

First Tee Program Comes to the Mid-Atlantic

by Dean M. Graves

Has anyone heard of "The First Tee"? Probably not in the context of junior golf facilities throughout the United States. The initiative of the World Golf Foundation is to have upwards to 200 facilities by the end of 2000. Former President George Bush entered the Honorary Chairmanship of First Tee by saying, "We want to create affordable entry points to golf for everyone who is interested in playing the game." *If you cheat in golf you cheat in life* is the philosophy of the program. The purpose is to teach children integrity, good sportsmanship, and honor through the game of golf.

The primary families of golf organizations that have made long term commitments include; GCSAA, USGA, PGA of America, PGA Tour, LPGA, Augusta National Golf Club, American Society of Golf Course Architects, National Golf Foundation, US Conference of Mayors, National League of Cities, HUD, Bureau of Land Management, National G.C. Owners, Tiger Woods Foundation, American Junior Golf Association, National Minority Golf Foundation, and National Association of Junior Golfers. There has never been such a complete gathering of golf organizations. If this group can't get something accomplished, then it can't be done.

On a local level, John Kotoski, CGCS and Dean M. Graves have been placed on the First Tee local chapters' Board of Directors. John is heading up the Baltimore representation and Dean is his counterpart in Washington, D.C. Both groups have identified locations and are presently investigating feasibility studies. Each respective Board is forming committees for facilities, legal, public relations, finance, and outreach. Seed funding is provided by the World Golf Foundation. Other contributions must be provided by local private and public sources.

Baltimore City has located a 35 acre site that has five abandoned baseball fields on a landfill. In Washington, D.C. there is a good possibility that the Soldiers and Airman's Home that currently has a nine-hole course could be used. Each of these locations has good public transportation access. The Baltimore location will probably comprise a driving range and hopefully a nine-hole executive par three course. Within the next eighteen months both cities

should have active facilities.

The local government and civic groups are excited and willing to commit time, manpower, and funding for this great program. Toro, Syncroflo, IBM, Club Car, Pursell and Jacklin Seed will provide equipment and supplies at cost for each site.

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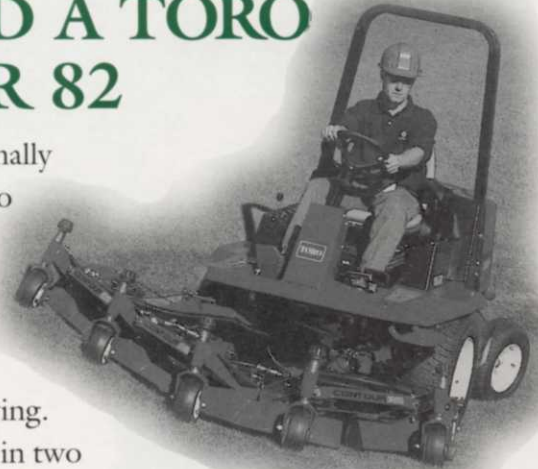
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Obviously Walter Carl Montross, CGCS was destined to become president. Although he never listed playing George Washington as one of his credentials when asked to run for a position on the MAAGCS Board of Directors.

Walter is a real native of D. C. He was born at the old Garfield Hospital which is located near RFK Stadium. He grew up in Rockville, Maryland and graduated from Annapolis High School. Walter attended the University of Maryland. He was introduced to the club business by his father who was a club manager. His career began at the Annapolis Roads Club.

Linda and Walter met at a bar in 1977. His answer to her query "What do you do for a living?" was "I grow grass!" They married four years later. Walter works with the living...Linda the dead (she teaches Latin). His children Tracy (15) and Geoffrey (13) keep him busy watching their sports (basketball, swimming, and soccer), coaching basketball, watching them sing in the church choir, and delivering them to their assortment of activities. He is a wonderfully supportive father.

Hobbies: cooking gourmet food, golf, reading (Stephen King, cooking magazines, books about American History), bridge (but never with Linda as a partner), fishing, hunting, watching televised sports (a.k.a. couch potato), traveling to president's graves (and other historical sites), and planning adventures with his family.

Dreams: becoming a Master Greenskeeper, to own a little place on the Chesapeake Bay (or tributary) with a 20' run-about boat or maybe join a Civil War Re-enactment Group.

He is most proud of his work with the MAAGCS, GCSAA and the fact that the young men who have been his assistant superintendents have done so well in their profession.

First Tee

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John and Dean will be attending monthly Board of Directors meetings and provide agronomic information. They will be making future site visits that are being scheduled in both metropolitan areas with local architects, business professionals and municipal representatives. *Turfgrass Matters* will keep you informed regarding each city's respective effort.



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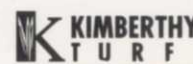
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