Gilmore will host the December 14 meeting at Turf Valley Country Club in Ellicott City, Md.

Since the last time MAAGCS met at Turf Valley, nine more holes have been added, bringing
See Turf Valley, page 5, col 3

Golf: See Golf Notes, page 2.

Dinner: Cocktails 6:00, hors d'oeuvres 6:30, dinner 7:00.

Formal. Cost: \$30.

Reservations: 301-490-6202

Directions: From Baltimore: I-695 to I-70 W to Marriottsville Rd exit. Left on Marriottsville Rd. At first stop sign turn left on Rt. 40. Go 7/10 mile to Turf Valley Rd. From D.C. I-495 to Rt. 29 N. Go to I-70 west & follow above directions.

Dues Increase Update

by Steve Potter

It was announced in last month's issue that the BOD set the dues to be \$120—a \$35 increase. Broad parameters were set on what the dues are to be used for but there has been some interest in specifics. This will attempt to answer some of these questions. As always, you are encouraged to call a board member to ask any questions you may have.

In fiscal year 1992 the association operated at approximately a \$2,000 loss. This loss was due to increased expenses, not loss of revenue. The growth of the membership was moderate and as

See Dues on page 6

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

We had a great meeting at Swan Creek last month. The weather was terrific for November and everyone enjoyed playing a scramble format with members they usually don't play golf with. The course was in excellent shape and the meal was more than most could finish. Geoffrey Blind from Hillendale had some great information to be used by the superintendent who is having poa or drainage problems on greens—so if you have some kind of renovation being considered at your club, give him a call.

The MAAGCS continues to grow as do its needs and responsibilities. An effort was made this year to plot a course that will accommodate these needs for the future. The Long Range Planning Committee, headed by director Mike Gilmore, was created this year to focus on the changes needed to accommodate the membership. It is purposefully moving at a moderate pace both to protect the association fiscally, and to allow the membership time to assist in these changes. These changes are being done in stages in hopes that in several years all the changes will blend to benefit the members and establish a means for meeting future needs of



the association. Your input is valued and I urge you to contact a board member to voice your concerns or suggestions.

The December meeting at Turf Valley is the election meeting. Past President Ken Ingram as chairman of the nominating committee is presenting an excellent slate of individuals to run for the BOD. If you are interested in serving the association, nominations are taken from the floor in accordance with the by-laws, or contact the next Past President for next year. (That's me, folks.)

The last thing I want to say through the president's message is to tell the entire membership what an enjoyable experience it has been serving you over the past year. I greatly enjoyed working with the gentlemen you have elected to the BOD. All of us are busy at our jobs—as you are—yet each and every board member always took the time to do his job for the membership and have a report ready for each board meeting. Time is growing increasingly precious and I admire and commend each board member for his attention to his board duties. I want to sign off by thanking these men for their dedication and professionalism. Thank you.



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MAAGCS Newsletter

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Slate of Officers for 1994

The 1993 MAAGCS Nominating Committee made up of Kenneth Ingram, Chairman, Bob Miller, Ben Stagg, and Lee Dieter, present the following slate of officers for the Annual Meeting: for president—Lou Rudinski; for vice president—Scott Wagner; for treasurer—Dean Graves; for secretary—Bill Shirk; for director (2 for a 3-year term, 1 for a 1-year term) Gordon Caldwell, Jim Metterey, Sean Remington. Nominations from the floor will be accepted.

Kenneth Ingram

GOLF NOTES

I think the key word for our November Four-Man Scramble Tournament was "perfect." The golf course was perfect and in excellent condition thanks to Ron Weaver and his staff. The weather was also perfect thanks to whom-ever, and the Pro Shop was perfect thanks to Donald Baxter. It is always a pleasure to have a Pro Shop staff who will try to do everything possible to assist in our golf tournaments, even opening the Pro Shop after our dinner so that the winners of the tournament could cash their gift certificates. Thanks again to Swan Creek's entire staff for a great job!

Our 1993 Tournament winner

(64) was the team of:

Dean Graves	\$50
Sean Remington	50
Ron Weaver	50
Steve Potter	50

Winners of Long Drive and
Closest-to-Pin competitions:

#7 Closest-to-Pin—Keith
Pitchford, \$50; #10 Closest-to-
Pin—Mike Evans, \$50; Long
Drive—Kirk Intermill, \$50

Thanks to this month's
sponsors: Egypt Farms—\$100;
Loff's—\$50.

November was our last official tournament of the year. It was the last chance to receive points for the Golfer of the Year Award. Jim McHenry who is spearheading this award has all of the results, and the winner will be announced at our annual election meeting.

December's golf will be held weather permitting. Please make your own arrangements. Tee times are 12-1, golf and carts are free. For tee time call Turf Valley Pro Shop: 410-465-1504

Bill Shirk, Golf Chairman

EDUCATION NOTES

The MAAGCS has graciously donated \$1,000 to the GCSAA Scholarship and Research Pesticide Exposure Study. The goal is to develop solid *independent* evidence about health effects of long-term pesticide exposure in a golf course setting. "Our use of pesticides to maintain golf courses makes us a focal point for this concern. We must have conclusive scientific evidence that is specific to our management practices," says Randy Nichols, CGCS and president of the GCSAA. Results of this study will be forthcoming in the next few years.

Dean Graves
Education Chairman

GCSAA Regional Seminar

December 13 and 14, 1993 the MAAGCS will host a GCSAA regional seminar, *Environmental Considerations in Golf Course Management*, at the accommodating Turf Valley Hotel and Country Club. Goals of the seminar are:

- ✓ Understanding regulatory compliance requirements for protecting water resources, wetlands, and other environmentally sensitive areas.
- ✓ Learning how to educate golfers and the general public about the environmental benefits of golf courses and how to deal with the press and consumer concerns.
- ✓ Be able to develop pesticide management strategies for worker protection, storage, disposal and environmental protection.

The Golf Course is in Great Shape... But You're Fired!

Reprinted with permission from Inforemer, newsletter of the San Diego GCSA. The article originally appeared in Western Region News, newsletter of the Western Regional USGA Green Section

During the past two years a disturbing number of superintendent dismissals have occurred in the western United States even though their golf courses were in good condition.

The most important function of the superintendent is to provide a well-maintained and playable golf course for the enjoyment of golfers. So let's take a close look at potential problem areas between the superintendent and other decision makers.

Some Problems. If the golf course is in excellent condition and the golfers are content, you would think the superintendent's security would be solid. This is not always the case, however. Non-turf-related problems can arise. These include:

1. Who is in charge of agronomic decisions?
2. Outside tournament scheduling or "surprise" membership events.
3. Conversations held between the golf professional(s) and players questioning agronomic decisions.
4. Comparing income rates between superintendents and other course employees.
5. Short-term green chairman appointments.
6. Personal preferences enter into decisions on course conditioning.
7. Architectural changes forced on the superintendent by the green committee that do not have majority support.
8. Superintendent failure to attend board meetings.
9. The desire to cut costs by the club or municipal operation.
10. Outside business interests by the superintendent.

Some Solutions. While the

preceding does not include all potential problems, it does represent many areas that do not deal with "grass growing." In this same vein, the following may not provide all the answers, but practical solutions can be considered to keep the ax from falling when it is not deserved.

1. Establish meetings to discuss mutual plans and how to have an effective working relationship between the superintendent, general manager and golf professional. From this meeting, the superintendent should understand exactly who is in charge. The general manager and/or golf

professional should understand that the superintendent is a *professional* and should be entrusted with all agronomic decisions.

2. Establish weekly management meetings to discuss areas of concern or upcoming events.
3. Play golf together. Include the superintendent, general manager, golf professional, and/or green chairman. If possible, play at outside facilities.
4. Make sure the superintendent attends all board meetings pertaining to maintenance operation.

See Fired, page 8, col 1



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Good Salesman=Good Superintendent

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"Good superintendents are good salesmen." A simple enough statement, but its real meaning and implications are not as obvious. As you travel around the state or country, you often compare your course, equipment, budget, etc. with what you see elsewhere. You probably ask, too, "How does he do it?"

As we all know, different situations will permit the golf course superintendent to do different things for himself and his course. Climate, soil conditions, age of the course and particularly the members' desires will have a great bearing on the course itself and the latitude the superintendent has. But frequently, the results boil down to the superintendent's salesmanship.

A favorite definition of salesmanship is the art of never selling but rather learning what people want and then helping them obtain it. Involved in this approach to salesmanship are the arts of observation and persuasion. Observation tells you what the people want, persuasion provides the means of giving them what they want.

Most golf course superintendents could find this approach successful for themselves and their course. They are blessed with an abundance of the power of observation and with some effort could easily improve on their abilities to persuade.

To utilize this plan, the superintendent must first determine what his golfers want.

Usually, this involves three major areas: scores, beauty and prestige, not necessarily in any order of preference. Next, he must adopt an attitude of "selling" what he wants in terms of what the members desire.

Assume for example you have been contemplating what you feel

**You must not "sell" more
than you can reasonably
expect to deliver, nor
should the golfers be
permitted to assume such
a miracle.**

to be a necessary purchase. After attending various equipment exhibits, field demonstrations, and talking with fellow superintendents and salesmen, you have determined exactly what you want. What now? Do you explain to your chairman or committee how having this machine will replace one that has been causing you tremendous problems because of break-downs or other insufficiencies? How the root structure will be affected, etc.?

While these points may be of real concern to you or your fellow superintendents, they will only maximize your interest while minimizing the interest of the golfer.

A better approach might be to

inquire into the golfers' desires to play through with less mechanical interruption to their game, having fewer non-play holes or days, more uniform playing surfaces, having a course with greater beauty—in short, being the envy of golfers at other courses.

Depending on the potential of the item you are contemplating, you can "sell" the golfers on your need through an approach that causes them to be the salesmen.

Regardless of your personal sales approach, persuasion must be supported by a sound presentation that fully documents your case. Undoubtedly, at some time, you will be called upon to "prove your case" before the purchase is approved. This will mean having all the facts and figures gathered in a fashion showing not only your thorough organization, but just as important, the manner of presentation itself could greatly influence your audience and their final decision.

As with all such things, there will be short-comings and pitfalls to be aware of, and this process is no different. You must not "sell" more than you can reasonably expect to deliver, nor should the golfers be permitted to assume such a miracle.

The more successful businesses are operated on a repeat purchase philosophy. You should expect to do the same. Souring your golfers with misspent money will only make it doubly difficult to purchase even a necessity the next time around.

Turf Equipment Managers Launch Their Own Association

The Mid-Atlantic Association of Turf Equipment Managers would like to take this time to introduce itself and ask that you share the following information with your mechanic(s).

In the spring a group of Baltimore area golf course mechanics determined the need for a mechanics association within the industry. Members feel that with the vast changes in turf equipment products it would benefit everyone to have the mechanic better trained. The organization's purpose is to promote education, and to exchange technical and practical knowledge related to maintenance, safety and proper

operation of turf equipment.

Currently the group meets the first Wednesday of every month at the Caves Valley maintenance shop at 1:00 p.m. Annual dues are \$50 and membership is open to mechanics, assistant mechanics, superintendents, assistant superintendents and sponsors from the turf industry.

Please stop by their table at the turf grass trade show—January 4 and 5. They will have applications and more information available.

For more information, please call Rusty Buck at Caves Valley, 410-356-1317, or Alan Bateman at Mount Pleasant, 410-821-5812.

Turf Valley, from page 1, col. 1

the grand total to 54. "We don't plan to grow any more—I hope," Mike laughs.

The club, in existence about 30 years, is owned by the Mangione family of Baltimore. About seven years ago, they added a hotel and conference center.

The biggest challenge to overseeing 54 holes and a crew of 30 is the organization, Mike says. He credits his smooth-running operation to the help and enthusiasm of his three assistants Bill Bopst, Ben Bryan, and Eric Van Janek. Says Mike, "You're only as good as the people you have working for you and their willingness to carry out plans. They're the ones who make my job easier."



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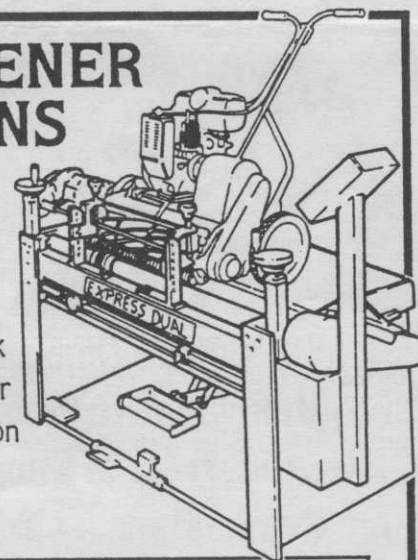
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Dues, from page 1

far as is known, there were no losses of renewals due to the economy. There is a projected deficit this year and some non-essentials such as dry goods have been put on hold for a year. During this period, the BOD still tried to make some changes with the membership's best interests in mind such as supporting some of the major projects of the GCSAA and increasing our own scholarship support of students working for members of the MAAGCS.

During this same period the BOD has been looking at changes to enhance services to the membership through the creation of the Long Range Committee. This committee made every effort to make recommendations based on the information they received in the surveys sent to the membership and on the information obtained from other local organizations. Some of the

changes are not costly, but a change such as a monthly mailing to announce the meetings costs several hundred dollars each month. Although it can be partially subsidized by advertising, the BOD did not feel it appropriate to have a membership service depend on optional advertising. The subject of executive director has been explored for years, and the association is now getting large enough that some sort of management service is essential. There are enough expense and problems associated with having an executive director that the Long Range Planning Committee proposed looking into a management service. They investigated other associations that have such a service and found that a wide variety of services is available at a wide range of costs. We hope that within the next year, a service that is both affordable and that will provide for the needs of the membership will be in place. The BOD

will also strive to maintain its policy of not cutting services to the membership during this period.

The dues increase is to keep the association solvent during these changes. A third of the increase can be attributed to inflation alone. The rest is to be used to try and keep what we feel are important functions of MAAGCS funded. These include educational scholarships that are \$3,500 above the mandated 10% of dues collected to be set aside for this purpose. The Education Committee is trying to award \$6,000 in scholarships this year and the BOD would like to see that number increased, not decreased. In the survey, the membership agreed almost unanimously. This still doesn't include the \$1,000 that was sent to the GCSAA to help in its pesticide exposure study. There were also donations made for benevolent purposes due to natural disasters; this came from the

See Dues, Page 7



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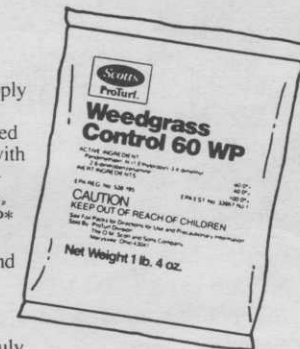
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Dues, from page 6

Benevolence Fund. It is important that you realize that this money comes exclusively from dues. And finally, we must have some source of revenue to depend on when we negotiate a contract with a management service and we very much want to do this without removing funding from any other service.

This is your association and the BOD is doing what it feels is best for the future of the MAAGCS. The BOD can't urge you strongly enough to call one of us with a question or concern, or to volunteer your time. I am sure accommodations will be made for you. These decisions were made by the BOD based on recommendations by committees that consist of board members, past presidents and members at large. Every effort is being made to change while keeping in mind your best interests. The BOD hopes it can depend on your financial support to get some of these changes implemented.

COHOON'S CORNER

○ The GCSAA has launched a new column in its publication, *Newsline*, entitled "Members Mailbag." The purpose of the column is to provide a forum for members where they can ask questions and voice concerns over GCSAA programs and activities. From what I hear, the Board of Directors of the GCSAA is eager to respond to the membership. So far, however, there has been very little response. Your comments can be mailed or faxed (no phone calls please) directly to the GCSAA.

○ Last year the MAAGCS sponsored a hospitality suite at the GCSAA national conference and show. It was such a success that we are going to do it again

this year in Dallas. The suite will be shared with the Metropolitan GCSA. It's a great place to meet up with your neighbors and talk about the educational program or where to go for dinner. By sharing the suite we can renew old acquaintances or make new friends with the great group of superintendents who make up the Metropolitan GCSA. Look for more information in the next few weeks.

○ For those who haven't heard, Mark Merrick has resigned as Social and Benevolence Chairman of the MAAGCS. Anyone who has attended Ladies' Night or who has worked with Mark knows that he has done an outstanding job for the association. Thanks for the service, and good luck in the future, Mark!

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Fired, from page 3

5. The golf professional must realize that he/she is not the superintendent. It is far better to direct turf related questions to the turfgrass professional—the superintendent.

6. The superintendent should not get involved in who makes how much money at the golf course.

7. When the new green chairman is elected, have an immediate meeting at the superintendent's office to begin the education process. At this time, be sure to give the green chairman a copy of the USGA Green Section Guide booklet.

8. The superintendent must realize that if the membership wants it purple, give it to them purple. But, if what they want could potentially cause long-term damage or side effects, get it in writing.

9. Establish a set of course condition standards at the board level so that quick decisions cannot be made by the green committee.

10. Don't lose a good superintendent because of money issues. Cut back in other areas such as reducing the acreage of maintained turf or accepting less than perfect roughs. A well-paid, professional superintendent is more valuable than a cheaper, but inexperienced person.

11. If the course is in good condition and the new green chairman wants the superintendent removed, remove the green chairman! The opposite is also true. That is, if the golf course is in poor condition and the new green chairman wishes to make reasonable improvements, yet is obstructed by the superintendent, then superintendent termination may be justified.

12. If outside business interests by

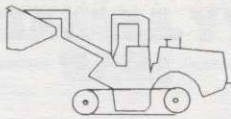
the superintendent are not affecting the golf course, allow the superintendent to be an entrepreneur. His activities in the community—such as teaching classes—will reflect positively on the golf course.

13. Provide improved stability and business sense by lengthening the green chairman's tenure to a minimum of three to five years. The policy of revolving, one-year terms for the green chairman doesn't work.

14. Always maintain open lines of communication in both directions. Diffuse problems before they reach a boiling point.

The superintendent's job is extremely difficult and there is nothing more frustrating than providing a well-maintained course while being threatened due to other problems. This should be taken into consideration any time a person's livelihood is on the line.

Terry Asphalt

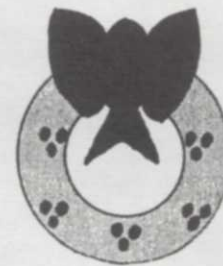


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