



# CHIPS & PUTTS

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OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE  
POCONO TURFGRASS ASSOCIATION

VOL. 8, NO. 7

October/November 2002

## Did You Know...

If you could count the number of cricket chirps in one minute, divide by two, add nine and divide by two again, you would have the correct temperature in celsius degrees

If a statue in a park of a person on a horse has both front legs in the air, the person died in battle; if the horse has one leg in the air, the person died as a result of wounds received in battle; if the horse has all four legs on the ground, the person died of natural causes.

In every episode of Seinfeld, there is Superman somewhere.

More than 50% of the people in the world have never made or received a phone call.



On October 23, 19 brave golfers descended on the quaint village of Myersville, MD for a day of golf at Musket Ridge. Little known was that that evening the Beltway Snipers would be arrested only a short mile or so from the golf course !! In retrospect, it was thought the duffers could have been in the "line-of-fire" all day !!

It was an informal gathering orchestrated by one of our former members, Doug Witcraft, the superintendent and his assistant, Matt Kuchta. The group from Shawnee Inn & CC was kind enough to donate their van for ease of transportation. A box lunch was provide at the beginning of the round and "finger food" and a quarter keg followed the golfing.

The Musket Ridge GC encompasses over 150 acres of breathtaking views and is another gem designed by Joe Lee. With its natural beauty and topography, Musket Ridge will certainly become known as one of his finest courses, joining the ranks of Joe Lee's Doral & LaCosta.

From the firsts hole's dramatic elevated tee shot, you will realize this course will rank as one of the Free States best. Undulating greens, strategically located visible hazards from elevated tee boxes and unique bunkering are the trademarks of this superbly conditioned golf course. The course plays

6,900 yards from the tips and is a real joy to play. As you stand on each tee, the hole is laid out before you, not only visually, but physically with hardly any blind shots. A real golfing experience. Doug ("El Bigota") has invited us back in the spring, so those of you who wish to take advantage of this "road trip" make your wishes be know. Or just go down on your own. "El Bigota" can be reached at 301-293-2174.

The brave soles came from Shawnee Inn & CC, C. C. of the Poconos, Windsor Heights, Woodstone CC, Silver Creek CC, Fountain Springs CC, Bowling Green CC (Front Royal, VA), and Simplot Partners.



## President's Message.....

Hello, again....First of all I would like to thank Gene Huelster for the past two years he has served as Association President. We wish him well, with continued success at White Beeches and the New Jersey Association. Also, I would like to take this opportunity to thank Tony Grieco for his many years of service to the PTGA. Tony has always given 100% for the PTGA. Thanks, Tony. I will be in touch.

This is my third go round as your Association President in the past few years. I hope to pick up where we left off a few years ago.

Your Board of Directors has given me the opportunity to "right the ship" if you may, following one of the most difficult years for many of us in the turfgrass business. The weather conditions, along with two PTGA Board members moving out of the region, contributed to some poorly attended and supported PTGA business.

One of the most exciting things that has happened in the past few months is the addition of two new Board members, Andy Jubinski and Rich Sweeney. We welcome these two great superintendents and look forward to working with them to get the PTGA kick started again. Andy and Rich will be chairpersons of our Education Committee, and the two have already begun setting up educational topics for our monthly meetings.

The monthly meeting schedule is near completion. We are still looking for two meeting sites, one for the month of April, preferably south of I-80/Lehigh Tunnel, and one for August to host the clambake. If you have any interest in hosting this year or in the years to come, please contact Executive Secretary, Melinda Wisnosky, or any one of the PTGA Board members.

I look forward to a great year with the PTGA. Again, I will ask all of you to get more involved with the Association.

On behalf of the PTGA Board of Directors, Have a Safe and Happy Holiday Season!

*Ron Garrison, CGCS*

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

The golf committee will be finalizing the 2003 meeting schedule this month. We can then begin to contact educational speakers in January when they are accessible and willing to consider spending a day with the members of the Pocono Turfgrass Association. If you are considering hosting a meeting next year, or even in 2004, please let one of the board members know or leave a message with Melinda.

I began recapping the GCSAA Chapter Delegates Meeting in this issue, and will complete the recap in the next issue. Please pay attention to the issues involving your vote at the national conference, and don't hesitate to let the board know your feelings so we can cast an association vote that is representative of our membership.

Happy Holidays to all.

*Eric Reed*



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## EARTHWORMS: THATCH-BUSTERS

Earthworms, called the "intestines of the earth" by Aristotle, are very important soil organisms that aid in the decomposition of plant litter, such as the thatch layer, and in recycling of nutrients. They help to break down and condition plant remnants in their gut. Their tunnels in the soil help oxygen and water to enter the soil more easily and their castings (waste) enrich it.

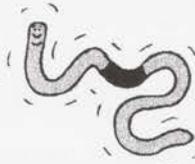
Earthworms may be viewed as pests because their burrows and castings create a roughened surface. Also, since earthworms are a preferred food for moles, pesticides are sometimes applied in an effort to remove food so that the moles will go elsewhere. There is no scientific evidence that elimination of earthworms will reduce problems with moles. Earthworms make significant contributions to a fertile, healthy soil. Attempts to control them to reduce surface disruption can have severe consequences, especially in thatch build up.

Thatch is a layer of living and dead roots, stems, and organic matter that accumulates at the soil surface. Thatch accumulates when the rate of decomposition is much lower than the rate of grass growth. Use of certain fertilizers or pesticides may encourage an accumulation of thatch by increasing turf growth and/or killing beneficial organisms, such as earthworms. Excessive thatch reduces penetration of water and other materials, such as fertilizer. It also encourages shallow grass roots which makes turf more susceptible to stress and pests. A heavy build up of thatch can require expensive dethatching. Earthworms break apart the thatch and pull organic matter into the soil. They also mix large amounts of soil into the thatch layer. This aids in a more rapid breakdown of the layer by increasing microbial activity and enhances its properties for growth of turfgrass.

Earthworms are generally found in the top 12" to 18" of the soil because this is where food is most abundant. The worm ingests soil and organic matter which is swallowed and ground in the gizzard. The ejected material, castings, are used to line the burrow or are deposited at the entrance. Earthworm activity depends directly on soil moisture and temperature. They become active when soil thaws in the spring and move deeper in late summer as the soil dries.

### Pesticides and Earthworms

Pesticides applied to control turf diseases or insect pests may severely affect earthworms. This can be avoided by accurately identifying and assessing



problems and, if a treatment is necessary, selecting products that have the least detrimental effect. Products commonly used on turf areas vary greatly in their toxicity to earthworms. Some pesticides can cause severe and long term reductions in earthworm numbers. Most of the common earthworm species in Kentucky grow slowly, live for several years, and have low reproductive rates. Consequently, repopulation of poisoned soil is slow. Preservation of earthworms is important where thatch is a problem.

Generally, the only time an insecticide application is necessary for most turf situations is to control white grubs. An application, if needed, should be made in about mid-August. Information on recognition, evaluation, and treatment is available at your county extension office (ENT-10, Controlling White Grubs).

The following toxicity information for earthworms was obtained during a 3-year research project by the UK Entomology Department.

*University of Kentucky, College of Agriculture, Department of Entomology.*

<u>Common Name</u>	<u>Brand Name</u>
<u>Low Toxicity (0% to 25% reduction)</u>	
<b>Fungicides</b>	
chlorothalonil	Bravo
fenarimol	Rubigan
fosetyl-Al	Aliette
iprodione	Chipco 20619
	Rovral
mancozeb	Dithane M-45
	Manzate 200
metalaxyl	Ridomil, Subdue
myclobutanil	Nova, Rally
propiconazole	Banner, Tilt
tebuconazole	Folicur
triadimefon	Bayleton
<b>Herbicides</b>	
dicamba	Banvel
dithiopyr	Dimension
isaxaben	Gallery
pendamethalin	Pre-M, Prowl, Ornamental Herbicide 2

(Continued on page 4)



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(Continued from page 3)

Prodiamine	Herbicide 2
2,4-D	Kerb
trichlopyr	2-4,D
	Garlon

**Insecticides**

azadirachtin	Margosan-O
bifenthrin	Talstar
cyfluthrin	Baythroid, Tempo
fluvalinate	Mavrik
isophenphos	Oftanol

**Plant Growth Regulators**

flurprimidol	Cutless
mefluidide	Embark

Moderate Toxicity (26% to 50% reduction)**Insecticides**

chlorpyrifos	Dursban, Lorsban
diazinon	Diazinon, Spectracide
isazofos	Triumph
trichlorfon	Proxol

Severe Toxicity (51% to 75% reduction)**Fungicides**

thiophanate methyl	Fungo, Cleary-3336
	Topsim-M

Very Severe Toxicity (76% to 100% reduction)**Fungicide**

benomyl	Benlate, Tersan-1991
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**Insecticides**

bendiocarb	Turcam
carbaryl	Sevin
ethoprop	Mocap
fonofos	Crusade, Dyfonate
phorate	Thimet

**To reduce detrimental effects:**

- Apply pesticides only when needed; eliminate preventive applications, especially in the spring when earthworms are near the soil surface
- Select products that are least injurious to earthworms and do not exceed labeled rates
- If possible, treat only infested areas

**Other Factors**

Excessive nitrogen applications that greatly reduce soil and thatch pH can be detrimental to earthworms. Earthworms are generally intolerant of acidic soils (pH<6.0). Soil samples can determine fertility needs and allow management decisions that will help to maintain healthy turf and beneficial organisms.



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## GCSAA CHAPTER DELEGATES MEETING RECAP

The GCSAA Chapter Delegate Meeting was held November 1 through November 3 in Kansas City, Missouri. A total of 98 out of 102 affiliated chapters were represented. Eric Reed represented the Pocono Turfgrass Association. The following is a brief recap of the highlights of the meeting. A complete 35-page outcome is available on the GCSAA website.

*Goals...Be  
recognized among  
the top  
organizations in  
American golf.....*

conference and show = 19%, Administrative = 25%, image, career development, and media relations = 6.5%, member and chapter services = 7%, foundation contribution = 5%, investment loss = 5%

- Dues increase is necessary to maintain current operational status. Last dues increases were 19% in 1997, 20% in 1990, and 21% in 1987.

- Increase will permit association to break even operationally. Also fund growth and advance the organization's mission, including educational web-casting, career development expansion, expanded employer outreach efforts, and expanded chapter leadership programs.

- GCSAA is preparing for a fiscal year change, effective January 1, 2004. Current bylaws state that the audit report shall be available for members at the annual meeting. This will not be possible with a new fiscal year. A bylaws change will be proposed that will allow an audit to be presented within 5 months of the year-end.

- Consideration of a joint trade show with the National Golf Course Owners Association. Would still involve separate conferences with possible educational overlap possibilities.

- GCSAA audit will be available on the website in the near future.

### Media/Public Relations

- GCSAA is focusing on building awareness and understanding of the profession among avid golfers, and building awareness and understanding of GCSAA among the trade.

Considerations for a change in location.... (more to come)

### State of the Association

- 22,000 members in 72 countries and territories; Association staff of 120; \$18 million operating budget; 10,000 registrants in education programs; average of 20,000 attendees at conference and show; 730 exhibitors and 270,000 square feet of exhibit space at conference and show. GCSAA currently has 102 affiliated chapters, 55 student chapters, 1,800 certified members, 22 committees and 250 committee members, and 10,000 registrants on the website.

### Association's four goals are:

1. To enable our members to achieve career success. Average tenure of a superintendent at one facility in 1995 was 7 years, 6 years in 1998, and 5 years in 2000. Goal is to better position superintendent within their facility.
2. To be a powerful and influential advocate for the interests of the profession and our members. Greater public outreach.
3. To be the recognized authority on continuing education, information and issues related to golf course management. Being an environmental leader.
4. To be a strategically positioned, dynamic and responsive organization.

### Goals by 2007:

- Be recognized among the top organizations in American golf; be recognized as the authoritative source of information and education related to golf course management by GCSAA members and others in the golf industry. Be recognized as leading golf's commitment to a positive environmental impact.
- To have the golf course superintendent be recognized as the key to the economic vitality of the facility by employers, and a key to the enjoyment of the game by influential golfers.

### Financial Status of the Association

- The negative results in 2002 (\$802,000 net loss) were a direct result of the poor overall economy, including weak corporate earnings, causing reduced marketing budgets for our industry partners, and losses in the equity investment markets.
- Revenue sources: membership dues = 22%, user fees (conference and show) = 20.6%, industry support = 54.3%, future initiative accrual = 2.4%
- Expenses: Education, info, publications, and web = 37%,

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## GOLF RESULTS OF THE OCTOBER MEETING



1st Gross - Jim Carville and Bill Rahling (76 +4)  
2nd Gross - Duane Schell and Hopeck (79 +7, Match of Cards)

1st Net - Tony Grieco and Steve Chirip (69 -3, Match of Cards)  
2nd Net - Dennis DeSanctis and Paul (69 -3, Match of Cards)

Pin Shot 0-15 Handicap - Jeff Wamlob  
Pin Shot 16+ Handicap - Rick Pany

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*A message from your golf course superintendent and GCSAA*



## Stressed Out?

Dr. George W. Hamilton, Jr., Penn State University"

The long hot dog days of summer are behind us, but many areas of scorched turf remain. The dead turf reminds us of what a difficult summer it was for many golf course superintendents and their staffs. Drought, high temperatures, disease, anything that could give grass a hard time seemed to appear in the summer of 2002, and stress levels were at all time highs. Of course I'm talking about plant stress, which can lead to human stress.

It seems that the causes of turf loss are somewhat misunderstood by golfers. I've spoken with several club members, green committee chairs, etc. this summer; and they all had a consistent theme when talking about the loss of turf at their golf courses. The theme revolved around the golf course being attacked by a dastardly disease or exposed to prolonged drought and heat. I was shocked (not really!) that the demand for fast greens and tournament conditions wasn't part of their reasons for dead turf. I informed them that the main reason for so much turf loss is that too much turf is consistently stressed to provide tournament conditions every single day. As we (i.e. turfsters) all know, stressed turf is more susceptible to environmental and pest-related stresses. The pursuit of perfect playing conditions day in and day out is the major reason that so much turf can be lost in a single season.

Practically no one escaped the summer unscathed. Our industry's hidden mission statement of "keep up with the Joneses" has forced far too many golf courses to abandon good agronomic practices. Less core cultivation, low fertility, excessive rolling, etc., will eventually take its toll. After all, it is a living plant.

This year, even the "Joneses" have lost grass, and golfers need to be reminded of that when ridiculous demands are being placed on golf course superintendents. Dead grass looks the same at big budget clubs as it does at low budget clubs. Stress doesn't discriminate by budget size. If you maintain grass on the "edge," sometimes you'll go over the edge.

There is no easy cure or quick fix, but we as an industry need to work together to develop a consistent message that this unrealistic and consistent pursuit of perfect playing conditions is going to continue to lead us down a path of over-stressed turf, which can easily revert to really dead turf. We need to become proactive and begin to educate golfers that this pursuit for perfection is agronomically incorrect and that the consequences of "living on the edge" will eventually result in poor playing conditions (dead turf) that will lead to significant inconveniences (renovations, course closings) to players.

Unfortunately, a lot of superintendents will probably lose their jobs this year because they lost grass as a result of creating too much stress by doing things against their will, experience, and education. The demand for perfect playing conditions has gripped our industry, and the resulting stress has begun to take its toll. And I'm not talking about plant stress.

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NEWS AND VIEWS FROM THE POCONO  
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a Merry Christmas  
And  
Happy New Year!*



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