



# CHIPS & PUTTS

OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE  
POCONO TURFGRASS ASSOCIATION

Founded in  
1936

VOL. 8, NO. 3

MAY 2002

## Glenmaura Seeks Volunteers

Glenmaura National Golf Club is seeking volunteers to assist with the golf course preparations for the Buy.com Steamtown Classic, to be held May 27, 2002 through June 2, 2002. Volunteers are needed at approximately 4:30 P.M. for the following dates: May 27, May 29, May 30, May 31, and June 1. To offer assistance or for more information, contact Golf Course Superintendent Andy Jubinski or Assistant Superintendent Jeff Koch at 570-457-8733.



Charles LaBar, CGCS  
Water Gap Country Club

On May 21, 2002 the Pocono Turfgrass Association's second meeting will be held at the Water Gap Country Club under host superintendent, Mr. Charles LaBar, CGCS.

Twenty years ago, the Water Gap Country Club was known as the Wolf Hollow Golf Club. This semi-private, Fazio design was built in the 1920's and tracks through 186 acres of scenic Pennsylvania wilderness. The golf course has many native dogwood and cherry trees that provide an excellent spring bloom. The peak yardage for the golf course measures 6,237 yards and plays to a par of 72. The tees, fairways, and roughs all consist of a fescue blend that responds exceptionally well in the non-irrigated areas of the golf course. The putting greens are the traditional *poa annua* and bent-grass combination an older course naturally develops.

Mr. LaBar has been associated with the Water Gap Country Club for 26 years and has admittedly 'been blessed with an excellent crew' during his reign as golf course superintendent. Charlie's previous work experience as a golf course superintendent was in New Jersey at a club named Apple Mountain. That position had helped pave the way for his upcoming retirement from the Water Gap Country Club in October of this year. His assistant, John Martin, is one of the many long-time employees who have remained loyal over the years. With a motto of "work the golf course, and don't sit in the office" as his general work philosophy, Charlie gained the respect and dedication of his crew of 10. Respect from his fellow colleagues is also evident and appreciated with the statement, "Charlie is a miracle worker on the golf course," which was added by Mike Hogan, the golf professional of the Water Gap Country Club. Although Mr. LaBar admits "It has been a long road," he



Continued on Page 5



## President's Message.....

Wow!! Who would have thought that this platform could cause so much controversy? I've had a lot of time to reflect, and I realize that I have an obligation to the Pocono Turfgrass Association and its members to be more "politically correct" and keep my emotions from getting the best of me (thanks John and Ron). Those of you who know me on a personal level realize that this will be a difficult task. I wanted to write about my personal feelings toward the GCSAA and my reasoning behind those feelings. First, I was passed over for a national committee position once again. Second, the changes I would like to see in the PTGA will not happen due to our affiliation agreement with GCSAA. What changes? Well, we have some great sales professionals who have a wealth of experience and good ideas that, quite frankly, I would like to see be able to hold a position on the executive committee or possibly become President. That may not sit well with some people, but that is something we should explore.

O.K., now onto nothing but positive messages. Charlie LaBar is retiring this year. Congratulations, Charlie! Our May meeting is at Water Gap, and we'll have a nice presentation for Charlie. Please plan to attend on May 21. The Bethlehem Municipal meeting was a success. Thanks, Tom. The last *Chips & Putts* was the best one I have ever seen! The content was great, pictures were placed nicely, and just a great job overall! Keep up the good work.

As always, I, along with the rest of the Board of Directors, am always available for you and any questions that you might have.

*Gene Huelster*

## From the Editor's Desk.....

I would like to welcome Dr. Mike Fidanza as the newest member of the *Chips & Putts* Turf Advisory Staff. Dr. Fidanza is the Assistant Professor of Horticulture for Penn State University at the Berks-Lehigh Valley College. He is accessible at maf100@psu.edu or at 610-396-6330.

Congratulations to Charlie LaBar for reaching a plateau in this profession that statistics show very few of us will reach - - retiring as a golf course superintendent. Best of luck, Charlie.

The Pennsylvania Drought website was incorrect in the last issue. The correct address is [www.dep.state.pa.us/dep/subject/hotopics/drought](http://www.dep.state.pa.us/dep/subject/hotopics/drought).

*Eric Reed*



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## Pest Predictions for 2002? ...it's anyone's guess!

Mike Fidanza, Ph.D., Assistant Professor of Horticulture (Turfgrass)  
David Sanford, Ph.D., Associate Professor of Horticulture (Ornamentals)  
Berks-Lehigh Valley College, Pennsylvania State University, Reading, PA

According to the National Climate Data Center, most of Pennsylvania has experienced below-normal winter precipitation (both rain and snow) which has intensified drought conditions that currently exist. Since records were formalized in 1895, this has been the 6<sup>th</sup> driest winter for the Northeast, and the 14<sup>th</sup> driest for the nation. Eastern Pennsylvania is about 9 to 16 inches below normal for rainfall. However, near-normal precipitation is expected for the region through May. Although the Southeastern Pennsylvania region has had some rain this spring, it is not enough to bring an end to the drought emergency. With a mild winter followed by a cold and moist spring, what kind of pest problems are we likely to encounter in 2002?

**Weeds.** With a lack of adequate rainfall, we often see unhealthy, thinner turf areas that are susceptible to weed invasion. An old rule-of-thumb states that crabgrass will germinate when forsythia is in bloom. This year we saw forsythia starting to bloom in early March, however the winter drought and colder soil temperatures were not favorable for crabgrass germination at that time. Typically crabgrass will first emerge when the minimum soil temperature at the 1 inch depth reaches about 55°F for several straight days. An unusual colder spring would delay normal crabgrass emergence. A preemergence herbicide applied too early this year may not have enough residual to last throughout the season, so a second preemergence application or targeted postemergence sprays may be needed.

**Diseases.** For golf courses, Rhizoctonia blight, dollar spot, and Pythium blight are always a threat. With a wet spring, we could see more red thread/pink patch and leaf spot occurrence. Leaf spot is especially severe on perennial ryegrass and slow growing

Kentucky bluegrass. Anthracnose was a serious problem last year, and plant pathologists agree that if your *Poa annua* putting greens experienced the disease last year, you could expect it again this year. Due to the mild winter, plant pathologists agree that the fungal pathogen that causes anthracnose be active right now.

**Insects.** Due to continued insecticide bans, entomologists forecast more earthworm activity. Many of the older chemistries suppressed earthworm population growth, but many of the newer products do not. Activity from armyworms and cutworms is difficult to predict in any year, however with drier weather we may see greater activity on turfgrass as vegetation dries out. Also, the drier weather limits those natural diseases that help control these pests. Since we had a mild winter and the region did not experience adequate freezes that can suppress some insect populations, it is reasonable to expect more grubs activity this year.

**Trees and ornamental plants.** Mild winters or severe freeze/thaws can deharden ornamentals thus predisposing those plants to injury. Drought conditions will contribute to root damage in woody plant material, particular large oak trees, which may not become visible until next year. Root dieback caused by drought can lead to the death of some larger trees as their food reserves are depleted. Also, a tree's root system damaged by drought is susceptible to the development of root diseases when normal rainfall patterns return.

**What is a degree-day?** Since temperature is a driving force for all biological activity, we can use temperature-based information to determine the rate

(Continued on page 4)



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(Continued from page 3)

of growth and development of organisms over time. We call this accumulation of temperature over time *degree days* or *growing degree-days* or *thermal time*, and we can use degree-day accumulation to predict pest occurrence.

**How do you calculate degree-days?** Degree-day accumulation is a sum of the number of degrees (referred to as "degree-days") by which each day's average temperature exceeds the base temperature. One degree-day is equal to 1 degree above the base temperature in a 24 hour period. A base temperature of 50°F is used in most cases. You calculate degree-days daily and summarize them over time beginning with a specific starting date. For example, a starting date of January 1 is typical for most degree-day models. Here is an example:

Step One: determine each day's average temperature.

$$\frac{\text{daily maximum temp.} + \text{daily minimum temp.}}{2} = \text{daily average temp.}$$

Step Two: determine the degree-day for each day.

$$\text{daily average temp.} - \text{base temp.} = \text{daily degree-day}$$

Step Three: calculate a running total of degree-days for each day. For example:



Continued on Page 5



date	maximum temp.	minimum temp.	average temp.	ave. temp. - base temp. (base temp. = 50)	degree-day	accumulated degree-days
May 1	75	48	61	61 - 50 = 11	11	11
May 2	70	46	58	58 - 50 = 8	8	19
May 3	73	39	56	56 - 50 = 6	6	25
May 4	81	47	63	63 - 50 = 13	13	38
May 5	74	45	59	59 - 50 = 9	9	47*

\* total cumulative degree-days for this 5 day period = 47.

**Where can I get degree-day information?** You can determine degree-days on your own or use weather stations to monitor temperature and calculate degree-day accumulation for you. Also, check with your local cooperative extension office because they may have degree-day information available for your area. You may also try the Climate Prediction Center at [www.cpc.ncep.noaa.gov/products/analysis\\_monitoring/cdus/degree\\_days/](http://www.cpc.ncep.noaa.gov/products/analysis_monitoring/cdus/degree_days/). This site lists cumulative degree-days calculated from a base temperature of 50°F for each state, and lists data for Allentown, Philadelphia, Scranton, and Williamsport for Pennsylvania. Remember that we are only interested in **growing degree-days**. The site also lists cooling and heating degree-day information, which is used to forecast home heating oil needs for the winter months. Another website of interest is [www.syngentaprofessionalproducts.com/to/](http://www.syngentaprofessionalproducts.com/to/). Follow the direction to GreenCast, which is a service that supplies weather and temperature information, and offers many turfgrass pest predictions. Purdue University has a site that offers weather-based turfgrass diseases forecasts at [www.btny.purdue.edu/turfcast.fcgi](http://www.btny.purdue.edu/turfcast.fcgi). Through the PBI/Gordon Corporation, you can visit [www.weedalert.com](http://www.weedalert.com) for information on turfgrass weed emergence specific to your region. And finally, a commercial site, [www.skybit.com](http://www.skybit.com), can provide daily weather summaries including degree-day accumulation as well as pest alerts for your specific location.

**Examples of degree-day models for turf.** Recently, Dr. Karl Danneberger of Ohio State University conducted a GCSAA Seminar in King of Prussia, PA, on turfgrass ecology. He discussed the use of degree-day accumulation to predict pest activity in turf. Although many degree-day models are available for agricultural crops, we do have a few for turf. For example, first generation sod webworm is observed at a range of 1250 – 1920 cumulative degree-days; Japanese beetle adult occurrence at a range of 1590 – 1925; and crabgrass emergence at 42 – 78 with the greatest emergence occurring at 140 – 230.

**Bottom Line.** Degree-day and weather-based forecast models are helpful, but the best monitoring tools for determining the presence of turfgrass pests are frequent scouting and visual inspection of your site.

#### References:

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(Continued from page 1)

"does loves golf course work.."

With the retirement plans starting in October, Charlie's wife of 7 years, Pauline, has plenty of work for him to do. And, if Charlie can manage to slip away from those chores, he will be playing golf, traveling, hunting, and fishing. Charlie has successfully completed a healthy career and you can guarantee, he will complete a healthy retirement.

*Congratulations, Charlie!*





## My First Job Change



I accepted the White Beeches position on October 27, 2001, and I started on November 12. It was one of the hardest decisions I have ever had to make. Pocono Farms gave me my first opportunity as a golf course superintendent, and for that I will always be grateful.

White beeches is a William Travis design built in the 1920's. My new job has already given me a number of firsts in my career: my first experience working with a predominantly Hispanic crew, working with greens measuring less than two acres, and living in an apartment in Hackensack.

As you can imagine, there was animosity towards me from day one. The previous superintendent had been there for nearly 16 years, so the long-time staff thought I was the reason for his departure.

Walking into the shop, I knew we had a choice of either cleaning up that grease museum or burning it to the ground and starting over. I'm not interested in doing any jail time. The image of the golf course was a direct reflection of the maintenance facility. Needless to say, we had our work cut out for us.

It has been six months, and I feel we have come a long way. The shop has been cleaned, somewhat organized, and has been given some much needed TLC. The course is beginning to take shape. We applied a dormant feed, removed some trees to improve sunlight penetration, rebuilt some bunkers, and stripped and lowered some collars. Even the crew (fewer now than when I arrived) have shown a new attitude. We have a long way to go, but I am optimistic that we'll get there. I will keep you up to date on our progress.

Gene Huelster

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by Jim MacLaren

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2000	<i>Scabiosa columbaria</i> "Butterfly Blue"	1994	<i>Astilbe</i> "Sprite"
1999	<i>Rudbeckia fulgida</i> var <i>sullivantii</i> "Goldsturm"	1993	<i>Veronica</i> "Sunny Border Blue"
1998	<i>Echinacea purpurea</i> "Magnus"	1992	<i>Coreopsis verticillata</i> "Moonbeam"
1997	<i>Salvia</i> "May Night"	1991	<i>Heuchera micrantha</i> "Palace Purple"
		1990	<i>Phlox stolonifera</i>



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## POCONO ROUNDUP

NEWS AND VIEWS FROM THE POCONO  
TURFGRASS ASSOCIATION



### Golf Results for the April Meeting At Bethlehem Golf Course

#### Loss Gross

Dave Milore/John Pillar	67
Tony Grieco/John Chassard	73
Bob Seltzer/Rich Sweeney	75

#### Low Net

Charlie McGill/Sean Cullen	57
Dennis DeSanctis/Dennis DeSanctis, Jr.	59
Mark Eisele/Bruce Kluhwa	62

### NEXT MEETING:

Tuesday, May 21, 2002  
Water Gap Country Club  
Lunch: 11:00 A.M.  
Golf: 12:00 Shotgun  
Cocktails: 5:00 P.M.—6:00 P.M.

### Congratulations!



We extend our congratulations to Dr. Mike Fidanza and his wife on the birth of twins, Julia Caroline and Giacomo Lorenzo.



POCONO TURFGRASS ASSOCIATION  
c/o MELINDA WISNOSKY  
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POSTAGE

NAME & ADDRESS

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